Who Sailed on the Restauration?

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In 1825, the Norwegian sloop *Restauration* sailed from Stavanger to New York City with a tiny crew, too many passengers, and a small amount of cargo. The voyage is famous both in Norway and America, with its story of fifty-two people who spent 98 days at sea, with a child born on the way; of how the ship was held in arrest upon its arrival in New York City; of how it was bonded by wealthy New York Quakers; and of how it was pardoned by the American president himself.

The voyage is often said to be the first emigration of Norwegians to the United States, even though we know that there were Norwegians in the British colonies in America long before 1825, as well as medieval Norsemen who sailed to North America one thousand years ago. Those stories, however, while important, remain only a prelude. It is the *Restauration* that posterity generally takes to be the real beginning of the Norwegian story in America; and it is those who sailed in her who are the forerunners of everyone who came after. They are seen as the first company in modern times to brave the ocean's dangers on their way to a new life in a new land; an organized beginning to the Norwegian mass migration of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Since then, the story of this vessel, her voyage and the people who sailed in her, have taken on aspects of a legendary Norse saga, especially among Norwegian Americans. It is treated as a heroic tale of a group of poor peasants who brave the ocean's perils to escape religious persecution and settle in a new land. In a deliberate comparison to the voyage of the "Pilgrim Fathers" in 1620—and to the pilgrims' role in the founding of the United States—the vessel that made the voyage, the *Restauration*, is often described as "the Norwegian *Mavflower*."

This iconic image of the vessel and its passengers was current in the Norwegian communities in America as early as 1875. On

June 6 that year, the Norwegian-American newspaper *Skandinaven* in Chicago published an article concerning the town of Norway, in La Salle County, Illinois. The article said first that the town of Norway was, "The largest, most important, and oldest of all the Norwegian settlements in the United States;" and then continued:

It is here that the greatest part of the early emigrants settled, [those who] came here on "The Sloop." No more needs to be said to describe them. What the Mayflower is in the memory of New Englanders, "The Sloop" must be the same for Norwegians. Both had "Pilgrim Fathers" on board—bold, fearless, sturdy people. Some are still to be found here in the settlement. I spoke with one of them the other day—an old man with a grey beard and a strongly marked face—a real pioneer.

Some years later, the well-known Norwegian-American Professor Rasmus B. Anderson (1846-1936) made the same comparison. Anderson, besides being an author, editor, businessman and ambassador, was a professor at the University of Wisconsin from 1867 to 1883. His book of 1895, *The First Chapter of Norwegian Immigration (1821-1840) Its Causes and Results*, was for many years the standard work about the early Norwegian emigration of America. Here he wrote:

And what about the pilgrim fathers who landed at Plymouth in 1620, and founded the first settlement in New England? Were they not men of strong minds, good judgment, and sterling character, and did they not rigidly conform their lives to their principles? Persecution led them to emigrate and in New England they embodied their principles in a framework of government on which, as a most stable foundation, our own great American republic has been built up. History repeats itself in Norway, in the early years of this century, and the sloop *Restaurationen* [sic] of which we are soon to speak, left Norway in 1825, because Quakers were not permitted to worship God according to

the dictates of their own conscience. The story of William Penn is repeated in Norway.²

In other words, only fifty years after she sailed, the *Restauration* had become a central element of Norwegian identity in America, and a symbol of their early arrival in the United States. Shortly thereafter, the reasons why the company who sailed in her departed Norway were directly compared to those of the English Pilgrims of 1620 and the Quakers of the later seventeenth century—i.e., religious persecution. Moreover, the vessel and the voyage had become an expression of the emigrants' character and potential as good American citizens—bold, fearless, sturdy, "real pioneers." In the same vein, those who had sailed in the *Restauration* were given a defining name by which they are known to later history. The company that sailed on the *Mayflower* are known as "The Pilgrim Fathers." Those who sailed in the *Restauration*—and only they—are called "The Sloopers."

Yet, despite its importance as a Norwegian-American ethnic marker, many of the details about this voyage remain unknown, obscure, and open to interpretation. One such detail that has teased researchers for decades is the number of people who sailed in her, and who they were. One might perhaps say that this is insignificant within the larger context of the creation and maintenance of a Norwegian-American ethnic identity. On the other hand, the creation of *any* group identity is founded upon a story of that group's beginnings, what we might call an ethnic creation myth; and such myths almost always are founded on stories of heroic forebears.

Thus, there is one detail from the voyage of the *Mayflower* which has resonated in American history through four centuries: the list of names attached to the "Mayflower Compact," the first governing document of Plymouth Colony, signed by 41 of the ship's 101 passengers on November 21, 1620. No such contemporary list of names exists for the *Restauration*. Yet the names of those who sailed in her can be seen as one of the building blocks of a Norwegian-American identity. Therefore, both Norwegian and Norwegian-American researchers, beginning with Professor Ras-

mus Anderson in the mid-nineteenth century, have attempted to answer the question: Who were the Sloopers?

It is well known that a list of the crew upon the vessel's departure from Norway exists.³ It is also certain that a ship's manifest listing the names of the passengers once existed as well, because of the customs laws of the United States in 1825. They required the captain of every ship entering New York harbor to: "Make a report in writing on oath or affirmation to the mayor of the city of New York," or the city recorder, within 24 hours of the ship's arrival:

Of the name, place of birth, and last legal settlement, age and occupation of every person who shall have been brought as a passenger in such ship or vessel on her last voyage from any country out of the United States into the port of New-York...⁴

Furthermore, the fine for not providing this list was \$500 for each passenger not named on it, to be paid by the captain.

Unfortunately, no one has yet been able to locate such a list, to the sorrow of every historian who has devoted any time at all to the Sloopers and their story. The Norwegian-American historian Theodore Blegen (1891-1969), writing in 1930, suggested that it may have been destroyed in a fire at the United States Department of the Treasury.⁵ Therefore, researchers both in Norway and America have gone to other sources for this information.

The earliest mention of the Sloopers that we know of today is a notice printed in the Norwegian newspaper *Den norske Rigstidende* on July 27, 1825, and dated July 7, which says: "The day before yesterday five peasant families left this place for America on a ship which they had bought for the purpose, and where they expect to find a Canaan's land." The next is a letter, written on August 27 that same summer by Bishop Johan Storm Munch (1778-1832) of Kristiansand and Stavanger, who said: "This summer fifty-one persons are supposed to have sailed to America." The third is the small emigrant handbook *Sandfærdig Beretning om Amerika til Oplysning og Nytte for Bonde og Menig-*

mand, usually referred to in English as Rynning's *True Account*, from 1838.

