



**SONS OF
NORWAY**

**SOLVANG LODGE 457
WESTBY, WISCONSIN**

Sons of Norway Newsletter (Sandhetter)



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PRESIDENTS LETTER FROM SANDY IVERSON

Hello again, I am back.

I said farewell to my term as president in our last newsletter but due to circumstances I will be serving one more year. Thanks to all the new officers for being willing to serve.

First, thank you to all who brought cookies for the Barnebirkie. Solvang lodge provided 46 dozen cookies. Due to no snow it was called off on Friday afternoon but there were still lots of activities. There were races and games for the children and all the cookies were still appreciated. This is the 2nd time in history that the race was not held. 11,000 registered for the Birkie and 1000 for the Barnebirkie. All were still happy and having a good time skiing on the 5K track that still had snow. Skiers come from all over the US and other countries.

We are delivering a large amount of stamps to Sun Prairie to be sent to Norway this month. I hope you will all remember to clip your stamps (leaving a ¼" frame) and bring them to the meetings. They do make a difference.

We have several new books in our library that you can check out. Take a look when you are at a meeting and bring some home to read. Many are about the Resistance and WW2 so we can learn what our ancestors struggled with. There are also books to trace folks in your background.

Of course May is approaching and with it our biggest event, Syttende Mai. Solvang lodge will be at the elementary school in Westby on May 17 in the morning and at the Coon Valley School in the afternoon. The annual Frokost (breakfast) at the Methodist Church on Saturday and the big parade on Sunday. We need you all to take part in any or all events. Please volunteer your help as it is a busy time.

Thanks to David & Hazel for doing one more newsletter. We appreciate him.

SOLVANG LODGE 457 CHRISTMAS PARTY DECEMBER 20, 2016



Our Solvang Lodge 457 Christmas party was held at the old town restaurant in Westby, WI. Myron “aka Buddy” Rundhaugen played the accordion. Brian Rude led the singing with Solvang members joining in. The meal and entertainment met with general approval, and a good time was had.



JANUARY 31, 2017 MEETING OF SOLVANG LODGE 457

The meeting was held at the Bekkum Library Community Room. President Sandy Iverson called the meeting to order. Peter Leum and Dennis Hagen presented the flags of the USA and Norway. We sang the anthems with Vanessa Mills playing the piano. We had 30 people attending. We welcomed new members Deb and Jim Jarves, and visitors David and Ruth Amundson. Happy Birthday was sung for Reuben Ellefson. We will be providing cookies for the “Barnebirki” in February. The new sound system installed by Mark Jelinek sounded great.



David Torgerson presented a cultural program on many styles of carved “Mangelboards”. He had great stories and pictures of some very old examples



and also some old valentines. Karen Hankee then gave a talk and shared letters from friends in Norway about Valentine's

Day in Norway. Only about 30% of the citizens have been recognizing this day. It is growing in popularity however with the encouragement of Floral and Card vendors. We are making plans for Syttende Mai. Servers for the evening lunch were Larry and Geri Leum and David and Vanessa Mills.

FEBRUARY 28, 2017 MEETING OF SOLVANG LODGE 457



Solvang Lodge 457 met at the Bekkum Library Tuesday night with 50 people in attendance. We had a short business meeting. President Sandy Iverson reported we sent 45 Dozen cookies to the Barnebirki where they were enjoyed by the children. Our program was presented by Roar Moe from Norway and Jill Storlie from Spring Grove. Roar was a ski instructor in Voss until he was 40, then decided to pursue his passion which is history and the "old culture of Norway" in providing a living for themselves and their families. He now conducts a "school" each summer on the small island of Little Faeroy where young people from Norway, the USA and other countries come to learn how to build a Viking Ship and sails, Sailing, using oars and sails, several methods of fishing and how to clean and preserve fish and the produce from a garden. They also learn the old ways of doing carpenter work. How to harvest wool from the wild sheep of the island, card and spin it into yarn to use for knitting sweaters. The young students are taught how to be self-sufficient as the Vikings who lived in this area from 792 – 1066, the "Viking Age". He had many interesting pictures from his 18 years of teaching, and restoring buildings on this "Island School." The Museums in Norway are very supportive of his work as are volunteers that are willing to share their knowledge of the old crafts. We enjoyed visiting with our guests as a lunch was served by Faye Mc Clurg, Larry Leland and David Torgerson. There is a great story in the latest National Geographic magazine about the Vikings.

