

SIGDALSLAG HISTORY

1911-2011

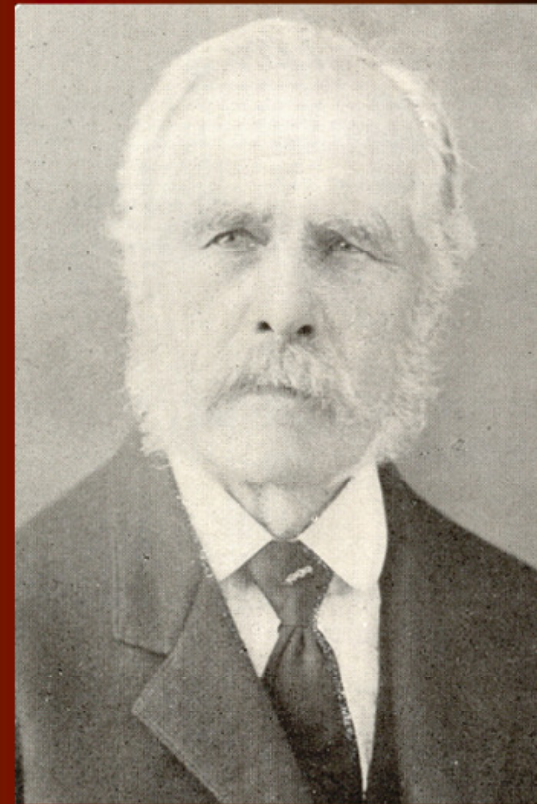
Sigdalslag joined the Norwegian bygdelag movement on St. Hans Day, June 24, 1911, in Fergus Falls, Minnesota with 200 members. The treasury showed \$119.75. Dues were \$1.00 for men and 50 cents for women!

Our founding father and first president was Anders B. Pedersen, an immigrant from Sigdal, who aspired to keep the cultural ties alive between his homeland of Norway and his adopted home in America.

Anders Bratalien Pedersen was born in 1838 at Braatelen in Sigdal. In 1870 he immigrated to Wisconsin, and lived in Minnesota for most of his life. He also became known as the Founding Father of Rothsay where he built the first store in the town.

Pedersen was inspired to form a bygdelag after a visit to Sigdal in 1895. He became our first President in 1911 and remained active until death.

Anders Pedersen suffered a stroke in 1916 and was forced to lie in bed for three years. During this time he kept in touch through his writings and established a fund for the Old People's Home in Sigdal which our Lag supported for many years.



1912 – Another year, a New President

In 1912 the meeting was again held in Fergus Falls. Anders Pedersen declined a second term and his cousin Gilbert T. Braatlien was elected as his successor. He held the position for the next 16 years! He was also the compiler and editor of the first Sigdalslag history book in 1914, and of the 1920 book with K. C. Kopseng. He served in the Minnesota State Legislature and farmed in Otter Tail Co., Minnesota.

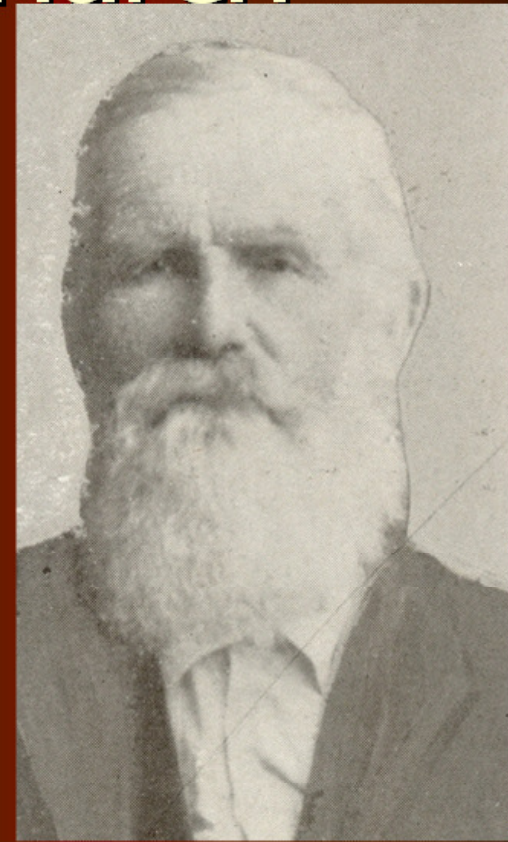


The Family Patriarch

Tollef Pedersen, brother of Anders, and his wife Hanna Olava Wagre of Ringerike, immigrated in 1885. They were the parents of 12 children born in Norway and one born in America. They farmed in Akron township near Rothsay, MN.

