



VIRGINIA VIKING

SONS OF NORWAY HAMPTON ROADS LODGE NO. 3-522

President: Leonard Zingarelli Vice President: Mike Solhaug Secretary: June Cooper Treasurer: Ragnhild Zingler



The President's Corner

Your lodge has a number of fun events planned. At the conclusion of each membership lodge meeting, a program is scheduled that has us sharing our Norwegian culture and heritage. These programs are very informative and fun. Take a look at our Schedule of Events to find out what exactly is being presented at each lodge meeting.

We celebrated Leiv Eiriksson Day at his statue at the entrance to the Mariner's Museum in Newport News on 9 October. This is an exact reproduction of the "original" statue that was presented to the people of Iceland as a gift from the people of the United States in 1930 on the occasion of the 1000th year celebration of the establishment of the Icelandic parliament. Iceland is where Leiv Eiriksson was born. His father was "Erik the Red" from Norway. We had a good turnout of our lodge members and the Icelandic group for both the ceremony and lunch. 9 October was officially selected as Leiv Eiriksson Day back in 1964 based on the first organized voyage of Norwegian immigrants to arrive in America way back in 1825. This date is always near Columbus Day which is celebrated for Christopher Columbus who thought he had discovered America some 500 years after Leiv Eiriksson.

We also have our annual Scandinavian Christmas Bazaar on 2 November. This is our biggest and most involved event that we do for the year. Please come out at help or at least visit. We finish off 2019 with a fun time at our lodge's Christmas party on 8 December. This year, we are NOT at Cypress Point for the Christmas party but rather at the Holiday Inn Virginia Beach Conference Center 5655 Greenwich Rd. This was the same place that our lodge held its 45th Anniversary Party. Invitations will be sent out soon. We have a lot of new members join into our lodge lately, so please come on out to our lodge meetings and events to meet them and share our Norwegian culture and heritage. Again, you can view our lodge's schedule (with additional details) by reading it in our Virginia Viking Newsletters (cut it out and place on your frig), attached to my membership group e-mails once a month, and found on our web site (hrson.org) and Facebook page (Hampton Roads Sons of Norway Home-Facebook). If you have any questions about these, please ask me.

LENNY

October 17, 2019

Membership Meeting at Bayside Presbyterian Church at 7:30 pm. The program is "Myths & Legends of Trolls" by Deanna Rumney.

November 1, 2019

Bazaar Set Up at Francis Asbury United Methodist Church At 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm

November 2, 2019
Bazaar at Francis
Asbury United
Methodist Church at
9:00 am to 3:00 pm

November 7, 2019

Board Meeting at Bayside Presbyterian Church at 7:00 p.m. in Room 507

November 21, 2019

Membership Lodge Meeting at Bayside Presbyterian Church at 7:30 p.m.

3rd District President October Message



October takes us back to the immigration of our forefathers. Since 1964, when Congress unanimously authorized and requested the [President](#) to create the observance of Leif Erikson Day through an annual [proclamation](#), October 9 was chosen because the ship [Restauration](#) arrived in [New York Harbor](#) on October 9, 1825, beginning a wave of immigration from Norway to America. In July of that year, a group of six dissenting families, seeking a haven from the official Norwegian state church, set sail from Stavanger in an undersized sloop, the *Restaurationen*. When it arrived in New York harbor after an arduous 14-week journey, the *Restaurationen* caused a sensation, and the local press marveled at the bravery of these Norwegian pilgrims. Local Quakers helped the destitute emigrants, who eventually established a community in

upstate New York. Today, their descendants are still known as "sloopers".

As Eva Britt Kornfeldt of the Oslo Visitors and Convention Bureau said: "Swedes, they do as they are told. Norwegians? We are a stubborn, self-reliant, impulsive, inventive and independent people. But above all, we're curious." Norwegians have always been brave explorers. From the early Vikings, then onto the first to cross Greenland by land, a Norwegian was first to the South Pole, the voyage of the Kon-Tiki, and then history's longest solo and un-resupplied ski journey, 3,000 miles across the South Pole region. Explorers! So many of us have heard the stories of our own family's emigration. Make sure to write these stories down for future generations, who can be proud of their heritage.

