

THE HISTORY OF GRIMM ALFALFA

BY

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Chaska, Minnesota

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Foreword

The purpose in writing this brief history of Grimm alfalfa is threefold. First, because the year 1957 marks the hundredth anniversary of the introduction of this superior product in the County of Carver, from which it has spread throughout North America. Second, to give the interested reader a true account of how this hardy forage plant was brought to the United States from Germany. The third purpose is to honor the Wendelin Grimm family, for the foresight displayed by Wendelin in bringing this alfalfa with him.

Although the account may seem simple and short, it entailed much time and research in obtaining the facts. The indefatigable zeal of the author, Frank Kelzer, is to be commended, as well as his persevering efforts in overcoming the many obstacles which present themselves in an undertaking of this kind.

S.M. A.

CARVER COUNTY, THE HOME OF GRIMM ALFALFA

In 1857, when Wendelin Grimm came to the United States,
In Laketown Township he bought himself some real estate.
He bought it to be his own, to make it his family's
future home.

A year after, on this farm, he found a spot
On a hillside, to sow some of his favorite crop.
This alfalfa crop he called his own
That made Carver County its future home.
On this hillside for a century had stood
His alfalfa, grown from its everlasting root.
And today, on his alfalfa hillside
Stands a great historical site.
Here his alfalfa stands at its very best.
No one can compare a strain of any of the rest
With his alfalfa seed.
From the beginning, his alfalfa had it rough,
But Mr. Grimm, really knew his "stuff".
With careful handling that made it sprout,
Year in, year out, it stood the drought.
Though severewinters came about,
His alfalfa always came out.
He called his pet, "Lucern or Ewiger Klee"
We call it Grimm's Alfalfa Hay.
His alfalfa became so very famous,
That its spread was just "outrageous".
He sowed his seed by hand
To make a successful stand.
When all his hard work was done,
A golden crown he won.
This all happened in the year of 1858
When Minnesota became a great state.



Mr. and Mrs. Wendelin Grimm, sturdy pioneers in Carver County, whose foresight in bringing a few pounds of seed of a hardy forage plant to this country from their homeland in Kùlsheim, Germany, and whose courage and perseverance in raising it, conferred an inestimable boon on the farmers in this county, state, and all North America.

WENDELIN GRIMM, THE ORIGINAL PRODUCER OF "GRIMM ALFALFA"

Mr. Wendelin Grimm was born on October 18, 1818, in a little village called Kùlsheim in the Grand Duchy of Baden, Germany. This village was known for its advances in agriculture and farming. In this place he spent his youth, and here he met his future wife, Juliana Segner, who was born on June 15, 1821. While the Grimm's lived in Kùlsheim, three children, Frank, Joseph, and Ottilia were born to them.

Mr. and Mrs. Grimm were an ambitious and a hard-working couple. At this time, their farm was situated out of town and consisted of small tracks of land which was difficult to farm.

When Frank was eleven, and Joseph nine, Mr. Wendelin Grimm began to look ahead to the family's future, and like so many other German families, he determined to migrate to America. They sold their farm, home, and belongings, packed their three trunks with the possessions they wished to take along, and set out for their adventurous trip to the land of promise, America.

Their travels took them westward from Kùlsheim until they reached the Rhine River. From there they took a boat up the Rhine to Rotterdam, where they boarded a powerful steamship to cross the great Atlantic Ocean. They encountered violent storms and rough sailing on a number of days.

Finally they arrived in New York. There they heard that most immigrants were going westward to Minnesota, which was said to be a place of great opportunity for new settlers. Just how they reached St. Paul is unknown. However, they rode up the Minnesota River to Chaska on a steamship and reached Chaska, in Carver County, about September 1, 1857.

Mr. Grimm and his family were lodged at the Bar Hotel in Chaska. The family remained in the lobby while Wendelin went in search for a place for the family to live. At this time he met a man, John Neunsinger, who told him that he had his farm in Laketown Township for sale. Mr. Grimm bought the farm, with a log cabin, barn, and clearing.

The following day, the Grimm family moved to their new home, which was about three miles northwest of Victoria. All in all, it was a long journey from Kùlsheim, Germany, to their new home in Minnesota. Before long, the new settlers became acquainted with their neighbors between Chaska and Victoria. The Grimm family attended St. Victoria Catholic Church, and later, the children became pupils at the parish school which necessitated a three-mile drive by means of oxen and wagon.

In 1858, when Mr. Grimm and his boys were actively engaged in their farm-work, Mr. Grimm took from one of his trunks, a secret treasure which he had hidden among the quilts and blankets. It was a small bag containing about fifteen pounds of "Lucern", or "Ewiger Klee", everlasting clover, as the plant was called in Germany, because of its perennial nature.

He proceeded to plant this alfalfa, his prize possession from Germany, on a small patch of ground near the log barn. During the winter, all of his treasure, except a few plants, froze. With a careful hand, he tended these plants, and selected only the seed of the sturdy plants. When the patch was well developed, it produced the hardiest alfalfa even grown. To this day there is no alfalfa more hardy than the genuine Grimm Alfalfa.

About two years after coming to America, a fourth child, Caroline, made her appearance in the Grimm family.

Wendelin Grimm was not only interested in farming, but was also devoted to the cause of helping his neighbor and of protecting his newly adopted country. When the news reached him that the Indian War of 1862 had begun, he took his team and wagon, gathered his neighbors and supplies, and set out westward to join the American men in their battle with the Indians. When the group reached Glencoe, they were informed that the National Army had taken over, and that the war was ended. This was before railroads were invented, so the volunteer soldiers made their laborious way back to their waiting families.

In the year 1872, Mr. Grimm purchased a second farm, midway between Victoria and Chaska. Several years later, his eldest son, Frank, married Rosalia Pograbo, and they established themselves on the Grimm homestead farm, while his father and the other members of the family moved to the new farm.

The second son, Joseph, married Mary Agnes Browsers on June 1, 1875. A few years later, they moved to Texas. After some time, they came back to Chaska, but remained only a time and then moved to Tampa, Florida.

