

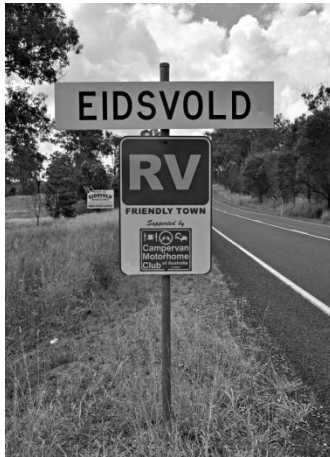


A Norwegian Waltz

Norwegian Immigration and Settlement in Queensland 1870-1914

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Entering the township of Eidsvold, Queensland, in February 2011 when the author visited. Eidsvold was established as a sheep station in 1848 by brothers Charles and Thomas Archer whose parents had migrated from Scotland to Larvik in Norway a generation earlier. PHOTO BY AUTHOR.



The residence of unknown Norwegians, probably in the Brisbane area, built in contemporary style. There appears to be a Norwegian flag hoisted from the flag pole in front of the building. The picture is probably from the 1880s or 1890s. PHOTO COURTESY OF GERD-BIRGIT TJOMSLAND.



Anders Pedersen Bjerke, born in Vang, Norway, married Severine Louisa Klæstad from Kristiania in Townsville in 1882. This photo is taken a few years later, probably in Croydon. Pictured are Severine and Anders with their children Albert (left), Clara, Alma and Matilda. PHOTO COURTESY OF MARILYN SMITH.

A Norwegian Waltz

The title *A Norwegian Waltz* alludes not to a dance, but to the meaning of the word 'waltz' within the context of the Australian bush, expressing a way of travelling about, epitomised by the song *Waltzing Matilda*, Australia's best known folk song. *Waltzing Matilda* was in fact written in the Queensland bush by A. B. (Banjo) Paterson and performed for the first time in Winton, 1895, during difficult times just a decade or two after several hundred Norwegian immigrants had arrived in the colony. Indeed the expression 'to waltz matilda' means to carry a bundle of your personal possessions as you travel the roads; 'matilda' being one of several names given to the swag or pack carried by itinerant workers in Australia in the 19th and early 20th century.

Prelude

I have gathered these stories afar,
In the wind and the rain,
In the land where the cattle camps are,
On the edge of the plain.
On the overland routes of the west,
When the watches were long,
I have fashioned in earnest and jest
These fragments of song.

They are just the rude stories one hears
In sadness and mirth,
The records of wandering years,
And scant is their worth
Though their merits indeed are but slight,
I shall not repine,
If they give you one moment's delight,
Old comrades of mine.

Written by Australian poet A. B. (Banjo) Paterson and published in
The Man from Snowy River & Other Verses, 1895.

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This thesis could not have been written without the help of a long list of individuals. Firstly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor at the University of Oslo, Professor Knut Kjeldstadli. His constructive, friendly and efficient feedback and advice has been invaluable to me throughout the entire process. To steer my project on to the right track, I am also grateful for suggestions from Dr. Olavi Koivukangas, Turku, as well as historian Robert Ørsted Jensen, Brisbane. Furthermore, I would like to extend warm thanks to Dr. Jonathan Richards, Griffith University, who sent me source material from his own collection and eagerly spent a whole day teaching me the ropes at the Queensland State Archives.

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The Scottish-Norwegian Archer family has a prominent position in Queensland history. In the process of gaining knowledge of the family's rich history, I received invaluable help from Mr. James Ronald Archer, Larvik, and Mr. Per B. Jørgensen, Drøbak. In February 2011 I visited the Eidsvold Station, founded by Charles and Thomas Archer in 1848, and Gracemere, the Archers' Queensland hub since 1855. I am grateful for the help and hospitality afforded me by Pauline and Bruce Forster, Ms. Cath Archer, Mr. Russel Archer, Dr. Lorna McDonald, Sally and Anthony Coates, Ms. Dot Hamilton, Ms. Amanda Hope (Eidsvold Library) and Ms. Fay Griffiths (Rockhampton & District Historical Society).

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material such as documents and photos, I have also been extended true Australian hospitality. I would like to thank Mr. Odd-Steinar Dybvad Raneng in Southport, Ms. Ann Augusteyn at the Capricorn Caves, Ms. Margaret Buchanan in Booval, Mr. Patrick Andersen in Brisbane as well as Simone and Karen Cody in Brisbane. The list goes on: Several individuals have sent me e-mails and letters, or met with me in person, relating information which has been directly or indirectly used in this thesis (see sources and references where relevant). Therefore, I would also like to show my appreciation to: Mr. Gunnar Aabøe, Dr. Bob Anderssen and Mr. John Anderssen, Mr. Severin Berner Andreassen (III), Ms. Diane Cheetham, Mr. David Clark, Ms. Joan Connor, Ms. Des Dun, Mr. Brian Euhus, Ms. Anne-Line Grimsbo, Mr. Leslie H. Halvorsen, Ms. Cate Harley, Ms. Genevieve Isbell, Mr. Clive Jacobsen, Mr. Steinar Johansen (Norwegian Club of Queensland), Ms. Marit Myhre, Ms. Pip Peck, Ms. Marilyn Smith, Mr. Steffen Sætereie, Ms. Gerd-Birgit Tjomsland, Ms. Robyn Wiltshire and Ms. Carol Woodrow. When I was nearing completion of this project, Pastor Stephen G. Nuske at St. Andrew's Lutheran Church in Brisbane kindly shared his insights into Scandinavian religious life. My apologies if any names have been omitted from the list.

I had the great pleasure of travelling to Queensland twice in 2011 as well as visiting archives and museums in Norway and Sweden, trips that could never have taken place without financial support from the Department of Archaeology, History and Conservation at the University of Oslo and a grant from the Eckbo Foundation. Also, I owe thanks to my employer *Aftenposten* and particularly to my boss John Einar Sandvand for being flexible and giving me the opportunity to do freelance work while I have been on study leave. Furthermore, I would like to acknowledge the work of Pål Jørgen Bakke who has proof read my writings and ensured that the English used in this thesis is reasonably comprehensible.

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Although I am tremendously grateful for all this help, allow me to state the obvious: The author is solely responsible for the content of this thesis, including any flaws or mistakes.

OSLO, APRIL 2012. FREDRIK LARSEN LUND.

Do you have information about Norwegian immigrants in Australia? Even though this thesis is now submitted I still have an interest in the topic. Feel free to e-mail me: fredrik.larsen.lund@gmail.com.

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List of abbreviations used in footnotes

ABS – Australian Bureau of Statistics.

AG – Agent-General, the Queensland government’s representative in London.

NAA – National Archives of Australia, Canberra

NAN – National Archives of Norway, Oslo.

NAS – National Archives of Sweden, Stockholm.

NDA – Norwegian Digital Archives. Archival material transcribed, digitised and published at <http://arkivverket.no/digitalarkivet>.

NLN – National Library of Norway, Oslo.

QLD BDM – Register of Births, Death and Marriages, Queensland Department of Justice and Attorney General, Brisbane.

QPP – Queensland Parliamentary Papers, minutes from the Legislative Assembly (from 1902).

QSA – Queensland State Archives, Brisbane.

SN – Statistics Norway.

V&P – Votes & proceedings, minutes from the Queensland Legislative Assembly (until 1901, then renamed QPP).

Figure 0.1. Norwegian settlement in Queensland 1870-1914



1 – Introduction

We have a saying that the ladies in Australia lack beauty, the birds don't sing, and the flowers have no scent.

*Norwegian scientist Carl Lumholtz, 1888, after spending four years in Queensland.*¹

THE FIFTY YEARS from 1865 to 1915 was a time of mass emigration from Norway. Almost 700,000 people left their native country in search of a new home overseas, the overwhelming majority in the United States and Canada.² However, some chose other destinations. Among them a few souls settled in a vast, and for most Norwegians unknown territory, called Queensland on the Australian continent, a journey up to four months away. The topic of this thesis is the immigration and settlement of Norwegians in Queensland which coincided with the great outflow of people to America. Who were they and what happened to them?

Historical context

IN THE 19TH CENTURY, both Norway and Queensland were societies in transition. For the British in newly occupied Queensland it was a question of 'populate or perish'. Norway, on the other hand, doubled its population from 1801 to 1875.³ Reduced mortality early in the century ran parallel with continuing high fertility. The growing number of people led to increased pressure on agricultural resources. The traditional peasant society was broken up in a structural transformation from relative self-sufficiency to a cash and market-based economy. In the mid-1800s the industrial revolution reached Norway, and the country was drawn into international trade facilitated by better communications. Under these conditions migration functioned both as a safety valve and as an alternative to the opportunities offered at home.⁴ As a demographic safety valve, emigration eased the absorption of Norway's rapidly increasing population. But the migrants were not simply pushed away by modernisation and population growth. According to historian Odd S. Lovoll the decision to move was based not so much on a lack of confidence in prospects at home as on anticipated superior possibilities in America.⁵ As the movement of people grew so did the 'myth about America'.

Just one year before the initial group of Norwegian emigrants set off from Stavanger to New York on board the *Restauration* in 1825, the first permanent European settlement was established in Queensland – the Moreton Bay penal colony – as an offshoot of the New South Wales colony. However, the British did not arrive in a 'terra nullius'. Although Queensland as

¹ Lumholtz 1888: 2. Original quote in Norwegian: "Man har jo det ord at damerne i Australien mangler skjønnhet, fuglene synger ikke, og blomstene dufter ikke."

² Østrem 2006: 34; Semmingsen 1978: 99.

³ Population tables, SN, <http://www.ssb.no/histstat/tabeller/3-1.html>, retr. 16 March 2011.

⁴ Nerbøvik 1999: 20-32.

⁵ Lovoll 1988: 230.

a discrete entity is a construction created by Western imperialism, the region had been populated by humans for 50,000 to 60,000 years.⁶

The Europeans occupied Queensland by populating it. A few German missionaries arrived in 1838. Four years later Moreton Bay was opened to free settlement, and by the end of the decade the first boatload of voluntary migrants had arrived from Britain. By then, squatters⁷ were already expanding into the Darling Downs, west of Brisbane, seizing valuable sheep land and pushing the frontier forward with immense Aboriginal losses in terms of land, livelihoods and lives.⁸ Early representatives of European expansionism were the Scottish-Norwegian Archer brothers, who took up pastoral land in the 1840s and 1850s. Convict transportation came to an end in New South Wales in 1840 but powerful squatters wanted to regain access to cheap bonded labour. Therefore, pastoralists began promoting the idea of a separate northern colony. In addition, the north was neglected in terms of development and infrastructure, an argument that won favour with the British.⁹ Queensland was formally separated from New South Wales in 1859.

At the time of separation the European population stood at only 28,000 in a territory more than three times the size of France. The new colony was set on a course for development, and the political priorities of the first government were infrastructure, immigration and opening up the land for agricultural settlement.¹⁰ Premier Herbert and his government attempted to break up the land-controlling squatter's strong grip on the pastures in order to facilitate smaller-scale agricultural settlement based on immigration from Europe. Contrary to the pastoralists' wish for convict labour, these new arrivals would arrive as free settlers.

The colony quickly developed relevant policies and the necessary machinery to handle immigration. A system of land orders was implemented in the 1860s to attract migrants, particularly resulting in many Germans coming to Queensland.¹¹ Hampered by economic difficulties, however, it was not until after the 1867 Gympie gold rush that the struggling young colony had the funds needed to really establish large-scale immigration programs.¹² The *Immigration Act* of 1869 served as a milestone, setting up a fully government-controlled

⁶ Evans 2007: 1; 3-11.

⁷ A squatter normally refers to someone who occupies a building or a property without legal title. The first pastoralists who took up grazing land in New South Wales did not have land title, hence the term 'squatter'. The term has since referred to the owners/occupiers of large pastoral properties in Australia.

⁸ Evans 2007: 52-55.

⁹ Fitzgerald, Megarrity and Symons 2009: 16.

¹⁰ Fitzgerald, Megarrity and Symons 2009: 19.

¹¹ Fitzgerald, Megarrity and Symons 2009: 20.

¹² Woolcock 1986: 10; Fitzgerald 1982: 157-160.

system to import people, including Scandinavians from 1870. Queensland wanted only those who were physically and morally respectable and the sponsored migrants were hand-picked and judged according to their usefulness for the new colony.¹³ As a result of these efforts, migration schemes contributed more to the population of Queensland than to any other Australian colony. Between 1860 and 1879, in excess of 114,000 migrants arrived from Britain and the rest of Europe. 85 per cent were assisted, meaning that the Queensland government paid for their passage, partly or in full.¹⁴

Outside the organised system, Norwegians also took part in a ‘hidden migration’ facilitated by developments in international trade. Australia and Norway were drawn closer through mercantile shipping from the second half of the 19th century. Export of Norwegian timber to Australia expanded from the mid-1860s.¹⁵ At the same time, Norway’s mercantile navy grew fast; the number of sailors increased from about 11,000 in 1835 to more than 60,000 in 1875. However, the rapid growth was followed by a crisis: The Norwegians were slow learners when steam began to replace sail and consequently lost shares in the freight markets.¹⁶ Ship desertions were frequent in foreign ports, including in Australia.¹⁷

Meanwhile Australia grew fast in terms of population and trade. The Norwegian sailing ships were still profitable on the long runs to the South Pacific, and the Australian trade became the last bastion for the sail. Tonnage on Norwegian vessels to the Antipodean colonies quadrupled in seven years from 1875 to 1882.¹⁸ In 1882 a total of 87 Norwegian vessels visited Australia and New Zealand. By 1899 the number had risen to 188. Many Norwegian ships remained in southern waters for a long time, engaging in the shipping of guano and copra from the South Pacific islands.¹⁹ As a result, a large number of Norwegian seamen visited Australia from the 1870s until World War I. Many of them chose to stay, either by being discharged in Australian ports or by jumping ship.

Research questions: scope and perspectives

ON A PERSONAL level this project originates from an intense interest in Australian, and especially Queensland, society, culture and history spanning more than a decade. Moreover, Queensland presents a good object of study due to the, relatively speaking, fairly significant influx of Norwegians from the 1870s to the early 1900s. A hypothesis is that this was mainly

¹³ Woolcock 1986: 15, 328; Evans 2007: 87.

¹⁴ Evans 2007: 83.

¹⁵ Worm-Müller 1950: 319.

¹⁶ Nedrebø, www.digitalarkivet.no/utstilling/sjorom.htm, retr. 7 Dec 2011; Bjørnlund and Jensen 1989: 313.

¹⁷ Fischer 1989: 293-307.

¹⁸ Weyergang-Nielsen 1994: 59.

¹⁹ Worm-Müller 1950: 320-330.

due to the colony's efforts to increase its population by offering subsidised passages. What's more, I find it interesting to study a topic which has so far been overlooked by Norwegian migration historians. Granted, the Norwegians in Australia were few, but together with their countrymen and women who moved to New Zealand, South Africa, Argentina etc., they confirm that the history of Norwegian emigration is more than just a question of America.

My primary motive has been to learn more about the Norwegians in Queensland; to focus my lens on this particular group of immigrants in one specific part of Australia. Due to the relative lack of previous research and the challenges concerning source material, both discussed later, this project had to start with establishing an empirical baseline. While valuable in its own right, my ambition has also been to provide a more systematic analysis of this historical phenomenon. As pointed out by historian Ottar Dahl, there is interplay between the formulation of research questions and the examination of the availability of data according to a given problem.²⁰ This has very much been the case here; literature and potential sources have been assessed while adjusting the research questions in order to design a project that would be possible to complete within the relevant practical constraints. In the end, I developed the following research questions:

- How did Norwegian immigration to Queensland take place between 1870 and 1914, i.e. how many arrived, when, and by what means?
- How did the Norwegians settle in after their arrival in Queensland in terms of admission, employment, residence and ethnic adjustment?

My perspective is the Norwegians as immigrants in Queensland rather than emigrants from Norway. These are not entirely separate concepts as an immigrant will carry with him his background. But here the analysis will focus on the Queensland side of the equation: the migrants' geographical and socioeconomic status at the destination as well as the admission and adjustment into the new society. My aim is to study the Norwegian population in its full spectrum, and to avoid over-emphasis on a few notable people (but see appendices 1-3 for some biographical details that go beyond the research questions).

By the term 'immigrant' I refer only to the first generation, i.e. the ones who were born in Norway, travelled to Australia, and then took up residence there. Children born in Australia with Norwegian parents are not part of my study. I do not apply any strict criteria as to the length of residence, but as far as it is possible to distinguish between various categories of Norwegians, I will exclude short-term visitors and sailors who called at Australian ports and left again after a limited time. As my focus has been settlement *in* Queensland, I have not

²⁰ Dahl 1973: 49.

found the space for an analysis of secondary migration within Australia, but some examples of stage-by-stage migration are provided in appendix 4.

Theoretical approach

Although Norwegian migration to Queensland was a minor phenomenon compared to other migratory processes, it can still be seen as a migration system, defined by historian Dirk Hoerder as a one-directional cluster of movements between a region of origin to a receiving region persisting over a period of time. Migration systems connect areas that have a relative surplus of labour, skill or capital – or a lack of certain resources such as land – with areas that have a relative demand for these factors. These conditions are not ‘objective’, according to Hoerder, but reflections in the minds of the migrants which explain the decision to move. Besides, as we shall see in the case of Queensland, governments may influence the system by exit or entry regulations or active recruitment.²¹

Further to this, Hoerder has developed a systems approach to the study of international migration. Such an approach connects migration decisions and patterns in the society of departure via the actual move across distance to the society of destination as well as links between the communities in which migrants spent or spend part of their lives. It is an interdisciplinary and transcultural perspective to indicate how interrelated economic, social, political, and technological forces converge into a cultural habitus, a whole way of live, and stimulate migration across space. The systems approach is based on migrant agency within structural constraints.²² This is a general idea, but I find it reasonably applicable here as a perspective to understand the process of Norwegian migration to, and settlement in, Queensland, although within the limitations set out above: Our main object of study is the destination, not the entire system.

The systems approach is a more complex model than classic push-and-pull theories of migration. The latter restrict themselves to supply and demand of labour and resources on a macro-level, criticises Hoerder. In the view of sociologist Stephen Castles and political scientist Mark J. Miller it seems absurd to treat migrants as individual market-players who have full information about their options and freedom to make rational choices. The contrary is often the case: they have limited and contradictory information and are subject to a range of constraints. Furthermore, argue Castles and Miller, the migrants’ behaviour is strongly influenced by historical experiences as well as by family and community dynamics.²³

²¹ Hoerder 2002: 16-17.

²² Harzig and Hoerder 2009: 87-88.

²³ Castles and Miller 2009: 23.

However, in our particular context I find it useful to apply the ‘pull’ concept in order to analyse the attractiveness, or possible lack thereof, of Queensland as a potential destination. According to Borjas, individuals ‘search’ for the country of residence that maximises their well-being: ”In a sense, competing host countries make ‘migration offers’ from which individuals compare and choose”.²⁴ The latter was indeed true in the case of Queensland. I will not use the push-pull model in a strict economic supply and demand sense, but rather as a tool to identify a variety of conditions in Queensland which could be relevant in the eyes of prospective Norwegian migrants who would first make a decision about whether to migrate or not, and secondly had to decide – more or less freely – where to go. More in chapter 2.

The systems approach to migration, on the other hand, combines the analysis of the position of a society in the global order, its structures, the regional specifics, selection and self-selection of migrants, the process of migration itself, and – within the receiving society’s structures – the insertion into labour markets, formation of ethnic enclaves or transcultural networks and interaction with new values and norms.²⁵ We will partly follow this recipe, but with an emphasis on the in-migrants in the receiving end of the system. Thus we shall consider some of the questions Castles and Miller argue we ought to ask in order to understand the migratory process:²⁶ We are going to discuss factors on various levels which made the Norwegians choose Queensland as their destination. From there we move on to examine political and practical structures for regulating and facilitating immigration. Moreover, we will also study the immigrants’ opportunities in the receiving society, particularly in the labour market and as settlers and permanent residents. Finally, we ask: How was the immigrants’ social infrastructure and the Norwegians’ ethnic identity?

In analytical terms, between the large structures (macro) and the individuals (micro), a third level – a meso-level – exists. Sociologist Thomas Faist has elaborated on ‘the crucial meso-level’: On this level we focus on social relations, ties between individuals in families, kinship groups, households, neighbourhoods and associations, and we need to study the social relations between individuals within these groups.²⁷ While Faist is concerned with the decision-making process on whether to migrate or not, here we mainly wish to analyse how the migrants found their way in their new homeland after arriving. Nevertheless, Faist’s emphasis on social networks seems to have relevance in these situations too: Migrants related to social structures before, during and after the actual transit from Norway to Queensland;

²⁴ Borjas 1989: 461.

²⁵ Hoerder 2002: 19.

²⁶ Castles and Miller 2009: 29

²⁷ Faist 1997: 188.

they were embedded in social contexts. I will not argue that the immigrants' behaviour were determined by these relations, but by drawing attention to the concept of 'social capital' like Faist does, we emphasis the resources inherent in their social ties. These resources, like information about jobs, transport etc. help the immigrants follow their objectives. Social capital is created in social relations and can be utilised by individuals as a resource. On the meso-level we study how social capital is formed, accumulated and mobilised by collectives and networks given certain macro-settings. Without social capital, says Faist, it is extremely difficult for migrants to invest resources like money or skills in a beneficial way.²⁸

Another key concept in the receiving end of migration is the process of acculturation. Hoerder has defined 'acculturation' as "a process of migrants' coming to terms with a new culture after having developed a full personality in the culture of origin [...]. It implies a gradual withering of old roots while sinking new ones at the same time," ref. page 4. It is a second socialisation, argues Hoerder, where the migrants have to deal with the conditions of the destination, in economical, social and political terms as well as reconstituted personal relationships. The interaction changes the receiving society to a certain degree.²⁹ When studying the transition from migrants to 'ethnics', theories of ethnicity and ethnic incorporation are also relevant. These will be reviewed in chapter 6 where we will discuss the Norwegians' ethnic adjustment in detail. Finally, acculturation does not take place in a social void, and as such the concept is also linked to Faist's point about social networks.

Historiography and research status

IN HIS OVERVIEW of Norwegian emigration history, Nils Olav Østrem encourages more research into Norwegian migration to Australia.³⁰ The main academic work on the topic is one chapter in Ingrid Semmingen's *Veien mot Vest*, vol. 2 (The Road to the West, 1950). It introduces the system of assisted migration to Queensland as well as maritime migration. For this thesis it has been useful mainly for two purposes: Firstly as a very basic introduction to the theme and secondly to locate a number of letters from Queensland used by Semmingsen in her research. Worth a mention is also Lars Leistad's M.A. thesis (hovedfag) *Fra Gloppen til Melbourne: Norsk innvandring til Australia i et innvandringspolitisk perspektiv* (Norwegian Immigration to Australia in an Immigration Policy Perspective, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, 1998). His area of study is Norwegian migration to Australia as a

²⁸ Faist 1997: 199-203

²⁹ Hoerder 1996: 212.

³⁰ Østrem 2006: 112.

whole and post World War II; as such quite a different topic from mine. However, Leistad has gathered much relevant background information about earlier migration as well.

A few works exist on the broader topic of Scandinavians in Australia. However, most available literature is anecdotal or lack references. One important exception is Olavi Koivukangas' PhD thesis *Scandinavian Immigration and Settlement in Australia before World War II* (Australian National University, 1972, published in 1974). This is a thorough demographic and historical study largely based on quantitative data from naturalisation records. These data have also been used as a major source here (see below). On the whole, Koivukangas offers the most comprehensive analysis of Scandinavians 'Down Under'.

Probably the best contribution to the historiography during the last 20 years is Danish historian Robert Ørsted Jensen's M.A. thesis *A Free Passage to Queensland* (Roskilde University Centre, 1994). He deals exclusively with Queensland and his main research interest lies with Danish assisted migration in the 1870s. His emphasis is predominantly on the system of assisted migration, recruitment of migrants and the sea passage to Queensland.

Among older contributions, a migrated Dane, Jens Lyng, wrote extensively about Scandinavians in Australia in the late 1800s and early 1900s. He was editor of the Melbourne-based paper *Norden* and also published several books among which his 1939 work *The Scandinavians in Australia, New Zealand and the Western Pacific* is the most extensive. Lyng was, however, mainly concerned with organised community life and prominent members of the immigrant stock, yet on questions pertaining to ethnic associations Lyng's work provides relevant information and insights.

A small wave of non-academic books appeared in the 1980s. The most comprehensive contribution was penned by Koivukangas and Melbourne professor John Stanley Martin: *Scandinavians in Australia* (1986). Swedish researcher Ulf Beijbom, with Martin, wrote *Vikings in the South: The Swedes in Australia* (1988). From Norway, Arvid Møller contributed with his book *Nordmenn som tok en annen vei* (Norwegians Who Took a Different Route, 1986) where he covered Norwegians in Australia from the earliest days until the mid 20th century. This book should probably best be characterised as dramatised non-fiction; supposedly factual, but not particularly useful for academic work.

Finally, Norwegians were too small a group to find their way into broader works on Queensland history. Scandinavians in general are mentioned here and there, as one of the largest non-British immigrant groups, but little systematic analysis has been offered. In local and community histories from various places in Queensland there are bits and pieces of information about Norwegians and Scandinavians, but no major studies.

Sources and research methods

WHEN STUDYING a tiny migrant group like the Norwegians in Queensland your 'Quellenkunde' is really put to a test. Relevant source material is scattered around numerous different locations in Australia, Norway and Sweden, many of which I have visited in person. As such 'exploring' has been an overarching strategy during this project. Two research trips to Queensland have been undertaken, perusing archives and libraries in Brisbane as well as regional libraries and historical societies. Thanks to careful planning the efforts were rewarding, but searching for material on Norwegians is a hit-and-miss undertaking at times.

Acquiring personal papers produced by the immigrants themselves proved to be the most challenging task. As opposed to immigrant letters from America, there are no published collections of letters from Norwegians in Australia. Because the core public libraries and archives were of limited use, I had to use alternative strategies in my inquiries: Family history is a popular pastime in Norway and probably even more so in Australia. Genealogy can give an insight into the lives of individuals and families. Amateur family historians often collect records related to their ancestors and such material has been of great use. In order to reach out to the family history community, I contacted Norwegian and Australian family history societies directly and also indirectly through the media. Despite these undertakings, it should be pointed out that the end product in terms of actual letters, diaries or other written material from the first generation of immigrants was limited.

Overview of sources and research methods

In order to answer the research questions, quantitative, qualitative and comparative methods have been put to use. Simple statistical analyses of mass data such as censuses and registers of naturalised Norwegians were performed in order to find interesting features on an aggregate level. This approach may be referred to as micro history: Nominal registers or databases, containing several variables, were used to find collective patterns by combining data on the level of the individual.³¹ Public registers and records have also been used to extract data on specific persons. Furthermore, analyses of qualitative, textual data have been carried out, spanning from government records to immigrant letters. On the following pages is a discussion of the main source categories and the methods and more specific techniques used in relation to each category (for a full list, see p. 158). Further to that, in some instances I have applied comparative methods in order to explain certain phenomena; to grasp the contrasts

³¹ Langholm 1977: 132-136.

between the specific Norwegian cases and general developments either in Queensland or in international migration.

Queensland and Australian government records

CENSUSES OF THE QUEENSLAND POPULATION: A census is the systematic, official count of a particular population. Various acts of legislation provided for the taking of censuses in Queensland and after federation in 1901 for the whole Commonwealth of Australia.³² For this thesis, the colonial censuses from 1871, 1881, 1886, 1891 and 1901, as well as the Commonwealth census of 1911 have been used quantitatively to examine the size and scope of the Norwegian-born population. The latter also includes much statistical information about Norwegian-born inhabitants, not measured in previous censuses, such as literacy, marital status and religious affiliation. Unlike many of the contemporary Norwegian censuses, the Queensland people counts are not nominal, i.e. there is no list of names of people living in every household. What they do contain, though, is the number of foreign-born persons residing in each district of the colony/state. By using the above mentioned censuses it has been possible to compile data which shows the changes in the Norwegian-born population in the various parts of Queensland between 1871 and 1911.

There are, however, some problems concerning the censuses. The first problem is on the level of usability. In the censuses of 1886, 1891 and 1901, Norwegian and Swedish-born persons were counted together. Thus, there is no way of telling the exact number of Norwegians living in Queensland during those years. However, it is possible to make fairly good estimates based on the censuses before 1886 and after 1901. These estimates will be presented in chapter 5. Secondly, there are problems on the level of reliability. According to Ørsted Jensen it is well known that the Australian censuses for 1871 are tainted by error and that the population counts from 1881 and especially from 1891 are much more reliable.³³ Koivukangas too has raised some problems in relation to Scandinavians in Australian censuses. One particular problem is that the censuses counted every person in Australia on the night of the census, including crew of ships visiting Australian ports. These people may have constituted a significant proportion of the total population, especially among Norwegians.³⁴ However, when shipping crews were specified in the 1911 census, they accounted for just 15 out of 685 Norwegians in Queensland.

³² Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1911, I: 30.

³³ Ørsted Jensen 1994: appendix IV.

³⁴ Koivukangas 1974: 16-17.

Earlier works point to a peak in the Swedish-Norwegian-born population at the 1886 census, when the combined number supposedly stood at 2787 (Lyng 1939, Koivukangas 1974). Lyng makes a point of the rapid increase from 1881 to 1886, though without providing a satisfactory explanation.³⁵ By closely examining the data and the tables in the 1886 census report, some discrepancies emerge as the figures given for each census district do not add up to 2787 but instead to 1793.³⁶ Given the uncertainties regarding the total number of Swedes and Norwegians in the 1886 census, I have decided not to base any conclusions on it.

NATURALISATION RECORDS: The records of Norwegian immigrants who were naturalised as British subjects have been one of the fundamental sources for this thesis. The *Imperial Act* of 1847 gave the Australian colonies power to pass laws providing for naturalisation of qualified aliens.³⁷ In Queensland the *Aliens Act* of 1867 allowed for Europeans and North Americans to be naturalised as British subjects provided they undertook an oath of allegiance to the Queen.³⁸ A naturalised alien would enjoy the same rights as a person born in Queensland. No specific period of residence was required to take up British citizenship in the colony; naturalisation could be obtained immediately upon arrival. Persons born or naturalised in Australia would become British subjects until Australian citizenship was introduced in 1948.

Up to and including 1903, naturalisations in Queensland were handled by the colonial/state government, and there is a separate series of naturalisation records for Queensland held by the Queensland State Archives. In 1904, naturalisations were taken over by the Commonwealth government under the provisions of the *Naturalisation Act* of 1903, and from that year on there is one single, national series of naturalisation records held by the

³⁵ Lyng 1939: 122.

³⁶ The Synopsis of the 1886 census gives the following number of people born in Sweden & Norway: 2370 males, 417 females = 2787 in total. The same numbers are presented in Table CLII Birthplaces on page 359 in the census. However, in the detailed tables on pages 44-159 and also pages 364-365, the total number adds up to 1376 males and 417 females = 1793 in total. In other words, about 1000 males are missing. The lower figure of 1793 is supported by looking at the proportion of females in the 1886, 1891 and 1901 censuses. In the latter two, 23.7 per cent of Swedes-Norwegians were female. If the correct number for 1886 is 417 females and 1370 males, that gives 23.3 per cent females. However, if we add another 1000 men, the female proportion drops to 15 per cent. It seems unlikely that the sex-ratio should have changed that much in just a few years. The lower number of 1793 is also supported by the fact that the main influx of migrants from Scandinavia took place in the 1870s. Consequently, the number of Swedes and Norwegians increased from 371 in 1871 to 1125 in 1881. Given that general assisted migration was not available in the early 1880s, it seems rather unlikely that the number of Swedes and Norwegians should have increased by more than 1600 in five years from 1881 to 1886. On the other hand, the 1880s was a time when many nominated migrants travelled from Norway to Queensland via London. It was also probably the main period for ship desertion in Australia.

³⁷ Koivukangas 1974: 19.

³⁸ *Queensland Government Gazette* 1867: 1457-1460.

National Archives of Australia. Under Commonwealth regulations the required term of residence was two years.³⁹

Applicants for naturalisation had to provide certain information. As a minimum this included name, year of birth, occupation and place of living. From 1904 the applicants were asked to fill in statutory declarations including information about place of residence, birthplace, occupation and employment situation, means and time of arrival, previous places of residence, marital condition and number of children.

The records used in this thesis are based on work done in the early 1970s by Koivukangas and his associates as part of the research undertaken for his PhD thesis. They collected and copied the original naturalisation records for all the Scandinavians who changed citizenship in Australia prior to 1904. They also took a sample of the records from the years after 1904; Norwegians naturalised between 1904 and 1915 were sampled in a ratio of 1 to 3. Key information from the naturalisation papers were copied on to index cards. A copy of the index cards for all the Norwegians is held at the Museum of Emigration in Hamar, Norway.

For this thesis I have been able to employ these records in two ways: Firstly as quantitative data to gain knowledge about the Norwegians in Queensland by creating a database in Excel containing the information from the index cards. The database consists of 517 names and includes the following variables: Family name, given names, sex, year of birth, age at time of naturalisation, year of naturalisation, reference number, marital status, occupation, place of living, place of origin, additional info. Not every person in the data set fills every variable; most notably there is no information about marital status and place of origin for those who were naturalised before 1904. Still the data has allowed various analyses, particularly concerning occupational distribution and settlement patterns.

Secondly, every single naturalisation tells a short story about an individual, the post-1904 records more so than the older ones. Based on the naturalisation papers it has been possible to locate additional information from other sources about individuals of particular interest. A large proportion of the post-1904 naturalisation papers have been digitised by the Australian National Archives and are available online.

There are a number of problems concerning the use of naturalisation records. Firstly, how reliable are the records? Naturalisation was typically applied for after many years of residence. Things such as year of arrival or previous addresses may have been forgotten. Information may have been omitted. However, in this thesis we mainly use information on

³⁹ Koivukangas 1974: 19-20.

occupation and place of residence at the time of naturalisation. Another point in terms of reliability is the possibility of a correct interpretation of the data. The main issue here is unreadable or incomprehensible handwriting. The papers were first collected in the 1970s and the information was copied on to handwritten index cards. Then, in a second process of data collection, I interpreted those index cards and transferred the data to a computer system. However, it should be noted that the information is unambiguous and comprehensible on all but a handful of records. Another issue is the fact that some persons were naturalised more than once. Because naturalisation was easy to obtain, one could simply just get a new one if the old certificate was lost. I have found a few obvious duplicates, but the number is very low.

Another main problem is: How relevant are these records as a source for an analysis of the Norwegian population in Queensland? Koivukangas has estimated that the naturalisation records for Norwegians who changed citizenship cover between one fourth and one third of the total number of arrivals prior to 1904, and 60 percent of arrivals in the years 1904-1915.⁴⁰ Although the records do not cover every immigrant, they give a fair insight into the more settled part of the population according to Koivukangas, and as such allow for generalisations to be made. However, the question remains whether the records are representative of the entire Norwegian settlement in Queensland. One objection is that very few women were naturalised. Of 517 persons in the database, there are only 16 women. Married women whose husband was naturalised (or British by birth) did not have to obtain their own certificates.⁴¹

Moving on to those who did become naturalised, the question is: Who changed their citizenship and who did not? One frequent motive was to select land for farming. Important land legislation such as the *Crown Lands Alienation Act* of 1868 and the *Crown Lands Alienation Act* of 1876 disqualified a person "who is not a natural-born or naturalized subject of Her Majesty" from taking up cheap agricultural land.⁴² For an immigrant in Queensland to nominate friends or relatives at home for subsidised passages to the colony, naturalisation was also necessary as set out in the *Immigration Act* of 1869.⁴³ In addition, a change of citizenship was required to become Master of a British vessel. Even obtaining a driving licence could require a certificate of naturalisation.⁴⁴ To purchase other forms of real estate, run a business or receive old-age pensions were other motives for a change of allegiance. Some men were naturalised to restore their wives' nationality. Many married British women, who then had

⁴⁰ Koivukangas 1974: 38, 114.

⁴¹ *Queensland Government Gazette* 1867: 1457-1460.

⁴² *Queensland Government Gazette* 1868: 173-201; *Queensland Government Gazette* 1876: 1223-1245.

⁴³ *Queensland Government Gazette* 1869: 1219-1222.

⁴⁴ Naturalisation papers, Christian Sigur Clausen, NAA, ref. 19/5529, 19/3561.

their citizenship changed to that of the husband unless he in turn was naturalised.⁴⁵ Based on these conditions, a reasonable hypothesis is that farmers and other property owners, as well as people who had their own businesses, are overrepresented in the database. Conversely, itinerant workers and those without a permanent residence or a family are likely to be underrepresented. Although the naturalisation records have some weaknesses, their strength is that they taken together systematically cover a large proportion of the Norwegian male population in various occupations all over Queensland. The information is easily interpreted and well structured. It is the closest we have to a muster roll over Norwegians in the territory.

OTHER QUEENSLAND AND AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT RECORDS: General searches in Queensland government archives have not been conducted, for two reasons: 1) Due to the low number of Norwegians it would have been like looking for a needle in a haystack; 2) My limited time during my two trips to Queensland did not allow for weeks of research into non-digitised public records. To follow up information found in other sources, however, police records, inquests and land title records have been located related to specific places and individuals of interest. The same goes for other government correspondence, in particular items concerning immigration. Unfortunately, the Queensland registers of discharged and deserted seamen do not list nationality. In order to estimate the extent of ship desertion among Norwegian sailors, copies of the *Register of deserters at Melbourne 1878-1924* were examined as no equivalent register existed in Queensland.

Other Queensland government publications

Official publications from the Queensland government have also been used as sources, most importantly the *Votes & Proceedings of the Queensland Legislative Assembly* (from 1902 known as *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*). This is the official record of the proceedings of the Legislative Assembly. They are minutes of the meetings and include bills, papers, reported motions and petitions tabled in Parliament. With regards to the research questions in this thesis, the parliamentary papers have been used mainly to study the political debate which took place in Queensland over Scandinavian immigration as well as annual reports and statistics from the Agent-General in London and the Immigration Agent in Brisbane. In addition, the *Queensland Police Gazette* has been examined to gain insight into Norwegians who broke the laws or deserted from their ships. The gazette published both warrants for the arrest of wanted persons as well as monthly tables over persons released from prison.

⁴⁵ Koivukangas 1974: 28-29.

Norwegian (Swedish-Norwegian) government records

CONSULAR PAPERS: A Swedish-Norwegian consulate was established in Brisbane in 1882. In 1906, Norway opened its own consulate after gaining independence from Sweden. The consulate dealt mainly with matters relating to shipping and commerce, but also acted as a mail box for people on the move and was involved when someone went missing or died. The Swedish National Archives in Stockholm hold the archives from 1882 to 1895, but the collection is probably incomplete. Nevertheless, these papers have been accessed. Material from the Norwegian consulate in Brisbane from 1906 onwards has never been handed over to the National Archives of Norway.⁴⁶ A few documents of interest have however been found in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' archives. Also, annual reports from the consulate in Brisbane were published for a period in the 1880s in *Uddrag af Aarsberetninger for de forenede Rigers Konsuler* (Extracts from Annual Reports from the Consuls of the United Kingdoms).

NORWEGIAN CENSUS AND STATISTICAL DATA: The Norwegian nominal census of 1865 has been used in selected cases to find background information about migrants, mainly among those who left in the 1870s. As for statistics, official population data such as *NOS No. VII. 25. Utvandringsstatistikk* (Departementet for Sociale Saker, Kristiania, 1921) is of little use for the purpose of this study. Firstly, the official Norwegian statistics does not include all migrants, as deserted seamen or those travelling independently were not counted. Secondly, the data is not geographically specific enough; i.e. there is only one broad category called 'Australia' which may include New Zealand and even Hawaii.⁴⁷

Passenger and departure lists

HAMBURG DEPARTURE LISTS: There is no register of every single Norwegian who came to Queensland. Passenger lists are held in archives in Australia, but for the most part they do not include the nationality of the passengers. Besides, Norwegians came to Queensland in a multitude of ways. However, about one-third of the arriving Norwegians travelled on ships that left from Hamburg in the 1870s as part of the colony's assisted migration program. At departure from the North German port, information about the passengers was systematically recorded by the shipping companies and submitted to the authorities. These records have been collected and digitised by family historians Rosemary and Eric Kopittke and published as a database, *Emigrants from Hamburg to Australasia 1850-1879* (publ. 1994-2005) containing about 40,000 names of which 748 are listed as Norwegians.

⁴⁶ Letter from National Archives of Norway to author, 22 August 2011.

⁴⁷ *Utvandringsstatistikk*, 1921: 73.

The Hamburg passenger lists include the following variables for each individual: Number, surname, given names, town of residence, state (country of origin), standing, age, sex, destination, ship, year. Destination is not always stated precisely. The Hamburg database has been useful in various ways, most importantly as a statistical source to gauge the extent of the assisted migration in the 1870s and annual fluctuations during that decade. There are a few ambiguities regarding the migrants' place of origin. For example, four people from Charlottenberg in Sweden are classified as Norwegians. Most likely, they travelled via Kristiania to Australia. However, all in all the vast majority of listings seem reliable and for statistical purposes I have used the whole data set, i.e. all the passengers listed with 'Norwegen' as their country of origin.

REGISTERS OF EMIGRANTS FROM KRISTIANIA (OSLO): Upon departure from Norway, emigrants registered with the police. In the Kristiania/Oslo police archives there are two series of logs listing departing migrants, transcribed and published online by Norwegian Digital Archives. Despite a slight overlap, the registers contain 785 emigrants bound for Queensland or Brisbane. Taken together, the two series represent a parallel to the Hamburg departure lists, covering mainly the organised emigration in the 1870s. The Norwegian protocols have two advantages over the Hamburg lists: They include more specific information regarding occupations and they list the migrants' place of residence prior to departure. However, the Norwegian lists have many gaps. Because of this, the Hamburg database has been used as the core quantitative source for studying the 1870s assisted migration.

Private papers

PERSONAL LETTERS AND WRITINGS: Immigrant letters, as well as diaries and autobiographical writings from the first generation can give an insight into ordinary people's thoughts and experiences. They may shed light on actual circumstances and experiences in the persons' lives, but they also tell us something about the writer and his or her way of thinking.⁴⁸

Letters and personal writings relevant to the research questions in this thesis have been few and for the most part short. I have also perused some anonymous letters published in newspapers (see below). My interest has been any information the letters have conveyed concerning impressions of Queensland and life and settlement in the new home country. Literary scientist Orm Øverland writes, based on studies of writings from Norwegians in America, that "with few exceptions, immigrant letters give a reliable account of material

⁴⁸ Referring to the traditional distinction between 'accounts' (No. *beretninger*) and 'remnants' (No. *levninger*) in Norwegian historical methodology. See Dahl 1973: 37-38; Kjeldstadli 1999: 170-174; Fulsås 2001: 233.

conditions”.⁴⁹ In Queensland’s case, factual information in the letters stands up well against other evidence, and the letters are generally written in a sober tone.

A few autobiographical works in the form of reminiscences penned at old age have been useful. These are written in retrospect and may have been edited as to place the writer in a good light. A number of second- or third-generation accounts have also been available and sometimes proved relevant in conjunction with other sources.

The selection of letters and other autobiographical writings is incidental, discovered through the efforts outlined earlier. Therefore we cannot dismiss the possible existence of other manuscripts which may alter the story of the Queensland Norwegians. What is more, we do not know whether the available material is representative. They are arbitrary examples of immigrant experiences, and in Øverland’s words “added to this is the probability that letters speaking of limited success would more likely be preserved [...] than letters telling of failure and misery”.⁵⁰ Having said that, views or experiences of a single person have not been used to draw conclusions for a whole group, but to enrich our understanding of developments or trends found in censuses, naturalisations and other sources.

Family history records

Thanks to the effort outlined previously, a large number of different family history papers were received, i.e. various family trees, heritage charts and written accounts which have been compiled for the purpose of studying a family’s genealogy. These records are secondary sources at best. The material has normally been collected by individual amateur historians or genealogical societies based on research into private papers, such as letters and autobiographical writings and public records like passenger lists, naturalisation papers, birth/death/marriage certificates etc. as well as newspaper articles. Quality-wise the material spans from almost professionally written and referenced manuscripts based on meticulous research into archival sources to simple family charts with very little information except names and dates of birth and death. In most cases the research has been done by ancestors one, two or three generations down the line from the migrants themselves. The material has been used to illuminate the statistical data and in conjunction with other sources to piece together the life stories of some of the Norwegians. The main problem with family history papers is anecdotal evidence; stories typically passed on through family tradition with no contemporary written records to back them up. Such anecdotes often relate to everyday life of the settlers, but with no independent confirmation their reliability comes into question.

⁴⁹ Øverland 1996: 214.

⁵⁰ Øverland 1996: 222.

Newspapers and periodicals

AUSTRALIAN: The main Queensland newspapers from 1860 until 1920 have been searched systematically. This applies to the following papers fully available online from the National Library of Australia at trove.nla.gov.au: *The Courier/Brisbane Courier*, *Cairns Post/Morning Post*, *Morning Bulletin (Rockhampton)*, *Queenslander* and *Townsville Daily Bulletin*. The method used was to search for the keywords 'Norway', 'Norwegian', 'born in Norway', 'native of Norway', 'Scandinavia' and 'Scandinavian' to find articles relating to Norwegian and Scandinavian immigration. For control, searches were also performed on the keywords 'Norseman', 'Norsemen', 'Norsky', 'Norskje', 'Norskis' and 'Norskies'. The total result was several thousand hits, most of which was irrelevant. Still, numerous useful items were found. Additional searches have been done on selected persons or items of interest, also after 1920.

The newspaper *Norden*, published in Melbourne from 1896, on a monthly or bi-monthly basis, was aimed at Scandinavians in Australia. Edited for many years by Jens Lyng, it had a focus on urban life in Victoria and New South Wales. However, reports from Scandinavians in Queensland featured regularly, although primarily related to organised activities. *Norden* has been studied from its inception in 1896 through to 1907. Some articles from other Australian publications have also been examined.

NORWEGIAN: As for Norwegian newspapers, selected papers and issues have been searched, in particular to find material pertaining to the Queensland government's recruitment campaign in the 1870s and 1890s. *Aftenposten*, *Dagbladet*, *Morgenbladet*, *Verdens Gang* and some other papers all published advertisements for subsidised tickets to Queensland. Furthermore, a handful of letters and stories from Queensland migrants were published in Norwegian newspapers. Four anonymous contributions published in *Dagbladet*, *Fredriksstad Tilskuer*, *Tromsø Stiftstidende* and *Verdens Gang* 1871-1874 have been found. The letters have much in common: They are all written by relatively newly arrived Queensland travellers and mainly speak of wages and working conditions, but also share some impressions of the new and unknown land. Although the material content generally agrees with other sources, they may have been edited and published as part of the promotional effort to paint a positive picture of the colony. This is a possibility which has to be taken into account when employing these letters as sources. In general, the letters linger around practical information and future opportunities rather than struggle and failure, but this is not unambiguous.

