

HISTORIC TRONDHJEM CHURCH

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www.TrondhjemPreservation.org
Historic Trondhjem Church



Telling a Story, Preserving a Treasure

President's Column



A Happy Spring to all! While things have been relatively quiet at the Historic Church since Christmas, the Board has been meeting and working on plans for the coming

months. In addition to Syttende Mai and the July Ice Cream Social, there are some new events on the calendar: a tour of the Historic Church for the Norwegian American Historical Association Crossings 200 Conference attendees in June (page 6), a stop on the Country Garden Tour in July, and a lefse making class in October! Please follow our website for more information (trondhjempreservation.org).

We are pleased to have a guest columnist in this issue: Amy Boxrud, Executive Director of the Norwegian American Historical Association (NAHA). 2025 is the 200th anniversary of the first organized group of immigrants from Norway to the United States, and it is being commemorated in Norway and the U.S. throughout the year. NAHA is hosting a special conference in June at St. Olaf.

Historic Trondhjem is one of the finest examples of a Norwegian immigrant church,

and we have received national recognition for it. But I believe that we are unique for another reason: many past and present Board members and attendees at our events have ancestors who built and or attended this church. Those who have no ancestral connection are drawn to the special immigrant experience and history that this place speaks to. In this issue, some of our Members have shared their family's immigrant histories. They seem particularly relevant in this year of Crossing 200! Do you have information on your family's immigration and the stories they tell?

As always – please remember that your gifts keep us going. Thank you for your support!

Mark Your Calendar

Syttende Mai Celebration May 18
200 Crossing TCPS Tourl June 18
Ice Cream & Pie Social July 20
Country Garden Tour July 26 & 27
Lefse Making Class October 18



2025: A Year of Crossings

By Amy Boxrud, Executive Director Norwegian American Historical Association (NAHA)

2025 is a significant year for the Norwegian American community. This year “Crossings,” the bicentennial of organized Norwegian migration to North America, will be commemorated on both sides of the Atlantic. The bicentennial marks the voyage of the sloop Restauration, sometimes called the “Norwegian Mayflower,” from Stavanger to New York in 1825.

“Crossings” will unfold as a series of events spread throughout 2025, held throughout Norway, Canada, and the United States. Here in the United States, we’ve created an umbrella organization of more than 30 partner organizations across the country. A rewarding aspect of our planning has been the collaboration between Norwegian and North American organizations. A subcommittee with members from Norway and North America worked together to develop the common “Crossings” identity. In keeping with the original voyage of the Restauration, a replica of the sloop is scheduled to leave Norway on July 4 and arrive in America on October 9. Events and exhibits on both sides of the Atlantic will frame and provide context for the voyage.

You can plan and participate in “Crossings” events locally, too. In Northfield, NAHA will co-host a conference exploring the causes and impact of Norwegian migration, together with its affiliate in Norway (NAHA-Norge); the

Norwegian Researchers and Teachers of North America (NORTANA); and the Norwegian Department at St. Olaf College. With events geared for both scholars and the public, the gathering is scheduled for June 18–22 on the St. Olaf campus. On June 18, a tour of the region’s historic churches will be offered, **including a stop at Historic Trondhjem Church**. The conference begins Wednesday evening with a welcome dinner and the concert, Musical Migration, showcasing music composed by Norwegian immigrants. Conference sessions will provide a dynamic exchange of ideas, with more than 70 presenters from both sides of the Atlantic. A Saturday evening banquet at the Northfield Armory will feature entertainment from the Footnotes, a Scandinavian American old-time dance band from Decorah, Iowa. Sunday offers a blend of learning and entertainment, including a family history class with Dana Kelly, executive director of the Norwegian American Genealogical Center and Naeseth Library, and a migration-themed film festival. To learn more and to register, visit the conference website, pages.stolaf.edu/cc2025/. To find more “Crossings” events near you, or to register your own event, visit crossings.norwegianamerican.com.

Lefse Making

TCPS will host a lefse making class and demonstration on Saturday, October 18th from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the Historic Church. Participants will learn some lefse history and lore, as well as how to mix and roll the dough, and bake it on the griddle! They can expect to take home some lefse, as well as several Trondhjem family recipes.

Class size will be limited to 10 people, and the cost is \$40 per person. Registration will open in early October. Watch the website for details.



