



# *Introduction*

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In July of 1825 a crew and passengers of fifty-two individuals left Stavanger harbor on the sloop *Restauration* destined for the United States. A child was born on the way, and the party, later referred to as the *Sloopers*, arrived in New York harbor on October 9 after 98 days at sea. The passengers on the *Restauration* were pioneers in more than one sense. Firstly, they constituted the first company in modern times to cross the dangers of the Atlantic Ocean on their way to America. *Restauration* has been referred to as “the Norwegian *Mayflower*,” alluding to the comparison with the voyage of the “Pilgrim Fathers” in 1620<sup>1</sup> and the Pilgrims’ role in the founding of the British colonies in North America.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, the voyage of the *Sloopers* in 1825 was a prelude to an organized mass emigration from Norway in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. All told, about 900,000 emigrants left Norway between 1825 and about 1980. Norway had the largest number of emigrants in Europe in the nineteenth century in proportion to its population, second only after Ireland.<sup>3</sup>

In 2025 we observe Crossings 200, the bicentennial anniversary and commemoration of the first organized and direct emigration from Norway to North America in 1825. However, Norwegians on both sides of the Atlantic have commemorated the iconic voyage of the *Restauration* at various intervals as public celebrations since the second part of the nineteenth century.

## **Commemorations of the sailing of the *Restauration***

On July 5, 1875, Norwegians in Chicago commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of the sailing of the *Restauration*. According to historian Odd S. Lovoll, their commemoration with a parade and a large open-air folk festival was an occasion where they could display the pride of their place in American society.<sup>4</sup> Fifty years later,

the activities that were launched in conjunction with the Norse-American Centennial represented a spectacular occasion to Norwegian Americans to interpret their position in American society. It also was an occasion where they could present the group's contributions to their new home. A four-day anniversary celebration at the State Fairgrounds in the Twin Cities commemorated the "first Norse Immigration to the United States in 1825 with the Sloop Restaurationen [sic!]." The festival program included a wide variety of cultural events, speeches, concerts, hymns, prayers, and exhibitions. A pageant portrayed the life of Civil War hero Colonel Hans Christian Heg, and several references were made in the centennial program that symbolized the accomplishments of Norwegians following their immigration to America.<sup>5</sup> The highlight of the celebration in the Twin Cities was President Calvin Coolidge's address to a large audience from the Grand Stand in which he endorsed Leif Erikson as the first European discoverer of America.<sup>6</sup> President Coolidge also acknowledged the contributions of Norwegian Americans to American institutions, as well as upholding constitutional rights and promoting "the integrity of the law."<sup>7</sup> According to Norwegian-born author and editor, Waldemar Ager, the centennial was an occasion in which Norwegian Americans could acquire citizenship and the right to participate as an American. It also meant that they could "claim America as their homeland 'more on par with descendants of Anglo-Saxon immigrants, who, in general and in a different manner from others, are regarded as rightful Americans.'"<sup>8</sup> The centennial celebration also was a response to assimilative forces in American society and the preservation of ethnic traits among Norwegian Americans. The traits of preservation and accommodation among Norwegian Americans during the centennial may be regarded as components in a creative and dynamic process in which Norwegian Americans negotiated their position in American society.<sup>9</sup>

The fiftieth and the centennial commemorations of the arrival of the *Restauration* to America were primarily events where Norwegian Americans focused on self-perception and the rightful home of the group in America. On the other hand, the sesquicen-

ennial commemorative events in October, 1975 in America were more focused on the portrayal of Norwegian Americans as a successful immigrant group that was well situated and assimilated but still proud of its Norwegian roots. The 1975 commemorations also focused more on the Norwegian homeland. According to Lovoll, the various commemorative events in America were elitist, among others due to the presence of King Olav V at receptions held at institutions of Norwegian origin in the United States.<sup>10</sup>