Finally, the journal of *Nordmandsforbundet* (Norse Federation), an association founded in 1907 in order to muster Norwegians all over the world, has been examined from

the first volume in 1908 until 1940. The journal featured regular reports from the Norwegian community 'Down Under'. Long-time editor Ludvig Saxe visited Norwegians in Australia for his book *Nordmænd jorden rundt* (Norwegians Around the World, 1914). One point of criticism is that *Nordmandsforbundet*, much like *Norden*, primarily reported on activities among parts of the urban middle-class with fairly strong links back to their homeland.

Personal communication

Various items of information were related through meetings with, as well as letters and email correspondence from, descendants of Norwegian immigrants and others with an interest in the topic. Most was anecdotal evidence, but some of it has nevertheless shed useful light on certain topics. Wherever such material has been employed it is referenced appropriately.

A note on currency

Australia was part of the British monetary union from the latter half of the 19th century, trading in Pound Sterling until the adaption of the Australian pound in 1910 with equal value. Norway used the *Speciedaler* (Spd.) until 1874 when the krone was introduced.

1 Speciedaler = 120 skilling = 4 kroner (from 1874).

1 £ sterling = 20 shilling = 240 pence = 2 Australian dollars (from 1966).

Exchange rate: 1 £ sterling \approx 18.2 Norwegian kroner \approx 4 Speciedaler 66 skilling.⁵¹

Outline for the rest of the thesis

IN THE FOLLOWING chapter we will look at conditions for migrating to Queensland. This discussion is a crucial pretext for the topic in chapter 3 which deals with the number of arrivals at various times and in various categories. Chapter 4 is an analysis of occupational participation and integration. In chapter 5 we present a detailed analysis of the settlement pattern, i.e. where the Norwegians lived. Chapter 6 examines ethnic adjustment within the hierarchy of various groups in Queensland. In a final concluding chapter, the totality of findings are assessed in an attempt to synthesise the results. In addition, I will present a number of appendices to provide more details on some topics as a supplement for the interested reader. Thus the Archer family history is outlined in appendix 1, the successful planter Oscar Svensen is portrayed in appendix 2, and the frequent prisoner Halvor Olsen in appendix 3. Appendix 4 gives a discussion of stage-by-stage migration from Norway to Queensland, while the final appendix, no. 5, contains some suggestions for further research.

⁵¹ Historic exchange rates, Bank of Norway, <http://www.norges-bank.no/no/prisstabilitet/valutakurser/historiske-valutakurser/>, retrieved 8 June 2011. The exchange rate between Norwegian and British (and Australian) currency was almost constant throughout the whole period from 1870 to 1914.

2 – Why Queensland?

”QUEENSLAND? Yes exactly. I can tell you are surprised, with a question mark on your face, as if you wanted to ask: ‘Where is Queensland?’”¹ This quote from the Norwegian newspaper *Verdens Gang* in 1871 serves as an appropriate introduction to a chapter which aims to analyse two closely related problem sets: Firstly, why would Norwegians want to go to Queensland? And secondly, why would Queensland want Norwegian immigrants? The first is related to any factors which served to encourage, or indeed discourage, Norwegians to migrate to this particular destination. The second is the question of why Scandinavia, including Norway, was seen as a relevant target area when the Queensland government went out looking for settlers. What were the political and practical considerations on this matter?

From the Norwegians’ perspective: Why go to Queensland?

THE TASK HERE is to identify whether Queensland had anything to offer prospective immigrants from Norway. Many different motives, rational as well as irrational ones, may influence a migrant’s decision to choose a particular destination. In terms of Australia, Koivukangas argues that Scandinavian immigration always has arisen from some special impulse, like adventure, lure of gold, assisted passages to compensate for the long journey, economic opportunities or particularly high wages for seamen.²

It is useful to distinguish between a ‘general pull’ and a ‘specific pull’. The first refers to macro-conditions in Queensland which were considered favourable, like adventure or good money, but were not exclusive to that particular destination. America and other receiving societies also had their gold rushes and economic success stories. Therefore, we may also introduce what was Queensland’s specific pull: The colony offered transport at heavily reduced rates for certain categories of people to increase its competitiveness compared with North America and other destinations.

However, we should also look at what may have held back prospective migrants. By applying the term ‘pull-reducing factors’ we may analyse conditions which made Queensland a less tempting destination. The concept does not refer to circumstances that push migrants to leave their homes. Instead, it is meant to cover conditions related to a particular destination that reduce its attractiveness in the minds of prospective migrants. The ‘pull reducing factors’ will thus counteract the positive pull of the destination concerned.

¹ *Verdens Gang*, 12 April 1871. Original quote in Norwegian: ”Queensland? Ja netop. Jeg ser Du studser og sætter et spørgende Ansigt op som Du vilde sige: ’hvor er Queensland?’”

² Koivukangas 1974: VI.

The general pull: Gold, land and good wages

Apart from cheap passages provided by the government, what did Queensland have to offer that was seen as attractive by the potential immigrants? The possibility of better economic conditions was clearly an attraction. Koivukangas points out that the Scandinavians had an economic motive for migrating to Australia.³ The advantages of the colony were summarised in the annual report for 1882 from the Swedish-Norwegian Consul in Brisbane. He wrote that the working classes in general have good conditions and that craftsmen, farmers and labourers easily can achieve an independent position.⁴ Fortunes changed regularly in line with the fluctuations in Queensland's economy, but the years 1871 to 1873, when many Norwegians arrived, is seen as a time when work was readily available.⁵ In a letter home written in October 1871, a newcomer from Fredrikstad shared his knowledge of the wage level in Queensland. Young girls were employed quickly, he wrote, and paid 6 to 10 shillings a week plus rations, an estimate which is supported by another letter in *Dagbladet*.⁶ A male worker could expect to earn 6 to 12 shillings a week plus rations, although this seems a low estimate. These rates are in line with or a bit lower than normal wages for working class occupations in colonial Queensland.⁷

How did these figures compare to wages paid in Norway? This is an uncertain estimate to make, but if we use the above weekly wages and stipulate that paid work was available for 35 weeks per year (much of the employment was seasonal), a female domestic servant would earn approximately £10 to £17 per year, which is the equivalent of about 180-320 kroner. Moreover, a male worker would make about £10 to £20 on a yearly basis (180-360 kroner). Other sources indicate annual wages for male labourers at £20-30 (ca. 360-540 kroner).⁸ Hearing this must have tempted some prospective emigrants in Norway: In comparison, servants in Norway earned much less. This was particularly true for female domestic workers, who in the first half of the 1870s were paid about 50-75 kroner per year. Male servants, on the other hand, earned from 120 kroner to just above 200 kroner. For both sexes urban wages were higher than rural wages in Norway.⁹

³ Koivukangas 1974: 103.

⁴ Report from Brisbane, in *Uddrag af Aarsberetninger fra de forenede Rigers Konsuler for Aaret 1882*: 369.

⁵ Thorpe 1996: 181.

⁶ *Fredriksstad Tilskuer*, 9 December 1871; *Dagbladet*, 4 July 1872.

⁷ Thorpe 1996: 177-178.

⁸ *Dagbladet*, 4 July 1872.

⁹ Annual wages for servants 1850-1920, SN, <http://www.ssb.no/histstat/aarbok/tab-2000-09-20-01.html>, retrieved 30 May 2011.

Propaganda articles in the Norwegian press also provided motivation to pack up and go. In 1871 *Verdens Gang* claimed that a normal *annual wage* for a maid was 90-135 Spd. (approximately 360-540 kroner/£20-£30).¹⁰ In the same article, *daily wages* for male workers were indicated: Timber cutters, butchers, tinsmiths, shoe makers or bakers could earn from 1 Spd. 60 sk. to 2 Spd. without food (6 to 8 kroner/6 to 9 shillings) in Queensland in 1871. In Norway, those jobs were paid about half of that.¹¹ True or not, these figures gave prospective migrants reason to believe that there were better opportunities in Queensland. Whether or not the migrants actually became better off in real terms has not been analysed, but literature and some sources indicate that times were often difficult. Wages may have been higher than in Norway, but so were living costs, complained an immigrant from the Tromsø district.¹²

On the other hand, stories of favourable wages were not just propaganda to lure poor Norwegians into migration. For seamen, the coastal trade on the east coast of Australia provided an opportunity to earn money.¹³ Norwegian trade vessels arriving in Brisbane in the 1880s had problems obtaining contracts for the return journey. However, the ships could be used in the coastal trade where many sailors found employment, according to the Swedish-Norwegian Consul.¹⁴ These sailors chose to stay, not because of propaganda at home, but after they had seen Queensland with their own eyes.

Aside from offering potentially good wages, Queensland was also a place where a poor man could obtain his own piece of land and become a farmer. From the 1860s politicians and populist opinion had “grandiose visions of an agrarian society where the empty lands of the coast and interior would become densely populated by a new class for antipodean yeomanry working their own family farms,” writes David Cameron in his analysis of Queensland’s agrarian scheme.¹⁵ The vision was meant to be reality by intensification and expansion of agricultural settlement and rural land use, breaking up the squattocracy by subdividing large areas of pastoral leasehold. The *Crown Lands Act* of 1868 allowed poorer immigrants to select land for a homestead by paying a low annual rent in return for making specified improvements such as clearing, fencing, cropping, erecting buildings etc. Provided that such improvements were made, the selectors could purchase the land after five to ten

¹⁰ *Verdens Gang*, 15 April 1871.

¹¹ Daily wages per occupation, rural and urban, 1875-1920, SN, <http://www.ssb.no/histstat/aarbok/ht-0605-257.html>, retrieved 30 May 2011.

¹² Evans 2007: 84, 124; *Tromsøposten* 8 March 1873.

¹³ Koivukangas 1974: V.

¹⁴ Report from Brisbane, in *Uddrag af Aarsberetninger fra de forenede Rigers Konsuler for Aaret 1884*: 35.

¹⁵ Cameron 2005: 06.1.

years for the low price of 2s. 6d. per acre.¹⁶ However, competing destinations could offer even better deals: The United States' *Homestead Act* of 1862 gave away 160 acres of freehold land to anyone who was or wished to become an American citizen.¹⁷ Canada also provided free land to immigrants at times.¹⁸

Being rich in mineral deposits, Queensland held attractions for people who were seeking adventure and riches in other ways than farming or regular wage work could provide. The Victorian and New South Wales gold rushes in the 1850s caused a large influx of people to Australia. Ten years later, in 1862-1863, a man known as 'Norwegian Peter' (his real name was probably J. P. Hansen) was looking for gold in the Upper Burnett district of Queensland.¹⁹ This experienced digger could well have come to Queensland after previous gold digging stints in the southern colonies of Australia. Another decade later, in 1873, gold was found at the Palmer River in North Queensland, creating "a great sensation all over Australia".²⁰ The discovery of the Palmer goldfield has been attributed to James V. Mulligan, but in his initial party of prospectors were two Norwegians: Peter Brown (his original name was Peter Abelsen) and Albert Brandt.²¹

Opportunity to join family or relatives

For some, going to Queensland meant more than just looking for a better future economically speaking. Their choice of destination was also influenced by already having friends or relatives there; an opportunity to restore family unity and also migrate within the safety of a social network, ref. Faist. Perhaps we may speak about chain migration on a very limited scale, within families or extended family networks. Migration through such networks can be seen as meso-level factors, bridging structural conditions and individual aspirations.²² Comparable to the pre-paid tickets to America, people already settled in Queensland could nominate family or friends at home to travel to Queensland on a reduced fare (see below), an offer some Norwegians made use of. This way the families could reduce the effect of the pull-reducing factors which we will discuss later. The story of the Klæstad family from Gran is illustrative: Lars Klæstad (born 1829) travelled to Queensland in 1871 as an assisted migrant.

¹⁶ Corkhill 1992: 64.

¹⁷ Østrem 2006: 62.

¹⁸ August Larsen to AG, 14 October 1898, QSA, PRE/A13.

¹⁹ *The Courier*, 15 December 1862; *The Courier*, 27 January 1863.

²⁰ Palmer 1903: 152.

²¹ *The Queenslander*, 3 September 1904. J.V. Mulligan gave an account of his expeditions and prospecting experiences in a series of articles. About the Palmer expeditions he wrote that "two 'foreigners', as they were then called (Norwegians), Peter Brown and Albert Brandt, joined the party". Brown is also mentioned in many other accounts of the discovery of the Palmer gold field. Also Ørsted Jensen 1994: 36, 89.

²² Faist 1997: 187-217.

His oldest daughter, Matilda, was with him. Lars and Matilda went to Ravenswood and then to Charters Towers where Lars became a gold miner. One year later, Lars' sister Marte Mikkelsen, her husband Johan Christiansen, their child, as well as Lars' son Svend arrived. Finally, in 1874, Lars' wife Anne came out with their four remaining children.²³

The specific opportunity: Assisted migration

Although the prospects of a better life, better pay and perhaps even the chance of getting rich in itself may have been tempting, the availability of subsidised passages specifically appears to have boosted Queensland's attractiveness. In his classic work *The Tyranny of Distance*, historian Geoffrey Blainey points out that most intending migrants dismissed Australia because of the length and cost of the journey. However, subsidised or free fares acted as a 'vital bribe' in order to overcome the 'tyranny of distance' and lure migrants away, particularly to Queensland.²⁴ As we saw in chapter 1, after separation from New South Wales in 1859, Queensland implemented a large-scale migration scheme whereby the government organised and subsidised an infrastructure that allowed migrants to travel relatively cheaply and smoothly across the globe. A window of opportunity was opened for prospective Norwegian emigrants, particularly those who did not have the means to pay the full price for tickets to Australia or America. As for Norway, 'free' migration to Queensland was organised for three short periods between 1871 and 1900: 1871-1873, 1876-1878, and finally 1898-1900. Conditions changed according to labour demand in Queensland. In times of economic hardship assisted migration would be halted for a while. In other words, who and how many were eligible for assisted or free migration, and at what cost, differed through the last three decades of the 19th century. See chapter 3 for a more detailed discussion of the various stages of Norwegian immigration to Queensland.

The basic framework of the migration program was set out in the *Immigration Act* of 1869. Most importantly, certain categories of migrants could obtain assisted or 'free' passages, meaning that the Queensland government paid for their fares in part or in full.²⁵ According to Danish historian Robert Ørsted Jensen, 95 per cent of the Scandinavians travelled as 'free' immigrants in the 1870s.²⁶ Generally, subsidised passages were advertised for single female domestic servants and male farm labourers, and at times for common

²³ *Modified Register for Michel Larson*, unpublished family history records of the Larson/Mikkelsen/Klæsted family from Gran in Norway.

²⁴ Blainey 1966: 168.

²⁵ Instructions to the AG for Immigration to Queensland, 29 December 1869, *V&P*, 1871: 891-892; copy of hand bill produced in London, as above: 896. Also Kleinschmidt 151: 55-56.

²⁶ Ørsted Jensen 1994: 45.

labourers and craftsmen.²⁷ Initially, they were required to repay their passage money within two years of arrival, however farm labourers and in particular female domestic servants (such as cooks, laundresses and housemaids) were seen as very scarce labour and in great demand and thus exempted from repayment. The *Immigration Act* of 1872 removed any future obligation for ‘free’ passengers to repay their fare. The journey was not completely free, though. Passengers from Scandinavia did have to pay for transfer to Hamburg (and later to England) where the ships departed for Queensland, as well as for food and linen on the voyage, and the agent’s expenses.²⁸

Recruiting agents manipulating with the emigrants’ occupations, in order to comply with Queensland regulations and perhaps also to fill their set quotas, seem to have been quite common. For example, Georg D. Dietrikson left Kristiania on 30 March 1872. Upon departure, he was listed in the police register as an office clerk, aged 24. He carried with him 100 Spd. (400 kroner), amounting to more than two years wages for a male urban servant. Yet Georg was an assisted migrant, and when departing Hamburg on the *Humboldt* he was registered as a ‘landmann’ (farm labourer) in accordance with Queensland regulations.²⁹ Similarly, four seamen/fishermen from Tromsø who migrated with their families in 1873 were all categorised as ‘landmann’.³⁰

By paying the fare in full, either upon departure (full-paying migrants) or within 12 months of arrival (assisted migrants), immigrants would receive land grants for 40 acres per adult. Later, in 1872 the land grant was changed to a £20 land order. However, the land order system was heavily criticised and was abolished in 1875. Still, subsidised migrants could take advantage of cheap land, as discussed above. Finally, the 1869 *Immigration Act* introduced a system similar to the prepaid tickets in America. Persons who were either born or naturalised in Queensland could nominate friends or relatives at home for migration, and they travelled on subsidised tickets or tickets paid in full or in part by their sponsors in the colony. Fares for single women up to the age of 40 were £1-2 and for males £2-4.³¹

The ticket price is an obvious indicator of how attractive the Queensland offer was. In the 70s, the company Blichfeldt & Co in Kristiania acted as agents for the Queensland

²⁷ *Verdens Gang*, 17 June 1871, 14 October 1871, 5 May 1873, 11 June 1873, 17 March 1899, 28 August 1899; *Dagbladet*, 4 March 1872.

²⁸ Instructions to the AG for Immigrants to Queensland, 29 December 1869; copy of Handbill published by the AG, both in V&P, 1871: 891-896. Also Kleinschmidt 1951: 55-56; Ørsted Jensen 1994: 40-45.

²⁹ Emigrants over Kristiania 1871-1939, NDA; *Emigrants from Hamburg to Australasia 1850-1879*.

³⁰ 1865 Census for Tromsø, NDA; *Emigrants from Hamburg to Australasia 1850-1879*.

³¹ Corkhill 1992: 76.

government, appointed by the colony's representative in Germany.³² In 1871 prospective Queensland migrants were lured with "particularly favourable conditions"; the agent offered passages that were "very cheap, just as cheap as to most ports in America". Furthermore, the same advertisement stated that unmarried females could travel "almost for free" with no obligations to repay later".³³

The first group of Norwegians to travel under the migration program left in April 1871. Among them were persons who had paid no more than 10 Spd. (40 kroner/£2 1s.) for the journey.³⁴ Although conditions varied, the most common rate was around 12 Spd. (48 kroner/£2 13s) for adults and 6 Spd. (24 kroner/£1 6s) for children under the age of six.³⁵ Still, the adult fare amounted to three to four months' wages for a male urban servant. For female domestic servants, offers were better. In 1873, Blichfeldt & Co announced that farm labourers, labourers and female domestic servants could travel to Queensland. Girls would have to pay 5 Spd. (a little over £1/20 kroner), and then another £1 later.³⁶ 5 Spd. was the equivalent of one to two months earnings for a female urban servant in Norway in the early 1870s. On the other hand, the offer from Queensland compared favourably with fares to America. Tickets on sailing vessels across the Atlantic were approximately 22 Spd. including food or 30 Spd. on a steamer (ca. 88 kroner/£4 17s. and 120 kroner/£6 12s. respectively).³⁷

The last period of mobilisation in Norway was 1898 to 1900. Queensland could again offer cheap passages. Recruitment was resumed on a more ambitious scale with advertisements, distribution of thousands of leaflets and illustrated guides in Norway, and the use of subagents in several cities.³⁸ In August 1899 an advertisement announced that "Queensland wants Norwegian immigrants". Respectable and capable women as well as farm labourers with or without families were offered free passage from London. The cost was 60 kroner (£3 6s.), to cover the journey to London, bed and board during transit in London in addition to necessary ship equipment.³⁹ In comparison, Thingvalla-Linien's steamers from Kristiania to New York in 1897 charged 180 kroner for adult passengers, though the journey to America generally cost upwards of 100 kroner (£5 10s.).⁴⁰

³² William Kirchner, the agent in Germany, to J. Douglas, AG, 4 June and 17 July 1870, V&P, 1871: 927-929.

³³ *Verdens Gang*, 14 October 1871 and following days. Also in *Aftenposten* 10 October 1871.

³⁴ *Fredriksstad Tilskuer*, 9 December 1871.

³⁵ *Verdens Gang* 15 April 1871, 11 June 1873; *Tromsø Stiftstidende*, 4 June 1871;

³⁶ *Verdens Gang*, 11 June 1873; see also *Tromsø Stiftstidende*, 10 April 1873.

³⁷ Semmingsen 1950: 1940-141.

³⁸ AG's report for 1898, V&P, 1899: 1247-1248.

³⁹ *Verdens Gang*, 28 August 1899.

⁴⁰ Lovoll 1997: 30-31.

Pull-reducing factors

It sounds easy: buy a cheap ticket, jump on a ship to Queensland and start a farm or get a well paid job. It was not that simple. A very small proportion of the total number of Norwegian emigrants ever went to Queensland, and as explained above, a number of ‘pull-reducing’ factors worked to the colony’s disadvantage.

LITTLE OR NO KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE DESTINATION: Let us return to the question at the beginning of this chapter: Where is Queensland? When *Verdens Gang* wrote about Queensland in 1871 it was assumed that very few potential migrants had any knowledge of the place. During the peak of assisted migration in 1871-1873 Norwegian newspapers published several articles in order to give a basic introduction to the colony (some of the press material was probably initiated by the agent, Blichfeldt & Co). From the Queensland side, it was acknowledged by their agent in Germany, William Kirchner, that they had a job to do in terms of changing the perception in Scandinavia about a “hitherto unknown colony”. Kirchner also requested that a reference be made to the British embassies in Copenhagen and Stockholm that the Queensland *Immigration Act* was genuine and bona fide.⁴¹ Even almost 30 years later, when active recruitment of migrants in Scandinavia was once again resumed, the problem remained the same. In his annual report for 1898, the Agent-General wrote:

Before this year there was not in Scandinavia one person in a hundred thousand, of the class the colony required, possessing any knowledge of Queensland, and even people who want to emigrate look with suspicion on any place they are not familiar with.⁴²

Eager persuasion, sometimes perhaps crossing the line to trickery, may have been necessary in order to recruit Norwegians for Queensland migration. As a result, some of the migrants possibly signed on against their better knowledge. Criticism was raised against the Queensland agent’s recruitment methods. In a letter printed in *Aftenposten* in 1873 Blichfeldt was accused of sending a young girl to Queensland when the girl actually wished to migrate to Iowa in the United States where her boyfriend was. According to the letter, the girl was led to believe that Queensland was on the way to America.⁴³ Further to this, in Fredrikstad in 1871 a Blichfeldt representative was accused of overstepping the mark by being too persuasive and painting an overly positive picture of Queensland without having much knowledge of the colony.⁴⁴

⁴¹ W. Kirchner to J. Douglas, AG, 4 June 1870, V&P, 1871: 929.

⁴² AG’s report for 1898, V&P, 1899: 1247-1248.

⁴³ *Aftenposten*, 4 January 1873.

⁴⁴ *Morgenbladet*, 24 May 1871 and 27 May 1871.

NEGATIVE STORIES ABOUT QUEENSLAND: If potential Norwegian migrants had heard about Queensland at all, their impression may well have been negative. Although convict transportation had ceased a generation ago, the image of Australia was still influenced by its past, as observed by Norwegian scientist Carl Lumholtz, among many others.⁴⁵ Rumours about slavery occurred. In Tromsø it became a topic of public discussion; discounted fares were seen by some as equivalent with indenture, which it was not.⁴⁶ In 1871 the Police Commissioner in Christiania prohibited 30 passengers from leaving for Queensland on the ship *John Bertram*. Queensland's agent in Germany subsequently reported that he had to contend with some difficulties in Norway due to "reports, full of exaggerations and misrepresentations about the Polynesian emigration," probably linked to the concept of indentured labour on the sugar plantations.⁴⁷ Another question was the climate. Although the propaganda promised warm but healthy conditions, critics – among them the well-known historian and parliamentarian Ludvig Kr. Daa – argued that Norwegians would become dangerously ill if they did outdoor work in the hot Queensland weather.⁴⁸ (See ch. 5 and 6).

Once again, at the turn of the century the Queensland agents had to overcome negative perceptions about the colony. In 1900, various Scandinavian newspapers published letters from Queensland, warning people not to go there. One of the issues was rumours that men who applied for a free passage to Queensland instead were shipped off to South Africa to fight in the Boer War.⁴⁹ The negative attention was a cause of concern for the Queensland authorities, and they distributed leaflets in Scandinavia pointing out that anyone travelling to the colony was completely free; the only requirement was for subsidised immigrants to remain there for a minimum of 12 months.⁵⁰

A CHALLENGING LABOUR MARKET: At times, good labour opportunities helped attract migrants to Queensland. However, the economic situation fluctuated; after years of prosperity, crisis followed. The short boom of 1872-1875 was followed by depression through the rest of the decade. Then the colony had its best years thus far between 1882 and 1884, before another financial crisis came in the 1890s accompanied by extended drought.⁵¹ After praising the good opportunities for several years, the Swedish-Norwegian Consul in Brisbane in his annual

⁴⁵ Lumholtz 1888: 1-2.

⁴⁶ *Tromsøposten*, 2 April 1873 and 26 April 1873; *Tromsø Stiftstidende*, 8 January 1874. See also appendix 4.

⁴⁷ Report of the Emigration Agent for Germany 1871, V&P, volume 1, part 2, 1872: 1439.

⁴⁸ *Tromsøposten*, 26 April 1873.

⁴⁹ AG's report for 1900, V&P, 4, 2, 1901: 1055.

⁵⁰ Leaflet from Queensland Depot in Helsingborg, Sweden, 1899 or 1900, Ulf Beijbom's collection, Swedish Institute of Emigration.

⁵¹ Evans 2007: 87, 109.

report for 1886 warned against drought and storms in Queensland, making it hard for immigrants from Sweden and Norway to find work.⁵² From time to time the newspapers in Norway published reports about the difficult labour market in Australia, such as in 1890 when *Aftenposten* related advice from the consul: "... times here in Australia are bad at the moment, in particular for people of those classes who are not used to hard work ..."⁵³

FEW NORWEGIAN 'BROKERS': In his discussion of Scandinavian immigration to Queensland, Jens Lyng argues that there was "no outstanding pioneer of Norse birth to accelerate it or take a friendly interest in the newcomers on their arrival".⁵⁴ In other words there were few 'brokers'; people who could act as middlemen between the newly arrived immigrants and Queensland society, and to counteract the lack of reliable information. Settling in an unfamiliar country is very difficult when there are no pioneers or 'brokers' to smoothen the entry into the new society. It makes establishing social networks in the destination country more demanding for the immigrants, which again can influence the decision to migrate, according to Faist.⁵⁵ There were exceptions, though, in the form of some family networks, a topic which will be further discussed in chapters 4, 5 and 6.

LESS ATTRACTIVE THAN OTHER DESTINATIONS: Queensland had to compete for her immigrants, not only with North America and New Zealand, but also with the more developed Australian colonies of New South Wales and Victoria. Australia's big cities, Melbourne and Sydney, were on par with the best in the world. In contrast, Queensland was much less developed. An incident in 1870 illustrates Queensland's problem: En route to Queensland, the immigrant ship *Maryborough* was forced to stop in Sydney due to lack of fresh water on board. The unscheduled stop led to a reprimand from the Queensland government, because ...

... it is considered extremely inadvisable, as likely to create a feeling of discontent and dissatisfaction in the minds of the immigrants, that ships intended for this colony should stop at any intermediate port in the other colonies, having superior attractions – like Sydney, from its size and importance – to any likely to be found in the smaller and less imposing towns of a newly-formed colony.⁵⁶

THE LONG AND ARDUOUS JOURNEY: "A journey to Queensland is no quick trip," *Verdens Gang* noted in 1871, before relating that the passage normally does not take more than four

⁵² Report from Brisbane, in *Uddrag av Aarsberetninger fra de forenede Rigers Konsuler for Aaret 1886*.

⁵³ *Aftenposten*, morning edition, 28 September 1890, original quote in Norwegian: "... Tiderne her i Australien for nærværende er daarlige, i Særdeleshed for Folk af de Klasser, som ikke er vant til haardt Arbeide ..."

⁵⁴ Lyng 1939: 121.

⁵⁵ Faist 1997: 203.

⁵⁶ Letter to the AG from Under Col. Secretary H. H. Massie, 14 May 1870, V&P, 1871: 908.

months.⁵⁷ Those who migrated to Queensland in the 1870s travelled on sailing vessels whereas most migrants to America used the faster steamships.⁵⁸ That meant four months at sea, without earning an income, compared to a two or three week journey to the east coast of America. Other things being equal, this was clearly to Queensland's disadvantage.

The journey to Queensland was not just long, it could be dangerous too, a fact clearly illustrated by the fate of some of the migrant ships that sailed from Hamburg. On the *Lammershagen*, arriving Moreton Bay in January 1873, many passengers contracted typhus, probably due to the poor quality of the drinking water as well as overcrowding and unhygienic conditions. This caused several deaths.⁵⁹ More than 60 Norwegians were on board. Later that year, the *Alardus* was five months at sea before she reached Melbourne in April 1873.⁶⁰ The final count after the arrival into Brisbane showed that 28 passengers had died en route and another three had perished in quarantine. The *Alardus* carried 100 more passengers than the contract with the German shipping line stipulated.⁶¹ Finally, the migration from Germany received another blow with the arrival of the *Reichstag* into Maryborough in July 1873. 36 deaths had occurred during the 90 day journey from Hamburg.⁶² Three Norwegian children died on board and a male adult lost his life a week after arrival.⁶³

Although the conditions on the sailing vessels gradually improved, the ships that left from Hamburg were inferior to the British ships in terms of decency, discipline, safety, cleanliness, medical attention, water and food, according to Helen Woolcock who has conducted a thorough study into the conditions onboard Queensland immigrant ships. German ships were also more crowded and mortality was higher than on the British vessels.⁶⁴

From a Queensland perspective: Why Norwegian immigrants?

MIGRATION FROM Norway, or more precisely: from Scandinavia, was a topic of public debate in Queensland from the late 1860s. Typically it was discussed either in conjunction with or as an extension of 'German' or 'European' immigration. Arguments were mostly in favour of the Norwegians, but as we shall see, some opposing voices were also raised.

⁵⁷ *Verdens Gang*, 12 & 15 April 1871. Original quote in Norw.: "en Reise til Queensland ikke er nogen Snartur."

⁵⁸ Lovoll 1997: 28-29.

⁵⁹ *The Brisbane Courier*, 22 January 1873.

⁶⁰ *The Brisbane Courier*, 21 April 1873.

⁶¹ *The Brisbane Courier*, 17 July 1873.

⁶² *Maryborough Chronicle*, 18 July 1873, published in Manderson 1997: 17.

⁶³ Death certificate Johan Severin Helstad, QLD BDM, ref. 1873/817.

⁶⁴ Woolcock 1986: 68, 74, 85, 270, 273.

Motives for welcoming Norwegian immigration

Firstly, there were racial motives existing within a context of an ethnic hierarchy where white labour was on top.⁶⁵ The racial argument seemed to be used most extensively in the 1880s, when the conflict over indentured labour from the South Sea Islands (referred to as ‘Kanakas’) was intense. Politician and anti-kanaka campaigner William Brookes, in a letter published in the *Brisbane Courier* presented a view typical of Queensland in the late 19th century. In his opinion, the power of political freedom and liberty “belongs as a gift from the English crown to everybody in Queensland who is not a lunatic, a criminal, under age, an aboriginal, a Chinaman, a South Sea Islander, or an Asiatic of any kind”. The gift, according to Brookes, can “only be received by a homogeneous European people. In Queensland we can blend English, Scotch, Irish, German, French, Danish, Norwegian, Italian, Spanish and Dutch; the result is one people, capable of combining for noble ends ...”.⁶⁶

Later, when organised migration from Scandinavia was resumed just before the turn of the century, racial and assimilationist motives were again used to justify the recruitment of immigrants. Queensland’s Agent-General in London, Horace Tozer, wrote in his annual report for 1899 that the best area for emigration is Scandinavia, because “not only are the inhabitants of these countries, by their origin, more closely allied to the Anglo-Saxon race than any other Germanic people, but there is a greater similarity in their language. No other people can be easier Anglicised.”⁶⁷

Not so overtly racist was the praise for Norwegians and other Scandinavians as good, hard-working settlers, an argument often repeated in politics and the press. As early as 1868, the papers wrote about a “very superior class of immigrants” existing among Scandinavians.⁶⁸ Even compared to the British, Scandinavians received favourable reviews. A correspondent wrote from Maryborough that the Germans and Scandinavians were “the most orderly, well-behaved lot of immigrants possible”.⁶⁹

Whenever mentioned in the annual reports of the Agent-Generals in Europe, or by the Immigration Agent in Queensland, Scandinavians received positive reviews. John Douglas, Agent-General in London and Premier of Queensland 1877-1879, was a strong advocate for the Scandinavians and believed that migrants from Norway, Sweden and Denmark were just

⁶⁵ Evans, Saunders and Cronin 1993: 19.

⁶⁶ *The Brisbane Courier*, 14 February 1882.

⁶⁷ AG’s report for 1899, V&P, 5, 2, 1900: 632.

⁶⁸ *The Brisbane Courier*, 28 November 1868.

⁶⁹ *The Brisbane Courier*, 17 February 1874.

as valuable as the Germans.⁷⁰ In 1899 the Immigration Agent gave a negative opinion of recently arrived Finnish migrants due to their “slowness in adapting themselves” to colonial conditions. As for the Danes, Norwegians and Swedes, the experience was altogether different according to the Immigration Agent: “Speaking English, more or less, as many of these do, and being more ready and apt to fall in with the ways and conditions of living in Queensland, they quickly find favour with employers and are easily absorbed into our rural population.”⁷¹

Seen from Brisbane, Germany, and indeed Norway, was very far away. Whether the differences between the nations of Northern Europe really mattered much to the public and politicians in Queensland remains an open question. In 1879, the *Brisbane Courier* defined the term ‘Germans’ as follows: “The people brought by the Hamburg ships. These included a very large proportion of Danes and Norwegians, some Swiss, and a fair sprinkling of Poles.”⁷²

Scandinavians to fill German ships

The practical steps to actually invite Scandinavians were taken when the Queensland government encountered difficulties in recruiting immigrants in Germany. Immigration from the German states was part of the implementation of the *Immigration Act* of 1869, but problems in Germany made the Queensland government look to Scandinavia, primarily to Denmark, but also to Sweden and Norway as a source of migrants to fill the ships.⁷³

In 1870, William Kirchner was appointed Emigration Agent for Queensland in Germany, and he started organising shipments directly from Hamburg to Queensland, partly because the North German government did not allow transport of German emigrants via English ports.⁷⁴ The ship *Humboldt* was the first to leave Hamburg, departing on 16 July 1870, almost at the same time as the Franco-Prussian war broke out. In order to avoid the war risks, the ship sailed under the British flag.⁷⁵ However, the war was only one of several obstacles hitting Queensland’s German migration scheme. By law in the North German Confederation, Queensland was prohibited from requiring repayment of the passage money from the emigrants, a practice which was still in place at the time. This “is a rather serious difficulty,” wrote Agent-General John Douglas from London.⁷⁶ Furthermore, due to the war no males between six and 40 years of age were allowed to leave Germany.⁷⁷

⁷⁰ *Queenslander*, 1 November 1873.

⁷¹ The Immigration Agent’s Report for the Year 1899, V&P, 5, 2, 1900: 675.

⁷² *The Brisbane Courier*, 4 August 1879.

⁷³ Ørsted Jensen 1994: 97.

⁷⁴ Letter from William Kirchner, 7 April 1870, V&P, 1871: 925.

⁷⁵ V&P, 871: 927.

⁷⁶ AG Douglas to the Colonial Secretary, 25 March 1870, V&P, 1871: 923.

⁷⁷ Douglas to the Colonial Secretary, 2 December 1870, V&P, 1871: 931.

The Queensland agents started searching for substitutes in the form of people from Scandinavia, where they found that contracts with a repayment clause could be used.⁷⁸ The ship *Reichstag*, which left Hamburg on 12 November 1870, was for the greater part filled with Scandinavians.⁷⁹ By then, Kirchner, the agent in Germany, had already worked the Scandinavian field for several months and he had appointed agents in Denmark, Sweden and Norway.⁸⁰ The first contingent of Norwegians, 87 in total, left Hamburg on board the *Friedeburg* on 23 April 1871.⁸¹ When Prussia for a time banned the Queensland agent from operating within its territory, Scandinavia again became an alternative in order to fill the ships. In his annual report for 1872, Kirchner wrote that "many applicants for passages to Queensland having been made from Scandinavia [...]. I entered into lengthened correspondence with Mr. Ap George, the British Vice-Consul of Christiania [...]. Several useful emigrants were engaged in Norway ...".⁸²

Direct immigrant ships from Scandinavia were suggested several times in order to ease the journey. The authorities also believed that "it is only by direct shipment that we can expect to secure the best class of immigrants".⁸³ The problem was that the selection of emigrants on the Continent was taken out of the Queensland agent's hands resulting in a disappointment with regards to the type of people who arrived. The question of direct ships from Copenhagen was on the table in 1877 and 1878, but no ship appears to have left.⁸⁴ Early the following year German and Scandinavian migration was suspended.

Opposition to Scandinavian immigration

The German-Scandinavian project was not uncontested, and opposing voices went forward to warn against immigration from Northern Europe. Arthur H. Palmer (Premier 1870-1874) stated in the Legislative Assembly that his personal experience of Scandinavians was not favourable.⁸⁵ Along the Mary River in 1873, many farmers were waiting for more English labourers, because "the last two lots of Scandinavians were very unsatisfactory and difficult to manage".⁸⁶ The latter may have been due to the immigrants being accustomed to more personal freedom at work in their home countries.

⁷⁸ William Kirchner to John Douglas, 17 July 1870, V&P, 1871: 927.

⁷⁹ Douglas to the Colonial Secretary, 2 December 1870, V&P, 1871: 931.

⁸⁰ Kirchner to Douglas, 4 June 1870, V&P, 1871: 929.

⁸¹ Kopittke 2000: 18-19; *Emigrants from Hamburg to Australasia 1850-1879*.

⁸² Report from the Emigration Agent for the Continent for the year 1872, V&P, 1, 2, 1873: 1001.

⁸³ Immigrant Agent Gray to the Colonial Secretary, 3 August 1877, V&P, 2, 2, 1877: 1175.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*; AG's annual report for 1877, V&P, 2, 1878: 3-5.

⁸⁵ *Queenslander*, 18 September 1880.

⁸⁶ *The Brisbane Courier*, 7 June 1873.

According to historian Raymond Evans, the migrants from Germany and Scandinavia were often older, poorer and had larger families than the British. In fact, Evans points out that European migration was generally not officially encouraged. One of the reasons was the insanitary conditions on the German ships, but sometimes the migrants were seen as less suited than the British.⁸⁷

On a more general note, as long as Queensland could get plenty of suitable immigrants from Britain, why look elsewhere? This point was raised by Palmer in 1880. From several sources, the preference was clearly voiced for people from ‘the home country’: In a letter to the editor of *The Brisbane Courier*, an immigrant expressed the view that the policy of the government should be to “help only the surplus population [...] of the United Kingdom to get here. If this were a German colony it is very certain that its Government would not spend one single shilling in the British labour market”.⁸⁸ Clearly some showed scepticism at spending public money on assisted migration. The question was regularly debated in Parliament. In 1872, one representative, Mr. Wienholt, said he was opposed to employers having labour brought out “at the expense of the country”. In the same debate, another member, Mr. Buchanan, said he would welcome a large stream of immigrants to the colony, provided they paid their own expenses.⁸⁹

In the 1880s, when the ethnic hierarchies really seemed to have taken shape, Premier Thomas McIllwraith suggested in Parliament that the British migrants should be given preference “if only for patriotic motives”.⁹⁰ A letter to *The Brisbane Courier* in 1882 stated this view more forcibly: “I wish to enter my protest against any further importation [...] of Germans, Scandinavians, or any other foreigner”. The line of argument then goes as follows: Australia will soon be a great and wealthy state which may well be involved in a war with a European power. In such an event, where is the loyalty of Germans and other foreigners?⁹¹ Part of such an argument was probably a growing fear of Germany’s expanding power. The colonial struggle between the British and German empires almost reached Queensland’s own shores. In 1883, Queensland proclaimed the annexation of New Guinea, but was not supported by London. One year later, Germany established a colony in the northern part of the same territory, causing a diplomatic crisis.⁹²

⁸⁷ Evans 2007: 89.

⁸⁸ *The Brisbane Courier*, 10 September 1884.

⁸⁹ *The Brisbane Courier*, 18 July 1872.

⁹⁰ *The Brisbane Courier*, 26 July 1882.

⁹¹ A writer signed “X”, *The Brisbane Courier*, 20 July 1882.

⁹² Corkhill 1992: 76.

Finally, a view not likely to have been held by the majority of Queenslanders, but worth mentioning for its hostility towards democracy: In a reply to the proposed running of steamships from Germany, C. H. Meyer wrote in *The Brisbane Courier* that “Queensland is an English colony and not a free democratic country”. He felt it most dangerous for the colony to introduce Germans and Scandinavians on a large scale: “Those immigrants foster democratic and independent notions faster than would be convenient to the Government. What is required in this colony is a loyal and conservative population.”⁹³

Norwegians as proposed indentured workers

Norwegians were also seen as potential replacements for labourers from the South Sea Islands. The idea was for Scandinavians and Germans to fill the gaps on sugar plantations in North Queensland when the ‘Kanakas’ would have to leave the colony due to legislation introduced by the government. The ‘Kanaka question’ exploded in the 1880s, but the proposal of introducing Scandinavian contract labour in the sugar fields was put forward at least as early as 1872 and was a recurring topic until the early 1900s.⁹⁴ The sugar industry was important to Queensland: In the late 19th century a quarter of the cultivated area in the colony was taken up by sugar cane.⁹⁵

Queensland Premier Samuel Griffith’s plan was to import labour from Europe to replace the Melanesians. The labourers would be indentured, not completely free immigrants.⁹⁶ In September 1884 Griffith told the Legislative Assembly that the Agent-General been instructed to make enquiries as to the best means of bringing indentured labourers from Germany, Norway, and Denmark.⁹⁷ Six months later, Griffith wrote to the Agent-General in London that “under the peculiarly favourable circumstances of the Queensland climate, European labourers are physically able and will, if properly treated, be found willing to do all necessary field labour in connection with this industry”.⁹⁸ The same year the Maryborough Farmers and Planters’ Association was eager to recruit indentured workers from Scandinavia or Southern Europe. Terms would be two-year contracts with a remuneration of £25 for the first year and £30 for the second, including board and lodging.⁹⁹

The possibility of immigration from Norway was thus drawn into one of the big political issues of the day, often termed ‘the labour question’; ultimately the question of

⁹³ *The Brisbane Courier*, 26 March 1892.

⁹⁴ *Rockhampton Bulletin*, 20 July 1872; *The Brisbane Courier*, 6 September 1905.

⁹⁵ *The Brisbane Courier*, 17 June 1890.

⁹⁶ *The Brisbane Courier*, 7 August 1884.

⁹⁷ *Cairns Post*, 11 September 1884.

⁹⁸ Letter from Griffith to AG, 11 March 1885, V&P, 2, 2, 1886: 907

⁹⁹ *Queenslander*, 13 December 1884.

whether or not Queensland should import indentured workers from the Pacific Islands and Asia. Contrary to Griffith's view, the classic argument against Europeans in the sugar fields was that they were unsuited for hard physical work in the hot, tropical climate. Yet concern for the labourers' physical health in the cane fields was not the only objection against Griffith's policy. There was fear that white indentured workers would in effect cause a downward pressure on wages. It was assumed that any indentured worker from Scandinavia or Germany would not endure the hard labour and instead leave the sugar plantations in order to enter the regular workforce, thus increasing wage competition.¹⁰⁰

However, the proponents of Scandinavian indentured labour in the sugar fields were not stopped by concerns over labour competition; they were unsuccessful due to opposition from the authorities in Northern Europe. In 1885 it emerged that German and Danish law did not allow for the engagement of indentured labour emigrants.¹⁰¹ Queensland's new Immigration Agent in Germany had to return after a short spell, and an attempt by the planters in Mackay to obtain indentured workers in Denmark was blocked by the authorities in Copenhagen.¹⁰² No evidence has been found of similar conflicts with Norwegian authorities or indeed any actual attempts to sign up Norwegians for contract labour on plantations before departure. However, some Norwegian free migrants found work on the sugar plantations in Mackay in the 1870s, as will be discussed in more detail in chapter 5.

Conclusion

Unless you worked your way to Queensland as a sailor, which many did, the long and expensive voyage was an obstacle difficult to overcome for most Norwegians in the late 19th century. Although Queensland offered opportunities for a better life, the pull was reduced by many factors: Not only by the arduous and expensive journey, but also by the fact that the colony was alien territory compared to North America. The colony's recruitment drive helped counteract these negative factors, both in terms of cheaper tickets and promotion in Norway. However, migration from non-British Europe was a controversial topic in Queensland in the late 19th century. Although Scandinavians generally seem to have been popular as settlers and labourers, assisted immigration from Norway, Sweden and Denmark was an easy target in periods of political or economic turbulence. To import them drew money from the public purse. Moreover, they were probably seen as too closely linked with Germans in times of rising imperial rivalry, not only in Europe, but also globally.

¹⁰⁰ *Morning Bulletin*, 29 October 1885.

¹⁰¹ *The Brisbane Courier*, 27 October 1885.

¹⁰² Agent-General's Report for 1885, V&P, 1886, 2, 2: 897-898.

3 – Entering new territory

Finally I have come onshore again, which was strange after such a long sea journey; it became boring and monotonous, especially towards the end when we approached our destination [...]. We anchored in the Mary Bay (the mouth of a large river) on the 8th of March, and on the 9th in the morning the steamship 'Queensland' came out and took us onboard, and at 2 o'clock we reached Maryborough, a very beautiful and rural town by the Mary River where we immediately were accommodated in some large buildings which belonged to the government; the girls in one building, the single men in another and the married families in a third. We were immediately given provisions consisting of fresh meat, which we had been missing for a long time, tea, sugar and wheat bread, all in abundance, and I must say, we lived well those days when we stayed at the depot.

*Letter from a migrant, published in Dagbladet 1872.*¹

After almost 100 days at sea, a small group of Norwegians arrived in Queensland from Hamburg on board the *Herschel* in March 1872. They were in the midst of the largest influx of assisted immigrants from Norway, starting with the arrival of the *Friedeburg* in Brisbane the previous year. More Norsemen were set to come over the next 40 years or so, not only through the program for assisted migration, but also by other means. In terms of arrival, several aspects will be discussed in this chapter: Firstly, how many Norwegians arrived in Queensland, and when? Furthermore, what happened to the immigrants after they disembarked? Under what conditions did they enter Queensland, and what arrangements were they met with upon arrival?

The number of Norwegian arrivals

THE TOTAL NUMBER of Norwegians coming to Australia was probably less than 6500 prior to 1915.² As an estimate, approximately 1800-2000 of them arrived in Queensland between 1870 and 1914. This is gross immigration, not taking into account those who subsequently left for other destinations. The number of Norwegians actually living in Queensland is unlikely to have exceeded ca. 850 at any one time, indicating considerable secondary migration to other parts of Australia (see chapter 5 and also appendix 4).

