

NORWEGIAN-AMERICAN PROGRAMS

by Glenn Borreson

About the programs: all seven programs below are PowerPoint presentations, each about 30 minutes, most recent programs listed first. Glenn will bring a computer and projector, but will need electrical hookup and a projection screen. (He is not available the months December through March. See his contact information at the bottom.)

THE GOVERNOR FROM HEGG: The Americanization of a Norwegian Immigrant's Son

Charles N. Herreid grew up in the tiny rural community of Hegg (where Glenn also grew up) in Trempealeau County, Wisconsin, where most folks were immigrant families from Norway's Hardanger Fjord. When Herreid was young man, he left for the Dakota Territory to practice law and there he would eventually become South Dakota's governor, only the third governor in the United States with Norwegian ancestry. This program traces both the Americanizing influences in Herreid's early life and others which appear during his leadership in the American West. Our question is: how did he become more American than Norwegian?

THE NORWEGIAN CROP: Tobacco Raising in Wisconsin

Long before the days of anti-smoking campaigns, tobacco raising was not only a matter of Norwegian pride in some Wisconsin communities, but also a crop that enabled immigrants to make hard-to-come-by cash and their descendants to thrive or at least survive on the farm. (Tobacco raising was in Glenn's own family for four generations.) Norwegians adopted the crop early in their arrival in Wisconsin and made two areas in the state's south and southwest mainstays of tobacco raising for decades before the business went up in smoke.

NORWEGIANS IN LOGGING CAMPS: Immigrants in the Wisconsin Pineries

The story of logging in the great pineries of northern Wisconsin is familiar to many of us since we were elementary students hearing of Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox. An old yellowed photo in Glenn's possession has led him to learn the role of Norwegians, especially immigrants and their families, in the state's logging action. Be prepared to hear their stories, old and new, serious and funny, as Norwegian-Americans worked in winter logging camps near great rivers like the Black and the Chippewa.

THE COFFIN SHIPS: Death on the Ocean Crossing and One Family's Story

Imagine yourself a child boarding a ship in Norway with your family, only to arrive weeks later in an American port city without your mother: she died on the ocean crossing and was buried at sea. What does that mean for you and your family? Will you have a home again? Can America still be "the golden land of opportunity?" This program is about the Norwegian immigrant experience crossing the Atlantic Ocean on a "coffin ship," and specifically the story of one of Glenn's ancestor families and their struggle to begin a new life in America.

THE THIRD BOOK OF NORWEGIAN-AMERICAN IMMIGRANTS: The Story of the Small Catechism from Norway to America

Martin Luther's *The Small Catechism* was the third treasured book that Norwegian immigrants to America were likely to have brought with them on the ocean voyage – and it was a great influence on their life in America. More than 475 years have passed since the first official translation of this Catechism from German into Norwegian. Using his own collection of Small Catechisms for illustrations, Glenn Borreson traces *The Small Catechism* through its life among the people of Norway to immigrants to America and even into our lifetime. “What does this mean?” is a question generations of confirmands sweated in reciting the answer! Enjoy the surprises in the story of this little gem of a book.

FROM TELEMARCK TO TAMARACK: Ski Jumping in Western Wisconsin

When emigrants from Telemark, Norway came to America, they brought not only old country culture but also the new sport of ski jumping. Evidence for skiing goes back a few thousand years, but ski jumping's beginnings in Telemark quickly took root in the Midwest in the late 1800s. Before 1900, immigrant jumpers were dazzling crowds and inspiring the construction of ski jumps in towns throughout the Midwest. Western Wisconsin was a hotbed of ski jumping from south of Westby to northwest of Eau Claire. Glenn Borreson traces this activity from the hills of Norway to the small towns and coulees of Wisconsin, from the mid-1800s to about 1950. (For Minnesota programs, Glenn has an addition about ski jumping in the southeastern part of the state.)

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF OLE ROLVAAG FOR TODAY

Born in 1876, the year of America's centennial, Ole Rolvaag came from a Norwegian fisherman's family to become one of our country's foremost writers on immigrant life. His fame came with the publishing of *Giants in the Earth* which became a Book-of-the-Month Club selection in June 1927. This book was the first of a trilogy following the progress of a Norwegian family immigrating to the Dakota Territory. Glenn Borreson lifts up episodes in all three books of the trilogy to illustrate how contemporary are themes from Rolvaag in America life yet today. From the costs of emigration to becoming American, Rolvaag tells a good story worth reading again.

To contact about a program:

Glenn Borreson (retired Lutheran pastor, ELCA)
1006 Deerfield Street
Holmen, WI 54636
Cell phone: 608-317-8811
E-mail: borresong@yahoo.com

A VIKING HISTORY PROGRAM

by Glenn Borreson

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THE LINDISFARNE 9/11 MOMENT: A 793 Viking Attack That Changed the World

Do you remember where you were on 9/11? Some dates are forever fixed in the memory. Such was the day the Northmen (Vikings) violently attacked a Christian monastery off the northeast coast of England. This program explores the impact of that attack and the reasons it was a world changer, both for the Vikings themselves and for the people and place they plundered and beyond.

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