

# Norwegian Tracks

Norwegian American Genealogical  
Center & Naeseth Library



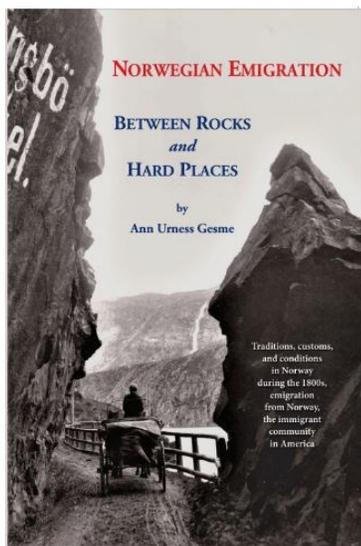
Fall 2021  
Volume 44, Number 2

## Webinar: *Between Rocks and Hard Places*

NAGC is excited to present an opportunity to “meet” author and historian, Ann Urness Gesme, as she and her family present the background on her recently updated book, *Norwegian Emigration: Between Rocks and Hard Places* on November 20.

75 years of research are represented in this incredible book about customs and conditions in the lives of rural Norwegians as they began to consider emigration in the 1800's. This book includes the original text of *Between Rocks and Hard Places* plus additional content and over 100 historic photos and illustrations that depict daily life on the farm and in the home, as well as the realities faced by those who emigrated to America.

“I read the first edition of Mrs. Gesme’s book several years ago and my first thought was how accessible she made the material for the reader,” states NAGC Executive Director Dana Kelly. “I approached the Gesme family about the possibility of connecting Mrs. Gesme with our members to reintroduce them to her book. We agreed that Zoom would be the best way for her to ‘meet’ everyone face-to-face and facilitate the greatest opportunity for our members to interact with her in real time.”



Several members of the Gesme family will gather via Zoom and present an overview of the book, how Mrs. Gesme conducted her research, and what inspired her to update the original book. The presentation will be followed by a real-time question and answer period with the author.

Pre-registration for this free event is required. Visit [nagcnl.org/store](http://nagcnl.org/store) and select the “November 20 Free Zoom Meeting.” A link will be emailed to all registered participants on November 18.

*Norwegian Emigration: Between Rocks and Hard Places* is available from the NAGC website, in the Naeseth Library, or at the annual Friends Dinner on October 17.

*Save the Date for  
our Madison Area  
Friends Event:  
October 17—See  
page 7!*

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NORWEGIAN AMERICAN  
Genealogical Center & Naeseth Library

## TUSEN TAKK FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dear NAGC members,

What will your legacy be?

That's not a rhetorical question. It's something we may find ourselves asking from time to time. One way to shape your legacy is to invest in the future of the most important genealogical research center in the Norwegian-American community: NAGC.

Our members have invested a great deal in NAGC over the past two years. We have extensively renovated the Naeseth Library. We are currently making dramatic updates to our website design. We have enhanced our technology assets to make virtual and online outreach opportunities available to our members across the country. We hired new, energetic staff to lead NAGC into the future.

The Board of Directors invites you to consider your role in securing the foundation of NAGC. There are many ways an investment in NAGC's future can be your legacy.

The NAGC Legacy Society recognizes and honors those who have made a commitment to the future of NAGC by including our organization in their estate plans. You can become a member of the Legacy Society by a variety of means including

- making a gift to NAGC in your will or trust;
- naming NAGC as a beneficiary of a retirement plan or insurance policy;



Above, 2021 NAGC Board Officers L to R: Gary Smithback (Vice Chair), John Thompson (Chair), Paul Berge (Treasurer), Ken Larson (Secretary)

- creating a trust for NAGC

Careful estate planning can ensure your contribution to NAGC's future and can be your legacy. For more information about planned giving and the Legacy Society, contact Dana Kelly at 608-255-2224 or danakelly@nagcnl.org.

So what will your legacy be?

*John W. Thompson*

Board Chairman

### *Norwegian Tracks*

Published two times per year by Norwegian American Genealogical Center & Naeseth Library (NAGC &NL)

415 W. Main Street  
Madison, WI 53703-3116  
Sent to members of NAGC & NL

The purpose of the publication is to assist and encourage genealogists with Norwegian and Norwegian-American genealogical questions.

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Letters concerning genealogical inquiries for *Norwegian Tracks* should be sent to Norwegian American Genealogical Center & Naeseth Library (NAGC & NL) 415 W. Main Street, Madison, WI 53703-3116

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other rights for subsequent publication back to the author or artists.

The Norwegian American Genealogical Center & Naeseth Library is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) educational nonprofit research center with national and international scope. The Center collects, preserves, shares, and interprets resources for the study of Norwegian heritage.

To carry out this mission, the Center provides:

- The Naeseth Library, located in Madison, where resources devoted to Norwegian and Norwegian-American genealogy are collected, preserved, shared and interpreted;
- Assistance, interpretation, education, and research by trained staff to members, patrons, and correspondents;
- Continuing education and outreach for genealogists and the public worldwide through cooperative information exchanges, publications, tours, displays, seminars, and merchandise sales.

NAGC & NL is open to the public Monday-Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and the second Saturday of each month from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Please call for an appointment to ensure staff availability and record accessibility at 608-255-2224 or email at [genealogy@nagcnl.org](mailto:genealogy@nagcnl.org).

# 2021 Fall Genealogy Classes Announced

Because of the popularity of the online classes offered during the fall and winter of 2020-2021, online classes will continue to be a part of the NAGC learning opportunities. For those who choose to participate in the online classes, a link and all class materials will be emailed in advance. The class will still be interactive so there will be opportunity for questions and discussion. “This won’t just be a recording. The classes will be live and offer opportunities for interaction with us,” Dana Kelly explained. “We have really enjoyed being able to expand our reach outside of our Madison-area members.”

