



Memories of Norway - 2015

*Personal recollections of
The Visit to Hadeland
Tour of the Western Fjords
and
Personal Travels in Norway*

Collected and published by the Hadeland Lag of America, Inc.

ISBN 978-1517302450

Third Edition

© 2015 All Rights Reserved



Cake served at the banquet



Our amazing tour managers and guides, Evonne and Verlyn Anderson

Table of Contents

Tusen Takk	1
Visit to Hadeland	
Itinerary June 17-23	10
Participants in the Tour	12
Memories	14
What We Saw	15
Verlyn & Evonne Anderson ...	16
Sharon Arends	18
Sara Gordon	19
LaVonne Hovland	20
Lenore Jesness	21
Jean Larson	23
Nancy Letness	27
Judy Liebelt	28
Helen Loing	29
Richard and Sharon Lunder ...	31
LuAnn Olson	33
Sharon Petersen	34
Gail Robison	35
Barb Schmitt	37
Karen Schulz	39
Saundra Skrove	40
Anne Sladky	41
Glen and Diane Stevens	43
Ragnhild Van Alstyne	45
The <i>Dynnastein</i>	47
Group Picture	48
Golden Potato Soup Recipe	50
Tour of the Western Fjords	
Itinerary June 24-July 2	51
Participants in the Tour	52
Memories	53
What We Saw	54
Verlyn & Evonne Anderson ...	55
Derich Arends	57
Sharon Arends	58
Elizabeth Botti	58
LaVonne Hovland	59

Nancy Letness	61
Helen Loing	62
Richard and Sharon Lunder ...	63
Sharon Petersen	64
Barb Schmitt	65
Karen Schulz	67
Saundra Skrove	68
Glen and Diane Stevens	69
Ragnhild Van Alstyne	71
Group Picture	74

Personal Travels

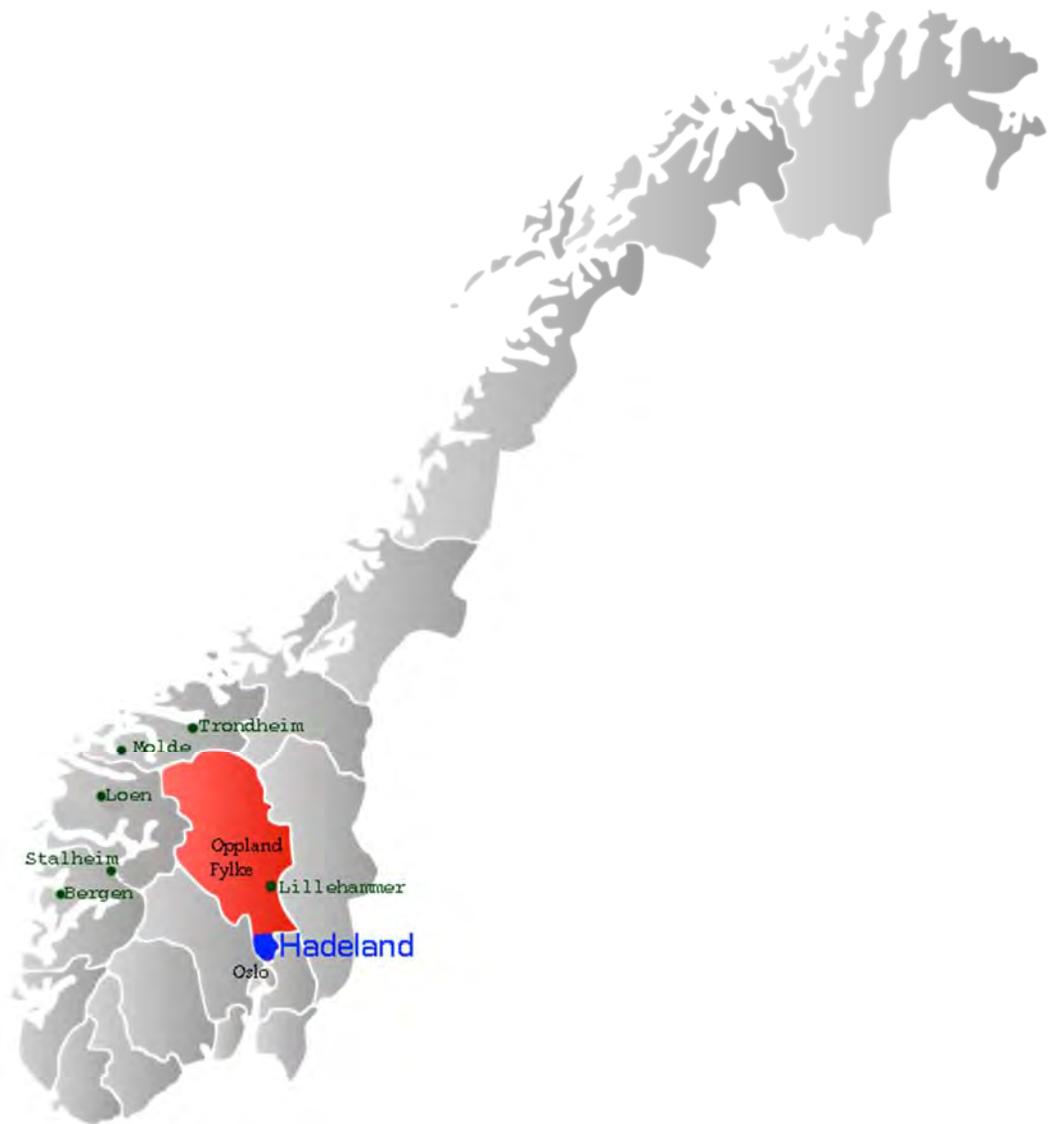
Lenore Jesness	77
Richard and Sharon Lunder	78
LuAnn Olson	79
John Padan	79
Barb Schmitt	80
Saundra Skrove	82
Anne Sladky	84

“A Day In June”	86
-----------------------	----

Acknowledgements

- ❖ Thanks to Ole Gamme and Knut Sterud for helping to identify all the wonderful Norwegians who gave of their time to tell us about the places we visited and made us feel so welcome in Norway.
- ❖ Unless otherwise credited, all the photos in this book were taken by lag members. The photos in individual stories were submitted by the authors. The lag’s excellent unofficial photographer Barb Schmitt and her husband Pete took most of the photos you’ll find elsewhere. They did an outstanding job of creating a pictorial history of the lag’s two week itinerary. Thanks to Harald Hvattum, Helen Loing, Jean Larson, Sharon Petersen, and Karen Schulz for providing the additional photos needed to complete the recap of the trip.
- ❖ Thanks to Barb Schmitt and Verlyn & Evonne Andersen for proofreading and suggesting improvements to the content of the book.
- ❖ Thanks **most of all** to the members of the tour who were willing to share their memories of our wonderful time in the land of our ancestors.

Anne Sladky
Editor



Hadeland is an historical district that is today made up of the *kommuner* (municipalities) of Gran, Jevnaker, and Lunner. Gran includes the parishes of Tingelstad and Brandbu. Brandbu was also its own *kommune* until it was absorbed by Gran in 1962. Hadeland lies within Oppland *Fylke* (County) about an hour north of Oslo.

The extended tour began with a visit to the Olympic site in Lillehammer, and continued with days spent taking in Norway's magnificent scenery and nights spent in Trondheim, Molde, Loen, Bergen, Stalheim and finally Gardermoen (Oslo).

Tusen Takk!

As so many of our members have said, the hospitality we experienced in Hadeland was beyond anything we could have expected. Everyone went out of their way to make us feel welcome. Mange, Mange, Tusen Takk!

Members of Kontaktforum



Ole Gamme



Harald Hvattum



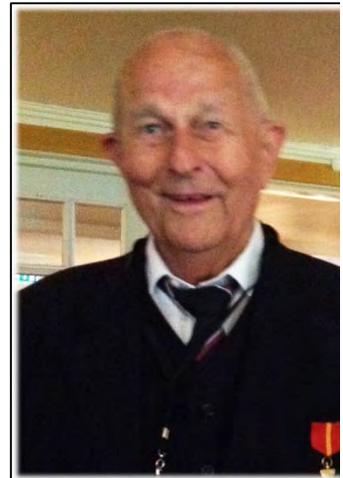
Kjell Myhre



Roy Stensrud



Geir Arne Myhrstuen



Hans Næss

Presidents of the Historical Societies



Hugo Hallum
Lunner Historical Society
Photo from lunnerhistorielag.com



Eivind Seigerud
Gran Historical Society



Torleif Johnsrud
Jevnaker Historical
Society

Hadeland Folkemuseum



Knut Sterud
President
Friends of Hadeland
Folkemuseum



Leila Raustøl
Director
Randsfjords Museum



Kari-Mette Avtjern
Museum Manager
Hadeland Folkemuseum

Entertainment



Streng og Belg



Furuleiken Spel og Danselag



Manskoret K. K.



Lisa Daehlin



Vårin Mack Borander



Lisa Daehlin
Torleif Nielsen
Helga Gamme
Ole Gamme

Guides, Speakers and Hosts



Marie Freitag
Jevnaker Church



Hilde Brørby Fivelsdahl
Mayor of Jevnaker



Kristin Gamme
Helgaker
Hadeland Glassworks



Annelise Grundstrøm
Kistefos Museum



Inger Marit Wirstad
Lunner Church



Jo Lyngstad
Grinakervev



Meal and Program at Lunner Church
Anne Lindstad Skråmestø, Gerd Lindstad Svarholt, Randi Werner, Ragnhild
Lindstad and Kari Lindstad Mack



Chane' Lyndset, Guide
Friends –Folkemuseum
St. Petri Church
(old Tingelstad)



Kari Wøien, Guide
Friends –Folkemuseum
Folkemuseum Tour



Gerd Nyland, Guide
Friends –
Folkemuseum
Folkemuseum Tour
New Tingelstad
Church
Nes Church



Per Svendsrud
Gran Historielag
Driver and Guide



Margarethe Hilton
Gran Historielag
Hostess and Guide

There were many more volunteers who helped make our time at the Folkemuseum, visiting ancestral farms, and touring in Hadeland unforgettable.

Our hosts at local farms were gracious and welcoming as well.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to them all!



Dr. Jan Ørnulf Melbostad
Oslo Bus Guide



Anne Lise Jorstad, Guide
Friends-Folkemuseum
Sister Churches
Stone House

Randsfjord Cruise on the “Haud”



Captain Birgir Lorentsen



Co-owner and Cruise Guide Ingvald Eid

The Sanner Hotel



Lars Næss

Everyone at the Sanner was helpful, responsive and seemed sincerely concerned with doing their best to make the week a great experience for each and every one of us. They succeeded!

The kitchen/serving staff took a well-deserved bow at the banquet for peerless service and outstanding menus that surprised and delighted us night after night – and morning after morning at breakfast.



5 stars to the Sanner for the hospitality of its, owner/manager Lars Næss and the entire staff!



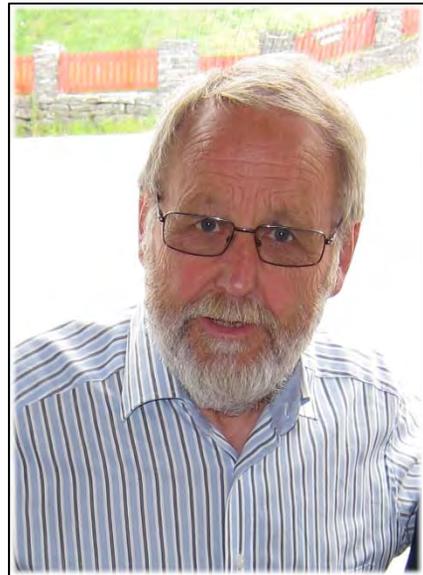
Bus Drivers



Hans Bjørge: Hadeland and Eidsvoll/Hamar - Pål Skiaker: Eidsvoll/Hamar



Eivind Kasin and Geir Midtmoen
Oslo



Helge Breien
Tour of the Western Fjords

Whether making hairpin turns on narrow country/mountain roads or navigating through the narrow streets of Oslo, we were in the confident hands of expert drivers. They didn't just drive us around; their knowledge and humor added an extra dimension to our tours.

Visit to Hadeland

June 17-23, 2015



Itinerary

Wednesday, June 17	Welcome Dinner and Reception
Thursday, June 18	Jevnaker and Lunner
Friday, June 19	Gran Mannskoret KK Concert
Saturday, June 20	Farm Visits Banquet
Sunday, June 21	Worship at St. Nicolai Randsfjord Cruise
Monday, June 22	Eidsvoll and Hamar
Tuesday, June 23	Oslo



Our extraordinary hosts in Hadeland, Helga and Ole Gamme

Participants in the Visit to Hadeland

Nicoline Ambrose, Urbana, Illinois
Verlyn & Evonne Anderson, Moorhead, Minnesota
Derich Arends, Charlotte, North Carolina
Sharon Arends, Statesboro, Georgia
Carol Baxter, Leslie, Charlotte & Lauren Hovey, Sacramento, California
Arden Brorby, Maddock, North Dakota
Jason Brorby, Rolette, North Dakota
Jean Cote, Coventry, Connecticut
Lisa and Missy Danielson, Tonka Bay, Minnesota
Thore and Marje Fossum, Poulsbo, Washington
Carol Gettinger, Erie, Pennsylvania
Sarah Goebel, Monroe, Wisconsin
Sara Gordon, Lake Forest, California
Susan Guttormson, Moorhead, Minnesota
Anne Hancock, Universal City, Texas
Bob Holmen, Red Lodge, Montana
LaVonne Hovland, Beaverton, Oregon
Robert and Sharon Hovland, Rothsay, Minnesota
Sonja Jensen, Fargo, North Dakota
Lenore Jesness, St. Paul, Minnesota
Linda Jesness, Burnsville, Minnesota
Jean Larson, Falcon Heights, Minnesota
Pier Larson, Baltimore, Maryland
Nancy and Dewey Letness, Houston, Texas
Judy Liebelt, Kindred, North Dakota
Helen Loing, Princeton, Minnesota
Christine Ludwig, Albany, Wisconsin
Richard and Sharon Lunder, Sioux Falls, South Dakota
Barbara Marsh, Garretson, South Dakota
Michael Marsh, King Salmon, Alaska
Victoria Moreno, New Castle, California
Gladys and Janet Murdoch, Raleigh, North Carolina
Stephanie Neal, Statesboro, Georgia
LuAnn Olson and Tyler Olson, Lake Elmo, Minnesota
Sharon and LeRoy Petersen, Rock Springs, Wisconsin
Marilyn and Kirsten Renback, Lennox, South Dakota
Gail Robison, Lewisville, Texas

Ronald Robison, Bridgeville, Delaware
James and Mary Rolf, Moorhead, Minnesota
Sydney Schneider, Alpharetta, Georgia
Pete and Barb Schmitt, Burnsville, Minnesota
Karen Schulz, Stillwater, Minnesota
Adeline Shjerve, Fergus Falls, Minnesota
Saundra Skrove, Fort Collins, Colorado
Anne Sladky, Walker, Minnesota
Mary Stephenson, Shelbyville, Michigan
Glen and Diane Stevens, Minot, North Dakota
Kristi Sundlie, Troy, Ohio
Ragnhild Van Alstyne and John Padan, Montgomery Village, Maryland
Shari Vaughn, Fergus Falls, Minnesota
Barbara Westfall, Greenwood, Delaware
Judy Welder, Bismarck, North Dakota



Presentation at the Grinaker Stave Church site

Memories of the Hadeland Visit



What We Saw

Thursday, June 18

Jevnaker Church
Hadeland Glassworks
Kistefos Museum
Lunner Church

Friday, June 19

Grinaker Stave Church site
Grinaker Weavery
Hadeland Folkemuseum
Tingelstad New Church
Mannskoret K. K. Concert at St. Nicolai
with featured soloist, Lisa Daehlin

Saturday, June 20

Farm Visits
Lunch at Gran High School
Music & Folkdancing
 Streng og Belg
 Furuleiken Spel og Danselag
Banquet
Music in the Salon: Ole & Helga,
 Torleif Neilsen, Lisa Daehlin

Sunday, June 21

Worship at St. Nicolai Church
Tour of the Sister Churches
Lunch at Granavollen Community
 House (*Huseflidslag*)
Steinhuset (Stone House)
Nes Church
Cruise on the Randsfjord

Monday, June 22

Eidsvoll
Hamar Cathedral

Tuesday, June 23

Utøya
Viking Ship Museum
Akershus Fortress - Resistance Museum
Royal Palace
Frogner Park - Vigeland Sculpture Park



The Sanner Hotel was our home
away from home in Hadeland



Verlyn & Evonne Anderson

Verlyn is the only member of the Hadeland Lag who has participated in the 1978, 1990, 2000, 2005, 2010 and 2015 tours and has worked with the committee in Hadeland on all except the 1978 tour, so planning for the 2015 tour began for us the summer of 2014. Ole Gamme and members of the *Kontaktforum Hadeland-Amerika* planned activities and many emails were sent back and forth across the ocean during the time between summer 2014 and June 2015. Evonne has taken part in all of those tours except the one in 1978. This year two of our daughters were along and that was special!

