

GUDBRANDSDALSLAGET STEVNER HISTORY

1909 - Present

YEAR	PLACE	HISTORIC HIGHLIGHTS
1909	Minneapolis, MN	Group formed at Minnehaha Park in Minneapolis, MN and formally organized on Sept 12th, 1909
1910	Minneapolis, MN	Pastor Thorkveen first chairman - served until he died in 1923
1911	Minneapolis, MN	Elected consultant from each of the 14 parishes in Gudbrandsdal, Norway, plus regular officers
1912	Fargo, ND	\$200 appropriated for the erection of a Prillar-Guri monument at Kringen, Sel <u>Tour to Norway</u> - Pastor Thorkveen led group of 28 to Norway received Norsk flags from 14 Gudbrandsdal parishes - King Haaken VII conferred the Order of St. Olaf on Pastor Thorkveen
1913	Glenwood, MN	
1914	Minneapolis, MN	Over 50,000 Bygdelag members met at the Minnesota State Fair Grounds to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the signing of the Norwegian constitution on May 17, 1814 - American flags sent to Norway
1915	Fargo, ND	Over 2000 attended Stevne
1916	Eau Claire, WI	Over 2000 attended Stevne - Bygdelagenes Fællesraad formed - Lars P. Thorkveen was first secretary
1917	Willmar, MN	1000-1200 attended Stevne - American patriotism emphasized - collected money for the Red Cross
1918		No meeting during WWI
1919	Minneapolis, MN	Stevne moved from Fergus Falls to Minneapolis because a tornado ripped through Fergus Falls shortly before meeting
1920	Fergus Falls, MN	Presented self portrait to Lars Thorkveen which was sent to Lom. Pipe organ fund started for Sør-Fron Church - gave 9-10,000 Kroner
1921	Eau Claire, WI	2000 attended Stevne <u>Tour to Norway</u> - Pastor Thorkveen led group of 60 to Norway, King Haaken VII present at Hundrop - where they celebrated the 900th year since King Olaf (Olaf den Helige) marched down Gudbrandsdalen bringing Christianity to the valley - The American flag was given as a gift from the lag to all parishes in Gudbrandsdal
1922	Detroit, MN (Detroit Lakes)	
1923	Minneapolis, MN	3000 attended Stevne - Pastor Thorkveen died 26 Feb 1923 Pastor Casper Johnshoy stepped in as president and served 12 years - membership peaked at 3,700 during his reign
1924	La Crosse, WI	
1925	Minneapolis, MN	The Norse American Centennial - All Bygdelags met at the Minnesota State Fair Grounds to commemorate the arrival of the sloop Restauration in 1825. President Calvin Coolidge spoke. Thorkveen & Buslet Memorial Fund established with students receiving grants
1926	Fargo, ND	1500 attended Stevne
1927	Eau Claire, WI	
1928	Mankato, MN	
1929	Minot, ND	Folks in ND separated from the lag due to distance and some social issues. Fellesraad dwindled from 33 to 17 lags
1930	Minneapolis, MN	
1931	Fargo, ND	

ORGANISERET
(12th SEPT. 1909)



