



pr. 8.6.2022 ev

## **The Norwegian-American Historical Association, Norway**

### **(NAHA-Norge)**

DET NORSK-AMERIKANSKE HISTORIELAGET I NORGE  
(NAHA-Norge)

#### **Seminar XIV:**

#### ***Nordic Identity Formation in a Transnational Context***

**Norsk utvandermuseum, Stange /Victoria hotel, Hamar**

**15.-18. juni 2022**

#### **KEY NOTE SPEAKERS:**

**Peterson, Anna C, associate professor, Luther College, Decorah, Iowa:**  
***(Re)Defining Norwegian Values in the Upper Midwest, 1913-1938***

In this talk, I will detail how Norwegian Americans, as well as other groups in the United States, helped establish and deploy a transnational Norwegian identity that stood for progress and humanitarianism. I will examine two cases where marginalized groups drew upon these rhetorical and ideological frameworks in order to further their own goals: in the American suffrage movement in the Upper Midwest and in a boarding school for American Indians in Wisconsin.

American suffragists promoted Scandinavian nations and peoples as progressive supporters of women's rights. When women won the right to vote in Norway in 1913, this provided evidence for their claims that Norwegians possessed an innate commitment to equality and progress. Suffragists pressured Norwegian Americans to prove their "Norwegianness" by supporting women's right to vote in the United States just as their countrymen had back in the Old Country.

When Norwegian Americans opened a mission and residential boarding school for American Indians in central Wisconsin in 1883, they did so with a sense of religious duty and secular guilt. Christianizing the Indians would not only save their souls, but also offer a kind of retribution for Norwegian American settlers' active participation in the dispossession of Native Americans. At the Bethany Indian Mission, the Norwegian Americans who ran and staffed the mission continued to cultivate the understanding that their work was grounded in

humanitarianism until the Mission closed in 1955. One of the tribes they missioned to – the Ho-Chunk or Winnebago – used this established identity to call for the removal of the last superintendent of the mission because he was not of Norwegian descent. The Ho-Chunk tied their complaints about the superintendent's cruel treatment of them to the fact that he was not Norwegian and thus could not live up to the humanitarian values his predecessors had established.

In both of these cases, we will see how people in the United States participated in defining and shaping understandings of Norwegian and Norwegian-American cultural values. When “Norwegian” and “Norwegian-American” came to stand for progress, equality, humanitarianism in the early-twentieth century, marginalized groups, including but not limited to Norwegian Americans, seized the opportunity to use these associations to further their own goals.

**Brøndal, Jørn , Professor and Chair, Center for American Studies, University of Southern Denmark**

***Between the Melting Pot and Pluralism: Identity Formation among Danish Immigrants in the United States in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries***

Many Danish migrants travelling to the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with dreams of maintaining their Old World traditions and religious habits in the New World soon confronted an ethnic patchwork quilt of ethnic diversity in the Midwest that put their fantasies to a test. Navigating a landscape of Norwegians, Irishmen, Poles, Swedes, Italians, Germans, Yankees, and occasionally Native Americans and African Americans, the Danish migrants attempted to define their own place within emerging nativist hierarchies of race and religion, at the same time that some of them began speculating about the meaning of being American. At a remarkably early date one Lutheran pastor even started toying with notions of pluralism and an ethnic melting pot in the United States.

**Salmons, Joe, professor, University of Wisconsin-Madison**

***The historical sociolinguistics of Scandinavian-American bilingualism***

The still emerging field of historical sociolinguistics draws data from social history in particular to better understand past linguistic situations. We know that Norwegian and other languages from the Nordic countries have been spoken in the American Upper Midwest since immigrants began to arrive in the early to mid 19th century, while important fieldwork is going on today with heritage bilingual speakers. Beyond a few important studies (Hjelde 2001, Natvig forthcoming), we know relatively little about when and how these communities became bilingual and how they negotiated bilingual-bicultural life in the region, with its social and linguistic implications. Drawing on methods and data types developed for German-speaking immigrant communities (Wilkerson & Salmons 2008, 2012), I reconstruct some patterns of bilingualism in the past, beginning with data from the 1910 US Census. That survey asked whether people were able to speak English and indicated other mother tongues where the answer was ‘no’. I use that data to establish household patterns of language knowledge and use. Early sound recordings provide direct evidence of sociolinguistic patterns, including multilingualism and use of dialectal features. From there, comparison to

patterns of institutional use (churches, newspapers, later radio) allows us insight into broader community patterns during the time of shift to English (Moquin 2019, Johnson forthcoming, others). Early analysis suggests that Norwegians tended to report speaking English considerably earlier than German-speaking immigrants, but they have remained bilingual just as long.

## References

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## PAPERS

**1.Bjoland, Trond Espen Teigen, Phd-student, Universitetet i Bergen**  
*Norwegian-American History in a Small Town Context/*  
*Norskamerikansk historie med småbyer som ramme/*

More than 800 000 Norwegians relocated to the USA between 1825 and 1930. They spread across the American continent and settled in large cities and rural agricultural communities. Small towns also appear to have been a popular type of settlement, and historian Odd Lovoll argues that a special bond existed between Norwegian immigrants and the small town. 2 The proposed presentation explores this bond by discussing the concept of “small town” as a framework for studies of Norwegian-American history. The presentation distinguishes between three different types of small towns and discusses whether such divisions may be fruitful in comparative migration studies. The purpose of the presentation is to open up a discussion about methodological approaches to small towns in studies of Norwegian-American history. The presentation is related to the applicant’s PhD project, and preliminary findings indicate that a distinction between different types of small towns can constitute an interesting basis for further studies.