Online class content will vary slightly from the in-person counterparts. Since the in-person sessions will take place at the Naeseth Library, there will be opportunity for students to research using the NAGC collection with the aid of staff. The online sessions will have additional content related to the course topic.

The in-person and online classes will be led by Dana Kelly and Chris Klauer.

## GENEALOGY BASICS

September 23, 2021– 10:00 a.m., \$40 (online)

This class is designed for those who are just dipping their toes into genealogy research. Class topics will include genealogy best practices, using websites such as Fami-

lySearch.org and Ancestry.com, in addition to resources available from historical societies and genealogical societies. This class is not specific to those with Norwegian heritage, and we welcome NAGC members and non-members.

## INTRODUCTION TO NORWEGIAN GENEALOGY

October 20, 2021–10:00 a.m., \$100 member/\$150 non-member (online)

This class is for those who are familiar with genealogy basics but haven’t dug into Norwegian genealogical research yet. The class will focus on Norwegian naming traditions, history and geography and strategies for locating where in Norway your ancestors originated. This class also includes a copy of our “Research Guide for Norwegian Genealogy: For Beginning and Experienced Genealogists.”

## INTERMEDIATE NORWEGIAN GENEALOGY

October 30, 2021– 9:00 a.m., \$100 member/\$150 non-member (in person)

This class expands on the introductory class by exploring using bygdebøker for research, introducing the Norwegian Digital Archives Website, and strategies for reading old handwriting. Lunch is included.

## EXPLORING THE NORWEGIAN DIGITAL ARCHIVES

November 6, 2021– 9:30 a.m., \$80 member/\$130 non-member (online); \$90 member/\$140 non-member (in person)

This class explores the wide variety of records and resources available in the Norwegian Digital Archives and how to find them. In person participants are encouraged to bring a laptop. Lunch is included for in person attendees.



*Above: Beginning genealogy class, 2018*

*Below: Beginning genealogy class, 2021*



### TO REGISTER:

[www.nagcnl.org](http://www.nagcnl.org)

608-255-2224

[genealogy@nagcnl.org](mailto:genealogy@nagcnl.org)

# NAGC Welcomes New Personnel

NAGC welcomes to its team a new part-time translator and a new member of the Board of Directors.

Arthur Ness has joined NAGC as a translator. He is a UW-Madison graduate with a degree in Medical Microbiology and Immunology. He recently retired from the State of Wisconsin's Food Safety Division as a Technical Specialist. He has over fifty years of genealogy experience. He remains in close contact with his family in Norway and has traveled there many times since his first visit in 1973. He has one daughter, a son-in-law, and three grandchildren.



*Arthur Ness*

Craig Gjerde was born in Minot, North Dakota, to parents with Norwegian backgrounds. He has explored his roots for years by recording family history, visiting Norway, searching databases, and exploring his R1a Y-DNA. He has elementary language skills in genealogical Norwegian and Danish.



*Craig Gjerde*

Craig is an emeritus professor of Family and Community Medicine at UW where he worked as a PhD in Educational Psychology with programs to enhance the teaching skills of faculty. He has also been active in the Ygdrasil Society, Bethel Lutheran Church, and Vesterheim.

In his earlier life, Craig was a Peace Corps volunteer as a math and science teacher in Malawi, where he learned a Bantu language. Craig and his wife, Cristel, have explored and taught several places in the world.

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## *Supporting NAGC is Easier than Ever*

NAGC is now a Thrivent Choice and an AmazonSmile organization, which means supporting NAGC has never been easier for its members.

Thrivent has long offered its members the opportunity to designate a portion of the company's earnings to the non-profit organization of the members' choice. Eligible Thrivent members can recommend where Thrivent distributes a portion of its charitable funding by directing Choice Dollars®. Visit <https://www.thrivent.com/making-a-difference/living-generously/thrivent-choice/> for more information.

AmazonSmile offers a similar opportunity. A portion of your purchase from Amazon.com can be directed to NAGC. For more information about enrolling in AmazonSmile visit [www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com).

NAGC is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization and all donations are tax deductible.



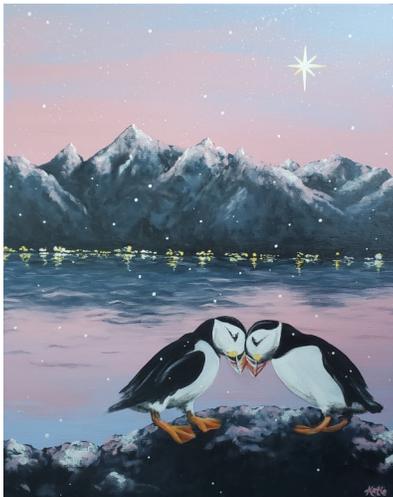
**THRIVENT**  
**FINANCIAL®**

**amazon**smile

**You shop. Amazon gives.**

## HOLIDAY MERCHANDISE AVAILABLE SOON

This whimsical wooden nisse is hand carved and hand painted by Madison artist Lee Bjerke. The ornament is 2.75" tall, carved and painted on both sides. The ornaments are available through the NAGC website or at the Naeseth Library.



Madison artist, Katie Maurer, is the designer of the 2021 Christmas card. The Cards will be available online and at the Naeseth Library October 18.

Both the ornament and cards will be available at the Friends Dinner on October 17.

