



**FAMILY HISTORY LIBRARY**  
**SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH**

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

# Norway

## CONTENTS

---

|                                       |    |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| Introduction                          | 1  |
| Norwegian Search Strategies           | 1  |
| Records at the Family History Library | 4  |
| Records Selection Table               | 6  |
| Map of Norway                         | 7  |
| The Family History Library Catalog    | 8  |
| Archives and Libraries                | 8  |
| Biography                             | 11 |
| Census                                | 12 |
| Church Records                        | 14 |
| Civil Registration                    | 16 |
| Court Records                         | 17 |
| Emigration and Immigration            | 17 |
| Encyclopedias and Dictionaries        | 20 |
| Gazetteers                            | 21 |
| Genealogy                             | 21 |
| History                               | 23 |
| Land and Property                     | 24 |
| Language and Languages                | 24 |
| Maps                                  | 25 |
| Military Records                      | 26 |
| Names, Personal                       | 27 |
| Nobility                              | 28 |
| Periodicals                           | 28 |
| Probate Records                       | 29 |
| Social Life and Customs               | 31 |
| Societies                             | 31 |
| Other Records                         | 33 |
| Comments and Suggestions              | 34 |

## INTRODUCTION

---

This outline introduces you to the records you can use to discover your Norwegian ancestors. It describes the content, use, and availability of major genealogical records. Use this outline to set meaningful goals and to select the records that will help you achieve them.

Generally, you must know the specific place where your Norwegian ancestor was born before beginning research in Norway. You will also need some basic understanding of genealogical research procedures. You may want to view the library's videocassette presentation and study the accompanying booklet, *A Guide to Research*, available at the Family History Library and at Family History Centers.

## Using This Outline

The "Norwegian Search Strategies" section of this outline explains how to research your family history effectively. This section is particularly valuable if you are just beginning your research.

The Records Selection Table on page 6 helps you select records to search. Records at the Family History Library describe the library's Norwegian collection. The Family History Library Catalog section explains how to use the catalog to find specific records in the library's collection.

Beginning on page 8, the outline discusses the major records, arranged in alphabetical order, used for Norwegian research, such as census and church records. The names of these sections are the same as the subject headings used in the Family History Library Catalog.

Related records and concepts are grouped together under the same heading. For example, in the "Emigration and Immigration" section you will find information about:

- The history of emigration from Norway.
- Passenger lists.
- Records of Norwegian emigrants in the United States.

On page 32 you will also find a brief list of other records.

## NORWEGIAN SEARCH STRATEGIES

---

### Step 1. Identify What You Know about Your Family

Begin your research with family and home sources. Look for names, dates, and places in certificates, family Bibles, obituaries, diaries, and other such sources. Ask your relatives for any additional information they may have. It is likely that your second cousin, great-aunt, or other relative already has some family information. Organize the information you find, and record it on pedigree charts and family group record forms.

## Step 2. Decide What You Want to Learn

Select a specific ancestor born in Norway for whom you know at least a name, the place or parish in Norway where he or she lived, and an approximate date when your ancestor lived there. It is also very helpful to know the names of other family members born in Norway. For suggestions on finding an immigrant ancestor's birthplace, see the "Emigration and Immigration" section of this outline.

Once you have selected an ancestor, decide what you want to learn about him or her, such as the person's marriage date and place or the names of the parents. You may want to ask an experienced researcher or a librarian to help you select a goal that you can successfully achieve.

## Step 3. Select a Record to Search

Read this outline to learn about the types of records used for Norwegian research. To trace your ancestor, you may need to use some of the records described in each section. Several factors can affect your choice of which records to search. This outline can help you evaluate the contents of, availability of, ease-of-use of, time period covered by, and reliability of the records as well as the likelihood that your ancestor will be listed in them.

In order to do effective research, you should first obtain some background information. Then survey any research that may have been done previously. Finally, search original documents.

**Background Information Sources.** You may need some geographical and historical information, which can save you time and effort by helping you focus your research on the correct place and time period.

- *Locate the place (town) or parish of residence.* Examine maps, gazetteers, postal guides, and other place-finding aids to learn as much as you can about each of the places where your ancestor lived. Identify the major migration routes, nearby cities, county boundaries, government and ecclesiastical jurisdictions, and other geographical features. Place-finding aids are described in the "Gazetteers," "History," and "Maps" sections of this outline.
- *Review local histories.* If possible, study histories of the areas where your ancestor lived. Look for clues about the people, places, and events that may have affected his or her life and the records about your ancestor. Records with information about migration and settlement patterns, government jurisdictions,

and local historical events may be described in periodicals from the area. See the "Periodicals" section of this outline for more information.

- *Learn about Norwegian jurisdictions.* You will need to know how Norway is divided into counties (*fylker*), how each county is divided into clerical districts (*prestegjeld*), and what other jurisdictions exist.
- *Use language helps.* The records and histories of Norwegian places will usually be written in Norwegian. It is not necessary to speak or read Norwegian to search the records, but you will need to learn some key words and phrases. Some helpful sources are described in the "Language and Languages" section of this outline.
- *Understand naming patterns.* Many Norwegian families followed distinct naming patterns. Understanding the patterns can help you identify ancestors. See the "Names, Personal" section of this outline for more information.
- *Understand local customs.* Local customs may have affected the way individuals' information was recorded. Illegitimacy, marital customs, and local conditions are discussed in the "Social Life and Customs" section of this outline.

**Previous Research Sources.** Most genealogists do a survey of research previously done by others. This can save time and give you valuable information. You may want to look for:

- Printed family histories and genealogies.
- Biographies.
- Local histories.
- The International Genealogical Index.
- *The Family Group Records Collection.*

Records containing previous research are described in the "Biography," "Genealogy," "Periodicals," and "Societies" sections of this outline. Remember that the information in these sources may contain some inaccuracies. Therefore, you will want to verify this information by reviewing primary sources such as church records.

**Original Records.** After surveying previous research, you will be ready to begin original research. Performing original research is the process of searching through original documents (often copied on microfilm), which are usually handwritten in the native language. These

documents can provide primary information about your ancestor because they were generally recorded at or near the time of an event by a reliable witness. To do thorough research, you should search records of:

- Each *parish* where your ancestor lived.
- The *time period* when he or she lived there.
- All *jurisdictions* that may have kept records about your ancestor (parish, county, and country).

Many types of original documents are described in this outline. For Norwegian genealogical research, most family information is found in the records described in the “Census,” “Church Records,” and “Probate Records” sections of this outline. For each record type, the paragraph heading used in this outline is the same as the heading used in the Family History Library Catalog.

#### Step 4. Find and Search the Record

**Suggestions for Obtaining Records.** You may be able to get the records you need in the following ways:

- *Family History Library.* You are welcome to visit and use the records at the Family History Library. The library is open to the public. There are no fees for using the records. For more information about the library’s services, write to:

Family History Library  
35 North West Temple Street  
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3400

- *Family History Centers.* Copies of most of the records on microform at the Family History Library can be loaned to more than 3,000 Family History Centers throughout the world. There are small rental and postage fees for this service.

The library’s books cannot be loaned to the centers, but copies of many books not protected by copyright are available on microfilm or microfiche.

You can get a list of Family History Centers by writing to the Family History Library. Or, look on the Internet at [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) under Custom Search.

- *Archives and local churches.* Most of the original documents you will need are at national and regional archives or in local parish offices. While the Family History Library has

most of these records on microfilm, others are available only at these archives. You can request searches in their records through correspondence. See the “Archives and Libraries” section of this outline for further information.

- *Libraries and interlibrary loan.* Public, academic, and other research libraries may have some published sources for Norwegian research. Many libraries also provide interlibrary loan services that allow you to borrow records from other libraries.
- *Professional researchers.* You can employ a private researcher to search the records for you. Some researchers specialize in Norwegian records. Lists of qualified professional researchers are available from the Family History Library. Archives and local church offices in Norway may provide names of individuals who can search their records for you.
- *Photocopies.* The Family History Library and many other libraries offer limited photocopy services for a fee. You must specify the exact pages you need. Books protected by copyright cannot be copied in their entirety. However, a few pages can usually be copied for personal research. The Norwegian archives offer copies of some records, but the costs may be relatively high.

When requesting services from libraries or professional researchers through correspondence, you will have more success if your letter is brief and very specific. Enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope when writing within your own country. When writing to other countries, enclose three international reply coupons (available from your post office). You will usually need to send a check or money order in advance to pay for photocopy or research services.

**Suggestions for Searching the Records.** You will be most successful with Norwegian research if you can examine microfilm copies of the original records. In some cases, transcripts of the original records are available. These may be easier to read, but they may be less accurate than the original records.

Follow these principles as you search the records for your ancestor:

- *Search for one generation at a time.* Do not attempt to connect your family to others with the same surname who lived more than a generation before your proven ancestor. It is much easier to prove parentage than descent.

- *Search for the ancestor's entire family.* The records of each person in a family may include clues for identifying other family members. In most families, children were born at regular intervals. If there appears to be a longer period between some children, re-examine the records for a child who may have been overlooked. Consider looking at other records to find a missing family member.
- *Search each source thoroughly.* The information you need to find a person or trace the family further may be a minor detail of the record you are searching. Note the occupation of your ancestor and the names of witnesses, godparents, neighbors, relatives, guardians, and others. Also note the places they are from.
- *Search a broad time period.* Dates obtained from some sources may not be accurate. Look several years before and after the date you think an event occurred, such as a birth.
- *Look for indexes.* Many records have indexes. However, many indexes are incomplete. They may only include the name of the specific person the record is about. They may not include parents, witnesses, and other incidental persons. Also be aware that the original records may have been misinterpreted or names may have been omitted during indexing.
- *Search for prior residences.* Information about an ancestor's previous residences is crucial to successful research.
- *Watch for spelling variations.* Look for the many ways a name could have been spelled. Spelling was not standardized when most early records were made. You may find a name spelled differently than it is today, as well as several different spelling variations in the original records.
- *Record your searches and findings.* Copy the information you find, and keep detailed notes about each record you search. These notes should include the author, title, page number, location, call numbers, description of each record and an account of the results of your search. Most researchers use a research log for this purpose.

## Step 5. Use the Information

**Evaluate the Information You Find.** Carefully evaluate whether the information you find is complete and accurate. Ask yourself these questions:

- Who provided the information? Did that person witness the event?
- Was the information recorded near the time of the event or later?
- Is the information consistent and logical?
- Does the new information verify the information found in other sources? Does it differ from information in other sources?
- Does it suggest other places, time periods, or records to search?

**Share Your Information with Others.** Your family's history can become a source of enjoyment and education. You may want to compile your findings into a family history. You can then share copies of your history with family members, the Family History Library, and other archives. You are also invited to contribute information or corrections to Ancestral File. For more information, see the "Genealogy" section of this outline or the publication *Contributing to Ancestral File*.

If you are a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, be sure to submit information about your deceased family members so you can provide temple ordinances for them. Your ward family history consultant or a staff member at the library can assist you.

## RECORDS AT THE FAMILY HISTORY LIBRARY

---

### Microform Records

The Family History Library currently has more than 12,000 rolls of microfilm and over 3,700 microfiche containing information about people who have lived in Norway. Most of the library's records have been obtained through an extensive and ongoing acquisition program. The library has microform copies of records found in Norwegian archives. These records include, among others:

- Birth, marriage, and death records from the Norwegian state church (Evangelical Lutheran church).
- Passenger lists.
- Censuses.
- Probate records.

## Printed Records

The library has over 3,700 volumes of books and other printed materials helpful for Norwegian research. Copies of some of these books are available on microform, including such books as:

- Atlases and maps.
- Gazetteers.
- Handbooks and manuals.
- Histories (national and local)
- Family histories.
- Rural chronicles (*Bygdebøker*).

## Computer Records

FamilySearch™ is available at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City and in many Family History Centers in the United States, Canada, and Europe. This computer program has many computer files of genealogical information, including the International Genealogical Index and Ancestral File. (For more information, see the “Genealogy” section of this outline.) The Family History Library Catalog is also available on computer as part of FamilySearch.

## RECORDS SELECTION TABLE

The table below can help you decide which records to search.

Column 3 lists those sections of this outline that may also be useful.