The fiftieth and centennial commemorations of the arrival of the *Restoration* in America were not mirrored in Norway. Many Norwegian Americans had visited Norway in 1914, which marked the centennial celebration of the signing of the Eidsvoll constitution and the recent Norwegian independence from Sweden. Norway's 1914 Jubilee Exhibition at the Frogner estate in Kristiania hosted many Norwegian-American visitors. The exhibition portrayed Norway as a modern industrial nation.<sup>11</sup> At the time Norway was still heavily affected by emigration, and Norwegian authorities regarded the emigrant movement as a negative element that was incompatible with the growth of the new nation.<sup>12</sup> In 1975, on the other hand, Norway had become a wealthy nation, and the sesquicentennial commemorations of Norwegian emigration took place in many Norwegian communities. In Stavanger, for example, King Olav participated in a festive dinner, and a celebratory service in the Stavanger Cathedral. US Senators Hubert Humphrey, Walter Mondale, and Warren Magnuson, and US Representative Al Quie visited the commemorations in Norway.<sup>13</sup> All men represented states with a large Norwegian-American population; Humphrey, Mondale, and Quie represented Minnesota, whereas Magnuson represented Washington state. A Norwegian stamp and a memorial coin were published as a contribution to the commemorations in 1975, and authorities and professionals on various levels in society took part in activities throughout the country.<sup>14</sup>

As in 1975, the 175th anniversary for the first organized emigration from Norway to America in 2000 saw the organization of many commemorative events in Norway and in the United States. Several tours were organized between the Upper Midwest

and Norway, as in 1975, and local celebrations were held across the nation. The city of Stavanger has been the center of the larger activities that have been held. It is also important to mention the existence and establishment of personal ties between individuals in communities on both sides of the Atlantic during the time periods between the larger commemoration years.<sup>15</sup>

### **Crossings 200**

The bicentennial commemoration of Norwegian emigration to North America, named *Crossings 200*, includes actors and events in the United States, Canada, and Norway. Both the United States and Canada are regarded as destinations for Norwegian emigrants. This perspective is a break with earlier commemorations which have focused on the transatlantic connection between Norway and the United States. *Crossings 200* serves as a good opportunity to take into account new and under-communicated perspectives on Norwegian emigrant history. Canada has not been a formal part of earlier commemorations on Norwegian transatlantic emigration, and this is probably tied to the centrality of the United States as a recipient of the large bulk of Norwegian emigrants in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, Canada played an integral part of the Norwegian transatlantic migratory movement in two various settings. Firstly, between 1851 and 1865, the majority of Norwegian emigrants followed sailing ships that sailed through Quebec and the St. Lawrence waterway to the Great Lakes bound for the Upper Midwest. Secondly, the exhaustion of agricultural lands in the region and an economic depression from 1893 coincided with an aggressive immigration policy from 1896 to attract American and European agricultural settlers to Canada. The result was the migration of farmers, tenant farmers and farm laborers from the Upper Midwest, including many Norwegian Americans, to western Canada. These included the prairie provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, as well as British Columbia. Immigration to Canada directly from Norway started after 1900.<sup>16</sup>

In Norway around 170 public, private, and volunteer organizations make part of a jubilee network and organize projects and ac-

tivities throughout the year. An executive committee is leading the work and serves as a source of inspiration for the large number of events that are planned in the anniversary year. Anno Norwegian Emigrant Museum, supported by the mother organization, Anno museum, is hosting the secretariat and is responsible for the Crossings 200 website. The jubilee will be marked by a range of events and projects organized by participating partners. More information about the various initiatives and events can be found at [crossings200.no](http://crossings200.no).

The main objectives of Crossings 200 in Norway are, firstly, to raise awareness of Norwegian emigration, particularly to North America. A second objective is to use knowledge of past emigration to better understand contemporary immigration processes and integration into Norwegian society. The third objective is to foster transatlantic collaboration between Norwegians in Norway and abroad, based on a shared cultural heritage and cooperation. Our shared goal is to celebrate and strengthen connections between Norway and relevant communities, organizations, and institutions in culture, education, tourism, business, and research in North America. Two large events will take place in conjunction with the bicentennial commemoration in 2025, both tied to the sailing of the *Restauration*. On July 4, Stavanger and neighboring municipalities in Rogaland County will organize various events. A large program is being planned in Stavanger in which King Harald and Queen Sonja will take part and will include the sailing of the replica of the *Restauration* built at Finnøy in 2010. The Friends of the *Restauration* group is planning the sailing of the replica of the *Restauration* with a crew across the Atlantic to New York City along the same route as the original in 1825. The planned arrival of the replica on the historical date of arrival of the original sloop on October 9, 2025, represents the second large event tied to the bicentennial commemoration in 2025. An official program and cultural events hosted by Norwegian cultural actors is being planned to take place on lower Manhattan in conjunction with the arrival of the replica on and around its historical arrival date.

