

**Velkommen!** to the Sons of Norway Genealogy Guide. Sons of Norway has published this guide to help its members get in touch with their heritage. We believe that the history of a nation and the nature of its culture are best described through the stories of its people. In your research you will truly get to know your ancestors – who they were, where they came from, and what they did with their lives. This guide is intended to help you get started researching your roots. It begins with some background information about Norwegian history and culture, and goes on to describe in detail all of the most important genealogical resources in both North America and Norway.

As you go on with your research, you may also want to get a copy of Sons of Norway's Norwegian Cultural Skills unit number five, *Genealogy / Family History*. Through this Cultural Skills program you can earn pins for your genealogical accomplishments. The unit, written by Sons of Norway member Lee Rokke of Norsota Lodge (1-602), also contains a lot of helpful information, and provides a structured format for doing your research. Copies of this and all Cultural Skills units can be ordered by calling Sons of Norway Headquarters at 1-800-945-8851 or by emailing [culture@sofn.com](mailto:culture@sofn.com).

## A Brief History of Norway and Norwegian Society

Before you hit the books, it will help to know a little bit about the social history of Norway, how the language has changed over time, and how surnames were determined.

Although it's difficult to imagine today, in the early 1800s, Norway was one of the poorest countries in Northern Europe. Although only about 3% of Norway's land has ever been good for farming, Norway was an agrarian society that had changed very little since feudal times. Norwegian society was highly stratified, and nearly every citizen belonged to the state Lutheran church, which closely regulated the private lives of the Norwegian people.

The early 1800s were a time of growing unrest in Norway. For the first time since the Black Plague of the 14<sup>th</sup> Century, the population was swelling. Cities were becoming more crowded, and farms less able to produce food for their inhabitants. When the Napoleonic Wars climaxed between 1807 and 1814, the English blockade of continental Europe crippled Norwegian trade. Denmark, which had politically dominated Norway for nearly 400 years, was so devastated by the war that in 1814 the country went bankrupt, and was forced to forfeit control of Norway, which soon entered into a union with Sweden that was to last until 1905. Norway had also experienced waves of religious dissidence, as radicals like Hans Nilsen Hauge began traveling the country protesting the authoritarianism of the state church. At the same time, a new country across the ocean was growing. As the United States added more and more territory, it badly needed people to populate its expanding borders.

The first known group emigration from Norway left Stavanger in 1825 in the small vessel *Restaurationen*. Although the voyage of *Restaurationen* is widely acknowledged as the official beginning of Norwegian emigration, the great exodus did not truly begin until the late 1830s. From that point on until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, social ferment in Norway and the lure of personal opportunity abroad inspired mass waves of emigration that would, by 1914, deprive the country of one quarter of its population.

## Patterns of Emigration

Emigrants did not leave Norway in a steady stream. Instead, they left home in waves, as detailed in Ingrid Semmingsen's essay *Norwegian Emigration to America During the Nineteenth Century* (Norwegian-American Studies, Vol. XI, p66). According to Semmingsen, Norwegians left Norway for America every year from 1836 on, but the movement had its first peak between 1849 and 1854. A period of decline followed, ended by a brief and dramatic increase between 1860 and 1862 at which point the Civil War and the Dakota Uprising abruptly curtailed emigration. The first major emigration lasted from 1866 to 1873, when 110,896 Norwegians left their homeland. Another lull followed until 1879, when the second enormous migration began, lasting until 1893, claiming 256,068 Norwegian citizens. Smaller waves followed in the late 1890s, and again in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## Norwegian Society in the Nineteenth Century

Another important key to finding your relatives is understanding the social structure of the country they left. Depending on what class your ancestors belonged to, you may have an easier – or harder – time tracking them down.

Most Norwegian-Americans can trace their ancestors to one of two social classes, the *bønder* or the *husmenn*.