In column 1 find the goal you selected.

Records containing previous research (biography, genealogy, history, nobility, periodicals, and societies) could provide useful information. These have been listed repeatedly if they are especially helpful.

In column 2 find the types of records that are most likely to have the information you need. Then turn to that section of this outline. (The terms used in columns 2 and 3 are the same as the subject headings used in this outline and in the Locality section of the Family History Library Catalog.)

| 1. If You Need:                             | 2. Look First In:                 | 3. Then Search:  |
|---|-----------------------------------|--|
| Age   | Census                            | Church Records   |
| Birth date                                  | Church Records                    | Genealogy (Bygdebok)   |
| Birthplace                                  | Census (1865 and later)           | Church Records   |
| Death                                       | Church Records                    | Probate Records, Court Records                               |
| Emigration information                      | Emigration and Immigration        | Societies, Genealogy (Bygdebok)                              |
| Historical background                       | History                           | Social Life and Customs, Societies                           |
| Language helps                              | Language and Languages            | Encyclopedias and Dictionaries                               |
| Living relatives                            | Genealogy                         | Societies, Directories (Bygdebok)                            |
| Marriage                                    | Church Records                    | Genealogy (Bygdebok)   |
| Naming customs                              | Names, Personal                   | Social Life and Customs                                      |
| Noble families                              | Nobility                          | Biography, Periodicals                                       |
| Occupation                                  | Church Records                    | Census, Genealogy (Bygdebok)                                 |
| Parents, children, and other family members | Church Records                    | Census, Probate Records, Court Records, Genealogy (Bygdebok) |
| Parish, district, and county boundaries     | Maps                              | Gazetteers   |
| Physical description                        | Military Records                  | Biography, Genealogy (Bygdebok)                              |
| Place-finding aids                          | Gazetteers                        | Maps, Encyclopedias and Dictionaries                         |
| Places of residence                         | Church Records                    | Census, Land and Property, Genealogy                         |
| Previous research (compiled genealogy)      | Genealogy, Periodicals, Societies | History, Biography, Archives and Libraries                   |



## **THE FAMILY HISTORY LIBRARY CATALOG**

---

The key to finding a record in the Family History Library's collection is using the Family History Library Catalog. The catalog describes each of the library's records and provides the call numbers. Microfiche copies of the catalog are at the Family History Library and at each Family History Center. Also, at the library and at most centers you can search the catalog on computer.

The Family History Library Catalog is divided into four major sections:

- Locality
- Surname
- Subject
- Author/Title

To find the call numbers of the records described in this outline, you will most often use the Locality section. The paragraph headings in this outline that describe types of records, such as "Church Records," are the same as the subject headings found in the Locality section of the Family History Library Catalog.

The catalog generally uses the same language that the records are written in to describe the records. However, the description also includes a brief English summary of the content.

The Locality section lists records according to the area they cover. Records relating to the entire country, such as passenger lists, are listed under:

### **NORWAY**

Most records are listed under the specific place. For example, in the Locality section look for:

- The *place* where an ancestor lived, such as:

EUROPE  
NORWAY  
NORWAY, AKERSHUS  
NORWAY, AKERSHUS, ASKER

- Then the record type you want, such as:

NORWAY - HISTORY  
NORWAY, AKERSHUS - GAZETTEERS  
NORWAY, AKERSHUS, ASKER - CHURCH RECORDS

This outline also provides some of the library's call numbers. These are preceded by FHL, the abbreviation for Family History Library.

If you need more information on using the Family History Library Catalog, a short videocassette presentation, written instructions, and librarians are available to assist you.

## **ARCHIVES AND LIBRARIES**

---

Archives collect and preserve original documents of organizations such as churches or governments. Libraries generally collect published sources such as books, maps, and microfilm. This section describes the major repositories of genealogical and historical records and sources for Norway. When one of these institutions is referred to elsewhere in this outline, return to this section to find the address.

If you plan to visit one of these repositories, contact the organization and ask for information about its collection, hours, services, and fees. When writing to an archive in Norway, you may write in English.

Although the records you need may be in an archive or library in Norway, the Family History Library and the Vesterheim Genealogical Center (see the "Societies" section of this outline) may have a microfilm copy of them. The Family History Library has copies of many records from Norwegian archives and libraries.

In Norway there are several major types of genealogical repositories:

- National archives
- Regional archives
- Church parish offices
- University and public libraries
- Historical and genealogical societies

### **National Archives**

The Norwegian government collects records relating to Norwegian history, culture, and people. Records of genealogical value at the national archives include census records, military records, and emigration lists. The National Archives of Norway is open to the public. You may purchase microfilms or request photocopies of the records by using forms obtained from the archives.



Riksarkivet (National Archive)  
Folke Bernadottes vei 21  
Postboks 4013, Ullevål stadion  
N-0806, Oslo  
Norway  
Phone: 47 22 02 26 00  
Fax: 47 22 23 74 89  
E-mail: [ra@riksarkivet.dep.telemax.no](mailto:ra@riksarkivet.dep.telemax.no)  
Internet: [www.riksarkivet.no](http://www.riksarkivet.no)

## Regional Archives

In Norway there are eight regional archives. They serve as repositories for records of their particular areas. Records of genealogical value at regional archives include birth, marriage, and death records (church records); land records; and court records. The regional archives of Norway are open to the public.

The regional archives for the various counties (*fylker*) are listed below.

For Østfold, Akershus, and Oslo Counties, write to:

Statsarkivet i Oslo  
Folke Bernadottes vei 21  
Postboks 4015 Ullevål stadion  
N-0806 Oslo  
Norway  
Phone: 47 22 02 26 00  
Fax: 47 22 23 74 89

For Buskerud, Vestfold, and Telemark Counties, write to:

Statsarkivet i Kongsberg  
Frogsvei 44  
N-3611 Kongsberg  
Norway  
Phone: 47 32 86 99 00  
Fax: 47 32 86 99 10

For Oppland and Hedemark Counties, write to:

Statsarkivet i Hamar  
Lille Strandgate 3  
N-2304 Hamar  
Norway  
Phone: 47 62 52 36 42  
Fax: 47 62 52 94 48

For Aust-Agder and Vest-Agder Counties, write to:

Statsarkivet i Kristiansand  
Märthas vei 1  
Serviceboks 402, 4604 Kristiansand  
N-4613 Kristiansand  
Norway  
Phone: 47 38 14 55 00  
Fax: 47 38 14 55 01

For Rogaland County, write to:

Statsarkivet i Stavanger  
Bergjelandsgt.30  
N-4012 Stavanger  
Norway  
Phone: 47 51 50 12 60  
Fax: 47 51 50 12 90

For Hordaland, Bergen, and Sogn og Fjordane Counties, write to:

Statsarkivet i Bergen  
Årstadveien 22  
N-5009 Bergen  
Norway  
Phone: 47 55 31 50 70  
Fax: 47 55 32 12 65

For Møre og Romsdal, Sør-Trøndelag, Nord-Trøndelag, and Nordland Counties, write to:

Statsarkivet i Trondheim  
Høgskoleveien 12  
Postboks 2825 Elgesæter  
N-7432 Trondheim  
Norway  
Phone: 47 73 88 45 00  
Fax: 47 73 88 45 40

For Troms County, Finnmark County and Spitsbergen, write to:

Statsarkivet i Tromsø  
N-9293 Tromsø  
Norway  
Phone: 47 77 67 66 11  
Fax: 47 77 67 65 20

## Church Parish Offices

Church records containing an entry dated less than 80 years ago are kept at the local parish office. All others are sent to the state archives for the area. It is possible to write to local parishes and to do so in English. See the “Church Records” section of this outline for more information.

## University and Public Libraries

Useful sources are also available in major libraries in Norway and the United States. Contact these libraries for information about their collection, hours, services, and fees.

The University Library (*Universitetsbiblioteket*) in Oslo functions much like the Library of Congress in the United States. The University Library has a copy of most published material in Norway. Its address is:

Bibliotek for humania og samfundsvitenskap  
Postboks 1009 Blindern  
0315 Oslo  
Norway  
Phone: 47 22 85 91 02  
Internet: [www.ub.uio.no/](http://www.ub.uio.no/)

The Norwegian Emigration Center is a division of the regional archive in Stavanger. The address for this archive and the Norwegian Emigration Museum are listed under the “Emigration and Immigration” section of this outline.

The main public libraries in Oslo and Bergen have large collections of most published material in Norway. Their collections of family histories, local histories, and biographical works are extensive. Their addresses are:

Deichmanske Bibliotek  
Henrik Ibsensgate 1  
N-0179 Oslo 1  
Norway  
Phone: 47 22 03 29 00  
Fax: 47 22 11 33 89  
E-mail: [deichman@deich.folkebibl.no](mailto:deichman@deich.folkebibl.no)  
Internet: [www.deich.folkebibl.no](http://www.deich.folkebibl.no)

Bergen Offentlige Bibliotek  
Strømgaten 6  
5015 Bergen  
Norway  
Phone: 47 55 56 85 60  
Fax: 47 55 56 85 70

There are several libraries in Norway that have genealogical information that may be searched on the Internet at:

[www.bibsys.no/bibliofil/bibliotek.html](http://www.bibsys.no/bibliofil/bibliotek.html)

Arkivnett Norge (Norway archives on the net) is another useful site:

[www.arkivnett.riksarkivet.no/](http://www.arkivnett.riksarkivet.no/)

The Memorial Library at the University of Wisconsin-Madison has one of the largest collections of Norwegian local histories in the United States, and these histories contain much genealogical information. Dennis Auburn Hill has published a bibliography of their holdings:

*Norwegian Local History: A Bibliography of the Material in the Collections of the Memorial Library.* Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1989. (FHL book 977.583/M1 A3hi; computer number 0484998.)

Other libraries that have large collections of Norwegian local histories include:

- Chester Fritz Library, University of North Dakota—Grand Forks
- Mikkelsen Library, Augustana College, Sioux Falls, South Dakota
- Rølvaag Library, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota
- Luther College, Decorah, Iowa (Archivist Duane Fenstermann)
- Concordia College, Moorhead, Minnesota (Archivist Sharon Hoverson)

## Historical and Genealogical Societies

Norway has some organized historical and genealogical societies. Some maintain libraries or archives that collect valuable genealogical records. For more information, including addresses of some societies, see the “Societies” section of this outline.

## Archives in the United States

The archives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) have microfilm copies of most of the Norwegian-American Lutheran church records. The copies can be loaned via the mail for a nominal fee. The ELCA is divided into nine regions. The regional archives may have additional information.

For information about the Norwegian Lutheran church records in the United States, write to:

Archivist, ELCA  
Elizabeth Wittman  
8765 West Higgins Road  
Chicago, IL 60631

You may visit the ELCA archives in person by appointment only:

ELCA Archives  
321 Bonnie Lane  
Elk Grove Village, IL 60007  
Phone: 1-847-690-9410

Other records of Norwegians in America are kept at the National Archives. These include service and pension, naturalization, immigration, and homestead records. For information, write to:

The National Archives of the United States  
Washington, D.C. 20408

Other United States records are kept on a state and county level.

### Computer Networks and Bulletin Boards

Computers with modems can be useful tools for obtaining information from selected archives and libraries. In fact, computer networks themselves serve as libraries. The Internet, certain computer bulletin boards, and commercial online services help family history researchers:

- Locate other researchers.
- Post queries.
- Send and receive e-mail.
- Search large databases.
- Search computer libraries.
- Join in computer chat and lecture sessions.

You can use online services to find computerized research tips and information about ancestors from Norway in many sources at local, provincial, national and international levels. The list of sources is growing rapidly. Most information is available at no cost.

Internet sites that include information about archives, censuses, church records, probate records, and military records are found in various sections of this outline. Some sites that act as an index to many useful Norwegian genealogical sites include:

National Archive in Norway (*Riksarkivet*):  
[www.riksarkivet.no](http://www.riksarkivet.no)

Digital Archive:  
[www.hist.uib.no/arkivverket](http://www.hist.uib.no/arkivverket)

GenWeb:

[www.rootsweb.com/~wgnorway](http://www.rootsweb.com/~wgnorway)

Family History Department:  
[www.familysearch.org/](http://www.familysearch.org/)

Nordicnotes:  
[www.nordicnotes.com](http://www.nordicnotes.com)

### Inventories, Registers, and Catalogs

Some archives have catalogs, inventories, guides, or periodicals that describe their records and how to use them. Write to each archive you are interested in for a guide to its collection. If one is available, study it before you visit or use the records during your visit so you can use your time more effectively. Some guides are listed in the Family History Library Catalog under the Locality section with the heading *ARCHIVES AND LIBRARIES* and the subheading *INVENTORIES, REGISTERS, AND CATALOGS*.