Ole Rynning (1809-1838) was a pastor's son from Snåsa who emigrated to the United States in 1837. He settled in Beaver Creek, Illinois, and died of malaria there in the autumn of 1838. Before he passed away, however, he finished his book, which contains the first known description of the voyage of the *Restauration*, including the information that fifty-two people sailed from Stavanger.⁸ Rynning did not, however, say anything about how many people arrived in New York City or who they were. That was left to one of the Sloopers themselves, Sarah T. Richey, who was a seven-year-old girl when she sailed on the *Restauration* in 1825.

Sarah was born Sara or Siri Aanensdatter Brastad in 1818. After a long life, two marriages and several children, she was living in Guthrie County, Iowa, when an unknown writer interviewed her about the voyage to America in 1825. The interview—titled *From Norway to America*—was published in the local newspaper *Sentinel* in Guthrie County, at some time between 1891 and 1894. It was amended and republished in the *Marseilles Plaindealer* in Marseilles, Illinois, on Friday, April 6, 1894, probably because Mrs. Richey previously had lived in that city and still had descendants there.

Mrs. Richey's story of the emigration is rather short, but it includes the first known list of the passengers and crew of the *Restauration*, as follows:

Cornelius Nelson, wife and four children;

Mr. Steen, wife and two children;

Daniel Rosdal, wife and five children;

Oien Thompson, wife and three children [This was Mrs.

Richey's family];

Simon Lime, wife and two children;

Lars Larson, wife and one child;

Nels Nelson and wife;

Henry Harwick and wife;

Thomas Madland, wife and three children;

Ole Olson;
Ole Johnson;
Gudmund Hougas;
Jacob Anderson;
Thor. Olson;
George Johnson;
Andrew Dahl;
Nels Thompson;
Mr. Gousland;
Mr. Olsen;
Mr. Erikson.

According to Mrs. Richey, the last two were the captain and mate respectively of the sloop. She also said that there were two other couples on board, but she could not remember their names. One of the couples, however, had returned to Norway in 1826.9

A year later, Rasmus B. Anderson published *The First Chapter of Norwegian Immigration*. He says himself that he interviewed and corresponded with several of the surviving Sloopers while working on his book, including both Sarah Richey and Margaret Allen (Geilane) Atwater (1825-1916), who had been born on the *Restauration* just before her arrival in America. He had also found the description of the sloop's arrival in the newspaper *The New York City Daily Advertiser* for October 12, 1825. On that basis, Anderson made a list of crew and passengers that contained fifty-three persons who arrived in New York City.

Anderson's list was repeated and refined by the Norwegian-American Professor and linguist George T. Flom (1871-1960) of Iowa State University, in his book *A History of Norwegian Immigration to the United States*, in 1909;¹³ and by the centennial celebrations of Norwegian immigration in 1925, several new sources of information about the Sloopers had been discovered. They included the health clearance given to *Restauration* at Stavanger on July 4, 1825; the correspondence between the Department of Churches and Bishop Munch concerning the departure; and the letters from the Swedish consul in New York, Henry Gahn

to the Norwegian foreign office concerning the arrival; and the documents concerning the arrest of the *Restauration* by the American customs authorities in October 1825.

Based on the foregoing, Theodore Blegen in his book *Norwegian Migration to America 1825-1860* of 1931, deleted some of Anderson's names, added others, and provided an edited list of names. However, he only provided the names of the men on board, not the names of the wives or the children. He also concluded that fifty-three individuals arrived in New York, and when referring to Anderson's work, called it: "the traditional list." ¹⁴

But is fifty-three the correct number? Even the available sources from 1825 are at odds. According to the vessel's health clearance signed by *byfogd* (bailiff) Ole Andreas Løwold in Stavanger on July 4, 1825, seven crew members and forty-five passengers departed Stavanger on the *Restauration*. Later that summer, however, Bishop Munch wrote that fifty-one people left. Of these two contemporary statements, the official health clearance for the *Restauration*, must be considered the correct one. It was written by the relevant authority at the port of departure, and it had to be shown by the captain at every port visited by the *Restauration* thereafter. It is certainly more trustworthy than a statement from the bishop, who wrote that fifty-one people "are supposed to have left," and who in any case was based in Kristiansand, not Stavanger.

Then on October 14, 1825, after the *Restauration* had been arrested and fined by the American customs authorities for carrying too many passengers for its size, the owners Lars Larson Geilane and Johannes Soledal, and Captain Lars O. Helland, petitioned the United States' government for relief of the fine. The petition includes this passage:

That the petitioners and others, amounting in all to forty-five persons, principally relatives and friends of Clang [sic] Peerson, purchased the said sloop in Norway aforesaid, took on board a few tons of iron for ballast, and provisions for the voyage, and thereupon, after having been regularly cleared at the port of

Stavanger in Norway aforesaid, took their departure for the Port of New York...¹⁶

This statement confirms that the *Restauration* had forty-five passengers upon departure from Norway, while the crew list delivered by Captain Helland in Stavanger confirms that there were seven crew members. And since one child was born on the way, fifty-three people arrived in New York City.

There are also two contemporary sources which further confirm that fifty-three individuals arrived in New York. The first is the newspaper article, "A Novel Sight" in the *New York Daily Advertiser*, which states that the *Restauration* carried forty-six passengers. The second source is the letter written by Consul Henry Gahn on October 15, 1825, in which he discusses the tonnage of the vessel with relation to the number of passengers and the size of the fine leveled by the American authorities. He states:

For forty-five passengers at least 112.5 tons are required. One child is said to have been born on the voyage; therefore, under the strictest interpretation of the law, the ship's tonnage ought to be 115 tons.¹⁸

Since there were seven members of the crew, the number given by the newspaper and by Consul Gahn indicate that there were fiftythree individuals on the *Restauration* when she arrived in New York.

A third source for the number fifty-three is a letter from one of the Sloopers, Henrik Hervig, to the newspaper *Fædrelandet og Emigranten* in La Crosse, Wisconsin, dated February 9, 1871, and quoted by Rasmus B. Anderson. In this letter, Hervig wrote: "I *and fifty-two other* Norwegians went in the year 1825 with a little sloop from Stavanger" [my italics]. Finally, Sarah Richey's list of the passengers and crew from 1894 (above) also adds up to fifty-three.