Norway has not had its own native aristocracy since the Black Plague. As such most agricultural land in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries was owned by the *bondeklasse*. The *bonde* (farmer) class was made up of farmers who owned the land they worked. Although they were rarely rich in monetary terms, the *bønder* (that's the plural form) were considered wealthy inasmuch as they owned, rather than rented, their land. To own one's own property was to be guaranteed a livelihood for oneself and dependents. It also carried with it great responsibility: the *bonde* was expected to provide for everyone – wife, children and servants – who lived on his farm. To own land was a sacred trust that was passed down from father to son. The *bønder* were also important to church and local government authorities because property taxes collected from the *bønder* made up the lion's share of the government's finances.

The *husmann* (literally “house man,” but often translated as “cotter”) was one step down the social ladder. He was the head servant or foreman on a farm, and typically rented a small acreage of his own on the estate where he was employed. Unlike the *bonde*, he could be hired and fired, and so his position on the farm – and, in turn, in society – was much less secure than the *bonde*.

*Bønder* and *husmenn* ancestors are much easier to find than others for one simple reason; they paid taxes. Because they were taxed the government kept detailed records about them, their families and their property, many of which are widely available to this day.

Another important social category is the *leilending* or *bygselmann*. A *leilending* was a tenant farmer who rented his land under a contract called a *bygselbrev*. A *leilending* would rent his land often for as little as a year at a time, and there was no guarantee the lease would be renewed. Paradoxically, the *leilending* could often pass his lease to his son, and if the farm went bankrupt, the renter could not have his property seized, as he did not own it. This category is less common, and harder to trace in farm and community histories.

# Norwegian Names

Although some upper class families used surnames – last names that remained the same from generation to generation – as far back as the 1500s, the vast majority of Norwegians from Viking times up until the about the mid-nineteenth century (and in some cases, until much later) used *patronyms*. A patronym is a name taken from one’s father. Simply put, everyone’s last name was their father’s first name with the suffix for “son” or “daughter” added on the end. For example, if Jon Olsson has a son named Thor, his name will be Thor Jonsson. In turn, when Thor’s son Ole is born, he will take the name Ole Thorsson. Jon’s daughter Marie will be named Marie Jonsdatter. When she has children, they will take a patronymic last name from their father.

Those patronymic suffixes (-søn, -datter) have a number of different spellings (-sen, -son, datter, etc) because of the way the Norwegian language has changed over time. For an explanation of this, skip ahead to page 5, *The Norwegian Language*.

Because there were relatively few names in use, the patronymic system by itself could be confusing. Therefore, in addition to the patronym, many people also took an additional “name” from the property where they lived or worked. For example, if Jon Olsson works on a farm called Røen, he would go as Jon Olsson Røen. These farm names were more like an address than a personal identifier, so if a person moved to a different farm, they would take a different farm name. Thus, when Jon Olsson Røen moves to the farm Tveitun, his name becomes Jon Olsson Tveitun.

Norwegian immigrants to America naturally adopted the naming conventions of their new country. The tradition of changing the patronym every generation, which was already going out of style in Norway, stopped completely in America. Some immigrants decided to keep their patronym as their last name, while others kept their farm names. As a rule, if your last name ends in -sen or -son, your last name is a patronym, and if you do enough research you will eventually find the Norwegian *stamfar* (arch ancestor) who gave you your family name. On the other hand, if your Norwegian family name is anything else (like Heiberg or Brandjord or Ness), it’s equally certain that your name refers to the farm, estate or village that your ancestors came from. If that is the case, you will have a much easier time tracing your roots. If you’re really lucky, your name might be the name of a place in Norway that is still there that you can find on a map – and visit!

Here are a few more hints about Norwegian names:

- Sometimes people were identified by their occupation. Examples: Jon Olsson gårdmand (farmer), Jon Olsson klokker (sexton), or Jon Olsson lendsmann (sheriff).
- Women did not adopt their husband’s name. Marie Jonsdatter used that name her entire life. The suffix -datter is often abbreviated d., dt. or dtr.
- The first son was usually named for the father’s father. Example: Jon Olsson will name his son Ole, who will then be Ole Jossøn. The second son will be named for the mother’s father. The same pattern follows for girls; the first is name for the father’s mother, the second for the mother’s mother.
- If a parent dies before a child of the same sex is born, the child receives the parent’s first name. Example: Elling Aslesen died three weeks before his son was born, and the child was named Elling Ellingsen.
- The first child in a new marriage is often named for the deceased spouse.

