

Reunions Abound for Local Genealogist

Reprinted from a November 11, 2004 article by Greg Lauser from the Prescott Journal

Chris Falteisek's latest genealogical adventures have included two reunions this year for members of his maternal ancestors' families - one in Norway and a second last week in Prescott.

Falteisek, his local and Norwegian relatives gathered here to spend additional time getting to know one another better, discussing their ancestry and experiencing cultural and shopping opportunities in the greater Twin Cities.

The Journal last covered Falteisek's travels of discovery in June 2001, shortly after he returned from a trip to Czechoslovakia tracing the lineage of his father's family. Since then, he has continued examining both sides of his family tree, including a visit to maternal ancestral homes this past June in Norway and Sweden.

While in Norway, Torill Hokstad Steivang - his sixth cousin, once removed, her husband, Bjørnar, and their daughters - Marianne and Eva Julie - helped him explore the areas around Dovre, Lesja, Folldal and Alvdal. Steivang was able to take vacation time from her responsibilities as administrative assistant for the arts-in-schools program for Hedmark County, Norway.

Falteisek was able to visit several farms where his ancestors lived near upper Folldal. The Steivangs also helped him make numerous contacts that will help him continue his family studies, and he gave organ and piano concerts in the Dovre and Dalen churches.

This past week Steivang and Falteisek spent time at the Norwegian American History Association in the St. Olav University library, Northfield, Minn. They also visited with other relatives around the Twin Cities, like Dixie Hansen of St. Paul, who is business manager for KSTP-TV. The three - Steivang, Falteisek and Hansen - are distant cousins drawn together by their shared interest in genealogy.

Excursions within the greater Twin Cities also included attending a Minnesota Timberwolves game, shopping at the Mall of America and elsewhere, being interviewed by KDWA Radio in Hastings and touring schools in Hastings.

"This trip our emphasis is to make sure the children have a good time, so they are excited about returning in the future when we want to devote more time to exploring details about ancestors who came to this country," said Steivang. She said the family hopes to return some time next year to conduct more family and emigrant research.

She noted that a majority of people leaving her home area near Alvdal, Norway in the 1850s immigrated to another Pierce County community - Spring Valley. Her ancestors settled in Barron County, near Prairie Farm; and her husband's ancestors immigrated to Stanley - midway between Chippewa Falls and Wausau. She is anxious to explore all of

those areas on future visits.

Steivang founded and operates a Web site devoted to the immigrants of Alvdal. Those interested can access it at <http://home.online.no/~steivang/frederiksgave.htm>.

Coincidentally, she and Falteisek began nurturing their passions for genealogy and history at about the same time - ages 10 and 12 - even though they would not meet one another for decades. Falteisek originally contacted Steivang in 2000 for assistance in tracking the origins of his mother's ancestors in Norway. Only after they began working together did they realize they were related.



Chris Falteisek, Torill & Eva Julie Steivang at Skeie in Dovre, Norway - 2004