

NEWS FOR DESCENDANTS OF EMIGRANTS FROM THE TELEMARCK REGION IN NORWAY
 VOLUME XXVI NUMBER II NOVEMBER 2019

The mission of Telelaget of America is to enable members to learn about and gain an appreciation of the history, culture, and customs of their ancestors from the Telemark region of Norway.

**Telelaget's 2020 Vision of Norway
 July 27 — August 9**



Plans are being made for our 2020 trip to Norway encompassing Norway's Telemark region in addition to Trondheim, Lillehammer, Fagernes and Oslo. Mailings and emails giving the details of, and application for the trip were sent about a month ago. If you did not receive one, go to www.telelaget.com and click on 2020 Telemark Tour at the top of the page.

Brekke Tours is currently accepting early registrations. A fully refundable \$400 per person deposit (paid by check) will secure your place on the tour with registrations accepted on a first-come; first-served basis. Estimated tour pricing with air/taxes/and fuel will be \$4300 per person, with a single room supplement of \$695.

Highlights of the tour will be the Nidaros Cathedral, Maihaugen, Glass Cathedral, Lake Mjøsa cruise, Vemork, West-Telemark Museum, Vigeland Park, Viking Ship Museum, and much more. The Telelaget tour combines must-see landmarks with an opportunity to visit the places and, when possible, meet family members, of participants' Telemark ancestors. Members in the US work closely with our Norwegian liaisons to create a unique and meaningful experience.

Past Telemark tours have sold out quickly, so if you are thinking of going on this trip, get your deposit in to Brekke today!

It's not too early to start thinking about next summer's 7-Lag Stevne in Duluth! We'll be in the heart of the city at the waterfront with an up-close view of the Lift Bridge in the Harborside Convention Center, part of the Duluth Entertainment complex (DECC).

The *stevne* will begin on Wednesday, July 8, with an open house and a harbor dinner cruise. Thursday and Friday offers classes and entertainment, and a Telelaget activity will be planned for Friday. Saturday there will be classes followed by the banquet.

Duluth is a hot summer destination, and hotels run \$200 and up. We have a 'great' rate of \$169/night at the Holiday Inn connected by skyway to DECC, or an economical alternative — dorm rooms at UMD (about 15 minutes away).

The program will include Viking re-enactors, presentations about Norwegians on the North Shore and Viking settlements in places like Greenland, Iceland, and Newfoundland, craft classes and activities for students. On Sunday, enjoy a bus tour of the North Shore from 9-5.

ANNUAL MEETING



The Annual Meeting of Telelaget, held at the Holiday Inn in Fargo ND during our 2019 *stevne*, was attended by 38 Telelaget members.

Our membership on July 10, 2019 was 352. This includes 38 Lifetime Members.

Members were encouraged to visit our updated website, and to submit articles to both the website and the *Telesoga*. Elaine Nordlie, Tour Director gave information on the July 27 - August 9, 2020 tour to Norway.

There was one opening on the Board of Directors, and Madelyn Krinke was elected by a ballot vote to fill the three-year term.

Madelyn was born and grew up in Mora, Minnesota. She attended the University of Minnesota for one year, then married her high school sweetheart, Arlen, while he was a student at Concordia College, St. Paul, Minnesota. They have now celebrated their 53rd wedding anniversary.

Madelyn has worked as an administrative assistant most of her adult years. Working full time for administrators of city or schools while raising their family of five daughters consumed most hours of



Board Member Madelyn Krinke

that era. After the children were out of high school, she returned to school to get her Information Technology in Management degree from Concordia University while continuing to work full time.

Madelyn retired in 2014 and a few years later became interested in her family history. A friend showed her how to do the research and what a *lag* and *stevne* were. Madelyn attended her first *stevne* in 2018, just prior to taking a tour of Norway.

Madelyn's father's ancestry is documented in the Wrolstad Family History book back to the 1300s. She plans to join the 2020 tour to Norway and visit the Vralstad farm(s) and two other ancestors' home sites, one in Ringsacker and the other in the Hof area.

Her new goal is to complete her search for ancestors to the extent possible and to record the history in a book for her descendants and others in her family.

SPECIAL GUEST



Pictured above is Sharon Bohnsack with Elaine Nordlie. Sharon attended the program at our Telelaget annual meeting where Elaine gave a power-point presentation about artist Hebjørn Gausta. Gausta is Sharon's great-great uncle on her mother's side. He was a member of Telelaget of America and was featured in the March 1919 and May 2017 issues of *Telesoga*. Elaine showed us photos of many of his altar paintings. Marion J. Nelson wrote a booklet about him, *Herbjørn Gausta: Norwegian-American Painter*.