Two of their sons, Gilbert and Martin Braatelen, were responsible for recording and preserving the history of Sigdalslag through the 1940's.

All of their sons became prominent farmers, businessmen, lawyers and legislators.



Tollef Pedersen, an older brother of our founder, Anders B. Pedersen.

The Braateliens of Sigdal— A Remarkable Immigrant Family



From left, in 1929: Peter, Martin, Edvart, Gilbert, Erik, Olaf, Mathilde, Hans Thomas (wife & son of Martin) and Newell, the son of Harold. Newell and his son Paul attended the 2006 stevne and he passed away in 2008.

Sigdalslaget Constitution prepared and designated on St. Hans Day, 1911, in Fergus Falls, Minnesota

1. This organization includes men and women from Eggedal, Krodsherad and Sigdal. It shall be called Sigdalslaget.
2. The lag's purpose is to gather these communities' emigrants, men and women, to a better understanding, comfort, and encouragement in this country where they now live, to gather and care for family histories, and to nurture good relationships as much as possible as our people come and go.
3. Membership includes every man and woman who emigrated from these areas and descendants of families from there.
4. Yearly dues are \$1.00 for men and \$.50 for women members and are paid in advance. (When a man is a member his wife is automatically included and pays no additional dues.)
5. Officers of the lag include a President, three Vice Presidents, a Secretary and Treasurer. They are to be elected at each yearly meeting.
6. The Saga writer will be chosen by the officers as needed.
7. This constitution is subject to change at any yearly meeting by a two-thirds majority.

Prepared and designated on St. Hans Day, 1911, in Fergus Falls, Minnesota.

Constitution Committee:

G. T. Hagen, G. G. Vatnaas, Elling Reiersen, Ole Knutsen, A. F. Uggen.

Sigdalslaget By-Laws

Adopted St. Hans Day, 1912, at Fergus Falls, Minnesota

1. The Sigdalslag will hold meetings once a year. Time and place to be decided by the members at the yearly meeting.
2. Speaking and voting power shall reside in men and women with paid up dues.
3. The lag's officers will serve for one year at a time.
4. At the yearly meeting 50 members will constitute a quorum, and will conduct the business.
5. President, Secretary and Treasurer will report on the financial abilities and status of the lag at each yearly meeting.
6. All expenditures shall have written approval by the President and Secretary before they are paid by the Treasurer.
7. Changes or additions of these by laws shall be made by a majority vote at the yearly meeting.

Prepared and designated on St. Hans Day, 1912, at Fergus Falls, Minnesota.

A. B. Pedersen, Ed Mobraaten, G. T. Hagen, By-Law Committee.

Sigdalslag Banner

The Sigdalslag banner was presented in 1914 during a homecoming celebration for Norwegian-Americans in Sigdal. The banner was purchased by Sigdøler and Eggedøler as a gift to Sigdalslag of America.

Under Norway's Coat of Arms encircled in a wreath, is the slogan "There is strength in numbers." At the bottom the words say "In remembrance of 1914."

On the back of the banner, which is almost as beautiful as the front, the words say "The world is wide and the ways are many."

We members of Sigdalslag may be biased, but we believe we have not only the oldest banner of any of the 7 lags but also the most beautiful!

Although it is wearing frail, we hope to use it for many years to come.

