



# SONS OF NORWAY

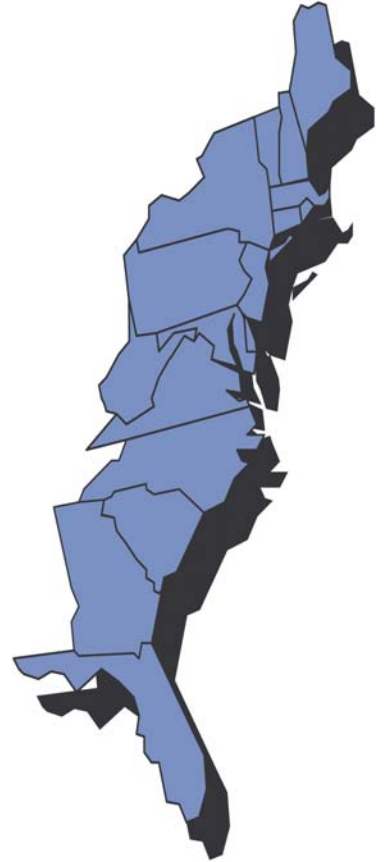
# 3D

 **Hurra for syttende mai!** 

May, 2009

## Third District Today Special Edition

### Culture, Heritage and History And more!!!



Welcome to a special edition of the Third District Today, the newsletter of the Third District of the Sons of Norway. District 3 has over 7,000 members in 52 Lodges on the East Coast of the United States from Maine to Florida. We offer the opportunity to make friends who share a common interest, learn and practice traditional Norwegian skills including:

- rosemaling
- woodcarving
- Norwegian dancing
- Norwegian language

while enjoying the many Lodge social functions and enjoying Norwegian delicacies.

Many of our lodges prepare their own newsletter and have their own websites. The articles in this Special Edition were taken primarily from the lodge newsletters. Kudos to all the newsletter editors, publicity directors and newsletter contributors; your efforts contribute to our great organization do not go unnoticed.

(Editor's Note: The banner at the top of the page courtesy of the Fram newsletter)



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Our new website ([www.sofn3d.org](http://www.sofn3d.org)) has been up for almost one month!!! Please take some to update the website for your lodge events and don't forget to submit your lodge history.

## Extract from local lodge newsletters

*One benefit of being Public Relations director is having the opportunity to see many of the great newsletters prepared by all of you! The content of the lodge newsletters is tremendous; what better time to share, than in May, the month Norwegians celebrate the signing of their Constitution. The following are just a sampling of the District Newsletter articles as well as other selected articles from various sources.*

## Constitution Day

*Excerpt from the Sarasota Pelikanen editor Roger Sean*

ON APRIL 10, 1814, REPRESENTATIVES from every region in Norway gathered in Eidsvoll to prepare a new and revolutionary constitution. The representatives aimed at replacing divine rules with the principle that popular power was vested in the people. Centuries of tradition and political practice were about to be overturned in Eidsvoll.

On May 17, 1814, following five weeks of deliberation, debate, and discussion, 112 men cast their votes for king and affixed their signatures to the new constitution of Norway. Their task completed, a delegation of sixteen men descended the stairs from the second-floor assembly room to the room where Christian Frederik anxiously awaited word of their meetings. He was handed the newly signed document and thanked the delegates for their trust and support in making him their king.

Although he was not present at the deliberations, Christian Frederik was not far away. His presence in the same building meant that he exerted a silent influence - and when the document was completed, it was as he wished it to be. It possessed features of a separation of powers, a strong monarchy, the establishment of a free press, and protection against torture, illegal searches, and *ex post facto* laws. It was, perhaps, the most liberal of constitutions, including that of the United States, which was one of the models for the delegates.

In the 1820s, Norwegian patriotism was on the rise. In 1820, the Society for Norway's Welfare held a competition for a national song, won by H.A. Bjerregaard's "Sønner av Norge." In 1821, the red, white, and blue Norwegian flag was flown for the first time. And, in 1824, the first May 17 jubilation was held in Oslo.