Prillar Guri Monument
Kringen, Sel, Norway



Eidvoll where the
constitution was signed



Sør Fron Church



Stone from Hundrop-
Dale Gudbrand Farm



YEAR	PLACE	HISTORIC HIGHLIGHTS
1932	Bemidji, MN	During the depression years of the 1930's there was little activity in the Lag movement, numbers never came back
1933		No record of a meeting
1934	Alexandria, MN	25th Anniversary of the Lag - Gov. Theodore Christianson spoke - grandfather was from Gausdal, Norway
1935	Webster, SD	
1936	Decorah, IA	
1937	Fergus Falls, MN	John Brondal impressed the group with his story telling
1938	Duluth, MN	
1939	Fargo, ND	Crown Prince Olav & Crown Princes Martha visited
1940	Alexandria, MN	
1941	Waupaca, WI	
1942		No meeting - Lag suspended activity during WWII
1943		No meeting - Gudbrandsdal suffered the horrors of the war
1944		No meeting - Most of the Lag leaders died during this period, only Erland Kummen survived
1945		No meeting. President Casper M. Johnshoy died
1946		Meeting canceled because of polio epidemic
1947	Minneapolis, MN	Very few attended this meeting - Pres Walter Johnshoy, brother of Casper, became president, but died in Sept
1948	Alexandria, MN	Olaf Viken elected president
1949	Fargo, ND	Combined Stevne with Nord Vestre Lag
1950	Montevideo, MN	Combined Stevne with Nord Vestre Lag - Play "Queen Aase from the Castle" - well attended meeting
1951	Eau Claire, WI	Motion to re-unite lags, but North Dakota declined
1952	St. James, MN	Pastor Jacob Tanner, evangelist for the ALC was the speaker
1953	Bemidji, MN	Memorial Service for Pastor Thorkveen who died in 1923
1954	Moorhead, MN	Årbok, Volume 24 published
1955	Duluth, MN	
1956	Fargo, ND	
1957	Glenwood, MN	
1958	Albert Lea, MN	
1959	Fargo, ND	50th Anniversary of the Lag - Pastor Ingvald & Mrs Skaare, Norwegian guests at Stevne
1960	Stoughton, WI	Lag visited the Norwegian community of Stoughton - group toured Little Norway near another Norwegian community of Mt. Horeb, WI
1961	Alexandria, MN	
1962	Rochester, MN	
1963	Roseau, MN	Combined meeting with Nord Vestre Lag
1964	Fargo, ND	
1965	Elbow Lake, MN	
1966	Benson, MN	Lag celebration held at Olaf Viken farm near Dawson, MN
1967	Fargo, ND	
1968	Fergus Falls, MN	Ludvig Berg, Sigurd Brenden & Arthur Mork elected to a committee to look into purchasing a banner - Ludvig was going to Norway and it was decided that he would look into buying a banner there
1969	Appleton, MN	Ludvig Berg reported that he didn't buy banner because the cost about \$600 - President John Hegge and Haakon Lunde went to Minneapolis, selected a banner that was made for the lag in Philadelphia which cost the lag \$203.56
1970	Westby, WI	Judge Lincoln Neprud had everyone out to his place one evening - attendees enjoyed themselves and continued to talk about the evening Voted that English could be used for secretary minutes

Historical 'Gotch Ya':

In 1948 Olaf Viken skipped the stevne business meeting in Alexandria, MN to go fishing. When he returned to the stevne he learned that he had been elected president. He served as president twice, a total of 16 years



War Memorial at Kvam



Thorkevén Tombstone, St. James, MN



Pastor and Mrs. Ingvald Skaare – 1959



Gudbrandsdalslaget Banner

YEAR PLACE

1971 Starbuck, MN

1972 Fargo, ND
1973 St. James, MN
1974 Fargo ND
1975 Moorhead, MN
1976 Minneapolis, MN
1977 Moorhead, MN
1978 Montevideo, MN
1979 Willmar, MN
1980 Westby, WI
1981 Windom, MN
1982 Marshall, MN
1983 La Crosse, WI

1984 Fergus Falls, MN

1985 Luverne, MN

1986 Albert Lea, MN
1987 Benson, MN

1988 Winona, MN

1989 Alexandria, MN

1990 Decorah, IA

1991 Montevideo, MN
1992 Alexandria, MN
1993 Brookings, SD
1994 La Crosse, WI
1995 Montevideo, MN

1996 Dexter, MN

1997 Granite Falls, MN

HISTORIC HIGHLIGHTS

Since the organization of the lag there had been a moment of silence in memory of the deceased - In 1971 the first memorial service held at a stevne, following the death of Judge Neprud, who was killed in a car accident

Historical Mystery: At the 1973 meeting John Ellefson reported that the lag banner was lost. Following the death of Judge Neprud in 1971, the banner couldn't be found. John and Gladys Prestegard had problems locating it. John went to all the dry cleaners in area and talked with Mrs. Neprud, but still no banner. It was a real mystery. Just before the 1973 stevne it was found in the Neprud basement.