Mer enn 800 000 mennesker flyttet fra Norge til USA i perioden 1825 til 1930. De spredte seg utover det amerikanske kontinentet og bosatte seg både i store byer og i rurale jordbrukssamfunn. Mange bosatte seg også i småbyer, og ifølge historikeren Odd Lovoll hadde norske immigranter et særlig sterkt bånd til småbyer og landsbylivet.<sup>1</sup> Denne presentasjonen utforsker dette båndet ved å diskutere konseptet «småby» som en ramme for studier av norskamerikansk historie. Presentasjonen skiller mellom tre ulike typer småbyer, og diskuterer hvorvidt slike skiller kan være fruktbare i komparative migrasjonsstudier. Formålet med presentasjonen er dermed å åpne for en diskusjon om metodisk tilnærming til småbyer i studier av norskamerikansk historie. Presentasjonen er knyttet til innmelderens PhD-prosjekt, og foreløpige funn tyder på at et skille mellom ulike typer småbyer kan utgjøre et interessant grunnlag for videre studier.

## Litteratur

Lovoll, Odd S., Todd W. Nichol, and Norwegian-American Historical Association.  
*Norwegians on the Prairie: Ethnicity and the Development of the Country Town*. St. Paul, Minn: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2006.

**Bjørke, Camilla** associate professor, Høgskolen i Østfold/Østfold University college,  
see paper number 6 (Hjelde)

## 2.Djupedal, Knut, former director, Norwegian Emigration Museum

### *The RESTAURATION – a tradition in images*

In the history of emigration, we often know the names of vessels that brought emigrants to America, Furthermore, we usually know some other details about them, such as the number of their masts, their length and depth or their tonnage. We do not have any pictures of them, however, and after their moment in history, they usually sail back into the same mist from which they first appeared.

This also applies to *Restauration*. We know her name and the name she had – *Emmanuel* - before she was rebuilt or “restored” in Egersund. We know her tonnage, her length and depth, and that she was a sloop. We also know some details about her career before - and after - she sailed to America. However, there is no drawing or painting of her, of which we can say with certainty, “This is the *Restauration*.”

Even so, there are today many images that purport to be the *Restauration*. Almost all of them are based on a painting done in 1924 by the Norwegian-American artist Sverre Sieverts. However, Sievert’s painting is an iteration of a gouache or watercolor entitled *Selen, ført af Capt. Conradus de Lange*, done in 1828 by the Norwegian marine artist Ole Johnsen Sebøy. And therein lies a story. It begins with Norwegian-American ethnic pride in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the conflicts between ethnic and American identity after World War I, the great

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<sup>1</sup> Odd S. Lovoll, Todd W. Nichol, and Norwegian-American Historical Association, *Norwegians on the prairie: ethnicity and the development of the country town* (St. Paul, Minn: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2006), 4.

gathering of Norwegian America in Minneapolis in 1925 and continues with the presentation of *Restauration* as a major symbol of Norwegian immigration to - and ethnic identity in - America ever since.

This paper will discuss the making of this Norwegian and Norwegian-American tradition, as demonstrated in a series of images of this most famous vessel, published between 1924 and 2022.

### **3. Emilsen, Christin lektor/high school teacher, Elverum videregående skole / high school** ***Publicly assisted emigration***

In the 1800s, we see a severe population growth in Norway. Due to the increase in the population and the more effective agriculture, there was a substantial pressure on the people living in both rural and urban districts. The lack of land, work and harsh social conditions led many Norwegians to live on the verge of poverty. Many saw the need for economic support in shorter or longer periods. This could be either clothes, food, medicines, or other necessities. Taking care of the poor was each county's responsibility. This was a severe challenge in a time where the number of people dependent on public support was rising and hence the expenses too. Finding effective, humane and cost efficient solutions for this support became a necessity.

At the same time, we see the mass emigration from Norway to America. Many people in Norway had a desire to emigrate to America in search of a better life – a desire that was expressed by some of the poorest people too. A question that some districts discussed was: could economically assisted emigration be a solution to reduce some of the expenses of the county? In 1869, the Norwegian newspaper, *Aftenposten*, wrote that several counties in the Eastern part of Norway had granted money to poor emigrant families to travel to America. The same year, we also see strong reactions against incidents like the previously mentioned expressed in Norwegian papers in America.

In this presentation, I will explore a few cases where Norwegian counties granted money to poor emigrants. Mainly, I will focus on the extent of these cases and who received the grants. What motivated these resolutions, and was it possible to use emigration as a way of reducing the counties' expenses? Finally, I will discuss what these cases and the reactions expressed in the newspapers say about the image that the Norwegians in America wanted to portray. Why do we see such strong reactions against publicly assisted emigration among Norwegians in America?

### **4. Garvik, Terje, Kopervik, pensjonert lektor/ high school teacher ( ret)** ***Karmøy Club of Washington 1991-2020***

I 2010 hadde eg eit foredrag på NAHA- seminaret på Utvandrer-museet om Karmøy Club. I Norwegian-American Essays 2011 er det ein artikkel: Karmøy Club of Washington, som er basert på hovedfagsoppgava frå 2006, og foredraget på seminaret.