A special challenge to the committee in Hadeland this year was the total number of Hadelanders who joined the tour – 70, with Lisa Daehlin! We were too many to fit on a bus so Ole found drivers to take passengers who followed the bus on the excursions in Hadeland. The days that we went to Oslo and Eidsvoll/Hamar two buses were used. The committee also planned lunch stops on all the days except the days when we traveled to Oslo and Eidsvoll. On those days tour members packed lunches from the breakfast buffet at the Sanner Hotel and Ole and his committee provided drinks.

Some of the activities were similar to what had been done in previous years because of those who had never visited Hadeland. There were, however, some very interesting highlights which were new, even to us. We must add that we always enjoy seeing the beautiful scenery in Hadeland and visiting the four farms where Verlyn's mother's ancestors lived before they emigrated.



Brørby, Ohe and Hovland descendants visiting the Søndre Brørby farm

It was special this year to have Lisa Daehlin with the group. She was in Norway on a concert tour and contacted Ole Gamme because she has ancestors from Hadeland. Ole invited her to be part of our week in Hadeland and to sing with the *KK Manskor* during their concert. She also sang with Ole and Helga Gamme in the Sanner Hotel Lounge after the Saturday night banquet, and in the *Domkirkeodden* in Hamar.

When participants registered for the tour they their ancestors who came from Hadeland. Ole took this information and found the home farms for all the participants. On Saturday he had arranged for drivers to take participants to the farms where their ancestors had been born. Verlyn has roots on the Ohe, Brorby, Hovland and Waterud farms and many of his relatives were on the tour—13 total – so Ole hired a small bus and driver to take us to those farms.

Another highlight that was new this year was the cruise on the Randsfjord on Sunday afternoon. All of us filled the boat and enjoyed a nice 3-hour cruise in beautiful weather. We were served *lapskaus*, a stew made with various meats and vegetables that was very tasty. A tour guide kept us informed of farms that we saw from the boat.

The next day, Monday, we traveled to Oslo and saw the Viking Ship Museum, the Resistance Museum, drove past the new opera house, toured the palace and ended the day with a walk through Frogner Park. We have been to Oslo many times but had never been in the palace. Thanks to Ole for arranging that tour! We saw state rooms on two floors of the palace. Tables in a couple of large dining rooms were set with the royal tableware and it was interesting to see that.



Helga and Ole Gamme at home

Tuesday we went to Eidsvoll and Hamar. The *Eidsvoll Bygningen* was restored in preparation for the celebrations that were held throughout Norway in 2014. That was the 200th anniversary of the writing and signing of the Norwegian Constitution in the *Eidsvoll Bygningen*. Because there were so many of us, we were divided into four groups for the tours. Many millions of dollars had been spent on the restoration. In the 1960s the building had been restored to the style of the 1960s. Now much research had been done to determine how the building had looked in 1814 and the building was now restored to what it had been in 1814.

The morning of June 23, 45 of us left Hadeland for our bus tour to Trondheim, Bergen and the Western Fjord country. Other participants either went to the airport for their flights home, stayed in Hadeland to visit with their relatives or continued with their own private travels.

Mange tusen takk to Ole Gamme and the *Kontaktforum* Committee for planning a great week for us!



Sharon Arends

I am a fourth generation American of Norwegian descent from my great-grandfather Tosten Jenson Wasjo (Vassjø) and his wife Marthe Henriksdtr both from Hadeland. My father's parents died when he was very young so he was not able to relay much information on his family history but he was always so proud of his Norwegian ancestry.

I had no preconceived outcome goals for this trip other than to have my two children, Derich Arends and Stephanie Arends Neal who joined me on this trip, garner a better idea of their heritage. The week stay at the Sanner Hotel in Gran was wonderful. The various day tours and evening events gave us such a tremendous outlook on our family's cultural base.

I was always told Norwegians were very stoic and a bit off-putting. We were met with the biggest smiles and the most warm-hearted people I have ever met. The day tours were so informative, giving us an inside look at the various handicrafts. We discovered where my great-grandfather had been baptized and the highlight was climbing to the home site of my great-grandmother, visiting the Vassjø farm and



The Arends and the Myhrstuen

meeting its new owners, thanks to the efforts of my newly-met 6th cousin, Geir Arne Myhrstuen. My father had a beautiful tenor voice and was a choir member for as long as I can remember. Hearing the Mannskoret K. K. at the Nicolai Church was so poignant and brought me to tears, showing me that my father was indeed with me on this trip.

My take-away from the first week of the trip was a profound sense of family and community. Everyone we met was so welcoming and felt like an old friend. What I had not expected was to make some very close friendships with many tour members during our short time together. I fully believe many of us will stay in contact and remain friends. The efforts of the Hadeland Lag members and the Kontaktforum Hadeland-Amerika are to be commended for providing such a phenomenal week for us.



Sara Gordon

My sister Vicky and I decided to visit Hadeland to find out more about our 2nd great-grandfather, Gilbert Dvergsten Johnson who arrived in America from Hadeland in 1854. We had no idea how amazingly beautiful Hadeland would be, or how generous and welcoming our Norwegian hosts would be.

We were lucky to meet a distant cousin, Odd Kjetil Berg, who was kind enough to share all of his information on our family in Norway. He took us to the farm where Gulbrand Johansen was born and the church where he was most likely baptized. In addition, we visited five farms where other distant family members had lived. We even found long-lost cousins, Lu Anne Olson and Judy Welder who were also along on the trip. One of the highlights of the trip was a second visit to the Hadeland Glassworks with Odd Kjetil Berg where we drank coffee, ate waffles and learned that some of our distant relatives had worked there as artisans. It was a wonderful trip and I can't wait to go back in five years!



Distant Cousins! LuAnn Olson, Judy Welder, Vicky Moreno, Odd Kjetil Berg, & Sara Gordon



LaVonne Hovland

After 45 years, I returned to Norway. The first time I was on a grand tour of Europe starting in Oslo, traveling to Denmark down to Italy through France into England and finally returning to Norway to visit Bergen. It was a great trip, but we weren't in any place or country long enough to see or learn about the culture and history.

The Hadeland tour was for *us*; everyone whose family came from the area. We visited so many wonderful and interesting places; the churches, museums, glassworks, Eidsvoll, Vigeland Park, the Palace, etc. It is impossible to pick one place that was my favorite.

When we visited our family farms, I felt a deeper connection to my Norwegian ancestors. It

became clear that they worked so very hard just to put food on the table for their families. There was little hope to have a better life for themselves or their children. They braved the unknown traveling for months under harsh



The Hovland Cousins in Norway

conditions to a

country that was so different from the one they knew. Family and friends they had known all of their lives were left behind knowing they would never see them again. They did it for their family, their present and future. I am humbled by their bravery and determination.

I was in awe of the beauty; green pastures and fields, clear streams, rivers and fjords, the majestic mountains and the clean air. Seeing the “trolls' marshmallows” was a treat. Walking through churches that were built almost 1000 years ago is unforgettable.

Verlyn informing everyone of the history of the churches as well as everything else we saw filled my head and heart. All of Norway's history is my history, too!

Everywhere we went, Norwegians welcomed and treated us in grand style. The food was delicious! The breakfasts were amazing with a selection of food for everyone's taste including the delicious bread every morning. The dinners were a treat which included a variety of local foods. My favorites were the yogurt and the "trout" or what Americans call salmon. Thankfully, the Hadeland organizers planned trips that included walking so we had the opportunity to wear off the pounds.

I am looking forward to learn what the next trip will include. Hopefully, it will be in the next few years. I won't be around to travel to Europe in another 45 years.



Editor's Note:

LaVonne mentions marshmallows for trolls. They are left in the fields so that the trolls will fill up on them and leave the children alone! The marshmallows are actually hay bales wrapped in white plastic to protect them from the weather.



Lenore Jesness

Every day in Hadeland was wonderful and memorable. The programs were exceptional - the young violinist at the Lunner church, Mannskoret KK and Lisa Daehlin at Nicolai Church, the guides who sang at Hamar, the Furuleiken dancers, the youngsters who sang for us at the Folk Museum, and all the guides at the beautiful churches. It would be hard to choose a favorite.

The hospitality of the Hadelanders was beyond expectations. The food was good and plentiful wherever we ate. It seemed everyone went out of their way to make our visit enjoyable.

Our time in Oslo was too brief, but the tour of the palace was fantastic with a great guide. The tour of the home at Eidsvoll was a glimpse of a life that likely would have been incomprehensible to my Hadeland ancestors. It was interesting to learn about the people who came from all over Norway to be part of creating the constitution there. My favorite part of the week was seeing where my ancestors lived. I could imagine them at the churches that had not changed much from the time they were baptized, confirmed, married, and buried. The *husmannsplass* at the Folk Museum was probably like their homes.

It was a moving experience to see the actual places where my ancestors lived. At Ruden we saw the small house where my great-great-grandparents raised their nine children. It is now someone's cabin. I was surprised that it was across the lake from the Ruden farm. My g-g-grandfather probably worked in the



forests there providing lumber for his employer. With only the lake for transportation, I imagine the family had a garden and perhaps a cow and other livestock. At a time when many *husmenn* moved frequently, this family lived here from before the birth of their oldest daughter in 1818 until after the death of the mother in 1860.



My great-great-grandmother's brother owned Strandstuen for a short time before he immigrated to America. Letters from his sisters in America likely convinced him that opportunities in America far outweighed the value of his small farm. We met a descendant of the person who bought Peder's small farm. The house is still

standing. The barn was gone, but the owner saved the barn doors and showed them to us. They had P P (for Peder Pedersen) on them.

Even though Peder Pedersen Strand is not a direct ancestor, he is responsible for my being here. After my great-great-grandparents died, he sent money for his niece (my great-grandmother) and her younger brothers to come to America. Peter, my great-grandparents and my great-grandfather's brother and their families moved from Fillmore County MN to west central MN where they homesteaded on adjacent farms. Peter's descendants still live on part of his homestead. When my grandparents were living, Peter's descendants were included in our family gatherings.

This visit to Hadeland gave me an interesting glimpse into the lives of my ancestors, and it was exciting for me to be able to walk where they had walked.



Jean Larson

**It Was a Good Thing. It was a “God Thing.”
– A Mitzvah!**

I was invited by our son, Pier, to visit Norway.
It was a Genealogy trip for him,
Looking for farms of his forebears.

I hesitated, because it wasn't
My heritage – it was my husband's.

But, then, I said, “Yes,” because my husband
Had died just six months prior,
And it seemed a good way to honor him.

We flew our separate ways and met
In Hadeland, an area north of Oslo
Where the forebears had lived,
And from which they had emigrated.
We joined others who had Norwegian
Ancestors from Hadeland as well.

On Saturday, some local Norwegians
Drove us to the ancestral lands,

In our case, several of us going in two vehicles.
It was more emotional than I had thought
—standing on that land.

My son stood there with the
Randsfjord in full
view and said it was hard to
imagine,
Why they would leave such a
beautiful place,
For the land-locked valleys of
Wisconsin.

We were told it was famine—
not enough
Land, some years of drought,
and poor crops;
People were starving.
So they sought a place, any place, that held Hope
For something better.

And my heart filled with Thankfulness,
Not thankful that they had had all that Trouble,
But thankful that Milt's ancestors
had come,
In fact, to Wisconsin; had lived,
And married and had children
who also
Had children, again, in turn.
I was thankful they had Milt,
And that I had met him.
It had changed my life, and its
direction!

And now, back in Norway, on
Monday,
Two buses were waiting to take
us
To Eidsvoll's 1814 Constitution Hall.
Too many of us boarded the first bus.
They asked some to move to the second.
No one budged. So, Pier said, "Let's go."
When I took that last step down
Off the bus, it happened—



I did something that made my
Left knee hurt instantly, and
Very sharply, each time I did weight-bearing.
I had, in that instant,
Become temporarily handicapped!

In retrospect, it was a Good Thing that happened,
But, at the time, it was Very Inconvenient.
We had already noted how unfriendly
That country was for handicapped persons:
(But, in their defense, it was an old country,
With many ancient and historic buildings)
Many uneven surfaces for walking,
Many stairs with no handrails,
Seemingly non-existent elevators,
(Pier and I were on 3rd floor of the hotel and
Suitcases had to be carried up two flights of stairs.)
Doorsills, and sills between rooms were
High, and if one didn't step carefully,
One could easily trip and fall.

But Eidsvoll happened to have a wheelchair for the handicapped!
And they had installed a tiny elevator just the
Year before—for their 200th anniversary celebration!
A Norwegian physician “just happened” to be
On that second bus. He was a surgeon, and
A former missionary! So, we “connected” on
Several levels. It was he who found the temporary wheelchair.
He, or someone, called the hotel, and found a
Walker for me, for the end of that day.
And they also found for me an unoccupied room
On 1st floor—it was the hotel's only Handicap Room—
A small room, with only one bed.
So, Pier got his room back to himself
And I spent the night and next morning
Using (and assessing) the Handicap Room . . .

“Doctor Jan” and his wife were with us that
Following day as well—our last day of the Hadeland Tour.
His wife “just happened” to work in a
Nursing Home in Norway!
I invited them, at the end of the day,
To come and look at my room with me.

It needed some things; it lacked some vital
And necessary elements, if one were truly handicapped.

The plastic glasses and extra toilet paper
Were on a shelf not accessible to one who
Had to stay seated. It assumed one could stand.
There was no grab-bar by the toilet, although
It had arms that could be brought down.
It then assumed you could PUSH yourself up.
There was nothing for PULLING—as I said—
No grab-bar. Also, no grab-bar or bars in
The otherwise very nice shower!
But, where could one hold on? And what
If one were falling? The only place would be
The water fixtures—not a safe thing!
And, it was assumed you could STAND
To take your shower—no shower stool there!
I was appalled, having been so
Long with Milt and other residents
At Lyngblomsten Care Center. I knew
About things that were necessary,
That made for safety. . . . And, so did
The Norwegian physician and his wife.
They helped me to assess. They made a list.
They talked to the hotel Reception people.