### BIOGRAPHY

---

A biography is a history of a person's life. In a biography you may find an individual's birth, marriage, and death information and the names of family members. Use the information carefully because there may be inaccuracies.

Many brief biographies on the Norwegian peoples have been gathered and published in collective works, sometimes called biographical encyclopedias or dictionaries. These usually only include biographies of prominent Norwegian citizens. Others contain biographies of specific groups of people such as military officers.

A significant biographical encyclopedia is:

Edv. Bull, Anders Krogvig, Gerhard Gran, et al.,  
*Norsk Biografisk Leksikon* (Norwegian Biographical Encyclopedia). 19 vols.  
Kristiania: H. Aschehoug & Co. W. Nygaard,  
1923–83. (FHL book 948.1 D36n; computer number 0215638.)

An index to a large biographical collection is:

*Scandinavian Biographical Index*. New Jersey:  
K.G. Sour, c1994. (FHL book 948 D32s;  
computer number 0731014.)

The actual biographical sketches are found on 393 microfiche. The first section of the work contains Danish, Norwegian, and Icelandic biographical sketches. The second section contains Swedish and Finnish sketches. The information comes from many sources. Both sections are in alphabetical order.

*Scandinavian Biographical Archives*. New York City: K.G. Saur, 1990. (On 393 FHL fiche beginning with 6060432; computer number 0543637.)

Collective biographies at the Family History Library are generally listed in the Locality section of the catalog under one of the following:

NORWAY - BIOGRAPHY  
NORWAY, [COUNTY] - BIOGRAPHY  
NORWAY, [COUNTY], [CITY] -  
BIOGRAPHY

You will also find some biographical information in Norwegian encyclopedias. See the "Encyclopedias and Dictionaries" section of this outline for additional help.

## **CENSUS**

---

A census is a count and description of the population. Censuses have been taken by the Norwegian government and by ecclesiastical officials for population studies and taxation purposes.

Census records can provide information about a person's family relationships, age, year of birth, birthplace, and property. Census records are especially valuable because they list a large portion of the population. They can provide information when all or portions of other records are missing. Generally, you will find more complete family information in more recent censuses, which can be particularly helpful in identifying birthplaces. Use the information with caution, however, since some of it may be incorrect.

*Aslak Bolts jordebok* is a publication of the first census taken in Norway. It was taken about 1430 by Aslak Bolt (1377–1450) for economic reasons, as the Catholic church was in debt. The Black Death had ravaged the country, and several of the farms were left desolate. Properties were to be indexed so taxes could be assessed. The index includes the value of each property, taxes paid (or not), and the name(s) of the owners. There is also an index by given-name and place-name in the back of the book. This particular index includes names of estates (farms) that were under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop in Nidaros (now Trondheim city in Norway). This book does not include all the localities of Norway, but it does include properties in Northern Norway, Trøndelag, and the north west coast of Norway. The old Norse language is listed on the left page, and a translation to the modern Norwegian language is listed on the right page.

*Aslak Bolts jordebok* was produced from the original book, from the *Münchensamlingen* (München Collection) in Riksarkivet in Oslo, and is in such poor condition that it is no longer available for the general public.

Jørgensen, Jon Gunnar. *Aslak Bolts jordebok* (Aslak Bolt's Land Book). Oslo: Riksarkivet, 1997. (FHL book 948.4 R2b; computer number 0826051.)

## **Census Records, 1664 to the Present**

Census records were taken in Norway between 1664 and 1666, in 1701, in the mid-1700s (*sjeleregister*), and in 1801. Although census records were completed between 1801 and 1865, these have not been kept for the entire country. Some of these census only list statistical information, while others are comparable to the 1801 census. These censuses are generally listed in the Family History Library Catalog on the parish level. Census records for 1865, 1875, and 1900 are nearly complete for the entire country and give helpful genealogical information.

In the latter 19th century, census records were taken every 10 years. Census records from 1910 to the present are not available at the Family History Library.

The following types of information are in these censuses:

**1664 to 1666.** Two censuses were taken, one clerical and one civil. Generally, only the names and ages of the head of the household and all male family members over age 12 are listed. These censuses cover the rural areas only. For some parts of Norway all or part of these censuses is missing.

**1701.** All male members of the family are listed by name and age. The census covers the rural areas only. The census is missing for some parts of the country.

**Mid-1700s.** During this time period a clerical census called a register of souls (*sjeleregister*) was taken. It is more of a true census than the previous ones are, listing all members of a family and all persons living with the family. Much of this record has been lost, but it has been preserved for some areas. Rogaland County is the only county for which the entire census is preserved. Some registers of souls can be found in the parish registers.

These censuses are also available on the Internet at:

[www.hist.uib.no/arkivverket](http://www.hist.uib.no/arkivverket)

After finding this site, click on “Folketellinger” (census) at the bottom of your screen. More information is continually being made available online; therefore, it is a good idea to search this site often.

**1801.** This census lists all family members and all persons living with the family, including their relationships, ages, and occupations. This census includes those living in the cities. It is available on microfilm and microfiche at the Family History Library. The microfiche version is typed and indexed by given name and farm name. This census is also available on the Internet at:

[www.uib.no/hi/1801page.html](http://www.uib.no/hi/1801page.html)  
[www.hist.uib.no/arkivverket](http://www.hist.uib.no/arkivverket)

**1801 to 1865.** Censuses were taken regularly between 1801 and 1865, but most of them were purely statistical. The census records that include more than statistical information have been microfilmed and are available at the Family History Library. The type of information in these censuses varies a great deal. They are listed in the catalog under:

NORWAY, [COUNTY], [PARISH] - CENSUS  
- [YEAR]

**1865, 1875, and 1900.** In addition to the information given in the 1801 census, these later censuses also list a person’s birthplace. Additional information includes:

- School districts within each parish.
- Indexes to farms and localities.
- Individual creeds, other than the national church.
- Number of domestic animals on each farm.
- Farm production.

These censuses differ from one another in format but contain very similar information.

These censuses are also available on the Internet but are not yet complete for the whole country. If a given parish is not listed in one of the following Internet addresses, check the other Internet address, where it will most likely be listed:

Digital Archive:  
[www.hist.uib.no/arkivverket](http://www.hist.uib.no/arkivverket)

(This site is in both Norwegian and English and includes several of the censuses for Norway, but only the 1801 and 1900 censuses are complete for the whole country.)

Census records are often available for various cities in Norway, such as an 1891 census for Bergen and a 1885 census for Fredrikstad. Not all of these censuses have been microfilmed, but you may consult the Family History Library Catalog to see what is available at the Family History Library.

## Census Indexes

You should search available indexes before using the actual census records. The information in an index may be incomplete or incorrect. If you believe your ancestor should have been in the census, search the census regardless of what you find in the index.

Street indexes are available for major cities throughout Norway. To use one you will need to know your ancestor’s address for the time period of the census. You may search parish registers, letters, and other such records to find the address. A street index can help you find your ancestor faster in the census.

**1801 Index.** All of the existing parts of the 1801 census have been indexed. Two indexes exist for each parish: the first is organized according to the names of the farms and the second according to the given name of each person living in the parish. Each county also has two indexes: one by given name and one by surname. To search the 1801 index, you will need to know the parish or county your ancestor lived in. These indexes can be found in the Family History Library Catalog under:

NORWAY, [COUNTY] - CENSUS - 1801 -  
INDEXES  
NORWAY, [COUNTY], [PARISH] - CENSUS  
- 1801

**Later Census Indexes.** There are additional indexes for various parishes. These indexes are usually organized by given name and surname. To see if there are indexes from the area you are interested in, check the Family History Library Catalog under one of the following:

NORWAY, [COUNTY], [PARISH] - CENSUS  
- [YEAR] - INDEXES

## Searching Census Records

When searching census records it is important to remember the following:

- Given names may not always be as complete as the name recorded in church records.
- Information may be incorrect.
- Spellings of names and places may vary.
- If you do not find a family at the expected address, search the surrounding areas.
- When you find your family in one census, search that same location in earlier and later census records for additional family members.

Sources that may give street addresses for large cities in Norway include:

- Church records of christenings, marriages, burials.
- Probate records.

## CHURCH RECORDS

---

The Lutheran church records are the primary source for genealogical research in Norway. Church records (*kirkebøker*) provide excellent information on names, dates, and places of births, marriages, and deaths. Almost everyone who lived in Norway was recorded in a church record.

Records of births, marriages, and deaths are commonly called vital records because critical events in a person's life are recorded in them. Church records are vital records made by the pastor or his assistant. They are often referred to as parish registers or church books and include records of christenings, marriages, and burials. In addition, church records may include lists of members, confirmations, marriage banns, and accounts of people moving in and out of the parish.

Church records are crucial for Norwegian research. The Evangelical Lutheran church became the state church (*Statskirken*), or national church (*Den Norske Kirke*, lit. The Norwegian Church), after the Reformation in 1536. As such, it is an arm of the national government. The church keeps the vital records for the government.

## General Historical Background

Christianity came to Norway around 1152 to 1153 in the form of the Catholic church. The church was organized with an archbishop in Nidaros (now

Trondheim), with ten bishop seats under him: four in Norway, two in Iceland, one in Greenland, one in the Faeroe Islands, one in the Orkney Islands, and one in the Hebrides Islands and Isle of Man.

From the time of the Reformation in 1536, Norway became a Lutheran nation. From then until 1843 it was against the law to practice the Roman Catholic religion in Norway. Notable exceptions include Catholic congregations in Fredrikstad (since 1682), Kristiansand (since 1686), and Oslo (Kristiania) (since 1843). A few Quakers were also allowed to live near Stavanger in 1826, provided that they did not move out of the area.

The Norwegian government recognized only the state church prior to 1845, when it became legal to organize churches of other denominations. St. Olav's Catholic congregation in Oslo was organized that year. Its church building was completed in 1856, the same year Catholic missionary work was started in Northern Norway, with Alta as its seat. This work, also called the North Pole Mission (*Nordpolmisjon*), was abolished in 1869, and resumed its seat in Oslo.

There are no church records from the pre-Reformation times in Norway. Therefore, the earliest church records available are the Lutheran church records.

At a Congress of Deans held in April 1668, a resolution was adopted to introduce keeping parish records in Norway. However, it was not until 1688 that record keeping was required by law. Some pastors began keeping records much earlier. The earliest parish record dates from 1623. Church records for the state church are available in most areas beginning about 1700.

In 1845 the Nonconformist Act recognized Christian dissenter churches; however, the act required that everyone from all denominations notify the pastor or their local Lutheran parish of all births and marriages. The Nonconformist Act did not apply to Jews until 1851, when a constitutional provision repealed the exclusion. Few Norwegians belong to nonconformist religions. In 1989 only six percent of the population listed their religion as other than Lutheran.

A uniform system for keeping church records was introduced by royal ordinance in December 1812. The use of a standard form began during the winter of 1814. This form was replaced by a new one in 1820 and another in 1870. The form adopted in 1870 is basically the same one still in use today.

Because of concerns over the possible destruction of church books by fire or loss, the Ordinance of 1812 required that a duplicate register be kept in a separate place. These records, called *klokker bøker* (clerk books), were kept by the parish clerk. The clerk books are designated as such in the Family History Library Catalog by the use of “kl” to the left of the volume and time period of the record.

### **Information Recorded in Church Records**

At first the record-keeping requirement was limited to baptisms, marriages, and burials. Confirmation registers of many parishes date from as early as 1736. Until a standard form was established in 1814, no directions were given on how to keep church records, so the records before that date vary greatly.