October is also the month we recognize as FOUNDATION MONTH. A donation to the Sons of Norway Foundation is a contribution to the positive impact we make through community, youth, educational, and cultural projects. With every contribution, there is an impact.

Everything the Sons of Norway Foundation accomplishes is the result of the support of our donors: the people who contribute time, talent and resources to further our mission in member communities. Every contribution matters and you can be sure that we're using your donations responsibly and effectively. Our 3D Foundation Director, Dirk Hansen, has information on how the Foundation can work for YOUR lodge. hansenoaks@lowcountry.com

In closing, remember, this is your Lodge, your Sons of Norway. We need members to come to the Lodge and assist in carrying out the business. All your officers ask is to give the Lodge at least one night a month. We also need your support in finding new members. Why not ask a friend to join in on all the good things we have in our lodge to share?

Fraternally, Kathy Dollymore, 3D President

BAZAAR REQUEST FOR THE RAFFLE

IF YOU HAVE ANY NEW OR ANTIQUE ITEMS YOU WOULD LIKE TO DONATE TOWARD THE RAFFLE PLEASE CONTACT MONA DENTON AT MONADENTON@GMAIL.COM OR 757-377-2370.

I AM HAPPY TO COME AND PICK UP ANY ITEMS.

LEIF ERICKSON CELEBRATION



The Troubling History of the Fight to Honor Leif Erikson—Not Columbus—as the Man Who 'Discovered America'

BY **OLIVIA B. WAXMAN**

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Many Americans will celebrate the second Monday in October as Columbus Day, a [federal holiday](#) that marks the anniversary of Christopher Columbus's Spanish-led expedition arriving in the Americas, or as [Indigenous Peoples Day](#), to acknowledge those who were displaced by European settlement in North America. Others, however, will opt for Oct. 9 to celebrate something else: Leif Erikson Day, a celebration of the Viking explorer credited with reaching the continent around the year 1000, nearly 500 years before Columbus did. But, while it may sound only fair to share the credit for exploration, the movement to recognize Erikson also has a dark back story, as Leif Erikson Day's history is connected to nativist backlash against immigration to the United States. At one point, for some people, the debate over who really "discovered" America came down to one question: who was whiter? The biggest ship carrying Norwegian immigrants to the U.S. arrived in 1825, and many of its passengers went to the Midwest in search of the peace and quiet of the countryside. Their homeland had become more crowded during a population boom that the country's economy struggled to keep pace with, according to Jørn Brøndal, professor and Chair of the Center for American Studies at the University of Southern Denmark. Signs of Scandinavian-American identity, such as an increase in English-language translations of the Norse sagas, began to grow. But interest in that history really spiked after the publication of the provocatively titled 1874 book [America Not Discovered By Columbus](#) by Rasmus B. Anderson, the founder of the Scandinavian studies program at the University of Wisconsin.

Anderson's account detailed "the first expedition to New England" in the year 1000 and described Leif Erikson as "the first pale-faced man" and "first white man who turned the bow of his ship towards the west for the purpose of finding America." He claimed American democracy descended from Norsemen's system of government, of "free people" whose "rulers were elected by the people in convention assembled." Furthermore, he made a case that Americans whose ancestors came from the U.K. actually had Viking blood too, due to earlier Norse invasions of Britain. Anderson also claimed that Leif Erikson's brother Thorvald was slaughtered by the indigenous people and buried with two crosses, and that his "skeleton in