The membership year in Telelaget runs from January to December. **Check the mailing label on your *Telesoga* to see if your membership expires in 2019.** If it does, send your renewal today to Joan Niemiec, 4239 Harriet Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55409.



"TeleMail" is an email newsletter that is sent at least two times during the year. To keep updated on the Telelaget Tour, *stevne*, and other *lag*, Fellesraad and Norwegian interest happenings, be sure that we have your current email address on file! Send it to teleneews@telelaget.com.

The Post Office does not forward bulk-rate mailed pieces, even if you have a forwarding order on file with them. Telelaget mailings are sent bulk-rate, so you must send us address changes to continue to receive Telelaget mail. Please be sure to send us any change of address, including your winter address so that you will continue to receive Telelaget mailings.

In keeping with our by-laws, we will not share your email address with anyone else.

2019 Stevne Memories



The Telelaget Board of Directors met following the Annual Meeting to elect officers. Pictured above clockwise from left are: President Jeff Huset, Genealogist Darrel Johnson, Treasurer Jerry Burmeister, Vice-President Doug Framness, Tour Director Elaine Nordlie, Membership Joan Niemiec; Publication Editor Lila Burmeister, Secretary Sheryl Hove, Directors at Large



The Fargo Spelesmanslag, a Hardanger fiddle group from the Fargo/Moorhead area provided the entertainment at Friday evening's general session.

At Thursday evenings general session, Del Sanders played spoons with the Kringen Accordion Band. A photo of the band is in the *Telesoga*.



Madelyn Krienke and Sandy Gilbert.
Members of Telelaget visit prior to the Annual Meeting

Kids' Club

Be sure to read about the newly forming BarneLag (Kid's Club) in the *Telesoga*! If you have an interest in helping with the BarneLag coordination/ideas or would like information on getting the activity box for a different *stevne*, please contact Sheila Andorfer at sandorfer@sbcglobal.net

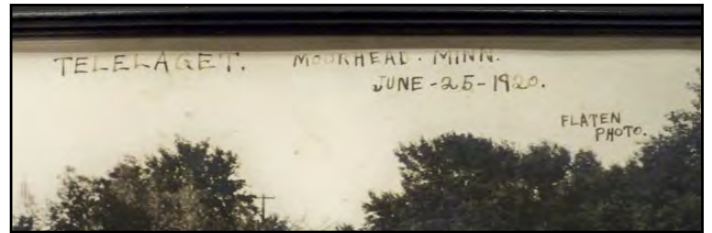


The Annual *Bunad* Parade at the Saturday Evening Banquet is always well-received.

A Stevne Surprise

We were very pleasantly surprised at this year's *stevne* when Telelaget member, Trygve Olson, brought in to the genealogy room a framed panoramic photo of a Telelaget *Stevne* held 99 years ago in Moorhead, Minnesota. This very historic photo was taken on June 25, 1920 by Moorhead's premier photographer O. E. Flaten and preserves the images of over 300 *stevne* attendees. It was quite interesting and also great fun to see all those people in the fashions of the day, most of whom were wearing their Telelaget *Stevne* souvenir ribbons. Our Historian, Jim Skree took several photos of the panoramic, and those sections are printed below.

In the center of the picture (top two photos on the next page) stands a row of ten women proudly attired in their Telemark, and other, *bunads*. Sitting on the ground to the far right (bottom center on the next page) are four fiddle players with instruments in hand. Imagine how much fun they must have had visiting, listening to music, dancing, eating, hearing various speakers, and just in general



Caption written on top of the panoramic photograph.

soaking in what must have been a powerful and koselig Telemark vibe!

There was nothing written on the back, so no identifications of any of the people, except for the fact that John Haugo and Joran Olson each found their grandfathers on the photo. John Haugo's grandfather is in the center of the first photo in the bottom row on this page. He's the tall one that looks like John with short dark tie, watch chain on front of pants, and hand in pocket. Joran's grandfather is in the bottom center section on the next page. He is in the back, tall with dark hair and



mustache and *stevne* ribbon on left lapel. He stands in line with the second fiddler in that section.

It is next to impossible at this late date to make any identifications, except for a few well-known members and perhaps members of the board whose pictures have been preserved.