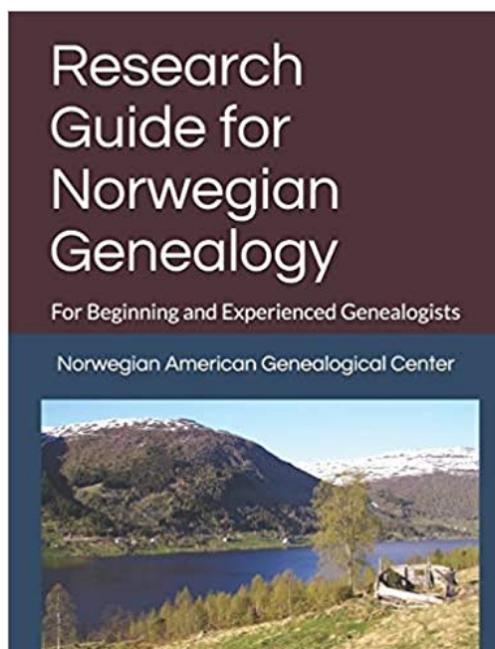
# Updated Research Guide Available

NAGC is excited to announce that the long-awaited *Research Guide for Norwegian Genealogy: For Beginning and Experienced Genealogists* is now available.

The updated guide has many revisions that make it even more indispensable for those researching their Norwegian roots. Information about new websites, DNA testing, and the new municipal divisions in Norway are all included.

Most notably, the guide has two extensive additions: a step by step guide to using the Norwegian Digital Archives website ([www.digitalarkivet.no](http://www.digitalarkivet.no)) and an index of Norwegian parishes.

NAGC members receive a 20% discount when purchasing the guide directly from NAGC's e-store or in person at the Naeseth Library. The guide is also available at full price from Amazon.com.



## COVID-19 VISITOR POLICY

NAGC does not require staff and visitors to wear a mask when visiting the Naeseth Library unless required by local ordinances. However, if any visitor would like our staff to wear a mask, we are happy to do so at your request.

Please be advised that local mask requirements may change with very little notice. NAGC's mask policy will always be in compliance with local, state, and federal requirements. Please call us if you have questions about wearing a mask prior to your visit.

- Appointments are required if you would like to work with a researcher. You can schedule an appointment by calling NAGC at (608) 255-2224 or sending an email to [genealogy@nagcnl.org](mailto:genealogy@nagcnl.org)
- Hand sanitizer is available right inside our entrance.
- If you are feeling ill, have a cough, or are running a fever, please reschedule your visit for when you are feeling well.
- If you are uncomfortable visiting the library, you are welcome to submit research and translation requests to us through our website, email, mail, or telephone.
- Curbside pick up is available for members who would like to buy a map, books, greeting cards, and other merchandise.

Thank you for your cooperation. We are excited to welcome visitors again to our library and are looking forward to helping you with your research.

## NAGC SERVICES:

- \* **Library Resources:** The Naeseth Library is open daily for use by members and non-members.
- \* **Research:** The NAGC staff conducts genealogical research upon request using our collection and resources from other sources including libraries, state repositories, and historical societies.
- \* **Research Assistance:** We provide assistance to patrons visiting the library.
- \* **Translation:** We offer translation of documents including letters and book excerpts from Norwegian dialects and Dano-Norwegian to English.
- \* **DNA Results:** We offer consultation and assistance with interpreting and using your DNA results for genealogy.
- \* **Classes:** We offer family history classes at the Naeseth Library Ostby Education Center and online (see next page)
- \* **Workshops:** We customize workshops for family reunions, Sons of Norway Lodges, Lags and other groups.

## NAGC FEE SCHEDULE:

### Members:

Daily Use	No Charge
Researcher	\$50/hour
Translator	\$50/hour
DNA Consultation	\$50/hour
Classes	see next page

### Non-Members:

Daily Use	\$15/day
Researcher	\$100/hour
Translator	\$100/hour
DNA Consultation	\$100/hour
Classes	see next page

Contact us to discuss charges for your custom workshop.

## Changes to NAGC Hours

In order to serve its members better, NAGC will be open from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and the second Saturday of each month from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. beginning October 1, 2021.

Appointments are required in order to ensure appropriate distancing can be maintained in the Naeseth Library. Anyone interested in scheduling an appointment can reach staff by calling 608-255-2224 during normal business hours or emailing [genealogy@nagcnl.org](mailto:genealogy@nagcnl.org).

## NAGC Welcomes UW iSchool Students

If you have paid a visit to the Naeseth Library this summer, you may have seen some unfamiliar faces. NAGC has had the pleasure of hosting two students from the University of Wisconsin-Madison Library and Information Studies graduate program.

Virginia Papke and Meranda Dooley both spent several hours per week for most of the summer working closely with NAGC staff to learn about managing a library collection. Some of the duties they assumed during their time here included cataloging, repairing books, preparing donor correspondence, and researching availability of books to fill in gaps in the bygdebok collection.

### Virginia Papke

Originally from the Midwestern United States, Virginia is pursuing her Master's Degree from the University of Wisconsin – Madison. She is completing her practicum at the NAGCNL. After graduating, Virginia hopes to work at an academic library or at an organization that would allow her to combine her experience in both libraries and nonprofits. Thus far, the activities Virginia has enjoyed most at the NAGCNL are learning more about the library's history, the history of Norway, and organizing recently donated items. When not working on school projects, she can be found walking, reading, and collecting postcards from around the world. Her favorite animals are cats and penguins.



### Meranda Dooley

Originally from Liberty, Missouri, Meranda is a recent graduate from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, having earned a Masters of Library and Information Science degree. In 2018, she graduated from Truman State University in Kirksville, Missouri, with a Bachelor of Music in Clarinet Performance degree. Meranda works as the Operations Associate at Madison Ballet and hopes to have long career in performing arts administration. In her spare time, she enjoys playing video games and taking care of her two cats, Simon & River.





NORWEGIAN AMERICAN  
Genealogical Center & Naeseth Library



JOIN THE MADISON-AREA FRIENDS OF NAGC FOR A

# Scandinavian Buffet

FEATURING A PERFORMANCE BY

# Dynamikk String Quartet

Sunday, October 17, 2021  
5:00 p.m. doors open  
Dinner served at 6:00 p.m.

Blackhawk Country Club  
3606 Blackhawk Drive  
Madison, WI 53705

Tickets: \$75.00 (\$25.00 tax deductible)

Table of 10: \$700.00 (\$200.00 tax deductible)

Select one:

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I would like to attend! Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ tickets for my party.

\_\_\_\_\_ Please reserve a table of 10 for my party.

Name(s) as they should appear on name tags:

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See reverse for payment information.



This festive gathering allows NAGC & NL to bring together its members throughout the region for a fun-filled evening. The social gathering and silent auction preview will provide time to visit with friends, the NAGC Board of Directors, staff, and volunteers.

Among other Scandinavian treats, smoked salmon, Swedish meatballs, baked cod, and pickled herring will be included in the buffet. **Tickets will not be sent; a response list will be held at the door.**



### LIVE AUCTION ITEMS

#### 1) Original Artwork by Katie Maurer

The artwork used to create NAGC's 2021 Christmas card will be available for auction.

#### 2) Award-winning Weaving

Weaver Carol Culbertson's beautiful, tri-color *krogbragd* table runner, won a red ribbon at Vesterheim's 2019 National Folk Art Exhibition.

**Donated by the artist.**

### NEW THIS YEAR: ONLINE AUCTION

There are additional items available to our members through our online auction. The items will be available to preview at the dinner, but must be purchased through the online auction. The auction will end October 22 at 3:00 p.m.

<https://www.biddingowl.com/NorwegianAmericanGenealog>

### BUNADS AND FESTIVE DRESS INVITED!

\_\_\_\_ Enclosed is my/our check payable to NAGC & NL in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ I am / We are unable to attend, but enclose a tax-deductible contribution to NAGC \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ I / We wish to make payment with the following card:

\_\_\_\_ American Express

\_\_\_\_ Discover

\_\_\_\_ MasterCard

\_\_\_\_ Visa

Credit card number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number (*required for credit card payment*) \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return with payment to:  
Norwegian American Genealogical Society  
415 West Main Street, Madison, WI 53703-3116  
**by September 30th.**

# How Tracing Our Genealogy Can Deepen Our Spiritual Lives

## LORI ERICKSON EMBARKS ON QUEST TO FIND HER SPIRITUAL ANCESTORS

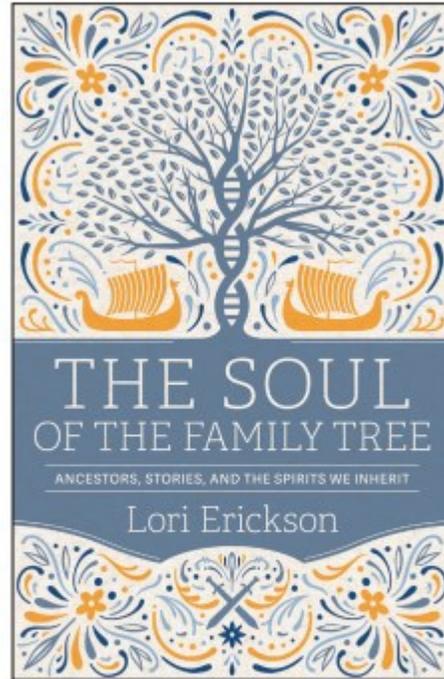
Courtesy of Lori Erickson and Westminster John Knox Press

Early one morning, travel writer Lori Erickson was collecting her spit. Like many Americans drawn to their pasts and genealogy, Erickson had decided to test her DNA to discover her heritage through a simple home-collected sample. This step soon launched her journey to walk the lands of her ancestors, from the stunning fjords of Norway and the bleak coast of Newfoundland to the small Norwegian-American Iowa town where she grew up and the farm of her great-great grandfather.

Erickson had her DNA results, but as a writer most interested in spiritual journeys, she wanted to dig deeper. What could she learn from her forbearers' spirituality? She realized that her story suddenly became much more than a quest to see how far back she could trace her ancestors. Instead, she began to see herself—and each of us—as parts of a long line of souls, adding our individual sparks to the flame of a much greater spirit.

Erickson (author of *Near the Exit* and *Holy Rover*) takes us along with her in her new book, *The Soul of the Family Tree: Ancestors, Spirits, and the Stories We Inherit*, as she seeks to show us how the spirits of our ancestors can guide us today. What can spiritual guides like Gudrid the Far Traveler, Leif Eriksson's sister-in-law, or the battle-hardened Viking-Saint Olaf teach her? And what would it be like to walk in the shoes of her hardscrabble immigrant ancestors, Hans and Sila, who settled in Decorah, Iowa, or to spend time with modern-day Norse pagans? The spiritual richness of Erickson's family tree taught her not only about her ancestors, but also just as much about herself.

*The Soul of the Family Tree* will appeal to readers of Erickson's previous books specializing in spiritual journeys, anyone interested in genealogy and Norse or Viking culture and history, and to those who have enjoyed similar books like *The Lost Family Tree* by Libby Copeland and *The Nordic Theory of Everything* by Anu Partanen. However, Erickson's exploration of the spirituality of our family trees sets this book apart from similar ventures. "Genealogy is one of America's top hobbies, but amateur researchers may never think to consider the spiritual dimensions of their explorations," says Jessica Miller Kelley, senior acquisitions editor at Westminster John Knox Press. "Erickson prompts readers to look not just backward but inward to consider the legacies left and journeys taken by our ancestors and to identify foremothers and forefathers who can inspire us today, whether we're biologically related or not."



