

Discovering Family History

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A Caveat or Three...

- Starting this process isn't particularly easy. If it were, you wouldn't be here.
- Tracing Norwegian roots *can* be particularly difficult.
- I'm presuming you have access to ***and*** a decent working knowledge of how to use a personal computer.

Norwegian Emigration

- Starts in 1825 and reaches its peak in 1880s
- Migration
 - Internal: from southern Norway to the north
 - External: starts in south and southeast; moves up the west coast; and then to the north
- Early emigration (before 1875)
 - mostly families, often farm owners
 - usually not destitute: early travel wasn't cheap
 - tended to move to the same U.S. destination

Norwegian Emigration

- Later emigration (1875-1915)
 - More individuals
 - Often pre-paid tickets from U.S.
- Settlement Patterns: Chronological
 - New York, Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, Dakotas, Montana, Canada
- Ships/Arrivals
 - Non-Scandinavian owned
 - Most left from Liverpool
 - Many sailed directly to Quebec or Nova Scotia
 - Ellis Island (1892-1954) not very useful

Norwegian Names

- Until late 1800s, changeable patronymics
- Farm names, but changed with a move
- Naming children:
 - Oldest son = paternal grandfather
 - Second son = maternal grandfather
 - Oldest daughter = paternal grandmother
 - Second daughter = maternal grandmother
 - Next child after deceased spouse/parent
 - Next child after deceased sibling

Norwegian Names

- Americanized names
 - Aslaug = Ellen
- Non-standard spellings
 - Wiken = Vigen
- Family members with different last names
 - John A. Dahl and Ludwig Anderson
- Changing last names back and forth...
 - Ole T. Anfinson = Ole Torkelson

Norwegian Language

- Learn enough for databases/bygdebøker
 - fylke/amt = county
 - førenamn = first name
 - etternavn = last name
 - bønder = farm owner
 - huseman = cotter/tenant
 - kone = wife
 - barn = children
 - gift = married (ugift = single)

Local History

- New counties and name changes
 - Polk - > Red Lake - > Pennington
- Townships have numbers before they have names
 - Township 153 = Smiley

Getting Started

- Genealogy software
- *Norsk-Engelsk Genealogical Dictionary*
- RootsWeb: be careful
- Ancestry.com: buy a subscription or find a research institution (library, archives, etc.) with a subscription.
 - Start with U.S. only: not much added for Norway in the worldwide subscription

Now what?

Work backwards
from
what you know!

Census Records

- Get *close* to a birthdate
- Latest full federal release is 1930
- Mistakes and illegible writing
- Families often live close to each other
- 1890 Federal Census: Burned in 1921
- MN Territorial Census: 1849-1905
 - 1885, 1895, 1905 for northwest MN

Census Case Study: Melvin Torkelson 1900

TWELFTH CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES. 1900. SCHEDULE No. 1.—POPULATION.

State Minnesota County Chisago Supervisor's District No. 7 Sheet No. 7-21-01
 Enumeration District No. 320

Township or other division of county Richbury Name of Institution Richbury Ward of city Richbury
 Name of incorporated city, town, or village, within the above-named district, enumerated by us on the 1st day of June, 1900, Richbury Enumerator P. Englebert 3649