## Names of Norwegian Farms

Nearly every Norwegian *gård*, or farm, has its own name. The name of a farm often describes its location, condition or ownership. *Ødegård* would be a deserted farm, while *Jonsrud* mean's "Jon's Clearing." Many contain descriptions of direction; *Østerdal* means "Eastern Valley," while *Midtrevollen* means "Middle Meadow." The suffix *-eie* is a means simply "property of" or "belongs to," and typically indicates a *husman's* place. *Glesneeie* is a *husmann's* place on Glesne.

When found at the end of a name, the suffixes *-en*, *-a* and *-et* are indicative articles, meaning "the." *Røen* means "the clearing" (*rø* = clearing, *en* = the).

# The Norwegian Language

Today Norway has two official written forms of its language, and over 80 officially recognized spoken dialects. Although most of the sources you will be working with will be in one of the many forms of Norwegian (or, if it's old enough, Danish) you do not need to be fluent – or even formally educated – in any of them to make progress. With a little practice, you will be able to recognize enough words to understand most of what you need.

Here you will find a very brief guide to the history of the Norwegian language and a word list of important terms you are likely to come across when doing genealogical research.

In the late 1300s Norway entered into a “union” with Denmark that would last until 1814. At the time the union was instituted all the Scandinavian languages were quite similar, and formal standards for writing the language were just developing. Under the rule of Denmark, however, Norwegian more or less ceased to be a written language. Instead, Norwegians learned to write their language according to Danish rules, although spoken Norwegian continued to evolve relatively unaffected. Starting in the mid-1800s, many Norwegians began demanding a new written language that more closely reflected how they spoke, especially in the rural districts of the country, where the language had been much less affected by Danish domination. Others felt that keeping the Danish form of the written language would preserve intellectual and commercial connections to Denmark, which had always been the more prominent country. From this debate, the two written standards of Norwegian evolved, *bokmål* (meaning “book language,” the Danish-influenced form) and *nynorsk* (the “new Norwegian,” based on old dialects). To further complicate things, each of these languages has changed its own rules over time.

For English-speaking genealogists, what this means is that between all the different sources out there that are available, there is essentially no one linguistic standard that defines them all. Depending on what you're looking at, you may come across three or more different spellings for the same word or name.

Another important thing to know is that the Norwegian alphabet has three more letters than the English one, namely æ / Æ, ø / Ø and å / Å. In older documents, these same letters may appear as ä / Ä, ö / Ö and aa / Aa respectively. Don't try to substitute English letters for these; they are different letters representing different sounds and changing them will often change the meaning of the word, or, in place names, mislead the your reader; Alnes and Ålnes, for example, are completely different places.

To navigate this tricky situation, you are going to need a good dictionary. The best one is Norwegian-English Dictionary by Einar Haugen, available from the University of Wisconsin Press. Haugen's dictionary is widely considered to be the best for English speakers, and unlike many other Norwegian-English dictionaries it includes words from nynorsk and a few from the major dialects. Another good one is the *Blåordbok* (Blue Dictionaries) from Kunnskapsforlaget in Norway. These are extremely good, but somewhat more difficult to use if you do not speak Norwegian, as all of the reference information is in that language.

## Norwegian Word List

Here are a few important Norwegian words you will encounter when doing your research.