To arrive at the above estimate is to make an approximate calculation from several sources. There are no comprehensive data listing every Norwegian-born man, woman and

¹ *Dagbladet*, 4 July 1872. Letter from a Queensland migrant. Original quote in Norwegian: "Ændelig er jeg da kommen til lands igjen, hvilket var rart efter saa lang en Søreise, der blev kjedelig og ensformig, især på Slutningen, da vi nærmede os Maalet." "Vi ankrede i Marybugten (Mundingen af en stor Flod) den 8de Marts, og den 9de om Morgenen kom Dampskibet 'Queensland' ud til os og tog os ombord, og Kl. 2 naaede vi Maryborough, en meget smuk og landlig By ved Maryfloden, hvor vi strax bleve Indkvarterede i nogle store Bygninger, som tilhøre Regjeringen, Pigerne for sig i en Bygning, Ungkarlene for sig i en anden Bygning og de gifte Familier i en 3die. Vi bleve strax tildelte Provisioner, som bestod af ferskt Kjød; hvilket vi længe havde savnet, The, Sukker og Hvedebrød, allting i Overflod, og jeg maa sige, vi levede godt de Dage, vi laa paa Depotet."

² Koivukangas 1974: 38.

child who disembarked in Queensland. Normally only those classified as migrants under the terms of the *Immigration Acts* were officially recorded, excluding for instance seamen and those who first arrived in another colony and later travelled to Queensland.³

Based on Koivukangas' study of naturalisation records (see chapter 1), an educated guess indicates that around 1200 Norwegian *males* arrived in Queensland prior to 1904. (The arithmetic behind this number is as follows: A little over 400 Norwegian men were naturalised before 1904, and Koivukangas estimates that the naturalisations for this period cover every third Scandinavian in Queensland. In other words: $400 \times 3 = 1200$).⁴ According to the censuses, roughly every fourth Norwegian was a *female*, and they need to be added into the equation, thus bringing the total number to 1500 Norwegian arrivals before to 1904.⁵

We also need to take into account those who were naturalised after 1904 but arrived before 1915. As explained in chapter 1, before and after 1904 constitute two different systems in terms of naturalisations. Among those who were naturalised in Queensland, around 130 males did so in the years 1904-1915. For this period Koivukangas estimates that the records cover 61 per cent of the total number of people arriving from Norway, which indicates in excess of 210 males arriving.⁶ By adding 25 per cent women, the total number for 1904-1915 should be approximately 260. However, we also have to count Norwegians who arrived prior to 1915 but who were naturalised at a later time. Again, by drawing heavily on Koivukangas, we may stipulate that a total of approximately 127 males fall into this category.⁷ By adding women, the total number comes to ca. 160 Norwegians. Again, these figures are presented with a degree of uncertainty.

Koivukangas' work in the 1970s has been the only systematic collection and analysis of naturalisation papers for Scandinavian immigrants. However, from passenger lists and other reports we know for certain that more than 1000 Norwegians travelled to Queensland as part of the government migration program in the 1870s and 1898-1900. Possibly 200-400

³ "Immigration", Brief Guide 16, Queensland State Archives,

<http://www.archives.qld.gov.au/downloads/BriefGuides/BG16Immigration.pdf>. Accessed 6 July 2011.

⁴ Koivukangas 1974: 37-38, 114. Australia-wide, Koivukangas estimates that 25 per cent of the Norwegians naturalised before 1904, however it is assumed to have been a higher proportion of naturalisations in Queensland than in other colonies/states due to the fact that many Scandinavians were farmers. Thus, in the chapter discussing Queensland, Koivukangas uses the figure of 1/3 Scandinavians naturalised.

⁵ The estimate of ca. 25 per cent women is based on the Censuses from 1881 to 1911.

⁶ Koivukangas 1974: 25, 38. When conducting his analysis, Koivukangas took a 1/3 sample of the Norwegian naturalisations in the years 1904-1915. The database of naturalisations used for this thesis, as described in chapter 1, contains 43 records for the period in question, thus the total number of naturalisations was ca. 130.

⁷ Koivukangas 1974: 25, 38. Koivukangas took a ½ sample of naturalisations from 1916-1946. The database used for this thesis contains 35 males naturalised 1916 or later, but who arrived no later than 1915. Koivukangas has stipulated that the records for this period cover 55 per cent for the arriving Norwegians in Australia.

more came as nominated migrants, mainly in the 1880s (see below). Add to this anyone who arrived outside of the government's system. As will be more closely elaborated in the next section, approximately 250 seamen may have settled in Queensland prior to 1904, and surely some more during the last decade before the war. In addition, a number of adventure-seekers, businessmen and others set foot in Queensland for various reasons. We also need to be aware that some immigrants came overland from other Australian colonies, or even directly from America, New Zealand or other places. Many were itinerant workers who may have first arrived in Melbourne or Sydney and then drifted around the country for years looking for work or opportunities. To sum up, the figures are far from certain, but based on available sources and within the practical limits of this thesis, it seems reasonably well-founded to conclude that ca. 1800-2000 Norwegians arrived in Queensland between 1870 and 1914, not counting short-term visitors.

Four periods of arrival

In order to gain a full understanding of the influx of Norwegians onto Queensland soil, it is useful to divide the years from 1870 to 1914 into four periods. These four periods differ with regard to the volume and character of the immigration which took place, and they also show that the number of arrivals fluctuated. The periods are: 1) 1870-1879 with the first wave of organised migration; 2) 1880-1897 with a steady trickle of arrivals, but no active recruitment; 3) 1898-1900 with a second attempt at organised migration; and 4) 1901-1914 again with no organised arrangements and arrivals from Norway slowing down.

1. 1870-1879. FIRST WAVE OF ASSISTED MIGRATION: A few Norwegians arrived in Queensland prior to the commencement of assisted migration in 1871. They were either explorers and pastoralists, like the Archers; gold diggers who had drifted north from Victoria or New South Wales, such as 'Norwegian Peter' in Gayndah (p. 23); or the odd sailor who had chosen to come onshore. The first Norwegian in Queensland to naturalise was Arnt Berg Williamsen from Bergen, working as a grocer in Brisbane, who changed his citizenship in 1863.⁸

Nevertheless, there was an obvious change when a batch of more than 80 Norwegians disembarked from the *Friedeburg* in Brisbane on 14 August 1871.⁹ This marked the start of an organised and much more voluminous influx of Norwegian immigrants. Close to 750 persons arrived in Queensland as subsidised migrants during the 1870s. Among them were many families (every fifth passenger was a child), single men and single women. Women

⁸ Queensland naturalisation records, 1863/197; *The Courier*, 15 July 1863.

⁹ Kopittke 2000: 18; *Emigrants from Hamburg to Australasia 1850-1879*.

accounted for 40 per cent of the Norwegian Hamburg migrants. The only time possibly resembling anything like ‘Queensland fever’ in Norway was the period from 1871 to 1873 when 675 men, women and children set sail for north east Australia; 80 per cent of them travelled on just six different departures from Hamburg. The peak year was 1872 with 289 Norwegians departing for Queensland.¹⁰

In 1874-1875 there was a pause and no subsidised migrants departed from Norway. The Queensland government decided to suspend immigration from Germany (and thus Scandinavia) in 1873. The official reason was the unsanitary conditions on the Hamburg ships, but in addition the government found non-British immigration extremely expensive and the colony was facing a financially difficult period. The German authorities’ attempts at obstructing Queensland migration (chapter 2) may also have influenced the decision.¹¹ Scandinavians already in Queensland were disappointed. They wrote a petition to the Parliament in 1875 asking the government to “renew and extend the benefits of immigration to our Scandinavian fellow-countrymen”. Many settlers would happily use the nomination system to assist their friends and relatives to come to Queensland, and it was believed that as many as 400 migrants could possibly be recruited every month.¹²

Assisted migration from Norway was resumed, however, but only from 1876 to 1878. Just over 70 people travelled via Hamburg during those three years. This was also a time of reduced migration from Norway in general following the economic crisis in the United States in 1873.¹³ Given the low number of Queensland arrivals in the late 70s, it does not seem that ‘The Sunshine State’ emerged as a relevant alternative for Norwegian emigrants when America was hit by financial downturn. Queensland finally disbanded its German-Scandinavian immigration scheme in 1879. The incentive was the difficult economic situation forcing the government to cut its expenses, consequently causing a depression in the labour market and thus a perceived need to reduce the intake of immigrants.¹⁴ The final shipment of Norwegians arrived on the *Charles Dickens* in February 1879.

2. 1880-1897. A STEADY TRICKLE OF ARRIVALS: The 1880s saw a record number of arrivals from the United Kingdom and therefore a reduced need to attract migrants from elsewhere. Consequently there was no organised recruitment in Norway, but a number of Norwegians

¹⁰ *Emigrants from Hamburg to Australasia 1850-1879*.

¹¹ Kleinschmidt 1951: 65-70, also articles from the *Maryborough Chronicle* published in Manderson 1997: 17-38; Ørsted Jensen 1994: 72; Corkhill 1992: 57-61.

¹² V&P, 2, 1, 1875: 593.

¹³ Lovoll 1997: 35.

¹⁴ V&P, 2, 1, 1879: 169.

travelled via London (see also chapter 2). Most were nominated migrants who reunited with friends or family who had arrived in Queensland in the 1870s.¹⁵ ‘Free-nominated’ Scandinavians and Germans could travel on extremely favourable rates to Queensland, via London. However, in 1887 the new *Immigration Act* abolished the ‘free-nominated’ system and doubled the fare for Scandinavians and Germans in an attempt to put them on equal terms with the British. Still, women aged 12 to 40 could travel for £2 and males for £4. The fare for children was £2.¹⁶ For others, discounts could sometimes be obtained.¹⁷

For instance, when the S.S *Almora* docked in Townsville on 1 May 1884, four of the passengers were ‘free-nominated’ immigrants from Norway: The sisters Josephine Amalie Hansen and Anna Sophie Hansen, their mother Johanna Hansen and her brother Johan Andreassen, all hailing from an industrial neighbourhood along the Aker River in Kristiania. It is not known who paid for their passage.¹⁸ As another example, the following year on 28 July 1885, R.M.S *Merkara* sailed from London with 452 migrants on board. 54 of the passengers were Danes, Swedes, Norwegians and Germans.¹⁹

The years from 1882 to 1886 saw on average 792 non-British migrants per year migrating to Queensland on ships organised by the Agent-General.²⁰ Departures were frequent, and when the reports list nationalities of the migrants, Norwegians are mentioned several times in the 1880s and 1890s although no exact numbers are given.²¹ By looking at the increase in the Norwegian population in the Queensland censuses from 1881 to 1891 (from 452 to ca. 780), it is reasonable to believe that at a few hundred Norwegian migrants arrived on British ships in the 1880s and to a lesser degree in the crisis-ridden 90s. In the 80s, massive out-migration from Norway coincided with an economic boom in Queensland and cheap tickets. At the same time communications improved greatly and steam replaced sail on the long run to Australia.

However, Norwegians not only came as passengers on immigrant ships. Some also worked their way to Australia. The limited archives which have survived from the Swedish-Norwegian consulate in Brisbane show that approximately 40 Norwegian commercial vessels

¹⁵ AG’s reports for 1886, 1887, 1888 and 1890 specifically mention Norwegians among the free-nominated emigrants. See also Immigration Agent’s Report for the year 1887, V&P, 3, 1, 1888: 153.

¹⁶ Corkhill 1992: 76.

¹⁷ *Norden*, November 1896, relates information from the Queensland government that Scandinavians could have their tickets reduced from £16 (290 kroner) to £12 (218 kroner).

¹⁸ Passenger manifest S.S *Almora*, Townsville Immigration Depot, copy obtained from Clive Jacobsen, Kingswood NSW. Also e-mail from Mr. Jacobsen, dated 12 July 2011.

¹⁹ *The Brisbane Courier*, 22 September 1885.

²⁰ AG’s reports in V&P, 1883: 419-427; 2, 2, 1884: 671-678; 2, 1885: 779; 2, 2, 1886: 897-898; 3, 1, 1887: 573.

²¹ AG’s report for 1886, V&P, 3, 1, 1887: 573. Also AG’s report for 1891, V&P, 2, 2, 1892: 810.

docked in Queensland ports between 1883 and 1892. On average, each of these sailing ships had a crew of 11. One single steamer, *Herman Wedel Jarlsberg* of Bergen also made it to Queensland, in January 1891, with a crew of 28.²² Although there is some uncertainty regarding arrivals at the northern ports, it is safe to assume that at least 400 sailors on board Norwegian ships visited Queensland during this decade. Moreover, many Norwegian seamen worked on foreign vessels. We do not know exactly how many stayed, but some were probably lured by good job opportunities in coastal shipping. Based on the naturalisation records, possibly around 250 Norwegian seamen settled in Queensland on a more permanent basis prior to 1904.²³ These sailors were not necessarily discharged in Queensland; they may also have left their masters in Melbourne, for instance, and then later made their way north. Seamen were not eligible for assisted passages, but this could be manipulated (chapter 2).

Of the arriving seamen, a considerable number jumped ship. The vessels typically remained in port for two to four weeks, presumably ample time to tempt the sailors to run away. During the 1880s and 1890s, 29 Norwegian sailors were charged with ship desertion and listed as wanted persons in the *Queensland Police Gazette*.²⁴ However, many cases went unreported. Two Norwegian sailors deserted the Swedish ship *Batavia* in Brisbane in April 1883.²⁵ No warrants were issued. From published arrest orders it seems that desertion was more common among Norwegians working on non-Scandinavian ships. Whether the conditions on these ships were worse than on the Norwegian ones is impossible to answer from the available material. In comparison, during the 1880s and 1890s, 1400 Norwegian sailors deserted in Melbourne.²⁶ Melbourne was a much bigger port than Brisbane, but the figure indicates that jumping ship was a very regular occurrence among Norwegian sailors in Australia. Many also deserted from Newcastle, New South Wales, an important port where Norwegian ships called regularly, and together with Melbourne on the list of the top 20 ports of desertion in the world.²⁷ Some of those who jumped ship in Victoria and New South Wales may have found their way to Queensland.

3. 1898-1900. SECOND ATTEMPT AT ASSISTED MIGRATION: Queensland's active efforts to sign up Norwegian migrants rose from its dormant stage in 1898, after August Larsen (based in

²² Lists of ships arrived, consular archives for Brisbane, NAS, SE/RA/231/231019.

²³ Database of Queensland naturalisation records; Koivukangas 1974: 37-38. 74 Norwegians who naturalised prior to 1904 stated various maritime occupations. Koivukangas has estimated that the naturalisation records from this period cover 25 per cent or more of the Scandinavian population.

²⁴ *Queensland Police Gazette* 1864-1915, Norwegians charged with ship desertion.

²⁵ Lists of ships arrived, consular archives for Brisbane, NAS, SE/RA/231/231019.

²⁶ Register of Deserters, Series 946, Public Records office of Victoria, copies at Swedish Institute of Emigration.

²⁷ Fischer 1989: 299.

London, probably Norwegian) was appointed agent for Scandinavia. It appears to have been Larsen's initiative rather than any active policy decisions made in Brisbane that resurrected Scandinavian migration.²⁸ With bad times in America, Larsen saw a window of opportunity to attract migrants to Queensland, with an emphasis on farmers who were offered 'free' and assisted passages. Larsen established a system of agents in Scandinavia, including several Norwegian cities.²⁹

As a result, there was a short burst of subsidised migration with some contingents of people arriving in 1899 and 1900. In total, 238 assisted and 27 full-paying passengers left Norway during those two years.³⁰ These migrants did not travel via Hamburg as was the case in the 1870s. Instead they arrived in Queensland on steamships from England, illustrated by the *Omrah* which sailed to Brisbane in 1899 with 11 Norwegian passengers.³¹

Larsen's contract expired 31 March 1901 and subsidised tickets ceased to be offered. Consequently, the price became too high, concluded Larsen who was still eagerly interested in Queensland migration. The number of Scandinavians was reduced to just 14 full-payers in 1901.³² More generally, attitudes towards assisted immigration had grown sceptical in Queensland because many 'new chums' left for the southern colonies or settled in towns instead of becoming farmers. Thus, the government favoured nominated migrants rather than those who were recruited 'off the street'.³³ In addition, Queensland was badly affected by the worst drought since European settlement began.

4. 1901-1914. IMMIGRATION FROM NORWAY SLOWING DOWN: In 1901, Queensland joined the new Commonwealth of Australia. The colony became a state, but the states retained responsibility for recruiting immigrants. However, the Commonwealth introduced the *Immigration Restriction Act* in 1901, providing for a dictation test as a means of controlling the admission of arriving migrants. It was primarily a tool to exclude non-Europeans, but it nevertheless prompted Queensland Premier Robert Philp to send a letter of protest to the Federal Government, warning against "virtual cessation of immigration" from Scandinavia and Germany.³⁴ Moreover, the Norwegian Ministry of Justice discouraged migration to Australia because the 1901 legislation could cause problems upon arrival. The Ministry also

²⁸ V&P, 2, 2, 1898: 696; *The Brisbane Courier*, 1 August 1898.

²⁹ Larsen to AG, 30 June 1898, QSA, PRE/A9; and 14 October 1898, QSA, PRE/A13; AG's report for 1898, V&P, 1899: 1253-1254; *The Brisbane Courier*, 23 April 1898.

³⁰ AG's reports for 1899 and 1900, V&P, 4, 2, 1900: 623-632 and V&P, 4, 2, 1901: 1049-1057.

³¹ *Norden*, 2 December 1899.

³² AG's report for 1900, V&P, 4, 2, 1901: 1055-1057; AG's report for 1901, QPP, 1, 1902: 1100.

³³ Immigration Agent's Report for 1902, QPP, 2, 1903: 435; Lewis 1973: 83.

³⁴ *The Brisbane Courier*, 6 September 1901.

addressed “erroneous portrayals of the conditions” given by August Larsen, who still promoted Australian migration from his London base.³⁵

The early 1900s in fact marked a slowdown in terms of persons entering from Norway and indeed Scandinavia. The reports from the Immigration Agent indicate just a handful of Norwegian arrivals or less per year from 1901 to 1914.³⁶ It was, however, still possible for settled Norwegians to nominate friends and family back home to come to Queensland at a substantially reduced fare. A dozen or so used that opportunity.³⁷

It has been argued that ship desertion among Norwegian sailors in Australian ports peaked during the years leading up to World War I.³⁸ Such a claim is not supported by the arrest warrants issued against deserted Norwegian sailors in Queensland. In fact, the warrants indicate that ship desertion was most frequent in the 1890s, with a total of 20 individual cases during that decade. Between 1900 and 1915, 12 Norwegian sailors were charged with ship desertion.³⁹ Neither is the claim backed by evidence from the port of Melbourne where Norwegian ships docked much more frequently. There, ship jumping peaked between 1883 and 1890 with an average of ca. 125 deserted Norwegians per year. In contrast, from 1900 to 1915 the annual average was less than 30.⁴⁰ Yet, quite a few Norwegian sailors undoubtedly roamed around as the number of ships from Norway in Australian ports increased greatly in the first few years of the 1900s.⁴¹ Their presence can be seen in Queensland’s prison records: From the late 1860s until 1915, about 150 Norwegians were sent to jail (see also chapter 4). More than half of them had tattoos, indicating a career at sea.⁴² Imprisonment of Norwegians reached a peak around 1900-1902, when a maximum of seven persons were jailed per year. Another peak came in the last half decade before World War I. The 1880s constituted a third period of relatively frequent imprisonment of Norwegians, supporting the point raised about the number of sailors during those years.

Reception and first steps in a new country

AS SOON AS the immigrants disembarked in Queensland, the process of acculturation began.⁴³

³⁵ *Morgenbladet*, 28 November 1907. Original quote in Norwegian: “feilaktige Skildringer af Forholdene”.

³⁶ Immigration Agent’s Reports for 1902-1914 in QPP, 1903-1915; *The Brisbane Courier*, 4 August 1909.

³⁷ Nomination cards, copies in Ulf Beijbom’s research collection, Swedish Institute of Emigration, 9:5:18.

³⁸ Tønnesen in Worm-Müller (ed.) 1951: 159.

³⁹ *Queensland Police Gazette* 1864-1915.

⁴⁰ Register of Deserters, Series 946, Public Records office of Victoria, copies at Swedish Institute of Emigration.

⁴¹ Worm-Müller 1950: 325.

⁴² Return of prisoners discharged from his majesty's prisons, *Queensland Police Gazette*, 1864-1915.

⁴³ Hoerder 1996: 211-212.

Depending on what sort of immigrant you were, this process would take different courses. Broadly speaking there were three distinct ways in which the Norwegians entered Queensland: Firstly, the assisted migrants in the 1870s and 1890s travelled as a part of an organised operation, meaning their reception was facilitated by the government. Secondly, and contrary to the first, those who jumped ship in Queensland had to hide from the authorities rather than being welcomed by the government. The last broad category comprises all the others; in other words those who arrived independently. These included migrants paying for their own tickets and travel arrangements, seamen discharged from ship duty as well as other persons arriving overland or by ship from other colonies. For these people there was no meet & greet from the government and they had to make their own arrangements.

Assisted migrants from deck to depot

As Dirk Hoerder has pointed out, since immigrants came with little or no capital they had to enter the labour market immediately.⁴⁴ For those who arrived through the government's migration scheme, the reception procedure consisted of several stages where the goal in the end was to match the 'new chums' with employers who were willing to hire them; a necessary first step whether one wished to become a farmer later or had no agricultural ambitions.

The assisted migrants arrived not only in Brisbane, but also in coastal towns further north, like Maryborough, Rockhampton, Mackay, Bowen, and Townsville. By legislation, for every immigrant ship to Brisbane, one ship had to be sent to the northern ports (everything north of Brisbane).⁴⁵ Immigrants were generally sought-after and it appears that the debate over where the ships should land was part of a wider political struggle over the regional development of Queensland. In any case, it meant that the immigrants did not necessarily have any choice as to where they disembarked, and it spread the arriving passengers over large tracts of the territory. The *Herschel* is one example. Of the Hamburg migrant ships it carried the largest number of passengers from Norway, leaving the Hanseatic City with 116 Norwegians on 30 March 1873. After a "remarkably pleasant" voyage of three and a half months, they arrived in the small town of Bowen, far away from the capital Brisbane.⁴⁶ 120 of the ship's passengers were transferred north to Mackay by coastal steamer. A number of Norwegians arrived in Townsville soon after.⁴⁷ On the *Lammershagen* two years prior, every fourth passenger was Norwegian. The ship arrived in Keppel Bay (Rockhampton). However,

⁴⁴ Hoerder 1996: 226.

⁴⁵ Immigration Agent's Returns of Immigration for the Year 1877, V&P, 2, 1878: 1.

⁴⁶ *Port Denison Times*, 19 July 1873, published in Kopittke 2001: 2.

⁴⁷ *The Mackay Mercury*, 19 July 1873, published in Kopittke 2001: 2; *Tromsø Stiftstidende*, 8 January 1874.

some of the immigrants were transferred to other ports, and in the process they were treated almost like cattle, according to the *Port Denison Times*:

No one was allowed on board but the agent and his officer, and they drafted off the people into three lots, those for Townsville and Mackay being put into their respective boats without coming ashore here at all. The Bowen people were then sent ashore to the Immigration Barracks [...] it is a good deal too much like the drafting of cattle to divide the people into so many portions for so many places [...] they should at any rate have the option of remaining at the first port they come to, otherwise their case is in this respect not very different from that of slaves.⁴⁸

The Norwegians' first encounters with Queenslanders usually took place shortly after the immigrant ship had anchored in safe waters outside the port of call, although some of the ships bound for northern ports stopped in Moreton Bay for fresh food supplies. "A resounding cheer greeted us, and was returned," wrote a family from Tromsø about the welcome from the locals when a long journey had finally come to an end and they were allowed to disembark from the *Herschel* and go ashore on 13 July 1873; girls first, then families and finally the single men.⁴⁹ In other ports, migrants were also greeted with cheers when times were good.⁵⁰ In more difficult times, when labour was in less demand, locals commented how dirty and filthy the Norwegians looked.⁵¹ Such was the case when the *Charles Dickens* arrived in 1879 during a time of redundancy of labour in the colony "attributable to the excessive numbers of immigrants which have lately been arriving," *The Rockhampton Bulletin* lamented.⁵² Generally, when the competition for jobs was tough, immigrants were seen more as a threat in terms of undercutting wages, for example when in 1876 the Queensland Working Man's Protection League sent a letter to the Parliament warning that the large number of immigrants were "glutting the labour markets of the colony to such a degree that many cannot find work or food to maintain their wives and families".⁵³

Speaking of wives, for many single women part of the arrival experience was to get married. Unmarried girls were scarce in Queensland with 193 males for every 100 females in 1881.⁵⁴ A Norwegian immigrant wrote home and told that immediately after arrival about 20 of the girls from the ship got married. Some of them had gotten engaged on board while others married Englishmen they had never seen before just three to four days after they

⁴⁸ *Port Denison Times*, 29 September 1871, published in Kopittke 2000: 33-34.

⁴⁹ *Tromsø Stiftstidende*, 8 January 1874

⁵⁰ *The Rockhampton Bulletin*, 3 November 1873, published in Kopittke 2001: 45.

⁵¹ *The Brisbane Courier*, 13 March 1879.

⁵² *The Rockhampton Bulletin*, 1 March 1879, published in Kopittke 2004: 79.

⁵³ V&P 1876, Vol 2, Part 2: 1065-1066.

⁵⁴ Fitzgerald, Megarrity and Symons 2009: 30.

disembarked.⁵⁵ Carl Lumholtz observed a similar 'instant' marriage between strangers in Western Queensland.⁵⁶ Although no further investigations have been made, it is possible that herein lay stories of sexual exploitation by the dominant male population.

Newly arrived assisted migrants were accommodated in a depot, usually very simple barracks and in some cases just tents. Single women, single men and families were kept apart. Lodging, food and medical attention for about ten days was included at the government's expense and the immigrants were free to visit the town to make their own arrangements for employment and housing.⁵⁷ The depots could be dirty, filthy and less than adequate, according to Helen Woolcock's study of health provisions in the Queensland immigrant apparatus.⁵⁸ But perhaps the Norwegians who had just spent three or four months at sea did not demand too much? A migrant from Fredrikstad, after complaining about the diet on the ships, described the lodgings as "well-organised", and in the letter to *Dagbladet* the facilities in Maryborough were praised, with abundant provisions of fresh meat, tea, sugar, and bread.⁵⁹

The first days of exploring Australia must have been fascinating, as seen by the experience of Carl Bjørndal, arriving in Brisbane in 1899, who observed a number of trees "which change bark but not their leaves. It sounds like a lie, however it is true. I have seen it with my own eyes [...] Here is the giant snake and other black ones which are very poisonous [and] among other animals there is the kangaroo and wild rabbits as well as little bears and a kind of wild dog of red colour called dingo."⁶⁰

Finding the first job

Waiting Engagement at Immigration Depot, Twenty-three New Arrivals ex Omrah, Swedes and Norwegians, chiefly the latter: dairy hands and farm labourers; superior lot.

Classified advertisement, The Brisbane Courier, 4 April 1900.

Around the turn of the century, the Immigration Depot placed advertisements in the newspapers to announce that newly arrived immigrants were available for hiring. The idea was of course to find work as soon as possible. Employers looking for workers could call on

⁵⁵ *Dagbladet*, 4 July 1872.

⁵⁶ Lumholtz 1889: 60.

⁵⁷ Woolcock 1986: 111; *Verdens Gang* 15 April 1871; *Dagbladet*, 4 July 1872.

⁵⁸ Woolcock 1986: 213.

⁵⁹ *Fredrikstad Tilskuer*, 9 December 1871; *Dagbladet*, 4 July 1872. Were these letters part of the Queensland agent's publicity campaign in Norway? Possibly, but at least the Fredrikstad letter also raise criticism against the agents and the promised shipping arrangements.

⁶⁰ Letter from Bjørndal to Thomas Jensen, 4 March 1900, NLN, Collection of handwritten manuscripts, 1973:33. Original quote in Norwegian: "Det er fler trær her som skifter barken og ikke Løvet. Det høres ut som en skrøne dog det er tilfelde. Det haver jeg da set med mine Øine [...] Her er Kjempeslangen og andre fler sorte som er meget giftig [...] Af andre dyr er det Kenguru og vile kaniner samt smaa Bjørne og et slags vild hund af en Rød farve ved Navnet Dingo".

the depots and take their pick. In April 1900, when Brisbane had received a fresh contingent of migrants from the ship *Jumna*, *The Brisbane Courier* wrote that the new arrivals would be kept at the depot until work was secured for them. "Should a case arise, however, where an immigrant persists in refusing a reasonable offer he will have to look out for himself after a fortnight or so. But this is a contingency which seldom or never happens." The two previous shipments of immigrants were moved on in a matter of three to seven days. The paper noted that they all appeared to have a common interest: "the best wages possible for the most agreeable work".⁶¹ Carl Bjørndal, who disembarked in Brisbane the year before, needed just four days in the depot before he secured himself an income.⁶²

When the first Norwegians arrived a generation earlier, the system was already in place as the letter to *Dagbladet* illustrates: "The day after our arrival many people who needed workers came to town, and of the newly arrived one after the other went away – to farmers, sugar plantations etc."⁶³ One of the Tromsø people said that employers came to the depot immediately after the immigrants had arrived in order to hire them.⁶⁴ According to Jens Lyng, most Scandinavians did not remain long in the depots. Some selected land and others were craftsmen, the rest took whatever jobs they were offered, building roads, bridges and railways, doing fencing and farm work etc.⁶⁵ In other words, they did what a lot of migrants had to do both in Australia, in America and in Europe: They entered the labour market as low-skill level workers.⁶⁶ *The Brisbane Courier* warned the 'new chums' not to expect too much in terms of payment: "for a time at least, they will not be well up in the duties required of them, and [...] they can hardly expect to receive the same rates of wages as those who have been in the colony for some time."⁶⁷

Still, as discussed in chapter 2, wages were better than in Norway. The level of remuneration was regular topic in the letters the Norwegians wrote after their first days and weeks in Queensland. In the 1870s, Norwegian men were initially paid in the range of £10 to £40 per annum (180-730 kroner), plus food rations, with wages around the £30 mark being the most typical. Contracts were normally for three, six or 12 months. Female domestic servants received 6-12 shillings per week, including lodging and food (ca. 5.50–11.00

⁶¹ *The Brisbane Courier*, 31 May 1900.

⁶² Bjørndal to Thomas Jensen, 4 March 1900, NLN, Collection of handwritten manuscripts, 1973:33.

⁶³ *Dagbladet*, 4 July 1872. Original quote in Norwegian: "Dagen efter vor Ankomst kom der en Mængde Mennesker til Byen, som manglede Folk, og af de Nyankomne drog nu den ene afsted efter den anden – til Farmere, Sukkerplantager osv."

⁶⁴ *Tromsø Stiftstidende*, 8 January 1874.

⁶⁵ Lyng 1939: 128.

⁶⁶ Hoerder 1996: 227.

⁶⁷ *The Brisbane Courier*, 5 October 1872, published in Kopittke 1994: 38-39.

kroner/week). Families with children could expect to earn £30-60 a year (ca. 550-1100 kroner), also with house and rations.⁶⁸ Wages were generally higher in the northern districts.

However, it was not always easy to find work straight out of the depot. Many ships arrived during the hottest and most unhealthy months at the ports where labour demand was lowest.⁶⁹ Drought, floods or failed crops could greatly diminish the labour needs in certain districts. If there was little work the immigrants could be transferred, with their expenses paid, to another depot where employment was available.⁷⁰ It appears that some of the Norwegians were incapable of finding work in the unfamiliar surroundings of English-speaking Queensland. Women would always get jobs, but for unskilled men it was sometimes a different story. After the *Lammershagen* arrived in Bowen in September 1871, 26 Norwegians were sent to the gold-mining town of Ravenswood. They were a respectable, hardy class of men, according to the *Miner*, however ...

... the state of destitution in which they have come amongst us is truly pitiable. Without money, blankets, or clothes, and mostly unable to speak a word of English, their condition may be imagined [...]. As might have been foreseen, they have been unsuccessful in obtaining employment, and will this morning return to Townsville. The diggings are already overstocked with unskilled labour.⁷¹

Before being sent away the “poor fellows” were supplied with food rations and allowed to shelter in the Court House. What happened later is not known.

Hidden migrants: Deserted seamen

Moving on to non-assisted immigrants, it has already been noted that a considerable number of Norwegian sailors ran away from their masters to start a new life in Queensland. Rather than being welcomed by cheering locals and official delegations they had to hide under the radar; ship desertion is indeed called a ‘hidden migration’.⁷² Why did they jump ship in Australia? Firstly, as touched upon in chapter 1, Norwegian shipping was in a state of crisis. In 1884, the Swedish-Norwegian consul in Brisbane noted this, and reported that Norwegian sailing ships met with difficulties in obtaining cargo for their return journey.⁷³ In 1880, the Norwegian merchant fleet employed almost 47,000 seamen in total, but thousands were deserting, not only in Australia but in even larger numbers in Europe and America.⁷⁴

⁶⁸ *Fredrikstad Tilskuer*, 9 December 1871; *Dagbladet*, 4 July 1872; *Tromsø Stiftstidende*, 8 January 1874; *The Maryborough Chronicle*, 17 June 1873, published in Kopittke 1994: 86; see also chapter 2.

⁶⁹ Woolcock 1986: 18.

⁷⁰ Immigration Agent, Brisbane, to Ass. Immigration Agent, Maryborough, 5 March 1900, QSA, Series ID 13064.

⁷¹ *Port Denison Times*, 21 October 1871, published in Kopittke 2000: 35-36.

⁷² Fischer 1989: 294.

⁷³ Consular report from Brisbane in *Uddrag af Aarsberetninger fra de forenede Rigers Konsuler for Aaret 1884*: 35.

⁷⁴ “En kræftskade på vor sjømandstand og en ulykke for landet”, article by Yngve Nedrebø, State Archivist in Bergen, presenting a survey undertaken by Pastor Ole Gustav Barmann in 1903 in order to map out the

Internationally, Australia was one of the prime areas for ship desertion in this period.⁷⁵ Although the ports of Melbourne and Newcastle had the largest number of deserters, and Brisbane was comparatively unimportant for Norwegian shipping, the naturalisation and prison records previously presented indicate that a number of seamen came to Queensland too. Generally, the land under the Southern Cross offered alternatives to the uncertainty of the crisis-ridden Norwegian fleet. Wages in the coastal trade were high; £6-7 per month from the 1890s, compared to £5 on Norwegian ships. In addition, inland seasonal work paid well. Recruiters also worked the wharves in many cities, eager to sign up sailors in a more or less sober state. Aside from better pay, many sailors were adventurous young men eager to see the world, identified by Pastor Ole Gustav Barmann in 1903 as a major reason for deserting. Australia certainly offered its fair share of potential adventures. Some may even have found love there. The deserters seem to have faced a fairly low risk. As pointed out previously, far from every escaped sailor was reported to the authorities, and the police could not necessarily stop the deserters in any case. In 1889 Captain Johnsen of the Norwegian barque *New Zealand* anticipated that some of his men would run off when the ship was in port at Cairns. He asked the consul for advice because “as his men are not British subjects the authorities cannot interfere”.⁷⁶

Some sailors went upcountry in summer only to return to the cities to sign on for a new berth when the season ended.⁷⁷ In many of the warrants that were issued for the arrest of deserted Norwegian sailors, the phrase “supposed to have gone to ...” followed by some destination more or less distant from the port where the ship was docked, shows that the runaway sailors were a mobile lot. To some, hard physical plantations or railway constructions work was more tempting than life in the docks. As early as 1870, Carl Christianson (aged 22) escaped together with a Swede and an Englishman from the *Chaasze* in Brisbane and then supposedly found employment at sugar plantations around Doughboy Creek or Logan outside town.⁷⁸ In Mackay, Ingel[b]right Storkson (25) and a Dane, Oscar Peterson, were believed to have taken up work at one of the nearby plantations after they jumped ship from the schooner *Santa Cruz* in 1882.⁷⁹ Sailors often deserted in groups. Within

problem of deserting Norwegian seamen. Available online:
<http://www.digitalarkivet.uib.no/utstilling/sjorom.htm>, accessed 3 September 2011.

⁷⁵ Fischer 1989: 297-298.

⁷⁶ Letter from Burns Philp & Co, Cairns, to the Swedish-Norwegian Consulate in Brisbane, 8 January 1889, in Consular archives for Brisbane, NAS, SE/RA/231/231019.

⁷⁷ Tønnesen in Worm-Müller 1951: 159.

⁷⁸ *Queensland Police Gazette* 1870: 95-96.

⁷⁹ *Queensland Police Gazette* 1882: 153.

five days in January 1891, eight Norwegian seamen took off from the *Star of Persia* in Gladstone. All were men in their 20s. They were joined by a Swede and supposedly went to Rockhampton, 110 kilometres further north.⁸⁰

According to Pastor Barmann's survey, poor conditions onboard the ships was not a widespread reason for escaping.⁸¹ However, unhappiness with the situation on board or conflicts with the master or other crew members may have caused some sailors to enter Australia illegally. Christian Olaf Andersen, a sailor since he was 15, jumped ship in New Zealand in 1895. He later lived in Cooktown, Queensland. In his memoirs he relates his various reasons for deserting: He disliked the second mate intensely, and the whole watch ran away just as the ship was ready to depart. But, Andersen writes: He would probably not have left if it was not for the "annoying letters" from his fiancée in Norway who was unhappy with him not being a captain. So he decided to break off the engagement and "that was the end of my wish to ever go Home".⁸²

In other cases, information obtained from official records only allows us to speculate: The barque *C. Tobias* of Arendal was docked in Brisbane during October and November 1888 after completing a run from London with a load of general cargo. Captain Christian Knudsen headed a crew of 14. However, while in Brisbane three crew members, two Norwegians and a Swede, were charged with disobedience of orders. Arrest warrants were issued by the police so the men presumably ran away. Just two days later, another Norwegian crew member jumped ship: 24 year old Emanuel Tufenssen (most likely a misspelling) started life in Queensland dressed in a dark tweed suit, a sailor's cap and elastic-side boots on his feet. The Norwegian spoke a little English according to the arrest warrant.⁸³

Independent migrants

How did the rest of the Norwegians make it to Queensland? The point about highlighting this category is to show that the arrivals were not limited to just assisted migrants and deserted seamen. Most importantly, a considerable number of seamen arrived in Queensland quite legally. Olaf A. Ødegaard was probably one of them. Unlike many, he was able to produce several certificates of discharge when he applied for naturalisation after 16 years in

⁸⁰ *Queensland Police Gazette* 1891: 103.

⁸¹ See note 74.

⁸² *Memoirs of Captain Christian Olaf Andersen*, Cairns Historical Society, R 910.45 AND, p. 22.

⁸³ *Queensland Police Gazette* 1888: 352-353, 360. Also Lists of ships arrived, consular archives for Brisbane, NAS, SE/RA/231/231019.

Queensland. Ødegaard arrived from the USA in 1908 as a seaman but later became a sugar cane worker.⁸⁴

Some paid their own way to Queensland, and a few migrants even had jobs lined up before they left home, like Carl Martin Horn. Born in 1889 in Larvik, Norway, he arrived in Adelaide on the barque *Holthe* as a 22 year old. From there he made his way to Queensland to work for the Archer family. With him Horn had recommendations from Colin Archer, a fellow Larvik citizen and by then an accomplished ship builder. When Horn applied for naturalisation in 1917 he worked as a book keeper for Archer Brothers Ltd.⁸⁵ In the next chapter we will take a closer look at the Archer family's role as door openers for Norwegians moving to Queensland.

Obviously, Horn and his equals were in a rather different position from many of the "poor fellows" who came to Queensland in the 1870s. As argued by Hoerder, different immigrants enter the receiving society at different levels and their resources determine the first steps they take upon arrival.⁸⁶ For the non-assisted migrants, the first impressions of Australian land and people in most cases must have been just as fascinating as for those who came in large groups and had their tickets sponsored. On the other hand, a sea captain, an experienced sailor or a well-connected and skilled white-collar worker had more resources to play with during those crucial first weeks in the new country. Better knowledge of English is one point. Moreover, those who could afford to pay for their own tickets were most likely economically better off than those who travelled on 'free' passages.

Conclusion

Approximately 1800-2000 Norwegians arrived in Queensland between 1870 and World War 1. As shown in this chapter, the influx went through several stages with a definitive peak in the early 1870s. Immigration to Queensland was more than just a question of assisted passages. Several hundred people also arrived by other means, most importantly as seamen. Upon arrival, all immigrants were not in an equal position. The assisted migrants had the advantage of reception facilities set up by the government, easing the initial task of finding jobs and housing. Others had friends, families or contacts who could act as personal 'brokers', but many were left to their own devices. In addition, the economic conditions in Queensland at the time of arrival also influenced the immigrants' first experiences in the new country in terms of reception and employment.

⁸⁴ Naturalisation papers, National Archives of Australia, 24/19738.

⁸⁵ Naturalisation papers, National Archives of Australia, 17/17137, 18/856.

⁸⁶ Hoerder 1996: 212.

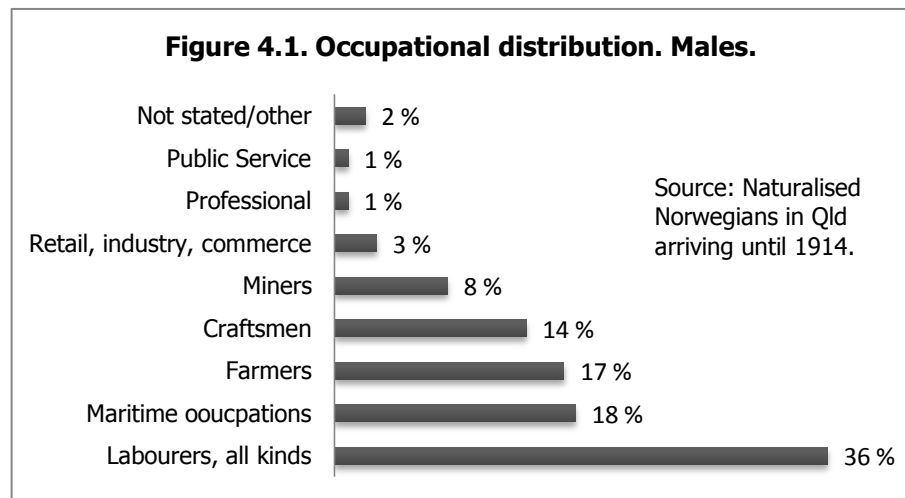
4 – Making a living

“THE POOR, STRONG labourer can earn his bread well in Queensland. But it requires harder and more strenuous work than in Norway.”¹ This observation was made by a newly arrived man from Fredrikstad in 1871. Hoerder has argued that the economic framework first and foremost determines the experience of the migrants.² Therefore it seems crucial to ask: How did the Norwegians integrate into Queensland work life? In this chapter we shall first examine the occupational structure of the Norwegian population. From there we will move on to a closer analysis of the different paths the Norwegians followed in their integration into occupational life.

Occupational structure among the Norwegians

THE OCCUPATIONAL distribution of Norwegian men can be seen in table 4.1.³ Generally speaking the vast

majority of Norwegian women and men belonged to the working class, as labourers, seamen, miners or domestic servants. Persons born in Norway were almost non-existent



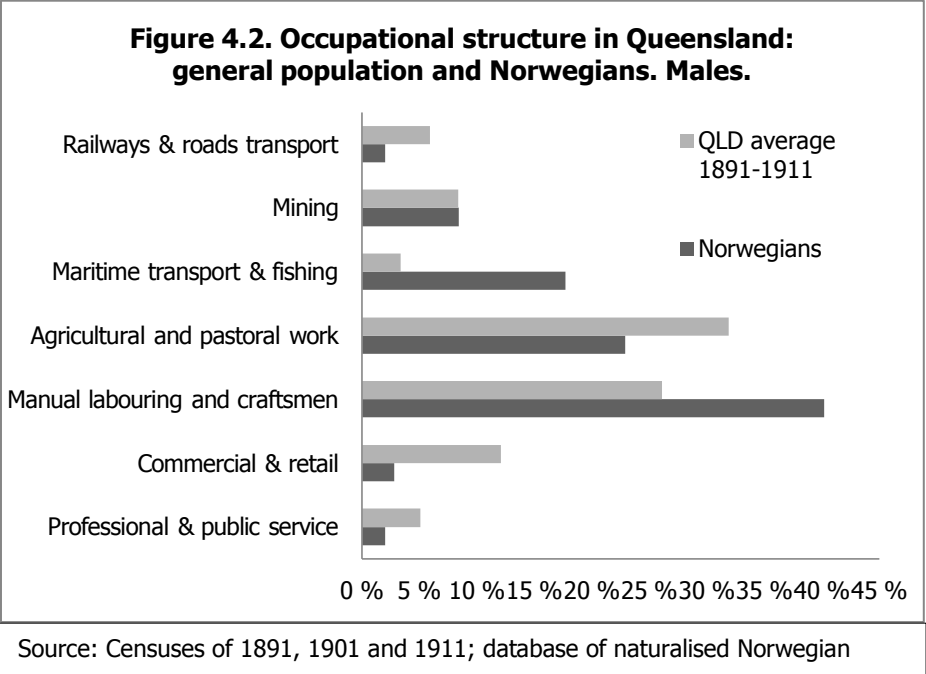
in the upper social reaches among pastoralists, and the top managerial and governing classes. However, a number of maritime officers held jobs with a degree of prestige. Some farmers, craftsmen and a few businesspeople also attained more independent positions, mostly gained through hard work more than by prior status.

¹ *Fredriksstad Tilskuer*, 9 December 1871, original quote in Norwegian: “Den fattige, kraftige arbeider kan tjene sitt brød godt i Queensland. Men det kreves et hardere og mer anstrengende arbeid enn i Norge”.

² Hoerder 1996: 226.

³ Aggregated data from the naturalisation records have been used to establish the main occupational categories for men (figure 4.1). Consequently, they record the Norwegians’ job status at the time of naturalisation, which may have been many years after their arrival in Queensland. Given the low number of individuals (483 males who arrived until 1914), it seems unwise to construct too many or too complex categories. As noted before, very few women naturalised and the numbers are too low to compile useful statistics. Finally, there is an element of uncertainty as to the proportion of naturalisations within different occupational categories, as noted in chapter 1. Farmers in particular are most likely overrepresented among those who naturalised, whereas the opposite could be the case for labourers and seamen. In other words, the actual percentage of these two latter categories may have been higher than the numbers in figure 4.1.

How does this picture compare with the overall population of Queensland? Statistics that allow for direct comparisons are unfortunately not available, but using data for the general male population from the 1891-1911 censuses some patterns do emerge. The main conclusions as seen from figure 4.2 are that Norwegian men were heavily overrepresented in manual labouring and crafts and especially in the maritime sector. Conversely, there were fewer Norwegians than average in the agricultural/pastoral sector and even more so in



commercial pursuits, land transport and white-collar jobs. Although there is uncertainty attached to the data, figures 4.1 and 4.2 show quite clearly the proletarian character of the Norwegian

immigrants. They worked mainly with their bodies and at sea, a tendency commensurate with the main categories of Norwegian immigrants, as discussed previously.