Poor Lena is paranoid about everything. She even has a rear view mirror on her stationary bike!
Lena says, "Show me a man vit his head held high, and I'll show yew a man dat can't get used tew his bifocals."
Ole says, " Just remember, medical insurance is a lot like wearing a hospital gown! Yew are never covered as much as yew think yew are!!!"

Oppskrift (Recipe)

POTATO PANCAKES (12-2 inch)

Combine:

3 Cups finely shredded potatoes

(well drained)

2 Eggs (well beaten)

Combine:

1 1/2 Tablespoons flour

1/8 teaspoon Baking powder

1 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon grated onion

Stir all together

Drop by Tablespoon onto preheated, greased skillet.

Brown lightly on both sides.

Serve hot with syrup or applesauce.



HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF CHRISTIANA, VERNON COUNTY, WI

Editor's note: I thought I would include this interesting history of the Town of Christiana this is taken from the following source. [Source: pgs. 480 - 490, "History of Vernon County, Wisconsin, Springfield, ILL. Union Publishing Company, 1884]

This town takes its name from the capital of Norway, its first settler being of that nationality. It is situated on the north line of Vernon County, and comprises congressional township 14, range 4. It is bounded on the north by LaCrosse County, on the east by the town of Clinton, on the south by the town of Viroqua, and on the west by the town of Coon.

The population of this town is largely Norwegian, and in 1883 it contained some of the choicest farms within the county. There is perhaps more tillable land in Christiana than almost any other in the northern tier of towns in the county.

Early Settlement

The first settlement in this town was made in September, 1848, by Hans Olson Libakken, who with his family located on the southwest quarter of section 35.

About the same time or a little later, an American named Carrier settled on sections 22 and 27, where he took up State lands. He lived there but a short time, but did a small amount of breaking and then sold out to a Norwegian and moved from the town.

In 1849 and 1850 a large number of settlers located in this town. Ole Syverson came in 1849, and the following spring settled on the northeast quarter of section 35. Soon after he sold out to John Michelet and purchased other land on section 34, where he lived for a time, and then bought the forty acres where the village of Westby is now situated, and remained there till his death.

Lars Christopherson was another settler of 1849; he located on section 35, which land he afterwards exchanged for 160 acres on section 34. He had been a soldier of the Mexican War; he was living in 1883 at Bloomingdale, Vernon County.

Evan Peterson came the same year and settled on section 36, where some years afterwards he died.

Ole Thorstenson also settled in 1849 on section 30. He was born in Norway in 1785, and died a few years after coming to this town. His wife was born in March, 1788; died Aug. 27, 1863. Their son, Henry O. Gulord, in 1883, was living on the land claimed by his father.

Hans K. Larson came in 1849 and claimed land on sections 22, 23, 26 and 27; his tract was made up of forty acres from each section. His final purchase, however, was confined to eighty acres, forty on section 22 and forty on section 26. In 1883 he was comfortably surrounded at his home on section 22.

John Michelet settled on section 35 in June, 1850. Another early settler was Hans K. Ramsrud, who located on section 28.

John Olson Bergum settled on section 33 in the spring of 1850, and was a resident of the same place in 1883.

Lars H. Galstad came the same year, locating on section 34. Among other settlers of 1850 were Iver P. Hegge, who settled on section 29 with his father, Peter Olson and Ingebret Homstad, who located on section 11. He was a prominent and well-known citizen, respected by all his neighbors. He died about 1875, quite suddenly.

In 1851 Ingebret Homstad settled on section 11. He was a native of Norway, but came to this vicinity from Dane Co., Wis. He remained on this section till his death. His sons were yet occupy it in 1884.

Clement Bergh located the same year on section 35, where he resided till his death.

Ole Running, another settler of 1851, settled on section 27, from there moved to Viroqua, and still later left the county and in a short time died.

Lars O. Olson settled on section 23 in 1857. He was born in Norway in 1830; came to America with his two brothers.

