

# NORWEGIANS WORLDWIDE TUCSON CHAPTER NEWSLETTER –MARCH 2020

March 2020

## Save the Dates

Monthly Meeting

15 March 2:00 PM

Lutheran Church of the  
Foothills

5102 N Craycroft Rd,  
Tucson, AZ 85718

\*\*\*\*\*

NORSK Folk Gathering

21 March 1:00 PM

Brother John's

1801 N Stone Ave, Tucson,  
AZ 85705

OUR New Website -

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

Membership-

Solveig Palanek- 520-299-  
4568

Email-

[solpalanek@gmail.com](mailto:solpalanek@gmail.com)

You may pay online with your

Credit card now at our new  
website.

This March we will be serving  
Norwegian Waffles. So bring

your appetite and look forward  
to enjoying Norwegian Vafler.



\*\*\*We will also enjoy a get  
together for our monthly Norsk  
Folk at Brother John's on Stone  
Ave. Enjoy some great BBQ and  
Aquavit for lunch.

See you at both !

## Norway and its age-old farming culture

Once you start taking an interest  
in the old Norwegian farming  
and family history, then the  
people of the past start coming  
to the fore.



n today's world, we have almost  
forgotten that our entire  
Norwegian culture is based on  
life in the age-old farming,  
fishing and hunting  
communities.

In the year 1000, all people in  
Norway lived in sparsely  
populated communities and  
rural areas. In 1835, 90% of the  
population still did. Even at the  
end of the Second World War,  
the proportion of the people  
living in towns and cities roughly  
equalled that of the people living  
in the countryside. Many of us  
living in urban areas in Norway  
today, have parents,  
grandparents or great-  
grandparents who grew up in  
smaller rural communities  
across the country.  
Communities that were – and  
who to a large extent still are –  
deeply rooted in the old farming  
traditions and way of life.

## **Subsistence economy – self- sufficiency and barter**

In earlier times, each single farm  
unit provided what the people  
and domestic animals living  
there needed to survive. This  
ancient way of life is what is  
called a subsistence economy.



Above - Stabbur

The very few necessities that the farm could not produce, its inhabitants would get by swapping their own products – or by providing their own labour. Money – even up to more modern times – was something that most people rarely had.

Historically, taxes were measured in produce – and paid for by handing over the farm's

own products – such as butter, barrels of grain, fish etc.

### Nature's own larder

Nature's offerings were the main source of all life. If people and domestic animals were to survive the long and cold Scandinavian winter, then the people had to reap and collect whatever they could find – and they would have to develop good ways of storing the food: food for both humans and livestock.



The job of cultivating the soil and the gathering of food was a full-time job – all year round. All family members had to contribute from a very young age.

The people who were diligent and well prepared were the ones that rarely lacked what they needed to survive – even in years when little would grow.

### Important knowledge was passed down from generation to generation

In the olden world, knowledge – and the ability to learn – was the most important property or skill a person could have. Back then, the majority of the population could neither read nor write. They did, however, know how to interpret and read nature around them – and how to prepare and store the food that they had cultivated and gathered.



These were skills that they had learned from their parents – which again had learned them from their parents. Thus, the knowledge was passed down from generation to generation. With each new link on the family chain, the treasure trove of knowledge grew bigger and bigger – helping the family moving forward and towards a better and more improved way of life.

In addition to making sure that there was enough food on the table, houses needed to be built and mended, necessary equipment had to be shaped and maintained – and the domestic animals had to be cared for.

If we go far enough back in time, there was neither doctors nor medicines. The people only had available to them what nature could provide, and the knowledge that had been accumulated through the centuries. Our ancestors had a vulnerable and at times a very hard existence. But they were also happy and contented people who enjoyed life. Just like the people of today.

### The rhythm of life – adapted to the seasons

The old farming community had its own rhythm. This was a rhythm based on the landscape around them and the passing of the seasons. The working day had its designated time for work, food and rest.

Back then, there was no electric light and the many other mod cons that we take for granted today. In the performance of their daily chores, the people had to follow the availability of the daylight.

### Evenings



In the evening, people would sit in front of the fire or under the oil lamp, doing their needlework or repairing various objects. And

lucky was the household that had a great storyteller – because the storyteller was an important person in the old world. In century after century, the stories were told and handed down from generation to generation.

### ***There was also time for celebration and fun***

People in the olden days also set aside time for celebrations and fun. Large occasions and feasts, like weddings and other life events, were often held during *håbolla* – which in many places in Norway is the name used for the periods between the busy seasons of spring, summer and autumn. Or they would celebrate during the wintertime.



