

# • Sigdalslag Saga •

VOL XIV NO 1

FEBRUARY, 1993

Serving Norwegian-Americans of Sigdal - Eggedal & Krødsherad Ancestry 1994

## LA CROSSE HOSTS 7 LAG STEVNE - JULY 14, 15, 16

Lag leaders selected the campus of U/W-La Crosse, La Crosse, Wisconsin, as the site of the 7 LAG STEVNE July 14-16, 1994.

Registration and genealogy begin Thursday, July 14 at 10 am at **Cartwright Center**, where virtually all stevne events take place. Programs and entertainment for everyone are being planned Friday afternoon, Friday evening, and Saturday evening.

Seven separate business meetings and individual lag programs will be held during the day Saturday. **Sigdal Lag will begin the day with a special catered breakfast.**

Registration will be \$15 for each member, guest or an exhibitor. Each person may register with one of the 7 Lag. If there are no ties to a specific area, a visitor registration would be appropriate for those interested in Norwegian heritage and culture. Tickets ordered in advance to **Norskedalen** will be \$2.50 per person. **Evening program tickets (FRI or SAT)** (age 12 and older) are priced separately at \$4 each. The public is invited.

**Orders for Saturday evening banquet tickets must be POSTMARKED JUNE 24.** Planners favored a menu at \$15 or less.

Rates for dormitory rooms will be \$16 per person/single room per night and \$13 per person/or \$26 per double room per night. Forms will be in the next SAGA. Blocks of rooms will be held until June 30 at two motels, listed elsewhere with campgrounds.

Cartwright Center's snack bar, "The Galley", will be open for mealtimes on a cash basis. Hot grilled-to-order or cold sandwiches, soup & chili, 1-2 daily entree "specials" plus beverages, breakfast and dessert items are offered.

**Cartwright offers the convenience of all major events in the same building. There is an elevator if you need one.** Because Murphy Library (used at the 1987 La Crosse Stevne) is under construction, U/W has arranged to move expensive equipment to a "great room" genealogy setting.

**Vesterheim Genealogical Center cooperates by loaning hundreds of microfilm and other resources to specific bygdelag each summer.** In the 1980s many bygdelag helped purchase their own Norwegian church records on microfilm and donated them to VGC for loan to VGC members nationwide. Lag genealogists bring bygdebøker, family histories, gift books from Norway, maps and other material from both the US and Norway by the car full.

### **ERICKSON IS COORDINATOR; EACH LAG ACCEPTS A "JOB"**

**Stevne Coordinator John Erickson, La Crescent, MN, announces the 1994 theme to be Land of Milk and Honey.**

Besides those wishing to present a portion of Sigdal Lag's own program, the lag has a "job" as its shared 7 Lag responsibility. This year that includes **placing & picking up decorations on each banquet table and taking tickets at two evening programs.** Two Sigdøler will be needed at **9:30 am July 14 to distribute badges for genealogy registration.** Sigdal Lag has 20 - 25 job openings; please "apply"!

Retaining her position as Genealogy Coordinator, **Marilyn Sorensen**, makes plans with genealogists Leslie Rogne, Hadeland; Ella Johnson, Land; Laurel Dikken, Numedal; Lee Rokke, Sigdal; Jan Frye, Telemark; and Leroy Madson, Toten.

Meetings last October and another January 8 with coordinators kicked off stevne planning.

Directors elected Borg Hanson (**Toten**) and Chet Habberstad (**Numedal**) as Chairperson and Vice Chairperson with re-election for Marilyn Somdahl (**Sigdal**) and Al Stevens (**Ringerike-Modum-Eiker**) as secretary and treasurer, respectively.

All directors were present at both meetings. Those not previously mentioned are Norma Gilbertson (**Hadeland**), Oscar Lund (**Land**) and Arnold Ness (**Telemark**).

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Marilyn and family,

Thanks for the interesting Christmas greeting. It was so fun to read your fine Norwegian!

This year we got a white Christmas again; it is so beautiful.

I have some health problems, but can work a little. I'm sending a photo of a painting Ranten og Raumyra. It was there the death dances took place in 1859--where three people lost their lives in a frightening festival. (See Mar 93 SAGA) I have painted in a white horse who stands and listens...

The painting hangs in the Drammen Hospital on the fifth floor because they take care such good care of me whenever I lie there. This view is the other side of Ranten that you have (oil painting done in 1982; given to Sigdalslaget by Krødsherad and Sigdal kommuner).

Greet everyone we know.

Beste julehilsen,

s/Olaug & Hans Wold Åmot, 12/20/93

Dear Marilyn Somdahl:

I'm sending the (Nov 27) Olympic Torch magazine (from DRAMMENS TIDENDE / BUSKERUDS BLAD).

The Olympic fire now burns and the lit torch will be carried all around Norway.

Hilsen, Daniel Lie 3300 Hokksund, 11/30/93

*(Krødsherad's story/timetable carrying the torch is on this page. Also see Newsbits. The editor thanks Lie for three mailings since the October SAGA, including two picture postcards with the Olympic logo! Norwegian letters above were translated by MDS)*