Actually, the tradition of May 17 started in Trondheim. It was started by Matthias Conrad Petersen, a Danish immigrant and editor of a Trondheim newspaper. Beginning in 1815, he put together parties and parades to celebrate the Constitution. In 1824, he proposed that May 17 should become the national day of celebration to mark the Constitution's "holy character" and its application to all Norwegians. For many people, especially the emerging middle class, the celebrations of May 17 became their first expression of political awareness.



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Through the celebration of May 17, the King and the people were united in one tradition that continued to evolve. The great author and playwright, Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, was instrumental in this evolution. In 1864, he wrote the lyrics for a new Norwegian national anthem, "Ja, vi elsker." In 1870, he helped initiate the Småguttenes tog (small boys' procession) and in 1889, the Barnetog (The children's procession).

Each generation must reflect on the importance of May 17, the fateful day in 1814 when 112 men met in Eidsvoll, changed the course of tradition and political practice, and gave the people of Norway a voice in their own political destiny. Matthias Conrad Petersen, in calling for May 17 to become a national holiday, declared, "Long live the Constitution." And, the tenets of the document and the liberty it embodies have withstood the upheavals of history to turn his declaration into a prophesy come true.

*Christian Frederik did not become king and the main street in Oslo is KARL JOHANS GATE (after a Swedish king). These excerpts are from an article by professor Terje Leiren, Univ. of Washington, Seattle.*

*Excerpt from Nor-BuNews editor Joyce Svendsen*

## **The Norwegian National Anthem**

In 1864, 50 years after the Constitution was written, Bjornstjerne Bjornson completed the lyrics of the Norwegian national anthem, "Ja, vi elsker dette landet" (Norway, Thine is our Devotion). Richard Nordaak composed the music. He was Bjørnson's cousin, and put music to several of Bjornson's poems, but composing the music to the national anthem is what gained him the most fame and recognition.

Norway, thine is our devotion.  
Land of hearth and home,  
Rising storm-scar'd from the ocean,  
Where the breakers foam.  
Oft to thee our thoughts are wending,  
Land that gave us birth,  
And to saga nights still sending  
Dreams upon our earth.  
And to saga nights still sending  
Dreams upon our earth.

Men of Norway be your dwelling,  
Cottage, house or farm  
Praise the Lord who all compelling  
Sav'd our land from harm  
Not the valour of a father  
On the battlefield  
Nor a mother's tears, but rather  
God our vict'ry sealed.  
Nor a mother's tears, but rather  
God our vict'ry sealed.



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Norway, thine is our devotion,  
Land of hearth and home,  
Rising storm-scarr'd from the ocean,  
Where the breakers foam.  
As our fathers' vict'ry gave it  
Peace for one and all,  
We shall rally, too, to save it  
When we hear the call,  
We shall rally, too, to save it  
When we hear the call.

*English translation by Christopher Norman (pre 1950)*

## **Culture**

*Excerpt from SunCoast News LODGE 3-562, editor Dean Brown*

### Norwegian Folk Dancing

*By Wendy Copeland, SunCoastCultural Director*

Norwegian folk dancing has become a very popular activity for Norwegian Americans. There are folk dance groups all over the US. Many of the dances that are done have been passed down from those who have come from the old country.

Norwegian dances can be divided into four groups: song dances (sangdanser), figure dances (turdanser), old time couple dances (gammeldanser), and provincial dances (bygdedanser).

Bygdedanser and the accompanying music, are normally seen as the oldest living musical traditions in the country. These traditions have mainly survived in the more isolated farming communities of the country. In the urban areas and along the coastline where the interaction with other cultural expressions was more intense, these dances have been left behind in favor of new popular dances ([gammeldans](#)) from Europe that came along with new instruments like the [Accordion](#).