As already noted, the bicentennial commemoration in 2025 involves the participation of networks in Canada and the United

States, respectively, the main destinations for Norwegian mass emigration in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The year-long celebration will observe and honor the strong ties between the nations across the Atlantic and encourage reflection on migration, past and present. Just as Norwegians once emigrated to America and other destinations in search of a better life, people now immigrate to Norway in pursuit of freedom, safety, and new opportunities. The anniversary aims to inspire reflection and engagement on the significance of migration, both in the past and today.

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

The seventeenth volume of Norwegian-American Essays is published in the commemorative year marking the bicentennial of Norwegian emigration to North America. The theme and content of this volume, “Nordic Identity Formation in a Transnational Context,” relates well to the main objectives of Crossings 200. It is based on the topic of the seminar hosted by the Norwegian-American Historical Association, Norway Chapter (NAHA-Norge) in Ottestad and Hamar June 15-18, 2022. The theme of the seminar addresses a neglected field in Norwegian American studies. Traditionally, Norwegian historiography has treated the development of Norwegian immigrants and their descendants in their own right, and the group has only to a limited degree been studied in their encounters with other cultural groups. Counter this traditional focus on Norwegian emigrant history, the topic of the seminar and, consequently, this publication, focus on identity formation among Norwegian immigrants and immigrant groups from other Nordic countries in America from the period of immigration until present. The anthology is peer-reviewed and published by NAHA-Norway.

The first essay in this volume, “Who Sailed on the *Restauration*?” by Knut Djupedal ties Norwegian-American Essays directly to the bicentennial commemoration of Norwegian emigration in 2025. According to Djupedal, the fifty-three individuals who stepped ashore in New York in 1825 and their vessel constitute the onset in the construction and maintenance of a Norwegian-Amer-

ican ethnic identity. The voyage of the *Restauration* has often been referred to as the first organized emigration of Norwegians to the United States despite the fact that there were Norwegians in America long before 1825. Those who sailed in her symbolize the pioneers of an organized beginning to the Norwegian mass migration of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In his essay Djupedal has suggested a list of names both for the crew and passengers on the *Restauration*.

Jørn Brøndal's essay, *Between Pluralism and the Melting Pot: Identity Formation among Danish Immigrants in the United States in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* constitutes one of the keynote lectures at the NAHA-Norway conference in 2022. In his essay, Brøndal discusses the interplay between the development of cultural pluralism among Danes on the one hand and the Americanization of Danes according to the concept of the melting pot on the other hand. Although about 330,000 Danes emigrated to America between 1860 and 1930, they gained a reputation for being good at "Americanizing" or "assimilating," but still formed a Danish-American culture that thrived between the 1870s and World War I. Danish Americans continually negotiated and renegotiated through the migratory experience in an attempt to construct a separate Danish-American identity.

Language and culture retention in Norwegian-American communities are central concepts in Joe Salmons' essay. His study was the basis for the second keynote lecture at the NAHA-Norway conference. It is about how and why Norwegian-American communities shifted to English with few heritage speakers born in any of these communities after the 1940s. By drawing on a model of shift in American society from the mid-nineteenth to the twentieth century based on connections between institutions within or beyond the local community, Salmons has gained insight about the Norwegian-Americans' negotiation of lingual and cultural skills in multicultural communities in the Upper Midwest. Through his analysis of basic data, the author studies how Norwegians acquired English and later shifted to English monolingualism in comparison to other immigrant groups.

Miranda Moen's essay is about material culture, a field which is rarely studied in *Norwegian-American Essays* specifically, and in Norwegian-American studies in general. More specifically, she examines to what extent regional building customs and socio-economic backgrounds among individuals from the Numedal and Valdres regions in Norway impacted Norwegian traditions in second-generation immigrant-built houses in Spring Grove in Minnesota. Norwegian influences found in Norwegian-American houses vary in representation due to many factors, resulting in a hybrid portrayal of cultural heritage. Through her knowledge of historical conditions in sending societies in Norway and the receiving society in America, Moen calls for an understanding of elements that shaped immigrant-built architecture into a hybrid architecture.

In his comparative study, Daron W. Olson focuses on the two competing journals of the *Nordmanns-Forbundet* that were published during World War II. One version issued by the *Nasjonal Samling* (NS) in Norway represented an image of Norway as a partner in a Greater Germanic confederation against Russian Bolshevism. The American free version of the journal, on the other hand, favored symbols tied to Norway's love of democracy, freedom, and a proclivity for a progressive society. The two versions reveal contrasting ideologies, variations in how the publications treated the war, the symbols they utilized, and their respective long-term objectives. According to Olson, the symbols employed by *Nordmanns-Forbundet's* American version laid the foundations for significant features of Norway's postwar identity connected to the *Storting*, May 17, and King Haakon, in addition to a strong anti-German sentiment.