We weren't just "complaining."
We wanted to help. I had come on this trip
To honor my husband, Milton.
This was my last day in Norway—
Leaving tomorrow. I had been "prevented"
From buying *any* souvenirs (that's another story . . .)
So, I had money. I gave it to the hotelldirektor,
(whose name "just happened" to be Lars!), and whose mother
Had been handicapped—I had been using HER walker!
He and I also, I believe, connected on some level.
The money was to help complete that room,
In memory of my husband, Milt—and Lars' mother!

It was a Good Thing—it was a "God Thing"!
As my neighbor said, — A Mitzvah!

Jean Larson, 2 July 2015



Nancy Letness

The plastic Viking horns I purchased in Norway for my 3-year old grandson were wobbling on his head as he asked, "Where did you go, Moremom?"

How do I tell my grandson that I connected to my past, stood on the grounds where his great-great-great-great-grandfather lived before leaving his homeland at 18 years of age for the United States? How do I convey the pride I feel for this ancestor who never forgot his homeland and was responsible for creating ties to Hadeland for hundreds of others who also left Norway for a better life in the new country? In order to share my memories of our Hadeland tour, I have to relate it to research I learned of my Hadeland ancestor.

I knew little about my great-grandfather, Thomas A. Walby, until a brother googled him about two years ago. A link led to the Hadeland Lag website with a photo of Thomas and a lengthy history. (Thank you webmasters!) I discovered that he was responsible for organizing the Hadeland Lag in 1910 and served as president for over thirty years. Thus began my membership in the Hadeland Lag, renewed genealogy

research and my anticipated trip to Norway in June, 2015, with Verlyn and Evonne Anderson leading the way.

Hadeland is located about 40 miles north of Oslo and consists of three municipalities, Gran, Lunner and Jevnaker. It is totally inland with rolling countrysides, forests and rich fertile farmlands surrounding Randsfjorden, Norway's fourth largest lake. My ancestor was named Torger Anderson and came from Gran. He lived on a small cotter farm owned by a large farm named Hvaleby.



The highlight of my tour in Hadeland was the Saturday when two relatives arrived at the hotel to take me to the farm of my ancestor. It was eerie standing on the land where my great-grandfather had once lived. A photographer from the local Gran newspaper arrived and tried to capture my reactions. (I later found out that the editor of the paper was also a relative!) We then went to the Hvaleby Farm and a third relative was there who had a picture of my grandmother as a child and a letter that had exchanged between her mother and my ancestor. I felt connected.



Judith Marie Bjone Liebelt

The trip of a lifetime! My roommate, Helen Loing, and I talked every day about the trip that would create memories we will never forget.

The churches were a big part of our memorable tour. The preserved beauty of the churches was so impressive. The Tinglestad Church made of stone was one such church. It's dated back to the

1220's and the interior is the original one from the 1500's and 1600's. The altar is a wonderful background for weddings.

The Nes church was another beautiful church. The graves in the church yard are carefully tended by the family members. I have several family members buried in that



The Bjone Farm

cemetery—Hans M. Bjone, Steffen Engnæs, Lars Engnæs, Kari Ajer, Hans Ajer, Ivar Engen, Jon Horn Strande, Marte Marie Strande, Olga Strande, Bent Strande.

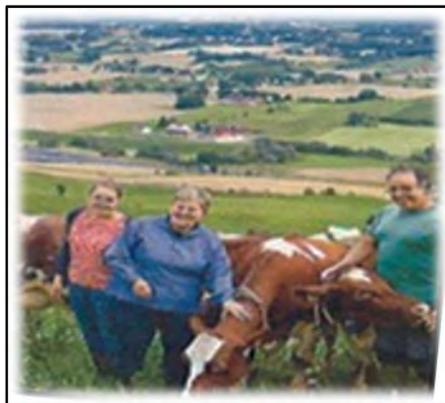
I was privileged to attend the last Sunday service in the Sørum church before the summer season began. The simple service was very beautiful. There were 5 ladies in attendance, plus the minister and the organist. We sang hymns that had familiar tunes. The simple service was very beautiful. My father's parents, Lars C. and Mina Bjone, as well as a cousin and two uncles and their wives are buried at that church.

The beauty of nature was everywhere. One could feast one's eyes on the green of the trees and grass, the brilliant colors of the flowers, the placid beauty of the ever present Randsfjord. Our boat tour was exhilarating with the fresh air and spray of the water! I couldn't help but imagine what it must have been in the days of the Vikings.

My father's birthplace, Bjone, is on the west side Randsfjord. His sister's farm—Horn—is on the east side. Cousins live on that beautiful lake at Krogsrud, Engnæs, and Tokerud. I had the privilege of visiting other cousins who also live on that lake, enjoying their warm hospitality and delicious food.

The farms with their livestock were fun to see. One second cousin, Mari, and her husband, Olaf, are featured with their cows on the Tine milk cartons.

The son of one of my second cousins is working on a fascinating project for his master's thesis in biology. He has patiently examined and logged data about wild orchids near Fredrikstad. I was able to see him at work.



Many places, many memories and wonderful people. Time was too short, so I must return.



Helen Loing

The trip of a lifetime..... that's what the Hadeland Lag's Tour of 2015 was for me. Not only did I see some of the world's most beautiful scenery, but I was able to connect with distant relatives and see where my Norwegian ancestors lived for countless generations.

What a thrill it was to drive and walk along the trails of Vikings and of Christian pilgrims who went from Oslo to Trondheim in the

north. Now I'm pretty sure that I'm not only 3% Neanderthal as revealed by a DNA test, but I'm probably also descended from the Vikings.

One of the biggest surprises I experienced was seeing *Solvberget* (Silver Mountain) on the ride from Oslo to the Sanner Hotel in Gran and finding out that it was the core of an old volcano. I had no idea that I would be able to observe remnants of volcanic activity in Hadeland. Then I was astonished to see fossils from ancient sea-beds that had been thrust to the surface by tectonic activity. An interpreter from the Hadeland Folkemuseum showed us those as well as pre-historic grave goods.

It was such a pleasure to visit the towns of Lunner, Gran and Jevnaker. Now, in my mind, they are no longer just place-names on a map. Most of my ancestors were from Jevnaker, and I couldn't help but be overcome with emotion when we visited the Jevnaker Church and graveyard where untold generations of my people were baptized, confirmed, married and buried.

What meant more to me than anything during the week I spent in Hadeland was meeting distant cousins and being able to visit the Gårdsrud farm and see the house in which my great-great-grandparents lived before they left for Wisconsin in 1849. The present owners of the place were extremely kind and hospitable, as were all of the people I met on the tour.

One evening we were treated to a very enjoyable concert performed by the 115-year-old Mannskoret KK in which my friend, Ole Gamme, sings. Those dear men sang their hearts out. At the Lunner Church we had a



The Gårdsrud farm



Inside the Stone House

delicious lunch in the Kirkestua and were entertained afterward by an enchanting little six-year-old girl violinist.

Regarding the history of the area, the medieval stone churches along the Pilgrim's Trail were very interesting to me, and I could picture the Bishop living in the Stone House that was built in 1220. It's near the Sister Churches and is the oldest stone building in Norway that's not a church. I could imagine King Olav having dinner with the bishop and staying there in 1225. Also, before the tour, I had read about two runestones that had been discovered in Hadeland, and I had looked forward to seeing them. Needless to say, I was not disappointed.

It was a very moving experience we had when we stopped on the way to Oslo in order to see the island where 69 young people were killed by a local terrorist in 2011. It seemed so much more personal than just reading about it in a newspaper. What a terrible national tragedy!

Vivid memories of this trip will remain with me for the rest of my days.



Richard & Sharon Lunder

On our first evening our Hadeland group arrived at the Sanner Hotel where we had a get acquainted orientation dinner and meeting.

The next day we visited the Lunner and Jevnaker Churches. At the Lunner Church they served a great lunch for us and we got to see the cemetery next to the church where my relatives were buried. The last of my family to pass was Per Lunder who died in the spring of 2014. We also visited the Hadeland Glassworks where they told us the history of the glassworks factory. Production is down due to foreign competition.

On Friday we visited the site of the Grinaker Stave Church and the New Tingelstad church in Gran. There was a good lunch and tour of the Hadeland Folkemuseum. We toured the Grinaker Weavery and then had time to shop. I bought a farmer's shirt made of fabric from the sheep raised in Hadeland.

In the evening there was a wonderful concert by Mannskoret K. K. at the Nicolai Church, which is one of the sister churches. Members of the men's choir included Ole Gamme, Knut Skiaker and my relative, Hans Lunder.

Knut and his brother Arve Skiaker, cousins of Ole Gamme, were in America a month prior to our arrival visiting my friend and their cousin, Manfred Hill who farms by Canton, SD. While they were there, Sharon and I went to Manfred's farm to visit them. After the concert they took us to their farm in Gran where we had lunch and toured their farm.

For us, the highlight of the Hadeland tour was on Saturday. Sharon and I were so grateful that Ole had arranged to have relatives Paul Helmen and Christian Grymyr drive us around. We have connections to 5 farms in Hadeland: the Lunder farm in Lunner, Helmen and Grymyr farms in Gran, and the Kjos and Daehlen farms in Brandbu.

Our first stop was the Lunder farm. This is the same farm where my Great-Great-Grandfather Lars Lunder was born. He left for America in 1868 to homestead on a farm 6 miles north of Canton, SD. After my cousin Per's death in 2014, the farm was sold to relatives Alf and Inger Wirstad. They showed us the farm house they are now remodeling. When we walked through the door there were pictures hanging on the wall of my great-great grandparents Lars and Anna (Kalvsjo) Lunder.

Next to their farm lives Hans Gudmyr Lunder who is a veterinarian. He also sings in the Mannskoret K.K. Hans and his wife showed us their home. They have a grandfather clock made in the 1400s by a family member. It still works! They also showed us many pictures of relatives who had lived on the Lunder farm.

From there Paul Helmen also a veterinarian, brought us to his farm where we met his wife Reidun and his son and family. They showed us the farm and had a big feast for Sharon and me. Because of the long stay at the Helmen and Lunder farms we did not get to the Grymyr, Kjos and Daehlen farms. Our plan is to go back to Norway in a few years to spend more time with the relatives we did not get to visit on this trip.

On Sunday we attended church services at the Nicolai Church. We then had a guided tour of both Sister Churches. We also visited the *Steinhuset* (Stone House). In the afternoon we had a great boat ride on the Randsfjord with lunch.

On Monday we visited Eidsvoll's 1814 Constitution Hall. Then in the afternoon we went to Hamar where a unique glass structure covers the ruins of its medieval cathedral. Inside this glass structure we listened to a performance by our guides, two



Our guides/performers at Hamar Cathedral

students from the Hamar School of Music. The acoustics were phenomenal.

Our last day was spent in Oslo. We visited the Resistance Museum and then had a guided tour of the Royal Palace. We spent the rest of the day taking pictures of the Vigeland statues in Frogner Park.



The fountain in Vigeland Sculpture Park

Each day we had a great breakfast and dinner at the Sanner Hotel. Ole and Helga Gamme did an outstanding job in coordinating and planning this fantastic Hadeland tour. Everything was done to perfection and Sharon and I are so grateful for the awesome Norwegian hospitality.



LuAnn Olson

When I am asked about our trip, the first thing I say is "Every day was a treasure" and indeed it was! It was certainly very special for me to have Tyler, my son, traveling with us and also my cousin Judy Welder. Their excitement and enthusiasm made the trip just absolutely amazing!

I had to include a picture of Tyler in the pulpit...let's see, what was his sermon for that moment? What a joy he was to have on the trip!! How can we not mention Saturday, when we were



fortunate enough to go out to our farms and meet such wonderful people. PRICELESS!

Many thanks to everyone here and in Norway for the wonderful and thoughtful planning that went into this fabulous trip!



Sharon Petersen

The scenery and history of Hadeland is fantastic, but the highlight of our week in Hadeland was Saturday when we spent the day visiting farms and Norwegian cousins. All of my mother's ancestors came from Hadeland. I was able to meet 11 cousins, some for the first time, others previously met in 2005. What a thrill to visit the places where our families lived and worked.

After our hearty Sanner breakfast (meal #1), we were met by my cousin Anders who took us to the Gammkin farm where many of my maternal ancestors lived worked. There we were welcomed by the present owners who invited us in for coffee and cookies (lunch #1). We toured the *husmann* cottage, the home of my ancestors. After this visit, Anders took us to the Lyngstad farm nearby where my great-grandmother's brother farmed. There we met with Asbjorg who served us a tort with ice cream and coffee (lunch #2). We had a wonderful visit and exchanged family information during this visit. Then Anders took us to his own home nearby where his wife, son, and son's wife greeted us. We were welcomed and served heart-shaped waffles topped with strawberries and cream, served with coffee (lunch #3). We also exchanged ancestor pictures and information. There we visited the birthplace and childhood home of my great-grandmother.

By this time it was 1:15 pm and time to return to the Sanner Hotel. There we were met by our cousin Hilde who is related by my maternal grandmother's family. She took us to



her cottage near Jaen where we visited with her, her sister and mother and were served sandwiches, ice cream and soda (lunch #4!) That visit was a few hours until we returned in time for the Hadeland Lag Banquet, a four-course meal and our **sixth** meal of the day. After dinner a huge cake was served to all banquet guests.



This was a very **filling** and fulfilling day for us. We were thrilled to visit with our cousins, even though we all said that there wasn't enough time, that we need to return when there is more time to visit and stay connected. We are so grateful to Ole Gamme for arranging visits to farms and connecting us with our families.



Gail Robison

About 11 years ago, my sister Barbara and I began talking about going to Norway. Both of us were working and money was not readily available. Fast forward to 2011. I discovered the Hadeland Lag, which just happened to be made up of people just like us. Our families came from that geographic area in Norway. I had retired; Barbara had not. I discovered the Lag had been taking trips to Norway every 5 years and tentatively planned the next trip in the summer of 2015.

I made it a goal to follow my dream. As the trip time approached (at least a year out) I began recruiting family members to go with the Lag, should the trip be realized. I am glad to say there were four of us in our family that joined the 2015 trip. We

represent two generations, hopefully keeping the Norwegian flame alive in our families for the future.

This trip was more than I imagined it could be. And while we (our group of four) did not meet any distant relatives, we met many great people on this trip every place we went. For me, the trip made me realize that many of the things my Mother loved had roots in her Norwegian heritage whether she ever realized it or not. From the flowers she grew around her many homes (she married a career airman), to the food dishes she set on the table, I found counterparts in Norway. My imagination makes me think she grew up with lilacs and Lilies of the Valley in her Mother's spring garden. And per-



A family picture at the Butjernsætera farm in Bjonerøa

haps as a young girl, rhubarb and root vegetables like rutabaga were served as part of many meals!

The most interesting part of my time in Hadeland was imagining just how difficult it must have been to live and raise a family on the west side of the Randsfjorden. In the winter you would have to travel across the ice. We had the easy trip via ferry!

While standing on the Butjernsætera farm I tried to imagine my great-great-great grandparents raising a family on that rocky patch. The views all around were stunning, but thinking about having to plant potatoes, chase a cow, herd sheep, drag a plow, or even wash clothes and hang them out to dry, made me understand their desire to leave Norway for the chance at a better life for their families.



Shed from the 1750s

The house, still standing, appeared to be built on a rock table. There was rock

on both sides of the house, used as a base for both a front and a rear porch. I am sure the house had been restored in the 1940's, but our guide indicated the storage shed was from the 1750's. A barn down the hill from the house was showing its age. However, we were told it appeared to have been built after WWII. And although there were still some items in the barn, it was sagging. Another hard winter with heavy snow may make it fall under the weight!

We were told the farm had been sold by the last living relatives a few years ago, maybe twelve or so, and that they now live in Oslo. Maybe in the future we can still find the Finstadts and meet them. But if not, I am ok with having made this journey just the way we did.