The areas of bygdedans correlate mainly with the areas where the [hardanger fiddle](#) is used as the main folk music instrument. In the parts of Norway where the violin is more common, the traditional dances like [pols](#) and [springleik](#) have taken up more modern traits associated with the [gammaldans](#).

Two national competitions are arranged each year. The [National Folk Dance Music Festival](#) is a gammeldans competition, while the [National Contest for Traditional Music](#) encompasses the older bygdedans fiddling and singing tradition, folk dancing and mastery of older folk music instruments. Other major venues where folk musicians and audiences convene include the [Førde International Folk Music Festival](#), the [Telemark International Folk Music Festival](#) in Bø and the Jørn Hilme Festival in Valdres.



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Valdres Springar – an instructional video of the Valdres springar dance is available on YouTube, as are several other Norwegian Folk Dance Videos. Just go to [www.YouTube.com](http://www.YouTube.com) and search for Norwegian Folk Dancing.

Happy Dancing!

Traditional Norwegian [Dance Workshop](#) at Land of the Vikings May 29 - 31, 2009

*Excerpt from Fredriksten News editor RuthAnn Christophersen*

## The Hardanger Fiddle

The Hardanger fiddle (in Norwegian, *hardingfele*) is often called the national instrument of Norway. It is similar to the violin and each one is a handmade work of art. A typical *hardingfele* is beautifully decorated with mother-of-pearl inlay and black pen-and-ink drawings, called *rosing*. It is topped with a carved head of a maiden or, more frequently, of an animal, usually a lion. Its most distinguishing feature is the four or five sympathetic strings that run underneath the fingerboard and add echoing overtones to the sound.

The instrument probably originated in the area around the Hardanger fjord of Norway – whence comes the English language name. The oldest known fiddle, the "Jaastad Fiddle," was made by Olav Jonsson Jaastad from Ullensvaang and may date from as early as 1651. By the mid-1700s the Hardanger fiddle had become the dominant folk instrument in much of the inland south-central and western coastal areas of Norway. It is one of the few European folk music traditions that has survived the assaults of cultural change and foreign musical influences to continue nearly unchanged up to the present day.

Researchers in *hardingfele* music have notated over 1,000 distinct tunes, or *slåttar*, for the instrument. Each tune has a history and lineage, transmitted as carefully as the tune itself. The folklore





surrounding the music has also been handed down for generations. Stories abound of the prowess of particular fiddlers or dancers, of the connection of fiddling with the supernatural, and of the joys and sorrows of everyday life, all connected with the music of the Hardanger fiddle in a living web.

The primary purpose of the *hardingfele* is to be played for listeners, but especially for dancers. *Hardingfeler* can be played for *gammaldans* (waltz, reinlender/ schottis, pols, etc.), but are most associated with Norwegian *bygdedans* (regional dances) such as *springar* and *gangar*. These dances are found in areas such as Hallingdal, Telemark, Setesdal, Valdres, and on the west coast of Norway in Voss, Jølster, and Sogn.

<http://www.hfaa.org/Home/about-the-hardanger-fiddle>

## Heritage

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coat\\_of\\_arms\\_of\\_Norway](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coat_of_arms_of_Norway)



The Coat of Arms of Norway is a crowned, golden lion rampant holding an axe with an argent blade, on a crowned, triangular and red [escutcheon](#). Its elements originate from personal insignias for the [royal house](#) in the [High Middle Ages](#), thus being among the oldest in Europe.

[Magnus Barefoot](#) (1093-1103) was the first [Norwegian](#) king to use an heraldic [lion](#) in his standard. [Håkon the Old](#) (1217-1263) placed the lion on [escutcheon](#).<sup>[\[citation needed\]](#)</sup> In 1280 a [crown](#) and a silver [axe](#) was added to the lion

in King [Eirik Magnusson](#)'s insignia. The axe is the martyr axe of [St. Olav](#), the weapon said to have killed him in the [Battle of Stiklestad](#) in 1030.<sup>[\[citation needed\]](#)</sup>