Overview of occupations among men

LABOURERS: 36 per cent of the naturalised Norwegian men were urban or rural labourers. This includes unskilled common labourers as well as some more skilled occupations. When naturalising, the vast majority of men just stated that they were ‘labourers’ or ‘farm labourers’. This fits with the picture of Queensland as a place where labour was manual, seasonal and required geographic mobility. Examples of more specific occupations were carriers, engine drivers, bushmen, sawyers, timber getters and shearers. Individuals were also involved in a variety of jobs such as boundary rider, drover, fencer, gardener, mill hand, night watchman, packer, ploughman, stockman and wool presser.

Many Norwegians made a living doing physically demanding work building railways and bridges. Railway construction was a crucial means of development in colonial Queensland, linked closely to the pastoral and mining industries. Often the demand for

railway workers absorbed newcomers as fast as the immigrant ships could deliver them.⁴ This kind of work typically involved the need to move around as projects were completed and new ones started. Theodor Folkenborg from Rødnes in the county of Smaalenene (Østfold) wrote home to his brother Arnt in 1896 from Rosedale, Queensland:

... since I arrived here in Queensland I have gone up here in the tropical climate, a long journey, times are not good, but right now I have good employment as a bridge builder (railway bridges). As you can imagine it is very hot and I do not know whether or not I will remain through summer.⁵

Working on the new railway line to the mining town of Chillagoe in North Queensland in 1900, a group of Norwegians and Finns were “principally engaged felling timber and preparing sleepers” enduring an “extreme change of climate from the north of Europe to the north of Queensland,” wrote the Cairns *Morning Post*. Some of the Norwegian labourers pooled their resources and bought a fully equipped horse and dray in order to find employment on the railway line. The profits would be divided among the investors.⁶

MARITIME OCCUPATIONS: The second largest group worked within the maritime sector; comprising 18 per cent of those naturalised. Scandinavian seamen were very well regarded, reported the Swedish-Norwegian Consul in Brisbane in 1884.⁷ As previously discussed, many seamen disembarked in Queensland. Johan Fredrik Markussen (born 1865) from Flekkerøy in Norway left his native home at a young age. Before he settled in Queensland he had seen his fair share of the South Pacific:

Roving and Wandering Seems to have been in My Blood Since I could Walk; and Went to Sea before I was 15 Years old – I landed in Melbourne in 1879 [...] Went to New Zealand and Sailed on that coast for 3 years, then back to Australian Coast and the South-Sea-Islands; and at times Worked ashore at Various Occupations – then in 1889 I Joined the Queensland Government Service as Boatsman ...⁸

Markussen remained in public service for 44 years, eventually becoming the master of several government steamers.

In *Norden* Jens Lyng took a dim view of Scandinavian seamen in Australia: They run away from the ship and their hard earned wages as soon as they reach port. If they get a job on a coastal boat or on the land they only stay as long as it takes to earn a few pounds, then they

⁴ Bolton 1972: 155.

⁵ Letter from Theodor Folkenborg to his brother Arnt, 17 July 1896, privately held.. Original quote in Norwegian: "... siden jeg kom her til Queensland haver jeg gåen op her i det tropiske klimat en lang reise og tiderne her er ikke gode, men jeg haver et godt arbeide som Brobygger (Gjernbanebroer) Just nu. Det er for som du nok kan tænke deg meget varmt og jeg ved ikke om jeg vil stoppe sommeren over."

⁶ *Morning Post*, 7 April 1900.

⁷ Consular report for Brisbane, *Uddrag af Aarsberetninger fra de forenede Rigers Konsuler for Aaret 1884*: 35.

⁸ Questionnaire from Nordmandsforbundet, answered by Markussen, post marked Brisbane 26 August 1933, index file 312, Nordmandsforbundet's archives, Museum of Emigration, Hamar.

spend it all and have to start at the bottom yet again resulting in poverty and a bitter old age.⁹ As will be further discussed later, quite a few Norwegian sailors did a lot of drinking, fighting and stealing during their time in Queensland.

There was a social division among the seamen between common sailors and officers. Based on the naturalisation records, one in eight mariners was a master mariner or a captain, and some of those who simply stated 'seaman' may later have become masters. In addition to ships' crews, some Norwegians worked as boat builders, dock workers, fishermen and divers. Norwegian maritime officers typically commanded vessels plying up and down the coast or were involved in the Pacific trade. Centred on Brisbane was a network of captains, some of them with close associations. One example is Karl Anton Berg (born ca. 1853) from Østerdalen in Norway who came out in the early 1880s and became a captain of the Adelaide Steamship Company's passenger ships between North Queensland and Melbourne. Berg was in the South Sea trade before coming to Australia.¹⁰ More Norwegians were on the staff rolls of the Adelaide Steamship Company: Captain Reis worked for the company as a pilot in North Queensland for 17 years between Cairns, Lucinda Point and Townsville, just one of several mariners who resided in the northern tropics.¹¹

FARMERS: "It is not as brilliant as it was described for those who have money and wish to start working the soil. There is enough land here, but it takes effort and strength to be a settler," wrote the migrant from Fredrikstad in 1871.¹² Although the Queensland government failed to convince the majority of migrants to become agriculturalists some did have the strength: 17 per cent of the Norwegian men were farmers.

Generally Scandinavian immigrants came with little or no capital, and for those who wished to become farmers it was typically a matter of clearing the land before they could start cultivating their crops. In the meantime the men often had to take other work to secure an income while the women stayed at home.¹³ Farming was very much a family affair, involving all members, young and old, male and female. However, the standard of living was miserable for the first few years; although the land rent was low, the farmers still faced the problem of earning enough money to set up and operate the farm.¹⁴

⁹ *Norden*, 29 July 1899

¹⁰ *The Brisbane Courier*, 25 October 1907; *Nordmandsforbundet* 1910: 493.

¹¹ *Cairns Post*, 20 September 1915.

¹² *Fredriksstad Tilskuer*, 9 December 1871. Original quote in Norwegian: "Det er ikke saa glimrende, som det stod, for dem, der have Penge og ville begynde paa Jorden. Her er Jord nok, men det koster Angstrængelse og Kraft at være Nybygger."

¹³ Lyng 1939: 129-130; Christensen 1991: 19.

¹⁴ Ross Johnston 1982: 137-139.

Some aspects of farming life may be shown through the example of Johan Jørgensen who travelled to Queensland as a young man sometime around 1888-1890. He and his Scottish business partner George Barnard cleared land to start a sugar farm at Lower Proserpine in the early 1890s. The days were long, but bachelor life also meant that some time was spent dancing with the women and falling in love. Although living arrangements steadily improved, the erratic seasons made for unpredictable yields from the crop; cyclones, floods and droughts were regular threats. They rarely managed to harvest as much sugar as they hoped for, but a good season would bring “smiling faces everywhere” in the local community.¹⁵

In November 1903, Jørgensen left the sugar farm. There was “not much in sugar at that particular place,” his wife was sick and he himself could not stand the humidity, so he decided to look for a better climate and a cheap farm.¹⁶ Thanks to his ties to the Archer and Walker families, Jørgensen had access to financial backing which was quite clearly out of reach for the average assisted immigrant. When he found a 300 acre property outside Biggenden, later to be named Pladsen, he was able to borrow most of the £850 needed to buy the farm. Still, he struggled and asked his relative Robert Stubbs Archer for advice on how to run the place. “I am not doing any good here,” Jørgensen wrote from Pladsen in 1910: “I have now been here close on 6 years and am quite satisfied that there is nothing in it for me.” Years of strenuous work had broken down his wife Bessie completely, and “we are so hard up that sometimes we don’t know what is best to do”.¹⁷

These downcast statements show how life as a farmer could take its toll, mentally, physically and financially. Although we lack knowledge about the general success/failure rate, some clearly achieved a degree of prosperity in the long run. Guldbrand and Rikka Larsen from North Odal migrated in 1873 (see also chapter 5). On a visit to Norway after 26 years, Guldbrand painted a rosy picture of Queensland farm life: Summer all year round, large horses and sheep, hens roaming freely and cows that only had to be milked once a day; the rest was left for the calves or the labourers. Larsen, a farmer near Warwick in the Darling Downs, said the soil was so fertile it could be cultivated for 50 years without using fertiliser, provided there was enough rain; “he who owns a piece of land there, and is willing to work [...] he has everything he needs, and in abundance.”¹⁸ Guldbrand Larsen undoubtedly

¹⁵ Letter from Johan Jørgensen to Kate, probably his sister, 2 March 1897, privately held.

¹⁶ Johan Jørgensen to Robert Archer, 18 September 1904, privately held.

¹⁷ Johan Jørgensen to Robert Archer, 22 May 1910, privately held.

¹⁸ *Politiken*, 3 March 1900. Original quote in Norwegian: “den, som ejer et Stykke Jord der, og vil arbejde [...] han har alt, hvad han behøver, og det i Overflod”

contributed to the myth making about Australia, but it nevertheless shows an older farmer who was content with his achievements in life.

CRAFTSMEN: 14 per cent of the naturalised males had taken up a craft or a trade. The craftsmen were a diverse bunch of people with carpenters by far the most numerous, comprising one-third of the group. In addition, several Norwegians were working as bakers, blacksmiths, boot makers, cooks and painters. From the sparse information on the naturalisation papers it is impossible to ascertain the social position of these craftspeople. Some were probably more like skilled labourers whereas others gained self-employment or ran their own businesses. The line between these groups was by no means clear.

Most craftsmen and tradespeople were urban dwellers. Carl Bjørndal from Asker, with his wife Elise and baby daughter Solveig, came to Brisbane in 1899 as assisted migrants. Carl gained work as a painter and lived in East Brisbane. When he wrote home some six and a half months after arriving, he told his family and friends in Norway that he earned well: 7.20 kroner (4 shillings) per day, more than twice the average wage for a journeyman painter in Norway, and the shift was only eight hours.¹⁹ Bjørndal came to Brisbane when Queensland was recovering from a crisis. Three years earlier, in 1896, there was no work for craftsmen in the colony. Shoemakers (of whom there were a few Norwegians), used to be well paid but were redundant thanks to newly introduced machinery, reported *Norden*.²⁰

MINERS: Mining was the fifth most common occupation among Norwegians. Eight per cent of the Norwegian men were involved in the mineral industry. Half of the miners lived in the Kennedy district in North Queensland, particularly in Charters Towers (see also chapter 5). Gold was of course the main lure, but Queensland miners also extracted tin, silver, lead, copper and other base metals. As was the case for craftsmen, the label 'miner' potentially includes a great spectrum of social positions from poor vagrants with a pick and a shovel to more successful, settled people involved in bigger operations. Broadly speaking there were two categories of miners: 1) Independent, mobile prospectors searching for alluvial or surface metals, primarily during the 1870s rushes, and 2) wage-earning, settled miners working for larger companies with heavy investment in deep underground reefing from the 1880s. The latter was mainly the case in Charters Towers, where mining offered the opportunity of good wages and living standards.²¹

¹⁹ Emigrants from Kristiania 1871-1930, NDA; Carl Bjørndal to Thomas Jenssen, 4 March 1900; Daily wages, 1875-1920, SN. An urban journeyman painter earned on average 3.47 kr/day in 1900. See also chapter 2.

²⁰ *Norden*, October 1896.

²¹ Colwell 1974: 69-80; Loos 1974: 164.

In chapter 2 we argued that some Norwegians were enticed by Queensland's mineral wealth. A few Norwegian prospectors came early to the colony without assistance from the government migration program. However, some of the 'free' migrants tried their luck too. Lars Mikkelsen Klæstad, arriving in Keppel Bay in 1871, must have heard about the northern gold fields because he moved on to Ravenswood immediately and then to nearby Charters Towers the year after. There he speculated in various mines. In 1875, Klæstad and four associates took out a mining lease of 1 acre 10 perches at an annual rent of £5. According to his obituary, Klæstad lost his hand in one of the mines where he worked, and then "after many subsequent ventures at mining which did not result successfully" he started gardening.²²

Mining was indeed a risky business in the 1870s, warned a migrant letter to *Verdens Gang*:

... by going to the gold mines you risk both your health and possibly your life. The gold mines that are most profitable are up in the warm zone, and the Scandinavians can't take the heat and the hard work. Many of my friends from the ship have gone up there, but most of them are now sick. They can work for a few weeks, but then they become sick again for a long time. Almost everyone here has been in the gold mines at some time or other, but perhaps not even one of 100 has managed to save any money here. The others have left without a penny in their pockets after spending all their money up there. The gold mines are the world's worst lottery.²³

As the quote suggests, the great northern gold rushes of the 1870s – Ravenswood, Charters Towers, Palmer, Etheridge and others – attracted a large number of men. According to historian G. C. Bolton, it was the prospect of being one's own master that lured so many to the North Queensland fields.²⁴ Thus it is likely that more than eight per cent for the Norwegian men actually tried mining at some point in time, but returned to other jobs later.

OTHER OCCUPATIONS: Comparatively few Norwegians were engaged in business, professional or public service. Doctors, lawyers, bankers, editors or teachers were virtually non-existent among the Norwegians. In Koivukangas' view "it is understandable that first generation Scandinavians with low status backgrounds could not be numerous in professional and higher business occupations"; few possessed resources in terms of capital and know-how.²⁵ In fact, the five categories discussed above comprised more than 90 per cent of all the males. The rest were involved in a large spectrum of jobs: A couple of architects and surveyors probably enjoyed the highest prestige. There were handfuls of clerks, and some storekeepers and publicans. A few were in rural business as agents and contractors whereas others were employed as accountants.

²² *Modified Register for Michel Larson*.

²³ Hale (ed.) 1986: 165-166, reprint from a letter published in *Verdens Gang*, 13 November 1872.

²⁴ Bolton 1972: 63.

²⁵ Koivukangas 1974: 257.

Occupations among women

It is safe to assume that most Norwegian women came to Queensland as assisted migrants. They were either unmarried and predominantly young *or* married women who travelled with the rest of their families. At the point of departure from Hamburg, the most commonly stated occupation-status was 'ledig', meaning unmarried, single.²⁶ The term 'ledig' was only used for females. Almost half of the women (48 per cent) were in this category, and they ranged fairly evenly from 15-16 years of age up to the late 30s. Another 13 per cent were specifically listed as domestic servants ('Dienstmädchen') in the Hamburg departure lists. 36 per cent were married women ('Frau').

What kind of work did these women do after their arrival? Hardly any personal accounts from Norwegian women have been found, but as a general rule historian Bill Thorpe indicates that marriage was the major 'career' for non-Aboriginal women in colonial Queensland. At the time of the 1911 census, two in three Norwegian women were married.²⁷ Most women in Queensland existed outside the paid labour market; less than one in five participated in the work force in 1891.²⁸ For those who did have a paid job, employment options were narrow. Aside from schools, women tended to work as domestic servants and housekeepers, on farms, as garment factory workers or running boarding houses.²⁹

The path to marriage and a 'career' as a wife was often short; it was not uncommon for girls to marry fresh off the boat, as seen in chapter 3. In addition, more than a third of the women were already in wed-lock when they left for Queensland. No matter when or where their marriage had taken place; for couples trying to settle in the colony both the husband and wife had to work hard to make a living, especially during the first few years. The women often had to look after the plot, the house and many children while their spouses were gone for long periods trying to earn an income as labourers.³⁰ Christine Andersen from Gran, who arrived in 1873, married Christian Sørensen from Denmark in Rockhampton in 1875. After getting married the young couple settled at 14 Mile Creek where they had a small farm. In addition to rearing ten children, Christine (Christina in Australia) used to take produce from the farm, especially eggs, into Rockhampton. The 22 kilometres each way was a long day's journey at a time when the roads were mere tracks.³¹

²⁶ Kopittke 2000: viii.

²⁷ Commonwealth Census 1911: Vol 1: 114-155; Vol 2: 105-385.

²⁸ Evans 2007: 126.

²⁹ Thorpe 1996: 153-154, referring to research done by Katie Spearritt.

³⁰ Cahir 1975: 98-99.

³¹ Family records and e-mail correspondence with Carol Woodrow, great-granddaughter of Christine Andersen; death certificate Christina Sorensen (nee Andersen), QLD BDM, ref. 5119330.

Two Norwegian-born sisters ran hotels in the gold mining town of Croydon in the 1890s and early 1900s, mentioned by Thorpe as one of few employment options for women. Gunda Sophie Swanson and Severine Louisa Peterson/Lee were daughters of Lars Klæstad, the miner in Charters Towers. The girls were children when they migrated. Severine (b. 1864) worked as a servant before she married Anders Pedersen Bjerke, a Norwegian blacksmith, in 1882. They moved to Croydon where Anders worked as a miner, and they also took over the licence of the Union Hotel; a licence which was later transferred to Severine. After Anders died in 1901, Severine kept the licence on the hotel as a widow and continued to run the place for a while after she remarried in 1905. Severine's elder sister Gunda (b. 1859) was also a hotel keeper in Croydon for a few years before moving to Charters Towers.³²

As for paid employment, various kinds of domestic work as maids, servants, cooks etc. were the main occupational options for Norwegian women, particularly for the unmarried ones. Queensland was dependent on single immigrant women to fill the jobs in the domestic labour market; such work was not regarded as attractive by Australian-born girls and there was an almost constant demand for servants.³³ The records of those Norwegian women who did naturalise support the notion that many women did domestic work. Of 16 naturalised women, nine listed various domestic duties as their profession. Four were widows. Further to the argument, there were enough Norwegian girls in Brisbane for them to be remembered a good many years after their arrival. When demand outstripped supply in the domestic labour market in the years from 1905, one Queensland lady told a newspaper that "some years ago a large number of Finnish and Norwegian women were to be had in Brisbane". For some reason they disappeared, she added, believing they had gone to America.³⁴ More likely, they got married and withdrew from paid employment. The more specific character of some of the female work can be seen in the following two examples: In 1902 two Norwegian maids advertised in *The Brisbane Courier*, seeking employment as a cook-laundress and a house-parlour maid. Some months later, a disengaged mother and her daughter used the same method to search for work as bread makers.³⁵

Modes of occupational integration

SO FAR WE have seen how the Norwegians were distributed in different sectors of the Queensland economy, with the high proportion of general labourers, seamen and farmers, and

³² *Modified Register for Michel Larson*.

³³ Cahir 1975: 108.

³⁴ *Morning Post*, 10 January 1906.

³⁵ *The Brisbane Courier*, 27 November 1902 and 4 July 1903.

the low number of professionals, being the most conspicuous findings. However, a static categorisation of occupations obscures the issue of how the Norwegians actually adapted to the conditions of Queensland work life.

The process of finding an income took place within a framework containing constraints as well as opportunities. In the previous chapter we discussed how the immigrants started life in Queensland under quite different conditions; a farmer, an unskilled labourer, a skilled craftsmen or a middle-class professional entered the receiving society at different levels.³⁶ Furthermore, immigrants had access to varying amounts of social capital as a resource to draw upon in terms of information about jobs and opportunities. Moreover, Queensland immigrants' lives evolved within a society with profound class, status, racial and gender divisions and where social mobility was limited, according to Bill Thorpe.³⁷ However, the immigrants were not entirely immobile. Although initially poor or unskilled, quite a few managed to create a good life as seen by examples presented throughout this thesis. Some even came to Queensland with money, education, resources and contacts. Contrary to Thorpe's analysis, in a PhD thesis about social mobility in colonial Queensland, Hilary Davies argues that the social structure was undeveloped during the 1860s to 1880s and that an expanding economy and growing population created opportunities for upward social mobility for those with the initiative to go ahead.³⁸ Even though most Norwegians remained within the working class, diagonal mobility – upwards improvement within one category, for example from unskilled to skilled worker – nevertheless meant a better socioeconomic position over time without necessarily entering the middle-class.³⁹

Norwegian immigrants tackled the challenges they were faced with in a variety of ways. Some prospered, others failed. On the following pages we will apply five different perspectives to better understand how the Norwegians were integrated into the economic sphere as a process which took place within the societal structure. In the absence of accounts from the immigrants themselves it is difficult to learn how they personally viewed their situation. Consequently, the following perspectives are fairly loose and not mutually exclusive, but based on the material available we will highlight some typical patterns. The perspectives are: 1) Rambling life in the bush; 2) Acquiring new skills and positions; 3) Using family networks; 4) Entering higher social strata; and 5) Falling out of society.

³⁶ Hoerder 1996: 213.

³⁷ Thorpe 1996: 135.

³⁸ Davies 2009: 296.

³⁹ Wist 2000: 113.

1. A RAMBLING LIFE IN THE BUSH: The least settled part of the Norwegian population lead their lives wandering around and/or taking up seasonal work. A common denominator among those in this group was a short horizon concerning money and living arrangements. In *Norden* a Swede commented on the restlessness among “the floating population” of Scandinavians; characterised by always being on the move, looking for something better but with no real goal.⁴⁰ This category includes ‘swagmen’: people with no fixed abode tramping around in search for casual work on a day-to-day basis.⁴¹ Some Norwegians may well have been swagmen, particularly during the depression in the 1890s. This category also includes highly mobile transient labourers on pastoral properties or construction sites, and also miners jumping from one gold rush to the next. These were typically unmarried men with few if any relatives in Australia, leading an existence in stark contrast to Victorian middle-class ideals.

Many of the characteristics of the swagman and the itinerant worker did in fact have a contemporary parallel in Norway. Historian Edvard Bull has developed the term ‘wandering culture’ in order to understand the practices and ideology of Norwegian road and railway construction workers between 1870 and 1920. Bull’s work is also a way in which to perceive similar movements in Australia. As in Queensland, construction sites in Norway were temporary and work was seasonal. The walkabout tradition prevailed in the north of Queensland at least until the early 1900s. Moving from job to job was a habit and the men grew restless if they stayed in one place too long.⁴² Both in Queensland and Norway rambling workers typically followed the railway sites as construction developed. However, in the Australian bush the structure of large pastoral stations meant that rural labourers also wandered a great deal. As with the swagmen in Australia, it was customary in Norway to feed and lodge the wandering workers.⁴³

A lot of the rambling was not necessarily related to the search for a job, according to Bull. Wandering was a part of the culture in itself. In Norway, the wanderers expressed that their lifestyle gave them freedom and happiness. It became a preference. There was no plan behind every move, but the men had a strong urge to see new places and to get their hands on

⁴⁰ *Norden*, exact date lacking, probably some time around 1900.

⁴¹ In a contemporary article published in *Nordmandsforbundet* (1912: 91-93) Victor Leegaard provides a description of the swagman: Wherever you go in the Australian countryside, you are sure to meet a ‘swaggie’ either in a camp or on a wander, he wrote. They wandered around from station to station, carrying only the bare necessities, such as the swag (a roll of canvas to sleep in). Whenever they reached a new station they asked for food, and perhaps work for a couple of days before setting off again. Permanent employment was none of their interest. It was customary for station owners to give the swagmen a feed, enough for the walk to the next station.

⁴² Bolton 1972: 290.

⁴³ Bull in Langholm and Sejersted (eds.) 1980: 244

women and drink.⁴⁴ Again, Queensland was similar; being a swagman was a lifestyle. The same must have applied to stockmen, fencers, shearers, drovers and boundary riders who moved around from station to station and stayed a few months at each place.

Carl Lumholtz visited a station in western Queensland in the early 1880s and he noted that life was monotonous with very few women. Because there was little to spend money on in the bush, a worker could normally save up and collect a large check from his boss when the contract was finished. Then it was time for some fun, noted Lumholtz: “He takes his horses, rides off, dismounts in the first little village and ‘has a good time’ – that is to say, he drinks every kind of liquor that is to be had.”⁴⁵ As for money, the attitude among the wandering workers in Norway was similar: Use what you earn on quick treats for yourself and your mates. Bull argues that such an attitude was common among people who were not spiritually embedded in capitalism: They did not save. Rather, when they had earned enough they preferred free time and a drink instead of continuous toil.⁴⁶

Seasonal or short-term employment on the pastoral properties or in the agricultural sector may indeed have been one of the few employment options for some of the Norwegians in Queensland who lacked language and trade skills (see chapter 3 about the 26 assisted migrants who could not find work in Ravenswood). Furthermore, many men were not bound by family ties. Combined with the pull of good wages and a considerable dose of freedom, life in the bush must have tempted many. One of them, Adolph W. Chr. Hagerup, was a boundary rider, residing in Cunnamulla when he was naturalised in 1886.⁴⁷ In other words, he did lonely work riding the fences on a large property in the outback. A man from Tønsberg wrote about his job on a property in western Queensland. As a stockman, he went bush alone for three months to look after two paddocks. “It did not feel like such a long time,” he pointed out. The people he saw for three months were the local Aborigines.⁴⁸

2. ACQUIRING NEW SKILLS AND POSITIONS: We have previously shown that many of the Norwegians came to Queensland partly because they possessed an ability to conduct certain work tasks that were in demand. Clearly, for some the skills and resources they brought with them served as a primary base for future employment at their destination, seamen being the

⁴⁴ Bull in Langholm and Sejersted (eds.) 1980: 235-236, 242-243.

⁴⁵ Lumholtz 1889: 60.

⁴⁶ Bull in Langholm and Sejersted (eds.) 1980: 242, 249.

⁴⁷ Queensland naturalisation records, ref. 1886/76.

⁴⁸ “Fra Australiens Skove og Prærier: Oplevelser fortalte af en Tønsberger” (From the Australian Bush and Praire: Experienced told by a Tønsberg man), a series of articles in *Tønsbergs Blad*, 1896.

obvious example. A sailor could enter the coastal shipping sector in Australia equipped with the skills he had learned while working at sea.

Nevertheless, it is apparent that all immigrants had to learn new things, the English language being one obstacle. For a great many Norwegians, making a living meant acquiring new or different skills and practices or changing old ones. The nature of Queensland's climate and economy required immigrants to take up vastly different types of work from what they were used to at home. We know that immigrants generally sought a better life; as such an ambition to improve one's situation would have prevailed. With ambition follows risk. An inexperienced selector clearing and cultivating land for the benefit of his family obviously faced risks, most notably from the unpredictable seasons and the unfamiliar farming practices (ref. Johan Jørgensen pg. 57). Among these people were sailors and labourers but more importantly there were many farmers, craftsmen and small business owners. Acquiring property or opening a shop also implied an intention to settle – not to roam around the bush.

There are no data available that allow for a systematic study of social mobility within the first generation of Norwegian immigrants. Yet, from personal accounts it is clear that many at least achieved some form of diagonal mobility (see above), gradually improving their situation in terms of working conditions, financial remuneration and personal independence while still remaining working class or farmers. A few established themselves in the middle class. For some it was a deliberate choice to learn new skills and follow the unknown. Others may have had qualifications which were not in demand at a particular time and place and as such had to adapt (see also chapter 3).⁴⁹ Geographic mobility was one response, finding a new occupation another option.

Diagonal mobility within the class of manual labour may be illustrated through the story of Henry Lawrence, the anglicised name of a Norwegian who arrived at Rockhampton in 1883. "Like most of the new arrivals in the country at that time he obtained employment on the construction work of the Central Railway line," wrote *The Longreach Leader* in an interview with Lawrence.⁵⁰ Lawrence relates that he grew tired of railway work so he decided to learn to shear sheep. In other words: He chose to learn a new trade in order to improve his work life. "It was heart breaking work while I was learning, and I shall never forget the pains and aches I suffered in my first shed," the Norwegian said when he was retired and shared his reminiscences after 55 years in Queensland. From the interview it is clear that Lawrence was

⁴⁹ Kjeldstadli 2008: 112-113 has a discussion of the same mechanisms in the context of post 1945 Norway.

⁵⁰ *The Longreach Leader*, 7 December 1938.

a competent and respected shearer; he had achieved a degree of success in his job. He was also married and well-established in Central West Queensland.

The career of Severin Berner Andreassen shows upward social mobility from sailor to land owner and politician. Others too followed a similar path through several different occupations gradually improving his outcome. Andreassen arrived in Sydney in the 1880s, possibly jumping ship. He cut sugar cane for a while before he came to the Logan River district south of Brisbane where he divided his attention between railway bridges and sawmills from 1885 to 1887. Later he and an associate bought a boat and turned their attention to *bêche-de-mer* (sea cucumber) fishing in North Queensland, a potentially lucrative business. However, in the early 1890s, Andreassen took up land in the Mowbray Valley just outside Port Douglas. With his wife and a growing number of children he started sugarcane farming, an industry which at the time was in its infancy in that district. Over the years he developed his property, but he involved himself in community matters: He served as a councillor for many years in the Douglas Shire Council and was mayor from 1927 to 1933.⁵¹

Not everyone succeeded. There are tales of bankrupt bakers and miners who gave up. The story of Harald Oscar Hein and his family shows that adapting to different working conditions by no means meant instant upward social mobility. Before migrating, Hein owned a farm in Ringerike, Norway. He was also an agronomist. Financial hardships due to failed crops led the family to sell their farm, and they were accepted as assisted migrants to Queensland in 1899. First they tried their luck at share-farming near Ipswich, but drought killed their crops and any hopes of success in agriculture. Hein worked as a farm labourer for a while, sleeping in outhouses and feeding on salt meat and dry bread. The family moved to Brisbane where the prospects were better. While their father took a job at the wharves, the two oldest daughters had to work as domestic servants and their mother Mathilde was a dressmaker. But things were looking up: Harald Hein later became a shopkeeper and a leader of the Norwegian community (see chapter 6), and a milestone was reached in 1915 when the family moved in to their own house Villa Trudvang.⁵²

3. USING FAMILY NETWORKS: Some of the Norwegians settled in, and found employment through, social networks that existed prior to departure, most notably family and kinship ties. In chapter 1 we introduced the concept of 'social capital' as a resource immigrants can draw

⁵¹ Interview with grandson Severin Berner Andreassen, 27 October 2010; "Mowbray Valley History" <http://www.douglas-shire-historical-society.org/mowbray.htm>, accessed 30 August 2011; *Cairns Post*, 17 August 1937.

⁵² Paulsen in Brändle and Karas (eds.) 1988: 132-146; Saxe 1914: 141; *Directory Queensland* 1904: 1263.

upon. Information about jobs is one such resource which is part of the social capital, according to Faist.⁵³ Once the pioneer migrants have settled those who follow can take advantage of their social capital. In Faist's analysis, this is linked to chain migration. Even in Queensland one could say that chain migration took place, albeit on a very small scale. Settled migrants, who had become naturalised, could nominate relatives and friends at home for cheap tickets to Queensland. In chapter 2 we noted that few 'brokers' existed who could act as middlemen between the newly arrived Norwegians and the Queensland society. While this holds true on a general, or shall we say public, level, some of the Norwegians could use 'brokers' by migrating through family related networks.

In chapter 2 we also mentioned the Klæstad family migration. A similar story can be illustrated by the Osmundsen/Olsen family. Iver Osmundsen (born 1840) from Skudneshavn came to Brisbane in 1883 with his son Nils (aged 16). Nils died of typhoid shortly after arrival. Iver, however, proceeded to Bloomfield in the far north of Queensland where he was granted a land selection. Two years after Iver's arrival his wife Anne and their five daughters aged between three and 15 disembarked in Queensland. Iver was already naturalised and could apply to have his family sent over as free nominated migrants.⁵⁴ Anne also travelled with her brother, Captain Olsen, his wife and their three daughters.⁵⁵

Borgen Johannessen from Kvæfjord in Troms county brought out his wife-to-be and other friends after he had established himself with his own farm. Johannessen arrived in Brisbane in 1900 on the *Oruba*, aged 23. He worked on sugar mills near Maryborough, and on an inland cattle station. In 1902 he was successful in a land ballot and purchased his own property at Leafdale near Wondai in the Burnett region.⁵⁶ Around 1909 Borgen Johannessen began nominating friends at home for migration. First he sponsored Karoline Sofie Karlsen and Johanna Amalia Nilsen, a nurse. Karoline may not have travelled, but Johanna definitely did: On 7 September 1910 she and Borgen married at the farm in Leafdale. Johanna's two sisters Margrethe Elise and Jendine Sofie also went to Australia. Borgen nominated two other friends too: Peder Nicolai Kristensen and Victor Pleym, both farmers who arrived in 1913.⁵⁷

Here our focus is employment. As such, networks could be helpful in three stages: Firstly, on the journey to Queensland in terms of exchange of information and resources

⁵³ Faist 1997: 199.

⁵⁴ Young 2007: 4.

⁵⁵ *Life on the Bloomfield*, by Millie Parsons (granddaughter of Anna and Iver O.), 1983, in Young 2007.

⁵⁶ Family history papers, courtesy of Joan Connor, a descendant, e-mail 27 December 2010.

⁵⁷ Copies of applications for nominated migration, found in Ulf Beijbom's research collection, Swedish Institute for Emigration. Also letter from Anne-Line Grimsbo, a relative of the descendants, 29 November 2010.

related to jobs. Secondly, some groups of families or friends settled close together after arrival in Queensland and may therefore have been able to draw upon each other's social capital – information about employment being the most relevant example in this context. Thirdly, and this is where the nominated passages re-enter the fray: In many cases, one or a few family members travelled first, then once the 'pioneers' were settled, the rest of the family would be sent for. In terms of employment, this could mean that the first family member(s) had jobs lined up for those who followed. Or at least they could help their relatives to navigate in the labour market and provide initial social safety beyond the government depots. Networks as a means of maintaining language and ethnic identity is another aspect, to which we shall return in chapter 6.

There is no statistical data available, but it seems the tendency was for a male member of the family to travel with one of the older children in the first heat and then for the wife, additional children and also in-laws to follow suit a year or two later. This is a common pattern in other migratory movements too. As discussed earlier in this chapter, men had much wider opportunities than women in terms of paid employment and status. Because Norwegian immigrants were permitted to naturalise immediately (see chapter 1), nomination could take place after a relatively short time, although it usually took a couple of years at least before relatives or friends arrived. As we have seen, it took time for a prospective farmer to reach a liveable income, and it seems the nominators wanted some degree of financial security before inviting their relatives. (No evidence has been found of legal requirements for the nominator to look after the nominated migrants after arrival in Queensland).

4. ENTERING HIGHER SOCIAL POSITIONS BASED ON PRIOR RESOURCES: A small group of Norwegians entered higher social strata more or less immediately upon arrival in Queensland. Fundamentally we are still dealing with social networks, but this group is worth isolating analytically because in contrast to men like Hein or Johannessen these immigrants did not have to start at the bottom as road builders or casual workers. They brought with them resources such as education, skills, knowledge or contacts which enabled them to quickly enter positions higher up in the social hierarchy. The elite among the Norwegian immigrants consisted of a small group of master mariners, businessmen, professionals and others who were well-connected to the economic and political rulers (diagram 4.3). Statistically they are almost invisible in the naturalisation records; some were listed as sea captains whereas others never changed their citizenship.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ None of the nine Archer brothers seems to have naturalised, at least not in Queensland.

In terms of making a living, the primary feature of this group is that most of the persons in question belonged to a small, but continuous network of Norwegians who helped each other settle in. In other words, they possessed a valuable social capital. Those who had access to this network could, typically through letters of recommendation, tap its resources and secure a safe start once they arrived. Davies, in her analysis of social mobility, argues that in colonial Queensland a network of family, friends and acquaintances was extremely advantageous because association with influential people through nepotism and patronage was vital for ambitious men who wished to obtain recognition or access opportunities.⁵⁹

“Are there any prominent Norwegians here?” Ludwig Saxe asked his fellow countrymen when he visited Brisbane.⁶⁰ According to Saxe they all pointed to the Archer family. Even though the family only migrated from Scotland to Norway in 1825, they had grown strong roots in their new Nordic homeland (see appendix 1). In Queensland, they owned large properties and were well-connected after their explorations in the 1840s and 1850s. In the process of establishing themselves ‘Down Under’ their Scottish background, including family and business links, was clearly helpful. Yet Archer family members who were either born in Norway or grew up there seem to have been at the pinnacle of a network which assisted quite a few Norwegians who came to Queensland. Two of the nine Archer brothers had influential public positions in Queensland at the time when many Norwegian immigrants arrived in the 1870s and 1880s. In an analysis of Queensland’s dominant social classes, Bill Thorpe links the Archers to some of the most powerful families in the colony.⁶¹ Archibald Archer (1820-1902) grew up in Larvik. He was a member of the Queensland Legislative Assembly 1867-1869 and 1879-1895, being colonial Treasurer and Minister for Education in 1882-1883.⁶² His younger brother Alexander (1828-1890) was born in Norway and trained in accounting and business management in Scotland. After moving to Australia he progressed to become manager of the Brisbane branch of the Bank of New South Wales where he remained in a leading position until his death.⁶³

The Archers were able to introduce other Norwegians to life in Queensland, both their own relatives and others. Alister and Cedric Archer were Larvik-born nephews of Archibald, Alexander and the other ‘pioneering’ brothers. These two young men migrated to Queensland

⁵⁹ Davies 2009: 299.

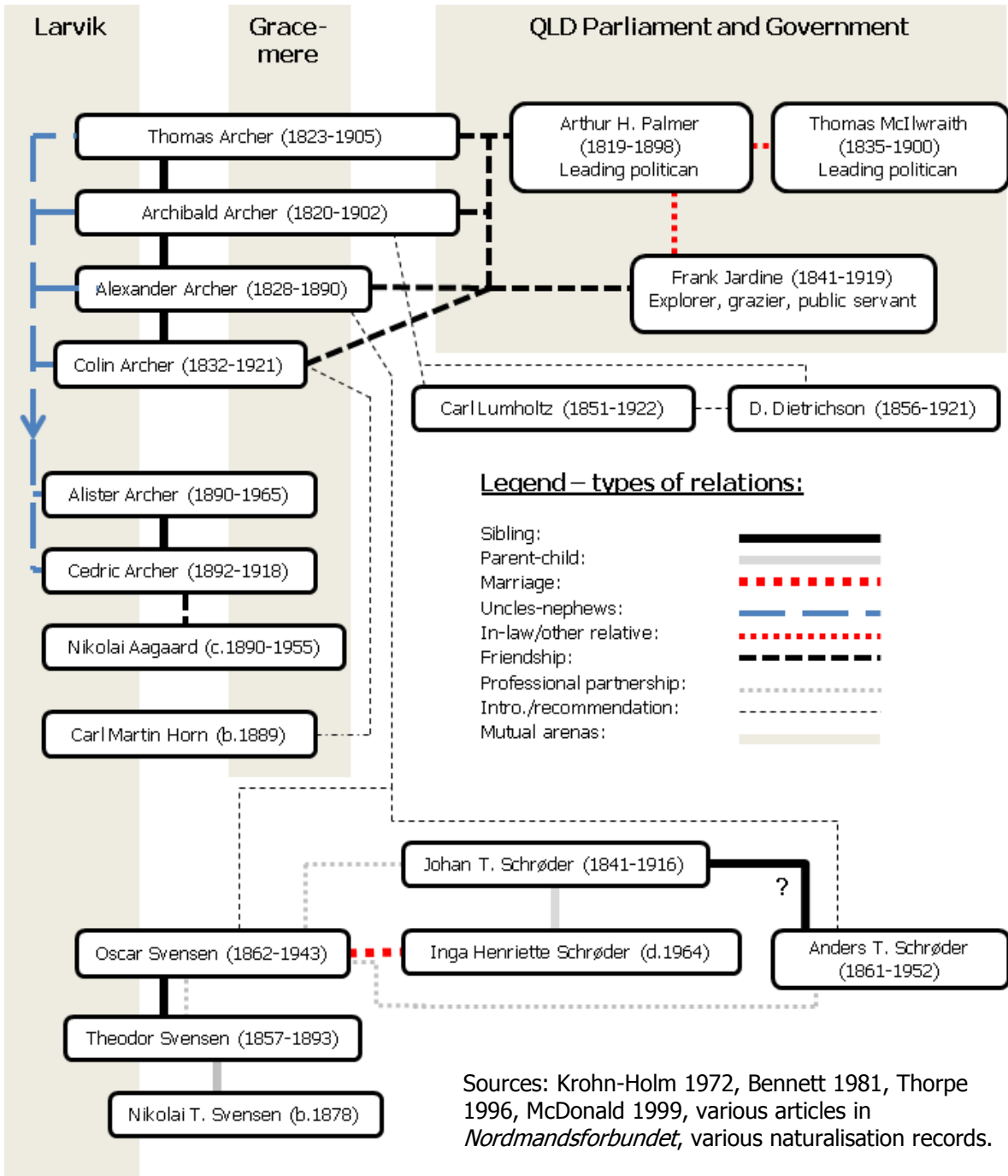
⁶⁰ Saxe 1914: 142. Original quote in Norwegian: “Fins her nogen norske storfolk?”

⁶¹ Thorpe 1996: 156-160.

⁶² “Archer, Archibald” by Mary O’Keeffe in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. Available online: <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/archer-archibald-2223>, accessed 30 August 2011.

⁶³ McDonald 1999: 198-211.

Figure 4.3. Sketch of network connections between selected Norwegians in Queensland and some other influential individuals



in the early 1900s and worked as stockmen on the family properties. So did their friend from Larvik, Nikolai Aagaard. All three took on British citizenship and fought in World War I. Cedric fell in France.⁶⁴ Cedric’s naturalisation process indicates the good relations the family had with leading politicians. When the young man wished to volunteer for the war in 1915, his boss and cousin, Robert Stubbs Archer, sent a letter to the local member of the federal

⁶⁴ McDonald 1999: 288-299.

House of Representatives, William G. Higgs, asking him openly to use his influence to "have the matter finalised without further delay". Higgs, one of the Labor Party's top dogs, promptly wrote two letters to the Department of External Affairs, requesting them to expedite the naturalisation. Cedric's application was approved within ten days of his taking the oath of allegiance.⁶⁵ In chapter 3 we saw how Carl Martin Horn secured a white-collar job at Gracemere based on recommendations from Colin Archer. Horn too used political lobbying to obtain British citizenship in order to enlist in 1917/1918. He got his British passport, but he apparently did not fight in the war.⁶⁶ Another relative was the farmer Johan Jørgensen who had access to financial capital to purchase a farm. These young men were in a very different position from most of the assisted migrants who disembarked in the 1870s, and who had to take whatever jobs they were offered while waiting in filthy and inadequate depots.

The influential Archer family sometimes acted as door-openers for Norwegians who were mere sojourners in Queensland. Carl Lumholtz stayed at Gracemere in 1880-1881 before undertaking his field work among Aborigines along the Herbert River. Violin player Mons Lie (son of author Jonas Lie), on a tour of Australia, came to Gracemere with a letter of recommendation in the late 1880s, but he received a rather stern reception, relates the *Norden* newspaper: "Archer had shortly before been led up the garden path by another Norwegian who had been introduced to him and had no desire to expose himself to such ingratitude once again."⁶⁷ Obviously, a helping hand from one of the Archers could be a valuable introduction to life in Queensland. David Dietrichson came to Brisbane in 1885 with a letter of recommendation from Carl Lumholtz to Archibald Archer. This contact seemed to have helped Dietrichson secure a position as assistant surveyor at the Surveyor-General's office. After passing a surveyor's exam Dietrichson later worked in many different places around Queensland, and was a partner for some years in the firm Pike, Dietrichson & Co in Brisbane, thus being one of the very few Norwegian professionals operating there.⁶⁸

After Archibald and Alexander Archer left the scene, the centre of gravity moved to the circle around Oscar Svensen. But he and his associates too, were helped by members of the Archer family. The life of Oscar Svensen (1862-1943) deserves a biography in itself (a sketch is given in appendix 2), but for our purposes we will focus our attention on his position

⁶⁵ Naturalisation papers, Cedric Archer, NAA ref. 15/12362, 15/11756.

⁶⁶ Naturalisation papers, Carl Martin Horn, NAA, 17/17137, 18/856.

⁶⁷ *Norden*, 9 September 1899. Original quote in Norwegian: "Archer var kort forinden blevet taget ordentlig ved Næsen af en anden Nordmand, der havde været introduceret til ham og havde ikke Lyst at udsætte sig for slig Utaknemlighed nok en Gang."

⁶⁸ Personal papers David Dietrichson, privately held. Also various listings in Pugh's Almanac 1886-1900.

within the Norwegian network. Svensen, like the Archer brothers, hailed from Larvik. Born into a seafaring family, he supposedly sailed to Australia in a spirit of adventure and arrived in Brisbane at the age of 21. Already as a young, newly arrived seaman, Oscar Svensen entered prominent circles. In Brisbane he met Alexander Archer, to whom Svensen had brought letters from Norway. Archer allegedly got Svensen a job on the new government yacht *Lucinda*. Working here, Svensen came into contact with several government ministers. Later, he was skipper on the passenger ferry between Brisbane and Kangaroo Point.⁶⁹

This was just the beginning of Svensen's ascendancy to becoming the most wealthy and influential Norwegian-born person in Brisbane in the early 1900s. The foundation was laid during two decades of trading, land dealings and plantation ownership in the Solomon Islands. The Solomon Islands business was initially undertaken in partnership with other Norwegians; Oscar's brother Theodor, who also lived in Brisbane with his family, and brothers Johannes and Solfren Nerdrum.⁷⁰ Again, associations between resourceful Norwegians were at play.

The Pacific ventures made Svensen very rich, and when he returned to settle with his family in Brisbane from 1907 he quickly became a highly respected member of society, socialising with top level people from business and politics.⁷¹ From 1910 onwards, the Brisbane papers printed regular reports from parties at the Svensens' large house, Norway, situated on top of Galloway's Hill overlooking the river.⁷² In 1918, Svensen was appointed Norwegian consul in Queensland, the first person in this position to be born in Norway.

Svensen's network comprised his extended family, all heavily dependent on shipping related business. In 1900, Oscar Svensen married Inga Henriette Schrøder, daughter of a former business partner, Captain Johan Terkelsen Schrøder (1841-1916) who probably was Svensen's cousin. Born in Kragerø, Norway, he came to Queensland in command of his own ship in 1888.⁷³ Moreover, Johan's close relative⁷⁴ Anders Terkelsen Schrøder (1861-1952) also did business with Oscar Svensen. For a while, Svensen and the Schrøders had a ship chandler business in Melbourne. Anders T. Schrøder (Schreuder in Australia) was a sea captain too and well educated. Moreover, he also travelled to Australia with a letter of introduction to Alexander Archer, and it was in Brisbane Schrøder and Svensen met and

⁶⁹ Fox 1923, III: 802-803.

⁷⁰ Bennett 1981: 170-189.

⁷¹ *ibid.* Also *Nordmandsforbundet* 1910: 492-494; *The Brisbane Courier*, 22 January 1896.

⁷² See for example *The Brisbane Courier*, 23 September 1910.

⁷³ *The Brisbane Courier*, 22 May 1916; *Nordmandsforbundet* 1910: 492-494.

⁷⁴ Johan and Anders may well have been brothers, but no definite evidence has been found verifying that.

became friends. Anders settled in Melbourne where he became a wealthy man and a leading figure in a network of Norwegian merchants similar to, but larger, than the one in Brisbane.⁷⁵

5. FALLING OUT OF SOCIETY: Migration was not always a gateway to wealth and success. So far we have worked our way up the steps to ascending positions in terms of permanency in settlement, economic security and social status. This last perspective, however, is meant to cover the opposite. For a variety of reasons, some Norwegians fell out of mainstream, respectable society. Here we will highlight three areas: Poverty and illness, suicide and criminal behaviour.