Dear Marilyn Somdahl,

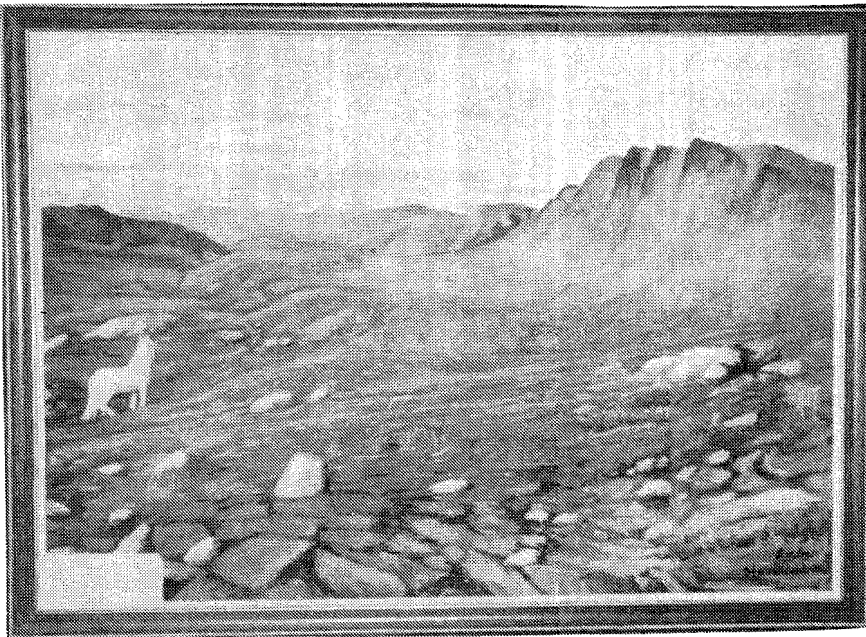
Thanks for the nice mention in the latest Sigdalslag Saga! I appreciated both the advertising for the textbooks and the help in finding people who might know about Sortebok here in America...I also enjoyed reading the rest of the newsletter.

Mange takk, Kathleen Stokker Decorah, IA 9/28/93

## Gifts & Memorials

Received since the October SAGA

\$06.95 bk order Shirley Sampson  
\$45.00 bk order Norway  
\$08.50 bk order Cheri Hoffman  
\$10.00 in memory of Aunt Irene La Bosco  
and Mildred Ruud, Mpls.  
given by Marilyn & Narv Somdahl



Ranten og Raumyra av Hans Wold

## Olympic Torch Brings Sport, Excitement

December 14, 1993 - Kl. 16.26 from Flå border (to Krøderen RR station) via Ørgenvika, Veikåker, Noresund to the foot of Norefjell (overnight).

At Norefjell Stein Eriksen, 1952 Norwegian gold medalist (now living in Colorado Springs), stood on the raised victory stand once more and a program took place --lit by the new torch at the old Olympic mountain. Tormod Skagestad read his own poem, spelemannslag and dancers performed and the Con Brio Choir sang.

### Torchbearers Tuesday

Hilde Riis, Per Ringnes, Berit Kristin Rolfstad, Marit Pedersen, Jorunn Killingstad, Ådne Næss, Harold Rønquist, Mari Strand Resell, Erik Finnevolden, Ingunn E. Finnevolden, Arve Gjøen, Ole Aksel Håkansen, Live Bråten, Viggo Jergel, Kjell Sørensen, Anita Brinchmann, Kenneth Eriksen, Frank Slevikmoen, Svein Bergh, Ole Raaen, Terje Aarthun, Knut Dag Bernhart, Ivar Snersrud, Knut Gulsvik, Berit Nordby, Monica Granum.

December 15, 1993 - Kl.07.33 from Noresund postoffice to "Den gamle Mester", Håkonsrud (via horse-pulled sled) to Krøderen Station where school band music played during the boarding of the veteran train, "Krøderbanen" enroute to Vikersund, Modum, with the torch.

### Torchbearers Wednesday

Anne Sønsteby, Tore Bjelland, Gunn Pedersen, Ståle Vidar Slettvold, Rune Abrahamsen, Hilde Blegeberg, Ove Jokerud, Unni Nilsen, Terje Rudin, Runar Kristoffersen, Finn Orsten, Erik Dalheim.

Then for 194 Nkr. one could get a ticket to ride the torchtrain with 36 well known skiers from various years (from both Modum and Krødsherad) to Vikersund Station. Kåre Waaler was master of ceremonies for these festivities. The railroad club also planned to sell pins and stamp letters on board. Refreshments were also to be available at the station and on the train.

# KRYLLING WOMAN DESIGNS TOP OLYMPIC SKIWEAR



*"It is always exciting to see the clothes in use for the first time," says Marit Eken Kalager (right) who takes a close look at the models, daughter Trine and Jon Folkvord. Marit herself is attired in a showstopper that won an earlier competition.*

How had this collection been inspired by earlier (historic) connections? The cap, for example, is reminiscent of the "kongelue", the well known ski cap of H.M. King Olav. A patterned lower border on the knit sweaters features motifs from woodcarving and rosemaling in Telemark. The collection was named "Morgedal" because four athletes brought the olympic flame (lit in the Sondre Nordheim cabin) down into the Morgedal business district. (From there it will circulate over 7,000 km throughout Norway before melding with the flame from Athens to begin the February Olympic Winter Games.)

After Marit finished the Kunst og Håndverksskole in 1987, she had steadily received notice as a very creative designer of clothes. She previously won another prestigious competition as well. In 1991 Marit won a contest held by Norges Husflidslag, using the theme, "Jeg fant, jeg fant" (I found it)--reminiscent of finding Norwegian treasures in folk arts.

*(Drammens Tidende/Buskeruds Blad story by Nils Drolsum; photo by Reidar Halden. Translation by Marilyn Somdahl, a second cousin of Marit's mother and Trine's grandmother, Ragne Granum Eken)*

## **Krødsherad.**

Ski clothes for 1994 were to be inspired by the 1952 Olympic Games. According to Marit Eken Kalager, 45, the attire would consist of ski jacket, pullover sweater, footwear, stockings, cap, muffler & mittens. Kalager is Krødsherad's own much employed clothing and costume designer.