This was a completely natural choice and part of the overall rhythm of the year. In spring there would be hectic activity getting the soil ready and the seed planted in the ground. Then there was a more quiet period, *håbolla*. Thereafter came the haying period – before yet another period of relative quiet. All this leading straight to the important autumn period with the harvesting of both the cultivated land and nature's more wildly growing offerings. The number one priority was to ensure that the storerooms were filled to the brim for the winter.

During the hectic periods, no one had any time spare to put on their fineries or to travel from farm to farm.

### **Why were the basic foods processed and refined?**

Bread, butter, cheese, sour cream and cured ham are words that often produces many good thought-images in the mind of the average Norwegian person. Food traditions – and the emotional connection that we have to the traditional food – go back many, many centuries.

What today's people normally do not think about – is why our ancestors started making butter and cheese. The answer is quite simple: basic foods – like milk and meat – were processed because it was important to be able to store the food over a longer period of time.

Cheese was made from the cow's and goat's milk – and could if necessary be stored for several years. The butter was churned from fresh or sour cream and could be stored longer when salt was added. Meat and fish were salted, smoked or dried so that it could be stored for a very long time. The Vikings brought with them such food on their many and long journeys – more than a thousand years ago.

Fresh meat was normally something eaten only in the autumn and at Christmas – during the slaughter period. Sometimes also during other parts of the year when an animal had to be slaughtered for various reasons – or the family had been out hunting.

Baking flatbread – *flatbrød* – and storing it was better than storing the actual flour. It is unclear how far back the tradition of making the Norwegian *flatbrød* goes, but the flatbread could be stored for many years and would often be found in tall stacks in the farm storehouses.

### **The summer dairy and the outfields**

In many other countries, the cultivated soil stretches for miles throughout a flat and accessible landscape. In large parts of Norway, the good soil is far less available and is often found in more rugged terrain. This meant that our Norwegian foremothers and forefathers had to utilise the landscape in a very different way, compared to our cousins in many other countries.

The infields was the most productive part of the land. This was where the farmer could grow the grain and other cultivated crops. The farm houses were often in close proximity to the infields. In many places, the farm also cultivated isolated land plots situated further out into the terrain.

The outfields is the word used for the remaining non-cultivated part of the land belonging to the farm – or the common land that the farm had the right to use for pasture and more.



The outfields were in earlier times an immensely important resource. A large proportion of the Norwegian farms had their own summer dairy in the outfields, sometimes located high up in the mountains. On the summer dairy pasture, the domestic animals would feed throughout the summer. The outfields would also be utilised for additional haymaking and the collection of moss and leaves to be used as winter feed for the farm animals. This feed would normally be transported back to the farm during the winter – or in early spring – using a horse and sleigh.

From the summer dairy milk, coming from the cows and the goats, the milkmaids – or seterbudeiene – would make butter and cheese and other dairy products. These products – in many places called budrätten – were brought back to the farm either by packhorse – kløvhest – or it was carried on a person's back. Back on the farm it would be stored in the storehouses – stabburene – or in the cellars.



***We must never forget to listen to the ancestral voice – or be afraid of following their advice. Our ancestors were so much wiser than we in the***

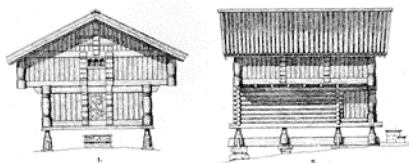
***modern world often give them credit for.***



**Stabbur | the food storehouse on the old Norwegian farm**

*Like all buildings on the old Norwegian farm, the stabbur had a clear purpose: it was a building designed for the storage of food.*

#### **A storage house**



Like all buildings found on the traditional Norwegian farm, the stabbur had a clear purpose: it was a building designed for the storage of food. Sometimes, people also used it for the storage of precious clothing.

Like most Norwegian buildings it was made of wood – using the old log cabin technique.

The storehouse comes in many shapes and sizes. For the most part, it is instantly recognisable. Some of the existing buildings are very old – and some are beautifully crafted.

The stabbur would typically consist of one or two floors – and was elevated from the ground – standing on stilts or pillars – made of wood or stone. They would be shaped in a certain way – often with a wide stone slate on top – preventing mice and other rodents from finding their way in. For the same reason, there would be a gap between the outside stairs – and the building itself.