<b>barn</b> – child / children	<b>gårdmann, gardmann</b> – farmer
<b>barselseng</b> – childbirth	<b>gift</b> - married
<b>bestefar, bestefedre, bestefedrar</b> – grandfather / grandfathers	<b>gjeter</b> – shepherd
<b>bestemor, bestemødre</b> – grandmother / grandmothers	<b>husmann</b> – cotter
<b>bonde, bønder</b> – farmer / farmers	<b>innerst</b> – farm laborer
<b>bror, brødre</b> – brother / brothers	<b>kirke, kyrkja</b> – church
<b>bruk</b> – small farm	<b>kone</b> – wife
<b>bruker</b> – user / farmer	<b>kusine</b> – female cousin
<b>budeie</b> – dairy maid	<b>led</b> – generation
<b>bygselbrev</b> – lease	<b>leiefolk</b> – hired help
<b>døpt</b> – baptized	<b>leilender</b> – renter
<b>døde</b> – died	<b>mor, mødre</b> – mother / mothers
<b>dreng</b> – boy / hired man	<b>odelsbonde</b> – freeholder
<b>ekte</b> – legitimate	<b>oldefar</b> - great grandfather
<b>ektefelle</b> - spouse	<b>oldemor</b> – great grandmother
<b>elv</b> – river	<b>pike</b> – girl
<b>enke</b> – widow	<b>prest</b> – pastor
<b>enkemann</b> – widower	<b>selveier</b> – owner
<b>far, fedre, fedrar</b> – father / fathers	<b>seter</b> – mountain dairy
<b>fattig</b> – poor	<b>sjø</b> – ocean, sea, lake
<b>fetter</b> – male cousin	<b>skjøte</b> – deed of sale
<b>fjell</b> – mountain	<b>slekt</b> – family
<b>flytter</b> – moves / moving	<b>stue</b> – cottage / living room
<b>foreldre</b> – parents	<b>svoger</b> – brother-in-law
<b>forpakter</b> – caretaker	<b>søster</b> – sister
<b>født</b> – born	<b>tjeneste</b> – service, servant
<b>gammel, gammal, gamle, gamla</b> – old	<b>uekte</b> – illegitimate
<b>gård, gard</b> – farm	<b>ætt</b> – clan / lineage

Because *bygedbøker* are often based on old property tax records, they frequently use archaic terms for weights and measurements you may not find in modern dictionaries.

<b>alen</b>	about 2 feet	<b>skinn</b>	1360 riksdalars
<b>daler, dalar</b>	Nor. banknote or coin, approximately 1 dollar	<b>skilling</b>	coin, worth 1/120 of a dalar
<b>lass</b>	load (usually of hay)	<b>skippund</b>	20 lispunds, or about 350 pounds
<b>lispund</b>	20 settings, or about 18 pounds	<b>skjeppe</b>	1/2 bushel
<b>mål</b>	1000 square meters, 0.247 acres	<b>spesidalar</b>	coin, about 1 dollar
<b>pund</b>	498 grams, just over a pound	<b>tønne</b>	barrel, about 4 bushles
<b>riksdalar</b>	coin used until 1875, ca 4 kroner	<b>våg</b>	39.5 lbs of dry measure
<b>setting</b>	about 9/10 of a pound		

# Getting Started

Whether you're an accomplished genealogist or just starting out for the first time, the most important thing to do is to start with what you know. This means beginning with yourself and working backward in time, writing down everything that you know (or think you know) about your closest relatives.

This is important to do because the farther you go back in time, the more confusing things will become. Many genealogists take pride in being able to trace their heritage further back in time than anyone else. Although this is an accomplishment, starting from someone you assume to be an ancestor and working forward can be extremely frustrating. Moreover, the further back in time you go, the more ancestors you will discover you have, and tracing the correct line through their descendants down to yourself may prove impossible.

Take a piece of paper and write your own name near the bottom. From your name draw a short line up; at the top, write your parents' names. From them, branch out again. What were the names of all four of your grandparents? Where and when were they born? Did your parents have any siblings? What were their names? Going step-by-step like this, fill in as much information as you know about your family. If you get stuck, before you go to the library or start searching online, talk to your relatives. Almost every family has an unofficial historian – give Aunt Ragna a call and see if she can help you out. If not, she may be able to point you to the right place to start searching.

Whatever gaps in your family tree you can't fill in from your own memory or from family stories, that's the information you want to go looking for.

