

In the land of South Beef River,
Many, many years ago -
Fifteen families and one bachelor
Gathered where the waters flow.

Where the deer play in the meadow
And the robin sings her song -
Where the birds chirp in the tree tops
And the sun shines all day long.

Over by the lofty pine trees,
Right beside the tall white birch,
Together all the folks decided -
A perfect place to build a church!

They all agreed it would take planning.
Then John Larson began to speak,
We'll all meet to make our plans
At my home in Beaver Creek.

My wife, Inga, will make us lunch,
You know, she's always said,
"Johnny, you just bring them here,
I'll see they all get fed!"

They all went home with plans to come,
On Friday of that week,
To make some plans and then to eat,
At Johnny's house in Beaver Creek!

Friday morning soon arrived,
With expectations high -
The men were finishing their chores,
As the sun rose in the sky.

The horse and buggies traveled long,
Over dusty road and crevice,
Some came from Telemarken Road,
And others came from Levis.

Fredrick Olson came and brought
His wife and daughter, Sally.
I think they had a little farm
Somewhere in Golden Valley.

Ole Onstad, bachelor,
Stayed home to read a book-
He'd like to go but he had heard
That Inga couldn't cook!

They all arrived at Johnny's house,
And all set for the meeting,
Except for Ole Onstad,
Who was deep within his reading.

Amund Hanson stood to speak,
Amidst the noisy clammer.
He was a carpenter by trade,
Back home in Lillehammer.

I'll build for us a little church,
Complete with bell and steeple,
If you'll pay me five hundred bucks,
Said Amund to the people.

They cheered and clapped, and then
declared,
That Amund was the winner.
Just then Inga shouted out,
"Come now then, let's have dinner."

The women had no say at all,
In this debate and chatter,
They sat in Inga's kitchen where
They ate and just got fatter!

The sun was setting in the west,
Their work they thought was done.
The buggies went their separate ways,
Beneath the setting sun.

Amund planned to start his task,
With so much on his plate -
He'd have to work especially hard,
To be done by Eighteen Seventy-Eight!

He worked all day into the night,
He worked while folks lay sleeping,
He worked through wind and rain and hail,
This promise, he'd be keeping!

Often men would help him out,
Sometimes, there'd be a bunch,
And often in mid-afternoon
The ladies would bring lunch.

Then one quiet evening,
Their hearts were filled with pride,
When they heard the church bells ringing,
Throughout the countryside.

Their church was finally finished,
As tears ran down each face,
The song the bells were playing
Seemed to be "Amazing Grace"!

The church was beautiful indeed,
But now, I must confess,
That though the church was beautiful,
Poor Amund was a mess!

Soon the winter winds would blow
And Christmas time was near-
The little church that Amund built
Brought comfort, warmth, and cheer.

The oil lamps in each window
Gave off a flickering light.
You could hear a choir singing
Some strains of "Silent Night"!

Over by the lofty pine trees,
Right beside the tall white birch,
Where their hopes and dreams lay crumbled,
Lord, help us build another church!

Then one day in mid-July,
Of Eighteen Eighty-Three
The wind came up, the sky got dark,
And one could hardly see.

And he did -
Second church dedicated June 25, 1885.

The one thing that they saw that day,
That broke each person's heart,
A cyclone came and in its rage,
Had blown their church apart!

The people gathered and mourned their
church,
And prayed that they could cope -
They all held hands and in their grief
Sang the hymn "Whispering Hope".

In the land of South Beef River,
Many, many years ago -
Several sad, disheartened people
Gathered where the waters flow.