Norwegian Immigrants at Historic Trondhjem: Reflections of Trondhjem Board and Members

Amund Fossum was a founding member of Trondhjem. He was born in Orkdal, Norway on February 21, 1830. He is believed to have emigrated some time between 1845 and 1850. He married Johanna Bakkmo and they emigrated to Spring Grove, MN where he farmed and raised a son and two daughters. His first wife died and he moved to Trondhjem, MN where he married Johanna Dombu and they raised three sons, John, Alfred and Ludwig. Amund Fossum signed the original constitution for “Trondhjem’s Norwegian Lutheran Church” on May 15, 1876.

Merle Fossum, Longtime Board Member

Dallas Berg’s grandparents, Daniel O and Emilia Berg were the first couple to be married in Trondhjem church in 1878, and they had 9 children. One of the children was Dallas’s father, Mens Berg, who married Dallas’s mother, Edna J. Shelley, in 1916. All of Dallas’s parents/ grandparents are buried in the Trondhjem cemetery.



This is the story about Edna J. Berg (Dallas’s mother) and how her family emigrated to America. Edna’s father, Ole K. Shelley, came to America in 1891. He bought 80 acres of land in Blair, Wisconsin. Once Ole was settled in Wisconsin, Edna’s mother, Bertha Shelley, and their 6 children made the long trip from Norway in 1892. Their 6 children ranged in age from 14 to 2 years old at that time. Their trip to America, included numerous train and boat rides from Norway. 3 more children were born in America – including Dallas’s mother, Edna.

Mrs. Bertha Shelley, and her 6 kids left their farm on May 10, 1892, from Aasnes Soler, Norway. They visited her parents in Grue Soler Norway, then traveled by train to Oslo, Norway. Then they

boarded a boat from Oslo to Hull, England and then took a train to Liverpool, England. They boarded the Allan Line boat for their 11-day voyage across the ocean to Quebec, Canada. Each day they had a daily meal on the boat – most likely provided as a part of their fare. They also brought food for the trip, along with a coffee pot to use daily on the boat, along with various other items. They were happy to enjoy coffee each day! After they arrived in Quebec, Canada they traveled to their new home in Blair, Wisconsin. They were met by their father, Ole, and a cousin, Elliot, at the train depot. The entire family was so excited to finally arrive at their new home on June 2, 1892 and quickly settled in on their farm!

Ultimately, Edna met and married Mens Berg in 1916. Mens grew up around Trondhjem church, as he was from Webster, MN. The happy couple settled in Dennison, MN where they raised 7 children, including Dallas. The entire family has strong ties to Trondhjem, as numerous family members (including Daniel, Emilia, Mens, Edna) have their final resting place in Trondhjem cemetery.

Sondy Berg Jensen with Dallas Berg, Longtime Board Member

My dad’s maternal Grandparents (my great grandparents) Beraug & Ellen Tharaldson emigrated from Nordland, Norway in 1882.

Grandpa piloted ships in Norway. It became a challenge when he moved to land-locked MN. He was never able to learn to drive a car because he had the habit of turning the steering wheel the opposite direction, like you would on a ship. He ran into many ditches before he gave up driving. My dad (Floyd Johnson) talked about working by his Grandpa’s side when he was a young boy. Grandpa liked to sharpen his scythe and cut thistle all day in the pasture.

Grandpa had fun challenging the grandchildren to run barefoot in the snow from the house, touch the barn, and run back. The grandkids could never do it, but Grandpa always could! He told

them he was able to because he was born in Norway and was tougher than American born kids. Grandma Tharaldson spun wool into thread with the spinning wheel. She knit mittens, stockings and vests from the wool.

My dad's paternal Grandparents (my great grandparents) Joe & Johanna (Veseth) Kleveberg (Johnson) emigrated from Hell, Norway, a small town not far from Trondheim. The word "hell" translates to "Luck" in English. They changed their last name to Johnson when they arrived in America.

Joe Klevberg was born February 10, 1834 in Sjordalen, Norway. Johanna Veseth was born November 18, 1838 in Trondheim, Norway. Joe and Johanna were married June 24, 1864 and made their home in Hell.

Joe & Johanna emigrated from Stordal, Norway on April 30, 1870. Their names are engraved in a monument at Stordal. The monument was built to honor the Norwegians who left that dock for America. When Joe & Johanna boarded the ship for America, they had twins that Johanna carried in her apron. Joe was a carpenter and cobbler (shoemaker) in Norway. He continued this occupation in America as well as running a farm.