There are dozens of different documents and resources you can search for to answer the vital questions about an ancestor's life. Of all of these, the easiest to use is of course the local *bygdebok*. A *bygdebok* is a historical work that usually focuses on the history of the farms in a particular area. Although each *bygdebok* is different, they typically list the owners of each farm, when they lived and died, who their descendants were, and so forth. They may also contain information about how much the farm was taxed in a given year, or even bits of narrative history and hints on where people moved when they left their home farms. Because of the depth and reliability of the information they provide, the *bygdebøker* are the most important resources you will use.

Another important resource you may want to search for is an ancestor's *utflyttingsattest*, or emigration certificate. Most emigrants had to file an *utflyttingsattest* with the local authorities before leaving Norway. A typical *utflyttingsattest* lists the name, birthplace and birth date of each person that left in a family. This can be a tremendous help in tracing your family history.

# Resources and Organizations

The next question you will have to answer is how much of the research you want to do for yourself. Do you need to simply find certain materials? Would you like a little help from a librarian? Or would you just rather have an expert take care of the whole thing for you? Here you will find information on several organizations who can do all of these things and more.

## Norwegian-American Genealogical Center and Naeseth Library

For anyone who needs assistance with their search, the Norwegian-American Genealogical Center and Naeseth Library ([www.nagcnl.org](http://www.nagcnl.org)) in Madison, Wisconsin is an excellent option. They are professionals and charge for their services: they also have a library that is available to the public for a fee.

Among its services, the center will:

- Search library and archival collections
- Help solve genealogical problems
- Compile bibliographies and other aids
- Collect family histories
- Assemble transcripts of cemeteries, census and church records

The Naeseth library offers all the essential sources for the Norwegian-American genealogist. Their collection includes Norwegian parish records (dating from the 17th century to the 20th century) that provide information about baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, and emigration, as well as *bygdebøker* (local community histories), privately published family histories and Norwegian census records. The Naeseth Library also offers American sources, like cemetery records and obituary files, some North American port records and American Lutheran church records.

Norwegian-American Genealogical Center & Naeseth Library

415 West Main St

Madison WI 53703

Tel. 608-255-2224

Fax 608-255-6842

[www.nagcnl.org](http://www.nagcnl.org)

## University of North Dakota Library Family History and Genealogy Room

The University of North Dakota (UND) Library Family History and Genealogy Room offers a wealth of primary and secondary source material essential to any Norwegian genealogist. The star attraction of their archives is their collection of more than 1000 *bygdebøker* for 520 communities in Norway, which may be the largest single collection of the books anywhere.

The Family History and Genealogy room is available to the general public, but the *bygdebøker* themselves are non-circulating. Anyone over the age of 18 who is not affiliated with the University may obtain a library card for a \$10 annual fee.

The Genealogy Room has its own website, through which one can browse for *bygdebøker* by county. It is important to note these lists are arranged according to the English alphabet, rather than the Norwegian. For example, Østfold county is listed directly after Oppland, rather than at the end of the list where it belongs. Similarly, the letters “å” and “æ” are both alphabetized as the English letter “a.” It is frequently more helpful to use the online card catalog, “ODIN”, which features a simple search interface, and supports the use of the Norwegian vowel characters. The University also publishes a bound list of all *bygdebøker* which you can obtain by contacting the library.

Besides the *bygdebøker*, the UND library also offers a number of other locally-oriented resources that may well be of use. They include; Federal Manuscript Population Census Schedules from 1840 to 1920, Ontario and Manitoba Provincial Population Census Schedules from 1831 to 1891, North Dakota and Western Minnesota Land Tract Books, the Ontario Computerized Land Record Index, American Lutheran Church Records for North Dakota, and naturalization records for several Red River Valley counties.

Chester Fritz Library  
University Ave & Centennial Dr  
P.O. Box 9000  
Grand Forks, ND 58202  
Phone: (701) 777-2617  
<http://www.library.und.edu>

## **Norwegian American Historical Association**

The Norwegian American Historical Association at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota also offers an extensive collection of interesting material. While their focus is mostly historical, they have a wealth of information that would be of use to any Norwegian genealogist.

The NAHA collection includes a great deal of academic material (articles from academic journals, studies, theses, etc), which can also be useful for genealogists seeking to understand the social and political environments their ancestors inhabited. The collection also features a collection of manuscripts written by Norwegian-Americans immigrants. The manuscripts range in subject from letters to personal memoirs to commentary on religious, political and social issues.