#### **Baptisms (*Døpte*)**

Prior to 1814, usually only the date of christening was listed. Children were generally christened within a few days of birth. Christening registers usually give the names of the infant and father and the place of residence. In some cases the mother’s name is listed, and often the names of godparents and witnesses were recorded. You may also find the child’s birth date and the father’s occupation in the baptismal records. Baptism records may also include records of stillbirths.

The spelling of a name was determined by the recorder, so many variations resulted. For example, the given name Sivert might be spelled as Syver, Sjur, Siver, Sifuer, or Siffuer.

After 1814 a standardized form was generally used in recording the event. On this form was listed both the birth and christening date, both parents’ names and place of residence, the child’s legitimate or illegitimate status, and the names of godparents and witnesses. In larger cities, street addresses were also listed.

#### **Marriages (*Viede, Copulerede*)**

Marriage registers give the bride’s and groom’s names, marriage date, and sometimes their place(s) of residence. Usually the record also indicates whether the bride and groom were single or widowed before marriage and gives the names of bondsmen (two men who knew that the bride and groom were eligible to be married; in later records these were often the fathers of the bride and groom). Sometimes a separate record of a couple’s engagement (*trolovelse*) appears in the earlier records.

Records after 1814 often include other information about the bride and groom, such as their ages, place of residence, and occupations. After the 1830s the records also include the names of their fathers and birthplaces.

Marriage registers sometimes give the date of the engagement and the three dates on which the marriage intentions were announced. These announcements, called *banns*, allowed anyone who knew of any reason why the couple should not marry to come forward.

Couples were usually married in the bride’s home parish. Typically, the bride and groom were in their twenties when they married.

#### **Burials (*Begravede*)**

Burials were recorded in the parish where the person was buried. The burial usually took place in the parish where the person died, one to two weeks after the death occurred. In the wintertime the actual time between death and burial could have been weeks or even months.

Burial registers list the name of the deceased and the date and place of burial. After 1814 the deceased person’s age, place of residence, and occupation were listed. For young children the name of the child’s father is usually given.

Burial records may exist for individuals who were born before birth records and marriage records were kept. Stillbirths were usually recorded in church burial registers.

Some of the birth, marriage, and death records (mainly Bergen and a few other parishes) are also available on the Internet at:

[www.hist.uib.no/arkivverket](http://www.hist.uib.no/arkivverket)

When you find the address, click on “Kirkebøker” (church books). Hard copies of these records in both Norwegian and English are also available for purchase. They can be ordered through the following address:

Registreingsentral for historiske data  
Det samfunnsvitenskapelige fakultet  
Universitetet i Tromsø  
N-9037 Tromsø  
Norway  
Telephone: 47 77 64 41 77  
Internet: [www.rhd.uit.no/](http://www.rhd.uit.no/)

## Confirmation (*Konfirmasjon*)

Although a person's first communion was important, before 1736 little formal religious instruction was given regarding it. However, in that year the Lutheran state church required that young people be instructed in catechism and pass a test before taking the first communion. This test and the first communion was called confirmation. No one was permitted to marry in the Lutheran church unless he or she had been confirmed.

Confirmation usually took place when a young person was between the ages of 14 to 20 years old. The candidate was usually nearer 19 years of age in the period close to 1736 and 14 to 16 years of age later. In pre-1815 confirmation records the age and place of residence were often recorded. After 1814 the name of the head of the household where the youth lived, the age, birth and/or baptism date, and the place of residence and birth were listed. Since the 1830s the parents' names were also listed.

## Vaccination (*Vaksinasjon*)

Small-pox vaccination was encouraged in Norway, and records of those vaccinated can be found in the parish register. In the early records the pastor listed all the children vaccinated on a particular day. These records may also list the person who performed the vaccination. After 1814 this information was sometimes added as a notation on the christening record. The main genealogical value of vaccination records is to show that a person resided in a parish at a given time.

## Arrivals/Departures (*Innflyttede/Uttflyttede*)

Some records of arrivals to and departures from parishes were kept prior to 1814. The printed forms in 1814 included information about people moving into a given parish and their departures to other parishes. The arrival records may list the person's name, age or birth date, occupation, former residence, and new residence. The departure lists give similar information. These records are important sources for following the movement of the working class. They often include citations given to people leaving a parish for North America.

## Locating Church Records

The parish registers are kept at the local parish church until 80 years have passed since the date of the last entry. The registers are then sent to the state archive for the area. (See the "Archives and Libraries" section of this outline.) The duplicate

copy of the register is sent to the state archive as soon as it is filled.

You must determine which parish your ancestor belonged to so you will know which parish registers to search. Small villages that did not have their own church were part of a larger parish, which is referred to by the town where the church was located. To identify the parish a farm or village belonged to, see the "Gazetteers" section of this outline.

Parish boundary maps can also be extremely helpful when determining which parish church records to search. They can help identify neighboring parishes if you need to search more than one parish in a region.

## Records at the Family History Library

The Family History Library has many Norwegian church records on microfilm. The collection includes all existing parish registers from their beginnings until about 1920. This collection continues to grow as new records are microfilmed.

To find these church records in the Family History Library Catalog, look in the Locality section under:

NORWAY, [COUNTY], [PARISH] -  
CHURCH RECORDS

## Records Not at the Family History Library

Baptism, marriage, and burial records with entries from the last 80-year period are located at the local parish church. Occasionally, pastors delay sending their old church books to the archives, so some local parishes may have records that are older than 80 years. You may write in English to local parishes for information from this most recent time period. When writing, always include a self-addressed envelope with three international postage coupons.

## CIVIL REGISTRATION

---

Civil registration refers to vital records made by the government. No civil registration occurred in Norway before 1876. Beginning that year a law required that all birth, marriage, and death information be sent to the Central Bureau of Statistics (*Statistisk Sentralbyrå*). This information is used for statistical purposes only and generally is not available to the public.

In 1915 the Registers of Vital Statistics (*Folkeregistre*) were started on a community level. They were based on information submitted by the



parish offices and include information about all persons in a community and the dates in which they moved into or out of the area. They also contain information about taxes, voter registration, and other official business.

Register information generally is not available to the public, but occasionally specific inquiries may be answered. The *Folkeregistre* (People's Registrar) in the local community should be contacted first. If the information you need cannot be obtained there, you may contact the archive that houses the information for that community for help.

For many years the Registers of Vital Statistics were funded by the district government, and the information was submitted voluntarily. However, since 1946, registration has been mandatory in all districts.

## **COURT RECORDS**

Three kinds of court records are kept in Norway: probate, land, and civil court records. The probate and land records are explained in the "Probate Records" and "Land and Property" sections of this outline. The civil court records are discussed here and are referred to simply as court records.

Most court records start sometime in the 1600s, and they record both criminal and civil action. Before the probate law was passed in 1687, many probate records were part of the general court records. Within court records you will find several different types of cases:

- Cases regarding *allodial* land rights (independently and privately owned land), where several generations of a family may be listed
- Paternity suits, including fines levied against parents of illegitimate children, and instruction about the church discipline in such matters
- Inheritance cases
- Criminal cases such as theft and murder

Court records offer helpful information about how your ancestor lived. This can be of great importance if you wish to have a better understanding of the times and lives of your ancestor. However, court records do require a great amount of time to search because they do not have indexes.

Many Norwegian court records are available on microfilm. More are deposited in the regional

archives in Norway. Those located at the Family History Library are listed in the Locality section of the catalog under these headings:

NORWAY - COURT RECORDS  
NORWAY, [COUNTY] - COURT RECORDS  
NORWAY, [COUNTY], [PARISH] - COURT RECORDS

## **EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION**

Emigration and immigration sources list the names of people leaving (emigrating) or coming into (immigrating) a country. Norwegian emigration records can be a useful source of genealogical information. They are usually found as passenger lists. There are also some records of passports issued. The information in these records includes the emigrants' names, ages, occupations, destinations, and places of origin or birthplaces.

These sources can be very valuable in helping you determine where in Norway your ancestor came from. They can also help in constructing family groups. If you do not find your ancestor, you may find emigration information about your ancestor's neighbors. People who lived near each other in Norway often settled together in the country they emigrated to.

This section discusses:

- How to find the ancestor's town of origin.
- History of emigration from Norway.
- Passenger lists.
- Records of Norwegian immigrants in the United States.

Fortunately, Norwegian emigration records are numerous. There are also some helpful records of Norwegian immigrants in the United States.

### **How to Find the Ancestor's Town of Origin**

Once you have traced your family to an immigrant ancestor, you must determine the city or town the ancestor was from. Norway has no nationwide index to birth, marriage, or death records. These records were kept locally.

Several sources may contain your ancestor's place of origin. You may be able to learn the town your ancestor came from by talking to older family members. Family members or a library may have documents that name the city or town, such as:

- Birth, marriage, and death certificates.
- Obituaries.
- Journals.
- Photographs.
- Letters.
- Family Bibles.
- Church certificates/records.
- Naturalization applications and petitions.
- Passenger lists.
- Passports.
- Family heirlooms.

If your ancestor has a surname that does not end in *sen* or *son*, the name itself may be a clue to the place in Norway where the family came from. Check a Norwegian Gazetteer such as *Norsk Stedsfortegnelse* (FHL 948.1 E8ns, 1972; microfiche number 6054629; computer number 0106663 ) to determine if the surname appears as a place name and where it is located in the country. See the “Names, Personal” section of this outline for further information about Norwegian naming customs.

### History of Emigration from Norway

Between 1836 and 1920 an estimated 900,000 people left Norway. Most of them went to the United States and Canada. This wave of emigration was caused by an increase in the Norwegian population and a desire to own land. While people of many occupations left Norway, most of these emigrants were farmers. The first emigrant ship left Norway in 1825, but the real wave of emigration started in 1836. Most who left Norway before 1825 first went to other European countries and then traveled to their destination.

- *1836 to 1865.* An estimated 200,000 emigrants left Norway during this period. The emigration movement took root all over the country. Groups of emigrants came from every county and most communities. Every spring, ships left ports all over Norway. In this early period the emigrants sailed to their various destinations, supplying themselves with food and commodities for a trip that could last as long as three months. Ninety-five percent of these emigrants went to the United States.

- *1866 to 1920.* In the mid 1860s, large numbers of people began leaving Norway on steamships. Most emigrants sailed to Hull, England, and then traveled by train to Liverpool, England. From there they sailed to the United States and Canada. Steamships took only two to three weeks instead of three months, so emigration increased. During this time period 700,000 people left Norway. However, emigration declined in the mid-1870s because of a recession in the United States.

### Passenger Lists

No passenger lists exist for any Norwegian ports before 1867. Prior to this time, emigrant groups generally bought or chartered a ship and left from almost any of Norway’s many ports. For earlier emigration records, check the Family History Library Catalog:

NORWAY - EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION  
 NORWAY, [COUNTY] - EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION  
 NORWAY, [COUNTY], [PARISH] - EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION  
 NORWAY, [COUNTY], [CITY] - EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION

These records may be on microfilm, on microfiche, or in book form. Some emigration sources are listed in periodicals, listed in the local histories (Bygdebøker), or found as passport records. Some Norwegians emigrated via Altona, Norway, and Hamburg, Germany.

After the mid-1860s most Norwegian emigrants left through the ports of Kristiania (Oslo), Bergen, Trondheim, and Stavanger. The records of departures from these ports are called passenger lists. The information in these lists varies over time but usually includes the emigrant’s name, age, occupation, last place of residence, and destination. When a family group emigrated together, the list also contains the members’ relationships to the head of the household. Passenger lists are available for most ports used by Norwegian emigrants. Most are indexed at least by the first letter of the surname.

The Family History Library has microfilm copies of the following original records. The film numbers are listed in the Family History Library Catalog under:

NORWAY - EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION - [PORT]

- *Kristiania (Oslo)*  
Passenger lists . . . . . 1867 to 1966  
Indexes . . . . . 1867 to 1966  
White Star Line (unindexed) . . . 1883 to 1923  
(Computer number 0253708)  
These records are alphabetized by the first letter of the surname only and then listed chronologically by date. They are handwritten and often difficult to read.

- *Bergen*  
Passenger lists . . . . . 1874 to 1924  
(Computer number 0253796)  
(A typewritten version of the Bergen lists has been copied and indexed on microfiche; computer number 0094941.)