On the other hand, according to the ship's tonnage and American law at the time, the *Restauration* legally could only have transported twenty-four passengers into New York City. The size of the

fine leveled by the Collector of Customs—\$150 per excess passenger, for a sum of \$3150—indicates that she was carrying twenty-one individuals above the legal limit when she was taken in arrest, for a total of forty-five passengers. Adding seven crew members gives a total of fifty-two people in the entire party. Yet Consul Gahn, in his words quoted above, makes it clear that "under the strictest interpretation of the law," the fine leveled on the *Restauration* should have been based on a total of forty-six passengers.

As far as I have been able to ascertain, everyone who has considered this discrepancy has agreed that the customs officials, being sympathetic to the economic plight of the Sloopers, decided to give them a little help. Consul Gahn's words seem to imply this; while as early as January 1826, the newspaper *Den norske Rigstidende* in Christiania (Oslo) wrote that the vessel was released from custody: "Probably because one understands that they broke the law due solely to [their] innocence and ignorance." The interview with Sarah Richey only says that the Sloopers: "... had trouble with the authorities on account of having a large cargo and more passengers than the American laws permitted for a vessel not larger than the *Restauration*." Rasmus B. Anderson, who had spoken to several of the Sloopers, wrote:

I suppose the authorities in New York partly in consideration of the ignorance and childish conduct of the sloop immigrants, and partly persuaded by the intercession of influential Quaker friends, decided to be merciful. The fact, in all events is that the captain was released from his captivity; and the sloop and its cargo were restored to their owners.²²

What sort of help could the customs officials give the Sloopers? The youngest passenger on the *Restauration* was Margaret Allen, the daughter of Lars Larson Geilane and his wife Martha. She was only a month old when she arrived in New York, having been born at sea on September 1825. Consul Gahn's words seem to imply that the customs agents did not include her when counting the passengers, a conclusion agreed to by later researchers.²³ Instead, the

agents counted only forty-five passengers and seven crew members, and based the size of the fine on that number.

Two facts argue against this interpretation. First, Margaret Allen was only one of three children under one year of age in the *Restauration*. The other two were counted among the passengers, and other passenger lists from the period demonstrate that every passenger on board an incoming vessel was counted, irrespective of their age.²⁴ Second is the size of the fine which would have been levied on the *Restauration's* captain for *not* reporting a passenger, as mentioned above. I doubt that Captain Helland, any of the other Sloopers, and particularly their well-to-do Quaker friends, would have risked breaking this law when such a large sum of money was involved.

In addition, such an action would have needed the collective sanction of the entire hierarchy of the New York customs office, including the Collector of Customs himself, of whom Consul Gahn, wrote the following:

The customs service here is genuinely concerned about the disagreeable necessity of taking legal steps, in view of the fact that the total value of the vessel will scarcely liquidate the costs of such action (...) but it is not within his [i.e., the local Collector of Customs] power to remit the dues entailed by such an inescapable procedure. It is not necessary for me to remind you that the government officials in this country, from the highest to the lowest, may not violate or ignore existing legal regulations.²⁵

The action would also have required the tacit acquiescence of the office of the mayor of New York City; the district court in New York; the treasury officials who transferred the case to President John Quincy Adams; and the president himself, who pardoned the Sloopers and forgave the fine. To my mind, such a chain of complete sympathy is unlikely at best. Therefore, I do not think that the baby Margaret Allen was left out of the count.

Even so, the size of the fine demonstrates that only forty-five people were counted as passengers when the *Restauration* arrived

in New York. Therefore, one of two things must have happened. The first alternative is that someone left the ship in Madeira or died on the voyage, despite the statement by Ole Rynning in 1838 that: "No one died on the sea." The second is that the American customs officials counted one of the other passengers as crew, thus giving the *Restauration* a crew of eight, not seven, when she landed in New York.

There is one source which says that there was a death on board. On July 4, 1875, there was a celebration in Chicago of the first fifty years of Norwegian emigration to the United States. According to the newspaper *The Chicago Tribune* for July 6, 1875, 5,000 Norwegians attended the celebration, including groups that traveled to the event from "adjoining states." It was: "The largest assemblage of Norsemen ever held in this country..." The main speaker at the event was Professor Rasmus B. Anderson. The *Tribune* also printed some words relevant to the present discussion.

One of the leading features of the celebration was the presence of four of the crew of the sloop "Restoration" as follows: Ole Overdal, Nils Nilsen, Mrs. Larson and her daughter of this city. The last named was born on the voyage, just in time to preserve the numerical strength of the crew, for only a few days previous, one of the party had died.²⁶

Ole Overdal might be either Ove Rossedal (1809-1890) or Ole Jonson Eide (1796-1878). Nils Nilsen, however, was Nils Nilsen Hersdal, who was 75 years old at this time, and living in La Salle County, Illinois, just outside Chicago. Mrs. Larson was Martha Georgiana Larson, widow of Lars Larson Geilane. Her daughter was Margaret Allen Atwater, born on the voyage as mentioned above, also living in Chicago in 1875. According to this newspaper account (which, given the occasion, must be based on first-hand information from these four Sloopers), one person died on the voyage and one, Margaret Allen, was born. Therefore, the same number of people that had left Stavanger, arrived in New York.

I have not seen any other source which mentions a death on board during the voyage of the *Restauration*. Nevertheless, such an event would not have been unusual at the time. On the contrary, a voyage in such a small vessel, completed without any deaths at all, must be considered a very fortunate one. This explanation would also go a long way towards solving some of the mystery concerning the number of Sloopers, and the difficulty of piecing together a complete list of the people who sailed in her.

On the other hand, as mentioned above, the customs officials may have counted one of the other passengers as crew. In this connection, it is important to note that the names and number of crew members were *not* listed on passenger manifests delivered to the New York City port authority.²⁷ Thus, any person who was listed as a passenger upon their departure from Norway, but who was considered to be a crew member upon their arrival in New York, would not be included in the number that formed the basis of the fine imposed on the *Restauration*.

