

"I prefer 'storytelling,'" Skogen tells me. "I like how you can always find a good point and something interesting in everyday life."

Skogen has spent several years developing the story of the Restauration, the sloop that brought the first Norwegian immigrants to the U.S. Like many true-life stories, the heroes and heroines are more steadfast than heroic. Their bravery comes forth in the life-changing choices they make as they oppose the rigid state religion of Lutheranism in favor of Quakerism. Living in and near Stavanger, Norway, the Quaker group tried to make concessions so they could continue to live in Norway but it becomes evident to both parties that they could only "agree to disagree." Emigration to the newly-formed democratic land of religious freedom in America is chosen as the only solution.

To make the journey, the group purchased a sloop of about 39 tons, built in 1801 in Hardanger, Norway. They rechristened the boat Restauration. Although it is often referred to as the Norwegian Mayflower, Restauration is only one-fourth of the size of the original Mayflower.

Forty-five passengers and seven crew left Norway on the three-month southbound trip and 46 passengers and crew arrive in New York, with a baby girl born out at sea.

While sailing up the Atlantic coast, they apparently missed the entrance to New York harbor and sailed up past Long Island. Then Restauration sailed west into Long Island Sound, entering New York waters through Hell Gate. They traveled down the East River to dock in New York City.

Several newspapers wrote about the arrival of the small band of Norwegians. The sloop Restauration turned out to be an even smaller vessel for the amount of passengers it can legally accommodate.

The boat was confiscated and a hearing was set for violation of The Act of 1819, which states in American Maritime Law that only two passengers are allowed for every five tons. The Restauration had 21 passengers too many, and the penalty is \$150 per passenger or \$3,150, which is more than twice the cost paid for the sloop in Norway.

In an episode which can only be called miraculous, the captain was pardoned by U.S. President John Quincy Adams, and the Restauration and captain were released from bondage. The passengers and crew make their way to Albany, N.Y., and then to the Erie Canal to head further west. As winter is upon them, the canal freezes and at least one man ice skates 300 miles along the canal to his new home. Some settle in Rochester, N.Y., and the descendants of this voyage, now known as "sloopers" pepper New York State and the Midwest.

The Restauration and captain remained in New York. The sloop was sold for \$400 and disappears from history, apparently falling off any traceable maritime registration. But that's not the end of the story, at least for the descendants of the "sloopers."

During April 2010, a full-sized replica of the Restauration was completed in Stavanger, the joint effort of the Restauration Foundation and boat builder Ryfylke Trebyggieri. It took three years to construct the handcrafted wooden boat. It was christened by Jill Elaine Russell, a descendant of Lars Larsen Geilane, who was the leader of the original 1825 group that settled in America.

Skogen, who attended the christening, tells me the Queen Mary was in the Harbor at the time and this grand liner gave a resounding salute to the Restauration when she was christened. The Restauration acquired, with a special agreement with Anne Elisebeth, her original manuscript of "Through Hell Gate to The Promised Land."

"The manuscript will never be printed," states Skogen. "It will only be told verbally by me or someone onboard Restauration."

For further information visit Skogen's website: [www.forteljarkokeriet.no](http://www.forteljarkokeriet.no).

**This article was originally published in the May 27, 2011 issue of the Norwegian American Weekly. For more information about the Norwegian American Weekly or to subscribe, call us toll free (800) 305-0217 or email [subscribe@norway.com](mailto:subscribe@norway.com).**

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