Ottilia, the eldest daughter, married Hubert Kelzer in 1889, and the newly weds made their home with Mr. and Mrs. Wendelin Grimm. Death claimed the latter on December 8, 1890, while his wife survived him until October 28, 1897. Both are buried in St. Victoria Cemetery, at Victoria, Minnesota. May their souls rest in peace.'

The youngest child of the Grimm family, Caroline, married William Glatzel. They settled on a farm located one mile north of Chaska.

Many interesting stories were told the grandchildren of Wendelin Grimm about the life of their grandfather. Ottilia, the wife of Hubert Kelzer, gives this interesting account. When Wendelin Grimm came to Carver County, he not only brought alfalfa seed with him, but a six-knife cabbage cutter, in order that his family might

be assured of their favorite German dish, sauerkraut. Not only did Mr. Grimm supply his own family with sauerkraut, but he would walk from town to town with his cutter strapped on his back, and cut cabbage for his customers along the way, among whom were hotel owners in Minneapolis and St. Paul. While on these tours, which often took several weeks, his sons took over the farm work. On his return, it was not unusual for him to carry a fifty-pound bag of flour from Minneapolis to Victoria.

At the turn of the century, between 1890 and 1900, dairy herds increased, and Carver County turned from grain farming to the dairy industry. As a result, the alfalfa fields became larger and larger because of the increasing demands for this product. The Grimm alfalfa seed was often difficult to get because of unfavorable weather conditions, and so many farmers had to buy a common alfalfa seed instead. However, a remarkable difference could be detected in these varieties.

Mr. Hubert Kelzer, who lived on Wendelin Grimm's second farm, also experienced a shortage of Grimm alfalfa seed, and bought a half bushel of common alfalfa seed from a local dealer. This he planted in a field next to the plot where his Grimm alfalfa stood. The latter field happened to be along the Chaska-Victoria road, and attracted the attention of many people passing by. The foliage of the common alfalfa was dark green, and the blossoms were blue, while the Grimm alfalfa had a lighter green foliage, and the blossoms were of various colors, such as light and dark blue, greenish purple, reddish yellow, and white. Often inquiries were made of Frank Kelzer, while working in the field, for an explanation of the different kinds of alfalfa.

About this time, Charles Brand, an agricultural inspector of Washington, D.C., was sent to investigate the different kinds of clover and alfalfa. While on his tour of inspection, he took pictures and samples of various fields for the purpose of observation and testing. A year later, he returned to the same fields and brought with him other experts from the University of Minnesota. They were very much astonished to find that the common alfalfa could not withstand the cold winter, and that not a blade was to be seen in the fields. Whereas the Grimm alfalfa, in the adjoining field, was sturdy and flourishing. Mr. Brand took pictures of these fields and filed his reports with the U.S. Agricultural Department.

After Charles Brand had taken pictures and made his report about the Grimm alfalfa and the common alfalfa, he and Frank Kelzer went to the field where the Grimm alfalfa stood, and dug out alfalfa plants, digging as deeply as they could with a long spade. Before putting these specimens in his water-proof bags, he identified and marked the plants carefully, as well as the bags. Before packing them into his

suitcase, he watered them again, and then took them to the experiment station in Washington, D.C. A few years later, Mr. Frank Grimm, son of Wendelin Grimm, received a sample of the seed grown from these plants. He planted these sample seeds in a field east of his farm buildings. It was a pleasure to see the variety in color in this alfalfa field. Mr. Leo Grimm, youngest son of Frank Grimm, can testify to this.

When the Grimm's first came to Carver County, the only means of traveling long distances, was by steam boat up and down the Minnesota River. During the first part of the 1860's, a severe depression occurred. This put the farmers here at a great disadvantage, because they had to sell their grain and wood before the river froze and while the boats could still run. Buyers took advantage of this situation, and bought the farmers' products at low prices. The farmers, on the other hand, had to pay high prices for everything they needed.

Transportation was improved somewhat by the introduction of horses and mules to replace the slow-moving oxen. This took place after the Civil War when the horses and mules were brought from the south.

The first railroads were built through Chaska in 1869. The Minneapolis and St. Louis went south to St. Louis, while the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul went as far as Glencoe. In 1873, they built a main road from Minneapolis to Cologne. This road went through the Wendelin Grimm farm to meet what they called the Hastings and Dakota Line. This line was a by-pass to the Twin Cities. The following year this was extended from Glencoe to Montevideo.

After the railroads were built, this county really began to boom with industries of various kinds such as brick yards, flour mills, breweries, and saw mills, together with live stock, grain raising, and dairy farming. There was a market for everything.

At this time, too, improvements in farm implements were being introduced. Steam threshing rigs were beginning to take the place of live horsepower; grain binders succeeded the old cradle, and cultivators were substituted for mowers. About this time, also, the horseless carriage or auto could be seen on the road occasionally, and everything seemed to become more modern and efficient as the farm machinery was mechanized, and tractors, trucks, and autos became indispensable.

During the first part of 1900, the silo became a great aid to the dairy farmers. At that time it was used only for corn silage,

but as more and more silos were built, experiments proved that alfalfa silage is equally as good as corn silage. Since the yield of alfalfa is about equal to corn silage per acre, more alfalfa was put into silos. Feeding cattle green alfalfa silage in winter, was comparable to green pasture in summer; dairy farmers used green alfalfa silage when pastures became short in summer. Farmers have found that one acre of alfalfa will produce as much feed in the form of green-chop alfalfa, as several acres of pasture. Thus a good brand of alfalfa, such as Grimm alfalfa, is another help to the dairy farmer.

By the year 1910, the raising of alfalfa became a booming occupation in Carver County. Dairy farming kept pace with the growth of alfalfa. Signs were placed all along the roads in this county with the following inscriptions:

"This is Carver County".

"Carver County, the Home of Grimm Alfalfa".

"Carver County, the Golden Buckle of the Dairy Belt".

Today there is only one of the original signs to be seen. This reads, "Carver County, the Home of Grimm Alfalfa", and is attached to the dairy barn on the Clarence Kelzer farm, which was the original second farm owned by Wendelin Grimm, the great grandfather of the present owner. This farm is located midway between Chaska and Victoria, just off County Road No. 14, on a Laketownship gravel road.

At first, Mr. Wendelin Grimm sold seed to his neighbors. They were eager to get it because they knew the superior quality of his product. Gradually the reputation of the quality of this seed spread throughout the county. The work of Charles Brand and the University of Minnesota experts brought this alfalfa to the attention of seed companies, and immediately they began to sell Grimm alfalfa seed. In this way it became known all over the United States from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and from the Gulf of Mexico to the north of Canada and Alaska.

Two of Frank Grimm's sons, John and Paul, went to ~~North~~ Reeder, Bowman County, North Dakota, where they took up farming. They farmed here for many years. One year Paul raised over 4,000 lb. of Grimm alfalfa seed. Unfavorable weather conditions necessitated their leaving the farm, and Mr. and Mrs. Paul Grimm and their seven sons settled in Billings, Montana.

Today there are many different trade names for alfalfa, but most of them can be traced to the original Grimm alfalfa seed. For to this day there is no other variety of alfalfa that can excel

the genuine Grimm alfalfa in durability, hardiness, and quality. May the name of Grimm alfalfa continue to denote the best alfalfa ever produced, and may its story continue to be told.

In conclusion, it can be seen that the foresight of an ambitious, German immigrant, Mr. Wendelin Grimm, brought prosperity to Carver County in the State of Minnesota. A fifteen-pound bag of alfalfa seed placed in a trunk between quilts and blankets, making a long journey from Kilsheim, Germany, to New York, and then from there to Carver County, Minnesota, after being sowed and cared for amid difficulties known only to a pioneer, has become the "open sesame", or magic key to prosperity for a great county.

The place Wendelin Grimm holds in the estimation of men of thought is revealed in an article which appeared in the Minnesota Quarterly, in the March, 1938 issue on pages 21 to 33.

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W E N D E L I N G R I M M A N D A L F A L F A

GRIMM ALFALFA is one of Minnesota's main contributions to American agriculture, and its history is an interesting and significant story of a hardy forage plant that was brought to America some eighty years ago by a German immigrant named Wendelin Grimm. Although millions of Europeans migrated to the United States in the course of the nineteenth century, Grimm stands out as an individual farmer who made an important specific contribution to American agriculture. He left his native Kùlsheim, a little agricultural village between Tauberbischofsheim and Wertheim in the Tauber Valley of the duchy of Baden, Germany, in 1857. Since he was nearly forty years of age when he emigrated, he retained many of his old farming methods and interests. Like many other immigrants he brought with him some of his favorite possessions. Among them was a bag of alfalfa seed, weighing not more than twenty pounds, which was destined to become the basis of his important agricultural contribution. Grimm reached Chaska in Carver County about September 1, and there he bought 137 acres in the northwest quarter of section 4, range 24 west, Laketown Township.

In the spring of 1858, Grimm planted the seed he had brought with him in order that he might have a crop of alfalfa, as had been his custom in the old country. The soil was favorable, but the winters were more severe than those of his native village, and he did not have immediate success. Some of the alfalfa plants winterkilled, but he carefully saved the seed from those that survived and replanted the field. Thus he continued year after year, trying to grow what he considered an essential crop. Some years his field winterkilled very little, but in others it died out almost entirely. Yet he always saved seed from the plants that survived and replanted the following spring. After years of persistence, the alfalfa became acclimatized and no longer winterkilled. The scientific importance of his work, Grimm probably never realized.

Detailed information about Grimm as a farmer is lacking, but reports gathered from the neighbors of his community have been repeatedly used. Charles Kenning of Bird Island, who was acquainted with Grimm, emphasized the fact that for many years he made little headway, and only by persistent care did he finally succeed in raising hardy alfalfa. A near neighbor, Henry Gerdson, is authority for the story of an incident that must have made Grimm feel that his efforts

¹This paper was presented at the afternoon session of the eighty-ninth annual meeting of the Minnesota Historical Society in St. Paul on January 10, 1938. In the absence of the authors, it was read by their friend, Mr. Rodney C. Loehr of St. Paul. Ed.

in growing alfalfa in America were worth while. In the summer of 1863, Grimm drove a number of fat cattle past Gerdson's home on the way to market. Gerdson, surprised to see such fat animals when feed was scarce and his own cattle were lean, asked Grimm where he had obtained his corn. Grimm, long conscious of the feed value of alfalfa, proudly answered: "Kein Körnchen, nur ewiger Klee,"--"not one kernel, only everlasting clover."

George Du Toit, the proprietor of a store at Chaska, knew Grimm for many years. It was through him that Grimm did much of his trading, including the buying of garden and field seeds. Du Toit remembered him as a man with the rudimentary education of the average German-born citizen, good common sense, and a determination in his undertakings. The storekeeper also said that, in his memory, the only time that Grimm's alfalfa nearly died out entirely was in the winter of 1874-75. It is interesting to note that this was the severest winter since the forties. Joseph, Grimm's older son, who lived with his father until 1876, when he went south, recalled that six years after the alfalfa was planted the family dug a driveway for a bank barn and found that the "roots of this clover had penetrated more than 10 feet deep through the clay soil."²

Wendelin Grimm's alfalfa or "everlasting clover," as it was commonly called, grew and thrived year after year, but it received little early notice commercially. Grimm himself did nothing to bring his contribution to the attention of the agricultural world. Only the farmers in his neighborhood planted it and relied on it as a permanent source of fodder and fertility for the soil. They obtained seed from Grimm and sowed fields for themselves. In this way alfalfa spread in Carver County, but it was raised largely within a radius of perhaps ten miles of the Grimm farm. It may also have been used a little in other localities. Grimm is reported to have bought a threshing machine in 1865 from an implement dealer who advised him to produce alfalfa seed for commercial purposes. Whether this suggestion was given as an aid to Grimm, or merely as a talking point to dispose of the thresher, is not known. According to Joseph Grimm, who operated the machine, 480 pounds of seed were produced on three acres in 1867 and sold in Minneapolis for fifty cents a pound.

²For additional details on Grimm, see the following accounts by Charles J. Brand: Grimm Alfalfa and Its Utilization in the Northwest, 7-9, 17-21. (United States Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Plant Industry, Bulletin, no. 209--Washington, 1911); "The Acclimatization of an Alfalfa Variety in Minnesota," in Science, 28:891 (December 18, 1908); and "Ancestral Home of Grimm Alfalfa," in Fertilizer Review, 9:8-10, 13 (September-October, 1934). See also Charles F. Colisson, "Memorial Tablet Erected to Grimm Alfalfa Originator," in Minneapolis Tribune, June 15, 1924; M.C. Cutting, "Alfalfa from Xerxes to Grimm," in Country Gentleman, 89:11, 29 (August 16, 1924); Charles Kenning, "Minnesota Alfalfa," in Farm, Stock and Home, 20:112 (March 1, 1904); and J.H. Shepperd, "The Story of an Everlasting Clover," in Breeder's Gazette, 83:845 (June 21, 1923). In Germany alfalfa is known as "ewiger Klee," because of its continuous growth. It is also called Luzerne, and Monatsklee, or "monthly clover," since it can be cut each month.

The failure of hardy alfalfa to spread in Minnesota during the early years of its development was probably due, as Joseph Grimm said, principally to the fact that livestock was grazed on vacant lands and there was plenty of open range. After the passage of the Enclosure Act in 1871, fences were erected and more attention was given to feed crops, and especially to alfalfa, in Carver County. In 1889 this county produced nearly fifty per cent of the alfalfa grown in Minnesota.³ Ten years later it was still the leading alfalfa center of the state, producing a third of the total crop. Prior to 1900, it was generally believed that the farmers of Minnesota could not grow permanent stands of alfalfa, and those few who knew that it was being grown in Carver County attributed its success to local soil conditions.

The first person to take an active interest in bringing Grimm's hardy alfalfa to the attention of the outside world was Arthur B. Lyman of Excelsior. About 1880, on a visit to Tobias Ottinger at Victoria in Carver County, he learned of the superiority of alfalfa over red clover and induced his father to plant a field, which winter-killed because ordinary seed was used. Ten year later, when teaching school in Dahlgren Township, Carver County, he again came in contact with this forage plant which withstood the wintery weather. This time he took a handful of Grimm alfalfa hay home and showed it to his father, who bought seed in Minneapolis and tried again. As before the crop winterkilled. Lyman, still believing in alfalfa, obtained seed from the Grimm neighborhood and persuaded his father to try again. The result following the first winter was not encouraging, but the second winter more plants survived and from then on the alfalfa continued to flourish.

Lyman was very enthusiastic over his father's success with Grimm alfalfa and was anxious to disclose the facts to someone who would bring it to the attention of Minnesota farmers. In 1900, at a picnic excursion on Lake Minnetonka, he met Professor Willet M. Hays, head of the Agricultural Experiment Station of the University of Minnesota in St. Paul, and to him told the story of his discovery. Hays decided to make a personal investigation in Carver County. Accompanied by an assistant, Andrew Boss, he drove the thirty miles to Excelsior and made an extensive tour of inspection with Lyman as guide. After three days, he decided to start trials with the plant at the experiment station, and made arrangements with Lyman to procure all the Grimm seed possible. Lyman obtained as much as he could by increasing his own alfalfa fields to "over one hundred acres." Cold, rainy seasons prevented the harvesting of large supplies for two years, but at the end of that time he again agreed to furnish seed because there were constant demands for it from other experiment stations.⁴

³Several writers have followed the statement in Brand, Grimm Alfalfa 20, that "in 1899, with the exception of certain counties in New York, Carver was the only county east of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers that reported as much as 1,000 acres of alfalfa under cultivation." Carver County is west of the Mississippi and only 658 acres of alfalfa were reported within its borders in the agricultural census of 1900.

⁴A. B. Lyman, "Alfalfa Seed," in Minnesota State Agricultural Society,

From this time on more interest was taken in the possibilities of developing and introducing hardy alfalfa as a forage crop for the Northwest. Lyman was invited by Professor Hays to read a paper on the subject at a session of the annual meeting of the Minnesota State Agricultural Society, held at the Masonic Temple in Minneapolis on January 12, 1904. A general discussion of alfalfa, and especially of the hardy variety grown in Carver County, followed the reading. Most noteworthy of the remarks and questions was the comment by William J. Spillman, a member of the federal department of agriculture:⁵

I cannot help but be impressed with this paper read by Mr. Lyman... as of vital importance to the future of agriculture in the State of Minnesota and in the Dakotas. We have been searching the world for a variety of alfalfa that would do just what this variety does. We sent a man to Turkestan this summer at great expense to get something of that kind, but here we know we have what we sought.

Professor Hays continued to give considerable attention to Grimm alfalfa, and in March, 1904, he issued a Press Bulletin in which, officially at least, this hardy alfalfa was referred to as Grimm alfalfa for the first time.

From 1901 to 1920 experiments to compare Grimm alfalfa with other alfalfas and other species of forage plants were conducted at various experiment stations in the Northwest. The first were started at the Agricultural Experiment Station of the University of Minnesota. Careful statistical records were kept, using genuine Grimm seed, commercial seed, Turkestan seed, Iowa seed, and some unidentified varieties. In 1902 similar experiments were begun at the North Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station at Fargo and also at the substation at Dickinson. Comparative studies in Montana and Kansas showed that Minnesota Grimm yielded three times as much hay as other alfalfas. Hardy strains were developed also in South Dakota; one of the best was known as Grimm S.D. 162. After Dr. Spillman heard about Grimm alfalfa at the meeting of the Minnesota State Agricultural Society in 1904, the United States department of agriculture became actively interested, and Professor Hays continued to give encouragement from Washington after his appointment as assistant secretary of agriculture. Charles J. Brand and Lawrence R. Waldron made exhaustive comparative tests at Dickinson. Their study brought them to the conclusion that Grimm alfalfa was a natural cross between the common purple blossom alfalfa, Medicago sativa, long familiar to agriculturists, and a wild yellow flowering kindred species, Medicago falcata, which in some devious way had strayed from its original home in Asia to western Europe.⁶

⁴Annual Report, 1903, p. 38-44, and "History of Alfalfa," in Minnesota Farmers' institute, Annual, 1922, p. 34. See also the paragraphs entitled "How I Discovered the Grimm Alfalfa" in the sixteen-page sales pamphlet issued by Lyman in at least three versions under the title Lyman's Grimm Alfalfa (n.p., n.d.).