armor” was later uncovered in Massachusetts. He ginned up this story to make it seem as if the Vikings had been the victims of Native American violence, [argues](#) JoAnne Mancini, author of the 2002 journal article “[Discovering Viking America.](#)” This alternate discovery narrative could serve as “a salve to Americans’ and particularly New Englanders’ increasingly guilty conscience about the [treatment of Native Americans](#)” in the late 19th century, and a way for “Scandinavian newcomers to the West” to feel better about their own personal “complicity in the brutal [conquest of Indian lands.](#)” Anderson’s book initially wasn’t well-known outside of academia, but would become better known to a mass audience when he was one of the passengers aboard a replica of a Viking ship that sailed from Norway to Chicago in a publicity stunt at the 1893 World’s Fair — also known as the World’s Columbian Exposition — in a stunt meant to distract attention from the festivities marking the 400th anniversary of Columbus’ arrival. The ship’s “welcome to the U.S. was so lavishly staged by the Norwegian Society of Brooklyn that six of her crew, including Captain Magnus Anderssen, ended up in Brooklyn’s Butler Street police court charged with being drunk and disorderly,” as TIME later [recapped](#) the event in 1950. The stunt made waves — in terms of national headlines — and Viking-mania took off. From William Carlos Williams’ 1923 poem about Leif’s father [Eric the Red](#) to the myriad statues erected to Vikings during this period — including a [recently toppled](#) one in Philadelphia — the signs were everywhere. In 1927, Chicago’s outer drive, connecting the city’s North and South Sides, was renamed for Leif. “Reason: he may have discovered America before Columbus; Columbus is now commonplace as thoroughfare designation; local Norwegians were active,” TIME [reported](#). But the frenzy for all things Viking wasn’t just a matter of concern about getting the history right. Experts say the drive for a Leif Erikson Day during that period was also part of a wave of concern among many Americans over an influx of southern and eastern European immigrants who [were not considered fully white](#) — a group that included Italians. Catholics were also mistrusted by many, which left Columbus with two strikes against him. In fact, Marie Brown, author of a book called *The Icelandic Discoverers of America; Or, Honour to Whom Honour Is Due*, testified in a 1887 U.S. Senate hearing that honoring Christopher Columbus “would be to publicly sanction the claims of the Church of Rome to this land, and virtually to invite the pope to come and take possession of it.” (One irony of that belief, Mancini has pointed out, is that there were Vikings who followed the Church of Rome too.) Some of Columbus’ defenders at the time tried to push back by pointing out that he was from Genoa in northern Italy, where many [residents](#) have boasted Nordic roots, so “he could be ‘forgiven’ for being Italian,” according to Brøndal. For some Scandinavian immigrants, the Leif Erikson and Viking

history-awareness campaigns were an effort to solidify their group's place at the top of the "ethnoracial hierarchies in the U.S.," adds Brøndal. "There was a recognition of the Scandinavians having somehow behaved well in the U.S., being viewed as people good at assimilating, so that allowed for these kinds of celebrations." Wisconsin is considered the first U.S. State to recognize Leif Erikson Day, in 1929. For a while, the choice of which explorer to applaud was a [controversial political issue](#), but eventually boosters for both decided they could live in harmony. As the vice president of the Minnesota Leif Erikson Monument Association said in 1934, "There is ample room for honoring both of these men." In fact, during Franklin Delano Roosevelt's presidency, Columbus Day [became a federal holiday in 1937](#), and he issued a statement in Sep. 1940 suggesting Americans read up on [Leif Erikson](#) on Oct. 9. By 1956, seven states, mostly in the Midwest, hosted some sort observance for the explorer.

So why hasn't Leif Erikson Day become as universally known as Columbus Day?