#### **Filled for a long, dark and cold winter**

Every autumn, the storehouse was filled to the brim, with food for a long – dark – and cold winter.

The stabbur had no fireplace, so the food stored there had to tolerate low temperatures. More often than not there would be no windows in the stabbur walls. This was to make sure that it was as cool as possible during the summer – and not too cold during the winter.

If the building had two floors, then flour and flatbread – butter and cheese – and dried, smoked or salted meat and fish – were often stored on the ground floor. The unground grain often on the top floor.

#### **Lock and key**

The storehouse door was often the only one with a lock. The mistress of the farm was the keeper of the key – a sign of her undisputed status

#### **The old Viking laws**

The stabbur is mentioned as early as in the 900s, in the Gulating law. The stabbur was one of three buildings a tenant

farmer had to make sure was in top shape, whenever ending his tenancy. The other two were the residential farmhouse and the cook and wash house (eldhuset or bryggerhuset).

The lawmakers were very clear on one specific point: should you come across a man – in your storehouse – someone who had stolen from you – then you could strike him dead on the spot. A brutal entry, emphasising people's need and right to protect their vital food supply.

### Maybe one day

The old storehouse can be found on a large number of farms, even today – now often empty reminders of the past.

The use of the buildings dramatically changed after the Second World War. Then electricity and modern appliances found their way into the old world.

Who knows, maybe one day the storehouse will reclaim its age-old status, and once again play a vital role, in the life of the Norwegians.

### The old farm and the hour of twilight



The hour of twilight is when the daylight starts to disappear – before it is completely dark. In the old Norwegian farming society, this was a time for rest.

The old Norwegians followed the rhythm of the day, they adapted to the landscape they lived in and the changing of the seasons.

The daylight and the weather were natural restrictions – and the people had no option but to obey. There was a time for work – and a time for rest.

### The old house

All through the Middle Ages – and in certain parts of Norway well into the 1700s – the typical farmhouse was a single-storey log building with no windows – a so-called årestue – with just an open fireplace in the centre of the room. There was an earthen or stone floor, and the smoke from the fire would gather in the upper part of the room, before escaping through a vent in the roof – a ljore.



The only natural light came through the smoke vent, which in earlier times consisted of a transparent cow's stomach stretched over a wooden frame – or through the entrance door.

Many of our emigrant ancestors from Norway to America knew such buildings.

### Evening chores

Later, when the lamp was burning, the people started their various evening chores and activities.

Father mended a shoe, made a wooden rake or rubbed the horse's harness with grease.

Mother sat with her spinning wheel, turning wool into yarn. Often, she did this during the autumn. After Christmas, she used the thread to weave the cloth needed for the family's clothing.

The old farm and the family living there was a self-sufficient entity. All from the beginning of time – up until not so long ago – this was how the Norwegians lived their lives.

### The hour of twilight

During winter, when the daylight disappeared early, people finished their outdoor chores and headed for the warmth of the fireplace. In the light of the fire, they had something to eat and rested for a while before the lamp was lit.

For many, this twilight hour was the part of the day that later in life evoked happy childhood memories: maybe the sight of a dear mother darning an old sock in front of the fire – or the sound of the peaceful breathing of a father resting in his bed.

In the hour of twilight, there was peace and quiet; no lamp was lit until it was almost entirely dark.



Share your Norwegian Heritage with your families, friends and neighbors. There are a thousand years of memories to share.... Tusen Takk



*Norwegians Worldwide-Tucson Chapter*

### Contact Us

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### **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

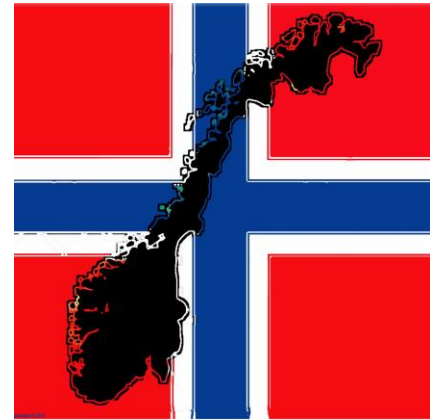
Norwegian-Americans, Norwegians living here in Arizona, and anyone with an interest in Norway and Scandinavia. Founded as a registered non-profit organization, our chapter has been connecting our community and promoting the rich national and cultural heritage of Norway for over 40 years.

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.

## Join us online at

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



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### **NORWEGIANS WORLDWIDE-TUCSON**

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Tucson AZ 85745

TO: