

# NORWEGIANS WORLDWIDE TUCSON CHAPTER NEWSLETTER – DECEMBER 2019

## SAVE THE DATE

**2019**

**15 December 2:00PM**

at

Lutheran Church of the  
Foothills

**2020**

**19 January 4:00 PM**

Ethnic Pot Luck at  
Tucson Women's Club  
6245 E Bellevue

December 2019

**15 December – Sunday**

**2:00 PM**

## ***Traditional JUL Party***

Lutheran Church of the Foothills  
5102 N Craycroft Rd, Tucson, AZ  
85718

Come and enjoy Norwegian Style

JUL with Rice Porridge

(whoever gets the ALMOND in  
their porridge get the prize- A  
marzipan pig)

Continued -----

Norwegian Christmas music

Freya's Sang will perform

Dance & Sing around the JUL Tree

Bring an unwrapped gift of a

Toy, or Gift card like McDonald's or  
i-tunes or cash to benefit

Casa De Los Nino's

***All members and non members  
welcome***



**NORDMANNS  
FORBUNDET  
NORWEGIANS  
WORLDWIDE**

**11 January 2020**

**Happy Norsk**

**Saturday 11:00 AM**

At Mona's Danish Bakery

4777 E Sunrise Dr # 113,  
Tucson, AZ 85718

**Happy Norsk will be ANY club  
members and non-members that are  
interested in just getting together at  
different Café's and pubs for a nice  
Time togethe once a month.**

We always welcome all people at  
our meetings and events who have  
an interest in the people and cluture  
of NORWAY

Vist us and Enjoy our company

## *Welcome New members*



Susan Swanson Swartz

Lois Coleman

Mary Underwood

Malinda F Briggs

Deborah DeCuir &

Susan Olsen

## *Members we lost in 2019*



Alfred Pabst

Joni Hansen

Audrey Williams

Ida Schenck

**It's time to RENEW your**

**2020 membership –**

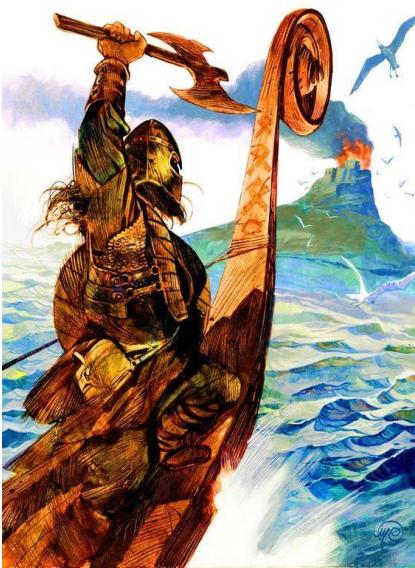
**in person or now online at**

**[www.norse-tucson.org](http://www.norse-tucson.org)**



Now that we are near 2020, let's look back and learn a little about our Ancestors the VIKINGS !.....

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE VIKINGS



Invaders, predators, barbarians – the Vikings are often portrayed merely as one-dimensional warriors whose achievements include little more than plundering and raiding. But from where did the Vikings originate and were they really violent, godless pagans?

In 793, terror descended on the coast of Northumbria as armed raiders attacked the defenceless monastery of St Cuthbert on Lindisfarne. The terrified monks watched helplessly as the invaders made off with a haul of treasure and a clutch of captives. It was the first recorded raid by the Vikings,

seaborne pirates from Scandinavia who would prey on coastal communities in north-western Europe for more than two centuries and create for themselves a reputation as fierce and pitiless warriors.

That image was magnified by those who wrote about the Viking attacks – in other words, their victims. The Anglo-Saxon cleric Alcuin of York wrote dramatically of the Lindisfarne raid that the “church was spattered with the blood of the priests of God, despoiled of all its ornaments... given as a prey to pagan peoples” and subsequent (mainly Christian) writers and chroniclers lost few opportunities to demonise the (mainly pagan) Vikings.



Yet, though they undeniably carried out very destructive and violent attacks, from small-scale raids against churches to major campaigns involving thousands of warriors, the Vikings formed part of a complex and often sophisticated Scandinavian culture. As well as raiders they were traders, reaching as far east as the rivers of Russia and the Caspian Sea; explorers, sending ships far across the Atlantic to land on the coastline of North America five centuries

before Columbus; poets, composing verse and prose sagas of great power, and artists, creating works of astonishing beauty.

The Vikings originated in what is now Denmark, Norway and Sweden (although centuries before they became unified countries). Their homeland was overwhelmingly rural, with almost no towns. The vast majority earned a meagre living through agriculture, or along the coast, by fishing. Advances in shipping technology in the 7th and 8th centuries meant that boats were powered by sails rather than solely by oars. These were then added to vessels made of overlapping planks ('clinker-built') to create longships, swift shallow-drafted boats that could navigate coastal and inland waters and land on beaches.

Exactly what first compelled bands of men to follow their local chieftain across the North Sea in these longships is unclear. It may have been localised overpopulation, as plots became subdivided to the point where families could barely eke out a living; it may have been political instability, as chieftains fought for dominance; or it may have been news brought home by merchants of the riches to be found in trading settlements further west. Probably it was a combination of all three. But in 793 that first raiding party hit Lindisfarne and within a few years further Viking bands had struck Scotland (794), Ireland (795) and France (799).

Their victims did not refer to them as Vikings. That name came later, becoming popularised by the 11th century and possibly deriving from the word vik, which in the Old Norse language the Vikings spoke means 'bay' or 'inlet'. Instead they were called Dani ('Danes') – there was no sense at the time that this should refer only to the inhabitants of what we now call Denmark – pagani ('pagans') or simply Normanni ('Northmen').



### When and where did the Viking begin to raid?

At first the raids were small-scale affairs, a matter of a few boatloads of men who would return home once they had collected sufficient plunder or if the resistance they encountered was too strong. But in the 850s they began to overwinter in southern England, in Ireland and along the Seine in France, establishing bases from which they began to dominate inland areas.



Left bottom- The remains of a Viking longship found at Gokstad in South Norway, c1920.

The raids reached a crescendo in the second half of the ninth century. In Ireland the Vikings established longphorts – fortified ports – including at Dublin, from which they dominated much of the eastern part of the island. In France they grew in strength as a divided Frankish kingdom fractured politically and in 885 a Viking army besieged and almost captured Paris.

In Scotland they established an earldom in the Orkneys and overran the Shetlands and the Hebrides. And in England an enormous Viking host, the micel here ('great army') arrived in 865. Led by a pair of warrior brothers, Halfdan and Ivar the Boneless, they picked off the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of England one by one. First Northumbria, with its capital at York, fell to them in 866, then East Anglia, followed by the central English kingdom of Mercia. Finally, only Wessex, ruled by Alfred, remained. A pious bookworm, Alfred had only become king because his three more martial older brothers had sickened or died in battle in previous Viking invasions.

In early January 878 a section of the Great Army led by Guthrum crossed the frontier and caught Alfred by surprise at the royal estate at Chippenham. Alfred barely managed to escape and spent months skulking in the Somerset marshes at Athelney.

It looked like the independence of Wessex – and that of England generally – might be at an end. But against the odds Alfred gathered a new army, defeated the Vikings at Edington and forced Guthrum to accept baptism as a Christian. For his achievement in saving his kingdom he became the only native English ruler to gain the nickname 'the Great'.

For 80 years England was divided between the land controlled by the kings of Wessex in the south and southwest and a Viking-controlled area in the Midlands and the north. Viking kings ruled this region until the last of them, Erik Bloodaxe, was expelled and killed in 954 and the kings of Wessex became rulers of a united England. Even so, Viking (and especially Danish) customs long persisted there and traces of Scandinavian DNA can still be found in a region that for centuries was known as the Danelaw.



Above- Silver penny of King Alfred. The reverse of this coin bears a monogram made up of the letters of LVNDONIA (London), possibly to commemorate the recovery or restoration of London after its occupation by the Danes.

By the mid-11th century united kingdoms had appeared in Denmark, Norway and Sweden and the raids had finally begun

to subside. There was a final burst of activity in the early 11th century when royal-sponsored expeditions succeeded in conquering England again and placing Danish kings on the throne there (including, most notably, Canute, who ruled an empire in England, Denmark and Norway, but who almost certainly did not command the tide to go out, as a folk tale alleges). Vikings remained in control of large parts of Scotland (especially Orkney), an area around Dublin and Normandy in France (where in 911 King Charles the Simple had granted land to a Norwegian chieftain, Rollo, the ancestor of William the Conqueror). They also controlled a large part of modern Ukraine and Russia, where Swedish Vikings had penetrated in the ninth century and established states based around Novgorod and Kiev.

### **Where did Vikings settle?**

This was not the full extent of the Viking world, however. The same maritime aggression that had caused them to plunder (and ultimately conquer) settled lands also led them to venture in search of unknown shores on which to settle. Vikings probably arrived in the Faroes in the eighth century and they used this as a stepping-stone to sail further west across the Atlantic.

In the mid-ninth century a series of Viking voyages came across Iceland and in the year 872 colonists led by Ingólf Arnarson settled on the island. They established a unique society, fiercely independent and owing no formal allegiance to the kings

of Norway. It was a republic whose supreme governing body was, from 930, the Althing, an assembly made up of Iceland's chief men which met each summer in a plain beside a massive cleft in a ring of hills in the centre of the island. It has a strong claim to be the world's oldest parliament.



From Iceland, too, we have other vital pieces of evidence of the inventiveness of Viking societies. These include the earliest pieces of history written by Vikings themselves in the form of a 12th-century history of Iceland, the *Íslendingabók*, and the *Landnámabók*, an account of the original settlement of the island (with the names of each of the first settlers and the land they took).

But more important – and surprising for those who view of the Vikings as one-dimensional warriors – is the collection of sagas known as the *Íslendingasögur* or Icelandic Family Sagas.



Their setting is the first 150 years of the Viking colony in Iceland and they tell of often-troubled relations between the

main Icelandic families. Alliances, betrayals, feuds and murders play out against the backdrop of a landscape in which features can still often be identified today. At their best, in tales such as *Njál's Saga* or *Egil's Saga*, they are powerful pieces of literature in their own right, and among the most important writing to survive from any European country in the Middle Ages.

### **Vikings and religion: what gods did they believe in?**

Iceland was the location of another drama that highlights the transition of Viking societies away from warrior chieftainships. Christianity came later to Scandinavian Viking societies than to many other parts of Europe. Whereas France's kings had accepted Christianity by the early sixth century and the Anglo-Saxon kings of England largely in the seventh, Christian missionaries only appeared in southern Scandinavia in the ninth century and made little headway there until Harald Bluetooth of Denmark accepted baptism in around 960. Harald had become Christian after a typical piece of Viking theatre: a drunken argument around the feasting table as to which was more powerful – Odin and Thor, or the new Christian God and his son, Jesus.

Iceland remained resolutely pagan, loyal to old gods such as Odin; the All Father; a one-eyed god who had sacrificed the other eye in exchange for knowledge of runes; and Thor, the thunder-god with his great

hammer Mjölfnir, who was also especially popular with warriors.