INMATE	SEX	AGE	RELATION	PERSONAL DESCRIPTION	MARRIAGE			CITIZENSHIP	EDUCATION			PREVIOUS MARRIAGE
					Married	Never	Widowed		None	Some	All	
11119	Male	27	Head	Swedish	Married	Never	Never	11119	None	Some	All	0
11120	Female	25	Wife	Swedish	Married	Never	Never	11119	None	Some	All	0
11121	Male	23	Son	Swedish	Never	Never	Never	11119	None	Some	All	0
11122	Female	21	Daughter	Swedish	Never	Never	Never	11119	None	Some	All	0
11123	Male	19	Son	Swedish	Never	Never	Never	11119	None	Some	All	0
11124	Female	17	Daughter	Swedish	Never	Never	Never	11119	None	Some	All	0
11125	Male	15	Son	Swedish	Never	Never	Never	11119	None	Some	All	0
11126	Female	13	Daughter	Swedish	Never	Never	Never	11119	None	Some	All	0
11127	Male	11	Son	Swedish	Never	Never	Never	11119	None	Some	All	0
11128	Female	9	Daughter	Swedish	Never	Never	Never	11119	None	Some	All	0
11129	Male	7	Son	Swedish	Never	Never	Never	11119	None	Some	All	0
11130	Female	5	Daughter	Swedish	Never	Never	Never	11119	None	Some	All	0
11131	Male	3	Son	Swedish	Never	Never	Never	11119	None	Some	All	0
11132	Female	1	Daughter	Swedish	Never	Never	Never	11119	None	Some	All	0
11133	Male	0	Son	Swedish	Never	Never	Never	11119	None	Some	All	0
11134	Female	0	Daughter	Swedish	Never	Never	Never	11119	None	Some	All	0
11135	Male	0	Son	Swedish	Never	Never	Never	11119	None	Some	All	0
11136	Female	0	Daughter	Swedish	Never	Never	Never	11119	None	Some	All	0
11137	Male	0	Son	Swedish	Never	Never	Never	11119	None	Some	All	0
11138	Female	0	Daughter	Swedish	Never	Never	Never	11119	None	Some	All	0
11139	Male	0	Son	Swedish	Never	Never	Never	11119	None	Some	All	0
11140	Female	0	Daughter	Swedish	Never	Never	Never	11119	None	Some	All	0
11141	Male	0	Son	Swedish	Never	Never	Never	11119	None	Some	All	0
11142	Female	0	Daughter	Swedish	Never	Never	Never	11119	None	Some	All	0
11143	Male	0	Son	Swedish	Never	Never	Never	11119	None	Some	All	0
11144	Female	0	Daughter	Swedish	Never	Never	Never	11119	None	Some	All	0
11145	Male	0	Son	Swedish	Never	Never	Never	11119	None	Some	All	0
11146	Female	0	Daughter	Swedish	Never	Never	Never	11119	None	Some	All	0
11147	Male	0	Son	Swedish	Never	Never	Never	11119	None	Some	All	0
11148	Female	0	Daughter	Swedish	Never	Never	Never	11119	None	Some	All	0
11149	Male	0	Son	Swedish	Never	Never	Never	11119	None	Some	All	0
11150	Female	0	Daughter	Swedish	Never	Never	Never	11119	None	Some	All	0

- Richbury should be Smiley
- Mathea = Mathew in ancestry.com
- Wife is naturalized when husband is until 20th century
- Previous records in list: father and father-in-law

Birth Records

When no attending physician or midwife, then the parents must make this return in writing. See instruction on Back.

PLACE OF BIRTH
 County of *Bell* STATE OF MINNESOTA
 Division of Vital Statistics 1194

Township of
 or
 Village of Reg. District No. No. in Registration Book *264*
 (Above numbers to be filled in only by local registrar or his deputy.)

City of *Bemidji* (No. St. Ward....)

FULL NAME OF CHILD *Erik Arold Saaf* (If child is not yet named, make supplemental report as directed.)