The design of the Norwegian arms has changed through the years, following changing heraldic fashions. In the late [Middle Ages](#), the [axe](#) handle gradually grew longer and came to resemble a [halberd](#). The handle was usually curved in order to fit the shape of [escutcheon](#) (or the changing union [quarterings](#)) preferred at the time, and also to match the shape of coins. The halberd was officially discarded and the shorter axe reintroduced by royal decree in 1844, when an authorised design was instituted for the first time. In 1905 the official design for royal and government arms was again changed, this time reverting to the medieval pattern, with a triangular [escutcheon](#) and a more upright lion. The painter [Eilif Peterssen](#) was responsible for the design. The present design was introduced in 1937, but slightly modified with royal approval [20 May 1992](#).

The coat of arms is always to be displayed surmounted with the royal crown. During the political and constitutional conflicts of the late 19th century, republican anti-union liberal forces could use a uncrowned shield as an emblem, as can be seen on the banner of Kristiania Folkevæpningsamlag in the Oslo City Museum.<sup>[\[citation needed\]](#)</sup> During [World War II](#) the [Quisling](#) regime continued to use the lion coat of arms. In 1943 the design of the lion was modified, and the royal



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crown was replaced with an open medieval type of crown. The legitimate [Norwegian government](#) continued to use the coat of arms with the royal crown during [exile](#).

According to the rules of heraldry, any design is acceptable and recognizable as the arms of Norway, provided it fits the [blazon](#) "[gules](#) a lion rampant or, crowned and bearing an axe with blade [argent](#)".

The Norwegian official blazon: "Ei opprett gull-løve på raud grunn med gullkrone på hovudet og gullskjeft sylvøks i framlabbane".

The above article was taken from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coat\\_of\\_arms\\_of\\_Norway](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coat_of_arms_of_Norway)

## Norway's oldest Stave Church



Photo: Jiri Havran, Directorate for Cultural Heritage

The ground under the [Urnes stave church](#) is sinking, and this national treasure in Sognefjord has begun to sink at its northern end, reports Norway Post.

During the summer of 2008, researchers from Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) worked to determine how much the church could be lifted and stabilized without being ruined. At the same time, dendrochronologist Terje Thun took tree ring samples from the oldest wood. The samples confirm that the church was erected over a longer period in the 1130's.



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At the same time it was shown that a portion of the church, including the northern wall, with its spectacular carvings, was actually recycled material from another church that previously stood at the same spot. The youngest of these timbers were felled around year 1070. Based on the wood samples, it is concluded that The Urnes Stave Church is the oldest Norwegian Church that has been dated. Urnes stave church is exceptional among the 28 remaining stave churches in Norway as regards architecture and style history. The church is best-preserved stave churches.

The wooden church of Urnes stands in the natural setting of Sogn og Fjordane. The church is an example of very skilled craftsmanship and has exceptionally fine wooden carvings. It was once a private church for a powerful high-born family at Urnes. The builders were aware of international trends in architecture, and transferred these trends from stone to wood. The interior of the church is exceptionally richly decorated. Urnes church is protected according to the Cultural Heritage Act.

Urnes stave church is now being restored. The restoration will be finished in 2009. Meanwhile, the visitors of Urnes are offered an exhibition about the church.

Source: Gemini Spring 2009 / Norway Post / Directorate for Cultural Heritage ([Riksantikvaren](#))

## History

*Excerpt from Norumbega Tidende editor Bill Lund*

### THE FIRST NORWEGIANS IN AMERICA

The emigration of Norwegians to America began in 1825 with the arrival of the sloop *Restaurationen* from Stavanger bearing 52 passengers and crew seeking a new life in the New World. However, they were not the first Norwegians to settle on these shores. Two hundred years earlier a few individuals and families from Norway were living in the Dutch settlement called New Amsterdam, later to become New York City as we know it today.