Deb Johnson Simon, Board Member

Edward Halverson, son of Halvor and Karen (Saxerud) Halverson and Rekken Guttormson

(Graving) were married in 1879 and in 1882 they emigrated to America from Solar, Norway. They settled on a farm



just north of the Historic Trondhjem Church which is now the Kalina farm. Their infant son, Karlodt, age one, died from scarlet fever a couple of months after they came to America. They also lost a son, Guttorm in 1903 at the age of 11.

Edward lived to be 97 years old. He was born in 1852 in Norway and died in 1949 in Northfield, Minnesota. Rekken, his wife of 50 years died

shortly after they had celebrated their wedding anniversary at the church. She was born in Norway in 1854 and died in 1929.

The Historic Trondhjem Church was very important to Edward as he served on the board of trustees, board of deacons and was a custodian there for a number of years. He belonged to the church for 67 years. Services were offered in Norwegian until close to the time of his death as he did not learn to speak English. Children of Edward and Rekken, who grew up in the Trondhjem area and attended the church for most of their lives were; Richard Halverson, Helga Johnson, Olla Fossum, Emma Sjulstad and Eddie Halverson (my grandfather).

My aunt, Margaret (Halverson) Heglund shared a story with me and I will attempt to write it out for you: Marius Saxerud was great grandpa Edward's younger brother. He emigrated to America a number of years after Edward and upon arrival in Minnesota came to the farm by Trondhjem before moving to St. Paul, Minnesota. I'm sure that they were very happy to see each other and Marius was welcomed with a beautiful performance of the song "kan du glemme gamle Norge" which translates to "how can you forget old Norway." Olla played the organ and Emma sang. Marius later told them that was the worst thing they could have sung and played for him since he was very homesick.

Karla Wiese Miller, Board Member

Thea Lavanger Halverson (my paternal grandmother) was born in 1888 to Maren and Andreas Lavanger in Sharon, North Dakota. Maren Dumbo was born in 1851 at Meldalen, Trondheim, Norway where she was "baptized, confirmed and grew to womanhood" (per her obituary). She immigrated to Rice County, Minnesota in 1882 and married Andreas Lavanger in 1883. Andreas Lavanger was born in 1848 in Tromso, Norway and immigrated to Kenyon, Minnesota in 1875. The couple filed for a homestead 3 miles NW of Sharon, North

Dakota, and are pictured outside their sod house.

Thea followed her sister Annie Lavanger Docken to Rice County, Minnesota and married Richard Halverson of the Trondhjem community. They had three children: Ernest (Rich's father), Norman (my father) and Myrtle Halverson Homeier. Richard and Thea are both buried in Trondhjem Cemetery.

**Nancy Halverson Norton,
Board Member, with Rich
Halverson**



I believe I am the newest TCPS Board member, I am honored to serve and I am a proud Norwegian.

Charles Martin Johnson, my grandfather, was born Karl Martin Johnsson, in Christiana, Norway on October 20th, 1894. My grandpa immigrated to North America via Canada



during World War 1. He voluntarily enlisted in the Canadian Army in 1915 and later found his way to the Crookston area in Northwestern, Minnesota.

In the early 1930's he wed Mamie Johnson and over 20 years they had seven children with my father being the oldest. After coming to North America as a 20-year-old he and my grandma planned his first return to see his family after 56 years away but unfortunately, he passed at age 77. I was just 10 years old when my grandpa passed away, but I still hold on to some very fond memories.

Jeff Johnson, Board Member

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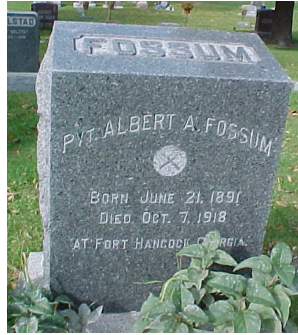
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Cemetery Corner

As we once again prepare our cemetery for Veterans Day and spring, I found myself thinking of the four WWI vets resting at Trondhjem Cemetery.

Albert Fossum (6/21/1891-10/7/1918) was the son of Anders & Sigri Fossum, also buried at our cemetery. Albert died at Camp Hancock GA from the 1918 Flu Pandemic, one month after arriving for basic training. His blue star (noting deployment) was the last WWI star to be added to the Trondhjem service flag and the first star to be exchanged for a gold one (noting death). The service flag hangs in the historic church.