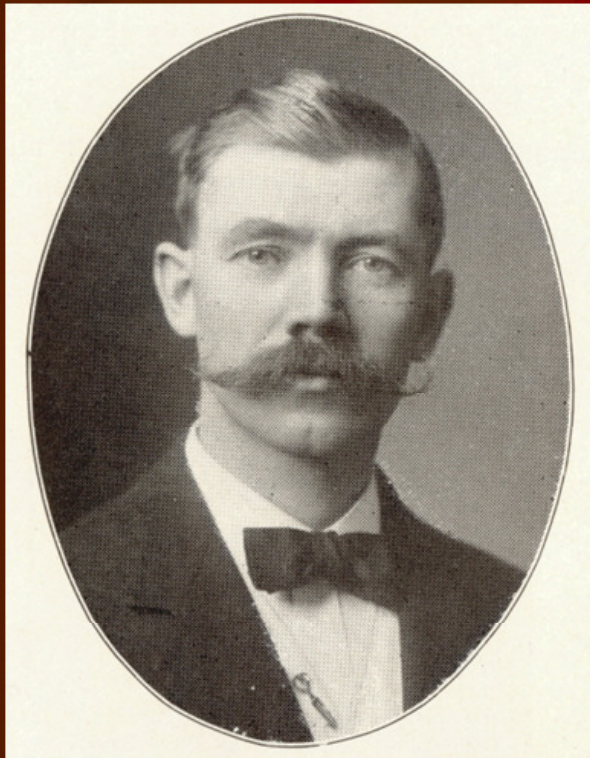


Sigdalslag Presidents Through the Years

- Anders B. Pedersen 1911
- Gilbert T. Braatelen (served 16 years) 1912
- Carl O. Hagen 1928
- Theodore Bjorka (served 16 years) 1935
- Tom Bjorka 1950
- Knute Olson 1955
- Tom Bjorka 1960
- Lars Mohagen (served 10 years) 1968
- Donald Berglund 1978
- Marilyn Somdahl (first woman president) 1982
- Corrine Johnson 1995
- Carol Meade 1998
- Earl Knutson 2000
- Judy Sosted 2007

Carl O. Hagen

Sigdalslag President, 1929-1934

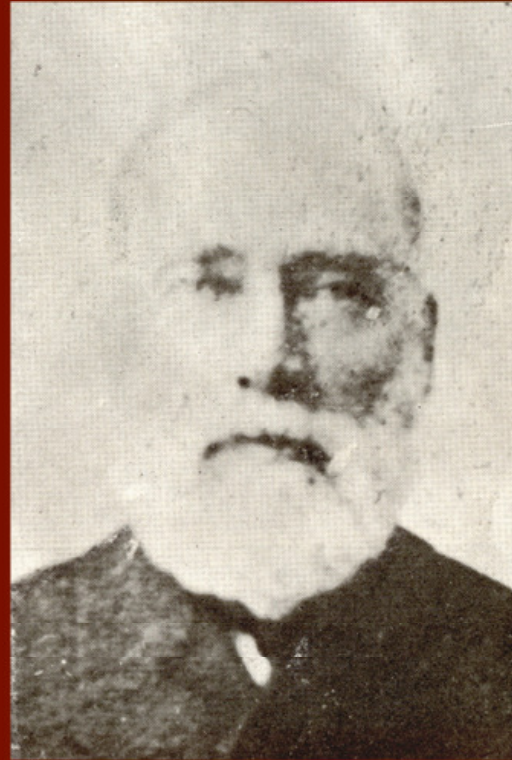


- Sigdal immigrant, Carl O. Hagen of Decorah, Iowa, was elected as president in 1928 and served for seven years.
- He was a member of Sigdalslag before 1914 and remained active throughout his life.
- In 1922 he took his family of three children back to Norway to live for three years so they could become acquainted with his beloved homeland.
- He died January 25, 1935.

Three Generations of Tailors in Sigdal



Engebret P. Hagen
1824-1893



Ole E. Hagen
1848-1913

Carl Hagen began learning the trade of "traveling tailor" in Sigdal at age nine, from his father Ole E. Hagen and his grandfather, Engebret P. Hagen, known as the "Old Tailor of Sigdal." Carl carried that trade to America and ran a tailoring business in Decorah for many years.

A visit to Sigdal, 1910



Back: Oscar A. Kolsrud, Ole A. Kolsrud, Jørgen Mitskogen, Carl O. Hagen Front: Ingeborg Varhus, Svein Ytreland, Kristine Mitskogen, Ragna Plomaas. The three women are Sisters of Carl O. Hagen. Photo taken at Solumsbeget.

The Carl O. Hagen family, 1932



Front: Carl O. Hagen, wife Ingeborg, Mrs. Olberg (Emma Blegen) Hagen holding Norma, Olberg Hagen. Back: Bernhard Hagen, Christine Hagen, and nieces Edel Ruth and Astri Dagmar Plomaas from Sigdal who lived with the Hagens.