Karmøy Club blei stifta i 1991. Det var først og fremst første generasjons karmøybuar som starta Karmøy Club. Fleire hadde pensjonert seg eller var i ferd med bli pensjonistar. Dei

hadde visjonar om kva Karmøy Club skulle bli. Ei viktig drivkraft var at dei ynskte at andre og seinare generasjonar karmøybuar skulle ha tilknytning til Karmøy og Norge. Dei observerte at dei generasjonene som var fødd og oppvokst i Amerika hadde ei annleis tilknytning til Karmøy og Norge enn første generasjon.

Det førte til at dei tok fleire veivalg for drifta av Karmøy Club. Eg vil peike på nokre av dei vala som blei tatt for å holde fast på tilknytningen til Karmøy for andre og seinare generasjonar.

Den tette tilknytniga mellom karmøybuar på Karmøy og i Amerika var også i endring på denne tida. Eg vil også peike på nokre valg som blei gjort på Karmøy for å holde vedlike kontakten mellom Karmøy og Amerika.

Eg vil til slutt peike på endringar i samfunnet i Amerika og på Karmøy, og i Norge, som har betydning for den gjensidige kontakten mellom Amerika og Norge og Karmøy.

### **5.Hempel, Kari G., associate professor emerita, University of Stavanger**

#### ***Can Pakistani integration into Norwegian society after 1970 provide new perspectives on Norwegian integration in the United States after 1870?/***

*Kan pakistansk integrering i det norske samfunnet etter 1970 fortelle oss om nordmenns integrering i USA etter 1870?*

Norwegian mass emigration to the United States began in the late 1860s, and religious affiliation was part of the migrants' invisible baggage. Pakistanis came to Norway after 1970. Most were Muslims, and religious affiliation was also part of their baggage. In both migrant groups, religious interest varied, but they all came from a society where religion, culture and state were closely intertwined.

Comparison or comparison is a demanding exercise and presupposes that phenomena are comparable. Here we are talking about the same phenomenon, but in different places and at different times. A comparison would at best be lame, and therefore the simpler exercise is chosen: to see things in context, to see the religious integration processes in context. Two questions have been central in a major work on these migrations: 1. What changes have taken place with the re-establishment of religion in a new homeland? 2. Has faith been a help or an obstacle to integration?

The questions about the Norwegian Americans and their congregations, about the changes and help for integration, are largely answered in my dissertation from 2012. Regarding the work with the Norwegian Pakistanis' transfer of faith, I am currently working on this. I find similarities and differences in the religious immigrant communities, but the work has also given me a new view of the Norwegian-American experiences. Here I want to highlight these, not least related to the ethnic religiosity among Norwegians and Scandinavians.

The major questions in this field of study are about Norway and the United States as immigration states, about religious policy, immigration policy, state integration policy and immigrant adaptation. Some of this background material will be included in the answer to how immigration to Norway can say something about immigration to the USA a hundred years before.

Den norske masseutvandringen til USA tok til fra slutten av 1860 årene, og religionstilhørigheten var en del av migrantenes usynlige bagasje. Pakistanere kom til Norge etter 1970. De fleste var muslimer, og religionstilhørigheten var også en del av deres bagasje. I begge migrantgruppene varierte den religiøse interessen, men alle kom de fra et samfunn hvor religion, kultur og stat var tett sammenvevd.

Sammenligning eller komparasjon er en krevende øvelse og forutsetter at fenomenen er sammenlignbare. Her er det snakk om like fenomen, men på ulikt sted og til ulik tid. En sammenligning ville i beste fall bli haltende, og derfor velges den enklere øvelsen: å se ting i sammenheng, å se de religiøse integrasjonsprosessene i sammenheng. To spørsmål har vært sentrale i et større arbeid om disse migrasjonene: 1. Hvilke endringer har skjedd ved reetablering av religionen i et nytt hjemland? 2. Har troen vært til hjelp eller til hinder for integrering?

Spørsmålene om norskamerikanerne og deres menigheter, om endringene og hjelp til integrering, er i stor grad besvart i avhandlingen min fra 2012. Når det gjelder arbeidet med norskpakistanernes overføring av tro, arbeider jeg for tiden med dette. Jeg finner likheter og ulikheter i de religiøse immigrantmiljøene, men arbeidet har også gitt meg et nytt syn på de norskamerikanske erfaringene. Her ønsker jeg å trekke fram disse, ikke minst knyttet til den etniske religiøsiteten blant nordmenn og skandinaver.

De store spørsmålene innenfor dette studiefeltet dreier seg om Norge og USA som innvandringsstater, om religionspolitikken, innvandringspolitikken, statlig integreringspolitikk og immigranttilpasning. Noe av dette bakgrunns materialet vil bli inkludert i svaret på hvordan innvandring til Norge kan si noe om innvandring til USA ett hundre år før.

**6.Hjelde, Arnstein professor, Bjørke, Camilla, associate professor, Opset, Barbro Bredesen, associate professor, Høgskolen i Østfold/ Østfold University College**

***Nordahl Rolfsen, his reader “Boken om Norge” and the volume “Norge i Amerika” : Nation building at the prairie?***

***Nordahl Rolfsen og leseboka «Norge i Amerika»: nasjonsbygging på prærien?***

Nordahl Rolfsen is a central figure in the Norwegian school history due to his reader *Lesebok for folkeskolen* (1892–95), which dominated the Norwegian public school from the late 1800s and towards the 1950s. Less known is that Rolfsen in the period between 1913 and 1915 compiled a special reader for Norwegians in America, *Boken om Norge*, in five volumes. As far as we know, this is in fact the first reader published in Norwegian which aimed at multilingual readers. Four of these five volumes were based on material from *Lesebok for folkeskolen*, while the last volume, *Norway in America* (1915) was completely newly written and specially adapted for Norwegian-Americans.

It is particularly this last and fifth volume we are going to focus on in this presentation. Through *Lesebok for folkeskolen*, which was intended for the Norwegian primary and lower secondary school, Rolfsen secured a strong position as a nation builder, both through his drive to Norwegianize the Danish written language, and through the work of creating a common Norwegian identity; the latter was particularly important in the years around 1905 when Norway struggled to gain independence from Sweden. In the preface to the volume *Norge i Amerika*, Rolfsen writes that “this fifth volume is no less Norwegian than the first”, i.e. . And

he expresses the hope that the present reader will help those who have left Norway to remember the port where they embarked, as well as the unity which they still belong to, just “as the ship carries its Norwegian flag”. This clearly shows that Rolfsen had a greater goal than just producing reading material to young heritage speakers in America, but actually building a Norwegian, or rather a Norwegian-American identity. And there are two aspects in particular in his work that we will try to focus on here: First, we would like to look at what linguistic choices Rolfsen made: This work came out in the middle of a period with many spelling reforms in Norway, where the goal was to make the Dano-Norwegian written language more Norwegian. And this ambition can be seen as a contrast to the general skepticism toward language reforms in the Norwegian-American society. Furthermore, we will look at the outline and the selection of texts in order to get a clearer picture of how this also could help to form a common Norwegian, or maybe a Norwegian-American identity.

I norsk samanheng kjenner vi Nordahl Rolfsen som leseverkforfattar, og lesebøkene hans dominerte norsk skole frå slutten av 1800-talet og dei første tiåra på 1900-talet. Mindre kjent er det at Rolfsen i perioden 1913-1915 laga eit eige leseverk for Det norske Amerika: 5-bindsverket *Boken om Norge*. Så langt vi veit, er dette det første norskspråklege leseverket retta mot ei fleirspråkleg lesegruppe. Fire av desse fem banda bygde på stoff frå leseverket for den norske folkeskolen, medan det siste bandet, *Norge i Amerika* (1915) var heilt nyskrive og spesielt tilpassa norskamerikanarane. Og det er særleg dette siste bandet som vi kjem til å fokusere på.

Gjennom leseverket for den norske folkeskolen sikra Rolfsen seg ein sterk posisjon som nasjonsbygger, både gjennom at han var pådrivar for å fornorske det danske skriftspråket, og også gjennom arbeidet med å skape ein felles norsk identitet, det siste var særleg viktig i åra rundt 1905.

I forordet til bandet *Norge i Amerika* skriv han at “(d)et femte bind er ikke mindre norsk end det første. Og skulde verket bidrage til at det farende Norrønafolk, som digteren skildrer, det som altid har faret, og altid vil fare, mindes havnen det drog ut fra og bevarer enhetsmerket det bærer i sit sind — som skuten bærer sit norske flag — saa er Boken om Norge ikke utsendt forgjæves”. Dette sitatet viser tydeleg at Rolfsen hadde eit større mål enn berre å produsere lesestoff, men faktisk bygge opp ein norsk, eventuelt norskamerikansk identitet. Og det er særleg to aspekt ved dette arbeidet vi vil prøve å ha fokus på:

For det første vil vi gjerne sjå på kva språklege val Rolfsen gjorde. Dette verket kom jo ut midt i ein periode med mange rettskrivingsreformer i Noreg, der målet var å gjere skriftspråket meir norsk. Og denne ambisjonen kan ein sjå som ein kontrast til skriftspråkleg konservative i det norskamerikanske samfunnet. Vidare vil vi sjå på tekstutval og framstilling for å få eit klårare bilete av korleis dette også er med på å forme ein felles norsk, eventuelt norskamerikansk identitet.

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## **7. Holm, Mona, PhD-fellow University of Oslo/Anno Museum (Norwegian Emigration Museum and Women's Museum Norway)**

### ***Aasta Hansteen and the USA: "The Best Country for Women"?***

During the era of mass emigration from Norway to the USA an important mobilization of women's rights activism and great advances in women's rights took place in both countries. The Americans were for a long time perceived as being the most progressive. However, women's rights activists on both sides of the Atlantic were influenced and inspired by each other. These contexts have generally been ignored both in Norwegian-American historiography, in migration history, and in Norwegian women's history. We still need to investigate the significance of transnational connections for the organisation and growth of women's politics, both from a Norwegian and an American perspective.