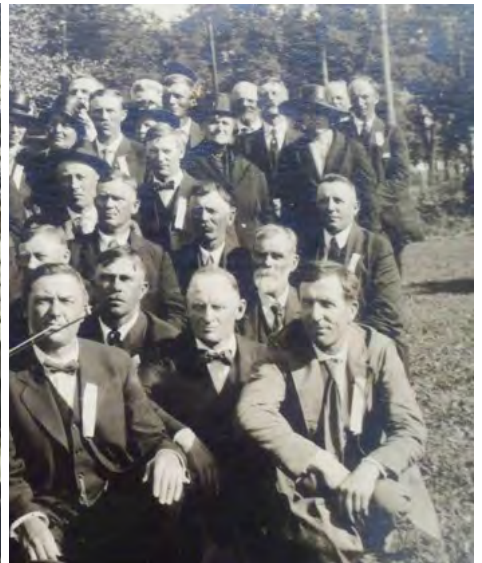
Jim Skree knew that the man sitting on the ground in front of the women in *bunads* (second photo, top row below) looking straight to the left with mustache and goatee, and a white kerchief in his pocket, is Edwin Studlien, an officer in the Telelaget from the Buffalo River Settlement. Even though his roots were not in Telemark, he obviously gained access by living in a Telemark settlement and by being married to Ingeborg Roholt, a *Telemarksjente* (Telemark girl) from Vrådal.

Webmaster Anne Sladky said it would be nice if this photograph could be scanned by the folks at NAHA. They have a collection of panoramic photos taken at early 20th century *bygdelag* functions and are asking for more. They can be viewed online and are of a very good quality.



1920 Telelaget Stevne panoramic photo, flanked by Joran Olson and Trygve Olson

If any of you out there know the whereabouts of any photographs or memorabilia, especially Telelaget Stevne ribbons, we would very much like to hear about them. When it comes to Telelaget history, these items are priceless. Please contact Telelaget Historian, Jim Skree: jimskree@gmail.com or (507) 896-3709.



WELCOME new members

Welcome to the following new members who have joined since May 2019:

Char Brekke, Grand Forks ND
Jim Dietz-Kilen, Urbandale IA
Robert Helgeson, Fort Myers FL
Carole Kettwick, Buffalo Cntr. IA
Larry Norris, Dallas TX
Deborah Shadd, Cohasset MA
Paul Thompson, Cheverly MD
Val Brekke, McIntosh MN
Peter Jacobson, Detroit Lakes MN
Naomi Nowland & Scott Johnson,
Clear Lake IA
Stan Ragnes, Plymouth MN
Catherine & Chris Roser,
Rose Creek MN
Kathleen Schuhmacher, Waverly IA
James & Kathleen Secora,
Hoffman Estates IL
Rolf Stang, St. Albans NY
Dawn Heimer, LaCrescent MN



There are a number of pages and groups on Facebook that can give you great information and photos about Telemark and Norway. Access by entering the name in the search field at the top of your Facebook page. You are welcome to post and comment on all of these sites. Click on "See Translation" in any post to instantly translate to English.

- **Telelaget of America**
- **International Telemark**
- **Telemark Heritage & Genealogy**
- **Norwegian Genealogy**
- **Visit Telemark**
- **I Love my Norwegian Heritage**
- **Norwegian-American Genealogy Help Here**



www.telelaget.com

The Telelaget website contains a wealth of information for descendant of Norwegian-American settlers to learn about the land, customs, and lives of their Norwegian families from Telemark. We would like to collect current and historic photos from each of the areas of Telemark. If you have photos from your travels, would you send two or three of them to Sandy Gilbert at sandyfgilbert@msn.com? Please be sure to label each photo with its location and your family name(s). We will likely only include one photo from each farm or town along with a photo of the local church so send the one you think is best!

Our webmaster recently gave us the following statistics regarding the use of our website, between April 2018 and April 2019. 1,548 different visitors made 3,064 visits, viewing 7,780 pages. 86% reached the site by direct link, 7% via a search engine and 7% from another site, most often Fellesraad or Facebook. The most popular pages were *What's New* and *Genealogy Homepage*, and most popular sections were *Telemark*, *Genealogy*, *Lag* and *Pioneers*.



Recommended Reading

One of the stops on Telelaget's *Vision of Norway* Tour will be Vemork, the hydroelectric power plant, where the Nazis produced "heavy water" for their atomic bomb experiments. Our visit includes your choice of a guided tour of the recently-opened heavy water cellar, or an (easy hiking) Saboteur Hike in the Hardanger Plateau to the Saboteur's cabin.