If this is what happened—that the customs officials counted one of the adult passengers as crew—then there are several available candidates, especially among the single men on board. The likeliest is Endre Salvesen Lindland, later known as Andrew Dahl. In 1825, he was forty-one years old, traveling alone, and according to Anderson, he: "is remembered as the cook on board." If this was his recognized role during the voyage, then it is possible, indeed probable, that when the sloop arrived in New York City, the authorities would have accepted him as a member of the crew. If so, then the number of passengers arriving in New York City would have been the same as the number that left Norway, despite the birth of Margaret Allen.

It is my conclusion then, that one of the men on board—the likeliest being Endre Salvesen Lindland—began the voyage as a passenger but was listed as crew when the *Restauration* arrived in New York City. To my mind, that is a much more likely explanation of the discrepancy between the possible and actual fine, than that the baby Margaret Allen was left out of the count.

Who, then, were the Sloopers? As mentioned earlier, Sarah Richey provided a list from her memory in the early 1890s, while

both Rasmus B. Anderson, George T. Flom and Theodore Blegen published amended lists in 1895, 1909 and 1931 respectively. Then in 1961, author and traveler J. Hart Rosdail, himself a descendant of two of the Sloopers, made a list in his book *The Sloopers. Their Ancestry and Posterity*. Rosdail, basing himself on Richey, Anderson and Blegen, listed fifty names, forty-nine of whom had sailed from Stavanger, while the last was Margaret Allen Larson, born on the way to America. Rosdail then considered the presence of the remaining three, without reaching any definite conclusion about their identities ²⁹

Later writers, such as the librarian and genealogist Gerhard Naeseth, have accepted Rosdail's list, only editing and refining it, and then speculated on the identities of the remaining three.³⁰ One of them, mentioned earlier, is Knud Anderson Slogvig, who is known to have emigrated in 1829. The first person to mention him as a passenger on the *Restauration* is Ole Rynning, who in 1838, wrote:

In 1835, one of the first emigrants [sic.], a young bachelor named Knud Slagvigen, made a trip back to Norway, and many persons traveled a long way just to talk to him.³¹

The Norwegian-American teacher, farmer, and newspaper editor Knud Langeland (1813-1888) also mentions Knud Slogvig in his autobiographical history of the early Norwegian emigration, *Nordmændene i Amerika. Nogle Optegnelser om De Norskes Udvandring til Amerika*, published in Chicago in 1888.³² Langeland emigrated to America in 1843. He became a well-known editor and writer, and between 1866 and 1872, he was the editor of *Skandinaven* of Chicago, at that time the largest Norwegian-American newspaper in America. He passed away in 1888, a year after his book on the Norwegians in America was registered in the Library of Congress, but apparently just before it was available to the general public.

Concerning Knud Slogvig, Langeland wrote:

Finally, one of the Sloopers by the name of Knud Slogvig came back to Norway in 1835, after having resided for ten years in the New World. He stayed for the most part in his home village in Skjold parish, and the news of his return flew like a firebrand from man to man with incredible speed. People traveled long distances from everywhere in Bergen Diocese and Stavanger County to speak with him [my translation].³³

Langeland adds that some of his close relatives visited Slogvig in the winter of 1836, and that three of them were in the party that sailed from Bergen in 1837.³⁴ Indeed, Langeland himself apparently visited Slogvig. In his book, he also wrote: "During the visit to Knud Slogvig, *we* [my emphasis] received a full and indisputable confirmation of things we had previously heard and read. This was during the winter of 1836." [My translation.]

Rasmus B. Anderson also says that Knud Slogvig sailed with the *Restauration*.³⁶ Theodore Blegen, on the other hand, does not think it likely, although he refers to Rynning's statement and notes that it is a possibility.³⁷ J. Hart Rosdail was also unsure, writing in 1961: "There are three people remaining on Anderson's list: Svend Johannesen, who did not emigrate, Anders Stangeland, who came with Cleng Peerson in 1824, and Knud Anderson Slogvik, who probably came in 1829." But after a brief discussion of possibilities, he adds: "Pending further discoveries, the author can only suggest that Knud Anderson Slogvik may have been on the boat after all."³⁸

The Norwegian historian Gunnar Skadberg, writing in 2007, also thinks it unlikely that Knud Slogvig was on the *Restauration*. Skadberg also tells us, however, that Slogvig did emigrate in 1829 and returned to Norway in 1835. At that time, he and a man named Bjørn Andersen Kvelve from Vikedal, the father of Rasmus B. Anderson, organized the next group emigration from Stavanger, which left that city in two vessels, the *Norden* in May and *Den Norske Klippe* in June 1836.³⁹

It is my opinion, however, that the available sources closest in time to the voyage—Ole Rynning and Knud Langeland—are cor-

rect. Knud Slogvig did indeed sail on the *Restauration*. In particular, the statement by Knud Langeland, who apparently met Knud Slogvig in the winter of 1836, must be considered very strong evidence that Slogvig was one of the Sloopers of 1825. However, I also think that Slogvig returned to Norway, probably in 1828. Theodore Blegen wrote in 1931 that two of the Sloopers went back to Norway in that year, and that one of them, Ole Johnson Eie or Eide, was married in Stavanger on July 24, 1828, "and very soon thereafter, departed for America." Therefore, I also think that Skadberg is correct when he writes that Slogvig emigrated (again) in 1829. While perhaps unusual in the 1820s, such travel back and forth across the Atlantic was not unique, not then and certainly not later.

Concerning the two remaining passengers, Rosdail writes: "There may have been one couple which returned to Norway in 1826 and their names thus forgotten. The latter stems from a statement made by Sarah Richey to the *Marseilles Plaindealer* in 1894." Sarah Richey's statement (which was discussed earlier) is confirmed in a Norwegian Parish Register from 1825 and 1827. The historian Per Seland, who wrote the *Bygdebok*, the local history of Sirdal municipality in West-Agder, published in 1987, found such a couple in the church records of Tonstad parish approximately 100 km. east of Stavanger. They are Salve Jensen Fintland (baptized in 1793) and Åsa Atlachsdatter, (baptized in 1801), who were married on April 5, 1825.

Under the heading, "departed the parish" in the ministerial records of Bakke Church, Tonstad parish, for 1825, this couple is listed as having moved to Stavanger; but the parson also added a note behind their names: "Are supposed to have gone to America." Two years later, in 1827, they returned. They are listed under the heading, "entered the parish", and the parson added this simple declarative note behind their names: "Returned from America." Seland himself speculates that these two were among the passengers on the *Restauration*.