Early Events

The first school house in the town was built on section 35, in 1851. During this year the first term of school was also taught.

The first tavern for the accommodation of travelers was the residence of Engebret Homstad, on section 11, who settled therein 1851. This was a popular stopping place for travelers for many years. Mr. Homstad died March 14, 1879.

The first death known in the town was that of a man named Ole Anderson, a non-resident who was on his way from Dane county to the Black River lumber region. He got as far as the house of a German settler near the present village of Westby, and was unable to proceed further. After a few days painful illness he died. This was about the middle of September, 1849. He was buried on the farm where he died. The deceased had a family living in Dane county.

The first white child born in the town was Brown Olson, a son of Hans and Caroline Olson, who were the first settlers of the town. This birth occurred March 30, 1850. In 1884 he was living on the same farm on which he was born.

The parties to the first marriage were John Clemenson and Martha Ingebretson. They were married in 1851.

The first religious services were held by the early Norwegian settlers, at private houses.

The following incident illustrative of pioneer hardship, is given in the language of the writer, Hans Nelson, of Westby, Christiana town: "In 1849, there being no grist mill nearer than Prairie du Chien, the settlers had to go to that place for their milling and to purchase their flour. Upon one occasion, I remember T. Unseth went to Prairie du Chien to buy flour and other necessaries of life; but unfortunately the store keeper made a grand mistake and loaded up a barrel of white sugar instead of a barrel of flour. When Mr. Unseth got home his daughter at once climbed up into her father's wagon to open the supposed flour barrel, the family being entirely out of any kind of bread stuff, at the time. But upon her taking out the head of the barrel, what was the surprise at finding the contents to be white sugar, instead of flour. Imagine the situation! No flour in the house - white sugar, however good in its place, would not make bread. The woman then began to cry as she thought of their condition - fifty miles away from a mill and not a morsel of bread to eat.

"What was to be done? The only way was to thresh some grain out of the stalk. And how was this to be done, unaided by machinery? Why they simply made a round ring twenty-five feet across on the ground and let oxen tread it out, in the good old fashioned way! After "threshing," came the grinding. This was not by the modern "roller process," but by turning an old country coffee mill. "There were many of the settlers of that year who lived on salt and potatoes, literally speaking too."

Organic

In 1855, the territory now constituting the towns of Clinton and Christiana were set off from the town of Viroqua, by the county board of Bad Ax County. To this territory was given the name of Christiana. In 1856 this territory was divided into the present towns of Cristiana and Clinton.

The first election in the present town of Christiana was held at the house of Nels Hanson Napurd, on section 33, April 7, 1856. The following were the officers elected: J. R. Bjorseth, (chairman), David Wilt and Hendrick Johnson, supervisors. Lars Christopherson was elected town clerk, but did not except the office and William McKnight was appointed in his stead. Hendrick Johnson was elected assessor; no other town officers are recorded as being elected at that date.

The town officers for 1883 were: Timothy Madden, chairman; Jacob Olson and Ole Bentson, supervisors; A. J. Moen, clerk; E. C. Bratlie, assessor; Julius Johnson, treasurer.

Andrew J. Moen, the present town clerk of Christiana, resides on section 33, where he settled in January, 1869. He was born in Norway in 1844; came to the United States in 1867. He lived in Minnesota two years, coming here from that State. His father, who came to Vernon County, several years later, now lives in the town of Coon.

Timothy Madden resides on section 15. He is the present chairman of the town board. He came to the town in 1855, was born in the city of New York, in 1818, of Irish parentage. Mr. Madden came to Wisconsin in 1852; spent some time in the pinery regions and came to this town in 1858.

Post offices

In 1884 the town was accommodated by three post offices, Westby and Newry, on section 14, and Lovass on section 8. The first post office in the town was established in 1857, and was called Coon Prairie. The first postmaster was George Smith, who had the office on section 5, town 13, range 4. It was then removed to the house of John Benson, on the same section, and subsequently removed to the house of Mr. Whittaker. It was then moved to across the town line into Christiana and kept at the house of Robert Lange. Later it vibrated across the line from one town to another, until the establishment of the post office at Westby, in 1879, when the Coon Prairie office was discontinued. The first postmaster at Westby was Andrew Johnson, who was shortly succeeded by Nicholas Nelson, who still held the office in 1884.