*The Soul of the Family Tree* is available from many retailers for \$18. NAGC enjoyed working with Lori on her genealogy as she researched for her book.

# In Memoriam



NAGC is saddened to learn of the passing of Louise Naeseth Hubbard, the sister of Gerhard Naeseth. Louise Hubbard died peacefully on June 29, 2021, in the Princeton Care Center in Princeton, New Jersey, after a joy-filled life of 105 years. Louise was a keen environmentalist, a loving mentor to

nieces and nephews, and a delight to family and friends.

Louise was born in Valley City, North Dakota, where her father was pastor at Our Savior's Lutheran Church. In 1919 her father was called to Spring Prairie Lutheran Church, a rural parish near DeForest, Wisconsin; the family lived there until 1954. Toward the end of her life, Louise was comforted by memories of her childhood home at the Spring Prairie parsonage. She remembered her mother, Emma Louise Brandt Naeseth, walking barefoot among the wildflowers before the responsibilities of the day began, and she treasured thoughtful conversations with her father, Carelius Gunnarson Naeseth.

Louise was proud of her Norwegian-American heritage. Her mother's ancestors were pioneer pastors in America and on the Naeseth side she was a third cousin of the Queen of Norway, the former Sonja Haraldsen. Louise was a loyal alumna of the Luther class of 1939. She loved her time at Luther; before women were formally accepted as students, she studied on campus under the auspices of the Decorah College for Women. After completing her education at Miss Wood's School, an innovative elementary teachers' training college in Minneapolis, she taught kindergarten in Wisconsin.

Louise's love of nature was apparent from an early age. Louise fell in love with a young graduate student at Trees for Tomorrow, a summer camp for teachers in Eagle River, Wisconsin. Fred Hubbard and Louise were married for 57 years until his death in 2008. When Fred retired, they focused on environmental issues in Hastings-on-Hudson, New York, enlisting volunteers to help create a nature trail along the Hudson River. Louise modeled good conservation habits by walking everywhere, composting and growing vegetables on her terrace, and even by carefully picking the plastic bags out of the recycling bins at her apartment complex when she was over 90.

Louise chose not to have a memorial service. She is missed by nieces and nephews from both her family and Fred's, as well as many friends and admirers in the Midwest and in New York,

where she lived from 1973 to 2019. In memory of Louise, contributions to your local library or to conservation efforts would be welcome. If she were with you now, Louise would be reminding you to look up at the birds, tell stories to children, and make sure to keep those plastic bags out of the recycling bins.



Owen D. Bekkum, long-time supporter of NAGC, passed away July 16, 2021, at Attic Angels Health Care Center. Owen was born in Westby, WI, on March 2, 1924, to Alfred and Huldah (Storbakken) Bekkum. He was blessed with a close-knit family and benefited from a large extended family, most of whom lived on farms near Westby. He and his sister, Helen, spent many

happy summer days on the Storbakken farm in Coon Valley with their grandparents.

Owen graduated from Westby High School in 1942 and started college, but was drafted into the U.S. Army during World War II. He served from 1943-1946, and was a member of the "Ole Battalion," which consisted of Norwegian Americans who could ski and speak Norwegian.

He met his first wife, Dorothy, who was already a successful business woman, while he was a college student working a part-time job. They were happily married for 50 years until her death in 2000. Owen married his second wife, Naomi Flugstad, a music teacher in Madison, in 2001. They both spoke Norwegian and had many interests in common pertaining to their Norwegian heritage. They were married for 16 years until her death in 2018.

Owen was extremely generous throughout his life, giving thousands to scholarship funds, churches, charities, and family. He helped finance the Bekkum Memorial Library and Norskedalen in the Westby area. He also gave generously to the Vesterheim Norwegian Museum in Decorah, IA, and the Norwegian American Genealogical Center & Naeseth Library of Madison.

Owen lived a full life over his 97 years and served as an inspiration to many. He will be greatly missed by friends and relatives, including one sister, Annette Shaw of Westby, and numerous cousins, nieces, nephews, and their spouses.

## THINKING OUTSIDE THE (BYGDE) BOX



By Sigrid Kolstø  
Hansen

As always in this column, I want to shine light on resources in the Naeseth Library that are less on peoples' minds compared to the well-known and valuable "bygdebooks," com-

monly known as "farm books."

In this edition of THINKING OUTSIDE THE (BYGDE) BOX, I am making a twist to the usual format where I review a book that is not a "bygdebook." This time, I will show how an interest in one specific geographic area in Norway can lead you to several different collections within our library. Knowing how important geography is in Norwegian genealogy, I figured that this kind of library search could serve as a useful example. By not limiting yourself to "bygdebooks," you may be surprised to find that we also have other types of resources covering your area that may be valuable to you.

As an example, I am asking you to pretend you have ancestors from Vik in Sogn (former Sogn og Fjordane county), Norway.

Let's say you have already done some research on your family background, and that is how you know that your family roots can be traced back to this little parish on the shore of the Sognefjorden in the traditional district of Sogn. However, you still have more work to do on your family tree, and you would like to learn more about the circumstances of the emigration from this area as well as about the village of Vik. You may also be curious to see if you can find any information about other families from the area that you may even be related to.

Whether you do a search in our library catalog yourself or you come in to the center and get help from the NAGC staff, you will want to do your search using the name "Vik" and probably also the greater area of "Sogn" or even the former county name "Sogn og Fjordane." (The purpose of the present article is not to teach how to effectively do a literature search, and I will, therefore, not go in detail about this process.)