⁵Minnesota State Agricultural Society, Annual Report, 1903, p. 42.

⁶C.J. Brand and L.R. Waldron, Cold Resistance of Alfalfa and Some

Brand had obtained alfalfa seed from the region of Grimm's old home in Germany for comparison with that developed by Grimm in Minnesota. With reference to its power to resist cold winter weather, the conclusion of Brand and Waldron is as follows:

In comparative experiments with Grimm alfalfa and the old German Franconian alfalfa the latter has proved to be much less hardy under our northern conditions than the Grimm, which points to the probability that the German lucern that Mr. Grimm brought with him has been greatly modified during its fifty years' sojourn in Minnesota... Under identical conditions and with identical treatment, adjoining rows of these strains killed out differently. In the old German strain 64 out of 85 plants winterkilled, while in a sample of Grimm grown in North Dakota only 2 out of 70 plants were killed. ... The Grimm killed out less than 3 per cent, while the old German lost more than 75 per cent.

Other observations were made by Brand and John W. Westgate, who started in 1906 to make a critical, botanical, agronomic, and historical study of alfalfa, officially directed by the United States department of agriculture. After three years of study, Westgate concluded that a certain per cent of *Medicago falcata*, the hardy drought-resisting wild alfalfa of Eurasia, was indicated in the Grimm strain, and that it was this ancestry rather than acclimatization since its introduction in Minnesota that made it so hardy a plant. Brand, in his summary, called attention to the hardiness and consequent great potential value of Grimm alfalfa. This had been amply substantiated by the results of his investigations and also by the experiences of many northern farmers, who time and again had planted seed of ordinary strains of domestic and foreign origin only to have their fields gradually deteriorate to a point where they were no longer profitable. Such fields had to be plowed up and resowed with Grimm to obtain enduring stands.

Ten years of tests comparing Grimm with other varieties of alfalfa confirmed all beliefs in its hardiness and superiority over other forage plants as a general feed crop for the Northwest. Grimm was recommended at all times, but little headway was made in establishing it as a leading forage crop because the farmers did not know how it should be raised and treated under different soil conditions. Methods were found, however, that eventually aided certain localities in its cultivation.

⁶Factors Influencing It, 50 (United States Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Plant Industry, Bulletins, no. 185--Washington, 1910); Brand, Grimm Alfalfa, 9-11, 13-17; R.A. Oakley and H.L. Westover, Commercial Varieties of Alfalfa, 10 (United States Department of Agriculture, Farmers' Bulletins, no. 757--Washington, 1916); P.K. Blinn, "Developing a Hardy Type of Alfalfa," in Breeder's Gazette, 63:947 (April 16, 1913).

⁷Brand, Grimm Alfalfa, 14

⁸Brand, Grimm Alfalfa, 58; J.M. Westgate, "Another Explanation of the Hardiness of Grimm Alfalfa," in Science, 30: 184-186 (August 6, 1909).

In Carver County the soil had always been favorable to a good stand, but where the land contained quantities of acid, alfalfa did not grow successfully. The farmers had to learn that, to counteract such conditions, they must apply lime to their fields. Inspection of the roots in alfalfa fields also revealed that poor stands were often caused by lack of alfalfa bacteria, whose presence is essential if the plants are to thrive and to fertilize the soil. The methods of inoculating new seedings had to be explained and demonstrated.

Although the large-scale production of Grimm alfalfa was slow in developing, its seed was much in demand and at all times scarce. In 1914, forty thousand pounds of seed were distributed among farmers widely scattered throughout the northwestern counties of Minnesota. Many seed companies handled what Grimm alfalfa seed they could get, and probably much that was purported to be of this variety, but it was Lyman who concentrated his attention on producing and distributing the seed on a large commercial scale. His early experience in furnishing seed for the farm school and the encouragement and influence of Hays afforded him an unusual opportunity. He leased land in Montana, Idaho, and the Dakotas, where the dry climate seemed to be most favorable to seed production. Grimm alfalfa failed to seed well in wet years or in humid surroundings. Lyman directed the farmers whose fields he had leased in the production of pure Grimm alfalfa seed. The growers were required to deliver all seed to him for inspection, and a pedigree was kept for each field planted. Advertisements in farm journals and pamphlets telling of the value of Grimm alfalfa and including a short history of its discovery gave publicity to "Lyman's Grimm Alfalfa Seed." It is not known to what extent Lyman's business grew, but in 1915, twenty-five thousand dollars worth of seed was sold, and at no time was his production great enough to meet the demand. The seed was always high in price, selling for as much as a dollar a pound.¹⁰

By 1920 Grimm alfalfa was being grown in widening circles. It had spread to many states of the Northwest where the winters brought sub-

⁹A.C. Army, "Alfalfa as a Farm Crop in Minnesota," and C.G. Selvig, "Pastures and Meadows for Northwestern Minnesota," in Minnesota Farmers' Institute, Annual, 1912, p. 167-170, 1918, p. 61-66; C. F. Bull, "Alfalfa in Minnesota," and "Nubs of News," in Breeder's Gazette, 52: 671, 57:618 (March 18, 1908, March 9, 1910); A.D. Wilson, "Why Alfalfa on Every Farm," H.M. Hamlin, "They 'Tried Alfalfa'--and They Failed," and A.D. Wilson, "Getting Started This Year with Alfalfa," in National Alfalfa Journal, February, 1919, p. 3, March 1920, p. 5, April, 1920, p. 5, 9-12; C. R. Hutcheson, "Notes from the Alfalfa Clubs," in Northwest Farmstead, 25: 465 (August 1, 1924); Minnesota State Board of Immigration, Central Minnesota 45 (St. Paul, 1915); "Failures in Alfalfa Growing," in Farm, Stock and Home 20:377 (September 1, 1904).