Based on the above, I suggest the following two alternative possibilities. The first alternative is based on the article in the *Chicago*

Tribune. In addition to the generally accepted names, another person, now unknown, sailed with the *Restauration* from Stavanger. The unknown passenger died at sea at some point before Margaret Allen was born. Thus, fifty-two individuals sailed from Stavanger and the same number arrived in New York City.

Despite the words of the *Tribune*, however, I am inclined to accept the second alternative as the true description of events. There were no deaths, and fifty-three individuals stepped ashore in America in October 1825, including Knut Anderson Slogvig, Salve Jensen Fintland and Aasa Atlachsdatter. From the point of view of the Sloopers—and Consul Henry Gahn—this number consisted of seven crew members and forty-six passengers. However, someone—perhaps the wealthy New York Quaker Francis Thompson, who paid the bond for the *Restauration* when it was placed in arrest—suggested, and the customs officials concurred, that the cook Endre Salvesen Lindland or alternatively, Knud Slogvig, should be treated as a member of the crew; and that therefore the American authorities counted eight crew members and only forty-five passengers.

As mentioned earlier, this detail from the voyage of the *Restau-ration*—the names and number of the Sloopers—may seem insignificant when seen in a greater context of the creation and maintenance of an ethnic identity. However, posterity has almost always accepted the Sloopers as the first organized group of Norwegians who emigrated with the intention of creating a new home for themselves in a new land. Their voyage is almost always taken to be the real beginning of the Norwegian migration to America, and most creation myths begin with some sort of heroic group origin. Indeed, perhaps only the tales of Leif Erikson and the Vinland voyages have played a greater role in the foundation of a Norwegian-American ethnic identity than the voyage of the *Restauration*.⁴³

The Norwegian-American recognition of such a heroic foundation of their own ethnic identity and, in their own eyes at least, of their relative importance among the many ethnic groups that now made their home there, has been especially evident during Norwegian-American celebrations of their time in America. It is

evident in the article from the *Skandinaven* of June 6, 1875, mentioned above, as well as the quote from the *Chicago Tribune* of July 4, from the same year, that "one of the leading features" of the celebration held in Chicago on July 4, 1875, "was the presence of four of the crew of the sloop 'Restoration' [sic]..."

On the other hand, during the celebration of the four-hundredth anniversary of the voyage of Christopher Columbus, which culminated in the Chicago World's Fair in 1893, it was Leif Erikson and the Norse voyages to Vinland that came to the fore among Norwegian-Americans. A copy of the Gokstad ship, christened *Viking*, was sailed from Norway to Chicago for the occasion. At the same time, the Norwegian-language newspaper *Nordisk Tidende* of Brooklyn agitated for the creation of a separate Norwegian-American national holiday, called *Leif Erikson Day*, to be celebrated annually on September 29.⁴⁴ This was almost certainly a response to a proclamation by President Benjamin Harrison on July 21 that year that designated October 12, 1892, as a one-time national holiday, to be called Columbus Day.

Nevertheless, despite the emphasis on the medieval Norsemen, the *Restauration* and the Sloopers were not forgotten. It is true that Rasmus B. Anderson's introduction to his book of 1895 included a discussion of the medieval voyages, which contained the bold statement: "The civilized history of America begins with the Norsemen." However, Anderson also noted that: "The emigration from Stavanger [i.e. the voyage of the *Restauration* in 1825] inspired people in other parts of Norway to leave the fatherland and seek homes in America;" adding: "Each exodus down to the forties [i.e., the 1840s] is a link in a chain beginning with the sloop, *Restaurationen* [sic]..."

Thirty years later, in 1925, it was the voyage of the *Restauration* upon which the celebrations of the Norwegian immigration centennial were founded. These celebrations were also held at a time when foreign ethnicity was suspect in the United States, and therefore, the *Restauration* had a large role to play. The vessel and her voyage were symbols which, along with the celebrations themselves, would:

Nail it to the wall, so to say, so that all our good American fellow-citizens can see it, that the Norwegian ethnic group is old here in the land, that it has been doing constructive labor in more ways than one for more than one hundred years, and that Norwegian-Americans have become good and faithful American citizens ⁴⁷

That same year, historian O. M. Norlie mentioned the Sloopers in his essay "Why We Celebrate," published in *The Norse-American Centennial Booklet* from that year:

The 53 who landed in New York a century ago are all dead and resting from their labors, but eighteen of their children are still alive, besides children of the second, third, fourth, and even fifth generations, a handsome host, 1,000 strong, scattered afar, from coast to coast.⁴⁸

The author J. Hart Rosdail (who was descended from two of the Sloopers, as mentioned earlier) writing in 1958, was more detailed:

Due to their position in Norwegian-American history, the Sloopers have been honored by commemorative events. The most important was the Norse-American Centennial of 1925, the greatest gathering of Norwegian-Americans ever held. On one day alone attendance was recorded at 84,000. A replica of the sloop was built and exhibited. Notables from Norway and Canada attended, and President Coolidge made a trip by special train from Washington. Descendants of the original Sloopers were honored guests, with expenses paid. They lunched with the President and attended a reception at the Governor's Mansion.⁴⁹

In passing, it should also be noted that during the celebrations in the towns of Ottawa and Norway, Illinois, in 1925, Professor Norlie initiated an organization called "The Slooper Society of America," where membership was limited to descendants of the original Sloopers and their spouses. It was patterned on the "May-

flower Society," founded in 1894 for the descendants of those who sailed on the *Mayflower*. The Slooper Society, with its subtitle, "The Norwegian Mayflower People" still exists, and holds its annual meetings in Norway, Illinois, on the Sunday closest to October 9 each year.