The passenger list from Bergen is also available on the Internet at:

[www.hist.uib.no/arkivverket](http://www.hist.uib.no/arkivverket)  
(Click on the 1801 census, then go to the bottom of that page and click on the Bergen emigration.)

[www.uib.no/hi/1801page.html](http://www.uib.no/hi/1801page.html)  
(Go to the bottom of the page and click on the Bergen emigration.)

A good index of Norwegians who emigrated from Bergen-Quebec was made from Quebec passenger lists:

*Fornavsregister til skipslistene Bergen-Quebec 1865–1873* (Given name Index to the Ship Lists Bergen-Quebec 1865–1873). Bergen: Statsarkivet, 1993. (FHL book 948.33 W3b; computer number 0696908.) This index is also available on the Internet (see below).

- *Trondheim*  
Passenger lists . . . . . 1867 to 1926  
(Computer number 0254155)  
(These lists have been indexed alphabetically by first name and surname(s). The index is on microfilm and is typewritten.)

- *Stavanger*  
(Computer number 0362398)  
The original passenger lists from Stavanger were destroyed. A list of emigrants from Rogaland County has been reconstructed from many other sources such as registers of people moving out of the parishes, newspaper articles, obituaries, and local histories. This emigrant list, known as the Rogaland emigration index, covers the earliest emigration period until the present day. It is alphabetized by the first letter only. For example, all the surnames beginning with “A” will be filed together in no particular order.

- *Other ports.*  
There are also passenger lists from Kristiansand (1873–1927, computer number 0253742), Kristiansund (1882–1959, computer number 0253926), and Ålesund (1852–1923, computer number 0263842).

Passport journals also exist for Kristiansund (1837–1909, computer number 0253882), Ålesund (1852–1916, computer number 0263875), and Romsdal rural district (1846–1925, computer number 0263894).

There is also an alphabetical list by given name, then surname of the people who emigrated from Telemark County, Norway, between 1814 and 1900:

*Emigrant kartotek Telemark frem til år 1900* (Emigrant Card Index for Telemark up to the year 1900). [S.l.: s.n., 1982]. (FHL fiche 6350054; computer number 0215687.)

An excellent index to most of the above passenger lists is found on the Internet in both Norwegian and English at:

[www.hist.uib.no/arkivverket](http://www.hist.uib.no/arkivverket)  
(Click on “emigranter” and then search the list of your choice.)

This site includes indexes for the following:

- Passenger lists from Bergen to New York, 1871–1873
- Passenger lists from Bergen, 1875–1924
- Passports issued for travel to America from Bergen, 1842–1860
- Ships’ lists from Bergen to New York, 1871–1873
- Emigrants from Bergen City by place of birth or residence
- Passenger lists from Kristiania (Oslo)
- Passenger lists from Kristiansand
- Emigration records from Stavanger
- Migrants from Gran parish, 1825–1900
- Migrants from Jevnaker parish, 1837–1901
- Migrants from Valdres, 1816–1867

## Records of Norwegian Immigrants in the United States

Most early Norwegian immigrants to the United States settled in the Midwest, but many also settled in other parts of the United States and Canada.

- *Passenger lists.* Most Norwegian immigrants to the United States arrived at the ports of New York and Quebec. The Family History Library has microfilm copies of the records of all the major North American ports. Some are indexed. See the *United States Research Outline* for further information about United States immigration records.
- *County histories.* Histories from the counties where Norwegians settled sometimes provide the immigrants' towns of origin.
- *War records.* Civil War service and pension records and World War I draft registration records sometimes give clues as to what a person's place of origin in Norway was.
- *Naturalization.* Naturalization records from county, state, and district courts may give important clues as to where an immigrant was from and when he or she lived there.
- *Census records.* The United States federal censuses for 1900, 1910, and 1920 list the year of immigration and indicate if a person had been naturalized.
- *Church records.* Church records from Norwegian churches in America can be useful in your research. (See the "Archives and Libraries" section of this outline for an address to the Evangelical Lutheran churches in America.)

An important work on early emigration from Norway to the United States is:

Ulvestad, Martin. *Nordmænderne i Amerika, deres historie og rekord* (Norwegians in America Their History and Record). 2 vols. Minneapolis: History Book Company's Forlag, 1907. (FHL book 973 F2u; film 0896612, item 1; computer number 0269168.)

This book describes many early Norwegian immigrants in every state in the Union, most with a place of origin.

Another useful book about early Norwegian immigration to America is:

Naeseth, Gerhard B. *Norwegian Immigrants to the United States, A Biographical Directory, 1825–1850*. 2 vols. Decorah, Iowa: Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum, 1997. (FHL book 973 D3nn; computer number 0715083.)

The Norwegian Immigrant Association was organized to create an exhibit for the Ellis Island Museum in 2000. Its web page includes links to other sites and can be found at:

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

The Norwegian Emigration Center is a division of the regional archive in Stavanger. The center has a copy of most of the published genealogical material about Norwegian families, as well as a complete collection of the church, census, probate, and emigration records. Workers there answer questions and do research for a nominal fee. The center's address is:

The Norwegian Emigration Center  
Bergjelandsгатen 30  
4012 Stavanger  
Norway  
Internet: <http://home.sol.no/~henningh/utvasent.htm>

The Norwegian Emigration Museum (*Norsk Utvandrer museum*), which has an archive, is located in Otterstad, Norway. It has an extensive collection of records of Norwegians in America. It also provides a network of local genealogists who, for a fee, will conduct private research through correspondence.

Norsk Utvandrer museum  
Åkershagan  
3212 Otterstad  
Norway  
Telephone: 47 62 57 48 50  
Fax: 47 62 57 48 51  
Internet: [www.hamarnett.no/emigrantmuseum](http://www.hamarnett.no/emigrantmuseum)  
Hours: 8:30 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.

## ENCYCLOPEDIAS AND DICTIONARIES

---

Encyclopedias may provide information on all branches of knowledge or may treat a specific topic comprehensively, usually in articles arranged alphabetically. They often contain information of great interest for genealogical research, including articles about places, prominent people, minorities, and religions. They can give information about diverse topics such as record-keeping practices, laws, customs, commerce, costumes, occupations, and archaic terminology.

The Family History Library has general knowledge encyclopedias in the Norwegian language and Norwegian-English and English-Norwegian dictionaries. The encyclopedias and dictionaries are listed in the Family History Library Catalog under:

#### NORWAY - ENCYCLOPEDIAS AND DICTIONARIES

See also the “Language” section of this outline.

### GAZETTEERS

A gazetteer is a dictionary of place-names. Gazetteers describe towns and villages, parishes, counties, rivers, mountains, sizes of population, and other geographical features. They usually include only the names of places that exist at the time the gazetteer was published. The place-names are generally listed in alphabetical order, similar to a dictionary. The standard spelling used in the gazetteer may differ from the variation used in records of your ancestors.

Gazetteers may also provide additional information about towns, such as schools, colleges, universities, major manufacturing works, canals, docks, and railroad stations.

You can use a gazetteer to locate the places where your family lived and to determine the civil and church jurisdictions over those places. For example, the place-name *Maugerud, Flesberg, Buskerud, Norway* reads this way: *Maugerud* is a farm in the parish of *Flesberg*, which is a county of *Buskerud*, in the country of Norway.

Many places in Norway have the same or similar names. You will need to use a gazetteer to identify the specific parish where your ancestor lived, the county of the parish, and the jurisdictions where records about your ancestor were kept. Gazetteers are also helpful for determining county jurisdictions as used in the Family History Library Catalog.

#### **Finding Place-Names in the Family History Library Catalog**

Place-names in the Family History Library Catalog are listed under their modern names and in their current counties. When using the microfiche version of the catalog, you can find the county that a parish or city is listed under in the catalog by using the “see reference” on the first microfiche for Norway. When using the compact disc version of the catalog, the Locality browse can be used to identify the county a particular parish belongs to.

The following postal guides of 1901 and 1972 are the best sources for identifying the parish and county a particular farm or village belongs to:

Klaus Helsing of Ragnar Lundh. *Norsk Stedfortegnelse: Postadressebog for Norge* (Norwegian Place-Name Index: Postal Guide for Norway). Kristiania: Poststyrelsen, 1901. (FHL book 948.1 E8ns 1901; film 0123205; fiche 6030038–49; computer number 0411170.)

*Norge. Postdirektoratet, 1972* (Norway. Postal Directory, 1972). Oslo: Nasjonaltrykkeriet, 1972. (FHL book 948.1 E8ns 1972; fiche 6054629; computer number; 0106663.)

#### **Historical Place-Names**

The *Amt* (county) system was introduced to Norway and Denmark in 1661. The union of Denmark and Norway lasted until 1814. On 14 August 1818 the word for *county* in Norway became *fylke*. A list of the old county names with reference to the new county names is found in *List of Parishes, Clerical Districts, and Regions with Maps for Each County in Norway* (see the “Maps” section of this outline).

### GENEALOGY

The term *genealogy* is used in this outline and in the Family History Library Catalog to describe a variety of records containing family information gathered by individuals, other researchers, societies, or archives. These records include pedigree charts, compiled information on families, correspondence, ancestor lists, research exchange files, record abstracts, and collections of original or copied documents. These can be excellent sources of information that can save you valuable time. Because they are compiled from other sources of information, they must be carefully evaluated for accuracy.

#### **Major Collections and Databases**

The Family History Library has several sources that contain previous research or can lead you to others who are interested in sharing family information. These sources include the following:

- ***International Genealogical Index.*** The names of millions of deceased individuals who lived in Norway are listed in the International Genealogical Index (IGI). Copies of the IGI are located at the library and at each Family

History Center. The index for Norway includes names extracted from parish registers by volunteers, as well as names submitted by others interested in Norwegian research.

Norway is divided into 18 counties and the autonomous cities of Oslo and Bergen. The Norwegian IGI index can be searched by last name or by given name.

The IGI is available on both microfiche and compact disc (as part of FamilySearch™). When using the compact disc version, you do not need to know which county to search. The computer will search the entire country for any name.

- **Ancestral File.** The Family History Library has developed a computer database of family information called Ancestral File, which currently includes over 30 million names from many countries, including Norway. This file must be used with great caution, as file merges have caused some patronymic name families to mix erroneously.
- **Family Group Records Collection.** More than eight million family group record forms have been microfilmed in the *Family Group Records Collection*. This collection includes many Norwegian families. There are two major sections: the Archives Section and the Patrons Section. The film numbers for both sections are listed in the Author\Title section of the Family History Library Catalog under:

#### FAMILY GROUP RECORDS COLLECTION

- **Family Histories.** Many Norwegian families have produced histories that include genealogical information, biographies, photographs, and other excellent information. These usually include several generations of the family.

The Family History Library has a large collection of Norwegian family histories. They are listed in the surname section of the Family History Library Catalog. Not every name found in a family history will be listed. Only the major surnames discussed in the family history are included. See also the “Biography” section of this outline.

- **Genealogical Collections.** The Family History Library has some collections of pedigree charts and notes gathered by different researchers for prominent Norwegian families. The collections are organized in alphabetical order by family surname and are handwritten. They are listed in

the Locality section of the Family History Library Catalog under:

#### NORWAY - GENEALOGY

- **Local Histories.** A special type of local history book called a *bygdebok* (community book, such as rural or farm history) is available for many rural Norwegian communities. These bygdebøker often include several volumes for a single community. Part of the material is devoted to the general history of the area, but most of it is usually devoted to the individual farms and the genealogies of the people living on the farms. Information found in a bygdebok should be considered secondary and needs to be verified using primary sources such as births, marriage, and death records.

The Family History Library has one of the largest collection of Norwegian local histories in the United States. Genealogical collections and these rural chronicles are listed in Family History Library Catalog under:

#### NORWAY, [COUNTY], [PARISH] - GENEALOGY

#### NORWAY, [COUNTY], [PARISH] - HISTORY

Many local periodicals published in Norway also contain excellent family information. The main places and families that are described in these periodicals are indexed. See the “Periodicals” section of this outline.

If you find your surname in any of the sources described in this section, determine whether the entry actually pertains to your family. All persons with the same surname are not necessarily related. You might have to do some research before you can connect your ancestry to families listed in these sources.

- **Internet.** Norwegian *GenWeb* has produced a comprehensive Norwegian genealogy web site that allows users to locate lost ancestors. It contains the entire 1880 United States census listing of people of Norwegian ancestry. Research tips and helpful links to other good genealogy sites can also be found at this site. Its address is:

[www.rootsweb.com/~wgnorway](http://www.rootsweb.com/~wgnorway)

To get started, post a query on the web site’s surname or farm/parish bulletin boards. This is similar to *Viking’s* “Lost Branch” (see the “Societies” section in this outline). The bulletin boards are a forum for questions about specific

family members or branches of the family. You might also search the site's online census records.

## **HISTORY**

---

Effective family research requires some understanding of the historical events that may have affected your family and the records about them. Learning about wars, governments, laws, migrations, and religious trends may help you understand political boundaries, family movements, and settlement patterns. These events may have led to the creation of records, such as land and military documents, that mention your family.

Researching your ancestors will become more interesting as you learn about the events they may have participated in. For example, by using a history you might learn about the events that occurred in the year your great-grandparents were married.

### **General History**

- 800– 1050 Viking age
- 872 King Harald Fairhair unites Norway into one kingdom. Before that, Norway is comprised of small, warring kingdoms.
- 1000 King Olav Trygvasson and King Olav Haraldsson “The Holy” bring Christianity to Norway.
- 1319 The old royal line dies out. Norway unites with Denmark.
- 1397– 1523 The Union of Kalmar is established, in which Denmark, Norway, and Sweden unite under one king.
- 1523– 1814 Denmark and Norway unite under one king.
- 1536 The king of Denmark and Norway appropriates the land holdings of the Catholic Church and declares the Lutheran Church as the state religion.
- 1814– 1905 Norway unites with Sweden. The Norwegian parliament rules under its own constitution, but there is only one king for Norway and Sweden.

- 1905– 1957 Prince Carl Fredrik of Denmark (named Håkon VII) is elected king of Norway. He rules as a constitutional monarch.

World War I (Norway is neutral, but in 1918 it is effectively blockaded. The Norwegian merchant fleet has great losses.)

- 1945 World War II (Germans occupies Norway.)

Interesting facts about Norway can be found at the following Internet addresses:

[www.cyberclip.com/Katrine/NorwayInfo/](http://www.cyberclip.com/Katrine/NorwayInfo/)

<http://odin.dep.no/html/nofovalt/depter/ud/nornyt/uda-286.html>

The Family History Library has some published national and local histories for Norway. The following is available at the library and on film at Family History Centers:

Gjerset, Knut. *History of the Norwegian People*. New York: The MacMillan Co., 1915. (FHL book 948.1 H2g; film 1440084; computer number 0251352.)

You can find histories in the Family History Library Catalog under:

EUROPE - HISTORY  
NORWAY - HISTORY  
NORWAY, [COUNTY] - HISTORY  
NORWAY, [COUNTY], [CITY] - HISTORY

Major works on Norwegian history are also available in public and university libraries.

### **Local Histories**

Local histories should be studied and enjoyed for the background information they can provide about your family's lifestyle and environment.

The Family History Library has many local histories for towns in Norway. The local histories (*bygdebøker*), give statistical information about the general area and genealogical information about the people in the community. (For more information, see the “Genealogy” section of this outline.) Some of these histories are also available at major public and university libraries in the Midwest.

## Calendar Changes

The Gregorian calendar is the calendar in common use in the world today. It is a correction of the Julian calendar, which had been in use since A.D. 46. Leap years had been miscalculated in the Julian calendar. By 1582 the calendar was 10 days behind the solar year.

In Norway the last day of the Julian calendar was 18 February 1700. At that time, 10 days were omitted in order to bring the calendar in line with the solar year. The day after 18 February 1700 was 1 March 1700.

The early records in Norway often list a feast day rather than an actual date (for example, Dom. 7 p. Trin. 1818, or 7 Sundays past the Holy Trinity Sunday). You can use the feast day calendar to determine that the date is 5 July 1818.

The feast day calendar was compiled by Inger M. Bukke and Finn A. Thomsen. It includes three parts: 1) an index to fixed and movable feast days, 2) the Gregorian calendar table from 1610 to 1833, and 3) the Julian calendar (for Sweden and Finland only) from 1700 to 1753 (FHL book 948 H3b; computer number 0121961).

The calendar is available at the Family History Library. It may also be available through other genealogical organizations.

## LAND AND PROPERTY

Land records in Norway generally start in the 1700s. These records contain information about real estate conveyances, mortgages, contracts, agreements, deeds, leases of land, and auction sales. They often reveal family information such as the name of a spouse, heir, and other relatives. From land records you may learn where people lived previously, their occupations, and other clues for further research. Sometimes you will find information about entire families.

For the period before 1700 you may wish to search court records. They contain similar property information.

The land records after 1865 are in the custody of the local magistrate (*sorenskriver*). They are also available up to 1935 at the regional archives, but only in book form. The records before 1865 are in the custody of the regional archives and are available on microfilm at the Family History Library.

The land records are listed in the Family History Library Catalog under:

NORWAY, [COUNTY], [PARISH] -  
LAND AND PROPERTY

## LANGUAGE AND LANGUAGES

Most materials used in Norwegian research are written in Norwegian. Although you do not need to speak or read Norwegian to do research, you do need some knowledge of the language to understand the records. You may also find some Latin words in Norwegian records.

Because Norwegian grammar may affect the way words appear in genealogical records, the words in a dictionary or word list may be slightly different from their appearance in records.

### Language Aids

The Family History Library has published a Norwegian-English list of genealogical words. The *Norwegian Word List* is available for a nominal fee by visiting or writing to the Family History Library. A Norwegian-English dictionary can also aid you in your research. You can find the word list, dictionaries, and similar language aids at many research libraries.

A useful dictionary is:

*Cappelens Store Engelsk Norsk Ordbok* and *Kunnskapsforlaget Aschehoug - Gyldendal's norsk engelsk ordbok* by W.A.Kirkeby (Cappelens Large English Norwegian Dictionary and Kunnskapsforlaget Aschehoug - Gyldendal's Norwegian English Dictionary by W.A. Kirkeby). Oslo: J.W. Cappelens Forlag, 1988 and Oslo: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag, 1986. (Computer numbers 0637052 and 0697284.)

Another useful dictionary that is also on microfilm is:

Scavenius, H. *Gyldendals Ordbøker; Norsk-Engelsk og Engelsk-Norsk* (Gyldendal's Dictionaries; Norwegian-English and English-Norwegian). Oslo: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag, 1945. (FHL film 1224705 item 4; computer number 0427612.)

Additional dictionaries can be found in the Locality section of the catalog under:

NORWAY - LANGUAGE AND  
LANGUAGES

and in the Subject section of the catalog under:

NORWEGIAN - LANGUAGE -  
DICTIONARIES



## MAPS

---

Maps are an important source to help locate the places where your ancestor lived. They help you see the neighboring towns and geographic features of the area your ancestor came from. Maps can help you locate places, parishes, churches, geographical features, transportation routes, and proximity to other towns. Maps may be published individually or in a bound collection called an atlas. Maps may also be included in gazetteers, guidebooks, local histories, and history texts.

Different types of maps can help you in different ways. Historical atlases describe the growth and development of countries. They show boundaries, migration routes, settlement patterns, military campaigns, and other historical information. Road atlases provide detailed information about the road systems of Norway.

The names of the Norwegian counties (*fylker*) changed in 1918. You can find the changes in:

*List of Parishes, Clerical Districts, and Regions, with Maps of the Counties in Norway.* Salt Lake City, Utah: Corporation of the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1992. (FHL book 948.1E77l; microfiche number 6068227; computer number 0663365.)

This publication shows outline maps of each county with parishes and clerical districts. It also contains a list of regions (districts) of Norway and shows which parishes belong to each region. The names of these regions are historical. Their boundaries are determined by geological features.

### Using Maps

Maps must be used carefully for several reasons:

- Several places may have the same name. For example, there are eight parishes called *Nes* in present-day Norway. You must determine which *Nes* your ancestor came from.
- Spelling was not standardized when most early records were made. You may find that the spelling of a place is different on an old map than how it is spelled today. For example, Heddal was formerly spelled Hitterdal.
- Place-names are often misspelled in American sources. Difficult names may have been shortened and important diacritical marks omitted.

### Finding the Specific Town on the Map

For successful Norwegian research, you must identify the parish where your ancestor lived. Because many parishes have the same name, you may need some additional information before you can locate the correct parish on a map. You will be more successful if you have some information about the parish. Before using a map, you should search gazetteers, histories, family records, and other sources to learn all you can about:

- The county (*fylke*) your ancestor was from.
- The parish where your ancestor was christened or married.
- The parish where your relatives lived.
- The size of the parish.
- The occupation of your ancestor or any relatives (this may indicate the size of the area or industries in the area).
- Nearby localities such as large cities.
- Nearby features such as rivers and mountains.
- Industries of the area.

### Finding Maps and Atlases

Maps and atlases are available at numerous historical societies and at public and university libraries.

The Family History Library has a good collection of Norwegian maps and atlases. These are listed in the Family History Library Catalog under:

#### NORWAY - MAPS

There are also some helpful atlases at the Family History Library:

*Kongelig Norsk Automobilklubb. Kartbok for Norge* (Royal Norwegian Automobile Club. Map Book for Norway). Scale variable. 2nd ed. Oslo: Kongelig Norsk Automobilklubb, 1954. (FHL book 948.1 E7d; film 1440189 item 5; computer number 0411156.)

*Norge, vol. 4. Atlas Register* (Norway, Vol. 4. Atlas Index). Scale 1:400,000. Oslo: J.W. Cappelen's Forlag A/S, 1963. (FHL book 948.1 E6nc, vol. 4; computer number 0249125.)

Norge. Statens kartverk [Oslo]: Statens kartverk: 1950–1997. FHL Map case 948.1 E7ns, (727 maps; microfilm numbers 1573254–1573255; computer number 0826225.)

You can purchase maps of Norway from:

Travel Genie Maps  
3815 Calhoun Avenue  
Ames, IA 50010-4106  
Telephone: 515-232-1070  
E-mail: TravGenie@aol.com  
Internet: [www.netins.net/showcase/travelgenie](http://www.netins.net/showcase/travelgenie)  
(This company is closed 10 April to 10 June each year. Please send orders and inquiries before 10 April or after 10 June.)

Explorer  
620 West Lincoln Way  
Ames, IA 50010-3900  
Telephone: 515-232-8843  
(This company offers primarily travel guides.)

## **MILITARY RECORDS**

Norway has been involved in several wars, and its first military force is as old as the country itself. In the late middle ages the military was dissolved. The Danish king (Christian IV) decided in 1628 that a Norwegian army was to be re-established. This was the beginning of a permanent Norwegian Army.

The Norwegian Army was reorganized in 1641 under *Hannibal Sechested* (Hannibal Feud), and a general war commissioner was chosen in 1644. In the 1650s there were two general war commissioners in Norway, one for north of the mountains (*nordaffjelske*) and one for south of the mountains (*sønnaffjelske*). The army was later organized with a general war commissioner and several regional war commissioners. The number of war commissioners varied between seven and ten from 1880 to 1900.

Military records identify individuals who served in the military or who were eligible for service. Evidence that an ancestor actually served may be found in family records, biographies, censuses, probate records, civil registration, and church records. Other sources such as church and census records are more easily available and contain better genealogical information than the military records.

Military records include the following:

- Muster rolls

- Personnel files
- Regimental account books
- Lists of officers
- Accounts (officers)
- Probate records (officers)
- Naval records

Records of military service in Norway were kept by the Department of Defense. These records are now at the National Archives. The Family History Library has on microfilm all the available military records for 1643 to 1909.

Because the military records from Norway are sketchy and not indexed, they are difficult to work with. The early records give only the names of individual soldiers. Information about officers is easier to find. In the 1700s and 1800s the records give more detailed personal information about each soldier than can sometimes be found in other records. You may find such information as a soldier's name; age; father's name and occupation; civil occupation; place of residence; marital status; wife's name; number of children; height; bodily peculiarities; illnesses or characteristics that made him unfit to serve; previous service; joining date; length of service; and status as a farm owner, renter or cotter.