This paper examines the Norwegian painter, writer, and women's rights activist Aasta Hansteen's stay in the USA from 1880 to 1889. The main questions that will be discussed are "How does Aasta Hansteen's view on women's rights issues develop during her years in North America, and how does she bring knowledge back to the women's rights movement in Norway?" A close reading will be made of Hansteen's letter correspondence, as well as her published texts in the Norwegian newspaper *Verdens Gang* and in the Norwegian Women's Movement's own publication *Nylænde*.

Historiographies exploring the ethnicity of the Norwegian-American immigrants (Jana Sverdljuk et.al, 2021), and of the Norwegian-American suffragists (Anna Peterson, 2011), will bring important concepts to the investigation

## **8. Haakenstad, Liv Marit AG®, master i faglitterær skriving**

### ***En manns påvirkning på en avis og det norskamerikanske miljøet/***

### ***One Man's impact on a Newspaper and the Norwegian-American Society***

Carl Søyland (1894-1978), født i Flekkefjord, kom til USA i 1919 etter nesten 10 år i Oslo. Etter noen år som sjømann og tramper, slo han seg ned i Brooklyn, og ble etter få år redaksjonssekretær, og så redaktør for Nordisk Tidende under andre verdenskrig. Søyland hadde stor innflytelse, på avisen så vel som på det norsk-amerikanske miljøet. Han omgikk alle, enten det var den vanlige mann i gata eller ambassadører og presidenter. Dette foredraget vil gi et glimt inn i perioden 1920-1950.

Carl Søyland (1894-1978), born in Flekkefjord, Norway came to the USA in 1919 after spending almost a decade in Oslo. After some years as a sailor and tramp, he settled in

Brooklyn. He started working for the newspaper Nordisk Tidende, and after a few years he became assistant editor. Søyland became editor-in-chief just before the outbreak of WWII. He had a great impact on the newspaper, as well as on the Norwegian-American society. Carl Søyland socialized with people, from road workers to presidents. This speech gives a glimpse into the period 1920-1950.

**9. Jensen, Ellen Marie:** Sami University of Applied Sciences (Samisk høgskole), Kautokeino  
***Gendered and Racialized Processes in Early Twentieth Century Sámi Migration to the USA***

Ellen Marie Jensen has deliberated on the obscured history of Sámi American migration to the United States through a gendered lens and an analysis of racialized constructions of the Sámi as “Other.” In her PhD project titled *Diasporic Indigeneity and Storytelling Across Media: A Case Study of Narratives of Early Twentieth Century Sámi Immigrant Women* and upcoming publications, Jensen theorizes Sámi migration and contemporary Sámi American identity through the emerging concept of diasporic indigeneity and reflects on the trans-Atlantic flow of racialized visual and textual discourses of the Sámi. In her panel presentation, Jensen will illustrate the racialized and gendered character of migration processes for the Sámi from Norwegian Sápmi, both before and after migration through census records, ship manifests, immigration records, historical accounts, and oral histories. Further, Jensen will reflect on the complexities, dynamics, and shifting affinities in local relationships between Indigenous peoples of North America and Nordic migrants vis-à-vis Sámi migrants as a Nordic Indigenous people living in diaspora as settlers on Indigenous lands.

**10. Joranger, Terje Mikael Hasle, Director at the Norwegian Emigrant Museum,**  
***Calling This Place Home: Conflicting Attitudes Toward the Land in a Comparative Perspective***

Historically, land has been considered a significant resource to immigrant settlers in various temporal and spatial locales. Yet there exist conflicting attitudes between various populations toward the use of the land. Indigenous populations have nurture deep spiritual, social, and cultural connections with their lands and regard land as a communal resource which are basic to their identity. In western societies, on the other hand, land has traditionally symbolized affluence and status in society. In this presentation Joranger will discuss these attitudes in relation to parallel encounters between the majority white population and the indigenous population in land-taking processes Norway and in the United States, respectively. Encouraged by Norwegian authorities, Norwegian settlers started to colonize the Pasvik valley near the present Russian and Finnish borders, a region then inhabited by East Sámi and Skolt Sámi populations. Parallel to this development, land-hungry Norwegian immigrants settled in areas in southern and western Wisconsin as part of the general westward expansion of American and immigrant populations. Many Norwegian immigrants settled in regions where portions of the original American Indian population still were residing in spite of removal policies enacted by the US federal government. Joranger will reflect upon the cultural encounters between the Norwegian settler population and the

Sámi and American Indian populations, respectively, and discuss how these encounters affected the parties involved.

**11. -Legreid, Ann Marie, Professor of Geography, Shepherd University, West Virginia**  
***"It's hard to stop a Trane": A Case Study of Norwegian-American Ingenuity and Identity***

Ethnic groups have undergone adaptation to American society at varying rates and intensities through the decades, constantly revising their ethnic identities in response to internal and external forces. Similarly, *individual* immigrants have responded to these forces in myriad ways, in some cases reinventing their ethnicity via new ethnic expressions. Ethnicity is revised or constructed within a historical process; this process includes the mingling of historical memories with the shared cultural heritages of people from the home country, other immigrant groups, and the host society. This study traces the process of ethnicization of a Norwegian entrepreneurial family in the American Midwest from immigrant status to ethnic American.

James Axel Trane emigrated with his parents from Målselven, Troms, to rural Wisconsin in 1864. Not content to turn the soil, James left the family farm and moved to the nearest sizable city, La Crosse, where he gained employment with the W.A. Roosevelt Company, learned plumbing engineering and subsequently founded his own plumbing firm. He sent his son, Reuben, to the University of Wisconsin where Reuben earned a degree in mechanical engineering. Father and son together founded the Trane Company in 1913, hired expert engineers, received almost 30 patents between the two of them, and established dozens of branch offices within and outside of the U.S. The Trane Company blossomed as the result of a brilliant combination of perseverance, entrepreneurial spirit, business finesse, and engineering know-how and innovation. Still rooted in La Crosse, Trane stands tall as a global giant in heating and cooling technologies to the present day.

The Trane family's ethnic identity represents a hybrid that evolved from ongoing negotiation with a multi-cultural America. Though ethnic roots were not overtly expressed in their industry, ethnic roots most certainly affected their attitudes and actions, particularly in a region permeated by Norwegian views and values. The Trane family reached far beyond normal ethnic boundaries; they thrived in a multi-cultural world and adapted quickly and aggressively to the American business environment. The Trane story is rich with material to inform our analyses of the Norwegian-American experience while also deserving of a place in the larger literatures on ethnicity and transnationalism.

**12. Løvlie, Birger. Professor emeritus, Høgskulen i Volda/ Volda University College**  
***"Moody in Scandinavia"***

The American revivalist preacher Dwight L. Moody and his disciples made a great impact on European church life during the last part of the 19th century. Most of those who made Moody's preaching known in Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland had met with Moody in the United States or Scotland and had a transnational element in their identity. They acted in accordance with Moody's slogan "Evangelization of the world in this generation," and

concentrated on the cities. For their evangelistic purpose, they minimized confessional differences. The national churches were considered man-made and little suited to promoting the kingdom of God, in contrast to the power of the worldwide church of reborn believers. The work of translating the songs created in the American revivalist circles became an enduring part of their influence. Fanny Crosby, Philip Paul Bliss and Ira Sankey are the best known hymn writers. Scandinavian poets like Lina Sandell (Sweden) and Eveline Heede (Norway) translated most of these songs.

Mitt bidrag har som utgangspunkt den amerikanske vekkelsespredikanten Dwight L. Moodys virksomhet i Europa i siste halvdel av 1800-tallet. Hensikten er å vise hvilken utbredelse virksomheten hadde, ikke minst i Norden. De fleste av dem som gjorde Moodys forkynnelse kjent i Danmark, Norge, Sverige og Finland hadde hatt nær kontakt med Moody i USA eller Skottland og hadde et transnasjonalt element i sin identitet. De virket i samsvar med Moodys slagord, «evangelization of the world in this generation», og konsentrerte seg om byene. For dette formålet ville de oppheve konfesjonelle skillelinjer, og de hegemoniske nasjonale kirkene ble betraktet som menneskeskapte og lite egnet til å fremme Guds rike, i motsetning til kraften i den verdensvide kirke av gjenfødte troende. Arbeidet med å oversette sangene som ble til i det amerikanske vekkelsesmiljøet, ble en varig del av deres innflytelse. Fanny Crosby, Peter Paul Bliss og Ira Sankey er de mest kjente.

**13. Mathiesen, Henrik Olav , PhD, University of Oslo**  
***“Norwegians in America”: Perceptions of Belonging, Identity Formation, and Ethnogenesis among the Norwegian Immigrants in the United States***

Scholars have become so used to the ethnic term “Norwegian Americans” that they have rarely stopped to ask when and why the term itself originated. It can be shown that the term does not appear in general usage until the late nineteenth century, many decades after the first Norwegians arrived. This paper takes as its departure point the unwillingness among early Norwegian immigrants to refer to themselves as “Americans” at all. Their preferred endonym, for many decades indeed, seems to have been “Norwegians in America.” The preference to remain “Norwegian” and the unwillingness to identify as “American” can be explained as a consequence of a little recognised phenomenon: that the term “American” itself, at least for some groups of immigrants, may at first have signified an ethnic rather than a civic social identity. Exploring the consequences of this observation, this paper argues that the first Norwegian immigrants developed perceptions of belonging in and to America in ways that did not depend on a melting-pot ideology based on a civic understanding of American nationalism. Norwegian immigrants rather argued that they belonged to American society on the basis of a settler colonial identity. Only as their children grew up and to varying degrees assimilated or acculturated to the social landscape did “Norwegian American” become a label to identify with. Thus the origin of the ethnic identity – the ethnogenesis of the Norwegian American people – can be understood, contrary to widely held presumptions, as being rooted in a settler colonial and transnational mindset rather than in civic ideology, of somehow “becoming American” by choice. To Norwegian immigrants, Americans were born, not made.

**14. Miller, Deborah L. St. Paul, Minnesota**

***21st-century Norwegian America: the Case of Thief River Falls, Minnesota***

Thief River Falls was identified in the 2000 U.S. Census as the most Norwegian town over 5,000 in population in the entire United States. 50% of the residents claimed Norwegian ancestry. U.S. towns with fewer than 5,000 people may have a higher percentage of Norwegian Americans, and there are several U.S. towns with a higher Norwegian-American profile than Thief River Falls, a town that is located near Minnesota's Red River Valley in a region of the U.S with a very strong concentration of people with Norwegian ancestry. Using Odd Lovoll's *Norwegians on the Prairie: Ethnicity and the Development of the Country Town* as a guide, I will investigate Thief River's claim to Norwegian-American identity in the 21st century. I will also comment briefly on the "most Swedish" town of Cambridge, Minnesota, and the "most German" town of New Ulm, Minnesota, as they were identified in the same 2000 census research.