Barb Schmitt

This was my 3rd “trip of a lifetime” to Hadeland. In 2005, Pete and I met my Haga relative, Ester, for the first time and I will never forget walking up the old church road to the Lunner church, realizing I was walking on the same ground my ancestors had walked to go to church. In 2010, we discovered the Folk Museum’s mother lode of genealogy and the Randi Bjørkvik DVD which vastly expanded my family tree. Now in 2015, I wasn’t as concerned about remembering every fact about a historical building, and this trip was more about the *people* in Norway – the old friends we saw again and the new friends and relatives we met, and it felt more like coming home than our other two trips.

My favorite day during the Hadeland tour was Saturday when most people went off to see ancestral farms. My husband Pete and I came two days early (see Independent Travels section) and thought we had already visited all of my relatives that lived in Hadeland at 7 different houses/farms, so we had low expectations for the day. Even though we had already spent 2 ½ days with them, our incredible relatives Ragnhild Lindstad and Kari Lindstad Mack insisted on spending the morning with us. Turns out there was another Rya relative we hadn’t met yet – Erling Oppen and his wife Erna. Oppen, Lunner, is at the top of a hill and Erling, who is 80, briskly hiked through tall grass to show us an incredible view of Hadeland! We could see for miles and it was stunning! We went inside and had coffee at the coffee table (Norwegians actually use their coffee tables to have coffee) with *kransekake* and ice cream. It was absolutely lovely and so much fun meeting new relatives and seeing their beautiful farm.



Open Farm, Lunner

I loved being able to go inside my ancestor's churches – Lunner, Jevnaker, old Tingelstad and the Sister Churches. To see baptismal fonts that were so old that my ancestors were baptized in them was incredible.

I loved listening to the Norwegians talk to each other in Norwegian – so

very fast and very singsong.

We loved the Sanner hotel. After a day of touring, it was so great to sit back and enjoy a fabulous meal and the company of other people at the table. We loved walking in the areas surrounding the Sanner – the view toward Gran is incredible and it is so peaceful and pastoral.

At Sunday's church service, I noticed a Norwegian sitting beside his two American relatives from our group, had tears in his eyes as everyone sang "Amazing Grace." At the words, "I once was lost, but now am found," I had tears too as I thought about how my Norwegian relatives were "lost" for a while but we have "found" each other 100+ years later and have reunited across the pond. Here I was, sitting in church in Hadeland! Incredible!



Kari Lindstad Mack, Ester Haga, Anne Lindstad Skråmestø, Ragnhild Lindstad and Helga Gamme

During the Randsfjord cruise, I was surprised at the comments by the guide as he talked about the various farms where people had gone to America (sometimes complete families). He made it sound so recent. And it struck me that this was really a big deal to the ones left behind in Norway.

We loved spending time in Hadeland. All of the sites we visited were so interesting and fun to see but the people we toured with and the new and old friends and relatives we met, really made the trip another “trip of a lifetime.”



Karen Schulz

This is my third trip to Hadeland. Spending time with my parents and with my sister Kristi and seeing places where my ancestors lived was a highlight of our week in Hadeland, the warrior land. I couldn't help but think how brave my ancestors were to leave everything they knew behind in search of a better life for themselves and their children. Finding a home, barn, or church used by them makes the area more meaningful to me.

I walked to the Sister churches from the Sanner Hotel several times during our stay. They were a highlight from my first trip to Hadeland. From the churches you can see a home where one of my great-great-great-grandfathers (not sure if that is enough 'greats') lived when he was growing up. On a



previous trip, I visited the farm and talked with the people who were living there (no relation). The lilacs, wild geranium and other spring flowers blooming made the walks more enjoyable.

I haven't had to research to find my relatives; my parents have done that already. Even so, every trip it seems we learn more about my ancestors. My dad shares this knowledge through stories he tells on the bus during our trip.

One of the experiences which has stayed with me is our visit to Norway's Resistance Museum, the Home Front Museum and learning about the courage of Norwegians during the German occupation during WWII. The invasion of Norway by the Nazis, the five year occupation and resistance, and finally the liberation of the Norwegian people and peace is covered in this museum. It tells a story about WWII that is not well known. Since my first visit to the museum, I have read many books about Norway's role in the war and about how strong the people were who stood up against the Nazis.



Saundra Skrove



When my cousin Anne Sladky first started conversations with me regarding the Hadeland Lag's visit to Norway I really wasn't serious, but the visions of fjords and beautiful scenery did seem intriguing. By early 2015 I decided it would actually be a trip to also broaden

my ancestral know-ledge. After many conversations and emails with our guides, Evonne and Verlyn, I realized what a wonderful advantage their vast Norwegian expertise would be on this excursion.

Upon arrival at the beautiful Sanner Hotel, I was struck with a tremendous feeling of peace and tranquility. On Friday, the visit to the Grinaker Stave Church site caught me totally off guard, realizing this was where my grandfather was baptized. An unexpected connection to my heritage...

On Saturday Anne and I would walk up a country dirt road, inhabited only by curious sheep, to a farmstead where our great-grandparents lived. The house was idyllic and in amazingly good shape given no one had lived there since. Our guide to this memorable site was Eivend Siegerud, president of the Gran Historical



My great-grandparents home in the Alm 'Badstua'

Society. His knowledge of the history of this property as well as that of our ancestors was unbelievable. The beautiful little farmstead, with a large rhubarb plant in the front yard, an old fence surrounding the yard and a very antique piece of farm equipment, was only surpassed in beauty by the blue sky with white puffy clouds in these forested hills. I must say I've never had a more soulful experience.

Our tour included all of Hadeland's best. What better hosts than Ole and Helga Gamme? We also fell in love with the wonderful Harald Hvattum. In their kind and hospitable ways, they made us feel totally welcome and loved. I broke a promise to myself not to spend any money on "me" in Norway but the visit to *Grinakervev*, a small textile factory was too tempting and I purchased a wonderful handmade short coat which I will cherish for the rest of my days.

All other events on our tour were exceptional including the Folkemuseum and the concert and service at Nicolai Church. I especially enjoyed the men's choir and the *Furuleiken* dance group.

After visiting the *Vikingskipshuset* and Akershus Fortress with its *Norges Hjemmefrontmuseum*, our buses stopped briefly at the Opera House. This stop, unbeknownst to me, was to pick up my daughter Jackie who had just arrived from Maryland and had taken the train from the airport to join us on the remaining tour. Thanks to Ole for arranging this!! It was a special time for us to tour the Royal Palace together as well as *Frognerparken* on a beautiful sunny day. What a wonderful ending to an unbelievable Hadeland vacation.



Anne Sladky

As a first time visitor to Norway, every day was full of exciting new experiences for me. It was just great to share the time in Hadeland with my cousin Sandra. We learned that in 1640 an ancestor from Denmark enlisted as an officer in the Swedish army and was granted a farm in Hadeland. We saw the farm, and now have a *Danish* coat of arms to call our own!



The Dvergsten farm is named for this rock tossed by a troll

I have always been enchanted by the story of the lazy troll who was very unhappy about being awakened by the church bells of what was then (the 12th Century) the *new* Tingelstad church. One Sunday morning he ripped a piece of rock from the mountain and threw it at the church. The rock fell short of the mark and landed in the yard at Dvergsten (a farm where many of my ancestors lived and worked). The rock remains where it landed. When the current owner needed to do some underground piping, the workers trenched around the rock; almost a millennium later, it is still not to be moved!

Seeing the house in the forest where my great-grandparents lived

was an unforgettable moment for me. It was not the one in a picture we've always been told was their *husmannsplass*; our guide Eivend Seigerud said the picture looked more like a *seter*. My grandfather's sisters truly loved their summertimes on the mountain, so that seemed to explain it.

I wasn't prepared for my reaction to the baptismal font at the New Tingelstad Church (built in 1866). I knew the font had been used to baptize my grandfather and all his siblings, but seeing it in person and being able to touch it moved me in an unexpected way.

En route to Oslo we made a brief stop at a roadside rest to look down at the island of Utøya where 69 young people were killed and 110 wounded on July 22, 2011. It is almost impossible to reconcile the natural serenity of this place with the horrific events of that day.



Memorials left at the roadside rest that looks down on Utøya

Visiting Eidsvoll made me understand the importance of that 1814 gathering in a way I had not before. My biggest surprise was the incredible acoustics at the ruins of Hamar Cathedral. When I closed my eyes and listened to the singing it was almost as if the Cathedral were still standing.

It seemed there were peonies, lupines and lilacs around every corner in Norway. When I was growing up, every farm in the neighborhood had peonies and lilacs in the yard. At more than one meal I was reminded of the lilies of the valley that dressed up the tables at our summer church dinners in Minnesota. What I didn't see in our own or the neighbor's yards were the lupines. I've learned they aren't native to Norway, but I think I'll have to plant some to remind me of this unforgettable visit, anyway!

Most of all, I will remember the incredible hospitality and generosity of spirit shown us by the people we met. "Minnesota nice" doesn't even come close to the warmth and thoughtful consideration shown us by everyone in Hadeland.



Glen and Diane Stevens

A dream has come and gone with numerous memories. What a privilege to spend some time walking the land our ancestors walked so many years ago. As Diane and I reflect on our week in the Hadeland district with three of my first cousins – Adeline Shjerve,

Sharon Vaughn, Arden Brorby and his son Jason, what fun. We were thankful for our heritage and visiting the farms of the Brorbys, Ohes, Hovlands, Watteruds and driving by but not stopping at the Stadum and Ness farms. Thank you, Ole Gamme, for giving us a nice tour on this day. Also the whole committee for a fun-filled week.

Then on to many of the churches built from the 1100s to the 1500s. It impressed us that they were so old, still standing and most being used. Improvements on the inside were made. Beautiful carved scrolls on the pulpits were painted in the traditional blues and reds with gold plating. Beautiful!! And on the church grounds was the cemetery with beautiful flowers planted and blooming in front of the headstones. The dead were not embalmed and were buried in a pine casket so that several in the family could use the same grave. Most of the gravestones had several names. Interesting.

We visited two famous businesses. At the Hadeland Glass Works, glass blowers

were making dishes and other things while we watched. Beautiful glasses, bowls, plates and other things. It was interesting to watch those red hot balls of melted glass being shaped and worked carefully into fine pieces. There were many displayed pieces for sale at the factory. The textile makers (Grinaker Weavery) in the barn was another amazing place. Those complicated looking mechanical weaving looms made everything from large tablecloths to runners, square toppers, scarves and much more. *Grinakervev* is one of the few damask weaving mills in Europe that is still operating. The hand woven pieces were small and they were more expensive. They also made Bunads there.



Ohe/Brorby/Hovland descendants

We personally enjoyed all the beautiful landscapes from the farms to the mountains. Also the architectural features in the cities, churches, and more. Many farms were small and close together. We noticed right away how well the yards were kept up and the buildings nicely painted.

Our time in Oslo included a visit to the

Viking Ship Museum at Bygdøy and a walk through the Vigeland sculptures in Frogner Park. My goodness!

On Sunday we walked from the Sanner Hotel up the hill to one of the Sister Churches (Nicolai) for morning church, a very formal Lutheran service in Norway. After the service Anne Lise Jorstad gave us a guided tour and the history of the sister churches. Then we walked over to the community center right there and had pastries and coffee. Many sister combinations were traveling on this tour so there was a time for pictures.

The days were full. Yes, breakfast – there was no shortage of food. Juice, eggs, oatmeal, yogurt, fruit, nuts, coffee and always that big basket of loaves of various breads. Just take one, slice off a slice or two, and smother it with the choices of cheeses, meats, jams and more. After a hearty breakfast we were on the bus by 9:00 most mornings and off for a new day of adventure. Learning about the history of the churches, farms and just general knowledge of Hadeland district family life was most interesting. Our tour guide, Verlyn Anderson, is a walking history book of life in

Norway. What a blessing! Also at most of the places we stopped there was a guide who also gave additional information. We want to capture the good memories with



First Cousins Glen Stevens, Addie Shjerve, Sheri Vaughn, Jason Brorby (1st cousin once removed), and his dad, Arden Brorby

pictures and information we heard and collected along the way and more could be said. There was so much.

We look forward to reading about and seeing pictures of the many that toured with us this first week so we can see them and remember their names – maybe! Diane and I are grateful for the opportunity to visit Norway and we enjoyed every minute of it. Thank you, beautiful Norway.



Ragnhild (Grini) Van Alstyne

When I first heard the request for each participant to write a short story about their impressions during the Hadeland Lag tour, my thought was that it does not apply to me. Everybody else would be interested in locating places their ancestors had left several generations ago, and were now connecting with relatives (whom they might not know) still living in Norway. Because I grew up at Gran, I would be visiting an area that I used to know very well and would be seeing relatives and friends that I saw a few years ago, so my reasons for visiting and my experiences would be different--but thinking about it now, maybe not that different after all.

My parents' and their generation—including my aunts and uncles that I knew while growing up in Gran, as well as neighbors—are gone, and my generation is the “old one” now. This means that there are numerous new, younger relatives at Hadeland, some of whom I knew already, but I was fortunate to meet several “new relatives” on

this trip. Although my husband and I have some family in the U.S., it seemed like I was related to just about everybody we met at Hadeland! That was a very interesting experience.

In my mind Gran is an incredibly beautiful place, and I never tire of the view from the Grini farms (where I grew up). When I visit I always notice new buildings, but the older ones are still there, and so well kept! On previous trips my husband and I have loved walking to Gran (center) with a cup of coffee and some delicious pastries as reward, but this time we only did that once. Because of the massive road project that is now marring the beautiful valley, it



View from the Grini farm

became a treacherous walk at times in mud and among huge trucks. We would have had real difficulties crossing the road (Rv. 4 where the sidewalk crossed the main road in the construction area) if we had not joined schoolchildren who turned out to be experts at getting across in spite of missing pedestrian-crossing signs. Fortunately we had *Kjørkevegen* (the old church road, now a beautiful hiking trail), but I keep thinking of how destructive the 4-lane highway is to the 3 Grini farms and to several other farms. Moreover, it seems that the main road connecting Lunner and Gran will become a toll-road in the future. So far I fail to see any benefits of the new road, but for the sake of the people at Gran who have to live with the damage I hope that there will be some.

On the more positive side, about 60 years ago I was among the ones fortunate to attend the then nearly new *realskole* for Gran and Lunner (“old Gran”, not combined w. Brandbu) which then had a total of 108 students in three grades at the former Gran Hotel. How interesting it was to visit the amazingly modern new high school with so many specialized classrooms, a huge gym and library, and *kultursal*. The new school has nearly twice as many employees as there were students in the old days, and even with nearly 1000 students “everybody” pointed out that the school was getting too small already. This school, along with the nearby sports complex, showed the high level of interest and investment in the younger generation’s development and education as well as in cultural activities.

The Hadeland Lag program was impressive, with cultural programs such as the beautiful and moving KK concert in the church, traditional dances performed by *Furuleiken* and dinner at Sanner, the many interesting bus tours and more. It is impossible to pick a favorite among the events. My husband and I had so much fun meeting and traveling with the Hadeland Lag members from so many different states, and I was pleased to hear that everybody had



Main entrance and commons area of the new high school in Gran

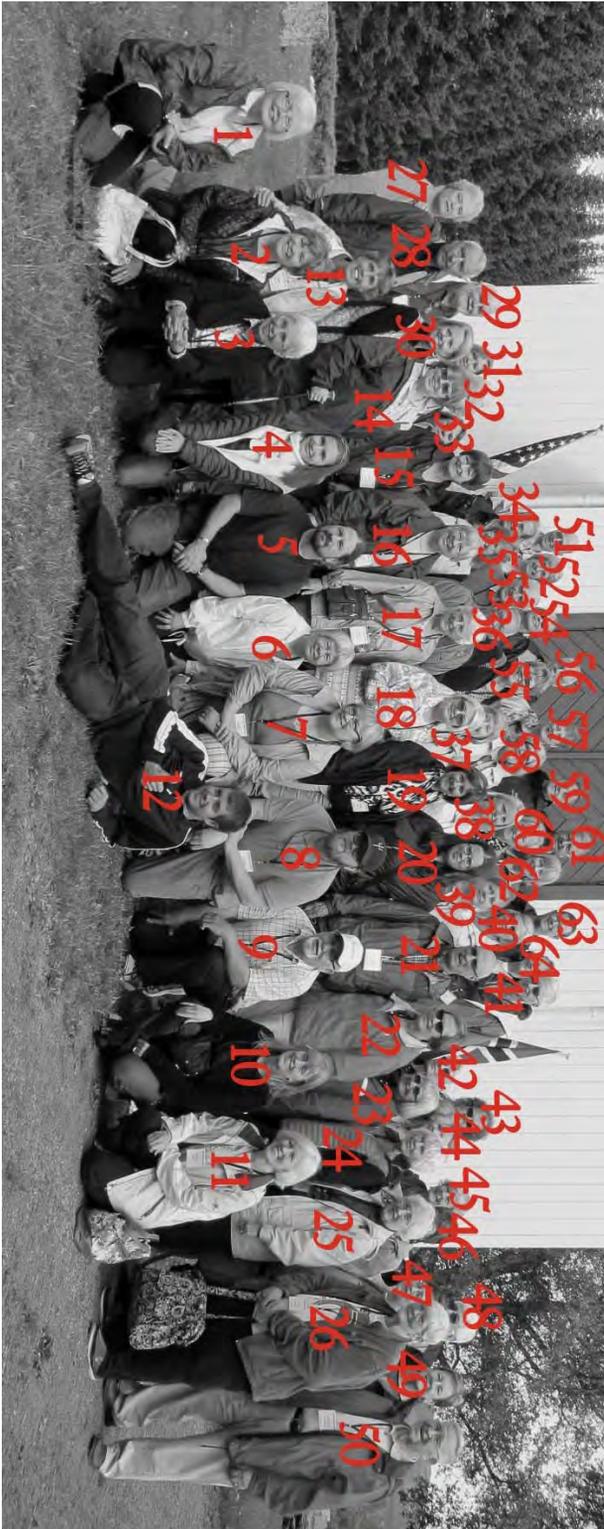
been so well received everywhere. It confirmed my impression that the people at Hadeland really know how to take care of their guests and make them feel welcome. I cannot even imagine all the work and preparation that went into making it such a successful visit for this diverse group. We owe them appreciation and *tusen takk*, and my husband and I owe a special thanks to Torborg and Johan Grini (who as members of *Furuleiken* told us about the Hadeland Lag 2 ½ years ago) and with whom we stayed for three wonderful weeks!



The Dynnastein

A large 10th century runestone was found on the Dynna farm in Hadeland. It was erected by a mother as a memorial to her daughter and contains images of the 3 Wise Men. It is the oldest existing rune in Norway that includes Christian imagery. The original was moved to the University of Oslo's Historical Museum in the early 1900s.

Major funding for this replica at the Hadeland Folkemuseum was provided by the Hadeland Lag. The replica was unveiled during the lag's 2000 visit to Norway.



- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Judy Liebelt | 51. Pete Schmitt |
| 2. Saundra Skrove | 52. Carol Gettinger |
| 3. Helen Loing | 53. Robert Hovland |
| 4. Missy Danielson | 54. Anne Sladky |
| 5. Michael Marsh | 55. Sarah Goebel |
| 6. Barbara Marsh | 56. LeRoy Petersen |
| 7. Linda Jesness | 57. Sydney Schneider |
| 8. Jason Brorby | 58. Christine Ludwig |
| 9. Arden Brorby | 59. Derich Arends |
| 10. Karen Schulz | 60. Sharon Arends |
| 11. Kristi Sundlie | 61. James Rolf |
| 12. Tyler Olson | 62. Susan Guttormson |
| 13. Barb Schmitt | 63. Pier Larson |
| 14. Sharon Hovland | 64. Jeanne Larson |
| 15. Sonja Jensen | |
| 16. Lenore Jesness | NOT PICTURED |
| 17. Diane Stevens | Carol Baxter |
| 18. Judy Welder | Leslie Hovey |
| 19. LuAnn Olson | Charlotte Hovey |
| 20. Kirsten Renback | Lauren Hovey |
| 21. Richard Lunder | Lisa Danielson |
| 22. Sharon Lunder | |
| 23. Addie Shjerve | |
| 24. Shari Vaughn | |
| 25. Evonne Anderson | |
| 26. Gail Robison | |
| 27. Marje Fossum | |
| 28. Bob Holmen | |
| 29. Thore Fossum | |
| 30. Sara Gordon | |
| 31. Jean Cote | |
| 32. LaVonne Hovland | |
| 33. Anne Hancock | |
| 34. Nicky Ambrose | |
| 35. Victoria Moreno | |
| 36. Glen Stevens | |
| 37. Sharon Petersen | |
| 38. Stephanie Neal | |
| 39. Marilyn Renback | |
| 40. Ragnhild Van Alstyne | |
| 41. John Padan | |
| 42. Gladys Murdoch | |
| 43. Ronald Robison | |
| 44. Janet Murdoch | |
| 45. Barbara Westfall | |
| 46. Mary Stephenson | |
| 47. Mary Rolf | |
| 48. Dewey Letness | |
| 49. Nancy Letness | |
| 50. Verlyn Anderson | |



A Recipe

Golden Potato Soup

Everyone raved about the soup that was served for lunch at the Hadeland Folkemuseum. Nora Graciela Weisæth (Knut Sterud's wife) graciously provided us with her recipe. Metric amounts have been converted to American measures. Simple and absolutely delicious!

Ingredients

1 leek
1 onion
1 tablespoon thyme
1 tablespoon butter
8 potatoes
2 ¼ cups diced rutabaga (500 grams)
6 ½ cups chicken stock (1.5 liters)
2/3 cup heavy cream (1.5 deciliters)
2/3 cup crème fraiche* (1.5 deciliters)
Salt
White pepper
White wine vinegar
Chopped parsley

*Crème fraiche is similar to sour cream but is thicker and richer with less bite. It contains no additional thickeners and does not curdle during cooking like sour cream. Crème fraiche is more expensive than sour cream and is not available in all grocery stores.

Directions

Chop the onion and white part of the leek. Add thyme and saute' until soft. Dice the rutabaga and potatoes and add to onions with broth. Boil until tender.

Add the green part of the leeks and boil for a few more minutes.

Add salt and pepper to taste and a drop of vinegar.

Carefully mix in the cream and crème fraiche. Top with parsley.



*Astrid Bilden of the Friends of
Hadeland Folkemuseum*

Tour of the Western Fjords

June 24-July 2, 2015



Itinerary

Wednesday, June 24	Hadeland to Trondheim
Thursday, June 25	Trondheim
Friday, June 26	Trondheim to Molde
Saturday, June 27	Molde to Loen
Sunday, June 28	Loen to Bergen
Monday, June 29	Bergen
Tuesday, June 30	Bergen to Stalheim
Wednesday, July 1	Stalheim to Gardermoen
Thursday, July 2	Tour ended

Participants in the Extended Tour

Nicoline Ambrose, Urbana, Illinois
Verlyn & Evonne Anderson, Moorhead, Minnesota
Derich Arends, Charlotte, North Carolina
Sharon Arends, Statesboro, Georgia
Eric Beastrom, Hudson, Wisconsin
Elizabeth Botti, Telford, Pennsylvania
Arden Brorby, Maddock, North Dakota
Jason Brorby, Rolette, North Dakota
Larry and Jean Cote, Chelsea Cote, Coventry, Connecticut
Carol Gettinger, Erie, Pennsylvania
Sarah Goebel, Monroe, Wisconsin
Susan Guttormson, Moorhead, Minnesota
LaVonne Hovland, Beaverton, Oregon
Robert and Sharon Hovland, Rothsay, Minnesota
Sonja Jensen, Fargo, North Dakota
Nancy and Duane Letness, Houston, Texas
Jackie Lewis, Tall Timbers, Maryland
Helen Loing, Princeton, Minnesota
Christine Ludwig, Albany, Wisconsin
Richard and Sharon Lunder, Sioux Falls, South Dakota
Stephanie Neal, Statesboro, Georgia
Ruth Ann Ordaz, El Paso, Texas
Sharon and LeRoy Petersen, Rock Springs, Wisconsin
Gail Robison, Lewisville, Texas
Ronald Robison, Bridgeville, Delaware
Pete and Barb Schmitt, Burnsville, Minnesota
Karen Schulz, Stillwater, Minnesota
Adeline Shjerve, Fergus Falls, Minnesota
Saundra Skrove, Fort Collins, Colorado
Mary Stephenson, Shelbyville, Michigan
Glen and Diane Stevens, Minot, North Dakota
Kristi Sundlie, Troy, Ohio
Ragnhild Van Alstyne and John Padan, Montgomery Village MD
Shari Vaughn, Fergus Falls, Minnesota
Barbara Westfall, Greenwood, Delaware

Memories of the Western Fjords



What We Saw

Wednesday, June 24

Olympic Ski Jump at Lillehammer
Lunch at Dombås
Overnight in Trondheim at the Thon
Prinsen Hotel

Thursday, June 25

Trondheim: Tour of Nidaros Cathedral
and Bishop's Residence
Optional visit to Hell
Evening organ concert at Nidaros
Cathedral
Overnight in Trondheim

Friday, June 26

The Atlantic Highway
Ergan Coastal Fort, Bud
Overnight in Molde at the Quality
Alexandria Hotel

Saturday, June 27

Molde Fjord, Stranda Fjord, Geiranger
Fjord with its 7-Sisters waterfall
Summit of Dalsnibba via Nibbevegen
Overnight in Loen at the Loenfjord
Hotel.

Sunday, June 28

Audhild Vikens Vevstove at Skei
i Jølster
Western Norway Emigration Center
at Sletta, Hordaland
Overnight in Bergen at the Thon
Bristol Hotel

Monday, June 29

Walking tour of Bergen
Tour of the Hanseatic Museum
Optional tour of Troidhaugen,
Edvard Grieg's summer home

Tuesday, June 30

Fløibanen Funicular on Mt. Fløyen
Lunch at Voss
Tour of Voss Church
"Tvindefossen" waterfall
Overnight at Stalheim Hotel

Wednesday, July 1

Tour of Borgund Stavkirke
Lunch at Fagernes
Drive through Hadeland
Overnight at the Park Inn at
Gardermoen Airport





Verlyn and Evonne Anderson

Bud, Norway: A Small Town with a Very Interesting History

Located about half way between Molde and Kristiansund on the far western coastline of Norway is the small village of Bud. On our Hadeland Lag tour we had an interesting visit to this historic, but little known town. It was at this strategically located site, overlooking the North Sea that the German invaders built, between 1941 and 1945, the Ergan Coastal Fort, the biggest fortified bunker in Norway. This massive “within the mountain” structure, totally camouflaged by its earthen covering, contained an Operations room, Command headquarters, a hospital, living quarters, together with rooms for weapons and other military equipment. There was food and water storage large enough to maintain the fort for 30 days, if access to the outside were shut off. Long, narrow tunnels from outside the bunker were dug for access to the massive inner structure. Sixty-seven steeply built steps took German personnel and present day visitors down, down into rooms that were dug out of the mountain.

Not many of us visitors to this historic site were aware that the Germans built 293 coastal forts along Norway’s Atlantic coastline, from the Finnish border in the north to the Swedish border in the south. The fortifications in Norway were only a part of the more than 1,500 of these fortifications that were built by Nazi Germany along the entire western coast of continental Europe and Scandinavia as a defense against anticipated Allied invasions of western or northern Nazi-occupied Europe. These fortifications became known as Hitler’s “Atlantic Wall.” Almost a million French prisoners of war were “drafted” to build these hundreds of fortifications along the western coastline of continental Europe.

Our very enthusiastic and knowledgeable guide told us the history of the Ergan Fort which was manned in the usual way: two chief officers,



At the Ergan Fort in Bud

13 petty officers, and 52 soldiers. In addition there were 20 infantrymen, thus totaling about 90 German men. 110 Polish and 40 Russian prisoners of war were housed in several occupied Bud schools. In addition, about 350 German soldiers were also stationed at Bud. They supervised the work activity of the Polish and Russian prisoners of war who built the fort. The primary duty of the personnel of the Ergan Fort was to defend that portion of the Norwegian coastline against attacks from the sea. Norway was the top priority within the German plan for the defense of Europe because through Norway, Hitler had access to the Atlantic Ocean. After the Allied raids on the Lofoten Islands and the coastal town of Meløy in December, 1941, the German leaders expected the Allied forces to attempt a major invasion of Norway from the sea. This was also in reaction to the deliberately false information that the Allied leaders were spreading about such an attack. As a result Hitler transferred additional 100,000 German soldiers to augment the more than 300,000 German soldiers that were already occupying Norway. The plans for the Normandy invasion were already underway so threatening Hitler with an invasion through Norway was the Allied way of encouraging him to transfer some more of his soldiers to Norway, thus lessening the number of German troops that would be fighting the Allied forces as they moved toward Germany after the Normandy invasion.

There was, of course, no attack on Norway by the Allied forces. After the suicide of Hitler on April 30, 1945 and the total surrender of Germany on May 8, the German Supreme Commander in Norway, Josef Terboven, also committed suicide. The rest of the German leadership in Norway, including the commander of the Ergan Coastal Fort in Bud, also surrendered.

Today Bud's Ergan Coastal Fort is a historical museum dealing with the Second World War in Norway. After the war, the fort was dismantled. German weapons and ammunitions were dumped into the ocean and the inventory of the fort was sold and the fort closed. Our guide told us that for many years after the war, the near empty underground fort was a favorite haunt for parties and other adventures for young Norwegians in the area. It was not until about the year 2000 that the local and federal authorities decided to restore the neglected



The Atlantic Highway north of Bud

fort and open it as a historic site for local citizens and visitors. That was an excellent idea. After a decade of restoration the historic Ergan Coastal Fort was open to visitors. It is a great site well worth an afternoon's visit. We all learned more about Norway during the Second World War.

After we left Bud, we traveled on the picturesque "Atlantic Highway" that connects seven islands with uniquely constructed bridges, - a scenic joy!



Derich Arends

The extended tour of northern and coastal Norway was a perfect way to extend the family- and friend-building that began in Hadeland. Importantly, I don't think I would have developed such a deep appreciation of what made the geography and people of Hadeland so special had I not had the chance to contrast it with the more "popular" areas of Norway. I would recommend anyone that hasn't been to Norway before to participate in both legs of the trip.

As a student of history, one of the things that I found fascinating was how the Norse society made the fairly smooth transition from paganism to Christianity by combining symbols of authority from both systems, at least for a time. This was especially evident in the Sister Churches, and additional examples of this practice abounded right up through the last day looking at a relief of Odin in the Stave Church.

I can't believe how fortunate I was to be able to share such amazing trip with my sister and mother. Without them, the countryside would still have been beautiful, the people would still have been friendly, and the bus still would have included many new friends by the end, but we would have lost the chance to develop a common sense of shared family, history, and tradition.

Add to that the breathtaking cruises through the fjords, the mountain top vistas, and



the nightly meetings of Team Troublemaker at the hotel bar, and I know I was on the trip of a lifetime.