Poverty and illness: Queensland was a place for development, and those who did not succeed tended to be overlooked, ignored, shunned or isolated, writes historian William Ross Johnston.⁷⁶ Some Norwegians ended up as vagrants. In 1891 Charles Christensen was charged with having “no lawful means of support”. Evidence given suggested that for the past months he had “lived in houses of ill-repute, and did nothing for an honest livelihood”.⁷⁷ Many Norwegians had problems providing for themselves in old age. It has been suggested that one in two Scandinavians in Australia had their funeral paid for by the council because they did not leave behind any descendants or financial means.⁷⁸ For some of the destitute old people, The Dunwich Benevolent Asylum on Peel Island in Moreton Bay was the last resort. Dunwich was a dumping ground for unwanted burdens on society like the blind, mentally deficient, terminally ill, or tuberculosis and leprosy patients.⁷⁹ Typical of the Norwegian patients was John Svensen. Born in Fredrikstad in 1840, he arrived in Brisbane in 1889. He lived a rather mobile life as a farm labourer, but never married or had children. At the age of 68 he resided at Dunwich.⁸⁰ In the 1890s, when the newspapers regularly published reports from the asylum, between six and nine inmates were usually Norwegians, in an institution that could accommodate more than 800 people.⁸¹ Some of them died there.⁸² Also, institutions called ‘asylums for the insane’, existed at Goodna, Ipswich and Toowoomba. A report to the authorities in 1895 suggested that 65 Swedish-Norwegian persons had been admitted to these hospitals since 1 January 1869.⁸³

⁷⁵ *Nordmandsforbundet* 1922: 419-422.

⁷⁶ Ross Johnston 1988: 457.

⁷⁷ *The Brisbane Courier*, 31 March 1891.

⁷⁸ *Norden*, 29 July 1899.

⁷⁹ Goodall 1992. Abstract available online: <http://espace.library.uq.edu.au/view/UQ:190037>.

⁸⁰ Naturalisation papers John Svensen, NAA, ref. 08/5742.

⁸¹ *Queenslander*, 12 October 1895; *The Brisbane Courier*, 27 June 1896; *The Brisbane Courier*, 23 June 1899.

⁸² *The Brisbane Courier*, 28 January 1897; *The Brisbane Courier*, 4 February 1897; and others.

⁸³ *The Brisbane Courier*, 14 October 1895.

With few personal accounts available, it is difficult to analyse the individual causes of misery. However, a general explanation should be sought in the fact that half of the Norwegian men never married (see chapter 6) and thus lacked a family in Queensland to support them when they could no longer make a living. As already mentioned many men had a short-term perspective concerning money. Cash was often spent as soon as it was earned, and this applied to sailors as well as land based workers. The sort of rambling life discussed above could end in poverty when the capacity to earn an income was exhausted. In addition, heavy drinking was widespread.

Suicide: Isolation and loneliness due to the lack of a social network or because of a solitary life in the bush, was a reason why men sometimes dropped out. On a few occasions lives ended in suicide, although Norwegians were hardly overrepresented compared to the general population: Of 2401 suicides between 1890 and 1940, only three were definitely Norwegians.⁸⁴ The story of Henry Thompson may well illustrate how some Norsemen ended their lives: With no money, no relations and no permanent residence he hung himself from a fence post at Bungil Creek near Roma on 4 February 1914, aged 84. According to a witness, Thompson had said: “I am no use to myself or any other person in the world, I am too old”.⁸⁵ In his history of North Queensland, Bolton argues that living in the more remote areas was psychologically challenging with the constant pressure that comes from loneliness, monotony, and rough climatic conditions. Those who lived there had to remain masters of their own environment and not ‘let themselves go’. Otherwise, alcohol abuse and occasionally suicide could be the result.⁸⁶

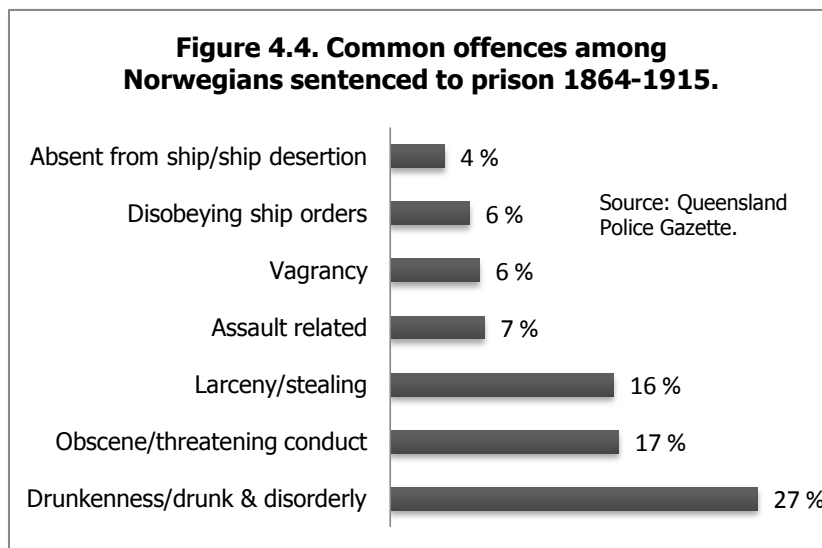
Furthermore, a bad season could ruin a farmer’s life and mining was “the world’s worst lottery”. Carl August ‘Charlie’ Klæstad - son of Lars Klæstad, the miner in Charters Towers - followed in his father’s footsteps; not only work-wise but also by being physically destroyed by his profession. At the turn of the year 1890-1891 he was searching for gold at the Grasstree diggings near Mackay. Living in a tent by himself, out of work, and prone to drinking, he committed suicide on the night of 4 January 1891. At the inquest after his death, the medical practitioner stated in his oath:

I last saw him alive on Sunday 4th January [...] he complained of something and I found it to be nervous prostration – I found deceased was in a very low state through drink and he appeared to have something on his mind [...] the following morning I went to deceased’s tent about 8 or 9 o’clock and found him suspended by a neck to a rope attached to the ridgepole of his tent – dead ...

⁸⁴ Personal communication with Dr. Jonathan Richards. Based on his research into inquest papers.

⁸⁵ Inquest into the suicide of Henry Thompson, QSA, JUS/N546.

⁸⁶ Bolton 1972: 107.



Carl August Klæstad had no property of any value when he died.⁸⁷

Criminal offences:

Many Norwegians broke the norms of mainstream society. 150 Norwegian-born persons were sent to prison in Queensland between 1864 and 1915.

Most offences were minor and very few were sentenced for serious acts of crime (figure 4.4). Drunkenness was by far the most common charge throughout the period, in a society where pubs easily outnumbered churches. Sentences varied from three days up to one month’s incarceration. A typical incident was probably the day when Neil Berres from Norway was out drinking with a fellow countryman and a woman in the European Hotel in Brisbane. Later they went to another place which Berres was too drunk to remember. Berres was charged with stealing a purse containing £2 8s. 3d. from the other Norwegian, but neither of them could actually point out where the purse was allegedly stolen, and Berres was released.⁸⁸

The registers of prisoners published in the *Queensland Police Gazette* throughout the period indicate that the majority of Norwegian offenders were sailors. The police duly noted any physical characteristics the inmates had, and more than half of the Norwegian prisoners boasted tattoos. Images of anchors, crosses, women, flags and inscriptions such as “Faith, Hope, and Charity” tell their tales about a life at sea. Some of these sailors only spent a short time in Queensland. As such they were not immigrants. However, every fifth (more than 30 out of 150) Norwegian who was imprisoned was a serial offender; i.e. jailed more than once. Some had short and intensive ‘careers’, others ran into trouble with the law at various times over longer periods, thus indicating long-time residency in Queensland (see also appendix 4).

A full comparison of criminal behaviour among the different nationalities in Queensland has not been possible within the limits of this project. However, the significant number of Norwegians who served prison sentences suggests that there was an unruly element among the Norsemen, particularly among sailors, in stark contrast to the family-oriented settlers. Trouble seems to have started during extended drinking sessions at the pubs and

⁸⁷ *Modified Register for Michael Larsen*, family papers, including copy of inquest papers.

⁸⁸ *The Brisbane Courier*, 10 March 1887.

hotels in Brisbane and other port towns as well as in the bush. This was a general pattern: There was a rough-and-ready masculinism among the many unmarried men in Queensland. The myth of mateship could sometimes turn wild, intolerant and threatening, according to Raymond Evans; with hard drinking, profanity, disorderliness, and predatory sexuality.⁸⁹

A handful of Norwegian women too spent time in Queensland's prisons prior to 1915. The charges were obscene language, larceny, assault, indecent exposure, breach of contagious diseases act, drunkenness and vagrancy. Anne (Annie) Tighe, served seven prison terms between 1880 and 1891. In the booming gold mining town of Charters Towers in the first half of the 1880s she was sentenced to jail on five occasions; three times for larceny, once for threatening language and once for vagrancy.⁹⁰ Unfortunately we know little about these women, and one can only speculate about their situation, but it seems fair to suggest that some women lived on the edge of 'drunken masculinity' as prostitutes and in other roles. In colonial Queensland women were generally positioned as second-class citizens subject to male dominance, sometimes violent.⁹¹ Among the several hundred Norwegian women who came to Queensland, successful marriage was indeed not the only 'career'.

Conclusion

Making a living is the title of this chapter. Towards the end we have applied a liberal interpretation of the concept having discussed phenomena such as crime and suicide. However, it all comes together in what has been the main point here: To show the variety of ways in which the Norwegians participated in the economic sphere, broadly speaking. The overwhelming majority of Norwegians in Queensland prior to 1914 were labourers, farmers, and sailors and thus occupying the lower end of the social spectrum. Many of the individuals presented in this chapter were fairly successful, but we must not forget the 'silent majority' who never wrote letters or were interviewed by journalists and whose situation is difficult to assess. And there was a different story too: Of those rambling sailors, workers and miners, living their restless lives, looking for the next adventure (or at least payday), and every so often running into trouble.

⁸⁹ Evans 2007: 127.

⁹⁰ H.M. Gaol Townsville, description book 1878-1889, QSA. According to the prison register, Anne Tighe was born in Norway (ca. 1856) and arrived on the *Humboldt* in 1871. However, that ship did not sail to Queensland in 1871. There is no record of an Anne Tighe on any of the Hamburg ships. Like many others, she could have anglicised her name. A person named Annie Tighe died in Queensland in 1891. Age of the deceased suggests it is the same individual. According to the death records, Tighe was born in Denmark (QLD BDM, ref. 1891/C3912), however she was listed as Norwegian every time she was sentenced to prison.

⁹¹ Evans 2007: 126-127.

5 – The Norwegian settlement

“‘WHY, ARE YOU NORWEGIAN?’ he asked with the usual coolness of a sailor; ‘I am also from Christiania and the captain yonder is from Horten’ he added, in a genuine broad Christiania dialect ...”¹ When Norwegian scientist Carl Lumholtz visited Queensland in the 1880s he met several fellow countrymen, as shown by this short encounter at the docks of Townsville. By that time many Norwegians had already established themselves in the Antipodes.

In this chapter we closely examine the patterns of Norwegian settlement in Queensland in terms of size, shape and content. Firstly, what was the size of the Norwegian population in Queensland at various times between 1870 and 1914, and what changes took place during that period? Secondly, what shape did the settlement take, i.e. where did the Norwegians live? Finally, what characterised the settlements and how did they fit into the larger context of contemporary Queensland? This last topic will be discussed through case analyses of the most significant Norwegian communities.

General overview: size, age and sex distribution

WHEN THE Norwegian population peaked in the 1880s, in relative terms, only about one in every 500 inhabitants in the colony was born in Norway. We could easily end this chapter here and conclude that the presence of Norwegian immigrants in Queensland was negligible. However, that would not only be contrary to the purpose of this thesis, it would also dismiss the fact that Norwegians together with their Scandinavian neighbours constituted the second-largest non-British European immigrant group before Federation in 1901. Moreover, many of the Norwegians did congregate in relatively considerable numbers in a handful of places, and these small settlements constitute interesting objects of study.

In the 1881 census, the Norwegian-born numbered 442 persons and constituted 0.21 per cent of the colony’s population (tables 5.1 and 5.2). The census was taken eight to ten years after the relatively large influx of Norwegian assisted migrants in the first half of the 1870s. A generation later, in the 1911 census, the number of Norwegians had increased to 685. However, due to a strong population growth in Queensland as a whole, the relative proportion stood at only 0.11 per cent. The absolute number of Norwegians seems to have peaked at about 850 in 1901. However we do not have an exact number because, as noted in chapter 1, Norwegians and Swedes were counted together in the three censuses of 1886, 1891 and 1901 thus making it difficult to paint a precise picture of the Norwegian population during these years. Table 5.1 shows that the Germans were the largest non-British group in Queensland. The table also shows the considerable influx of Asians and Pacific Islanders (see

¹ Lumholtz 1889: 67.

also chapter 6). The Aboriginal people were not included in population tables from the period. In terms of Scandinavian immigrants, Danes were much more numerous than both Swedes and Norwegians. From 1871 to 1911 Queensland had about four Danes to every Norwegian, explained by a much larger migration via Hamburg in the 1870s. Hamburg is closer to Denmark than to Norway of course, and more than seven times as many Danes as Norwegians travelled to Queensland on the German ships.

Table 5.1. Country of birth, selected countries, QLD censuses 1871-1911. Absolute numbers

	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911
England and Wales	26,296	37,390	77,187	68,589	67,886
Scotland	8,564	9,929	22,400	19,934	20,530
Ireland	20,972	28,295	43,036	37,636	31,599
Germany	8,317	11,638	14,910	13,163	11,979
Denmark	554	2,223	3,071	3,158	2,641
Norway	119	442	782*	857*	685
Sweden	253	583	1,173*	1,285*	1,054
China and Japan	3,305	11,264	8,603	n/a	n/a
China	n/a	n/a	n/a	8,472	5,473
Japan	n/a	n/a	n/a	2,257	1,452
Pacific Islands	2,336	6,396	9,338	8,809	1,002
Total population QLD	120,104	213,525	393,718	498,129	605,813

Sources: Census data 1871-1901 in Historical Census and Colonial Data Archive; Commonwealth Census 1911; Australian Bureau of Statistics. *The Norwegian-born population in 1891 and 1901 has been estimated. In these two censuses Swedes and Norwegians were grouped together, as described in chapter 1. By comparing previous and later censuses, it is reasonable to stipulate that for every ten Swedish-Norwegians, four were born in Norway and six came from Sweden. The Swedish-to-Norwegian ratio was as follows: 1871, 32 per cent Norwegians; 1881, 43 per cent Norwegians; 1911, 39 per cent Norwegians.

Table 5.2. Country of birth, selected countries, QLD censuses 1871-1911. Relative numbers

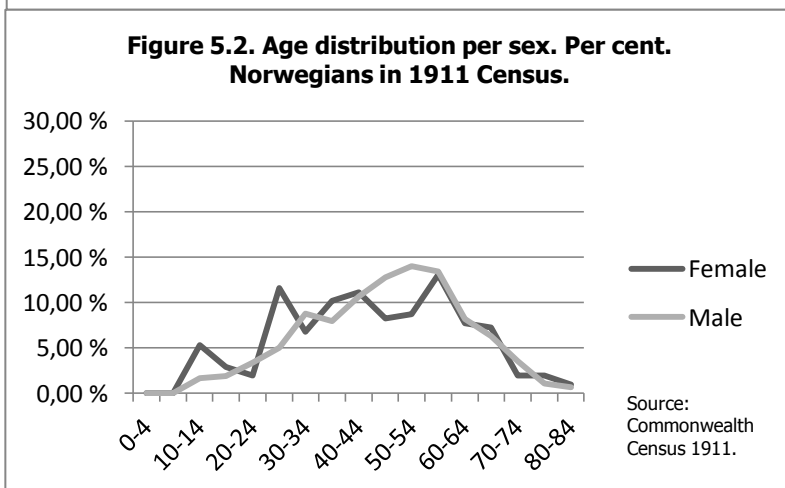
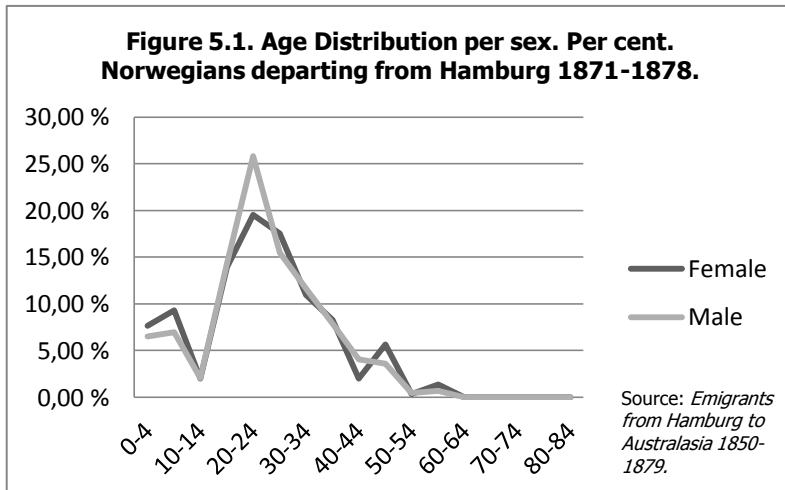
	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911
England and Wales	21.89 %	17.51 %	19.60 %	13.77 %	11.21 %
Scotland	7.13 %	4.65 %	5.69 %	4.00 %	3.39 %
Ireland	17.46 %	13.25 %	10.93 %	7.56 %	5.22 %
Germany	6.92 %	5.45 %	3.79 %	2.64 %	1.98 %
Denmark	0.46 %	1.04 %	0.78 %	0.63 %	0.44 %
Norway	0.10 %	0.21 %	0.20 %*	0.17 %*	0.11 %
Sweden	0.21 %	0.27 %	0.30 %*	0.26 %*	0.17 %
China and Japan	2.75 %	5.28 %	2.19 %	n/a	n/a
China	n/a	n/a	n/a	1.70 %	0.90 %
Japan	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.45 %	0.24 %
Pacific Islands	1.94 %	3.00 %	2.37 %	1.77 %	0.17 %
Total population QLD	100.00 %	100.00 %	100.00 %	100.00 %	100.00 %

Source: See table 5.1.

Sex and age distribution

There was an uneven sex distribution among the Norwegians who settled in Queensland. Data are not always available, but the 1911 Commonwealth census showed 30 per cent women and 70 per cent men among the Norwegian-born in Queensland. In the state's population as a whole, women accounted for 46 per cent and men 54 per cent.

On the other hand, from a Norwegian point of view, Queensland actually had a more even sex distribution than the rest of Australia. The ratio for Norwegians in Australia as a whole was 12 per cent women and 88 per cent men.² Generally, the Norwegian migration to Australia was heavily dominated by men, particularly sailors. The fact that Queensland attracted relatively more women can be explained by assisted migration. As mentioned in chapter 3, 40 per cent of the Norwegian migrants who travelled via Hamburg in the 1870s



were female, more than 300 in all, and predominately young.³ Those who settled in Queensland for good would affect the sex distribution for many years to come.

Moving on to age structure, the available data shows clearly how the number of first generation Norwegians in Queensland diminished as the immigrants from the 1870s grew older and newcomers became more and more rare in the early 1900s. This is best illustrated by comparing the age structure of those who sailed from Hamburg 1871 to 1878

with the age distribution in the 1911 census (figures 5.1 and 5.2).⁴ The ones who came in the 1870s were young, with an emphasis on people in their 20s, who fulfilled the conditions of the government migration program. 41 per cent of the men and 37 per cent of the women were aged between 20 and 29 when they left Hamburg for Queensland. Moreover, seven out of ten were under the age of 30. Migrants older than 50 could be counted on two hands.⁵

One generation down the road the picture was markedly different, as shown in the 1911 census. For starters, the peak of the curve was now in the 50s bracket. 47 per cent of

² Australian Historical Population Statistics, Country of Birth, ABS, 2008. www.abs.gov.au, retr. 4 April 2011.

³ *Emigrants from Hamburg to Australasia 1850-1879.*

⁴ Prior to 1914, the 1911 Census is the only census where such data is given.

⁵ *Emigrants from Hamburg to Australasia 1850-1879.*

males and 42 per cent of women were above the age of 50, reflecting an enormous change in the age distribution: The migrants who arrived in the 1870s and 1880s had aged. Whereas growing old is inevitable, another significant feature of the age curve in 1911 was the complete absence of children. There were no Norwegian-born children under the age of ten. Altogether, the proportion of young people under 30 had decreased to 12 per cent among men and 22 per cent among women (and half of these were 25 or older). Adding to this picture, statistics from the 1911 census also show that approximately 70 per cent of the Norwegians had resided in Australia for 20 years or more.⁶ These data clearly show how the influx of young immigrants from Norway ceased after the turn of the century. There was little fresh blood, and consequently the Norwegian-born settlement in Queensland grew older and older.

Overview of the Norwegian settlement pattern

AT THIS POINT it should be quite clear that the Norwegians were spread all over Queensland, as shown by table 5.3 (next page). However, most people lived along the coastal belt from Brisbane to Cooktown, in the Darling Downs or on the North Queensland gold fields. Brisbane was the main port of entry, but as seen in chapter 3, a considerable number of immigrants arrived in the other ports along the Queensland coast. These coastal towns were distribution points from where the immigrants ventured further on their journey to settlement. At times, considerable numbers of Norwegians lived in these towns, particularly in Brisbane, of course, but also in Townsville which probably had around 90 inhabitants from Norway in 1901. Naturalisation records and individual stories also indicate that a great number stayed in the coastal towns at some point in their 'career' as Queensland immigrants. Some left Queensland altogether for supposedly greener pastures in New South Wales and Victoria.⁷

Table 5.3 also indicates that the capital Brisbane was the main centre for the Norwegian population. Further afield, there were Norwegians thinly spread all over the southern part of Queensland with a dozen or two each living in important towns such as Maryborough, Bundaberg and Rockhampton, typically as craftspeople and sailors. Near Warwick (census districts Warwick and Darling Downs East) many farmers made homes for themselves in a small area. Similar developments took place in the Burnett district in the early 1900s. Further north, Mackay had a comparatively large Norwegian population in the 1880s mainly doing farm labouring. (*Continues on page 82*).

⁶ The Commonwealth Census of 1911, Birthplaces, I: 114-155, II: 105-385.

⁷ A discussion of 'the long road to settlement' is provided in Appendix 4.

Table 5.3. Norwegian-born in Queensland Census Districts 1871-1911

	1871	1881	1891 (est.)	1901 (est.)	1911	Remarks
Brisbane						
Brisbane N	30	54	120	115	27	Only Bris. bef. 1911.
Brisbane S					47	
Nundah					7	From 1901.
Enoggera					11	From 1891.
Toowong					2	From 1891.
Oxley	8	12	26	21	11	
SUBTOTAL	38	66	159	157	107	
South East						
Moreton East	8	9	24	22	27	
Moreton West	1	8	14	16	13	
Ipswich	4	2	3	8	4	
Logan	6	5	4	6	4	
Fassifern	0	0	0	0	0	
Stanley	1	1	1	4	4	
Carboottle	8	18	37	27	19	
Highfields	1	1	1	8	3	
SUBTOTAL	28	43	84	91	74	
Darling Downs						
D. Downs Central	6	3	3	10	5	
D. Downs East	1	2	36	43	30	
D. Downs North	1	3	1	7	8	
D. Downs West	0	1	2	1	4	
Toowoomba	1	5	8	17	18	
Warwick	1	2	10	5	2	
Stanthorpe	1	1	0	2	1	
Delby	2	0	0	1	1	
SUBTOTAL	12	17	60	86	69	
Wide Bay-Burnett						
Gympie	7	5	5	8	6	
Tiaro	11	7	7	7	0	
Maryborough	2	19	14	18	8	
Wide Bay	0	10	12	20	18	
Burnett	0	1	5	14	41	
Bundaberg	9	9	23	27	23	
SUBTOTAL	9	55	66	94	96	
Fitzroy						
Gladstone	1	3	16	14	11	
Leichardt	0	1	20	5	4	
Taroom	1	0	0	1	2	
Springure	0	3	4	7	5	
Peak Downs	3	0	1	0	1	
Rockhampton	3	11	12	15	6	
Mount Morgan	4	16	22	25	25	
Westwood	4	16	22	25	25	
SUBTOTAL	12	34	75	84	70	
Mackay						
St. Lawrence	1	1	1	3	1	
Mackay	2	57	32	30	24	
Bowen	1	12	17	11	8	
Clermont	3	9	8	8	6	
SUBTOTAL	7	79	60	56	39	
Northern						
Townsville	1	42	55	89	46	
Kennedy	8	45	68	59	39	Incl. Kennedy N and S 1871.
Cardwell	0	5	5	4	5	
SUBTOTAL	9	92	128	152	90	
Far North						
Gilbert	1					Only 1871, later Etheridge.
Carins						Part of Cook -1881.
Herberton						Part of Cook -1881.
Etheridge						From 1881.
Chillagoe						Woothakata -1901.
Cook	0	3	26	11	13	From 1881.
Palmer						From 1881.
Somerses						From 1881.
SUBTOTAL	1	15	66	78	84	
North West						
Burke	0	7	52	2	3	Part of Burke -1891.
Croydon						Part of Burke -1881.
Glencurry						Part of Burke -1881.
Hughenden						Part of Burke -1881.
SUBTOTAL	0	7	56	30	10	
Central West						
Marathon						1881-1901.
Boulia						Part of Marathon 1881-1901.
Winton						Part of Marathon 1881-1901.
Aramac						From 1881.
Blackall						From 1881.
Diamantina						From 1881.
SUBTOTAL	0	16	19	15	17	
South West						
Mitchell	1					Only 1871
Warrego	1	0	0	0	0	
Charleville						From 1881.
Cumnamulla						From 1881.
Belonne	0	9	1	4	5	
Maranoa	1	5	2	2	3	
Tambo						1891 only.
SUBTOTAL	3	18	9	14	14	
Shipping						
						1911 only.
TOTAL QLD	119	442	782 (est.)	857 (est.)	685	

Sources: Census data 1871-1901 in Historical Census and Colonial Data Archive; Commonwealth Census 1911. Censuses 1876 and 1886 are not included in the table. District borders changed as new districts were subdivided.

Note on estimates: The Norwegian population for 1891 and 1901 is estimated for each census district by using the district's average Norwegian:Swedish ratio from the 1881 and 1911 censuses. Where these data have not been available, the average district ratio from the 1911 census has been applied. If no such data was available either, the total average ratio for Qld is based on average Swedish:Norwegian ratio for Qld as a whole. The district and regional estimates have been adjusted up or down one or two persons where necessary to make the subtotals add up with the total estimated population.

(Continued from page 80). In fact, no other district in Queensland ever had a higher proportion of Norwegian inhabitants than Mackay at the time of the 1881 census (table 5.4). Moving up the coast, starting from Townsville there was a comparatively strong Norwegian presence in many parts of North Queensland as this region gradually opened up to European settlement from the 1870s. Many people found their way to the Kennedy district, including the gold mining towns of Charters Towers and nearby Ravenswood. The same goes for other gold fields, particularly Croydon (census district of Burke in 1891) during the short-lived rush there. Finally, the vast interior (Central West, South West) was very sparsely populated by Norwegians, or indeed by anyone.

Table 5.4. Census districts with highest proportion of Norwegian-born inhabitants

District	Ratio
Mackay	0.98 %
Townsville	0.82 %
Bowen	0.78 %
Kennedy	0.62 %
Burke	0.56 %
Wide Bay	0.55 %
Tiaro	0.52 %

Source: Queensland census 1881.

After the relative peak of the Norwegian population in 1881, at 0.21 per cent of the Queensland total, the general trend was declining in terms of proportion. However, two regions actually saw a relative increase in its Norwegian-born population: The Darling Downs and the Far North. The first case can be attributed to the aforementioned farmers around Warwick. In the Downs as a whole the proportion of Norwegians rose from 0.05 per cent to

Table 5.5. Population of Norwegian-born in Queensland's regions 1871,1881, 1911. Relative numbers

	1871	1881	1911
Brisbane	0.16 %	0.16 %	0.08 %
South East	0.11 %	0.11 %	0.07 %
Darling Downs	0.06 %	0.05 %	0.09 %
Wide Bay-Burnett	0.05 %	0.19 %	0.13 %
Fitzroy	0.09 %	0.20 %	0.13 %
Mackay (region)	0.11 %	0.58 %	0.16 %
Northern	0.16 %	0.68 %	0.19 %
Far North	0.08 %	0.12 %	0.23 %
North West	0.00 %	0.56 %	0.11 %
Central West	0.00 %	0.32 %	0.10 %
South West	0.06 %	0.20 %	0.06 %
Total	0.10 %	0.21 %	0.11 %

Source: See table 5.1.

0.09 per cent from 1881 to 1911, but in the district of Darling Downs East it stood at 0.26 per cent in the latter year. Moving on to the Far Northern region, the proportion jumped from 0.11 per cent to 0.23 per cent. In real numbers the Norwegians increased from 15 to 84 over a 30 year spell from 1881, spread all over the region. The 'pull of the far north' included construction work and mining as well as shipping opportunities in Cooktown and Cairns, the latter a growing town throughout the period.

Koivukangas uses the term ‘infiltration settlement’, meaning that Scandinavians were thinly distributed all over Australia with very few areas of high ethnic concentration.⁸ While this indeed is a valid point in terms of the Norwegian population in Queensland, the available data also indicates the existence of a handful of clusters where a number of Norwegian families and individuals lived close to each other. Such clusters were found in some of the places already mentioned: the farming districts east of Warwick, in Mackay, and on some of the northern goldfields. Several of the most significant Norwegian settlements can be deduced by the census data presented in the tables here. But not always, as is the case with the small Norwegian-Scandinavian communities on the Herbert and Bloomfield rivers in the north and the far north respectively. We may use the term ‘micro-settlement’ to describe a locality where a few Norwegians lived close together and maintained close interaction through being neighbours, and by common activities and marriage links. The communities on the Herbert and the Bloomfield are examples of this and will be analysed more closely later in the chapter.

Case studies of specific Norwegian settlements

MANY OF THE most concentrated and localised Norwegian settlements highlight major issues in Queensland history in the colonial and early Federation period. In the forthcoming analysis we will discuss six Norwegian settlements within the context of different aspects of contemporary Queensland history: The Norwegians in Brisbane will be examined in terms of social stratification, which was most elaborate in the capital city. The group of farmers who settled near Warwick can be seen as an expression of Queensland’s vision of closer agricultural settlement. In Mackay, Norwegians on the sugarcane fields did their work within a changing sugar industry tied closely to the debate over the ‘labour question’. Norwegians on the Herbert River also reflected the changing sugar industry. The gold rushes in the north are an important part of Queensland’s history and a story where Norwegians played their part. Finally, isolated communities on the Bloomfield River in the far north highlight life on the frontier and white-Aboriginal contact.

Brisbane and the South East

The Brisbane area was the part of Queensland with the largest number of Norwegians. Despite the colonial government’s scepticism towards urban life, by the 1890s Australia was more urbanised than any other continent and Brisbane was by far the most populous city in Queensland. During the 1880s, the total population almost trebled.⁹ The number of Norwegians increased greatly too, as seen in table 5.6.

⁸ Koivukangas 1974: VI

⁹ Lawson 1973: 3-6.

Table 5.6. Norwegians in Brisbane and South East Queensland 1871-1911

	1871	1881	1891 (est.)	1901 (est.)	1911
Brisbane	38	66	159	157	107
Rest of SE Qld	28	43	84	91	74
Total Norwegian	66	109	243	248	181
Total population	49,330	80,932	164,461	194,554	237,071

Source: See table 5.1.

Brisbane was the port of call for a large proportion of the assisted Norwegian migrants in the 1870s. But many subsequently moved on. When census was taken in 1 September 1871, 38 Norwegians lived in Brisbane.¹⁰ Most of these people must have arrived on the immigrant ship *Friedeburg* from Hamburg, which anchored in Moreton Bay on 11 August 1871 carrying 87 Norwegian immigrants.¹¹ Consequently, if the head count done three weeks later is correct many of the ‘new chums’ had quickly ventured into the surrounding region or further afield. Also during the following year, when Norwegian arrivals peaked, many of the immigrants left Brisbane, according to *Norden*, presumably to take up work or land elsewhere.¹² Later, around the turn of the century, most of the Norwegians who travelled on assisted passages seem to have disembarked in Brisbane. Moreover, a large share of the discharged and deserted seamen also left their ships here. Yet again the influx of several hundred Norwegians was not absorbed by the city itself; many moved on, a fact which highlights Brisbane’s function as an arrival and distribution point for Norwegian immigrants. The city nevertheless housed the largest Norwegian settlement in Queensland, counting probably 150-160 persons during the peak from around 1890 until sometime after the turn of the century. Yet the men and women from Norway constituted only a tiny minority in a city which had quickly grown to a settlement of almost 90,000.

Due to Brisbane’s comparatively large population the city was characterised by a more elaborate division of labour than elsewhere in Queensland. This occupational diversity was the chief source of the city’s heterogeneity, according to an urban history written by Ronald Lawson.¹³ Also within the small Norwegian group a hierarchy seems to have existed. Such social stratification was also known from much larger Norwegian settlements in North American cities like Chicago.¹⁴ In Brisbane, graziers, leading businessmen and widely respected professionals occupied the highest status.¹⁵ As seen through the network analysis of the Archer and Svensen families in the previous chapter, a few Norwegians held high status

¹⁰ *Queensland Census of 1871*. Census districts of Brisbane and Oxley.

¹¹ Kopittke 2000: 18.

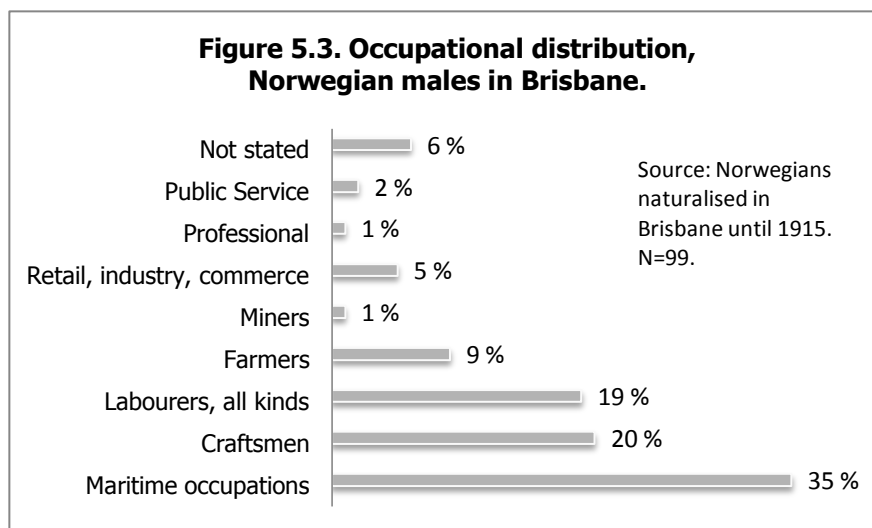
¹² *Norden*, 3 Nov-1 Dec 1900.

¹³ Lawson 1973: 44.

¹⁴ Lovoll 2006: 90.

¹⁵ Lawson 1973: 61.

positions. “The homes of the elite crowned the hills” of Brisbane, writes Lawson.¹⁶ Oscar Svensen’s Villa Norway was such an abode; a large house resting on top of Galloway’s Hill as a local landmark overlooking the Brisbane River.



However, the majority of Norwegians were found in lower status groups. Interestingly, the Norwegians in Brisbane had a different occupational distribution from their countrymen in Queensland as a whole

(figure 5.3, see also figure 4.1). The high number of seamen is a reflection of the fact that Brisbane had the largest port in Queensland. Moreover, being an artisan or a tradesman was more common in urban Brisbane whereas few were farmers in the growing city. Those farmers who became naturalised in Brisbane did so before 1890 *or* they lived on the outskirts of the urban sprawl. The fact that not even the capital Brisbane, a centre for commerce and government, had many Norwegian professionals or public servants underlines the point raised in chapter 4 about the proletarian character of the immigrant group.

According to Lawson there was a continuum of status positions downwards from the elite. Lesser professionals, manufacturers, smaller merchants, managers and executives constituted the middle class with one-man shop keepers at the lower end. We should also add the master mariners to the middle class. In an article from 1896, Jens Lyng lists captains Karl A. Berg and Johan T. Schrøder among leading Scandinavians in Brisbane.¹⁷ Until the 1880s Brisbane had quite good opportunities for upward social mobility because the population and the economy were still expanding rapidly. Then, during the depression of the 90s, a reduced intake of immigrants and the economic crisis made social climbing more difficult.¹⁸ Thorger Ekelund was one of the Norwegians who ascended into a good position. Born in Sandefjord he learned to speak a little English on his voyage to Australia as a 19 year old in 1885. In Brisbane he took up work as a boot finisher in a factory in the Fortitude Valley. After some years he and his workmate, a Dane by the name Christensen, established a shoe making

¹⁶ Lawson 1973: 103.

¹⁷ *Norden*, September 1896.

¹⁸ Lawson 1973: 24.

business together. Ekelund became managing director, a position he retained until his retirement. He was also involved in the community as an active member of the Scandinavian club and as a Commissioner of Peace, clearly indicating his middle class status.¹⁹

Towards the bottom of the ladder were the wage-earning people: white-collar employees, artisans and skilled labourers, and at the lowest end of the hierarchy the unskilled workers who took up many different jobs with varying pay and prestige.²⁰ The many common sailors from Norway would also have been in the lower positions. The large number of boot makers was a characteristic feature of the Scandinavians in Brisbane, according to Lyng.²¹ But apparently most of them did not climb like Ekelund. Faced with difficulties as the trade underwent mechanisation many lost their jobs or had to accept sharply reduced wages.²²

The status hierarchy among the Norwegians in Queensland's capital may further be depicted by the pattern of settlement within the urban space. As mentioned above, Oscar Svensen literally lived in a peak position. Although the evidence is limited to the information given on the naturalisation papers, it appears that South Brisbane and Kangaroo Point were relative strongholds of the Norwegian colony. In Brisbane, the cooler hills carried prestige whereas hollows and river flats were working-class areas. South Brisbane in particular was a lower-class area situated near the flood-prone river and close to industry and the wharves.²³ It seems likely that many of the Norwegian sailors lived here. Kangaroo Point was a mixed area; lower-class near the river with more prestigious addresses higher up. This suburb was popular among Norwegian seamen.

In summary, Brisbane was an important point of arrival and distribution. Those who settled in the capital were a diverse group with seamen and craftsmen being dominant. As such they belonged mainly to the lower social groups, a fact which can also be seen through the pattern of settlement within the urban space itself.

Warwick and the Darling Downs

The plains and valleys east of Warwick in the eastern Darling Downs was the one district where the vision of closer agricultural settlement seemed to materialise in a Norwegian context (see also chapters 2 and 4). Squatters established their cattle runs in the Darling Downs in the 1840s and 1850s, but the district was later opened for agriculture.

¹⁹ *The Courier-Mail*, 23 May 1935; *Directory Queensland* 1895: 69; *Pugh's Almanac* 1915: 398; Emigrants from Oslo 1867-1930, NDA; Saxe 1914: 141.

²⁰ Lawson 1973: 61-62.

²¹ *Norden*, September 1896.

²² Lawson 1973: 66-68.

²³ Lawson 1973: 104.

Table 5.7. Norwegians in eastern Darling Downs and Warwick 1871-1911

	1871	1881	1891 (est.)	1901 (est.)	1911
Darling Downs East	1	2	36	43	30
Warwick (town)	1	2	10	5	2
Total Norwegian	2	4	46	48	32
Total population	6,565	7,933	9,832	12,274	17,179

Source: See table 5.1.

There were Norwegians in many parts of this region, but the census data and naturalisation records show a very distinct concentration of Norwegian settlers near the town of Warwick. The largest Norwegian agricultural settlement was found within a fairly limited area within the Darling Downs East census district, comprising flats and valleys bordered by the mountains of the Great Dividing Range. In particular, they made new homes for themselves on the rich soils surrounding the little town of Yangan; in nearby localities such as Swan Creek, Swanfels, Killarney, Emu Vale and Freestone.²⁴ In the same area a considerable number of Danes lived too; enough for a place to be called ‘Little Denmark’.²⁵

The first Norwegians arrived in the second half of the 1870s. However, the real influx seems to have started after the 1881 census but probably before mid-1882 when the *Warwick Argus* commented on the large number of Norwegians and Danes in the district.²⁶ Later accounts of local history include comments on the arrival of a large group of Danish immigrants around 1880.²⁷ However, it is clear that many of these people were Norwegians. From 1884 to 1904, 22 Norwegian male farmers were naturalised in Warwick and the area outlined above. A contemporary report from the *Warwick Argus* shows how the settlers turned scrub into cultivated land:

A ride up the valley of Swan Creek will show that nearly every acre of what is commonly termed agricultural land has been bought up and brought under the plough [...] and the dense scrubs at the foot of the mountain peaks are steadily disappearing before the spread of settlement. At Lower and Upper Swan Creek, at Lower and Upper Freestone Creek, and at Emu Creek the area of land under cultivation, we believe, is larger in proportion to the area available than is the case with any other district in the colony.²⁸

A characteristic of the Norwegian settlement in this district is the relatively large group living close to each other in a rural area. Prior to 1914 no other place in Queensland boasted more farmers from Norway than the fields east of Warwick. Why did so many choose to settle here? Unfortunately, no accounts from the immigrants themselves that may shed light to the question have been found. *The Yangan & Swanfels Chronicle*, a local history publication, deals briefly with the many Danish immigrants who came and concludes that “exactly what

²⁴ Database of Queensland naturalisations records.

²⁵ Mauch in Schofield (ed.) 1999: 30.

²⁶ *Queenslander*, 26 August 1882, referring to the *Warwick Argus*.

²⁷ Mauch in Schofield (ed.) 1999: 30.

²⁸ *Queenslander*, 26 August 1882, referring to the *Warwick Argus*.

circumstances started the movement of Danes to the Swanfels and Yangan area cannot be stated with certainty”.²⁹

However, the most likely explanation goes back to the question of closer settlement: The area in question was one of the first in Queensland to be thrown open for agricultural selection. Most of the Norwegians lived on the former grounds of the Canning Downs Station. In 1868 the Queensland government reclaimed this land and threw it open for selection, thus commencing a process of transition from cattle station to small-scale mixed agriculture.³⁰ In other words, when assisted migrants began arriving in the 1870s this was one of the districts providing opportunities for prospective farmers. Although some Norwegians arrived in the 70s the main influx took place from the early 1880s. It seems the Norwegians moved in tandem with, or at least followed the example of, the much more numerous Danes. In 1886 for instance, the two Norwegians Guldbrand (Charl) Larsen and Fin Sørensen selected 52 and 40 acres respectively under the terms of the *Crown Lands Act* of 1884. Larsen paid an annual rent of £2 13s. 3d. (ca. 48 kroner) for five years plus a survey fee. Sørensen’s rent was slightly lower due to the smaller acreage.³¹ Larsen was among the first Norwegians to naturalise, in 1884. He had a farm at Freestone Creek.

One reason for the boost in the Norwegian population was the fact that some settlers used the nomination system to invite friends and family to Queensland on cheap tickets. Torleiv Oma, a tinsmith who lived in Warwick town, nominated eleven adults in 1887 and 1888; some were free, for others he paid £2 (36 kroner). Guldbrand Larsen also nominated at least two countrymen. One of them, Ole F. Sørensen, became a farmer at Swan Creek.³² The process is depicted by an August 1882 report in the *Warwick Argus* which relates that a train had arrived with a considerable addition to the Danish population of the farming districts on Swan Creek:

The new arrivals, who we believe only landed last week from the *Almora*, were met at the station by some of their friends, and, being unable to speak English, the hearty welcomes extended to them in a strange tongue made the party the centre of a good deal of interest. They have since left town for the homesteads of their friends, who are engaged in clearing and cultivating the scrub lands on the banks of Upper Swan and Freestone Creeks. There is already a considerable population of Danes, Swedes, and Norwegians settled in the localities named, and their numbers are being steadily increased.³³

Looking at the time of naturalisation, half of the Norwegian farmers in this district were actually naturalised as late as 1899-1901. The latter year particularly saw a considerable

²⁹ Gamgee (ed.) 1999: 9.

³⁰ Gamgee (ed.) 1999: 8-9.

³¹ Register of agricultural farms, 4 October 1886-3 January 1887, Land Agent, Warwick, QSA, A/13377.

³² Register of passage certificates, Sub-Immigration Agent, Warwick, QSA, ID 269450.

³³ *Queenslander*, 26 August 1882, referring to the *Warwick Argus*.

group, relatively speaking, of Norwegian farmers changing citizenship. They all lived within the small area discussed here. The 1901 census indicates an increase in the number of Norwegians. Possibly they belonged to the group of newly arrived assisted migrants in 1899-1900 and they had perhaps heard positive reports from other Scandinavians in the area and wished to follow their example. It was also within fairly easy travelling distance from Brisbane.

Although the question of the white man's suitability for hard work in the tropical regions of northern Queensland was an ongoing debate, the Scandinavian Darling Downs farmers actually lived in a climate not entirely unlike what they had left in their native countries. Guldbrand Larsen was happy with only three months of morning frost³⁴. In fact, Warwick has four seasons unlike much of Queensland's two-seasonal wet-dry cycle. Without pressing this point too hard, we should not entirely dismiss the idea that some Norwegian immigrants may have preferred this area due to its familiar climatic conditions.

Some of the Scandinavian immigrants may have chosen the district for religious reasons. When Guldbrand Larsen shared some of his memories from 26 years in Australia he told the Norwegian newspaper *Politiken* that the sale of alcohol was prohibited in Warwick. The question had been discussed three times, but on every occasion the farmers had supported prohibition. They were all teetotalers, Larsen said.³⁵ It is unlikely that alcohol was banned in the town of Warwick itself, but he may have actually referred to the hamlet of Freestone Creek where he lived. Here there was a Danish Baptist church in the 1880s and 1890s, and Danish Baptists were fervently opposed to alcohol.³⁶ More generally, however, temperance was a strong social movement in Scandinavia at this time and Larsen and others may have been influenced by that. There was also a Scandinavian Lutheran presence in this area. Firstly, Norwegian minister Christopher Gaustad spent time in Warwick, at least in 1871-1872, as a pastor working among German settlers in Sandy Creek, another farming area nearby.³⁷ After he had left, the district had congregations associated with the Scandinavian Lutheran Church in Brisbane and there was a Scandinavian church in Yangan.³⁸

Puritan or not, the story of the Warwick Norwegians is a tale of close agricultural settlement. In selecting land, becoming farmers and nominating other friends and relatives to follow in their footsteps these Norsemen were perfect immigrants judged by the contemporary ideals set out by the Queensland government.

³⁴ *Politiken*, 3 March 1900.

³⁵ *Politiken*, 3 March 1900.

³⁶ Williams 1996: 108-112; Eidberg 2003: 138-140.

³⁷ *The Brisbane Courier*, 27 March 1871; *Queenslander*, 20 July 1872.