Although earlier European navigators had explored the area for more than a century, it was the voyages of Henry Hudson in 1609 and the commercial interests of the Dutch East India Company that led to the founding of New Amsterdam in 1625. The legendary purchase of Manhattan Island from the Indians for approximately twenty-four dollars also occurred during this period, thus establishing legal possession of the land by the Dutch.

Colonization of New Amsterdam began in the spring of 1630 with the arrival of a Dutch ship and the disembarking of a party of fifty or more settlers, including eight or nine Norwegians. At the time both Norway and the Netherlands were maritime nations with their vessels and commercial interests ranging widely through the Western world and beyond. Thus a number of Norwegian mariners and their families were living in the Netherlands and several responded to offers from the Dutch India company to work as farmers or tradesmen in the new colony. Legal documents, including marriage records, deeds conveying land or other property, and court proceedings provide considerable information regarding these early settlers. Further, a number of detailed genealogical records of specific individuals make it possible to move through successive generations over more than two hundred years. In one instance a Norwegian couple, Roelof Jansen



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and his wife Anneke Jans, left their home in the Norwegian city of Marstrand, and emigrated to the Netherlands and from there went to America in 1630. They settled first on a farm near Albany and later moved to New Amsterdam where they were given sixty acres along what is today the East River in lower Manhattan. After the English displaced the Dutch by military conquest, the property was confiscated by the royal family and later, in 1705, transferred to Trinity Church. Subsequent generations, claiming to be the legitimate heirs to the property have repeatedly challenged the validity of that transfer without success.

It is estimated that over the years and extending well into the first quarter of the twentieth century nearly twenty law suits have been brought against Trinity Church in an effort to recover the property. It has also been the object of various schemes perpetrated by swindlers seeking to attract investors with hopes of sharing in the inheritance. As one writer describes it, Anneke and her husband Roelof Jansen could never have dreamed that what once had been their plot of land would become perhaps the most expensive piece of real estate on the entire continent and also, "a *cause célèbre* in the annals of American jurisprudence." Marriage between the Dutch and Norwegians in New Amsterdam was not uncommon. Perhaps the most celebrated was when Dutch landowner Jan Van der Bilt married Anneken Hendricks from Bergen, thus marking the beginning of one of the oldest and wealthiest families in America. From this same line came the Remsen and Rosenkrantz families, resulting from intermarriages which can ultimately be traced back to Norway.

Another of the early Norwegian settlers in New Amsterdam, who arrived in 1633, was Hans Hansen Bergen, also known as Hans Hansen Noorman, signifying his Norwegian origin. It is often suggested that what is today the largest and most populous county in New Jersey, and once a part of New Amsterdam, derives its name from that early settler or the Norwegian city, but that is merely conjecture.

The Andriessen family, originally from Fredrikstad, is especially well documented. Arriving in New Amsterdam in 1637, Albert Andriessen became a tobacco planter and later operated two sawmills, and was involved in numerous legal disputes resulting from his business dealings and relationships. Overall some fifty or sixty Norwegians are thought to have settled in America during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, prior to the beginning of the emigration movement in 1825. In some cases they came as families under contract with merchants or landowners. In others they arrived as sailors or tradesmen aboard Dutch or English ships, and chose to remain. Virtually all settled in New Amsterdam, under the Dutch, or in Boston, under the English. In any case their numbers were small, but over time their influence great. Who was the first to arrive and when may never be known. The earliest firm date seems to be 1631, when an English sea captain brought Hugh Gunnison to Boston. Gunnison later became a judge in the Massachusetts courts, and his ancestors spread from New England to the West where in Colorado a city, a river and a national monument all bear the Gunnison name. And so it was years later, when the flood of Norwegian immigrants arrived on the eastern shores and soon made their way to the plains of the Midwest and across the mountains and desert to Washington in the north and California in the south - "from sea to shining sea."

