

Plans for the 2025 Emigration Bicentennial Commemoration

Bygdelagenes Fellesraad Annual Meeting April 30, 2021

Terje Mikael Hasle Joranger, Ph.D.
Director, Norwegian Emigrant Museum



Terje Mikael Hasle Joranger



Director, Norwegian Emigrant Museum

Ph.D., University of Oslo

Fields of research: Migration, Ethnicity, Transnationalism, Local history

Editor, *Norwegian-American Essays*

Co-editor, *Nordic Whiteness and Migration to the USA*

Ongoing project: A Sense of Places: The Creation of a Norwegian-American Identity



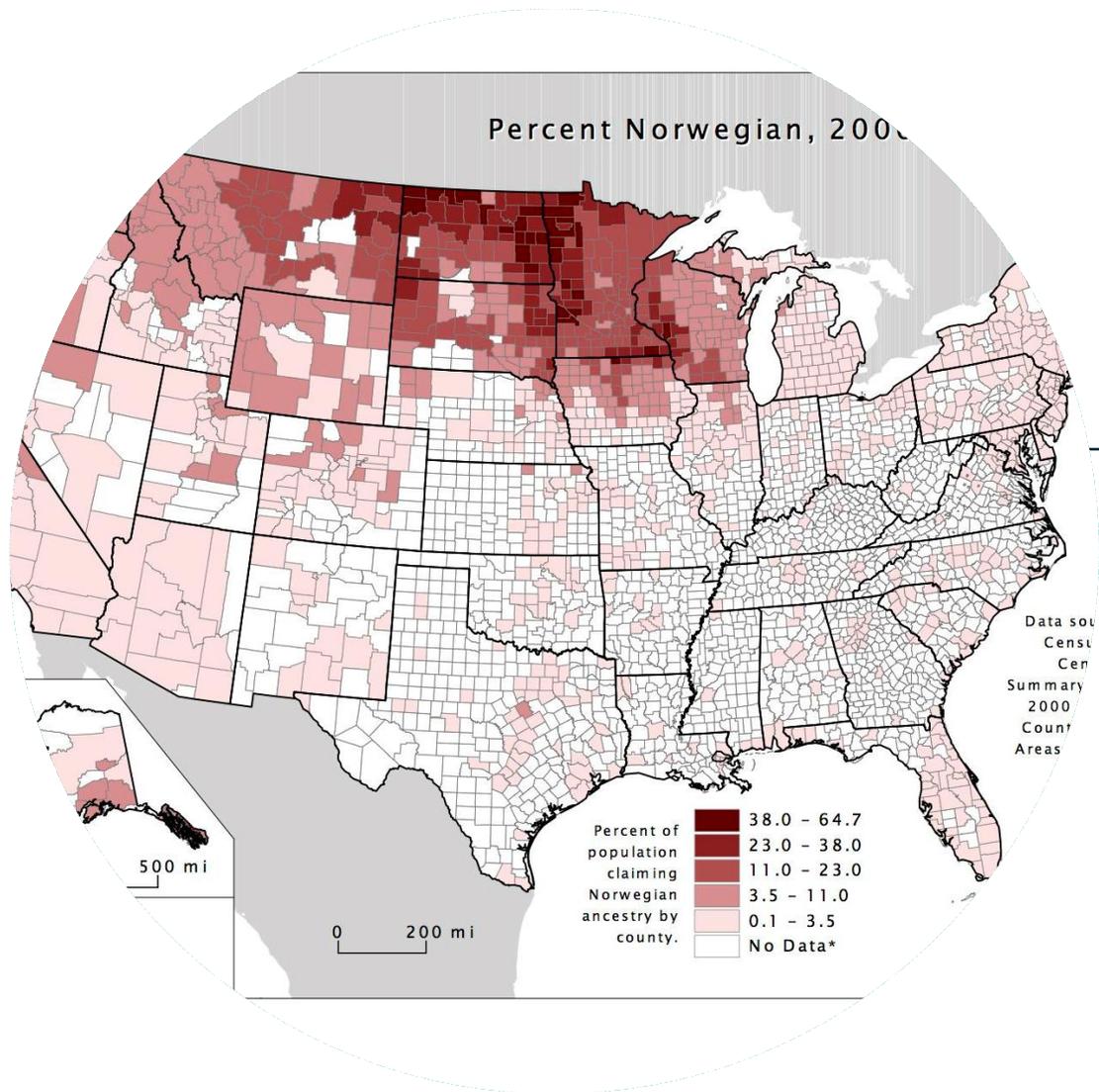
— *Restauration 1825.*

Photo: Courtesy of the Ryfylke Museum.