Art Mork elected president in 1979

Hjordis Helgestad elected president, served 7 years

The constitution was translated into English by Hilma Fossum

Lag repaired Rev. Thorkevne's grave marker as his picture had been damaged

The first lag newsletter, named *Gudbrandsdalslag's Brev* was sent out before the

1983 stevne - Halvor Christensen & wife of Vinstra, Norway were guests at the

stevne (he carved our unique gavel) - the constitution was updated

Contributed money to the rebuilding of a stabbur originally built in Gudbrandsdalen,

Norway at Skogfjorden, near Bemidji, MN.

75th Anniversary of the Lag - President Hjordis Helgestad compiled anniversary

book - Anniversary buttons sold - Membership was approximately 300.

Lloyd George Melgard, dedicated lag leader died.

Tribute to Olaf Viken, an active member, who died - Leif Melgaard honored with a

National Heritage Fellowship Award in Washington D.C. - dues raised to \$5.00

Helen Lien elected president, served 6 years. Marilyn

Sorensen appointed lag genealogist. Beginning in 1987

membership increased with the insurgence of genealogy.

Beginning of a new event for the lag - a genealogy workshop

led by Marilyn Sorensen, Betty Strand, Barbara Hauger,

Gordon Strand and Blaine Hedberg

80th Anniversary of the lag - Genealogy workshop drew

large crowds - six microfilm/microfiche readers were

available for research - Gordon Strand was responsible for

acquisition, safely setting up readers in lab, fixing, trouble

shooting, transporting and storing readers - time devoted to

genealogy research increased from a few hours to two days;

Wednesday evening, all day Thursday and Friday morning

Genealogy collection expanded by the addition of printed

church books for Ringebu transported by Per Åsmundstad

from Ringebu, Norway - Arnfinn Kjelland assisted with Lesja
genealogy

Memorial read to King Olaf V who died on Jan 17, 1991

Trip to Norway cancelled - Artist Leif Melgard died

Evelyn Finnes elected president, served 7 years

Forty people registered for the genealogy room

"Ellis Island" presentation given by the Fjordland Lodge-

Sons of Norway, Brookings, SD

Membership almost 300, with 51 new members added

Genealogy research lab open Wednesday PM, all day

Thursday, and Friday until noon - 40 people researched in lab

Genealogy collection increased with lag purchase of the

Norwegian church microfilms for the entire area of

Gudbrandsdal

John Andrisen appointed Historian, until 2007 gathered,

organized, and preserved historic materials for the lag

Sixty people researched in the genealogy lab at the Stevne



Genealogist Marilyn Sorensen in lab



Microfiche machine used by many in lab



Historical Display

YEAR PLACE

1998 Westby, WI
1999 Decorah, IA

HISTORIC HIGHLIGHTS

Over 70 people researched in the stevne genealogy lab
Bygdelag Centennial - 1899-1999, sponsored by Bygdelagenes Fellesraad, an umbrella organization of the 32 bygdelags - as Fellesraad VP Marilyn Sorensen co-chaired program with Chris Skjervold
90th Anniversary of lag - John Andrisen compiled 90th Anniversary Booklet - developed historical display for lag
Y2K Heritage Fest, six hours of cultural immersion, chaired by John Andrisen. Took a field trip to Milan, MN
2000 Willmar, MN
2001 Starbuck, MN
Combined Stevne with Tronderlag
Gudbrandsdalslaget granted tax exempt status by IRS.
Lyle Elverud provided the leadership for the project.
2002 St. Paul, MN
Lyle Elverud became president. Combined Stevne with Tronderlag. Mildred Torgeson died, served lag for 28 years
2003 Sioux Falls, SD
First year of the Tre Lag Stevne, combining Gudbrandsdalslag, Trønderlag, and Nord Hedmark and Hedmarken Lags for annual stevne gatherings.