The two Bjorka Presidents



Theodore Bjorka
1935-1950



Tom Bjorka
1950-55; 1959-68

- Theodore Bjorka was born in Otter Tail County, Minnesota in 1884, the son of Krodsherad immigrants. He farmed at Ruso, North Dakota and Aastad in Otter Tail County. He was very active in community and church activities and played in the Aastad band.
- Tom Bjorka was a nephew of Theodore and served two terms as President with a break of four years between terms. He was born in Minnewaukan, ND and later moved to Los Angeles, CA.

Sigdal Officers, 1948



Top: Saga writer and Historian Anton Aasand, Pres. Theodore Bjorka, Sec. Gunder Jacobsen, Treasurer Knut Juvet, Bottom: V. P.'s Tollef Bagaas, Sigdal; Hans Bergerud, Krodsherad; Tom Bjorka, Eggedal.

Knute Olson

President 1955-1959

Eggedal-born Knute Olson was elected Sigdalslag President in 1954 and served from 1955-1959 between the two terms of Tom Bjorka. He came to America in 1912 at age 16. He married Minnie Skredsvig, a niece of the artist Christian Skredsvig of Eggedal. They settled in Hudson, Wisconsin where he worked with the railroad. In 1930 he joined the Sigdalslag's Norway trip and visited his family for the first time since leaving his Norwegian home. He died in 1966.





Knute, Minnie and 3 girls in 1929: Helen Margrethe, 7; Orlain Carol, 9; and Jane Marie, 17 months. Right: Jane Marie and husband Donald Carlstrom in 2006.

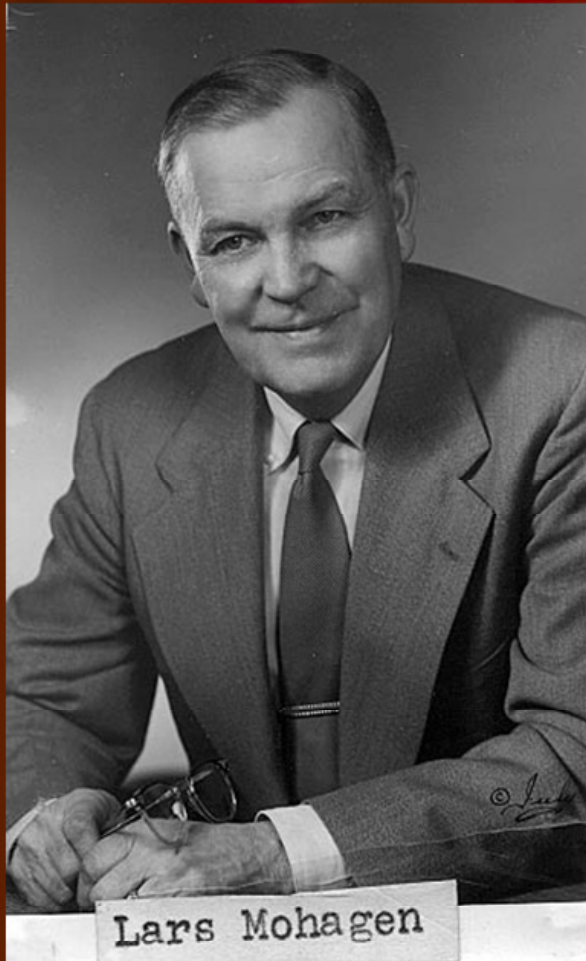


Knute and Minnie (Skredsvig) Olson in 1941. They were married in 1915 in St. Paul.



Lars Mohagen

President 1968-1978



Lars Mohagen of Elbow Lake, MN, served as President of Sigdalslag for 10 years and was instrumental in keeping the Lag from folding in the mid-1970's.

Dissolution was discussed during the 1978 stevne with Hallingslag due to declining membership. Lars urged the members to keep going and encouraged new people to join. the Lag survived, and thrived.

Lars and his father established the first Chevrolet dealership in Grant County in 1912 and he was a life-long car buff. He was the mayor of Wendell for several years and started a hardware business there. He died in 1981 at the age of 87.

The Mohagen family



Lars Mohagen and wife Nellie (Ellingson) with two sons Lorain (Moe) and Harold in 1939

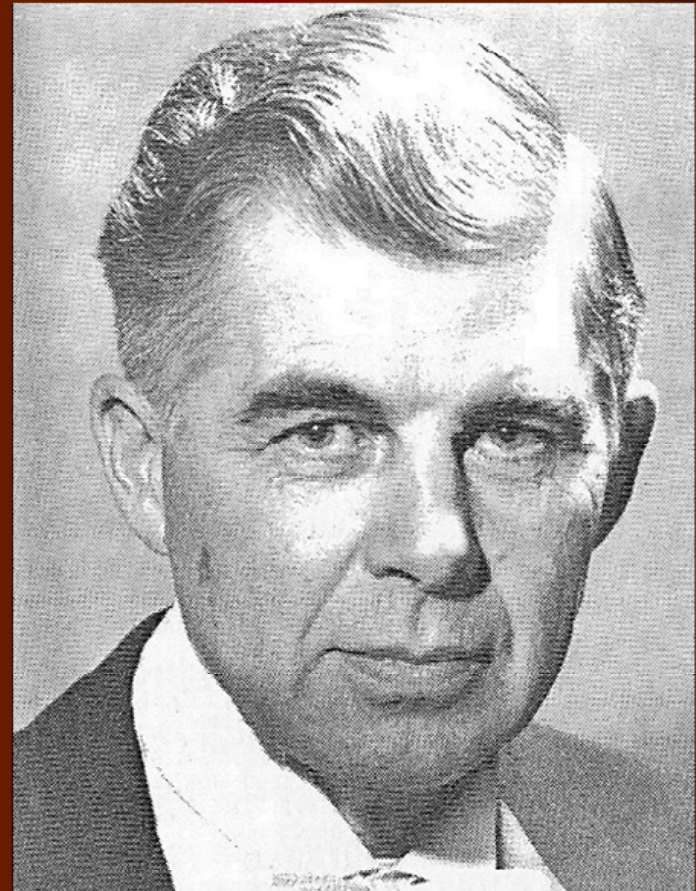


Harold Mohagen in 2000 was a Syttende Mai ambassador to Elbow Lake's sister city of Flekkefjord.

Dr. Donald Herbert Berglund

President 1978-82

- Dr. Donald Berglund was director of the St. Olaf College orchestra for 34 years and took the group on several tours of Norway.
- He was born in Fergus Falls in 1914, the same year and location where Sigdalslag was founded.
- His mother, Gina Pikop, was the daughter of Sigdal immigrants. He suffered from Alzheimer's disease in later years.
- He died in 1989 at age 75.



Marilyn Somdahl— First Woman President of Sigdal

After 71 years of existence, Sigdalslag finally elected a woman president, who ably led the Lag for more than 12 years.

Marilyn was elected president in 1982 and served until 1995. She was a recipient of the St. Olaf's Medal in 1966 for her cultural promotion between the United States and Norway.

Marilyn Dahlen, born in North Dakota, married Narvel Somdahl in 1958. They been active in the promotion of Norwegian-American causes for many years. Marilyn edited the Sigdalslag Saga for 15 years.

Marilyn was also the first woman president of the Bygdelagenes Fellesraad, a post she still holds. She has remained an active member of our Lag and several other bygdelags.



Corrine Lesteberg Johnson

President, 1995-1998

Corrine Lesteberg Johnson followed Marilyn Somdahl to become our second woman President. During her term in office Corrine was the overseer of the Lag's 85th anniversary celebration, and the publication of the English translations of the Sigdalslag books 1914-1941.

She is the granddaughter of Krodsherad immigrants and has kept strong ties with her Norwegian relatives through the years. She is now living in retirement in Richfield, Minn. and though in her mid-80's she remains an active member.



Carol Rugland Meade

President, 1998-2000

Carol Rugland Meade joined Sigdalslag following her first trip to Norway in 1982. She was elected President in July, 1998 and was in office during the Sigdalslag Heritage Tour to Norway in 2000.

Carol's great-grandparents, Gulbrand Gulbrandson and Sigrid Pletanhagen, were married in 1849 at the old stave church in Eggedal by noted poet-pastor Jorgen Moe. They emigrated in 1852 and homesteaded in Silver Lake, Iowa. The original farm is still in the Rugland family.

Carol's three children, Erik, Marguerite and Birgitta are also members of Sigdalslag. Carol is retired from nursing and lives in Richfield, Minnesota.