In short, I was able to identify about 30 books and documents (including the "bygdebooks") from six different collections in our library.

Since this is a THINKING OUTSIDE THE (BYGDE) BOX column, I will not spend much time on the "bygdebooks" from my hit list. I will just mention that there are two different series of "bygdebooks" from Vik; one was published between 1951 and 1958 while the other was published between 2003 and 2006. As always when we have one older and one newer set of "bygdebooks" from an area, it is worth looking at both sets. This is because "bygdebooks" published during different time periods sometimes provide slightly different information. In the case of Vik, there are about 50 years between the publishing of the two series, which means that there is probably some updated information in the newer set. On the flip side, information from the old set may have been left out in the newer publication.

### **Collection: Civil/Church records, lists – Norway**

Resources in this collection are generally used for direct genealogical research purposes. As one can tell from the name, the content of these materials are presented in the form of lists. I found two items in this collection that fit the bill for my quest related to Vik.

The first is a 38-page document with births and deaths of Vik migrants to the United States. Particularly interesting and potentially useful information included here is information about the parish and/or township where they died in America.

The second item from this collection is a 180-page index of the 1701 census from Sogn, Sunnfjord and Nordfjord. (The 1701 census was taken for military purposes. Males living in rural districts who were over the age of one year are listed. Information included is the farm name, name and age of the owner, names and ages of sons and servants. Included is also the residence of all unmarried males living away from home when the census was taken.) This index is by first name. It is transcribed and easy to read.

### **Collection: Emigration History**

A topic that I personally find particularly interesting has to do with the general Norway to America emigration history. I am fascinated with the patterns of emigration and the societal and personal reasons why people left Norway. Maybe more than anything, I cannot get enough of the individuals' and families' stories and emigration experiences. To my delight, I found altogether six items in this collection that included Vik.

*(Continued on page 12)*

## THINKING OUTSIDE THE (BYGDE) BOX (CONT.)

Among these are two volumes (volume 29 and 32) of a series called Norwegian American Studies, published by The Norwegian-American Historical Association. In volume 29, published in 1983, I found an article by Rasmus Sunde who is a Norwegian historian and author. The article is about emigration from Sogn in general and Vik in particular. He offers his own view on why Vik had such high numbers of emigrants relative to their population, and he also attempts to explain why the different regions in Sogn were unequally represented in the emigrant statistics. Interestingly, vol. 32 in the same book series also has an article about emigration from Sogn. However, the author here, Aage Engesæter, offers counterarguments to Sunde's viewpoints on which factor(s) caused Vik people to leave for America. The way Engesæter builds his essay, he systematically goes through Sunde's argumentation. He offers statistics and facts to show why he believes Sunde came to the wrong conclusions concerning reasons for the high emigration rate from Vik and Sogn. Engesæter keeps me, as a reader, in suspense as I am waiting for what Engesæter believes is the real explanation(s) for the emigration patterns and numbers from Vik and Sogn. I will not be giving out any spoilers here – you may want to read for yourself!

The above-mentioned article that Sunde wrote for Norwegian American Studies (vol.29) was based on his thesis: "Ei undersøking av utvandringa til Amerika frå Vik i Sogn 1839-1915" (Translation: A Study of the emigration to America from Vik in Sogn 1839-1915) from 1974. In 1989 he published a book in Norwegian called *Ein stad skal ein vera: Utvandringa frå Vik i Sogn* (Translation: *Emigration from Vik in Sogn*.) This book can also be found in this collection in the Naeseth Library. The first part of the book generally covers the same topics that he wrote about in his article and in his thesis. Sunde has included a summary in English for this first part of the book.

In the second part, the author has a list of all immigrants from Vik to America sorted alphabetically by name/farm name and by year of emigration. This may be an advantage for you as a family researcher in that the families are kept together in groups. In order to make it easier to read for an English-speaking audience, Sunde gives an explanation of the abbreviations used in the list. This transcription is considerably easier to read than the old church records.

Following this list, Sunde presents additional, verified information about the emigrants. To the degree that information was available to him, this includes what the emigrant did for a living, whether he or she moved, name and information about the spouse, the emigrant's American name -if it differs from the Norwegian name- and more.

Another book on emigration history from Sogn, that includes Vik, is called *Amerikafeber: om likskapar og ulikskapar i utvandringsmønsteret i Sogn og*

No search in a library will ever be perfectly complete. There will always be books in a library collection containing information you may need that don't appear after you search the online catalog.

As an example, I only got one result from my search in the Family History Collection when I searched for "Vik." That does not necessarily mean that we have no other family history books about people with ancestors from Vik in Sogn. It's possible that it simply wasn't apparent to whomever cataloged the book that the family was from Vik in Sogn.

Searching a collection is both a science and an art. Getting the best results comes with practice. Remember we at NAGC are here to help you identify resources in our library that cover what you are looking for.

The staff and volunteers at NAGC-NL are constantly working hard to improve the catalog records. The objective is to make the library as accessible and easy to navigate as possible for our members and patrons.

In addition to improve the accessibility of the existing collection in the Naeseth Library, we are also constantly seeking to expand the collection to include more material, including, but not limited to "bygdebooks."



# Librarian's Corner

*Fjordane* (Translation: *America Fever: About Commonalities and Differences in the emigration pattern in Sogn og Fjordane*.) This book is written by the same author, and is based on a seminar on emigration that was held in Vik in 1989. In this report, Rasmus Sunde has contributed with an article called "Utvandringa frå Vik I Sogn" (Translation: "Emigration from Vik in Sogn"). Here, Sunde focuses on the very first emigrants from Vik: Per Ivarson Undi, his wife Anna Davidsdotter and their two children. They left Vik in 1839 and settled in Wiota, Wisconsin. A fascinating story.

