

NORWEGIAN HERITAGE PROGRAMS

by Glenn Borreson

About the programs: all the 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 of page 2.)

FARM LIKE A VIKING: Farm Life Then – and Their Animals’ Descendants Today

Stories of Viking warriors, their seafaring and attacks, are what we expect to hear about the Northmen in the years 790-1100. But what else did they do? Besides being crafts people and traders and more, they were especially farmers, fishermen and hunters. This program explores what their farming involved – their buildings, animals, and crops – and then it makes a leap in time to look at today’s animals that are descended from those of the Viking Age and where they are found.

MARIA THE MIDWIFE: Stories of Norwegian Midwives in the Midwest

Throughout human history midwives have attended the birth of babies. See and hear who these women were among Norwegian immigrants to America, and why they were important. Glenn tells their stories with photos of midwives especially from rural Wisconsin where they were trusted members of the community. Learn too how their status changed in the early 20th century.

OH CANADA! WHY CANADA? Norwegian Immigrants Who Left the USA for Saskatchewan

Crossing the Atlantic and then half the United States did not complete the journey for some immigrants who eventually found their new life in “the prairie provinces” of Canada. Beginning with a surprise in his own ancestry, Glenn examines why and when some Norwegians left this country, where they settled in Canada, and what their new lives were like.

FROM SEAGOING TO CITRUS GROWING: The First Norwegians in Florida

The stories of Norwegian immigrants to the Midwest have become familiar to us, but what about in Florida, a state so different in geography and climate from both the Midwest and Norway? What was happening there when immigrants were flooding into the Midwest after the Civil War? This program tells of the first Norwegians to our 45th state, who they were, where they settled in Florida, and why.

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.

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

With parents from Hardanger Fjord, Charles N. Herreid grew up in the tiny rural community of Hegg (where Glenn also grew up) in Trempealeau County, Wisconsin. When Herreid was young man, he left for the Dakota Territory and went on to become the third governor in the United States with Norwegian ancestry. Glenn searches out answers to the question: 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 last 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. Hear the stories, old and new, serious and funny, of Norwegian-Americans who 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.

Other Programs:

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

FROM TELEMARCK TO TAMARACK: Ski Jumping in Western Wisconsin

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF OLE ROLVAAG FOR TODAY

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