Then on September 2, 1964, the United States Congress, by joint resolution, authorized and requested the president to make an annual proclamation, designating October 9 as Leif Erikson Day. While the congressional resolution does not mention the *Restauration* or the Sloopers, it is notable that October 9 is the generally accepted date of their arrival in New York City; and that date was chosen, according to the sponsor, Representative Joseph E. Karth of Minnesota, because: "October 9 has traditionally been observed as Leif Erikson Day by many Scandinavian groups through the years." Every president since then has made such a proclamation, the most recent being Joe Biden on October 6, 2023. 51

During the sesquicentennial of the voyage in 1975, the *Restauration* was again a symbol, but now of a "new (Norwegian) ethnicity," which had adopted a new language, a new lifestyle, a new "spirit of America," but which also sought to preserve a cultural heritage from the "old country." For Norwegian-Americans, this included a self-image as people who were genuine, honest, unpretentious, practical, and no-nonsense; a people who tried to retain the inherited "straightforward peasant values and perspectives of their ancestors," values which were assumed to be, "too easily lost in the complexities of our modern commercial society." 52

In short, the fifty-three individuals who came across the gangplank in New York City in 1825, and their vessel, may be said to constitute—along with Leif Erikson and the Vinland voyages some of the very first building blocks in the construction and maintenance of a Norwegian-American ethnic identity. For that reason, if for no other, their names are of great interest to Norwegian-American posterity.

Based on the foregoing, I therefore suggest the following list of names for the crew and passengers on the *Restauration*.⁵³ For the sake of clarity, I have gathered them in family groups.

A List of Crew and Passengers on the Restauration.

- 1. Lars Larsen Geilane (1786-1845). Leader, owner. Brother of Siri Larsdatter Geilane (no. 38). Husband of:
- 2. Martha Georgiana Jørgensdatter Eide (1803-1887). Informant for Rasmus B. Anderson.
- 3. Margaret Allen Larsdatter (1825-1916). Born at sea on September 2, 1825. Informant for Rasmus B. Anderson.
- 4. Cornelius Nielsen Hersdal (1778-1833). Brother of Niels Nielsen Hersdal (no. 35). Husband of:
- 5. Kari Pedersdatter Hesthammer (1789-1846). Sister of Cleng Peerson.
- 6. (Susan) Anne Corneliusdatter (1814-1858).
- 7. Nils Corneliusen (1816-1893).
- 8. Inger M. Corneliusdatter (1819-1896). Informant for Rasmus B. Anderson.
- 9. Martha Karine Corneliusdatter (1822-1913). Informant for Rasmus B. Anderson.
- 10. Johannes Jacobsen Steine Soledal (1788-). Owner and crew. Husband of:
- 11. Martha Svendsdatter Kindingstad (1786-).
- 12. Martha Helene Johannesdatter (1820-ca. 1885).
- 13. Aanen Thoresen Brastad (1796-1826). Brother of Niels Thoresen Brastad (no. 47). Husband of:
- 14. Bertha Karine Aadnesdatter Orstad (1790-1844).
- 15. Sara (Siri) Aanensdatter (1818-1904) later known as Sarah T. Richey. Informant for Rasmus B. Anderson.
- 16. Anne Marie Kristine Aanensdatter (1818-1842).
- 17. Berta Karine Aanensdatter (1825-1826).
- 18. Daniel Stensen Rossedal (1779-1854). Ancestor of author J. Hart Rosdail. Husband of:
- 19. Britha Johanne Ovesdatter (1786-1854).
- 20. Elen (Eli) Danielsdatter (1807-1886).

- 21. Ove Danielsen (1809-1890).
- 22. John Danielsen (1825-1893).
- 23. Lars Danielsen (1812-1837).
- 24. Helga Hulda Danielsdatter (1825-1914). Informant for Rasmus B. Anderson.
- 25. Tormod Jensen Madland (1780-1826). Husband of:
- 26. Siri Iversdatter Seldal (1770-1829).
- 27. Rakel Serine Tormodsdatter (1807-). Later married the captain, Lars Olsen Helland (no. 49).
- 28. Guri Tormodsdatter (1809-1846).
- Serine Tormodsdatter (1814-1898). Later married Jacob Andersen Slogvig (no. 37). Informant for Rasmus. B. Anderson.
- 30. Simon Pedersen Lihme (1782-). Husband of:
- 31. Maren Karine Størchersdatter Kyllesø (1782-).
- 32. Greta Birgitte Simonsdatter (1814-).
- 33. Severine Marie Simonsdatter (1817-ca.1827-28).
- 34. Simon Simonsen (1822-ca. 1827-28).
- 35. Niels Nielsen Hersdal (1800-1886). Crew. Brother of Cornelius Nielsen Hersdal (no. 4). Informant for Rasmus B. Anderson. Husband of:
- 36. Bertha Christophersdatter Hervik (1802-1882). Sister of Henrik Christophersen Hervik (no. 39). Informant for Rasmus B. Anderson.
- 37. Jacob Andersen Slogvig (1806-1864) Crew. Brother of Knud Andersen Slogvig (no. 53). Later married Serine Tormodsdatter Madland (no. 29).
- 38. Siri Larsdatter Geilane (1779-after 1845). Sister of Lars Larson Geilane (no. 1).
- 39. Henrik Christophersen Hervik. (1802-1883). Crew. Brother of Bertha Christophersdatter Hervik (no. 36).

- 40. Bertha (Martha?) Henriksdatter (1797/79-1868).
- 41. Ole Jonsen Eide (1796-1878). Returned to Norway in 1828, married that year, emigrated again "shortly thereafter."
- 42. Gudmund Danielsen Haukaas (1800-1849). Crew.
- 43. Torstein Olsen Bjorland (1795-1874). Informant of Rasmus B. Anderson.
- 44. Jørgen Johnsen Hesja (1809-1849).
- 45. Endre Salvesen Lindland (Andrew Dahl) (1784-ca. 1860). Supposed to have been the cook on board. Perhaps listed as crew upon arrival in New York City.
- 46. Halvor Iversen Revheim (1809-ca. 1849).
- 47. Niels Thoresen Brastad (1804-1863). Brother of Aanen Thoresen Brastad (no. 13).
- 48. Ole Olsen Hetletveit (1797-1854).
- 49 Lars Olsen Helland (?-?). Captain, owner. Married Rakel Serine Tormodsdatter Madland (no. 27).
- 50. Peder Eriksen Meland (?-?). Crew, mate.
- 51. Salve Jensen Fintland (1792/93-?). From Sirdal. Returned to Norway in 1826-27. Husband of:
- 52. Åsa Atlachsdatter (1800/01-?). From Sirdal. Returned to Norway in 1826-27.
- 53. Knud Andersen Slogvig (1798-1867) Brother of Jacob Andersen Slogvig (no. 37). Returned to Norway in 1826-28. Emigrated again in 1829, returned to Norway once more in 1835, and emigrated a final time in 1836.