An excellent book to prepare for either of these options is *Winter Fortress: The Epic Mission to Sabotage Hitler's Atomic Bomb* by Neal Bascomb. The book is based on a trove of top-secret documents and never-before-seen diaries and letters of the saboteurs.

We will be hearing about the *Bonde* (Farmers) revolt while we are in Flatdal, and we will also enjoy a presentation by a local silversmith at the Gaustablikk hotel. Our Telelaget website contains several articles on these two topics. Go to www.Telelaget.com and click on "History & Traditions" under "Points of Interest" in the left column. From there, click on "The *Bonde* Revolt in Hjartdal in 1540" or "Telemark Silver."

Clicking on "Telemark, Norway" under "Points of Interest" will lead you to many more interesting topics about Telemark.



• Telelaget of America is a 501(c)(3) organization making your donation tax deductible. Donations to Telelaget can be used in a number of ways, including books for our library, repair of books in our collection, offsetting printing and mailing costs, and more.

• **Thrivent Choice** Dollars can be directed to Telelaget of America! If you are a Thrivent member and would like to direct your Choice Dollars, call 800-847-4836 and say "Thrivent Choice" or go to www.thrivent.com & click on "Making a Difference".

• When you shop on **Amazon**, start at smile.amazon.com. and select Telelaget. Amazon donates 0.5% of your eligible purchases to Telelaget. AmazonSmile is the same Amazon you know. Same products, same prices, same service.

Thortvedt Family Subject of Research by Vest Telemark Museum

by *Telegaet Historian, Jim Skree*

A very ambitious project which Shelley Jerviss and I have been peripherally involved with concerns the Vest Telemark Museum (previously called the Lårdal Museum, next to the Eidsborg Stave Church) regarding the Buffalo River Settlement, about eight miles east of Moorhead, which was featured in our very first issue of *Telesoga* back in 1909. The VTM director, Dag Rorgemoen, and public program coordinator, Tilman Hartenstein, came to the midwest area in March stopping at Vesterheim Museum in Decorah to do some research, so Shelley I met them there.

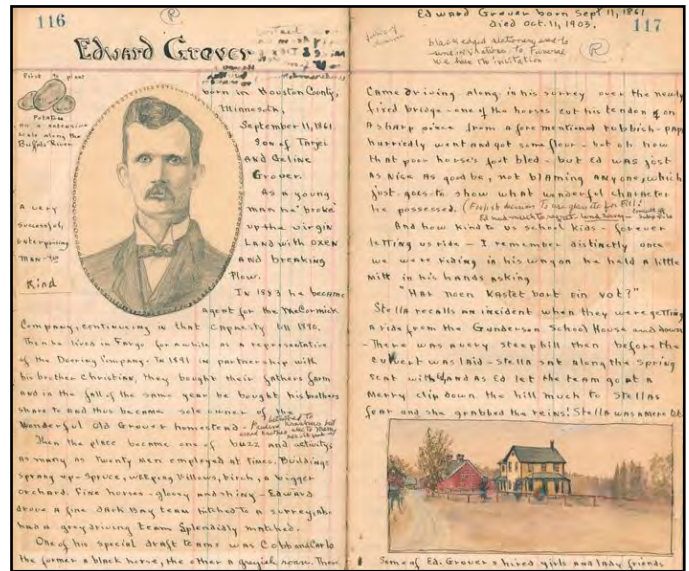
The focus of their research and planned exhibition will be on the large, extended Gjeitestad/Gedstad and Tortveit/Thortvedt (siblings) family who came from Fyresdal to Houston, Minnesota (in Houston County) in 1861. The VTM guys wanted to gather information about the pioneer's lives and where they lived in rural Houston



Dag Rorgemoen & Tilman Hartenstein of the Vest Telemark Museum, at the Stone Church near Houston, Minnesota

before migrating up to the Red River Valley, settling along the Buffalo River in 1870 and 1871. They were the first in that area and together with those that followed for the next several years the settlement became Houston's largest Norwegian colony. Those pioneers built their own church, later called Concordia, and regard the Stone Church Congregation back in Houston (whose church they also help to build) to be their "Mother Church." The following day, Shelly and I took the guys on an extended tour of that church, and they were very intrigued by all the familiar names in the cemetery.