SEX OF CHILD <i>boy</i>	Single <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Twin <input type="checkbox"/> Triplet <input type="checkbox"/>	and	Number in order of birth <i>2</i>	Legitimate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> illegitimate <input type="checkbox"/>	DATE OF BIRTH <i>Dec. 17, 1911</i> (Month) (day) (year)
FULL NAME <i>Erik Algot Saaf</i>	FATHER	FULL MAIDEN NAME <i>Lorentina Regina Olson</i>	MOTHER		
POST OFFICE ADDRESS <i>Bemidji</i>		POST OFFICE ADDRESS <i>Bemidji</i>			
COLOR OR RACE <i>white</i>	AGE AT LAST BIRTHDAY <i>30</i> (Years)	COLOR OR RACE <i>white</i>	AGE AT LAST BIRTHDAY <i>32</i> (Years)		
BIRTHPLACE (STATE OR COUNTRY) <i>Sweden</i>		BIRTHPLACE (STATE OR COUNTRY) <i>Norway</i>			
OCCUPATION <i>laborer</i>		OCCUPATION			
NUMBER OF CHILD OF THIS MOTHER <i>first</i>			NUMBER OF CHILDREN OF THIS MOTHER, NOW LIVING <i>2</i>		

CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDING PHYSICIAN, MIDWIFE OR PARENT
 I hereby certify that I attended the birth of above child, (and that it) occurred on 19..... M.
 Cross out words which do not apply.

(Signature) *Gusa Remick* Dated *Bemidji* 19..... Address *Bemidji*
 (Attending Physician, Midwife, Father, Informant)—Cross out words which do not apply.

What steps have been taken to prevent ophthalmia neonatorum?

Filed *12-28 1911* *J. A. Ward* Address *Bemidji*
 Registrar

- MN Birth Index: 1935-2002
 - Recent family (later than 1930 census)
 - Mother's maiden name
 - Full birth date
 - Birth county
- Birth Certificates
 - Parents' full names/birth places
 - www.health.state.mn.us/divs/chs/osr/birth.html

Death Indices

- MN Death Index
 - 1908-2002
 - Recent family (later than 1930 census)
 - Mother's maiden name
 - Full birth/death date
- SSN Death Index
 - Month/year only
 - Last residence
 - Last benefit
 - State where SSN was issued

Minnesota Death Index, 1908-2002 about Melvin Olaf Torkelson	
Name:	Melvin Olaf Torkelson
Birth Date:	6 Sep 1899
Death Date:	18 Feb 1982
Death County:	Pennington
Mother's Maiden Name:	Stene
State File Number:	004187
Certificate Number:	004187
Certificate Year:	1982
Record Number:	2070330

Death Certificates

- people.mnhs.org/dci
- \$9.00 each
- Parent's full names/birth places

Cemeteries / Obituaries

Torkelson	Margit	4/11/1875	10/23/1952	77	Clearwater - RL			
Torkelson	Mathea S.	7/8/1869	12/29/1943	74	EG	1	7	6
Torkelson	Melvin O.	9/6/1899	2/18/1982	82	St. Pauli			
Torkelson	Mildred	7/5/1919	2/28/2005	85	Hegland		100	
Torkelson	Nere	4/6/1922	9/13/1977	55	Clearwater - RL			
Torkelson	Norval	9/19/1913	12/31/2004	91	Hegland		100	
Torkelson	Obert	5//1944	11/4/1944	0	Clearwater - RL			
Torkelson	Ole	4/3/1866	10/18/1950	84	EG	1	7	7
Torkelson	Ole	12/6/1871	7/13/1936	64	Clearwater - RL			
Torkelson	Oscar B.	/1914	8/9/1984	70	Clearwater - RL			

- Cemeteries
 - Birth/death dates
 - Good for wife's first name, if unknown: look for contiguous plot numbers
- Obituaries
 - Online: ancestry.com (trftimes.com)
 - Request from local newspaper with exact published date, if possible
 - Gold mine? White wash?

Military Records

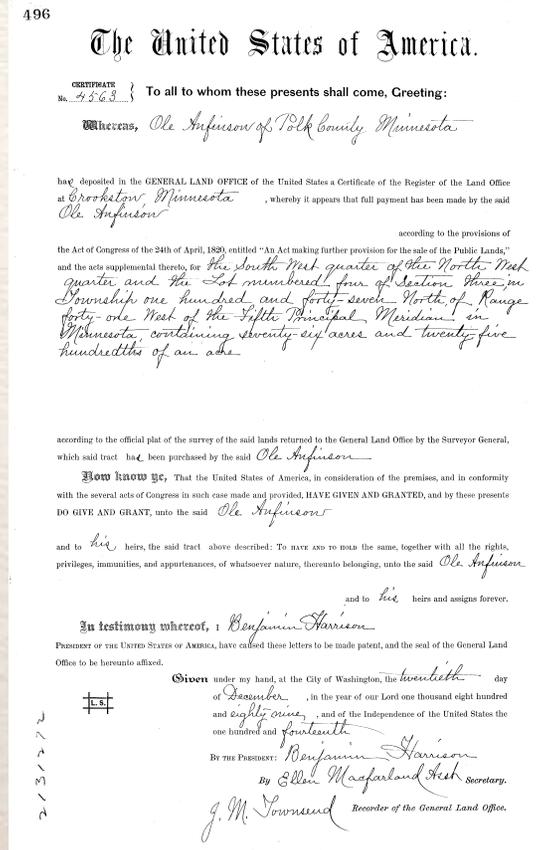
REGISTRATION CARD
 22-4-22 C
 SERIAL NUMBER: 633 | ORDER NUMBER: A-995
 1. NAME: *Marvin Olaf Sorhelson*
 2. FURNISH HOME ADDRESS: *Hayes Cunningham Minn.*
 3. AGE IN YEARS: *20* | DATE OF BIRTH: *Sept 6 1898*
 RACE: *White*
 U. S. CITIZEN: *yes*
 PRESENT OCCUPATION: *Iron Laboratory* | EMPLOYER'S NAME: *Geo. Henderson*
 PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS: *Calvin Cavaler P.D.*
 NEAREST RELATIVE: *Arthur Sorhelson, Mother*
 I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE READ THE ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE.
 P. M. G. O. *Marvin Olaf Sorhelson*

REGISTRAR'S REPORT
 DESCRIPTION OF REGISTRANT
 HEIGHT: *5 11* | BUILD: *Medium* | COLOR OF EYES: *Blue* | COLOR OF HAIR: *Light*
 23. Has person lost arm, leg, hand, eye, or is he obviously physically disabled? *no*
 I certify that my answers are true; that the person registered has read or has had read to him his own answers; that I have witnessed his signature or mark; and that all of his answers of which I have knowledge are true, except as follows:
John Sorhelson
 Date of Registration: *9-7-18*
 LOCAL BOARD for the COUNTY OF PENNINGTON STATE OF MINNESOTA THIEF RIVER FALLS, MINN.
 STAFF OF LOCAL BOARD:
 The stamp of the Local Board having jurisdiction of the area in which the registrant has his permanent home shall be placed on this box.

- WWI Draft Registration
 - 24 million
 - 98% of men under 46
 - Birthplace, full birth date, closest relative
 - Occupation and place of occupation
 - Physical description
- WWII Army Enlistment
 - Education, marital status, height, weight
 - Enlistment city/state
 - Birth year

Land Records

- Land Patents
 - glorerecords.blm.gov
 - state/county
 - land office: Crookston
 - copy of certificate
- Land Records
 - archives.gov/
 - genealogy/land
 - Order: eservices.archives.gov/
 - orderonline
 - use information obtained in glorerecords search



Immigration/Emigration

Border Crossings: From Canada to U.S., 1895-1956 about Anna R Saaf

Name:	Anna R Saaf
Arrival Date:	28 Oct 1910
Age:	6 years 6 months
Birth Date:	abt 1904
Gender:	Female
Race/Nationality:	Scandinavian
Ship Name:	Tunisian
Port of Arrival:	Quebec, Canada
Port of Departure:	Liverpool, England



[View original image](#)

BALCON, CABIN, AND STEERAGE ALIENS MUST BE COMPLETELY MANIFESTED.

LIST OR MANIFEST OF ALIEN PASSENGERS FOR THE UNITED STATES
 Required by the regulations of the Secretary of Commerce and Labor of the United States, under Act of Congress approved February 20, 1907, to be delivered
 S. S. *Tunisian* sailing from *Liverpool* *Oct 20 1910*

No. on List	NAME IN FULL		Age	Sex	Color of Hair	Color of Eyes	MARRIAGE	Nationality (Country of which citizen or subject)	Place of Birth	Last Permanent Residence		The name and complete address of nearest relative or friend in country whence alien came	Place of Destination
	Family Name	Given Name								Country	City or Town		
100774	Loren	Jennine	8	F	Bl	Bl	Married	Norway	Oslo	Sweden	Oslo	Brother, Sweden, Oslo	Oslo
100775	Brelli			F	Bl	Bl		Norway	Oslo	Sweden	Oslo	Brother, Sweden, Oslo	Oslo
100776	Christofferson	Carin	23	F	Bl	Bl		Sweden	Skövde	Sweden	Skövde	Brother, Sweden, Skövde	Skövde
100777	Christofferson	Carl	23	M	Bl	Bl		Sweden	Skövde	Sweden	Skövde	Brother, Sweden, Skövde	Skövde
100778	Christofferson	Carl	23	M	Bl	Bl		Sweden	Skövde	Sweden	Skövde	Brother, Sweden, Skövde	Skövde
100779	Christofferson	Carl	23	M	Bl	Bl		Sweden	Skövde	Sweden	Skövde	Brother, Sweden, Skövde	Skövde
100780	Christofferson	Carl	23	M	Bl	Bl		Sweden	Skövde	Sweden	Skövde	Brother, Sweden, Skövde	Skövde
100781	Christofferson	Carl	23	M	Bl	Bl		Sweden	Skövde	Sweden	Skövde	Brother, Sweden, Skövde	Skövde
100782	Christofferson	Carl	23	M	Bl	Bl		Sweden	Skövde	Sweden	Skövde	Brother, Sweden, Skövde	Skövde
100783	Christofferson	Carl	23	M	Bl	Bl		Sweden	Skövde	Sweden	Skövde	Brother, Sweden, Skövde	Skövde
100784	Christofferson	Carl	23	M	Bl	Bl		Sweden	Skövde	Sweden	Skövde	Brother, Sweden, Skövde	Skövde
100785	Christofferson	Carl	23	M	Bl	Bl		Sweden	Skövde	Sweden	Skövde	Brother, Sweden, Skövde	Skövde
100786	Christofferson	Carl	23	M	Bl	Bl		Sweden	Skövde	Sweden	Skövde	Brother, Sweden, Skövde	Skövde
100787	Christofferson	Carl	23	M	Bl	Bl		Sweden	Skövde	Sweden	Skövde	Brother, Sweden, Skövde	Skövde
100788	Christofferson	Carl	23	M	Bl	Bl		Sweden	Skövde	Sweden	Skövde	Brother, Sweden, Skövde	Skövde
100789	Christofferson	Carl	23	M	Bl	Bl		Sweden	Skövde	Sweden	Skövde	Brother, Sweden, Skövde	Skövde
100790	Christofferson	Carl	23	M	Bl	Bl		Sweden	Skövde	Sweden	Skövde	Brother, Sweden, Skövde	Skövde
100791	Christofferson	Carl	23	M	Bl	Bl		Sweden	Skövde	Sweden	Skövde	Brother, Sweden, Skövde	Skövde
100792	Christofferson	Carl	23	M	Bl	Bl		Sweden	Skövde	Sweden	Skövde	Brother, Sweden, Skövde	Skövde
100793	Christofferson	Carl	23	M	Bl	Bl		Sweden	Skövde	Sweden	Skövde	Brother, Sweden, Skövde	Skövde
100794	Christofferson	Carl	23	M	Bl	Bl		Sweden	Skövde	Sweden	Skövde	Brother, Sweden, Skövde	Skövde
100795	Christofferson	Carl	23	M	Bl	Bl		Sweden	Skövde	Sweden	Skövde	Brother, Sweden, Skövde	Skövde
100796	Christofferson	Carl	23	M	Bl	Bl		Sweden	Skövde	Sweden	Skövde	Brother, Sweden, Skövde	Skövde
100797	Christofferson	Carl	23	M	Bl	Bl		Sweden	Skövde	Sweden	Skövde	Brother, Sweden, Skövde	Skövde
100798	Christofferson	Carl	23	M	Bl	Bl		Sweden	Skövde	Sweden	Skövde	Brother, Sweden, Skövde	Skövde
100799	Christofferson	Carl	23	M	Bl	Bl		Sweden	Skövde	Sweden	Skövde	Brother, Sweden, Skövde	Skövde
100800	Christofferson	Carl	23	M	Bl	Bl		Sweden	Skövde	Sweden	Skövde	Brother, Sweden, Skövde	Skövde