Notes

- ¹ "Norway," in *Skandinaven*, Chicago, July 6, 1875, 2. Copy from a microfilm, provided by The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, Springfield, IL. My translation.
- ² Rasmus B. Anderson, *The First Chapter of Norwegian Emigration (1821-1840), its Causes and Results* (Madison, WI: Printed by the author, 1906), 51.
- ³ Captain Lars O. Helland turned over a crew list to the relevant port authority in Stavanger on June 27, 1825. *Stavanger Customs Protocol for June 27, 1825*. Riksarkivet [The Norwegian National Archives]. Oslo: Finansdepartementet, journal-saker 456/1826 F, nr. 105, 1825. The list is as follows (my translation):

Mate Peder Eriksen Meeland, 31 years;

Able-bodied Seaman Johannes Jacobsen Soledal, 39 years;

Able-bodied Seaman Gudmund Danielsen Hugaas, 25 years;

Able-bodied Seaman Niels Nielsen Hersdal, 25 years;

Ordinary Seaman Henrik Christophersen Hervig, 22 years;

Boy Jacob Andersen Slaavig, 15 years.

Signed in Stavanger June 27, 1825, Lars O. Helland, Captain.

- ⁴ "An act concerning Passengers in Vessels coming to the Port of New-York." Laws of the State of New-York, passed at the forty-seventh session of the Legislature, from Jan 6, 1824. Chapter XXXVII. February 11, 1824, 27.
- ⁵ Theodore Blegen, "Sloop folk Problems." Appendix to *Norwegian Migration to America 1825-1860*, (Northfield: The Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1931), 381-396. 395.
- ⁶ Den norske Rigstidende, July 25, 1825. https://www.nb.no/items/f53a75d790a86964c5e356051acb41b7?page=0. Accessed December 18, 2021.
- ⁷ Gunnar J. Malmin, "Norsk Landnam i U.S. II. Lidt om Sluppefolkets Udvandring i 1825," *Decorah-Posten* november 21, 1924, vol. 54, no. 34. In the original Norwegian as published by Malmin: *«I denne Sommer skulle 51 Personer være afseilede til Amerika.*"
- ⁸ Ole Rynning, *Sandfærdig Beretning om Amerika til Oplysning og Nytte for Bonde og Menigmand*, trans. and ed. Theodore Blegen. (Northfield, MN: The Norwegian-American Historical Association, Travel and Description Series, 1926), vol. I, 71-72.
- ⁹(Sarah T. Richey) "From Norway to America." *The Marseilles Plaindealer* Marseilles, IL, Friday, April 6, 1894, Vol. XVIII, no. 14, 1, 4.
- ¹⁰ Anderson, *First Chapter*, 93. "I myself have seen and talked with eight of the sloop passengers, (...) and have had a considerable correspondence with a ninth and tenth..."
- ¹¹ Anderson, First Chapter, 70-71.
- ¹² Anderson, First Chapter, 91 ff.
- ¹³ George T. Flom, *A History of Norwegian Immigration to The United States: From the Earliest Beginnings Down to The Year 1848* (Iowa City: Privately published, 1909) 46-48.

- ¹⁴ Blegen, "Sloop folk Problems," 395-396.
- ¹⁵ Blegen, "Sloop folk Problems," 394, writes:

The health record dated July 4, 1825, and signed by Løwold at the Stavanger Raadstue, for the latter gives the number of passengers as 45 and of the crew as 7. (...) The Løwold document is printed in *Norges-posten* for October 8, 1825. This health record shows that the sloop was officially "cleared" on July 4 for sailing, but this release may have come late in the day and the sloop may not have departed until the next morning.

- ¹⁶ 'Petition for Remission,' in Theodore Blegen, "John Quincy Adams and the Sloop 'Restoration'." Appendix to Theodore C. Blegen, *Norwegian Migration to America: The American Transition.* (Northfield, MN: The Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1940) 599-628. 608.
- ¹⁷ New-York Daily Advertiser, October 12, 1825, as quoted in Anderson, First Chapter, 70-71.
- ¹⁸Letters from Henry Gahn, translated by Theodore Blegen, in "Adams and the Restoration'," 622.
- ¹⁹ Anderson, First Chapter, 79.
- ²⁰ Den norske Rigstidende, 23.01.1826, 1. https://www.nb.no/items/99c0099 e0d25559b74f9949362e6d528?page=0. Accessed August 7, 2023. My translation.
- ²¹ Richey, "From Norway to America." 1.
- ²² Anderson, First Chapter, 63.
- ²³ Cf. for example J. Hart Rosdail, *The Sloopers. Their Ancestry and Posterity* (Norwegian Slooper Society of America, 1961) 32.
- ²⁴ See for example a selection of the New York City Passenger lists at https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Free_Online_New_York_Passenger_Lists, 1820-1897
- ²⁵ Henry Gahn, in "Adams and the 'Restoration'," 622.
- ²⁶ Chicago Tribune, Chicago IL, July 6, 1875, 1. Newspapers.com https://www.newspapers.com/image/466300320. Downloaded December 23, 2021.
- ²⁷ Cf. n. 4 above.
- ²⁸ Anderson, First Chapter, 92,108.
- ²⁹ Rosdail, *The Sloopers*, 605-607.
- ³⁰ Gerhard Naeseth, *Norwegian Immigrants to the United States: A Biographical Directory.*
- Vol. 1: 1825-1843. (Decorah, Iowa: Anundsen Publishing Company, 1993), 2-8. ³¹ Rynning, True Account, 74.
- ³² Knud Langeland, *Nordmændene i Amerika. Nogle Optegnelser om De Norskes Udvandring til Amerika.* (Chicago: John Anderson Co, 1887/1888) 17-18.
- ³³ Langeland, *Nordmændene i Amerika*, 17-18. The Norwegian sentences are:

Endelig kom en af Sluppefolkene ved Navn Knud Slogvig tilbage til Norge i 1835 efterat have opholdt Sig ti Aar i den nye Verden. Han opholdt Sig for det meste i sin Hjembygd i Skjolds Præstegjeld, og Efterretningen om hans Hjemkomst løb som en Budstikke fra Mand til Mand