To use Norwegian military records, you will have to determine the specific unit that your ancestor served in. If you do not know the name of the unit, you may be able to find out which units were in the area where he lived. To do this, you must know the town where the individual was living when he was of age to serve in the military. To determine what unit your ancestor belonged to, check the Family History Library Catalog under:

### **NORWAY - MILITARY RECORDS**

A useful biography about Norwegian military officers from 1628 to 1814 is:

*Olai Ovenstad. Militærbiografier, den norske hærs officerer fra 18 januar 1628 til 17 mai 1814* (The Norwegian Army Officers from January 18, 1628 to May 17, 1814). Oslo: Norsk Slekthistorisk Forening, 1948–1949. 2 vol. (FHL 948.1 D3o; computer number 0411114.)

A list of the regiments and companies for each county is listed. The main military records for Norway are to be found on the level of the country, but there are also a few listed under the level of

county and city, which can be found in the Family History Library Catalog under:

NORWAY [COUNTY], - MILITARY RECORDS  
NORWAY, [COUNTY], [PARISH] - MILITARY RECORDS

## Military History

Norway was involved in the following military actions:

- 1563–70 The Nordic Seven-Year War
- 1611–13 The Kalmar War
- 1643–45 The Hannibal Feud
- 1657–60 The Krabbe War and Bjelke Feud
- 1675–79 The Gyldenløve Feud
- 1709–20 The Eleven-Year War
- 1788 Action against Sweden (in Bohuslän)
- 1807–14 Napoleonic War
- 1940–45 Occupation during World War II

For more historical information about the Norwegian military, see:

Bjørn Christophersen, *Vårt Forsvars Historie* (The History of Our Defense). Oslo: Gyldendahl Norsk Forlag, 1978. (FHL book Ref. 948.1 M2c; computer number 0107619.)

For information about Norwegians who settled in Wisconsin and served in the 15th Volunteer Infantry, see the following web site:

[www.15thwisconsin.net](http://www.15thwisconsin.net)

More military histories are listed in the Family History Library Catalog under:

NORWAY - MILITARY HISTORY

## NAMES, PERSONAL

Understanding surnames and given names can help you find and identify your ancestors in the records.

### Surnames

Before record keeping began, most people had only one name such as John. As the population increased it became necessary to distinguish

between individuals with the same name. The problem was usually solved by adding descriptive information. John became John the *skredder* (tailor), John the son of Matthew, John the short, or John from *Nordgård* (farm). At first, such “surnames” applied only to one person and not to the whole family. After a few generations, these names were passed from father to son.

Surnames developed from four major sources:

- *Patronymic*, based on a parent’s name, such as Siver *Jensen* (son of Jens)
- *Occupational*, based on the person’s trade, such as Hans *Smed* (Smith)
- *Nicknames*, based on a person’s characteristics, such as Olav *Blåtann* (Blue tooth)
- *Geographical*, based on a person’s farm name, such as David *Mundal*

Surnames were first used by the nobility and wealthy land owners. Later the custom was followed by merchants and townspeople and eventually by the rural population.

The predominant type of surname in Norway is patronymic. Such names are based on the father’s given name. This “last name” changed with each generation. For example, Sjul Gulliksen was the son of a man named Gullik. If Sjul had a son named Hans, the son would be known as Hans Sjulsen (Hans son of Sjul). His brothers would be called Sjulsen, while his sisters would be known as Sjulsdatter (daughter of Sjul). Where the population used patronymics, a woman did not change her name at marriage.

After about 1850 it became the custom in the cities to take permanent surnames. By 1900 most of Norway began doing so. In some places the patronymic naming customs continued until 1923, when a law was passed requiring persons to adopt permanent family names to be passed to successive generations. When this happened, many Norwegians chose to use the name of their farm (residence) as their surname.

### Given Names

A specific naming pattern was very common in Norway until about 1900. Although not always followed strictly, the following patterns may be helpful in researching family groups and determining the parents of the mother and father:

- The first male child was usually named for the father’s father.

- The second boy was named for the mother's father.
- The first female child was named for the mother's mother.
- The second girl was named for the father's mother.
- Additional children were often named for the parents' grandparents.
- If a spouse died and the surviving spouse remarried, the first child by the same sex was named after the deceased spouse.
- Two or three children in the same family sometimes were given the same given name. In some cases it was done because an older child died and the next child was given the same name. However, two or more children by the same given name lived. Therefore, do not presume that the first child with the same given name died unless the actual death record is found.

## **NOBILITY**

The Norwegian noble class started as a group of wealthy men who counseled the king in the 1200s. The king gave them special rights (such as freedom from taxes and answering only to the king's judgment) in return for special favors or services. These rights became hereditary, and the noble class was born. According to European custom, nobles received titles of varying degrees and were to be referred to as "Master" and "Mistress." The greatest difference between European and Norwegian nobility was the fact that most of the Norwegian nobility remained farmers. Their claim to and management of their land was always most important.

The black plague (*Svartedauen*) was brought to Bergen by passengers of a ship in the late summer of 1349. It wiped out the majority of the Norwegian noble class, as well as approximately one-half to two-thirds of the rest of the population. As the black plague concluded, members of the Danish ruling class became the dominate force for governing a united Norway and Denmark. Most Norwegian nobility after this time is of Danish origin. An 1849 amendment to the Norwegian constitution, written in 1814, abolished all nobility.

Although some original records such as the grant of nobility still exist, you can adequately accomplish most nobility research in secondary sources. These include published or manuscript genealogies of noble families.

An important source for Norwegian nobility research is:

*Danmarks Adels Arbok* (Danish Nobility Yearbook). København. First volume published in 1884. Some of the latest issues are not on microfilm. (FHL book 948.9 D55d; film 1124534-45; computer number 0186006.)

*Norsk Slektshistorisk Tidsskrift* (Periodical of Norwegian Family History) This also has many articles about Norwegian noble families. See the "Periodicals," "Societies," and "Genealogies" sections of this outline for more information.

*I balansepunktet* (In the balance point) includes many nobility families for several generations, mainly from the region of Sunnmøre, Møre og Romsdal, Norway. It also includes some nobility families from the west coast of Norway. This book covers the time frame from about 800 to 1700 (FHL book 948.35 H2u; computer number 0823288).

The Family History Library has collected other records of noble families. These records are listed in the Family History Library Catalog under:

NORWAY - NOBILITY  
 NORWAY, [COUNTY] - NOBILITY  
 NORWAY, [COUNTY], [TOWN] -  
 NOBILITY

## **PERIODICALS**

Most genealogical and historical societies in Norway publish magazines and newsletters. Excellent regional publications are also available. The articles often include:

- Family genealogies and pedigrees.
- Transcripts of church records.
- Helpful articles on research methodology.
- Information about local records, archives, and services.
- Book advertisements and book reviews.
- Research advertisements.
- Queries or requests for information about specific ancestors that can help you contact other interested researchers.

The periodicals are written in Norwegian and mainly contain compiled genealogies of native families and articles on local history. They are an excellent place to publish queries or advertisements for information about a Norwegian ancestor. The major national periodical for Norway is:

*Norsk Slektshistorisk Tidsskrift* (Periodical of Norwegian Family History). Oslo: Norsk Slektshistorisk Forening, 1928–. (FHL book 948.1 D25ns; computer number 0252076.)

The Vesterheim Genealogical Center—Norwegian American Museum in Decorah, Iowa, publishes a quarterly periodical called *Norwegian Tracks* to assist genealogists with Norwegian and Norwegian-American research (FHL book 948.1 d25; computer number 0036217).

Letters with genealogical inquiries should be addressed to:

Norwegian Tracks  
Vesterheim Genealogical Center and  
Naeseth Library  
415 West Main Street  
Madison, WI 53703  
Internet: [www.vesterheim.org](http://www.vesterheim.org)

**Indexes.** Some magazines have annual or cumulative indexes. One such index is:

*Norway—Periodical Index up to 1996.* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Corporation of the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1998. (FHL book 948.1 B22L; computer number 0459931.) This index of surnames and localities is available in the Norwegian periodicals at the Family History Library's Scandinavian register table. An addendum is in process and includes 1996 to 2000.

**Obtaining Periodicals.** Copies of periodicals are available from the local societies that publish them. Major archives with genealogical collections will have copies of many periodicals, particularly those representing the area they serve.

The Family History Library subscribes to many Norwegian periodicals. These are listed in the Family History Library Catalog in several ways. If you know the title of a periodical, search the Author/Title section. To find periodicals in the Locality section, use the following approaches:

NORWAY - GENEALOGY - PERIODICALS  
NORWAY - HISTORY - PERIODICALS  
NORWAY - PERIODICALS

NORWAY - SOCIETIES - PERIODICALS  
NORWAY, [COUNTY] - [PERIODICALS]  
NORWAY, [COUNTY], [CITY] -  
[PERIODICALS]

## **PROBATE RECORDS**

Probate records are court records that describe the distribution of people's estates after death. Information in the records may include a person's death date, heirs and guardians, relationships, residences, estate inventory, and witnesses.

These records are very helpful because in many areas the authorities began recording probate actions before they began keeping birth and death records. In these records whole families are recorded, and in many probates long lists of heirs such as brothers, sisters, nephews, and nieces are shown, depending on the condition of a probate.

Probate records were not created for every person who died. However, the probate law of 1687 stated that probate was necessary if a parent died and left children that were not of age (25 years old). An estate was often probated even if the children were of age.

While probate records are some of the most accurate sources of genealogical information, the relationships noted in the records may not always have the same meaning today. For instance, a brother-in-law may be recorded as a brother because legally that made no difference in probating the estate.

From the 14th century the *foged* (bailiff) was responsible for law enforcement in his jurisdiction. Late in the 16th century the *sorenskriver* (scribe) in the bailiff's office was appointed to take care of probate cases and prepare the legal documents in connection with probates. Later, the title *sorenskriver* came to mean probate judge.

### **The Probate Process**

Probate records are among the most important genealogical sources of Norway, and the procedure for their jurisdiction had its beginning centuries ago. The country was divided into small districts anciently called *fylker*. Several of these districts composed a *lagdømme*, a court where the law was expounded and disputes settled.

From these beginnings evolved *fogderier* (legal circuits), which today are known as *domsogn* or *sorenskriverier* (probate courts).

The administrative official in a *len* (county) in the earlier centuries was the *lensherre*. Later an *amtman* (county governor) was appointed by the king. His local functionary was the *fogd* or *foged* (bailiff), and the *fogderi* was his official district. The fogd became the official who collected taxes and enforced the law (*politi og oppebørselsmann*).

In the later part of the 16th century the scribe (*sorenskriver*) in the office of the fogd was appointed to take care of the legal division of an inheritance or the settlement of an estate, and he prepared the probate documents as a probate clerk.

Norwegian law required that the death of a person be reported to the district official as soon as possible in order to seal the estate of the deceased. Exempted from this rule was money or property set apart for the funeral and the common household. The cost of these were recorded and accounted for at the closing of the probate.

If the deceased was a parent, any children still living at home and the surviving spouse were to be present at the registration of the probate document, which registration was to take place on the third day after the death at the home of the deceased. All the guardians had to be present at the time of the settlement. All heirs who were not living in the parish but were residents of the same county were expected to present themselves within a set time of the registration. Usually it was up to the district official (*lensmann*) to decide how soon each individual was expected to be present, depending on where they lived. Those heirs living out of the county were customarily to be present within 12 weeks after the date of death. If they lived outside the country, they were usually to present themselves one year and six weeks after the date of death.

If a widow was pregnant at the time of her husband's death, she had the right to retain the undivided possession of the estate until the birth of the child so that the unborn child would also inherit from the estate. A widow or widower could not marry again before a certificate was obtained that showed that the estate had been settled.

From the commencement of such records, around 1660 to 1685, each probate court recorded deeds, probates, and other legal business in one chronological record. In 1685 the probate laws were revised and more firmly established under the authority of a bailiff in the rural areas and the mayor, aldermen, and city judge in the cities. By 1690, however, a district judge was the administrator in probate matters in the county courts. At the same time, the administration of probates in the cities came under the jurisdiction of the city judge alone.