- Border Crossings - Canada/U.S.: 1895-1956
- Swedish Emigration Records: 1783-1951
- NorwayHeritage.com: pre-1875

Bygdebøker

- UND Library's Special Collections
- Published by *fylke*
- Usually multiple volumes:
 - Community history
 - Genealogy / family histories
 - Photographs



Bygdebok: Sample

Ingeborg, i daglegtale var ho kalla Ingebør, og Sæmund hadde desse borna:

- *1. **John Severin**, f. 24/7 1878. Han reiste til Amerika og døydde der i ung alder.*
- *2. **Anna Olise**, f. 11/3 1880. Ho var eit par turar i Seattle, USA, men kom heim og stelte for mora så lenge ho levde. Sjølv vart Anna etter kvart sterkt plaga av leddgikt. Ho døydde i 1967 på Frei Aldersheim.*
- *3. **Kirsten Oline**, f. 1882. Ho døydde truleg tidleg.*
- *4. **Gurine Indiana Helene**, f. 1882. Ho døydde i 1883.*
- *5. **Peder Olaus**, f. 1884. Han tok over garden.*
- *6. **Sæmund Ingvar**, f. 15/10 1886. Han utvarsdra til USA og var gift der to ganger. Begge ekteskapa var barnlaver. Den etter kona hette Magda og var fra Nord-Norge. Dei bodde først i Chicago og seinare i Seattle.*
- *7. **Gustav Albert**, f. 4/12 1889. Han utvandra til Alaska. Da har vart pensjonist, flytta han heim og bygde heimen Soria Maria her i Sallaupen.*

Norwegian Archives

- Digitalarkivet.no
 - Census
 - Emigrants
 - Church registers
 - Many others
- 1801, 1865, 1870, 1900
- There's an English version, but you'll still need a little *norsk*.

Database selector | 1801 | 1865 | 1875 | 1900 | Digitised parish records

Database selector

Select database

County

Source category

Period

Or search for the database

Search criteria

The system is case sensitive
"Aker" will select Aker, but not Ullensaker, "aker" will select both.

**4181 databases has been found.
There are too many to be shown.
Reduce your selection.**

Stuck?

- RootsWeb: email addresses for contacts
 - Put your findings up there: people will contact *you!*
- Websites: webmasters and other contacts
- Professionals/Volunteers
- Newsgroups/Mailing Lists
- Norwegian American Genealogical Center
 - In-house research
 - Research by mail: \$20/hour for members

Most Useful Links

- <http://www.cyndislist.com/norway.htm>
 - comprehensive list of online resources
- <http://www.ancestry.com>
 - Often available at public libraries
 - Personal subscription: ~\$150/year
- <http://pvillage.org>
 - Pennington County cemeteries/obituaries

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HistoricStPauli.org

Etnedalen.org