Newry post office was established in 1868. This office was first kept by Peter Bredle, at his house on section 11. The second postmaster was Frank Delle, who kept the office at his store on section 14. In 1884 the office was kept by Christopher Christopherson, who received his appointment in the spring of 1872.

Lovaas post office is so called from Jacob Lovaas, the first settler of that part of the town. It was established, March 15, 1875, when Christian Olson was appointed postmaster and was still in charge in 1884. Mr. Olson keeps a small general store at this point, which is located on section 8.

Mill

The only mill in the town of Christiana is a saw mill built in 1862, on the south branch of Coon creek, on section 8. It was erected by Iver A. Amunson. The object in view, by the builder of this saw mill, was to cut lumber from the fine hard wood found in this section of the county. After running a few years it was taken down and replaced by one of a greater capacity, which was propelled by steam power. In 1883 this was removed to the northeast corner of section 7.

Educational

The advantages for schooling in this town have always been fair, though perhaps below the average town of the county.

The first school was taught in 1851 in a building erected that year on section 35. It was 22x26 feet and at the time it was built was among the best in the county. A few years later this building was burned.

In 1884 there were seven school houses in the town, located in seven sub-districts.

In district No. 1 the population are nearly all Norwegians who send their children to school more in the winter season than in the summer. This district affords a fair school building, though quite small.

In district No. 2 about the same interest is manifested and also nearly the same advantages given in way of school property.

In district No. 3 the school population is made up largely of Germans, Irish and Norwegians; the latter nationality being in the majority, however. Much interest has been manifested in school matters.

Timothy Madden, clerk of the school district, has held the office for many years, during which time he has over looked after the wellbeing of the schools. The school house in this district is a large, well-planned frame structure, provided with the best improved seats, maps, charts, etc.

District No. 4 is situated near Lovaas post office. Jacob Olson is the leading man in school matters here. The school building is not first class, but is rather an index of by-gone days, when the common school was slighted more than it is now-a-days. Notwithstanding this difficulty the patrons, who are nearly all Norwegians, evince a deep interest in their schools.

In district No. 5 the Norwegian element predominates largely. The school house is a log building which is fairly comfortable. School is usually held five months in the year.

District No. 6 is situated on the north line of the town and county and embraces a portion of Portland Town in La Crosse County. This district is also provided with a log house. The Americans have the majority in this locality and great interest is manifested in the schools, which are generally taught by first-class teachers.

In 1884 district No. 7 was comparatively a new district, which embraced the village of Westby. Here a large comfortable school house stands, furnished after the latest plans and methods.

Religious

The Norwegians were the first to maintain religious services in this town. They hold meetings at a very early date, sometime prior to 1850.

In 1884 there were three religious denominations having organizations within the town. A Norwegian Lutheran church was located on section 2 and one of the same sect situated on the northeast corner of section 28.

The Methodist Episcopal denomination has for many years been represented by the Norwegians of that faith, who have held their meetings of late years in their church building on section 26; but, in 1884, had discontinued services and were preparing to build a new church in the village of Westby.

The Norwegian Lutheran church on section 2 was erected about the same time that the Coon Prairie church was erected in the town of Viroqua. These two Churches were formerly one, but owing to the large membership and the great distance apart it was deemed necessary to build a second church in the northern part of the town. This structure is a frame one, costing about \$2,500. These two Churches are supplied by the same minister.

Rev. O. Jacobson, of Viroqua, pastor of Coon Prairie M. E. Church, was born at Taunsburg, Norway, Feb. 12, 1849. Came to the United States in 1871, lived in New York City some time, where he began preparation for the ministry. He began preaching in 1875; was ordained deacon at Faribault, Rice Co., Minn., in 1877 by Bishop Andrew; was ordained elder at Winona in 1879 by Bishop Peck. Was assigned to the Deer Park circuit where he remained two years; came here in 1881. Before his ordination, Mr. Jacobson had charge of the Churches of his denomination at St. Paul and Minneapolis, and afterward at Faribault. His wife is a native of Sweden. They have three children.

