



# Finding an Ancestor's Place of Origin in Norway: a Case Study

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## OBJECTIVES:

You will learn how to find:

- a person in US immigration records
- places in 1972 postal guide
- a person in emigration records from Bergen
- home parish in FamilySearch wiki for Norway
- a person in 1900 census for Norway
- find a person in birth records
- confirmation records
- moving records
- a farm book

## Background:

Most Norwegians who emigrated did so between 1816 and 1930. The early records are passports issued by the police, they are valuable as they list name, age, place of residence, and date passport was issued. The regular ship list and emigration records will give name, places of residence and birth, age, year of birth, date of emigration, and usually destination. These records are available in a searchable database online at:

<https://digitalarkivet.no/en/>

## Bergen emigration:

Skipslister politimester, Pass, stykke 1, 1816-1822 (passports by the police)

- Pass for emigrasjon til Amerika, utstedt i Bergen 1842-1860 (Passport for emigration to America 1842-1860)
- Skipslister for Bergen-Quebeck, Canada 1865-1873 (Ship lists Bergen-Quebec 1865-1873)
- Skipslister for Bergen-New York 1873 (Ship lists Bergen-New York 1871-1873)
- Emigrants over Bergen 1874-1930 (Emigration from Bergen 1874-1930)

See also website: The Promise of America: <http://www.nb.no/emigrasjon/emigration>

## Getting started: Find the place-name where your ancestor lived.

If you know that your ancestor emigrated through the port of Bergen, he or she would most likely have come from an area around the west coast of Norway. By searching for the person in the databases for Bergen, you should be able to find the place where he or she came from. If a farm name was used as a last name of your person, you may be able to find the farm name in the 1972 Postal Guide where you will find the parish where this farm name is located.

<http://da3.arkivverket.no/cgi-win/WebBok.exe?slag=lesbok&bokid=nsf>

If you do not know the port where your ancestor came from, you may have to search additional sources to find the place where your ancestor lived, was born, or was married.

To find this information, you need an understanding of what records are available, both in the United States and Norway. As you search the sources discussed below, have these questions in mind:

- Was your ancestor in the U.S. by 1900, 1910, 1920, or 1930?
- Where did your immigrant ancestor reside in the United States?
- When did your ancestor emigrate?
- Did your ancestor emigrate alone or with someone?
- Did your ancestor emigrate as a child or as an adult?
- Was your ancestor married when he or she emigrated?

## Search American records:

Search American records to find out everything you can about your Norwegian ancestor.

- Talk to living relatives of your immigrant ancestor. Search for personal information in sources you may have at home or at the home of relatives, such as vital records, bibles, journals, letters, pictures, funeral home records, or obituaries.
- Search immigration records. These can be found by searching the passenger list for each port, as well as the Ellis Island and Castle Garden records online. See online passenger lists at [ancestry.com](http://search.ancestryinstitution.com/search/category.aspx?cat=112)
- Search the U.S. census for 1900, 1910, 1920, and 1930. These will list the year of immigrations as well as country of origin. This will help narrow your search to one year.
- Search other records of places where your ancestor lived in the United States, such as church records, court records, county histories, and phone directories.
- Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, online at <http://www.elca.org>
- Family History Library Catalog for Norwegian-American churches
- Naturalization records
- The Andrew Ansel Rowberg Collection at the (FHL) on microfiche.
- The Norwegian American Genealogical Center in Madison, Wisconsin  
<https://www.naha.stolaf.edu/>

## Norwegian-American records:

- Norwegian American Genealogical Center (NAGC) <http://nagcnl.org>
- Sons of Norway at <http://www.sofn.com>

## Emigration Records from Norway

If you still do not have a place-name and you only have a year of immigration from a U.S census, you will want to search the emigration records for each port in Norway for that year.

Look for your ancestor's name in the emigration records in these helpful Websites:

- Digitalarkivet (Digital Archives) <https://digitalarkivet.no/en/>
- Norway-Heritage <http://www.norwayheritage.com/>

The online emigration records for Norway are indexed and are in print that is easy to read, but since several individuals have entered the information, it does happen (not very often) that a person is left off. If this is the case, search the emigration records on microfilm.

## LDS SOURCES

- Scandinavian LDS Mission Index (names extracted from LDS mission records). Available on microfiche by last name, then first name. Fiche no. 6060482 then part no. 1-344.
- Clash of Cultures: the Norwegian experience with Mormonism, 1842-1920 by Gerald Myron Haslam. FHL 948.1 F2h 1984. List of early members Appendix I pgs. 123-141.

**To learn more, you may want to see: FamilySearch wiki for Norway**  
[https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Norway\\_Emigration\\_and\\_Immigration](https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Norway_Emigration_and_Immigration)

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