³⁸ *Norden*, August 1898; Theile 1938: 29; Gamgee (ed.) 1999: 9.

Mackay

Table 5.8. Norwegians in Mackay 1871-1911

	1871	1881	1891 (est.)	1901 (est.)	1911
Norwegians	2	57	32	30	24
Total population	2,097	5,787	10,538	11,144	14,893

Source: See table 5.1

A comparatively large group of Norwegians came to Mackay in the 1870s and 1880s to work on the sugar plantations. They stepped into the cane fields in the midst of political conflicts and structural changes in the sugar industry. Founded in 1862, Mackay is today one of the larger coastal cities in the northern part of Queensland. From the early days, sugar-cane farming has been a vital industry in the Mackay area. At the 1881 census, no district in Queensland had more Norwegians than Mackay; the number was 57, meaning that one percent of Mackay's inhabitants hailed from Norway. No other place in Queensland has ever recorded a higher proportion of Norwegians than Mackay did in 1881. However, the number diminished. By 1911 it was less than half of what it was 30 years earlier.

Norwegians in Mackay were to a large degree labourers and farm labourers; six out of ten naturalised Norwegians were employed in these occupations. In line with previous discussions, it is reasonable to assume that in reality an even higher proportion of the Norwegians in Mackay were labourers. Moreover, seven out of ten Norwegians who were naturalised in Mackay did so in the 1870s and 1880s. Scandinavians, including Norwegians, were employed in the sugar industry from 1871, the year when assisted migrants started coming from Norway. Immigrants arriving in Rockhampton or Bowen, on ships like the *Lammershagen* and *Humboldt*, were transferred to Mackay (see chapter 3).³⁹ The *Queenslander* reported that settlers who were not able to start at once on their own account would ...

... easily find employment on the plantations already established, as labor of all kinds is in demand here; witness the case of sixty Scandinavian immigrants who arrived here per *Lammershagen* the other day, of whom the single men and women were all hired the first day, and the married couples all before the end of the week. Should settlers bring teams here they will find plenty of work for them at ploughing and drawing sugar, &c.⁴⁰

As indicated in this quote, the new arrivals found employment in the sugar industry. But hard physical labour in the tropical climate was unsuited to the white man; at least so ran the classic argument in the debate over coloured labour in Queensland. During the plantation era in the sugar industry, from the 1860s until the 1890s, the production of sugar was characterised by large estates with their own mills, run mainly with indentured labour from

³⁹ *The Brisbane Courier*, 8 September 1871, published in Kopittke 2000: 30.

⁴⁰ *Queenslander*, 18 November 1871.

the South Pacific, the so called ‘Kanakas’.⁴¹ However, Norwegians and other Europeans infiltrated the canefields and sugar mills of the Mackay region. Europeans were employed as engineers and skilled workers on the mills and as overseers in the field, according to Bolton.⁴² Carl Peter August Andersen, for example, an assisted migrant who arrived in 1872, worked for the Palms Sugar Estate where he was in charge of caring for the horses.⁴³ In 1884 a white ploughman earned about £66 a year, many times more than the indentured labourers from the Pacific Islands.⁴⁴

However, there are indications that Norwegians and other Europeans also did unskilled work in the fields. In a letter to the *Queenslander* in 1880, a farmer wrote:

Several sugar farms on the coast are worked without Kanaka labor at all, and I know for fact that some few years ago in a shipload of immigrants from Norway a number were sent direct from Rockhampton to Port Mackay, and worked shoulder to shoulder with the much-maligned Kanaka.⁴⁵

In a similar account from 1878 another writer used the experience with the Norwegians as an argument against the notion that the white man could not endure work on the plantations:

There were several new-chums just arrived from Norway who were engaged on arrival and sent to Port Mackay. One would think that such a change from the climate of Norway, to that of a Northern Queensland sugar plantation, might try the constitution. I asked one of them how it agreed with him, and he gave me very much the same reply as an old Scotchman did when a friend asked him how he was; he replied, that it was a most extraordinary fact, that *he gaed to bed last night sober, a thing he hadna done for forty years, and he didna feel a bit the waur*, and so said our hardy Norseman, that after he and his mates had done their six or twelve months – doing same labour as the Kanakas – he did not feel one bit the worse. In fact, he gave Port Mackay rather a good character. There were good huts, plenty to eat, lots of society, as there were on the same plantation about sixty white men and as many Kanakas.⁴⁶

The debate over the ‘Kanaka question’ intensified when Samuel Griffith’s government was elected in 1883 on a program to eliminate coloured labour. But as John Kerr points out in his history of the Pioneer shire, scarcity of Melanesians rather than regulation was the major force impelling planters and farmers towards white labour.⁴⁷ From the first cane was planted until the complete mechanisation of the industry a century later, obtaining labour for the hard work in the canefields was the industry’s main problem, Kerr argues. In chapter 2 we heard about the plans for Scandinavians as possible indentured workers. The Mackay Planters and Farmers’ Association discussed the matter in 1884-1885, and it was decided to experiment

⁴¹ Moore 1974: 30-39.

⁴² Bolton 1972: 84.

⁴³ *Early Settlers of Mackay 1860-1885*, 2009: 252.

⁴⁴ Moore 1974: 33.

⁴⁵ *Queenslander*, 31 July 1880.

⁴⁶ *Morning Bulletin*, 3 December 1878, signed Tarry Woo.

⁴⁷ Kerr 1980: 126.

with contract workers from Germany and Scandinavia.⁴⁸ However, as for the Norwegians it seems they mainly came in the 1870s and that the 1881 census constituted a peak in numbers. This coincided with the ongoing boom in ‘Sugaropolis’ Mackay where the area under cane trebled from 1878 to 1885 before crisis set in.⁴⁹

After that, new farming patterns emerged in the sugar industry. The system with large plantations was doomed, according to Bolton. Investments had been too high and returns unsatisfactory. In addition came political pressure to end the system of indentured labour. The sugar industry went through a structural change into a new era of small-scale, family-based farming concentrated around central, cooperative mills – with support from the government.⁵⁰ The censuses indicate a reduction in the Norwegian population in Mackay during this transition to small-scale farming, and it seems likely that many of the farm labourers from the 1870s and 1880s moved on to other places when the plantations were put under pressure. Some stayed on. A list of sugar plantations and farms in the Mackay district compiled in 1895 shows many Scandinavian names, but as no nationality is given for the farmers, it is impossible to say who were Danish and who were Norwegian; most likely the majority came from Denmark.⁵¹ One of them was Christian Petersen Mau, married to Randine (Randi) Petersdatter (1850-1943) from Hønefoss, Norway. While Mr. Mau’s footprints are quite visible thanks to his involvement in local affairs and politics, and as a correspondent for *Norden*, little is known about his spouse. They supposedly met on board the *Humboldt* en route from Hamburg to Bowen in 1872, and they were probably among a group of Scandinavians from the ship who were sent to Mackay. Randi reared nine children while the family gained experience in sugar farming. By 1895 Christian Mau had 81 acres of leased land. He employed one white man, his son, and five Melanesians. In 1900 he also hired newly arrived Scandinavians.⁵² In summary, Norwegians in Mackay engaged in manual labour on the canefields, but few seemed to have stayed long enough to set up their own farms.

Micro-settlement on the Lower Herbert River

Like the Warwick farmers, the Lower Herbert district in North Queensland is one of the few documented cases of close agricultural settlement with a strong Norwegian presence. Four families, all with either a Norwegian husband or wife, took up adjoining sections of land along the Herbert River where the town of Halifax is now situated. They were agents of change as the sugar cane industry in the district was transformed from the plantation era to

⁴⁸ *Queenslander*, 25 October 1884; *The Brisbane Courier*, 25 June 1885.

⁴⁹ Bolton 1972: 135.

⁵⁰ Moore 1974: 30-39; Bolton 1972: 199.

⁵¹ *The Sugar Fields of Mackay*, compiled by Aeneas F. Munro, 1895.

⁵² *The Sugar Fields of Mackay*, 1895: 41; *Early Settlers of Mackay 1860-1885*, 2009: 174; *Norden*, 16 June 1900.

small-scale farming and later transition to Italian domination. Their experiences show resourceful settlers able to build a community and change the conditions of their agricultural pursuits, and muster a voice that was heard even at Government House in Brisbane.

Between 1869 and 1872 the immensely fertile soils of the Lower Herbert became the basis of a firmly established sugar-growing industry.⁵³ At the centre of these developments from a Norwegian-Scandinavian viewpoint were Eva and August Anderssen, Swedes by birth who had moved to Norway prior to their subsequent migration to Queensland.⁵⁴ After their arrival in Queensland they soon came to the large Macknade sugar plantation which was carved out of the rainforest on the Lower Herbert. The couple lived and worked there for eight years, August as a carpenter.⁵⁵ Other Norsemen found their way to the same area. Johan Alm Johannesen (later John Alm) and his Danish wife, as well as Augusta (nee Pedersen) from Norway and her Danish husband Harald Hoffensetz all arrived around 1872-1873. These were among the first European families to settle in the area. John Alm did fencing work in the valley in the 70s but his aim was to select a piece of land on which to build a new home.⁵⁶ After initial disappointments regarding the availability of suitable acreage, in 1880 August Anderssen found sufficient land for a selection of 350 acres.⁵⁷ At the same time, several other selections were taken up: The Anderssens, Alms, Hoffensetz and another Norwegian, Martinius Normann, in fact came to live on adjacent blocks as next door neighbours.

The Anderssens started with maize and sweet potatoes, selling to the plantations as food for the 'Kanakas'.⁵⁸ However, the neighbours were eager to move into sugar. August Anderssen and John Alm, after receiving positive signals from the Colonial Sugar Refining Company (CSR), initiated a meeting among the farmers to discuss forming a body to negotiate the supplying of cane to the company.⁵⁹ The problem for small farmers in sugar was access to mills because the mills were then owned and operated by the private plantations with no obligations to the wider farming community. However, by combining their efforts the small farmers could offer around 200 acres of sugarcane. Anderssen, Alm and Hoffensetz were among the six farmers who founded the Herbert River Farmers Association – with Anderssen as chairman – as a body to negotiate on behalf of the small selectors, and to

⁵³ Bolton 1972: 74.

⁵⁴ In the Hamburg departure lists, Eva and August were registered as Norwegians from Drammen. However, they both came from the Dalsland region in Sweden. While Eva had lived in Norway since she was a little girl and apparently considered herself more Norwegian than Swedish, August moved to Norway as an adult, according to the *Anderssens in Australia* family history manuscript. The Anderssens are an example of stage-by-stage migration which is further discussed in Appendix 4.

⁵⁵ *Anderssens in Australia*, manuscript: 24-26.

⁵⁶ *Herbert River Express*, 11 October 1932.

⁵⁷ *Anderssens in Australia*: 29.

⁵⁸ *Anderssens in Australia*: 32.

⁵⁹ Alm in *Herbert River Express*, 24 January 1933; *Anderssens in Australia*: 33.

promote their interests and communicate with the authorities. In 1884 they secured a seven-year contract for delivering cane to CSR. The farmers' association was the first of its kind in Queensland, but the farmers followed collaborative traditions from their home countries. By 1885 the association had 60 members.⁶⁰ The many pro-active steps taken by the farmers' association was later retold in a series of articles written by Alm in the *Herbert River Express*.

As farmers/small selectors the Halifax Scandinavians stood in opposition to the planters who owned the large plantations and mills.⁶¹ In reality the farmers launched an alternative to the prevailing plantation system; they suggested that white farmers could in fact work in the tropics, and as such were met with a negative response from the planters' camp. However, the farmers succeeded. Anderssen's ex-employer at Macknade changed sides and supported the small farmers. Also, Sir Edward Knox, the Danish founder of CSR, had a reputation for giving Scandinavians a fair go.⁶²

The Herbert River initiative was met with interest at the highest political level in Queensland because the farmers themselves did many of the tasks that had been delegated to Pacific Islanders as being too strenuous for white men.⁶³ (The small farmers did in fact engage some Chinese labourers). Premier Samuel Griffith, a strong advocate against coloured labour, visited Herbert River in 1891 and attended a reception at the Anderssen home Riverview where many residents had assembled.⁶⁴ Griffith wanted to dismantle the plantation system and encourage small family farms. The Scandinavians in Halifax had disproven contemporary medical beliefs, and as such the stories presented at Riverview must have been of some interest to the Premier.

The Scandinavians not only built an organisation to challenge the planters. August Anderssen has been termed 'the father of Halifax' because the town was built by selling off blocks of his farm and partly through his initiative.⁶⁵ The Lower Herbert River witnessed a sugar boom in the early 1880s and the unprecedented prosperity brought life to the Halifax township situated on Anderssen's property.⁶⁶ New sugar ventures were started. A hotel was built in 1881. The first school was erected by Andersen, Alm, Hoffensetz and others and it opened in 1883, after the farmers' association had taken the first step. The same men also helped constructing an Anglican church.⁶⁷

⁶⁰ Shepperd 1957: 105-107, 127.

⁶¹ Shepperd 1957: 120.

⁶² *Anderssens in Australia*: 34.

⁶³ Bolton 1972: 146.

⁶⁴ Shepperd 1957: 186-187; *The Brisbane Courier*, 12 January 1891.

⁶⁵ Shepperd 1957: 106, 138-139.

⁶⁶ Bolton 1972: 136.

⁶⁷ *Anderssens in Australia*: 30-41.

There appears to have been close connections between the Scandinavian families in Halifax who, as already mentioned, lived next door to each other. Alm, Anderssen and Hoffensetz were together involved in much of the community building. Eva Anderssen's son Johan married the Alms' daughter Helen Elise. Meanwhile, Augusta Hoffensetz was the nurse in attendance at several births.⁶⁸ On the other hand, when Carl Lumholtz passed by in 1882 he met Eva and August Anderssen who had by then almost forgotten their native language. Lumholtz' observation seems strange. After just a decade in Australia, surrounded by other Scandinavians, the Anderssens had supposedly lost their mother tongue. That said, the community building in Halifax seems to have been not so much an ethnic issue as an economic one. Lumholtz's analysis of Anderssen's situation is a testimony to the success of the selectors. Anderssen's farm had an impression of wealth, wrote Lumholtz, whose argument goes on as follows: By starting out as a carpenter on the first sugar plantation, Anderssen earned well because he was willing to work in an "unhealthy" climate. He saved money and bought land. His land quickly increased in value because the soil was very well suited for sugarcane. He later made good money from selling off some of his acreage and had £10,000 to his name by the time Lumholtz came by. Ten years previously he had come to the river with two empty hands.⁶⁹

As the first generation of Scandinavian farmers grew old, the Herbert River sugar industry went into a new phase. Italian immigrants had been recruited from the 1890s to fill the gap when the 'Kanaka' trade was abolished. Many of them settled around Halifax. By 1908 every Italian dialect was spoken in Halifax. A few years later Herbert River farms changed hands in considerable numbers. Most of the buyers were Italian canecutters who had saved up money to buy properties.⁷⁰ As we have seen, this was a time when immigration from Norway, or indeed Scandinavia, had practically ceased. The end of the Scandinavian chapter in Halifax is probably best symbolised by the sale of the Anderssen family farm Riverview, which was handed over to Italian farmers in 1919/1920.⁷¹

To sum up, the significance of the Norwegian-Scandinavian families on the Herbert River was the way they shaped new farming practices in an era of transformation in the sugar industry, and also how they actively built their own association as well as a small town.

⁶⁸ *Anderssens in Australia*: 51, 27.

⁶⁹ Lumholtz 1888: 87.

⁷⁰ Douglass 1995: 50-63, 93-96.

⁷¹ *Anderssens in Australia*: 59.

Charters Towers and other goldfields

Gold virtually made North Queensland. More than anything else it opened up the north and populated it with Europeans.⁷² People flocked in their thousands to the goldfields at Charters Towers after the valuable mineral was found there in late 1871. The letter quoted in chapter 4 about the lottery of gold mining shows that many a Norwegian was lured north by the potential El Dorado and entered the diverse population of miners. Charters Towers overshadowed all the other mining centres.⁷³ Unlike other goldfields there was easy access to a port in Townsville, and particularly in the 1880s ‘the Towers’ showed strong development.

As for Norwegians on the goldfields, the census and naturalisation data provide insight into those who tried their luck. The district of Kennedy, comprising both Charters Towers and Ravenswood, another important goldfield, had a relatively numerous Norwegian population. It counted 45 in 1881 and 39 in 1911. However the peak was probably in the 1890s with as many as 70 Norwegians living in this district. Possibly, quite a few had moved in from the coast due to the changes in the sugar industry as well as the hard times in towns and cities.

Mining was the dominant occupation among the Norwegians, comprising almost six out of ten men who were naturalised in the district. Apart from that, there were a few craftsmen, labourers and farmers serving the various needs of the boom towns. Charters Towers was a prosperous community with no man on less than £3 a week, and almost every miner owning his own house. However, in the fast-growing town basic services and sanitation were neglected, causing frequent outbreaks of typhoid and enteric fever.⁷⁴

Table 5.9. Norwegians in the northern mining-dominated districts 1871-1911

	1871	1881	1891 (est.)	1901 (est.)	1911
Kennedy (incl. Charters Towers)	8	45	68	59	39
Herberton (part of Cook 1871-1881)	n/a	n/a	11	24	20
Etheridge	n/a	2	6	6	8
Chillagoe (Woothakata until 1901)	n/a	6	5	4	13
Cook	0	3	26	11	13
Palmer	n/a	3	3	13	4
Burke (incl. Croydon until 1891)	0	7	52	2	3
Croydon	n/a	n/a	n/a	24	4
Total Norwegian	8	66	171	143	104
Total population	4,557	20,579	36,342	49,403	48,881

Source: See table 5.1.

Seven out of ten Norwegians who naturalised did so in the 1870s and 1880s, particularly from the late 70s to the late 80s. This was before the real advent of wage-based deep reefing yet during the strong boom in the early years of the gold rush, indicating that many of these men

⁷² Colwell 1974: 73-76.

⁷³ Bolton 1972: 110.

⁷⁴ Bolton 1972: 122-123.

were independent miners working on their own claims, like Lars Klæstad who we met in chapter 4. (Some of those who arrived in the 90s may have been naturalised elsewhere).

Other Norwegians tried their luck in the many underground shafts that were steadily growing in depth around the town. The Jacobsen family from Kristiania, parents Maren (Mary) and Iver, and children Pauline, Sigvart (adult) and Ingevald (Angus) were assisted migrants who had arrived at Keppel Bay on the *Lammershagen* in September 1871. Three years later they followed the goldrush to Charters Towers. The family acquired 80 acres of land close to town and established a dairy farm.⁷⁵ Dairy and cattle farming were important auxiliary services to the mining community and involved many, according to Bolton.⁷⁶ After selling off some of the land on the farm, sons Sigvart and Ingevald invested in a mining lease on the Union Prospecting Claim in 1881. Ingevald at least kept dairying as a supplement income during his mining venture.⁷⁷ Among the brothers' four partners was Norwegian Ole (Ola) Olsen from Kragerø, a fellow passenger from the migrant ship who had been involved in the mine since about 1877. Olsen was the manager of the Union P.C. In 1885, during the speculation frenzy in Charters Towers, the mine was registered as a public company with a nominal value of £12,000. Half of the shares were reserved for the original owners. After two years with probably no yields, the mine produced 160 ounces of gold in 1888, worth £480.⁷⁸ Olsen became a seasoned gold miner: In 1890 he was the leader of a party of men who took up a seven acre lease for a mine named Scandinavian No. 1 North.⁷⁹

Several Norwegian families lived in 'The World' as Charters Towers was called during the golden days when it was the second largest city in Queensland. The Klæstads, Jacobsens and Ole Olsen have been mentioned. The latter migrated with his parents, a sister and a brother and also an unmarried girl from his parish, Anne Marie Thorsdatter (Thorsen) who he married in Rockhampton on 14 September 1871, a mere week after arriving. They had eight children and lived in Charters Towers at least until Ole died in 1896.⁸⁰ Ole Olsen's sister, Elevine Olette, also called Charters Towers home for 27 years with her Norwegian husband Anders Gustav Andersen, whom she must have met in Australia, and a flock of children which eventually counted seven.⁸¹ Being a place for long-term family settlement, Charters Towers differed from other goldfields in the north that were more short-lived with

⁷⁵ Lyons 1992: 4-5.

⁷⁶ Bolton 1972: 122.

⁷⁷ Lyons 1992: 21.

⁷⁸ Lyons 1992: 6-9, citing *The Northern Miner* 27 April 1885 among other sources.

⁷⁹ Gold Mining Lease, 1891/87, QSA.

⁸⁰ Olsen/Jensen family papers, compiled by Mr. Gunnar Aabøe, Kragerø; e-mail from Aabøe, 17 Dec 2010.

⁸¹ Queensland naturalisation papers; naturalisation Elevine Olette Andersen, NAA, ref. 15/1385; Olsen/Jensen family papers.

transient male-dominated populations. As Bolton points out, Charters Towers' deep gold reefs stood out because of the continuous output of precious metal over many years constituting over 2/3 of North Queensland's production in the 1890s and early 1900s.⁸²

OTHER NORTH QUEENSLAND MINING DISTRICTS: With Charters Towers and Ravenswood as major exceptions, most of the gold in the North Queensland mines was alluvial, meaning the mineral was sluiced by the use of water and a tin pan. Mining largely involved the sudden movement and frenetic activity of large, transient populations. Norwegian Peter Abelsen (Brown) has a place in North Queensland history as one of the companions of the legendary prospector James Venture Mulligan, who stimulated the Palmer and Hodgkinson gold rushes in 1873 and 1876. The Palmer River rush of 1873-1878 attracted around 50,000 diggers.⁸³

This was the frontier: Mining brought the first white men into the north. In line with what we discussed in chapter 4, Raymond Evans points out that tales of golden fortune often masked stories of extreme social dislocation, environmental wastage, racial struggles and individual suffering.⁸⁴ It was not just gold that was unearthed. Surely, Norwegians were present on all the major mineral fields, although hardly any personal accounts have survived. Writing from Thornborough on the Hodgkinson River in 1899, Carl A. Egerström from Sweden relates that the local Swedes, Norwegians and Danes totalled 12.⁸⁵

The district around Croydon, near the Gulf of Carpentaria, had a sizeable Norwegian population in the 1890s and early 1900s. Gold was discovered in Croydon in 1885 and two years later it was a town of 7000; the rush was intense but relatively short-lived.⁸⁶ We have already seen that the Klæstad sisters were running pubs in Croydon during the gold rush. So did another Norwegian, John Nerstad. The female Norwegian population in Croydon was further boosted when his two nieces Johanna Sophie and Ragna Bernadine Skaug arrived in November 1884. Ragna married and settled in Croydon.⁸⁷

The life of immigrant Magnus Simenson (Simpson) (1852-1918) illustrates the challenges of living on the remote frontier in the 1880s and 90s. He arrived in Queensland in 1879 as an assisted migrant. Five years later he married Johanna Barnekow, a Swedish woman, in Cairns. The couple moved west towards the Gulf Savannah. The circumstances of their second son Sigurd's birth in 1887 show that few facilities were available: He was supposedly born under a tarpaulin on the banks of the Gilbert River, the nearest doctor about

⁸² Bolton 1972: 260.

⁸³ Colwell 1974: 78.

⁸⁴ Evans 2007: 104. See also chapter 6.

⁸⁵ Egerström to his brother in Sweden, 25 March 1899, privately held.

⁸⁶ Bolton 1972: 130; Colwell 1974: 80.

⁸⁷ *The Christensen Family*, compiled by Rod Christensen 2001, in Cairns Historical Society, D14855.

100 kilometres away in Croydon. A carrier's wife who was in the camp at the time acted as midwife. At the time of Sigurd's birth, Magnus Simpson was renting a saw mill cutting timber for the gold mines at Croydon and Georgetown. The family moved from timber stand to timber stand. Magnus also did general construction work and for many years raised cattle on a station near Georgetown; a testimony to the fact that life in the bush often meant diversifying in order to make a liveable income.⁸⁸

Croydon, Charters Towers and other gold towns; the Norwegians were relatively numerous on the mineral fields, both as individual prospectors and as participants in organised efforts. Although in many ways a men's frontier, women and children were part of the settlements too.

Micro-settlement on the Bloomfield River

In one of the most remote localities on the north Queensland coast, a small Norwegian-Scandinavian settlement existed from the mid-1880s. Four points are particularly worth discussing in relation to this little community: Firstly, the isolation in terms of communications with the outside world. Secondly, the way in which marriage links between Norwegians and Swedes, combined with additional immigration, created and maintained a close-knit group settlement. Thirdly, the great variety of produce the settlers grew and collected in order to make a living, and finally Bloomfield River's frontier character with close interaction between Europeans, Aboriginals and other groups.

Iver Osmundsen from Skudeneshavn in Norway was the first farmer on the Bloomfield River. No sources explain exactly why he chose to select land there and bring his family to such an isolated place. Europeans first came to the Bloomfield as cedar cutters in the 1870s and later for tin mining. A short-lived attempt at sugar cultivation was started in the early 1880s. Osmundsen, a master mariner, was granted a selection of 160 acres of land in 1884 and called it Bannabilla after the Aboriginal name of the area.⁸⁹ As outlined in chapter 4, he soon sent for the rest of his family. Wife Anne (Anna) and their five daughters arrived, and so did her brother, Captain Olsen, his spouse Anna and their three daughters. Captain Olsen died when a boat capsized, probably in 1886 or 1887, but his widow remarried another Norwegian, Gustav Svendsen Lunde, presumably a sailor, who had settled at Bloomfield River as a farmer and thus extended the Norwegian community.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ E-mails from Robyn Wiltshire, great-granddaughter of M. Simonsen, including copies of certificates and photos of machinery, dated 27 and 29 November 2010. Also copy of *Georgetown Centenary Book; Cairns Post*, 16 April 1918; *Townsville Bulletin*, 2 January 1970.

⁸⁹ Young 2007: 4.

⁹⁰ *Life on the Bloomfield*, by Millie Parsons (granddaughter of Anna and Iver O.), 1983, in Young 2007; letter from Elise Osmundsen to Tomine Olsen, 28 November 1887, published in *The Northern Sun*, Vol. 17, No. 58,

Other countrymen also arrived at Bloomfield River. In 1887, Elise Olava Osmundsen, daughter of Iver and Anna and then about 15 years old, wrote in a letter to a friend in Norway: “There are many Norwegians in Bloomfield, but most of them can’t speak Norwegian.”⁹¹ Captain Nils Christensen came in 1886, and he probably travelled to Australia together with the Osmundsen females onboard the *Quetta*. Anecdotal evidence suggests he did not find any fellow countrymen in Brisbane and was advised by the authorities to proceed to Bloomfield River where there were Norwegians and a Lutheran mission.⁹² Christensen later became Elise Osmundsen’s husband. The Osmundsen daughters further strengthened the Scandinavian community when Bertine Olivia married Erik Gustav Olufson in Warwick in 1889 (Iver Osmundsen’s sister Gunhild lived in Warwick).⁹³ Olufson took up land on the Bloomfield River in 1890, and local history has it that he became the most successful farmer on the river despite having sustained severe injuries in a serious accident. The Olufson and Osmundsen families stayed close at least until Iver and Anna died (1914 and 1925).

Boat was the only means of communications with the outside world, unless one wished to trudge more than a 100 kilometres through the most impenetrable rainforest. Cooktown was the nearest town, visited regularly by the settlers to sell produce and obtain supplies. Iver Osmundsen got his master’s certificate in 1884 and owned a lugger which he used for trading between Port Douglas, Bloomfield and Cooktown. He carried foodstuffs one way and produce the other.⁹⁴ He also used his vessel for bêche-de-mer fishing off the reefs and collecting trochus shells.⁹⁵ Olufson too did coastal trading with his boats.

In April 1888 Elise Osmundsen wrote another letter to Tomine Olsen, her friend in Norway. There she outlined some of the challenges of life in the jungle:

We have had the fever for a long time, but we are a little better now. [...] Mother was worse, and in hospital but is better now and can sit up. [...] We are so lonely when sick. If any comes it is menfolk. We live so far from others. [...] There is no school or church yet, but God is everywhere and listens to us.⁹⁶

The family applied a diverse form of farming in order to make a living, as described in Elise’s letter: They harvested grain, although the price had been low. Sweet potatoes were also produced. The family had lots of chickens, but snakes often took them. There were plans to

May-June 2002; power of attorney, 24 May 1890, archive of Swedish-Norwegian consulate in Brisbane, NAS, SE/RA/231/231019; Queensland naturalisation records, ref. 1889/9624.

⁹¹ Elise Osmundsen to Tomine Olsen, 28 November 1887.

⁹² *Life on the Bloomfield with Grandmother Osmundsen* by Alex Dawson, 1979, included in Young 2007.

⁹³ Pedigree chart Olufson family, Cairns Hist. Soc., call no. D13617. The sources are divided over whether Olufson was a Swede or a Norwegian. The pedigree chart says he was born in Jämtland, Sweden in 1866. However, it seems he naturalised as a Norwegian in Warwick in 1887, ref. 1887/8591. See also Young 2007.

⁹⁴ Young 2007: 4.

⁹⁵ *Life on the Bloomfield*, by Millie Parsons, 1983.

⁹⁶ Elise Osmundsen to Tomine Olsen, April 1888, publ. in *The Northern Sun*, Vol. 17, No. 58, May-June 2002.

acquire pigs too. They grew different kinds of fruit, such as oranges. Elise also wrote that her father had planted tobacco and coffee. Fresh meat and sometimes fish was also part of their diet. Milk was supplied by a nearby farm. This tallies with accounts from Erik Olufsen's farming. He grew fruit, tobacco, coffee, rice, potatoes, maize and other crops. In addition he had an apiary as well as cattle and a slaughtering licence. The meat was delivered for miles around. He sold honey from bee hives, butter from dairy cows and eggs.⁹⁷

The small Bloomfield community was undoubtedly a frontier settlement, and the Norwegians who lived there had close contact with the local indigenous peoples, as will be further discussed in the next chapter. Its population was a far cry from the Brisbane elite's notion of a 'white man's Queensland'. The indigenous peoples of the Kokobididji and Jungakurara tribes were numerous, counting 287 in 1898 compared to 13 European land selections in the area.⁹⁸ Among the foreign population were Cape Verde Portuguese traders, German missionaries and others, illustrated by the following episode from when an expert in tobacco cultivation visited the Bloomfield settlement: "Mr. Lamb found some difficulty in giving oral instruction on the Bloomfield, the cultivators being of very mixed nationalities, comprising Norwegians, Danes, Saxons, Chinese, Javanese, in addition to the English-speaking races."⁹⁹ With the heterogeneous community at the Bloomfield we conclude the case analysis of the relatively diverse Norwegian settlement spread around Queensland.

Conclusion

The Norwegian population in Queensland was tiny throughout the period from 1870 to 1914. While the peak in absolute terms occurred sometime around the turn of the century, relatively speaking the Norwegian presence was strongest in the early 1880s, with many of the assisted migrants still going strong and a steady trickle of nominated migrants arriving from Norway. As migration from Norway practically ceased after 1900, the Norwegian-born colony gradually grew older. A general conclusion is that Norwegians were thinly spread over large parts of Queensland, with an emphasis on coastal areas, the Darling Downs and the mining districts, thus mirroring many of the contemporary developments in 'The Sunshine State'. However, a handful of small communities existed where groups of Norwegian families lived in close quarters, predominantly as farmers. These micro-settlements, in the Darling Downs, on the Herbert and Bloomfield rivers and in a few other places, constitute the closest resemblance to anything like Norwegian 'ethnic' enclaves.

⁹⁷ *North Queensland Register*, No. 228, 10 Nov 1951; Millie Parsons, see note 90.

⁹⁸ Report from Walther E. Roth to Commissioner of Police, Brisbane, 24 February 1898, in Cairns Historical Society, call no. D10835, 01/87.

⁹⁹ *The Brisbane Courier*, 6 July 1891.

6 – Ethnic adjustment

The Norsemen in Australia to a much greater extent than the Norsemen in the United States risk being completely absorbed in the reigning people and language of their new home and lose their connection with their countrymen and the old country.

Aftenposten, 12 August 1896¹

THE OBJECTIVE of this chapter is to examine Norwegian ethnicity within the Queensland society. Previous works by Lyng, Koivukangas and others have mainly studied Scandinavian ethnicity in Australia as expressed through associations, churches and the press, but as we shall see these institutions reached only a minority of Norsemen and women.² Therefore, in terms of the Norwegian population in Queensland, we will start on a more basic level by asking: Does it make sense to talk about Norwegians as a distinct ethnic group? In order to answer that question we need to examine how the Norwegians asserted their ethnic identity in Queensland and analyse what different forms their expression of ethnicity took. However, according to anthropologist Fredrik Barth's argument, we should study the boundaries which define the ethnic groups rather than their cultural content.³ In a Queensland context we will adapt this view by examining the ethnic hierarchy which existed within the heterogeneous population of the colony/state. What position did the Norwegians have in this structure? To what extent were they subject to marginalisation by other groups? What was the relationship between Norwegian immigrants and Queensland's indigenous peoples?

Norwegians as an ethnic group

“UP UNTIL THE Second World War it was one of the myths of official propaganda that Australia was a racially homogeneous society, basically of British stock,” writes John Rickard in his book *Australia: A Cultural History*.⁴ Yet, right from the 1840s Queensland was an ethnically complex society with indigenous peoples as well as immigrants from practically all corners of the globe. However, “the general Australian attitude was that immigrants should assimilate to the established Anglo-Celtic pattern,” according to John S. Martin's study of Scandinavians in Melbourne, Victoria.⁵ Within these constraints, was there any room for the Norwegians to pursue an ethnic identity of their own as an alternative to assimilation?

¹ *Aftenposten*, 12 August 1896. Original quote in Norwegian: “Nordboerne i Australien langt mere end Nordboerne i de Forenede Stater er udsatte for at gaa fuldstændig op i det nye Hjemms herskende Folk og Sprog og tabe Forbindelsen med Landsmænd og det gamle Land ...”

² See Lyng's writings in *Norden* as well as Lyng 1939; Koivukangas 1974; Koivukangas and Martin 1986.

³ Barth (ed.) 1969: 9-38.

⁴ Rickard 1996: 35.

⁵ Martin in Runblom and Blank (eds.) 1990: 73.

In his classic text on *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, Barth defines an ethnic group as mainly biologically self-sustainable; sharing fundamental cultural values; constituting a field of communication and interaction; and with a membership which defines itself and is identified by others. In other words, the group forms a category which differs from other categories of the same order.⁶ Ethnicity takes on varying degrees of importance in social situations, and it may be just one of several sets of identities individuals use to name each other as social beings.⁷

Based on Barth's and similar definitions, it seems wrong to characterise the Norwegians in Queensland as a distinct ethnic group, or indeed an ethnic community. They were too few and too scattered. As will be discussed more thoroughly later in this chapter, national leaders were also almost non-existent. Yet Norwegian, or perhaps more commonly: Scandinavian, ethnicity played out to a limited degree right from the *Friedeburg* docked in Moreton Bay in August 1871. Ulf Beijbom and John S. Martin in their work on Swedes in Australia believe the differences between Swedes, Danes and Norwegians evaporated in the pioneer areas and that they developed a strong sense of solidarity in Queensland. Being so few on the frontier, they had to stick together against suspicion from other nationalities.⁸ This is probably true, and sometimes Scandinavians lived in close quarters. However, the late 1800s was also a time of rising nationalism. Norway had parted from its colonial ruler Denmark in 1814, joined a personal union with the Swedish crown and then struggled for full independence. Both Koivukangas and Lyng have pointed to friction in intra-Scandinavian relations.⁹ All in all, it is thus difficult to gauge the exact strength of Norwegian versus Scandinavian identity. Rather than emphasising the Norwegians as one group where its members moved in tandem, ethnic adjustment was more of a continuum where individuals subscribed to varying degrees of Norwegianness or Scandinavism. Given the pressure to assimilate, many Norsemen may have considered it to be in their best interest not to draw attention to their ethnic background. In certain situations, the Norwegians played the ethnicity card, in others it was less relevant.

Some patterns of ethnic adjustment

Below is a typology of some patterns of ethnic adjustment which have been identified through the source analysis. This is a dynamic scale from outright assimilation to full ethnic assertion.

⁶ Barth (ed.) 1969: 9-38.

⁷ Handelman 1977: 187-200; Hylland-Eriksen 1993: 30-34.

⁸ Beijbom and Martin 1988: 59.

⁹ Koivukangas 1974: 281; Lyng 1939: 151-153.

The typology loosely applies Don Handelman's continuum of organisational incorporation: from ethnic category via ethnic network and ethnic association to ethnic community; four steps on a ladder where ethnicity plays an increasingly central role for persons identified as members of the group.¹⁰ However, what Handelman terms 'ethnic community', the existence of ethnic units within comparatively permanent territorial borders, does not hold much relevance for the tiny, scattered Norwegian population in Queensland and will not be applied.

ABSORPTION INTO THE BRITISH-AUSTRALIAN MAJORITY: A large portion of the Norwegians in Queensland were quickly assimilated into the English-speaking British-Australian society. In John S. Martin's view "this was not difficult for the Scandinavians who often stressed their similarities of language, religion, and institutions, as well as links with the British royal house. For this reason Scandinavians were generally popular in Australia."¹¹ Several indicators point to such a process taking place: Formation of new social networks, Anglicisation of names, use of the English language, marriage patterns and change of religious denomination. In this group the ethnic component of the persons' identities did not take centre stage; occupation, social status or other markers were more important. Following Handelman, even assimilated Norwegians would still belong to the *ethnic category* of Norwegians. As immigrants from Norway they shared a corporate history and common elements of social identity which they could use to orient themselves to other individuals.¹²

Many Norsemen disappeared into the majority population. According to Koivukangas, the real key to the understanding of Scandinavian assimilation was the fate of an isolated – and often lonely – settler in the Australian bush or metropolis, completely exposed to the surrounding society without any counter influence from a Scandinavian community.¹³

This was particularly true for the many single men, typically employed as labourers, seamen or miners, and often very mobile people. At the time of the 1911 census, almost one in two Norwegian men remained unmarried (47.5 per cent).¹⁴ For them, the likelihood of finding Australian, English, Scottish or Irish friends were much greater than encountering Norwegians or other Scandinavians, and they tended to lose their group identity quickly, according to Geoffrey Sherington's research on Australia's immigrants.¹⁵

To ease their way into Queensland society a considerable portion of the Norwegians changed their names. We have seen several examples already: Guldbrand Larsen became

¹⁰ Handelman 1977: 189.

¹¹ Martin in Runblom and Blank (eds.) 1990: 73.

¹² Handelman 1977: 190.

¹³ Koivukangas 1974: 282.

¹⁴ The Commonwealth Census 1911, Birthplaces, I: 114-155, II: 105-385.

¹⁵ Sherington 1982: 114.

Charl Larsen, Ingevald Jacobsen changed his name to Angus Jacobson. The naturalisation records show many anglicised names, but probably do not cover the large number of people who used English names informally. In the register of Norwegians discharged from Queensland gaols the majority of the 150 prisoners had changed or adjusted their names.¹⁶

Scandinavians in Australia were quick to adopt English, Koivukangas concludes in his study.¹⁷ English was easy to learn and necessary for almost all jobs. Again, most of your workmates would be non-Scandinavians. Even in a community with several Scandinavian families the mother tongue was forgotten after a few years as seen by Carl Lumholtz' encounter with Eva and August Anderssen at Herbert River (chapter 5). At the time of the 1911 census, when most of the Norwegians had resided in Queensland for more than 20 years, 85 per cent could read and write English. Eight per cent were only able to read and write a foreign language, presumably Norwegian. Less than three per cent were illiterate.

The marriage pattern further indicates how many Norwegians, men in particular, were drawn into the English-speaking majority. Koivukangas argues that marriage outside the national group, especially to women of British origin, was a major factor facilitating assimilation.¹⁸ Furthermore, as already mentioned, almost half of the Norwegian men were unmarried in 1911. Bear in mind the relatively mature age, as well as the long residence time, of most of the Norwegians at that time. These men were not young fellows just about to become wedded. Rather, they were mostly older men who never married in their life. For women, the picture was quite different: Only 16 per cent had never married. 66 per cent were married, compared to 47 per cent among men. A likely explanation of these figures is that most of the young, single women who came in the 1870s found a husband (see also chapter 3).

Who did they marry? Only Australia-wide data are available, but given that half of the Norwegian women lived in Queensland in 1911, the numbers should have some relevance.¹⁹ Only six per cent of the men were married to a Norwegian woman. Conversely, the figure was 31 per cent for Norwegian women married to a Norwegian man. In other words, those Norwegian men who actually married sought their wives outside their own nationality, in line with Koivukangas' argument. At the time of the 1911 census, the most common nationality of the wife was Australian (43 per cent), followed by English (10 per cent). Marrying women from other Scandinavian countries was uncommon: Only 1.1 and 1.3 per cent of Norwegian men had a Swedish or Danish spouse respectively. Consequently, for most of the married

¹⁶ *Queensland Police Gazette*, Return of prisoners discharged from prisons, 1864-1915.

¹⁷ Koivukangas 1974: 277.

¹⁸ Koivukangas 1974: 232.

¹⁹ The Commonwealth Census 1911, Relative Birthplaces of Husbands and Wives, III: 1109-1110.

Norwegian men, the English language and the Anglo-Saxon customs dominated domestic life, traditionally passed down by female family members.

Norwegian women, on the other hand, most typically had a spouse from her own country (31 per cent). Apart from that, Australian (14.5 per cent) and English (10 per cent) husbands were most common. Some Norwegian females were married to men from Sweden or Denmark, eight and six per cent respectively. Two factors explain the different marriage patterns between men and women. A lot of married couples left Norway together, mainly in the 1870s, and settled in Queensland. This is seen in the high percentage of Norwegian women married to a Norwegian man. However, many Norwegian men travelled to Australia by other means than assisted passage, particularly sailors. When these men arrived, they had to look outside their own national group to find a spouse, if indeed they ever found one.

Many also changed their religious denomination. Again, the source is the 1911 census which basically comprises long-term Norwegian settlers. 41 per cent belonged to the Lutheran or other protestant churches. However, as many as 32 per cent pledged allegiance to the Church of England and another six per cent were Presbyterian and almost five per cent Methodist.²⁰ In summary, it seems clear that absorption rather maintaining a strong ethnic identity was the pattern of adjustment for numerous Norwegian immigrants.

CONNECTION THROUGH NORWEGIAN NETWORKS: Although most immigrants quickly adapted to their new surroundings, some still took part in Norwegian networks where interaction was based on common ethnicity. In Handelman's words this implies a higher degree of organisational incorporation than the above category: The *ethnic network* contains only persons who choose to perceive each other according to categories of ethnic membership. The content of their interaction will be seen by them and by others to have an ethnic flavour and the members of the networks will have built relatively enduring interpersonal ties based on shared ethnicity.²¹ In a Queensland context this could mean living or staying close to other Norwegians or Scandinavians, exercising the mother tongue to some extent and using Norwegian friends, relatives or 'brokers' to facilitate in the acculturation process.

The micro-settlements presented in the previous chapter, in places such as Warwick and the Herbert and Bloomfield rivers, were closely linked to the question of family migration. Here, Norwegian settlers lived as neighbours. Families were often linked through marriage in addition to interaction in daily life. The same seems to apply to the localised networks of Norwegians in Queensland. Under the 'family perspective' discussed in chapter

²⁰ The Commonwealth Census 1911, Birthplaces, I:114-155, II: 105-385.

²¹ Handelman 1977: 195.

4, we saw how nominated migrants would come to live close to their friends or relatives, at least for a while. In facilitating the nomination process there was also a chain of communication between Queensland and Norway.

However, the bounds were rather informal. Apart from some short-lived Scandinavian Lutheran and Baptist congregations, there is no evidence of Norwegian ethnic associations formed in these settlements. It appears the Norwegians preferred to live close together for comfort and practical assistance during the demanding years of establishing residence and an income, but that forming ethnic associations was not a priority. According to Kjeldstadli the networks often extend into larger units; in some cases into elaborate ethnic communities²². In Queensland, however, this did not materialise in the case of the micro-settlements. Rather, as Kjeldstadli also predicts will happen sometimes, the links became weaker over time when these networks no longer best met the needs of the immigrants. After the first generation had settled in, the bounds dissolved with the lack of new arrivals.

ACTIVELY STAYING NORWEGIAN: This next level marks an increased intensity and activity in relation to Norway and Norwegian culture, identity and interests. This small group was typically characterised by endogamous marriages, permanent networks among fellow countrymen and women in Queensland, participation in Norwegian/Scandinavian associations and churches and strong links to the old country, sometimes in the form of circle migration. The clearest evidence of immigrants actively maintaining a strong Norwegian identity is found in Brisbane, where ethnic sentiments and fairly good economic status converged in a small Norwegian middle-class (see also chapters 4 and 5).

One representative of this group was Thorger Ekelund who had gone from boot maker to businessman. He was an active member of the Scandinavian Association and participated in many activities with other Norsemen.²³ It was no doubt easier for well-established businessmen or mariners to stay in touch with their native country than say a transient road worker. Johan Fredrik Markussen from Flekkerøy arrived in Australia in 1879 and spent most of his adult life in Queensland eventually becoming a master mariner. Although Markussen's wife was Scottish, he maintained links with his motherland. In 1908, the family returned to Norway and other European countries for a visit.²⁴ The following year, Markussen nominated his sister Mathilde, a domestic servant, for assisted migration and paid £2. He may also have

²² Kjeldstadli 2008: 52-53.

²³ *Nordmandsforbundet*, 1911: 489, 1914: 544-545.

²⁴ *The Brisbane Courier*, 27 October 1908.

been a member of Nordmandsforbundet; at least as a retiree in 1935 he replied to a questionnaire sent to Norwegians living around the world.²⁵

The Schröder and Svensen families seem to have been at the nexus of Norwegianhood in Brisbane (see also chapter 4 and appendix 2). We will return to Oscar Svensen, the family's most prominent figure, below. Nikolai Theodor Svensen, Oscar's nephew, also nurtured his Norwegian heritage for a long time even though he came to Australia as a 12 year old boy. "I regard Norway as my fatherland, I am proud of being born Norwegian, have always been through all these years," he wrote in 1935 at the age of 57.²⁶ His house in Buranda, Brisbane, was called Larvik after his home-town. However, Svensen was also a naturalised British subject and he fought for the empire both in the Boer War and in the First World War, experiences he wrote about in Nordmandsforbundet's journal on several occasions.²⁷ As such, N. T. Svensen exemplifies a pattern found by Odd S. Lovoll in Norwegian communities in the United States: a dual loyalty of consent and descent, borrowing Werner Sollors' idea; the former as loyalty to a new culture and its structures, the latter as loyalty to an ancestral heritage.²⁸ In Queensland too, such dualities seem to have existed among some of the Norwegians who on one hand were integrated into Australian society in terms of employment, residence and even naturalisation but still kept their Norwegian identity alive.