2004 Rochester, MN

Tre Lag Stevne, "*Celebrating the Norwegian Spirit*", toured SE Minnesota, keynoter, Paul Hasvold. Jim Olson began lag presidency

2005 Norway

Gudbrandsdal Genealogical Seminar - Jun 12-20/Cultural Heritage Tour - Jun 19-Jul 2, coordinated by Jim Olson and Marilyn Sorensen - 39 people went to Norway

2005 Fargo, ND

Tre Lag Stevne, "*Fulfilling the Dream*", visited Hjemkomst Center, in Moorhead, MN, keynoter Verlyn Anderson & banquet speaker, Hiram M Drache

2006 Salt Lake City, UT

Bygdelag research trip to Family History Library - Feb 26-

2006 Eau Claire, WI

Mar 4, coordinated by Elaine Hasleton & Marilyn Sorensen
Tre Lag Stevne, "*Following the Timber Trail*", toured Trempealeau Co sites, toured Chippewa Valley and Paul Bunyan Museums

2007 Norway

\$1000.00 grant received from Hanson Foundation for Årbok Genealogical Seminar in Oslo, Hamar and Gudbrandsdal, June 10-26, coordinated by Marilyn Sorensen & Jim Olson
Thirteen, a baker's dozen, participated

2007 La Crosse, WI

Tre Lag Stevne, "*Norwegians on the Move: Rivers, Roads and Rails*" - cruise on Mississippi River - special day at Norskedalen Nature and Heritage Center, Coon Valley, WI
Art Mork, our oldest member died at age 107 on Sept 12, 2007 - webmaster becomes board position Updated constitution and by-law changes adopted - Aug 2, 2007
Betty Strand reported membership of 300 in 29 states, plus Canada, Australia, and Norway

2008 Fergus Falls, MN

Tre Lag Stevne, "*Voices on the Prairie*" toured area sites, "*The Immigrants*" play presented by Norsk traveling group, keynoter Scott Wolter on the Alexandria Rune Stone - \$1000 grant received from Hanson Foundation for centennial tour

2009 Norway

Jubilee Tour of Gudbrandsdal - June 20-July 6 - coordinated by Jim Olson and Marilyn Sorensen - 13 went on the tour

2009 St. Paul, MN

Tre Lag Stevne, "*Butcher, Baker, Candlestick Maker* . *They were not all farmers*" - Tre Lag Stevne, S. St. Paul, MN
Gudbrandsdalslaget Centennial Celebration
Årbok, Volume 25, edited by Jim Olson, published, first yearbook since 1953
New Prillar-Guri pin & logo designed for 100th Anniversary by Jeff Anderson, son-in-law of lag archivist, Bob Olson



Bygdelag Program



Bunad's on parade at 2005 Ringebu Festival



Bunad's on parade at 2006 Eau Claire stevne



Prillar Guri statue in Otta



Garmo Stave Church at Maihaugen



YEAR PLACE**HISTORIC HIGHLIGHTS**

2010	Stevens Point, WI	Tre Lag Stevne, <i>"Looking Forward, Looking Back, Norwegian Spirit and Perserverance"</i>
2011	Sioux Falls, SD	Tre Lag Stevne, <i>"Telling Our Story"</i>
2012	Fargo, ND	Tre Lag Stevne, <i>"About Face! Our Legacy"</i>
2012	Norway	Gudbrandsdalslaget tour of Norway – "Celebrating the 400 th Anniversary of Kringen" – August 15 – 30 Participated in the Kringen Festival in Otta commemorating 400 th anniversary of Norwegian farmers defeating the Sinclair Clan (mercenaries of Sweden) at the Battle of Kringen. Lag members marched in the celebration parade.
2013	Oconomowoc, WI	Tre Lag Stevne, <i>"Stepping Stones"</i>
2014	Saint Cloud, MN	Tre Lag Stevne, <i>"Country Quilt"</i>
2015	Eau Claire, WI	Tre Lag Stevne, <i>"Staying in Touch: From Posten to Posting"</i>
2016	Norway	Gudbrandsdalslaget tour of Norway – "Exploring 21 st Century Norway" – June 19 – July 2
2016	South Saint Paul, MN	Tre Lag Stevne, <i>"Lasting Legacies: The Future of Our Past"</i>
2017	La Crosse, WI	Tre Lag Stevne, <i>"Where the Three Rivers Meet"</i>
2018	Austin, MN	Tre Lag Stevne, <i>"Norway Evolving"</i>
2019	Alexandria, MN	Tre Lag Stevne, <i>"Close Encounters of the Norwegian Kind"</i>