Probate records of clergy and school teachers were kept separately from the civil records and were administered by some of the local church officials. This separate condition existed in general up to 1809 and in some districts up to 1812.

According to the Law of 1685, which was in force until 1814, the sequence of distribution of an inheritance was as follows:

1. The next of kin went to the court with a sponsor or guardian no sooner than 30 days after the death of the relative.
2. In the earlier days, it was customary to give 50 percent of the property to the surviving spouse and the other 50 percent to the children, with male children receiving twice as much as female children. This rule was later changed so that all children received equal amounts. If no spouse or children were living, the estate reverted to the deceased's father or his brother and sisters. If these relatives were unavailable, the estate reverted to the deceased person's mother or her brothers and sisters, then to the grandparents, and then to other remaining relatives.

The Norwegian law provided for the guardianship of children under 25. At the mother's death the father was appointed. At the father's death one of the brothers of the children was appointed if he was over the age of 25 (a person was considered a minor until that age). Next in line was the grandfather on the father's side, then the grandfather on the mother's side. After the grandfather, the next in line were the uncles on the father's side and then the uncles on the mother's side. If none of these persons were alive, then the nearest relatives on the father's side were appointed. If this was impossible, then the nearest relatives on the mother's side were appointed. If no relatives could be found, the government appointed some reliable persons as guardians for the children.

### **The Availability of Probate Records**

Early probate records for clergy, school teachers, and military officers were often separated from the regular probate records. Church officials conducted probate proceedings for priests or schoolteachers, commanding officers for military officers. After 1812 a probate judge conducted these probates along with all other probates.

The Family History Library has an excellent collection of Norwegian probate records. These are listed in the Family History Library Catalog under:

NORWAY, [REGION] -PROBATE RECORDS  
NORWAY, [COUNTY] - PROBATE RECORDS  
NORWAY, [COUNTY], [PARISH] - PROBATE RECORDS

Records before 1687 are usually listed under:

NORWAY - COURT RECORDS  
NORWAY, [REGION] - COURT RECORDS  
NORWAY, [COUNTY] - COURT RECORDS  
NORWAY, [COUNTY], [PARISH] - COURT RECORDS

Many of the Norwegian probate records are not indexed. Those that are indexed may be indexed by given name, surname, or the name of the farm where the deceased person resided at the time of death.

## **SOCIAL LIFE AND CUSTOMS**

To be effective in family history research, it is often helpful to understand the society your ancestor lived in. Learning about everyday life, religious practices, customs, and traditions will help you appreciate your ancestor and often give you ideas for research. Those that might affect your research strategy include mortality rates, life spans, apprenticeship customs, and courting and marriage customs that affected illegitimacy rates.

The infant mortality rate was high in most areas of Norway before the 20th century. Adults had a shorter life span than today, so it is necessary to search the death records in order to get a complete picture of a family.

About the time of confirmation (between the ages of 14 and 20), young people often left home to earn their own living or to prepare themselves to do so. A young man may have signed a contract for a five-year apprenticeship to learn a trade such as shoe making, barrel making, or rope making. A young woman may have become a servant in a well-to-do household or lived with relatives to learn housekeeping.

Norwegian marriage customs go back hundreds of years and have been changed very little by outside influences. For a long time most of the population followed the custom that marriages took place in private. Therefore, when a young couple and their families had agreed to the marriage, they and the community around them considered them as if married. Because of this custom the birth of the

first child often occurred soon after the marriage was formalized in the church.

The birth of illegitimate children was not uncommon. In many cases a promise of marriage had been made or the father may have died before the formal marriage could take place.

The Family History Library has some sources that explain social life and customs in Norway. Most are in Norwegian. They are listed in the Locality section of the Family History Library Catalog under:

NORWAY - SOCIAL LIFE AND CUSTOMS  
NORWAY, [COUNTY] - SOCIAL LIFE AND CUSTOMS  
NORWAY, [COUNTY], [VILLAGE] - SOCIAL LIFE AND CUSTOMS

A good book describing many aspects of Norwegian social life and customs is:

*Of Norwegian Ways*. Bent Vanberg, Minneapolis, Minnesota: Dillon Press, 1970. (FHL book Scand 948.1 H6v; computer number 0088481.)

Norwegian periodicals are a particularly good source of information about social life and customs. For more information, see the "Periodicals" section of this outline.

The *bygdebok* discussed in the "Genealogy" section of this outline describe the local customs in the various parts of Norway. Also see the "Periodicals" and "Societies" sections of this outline.

## **SOCIETIES**

There are several societies and organizations in Norway that may have information of value to your genealogical research. Most local communities in Norway have a genealogical and historical society of some type. Many of these groups publish books and periodicals. For more information, see the "Genealogy" and "Periodicals" sections of this outline.

There may also be some societies in the country your ancestor immigrated to, especially in the United States. The *bygdelags* (community societies) in the United States are made up of descendants of people who emigrated to North America from Norway. Presently there are 32 affiliated *lag* (societies). Every *lag* seeks to preserve and strengthen bonds with its home district or community of origin in Norway. You may find it helpful to join and support one of these societies. For information about these *bygdelags*,

please contact the president or vice-president, who can direct you to the lag that has information about the area in Norway that your ancestors came from:

President  
Marilyn D. Somdahl  
10129 Goodrich Circle  
Minneapolis, MN 55437  
Telephone: 612-831-4409

Vice-President  
Marilyn Sorensen  
4468 Arden View Court  
St. Paul, MN 55112  
Telephone: 651-633-1329  
Internet: [www.hfaa.org/bygdelaag](http://www.hfaa.org/bygdelaag)

The Vesterheim Genealogical Center (see below) can also help you find out if there is a society for the area your ancestors came from.

### Genealogical Societies

The major genealogical society in the United States that emphasizes Norwegian research is:

Vesterheim Genealogical Center  
Norwegian American Museum  
415 West Main Street  
Madison, WI 53703  
Internet: [www.vesterheim.org](http://www.vesterheim.org)

For more information, see the "Periodicals" section of this outline.

Many societies have collections that could provide information on Norwegian ancestors. For example, The Norwegian-American Association in Northfield, Minnesota, has a file known as the "Rowberg" file. Andrew A. Rowberg started this file in 1914, using articles about Norwegian Americans from Norwegian-American newspapers. The articles include obituaries; wedding and birth announcements; and information about weddings, anniversaries, promotions, honors, Norway visits, and other events. Short articles are mounted on cards, and longer articles are mounted in scrapbooks. Reference cards indicate volume and page numbers to these scrapbooks. Each article gives the newspaper's name and date of issue. This file also refers to biographical information in a number of Norwegian-American periodicals.

This information is available on microfiche in the Author/Title section of the Family History Library Catalog under "Rowberg, Andrew A." (computer number 0756368). It is listed in the Subject section under:

NORWEGIAN AMERICANS - UNITED STATES  
NORWEGIANS - UNITED STATES

It is also listed in the Locality section under:

UNITED STATES - MINORITIES  
UNITED STATES - OBITUARIES  
UNITED STATES - NEWSPAPERS  
UNITED STATES - GENEALOGY

The main genealogical society in Norway publishes the periodical *Norsk Slektshistorisk Tidsskrift* (Norwegian Family History Periodical). For more information, see the "Periodicals" and "Genealogy" sections of this outline.

The address of the society is:

Norsk Slektshistorisk Forening  
(Norwegian Family History Society)  
Pox 59 Sentrum  
0101 Oslo  
Norway  
Telephone/Fax: 47-22-42-22-04  
E-mail: [nstgen@online.no](mailto:nstgen@online.no)  
Internet: <http://home.sol.no/~nstgen/>  
(The society is open only Monday and Thursday from 11:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M.)

Another publication with information about genealogy and data in Norway is *DIS-NORGE*. The association DIS-Norge has several local branches throughout Norway that represent the following places: DIS-Salten Slektshistorielag in Bodø, DIS-Finnmark in Vadsø, DIS-Troms in Tromsdalen, DIS-Nord-Trøndelag in Steinkjer, DIS-Sør-Trøndelag in Trondheim, DIS-Hordaland in Bergen, DIS-Rogaland in Hømmersåk, DIS-Akershus in Fetsund, DIS-Møre og Romsdal in Ålesund, DIS-Vestfold in Husøysund, DIS-Østfold in Kråkerøy, DIS-Telemark in Skien, DIS-Haugaland in Haugesund, DIS-Aust-Agder in His, DIS-Vest-Agder in Kristiansand S, DIS-Oppland in Lillehammer, DIS-Hedmark in Hamar, and DIS-Sogn og Fjordane in Gaupne.



The association DIS-Norge was founded on 12 January 1990. In 1996 its membership was 2,300, a number that grows daily. The primary goal of this association is to provide a common forum for anyone in Norway who is interested in using computers for genealogical research. The web site address for DIS-Norge gives an English summary.

DIS-Norge (Computer processing in genealogy)  
Postboks 29 Bryn  
01611 Oslo  
Norway  
E-mail: [disnorge@online.no](mailto:disnorge@online.no)  
Internet: [www.sn.no/disnorge](http://www.sn.no/disnorge)

## Historical Societies

Norwegian historical societies can be valuable sources of information. Similar societies exist in countries where Norwegian emigrants settled. These societies often collect information about Norwegian immigrants. Some may have information about specific Norwegian individuals. Many societies have special book and manuscript collections for Norway that may be difficult to find in libraries and archives. (See the reference to *bygdelags* above.) Other historical societies that may be of interest include:

Sons of Norway, International Headquarters  
1455 West Lake Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55408-2666  
Phone: 1-612-827-3611  
Fax: 612-827-0658  
Internet: [www.sofn.com](http://www.sofn.com)

Norway Office:  
(Sons of Norway)  
Markensgt. 39  
4601 Kristiansand (S)  
Norway  
Phone: 47-38-02-46-46  
Fax: 47-38-07-14-40

Landslaget for Lokalhistorie  
(Local history society for Norway)  
Egil Nysæter  
Nordåsgrenda 102  
5046 Rådal  
Norway  
Phone: 47-55-23-91-95

This organization publishes the periodical *Heimen* (The Home) (FHL book 948.1 H25he; computer number 0004149).

Norsk Lokalhistorisk Institutt (Norwegian Local Historical Institute)  
Folke Bernadottes vei 21  
Pb. 4017 Ullevål stadion  
N-0806 Oslo  
Norway  
Phone: 47 22 02 26 06  
Fax: 47 22 23 74 89

Norsk Lokalhistorisk Institutt coordinates the work of most of the local historical societies in Norway. It can give information and addresses for most local historical societies in Norway.

## Locating Records at the Family History Library

Records of societies are usually described in the Author/Title section of the Family History Library Catalog under the name of the society. They are also listed in the Locality section under:

NORWAY - SOCIETIES  
NORWAY, [COUNTY] - SOCIETIES  
NORWAY - GENEALOGY  
NORWAY, [COUNTY] - GENEALOGY  
NORWAY, [COUNTY], [PARISH] - GENEALOGY

## OTHER RECORDS

---

Other types of records that are not mentioned in this outline are listed in the Locality section of the Family History Library Catalog. For example, see the following subject headings:

ALMANACS  
BIBLIOGRAPHY  
DESCRIPTION AND TRAVEL  
FOLKLORE  
HANDWRITING  
LAW AND LEGISLATION  
NAMES, GEOGRAPHICAL  
OBITUARIES  
OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES  
PENSION RECORDS  
PUBLIC RECORDS  
SCHOOLS  
TAXATION

## **COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS**

The Family History Library welcomes additions and corrections that will improve future editions of this outline. Please send your suggestions to:

Publications Coordination  
Family History Library  
35 North West Temple Street  
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3400

We appreciate the archivists, librarians, and others who have reviewed this outline and shared helpful information.

Copyright © 1992, 2000 by Intellectual Reserve. All rights reserved.  
Printed in the USA  
Second Edition, January 2000. English approval: 1/00

No part of this document may be reprinted, posted on-line, or reproduced in any form for any purpose without the prior written permission of the publisher. Send all requests for such permission to:

Copyrights and Permissions Coordinator  
Family History Department  
50 E. North Temple Street  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84150-3400  
USA  
Fax: 801-240-2494

FamilySearch is a trademark of Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

34090