Moving on from these individual cases, Handelman argues that when persons who define themselves within the same ethnic group also begin to maintain that they hold common interests they only can express together, they start to act *in association* to achieve their goals.²⁹ Several ethnic associations and churches did in fact exist for Scandinavians in Queensland. There was room for active expression of Norwegian or Scandinavian identity for those who lived near a club or a church. However, as the below discussion will show, participation was limited to a few. The Norse institutions in Queensland were Scandinavian rather than national. The number of Norwegians was simply too low to sustain separate associations, but the Brisbane club was a member of Nordmandsforbundet from 1911, indicating the existence of persons who wished to maintain strong links to Norway.

The opportunity for ethnic association was strongest in urban areas, particularly in Brisbane. However, to put the level of participation into perspective, consider the following

²⁵ Copy of application No. 3193, in Ulf Beijbom's research collection, Swedish Institute of Emigration; Norwegians worldwide, questionnaire, sent 23 June 1935, in file no. 312, Norwegian Museum of Emigration.

²⁶ Norwegians worldwide, questionnaire, 1935, in file no. 363, No. Museum of Em. Original quote in Norwegian: "Jeg ser på Norge som mitt Fædreland, er stolt av at jeg er Norsk føtt, har alltid vært det i alle disse år".

²⁷ *Nordmandsforbundet*, 1913: 481, 1915: 326.

²⁸ Lovoll 2006: 248.

²⁹ Handelman 1977: 196.

numbers: The city of Brisbane counted more than 700 Scandinavians in 1886, rising to 742 in 1891 before falling to 626 in the 1901 census.³⁰ Yet the Scandinavian association, founded in 1872, had only 62 members in 1883, a number which was further reduced to 37 in 1892 during the depression.³¹ Although the membership later increased, the association was firmly footed in the Scandinavian middle-class, seen quite clearly from the club's activities which consisted of annual masquerade balls, banquets, picnics, Christmas celebrations and garden festivals as well as maintaining a library.³² Koivukangas' observation seems to hold much truth: "In metropolitan areas there were actually two Scandinavian communities: that of businessmen, tradesmen and other settled people, who were often active in ethnic social life, and that of Scandinavians of lower social status, often working at the port or in related occupations."³³ Among the former were those who maintained a strong Norwegian identity and who had the personal means to invest time in activities to support the association's goals. The latter group mainly consisted of assimilated immigrants with a much more flexible attitude to their own ethnicity, c.f. the many sailors who changed their names.

From the outset, the Danish immigrants were the strongest supporters of the Scandinavian Association in Brisbane. Although it had Norwegian members, the common Scandinavian feeling diminished as time went by, according to Lyng, due to few new arrivals from Sweden and Norway. The club became more and more Danish and in 1924 the name was changed to Danish Association Heimdal.³⁴ At least twice, Swedish consuls tried to form breakaway associations for Swedes and Norwegians, in 1879 and 1898. However, these clubs soon died.³⁵ Shortly after the last attempt, a 'Scandinavian' in Bundaberg wrote a letter to *Norden* taking issue with the Danish dominance in the Scandinavian club's meeting: "... the whole Thing was Danish from Top to Bottom, and not Scandinavian at all [...] Sweden and Norway don't seem to come in anywhere ..." was the message.³⁶ Seen from a Norwegian point of view, although friendly relations surely existed on a personal level between the Scandinavians, some immigrants were perhaps not too eager to join clubs chaired by the Swedish consul or by the dominant Danish middle-class at a time of increasing nationalism.

³⁰ Queensland censuses 1886, 1891, 1901.

³¹ Hansen 1972: 2.

³² See the following reports in the *Brisbane Courier*: 22 July 1878, 28 May 1879, 1 June 1880, 1 August 1882, 15 May 1885, 7 August 1886, 15 May 1888, 7 January 1889, 14 January 1890, 26 December 1898, 7 June 1902, 28 September 1908, 18 September 1909, 24 October 1910 and 1 August 1911.

³³ Koivukangas 1974: 269.

³⁴ Lyng 1939: 153; Hansen 1972.

³⁵ Lyng 1939: 151.

³⁶ *Norden*, 22 February 1899.

In the United States, the celebration of the Constitution Day, 17 May, assumed a role as the major symbol of Norwegian ethnicity from the 1880s, particularly in the large cities.³⁷ In Brisbane, the celebrations, if any, were much more subdued affairs. No reports have been found of 17 May celebrations in the Scandinavian club until the centenary in 1914. No sources answer this question, but: up to that point overt celebrations of Norwegian independence were perhaps impossible in a Danish-dominated Scandinavian association? The first report of an official 17 May celebration in Brisbane is from 1909, and it took place at the office of the Norwegian consul, Arthur John Carter (born in England), and not in the club. It was an affair for diplomats and businessmen, not for the common people.³⁸ In 1914, when the Scandinavian club hosted a 17 May event for the first time, two Norwegians, Harald O. Hein and Thorger Ekelund were leading members of the association.³⁹

Organised Scandinavian activities also took place in a few other places in Queensland, notably in Rockhampton, Bundaberg, Maryborough and Charters Towers. Most of them were short-lived or reached only a limited part of the population. For example, a Scandinavian association was founded in Maryborough in 1872, initially as a sick relief fund, but later as a social club peaking at about 60 members but more or less in its doldrums by the turn of the century due to a lack of fresh blood.⁴⁰ In the gold-mining centre of Charters Towers, where many Norwegians lived, a Scandinavian association was formed in the 1880s. It appears to have had about 40 members at its height. In 1894 Scandinavians held a well-attended picnic, according to a press report. Yet three years later the club was down to just seven members.⁴¹

The story is similar for the Scandinavian churches. Norwegian pastor Christoffer Gaustad (see chapter 5), working for the pietist German Gossner Mission, held the first recorded service in Danish in Brisbane in 1872.⁴² The need arose for a Scandinavian church and a small congregation was born. With Stephanus Grønvold from Drammen as one of the leaders, they managed to build a church in South Brisbane, opening in 1877, later moving to Kangaroo Point. A couple of Danish revivalist pastors, men of the Inner Mission, led the congregation and seemingly shaped its orientation. The Norwegian Jens Christian Larsen took over from 1889; another revivalist, trained by the zealous pastor and Inner Mission leader Johan C. H. Storjohann. Yet Larsen has been described as a liberal and knowledgeable priest

³⁷ Lovoll 2006: 119.

³⁸ *The Brisbane Courier*, 18 May 1909.

³⁹ *The Brisbane Courier*, 19 May 1914.

⁴⁰ *Norden*, November-December 1900; Lyng 1939: 138.

⁴¹ *The Brisbane Courier*, 15 October 1894; *Norden*, 1 December 1900.

⁴² *The Brisbane Courier*, 26 June 1872; Koivukangas and Martin 1986: 77.

who was at odds with the orthodox Brisbane congregation and thus returned home in 1893/94.⁴³ In the Wide Bay area, Maryborough had many Danish settlers, but comparatively few Norwegians. However, the first Scandinavian pastor in the district was the Norwegian lay preacher John Harry Hansen. A wooden church was built in 1883, but the congregation suffered from neglect and the lack of a pastor.⁴⁴ In Mackay, Gaustad founded a congregation in the mid-1870s. A church was erected, but after some years the congregation diminished and the church blew down.⁴⁵ A few other places, mainly dominated by Danes, also had short-lived Scandinavian churches, such as Warwick and Yangan.

According to Koivukangas only a minority of Scandinavians took part in church life, and as seen above a large proportion of the Norwegians joined the Church of England or other denominations. Jens Lyng reckons the Scandinavian churches failed to become engines for ethnic association because the Scandinavians were too scattered and the clergy did not have the means to attract large congregations. Lyng, who was a church-sceptic Scandinavian, concludes that strictly religious concerns took priority over the nationalist agenda, and therefore the pastors never succeeded in gathering large numbers of people⁴⁶

To sum up, the Scandinavian institutions, the clubs more so than the churches, were arenas for expression of ethnicity. However, they only reached a minority of the immigrants. W.D. Borrie has argued that Scandinavian institutions were generally weak, but strongest in urban areas and among Danes, where in-marriage was more frequent.⁴⁷ In case of the Norwegians, formal and informal ethnic association seem to have been strongest among the small group of middle-class people in Brisbane.

NATIONAL LEADERS: In his prolific writings Jens Lyng has commented on the lack of leadership talents among the Scandinavians.⁴⁸ This seems to hold true for the Norwegians as well; there were extremely few outstanding individuals who lit up the path for the rest of the group based on shared ethnicity. The shortage of individual talent was only one aspect of the problem: Due to the scattered nature of the settlement and the limited infrastructure, it would have been a challenging task to muster Scandinavians all over Queensland in any case.

In order to provide a definition of a 'national leader' in our particular context we may say that most of the following attributes would have to apply to such a person: Founder,

⁴³ *Norden*, 24 February 1901; Selmer 1926: 34-35; Brandrud 1945: 282-289.

⁴⁴ *Norden*, 24 February 1901; Queensland naturalisation records, ref. 1873/1639; Emigrants from Kristiania 1871-1930, NDA; Theile 1938: 29; Lyng 1939.

⁴⁵ *Norden*, 6 April 1901.

⁴⁶ *Norden*, 6 April 1901; Koivukangas 1974: 220.

⁴⁷ Borrie 1954: 44.

⁴⁸ *Norden*, 3 November 1900; Lyng 1939: 121.

initiator or leader of Norwegian/Scandinavian networks, churches or associations; active in mustering fellow countrymen; initiator or host for national celebrations for the benefit of the ethnic community; facilitator or ‘broker’ for others based on shared ethnicity.

The Archer brothers may be considered national leaders, most clearly symbolised through their founding of the Eidsvold Station in 1848. However, other than facilitating the entry into Queensland for certain people (chapter 4), they were not active leaders of a broader Norwegian community. Yet, given their high standing in Queensland at the time, they may have functioned as symbolic leaders even for Norwegian immigrants outside their own family circle. During the course of this thesis we have also touched upon a few individuals who no doubt assumed leadership positions (formal or informal) in their local communities, such as Iver Osmundsen at Bloomfield River, Alm and Anderssen at Herbert River and others. While it appears likely that shared ethnicity played a role in the formation of these settlements, men like Osmundsen were at the centre of very localised networks whose main objectives seem to have been functional rather than ethnic. Moreover, all these micro-settlements had a fluid mix of immigrants from many nationalities, and membership of institutions like the Herbert River Farmers’ Association was not defined by country of birth. Consequently, we would not regard these men as national leaders by the definition above.

Extending the argument raised previously about the ethnic sentiments among middle-class Norwegians in Brisbane, the capital city is also where we find the most clear-cut examples of national leaders. These leaders did not emerge until the early 1900s. Oscar Svensen was the most visible figure, followed by Harald O. Hein, a man who had ascended economically and socially since his arrival in Queensland.

Before we take a closer look at these gentlemen, it is worth rewinding to the 1870s to ask: Who were the leaders at the time when several hundred Norwegians arrived in Queensland within a couple of years? Lyng’s comment about the lack of persons with the required position, influence or intellectual capacity to head up the Scandinavian flock in Brisbane seems reasonable.⁴⁹ The assisted immigrants who arrived in the 1870s were mostly poor people and predominantly young. Consequently their first priority was to find employment and a place to live, but they also had social needs. By being instrumental in gathering and organising the first large batch of immigrants, Johan Jappe, a carpenter from Kristiania, became one of the leaders of the Scandinavian community in its early days. Before the arrival of the *Friedeburg* in August 1871 there were hardly any Scandinavians in

⁴⁹ *Norden*, 3 November 1900.

Brisbane. Those who arrived had to fend for themselves as best they could. The first meeting place for Scandinavians was a lodging house owned by a German where dances were held every Saturday. However, around June 1872 Jappe opened a lodging house in the former Wandfield Hotel on the corner of Edward and Union Street, and thus provided a social venue for the Norsemen. Every weekend the house was full of guests and the newcomers had a lively time, according to *Norden*.⁵⁰ The first Scandinavian club in Brisbane was formed there on 23 September 1872, and Jappe himself was one of the founding members.⁵¹ However, after a few months the Scandinavians stopped visiting Jappe's establishment and just after Christmas 1872 he had to close the business. No explanation has been found as to the sudden demise of the venue. From one point of view Jappe was indeed an early national leader; on the other hand, he may just have been an unsuccessful publican. Johan Jappe himself arrived on the *Friedeburg* and thus belonged to the first significant batch of Norwegian immigrants.⁵²

A generation later, full Norwegian independence from Sweden and the subsequent establishment of a Norwegian consulate in Brisbane, as well as the existence of some resourceful, Norwegian-minded middle-class men created an environment for new national leaders to emerge. This new focus on Norwegian identity can be seen by the Scandinavian Association becoming a chapter of Nordmandsforbundet in 1911.⁵³ Instrumental in this process was undoubtedly Harald O. Hein (see also chapter 4). For many years, Hein had an active position within the Norwegian community as Australian commissioner for Nordmandsforbundet.⁵⁴ He was also a leading member of the Scandinavian Association. A member of its committee from at least 1911, he assumed the role of president for several years around 1920.⁵⁵ The Heins seem to have socialised mainly with other Scandinavians and maintained their mother tongue well. When Hein died in 1928 his hospitality towards his fellow countrymen was praised. Their home had a Norwegian name, Villa Trudvang, and from the flagpole the ensign of their native country waved on special occasions.⁵⁶

Captain Oscar Svensen was, if not the most important, at least the most prominent leader of the Norwegian flock. He was introduced in chapter 4 as a wealthy businessman with

⁵⁰ *Norden*, a series of articles published in November-December 1900.

⁵¹ Hansen 1972: 1.

⁵² *Emigrants from Hamburg to Australasia 1850-1879*. Jappe embarked on the journey to Queensland 23 years old with his wife Mathilde and an unmarried girl, Wilhelmina, probably his sister. Later Jappe took up land in Gin Gin near Bundaberg and worked as a timber merchant (Emigrants from Oslo 1867-1930, NDA; Historical birth, death and marriage records, QLD BDM; *Queensland Government Gazette* 1883: 536; *Wise's Queensland Directory* 1893-94: 144).

⁵³ *Nordmandsforbundet*, 1911: 489.

⁵⁴ *Nordmandsforbundet*, 1917: 370; 1926: 223.

⁵⁵ *The Brisbane Courier*, 10 June 1911; *Nordmandsforbundet*, 1921: 539.

⁵⁶ Paulsen in Brändle and Karas (eds.) 1988: 133; *Nordmandsforbundet*, 1928: 99, 1926: 223.

an extensive network among Queensland's elite. Although Svensen's career in Australia and the South Pacific began in the 1880s, it was not until he finally settled in Brisbane with his family sometime around 1910 that he began to assume the role of a national leader. Despite his long spell abroad, Svensen has always been a 100 per cent Norwegian, Ludwig Saxe wrote.⁵⁷ Svensen named his new home Norway when it was built in 1907-1908 and he was a member of Nordmandsforbundet. In 1910 he was rated the most well-known Norwegian in Brisbane. Oscar and his wife Inga Henriette regularly hosted lavish parties at their home.⁵⁸

To begin with, however, Svensen seemed to nurture his connections with Brisbane's leading politicians and businessmen more than with Norwegians as such. But the Svensen family attended the Scandinavian Lutheran Church's garden fete in 1910. Captain Svensen's status as a leading Norwegian is indicated by the fact that when South Pole explorer Roald Amundsen paid Brisbane a short visit in April 1912, Svensen was on the welcoming committee along with the Queensland vice-governor and other high-ranking men. In 1914 the Svensens went back to their native country to be present at the centenary of the Norwegian constitution.⁵⁹

A more active and formal leadership began in 1918 when Svensen was appointed Norwegian consul for Queensland. The following years, the Svensens opened their house for 17 May celebrations.⁶⁰ Harald O. Hein filed a report to *Nordmandsforbundet* praising the traditional Norwegian dishes on the table, the speeches and the singing of the national anthem. He was also full of admiration for the way the family had decorated their large villa:

That it is inhabited by Norwegians, who have not forgotten their fatherland, can be seen right away, in that the eye in every room meets things brought here from Norway, such as woodcarvings, embroideries, flags and much more ...⁶¹

The practices of the leading middle-class Norwegians seem to follow what Herbert Gans has termed 'symbolic ethnicity'. The patterns Gans observed among third generation immigrants in the United States appeared among first generation Norwegians in Queensland: "... ethnicity takes on an expressive rather than instrumental function in people's lives, becoming more of a leisure-time activity and losing its relevance, say, to earning a living or regulating family

⁵⁷ *Nordmandsforbundet*, 1938: 116-117.

⁵⁸ *Nordmandsforbundet*, 1938: 116-117 and 1910: 492; *Queenslander*, 1 October 1910; *The Brisbane Courier*, 19 October 1911 and 16 October 1913.

⁵⁹ *Nordmandsforbundet*, 1912: 392; *The Brisbane Courier*, 24 October 1910 and 29 October 1914.

⁶⁰ *The Brisbane Courier*, 21 May 1919 and 18 May 1920.

⁶¹ *Nordmandsforbundet*, 1919: 198-199. Original quote in Norwegian: "At den beboes av norske, og av folk, som ikke har glemt sit fædreland, kan man straks se, idet øiet i hvert eneste værelse møter ting, som er hentet fra Norge, saasom træskjærerarbeider, broderidekorationer, flag o. m. m ..."

life.”⁶² The Norwegians in Queensland have always been too few to warrant any substantial ethnic infrastructure. The sociogeographic landscape was *not* “full of ‘signs’ almost inevitably leading them to the quarters where their fellow countrymen and women lived,” to turn a quote from Dirk Hoerder upside-down.⁶³ For the well-settled Norwegians, ethnicity had a more limited practical function in their new country. Because of that, probably, there was a stronger emphasis on symbols; on nostalgic allegiance to the old country and pride in traditions. In fact, ceremonial holidays and food are two of the ethnic symbols Gans has identified.⁶⁴

Oscar Svensen was clearly a Norwegian frontrunner, but for whom? It is difficult to imagine that the average Norwegian labourer or farmer in Queensland found much in common with their rich countryman and his nostalgic expression of national symbols. Again, we are back to ethnic association as a middle-class activity. The invitees to Svensen’s 17 May event in 1919 were not just anyone; they were the members of the Scandinavian Association.⁶⁵ As such, the event was probably more relevant for well-to-do Danes and Swedes in Brisbane than for the general Norwegian population in Queensland.

Norwegians within the ethnic hierarchy

THE NORWEGIAN IMMIGRANTS’ adjustment took place within an ethnic hierarchy which existed in Queensland from the beginning of European settlement. In a highly stratified society Europeans were positioned at the top of the ladder, with pastoralists and planters regarding themselves as being at the very apex.⁶⁶ Stereotyping and ‘scientific’ explanations, inspired by Charles Darwin, Herbert Spencer and others, were employed to place the Aboriginals, the Melanesians, the Chinese and other non-white people as inferior to the white population. In his book *Among Cannibals* (publ. in English 1889) based on field studies in North Queensland, Norwegian scientist Carl Lumholtz followed a typical pattern by concluding that the Aboriginals were a “doomed race,” without “the power to resist the onward march of civilisation,” and would soon disappear from the face of the earth.⁶⁷

A colour line was drawn. Non-Europeans, regardless of talent or capacity, were forever to be kept in a subservient position to the whites: “Upon the theoretical evolutionary ladders and trees of mankind which were constructed, the Aborigine was inevitably placed

⁶² Gans 1996: 435.

⁶³ Hoerder 1996: 216.

⁶⁴ Gans 1996: 436.

⁶⁵ *Nordmandsforbundet*, 1919: 198-199; *The Brisbane Courier*, 21 May 1919.

⁶⁶ Evans, Saunders and Cronin 1993: 162.

⁶⁷ Lumholtz 1889: 349.

upon the lowest rung of the most stunted branch, writes Raymond Evans, Kay Saunders and Kathryn Cronin in their book *Race Relations in Colonial Queensland*.⁶⁸

The sugar plantations were distinct social systems with a division of labour between master (whites) and servants (Melanesians, Aborigines). The following example of the wage scale on a sugar plantation provides a clear image of the ethnic stratification in Queensland:

Europeans: Ca. £52 per annum.

Unskilled Chinese field workers: Ca. £30 p.a.

Melanesian workers: £4 p.a.

Aboriginal workers: Rations.⁶⁹

The plantation provided a microcosm of power relationships within the colonial society, with Melanesians being placed near the bottom, followed only by the Aborigines. These structures were transferred to the rest of the society thus drawing the colour line all over Queensland. As shown previously, the arduous work on the plantations was not seen as suitable for Europeans, however Saunders argues:

Constant claims about the unsuitability of Europeans toiling in the heat were not so much statements based upon actual observation, as rationalizations to substantiate the existence of a particular social structure wherein Melanesians and other non-Europeans were kept in a permanent position of economic and cultural subservience.⁷⁰

The Palmer River gold rush from 1873 saw the arrival of a comparatively large number of Chinese (Cantonese) gold diggers in North Queensland. The Chinese, seen as hard-working but servile, were considered competitors and a greater threat than other coloured groups: China was a major power with a large population in relative proximity to Queensland. The Chinese immigrants were skilled and well-organised in their work; on the gold fields they managed to extract profitable yields from diggings left by European miners. To counteract the perceived threat, the Queensland government introduced legislation discriminating against the Chinese. At a time when the authorities sponsored Norwegian and other European immigrants with around £13 a head, the 1877 *Chinese Immigrants Regulation Act* restricted the number of Chinese to one person per ten tons of the ship's capacity and provided for a £10 entry fee.⁷¹

The Norwegians' position

Was a 'European' just a 'European', or did hierarchies exist also within the dominant part of the population? If so, what position did the Norwegians have? Racism enjoyed almost unchallenged respectability in colonial Queensland, according to Evans. In a heterogeneous

⁶⁸ Evans, Saunders and Cronin 1993: 70, 162.

⁶⁹ Evans, Saunders and Cronin 1993: 245.

⁷⁰ Evans, Saunders and Cronin 1993: 158, 180.

⁷¹ Evans, Saunders and Cronin 1993: 245, 268.

society cultures were judged negatively according to the degree with which they varied from Anglo-Saxon appearances, norms and ideals.⁷² Even within the Anglo-Celtic group the Irish were often seen as inferior to the English or the Scots. For the Norwegian immigrants such attitudes would probably not be all that unfamiliar. A part of Norway's nation building from the second half of the 19th century was a newfound hostility towards the country's minorities and adoption of assimilationist policies against such groups as the indigenous Sami people.⁷³

As for Queensland, in chapter 2 we demonstrated how racial motives were used to construct an image of Scandinavians as welcome immigrants. From the early days of European settlement, the Germans were regarded as less objectionable than the Chinese because of their northern European ancestry.⁷⁴ Northern Europeans could easily obtain British citizenship. Generally, the ease with which most Norwegians learned English and subjected to the assimilation pressure meant that they did not face many problems caused by their ethnicity. But the fact that many saw the need to change their names indicates the perceived necessity of conforming to Anglo-Saxon ideals. However, adopting the language and culture of a British colony was not necessarily considered as negative by the Norwegians. They shared the same general ideas of evolutionism, and in public opinion in Norway the Englishman occupied the top rung on the ladder, according to Kjeldstadli.⁷⁵ Although Norwegians awarded themselves a high position too, they were enthusiastic about the 'civilised people' of the large European nations like Germany and Britain while the Sami people were considered 'doomed' – parallel to biological racism in Australia and elsewhere.

Going back to Queensland, Handelman has useful concepts to help us understand its ethnic dynamics. The arrangement of category membership tend to be either 'lateral' or 'hierarchical' in a given place and time, he writes.⁷⁶ In a lateral arrangement, various category sets such as ethnicity, occupation, religion, education etc. are interchangeable to a certain degree; hence one person may be categorised according to different criteria of relevance in different situations. In Queensland, this was the case within the European population: A Norwegian immigrant was not solely judged by his Norwegian nationality; in fact ethnicity was only one of several identities he or she could employ in daily life.

However, a hierarchical structure coexisted in Queensland. In such an arrangement, according to Handelman, a person may be determined in terms of membership in one given

⁷² Evans 2007: 130-131.

⁷³ Niemi 2007: 37-58.

⁷⁴ Evans 2007: 69.

⁷⁵ Kjeldstadli 2003: 321-323.

⁷⁶ Handelman 1977: 192.

category, for example ethnicity, and all behaviour will be interpreted by others based on this one category of identity.⁷⁷ In the Queensland context, this seems to have characterised the relationship between the European or 'white' population and the 'others', i.e. Aboriginals, Melanesians, Chinese, etc. As shown above, these groups were positioned in a hierarchical order according to their ethnicity alone.

Compared to these 'outsiders' racial prejudices against the Norwegians was virtually non-existent. However, being an active Lutheran may, at times, have qualified for negative characteristics from the majority because it accentuated a 'German' background. In his 1890 *History of Bundaberg*, J. Y. Walker disapproves of the Lutheran church in town, commenting that the attached school's attempt at teaching German children in their native tongue is "a futile and fruitless endeavor".⁷⁸ More generally, a lack of English skills could highlight differences, as seen by the example of 26 Norwegians who were sent to Ravenswood in 1871 (chapter 3) and the arrival of nominated migrants to Warwick in 1882 (chapter 5).

In racially alert situations, such as on the goldfields, use of 'foreign' languages may have been disapproved of, indicated by Beijbom and Martin's observation that Scandinavians stuck together on the frontier to fend off suspicion from other groups. Such tensions were heightened at times of war when the loyalty of non-British people came into question.⁷⁹ A Swede in Thornborough, on the Hodgkinson River goldfields, wrote home to his brother in 1900, during the Boer War:

Anyone not having British origins is suspected of having sympathies for the Transvaal Boers and subjected to persecutions and unpleasant insinuations. An example close to me occurred to a Swede, a Norwegian and a German who were openly discussing the war and the Englishmen's way of dealing with the Boers. This resulted in a fight, and the three foreigners were fired from their positions ...⁸⁰

During World War 1, when Britain and Germany fought each other, the marginalisation of some European minorities became more pronounced in Queensland. Germans were subjected to surveillance, job dismissals, confiscation, internment and deportation.⁸¹ Norwegians too were required to register as 'aliens' and faced fines if they did not.

Although racism was widespread during colonial times, Queensland stepped up its process of white-washing after Federation in 1901.⁸² The Melanesian labour trade was terminated. On a national level, the *Immigration Restriction Act* of 1901 introduced a

⁷⁷ Handelman 1977: 193.

⁷⁸ Walker 1890: 151.

⁷⁹ *The Brisbane Courier*, 17 January 1900 and 20 January 1900.

⁸⁰ Letter from C. A. Egerström, Thornborough, to his brother in Sweden, 18 March 1900, privately held.

⁸¹ Evans 2007: 170.

⁸² Evans 2007: 143-144.

dictation test, requiring newcomers to “write out at dictation” a passage of 50 words in a European language chosen freely by the immigration officer.⁸³ The legislation could potentially be used to discriminate against any migrant, although in practice it was a weapon to exclude non-Europeans.⁸⁴

What it does show, however, is that even ‘white’ Europeans were under a degree of threat in the racially oppressive environment around the turn of the century. Evans points out that there was a debate over the actual meaning of whiteness and the flexibility of its boundaries: Should it be restricted to Britons or include all Europeans? Did ‘European’ comprise only Nordic or Alpine subjects or include Mediterraneans as well? Since the late 19th century, small groups of Italian, Greek and Maltese emigrants had arrived in Queensland. By the press, these people were judged as inferior to “long skulled Nordics” from Western Europe.⁸⁵ In other words, phenotypical labelling took place, not only towards Aboriginals or Melanesians, but also to rank different groups of European immigrants. Many Italians settled along the Herbert River, where Scandinavian families had previously been pioneer farmers. Although John Alm reckoned the Italians were not only “good workers, but honest and thrifty,” the colour line was drawn here too: In 1906, during a Royal Commission into the sugar industry, one farmer said he favoured first the British, then Scandinavians before adding: “If we can’t get sufficient Scandinavians we will have to be content with Italians.”⁸⁶

To sum up, in purely physiognomic terms, Norwegians enjoyed a high status in race-obsessed Queensland. However, due to the pressure to assimilate, deviations from the majority course in terms of language, religion and political opinion could lead to negative reactions in one way or the other. On the other hand, for the most part Norwegians were not likely to be categorised in ethnical terms alone and could use other identities when needed.

Relations to the indigenous people

As part of the dominant European population of Queensland, the Norwegians participated, at least indirectly, in the massive dispossession of the territory’s indigenous people. The newcomers from Norway and Queensland’s native population occupied opposite positions in the ethnic hierarchy. To what extent did Norwegian immigrants take part in active marginalisation of Aborigines? This question is difficult to answer precisely for several

⁸³ Immigration Restriction Act of 1901.

⁸⁴ Corkhill 1992: 87.

⁸⁵ Evans 2007: 175-176.

⁸⁶ *Herbert River Express*, 23 September 1933; quoted in Douglass 1995: 89.

reasons: Much of what Evans has termed “genocidal activities”⁸⁷ went unrecorded, and the nationality of the perpetrators would not necessarily have been registered in any case. In addition, searching through police and court records looking for what would probably be only a few cases explicitly involving Norwegians is beyond the practical limits of this thesis. Moreover, whiteness rather than ‘Norwegianness’ was probably accentuated in encounters with the indigenous population. Nevertheless, from the available sources it is possible to provide some examples of Norwegian-Aboriginal interaction.

Firstly, few of the Norwegians who wrote about their initial impressions of Australia failed to mention their first encounter with the indigenous people as seen in a letter from an immigrant published in *Dagbladet* in 1872:

They look awfully ugly these natives, especially the ‘beautiful’ sex, but otherwise they are good-natured people who do not hurt anyone. They walk around almost naked [...]. Some of them work here in [Maryborough], but only a few. ‘What do we need to work for’, they say, ‘when we can live so easily. The whites are stupid people who want to toil and moil like that their whole life, and yet they are left with nothing when they die’. Most of them speak English fluently, and I have spoken with many, but I cannot agree with those who describe these people as being particularly dumb. On the contrary, I believe they are people who can learn and understand anything, there is only a lack of will or perhaps clothing.⁸⁸

The Norseman’s words are in line with contemporary stereotyping, and as mentioned before, ideas of ethnic hierarchies and popular categorisations of ‘white’, ‘black’ and ‘yellow’ would have been part of the immigrants’ mental baggage from home. However, the quote also shows a mixed assessment: The Aboriginals are ugly and possess no will to work, but on the other hand the writer states that they are good-natured, and they do not hurt anyone. Neither are they dumb, and most of them speak English fluently. In fact, the Norwegian believes the Aboriginals have the capacity to understand anything if they want to. The *Dagbladet* letter fits with Knut Jordheim’s findings in his study of attitudes towards indigenous people among Norwegian immigrants in the United States: The American Indians were often described in exotic terms as part of a bigger picture of overwhelming impressions upon arrival in a new country. Typically the indigenous people were observed from the safety of white dominance, and thus the ‘natives’ were not considered an immediate threat, as in the above quote.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Evans 2007: 137.

⁸⁸ *Dagbladet*, 4 July 1872. Original quote in Norwegian: “De ser forfærdelig stygge ud disse Indfødte, især ‘det smukke’ Kjønn, men de ere ellers godmodige Mennesker som ingen Skade gjøre. De gaa næsten nøgne [...]. Enkelte af dem arbeide her i Byen, men det er kun faa. ‘Hvad skal vi arbeide for,’ sige de, ‘naar vi kan leve saa let. De Hvide ere dumme Mennesker, som vil slide og slæbe saaledes sit hele Liv, og endda faar de ingen Ting med sig, naar de dør.’ De snakke meget flydende Engelsk de fleste af dem, og jeg har talt med Mange, men jeg kan ikke være enig med dem, der beskrive disse Mennesker som saa særdeles Dumme. Tvertimod tror jeg, det er Folk, som kan lære og fatte Alting; der mangler kun Villie eller maaske rettere Bekledning’.

⁸⁹ Jordheim 2003: 74, 106-107.

More than just first impressions were the conclusions reached by Lumholtz after four years of zoological and ethnographic field work in Queensland from 1880 to 1884. Did he agree with the observations in the *Dagbladet* letter? Lumholtz relegated Aboriginal culture to the "lowest to be found among the whole genus *homo sapiens*".⁹⁰ Contrary to the immigrant in Maryborough, Lumholtz did not think the indigenous people could 'understand anything'. Rather, within white man's society, the Aboriginals' capacity to 'develop' is limited to becoming workers on a white man's cattle station; they do not comprehend the value of money and can never get as far as to occupy an independent position, the scientist believed.⁹¹

Lumholtz acknowledged the Aboriginals' potential as workers and admired their skills as climbers, hunters, trackers and craftsmen.⁹² But it does not hide the fact that Lumholtz mostly ascribed negative attributes to the native population he studied. He too found them ugly. What is more, Aboriginals are not 'good-natured', they are treacherous and they cannot be relied upon, he argued. "Children of nature" was an expression frequently used by Lumholtz: They do not care for anything beyond the present moment. Self-preservation is their only law of life and by following it they may lie, beg, betray and even kill without hesitation, he wrote.⁹³ Lumholtz was a sojourner in Queensland, not an immigrant. As a scientist on a research mission his circumstances were vastly different from that of a common Norwegian settler. Yet, with his first-hand participatory observation he provided 'scientific' confirmation to common beliefs about Aboriginals that may have served as further ammunition to the ongoing racial stereotyping in Queensland.

On close personal contact, the relationship often changed from distant fascination to violent domination. Lumholtz used firearms to instil fear among the Aboriginals in his vicinity. By repeating it so often in his book, and writing things like "never let him walk behind you," he contributed to the shaping of an image of the Aborigine as an evil creature.⁹⁴ Other Norwegians related similar patterns. In the bush, pastoral properties could threaten Aboriginal livelihoods, and from a cattle station a stockman from Tønsberg described a relationship backed by guns. The Europeans had close encounters with the "wild blacks" during the course of their work on the property. At times, the stockmen sat down by the Aborigines' campfires for dinner or tea. However, the relation was frail: a disagreement between the Europeans and the Aboriginals provoked "us to take our revolvers and keep the

⁹⁰ Lumholtz 1889: viii.

⁹¹ Lumholtz 1889: 340, 343.

⁹² Lumholtz 1889: 71, 80, 189.

⁹³ Lumholtz 1889: 44, 72, 80, 100-101, 224.

⁹⁴ Lumholtz 1889: 100.

fellows away from us as spears and boomerangs flew around ...”⁹⁵ When the Norwegian lived alone in the bush for three months the Aboriginals offered him fish, wild ducks and scrub turkey in exchange for flour, sugar, tea and the occasional pinch of tobacco. Although mutually beneficial, these encounters took place with gun in hand because the blacks “looked awful” and they were aggressive, according to the Tønsberg man, so he always fired a few shots.⁹⁶ No sources offer the Aboriginals’ interpretation of these situations.

Surveyors were often the first point of contact between settlers and indigenous people, and they relied on Aboriginals to guide them to water and assist in other ways.⁹⁷ Norwegian surveyor David Dietrichson worked on the Queensland-South Australia border, probably in the 1890s. He too emphasises the violent relationship: “Every night we had to keep guard in the camp, and every now and then we were forced to shoot some of them to gain respect.”⁹⁸ Again, these stories parallel Jordheim’s analysis: Norwegians who moved forward on the western frontier in the United States and met indigenous people, did so with guns. As the immigrants left their own safe settlements and progressed into Indian territory the rules changed: the Indians were seen as a practical problem which had to be overcome, a part of nature’s threats along with deserts and snakes.⁹⁹

In Queensland too, the more violent encounters took place on the frontier of European settlement. Those who lived in white-controlled Brisbane would have a different experience than residents way out west or in the far north. Aboriginals worked as quasi-slaves in the lucrative *bêche-de-mer* (sea cucumber, also known as trepang, trepany) fishing and pearling activities in the far north, according to Evans, as these ventures required a large supply of cheap, unskilled labour.¹⁰⁰ The seaman Christian Olaf Andersen came to Cooktown in 1898 and joined a Dane, ‘German Harry’, with the intention of fishing for the high-value sea cucumber. “We were unable to get all the black boys we wanted and had to make a start with eight boys, a Rathuma man, Harry and myself,” Andersen wrote in his personal memoirs; the use of the word ‘boys’ in itself possibly an example of contemporary racial stereotyping.¹⁰¹ The catch was collected by hand from the reef at low tide, gutted, dried and smoked and then

⁹⁵ “Fra Australiens Skove og Prærier” (From the Australian Bush and Prairie), a series of articles published in *Tønsbergs Blad*, 1896: 48-49. Original quote in Norwegian: “os til at tage frem vore Revolvere og holde Krabaterne fra os, medens Spyd og Boomerang suste omkring ...”

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*: 25-26.

⁹⁷ Kitson and McKay 2006: 1.

⁹⁸ “En australsk eventyrer beretter” (Accounts from an Australian adventurer), autobiographical writings by David Dietrichson, privately held. Original quote in Norwegian: “Vi måtte hver nat holde vagt i leiren, og nu og da var vi tvungne til at skyde nogle af dem for at indynde respekt”.

⁹⁹ Jordheim 2003: 86.

¹⁰⁰ Evans 2007: 134; Loos 1974: 171-172.

¹⁰¹ *Memoirs of Captain Christian Olaf Andersen*, pg. 27.

sold to the Chinese market for £120 per ton. Andersen and company worked on the Pocklington and Indispensable reefs, both off New Guinea. We do not know a lot about how Andersen's 'boys' were treated, other than the Norwegian's own words: "We had the boys on the reef when the weather permitted and picked up Tealfish, Deepwater Black and Suffred, which are the names of the different kinds of Trepany fetching the highest prices."

We should not generalise too much from these cases of possibly violent or exploitative interaction, but they nevertheless fall within the bigger picture of European transformation of Queensland. Conversely, incidents of friendly relations between Norwegians and Aboriginals cannot be taken as more than isolated cases. In the previous chapter we argued that one of the characteristics of the Norwegian-Scandinavian micro-settlement on the Bloomfield River was the close contact between Europeans and Aborigines. In 1898, Iver Osmundsen had 34 indigenous persons living on his selection Banabilla, itself an Aboriginal name. He employed three to four Aboriginals and always gave them food for work done, but apparently not wages like a European would earn. The youngest Osmundsen daughter, aged about 14, spoke the language of the local people and acted as an interpreter when officials came for inspections.¹⁰² According to later family accounts, the Osmundsens continued to interact closely with the local Aborigines, allowing nomads to camp on their property and giving tea or soup to the sick.¹⁰³ As such, it seems they had the opposite attitude to the indigenous people to those who felt the need to wield guns. Yet one example like this does not alter the general picture of white-Aboriginal relations: Slow, but relentless European invasion and desperate, but ultimately futile resistance by the Aboriginals, to borrow historian Henry Reynolds' words.¹⁰⁴

Conclusion

Norwegians did not constitute a single, distinct ethnic group in Queensland. Pressure to assimilate into the Anglo-Celtic society was a strong force. Although Norwegians generally enjoyed a high position in the ethnic hierarchy in Queensland it was often necessary to conform to British ideals in order to be accepted. Within this context, Norwegian ethnic identity was situational and not uniform. In this chapter we have tried to show the existence of a continuum of various forms of ethnic adjustment, taking into account especially the contrast between the many proletarians, typically single men, who often were subject to rapid absorption into the majority, and the middle-class strata of families who maintained and expressed their Norwegianness to a much greater extent.

¹⁰² W. E. Roth to Commissioner of Police, Brisbane, 24 February 1898, in Cairns Historical Society.

¹⁰³ "Life on the Bloomfield with Grandmother Osmundsen" and "Life on the Bloomfield", both in Young, 2007.

¹⁰⁴ Reynolds in Reynolds (ed.) 1993: 43.

7 – Conclusion

THIS THESIS CONFIRMS that America was not the only destination for Norwegian out-migrants during the time of mass emigration. This is interesting on several levels: Firstly, there were multiple destination choices for prospective migrants, although they were not equally relevant. Secondly, in the various receiving societies, the story of Norwegian immigration and settlement is a diverse one. Our understanding of Norwegian migrant communities is typically formed by the experiences from the United States; of strong ethnic solidarity in Brooklyn, Chicago and the rural Mid-West. However, this is not the whole story, as this study from Queensland demonstrates.

In the introductory chapter we presented two broad research questions: 1) How did Norwegian immigration to Queensland take place between 1870 and 1914, i.e. how many arrived, when, and by what means? 2) How did the Norwegians settle in after their arrival in Queensland in terms of admission, employment, residence and ethnic adjustment?

Based on these questions, the aim of this thesis has been twofold: Firstly, to provide a systematic discussion of the Norwegian immigration to Queensland as an uneven movement of people within a limited period of time; and secondly, to analyse the ‘settling in’, or the acculturation, of the Norwegians. In other words, the latter can be seen as a study of how the migrants came to terms with their new home after they disembarked in Queensland.

The migratory movement

The basic conclusion about the size of the Norwegian migration to Queensland is that it was very small. A study of Norwegians in any other part of Australia would most likely lead to the same result: The land under the Southern Cross has never been among the most popular destinations for migrants from Norway. As shown in chapter 3, probably less than 2000 Norwegians came to Queensland between 1870 and 1914, peaking in 1871-1873 and 1899-1900. The number of arrivals fluctuated according to the availability of assisted passages, offered by the Queensland government as a means of attracting immigrants from Europe. But why did so few go, given the attractive ‘package’ on offer?

According to Dirk Hoerder, people migrate when conditions at potential destinations seem better to a degree that the opportunity costs – loss of relationships, fear of change and the unknown, the actual fare – are lower than the hoped-for benefits.¹ In the case of Norwegian migration to Queensland we may conclude that the anticipated benefits did not pass the threshold of ‘pull-reducing factors’. As shown in chapter 2, Queensland was not only

¹ Hoerder 2002: 16.

far away, it was more or less unknown to most potential migrants from Norway. In stark contrast to this, consider the strong position of the United States in Norway with a massive movement of people and numerous links both between persons in the two countries and also in terms of physical communications.

Queensland attempted to offer a 'vital bribe' to increase its attractiveness, and particularly in the early 1870s they did lure away a few hundred Norwegians. Had the migration scheme not been disbanded, as it was several times, more Norwegians would probably have travelled to 'The Sunshine State' and settled there. Eventually the migratory link may have become self-sustaining. However, import of settlers from Scandinavia was always on the fringes of Queensland's immigration policy, prone to be axed when political or financial problems arose, like in 1873, 1879 and 1901. In periods when cheap tickets were not available in Norway and promotion was limited, Queensland must have been considered practically irrelevant as a potential destination compared to the strong pull of America. A few people travelled to Queensland to reunite with their families, but the number was never large enough to create the necessary momentum for chain migration to kick off.

Assisted migrants were not the only Norwegians who came to Queensland. In particular, numerous seamen arrived on the coasts of eastern Australia, although more so in Victoria and New South Wales than in Queensland. In general they were not stable family settlers with an impetus to encourage friends and relatives at home to follow. Instead, many seamen were single men with a short-term perspective on their own lives, and as such they were not good agents for chain migration. On the other hand, a smaller group of sea captains and businessmen obviously saw opportunities in the colony and chose to settle there, later helping others to follow suit. This form of migration can be seen in relation to the growing Norwegian maritime presence in the antipodes. In contrast to cheap tickets for the poor, this was a kind of business migration which took place within circles of resourceful, aspiring and adventurous men.

The process of admission is often a major obstacle for migrants. However, for Norwegians entering Queensland prior to 1901 it was not a problem: They were generally accepted immigrants and could also obtain British citizenship immediately upon arrival. Regulations were tightened with the implementation of the *Immigration Restriction Act* of 1901. Although it was not primarily aimed at Europeans it may have further discouraged Norwegians to enter Australia at a time when assisted and maritime migration was slowing down.

The process of settling in

Assisted migrants were welcomed to Queensland because they were seen as physically useful to the colony. Most of the migrants did hard work as labourers on roads, railways and farms; as carpenters and boot makers, as sailors and in the mines. A minority established their own farms. For women, marriage was the main 'career' besides work as domestic servants. As a conclusion, the occupational structure of Norwegians in Queensland was proletarian, and compared to the general population Norwegian men were heavily overrepresented in maritime activities and in manual labouring/crafts.

Knowing that migration to Queensland was mainly relevant for poor people and sailors, it is not surprising that the Norwegians were scarce in the upper echelons of society. There was a certain degree of social mobility however, mostly observed through individual cases rather than systematically, illustrated by examples of seafarers, craftsmen, farmers and small business owners who were successful in their pursuits. Often it may have been a question of 'diagonal mobility'; improving one's own position while remaining in the same social class. In contrast, many Norwegians ended their lives in poverty, and we should not overlook these often 'silent' migrants when forming our conclusions.

We have seen how Norwegians were scattered over most parts of Queensland, some of them were concentrated in a few micro-settlements. But why did the Norwegians not form more close settlements? They were extremely few, of course, counting just 1 out of 500 inhabitants at the relative peak of the Norwegian population, or around 850 at most in absolute terms. But in New Zealand, where similar numbers of Norwegian migrants arrived in the 1870s, the Norsemen congregated in small villages: Norsewood and Dannevirke in Hawkes Bay. However, this was largely due to active efforts by the New Zealand government which wanted Scandinavian immigrants for a specific task in a specific area, e.g. clearing the large Seventy Mile Bush.² In Queensland there was no similar plan; the Norwegians were assisted, yes, but upon arrival there was no active initiative from the government or other groups to settle the people from Norway together. Rather, they were expected to assimilate.

Further to that, the Norwegians arrived at different places along the coast; for subsidised migrants the choice of destination was not always in their own hands. Remember also that Queensland is a very large territory. The economy and infrastructure had a regionalised character. As such it was difficult to communicate with and bring together fellow countrymen in other parts of the colony. As pointed out in chapter 3, the first priority for the 'new chums' was to find an income, but the Norwegian community was probably too weak to

² Molstad Andresen 1999; Brew 2007.

offer much in the way of assistance, except for those who migrated through family networks. As Hoerder has pointed out, assisted migration reduced the need for help from fellow countrymen during the crucial first days after arrival, diminishing the opportunities for ethnic community formation.³ The mobile nature of many jobs also made ethnic settlement formation more difficult.

Although Norwegians generally enjoyed a favourable position in Queensland's ethnically stratified society, there was an apparent pressure to conform to British ideals. As such, I agree with Koivukangas' point about isolated settlers completely exposed to the surrounding society (chapter 6). On the other hand, the picture was slightly more complex. While there was little ethnic clustering in Queensland, and the settlement there differed enormously from the close-knit communities among Norwegians in the United States, some Queensland Norwegians still kept their ethnic identities alive. Family networks were an arena for retention of the native language, traditions and communications back home. With a possible exception during the relatively large influx of Scandinavians in the early 1870s, formal ethnic associations for Norsemen had few members. Those that existed were mostly relevant to people who lived in Brisbane and a few other towns, and some Norwegians assumed leadership roles in them. A few migrants who came to Queensland in the 1880s and 1890s actively took part in organising ethnic activities until well after World War I. In conclusion, however, participation in ethnic associations seems to have been more of a leisure activity among a few urban middle-class Norwegians than a functional step in the acculturation process for the common immigrants. We are again back to the scattered nature of the settlement as well as the regionalised structure of Queensland's society. These conditions also worked to the disadvantage of the Scandinavian churches as potential ethnic hubs; a potential further diminished by pietist ministers who may have pushed people away from the Lutheran church in favour of other orientations in life.