Earl Knutson, President 2000-2007

Earl Knutson was elected Sigdalslag president at the Stevne in 2000, just after returning from the Heritage tour to Norway. At the time he was newly married to Betty who became his helpmate throughout his presidency.

Earl and Betty were instrumental in the planning and supervising of the 2004 "Amber Waves of Grain" stevne in Willmar, Minnesota, which was a huge success.

Earl (and Betty) served ably through the stevne in 2007, and Betty has taught Hardanger classes for the past several years.



The Knutsons



Earl and Betty were honored as the "newest newlyweds" by our hosts, Drammen Sons of Norway, during the 2000 Heritage tour to Norway.



Earl has been very involved in a pioneer project to restore the Old Norway log church and museum in his home town of Willmar. Our Lag held its 2004 annual meeting there.



Four Sigdalslag Presidents



From left, Corrine Lesteberg Johnson, Marilyn Dahlen Somdahl, Earl Knutson and Carol Rugland Meade, together at the 2002 Stevne.

Judy Sosted, President 2007-



Judy Sosted was elected president of Sigdalslag in July of 2007. One regret is that she did not develop an interest in genealogy until all of her ancestors who knew anything had passed on. On a visit to Norway in 1998 she visited with Havard Støvern in Sigdal and also saw her grandfather's farm in Saastad. Upon her return she contacted Lee Rokke to learn more about her ancestors, and she joined Sigdalslag.

Judy's home has been Northfield, MN for over 20 years, where she volunteers with the Northfield Historical Society, NAHA, and in Court Mediation for Rice County. Recently she has been involved in the Human Genome project which follows DNA back through the generations to determine the source of your family's roots.

Judy in her
bunad at 2008
Stevne



Anton Aasand

Historian and "Sagaskriver"



Anton Aasand, born in 1888 on the Aasen farm in Eggedal, served as the Sigdalslag historian and Saga writer from the 1940's to 1971. He was in charge of the publication of the 1949 history book and was adamant that all of the lag's minutes and books be kept in Norwegian. It was not until his retirement in 1971 that the Lag's publications appeared in English.

Anton married Emma Opdahl, the daughter of immigrants from Valdres and Hurdal who were pioneers of Manfred, North Dakota.

The Aasand family lived in Manfred, Harvey and finally in McHenry, North Dakota. Anton kept up his ties with Norway and visited there three times. He wrote many articles for the Norwegian-American newspapers.

Selmer and Signe Pletan Skinnemoen



Signe & Selmer Skinnemoen

Signe (Mrs. Selmer) Skinnemoen was elected as Sigdalslag secretary in 1971 after Anton Aasand had kept the records since the 1940's in Norwegian. She was the first Secretary to record the Lag's minutes in English and she served until 1979.

Signe was the daughter of Gilbert and Ida Platen and Selmer was the son of Nils and Ida Lillemoen Skinnemoen. All four of his grandparents were Sigdal immigrants who settled in Grant County, Minnesota.

Rosella Goettelman— Translator Extraordinaire

Rosella Goettelman of Decorah, Iowa, has worked on the translations of all of the Sigdalslag history books, 1914-1949, from Norwegian to English as well as our old minutes prior to 1971. She has spent a massive amount of hours on these tasks which has enabled our later generations of members to have a better understanding of the early days of Sigdalslag and the people behind it.



Lee Rokke—Super Genealogist!



Sigdalslag's genealogist, Leona (Lee) Eng Rokke, received the coveted King Olaf's Medal in 2004 for her outstanding service and sharing of her research on the Sigdal immigrants with the Sigdal-Eggedal Museum in Prestfoss. Presenting the award during the 2004 Stevne in Willmar, MN, was Norwegian consul Anita Helland. Lee began as "librarian" in 1981, a job which soon evolved into genealogist. She retired in 2009.

Lee Rokke—continued!



When not accepting awards, Lee was most always found at the Stevne teaching classes or assisting members and researchers in the Lag's genealogy booth.

David Rokke



Lee has been married for over 50 years to David Rokke, a Lutheran pastor now retired. Lee and David kept the extensive Sigdalslag library at their home for many years and each year they hauled the entire (and very heavy) collection from their home in Apple Valley, MN to wherever the Stevne was held that year.