Marit has gradually gotten to the top in competitions for the best costume for different formal events and occasions. Last winter she was invited to compete for the "OL-drakt" (Olympic costume) -- an exercise undertaken with a special joy for a native Krylling, for the people of Krødsherad take considerable pride in the fact that they are among the few who have made OL arrangements earlier. (1952 grand slalom events were staged at Mt. Norefjell).

Marit placed first in Telemark Håndverkssentral's contest. With the triumphant fanfare of a black/white film theme as accompaniment, the models came forth in dark blue sweaters and knickers and "Selbu" stockings firmly planted in Norwegian boots. What was seen 42 years earlier appeared this time in "kongebliåt" (kingsblue) and was sewn in modern, water-repellant materials.

The administrator of this assignment had definite perceptions of how the clothes should look. Designers had two weeks to research and prepare for a connection with 1952. This included viewing films and studying countless clippings, magazines, and books.

After Marit's designs had won, they chose three jackets, two pants, a hat and a sweater that are now produced at the handwork center in Vinje. "The day before the Olympic flame was lit in Morgedal, I saw the whole line for the first time," she said.

# MARK YOUR CALENDAR

FEB 13 - MOTHER'S DAY (Norway)

FEB 21 - BIRTHDAY of King Harald V

MAY 6 - LAG GENEALOGY WORKSHOP

MAY 7 - BYGDELAGENES FELLESRÅD

Transfiguration Church

Bloomington, MN

MAY 8 - MOTHER'S DAY (US)

MAY 17- CONSTITUTION DAY (Norway)

JUNE 9-11 - VESTLANDSLAG STEVNE

St Olaf, Northfield, MN

JUNE 16-18 - 95th VALDRES SAMBAND

Granite Falls, MN

JUNE 16-19 - HALLINGLAG

UND, Grand Forks, ND

JUNE 17-18 - SUNNFJORD LAG

River Falls, WI

JUNE 19 - FATHER'S DAY

JUNE 22-26 - HJEMKOMST FESTIVAL

Fargo, ND - Moorhead, MN

JULY 1 - CANADA DAY

JULY 4 - INDEPENDENCE DAY (US)

JULY 9 - 85th SETESDAL STEVNE

Oklee, MN

JULY 10 - NORWAY DAY

Minneapolis, MN

JULY 14-16 - 7 LAG STEVNE

La Crosse, WI

JULY 28-30 - GUDBRANDSDAL-NAT'L

La Crosse, WI

JULY 29-31 - NORDIC FEST

Decorah, IA

## Book News

### BIOGRAPHY IS FIRST RATE

Ole Bull: Norway's Romantic Musician and Cosmopolitan Patriot (University of Wisconsin Press. 884 pages. \$32.00)

Einar Haugen and Camilla Cai have written a biography which has been called the "only Bull biography of substance to appear in English since 1880", the year Ole Bull, Norway's greatest violinist died.

Though Bull was called "the Nordic Paganini", book reviewer David McCall Walsten says there is every reason to believe that the

genius of Ole Bull surpassed that of the famed Italian, Niccolò Paganini (1782-1840). Walsten contends that had Bull composed more and performed less he might be remembered as more than just a gifted virtuoso whose name is well-known, while his works are not.

Haugen, author of Norwegian language/culture books, wrote the biographical section while his daughter Cai, a specialist in 19th century European music, took up the technical aspects of the musicianship. She teaches at Kenyon College. Furthermore, Cai has compiled the only complete listing of Bull's compositions in English.

Bull, born in Bergen in 1810, was already performing with a string quartet at age 8. At 19 he resisted his father's efforts to become a preacher by traveling to Germany to meet Louis Spohr, whose compositions Bull had performed. Upon returning to Norway, he continued giving classical recitals, but his lifelong interest in Norwegian folk tunes and hardanger fiddle techniques began during this period.

At 21 he went to Paris and stayed seven years, building a reputation as Paganini's logical successor. There he met Franz Liszt and other leading musicians of that time.

American tours began in 1843, winning rave reviews by such papers as New York Herald Tribune. He died (of cancer) in Bergen some weeks after his last tour in 1880.

Bull lost a fortune in the creation of a utopian colony of Norwegian immigrants called "Oleana" in north-central Pennsylvania in 1852. Next he founded an unsuccessful opera company. In Norway, he established a national theatre in Bergen in 1850 which operated until 1863.

After hearing Edvard Grieg play his own compositions on the keyboard, Bull urged the parents to send Edvard to study music at Zeipzig. At 21 Grieg and Bull were playing Mozart together and discussing Norway's folk music. Grieg's first collection of folk songs was dedicated to Bull in 1869.

Haugen explores Bull's visits to Madison, WI in 1856 and again in 1868. He was a guest of the family of lumber baron Edward Thorp, and was attracted to Thorp's daughter. At age 60, Bull married pianist Sara Thorp, 20, with an extravagant wedding in Madison (after a private ceremony in Norway). They soon had a daughter, Sara Olea. He had four children with his first wife Felicie who died in 1862.

### About the Bergen Festival

The June, 1993, Bergen International Music Festival lasted two extra days, partly because of Grieg's 150th birth anniversary and also because it had its own 40th year festival. Over 101 events including guest performances by major ensembles, 15 premieres, four symphony orchestras, 38 soloists, seven choirs and three different productions of Peer Gynt were heard.

Most notable was the discovery of 23 previously unknown Grieg piano compositions in the archives of the Bergen public library. These were written in 1858-59 prior to Grieg's studies in Leipzig. (Norway Times 3/11/93)

## FIRST LADY WILL ATTEND OL GAMES AT LILLEHAMMER

Hillary Rodham Clinton will visit Lillehammer, Norway, for the first time when she flies there February 11. It's the first time a First Lady has made Olympics in another country a priority.