And a quick note to myself for next time: bring spicy hot mustard, and be sure to maintain an expanding catalog of “Verlyn-isms” for future use.



Sharon Arends

My family chose to continue with the Norway tour after visiting Hadeland. What a memory maker! Verlyn and Evonne provided us with an informative, fun-filled, awe inspiring week. Verlyn did indeed keep us ‘filled and emptied’. Their choices of side trips were amazing. Each stop gave us a new vision of beautiful Norway. And as a mother, I had fun watching my daughter be a short-term tour guide with Verlyn. My heart is still full and I will be first on the list for the next tour.



Elizabeth Botti

This journey starts with my submitting a registration for the Western Tour portion of the Hadeland Lag's 2015 trip to Norway and requesting a roommate. Contact information for Helen Loing, who lives in Minnesota, was emailed to me, a Wisconsinite transplanted to Pennsylvania. I sent her an introductory email. We kept the emails

flying back and forth once we discovered our Norwegian ancestors all settled in southwest Wisconsin in the 1850s!

While digging into possible connections, we found we share ancestors via Anders Christoffersen (Anderson in America) who immigrated in 1851 and is my great great grandfather. Lars Christoffersen (Larson in America), brother of Anders, is Helen's great great grandfather. They are the sons of Christopher Gulbrandsen, our great great great grandfather! What a small world we live in...

It was also discovered that Helen and her mother along with other cousins had visited my parents in the mid 40s when we lived on a farm in Glen Valley outside of Hollandale, WI. The farm had originally belonged to Helen's ancestors.



With roommate Helen Loing -- happy in "Hell"

Where we are going is to "Hell" (Norway, that is) via bus on a rainy, damp day. As a post card stated, "Now I can say I have been to Hell and Back"!! It's been loads of fun informing friends and family of this fact!!

The "Frosting on the Cake" for my trip to Norway was the discovery that my seat mate on the return flight to Newark, NJ lives in a town three miles from where I live...who else can say they had to go all the way to Norway to meet a neighbor??



LaVonne Hovland

After Hadeland, the trip continued to include cities and sites on the west coast. Our first stop was Trondheim. For me the most memorable place we visited was Nidaros Cathedral. As soon as I entered, the view took my breath away! It is huge with stained glass windows everywhere with the largest above the altar, the rose window. The arches appeared to go on endlessly, but met high above my head.

Although there are many beautiful and historic relics in churches, my focus was the

organ. Nidaros has two organs, the Steinmeyer which was built in 1930 and Wagner built by Joachim Wagner in 1741. Many of us chose to attend the concert that afternoon. What an honor!

As we continued our trip to Molde, we had the privilege to travel on the Atlantic Highway. We had sunshine and very blue skies with no storms or high waves anywhere. Our driver, Helge, treated us to an extra stop at Bud. We visited the restored Ergan Coastal Fort which was built by the Germans in WWII. The purpose was to protect the coast from attack. We saw where the soldiers worked, ate, lived and slept. It was a sober reminder of Germany's occupation.

After leaving Molde, we traveled on several ferries. The most memorable ride for me was from Stranda and to Geiranger where our very capable driver drove UP, UP to Dalsnibba. Being NOT fond of heights, I accidentally sat on the wrong side of the bus. As we rode, I could see straight down to where we had been with no road under us. It wasn't long before I put my bag and other things on the seat *next* to the window, and I sat on the aisle seat. That helped, but I wasn't comfortable until we were down at sea level.

That evening we stayed in the small town of Loen. The town is surrounded by mountains with a river flowing into the fjord. What a picturesque village. The highlight for me was walking up to the small church that was several blocks from the hotel. The current church is 180 years old. What fascinated me was the Celtic Stone cross that stands outside of the cemetery. It is at least 1000 years old and shows to be one of the oldest Christian sites in Western Norway. Originally, it was closer to the



fjord, but 300 years ago it was placed next to the church. Inside the church, the current pulpit, clerk's stall and hanging ship date back to 1640. There are several other items dating back to the 1600 and 1700s. I spent a lot of time walking through the church and looking at everything. All of a sudden I realized that I had been there for a long time. I decided to walk back "before it was dark." Then I said, "Da! The sun doesn't set." The walk back seemed longer for some reason.

Visiting Bergen wasn't as memorable as it was 45 years ago. Fisherman's Market didn't have the fishermen cutting up their fish in front of you, selling their seafood directly off of the boat and there wasn't a large flower market. Bergen grew up. For me I liked the quaint town I visited many years ago.



Nancy Letness

The long bus ride to Trondheim was needed following our Hadeland tour - time to absorb all that we experienced in the previous week and connecting with ancestors. A quick stop at Lillehammer gave us a glimpse of summer ski jump training. The ski jump landings had a plastic covering which allowed ski jumpers to practice during warm seasons. We watched young skiers flying to a landing, cooling down their skis from friction created and then trekking back up for more. I wondered if a fall would be more dangerous during the summer months.

Trondheim is one of our favorite cities with Nidaros Cathedral, built over the tomb of St. Olav - Viking King and Norway's patron saint. A local daycare was out for some fresh air and I had to capture them in a photo right in front of the cathedral door to show my grandson.

Relatives of my husband live a few miles north of Trondheim at Levanger. We had dinner the night we arrived with two second cousins and the next night with family on his mother's side.



Bergen is a city rich in history, beauty and shopping! Our tour of the Bryggen and old Hanseatic Harbor with museum, dating back 900 years, was most informative. Roaming in and around the harbor stores, one can get lost in an era past and purchase a Norwegian sweater to take home. Great efforts have been taken to preserve Bergen's history which I appreciated. We were fortunate to have a clear day to take the Funicular to the top of Mount Fløyen for an eagle's view of Bergen.

The drive from Bergen to Oslo was filled with indescribably beautiful scenery, which you can read about in any travel book. My favorite memories were made with all the fellow travelers we met on the tour. This was our first but not last organized tour. Sharing laughs with our new friends, bus driver and yes, tipping a few expensive beers, made the tour special and created memories. History, humor and new relationships - we found all this on the tour!



Helen Loing

Dovrefjell National Park seemed like the top of the world, especially when we started driving into the clouds above the tree line and crossed a divide. Spring was hanging in there late toward the end of June this year. We saw much snow on the mountains, white-water rafters and kayakers paddling the rushing mountain streams, and *hytter* (summer cabins) that were not yet opened up for the season, but we did not see any muskox. They were reintroduced into this area between 1947 and 1953.

This was the second time I was able to visit the Trondheim Cathedral. In 1966 there was extensive renovation going on inside and there was a lot of scaffolding in front of the church. This time my view of this great edifice was unimpeded, and, in addition to an interesting tour, we were able to attend a Vespers service and hear one of the two fine organs being played.

Before going to Norway this summer I had seen a video on *YouTube* of a drive on the North Atlantic Highway, known also as the Atlantic Road. How excited I was to learn that our bus was going to take us on a portion of it. The drive was indeed breathtaking at times. While we were in the area, we had the opportunity to visit a Nazi bunker above the small town of Bud on the coast. I learned that there was room for 300 soldiers in the lower level and the bunker even contained its own hospital. During WWII there were actually about 300 bunkers along the Norwegian Coast.

All my life I've seen photos of the beautiful Geiranger Fjord touted as "the real jewel of the Norwegian Fjords" with its majestic snow-covered mountains, wild waterfalls and lush vegetation. Yes, it is one of the most spectacular places to visit in Norway. After a ferry ride up the fjord, we rode the bus up 13 or 14 switchbacks to Dalsnibba where we had an absolutely magnificent view of the fjord far down below.

Visiting the Western Norway Emigration Center in Sletta, Radøy was a moving experience for me. Several buildings from the Upper Midwest in the U.S. had been re-located to that outdoor museum, and when I entered



Branson Church

the church that had been brought there, board by board, from rural Branson ND in 1996-97, it was almost exactly like entering the Rosendal Church near Reynolds, ND where my husband and his siblings were baptized and confirmed.

Another spectacular view I greatly appreciated was that from the Stalheim Hotel where we stayed on the return trip from Bergen to Oslo. Even though the original hotel had burned to the ground, there were still stables (the “stal” or stalls in “Stalheim”) where horses had been kept and exchanged along the route in the olden days. There was also a German bunker from WW II on the grounds that we investigated. We were able to see where the soldiers could look down on the road below and monitor traffic on the highway. The height was extreme, for there was an 18% grade on the switchbacks as we descended the next morning.

Indeed, we had a taste of what’s best in western Norway on the extended tour.



Richard & Sharon Lunder

We began our sightseeing tour on Wednesday morning with Verlyn and Evonne Anderson as our tour guides. Our first stop was the Olympic Hall in Lillehammer which was built for the 1994 Olympics. There we watched ski jumpers landing on plastic pads as they were practicing their ski jump

techniques.

We traveled by chartered bus to Trondheim through the Gudbrandsdal Valley, Dombås, and Oppdal.

On Thursday we stopped by Hell, Norway and took pictures and visited the Nidaros Cathedral in Trondheim. This beautiful building was completed in 1330.

On Friday we traveled along the Sogneford to Molde, Norway where we took the scenic Atlantic Highway which gave us a chance to take many great pictures. We stayed at the Quality Hotel Alexandria.

On Saturday we took many ferry rides along the western fjords. The scenery was spectacular and Verlyn Anderson told us many stories about the history of this area. We stopped in Skei i Jolster on our way to Bergen and we bought Norwegian sweaters, caps and scarfs at the Audhild Viken Store. We crossed the beautiful Sogneford to Bergen, Norway’s second largest city. Our bus driver Helge and Verlyn Anderson gave

us a guided tour of Bergen. We stayed two nights at the Hotel Bristol and enjoyed some shopping and sightseeing.

On Monday we visited Bergen's interesting historic sites including Trollhaugen, Edvard Grieg's summer home, the old Hanseatic Harbor, and Bergen's famous fish market where we had lunch. We also visited St. Mary's Church and the Bryggen.

On Tuesday we started early to take the Fløibanen Funicular to the top of Mount Fløyen where we got a bird's eye view of the city of Bergen.

We then traveled to Voss and on through the mountains to the beautiful Stalheim Hotel. This was a very scenic trip with lots of switch back roads, and many good stories and history from Verlyn Anderson. We stayed overnight at the Stalheim Hotel where we had a fantastic dinner and breakfast. On Wednesday we started back to Oslo and headed down hair-pin turns to Gudvangen. On the way we passed through many tunnels. The Lærdal was the longest at approximately 24 miles long and was a good nap time. We continued through the scenic mountains to our final destination which was the Park Inn Hotel at Oslo's Gardermoen Airport.

We can't thank Verlyn and Evonne Anderson enough for such a well-planned and organized tour. They enlightened us along the way about all the historical sites and Norwegian history.



Sharon made a friend at Dalsnibba



Sharon Petersen

There are so many wonderful memories of our tour of Norway.

I was very excited to visit the Nidaros Cathedral in Trondheim. I am a graduate of St. Olaf College and have participated in and attended several St. Olaf Christmas concerts over the years. I have the video of

the St. Olaf Choir's Christmas concert at Nidaros. To watch and listen to the concert again in this beautiful cathedral was very meaningful for me. It was also very special to hear an organ recital and experience the beautiful live music.

I could write a few more highlights of the tour, but there was indescribable scenery around every bend in the fjords. It is the most pristine scenery anywhere!



Barb Schmitt

Touring with Verlyn and Evonne is such fun and it's truly the ultimate!!

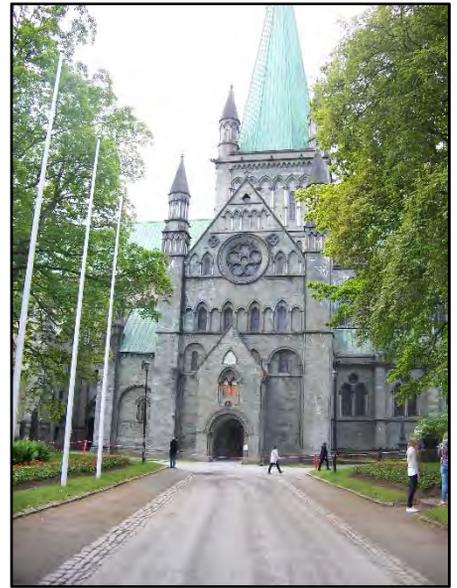
Hop on the bus, listen to Verlyn's very entertaining stories, learn the history about what you're going to see at the next stop and why it's important, get off the bus and enjoy the scenery or historical site, hop back on the bus, repeat. At the end of the day, Evonne, the precision planner, gets the hotel keys, hands them out and you're on your way. Ditch your bags in your hotel room, admire the new view, and go explore a new city. What could be better?! No driving or reading maps or planning where to stop or figuring out how to buy tickets – it's all done for you. You just sit back and enjoy the scenery and experiences!

Exploring a new city, never knowing what treasure might be around the corner, is such fun! At our first stop, Trondheim, we stumbled across a street fair which was fun. Then we discovered the Nidaros Cathedral, but we didn't go around the corner. But the next morning at our formal tour, we went around the corner and discovered the famous "West Front Sculptures." They were incredible and the church was fascinating. I had the best torsk dinner of my life at the Trondheim Egon restaurant.

I found the scenery on the new Atlantic Highway was so unique -- our first view of the North Sea. We enjoyed the stop at Bud to see the WWII bunkers.

I won't ever forget the stunning view from our hotel in Molde – the fjord was about half a block away and the Hurtigruten docked there twice. There were gorgeous mountains across the fjord – awaiting us the next day.

My favorite day on the tour was travelling from Molde to Loen. We had incredible weather – sunny and clear for viewing the stunning scenery, and we went on the



Nidaros Cathedral

beautiful fjords from Stranda and the Geiranger fjord (with the Seven Sisters waterfall) and up to Dalsnibba. Talk about what's around the corner. We went up umpteen switchbacks to get to Dalsnibba – the highest road in Norway, and what a view it was when we got to the top!! The hotel at Loen that evening was even more scenic than Molde had been, with a river running behind the hotel and it was right on the fjord!

Bergen was great fun and Pete & I toured Hakon's Hall and the Rosenkrantz Tower, two medieval buildings. The view from the top of Rosenkrantz Tower was worth the price of admission itself. We got to try on old medieval battle armament (very heavy) and went in a real dungeon.

Of course the primo hotel view was at the Stallheim! It was great to be able to stay overnight there, as we had time to explore the bunker and walk down the mountain a bit.

On our final day it was wonderful to see Hadeland again on our way to the airport hotel. The peaceful farm scenery really connects with me, probably because of my North Dakota roots.



On the Geiranger Fjord

Lastly, the group of people we toured with was fantastic! It was great fun to be out exploring a city and run into our fellow travelers and find out what special things they saw and did. We so enjoyed getting to know people on the bus or when we had meals together or toured sites. These wonderful people really made our trip great!





Karen Schulz

Our stay at the Stalheim hotel was a highlight of the tour. It was hard to take your eyes off the view of the Nærøy Valley from the patio of the hotel. The evening we stayed at Stalheim, after another excellent buffet dinner, I hiked down steep hairpin turns on the road to the valley to get a closer look at the waterfalls with Kristi, Eric and Barb.

Remember the road we drove down the next morning? Yes, that is the road we walked down. At first the way wasn't too steep, then we reached the first of the switchbacks. What had I gotten myself into? Flowers and tall grasses lined the road. Trolls disguised as moss covered rocks watched silently as we passed by them. The view of first one waterfall and then the second falls grew more fantastic with each turn down the steep road. Since we were walking, I was able to stand and take in the falls. It felt like I could feel the pounding of the water hitting the ground. My legs could use a break too. They weren't use to walking down such steep inclines. We walked about halfway down to the valley, maybe a little more. The view of the waterfall was incredible. There was a farm not far from the top of the falls. Could you imagine living there and being able to hear the rush of water all the time?



After watching the water cascade down to rocks somewhere in the trees below us, we decided to start our ascent instead of walking further down the mountain. Kristi and I stopped to take pictures of flowers and to rest our legs frequently on the walk uphill. Eric and Barb went on without us. We managed to make it back to the hotel before 10 o'clock. I purchased a postcard of the road so I could see just how far we had walked on the zig zag road.





Sandra Skrove

Just when I thought nothing could match the experiences in Hadeland, we were off to see more of Norway in a brand new Mercedes bus. Lillehammer was a lovely town, different from my Colorado ski towns of Aspen and Vail. It was unique watching ski jumpers practice their sport on artificial (plastic) turf.

In Trondheim I met people on the street who said "I know you Skroves." That's never happened to me anywhere! Despite rain and a room overlooking an alley and dumpsters, I loved the city.

The Atlantic Highway was a sight to behold and walking the path in Eide we were able to spot the King & Queen's yacht out at sea.

Molde was my favorite town in Norway with a beautiful harbor framed in snow-capped mountains. Known as the "City of Roses," we were just a bit early to see the full blooms. The town has a world class soccer stadium, first class hotels, the best health club and spa I have ever seen and cruise ships coming and going in the harbor. A jewelry store boasted the name Jermstad Jewelers, the same as my first cousins. I wanted to stay in Molde!

Thank you to our bus driver, Helge Breien for choosing the most awesome of routes. The fjords, with their abundant waterfalls and never-ending views were as great on the fjord cruise as they were from the highest peak in Norway. The scenery from Molde to Loen was the equal of anything I've seen, even in Colorado. Loen was also a beautiful little town, smaller and more peaceful than Molde. The Loenfjord Hotel was heavenly. After dinner and drinks, my darling daughter Jackie and equally fun friend Stephanie Neal entertained us all by diving into the icy cold fjord waters. My sides hurt from laughing the next day.



Sandra and her daughter Jackie

On our way to Bergen we stopped at Sletta, an historic village moved to Norway from the US. The church held special interest – it had been disassembled and moved from a town very near where I grew up.

We spent two nights in Bergen and were graced with sunshine, the first in 200 days, according to the locals! I strolled Bergen with Helge Breien, learning local lore like

the life of Ole Bull and meeting a true Norwegian Forest cat, called "angel cats" in Norway.

At Edvard Grieg's summer home I was scolded for 'almost' taking a picture of a wonderful piece of artwork....my bad.

The view from the Fløibanen Funicular was stunning, but it was sad leaving Bergen and knowing we had only one more stop. The Stalheim Hotel was elegant and our room had another awesome vista. We had so much fun and laughter that evening that I wondered if the staff of the Stalheim would ever let us return.

It felt good to pass through Hadeland again en route to the airport. Hadeland is such a special place with sheep grazing and lupine in bloom everywhere. Sad to leave Norway the following day. We all owe Evonne and Verlyn a huge debt of gratitude for sharing their unsurpassed knowledge of Norway with us. It was an unforgettable Norwegian adventure.



Glen and Diane Stevens

We drove to Lillehammer and stopped to see the '94 Olympic Ski Jump Arena. A few folks were skiing. No snow, though. In Trondheim we visited the most historic site – the Nidaros Cathedral, the largest in Scandinavia. In the evening we listened to an organ concert there. The organ had over 3,000 pipes. An amazing sound. It was also interesting to walk around the area around the hotel.

At several of the hotels we stayed at we were amazed to see how many other buses were parked outside. At mealtime the tables were neatly set with table cloths, napkins, glasses and centerpieces. The food, and lots of it, was presented nicely. Groups were given times to eat since there were so many to feed. Usually we sat with different people, so we got to know more and more of the folks on the tour. The Atlantic Highway was something to experience, too.

Traveling from place to place there were many, many tunnels that didn't look large enough for meeting cars, but buses passed each other with little room left over. After Gudvangen we drove through the 24-mile long Lærdal Tunnel, the longest tunnel in the world. Three times we crossed water on a ferry. We couldn't believe how many

vehicles fit. The ferry rides were just long enough for us to get out and find something to eat or drink, then board again, drive off the ferry and be on our way.

We got to shop a little in Bergen and eat dinner on our own. Glen found a Norway cap for a souvenir. The buildings were so close together – just fun being there. We were glad the sun came out before we left Bergen so we could take the Fløibanen Funicular to the top of the Mount Fløyen to look down on the second largest city in Norway.

It was breathtaking to see the fjords, mountains, waterfalls, and the beauty of the landscape. Many smaller farms, painted nicely and yards kept up. We so much enjoyed the many lupine flowers that grew wild. Climbing the hairpin curves getting to the highest point in Norway and then getting back down on a road so narrow it didn't allow traffic both ways. Looked like we were driving off the edge sometimes.

The Stalheim Hotel had a museum of old log buildings with grass roofs. The only ones we could open the door



on were the “two holer” and the “three holer.” The roof was so low – must have been short people using those. Brought back memories of my childhood. The Stalheim Gorge was beautiful. Looking over the short rock wall behind the hotel was another perfect place for pictures with mountains in the background.

Our tour driver was a farmer and did a fantastic job. Verlyn and Evonne did a great job filling us in with history about everything we saw, and guides at our stops provided history and information, too.

Norway will hold such special memories for us. People were friendly and appreciative of the Americans. A great time – thank you, and we have a memento or two and lots of memories of our wonderful trip. Glen's cousin said it was like “going to heaven.”





Ragnhild Van Alstytne

After the week at Hadeland, which included several cultural events, dinners, and several bus tours, would a week-long bus tour with the Hadeland Lag be a good idea? And would traveling by bus with a set program and seeing some places my husband and I had visited before still be interesting and enjoyable?

We started from Sanner onboard a brand new Mercedes bus from *Askeladden Reiser* with more comfort and cleanliness than expected. The local driver, along with our expert guide Verlyn Anderson, made sure we had an interesting and safe journey.

For me, Trondheim was one of the highlights. *Nidarosdomen*, the town's centuries old cathedral, is the largest medieval church in Scandinavia and it is located next to the Archbishop's Palace, a massive complex of stone buildings that now contains several museums. We first had a detailed guided tour of the huge cathedral, and in the afternoon we returned for a church service where the larger of the two



organs would be played. During this concert service I easily imagined the masses of pilgrims visiting the cathedral during the centuries, and how they would have been awed by this glorious church and no doubt relieved to have finally reached their destination. I noticed that in this most important and historic church in Norway, both the minister and the organist were women.

The mixture of old and new also surprised me one evening when we returned to take photos of the magnificent west façade of the cathedral with its rows upon rows of sculpture of saints and historic figures, but suddenly the silence was broken, and we realized that a drone was flying down by the façade and most likely also taking photos before flying back up again.

Another surprise occurred when we explored the city on foot and after crossing the river at the picturesque *Gamle Bybro* (old town bridge) and continuing up a steep hill

surrounded by old buildings on *Bakklandet*, we heard a rumbling noise which seemed to come from a metal strip in the sidewalk. Looking around, we saw a bicyclist moving effortlessly straight up the hill, using the built-in free bicycle lift.

I first visited *Vestlandet* (the west or “fjord” country) nearly 60 years ago, and was immediately taken by the breathtaking scenery. Now, after several additional visits I still find it incredibly beautiful, with another panorama coming into view at each curve of the road. Our day-long journey from Molde to Loen stood out, the ferry from Molde with views of several snow-capped mountains, then over land (plus another ferry) and more amazing views to Stranda for a ferry on the Geiranger fjord, with the many famous waterfalls and the small farm houses clinging precariously onto the steep mountainsides. Viewing the hairpin turns and the scenery on the narrow road from Geiranger (sea level) to the top of Dalsnibba mountain (nearly 5,000 ft.) from high up in the bus was scary and magnificent at the same time. I was so glad we had such an excellent driver and a new bus!

For me, it was touching meeting the many Americans of Norwegian descent. My fellow travelers were an interesting and fun group, and being a “senior,” I was very happy to see so many “juniors”! At the end of the trip several of them suggested returning because waiting five years would be too long. What better evidence of a successful tour!

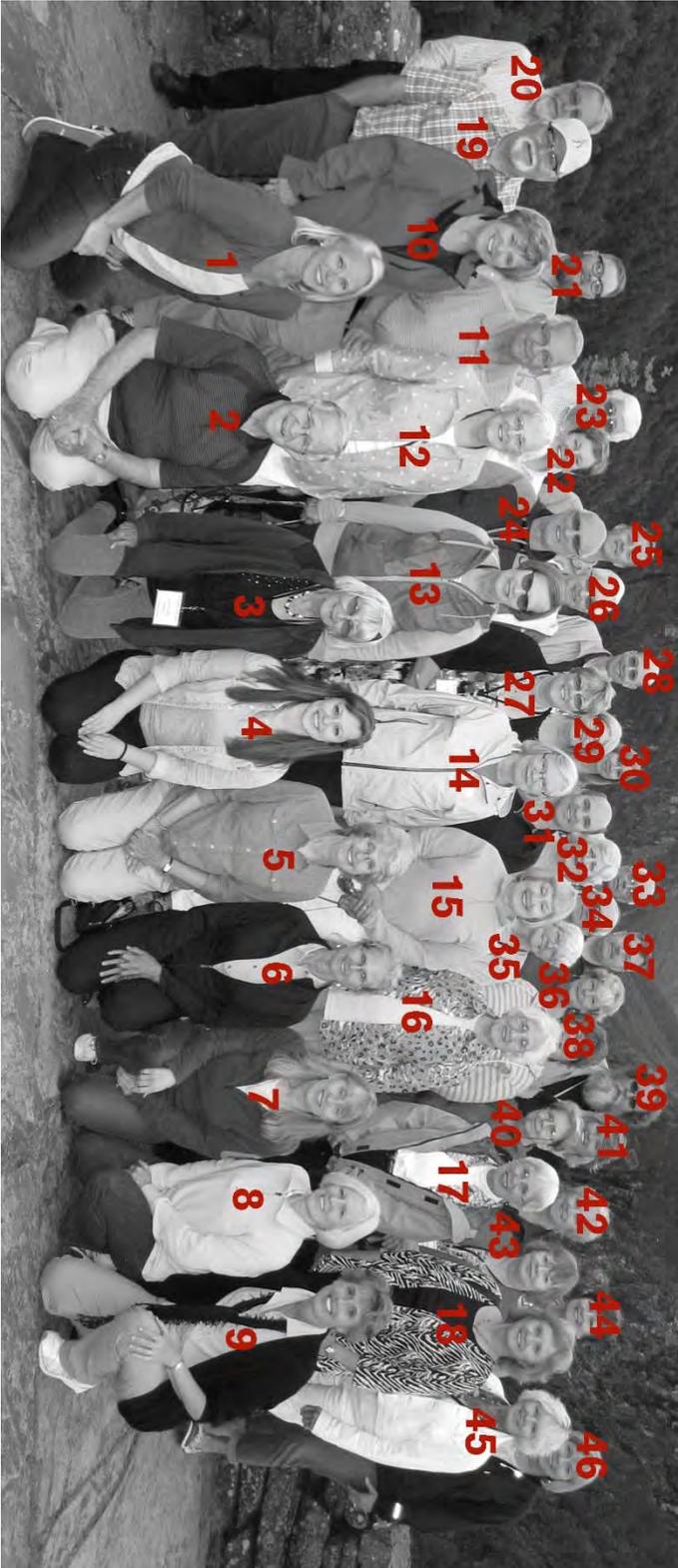
Verlyn Anderson was an excellent guide on the week-long tour. I learned so much, especially about the emigration from Norway and their lives and times, as well as more ancient Norwegian history with names and dates. His memory is so much better than mine, and his stories did keep us awake! His wife Evonne quietly kept track of logistics and made sure nobody was left behind on our numerous stops. So my answer to the questions in my first paragraph is a definite YES!



A slice of the Midwest transplanted to Sletta, Norway



A cold day in Hell (Norway)



1. Stephanie Neal
2. Verlyn Anderson
3. Addie Shjerve
4. Chelsea Cote
5. Carol Gettinger
6. Nicky Ambrose
7. Karen Schulz
8. Kristi Sundlie
9. Barb Schmitt
10. Saundra Skrove
11. Glen Stevens
12. Diane Stevens
13. Sharon Lunder
14. Ragnhild Van Alstyne
15. Sharon Petersen
16. Evonne Anderson
17. Helen Loing
18. Ruth Ann Ordaz
19. Arden Brorby
20. Helge Breien
21. Jason Brorby
22. Nancy Letness
23. Dewey Letness
24. Richard Lunder
25. Derich Arends
26. John Padan
27. Sarah Goebel
28. Pete Schmitt
29. Christine Ludwig
30. Jean Cote
31. Larry Cote
32. LaVonne Hovland
33. LeRoy Petersen
34. Robert Hovland
35. Gail Robison
36. Barbara Westfall
37. Eric Beastrom
38. Mary Stephenson
39. Ronald Robison
40. Elizabeth Botti
41. Jackie Lewis
42. Sharon Arends
43. Sharon Hovland
44. Sonja Jensen
45. Shari Vaughn
46. Susan Guttormson



Personal Travels

June-July 2015



“Roads Less Traveled”
(at least by Hadeland Lag members)

A number of our members took advantage of the opportunity afforded them by the lag’s visit to plan personal itineraries that brought them to other destinations in Norway.

Hedmark-Hadeland-Hjelmeland-Verdal-Telemark-Buskerud-Land



Lenore Jesness

After leaving Hadeland, my cousin Linda and I went to Hedmark to visit our cousin Marit and other relatives and friends. (For genealogists, Marit is actually our 3rd cousin once removed). This was our fourth visit to Hedmark, and I feel almost like I am going home. We've met several relatives from our great-grandfather's family. On previous visits we've been to some of the family farms including the Jessnes farms where our great-great-grandfather was a husmann. My immigrant great-grandfather took the name Jesness because there were too many men named Ole Larson and the mail got mixed up!

Several people invited us for a meal or coffee, and we were even included in an annual dart tournament. If one of us had won, we would be required to go back in 2016 to defend our championship. That was not a concern. We also enjoyed Marit's grandsons who are learning English in school.

Furnes Church, the church of our Hedmark ancestors, was open for visitors on Saturday, so we were able to take lots of pictures. We found the grave markers of several relatives, but no really old family markers. Since much of the land is not suitable for cemeteries (or farms), Norwegians reuse burial sites. Norwegians are buried in wooden coffins with no vaults and no embalming, so the return to dust is quicker than in this country. After about 20 years, if no one pays rent for the burial site, the marker is removed and another body is buried on top of whatever might remain from the previous burial.

One day we took the train to Lillehammer and visited Maihaugen, a wonderful open air museum. I enjoyed this exhibit of various aspects of life in Norway in previous centuries. After a quick visit, we headed to the north end of Lake Mjosa, Norway's largest lake, where we waited to hear the



whistle of the 19th century paddle steamship *Skibladner*. It was a beautiful day and we had a pleasant trip from Lillehammer to Hamar. *Skibladner's* maiden voyage on Lake

Mjøsa was in 1856. At that time the steamship provided transportation from the railroad terminus in Eidsvoll to the towns along the shores of Lake Mjøsa.

As we travelled on *Skibaldner*, I thought of my great-grandparents who took a much different trip on Lake Mjøsa. They left Hamar in 1872 and travelled by steamship to Eidsvoll where they got on the train to Christiania (Oslo). From there they left for America. They left friends and relatives, not knowing if they would ever see them again, and they had to bring along whatever they would need for the voyage across the ocean as well as things they would need in their new home. I'm sure they never imagined that 143 years later some of their descendants would be on this pleasure trip.