David is also an active member of Sigdalslag and was instrumental in drafting and filing the Sigdalslag Articles of Incorporation which enabled Sigdalslag to be approved for non-profit status in 2007.

Certificate of Incorporation

State of Minnesota
SECRETARY OF STATE

CERTIFICATE OF INCORPORATION

I, Mark Ritchie, Secretary of State of Minnesota, do certify that: Articles of Incorporation, duly signed and acknowledged under oath, have been filed on this date in the Office of the Secretary of State, for the incorporation of the following corporation, under and in accordance with the provisions of the chapter of Minnesota Statutes listed below.

This corporation is now legally organized under the laws of Minnesota.

Corporate Name: Sigdalslag
Corporate Charter Number: 2475622-2
Chapter Formed Under: 317A

This certificate has been issued on 08/20/2007.

The Great Seal of the State of Minnesota, featuring a landscape with a sun, mountains, and a river, surrounded by the words "THE GREAT SEAL OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA" and the date "1858".

Mark Ritchie
Secretary of State

New Genealogist in 2009

Garth Ulrich of Saskatchewan



Garth Ulrich of Saskatchewan became Lag genealogist in April 2009. He has big shoes to fill but he is certainly up to the task.

Garth has been interested in researching his roots since he was a teenager, and he joined Sigdalslag at age 17. He was elected vice-president in 2000, has taught classes at past Stevner, and has helped many with Internet genealogy.

Garth taught special education at a remote Indian School in northern Saskatchewan for eight years and is now teaching at Christopher Lake near Prince Albert.

Don and Lynn Skadeland— Keepers of the Funds!

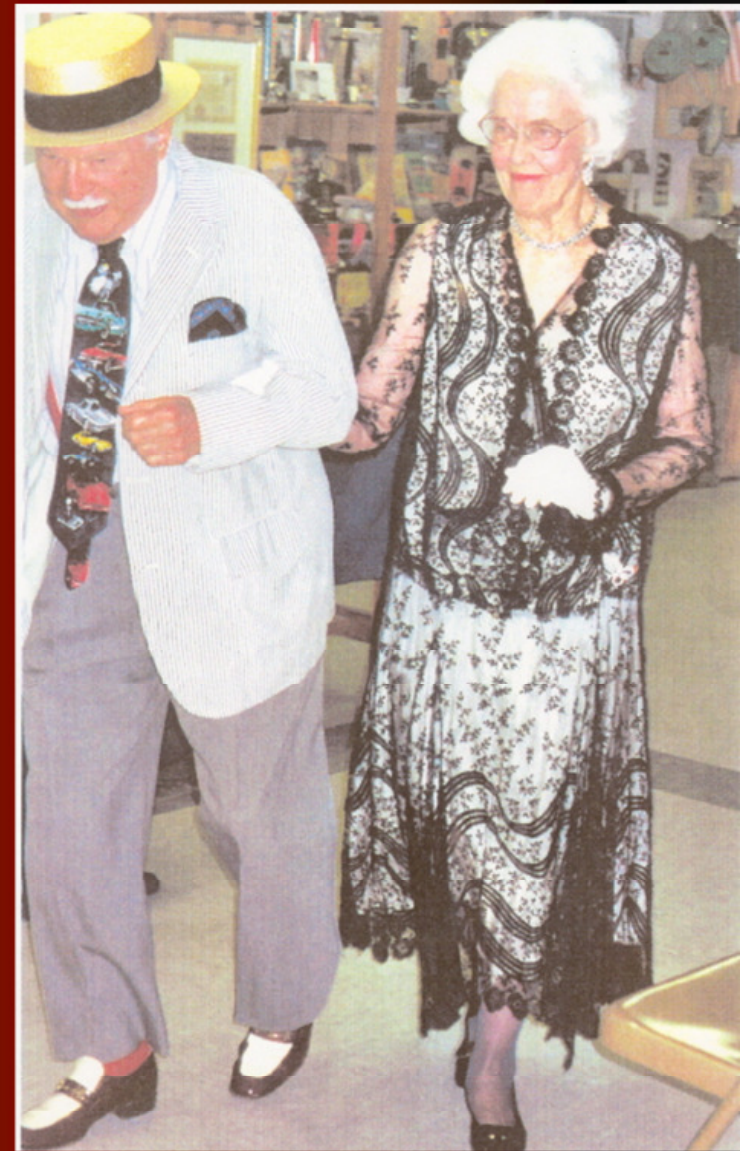
Don Skadeland along with able wife and helpmate Lynn, kept the money and the bank books for Sigdalslag for a good many years. They retired from the post in 2005, but their resignation was not accepted unless they provided an acceptable replacement. They did so in the person of their son Dean, who served until 2010. Don suggested Sigdalslag pass a law that a treasurer may not resign his or her post unless he or she is able to provide a successor by procreation! This proposal is still under advisement.