In the next essay, "It's hard to stop a Trane," Ann Marie Legreid studies identity retention across several generations in two entrepreneurial families in La Crosse, Wisconsin with Norwegian roots. Whereas the Trane family became well known through their enterprise in heating and cooling technologies, the Adolf Gundersen family pioneered group medical practice in the U.S. and provided medical services with special importance to the Norwegian-American community in the Upper Midwest. Both families established



methods and technologies that impacted communities across ethnic and national boundaries. However, Legreid's study raises more complex questions about how the ethnic identities of the two families represented social constructs that were the result of the families' negotiation with the surrounding multi-cultural society, contextual factors and acculturation.

Trond Espen Teigen Bjoland examines May 17 celebrations among Norwegian Americans in Whitewater, Wisconsin, between 1880 and 1940. Whitewater's celebrations incorporated both Norwegian and American cultural symbols and the English language throughout the selected time period, but they never evolved into city-wide festivals that included residents beyond those of Norwegian birth or ancestry. Instead, they were largely confined to spaces such as churches or private homes. While earlier research on Norway's Constitution Day in America has focused on communities with significant Norwegian-American populations, this study calls for an analysis of ethnic celebrations in various types of communities. The study of a variety of locales may indicate how both local conditions and broader societal trends could shape cultural practices in immigrant communities.

A comparative study of religious beliefs across religions, cultures, continents, and time is the focus of Kari G. Hempel's essay. As people migrate, their religious beliefs accompany the migrants. Yet a significant question tied to migration processes is the role of religion as a help or a hindrance to integration. In her essay, Hempel compares two religious congregations. One is the Trinity Lutheran Congregation, a Christian Norwegian immigrant church in Minneapolis, founded in 1870. The second congregation is the Islamic Cultural Center located in the Sunni Islamic Mosque in Oslo, from 1970. In her exploration of the function of religion in the integration processes, she employs American sociologist Charles Hirschman's three Rs, namely Refuge, Resources, and Respect. In spite of the fact that the two congregations differ in terms of spatial and temporal contexts, Hempel's study displays clear similarities in the respective members' adaptation to the majority society.

### **Co-publishers**

In 2023, NAHA-Norway and Anno Norwegian Emigrant Museum entered into a partnership as co-publishers of *Norwegian-American Essays*. Anno museum, a consolidated museum which was established in 2009 and in which Anno Norwegian Emigrant Museum makes up one of its museums, is interested in supporting *Norwegian-American Essays*. By contributing economically, Anno museum will participate in supporting the anthology on a regular basis during its years of publication. In average, the publication has been issued every three years following NAHA-Norway's conferences. Since the first issue published in 1986, *Norwegian-American Essays* has been a paper publication. The cooperation between NAHA-Norway and the Norwegian Emigrant Museum will also result in that *Norwegian-American Essays* becomes an Open Access publication, granting free and open online access to its academic information. This will enable all readers, Norwegian or non-Norwegian, to read, download, copy, distribute, print, and use the material in education within existing legal agreements. This is a positive development, especially for American authors whose work will be accessible online.

The Norwegian Emigrant Museum and NAHA-Norway have co-published *Norwegian-American Essays* between 1993 and 2008. The two partners, NAHA-Norway and the Norwegian Emigrant Museum, resume cooperation in order to display their shared and strong interest in disseminating Norwegian history and culture. Teaching positions at Norwegian universities and university colleges are becoming fewer, mirroring the situation both in Canada and in the United States. In these times of reduced visibility in Norwegian-American studies, it is significant to strengthen cooperation between relevant partners.

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*Essays*. Most of the essays in this volume are based on presentations that were held at the NAHA-Norway seminar in Ottestad and Hamar in 2022. NAHA-Norway extends its thanks to the following institutions and organizations for their contribution to the NAHA-Norway seminar in 2022: Fritt Ord, Stange municipality, and Anno museum.

