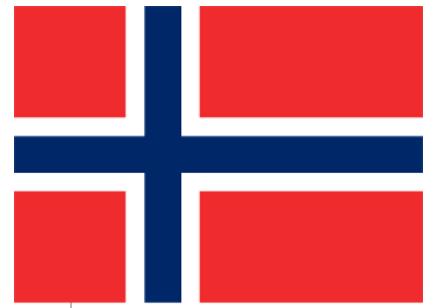




Romerikslaget News



Flere Lag Stevne New Land, New Life 1825-2025



August 5-7, 2025
Stoney Creek Hotel & Conference Center
3060 S Kinney Coulee Road
Onalaska, WI 54650

A registration form and full schedule of events are being mailed to all members and are also available on Lag websites and Facebook pages. Please register for *stevne* by July 21, 2025. Hotel group rate deadline: July 5, 2025.

Notes from the President

Hilsen!

Time is drawing near for our annual *Flere Lag Stevne!* As noted on the front page, it will take place at the Stoney Creek Hotel in Onalaska, Wisconsin. It's off I-90, just North of LaCrosse. If you haven't already made your room reservation, don't put it off any longer! July 5 is the deadline to get the *stevne* group rate. All members of *Romerikslaget* will be sent the *stevne* program schedule, registration form, and reservation information by regular mail and by email.

To commemorate the 200th anniversary of the first organized emigration from Norway to America, this year's theme is **New Land, New Life: 1825 - 2025**. This is the postage stamp that was issued in 1925 in honor of the 100th anniversary of that first crossing.



Please remember to bring gently-used Nordic items for donation to the Silent Auction and bring a treat to share in the Hospitality room.



There is limited bench seating for the outdoor concert during the bus tour to *Norskedalen*, so you are encouraged to bring a bag chair or a cushion to sit on. Chairs will be put in the bus baggage section. Looking forward to seeing you at *Stevne* in August!

Skål!

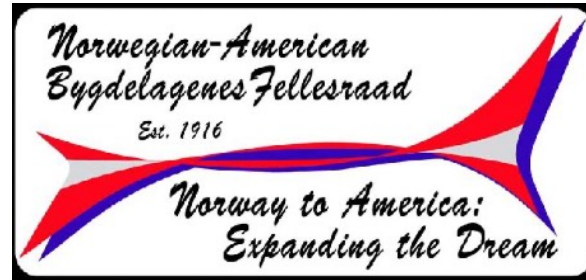
Norma Kjenstad Barnes

**Oslo
&
Akershus Fylke**

Ovre Romerike:
Eidsvoll, Feiring,
Gjerdrum, Hurdal,
Nannestad, Nes,
Ullensaker

Nedre Romerike:
Aurskog-Høland,
Blaker, Enebakk,
Fet, Hakadal,
Lørenskog,
Nittedal,
Rælingen,
Setskog, Skedsmo,
Sørum,
Follo
Frogn, Kråkstad,
Nesodden,
Oppegård, Ski,
Vestby, Ås

Vestre Akershus:
Asker, Bærum



2025 Annual Bygdelagenes Fellesraad Report on Activities for Fiscal Year 2024 May 1, 2024 to April 30, 2025

“Crossings - A 200th Year Celebration”

Mary Gross and Linda McKeen were the voting delegates from Romerikslaget. This report is contributed by Linda McKeen.

The two-day event began on Friday May 2 with a welcome from *Fellesraad* President, Elaine Hasleton. She reminded us of our foundation of preserving Norwegian heritage and pointed us to the vision for our future in partnerships with NAHA, Norway House Haugo *Bibliotek*, and Family Search Affiliated Library access.

Dr. Lawrence Moe presented “*New Life, New Land*,” an in-depth study of immigration and settlement to America. The fascinating presentation can be found at:

http://www.fellesraad.com/fell_events.htm#Annual

After a break, Jeff Svare, the Chief Genealogical Officer for Family Search, shared his presentation “*Indexed Passenger Lists & Migration Records*.” Jeff had some obscure ways of finding records that most of us haven’t thought about. We do not have permission from Family Search to post a link but if you go to the Family Search classes you will see several of Jeff’s presentations. (I found his presentation on the *Lensregnskaper* helpful if you want the original sources for what is found in the *Bygdeboker*.)

Saturday was all business and a lot of camaraderie. I am fortunate to live close to Minneapolis and have enjoyed attending in person and meeting members of other lags. *Mindekirken* has a great Norwegian cook! The Financial Investments, Income and Expenses, and Financial Statement are all found at the first link above, as submitted by Treasurer Don Teigen and reported by Ann Romo, Secretary.

An Organization report on Norway House and a tour of the facility included the *Bibliotek*, Special Collections Room, and the space where the Saga Center will be built. The Saga Center will be “a unique exhibit to help visitors learn more about Norway, Norwegian culture, and hopefully gain an interest in their family history.” There will be five Station Concepts included. Key partners in development are referenced in the Annual Report.

Marilyn Sorenson reported that Lag Week In Salt Lake City was successful at breaking through some brick walls. There were six new attendees for a total of 19. Classes were organized by Jeff Svare. Lag week for 2026 is March 8-14 in Salt Lake City, just after Roots Tech.

Gracia Grindal presented “*The Role of Churches in the Immigrant’s Lives*.” The details in her presentation were abundant and engaging. Gracia has also written many books and articles on Norwegians, Lutherans, and women. A link to her YouTube video is on the *Fellesraad* event page.

Gudbrandsdal Lag has become a pilot project for Family Search, a project where each lag can independently preserve their databases on a private site within Family Search. Here is a quote from *Fellesraad* VP Marilyn Sorenson. “Adding data as well as keeping the information specific to one’s lag will assure that the lag information is kept. There is a plan to add an organization category such as *Fellesraad* so all lags would have the opportunity to have their databases as a private tree.”

The Meaning of “*Husmann*” by Carol Olson

Here is a follow-up to my article in the last newsletter. This is taken from articles in the Nord Hedmark og Hedmarken newsletter (Winter 2025 and Fall 2018 issues). It explains what I referred to about the Østegaard tenant farm Nygård, based on the Rælingen bygdebok, pages 308-309. Halvor Hansen Nygaard came there from Høland. His wife Maren came from Fet, and they settled there after their marriage.

Halvor’s immediate ancestors were tenant farmers and so were Maren’s, though they did have landowners in their more remote ancestry.

In addition, I comment here on Halvor Hansen Nygaard and his 3 sons Hans, Johan/John, and Karl/Carl. Besides being a tenant farmer with land, Halvor, as well as his sons, worked as tailors to supplement family income, a trade which they all continued after settling in the United States. Hans ended up as a farmer but also served in different county offices; John owned a tailor shop before he became a County Clerk, serving in that capacity for 40 years; and Carl made tailoring his profession. His obituary said that Carl was a tailor who was well-respected by businessmen in the Tacoma, Washington area. All the men when they came to the United States had trunks made for tailors.



A cotter's place probably situated in Sunndal, Møre og Romsdal. Persons not known. Photo by Ole J Gravern d.e. Stiftelsen Nordmøre Museum License: [CC ShareAlike](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

Who was the “*husmann*”?

By [Martin Roe Eidhammer](#)

(Reprinted from the Fall 2018 issue of NHOH News)

The term “*husmann*” appears in all the sources we use in Norwegian genealogy. The term “*husmann*” is generally translated into English as cotter or crofter. Norwegian cotter’s conditions were a little different from those in other countries. We may find this term in several sources as *husmann*, *huusmand*, *pladsemand*. This is the man in the family. The wife is normally described as *huusmandskone* or *pladsemandskone*. The couple may be referred to by the term *pladsefolk* or *plassefolk*. *Strandsitter* may be used to refer to cotters living by water. Within the scope of this article the conditions of the *husmann* will be covered in very general term.

The “social class” cotter (“*husmann*”) was a person who lived on a piece of land that did not appear as a separate entity in the land register. The owner had to pay the taxes on this land. The cotters rented this land and paid either in money or by working at the farm. Some cotters had land where they could do a little farming and keep a few animals (often a cow for milk). Other cotters had no land and had to rely on some kind of handcrafts to support their family. Cotters are often looked upon as very poor people. Some definitely were, but it is not possible to generalize, because the conditions from one cotter family to the next did vary a lot. There were also big differences from district to district. Cotters who performed some kind of handcrafts; i.e., cobblers, tailors, etc., were able to earn a decent living.

The term *husmann* was used as far back as in the late 1200s. At this time and through the next centuries, it referred to a lodger or a person who had no permanent employment and took odd jobs. Husmann could also be used about a man who had retired and was now supported by younger people, often his son or daughter's family. Finally, husmann could be used to describe a person who cleared a piece of land and settled there. These explanations though, are **not** relevant for the *husmann* we meet in the Norwegian sources from about 1700 and onward.

To understand the term cotter, we need to look at the population growth that started in the early 1700s. Going back to the middle of the 1300s and the Black plague, we learn that in this epidemic 50 to 60% of the population in Norway died (Wikipedia: *Svartedauden*). It took about 400 years for the population to grow to the number it was before the Black plague struck Norway (Wikipedia: *Norges demografi*).

There were different ways to meet the needs of the increasing number of households. The farms that were left abandoned during the black plague were re-inhabited. There was an extensive cultivating of land that had not earlier been farmed. Some of the new households were provided for by splitting the old farms into smaller farm parts. There is a limit to how small a farm can be and still provide for a household. The most extensive splitting of farms took place in areas where one could get additional income. This was the situation on the coast where the fisheries provided income. Also, in areas adjacent to mines or rich forests, there was extensive farm splitting.

Cotters were divided into two categories -

Husmann med jord; i.e., the cotter had land where he could raise a crop and keep animals.

Husmann uten jord; i.e., the cotter had no land and was dependent on an income from paid work or a handcraft.

The farmers' reasons for letting someone live as cotters on their land -

- **Help out a son/brother to get an income.** The oldest son inherited the farm, but another son could get a livelihood by living as a cotter at the farm.
- **Extra income from rent - Monetary.** This husmann's conditions were similar to the renter (*leilending*). He is sometimes called a *Bygslingshusmann*. If the cotter worked on the landlord's farm, he would be paid for this work. This kind of agreements were often found in areas where the cotter had the possibility to earn some money on the side; i.e., from or fishing, mining or forestry. Also, a cotter who performed a handcraft; i.e., tailoring, shoemaking etc. could pay rent for his cotter's place.
- **Rent paid in natural goods.** This is similar to the conditions of the sharecropper.
- **Have the seasonal help needed at hand.** Not having to pay for year-round employed farm hands. Many cotter's agreements stated that the cotter work a defined number of days at certain times of the year. Sometimes the cotter's children were required to shepherd the landlord's animals while they grazed in the forests/mountains.
- **Have more of the land cleared and farmed (*rydningshusmann*).** Some husmenn rented a piece of land that had not previously been cleared. Their first task would be to clear the land and build houses. Most of the agreements stated that the land would go back to the farm when the cotter died. This would slowly increase the cultivated land of the farm. There were also landlords who accepted that the lease of the cotter's place was handed down to the oldest son of the cotter.

The Cotter's contract

Prior to 1750 the cotters had very little protection in the laws. In 1750 regulations were put in place. These stated that the agreement had to be written. The regulations stated that as long as the cotter fulfilled the terms, the contract was valid for the cotter's lifetime. Regulations were amended several times (*Lokalhistoriewiki*). The cotters' agreements varied greatly.

Here are some of the most common terms that were defined in these contracts.

- A description of the land (cotter's place) with boundaries.
- A statement about the cotter's duty to maintain the houses on the cotter's place.
- Which and how much of the farms resources the cotter was allowed to use, e.g. wood for building materials and firewood.

Grazing of the cotter's animals on the farm's outfield.

How the rent is paid: in work on the farm, in natural goods or in money (or a combination).

(Hopefully this little presentation has helped you get an understanding of the "husmann's" condition. As pointed out, their lives varied, and it is hard to tell exactly how each of our ancestors lived.)