**15. Moen, Miranda, US Fulbright Fellow 2021-2022, hosted by the Norwegian Emigrant Museum and the Oslo School of Architecture and Design)**

***Ethnicity, Class, and Regional Building Styles: The Foundation of Immigrant Architecture***

Despite scholarly consensus on the factors of emigration, settlement patterns, and transnational communication of Norwegian-American immigrants, there is still much debate over the degree to which Norwegian material culture is represented in immigrant-built houses. Early studies largely neglected class-specific and regional influences in their analysis. As a result, they largely concluded that the process of Americanization stripped homes of cultural components soon after emigration, stunting future research. In recent decades, material culture has been a neglected topic in Norwegian-American studies, while past scholars clearly state that there were too few studies to draw definitive conclusions.

Through a transnational comparative analysis, I examine the rural Norwegian and Norwegian-American dwellings of the Vik and Traaen families who emigrated from the Valdres and Numedal valleys, respectively, to Spring Grove, Minnesota in the mid-nineteenth century. As a departure from previous research, this study focuses on the analysis of second-generation frame houses which may offer the best opportunity to "detect cultural impulses and choices because they [were not built] as a result of an immediate need."<sup>2</sup> Both families came from Eastern Norway, but the Vik family were crofters (*husmenn*) while the Traaens were landowners (*selveiere*). This project aims to contribute to Norwegian-American material culture research by identifying existing gaps in research, providing more case study dwellings for this body of work, and demonstrating why the study of lower-class socio-economic contexts and regional influences are key to further development in the field. Lastly, I hope to stimulate further research of existing and at-risk nineteenth century houses in rural areas by relaying their critical role to historic and contemporary cultural identities in Norway and the United States.

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<sup>2</sup> Reidar Bakken, "Two Museum Houses: A Microanalysis of Cultural Adaptation in the Upper Midwest in the Late Nineteenth Century." *Norwegian-American Studies*, 32, trans. C. A. Clausen (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 145.

**16. Nerheim, Gunnar, professor emeritus, University of Stavanger, Norway**  
***Nordic Identity Formation in Pallises Triangle in Alberta , Canada around 1900***

The paper will explore identity formation among Norwegian, Swedish, and other immigrant groups from European countries in the 73,000 square miles called Palliser's Triangle in Southern Alberta and Saskatchewan. It was the driest and most arid part of the Canadian prairies.

In the early 1880s American cattle ranchers began moving cattle, capital, and expertise to the open ranges in the Bow River region around Fort Macleod. British and Canadian investors also established huge ranches. The cattle business dominated economic life in southern Alberta between 1882 and 1905.

After 1900 most of the large ranches were broken up and sold to homesteaders. The combination of rising wheat prices, the building of new railway lines, wetter years than normal, new methods of dry farming, and new agricultural technologies led to a surge in new homesteads.

Two new railways in the 1890s became important for the expansion of farming north and south of Calgary

The Canadian government put into action an aggressive immigration policy campaign after 1896. Advertisements promoting the Canadian prairies were printed in more than 7,000 newspapers and farmers' journals. Between 1897 and 1914 nearly 600,000 immigrants from the United States moved into the new prairie provinces Saskatchewan and Alberta. A large number of Norwegians and Swedes were part of the flow from the United States into western Canada. Thousands of Germans made the trek, as well as Hungarians, Belgians, Dutch, Ukrainians, Poles, and other Scandinavians. About one third of the immigrants coming from the United States had not been born there.

The settler boom in western Canada soon led to increases in land values. By 1910 the region was no longer the "poor man's paradise". In 1913, after the wheat market collapsed, nearly two thirds of the American immigrants gave up and returned to the United States.

Several ethnic groups on the Canadian Prairies congregated in areas where they could speak their own language, practice their own religion, and follow the customs they were used to and wanted to teach their children. The Canadian government was very liberal compared with the US government about allowing block settlements – a particular type of land distribution which allowed settlers belonging to the same ethnicity to form small colonies.

Many ethno-religious settlements were planned and negotiated with the authorities. They could concern Jewish, Mennonite, Hutterite, Doukbor as well as German Catholic, German Protestant, British, French, and Hungarian bloc settlements.

In contrast to the planned settlements, Scandinavian, Ukrainian, and Polish settlements tended to be of the chain or gravitational type. The majority of settlers from the Ukraine emigrated from neighboring districts in Galicia and Bukovina. Polish concentrations often developed within Ukrainian settlements, although several distinctly Polish settlements also came into existence.

Since so many Norwegians had first lived in the United States, they had already to a large degree adapted their way of life to that of the greater society. They preferred to speak Norwegian, but most of them mastered the English language much better than most other non-English speaking immigrant groups. According to the Canadian Census of 1916 only 1.4 percent of 6,971 persons with a Danish background were unable to speak English, 2.1 percent of 34,780 with a Norwegian background, and 3.4 percent of 27,796 persons with a Swedish background. Polish, Russian, and Ukrainian immigrants had far larger language problems – almost 40 percent of all Ukrainians were unable to speak English and 27 percent of the Poles and the Russians.