Richard C. Gilman  
Pasadena, California April 2009

Third District Today



## Mythology

*Taken from Southern Star's The Strand, editor Dirk Hansen*



## Njord and Skadi



***The mountain goddess Skadi was the daughter of the giant Thiazi whom the Aesir killed after he had stolen the golden apples of youth. She arrived at Asgard determined to avenge her father and punish the gods. The Aesir, hoping to placate her, offered her the pick of all the unmarried gods.***

In full armour Skadi must have made an impression upon the Aesir. Repenting the death of her father, they were eager to sooth her wrath by aiding in her request for a husband. But the gods make nothing easy for the giants or their offspring; a parade was carefully arranged in which only the gods' feet were visible.

Skadi picked the pair that were by far the cleanest, whitest and best-kept. She felt confident they belonged to Balder, the fairest of all the gods, desired by every woman, and on this basis she claimed her husband. Then the owner of the feet was made to reveal his identity. Instead of Balder, Skadi had chosen Njord, god of the sea, whose feet were pristine because the sea continually washed over them. At first, Skadi was taken aback, but she agreed to the marriage anyway. The partnership was a difficult one; Skadi was the daughter of a mountain giant, and longed to live in her peak-top sanctuary, but Njord did not feel comfortable anywhere but by the sea. Determined to fulfill their vows, they agreed to compromise by residing for nine nights in Thrymheim, Skadi's mountain castle, followed by nine nights at Noatun, Njord's coastal abode.

But this arrangement alternating between one location and the other, failed to satisfy either Skadi or Njord - each was desperately unhappy in the other's home. Njord could not bear the dark foreboding mountains, surrounded by the eerie sound of howling wolves, and Skadi could not tolerate the vast expanse of the sea and complained bitterly about the screeching of the gulls.

Eventually the two were forced to live apart; Njord remained by the seas while Skadi returned to the mountains, where she was often to be seen roaming the slopes, travelling about on skis or snow-shoes.





*Taken from Southern Star's The Strand, editor Dirk Hansen*

## **A SAGA OF KING KNUT**

A hundred years or more after the time of Alfred the Great there was a king of England named Canute [English name for "Knut"]. King Canute was a Dane; but the Danes were not so fierce and cruel then as they had been when they were at war with King Alfred. The great men and officers who were around King Canute were always praising him. "You are the greatest man that ever lived," one would say. Then another would say, "O king! there can never be another man so mighty as you." And another would say, "Great Canute, there is nothing in the world that dares to disobey you." The king was a man of sense, and he grew very tired of hearing such foolish speeches.

One day he was by the seashore, and his officers were with him. They were praising him, as they were in the habit of doing. He thought that now he would teach them a lesson, and so he bade them set his chair on the beach close by the edge of the water. "Am I the greatest man in the world?" he asked. "O king!" they cried, "there is no one so mighty as you." "Do all things obey me?" he asked. "There is nothing that dares to disobey you, O king!" they said. "The world bows before you, and gives you honour." "Will the sea obey me?" he asked; and he looked down at the little waves which were lapping the sand at his feet. The foolish officers were puzzled, but they did not dare to say "No." "Command it, O king! and it will obey," said one. "Sea," cried Canute, "I command you to come no farther! Waves, stop your rolling, and do not dare to touch my feet!"

But the tide came in, just as it always did. The water rose higher and higher. It came up around the king's chair, and wet not only his feet, but also his robe. His officers stood about him, alarmed, and wondering whether he was not mad. Then Canute took off his crown, and threw it down upon the sand. "I shall never wear it again," he said. "And do you, my men, learn a lesson from what you have seen? There is only one King who is all-powerful; and it is he who rules the sea, and holds the ocean in the hollow of his hand. It is he whom you ought to praise and serve above all others."





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President@sofn3d.org  
VicePresident@sofn3d.org  
Secretary@sofn3d.org  
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Counselor@sofn3d.org  
Youth@sofn3d.org  
Sports@sofn3d.org  
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Zone1@sofn3d.org  
Zone2@sofn3d.org  
Zone3@sofn3d.org  
Zone4@sofn3d.org  
Zone5@sofn3d.org  
Zone6@sofn3d.org

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