¹⁰(J.Y. Beaty), "Alfalfa Seed with a Real Pedigree," in National Alfalfa Journal, March, 1916, p. 5; "Lyman Tells of Saving Alfalfa Seed," in Northwest Farmstead, 25:399,404, (June 15, 1924); advertisement in Farm, Stock and Home, 25:207 (March 15, 1909); Lyman's Grimm Alfalfa.

zero weather and to the Canadian West, and it had been tried in the states to the southward. In the warm, humid regions, however, the results proved very unsatisfactory, so its growth in such places was not advised. The alfalfa acreage in Minnesota increased from 658 acres in 1900, to 2,288 in 1910, 45,419 in 1920, and 702,578 in 1930. The focal point up to 1924 was always Carver County, but so great was the expansion that by 1930 no less than eighteen counties had a larger acreage. During the ten years from 1910 to 1920, Grimm alfalfa was becoming a standard hay crop in Minnesota, endorsed by many growers. The best results appeared in the western part of the state and portions of the eastern half. The leading counties in seed production were Grant, Kittson, eastern Roseau, central Marshall, eastern Polk, Norman, Otter Tail, Wilkin, Becker, Crow Wing, Chippewa, Lac qui Parle, Todd, and Stevens. In southwestern Minnesota and the Red River Valley, excellent hay crops were obtained, but the fields produced seed only in dry seasons. 11

Farmers in North Dakota became interested in Grimm alfalfa after seeing the results at the North Dakota demonstration farms. Some began extensive production of seed and, as a result, the North Dakota Grimm Alfalfa Seed Producers' Association was incorporated in 1916. The objects were to register Grimm alfalfa fields to keep the variety pure, to assure purchasers that all the seed they bought was genuine North Dakota-grown Grimm, and to furnish this seed to buyers at prices consistent with the product. The bylaws provided for inspection and verification of fields to insure against fraud or possible error. The Grimm fields in North Dakota were registered by application, and growers stated under oath that genuine seed was the source from which their crops were grown. In 1917, its first year, the association handled seventeen thousand pounds of seed. 12

A similar organization in Minnesota, the Minnesota Grimm Alfalfa Growers Association, was formed at Morris in August, 1924. The businessmen of the town agreed to donate and build a warehouse to be used for storing the pooled seed of all members of the organization. Articles and bylaws were drawn up providing for the use of genuine seed and fair terms of production. In order to equalize freight costs, it was agreed to average the cartage, thus giving a farmer who lived two hundred miles from Morris the same advantage as one who shipped only ten miles. The Minnesota Crop Improvement Association also became actively interested in Grimm alfalfa, and required that seed for certification be traced back, under affidavit, to Carver County. 13

Although increasing attention was being given to the production of Grimm seed, the acreage was slow in reaching a commanding figure.

11 R. S. Dunham, "40 Years of Agronomy," in Red River Aggie, 12-15 (Crookston, 1936).

12 W. R. Porter, "N.D. Grimm Alfalfa Association," in Farmer, 36: 852 (May 11, 1918).

13 "Certifying Alfalfa Seed," and "Morris Donates Grimm Warehouse," in Northwest Farmstead, 25:359, 506 (May 15, August 15, 1924).

The Northwest Farmstead took a leading interest in expanding the acreage of alfalfa, recommending Grimm as the variety to be grown in Minnesota. After emphasizing alfalfa for a number of years, it started a most arduous campaign on August 1, 1923, and during the following year published some two hundred articles endorsing Grimm and revealing the value of alfalfa as a protein feed and a soil builder. The campaign slogan was "An Acre of Alfalfa for Every Cow in Minnesota." To teach the farmers how to grow alfalfa successfully, Charles R. Hutcheson, a specialist on the subject, was engaged to go to all parts of Minnesota to test the soil and explain to the farmers and businessmen "what to do and how to do it" in order to succeed with alfalfa. He came to be known as "Alfalfa Hutch," and as a result of his work many alfalfa clubs were formed to further its growth. An example of the interest taken is shown in a letter from Lynn Sheldon, county agent of Redwood County, to the Northwest Farmstead:¹⁴

Redwood County farmers have sown over 15,000 pounds of Grimm alfalfa this spring (1924) according to reports from various seed handling agencies. About one half of that amount was ordered through the county agent and orders were placed with the various seed distributing agencies handling good seed at right prices.

The production of a forage plant so hardy as Grimm alfalfa, with its permanence, enormous yields, high protein content, economy as a crop, and value as a soil builder and weed throttler, is almost without parallel in plant history. It is impossible to compute in dollars and cents what it has meant to the nation. Minnesota, therefore, owes a great deal to the diligent German pioneer who knew that he must have good feed for his livestock and, through perseverance and hard work, developed what is the outstanding forage crop in the Northwest today. Who should be honored for bringing Grimm alfalfa to the attention of the agricultural world and fostering its development is a question that cannot be answered easily. Much credit, however, should be given to Lyman, Hays, Boss, Brand, Waldron, Westgate, Hutcheson, and others for their interest in alfalfa work. The various alfalfa associations and the campaign of the Northwest Farmstead should not be overlooked.¹⁵

To pay homage and tribute to the German pioneer who developed Grimm alfalfa, a monument was unveiled and dedicated on June 10, 1924, on his old farm. Over four hundred people gathered for the occasion including many of Grimm's descendants. His granddaughter, Miss Clara Adelman of Minneapolis, drew back the American flag that covered the monument--a bronze tablet attached to a native boulder. The inscription

¹⁴ Northwest Farmstead's Alfalfa Campaign in Minnesota, "Review of Alfalfa Club Activities," and "With Alfalfa Clubs in Minnesota," in Northwest Farmstead, 25:294, 352, 403 (April 15, May 15, June 15, 1924); C.R. Hutcheson, "Grimm or Cossack--Why?" in Farm, Stock and Home, 41:174 (March 15, 1925).

¹⁵ "Alfalfa on Every Minnesota Farm," in Farm, Stock and Home, 41:174 (March 15, 1925).

tion reads: "Commemorating Wendelin Grimm, resident of Minnesota 1857-1891, who originated Grimm Alfalfa on this farm. Erected June 1924 by Grimm Alfalfa Growers Associations."

Speakers at the dedication services included Dean W. C. Coffey, of the college of agriculture of the University of Minnesota, who declared that he felt that Grimm's contribution to the livestock industry was as great as that of the breeders. George W. Kelley, editor of the Northwest Farmstead, gave his reaction to the occasion in the following editorial, and its text may well serve as a conclusion for the present discussion:

The world knows not its greatest benefactors. Frequently it raises to eminence the demagogue and the time server. Fame is often given to those responsible for its most disastrous calamities.

Sometimes, though, it is given to a few to recognize and pay tribute to a patient man or woman who in obscurity and perhaps in poverty has worked out great benefits to humanity.

Such an occasion was that . . . when eminent men from several states joined with hundreds of his former neighbors in dedicating a monument to the late Wendelin Grimm. . . .

Civilization advances. Such monuments indicate it. Perhaps some day our historians will tell more of the work of such men and glorify less the authors of death and devastation.¹⁶

EVERETT E. EDWARDS

United States Department of Agriculture,
Washington, D.C.

HORACE H. RUSSELL

Social Security Board, Washington, D.C.

¹⁶"Honor to Wendelin Grimm," in Farmer, 42:800, 857, 864 (June 7, 21, 1924); Collison, in Tribune, June 15, 1924; Northwest Farmstead, 25: 375, 419, 423, (June 1, July 1, 1924).

Külsheim

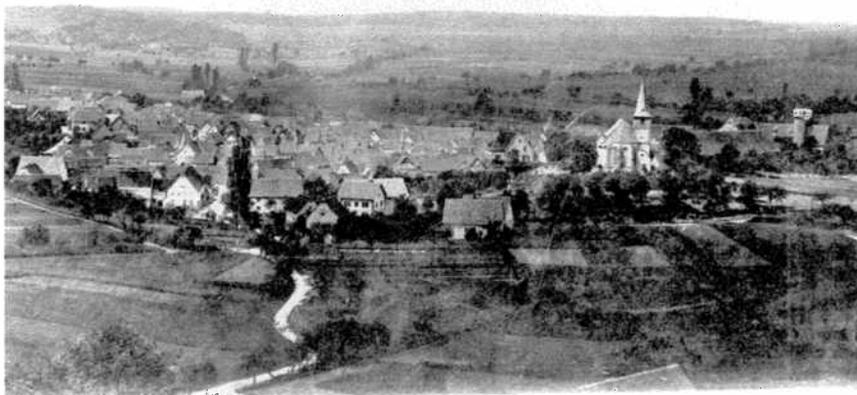
In the northeastern part of Baden, Germany, lies a little town called Külsheim. This place is of interest because it was the home of Wendelin Grimm before coming to Carver County. Külsheim lies at the foot of the hills overlooking the Tauber Valley through which the Tauber River flows. On one side of the river there is meadow land, on the other, fertile agricultural soil. On the upper part of the river there is a dam which provides water for four water-power wheels. The first and second of these furnish power for two small flour mills, the third is used for commercial purposes, while the fourth runs a saw mill.

The town has running spring water, and many water fountains are scattered throughout the hills. Dense forests provide lumber and kindling for the town. Many walnut and chestnut trees grow here which furnish nuts for oil and other useful products.

Külsheim is a very old town. It was established long before the birth of Christ, and had many encounters with the Roman Army. To protect it, a high stone wall was built around it, there were also a large guard house and a lookout tower for this purpose. Deep trenches surrounded the wall. These were full of spring water. The stone wall had three big gates. One of these can still be seen, though the rest of the wall has crumbled.

Although Külsheim is a comparatively large town, it has no railroad. However, there is a railroad about three miles away where the mail for the town comes in and from which the citizens receive freight and transportation.

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Külsheim

Külsheim, the town from which Wendelin Grimm immigrated in 1857.

HOW GRIMM ALFALFA CAME TO MINNESOTA

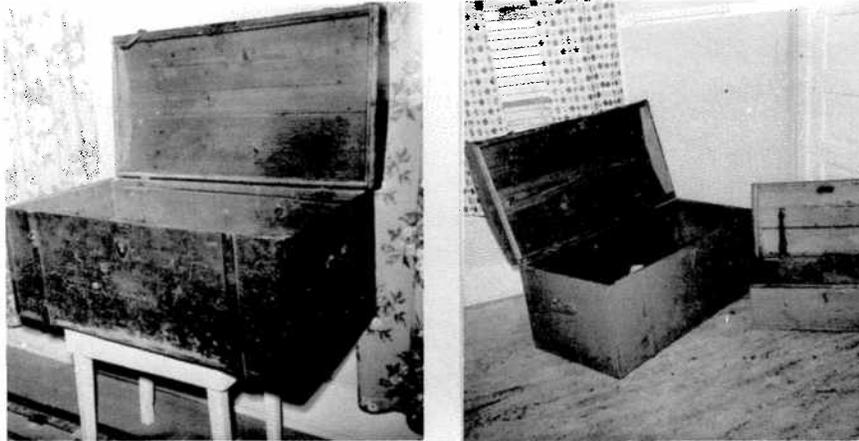
In a trunk, between blankets and quilts, as in a
treasure chest,
Lay hid a fifteen-pound bag of seed, the very best.
'Twas put there by a man named Wendelin Grimm,
A man of ambition, vigor, and vim.
His purpose was to sow it in fertile soil,
But this involved a deal of labor and of toil.

By stage coach, covered wagon, or however it went,
In transit many, many weeks were spent,
Until it came to Laketown Township in this state,
Where Grimm had bought himself some real estate.
Here, year after year, a spot was found
To raise this alfalfa in fertile ground.