Richard & Sharon Lunder

We arrived a day early, Tuesday, 6/16/2015, and Ole and Helga Gamme picked us up at the airport at around 1 P.M. They then brought us to their farm for a great lunch. Ole and Helga Gamme had arranged for us to stay at the farm of cousins Oddvar Borge and Anne Inger Helmen Borge. Anne is a professor at the

University of Oslo and Oddvar is a dentist in Gran.

They had a fantastic dinner party for us and invited more of our Norwegian relatives - Paul and Reidun Helmen and Thorstein and Berthe-Marie Helmen. We got to sample some great Norwegian beer and wine and had a wonderful family reunion. I brought lots of family history and photos to share. They also had many photos and Helmen history for us to talk about. They showed us their potato farm and all of their farm buildings.

On this same farm Anne Inger Helmen was proud to show us her mother's home, which she has restored into a museum. The home dates back to the 1800's and it was restored with all her mother's belongings.

Anne brought us to the Sanner Hotel on the morning of the June 17th to start our tour of Hadeland.



LuAnn Olson

After our time in Hadeland, my son Tyler and cousin Judy Welder and I flew to Stavanger and found our way to Hjelmeland, the area that my grandfather came from and we were fortunate to stay on the farm our ancestors lived on. The current owners showed us around the area. The photo was taken where we hiked to see the full Foss farm below us. The current owner's father, who is 95, knew the story of the Foss family, so he spent time telling us about that era of time. All we could say of our time there was that it was AMAZING!!



A few days later, our distant relative from Bergen drove down to pick us up and then drove us back to Bergen through the fjord country. It was wonderful to get to know him and see all the beautiful scenery along the way. While we were in Bergen, we were invited over for a family dinner. Oh my, the food was everywhere, we ate and ate! We visited into the evening hours and we all said that it seemed like we had known each other for years. Another PRICELESS moment!

This trip was truly a trip of a lifetime and one that we will talk about so often in the years ahead.

Thank you again for making it a magical trip for all of us!!



John Padan

On Saturday July 4, my wife Ronnie (Ragnhild Van Alstynne) and I spent a warm, dry, and cloud-free day visiting a site in Oslo not on the normal tourist route. Accompanied by a couple of family members, we made our way up the hills just east of downtown Oslo to Ekeberg Park.

This marvelous chunk of real estate features a new sculpture park, a fine restaurant, and an unusual view of the inner Oslo Fjord.

In the center of the photo below you can spot the rear of the iconic Opera House, with its “iceberg” floating nearby. After a bit more hiking up and down than we had bargained for, in order to see as many outdoor works of art as we could, we went to Aker Brygge to visit the new Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art.

The museum is located in an extension of the area of trendy restaurants which have been part of the harbor scene for many years; now there are many, many more dining choices. We lunched at one of the new restaurants, outdoors of course, and thoroughly enjoyed the parade of pleasure boats, people sun-bathing, and children playing in the water at a small beach near the museum.

A few days prior to the orientation/dinner, Ronnie’s brother Torgeir and I took a helicopter tour over Gran. It was a real thrill to see the town, nearby farms, and the Route 4 construction from the air. Ronnie declined the opportunity to share in the ride. Later, I was reminded of that aerial perspective when at Dalsnibba and at the Stalheim Hotel.

This was my twelfth visit to Norway. I am still in awe at the beauty of the scenery. I hope that my wife and I see some of you folks again, perhaps at some future meeting of the lag.



Barb Schmitt

My husband Pete and I came to Hadeland two days before the tour started to visit my new-found Rya relatives, Ragnhild Lindstad and Kari Lindstad Mack who I had met one evening in Minneapolis in 2011. These two incredible women took us all over Hadeland to meet relatives

and visit farm sites. They met us at the airport and whisked us off to Ragnhild's beautiful house in Lunner where we stayed for two nights. The time we spent with Ragnhild and Kari was our favorite time of our entire trip to Norway. We met more Rya relatives in 2 ½ days than I knew existed which was so much fun and all of them were totally delightful and so hospitable. Two visits were exceptional highlights:

First on the agenda was a visit to Haga in Lunner – the house my great-great grandfather, Gudmund Haga, built in about 1867, before immigrating to America in 1871. I'd seen it from the outside two times (in 2005 and 2010) but total strangers now own the house (and have since 1887) so I had never been inside. But Ragnhild knew the owners and had lined up our visit. We were welcomed by Petter Erik Haga and his wife Gerd Gjørvad. I came with an old photo of the house that showed Petter Erik's ancestors in the foreground. Petter Erik went into the house and came out with the same photo! Stepping into this house was an incredible experience for me! Petter Erik & Gerd explained the family lived in one big room with half used for living quarters and half for a kitchen. It had a massive white fireplace. They have lovingly restored this room using the original wood (which had turned black from soot from the fireplace) and shored up the ceiling which was falling down. They explained the middle room on the first floor was where "the woman that came with the house" had lived. I told Petter Erik and Gerd that "woman" was my great-great-great grandmother, Anne Gudmundsdatter Haga (1816-1889)! I had been told by Haga relatives that Anne had lived in her son Gudmund's house, so when it was sold, she was to be provided for by the new owners (an odd concept to us Americans), but to hear them verify this story was amazing. (Gerd later gave me copies of documents regarding the sale of the house in 1887 that stated "Anne Gudmunds-datter Haga, retired woman" could live in the lower middle chamber until she died). We then had coffee and a lively visit and we left Haga knowing we had new friends in Lunner.

Wednesday, before joining our Hadeland Lag tour, we visited Rya relatives Per Marius Frøislee and his new wife Aud for brunch. We had



Per Frøislee and Barb holding a photo of her gr-gr-grandmother's 1916 funeral

met Per when we visited in 2005 and he had even put up the Norwegian flag in the yard to welcome us this time. (Ragnhild said that was a big deal). Per and Aud are living in the house where my great-great grand-mother Eli Rya was born, and they had a box of old photos for us to look at. I pulled out a photo of my great-great-grand-mother Eli's funeral in Northwood, ND in 1916, and Per and I took a photo of us both holding that picture – indeed we are relatives! Per told Ragnhild and Kari information about the house in Norwegian and they interpreted (which I recorded thank heavens because I was in such “awe” of the experience I never would have remembered everything he said). He shared that Eli's mother, Kari Grua (1812-1895), liked things to be orderly, inside and outside. I have never heard anything about her. He had stories I never would have learned had I not visited Hadeland. The visit was over all too soon as it was time to join the Hadeland Lag group tour and see what experiences were lined up for us, but I couldn't imagine anything could beat the 2 ½ days we had just spent getting to know our Rya relatives.



Saundra Skrove

The evening after we arrived in Trondheim, after dinner my daughter Jackie and I walked to the train station to scope it out and buy tickets for the following morning's trip to Verdal. Ole Gamme had arranged for us to meet Skrove relatives and see where my grandfather was born.

We boarded the train the next morning with anticipation, not realizing what an amazing day was in store. The train took us through HELL, yes, that is really a town in Norway (later we would go through PARADISE, so it all balanced out). The one-hour train ride was enjoyable and passed quickly. In Verdal we were greeted by three wonderful people with broad smiles and big hugs. Joar Nissemo is a high school teacher and Norwegian genealogist, his wife Inger and Inger Johanne Skrove are all relatives. We were very excited and seems everyone was talking at once, except Inger Skrove, who just passed some Norwegian questions through Joar.

Our first stop was the Stiklestad Museum and church. Sainted King Olav died in battle in the year 1030. The altar piece in Stiklestad *Kirke* is said to have been built

above the stone against which Olav died. Jackie and I touched the stone, which remains behind the altar today, and are thus supposed to be blessed with good fortune.

More importantly to us, this was the church where my Grandfather Anton Skrove was baptized and confirmed. Viewing the altar and very ornate baptismal font was indeed the highlight of my entire trip!

Every year on *Olsok* (July 29th) the play, *Spelet om Heilag Olav* (the story of St Olav) is performed in the amphitheater at Stiklestad. At the top of this theater there is a statue of Olav the Holy on his horse. I found the God of Viking Fertility quite amusing.

This very soulful and profound visit to Stiklestad was followed by "coffee" at Inger Johanne Skrove's very warm and inviting home. "Coffee" consisted of the real



With Joar Nissemo and Inger Skrove

thing, served with cream and sugar, and about a dozen other Norwegian goodies including lefse, flat bread, donuts and so much more. After this heart-warming visit and an exchange of gifts, we were taken on a tour of my great grandfather's farmstead and my great grandmother's just up the hill.

Story has it that my great-grandparents would meet in the woods on the hill between the two

farmsteads and thus my Grandpa Anton Skrove was conceived. Joar really enjoyed relating this story and it certainly added to the fun and joyful excursion we were having. We also visited the site where my Grandma Skrove's home had been and took rocks from what had been the foundation of that home.

We had told Joar that we needed to be back at the station at 4:30 to catch our train back to Trondheim and he kept saying "but you must stay longer." Our last stop was his and Inger's home, a beautiful farm on a scenic hillside. There was a house for sale on their road and Joar encouraged me to buy it and stay. I wished I could! Joar finally realized we 'did' need to catch the train and thus drove 70 mph over the hills and valleys — laughing all the way and adding his Norwegian shout which I can't recreate on paper, but will always resonate in our hearts and minds --- until we return again. Yes, I

do want to return and spend more time with these special people. Maybe on July 29th of 'some' year to be determined!



Anne Sladky

Rather than join the lag's extended tour, I arrived a few days early so I could see the places where my father's family had lived. My mother's parents were both Hadelanders, but my dad's family hailed from Telemark, Buskerud, and Valdres/Nordre Land.

I rented a car at the airport and thanks to GPS, I was able to navigate right up to Ole and Helga Gamme's driveway. After a good chat and a great lunch, I was off to Telemark.

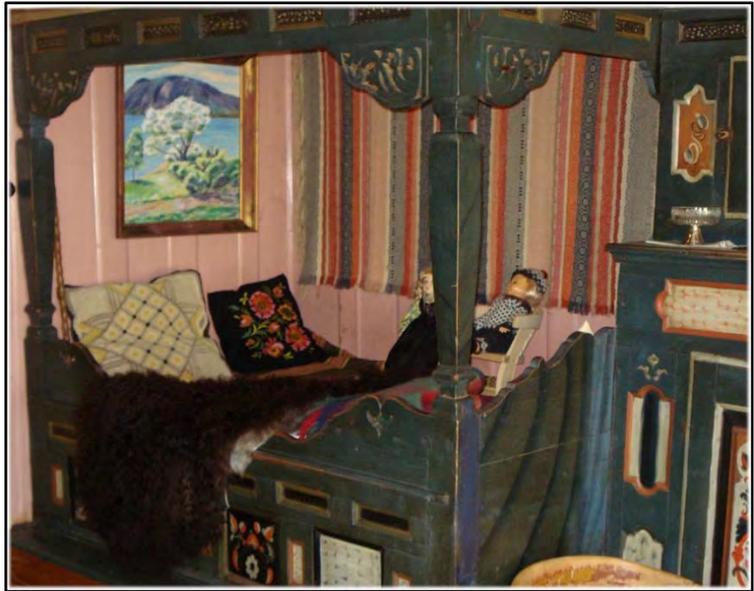
The next two days were spent in the good company of two very generous locals who made all the arrangements for me to visit a dozen farms in Kviteseid, Mo and Fyresdal. The first settlers in the community where I grew up named the township Moland. Walking through the Moland cemetery in Fyresdal, Telemark, I felt right at home ... most of the names I found were etched into my own life memories (and the tombstones at my family church outside of Moorhead, Minnesota).

My Telemark ancestors all arrived in America more than 150 years ago, but I felt an unexpectedly profound connection to the mountains and valleys that were their Norwegian homes. More than one of my foreparents lived in the mountains that surround Lake Bandak, and I found a beautiful poster of a photograph of a hawk in flight over the lake. It is now framed and hanging on the wall in my living room. It reminds me every day of Telemark's breath-taking scenery and the farms I visited there.

I was greeted by my 4th cousin at the large farm (by Norwegian standards) where my great-great-grandfather Mikkel grew up. As he talked, I felt the hair on my neck stand up: the cadence of his speech and mannerisms combined with a remarkable family resemblance reminded me of my six great-uncles and more than one of my cousins. I was amazed to learn that the room in their home that has been maintained as it was in 1820 was actually Mikkel's room until 1845, when he inherited another of his father's farms. To see the bed where he slept, the rosemaled chest where he kept his clothes, and the stone corner fireplace that kept him warm at night was an incredible experience.

From Telemark I went on to Buskerud where I was able to visit the farms where

my great-grandmother's ancestors lived. Her paternal grandparents came to America in 1842, but the house and farm buildings in the high mountain meadow they called home were still standing, although in disrepair. It was a rainy, foggy day - gloomy - but the melody created by the rushing creek, the birds, light rain falling on the grass and the rustle of the wind through the trees made



Mikkel's Room

me feel in my bones the joyful music that was so much a part of my great-great-great-grandfather's life story; he was a well known hardanger fiddler. This place touched my soul like no other.

After the lag's time in Hadeland, I spent a few more days in Norway. Ole and Helga brought me to the last farm on my list, where another of my great-great-great grandparents had lived with their three children until they left in 1850. It was another remote farm, high on a mountain above the Etne River valley. We had a picnic on the 'porch' of the stabbur that the farm book said had been built about 1800. One last chance to actually touch and experience a part of the life my Norwegian ancestors left behind.

My time in Norway was an unforgettable journey into my heritage.



A Day in June

Gerd Nyland wrote this poem in Norwegian, translated it into English and read it during our visit to Nes Church.

I would like to take the June day with me
into the rainy days of November and the dark cold days of January,
the sun shining brightly on the hills and fields in the valley,
the birch trees that filter rays of sun
down on buttercups, daisies and violets.
through shivering tender light green leaves.

I want to hold on to a day in June
and remember all the flowers of early summer,
the pink ones, the blue ones, the yellow and the purple,
I want to remember all the different shades of green,
the straws that sway in the meadow in the summer breeze
below blooming bush and white legged birch.

I want to hold on to a day in June
And remember the fragrance of newly cut hay,
the smell of the soil, the lilacs and the wild roses.
I want to remember the chirping of birds in the top of the pine tree,
the sound of the running creek and the sight of swans through the valley
on their way to make nests by the fjord.

I would like to bring that June day with me
into gray November fog and short, ice cold January days,
the light and bright summer evenings,
the bluish sky of the summer night that surrounds meadows and hills,
and I want to keep in my heart the invincible
belief in a new beginning that the June day inspires in me.

© 2015 Gerd Nyland
reprinted here with her permission



Junidagen

Jeg vil ha junidagen med meg inn i novemberregnet og januarkulda, sollyset, blomsterenga, den spirende kornåkeren og bjørka som siler solstråler ned på soleie og prestekragebakker.

Jeg vil holde fast ved junidagen og huske hundekjeksblondeslør, åkersennepsborder og silkestrå som svaier i sommerbris ved lilla St. Hansblomst og frodige lupiner, stolte innvandrere, rosa, hvite og blå.

Jeg vil holde fast ved junidagen og minnes angen av nyslått høy, duften av jord og dagfiol, lyden av fuglekvitter i furukrona, den sildrende bekken og synet av svaner på flukt mot en fjern fjord.

Jeg vil ha junidagen med meg inn i trist novembertåke og iskalde, korte januardager, den lange, lyse sommerkvelden, sommernattas blågrå himmel over den spirende åkeren, og junidagens ukuelige livsvilje.



© 2015 Gerd Nyland
reprinted here with her permission