The Olympic Flame will be lit at the opening ceremonies February 12, and Norway will be the center of attention for 16 days. Skiing conditions are excellent with about 1 meter of snow.

## Yasser Arafat & Shimon Peres Attend Holst Rites In Oslo

Besides his own countrymen, Johan Jørgen Holst, peacemaker and Foreign Minister of Norway, will be remembered internationally for the so called "Oslo channel" negotiations -- arranging secret talks between Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and PLO leader Yasser Arafat, both of whom attended his funeral January 22 in Oslo. Holst was hospitalized in November and died at age 56 January 13 after suffering two strokes.

In a eulogy in the 17th century Lutheran cathedral, US Secretary of State Warren Christopher praised Holst as an imaginative and practical diplomat, a valued colleague and a generous friend.

The Declaration of Principles between Israel and the PLO was signed September 13, 1993, by Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Arafat on the lawn of the White House, witnessed by a crowd of several thousand along with millions of TV viewers.

His wife Marianne Heiberg, also knowledgeable as a researcher on the Middle East, was in the group of negotiators that brought the two parties together in hotels, remote farmhouses and in their own home. She and Holst have one son; he also has a son and three daughters from a previous marriage.

Holst graduated from Columbia University in New York in 1960, following Norwegian military service. His life was devoted to international politics--mostly in the US and Norway. He was Defense Minister in 1986-89 and again 1990-April 2, 1993 when his predecessor, Thorvald Stoltenberg, resigned as Foreign Minister to accept the UN position of negotiator in the former Yugoslavia. Stoltenberg was both a political friend and a family member. His wife Karin is a sister of Holst's wife, Marianne Heiberg.

(Sources: Jan 23 Minneapolis Star Tribune and Jan 20 Norway Times)

## HERE ARE HOUSING OPTIONS FOR LA CROSSE STEVNE

**Residence halls** will offer rooms with two twin beds, closets, mirrors, desks, chairs and a refrigerator. Since rooms are not air conditioned, you may bring a small electric fan. Wendt Hall has an elevator. Fees (p 1) are due in full June 30 to UW-La Crosse.

Most motels offer non-smoking rooms, with handicap accessibility. **TWO MOTELS** have set aside a block of slightly reduced-rate rooms for the Norwegian 7 Lag Stevne (mention this in your inquiry). Make your reservations before June 30. The telephone area code is **608**.

**Super 8 Motel**, 1625 Rose St, La Crosse, WI 54603 offers 10% discount; and the national phone number is 1-800-800-8000. The other is the **La Crosse Inn**, (phone 784-5440) or write 232 North 6th St (Hwy 16), La Crosse, 54601.

Other motels and phone numbers:  
Radisson 1-800-333-3333  
Holiday Inn 1-800-HOLIDAY  
Days Inn 1-800-325-2525  
Midway 1-800-528-1234  
Hampton Inn 1-800-HAMPTON  
Exel Inn 608-781-0400  
Comfort Inn 608-781-7500

**CAMPGROUNDS** nearby include:  
Goose Island (LaX Co) Park, 5 mi South, Hwy 35. No reservations (799-7018); has 275 shaded sites out of 400; shelters, dump station.

Pettibone RV Resort, US Hwy 14-61, offers mini-golf; (782-5858) or write 333 Park Plaza Dr, La X 54601

Veteran's Memorial Park, about 9 mi East on La Crosse River & Hwy 16, dump station. (786-0840) Route 1, West Salem, WI 54669

Neshonoc Lakeside, 12 mi East on Hwy 16, lake swimming, (786-1792) or N5334 Neshonoc Rd, West Salem, WI 54669

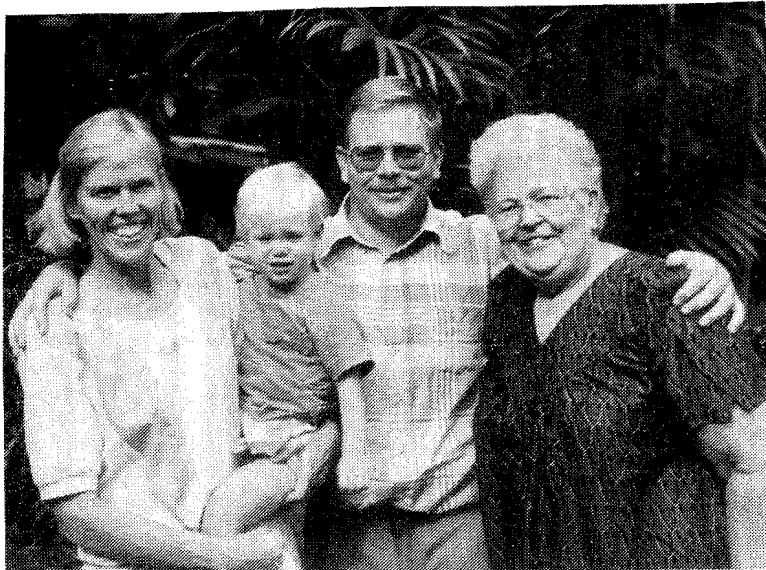


ON WISCONSIN'S WEST COAST...

# NEWSBITS

**GLORIA BURRIS**, Vancouver, WA, sent MANY stevne pictures for the photo album which can be used from time to time. Tusen Takk! All Sigdal Lag members are invited to send contributions of news, family related articles, or pictures.

Lag vice presidents have been traveling. **DON & LYNN SKADELAND** took trips to Florida, autumn tours to New England and the ND Høstfest, and Branson, MO, between the Wahpeton stevne and Christmas. **CORRINE JOHNSON**, pictured below, went a bit farther.