<https://ryfylkemuseet.no/events/restauration/>

Why organize the 2025 Bicentennial Commemoration?

- *The first organized overseas emigration from Norway took place in 1825.*
- *The sloop Restauration left Stavanger for America with 52 Norwegian passengers.*
- *Since that time about 900,000 Norwegians have emigrated to North America.*
- *In addition, up to 100,000 Norwegians have moved to locations throughout the world since 1825.*



Norwegians in North America according to the 2000 Federal US Census.

Source: <https://i.redd.it/8x4hwhsudqf41.jpg>

Our partners

- The Norwegian Ministry of Culture (Funding)
- Relevant organizations and institutions in Norway and in the USA (Cooperation)
- The Norwegian Emigrant Museum/Anno museum (Coordinator)
 - Increase knowledge.
 - Volunteers.
 - Migration research.
- First goal: establish a position as 2025 Coordinator at the Norwegian Emigrant Museum.

Past, future, and present

- *In recent times Norway has seen a shift from being an emigrant country to becoming a net immigrant country. Norway has received a higher number of immigrants as compared to the number of emigrants since the 1960s.*
- *Immigration and emigration are two sides of the same process. Consequently, it is important to know the country's own emigrant history in order to understand its immigration.*
- Emigration affected every community in Norway, the development of Norwegian society, and Norway's contact with the surrounding world.
- Today migration is a phenomenon which has great impact on our society, on our role in the world, and identity formation.



Educating children and youth about migration is a significant part of the 2025 event.

Source: Norwegian Emigrant Museum.

Past, future and present

- The adaptation process among recent immigrants in Norway may partly be compared to the process of adaptation among Norwegian immigrants in America in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Similar traits:
 - identity formation among the immigrant generation and their descendants
 - the connections to the majority society and other minorities in the receiving society
 - gender roles
 - the immigrants' contributions to their adopted society
 - different points of view among immigrants and the majority society regarding immigration

Past, future and present

- Goal: to understand our present and future by understanding our past through outreach, reflection, dialogue.
- Research projects: new perspectives on migration, identity, and cultural encounters.
- Part of the *National Jubilee 2030 – Norway in a thousand years* (Stiklestad Nasjonale Kultursenter). In 2025: the migration narrative connected to Saint Olaf (identity, cultural encounters, travels).
- Part of the celebration of *Stavanger 900 Years*.



— Since 1967, Norway has been a net immigrant country, i.e. the number of immigrants surpass the number of emigrants.

Source: Lise Åserud (NTB scanpix)

The immigrant as resource

- Emigrants are significant resources for the home country:
- Language
- Network
- Funds
- Ideas. Example: Return migrants and the building of Norway.
- Opportunities: No other OECD member has lost more export shares than Norway during the past 20 yrs.: trade must increase significantly.

The Sacquitne Barn.

Photo: Norwegian Emigrant Museum.



Comparisons

- Emigration and immigration part of the same process.
- Emigrants/Immigrants contribute to the exchange and expansion of history, culture, and economy across borders and people.
- By shedding light on the migration experience in Norwegian history, we can contribute to increased tolerance, integration, and community in Norwegian multicultural society.



The Norwegian Emigrant Museum has taken a lead in organizing a national bicentennial commemoration of Norwegian emigration in 2025.

Photo: Anno museum.

The secretariat (coordinator)

- Application for funding to the Ministry of Culture.
- Duration: 2021-2026.
- Location: the Norwegian Emigrant Museum.
- Tasks: create visions, communications strategy, and presentation of the visions to target groups.
- Coordinate activities of task groups 2022-2025.
- Facilitate activities throughout Norway through volunteer work and community engagement.
- Establish contacts and network; stimulate for research.
- Digital communication; the creation of a digital planning guide; follow up activities; a hub in coordinating activities and cooperation; common marketing of events.

Visions toward 2025

1. The impact of migration on Norwegian society.

- Create interest and understanding for migration and globalization as basis for identity formation and bridge between countries and culture, past and present, and among generations.
- To stimulate for tolerance to cultural differences by regarding our own migration story in a new context in light of contemporary society; also to understand immigration in light of history.
- Focus on various forms of freedom; economic, religious, political, and increased well-being.
- Shed light on similarities and differences in relation to contemporary immigration; pressures between retaining an ethnic identity and adaptation to the host country; to the experiences of immigrants.