The Thortvedt branch will be representative of all the pioneers in the Buffalo River settlement, since they above all others kept such extensive and detailed records about their lives, from the 400 mile trip from Houston to Moorhead and subsequent years building up their farms, to taking great pleasure and satisfaction in being a part of a very successful immigrant community composed almost



"Old Biography" by Orabel Thortvedt. Top portion of pp. 116&117.

exclusively of Norwegians from Fyresdal and Vrårdal in West Telemark.

Levi Thortvedt and several of his daughters kept diaries and journals much of their lives and also wrote history. Daughter, Orabel, was especially prolific and being an accomplished artist, she also richly illustrated many of her writings. The family archives, recently donated to the Historical and Cultural Society of Clay County, located in the *Hjemkomst* Center at Moorhead, contains hundreds of early, identified photographs, and the diaries, journals, scrapbooks, etcetera, take up 50 feet of shelf space. Really a mind-blowing collection!



Vest Telemark Museum-Main Building opened in 2012.

Dag Rorgemoen has been the director of the VTM since 1999 and has seen the Museum through many changes and improvements, not the least of which was an architecturally striking expansion of the main Museum building. The opening is scheduled for some time in 2020, and we're all looking forward very much to seeing what the folks at Vest Telemark Museum will do with all the treasures they have surely discovered on their research trip to the Midwest.



The *Telesoga* is written by you — the members of Telelaget of America. We welcome your stories telling us what you have found out about your family members who have connections to Telemark.

Some of the board members of Telelaget have also developed a list of articles we felt would be of interest to our general readership. If you would like to write about one or more of the topics below, please contact our editor, Lila Burmeister, at lilajsb@gmail.com. There is no monetary payment for your writing, but you will receive five copies of the *Telesoga* to share with family and friends.

1. Grandmother's walk at the *Hardangervidda* plants, photos, saboteur history
2. Hikes on the *Hardangervidda*
3. Gaustablikken Resort history
4. Christmas/Easter customs in Telemark
5. Skiing in Telemark
6. History of the Sando Jewelry shop in Rjukan and an explanation of the jewelry shapes
7. Recipe corner — 1 per issue
8. Reindeer facts
9. Wedding customs in Telemark: music, locations, jewelry, fashions through the years
10. History of Scandinavian shops in the Midwest
11. History of East Telemark *bunad*
12. History of West Telemark *bunad*
13. Select one of the churches built by people from Telemark in the US and report on it
14. History of each Norwegian College in the US and in Telemark
15. Ole Bull
16. The fishing industry in Norway
17. Wooden boats in Norway
18. Ibsen's home and history in Skien
19. Forestry in Telemark
20. Rjukan stores
21. Community flags in Telemark
22. Discuss early maps of Telemark
23. Highlight the historic inns and hotels in Telemark
24. Greenleaf Lutheran Church, Harmony MN and other Norwegian congregations in the US

Submit your articles via email (lilajsb@gmail.com) or snail mail to Lila Burmeister, 7410 159th Street NE, Atwater MN 56209. If you would like help refining and polishing your article, there are several members who are happy to assist.

Telelaget has several items for sale. We published a three-volume set of Norwegian-American history books. The first volume focuses on Norwegian history and its people, Telemark emigration, and settlement history in general. Volume II is a collection of histories and stories gathered by Torkel Oftellie from Telemark settlements in the Midwest. Volume III includes settlement histories from Northern Minnesota, North Dakota, and Washington.

Telelaget to America:
Volume I – Emigration;
Volume II – Settlements;
Volume III – Settlements, Biographies,
& Telemark Lore.

\$20 each or \$50 for the series.

Telelaget of America celebrated their 100th Anniversary in 2007 and published ***Telelaget, The First One Hundred Years***. The contents of this volume includes the history of the *bygdelag* & *stevner*, the history of board members and translator, the *Telesoga* and *TeleNews*, group tours to and from Norway, and Telelaget's age of technology. The cost of the book is \$20, or it is free for a limited time to new lifetime members!

A Year on Haugo Farm — \$20.

Author Ingebjørg Draugedal tells of her life as a girl growing up on a Telemark farm during the Nazi occupation.

Back issues of the *Telesoga* are available for \$5.00 per issue, and a DVD containing the complete set of all *Telesoga* printed from 1909 through 2017 is \$30.00.

Mugs and miniature Telelaget *fane* (flag) are available for \$5.00 each, and totebags are \$10.00 each.

These items can be purchased on the website or by contacting Shelley Jerviss, email smjerv@goacentek.net, tel: (507) 459-2143, mail: P. O. Box 292, Houston MN 55943. Each of them would make great gifts — for Christmas or any time!