Using NAHA is an excellent way to broaden your research. It's wonderful to learn your ancestors' names and where they were born or when they died, but who were they really? What were their communities like? Why did they leave? Broader questions like this can find answers through NAHA's important collection. The NAHA archive contains books, letters, journals, diaries, family histories and photographs that document and illuminate the “big picture” of Norwegian-American life. Emigration records from major Norwegian ports are held from 1867 to about 1900, but searching these can be very time-consuming unless an approximate date of emigration is known.

If you plan on using the archives more than once, joining NAHA is an excellent idea. NAHA members receive the following benefits:

- Complimentary copy of all new publications
- 25% discount on NAHA publications currently in print
- Priority use of the archives, in person and by e-mail
- The NAHA newsletter
- Invitations to participate in educational activities

The NAHA archives are always expanding, and most material can be searched for online via a dedicated search engine called Leif, available through the NAHA website. With Leif you can perform a document search (which looks at the titles for individual documents within the collection) or a collection search (which looks through the descriptions of articles). A document search is best if you are looking for a specific letter or article by a particular person, while a collection search is best if you are looking for the writings on broad topics. The interface is very easy to use, and includes a way to add Norwegian vowels (ø, å, æ, etc) which have to be used in order to turn up results for a search like, for example, “*attesaga*.”

Also online you will find a PDF document which includes complete bibliographical information for every item in the archive. The file is rather large (566k, 244 pages) but if you save it to your hard drive, you can search it in Adobe Acrobat Reader by using the find function (control + F).

Visitors may use the NAHA library for a daily fee of \$5 for NAHA members and \$10 for non-members. If you cannot visit the library in person, NAHA does have a small staff that will assist with research at the price of \$20 an hour or more depending on the type of research needed. NAHA members receive priority, and it is necessary to schedule an appointment ahead of time. The staff will also scan or photocopy most materials from the collection, unless their condition makes duplicating them impossible. NAHA does not provide translation services, but will provide information about translators upon request.

The Norwegian-American Historical Association

1510 St. Olaf Avenue

Northfield, MN 55057-1097

(507) 646-3221

<http://www.naha.stolaf.edu>

## **Norwegian-American Bygdelagenes Fellesraad**

Another important organization to know about is the Bygdelagenes Fellesraad and the various *bygdelag* it represents. A *bygdelag* is a club (*lag*) for people whose ancestors all came from the same community (*bygd*) in Norway. There are currently 32 *lag* in America with members across the country, loosely coordinated by the Fellesraad (central council). The *lag* often attract people who are interested in genealogy and history, so if you need guidance specific to your area of Norway, the right *bygdelag* may have just the person to talk to. For complete contact for all the *bygdelagene*, go to [www.fellesraad.com](http://www.fellesraad.com).

## Norwegian-American Genealogical Association

Practicing Norwegian-American genealogists, professionals and amateurs alike, may want to consider joining the Norwegian-American Genealogical Association (NAGA). NAGA assists members with their research, and maintains a private collection of research materials. These include Norwegian census records, the Rowberg obituary file, regional maps of Norway, ships' lists, and a collection of other books and periodicals. NAGA holds monthly meetings in Golden Valley, Minnesota, but welcomes members from all over the world. The group also publishes a quarterly newspaper, *Avisen*, which explores research methods, and reviews the latest genealogical resources.

Norwegian-American Genealogical Association

5768 Olson Memorial Highway

Golden Valley, MN 55422

612-595-9347

<http://www.norwegianamerican.org>

Meetings are held the last Wednesday of every month, beginning at 7:00 PM.

## Research in Norway

Once you are firmly established in your research you may find it necessary to start looking for sources on the other side of the Atlantic.

### The Norwegian Emigration Center

The Norwegian Emigration Center in Stavanger, Norway is the best place to start research in Norway. The Center's extensive archives contain; church records on microfilm, census information and *bygdebøker*.