Case of Murder

A brutal case of murder of one of the citizens of the town of Christiana occurred on New Year's night, 1864. Robert Lange resided on section 33, where he kept a store. Jack Clear was a soldier in the Union army, whose father lived in the town of Viroqua. At the time of the murder Clear was at home on a furlough, which had about expired. He and Lange were well acquainted and personal friends. Lange, having business at La Crosse, an arrangement was made with Clear, by which the latter was to ride to La Crosse with Lange, on his way to join his regiment. Lange was not again seen alive by any of his friends. At about midnight, his team, with the wagon, appeared in front of the City Hotel, where Lange was accustomed to call. The team was without a driver. An examination revealed blood stains in the wagon; a search was instituted and the body of Lange was found about three miles south of La Crosse.

He had been killed and his head terribly mangled with an ax. It seems that the parties had stopped at a place where beer was sold, and Clear had improved the opportunity of secreting an ax in the wagon. The day was very cold and after they had resumed their ride, Clear pretending to be cold, jumped out of the wagon and ran along behind it for some distance, and then quietly getting in behind, picked up the ax, and struck his unsuspecting companion, mangling him in a terrible manner and doubtless killing him instantly. He then drove into the timber, threw the body from the wagon, drove the team into town, and as it appears, left it to take care of itself. The object of the murder was to secure several hundred dollars that Lange had upon his person at the time. Clear succeeded in reaching Chicago where he was arrested by Elias Solberg, sheriff of La Crosse County. The murder produced intense excitement and when Clear returned to La Crosse, with the sheriff, a desperate effort was made to lynch him, which was finally prevented by strategy. Clear was tried for the murder and sent to Waupun for life, where he remained till recently, when he was pardoned by Gov. Smith, at about the close of his administration.

EASTER CELEBRATIONS IN NORWAY

Easter celebrations in Norway bring to mind visions of springtime ski excursions to mountain cabins, colorful decorations and time spent with friends and family. However, none of these Norwegian traditions are as unfamiliar and unusual to North Americans as the Norwegian Easter tradition of P  skekrim. Literally translated as “Easter crime,” this phenomenon grips Norway each spring and fills bookstores with dark tales of murder and kidnapping and Norwegian TV and radio programming with popular crime series.

While it is uncertain exactly how P  skekrim has evolved and grown to become the Norwegian phenomenon it is today, it is believed to have started with a pair of students from Bergen who in the spring of 1923 published a crime novel titled, *Bergenstoget plyndret I natt* (“Bergen Train Robbed Tonight”). The students, Nordahl Grieg and Nils Lie wrote the novel under the pseudonym “Jonathan Jerv” and purchased advertisements in *Aftenposten* and other Oslo newspapers to promote their book. The advertisement, cleverly masquerading as an article headline in big, bold letters just beneath the paper’s masthead, featured the novel’s title “BERGEN TRAIN ROBBED TONIGHT” and caused a sensation among readers who believed it to be a real headline. Readers concerned for the welfare of passengers on the train had missed the tiny text nearby (Pris 2 kroner, Gyldendal) denoting the price and publisher of the novel. The ingenious marketing stunt created such a buzz in Norway that the novel became a huge success and later was turned into a film in 1928. Publishers soon caught on to the novel’s Eastertime sales success and P  skekrim became an annual tradition.

While Scandinavian crime writers are enjoying tremendous popularity worldwide as of late, efforts by publishers to replicate P  skekrim in Sweden have been unsuccessful and Easter crime remains an unparalleled Norwegian phenomenon.

THE WOLF AS A PROBLEM FOR OUR EARLY NORWEGION SETTLERS

(From the History of Vernon County, Wisconsin 1884)

Our early settlers faced wild beasts of prey, the most numerous and troublesome of which was the wolf. While it was true, in a figurative sense, that it required the utmost care and exertion to “keep the wolf from the door,” it was almost as true in a literal sense. There were two species of these animals, the large, black, timber wolf, and the smaller gray wolf that usually inhabited the prairie. At first, it was next to impossible for a settler to keep small stock of any kind that would serve as a prey to these ravenous beasts. Sheep were not deemed safe property until years after, when their enemies were supposed to be nearly exterminated. Large numbers of wolves were destroyed during the early years of settlement.



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