Visions toward 2025

2. Diversity and inclusion.

- Develop a national exhibit on Norwegian emigration, both permanent and digital.
- Present positive and negative consequences of emigration; the influence of emigration on society building, society development, and innovation both in and outside of Norway.
Migrasjon knyttet til mangfoldsbegrepet.
- Present the consequences of the migration process for identity formation among children, youth, and adults in relation to values, gender, religion, ethnicity, and education. The relationship between minority and majority groups, problems connected to race, discrimination, and whiteness, among others the situation of the indigenous population.
- Continue the development of the role of the NEM as resource center for the public and its contribution to new knowledge.

Visions toward 2025

3. To strengthen the contact with emigrant Norwegians today.

- Discussion of Norwegian diaspora.
- How can Norway benefit from the competence and strengthen the ties of expatriated Norwegians to their homeland? Necessary to build more knowledge about this group toward 2025; their stories will add understanding and indications on future Norwegian emigration. Situation in Denmark relevant for Norway: contact with diaspora as potential resource for Denmark through cooperation Ministry of Foreign Affairs, business community, diaspora organizations.
- Goal: a commemoration that engages, renew interest for migration and debate about migration. Includes engaging activities, cultural activities,

Organization of 2025 events

- Non-profit organizations.
- Museums (regional, national).
- Research institutions.
- Municipalities.
- Transatlantic partners.
- Others.

Organization of 2025 events

- The Bicentennial National Committee: anchors a variety of partners in the field of migration nationwide. Chair: Knut Storberget, County governor in Innlandet og Chairman of the Board of Anno museum.
- Partnership including non-profit and public organizations: a good mixture. Ensures engagement in the process toward 2025.
- More partners included in the coming phase: exchange of ideas.
- To be added: immigrant organizations, student organizations abroad (ANSA) and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- An executive committee and task groups consisting of committee members desired to get involved in more in-depth activities as part of commemoration. Present findings to the larger committee.



Research

- Research activity will be organized separate from the planning of other activities but will be coordinated with the 2025 Bicentennial activities.
- Relevant resource center for research activities; host apartment for researchers; source material in museum archives and library; network of research institutions in the USA and Europe.
- The NEM will organize a broad research project in the field of migration.
- Research will be connected to actual research projects leading up to 2025; present results from research.
 - Application to the Norwegian Research Council: Ph.D. project 2021-2025 NRC; cooperation Anno Museum/the University of Oslo. Findings presented for the 2025 commemoration.
 - Application to the Norwegian Arts Council; cooperation with the NLN, museums, universities on the neglected narratives connected to the Norwegian migration.
 - Application to the Norwegian Research Council: NEM partner with other institutions in project *Race and racism in teacher education 2021-2024*.

Timeline

- 2021: establish committee and task groups; formulate visions, themes, research program, digital communication; participate in research projects with a national scope.
- 2022-2024: cooperation between relevant local, national, and international institutions and organizations; dialogue with non-profit organizations, schools, exhibits, and digital presentations. Emphasis on the stimulation of interest toward 2025; create an engagement and interest among non-profit organizations through digital media (website, logo); research between various institutions, exchange of research results.
- 2025: activities in local communities, to mark migration history throughout Norway. Goal: create engaging activities through 2025, outreach, research locally, nationally, internationally and to present findings also after 2025; visibility in national media and debates; conference at the NEM; open a permanent exhibit on global emigration from Norway.

Cooperation with organizations in the USA

- A good partnership between the NEM and Norwegian American non-profit institutions and organizations. The Bygdelagenes Fellesraad, the Sons of Norway, NAHA, Vesterheim, the National Nordic Museum.
- Transnational representation gives inspiration in the planning process both in the USA and in Norway.
- Anno museum/NEM represented in the 2025 US Bicentennial Commemoration Committee.
- The Norwegian-American Historical Association represented in the Norwegian executive committee.

The Bygdelagenes Fellesraad

- Cooperation between the BF and Norwegian historical and genealogical associations for the 2025 bicentennial?
- Example 1: Identify emigrants in life course stories
 - Origins in Norway
 - The migration process
 - Life in the US.
- Example 2: Identify charter members of all the various bygdelags in the US in survey; then do original research on locating more people.

Thank you