The Center also offers a number of services including:

- Help finding relatives anywhere in Norway
- Tips for finding sources on the Internet
- Classes on genealogical research

Located in scenic Old Stavanger, the Emigration Center features a reading room, with facilities for reading microfilm and microfiche, as well as broadband internet access. The reading room is available to the public for no charge.

You can also hire one of the staff genealogists to do the work for you. You can fill out an inquiry form, in person or online, stating as much information as you know about your background and any specific questions that you have. The cost is \$70 for the first three hours of research, and \$30 for each additional hour. Due to the large number of requests, the average wait time for a reply is about 3 months.

Norwegian Emigration Center

Strandkaien 31

4005 Stavanger

Norway

011 47 51 53 88 60

<http://www.emigrationcenter.com/>

## Statsarkivene and Riksarkivet

Another excellent resource in Norway are Riksarkivet and Statsarkivene. Riksarkivet (The National Archives) preserves historical government documents of national interest, while the Statsarkivene, which are divided up into local branches, contain materials specific to the areas they serve. Both the Riksarkivet and the Statsarkivene contain only materials that are at least 25 years old and out of administrative use. The central web page ([www.riksarkivet.no](http://www.riksarkivet.no)) and the local pages (see links below) all have some basic information in English, but most of the actual content of their pages is in Norwegian. These National Archives will provide you with copies of birth, death, baptismal, or marriage records, depending on what is available in their archives. Although they will not do regular research, they will send you copies of their microfilm records if they find information about a specific person. To be able to do this they will need names, birth dates, and / or other vital dates, and the names of the places your ancestors came from. Fees will vary by branch and type of research.

**If your ancestors came from Østfold, Akershus, Oslo, Buskerud, Vestfold or Telemark, contact:**

### Statsarkivet i Oslo

Folke Bernadottes vei 21  
Postboks 4015 Ullevål stadion  
0806 Oslo  
NORWAY  
Tel. 011 47 22 02 26 00  
Fax 011 47 22 23 74 89  
[statsarkivet.oslo@riksarkivaren.dep.no](mailto:statsarkivet.oslo@riksarkivaren.dep.no)  
<http://www.arkivverket.no/oslo>

*Note: Phone orders for copies of documents will only be received Monday-Friday from 10 AM to 2PM Norwegian time.*

**If your ancestors came from Hedmark and Oppland, contact:**

### Statsarkivet i Hamar

Lille Strandgaten 3, 3rd floor  
Postboks 533  
2304 Hamar  
NORWAY  
Tel. 011 47 62 55 54 40  
Fax 011 47 62 52 94 48  
[statsarkivet.hamar@riksarkivaren.dep.no](mailto:statsarkivet.hamar@riksarkivaren.dep.no)  
<http://www.arkivverket.no/hamar>

**If your ancestors came from Buskerud, Vestfold or Telemark, contact:**

### Statsarkivet i Kongsberg

Frogsvei 44  
3611 Kongsberg  
NORWAY  
Tel 011 47 32 86 99 00  
Fax 011 47 32 86 99 10  
[statsarkivet.kongsberg@riksarkivaren.dep.no](mailto:statsarkivet.kongsberg@riksarkivaren.dep.no)  
<http://www.arkivverket.no/kongsberg>

**If your ancestors came from Aust-Agder or Vest-Agder, contact:**

### Statsarkivet i Kristiansand

Märthas vei 1  
Serviceboks 402  
4604 Kristiansand  
NORWAY  
Tel 011 47 38 14 55 00  
Fax 011 47 38 14 55 01  
[statsarkivet.kristiansand@riksarkivaren.dep.no](mailto:statsarkivet.kristiansand@riksarkivaren.dep.no)  
<http://www.arkivverket.no/kristiansand>

**If your ancestors came from Rogaland, contact:**

### **Statsarkivet i Stavanger**

Bergelandsgata 30

4012 Stavanger

NORWAY

Tel. 011 47 51 50 12 60

Fax 011 47 51 50 12 90

[statsarkivet.stavanger@riksarkivaren.dep.no](mailto:statsarkivet.stavanger@riksarkivaren.dep.no)

<http://www.arkivverket.no/stavanger/>

**If your ancestors came from Hordaland or Sogn og Fjordane, contact:**

### **Statsarkivet i Bergen**

Årstadveien 22

5009 Bergen

NORWAY

Tel. 011 47 55 96 58 00

Fax 011 47 55 96 58 01

[Statsarkivet.Bergen@riksarkivaren.dep.no](mailto:Statsarkivet.Bergen@riksarkivaren.dep.no)

<http://www.arkivverket.no/bergen>

**If your ancestors came from Møre og Romsdal, Sør-Trøndelag, Nord-Trøndelag and Nordland, contact:**

### **Statsarkivet i Trondheim**

Høgskolevegen 12

Postboks 2825 Elgesæter

7432 Trondheim

NORWAY

Tel. 011 47 73 88 45 00

Fax 011 47 73 88 45 40

[statsarkivet.trondheim@riksarkivaren.dep.no](mailto:statsarkivet.trondheim@riksarkivaren.dep.no)

<http://www.arkivverket.no/trondheim>

**If your ancestors came from Troms og Finnmark, contact:**

### **Statsarkivet i Tromsø**

Huginbakken 18, Breivika

9293 Tromsø

NORWAY

Tel 011 47 77 64 72 00

Fax 011 47 77 64 72 01

[statsarkivet.tromso@riksarkivaren.dep.no](mailto:statsarkivet.tromso@riksarkivaren.dep.no)

<http://www.arkivverket.no/tromso>

## **Norsk Utvandremuseum – The Norwegian Emigrant Museum**

The Norwegian Emigrant Museum in Ottestad, Norway is an independent museum commemorating the emigration of the Norwegian people. The museum features an extensive open air display of emigrant cabins, barns and artifacts. The museum also maintains a research center and library including:

- Thousands of letters from America
- Thousands of emigrant photographs
- An emigrant agent archive
- Archives from Norwegian missionary activity
- Hundreds of tape recorded interviews with emigrants
- Microfilms of church records from Norwegian congregations in America
- American census information

Norsk Utvandremuseum

Åkershagan

2312 Ottestad

Norway

Tel: 011 47 62 57 48 50

Fax: 011 47 62 57 48 51

[museum@emigrant.museum.no](mailto:museum@emigrant.museum.no)

<http://www.museumsnett.no/emigrantmuseum>

# Helpful Websites

Here are a few more online resources that may be useful. Not all of these are specific to Norway, and some of them may charge for their services, so be sure to review their terms of service carefully before using them.

## **Ancestry.com**

The largest collection of family history records on the web. <http://www.ancestry.com>

## **Ellis Island Immigrant Museum**

Passenger searches, family scrapbooks and information on the immigrant experience.

<http://www.ellisland.org>

## **Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

The Archives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are the collective memory of the ELCA church-wide organization, including records of predecessor church bodies, inter-Lutheran organizations, and certain records relating to ELCA synods and their predecessors. <http://www.elca.org/archives>

## **Family Search**

The Family History Library Catalog describes more than 3 million microfilms, microfiche, books, and other items available at the Family History Library and through your local family history center.

<http://www.familysearch.org>

## **Genealogy Home Page**

Genealogy links all over the place <http://www.genhomepage.com/>

## **Kirken.no**

This is the homepage of the Norwegian state church. Through this page you can search for contact information of parishes in Norway, who may have useful archives.

[www.kirken.no](http://www.kirken.no)

## **RootsWeb.com**

This Norway Genealogy website was first created in June 1997 to assist those who are researching their ancestors from Norway. This website has grown from about 15 pages then to over 200 now.

<http://www.rootsweb.com/%7Ewgnorway>

## **Norwegian Historical Data Centre**

The Norwegian Historical Data Centre (NHDC) is a national institution under the Faculty of Social Science at the University of Tromsø. Their main aim is to computerize the Norwegian censuses 1865 onwards together with the parish registers and other sources from the 18th and 19th centuries.

<http://www.rhd.uit.no/indexeng.html>

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*Mange tusen takk!*