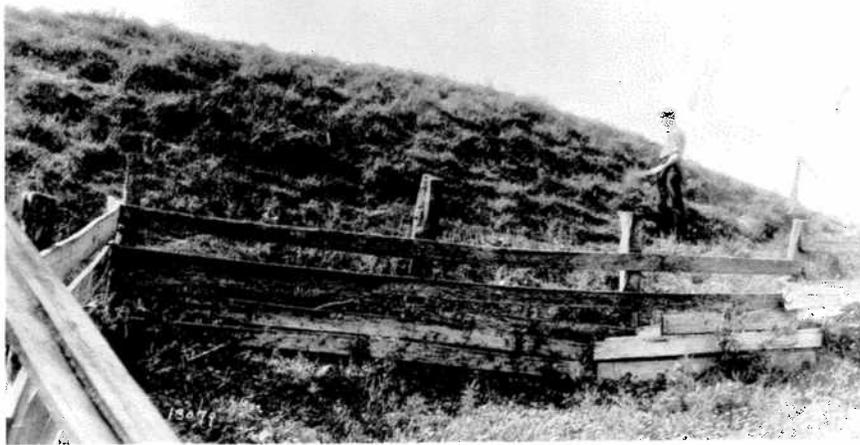
The winters then were very, very cold,
And icy winds a tragic story told.
But Grimm alfalfa bravely stood the test,
Always bringing forth yields the very best.

And so today the signboards in Carver County read:
"Carver County, The Home of Grimm Alfalfa Seed".
Yes, Grimm Alfalfa Hay has become renowned
It stands as something that cannot be 'downed".
For its very name is "Lucern, or Ewiger Klee"
To us Americans, better known as Grimm Alfalfa Hay.

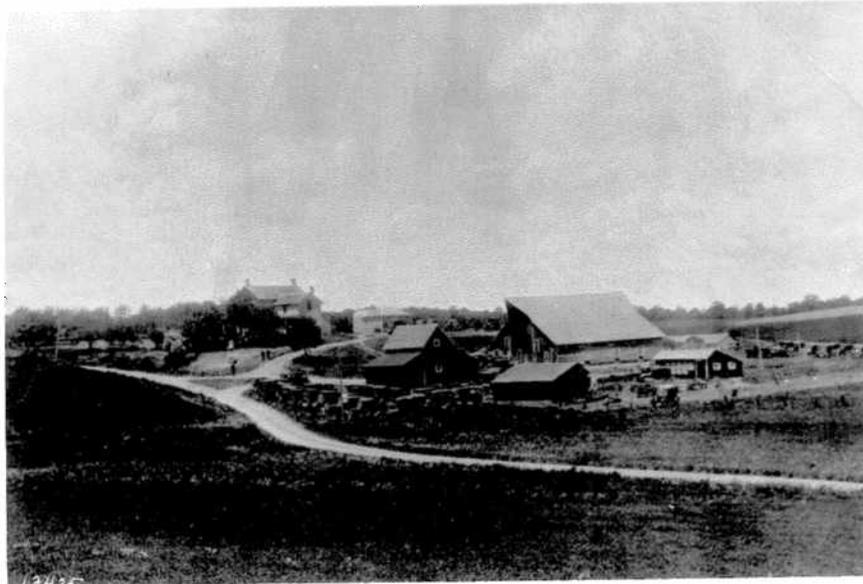
This seed was planted first in 1858,
The very year when Minnesota became a state.
All this came about because a man named Wendelin Grimm,
Had courage and faith, and persevering vim.



In one of these trunks lay hidden the precious treasure of a small bag of "Ewiger Klee" seed, today known as Grimm alfalfa, the hardy forage plant superior to any other kind.



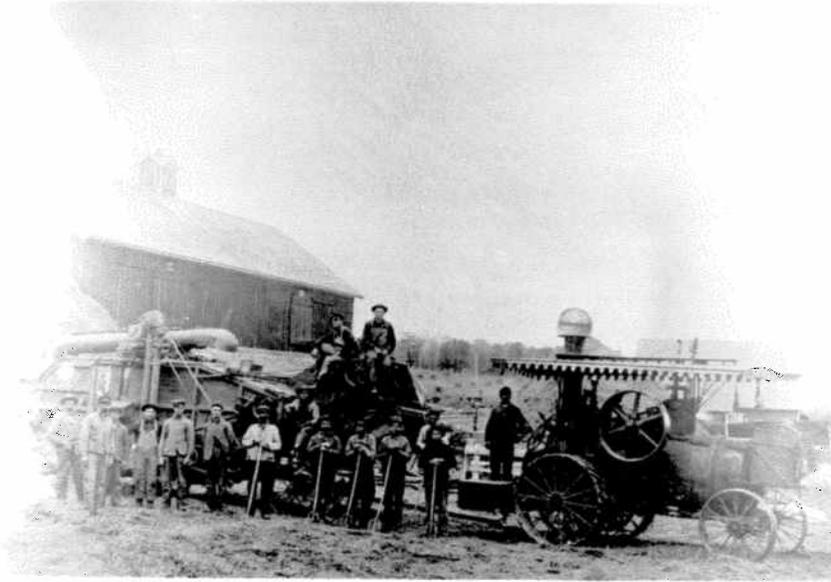
A picture of the stand of Grimm alfalfa on the day of dedication, sixty years after the original planting.



Farm to which Wendelin Grimm migrated in 1857. The original log buildings of house, barn, and granary were replaced by him about the year 1875.



Horsepower-threshing machine used on the Grimm farm during the years of 1865 - 1885.



This picture shows the man-power necessary to complete the work done in threshing in 1909. It was taken on the original Grimm farm, now owned by Clarence Kelzer, great-grandson of Wendelin Grimm.

Reading from left to right are the following: Anton Schmieg, grain-carrier, Hubert Kelzer, straw-pile maker; Clarence Pearson, Frank Grimm, Frank Kelzer, George Kelzer, grain-carriers; Jacob Gardener, Nick Schutrup, Harry Ehrmantraut, Tom Klingelhutz, Joe Willmann, Leonard Van Sloun, bundle-pitchers; Joe Notermann, engineer. Seated on top of machine, Matt Schneider, blower-tender; Theodore Kramer, bagger-man; Matt Van Sloun, grain-separator; Frank Dessen (not shown on picture) water-tender.



Picture of the Grimm grandchildren present at the dedication of the monument on June 10, 1924. Seated left to right: Annie Grimm Courteau, Mary Kelzer Wellens, Frances Grimm Williams. Standing: Mary Grimm Adelmann, Ottilia Grimm Volkenant. Back Row: Leo Grimm, Frank Grimm, George Kelzer, Frank Kelzer, Raymond Kelzer, and Edward Glatzel.