Norwegian-American Essays has a mission in developing the field of Norwegian-American scholarship and to spread its readership among prospective readers. The eight essays in this volume corroborate this mission. The volume includes authors both from the United States and Norway, some of whom are new authors. The eight essays in this anthology are based on presentations that were held at the seminar. All essays have gone through a peer review process, and most of the essays have benefited from the editorial advice given by the readers. We owe the readers gratitude for their service. I would like to thank colleagues in Scandinavia and in the United States who have helped and assisted during the work process, including Odd S. Lovoll, Janne Lahti, Henrik Olav Mathiesen, Debbie Miller, Trond Espen Teigen Bjoland, Daron W. Olson, Knut Djupedal, Laurann Gilbertson, David C. Mauk, Arnstein Hjelde, Gunnar Tore Nerheim, Nils Olav Østrem, Lori Ann Lahlum, and Aud V. Tønnessen. Finally, but not least, I wish to thank my patient and loyal co-worker Harry T. Cleven. His expertise and insight are significant contributions to the publishing of this anthology.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Jamestown was the first permanent English settlement in North America. It was established in 1607.

<sup>2</sup> The Sloopers were not the first Norse to set their foot on American soil. The Grønlendingesagaen, Saga of the Greenlanders, in the *Flatøybok* points toward the presence of Norsemen on the North American continent in the Medieval Period. Norwegians in New Netherland during the Dutch Colonial Period in the seventeenth century. See the Norwegian modern translation of *Flatøybok*, vol. 2 (Stavanger. Saga bok, 2015), 286-290, 453-468; see also Ernst Berge Drange, “Norwegians in America during the Dutch Colonial Period—A Forgotten Story,” *Norwegian-American Essays*, Vol. XV (2020), 209-232.

<sup>3</sup> Odd S. Lovoll, *Det løfterike landet* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget 1997).

<sup>4</sup> Odd S. Lovoll, *Promise Fulfilled. A Portrait of Norwegian Americans Today*

(Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 70. Two years earlier, enthusiastic Norwegian immigrants organized a celebration of May 17 in the village of Moscow in Iowa County, Wisconsin. Terje Mikael Hasle Joranger, "Lokale eller nasjonale kollektive identiteter?," *Historisk tidsskrift*, Vol. 89:2 (2010), 228-229.

<sup>5</sup> Lovoll, *Promise Fulfilled*, 70; *Norse-American Centennial 1825-1925* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1925), 75; *Norse-American Centennial 1825-1925* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1925), 61-89.

<sup>6</sup> Lovoll, *Promise Fulfilled*, 70.

<sup>7</sup> "President Calvin Coolidge at the Norse Centennial," *Bygdelagenes Fællesraad, Inc. Aarbok og Julehilsen 1929* (Minneapolis: Th. Lund Press, Inc. Trykkeri), 121.

<sup>8</sup> Ager was awarded first prize in the Norse-American Centennial contest for the best essay on the theme "Why we celebrate." The citations are taken from his price-winning article which appeared in the Norse-American Centennial publication. See Waldemar Ager, "Omkring Hundreaarsfesten," *Norse-American Centennial 1825-1925* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1925), 12-13.

<sup>9</sup> Ager, "Omkring Hundreaarsfesten," 12; April Schultz, «The Pride of the Race Had Been Touched»: The 1925 Norse-American Immigration Centennial and Ethnic Identity," *Journal of American History*, Vol 77: 4 (Mar. 1991), 1265-1295; Lovoll, *Promise Fulfilled*, 70.

<sup>10</sup> Lovoll, *Promise Fulfilled*, 71.

<sup>11</sup> Daron W. Olson, "His Mother's Song: The Ethnolandscapes of Norwegian-American Male Visitors to Norway During the 1914 Eidsvoll Centennial," *Norwegian-American Essays* Vol. XV (2017), 133-157.

<sup>12</sup> Hans Eyvind Næss, "Utvandrerhistoriske markeringer og utvandrerbyen Stavanger," *Stavangeren* No. 1 (2021), 15-16.

<sup>13</sup> Mondale, Quie, and Humphrey had Norwegian roots. Magnuson was adopted, but he grew up in Scandinavian family in a Scandinavian community.

<sup>14</sup> Næss, "Utvandrerhistoriske markeringer," 16. In 1925, representatives from the Norwegian authorities had given their addresses at the Norse-American Centennial. *Norse-American Centennial*, 69.

<sup>15</sup> Næss, "Utvandrerhistoriske markeringer," 21.

<sup>16</sup> Odd S. Lovoll, *Across the Deep Blue Sea: The Saga of Early Norwegian Immigrants* (St. Paul, Minnesota: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2015); Gulbrand Loken, *From Fjord to Frontier: A History of the Norwegians in Canada* (Toronto, Ontario: McClelland & Stewart, 1980).