- med utrolig Hurtighed. Allvegne fra i Bergens Stift og Stavanger Amt reiste Folk lange Veie for at tale med ham.
- ³⁴ Langeland, Nordmændene i Amerika. 18.
- ³⁵ Langeland, *Nordmændene i Amerika*, 23. The Norwegian text reads: "Ved Besøget hos Knud Slogvig fik vi [sic] en fuld og sikker Bekræftelse paa, hvad vi tidligere have hørt og læst. Dette var i vinteren 1836."
- ³⁶ Anderson, First Chapter, 92.
- ³⁷ Blegen, "Sloop folk Problems", 396.
- ³⁸ Rosdail, *The Sloopers*, 606.
- ³⁹ Gunnar A. Skadberg, *Øve dammen i Junaiten* [Over the Pond in America] (Stavanger: Wigestrand Forlag, 2007), 96. Skadberg writes that Slogvig: "Has been mentioned as a possible 'slooper,' but this is rejected by most emigration historians, and is probably not correct." My translation.
- ⁴⁰ Theodore Blegen, *Norwegian Migration to America 1825-1860* (Northfield: The Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1931) 60. See in particular notes 8 and 9. See also Anna Danielsen's letter of February 28, 1895, to Rasmus B. Anderson, in Anderson, *First Chapter*, 86-90.
- ⁴¹ Rosdail, *The Sloopers*, 606.
- ⁴² Per Seland, Sirdal Gård og Ætt, vol. II, (Sirdal: Sirdal Kommune, 1987) 341, 511. See also the digitized church records at The Norwegian Digital Archives, Sirdal sokneprestkontor, SAK/1111-0036/F/Fa/Fab/L0001 Ministerialbok nr. A 1, 1815-1834, 582-583, and 632. https://media.digitalarkivet.no/en/view/9824/178, and https://media.digitalarkivet.no/en/view/9824/183. Accessed February 9, 2022. My translation of the notes in the parish record.
- ⁴³ Cf. Orm Øverland, *Immigrant Minds, American Identities* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000).
- ⁴⁴ Nordisk Tidende, No. 45, anden årgang, September 16, 1892, 1. https://www.nb.no/items/33f0fd10332c218962a306e31b9b4567?page=0, accessed September 25, 2023.
- ⁴⁵ Anderson, *First Chapter*, 15.
- ⁴⁶ Anderson, *First Chapter*, 53.
- ⁴⁷The newspaper *Decorah-Posten*, quoted by Arne Kildal, in *Norges Handels- og Sjøfartstidende*, June 4. 1924, 5. My translation. https://www.nb.no/items/0b4fffb22a0960d66251fb6a73492d72?page=5. Accessed March 10, 2022.
- ⁴⁸ O. M. Norlie, "Why We Celebrate." *Norse-American Centennial 1825-1925 Souvenir Edition Booklet*, Norse-American Centennial Executive Committee (St. Paul, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1925) 51-56, 51.
- ⁴⁹ J. Hart Rosdail, "The Sloopers and the Slooper Society." Bethesda Gleanings, (April 2, 1958) 4, in https://sloopersociety.org/resources/the-sloopers-and-the-slooper-society-by-j-hart-rosadail-april-2-1958. Accessed July 31, 2023.
- ⁵⁰ Nordisk Tidende, No. 36, 74. årgang, september 3, 1964, 7. https://www.nb.no/items/33d392bff3f87efc9fa13089711c6192?page=5. Accessed September 25, 2023.
- ⁵¹A Proclamation on Leif Erikson Day, 2023 | The White House https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2023/10/06/a-proclamation-on-leif-erikson-day-2023/ Accessed May 3, 2024.

⁵² Paul D. Rusten, "A Heritage is to Share." *The Commemorative Publication of the Norwegian-American 1975 Sesquicentennial Association* (Minneapolis: The Norwegian-American 1975 Sesquicentennial Association, 1975), 8-9.

53 This list is based on a comparison of the crew list of 1825 as well as passenger lists and further information found in the sources listed below. Ultimately, all of the lists, except the one signed by Captain Lars O. Helland and that provided by Sarah T. Richev, begin with Rasmus B. Anderson's list from 1895, Rasmus B. Anderson, The First Chapter of Norwegian Emigration (1821-1840), its Causes and Results (Madison, WI: Printed by the author, 1906), 91 ff; Theodore Blegen, "Sloop folk Problems." Appendix to Norwegian Migration to America 1825-1860. 395ff; George T. Flom, A History of Norwegian Immigration to The United States: From the Earliest Beginnings Down to The Year 1848 (Iowa City: Privately published, 1909) 46-48; Knud Langeland, Nordmændene i Amerika, Nogle Optegnelser om De Norskes Udvandring til Amerika. (Chicago: John Anderson Co, http://www.norwayheritage.com/p 1887/1888); Norway Heritage.com list.asp?jo=1571. Accessed March 30, 2022; Gerhard Næseth, Norwegian Immigrants to the United States: A Biographical Directory Vol. 1: 1825-1843 (Decorah. Iowa: Anundsen Publishing Company, 1993), 2-8; Captain Lars O. Helland, Crew list of June 27, 1825, "Stavanger Customs Protocol for June 27, 1825." Riksarkivet [The Norwegian National Archives]. Oslo: Finansdepartementet, journalsaker 456/1826 F, nr. 105, 1825; Sarah T. Richey [Sara Aanensdtr]. "From Norway to America," The Marseilles Plaindealer, Marseilles, IL, April 6, 1894, Vol XVIII, no 14, 1, 4; J. Hart Rosdail, The Sloopers, Their Ancestry and Posterity (Norwegian Slooper Society of America, 1961) 605-607. See especially the description of his research on p. 607; Ole Rynning, Sandfærdig Beretning om Amerika til Oplysning og Nytte for Bonde og Menigmand, trans. and ed. Theodore Blegen. (Northfield, MN: The Norwegian-American Historical Association, Travel and Description Series, 1926), vol. I, 71-72; Per Seland, Sirdal Gård og Ætt, vol. II, Sirdal kommune: 1987, 341, 511. The digitized church records at The Norwegian Digital Archives, Sirdal sokneprestkontor, SAK/1111-0036/F/Fa/Fab/L0001 Ministerialbok nr. A 1, 1815-1834, 582-583, and 632, https://media.digitalarkivet.no/ en/view/9824/178, and https://media.digitalarkivet.no/en/view/9824/183. Accessed February 9, 2022; Gunnar A. Skadberg, *Ove dammen i Junaiten* (Stavanger: Wigestrand Forlag, 2007), 63.