In November, flying to Zaire, Africa, via Paris, Corrine tested her tolerance for the tropics for seven weeks. She visited her missionary son, Galen, his wife Jill & granddaughter Elikia. The (X - map left) shows where they live in the former Belgian Congo above the equator.



The picture, taken with her family January 4 as she left Karawa, shows her in her made-to-order dress with fabric made and sold in open markets there.

**ALICE & FRED MENSING** are enjoying Palm Springs, CA, for a few weeks to rest, relax and re-charge. **SAGA** sends the same *ta det med ro* wishes to **MURIEL HOFF** recuperating from surgery at home.

One of **ELVERA BISBEE's** Christmas gifts was the book, Norwegian Rose Painting In America, by Nils Ellingsgard. Her great great grandmother's trunk, now owned by Elvera, appears on page 59. "The colors are gorgeous," says Elvera who is a rosemaier of long standing herself. "Darrel Henning flew up & took pictures a year and a half ago." The book is available (\$45) at Vesterheim, the largest ethnic museum in the US, located at Decorah, IA (60 mi from La Crosse).

Members who make and sell handcrafted Norwegian

items and plan to attend the La Crosse stevne may write of their skills and interest to Roland Krogstad, Exhibit Chr., 2718 Regent St, Madison, WI 53705. Letters of invitation will be sent because exhibit space is limited.

This **SAGA** is being mailed to 184 members households of 1993. Please act now if 94, 95 or 96 does not follow your name on the address label. It would be heartwarming to get somewhere near 100% renewals from 54 of you in this next month. A 3-year subscription gives the "best bang for the buck"..... Several prospective members have ordered the Sigdalslag Album 1991-1992 containing many pictures before becoming members. Please pass the word the \$6.95 price is for current members at the stevne or postage paid. Non-members pay \$8.50. There is talk of postage rates possibly rising, so the prudent thing is to join first....and buy a book afterward!

**IRENE NAVARRE** has a connection to a Sortebok (or Black Book) from Modum. Various home remedies were found to be useful back then, and Kathleen Stokker, professor of Norwegian at Luther College, is researching such "books" in America.

## Daniel Lie Sends More Resources

Once again Daniel Lie has mailed several resources for reference and study to the lag president. Copies of the Øvre og Nedre Eiker Historielag yearbooks, Eikerminne - 1991 and Eikerminne - 1992 arrived by Christmas. One shows a picture honoring Ingrid Enderud with flowers and a pewter platter in March. She arranged the 1986 Sigdalslag visit to Fossesholm and has now retired from leadership capacities for many of her 45 years with the group. Like Lie, she also has roots in Sigdal. These books will be used by both Sigdalslag and Ringerike-Modum-Eiker Lag. Check for resources with both genealogists.

An excerpt of Ludwig Throndsen's book, Det Hender Så Mangt - Historier fra Buskerud arrived early in November. We really appreciate being remembered. All our contacts in Norway make us richer in understanding our "roots". Tusen Takk!

# GENEALOGY NEWS & VIEWS

by Lee Rokke

## *Thanks to Erber & Shortino For Additions to Lag's Library*

**Audrey Erber**, Oak Park, IL, has donated a copy of her book, Brita Edwinson, Elling Thompson, and Endre Anderson Family History, Volume I, to the Sigdalslag library. The families she records are from Ulvik in Hordaland, Frosta in Nord Trøndelag, and **Krødsherad**.

She has been able to collect an amazing amount of documents from the lives of her immigrant ancestors, and the book is an outstanding example of the kind of documentation that can be added to a family history.

Audrey is a descendant of **Endre Olsen Glesne** and **Ingeborg Kornelioussdatter Vad** who immigrated from Sigdal in 1850 together with three children--**Ole, Berit and Kornelius**.

It is possible to see from the pedigree charts on this family that many of the Sigdalslag members are distant relatives of Audrey's, including the lag president, Marilyn Somdahl. Many of you will want to study the book this July at the stevne. We Sigdalslag members thank Audrey for her gift.

Another gift, which comes from **Debbie Shortino**, Minneapolis, was used by many of you at the 1993 stevne. However, our readers may not know this; I'm sorry that it was not acknowledged in the October SAGA. Instead we thank her now.

Debbie donated a copy of the Transcription of West Norway Lake Cemetery, (Hope Lutheran Church), Norway Lake Township, Section 32, (Kandiyohi County, MN), dated July 19, 1991.

## **Naeseth Reads First of Five Books For Year End Gifts**

Late last year, as most of you are aware by now, Gerhard Naeseth, Madison, Wisconsin, published his book, Norwegian Immigrants to the United States: A Biographical Directory, Volume I, 1825-1843. Four more volumes

are being planned to accommodate the information for the years stated.

In 390 pages there are 3867 biographical entries. Emigrants from Norway are arranged by departure year and the book has included the name of the ship, port of entry, and arrival date. Parents and children's names are listed as well as the home areas, if known, in both Norway and the US. At least 33 Sigdølinger are listed in the book.

In the Krødsherad emigrant list in 1842 there was a family listed as **Gigernes**. They are on page 490 in the Krødsherad bygdebok, but I had not been able to locate them in this country. The Naeseth book has given us another clue--the family name used on the passenger list of the Ellida that arrived in New York August 9, 1842, was **Lesteberg**. Their destination is not listed, but surely with all of the **Lestebergs** in the Sigdalslag, someone knows who this family is, and where they went! The names are **Ole Jonson & wife Rønnaug, children: Jon, Olava and Berit (Gigernes or Lesteberg)**.