**17. Olson, Daron W. . associate professor, Indiana University East**  
***“Two Very Different Sides of the Same Coin. Nordmanns-Forbundet and World War II”***

My paper will analyze and compare the two versions of *Nordmanns-Forbundet* that existed during World War II. *Nordmanns-Forbundet* was a publication based in Norway that aimed to forge greater ties between homeland Norwegians and Norwegians living abroad. This strategy was part of the conception referred to as “The Greater Norway.” Owing to the German occupation of Norway in 1940 and subsequent Nasjonal Samling takeover of the publication in 1941, the leaders of the journal decided in December 1941, to launch a journal by the same name that would be published in the United States. As might be expected, the two versions had radically different goals and were competitors on different sides during the war. The American version aimed to support the Allied war cause and tended to focus its coverage on the war and war symbols, including Norway’s various military contributions, which was part of the exiled Norwegian government strategy to depict Norway as “a fighting ally.” Meanwhile, the Nazi-controlled version sought to portray occupied Norway as a component of a crusade fighting against Bolshevism as well as portraying Norway as part of “a Greater Germania.” The result of this ideological battle is that it highlighted how Norway’s national identity changed as a result of the war: in effect, Norway abandoned Nordic neutrality and became an advocate for an Atlantic-based strategy that promoted collective security. In addition, the American version emphasized that Norway’s national symbols would deemphasize Vikings or peasant imagery (which the Nazi version stressed) and instead asserted Norway’s modern symbols of freedom such as its constitution, the Storting, and King Haakon VII.

**18. Ringdal, Siv, Senior Curator, Norsk Folkemuseum**  
***Extravagant or down to earth? The materialization of migration in Lista and Jæren, two coastal areas in southern Norway***

In my talk, I would like to present a material from a preliminary study that I have been working with. I would like to discuss how two municipalities in the southwestern part of Norway, Lista in the county of Agder, and Time in the Jæren-region, materialized migration in the two first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. More precisely, I would like to illuminate how returned emigrants in these two places, invested their savings from America in different ways. The probate records after deceased returned migrants indicates that the returned migrants from Lista had invested in their houses and homes, for instance with gramophones and parlor

furniture brought back from America. The same material from Time indicates that the returned immigrants there did not invest in their house and home, but rather in the farm. In the presentation I would like to present some examples on these two different ways of materializing migration, and to discuss why the Lista-migrants appears to have been more occupied with everyday life luxury, whilst the Time-migrants seems to have been more concerned with their land

**19. Sackrison, Caitlin, PhD candidate, Brandeis University**

***Laying Claim in a Borderland: Norwegian-American Women in Brown County, Minnesota in the 19th century"***

This presentation is based on part of my dissertation on Norwegian-American women's land claims in Brown County, Minnesota, with a focus on the period of 1865 to 1885. My research focuses on how Norwegian immigrant women utilized recently passed legislation, like the Married Women's Property Acts and the Homestead Act, to not only claim land but also purchase and bequeath it. In this presentation, I will begin by providing a brief overview of the history of this borderland, including its long history as the Dakota Nation's homeland, the impact of the US-Dakota War in 1862, the forceful dispossession of the Dakota people, and Norwegian-American immigrants' complicity in white settler colonialism in this space. I will then highlight the impact of the Married Women's Property Act and the Homestead Act for women's property rights in Minnesota, and how Norwegian women in Brown County utilized these acts to claim and hold title to land in this space throughout the 1860s to 1880s. I will finish my presentation by providing greater detail on some of these Norwegian-American women and what they did with their land holdings, and highlight my ongoing work of examining how Norwegian immigrant women viewed women's landownership through an investigation of Norwegian culture and traditional inheritance practices..

**20. Østrem, Nils Olav , professor, University of Stavanger (with input from Gunleif Seldal)**

***Er det noko nytt om Kleng Peerson og Knut Olson Eide?/  
Something new about Kleng Peerson and Knut Olson Eide?***

I 2017 kom det ut ei ny utgåve av boka *Migrasjonsforståelse*, som handlar om flytteprosessar, rasisme og globalisering i norsk migrantsamanheng. Her heiter det om starten på den norske utvandringshistoria: «Før 'Restaurationen'(!) la ut på sin ferd, var imidlertid prosjektet godt forberedt gjennom to pionerer som reiste i forveien på vegne av kvekerne i Stavanger. Den ene av disse, Kleng Pedersen, kom tilbake i 1824 for å avlegge rapport før han igjen reiste til Amerika for å forberede gruppens ankomst. **Den andre døde under oppholdet i Amerika.**» Knut Olson Eide var den andre av desse to pionerane. Men døydde han i USA?

In 2017 a new edition of the book *Migrasjonsforståelse (Migration Understanding)* was published. The book deals with migration processes, racism and globalisation in the Norwegian context of migrants and intercultural relations. Here is a quote about the start of the Norwegian emigration:



"Before the 'Restoration'(!) left for US, the project was well prepared through two pioneers, who travelled in advance on behalf of the Quakers in Stavanger. One of them, Kleng Pedersen, returned in 1824 to report on their findings before leaving again for America to prepare for the arrival of the whole group. **The other one died during his stay in America.**"  
Knut Olson Eide was the second of the two pioneers. But did he die in the US?