Above-THOR

### Where did the Vikings travel to?

Iceland, too, was the platform from which the Vikings launched their furthest-flung explorations. In 982 a fiery tempered chieftain, Erik the Red, who had already been exiled from Norway for his father's part in a homicide, was then exiled from Iceland for involvement in another murder. He had heard rumours of land to the west and, with a small group of companions, sailed in search of it. What he found was beyond his wildest imaginings. Only 300 kilometres west of Iceland, Greenland is the world's largest island, and its south and south-west tip had fjords [deep, narrow and elongated sea or lakedrain, with steep land on three sides] and lush pastures that must have reminded Erik of his Scandinavian homeland. He returned back to Iceland, gathered 25 ship-loads of settlers and established a new Viking colony in Greenland that survived into the 15th century.

Erik's son, Leif, outdid his father. Having heard from another Viking Greenlander, Bjarni Herjolfsson, that he had sighted land even further west, Leif went

to see for himself. In around 1002 he and his crew found themselves sailing somewhere along the coast of North America. They found a glacial, mountainous coast, then a wooded one, and finally a country of fertile pastures that they named Vinland. Although they resolved to start a new colony there, it was – unlike either Iceland or Greenland – already settled and hostility from native Americans and their own small numbers (Greenland at the time probably had about 3,000 Viking inhabitants) meant that it was soon abandoned. They had, though, become the first Europeans to land in (and settle in) the Americas, almost five centuries before Christopher Columbus.



For centuries Erik's achievement lived on only in a pair of sagas, The Saga of the Greenlanders and Erik the Red's Saga. The location of Vinland, despite attempts to work out where it lay from information contained in the sagas, remained elusive. It was even unclear if the Vikings really had reached North America. Then, in the early 1960s, a Norwegian explorer Helge Ingstad and his archaeologist wife, Anne Stine, found the

remains of ancient houses at L'Anse aux Meadows on Newfoundland in Canada. Fragments of worked iron (many of them nails, probably from a ship), which the native population did not possess the technology to produce, meant that it was soon clear this was a Viking settlement. Although perhaps too small to be the main Vinland colony, it was still astonishing confirmation of what the sagas had said. Leif Erikson's reputation as a great explorer and discoverer of new lands was confirmed without doubt.

This might well have pleased him, for a man's reputation was everything to a Viking. Quick wit, bravery and action were among the key attributes for a Viking warrior, but to be remembered for great deeds was the most important of all. The Hávamál, a collection of Viking aphorisms, contains much apt advice such as "Never let a bad man know your own bad fortune", but most famous of all is the saying "Cattle die, kindred die, we ourselves shall die, but I know one thing that never dies: the reputations of each one dead".



The reputation of the Vikings simply as raiders and plunderers has long been established. Restoring their fame as traders, storytellers, explorers, missionaries, artists and rulers is long overdue.



*Norwegians Worldwide-Tucson Chapter*

### Contact Us

#### **Norwegians Worldwide-Tucson**

Larry Jensen – President

217 S Bella Vista Dr

Tucson, AZ 85745

520-301-9641

Email-NWW\_Tucson@outlook.com

WWW. [www.norse-tucson.org](http://www.norse-tucson.org)

Membership Chairperson

Solveig Palanek- 520-299-4568

Email-solpalanek@gmail.com

### **VELKOMMEN TO YOUR NORWEGIAN CONNECTION IN THE DESERT.**

We are the TUCSON , Arizona chapter of Norwegians Worldwide / Nordmanns-Forbundet. Our chapter is a diverse network of Norwegian-Americans, Norwegians living here in Arizona, and anyone with an interest in Norway and Scandinavia. Founded as a registered non-profit organization, our chapter has been connecting our community and promoting the rich national and cultural heritage of Norway for over 40 years.

Welcome to a community for Norwegian Americans, Norwegians living in Arizona, and anyone with an interest in Norway and/or Scandinavia. If you are looking to connect with your heritage, practice your language skills, meet new friends, explore Nordic culture, and more -- drop us a line or stop by our next event! We host family-friendly events throughout the year celebrating Norway's rich cultural heritage and current events.

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### **NORWEGIANS WORLDWIDE-TUCSON**

Larry Jensen – President

217 S Bella Vista Dr

Tucson, AZ 85745

TO: