

Norwegian Church Records

Norway is and has been a church state with the Lutheran Church as the official religion.

All major events in life are recorded in church books

No civil registration until very recently

Records kept usually in chronological order of life

Baptism

Confirmation

Marriage

Death

Arrival and departure in the parish

Vaccination for Cow Pox

The church books have changed over time

Books prior to about 1800 were kept in dialogue format

Sometimes all events recorded together

Sometimes sections for baptisms etc

Books after 1800 or there about were kept in columnar form

Headings have changed over the years

See *Norwegian Research Guide* for translations

Pastors sometimes created their own books instead of buying them

Pastors sometimes used another section for other events such as baptisms

Where deaths are recorded

Handwriting can be a nightmare as well as lack of dipping pen in ink

Condition of books prior to microfilming

Books remain in local parish for 80 years after last entry. Transferred to National Archives and sometime after will be microfilmed

Norway also has privacy conditions on records so records from about 1920 forward may or may not be available. Dependent on when the last entry was put into the book. They will be available to us at a later date.

Jerry Paulson

Naeseth Chair for Genealogical Research and Publication

Norwegian American Genealogical Center and Naeseth Library

Madison WI