The two remaining items from the emigration collection in Naeseth Library are two issues of a quite unique periodical called *Emigration Review*. One thing I find particularly unique about this magazine is that it was jointly published by Fylkesarkivet I Sogn og Fjordane (Translation: County Archives in Sogn og Fjordane) and Vesterheim Genealogical Center (The former name for NAGC-NL). Accordingly, the content covers subjects of common interest for "Sogninger" (people from Sogn) living on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. In an article about Vik in 1993, I learned, among other things, the fun fact that Vik, at the time, had been voted the best place to live Norway.

In addition to emigration history and local history from the different sub-parishes in Sogn, one of the issues also contains cemetery transcripts from East Koshkonong Church in Dane County, Wisconsin. In a situation where you are not able to find a grave on findagrave.com, this transcript from 1996 may be helpful as it potentially could include grave stones that have since been overgrown or, for other reasons, are not legible.

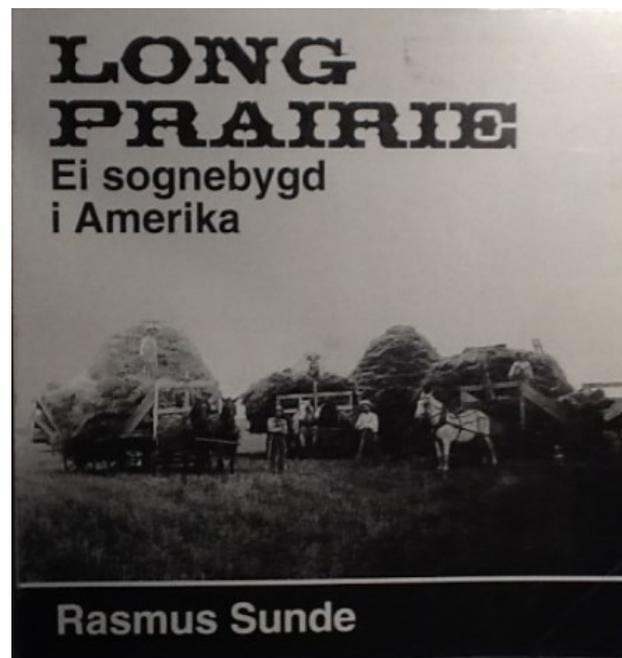
## Collection: County History-America

As a continuation of my fascination with the family stories of emigration and immigration, I also find this collection very interesting. In this part of the library, you will find books about communities in America with Norwegian immigration history. For our Vik-case study, we have exactly such a book. It is called *Long Prairie: Ei Sognebygd I Amerika* (Translation: *Long Prairie: A Sogn village in America*), written by the same Rasmus Sunde from above and published in 1995. We have both the original version written in Norwegian as well as an English translation.

In this fascinating read, we follow two immigrant groups from Vik who ended up in the Norwegian-American community named Long Prairie, which is in Boone Township, Boone County, Illinois.

Long Prairie was heavily populated by people from Sogn. In his book, Sunde focuses in on the stories of two men, and their families, from Vik who fared differently after they moved to America. By the end of the book, the author again zooms out in order to look at the Norwegian-American community in Long Prairie as a whole.

One important takeaway here is the story of how this Norwegian community changed over time. Apparently, the settlers went from being a tight-knit group who helped and supported each other in their struggle to make a good life for themselves, to becoming a community where it was "hard to work for common interests and solidarity." By the turn of the century, according to the author, it was rare that people from the entire settlement even got together for social gatherings. How could this happen? Well, again, you may want to read for yourself.



## Collection: Family history

In the Naeseth Library there are close to 1400 family history books. Most of these books have been donated to us by patrons of NAGC-NL. Many of the donors have received support for their family research from staff here at the center. With so many family histories, you will generally have a fair chance of finding results when you do a search based on your family name. In the case of Vik, however, I only found one family from Vik in this section: The Hopstock family.

(Continued on page 14)

## LIBRARIAN'S CORNER (CONT.)

### Collection: Norwegian History

My search in this collection in our library was more fruitful as I found six items that covered Vik in Sogn. The downside for most English-speaking users is that all of these items are written in Norwegian. However, they generally have really fascinating photos and pictures. Topics of these local history books include postal history from Vik, trade and commerce in Vik, and cultural history. There was even some genealogical information on some families from Sogn nestled in one if the items. For people with special interest in the topics covered, remember there is always the option of using the translation services at NAGC.