William Fossum (11/21/1895-7/16/1969) was the son of Johannes & Gurina Fossum who also rest at Trondhjem Cemetery. He was a private and served in the 3rd Infantry. William was the caretaker of Trondhjem Cemetery for many years.

Peter Paulsen (12/27/1895-9/19/1923) was the son of Soren and Anna Paulsen who are also buried at Trondhjem Cemetery.

Ole Bernard Berg (11/7/18-10/10/1960) was the only son of Johannes “John” & Elisa Berg, who are also buried at Trondhjem Cemetery. Ole served in CO B 305 Field Artillery. The 305th was deployed to the Western front in France and Belgium. The field artillery was part of a mobile unit on the front lines and was involved in some of the infamous battles of WWI. While I don’t have information regarding Ole’s time serving our country, I can imagine it was a defining moment in his life because years later his headstone was engraved with “PVT CO B 305 ARTY”. Ole lived with “shell shock” and died by suicide at the age of 69. At that time, there was little understanding of what we now call PTSD and suicide was not only considered shameful but was a felony in most states.

Since WWI, research has increased our understanding and compassion for people suffering from PTSD. However, according to USO.org, between 2001 and 2021 7,057 service members were killed in combat while 30,177 died by suicide. While it’s too late to thank Ole and his parents for Ole’s life altering sacrifice to his country, we can honor him now in the way we treat our veterans and troops.

The Trondhjem Cemetery is an entity of its own. While we work closely with Trondhjem Lutheran Church and the Trondhjem Community Preservation Society, the cemetery is not funded by either of these organizations. Donations to the cemetery are tax deductible. If you would like to help support our cemetery, donations for this historic site can be sent to:

Trondhjem Cemetery Corp
PO Box 123, Northfield, MN 55057

or

Deb Simon
12527 50th St W New Prague MN 56071

Please write checks to
“Trondhjem Cemetery”
Deb (Johnson) Simon, Treasurer,
Trondhjem Cemetery Corp

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Brad Valek

Allen Valek

Memory of Great grandparents Daniel & Emelie, GrandParents: Mens & Edna Berg, Aunt Millie Berg

Carol Berg

Memory of Grandparents Claris & Marius Saxerud

Judith Saxerud

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Susan Cabot

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Barbara Lockrem or Kristin Johnson

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Gary & Sonia Johnson

**There was an issue with the address labels in our last newsletter. If you sent a donation using that envelope and you are not listed here, please let us know.

Syttende Mai

Relative Harmony, a male quartet of related singers will be performing for our TCPS Syttende Mai observance on Sunday, May 18 at 1:00 p.m. This group started performing together for various events at Christiania Lutheran Church in rural Lakeville (Eidsvold).

George Silverness helped to form the quartet as it consists of him, his son, Darren, his son-in-law Joe Jorgenson and his son-in-law, Eric Weerts. (That is how they took the name, Relative Harmony.) Our board member, Karla Miller will be accompanying them on the piano and “Doc” Steven Aaker will be playing bass guitar.

You will be entertained by their beautiful blended harmonies and the variety of selections. They will help to lead our favorite Norwegian tunes and sing some gospel and popular favorites. Please join us for an enjoyable event celebrating Syttende Mai.



Luncheon, Pie & Ice Cream Social

The TCPS Annual Ice Cream Social on July 20, 2025 will feature a band called “Hotdish Casserole.” This band will play hits from the 50’s, 60’s and 70’s. Jeanie and Dave Johnston formed this band and they are great friends of TCPS. Jeanie is a descendent of the Ted Johnson family. Ted and Helga (Halverson) Johnson were her grandparents. Her parents were Alvin and Eunice Johnson. So, she is a relative of quite a few of the TCPS board members; Nancy Halverson Norton, Karla Miller, Renee Fredrickson, Deb Simon, Bonnie Pavek and Darin Pavek.

Country Garden Tour & Art Market

July 26 & 27th

TCPS will be one of the stops on the Trondhjem Church’s tour of country gardens. We will feature our rain garden and a market which will include a Norwegian tea and goodies.

Tickets can be purchase day of, at any of the stops or online presale at TrondhjemLutheran.org.

TCPS Trondhjem Community Preservation Society

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