There isn't one straightforward answer. Mancini has argued the debate over shades of whiteness [fizzled out](#) once the quota system that restricted immigration in the '20s was replaced. To Brøndal, the facts speak for themselves, and Columbus gets more credit because he simply did more to cultivate transatlantic trade routes. And then there's the issue of available evidence to support the story of Leif Erikson. While translations of sagas telling the Leif Erikson story have long been readily available, finding hard evidence was more difficult. When Anderson was writing his book, the translations of the sagas weren't clear about even the basics of the location of "Vinland," where Leif Erikson and his fleet landed, leading many New England elites to guess he landed in Boston or Philadelphia. "This is imagined, purely imagined," says Adam Miyashiro, a medieval literature professor at Stockton University and expert on race in the Middle Ages. In the 1950s, a map known as the "Vinland Map" was discovered in a medieval book that came into the hands of a private collector, and scholars decided it was from 1440 and was the first known map to show the Western Hemisphere before Columbus got there. "The map throws further doubt on the legend that Columbus was sailing into completely mysterious and uncharted seas when he set out with his small fleet in 1492. Instead, it appears possible that the Viking voyages may have served as an incentive to Columbus and Cabot and other rediscoverers of America in the 15th century," [TIME noted](#) when it went on display in 1965. ("On a wall in East Boston, one embittered Italian-American scrawled-'Leif Ericsson is a fink'..." the magazine [followed up](#) the next week. "In Chicago, Columbus Day Parade Chairman Victor Arrigo denounced [the map] as a

‘Communist plot.’”) But the map **wasn’t** what it appeared to be. “[Aside] from a Norse penny, minted between 1065 and 1080 and found in 1957 at an Indian site near Brooklin, Maine, nearly all of [the supposed Viking artifacts] have turned out to be bogus,” TIME **noted** in a 2000 story timed with the thousand-year anniversary of Erikson’s arrival. “The Newport (R.I.) Tower, whose supposed Viking origin was central to Longfellow’s epic poem *The Skeleton in Armor*, was built by an early Governor of Rhode Island. The Kensington Stone, a rune-covered slab unearthed on a Minnesota farm in 1898 that purportedly describes a voyage to Vinland in 1362, is today widely believed to be a modern forgery. So is Yale’s Vinland Map, a seemingly antique chart with the marking ‘Vinilanda Insula’ that surfaced in the 1950s bound into a medieval book.” The most significant archaeological excavation related to the origins of Leif Erikson’s trip took place in 1960 when archaeologists revealed that Erikson had first landed in Newfoundland, Canada, not in what’s now the U.S. “In retrospect, it is astonishing that the evidence took so long to be found. That year Norwegian explorer Helge Ingstad and his wife, archaeologist Anne Stine Ingstad, went to Newfoundland to explore a place identified on an Icelandic map from the 1670s as ‘Promontorium Winlandiae,’ near the small fishing village of L’Anse aux Meadows, in the province’s northern reaches. They were certain that it marked the location of an ancient Norse settlement,” TIME explained in that 2000 story. “Finding the settlement turned out to be absurdly easy. When the Ingstads asked the locals if there were any odd ruins in the area, they were taken to a place known as ‘the Indian camp.’ They immediately recognized the grass-covered ridges as Viking-era ruins like those in Iceland and Greenland.” But, even though Erikson arrived in Canada instead of the U.S., that hasn’t stopped some Americans from celebrating his achievement. Since at least FDR, American presidents have generally issued annual proclamations recognizing Oct. 9 as a day to honor Leif Erikson’s achievements and, more currently, the achievements of the larger Scandinavian-American community. At least for Brøndal, it’s hard to imagine the holiday will gain much more additional recognition at this point, especially as the tide **grows** behind the idea of Indigenous Peoples Day, since the celebration of the Viking explorer isn’t any less problematic in that sense than the celebration of the Italian explorer. And yet both holidays have become a source of pride, for Italian-Americans and Scandinavian-Americans, and have become opportunities for these groups to raise awareness about their roles in the American story.

“Unlike Columbus, the Vikings may not have established a permanent presence in North America the first time around,” TIME observed in 2000. “But given the millions of Americans who share at least a bit of Viking blood, they are still there — and in considerable force.”

Gratulerer med Oktober Bursdag!

Happy October Birthdays!

Norma Castellano

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Virginia Viking

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