Bicentennial Launch July 4

On July 4, 2025, a replica of the sailing ship *Restauration* will leave Stavanger, Norway, to sail to America. The sailing is intended to recreate the original voyage of 1825, and the replica is due to arrive in New York Harbor on October 9. The ship's type is a sloop, which was characterized as a sailboat with one mast and fore-and-aft rigged sails. Fifty-two passengers were crowded on that ship, well beyond the usual capacity, but the lure of America overcame the misgivings some most likely had. They went on to become known as the "Sloopers." Their leader was Cleng Peerson, who became known as the Father of Norwegian Emigration.



Left: "Restauration leaving Stavanger" by Benjamin Blessum (1877-1954). Painted in 1914. Owner: the Norwegian Emigrant Museum and Research Center Foundation. Anno Norsk utvandremuseum.

Right: Authentic replica of the sloop Restauration.



New York is just one place planning commemorations. Several Norwegian-American organizations are planning to celebrate as well, both in the U. S. and in Norway.

To find a schedule of events commemorating the 200th Anniversary of the first emigrant crossing from Norway to America, go to the Crossings calendar online at:

<https://crossings.norwegianamerican.com/events/>

The new Ambassador from Norway is from Romerike!

Anniken Huitfeldt is Norway’s Ambassador to the United States, stationed at the Norwegian Embassy in Washington, DC. (She replaced Ambassador Anniken Krutnes in August 2024.) She has a long history of public service, most recently serving as Foreign Minister from 2021 to 2023. Huitfeldt also held three Cabinet positions with Jens Stoltenberg’s administration. She has a longstanding career in the Norwegian Parliament and led its Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defense for eight years. As a young adult, she studied at the University of Oslo and the London School of Economics, and she later achieved a master’s degree in foreign policy.

Jessheim, in Romerike, is her hometown. When I had the privilege of meeting her this spring in Sioux Falls, I told her about my Norwegian ancestors from Nannestad and Ullensaker and said “We might be cousins!” She very graciously laughed and responded “That could be.” Anniken was at a reception in honor of her first visit to South Dakota as Ambassador. She was there to attend the first performance in more than 50 years of Douglas Moore’s opera “Giants in the Earth”. An adaptation of O.E. Rolvaag’s novel, a Midwestern classic about Norwegian immigrants who settled near present-day Sioux Falls in the late 19th century, Moore’s opera premiered in 1951, quickly won the Pulitzer Prize for music, then practically disappeared. (I attended a performance and it was incredibly emotional to witness Rolvaag’s characters come to life on the stage!



Ambassador Anniken Huitfeldt & Norma at April 2025 “Giants in the Earth” reception, Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

Velkommen to Syttende Mai in Seattle!
I met up with Ambassador Anniken again in Seattle on *Syttende Mai*! She cordially greeted everyone, posed for pictures, and gave congratulatory remarks at the celebration luncheon in the Nordic Museum. Then she viewed the annual parade through Ballard from the VIP stands. It’s the largest *Syttende Mai* parade outside of Norway!
My sister Jane came from Idaho and wore my *hverdags bunad* since I finished my Romerike fancy *bunad* just in time!



Caption

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UPCOMING EVENTS

- Wed-Fr, June 11-13 - **Vestlandslag Stevne**
Hope Presbyterian Church
7730 N Shore Dr.
Spicer, Minnesota
- Mon-Wed, June 16-18 - **Nordlandslag Stevne**
Fergus Falls, Minnesota
- Fri-Sat, June 20 & 21 - **Scandinavian Festival**
Hjemkomst Center & Viking Ship Park,
Moorhead, MN
www.hcsconline.org
- Fri-Sat, June 27-28 - **Valdres Samband**
Superior, Wisconsin
- Wed-Sat, July 9-12 - **7+ Lag Stevne**
DoubleTree Inn Convention Center
Austin, Minnesota
- Thur-Sat, July 24-26 - **Hallinglag Stevne**
Sheraton Hotel
Sioux Falls, South Dakota
- Thur-Sat, Aug 14-16 - **Sognefjordlag Stevne**
Grace Lutheran Church
Albert Lea, Minnesota
- Sunday, Sept 14 - **Nordfjordlag Stevne**
Green Lake Bible Camp
Spicer, Minnesota

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