Irene Navarre—Sigdalslag benefactor

Irene O'Connor Navarre is a descendant of Eggedal immigrant Elling Pedersen Enger of Eggedal. She was married for 45 years to Albuquerque oral surgeon Dr. Harry Navarre who was a pilot and an "adopted" Norwegian who passed away in 2008. They enjoyed many adventurous trips in their own plane across the U. S., Mexico and Canada.

Irene has been an avid supporter of Sigdalslag for years and served as parliamentarian for the annual meetings. She has sponsored Sigdalslag family memberships for numerous nieces, nephews and cousins over the years. She has enjoyed seven trips to Norway and keeps in close touch with the descendants of all seven of her Norwegian immigrant great-grandparents. Now, at 90-something, she remains a beautiful and gracious lady and an active member.



Donald Edwin Guttormsen

1954-1990

Donald Guttormsen was born in 1953 in Caledonia, Minnesota to Edwin Rudolph and Ruth Halvorson Guttormsen and died in 1990 at the age of 35.

He was elected as a vice-president of Sigdalslag in 1985 after being a member for six years.

Donald lived in Norway for two years and became fluent in the Norwegian language.

His roots sprang from Sigdal and Eggedal, specifically Tovsrud on the Sole farm and Kodalen, Teige and Amunrud farms.

Donald was president of the Minnesota Volksmark and organized several walks and he was an organizer of Spring Grove's Syttende Mai celebration.



Håvard Støvern—Bridging the Gap

October 18, 1936-July 6, 2006



Håvard Støvern

Håvard Støvern was appointed as Director of the Sigdal-Eggedal Museum at Prestfoss, Sigdal, in 1981.

One of his passions as museum director was locating relatives of emigrants from Krødsherad, Sigdal and Eggedal. It was especially heart-warming for him to unite families in Norway with relatives in relatives. He worked closely with Lee Rokke over the years in the sharing of information between the two countries.

Håvard passed away on July 6, 2006 and Sigdalslag lost a very dear friend.

Prestfoss Museum Director Sigrid Kvisle

Sigrid Kvisle was born in 1944 in Prestfoss, Sigdal, Norway and grew up with a lot of genealogy around her. She was hired as director of the Museum-Folk Music Center. In 1988 after working in Oslo for many years.

Sigrid was largely responsible for arranging Sigdal events for the 175 year celebration of emigration when 60 or so Sigdalslag members visited in June of 2000.

She has made contact with many relatives in America and has visited several places including Minnesota, North Dakota, Iowa and Canada. She was instrumental in the development and publication of the new Sigdal-Eggedal bygdeboks.



**Present museum
director Sigrid Kvisle,
June 2010.**

Sigdalslag Saga From 1981



Scott Brunner, Saga
Editor since 2008

The first issue of the Sigdalslag Saga hit the press in April of 1981, instituted and edited by Olga Berglund. She was assisted by Secretary Elaine Schulstad who served as editor from 1982-1987. When Elaine retired Marilyn & Narv Somdahl took on the task for the next fifteen years. They retired in 2002 when Cindy Peterson and Marilyn Moen became co-editors. They retired in 2008 and Scott Brunner volunteered to be editor shortly after becoming a Sigdalslag member. He has done an awesome job, but has announced he is stepping down after this year. Who will the next editor be? Why not you?!

First SAGA Editors



Olga Berglund, 1981



Elaine Schulstad, 1981-1987

Past SAGA Scriveners



Marilyn Somdahl
1987-2002



Cindy Peterson and Marilyn Moen
2002-2008



2011 and Beyond

- Sigdalslag's 100th anniversary celebration will be held in Fargo, ND on July 17, 2011—
- the start of our 2nd Century. What does the future hold!