One word of caution--as with all genealogy books, there are mistakes. **Be sure to double check the original sources to insure accuracy.** One notable mistake occurred in the bygdebøker when Andreas Mørch confused **Engebret Gulbrandsen Hovland (Søland)** with **Engebret Gulbrandsen Skare**. Naeseth copied this error, making **Eli Eriksdtr Skaalien** married to both Engebret Skare and Engebret Hovland. It has been well documented that she married Engebret Hovland (Søland). There is much written about that couple, but I am still searching for information about Engebret Skare.

**Please send me a note if you know about Engebret Gulbrandsen Skare or the Lesteberg (Gigernes) family.**

Sigdal Lag has purchased a copy of Naeseth's book, so that it will be available to any lag members who wish to study it. Copies may be available for purchase at the La Crosse stevne or by contacting Vesterheim Genealogical Center, 415 West Main Street, Madison, WI 53703-3116. Phone 608-255-2224.



## *From Sigdal, Norway, to the Mouse River Valley in North Dakota*

by Erik Ramstad

*The founding father of Minot, ND, was born January 17, 1860, at Kosahaugen in Sigdal to Anne Elevsdatter who was married earlier to Reier Pederson of Flå, Hallingdal. At the time he was to take confirmation instruction, he was unable to read and write because he had spent time at home, not in school. Arrangements were made by the pastor for both religious training and life long learning; he was confirmed in Sigdal. He died January 21, 1951, survived by his second wife, Louise Herbranson (Knutson) Ramstad.*

I could tell about much before 1882, but I will begin with that year when it was, for me, notable in many respects. I was in Grafton then, searching for land, but I didn't find any that completely satisfied me. In the meantime I heard through friends who were staying out in the West, that the Mouse River Valley had many resources to offer. My brother Peder and I made up our minds then to go westward. I had a good team of oxen and a couple (wagon) "rigs". With this outfitting we began the trip west in 1883.

It was before the Great Northern Railroad was built, so we had to help ourselves as best we could as far as transportation was concerned.

There were obstacles. The poor oxen did all they were capable of, and we had a covered wagon. It was our dining room, sleeping wagon, drawing room and kitchen. In the evening we unhitched the oxen and let them out on God's green fields. It was early in the spring, so there wasn't a lot of grass, but they managed. When we came farther west it was better (grazing).

Week after week went slowly, slowly forth over the endless plain. Many hindrances & difficulties got in the way. But we were Norwegians, young and active; we didn't think of giving up.

We approached Mouse River. Then we met a 'devil' from all directions: mygg, the famous small fly that we call mosquito. It was warlike. We had to have buffalo netting around our faces, yet it was not easy to manage. But the oxen were along also. The mosquitoes attacked them a million ways from all sides. We did our best to protect them. We smeared them in with axle grease, especially the nose, mouth, and ears.

After three weeks we arrived. First we searched for land. That we found. There was enough of it. The land was not yet surveyed, so we had to settle down as "squatters".

My brother chose his land east of the river where Minot Nursery now is located. I set the highest post where the well known city of Minot now lies. I built my house exactly on the place where the Great Northern Railroad roundhouse stands today. There were large trees along the Mouse River in those days. These we cut, taking the branches and bark off. The oxen dragged them to the building site. And it didn't take long before we had logs to build from.

While I walked & chopped & sawed, Ivar Aasen's words ran through my mind: "Between hills & mountains by the ocean, the Norwegian has found his home; there he digs a foundation to build and set up his own house." It was not Norway with its proud mountains or light birches, but it reminded me of it. The cabins were soon ready. We made them the traditional Norwegian way-- log on log, row by row. But I won't praise the lumbermen. The building was so open in the cracks that we could see both sun and moon between the timbers.

But we were not without hope. We made 'dough' of earth and water that we stuck into the gapping cracks. And the cabins became tight as pots. It was not a showplace, but it was otherwise good in all ways. We were well satisfied with it. I had never been so happy in any house as in my small log cabin by the Mouse River.

After the house was standing, I took up work with the land. The oxen had to move forward once again. I set the plow in the black, virgin soil. Furrow after furrow lay side by side and the dark flood became larger and wider. While my ox team & I walked there, turning the prairie, we shouted "Hurrah" to each other. Forward it went. Soon the whole field lay coalblack where now many railroad tracks gleam of shiny steel.

When I was finished with it, I set the plow in the slope where Leeland Hotel and Bovey Shute's Lumber Yard now stand. When both slopes lighted black, I stood and looked out over my work with my animals. I felt mighty as a king. I was almost tempted to say as God when he had created the earth: It is in all respects very good. Then one of my neighbors came walking during this same uplifting time. I couldn't contain myself, but shouted "Hallelujah!" But to my surprise and irritation, he replied somewhat dryly.

So came changes in the weather and I got busy with haymaking and set up some splendid stacks. When I was done with that, I went back again to Grafton, still proud of my loyal friends, the ox team. They didn't disappoint me this time either. The threshing began, and the oxen and I were there for that. We didn't become millionaires, but we worked enough that we could prepare to get through the winter. And I was happy. I saw my farm by the Mouse River in light and beauty. I dreamed only of it each night. I was a king.



## To the Mouse River Valley

In November, I traveled back. It was lonely and without comfort on the road. Dark and cold nights. So much could happen. I longed for company, and that I should shortly get. When I came to Bartlett, east of Devils Lake, I met L.V. Foot & family. They had land at Burlington. We hit it off together. B. Johnson who also had land at the Mouse River was traveling ahead of us. Mercy, mercy - him again. Johnson had two untamed team of oxen and two rigs. When he often got in a scrape with his wild animals, he asked if I could help him a little. And I did. I let him drive my ox team, so I put his four oxen and two cows ahead of his wagon in three teams, traveling ahead, and tied them to my wagon. And it went okay. It became a whole caravan.

Even though we were several in the company, it became sad and uninviting. The prairie was black as far as the eye could reach. A racing prairie fire had lapped up every straw and bush some days ahead of us. Luckily we had (animal) feed with us.

One morning we woke up in terror. It was a snowstorm--one of the worst. The animals stood & froze. We gave them food, but it didn't help. I felt so bad for my faithful oxen. But something came to me. I went down to the swamp where some puddles stood. It was ugly & gruesome, but I filled my pail, went into the wagon & strained the water through a handkerchief, warmed it in a frypan over the fire, and carefully took out a bottle of alcohol, added sugar & water to the bottle and went out to my ox team. I gave them each a good drink. And they "came to" again. Some may say it wasn't the thing to do, but in this situation strong drink was used as medicine.

Right away it carried further. The oxen were enlivened and did a dance. We drove the whole day. During the evening we came to Broken Bone Lake, about eight miles west of the place we left during the morning. We had to stay there four days until the storm was over. Here was Johnson again. There were several settlers at Broken Bone Lake already then. I set out and reached home without any more happenings. And I was happy. It isn't fun to face danger in wild open country.

Now it was full winter. I kept busy with winterwork by cutting fence posts (rope). I wanted a fence around my land as soon as possible. And it went as lively as I wished. Axes rang out in the woods and sounded to the distant ridges.

When there wasn't much food, I took my rifle from the wall and went hunting. There were rabbits, deer, prairie chickens, and other edible

animals in abundance. Mouse River then held fish. One could dip them up or spear them through the ice with a long hayfork.

As soon as the snow was gone, I went out to look at my acres. I had to think now of spring's work. But tools? I mulled this over a day or two, and solved the problem. I went into the woods and cut a big tree with many branches, trimmed it, and my oxen dragged it home. It was my first harrow (drag). It ripped into the earth and evened it out as the oxen I drove pulled the drag back and forth. As in Norway, I seeded by hand, dragged the treeharrow over it again, and spring's work was finished.

Now it depended on rain and sunshine. There was nothing to do but to wait for God's rich autumn harvest.

While waiting, I thought how I should store the crop in the hillside. Of course, I had no tools, but necessity spurs invention. I found a man called "Krill" who owned a scythe.

Autumn came with arms full of golden, fertile treasure. The homemade tools flashed through the acres and laid the crop on the ground. How should I get it threshed? I searched for a tool we called "slue", but that didn't work. So we looked for another way. A large tree was cut, trimmed, and brought home. The top was cut so there was a main head and a "throat". The throat was made between two boards that we bolted together. So it became a threshing site out on the ground. In the middle a large post was driven down. To this post the threshing machine was permanently attached, the grain topped straw was scattered on the pile and the oxen turned the machine. Threshing was in full swing.

From 40-50 bushels of wheat could be rolled out per day, and 100 bushels of oats. But the road had to be good or it wouldn't work. So we got ahold of "en droftemaskin" and this went flawlessly on loan between the neighbors.

Getting the crop to market was next. The nearest were 140 miles to Bismarck and 120 miles to Devils Lake. A long way--it took 11 days to drive a load to Devils Lake. It went no better to count the days than the miles! We sat proudly in place with our grain and finally came home prouder still with good things (we'd bought).

In 1893 the Great Northern (Railroad) came, and that stirred things up along the Mouse River. I let (James J.) Hill get 40 acres of my land, and this caused the most fuss for me. The town began and houses were built before it was surveyed. In 1893 the Soo Line Railroad came and I gave them a road through my land.

## *RUGLAND VISITS TO EGGEDAL continued*

My friend and guide Karl soon discovered that a group of people were to be given a tour of the church (which was locked when we arrived) by an "old" man who turned out to be the official "overseer" and guide. We joined.

The interior of the church was beautiful--much gold leaf. The altar was a duplicate of that in the Dom Kirke (Cathedral Church) in Oslo --but only one third as large. Some of the wood carvings and the baptismal font were from an old STAVE KIRKE which had stood nearby.

After the guide had finished his explanation of the interior of the church, including some beautiful paintings, and the other tourists had left, I introduced myself as a Rugland who lived in the U.S.A. He was elated and said immediately that we must be related since he was related to Knut Knutson Rugland who had lived on the Rugland Gaard many years ago. When I told him that I had been in Norway 50 years ago (not yet 18 years old) he was nonplussed. He thought he would have been living in Eggedal when Gay, Si and I were there in 1925 on (believe it or not) **July 9!**

This man, Tveiten by name, had a private museum of over 7500 antique and historical items about Sigdal (the largest community of which Eggedal is a part). He was a retired school teacher 79 years old. Besides his duties as caretaker of the church, he was obviously the historical authority for the Eggedal community. He agreed to spend some time with us later in the day when he wouldn't be quite so busy.

It was time for lunch. Karl bought some provisions (cold meat, rolls, etc) at the little store, and then we drove to his cottage some 500 meters above Eggedal on the west side of Norefjell (mountain). Actually the cottage was some two or three hundred yards from the end of the road so we walked that distance over rather rugged terrain. It occurred to me that this may well have been the same mountain that Knut Rugland took the three of us to his fishing shack in 1925.

About 2:30 p.m. we again sought out our friend in his home-museum where he produced some old out-of-print books containing the genealogy of all people in Sigdal way back. If two or three days were available, one could put together a family tree up to 50 years or so ago.

It was thrilling to learn from this source, and his genuine personal interest about grandfather and great grandfather Rugland. In a few minutes, the following genealogy was established:

My great grandfather was Gulbrand Fingarson Rugland, born in 1770 and died in 1841. His wife, my great grandmother Helge Gjermundsdatter, died in 1838. We could not establish the date of her birth.

My grandfather was the 7th child of that union. His name was Gulbrand (Gulbrandson Rugland). He was born in 1820 and married in 1849 to Sigrid Halvorsdatter Pletan-Hagen (her date of birth I failed to get). They immigrated to the U.S.A. in 1852 with their then one daughter, Helge, who was born in 1849. There were no further records of this family for the reason, I suppose, that they were no longer members of that community.

Other children of Gulbrand Fingarson Rugland and wife Helge (in birth order) were:

1. Barbro born 1803. Emigrated to USA 1859
2. Ambjor born 1805. Died 1909
3. Fingar born 1808. Married in 1843 to Mary ...?
4. Hjermand b. 1811. Moved to Hurum in 1841
5. Ambjorg b. 1814. Married to Thore Rustad in 1837
6. \*Christofer b. 1816. Md to Sebjorn Kleve in 1841
7. Seventh was grandfather
8. Ingeborg b. 1823. Emigrated to USA in 1849
9. \*Ingebret b. 1825. Md to Andreasdatter Gronhovd.

(\*In Esther Brekke's paper, "Pioneer Pastor", based on father's writing, she mentioned Stephen Rugland who lived in Fergus Falls in the 1920s and whom Dad worked for in Ashby, ND in 1888. She mentioned that this Stephen (originally Steiner) was the son of Christofer Rugland and that Christofer's three sons were named Fingar, Lars and Sebjorn.)

When Gay, Si and I visited Norway in 1925, we met some Gronhovds who were related to us. These people originally had the name Rugland, but moving on to another farm, they became Gronhovds. They may have been descendants of Ingebret.

It was hard to break away from that wonderful "old" man who possessed so much of our ancestral history, but we had to get back to Oslo. So I thanked him for all his help--forced him to accept a 50 Nkr. bill and we left. Before returning to Oslo, Karl drove me up the valley to the old Rugland Gaard. I took pictures and found they were of the same house I'd photographed in 1925.

#

*Watch for "SUCCEEDING GENERATIONS VISIT EGGEDAL" in a future SAGA.*



**SIGDAL LAG REGISTRATION - JULY 14-15-16 - LA CROSSE**

My/Our names \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
*(for badges)*

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

REGISTRATION (Thurs/Fri/Sat - one or three days) \$15 per person \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 \*Genealogy \*Sales Exhibits \*Meeting Rooms \*Evening & Day programs

SIGDAL LAG BREAKFAST - 8:15 AM SATURDAY \$5.50 each \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
*(O.J. - muffins - egg dish (quiche) - coffee)*

SAT EVE BANQUET TICKET \$15 per person \$ \_\_\_\_\_

NORSKEDALEN TICKET (Heritage Center, Coon Valley, WI) - \$2.50 p/person \$ \_\_\_\_\_

EVENING PROGRAM TICKETS *(non-registered, age 12 & up)* \_\_\_ FRI \_\_\_ SAT \$4 each \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL \$ \_\_\_\_\_

MAIL ON OR BEFORE JUNE 24, 1994 with check payable to SIGDAL LAG to

**MURIEL HOFF, 3512 WHITE BEAR AVE, WHITE BEAR LAKE, MN 55110**

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**UW-La Crosse 1994 Housing Reservation Form**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City/State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone \_\_\_\_\_ Day time phone \_\_\_\_\_

ROOM	NAME	SINGLE/ DOUBLE	FEMALE/ MALE	ARRIVAL DATE	DEPARTURE DATE
#1.					

(Duplicate this form if reserving more than one room)

Residence hall rooms are **NOT** air conditioned. Bring a small fan/window fan. Each room has two twin beds, desks, chairs, dressers, closets, mirrors and a refrigerator. Two sheets, pillowcase, pillow, blanket, towel and soap are provided. Bring your own personal hygiene items.

RATES: \$13 per person/per night DOUBLE occupancy inclusive  
 \$16 per person/per night SINGLE occupancy inclusive

A check (payable to UW-La Crosse) of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed for lodging for \_\_\_\_\_ nights.

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM BY JUNE 30, 1994 ALONG WITH FULL PAYMENT TO PAUL RIFKIN,

UW-LA CROSSE, RESIDENCE LIFE OFC, 1725 STATE ST, LA CROSSE, WI 54601

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LEROY LARSON (center), HELGE LAMO (in the white shirt) and MEL BRENDEN of The Minnesota Scandinavian Ensemble Show

Band appear above. The public is invited to attend the program Friday evening, July 15, at 7:30 pm at Cartwright Center, University of Wisconsin at La Crosse, Wisconsin. Also featured is DARRELL HENNING, curator-director of Vesterheim Museum at Decorah, IA. Tickets, available at the door a half hour prior to the program, are \$4 per person for guests, La Crosse area residents or anyone not wearing a 7 LAG STEVNE registration badge.

Fame came to the group as regulars on Garrison Keillor's "A Prairie Home Companion" radio show, where they played folk songs, folk dance tunes or American old time as they exchanged pleasantries with the host. Known as recording artists of nine LPs and cassettes, the group won the Minnesota Music Award in 1989 and appeared on "American Snapshots", the national cable TV special, the same year. More recently are other ethnic TV specials, "This Morning" show (CBS) with Harry Smith, KSTP-TV's "People in Harmony" and Norsk Høstfest, Minot, ND. *You're invited to come by seven sponsoring bygdelag: Hadeland, Land, Numedal, Ringerike-Modum-Eiker, Sigdal, Telemag, and Toten.*

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