### Collection: Reference Material

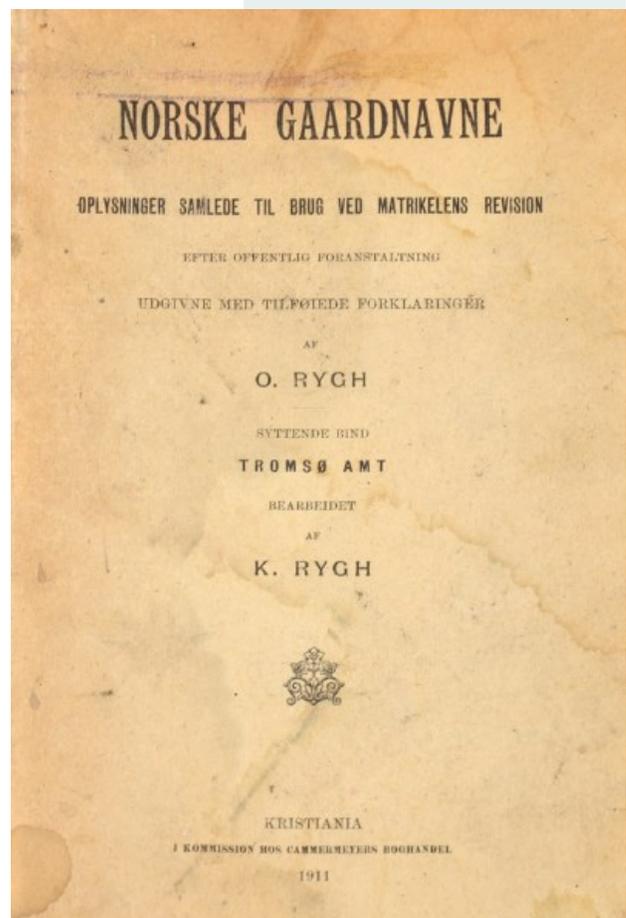
Lastly, I will allude the reader to some resources from our reference section that can be very useful to you as a family history researcher. First and foremost, I want to bring attention to a 19-volume book series by, the late Norwegian professor Oluf Rygh, based on work he did between 1897 and 1924. During that time he documented over 45,000 farm names in Norway. The book series is called *Norske Gaardnavne* (Translation: *Norwegian Farm Names*). These books are out of print and hard to get hold of. The book series is organized according to the old administrative units: amts. In order to find the farms in Vik, you will need to go to volume 12 which covers Nordre Bergenhus amt, the former name for Sogn og Fjordane county. Here you will find all the farms names in Vik listed by ascending farm numbers. Rygh also gives the historical spellings of the farm names as well as their etymology. The Rygh books are incredible valuable as they can guide you to pull out the “bygdebok” in which you will find “your” farm.

In the case of our Vik quest, there is one more resource available to us from this collection. This is a binder with photocopies and the first part has farm names from inner Sogn listed. The source here is Neill Hofland, Norway-l@rootsweb.com. One advantage of this list over the Rygh series is that they are listed alphabetically. Moreover, all the different parishes in Sogn are mixed in together, meaning that you can easily find the farm you are looking for without knowing which parish it belonged to.

The second part of the binder also caught my attention and turned out to be interesting reading. The headline is: “Traditional surname endings in Norway.” Here the naming traditions of farm names and the meaning of the different parts of the names are explained. Turns out quite a bit of information can be read out of a “simple” farm name!

If you followed me through this Vik quest, you have gathered that the Naeseth Library has a lot to offer besides the “bygdebooks.” We are all different in what aspects of the emigration/immigration story we are interested in. Our focus area will probably also change over time, depending on where in our research process we find ourselves.

My intention with this column in general, and this article in particular, is to simply make all of our resources visible and available to you at the Naeseth Library “smorgasbord.” This way you can choose which of the resources that seems best fit to help you in your own quest to find out about your ancestors from Norway.



## RECENT ACQUISITIONS

We offer our sincere thanks to the donors listed below who gave research materials for the Naeseth Library during the first half of 2021.

### NEW FAMILY HISTORIES

Paul Berge, Middleton, WI  
William Gartner, Madison, WI  
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### NEW NORWEGIAN LOCAL HISTORIES & REFERENCE

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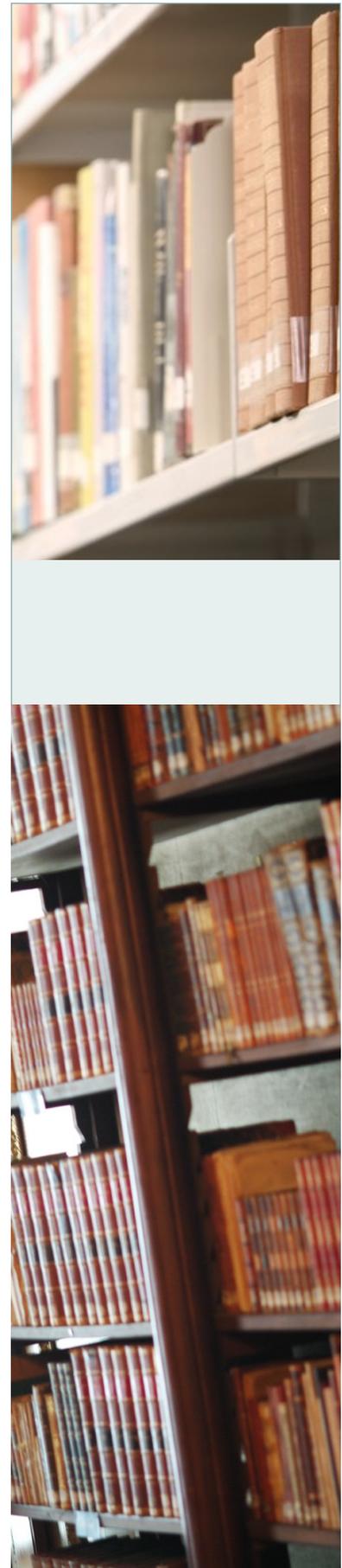
Alice Zweifel, Sun Prairie, WI  
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Linda Hash, Appleton, WI  
Dana Kelly, Deerfield, WI  
Sharen Manolopoulos, Los Angeles, CA  
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### OTHER NEW RESEARCH MATERIALS

Dave and Ruth Amundson, Westby, WI  
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We are also grateful for the two acquisitions funds that continue to support additions to the library collections at NAGC: the William Helgeson Fund and the Loper Fund for North Norway Acquisitions.

For a complete listing of authors, titles, and subjects of the items in the Naeseth Library, please consult the library catalog on our website: <https://nagcnl.pastperfectonline.com/>



# Norwegian Tracks

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