Several of the points we have raised here indicate a more fundamental division between Norwegian immigrants in Queensland. Although a continuum of positions rather than a clear-cut dichotomy, when summarising our findings it seems fruitful to distinguish between 'living alone' and 'living together'. The group living alone overwhelmingly comprised of men. They arrived in Queensland without the support of a family and without significant financial resources. These men were typically labourers or sailors. They normally wandered around a great deal in search of work and adventure. In other words, there was a

³ Hoerder 1996: 244

high degree of geographical mobility within this group. However, as mentioned before, they often had a short-term attitude to money. Some of these men were prone to drinking and involved in a fair share of rucks in Queensland's numerous pubs. Almost half of the Norwegian men were unmarried, and a large percentage died in poverty without relatives in Australia. As for ethnic adjustment, most people in this group were rather rapidly absorbed into the Anglo-Celtic majority, surrounded as they were by British and Irish work and drinking mates.

The other group, 'living together', in contrast, was more family-oriented. Many of these people travelled to Queensland together as families on immigrant ships. Some married after arrival and fostered children. There was a mix of men, women and children in this group. Some of the families settled close together, and after having established a reasonably secure position in Queensland they nominated friends and relatives at home for cheap tickets, further strengthening the networks. People in this category had a higher degree of permanent settlement, perhaps a family farm or a shop, and there was a larger proportion of people who gradually improved their social position. In terms of ethnic identity, stronger social networks among other Norwegians allowed for the maintenance of a degree of Norwegianness, but mainly during the first generation. Among some, ethnicity was more actively expressed through participation in organised activities.

All in all, we cannot really speak of a united community of Norwegians in Queensland in 1870-1914. If anything, it was a fragmented group of people. They were geographically spread out, obviously, but social differences existed too; not so much between top and bottom in a general class hierarchy as within a broader working/farming class at the lower part of the social spectrum, where most Norwegians belonged. The unconformity was connected to varying degrees of permanency in employment, residence and social mobility. Also, inclusion in social networks differed between the immigrants. As a consequence there was an inequality in people's ability to draw on social capital in the process of acculturation.

Strengths and weaknesses

The main strength of *A Norwegian Waltz*, I believe, is that we have been able to offer a systematic discussion of both the migratory movement to Queensland and important aspects of the Norwegian settler society. However, in this concluding chapter I also think some self-criticism is due:

The analysis has an outsider's perspective because it is based to a large degree on quantitative data, newspaper articles, family history and other second-hand accounts. There is

a lack of insight into the real thoughts and expressions of the first generation of immigrants, due mainly to the limited availability of source material. To put it differently: We have built a decent structure, but I wish we could have delved deeper into the agents and also been better able to explain ‘why’ and not just ‘how’.

Further to this, the analysis has a male perspective. Although I have tried to include women when possible, the result is not entirely satisfying given that 20-30 per cent of the Norwegian-born population consisted of females. However, it has been difficult to locate sources which treat women as more than almost invisible extensions of their male partners, perhaps no surprise given women’s second-class position in Queensland at the time.

Another point of criticism is: We have studied a tiny group of people within the complex context of Queensland history. Although numerous books and articles have been perused, it is still a risk that my understanding of Queensland is wrong in some places, or at least not sophisticated enough. What is said here about contemporary developments in Queensland history does not pretend to offer the ultimate interpretation, but rather serve as a framework of understanding for readers who are not experts on the subject.

Furthermore, is it not ethnocentric to have such a narrow focus on one small group of people? In choosing my object of study I have fixed my eyes firmly on the case of the Norwegians, most of the time even isolated from Swedes and Danes with whom they shared many characteristics in the process of migration to and settlement in Queensland. On the other hand, in my analysis of the Norwegians in Queensland, I have clearly indicated that they came to an ethnically complex society and lived their lives in dynamic interaction with people from a variety of ethnic groups, including other Scandinavians. As such, the Norwegians have not been treated as an isolated unit outside the rest of society but rather as an integral part of the colony/state and its history. Trying to understand Norwegian migration to Queensland does not make sense without taking into account other developments that took place there.

Finally, have we perhaps overvalued the Norwegian presence in Queensland? When reading 130 pages about one single immigrant group, one may be excused for attaching more importance to this group than it deserves. I can only repeat that between 1870 and 1914, the Norwegians only comprised between 0.1 and 0.2 per cent of the territory’s population. Apart from the Archer family (who came from Scotland, to be honest), the Svensens and a couple of others, no Norwegian individual has made a particularly notable contribution to Queensland business, politics, culture or art. So this is definitely not an endeavour to construct an exaggerated picture of the Norwegians’ importance, just an attempt to examine the Norsemen within the societal mosaic of ‘The Sunshine State’.

Appendix 1 – The Archer Family

A short outline of its history in relation to Norway and Queensland

MEMBERS OF the Scottish-Norwegian Archer family exerted agency as influential explorers, pastoralists, politicians and businessmen from the early days of European occupation in Queensland. The Archer brothers crossed into present-day Queensland as early as 1841, and were well and truly settled at their permanent base at Gracemere, near Rockhampton, by the time the first assisted migrants from Norway started arriving. Clearly, the Archers were in a different position from most common immigrants in terms of access to resources and networks (see chapter 4). Yet an account of Norwegians in Queensland would be incomplete without touching upon this family and its longstanding connection between Norway and Australia. This appendix, based primarily on Lorna McDonald's book *Over Earth and Ocean: The Archers of Tolderodden and Gracemere, a Norse-Australian Saga 1819-1965* (1999), will offer an overview of the family's history with particular relation to the transcontinental networks linking Norway and Queensland.

Scottish descent

The Archers who came to Australia had their roots in Scotland. William Archer Sr. (1786-1869) was a junior partner in his family's ship-building and timber trade firm in Perth. During difficult times after the Napoleonic Wars, in 1819 William was sent on a business trip to Sweden and Norway, two countries from which the Scottish merchants imported timber. The romantically inclined Archer visited Larvik, south west of Kristiania (Oslo), among other places, and he fell in love with the small coastal town, according to McDonald. After the family firm folded in 1824, William lost his livelihood. He had, however, funds to purchase a schooner, which the family used to migrate to Norway in 1825. The party included William, his wife Julia (nee Walker) (1791-1880) and their eight children. The family settled at Tolderodden (now Tollerodden) in Larvik. The children went to school there and rapidly became as fluent in Norwegian as in English, The older boys were trained in a trade or a profession back in Perth. In addition, Julia and William increased their family with five new offsprings after they settled in Larvik.¹

Sent to Australia

Over the course of the next decades, all the nine Archer sons would travel to Australia and spend time there. None of the four girls ever did the same. Although the Archer family was financially strained, father William wished for his nine boys to enter the world as educated

¹ McDonald 1999: 5-14.

gentlemen, and the brothers were determined to save their father from economic ruin. However, there was no suitable employment for them in Norway. Migration to Australia offered better prospects than low paid positions, if obtainable, in Britain, argues McDonald. She writes that it was chiefly through the agency of their mother Julia's uncles William and James Walker that the young Archers were sent to the outposts of the British Empire. William Walker had first arrived in Sydney in 1813 and had a mercantile firm there, while his brother James held a land grant in the Blue Mountains.² These were among many Scottish merchant families who looked for opportunities in the early days of European occupation of Australia.

The Archer boys' migratory circle between Norway and Australia began when David Archer, the third eldest son, arrived in Sydney in 1834 to learn the ropes in the wool business at the Walker property, Wallerawang Station. However, David wanted to establish his own sheep station. He received payment for his work for the Walkers partly in livestock, and David's plan was to overland his sheep northwards in search for a vacant piece of land to take up for himself.³ Before that, David was joined as a colonist by his brothers William and Thomas, who arrived in 1837, and John who was in Australia too on account of his occupation as a seaman (he was actually the first of them to see Sydney, in 1833).

Looking for better pastures

The Archer brothers are renowned for their great overland journeys, the first of which began in 1840. After initial difficulties, in May 1841 David, Thomas and John set out to the north with 5000 sheep looking for unoccupied land. In August they reached the Darling Downs, and had thus crossed into what would later become Queensland. After a total of 18 months on the move, David selected a run on the upper Brisbane River, 80 kilometres north of Brisbane, and named it Durundur.⁴ The Archer history is an important example of how European squatters and explorers extended their reach into today's Queensland in the 1840s and 1850s. These were areas previously uncharted by the Europeans. As such, we may say that the Archers actually created the frontier as they moved forward. Thus, their ventures imply an occupation of Aboriginal land too. As the brothers established new sheep stations, they had contacts with the indigenous population who was dispossessed of their land. However, Lorna McDonald repeatedly points out that the Archers were at the odds with the rest of the white community,

² McDonald 1999: 18, 42.

³ McDonald 1999: 42-56.

⁴ McDonald 1999: 61-62.

both at Durundur and later at Gracemere, in their fair and friendly relationship with the local Aboriginal people.⁵

The 15 years from the first attempts at an overland journey in 1840, until Gracemere was settled in 1855, is a story of constant search for better pastures. Durundur had the worst possible conditions for wool production: it was too lush and humid.⁶ Among the colonists there was a struggle for good land as European settlement expanded, and for the Archers it was necessary to look for better country to graze their sheep. From 1846 to 1848, the brothers moved west and north to set up several stations in drier country where the sheep improved. In 1848 they entered the Burnett region and claimed land there. One of the properties was called Eidsvold, taken up by Charles and Thomas Archer, and named after the village in Norway where the Norwegian constitution was adopted in 1814. It was situated on a picturesque sweep of the Burnett River and could hold about 15,000 sheep, according to Thomas' assessment in 1848.⁷ A block was called Telemark, after a region in Norway.

Although the older Archer brothers were all born in Scotland, they held a fascination for Norwegian nature and culture as well as for Norse mythology. The most lasting heritage of this are the place names they gave to various properties and natural features: Eidsvold and Telemark on the Burnett; and later Farris, for a short time, Mt. Sleipner, Mt. Berserker and File-Fjeld in the Fitzroy region. Having left Scotland at young age, they did look at the town of Larvik as their real home, and "for all the brothers, Norway was always the yardstick when scenery was described," writes Lorna McDonald.⁸

Finding the "perfect paradise"

It was the oldest brother, Charles, in Australia since 1843, who was to complete the overland journeying in search for better land. Fuelled by previous expeditions by German explorer and naturalist Ludwig Leichhardt, Charles was eager to venture further north from the Burnett and into the region of Keppel Bay. In 1853, Charles and William, set out on the brothers' most ambitious expedition yet, resulting in them becoming the first Europeans to explore the Fitzroy Valley (near present-day Rockhampton).⁹ Three weeks after leaving Eidsvold, in a classic moment in Archer history, Charles, mounted on his favourite horse Sleipner (named after the Norse deity Odin's eight-legged equine creature) gazes out from the mountain range down to the flat, open valley below with a large river. "Upon topping the range a most

⁵ McDonald 1999: 165, among many references; personal communication with Dr. McDonald, 18 Feb 2011.

⁶ McDonald 1999: 65.

⁷ "Ceratodus", 2, 1979: 15.

⁸ "Ceratodus", 1, 1979: 20; McDonald 1999: 45.

⁹ McDonald 1999: 139-140.

astonishing view lay beneath us,” he wrote in his journal on 4 May 1853.¹⁰ They named the river Fitzroy after the then governor of New South Wales, Charles Fitzroy. Down in the valley they struck a lake, which “to our surprise was – for this country – a most magnificent sheet of fresh water ...,” according to Charles.¹¹ Here they marked a run of 1440 sq. km, originally called Farris, after a lake near Larvik. The run was later renamed Gracemere in honour of Thomas Archer’s wife Grace Morrison.

This “perfect paradise,” in Charles’ words, was to become the future and final home base for the Archer family in Australia. However, in order to settle Gracemere permanently, Charles and William had to undertake another challenging trek: The two brothers and a group of European and indigenous shepherds took 8000 sheep north from Coonambula in the Burnett, droving almost 300 kilometres in 39 days.¹² Meanwhile Colin Archer brought in supplies on the ketch *Ellida* up to the future site of Rockhampton, then part of the Gracemere run. Another legendary moment in the history of the Archers is the rendezvous with Charles on 1 September 1855 when Colin arrives on his boat to meet Charles and his party who have just about run out of supplies.

The following year, a site for a future township was chosen on the Fitzroy. The Crown Lands Commissioner suggested it be called Charleston, in honour of Charles Archer, but Charles declined. In the end, the name Rockhampton was chosen. “Charles’ significance outside the family lies in his role within Queensland history as the first European to encounter the Fitzroy River and virtual founder of the City of Rockhampton,” writes Lorna McDonald.¹³

Although David Archer returned to Europe and never saw Australia again, most of the brothers lived their lives in a cycle between Larvik, Queensland and Britain, all undertaking their ‘ritualistic return’ to Tolderodden once or even several times.¹⁴ Thanks to a boom in the sheep and wool business following the gold rush of the early 1850s, the older brothers could afford to pay for the younger ones to travel to Australia.¹⁵ In 1852, 18 years after David’s arrival, the first Norwegian-born Archer came out: Colin, who was later to become a naval architect. The migratory link was maintained after Gracemere was established, with James, the youngest of the brothers, and his nephew Simon Jørgensen (son of Catherine, the oldest sibling) arriving in 1855. Gracemere became a school for many a young man who spent time

¹⁰ “Ceradotus”, 2, 1979: 17.

¹¹ “Ceradotus”, 2, 1979: 17.

¹² “Ceradotus”, 2, 1979: 18.

¹³ McDonald 1999: 151-153.

¹⁴ “Ceradotus”, 2, 1979: 16.

¹⁵ McDonald 1999: 138.

there to gain colonial experience.¹⁶ After the short-lived gold rush at Canoona north of Rockhampton in 1858, when around 15,000 hopefuls landed within three months, Gracemere ceased to be on the frontier of the settlement. Rockhampton grew quickly into a town. Later on, the Archers developed their station into an important beef cattle stud.

Gracemere was not only a workplace for members of the family. They had a number of other Norwegian immigrants in employ, some of them from Larvik and possibly acquainted with the Archers prior to departure from Norway. In January 1873, Andrew P. Jensen, a young stockman from Norway, drowned when attempting to cross the Calliope River. With him were his boss William Archer and another Norwegian, Fredrik Dahm.¹⁷ It is also known that Johannes Olsen, a labourer from Frederiksværn (Stavern) near Larvik, worked on Gracemere. He, his wife Lise and two children travelled to Queensland as assisted migrants in 1873, and anecdotal evidence suggests they came out at the request of some member(s) of the Archer family. Olsen's two eldest sons Andrew and Alexander left Norway two years previously and they too may have been employed at Gracemere.¹⁸

The Archer family's significance in Queensland extended beyond that of pastoral exploration. Two of the brothers, Archibald and Alexander, made their mark on Queensland's political and business scene from the 1860s to the 1890s, Archibald in parliament and Alexander as a banker. Alexander lived in Brisbane and was head of the Bank of New South Wales in Queensland for many years. Archibald was a member of the Queensland Parliament. He made his debut when he won the new Rockhampton seat in 1867. His chief concern in parliament was reformation of land legislation. In addition, he was a leading voice for the separation of Central Queensland from the rest of the colony.¹⁹ When Archibald returned to Norway in 1896, he was the last of the original nine brothers to leave Australia, marking the end of 63 years' of explorative, pastoral, maritime, commercial and political pursuits.

Second generation migration

As the first generation withdrew, the second took over. David's son Robert Stubbs Archer (1858-1926) became manager at Gracemere from the mid-1880s. However, the link to Norway was not broken. Robert's daughter Joan, the first child to be born a Gracemere, travelled to Larvik and re-established the pattern of migration. There she met her future husband, Alister Archer (1890-1965), son of James Archer. Alister, born and bred in Larvik,

¹⁶ McDonald 1999: 182.

¹⁷ *Rockhampton Bulletin*, 31 January and 3 February 1873.

¹⁸ *Emigrants from Hamburg to Australasia 1850-1879; Emigrants from Oslo 1867-1930, NDA; History of Capricorn Caves*, family/local history by Ann Augusteyn 2006; manuscript by Theodor Olsen, probably 1950s.

¹⁹ McDonald 1999: 179-212.

decided to move to Queensland, possibly influenced by Joan who was at the same age. He migrated in 1909 accompanied by his school friend Nikolai Aagaard, and the two learned the ropes at the family properties.²⁰ Alister and Nikolai both became permanent Queensland residents. Alister's younger brother, Cedric (1892-1918), also migrated, in 1912. All three boys took up British citizenship in order to enlist in the Australian Imperial Force and fight in World War 1.²¹ Cedric fell in France in 1918, but the two others returned to Queensland. Nikolai Aagaard also married an Archer woman: Doris, granddaughter of David Archer. "And so the family links forged between Norway and Australia in the first half of the nineteenth century were reinforced in the years following the First World War," writes McDonald.²²

When Robert Stubbs Archer passed away in 1926, Alister took over as general manager for Archer Brothers Ltd. and became a respected cattleman. The struggling company was, however, wound up and the properties sold in 1949.²³ The Gracemere homestead remained in the family and Alister lived there for the rest of his life. His death in 1965 marked the end of a 130 year long era of circle migration between Larvik and Australia. As of 2011, however, descendants of William Sr. and Julia Archer still live in the old homestead. Tolderodden, on the other hand, was sold to Larvik municipality in 1938, but there are members of the Archer family still residing in Larvik too, and they stay in touch with their relatives in Rockhampton. There, in the capital of Central Queensland, a statue of Charles Archer, mounted on his horse Sleipner, was unveiled in 1981 on the Fitzroy riverbank.

In summary, the saga of the Archers is an exciting one, almost more like a piece of fiction than reality. However, the family did in fact contribute significantly to European occupation and colonisation of Australia, in particular by exploring parts of today's Queensland. With their involvement in the pastoral industry in addition to numerous influential family, business and political links, members of the Archer family had a strong and respected position in the society.

Short biographical overview of the Archer brothers²⁴

CHARLES (1813-1861): Born in Scotland. Went to the West Indies 16 years old. Came to Durundur 1843 to learn the trade of a squatter. Took over from his younger brother Thomas as 'the great pioneer'; headed the expedition to the Fitzroy 1853 and established the family base

²⁰ McDonald 1999: 288.

²¹ Naturalisation papers, Alister and Cedric Archer, NAA, ref. 11/10812, 15/11672

²² McDonald 1999: 333.

²³ McDonald 1999: 341-352.

²⁴ Based on McDonald 1999.

at Gracemere in 1855. Seen as the virtual founder of Rockhampton. A skilled artist and cartographer. Never married. Back to Larvik in 1857. Buried at Tolderodden.

JOHN (1814-1857): Born in Scotland. Seaman. The first family member to reach Sydney, in January 1833. Joined the 1841 trek to Durundur and remained there until 1844. Became captain of a ship in 1849, going to San Francisco. Also did whaling in the Arctic Ocean and trading in the Bass Strait. Married three times; the first two wives died. Two children. John was lost at sea outside New Zealand in 1857.

DAVID (1816-1900): Born in Scotland. Came to Sydney in 1834. Seen as the family's true pastoral pioneer. Manager at the Walker's station Wallerawang in 1838. Established the firm David Archer & Co in 1839. Later manager at Durundur. Back to Norway in 1853, then moved to England and Ireland where he married Susan Stubbs in 1855. Later the family lived in Scotland and London. Accountant and business manager for the family interests in Australia. Ten children.

WILLIAM (1818-1896): Born in Scotland. Came to Australia in 1837. Held managerial positions at Wallerawang Station for many years. Also managed Eton Vale Station on the Darling Downs. Later he was manager at Gracemere. Visited Norway several times and retired in Larvik, where he is buried at Tolderodden. Never married.

ARCHIBALD (1820-1902): Born in Scotland where he was also trained as an engineer. Many years on Polynesian islands as a planter and trader. In the 1860s he became a Queensland politician. Member of the Legislative Assembly 1867-69 and 1879-95, and served as Treasurer and Minister for Education 1882-83. Keen supporter of the separation movement. When in Europe in 1871 he was appointed Agent-General in London by the Queensland government. He resigned, as the role was inconsistent with his position on the separation question. Several visits to Norway, retired to Larvik in 1896 and buried at Tolderodden. Never married.

THOMAS (1823-1905): Born in Scotland. Arrived in Australia in 1837, joined his brother David. Trained in the sheep and wool business at Wallerawang. Seen as the 'great explorer'; Thomas was a restless soul always eager to venture into unknown territory. Followed the gold rush to California, 1849. Back in Europe, he married Grace Morrison in Perth, Scotland, 1853. Several periods in Australia; returned to settle in England in 1880. Agent-General in London for the Queensland government 1881-1884. Re-appointed 1888, resigned 1890.

Wrote several pamphlets. Knighted 1884: Companion of St. Michael and St. George (CMG).
Nine children.

ALEXANDER (1828-1890): Born in Larvik. Educated in Scotland in accounting and business management. To Australia in 1852 following the Victorian goldrush. Manager of the Bank of New South Wales in Kyneton, Victoria, 1854. From 1864, manager and inspector of the Bank of New South Wales in Queensland. Married 1871 to Mary Louisa MacKenzie, daughter of a Queensland Premier. Lived in Brisbane. Took longer holidays in Norway. Alexander and Mary died on board the *Quetta* in 1890, en route to Europe, when the ship struck an uncharted rock in the Torres Strait. No children.

COLIN (1832-1921): Born in Larvik. At the age of 18 he travelled to California to search for his brother Thomas. Went to Australia in 1852 and stayed for nine years. In charge at the Coonambula Station. Moved to Gracemere in 1856, managed the property for three years and designed the homestead there. Back to Norway 1861, settled in Larvik, established a boatyard and earned a reputation as an innovative ships architect, particularly with his rescue boats which later became known simply as 'Colin Archers'. Designed and built the *Fram*, launched in 1892, used by Nansen and Amundsen on their Polar expeditions. A founding member of Norsk Selskab til Skibbrudnes Redning (Norwegian Sea Rescue). Commander of the Order of St. Olav, 1896. Married Karen Sofie Wiborg in 1868. Five children. Buried at Tolderodden.

JAMES (1836-1919): Born in Larvik. Travelled to Australia in 1855. Together with his nephew (who was at equal age) Simon Jørgensen, he learned the trade as a bullock driver and wool grower at Gracemere. Had spells as manager there. Also managed the family property Minnie Downs for several years. Back in Larvik 1863-1865 and 1873-1874, and returned to Norway for good in the 1880s. There he established business as a tea importer and general agent. Married Brisbane-born Louisa MacKenzie (sister of Alexander A.'s wife). Seven children.

THE FEMALE SIBLINGS: Julia and William Sr. also had four girls, none of who ever visited Australia. They resided in Norway; Catherine, Jane Ann and Mary largely at Tolderodden. The daughters were: Catherine (Kate) (1811-1865); Julia (1824-1906); Mary (1826-1908); and Jane Ann (1831-1912).

Appendix 2 – A short biography of Oscar Svensen

THROUGHOUT THIS thesis, we have met Oscar Svensen (1862-1943) a number of times. As mentioned in chapter 4, this man deserves his own biography. While that could well be a future task, let us here just take a brief look at Svensen's life, with a particular eye on his activities in the South Pacific and Australia.

Oscar was born on 1 July 1862 and grew up in Tjølling, just outside Larvik. The Svensen family had a house, Solhøi, in Storgaten 11 in the settlement of Østre Halsen. Oscar's father Nikolai Edvard Svensen (1816-1881) from Arendal was a ship owner and captain, and he was married to Johanne Petra (nee Foss), born in Larvik. The family moved to Østre Halsen in 1851. Johanne and Nikolai fostered seven children, two girls and five boys, among who Oscar was the second youngest.¹

The Svensen brothers were brought up in a maritime environment. Østre Halsen, at the mouth of the Numedal River, was home to a good harbour, two shipyards and a number of mariners. The Svensen family was involved as part owners in at least a couple of vessels.² Oscar and his older brothers Theodor (1857-1893) and Samuel (1851-1898) all became skilled seamen from a young age. At the age of 19, Oscar apparently mastered a vessel trading between the North Sea and the Baltic Sea.

Around 1883, aged about 21, Oscar arrived in Australia for the first time. He supposedly set off in a spirit of adventure, first to Sydney, later to Brisbane.³ In Brisbane, as indicated in chapter 4, Oscar met Alexander Archer who helped the young man from Larvik to a job on the Queensland government's new paddle yacht *Lucinda*.⁴ The Archers and the Svensens, both being outward-looking families from the Larvik area, may well have been acquainted with each other from home. For the ambitious Oscar, working on the *Lucinda* must have been advantageous; here he met several government ministers who travelled on the small steamer. Oscar is supposed to have once carried Premier Samuel Griffith on his shoulders on shore at Dunwich on Peel Island. However, Oscar quit his job on the *Lucinda* after some time and instead found employment with the Brisbane Steam Ferry Co., ferrying passenger between Kangaroo Point and the City.⁵

¹ 1865 Census for Tjølling, NDA; Krohn-Holm 1972: 1222.

² Arbo Høeg 1949: 76-81; Det norske veritas, registers of classified ships, 1884-1890.

³ Fox, III, 1919-1923: 802-803; *Pacific Islands Monthly*, February 1964: 77-80; *Nordmandsforbundet*, 1918: 436.

⁴ Fox, III, 1919-1923: 802-803.

⁵ *Ibid.*; *Pacific Islands Monthly*, February 1964: 77-80.

The details are a bit hazy, but Oscar returned to Norway at some point between 1887 and 1889. It seems that Theodor too had been to Australia. According to Theodor's son Nikolai Theodor (born 1878), in 1887 his father's ship came home to Larvik with Oscar as first mate. Due to the increased competition from steamships, the Svensen vessels returned to Norway to be sold.⁶ What happened exactly is unclear, but this was a troublesome time for many ship owners on the southern coastline of Norway, especially around 1886-1887. With the family business in difficulties, there was probably not much to hold back the adventurous brothers who had already learned of some of the opportunities awaiting 'Down Under'.

To the Solomon Islands

Thus Theodor and Oscar left Larvik again for England and Australia. On the way they met Captain Johan T. Schrøder from Kragerø (Oscar's future father-in-law). When they arrived in Melbourne, Oscar and Schrøder formed a ship chandler's business together, apparently also involving another Schrøder, c.f. chapter 4.⁷ Meanwhile Theodor eventually got command of a South Sea 'blackbirder'; i.e. a ship 'recruiting' (some would say kidnapping) Melanesians for indentured work on the Queensland sugar plantations. Thus he became the first Svensen to do business in the Solomon Islands, an archipelago that would later provide his younger brother Oscar with immense riches. After his venture in the Pacific, Theodor succeeded Oscar as captain of the Kangaroo Point ferry in Brisbane.⁸ In about 1890 Theodor's family joined him in the Queensland capital; his wife Marie (nee Rosenkilde) and their six children. Nikolai Theodor, the eldest son, was later to become a cartographer, architect and military officer in Australia, serving in the Boer War and World War 1 (see also chapter 6).⁹

Going back to Oscar, his first encounter with the Solomon Islands took place around 1888 when he was on a trading journey to the Ellice Islands (Tuvalu) with the schooner *Thistle*. On the way back he called at Marau Sound on Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands, and discovered the opportunities for trade and land dealings on the islands.¹⁰

For some time in 1889 Theodor and Oscar were back in Brisbane where they became naturalised citizens, both giving Kangaroo Point as their address.¹¹ The following year, Oscar, Theodor and Alex Monrad (possibly another Norwegian) returned to Marau. They established

⁶ N.T. Svensen to Mr. Seton, 11 May 1964, in Papers re Oscar Svensen, Pacific Manuscripts Bureau, PMB 975.

⁷ Oscar arrived in Melbourne in 1888, according to N.T. Svensen's reminiscences. Involved in the ship chandler's business was probably also Anders T. Schrøder, a man who most likely was Johan Schrøder's brother. He took over the business in Melbourne after Oscar left (Nordmandsforbundet, 1921: 420).

⁸ N.T. Svensen to Mr. Seton, 11 May 1964; Nordmandsforbundet, 1921: 419-422.

⁹ Krohn-Holm 1972: 1207; Nordmandsforbundet, questionnaire, No. 363, 1935, in Nor. Museum of Emigration.

¹⁰ Hviding 2009: 153; *Daily Mail*, 20 July 1922; *Pacific Islands Monthly*, February 1964: 77-80.

¹¹ Queensland naturalisation records, ref. 1889/4466, 1889/9467.

a friendly relationship with the locals and decided to establish a trading post there. For this purpose they bought the small island of Tavanipupu. With the two Nerdrum brothers, Johannes and Solfren, who they had met in Brisbane, the Svensen brothers formed *The Norwegian Solomon Islands Trading and Planting Company Ltd.* in 1891. Oscar ended his business engagement in Melbourne and all four of them sailed to Marau in the ketch *Siskin* and finalised the purchase of Tavanipupu with a quantum of firearms and other goods.¹²

This was the beginning of Oscar's long-standing business relationship with the Solomon Islands, which would follow him virtually for the rest of his life. The firearms trade held prospects of great rewards, writes Judith Bennett in a scholarly article about Svensen's life on the Solomon Islands. By sailing under the Norwegian flag, the Svensen/Nerdrum company argued that they could bypass the British-imposed ban on trade in firearms.¹³ From their island base, they also used the *Siskin* to sail around the archipelago trading mainly copra (dried flesh of coconut), but also ivory nuts and turtle shells, for goods like textiles, knives and tobacco which were much in demand on the islands.

Oscar soon was alone at the helm of the business venture. Monrad withdrew due to ill health, Theodor Svensen died from illness on the Solomon Islands in 1893, Solfren Nerdrum faced the same destiny in 1896 and his brother returned to Norway. Furthermore, the Norwegian venture initially faced difficulties in their relationship with some of the Solomon Islanders as well as complaints from other traders due to their extensive dealings in arms and ammunition.¹⁴ However, relations changed when Oscar, known as 'Kapitan Marau', took over the reins. He made friends with locals and Europeans alike because of his hospitality, kindness and desire to please his customers.¹⁵ "Svensen himself always regarded Solomon Islanders as men and treated them as such, never calling them 'kanakas', 'niggers' or 'blacks'. Nor did he swear at them, a habit common to most of his European contemporaries and deeply resented by the Melanesians," writes Bennett.¹⁶

The Solomons became a British protectorate in 1893. Increased British presence was a threat against the firearm dealings, but Oscar Svensen continued his lucrative yet controversial weapons trade until the British established a resident administration in 1896. Once the Resident Commissioner, C. M. Woodford, arrived, Oscar sought his friendship and

¹² Bennett 1981: 172; Hviding 2009: 153.

¹³ Bennett 1981: 172.

¹⁴ Bennett 1981: 174.

¹⁵ Bennett 1981: 175.

¹⁶ Bennett 1981: 182.

assisted him with information. The courting paid off, and with Woodford's support Svensen was awarded exclusive diving rights for pearl shells in 1899.¹⁷

The ambitious planter

This was a time of great expansion for the company, with new trading posts being set up on several islands. Svensen also started coconut plantations, and was the first to engage in systematic coconut planting on the islands.¹⁸ According to social anthropologist Edvard Hviding, who has written about Norwegians on the Solomon Islands from 1870 to 1930, Oscar Svensen was at the forefront of the growing colonial economy. He had a strong ambition, right from the outset, to make a fortune on the islands. Furthermore, he managed to develop robust and stable relations with the local population prior to the establishment of the British administration, and when the colonial rulers arrived, Oscar could furnish them with highly valued advice.¹⁹ Even author Jack London and his wife were supposedly assisted by Svensen when they travelled around the islands.²⁰

Oscar's goal was to return to Australia, establish a home and maintain the good name he had previously earned in the colonies, to which he succeeded.²¹ What really boosted his riches was his extensive and highly profitable land dealings in the Solomons. He wanted to diversify his business to include commercial plantations and started purchasing lots of land wherever he could, using trade contacts with local people. He planted coconuts and also tried coffee. From 1900 and during the following years he acquired about 25,000 acres directly from islanders, for which he paid less than £1000 in cash and goods. At a time when the British Resident Commissioner earned a mere £300 per year, Oscar Svensen claimed to have been earning between £2000 and £6000 annually and to be collecting almost half the entire local produce. Bennett believes these claims to be correct.²²

His investments yielded incredible returns. In February 1907, Oscar completed the sale of 51,000 acres of land to the British soap manufacturing firm Levers, which was seeking a reliable source of copra for their soap factory in Sydney. For most of Oscar's properties, Levers paid £40,000 for land which had cost him £4000. Two months later, he used £1000 to buy over three and a half acres of prime residential land at Galloway's Hill in Brisbane (see chapters 5 and 6). In addition, when the use of Melanesian indentured labour came to an end

¹⁷ Bennett 1981: 176-178.

¹⁸ *Pacific Islands Monthly*, February 1964: 77-80.

¹⁹ Hviding 2009: 156.

²⁰ Hviding 2009: 141.

²¹ Bennett 1981: 180.

²² Bennett 1981: 181.

in Australia in 1906, Oscar successfully negotiated for his involvement in the repatriation of around 4000 Solomon Islanders who had been deported from Queensland. This earned him about £9000.²³

After the sale to Levers, Oscar still held interests in the Solomons, and he concentrated on his remaining plantations where he experimented with various crops like cotton, rubber and tobacco. In 1912 the days of lucrative land dealings ended when the law was changed making the government sole purchaser of land from Solomon Islanders. The experienced planter also assumed directorial positions such as in the Solomon Islands Rubber Company which in 1910 bought for £16,000 land he had purchased in 1905 for £50. Among other ventures, he was director of Marmara Plantations Ltd. with a quarter of the shares of a total capital of £120,000.²⁴

Settling down in Brisbane

It seems Oscar's physical relocation from the Solomons back to Brisbane happened gradually. On 31 January 1900 he married Inga Henriette Schrøder, daughter of his former business partner, in the Scandinavian Lutheran Church in Brisbane.²⁵ At that time he still resided in the Solomons, but his wife never moved to the islands. Inga Henriette remained in Brisbane where their first child, Lily, was born on 4 December 1900. In the following years, Oscar travelled back and forth between Brisbane and the Solomon Islands while wife and children seemed to have lived with, or near the Schrøder family.²⁶ The year 1907 saw the start of the construction of the new family home on Galloway's Hill, named Norway. Tenders were invited in May for the erection of a residence, a lodge and a stable.²⁷ It has been suggested that Oscar retired from the Solomons in 1912.²⁸ But he seems to have been increasingly present in Brisbane at least from 1909, when *The Brisbane Courier* noted that "Captain Svensen, Norway, Galloways Hill, has left on a brief visit to the Solomon Islands," indicating that his base was in Queensland rather than on the islands.²⁹ The following year he held the vice-presidency of the East Brisbane Bowling Club, spent a holiday in Southport and organised social events in his new house. He also involved himself in community matters,

²³ Bennett 1981: 184-185; *The Brisbane Courier*, 30 July 1906.

²⁴ Bennett 1981: 185-186.

²⁵ *The Brisbane Courier*, 2 February 1900.

²⁶ *Directory Queensland 1902-1905*; Qld State Electoral Roll, 1906: 35, 47; *The Brisbane Courier*, 7 July 1908.

²⁷ *The Brisbane Courier*, 23 April 1907.

²⁸ *Pacific Islands Monthly*, February 1994: 77-80.

²⁹ *The Brisbane Courier*, 20 April 1909.

staging a protest meeting at his home against a proposed hotel in Norman Park.³⁰ Moreover, Inga Henriette and Oscar had a growing flock of children to raise. After Lily followed more girls: Hanna Marjorie (b. 1902), Vera (b. 1905), Borghild Marie (b. 1907), Inga Henriette (b. 1908), Linda Regina (b. 1909) and Ann (Nancy) – and a son, Oscar Jr., in 1913.

As elaborated in chapter 4, following his return to Brisbane Oscar became a highly-respected member of society in the Queensland capital. Now, his base was the grand new family home, described by Ludvig Saxe in his 1914 book *Nordmænd jorden rundt* (Norwegians Around the World): “When we travel on the steamer up the [Brisbane] river which winds its way through the beautiful suburbs with villas and gardens on both sides, the eye catches a large house ‘Norway’ resting as a royal mansion on top of a hill with the best views in the entire city ...”³¹ Bowling, card games and yachting were among Oscar’s interests, and he and his wife entertained guests regularly. Following a card game tournament in 1910, *The Brisbane Courier* reported:

The spacious verandas and reception rooms were made beautiful with palms [...] and lilies between which were hung Chinese lanterns. The grounds were brilliantly lighted with acetylene burners [...]. There were over 200 present, and Captain and Mrs. Svensen entertained the party at a dainty supper, the excellent catering being carried out by Rowe.³²

The Norwegian was elected member of the Brisbane Chamber of Commerce in 1913.³³ Oscar and Inga Henriette also had time for charitable work, such as Christmas visits to the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum.³⁴

In 1914, the Svensen couple was away from Brisbane for nine months for a visit to their native country in order to attend the celebration of the centenary of the Norwegian constitution. During the northern summer of 1914, Europe, of course, was on the brink of war, something Svensen experienced while visiting Sognefjorden in Western Norway: There he observed the German Emperor’s yacht *Hohenzollern*. In itself no surprise, since Kaiser Wilhelm often holidayed in Norway. However, as Svensen noticed, the Emperor’s boat had “three German battleships at anchor, and 31 other German warships were anchored outside,” an unusual military show regarded as a menace by the locals.³⁵ A few days later the war broke

³⁰ Qld State Electoral Roll, 1, 1910: 99; *Pugh’s Almanac* 1910: 543; *The Brisbane Courier*, 14 January 1910; *The Brisbane Courier*, 1 October 1910; *Queenslander*, 1 October 1910.

³¹ Saxe 1914: 143. Original quote in Norwegian: “Naar vi kommer med dampskibet opover floden som slynger sig gjennem de vakre forstæder med villager og haver paa begge sider, saa ser vi et stort hus ‘Norway’ ligge som en kongsgaard paa toppen av en høide hvor vi har den fineste utsigt i hele byen ...”

³² *The Brisbane Courier*, 23 September 1910.

³³ *The Brisbane Courier*, 9 October 1913.

³⁴ *The Brisbane Courier*, 1 January 1914.

³⁵ *The Brisbane Courier*, 29 October 1914.

out. The Svensens made it back to Australia via the Trans-Siberian Railway, and later Oscar shared their adventures with the Brisbane press.

As outlined in chapter 6, Oscar Svensen was appointed consul for Norway in 1918. “I think it will be impossible to find a better man for this post,” wrote Finn Koren, Consul-General in Sydney in his recommendation to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.³⁶ He added that Svensen had a well-known and respected position in Brisbane, living practically like a rentier. Norway maintained a consulate in Brisbane from 1906, following separation from Sweden. The first official representative in the Queensland capital, as honorary consul, was Arthur John Carter (1847-1917), a local businessman, born in England. When Carter died, his son stepped in for a while before Oscar Svensen became the first Norwegian-born consul in Brisbane; an event celebrated by the Scandinavian Association with a party attended by 40 members, and with Queensland produced mock *aquavit* on the table.³⁷ During his time as consul, Oscar also organised 17 May celebrations at his home (chapter 6). His position ensured that Oscar and Inga Henriette were regular guests at parties and receptions for Brisbane’s political and financial elite. He must have been seen as a valuable man for Norway too. In 1930 Svensen threatened to withdraw as consul; he was now retired and kept no office in the city. However, on Svensen’s request the Ministry of Foreign Affairs appointed a vice-consul to look after daily business under the retired planter’s guidance.³⁸

Svensen retained some business interests on the Solomon Islands as he grew older, with annual visits to the islands as director to Marmara, Domma and Santa Isabel Plantations. Income from the plantations decreased, however, and Oscar supplemented his earnings by subdividing his Brisbane property. By 1941 he had earned more from sales than he originally paid for the land, and he still retained spacious grounds around his home.³⁹

His son Oscar Jr. (Okki) moved to the Solomon Islands in 1933 to manage the family interests there. Following war time destruction of the plantations the family sold out in 1950.⁴⁰ When Oscar Sr. died in 1943, the value of his estate was £5200, so his holdings had diminished considerably since the lucrative land dealings a few decades earlier.⁴¹ The title of the family’s landmark home was passed on to Oscar and Inga Henriette’s second-youngest

³⁶ Koren to Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 27 January 1918, NAN, RA/S-1724. Original quote in Norwegian: “Jeg tror det vil være umulig at finde nogen bedre mand til denne post.”

³⁷ *Nordmandsforbundet*, 1918: 435-437.

³⁸ Hans Fay, Consul-General in Sydney to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 6 March 1930, NAN, RA/S-1724; *The Courier-Mail*, 21 December 1951.

³⁹ Bennett 1981: 187; information obtained from Museum of Lands, Mapping and Surveying, part of Queensland Department of Environment and Resource Management, July 2011.

⁴⁰ Bennett 1981: 186-187.

⁴¹ *The Courier-Mail*, 7 October 1944.

daughter Linda Regina and Walter E. Savage. (Savage was a well-known accountant and Norwegian vice-consul from 1930; business associate of Oscar and father to the husband of Svensen's youngest daughter Nancy). However, it seems the Svensens ceased living in the house. The "Exceptionally Fine Property" was announced for sale in September 1944.⁴² Today, nothing is left of Villa Norway.

Oscar Svensen was a man with great drive and business sense, concludes Judith Bennett: He knew how to smell the scent of a good opportunity while keeping his options open in order to be able to concentrate his efforts on what was the most profitable enterprise at a particular time. He quickly learned to understand the Solomon Islands and build good relations there.⁴³ Edvard Hviding, in summary, argues that Svensen without comparison was the single most important agent in the development of the colonial economy on the Solomon Islands.⁴⁴ Besides, he was at the nexus of a network of Norwegian men who spent long periods on the islands, a network which also extended to Brisbane through the Svensens, Schrøders and others.

While Oscar Svensen's career was mainly centred on the Solomon Islands, he was a Queensland immigrant too. Brisbane runs as a red thread through his 60-odd years in Australia and the South Pacific, from his first job on board the government steamer *Lucinda* through to his sunset years as a wealthy, and apparently happy, retired planter. But as a Norwegian Queenslander he stood out from his fellow countrymen because of his position on top of the social ladder. He was perhaps a 'white of another kind'⁴⁵; a high status immigrant who could resist the assimilation pressure yet become fully accepted as a businessman.

Not only did Oscar Svensen forge valuable contacts during his first sojourn as a young man, later he obviously became well integrated into business and political circles, even officially representing Norway in Queensland. Yet he retained his ethnic identity, as discussed in chapter 6, although more as a leisure time activity within a network of friends from Scandinavia rather than a functional necessity for succeeding as an immigrant. By the time he settled in Brisbane he had already succeeded far beyond the reach of most migrants, and Oscar belonged to Brisbane's upper class thanks to his extensive land dealings in the Solomon Islands.

⁴² Information from Museum of Lands, Mapping and Surveying; *Courier-Mail*, 23 September 1944; *Queensland Telephone Directory* 1947: 145 (shows Norway was occupied by Miss Joan Robinson and Miss M Wylie, Physiotherapist).

⁴³ Bennett 1981: 188.

⁴⁴ Hviding 2009: 157.

⁴⁵ Niemi 2007: 44-45.

Appendix 3 – Halvor Olsen: a notorious prisoner

AMONG THE 150 or so Norwegians who served prison sentences in Queensland from 1864 until 1915, by far the most notorious was Halvor Olsen (ca. 1862-1916). Not because he was a seriously dangerous criminal, but because he was an extremely frequent guest in The Majesty's prisons. Under his own name, often spelled Halver, and his aliases Charles Olsen, Oliver Olsen and Charles H. Oliver, he was sent to jail 59 times between 1896 and 1915.¹

Given his frequent use of pseudonyms, some records may have been missed, but his 'career' seems to have started in Brisbane in late 1896 when he was convicted of larceny. The judge sent him to Boggo Road Gaol for one month. The then 35 year old Norwegian showed a sallow complexion, he had light brown hair and grey eyes. 160 centimetres high and weighing about 61 kilos, according to the prison records, he was not a big man. Yet he stood out from the crowd: His right wrist had been broken and his left arm amputated above the elbow.

After his apparent debut behind the bars in 1896, he was back again in April 1898 with another one-month sentence, this time for obscene language. Then he disappeared for some time. He may have gone to Biggenden, in the Burnett region. A Norwegian named Halvor O. Olsen, aged 36, got his naturalisation there in 1897 – as a labourer.² However, any physical work must obviously have been difficult with one arm missing.

In late December 1899, Halvor Olsen was yet again convicted in Brisbane, this time for drunkenness, but with a mild sentence: Pay a 5s. fine or spend six hours in jail. The same sentence was repeated just one month later.³ Drinking may have been a recourse in a society which did not value physical handicaps much (see chapter 4). The early 1900s marked an intensifying of Olsen's 'career' as a prison bird. 1905 was a particularly bad year; he was locked up eight times, almost always for drunkenness with sentences ranging for three days to one month. In fact, during two decades in and out of Boggo Road Gaol, Olsen was incarcerated at least 31 times for intoxication.

However, the year 1905 began with three months behind bars for vagrancy, and he was tried in Toowoomba. This was one of a total of five convictions for vagrancy and it suggests that Olsen was homeless at times. He sometimes wandered around, not only to Toowoomba, but also to Maryborough, Ipswich and Warwick. One morning in January 1913

¹ *Queensland Police Gazette*, return of prisoners discharged from prison, 1964-1915; Index of prisoners, HM Prison Brisbane, QSA, ID 271606. All references to Olsen's convictions, and his physical appearances, are from these two sources, unless otherwise stated.

² Queensland naturalisation records, ref. 1897/126

³ *The Brisbane Courier*, 13 December 1899 and 23 January 1900.

he had to face the Warwick Police Court, charged with having no lawful means of support. The judge handed down his sentence: three months imprisonment, with hard labour.⁴ Olsen may also have tried his luck at the Mount Morgan gold rush in Central Queensland in 1902, but drunkenness and obscene language were again causing problems, evidenced by two appearances in the Police Court within a week.⁵

The majority of charges against Halvor Olsen were nevertheless laid in Brisbane, and this is where he served his terms in jail. Consequently, he must have spent most of his time in the capital city. On several occasions Olsen was literally out of prison one day and back behind bars the next, as for example in September 1905. On 1 September he was given 14 days imprisonment for drunkenness, in North Brisbane. He was released on 14 September. Then, two days later, he was once again found guilty of drunkenness. This time the punishment was harsher: Olsen had to spend one month in the lock-up.

From 1906 until 1911 he was relatively well-behaved with one or two yearly trips to the prison. 1912, however, saw a surge with six sentences, including the habitual drunkenness as well as obscene language and creating disturbance. This was to be the pattern for the rest of his life. Halvor Olsen passed away in 1916, 54 years old.

Little else is known about the person Halvor Olsen. His mother's name was Hannah Marie, and Halvor was named after his father.⁶ From the prison register it appears that our Halvor was a seaman, born in Norway, a Lutheran, and that he arrived in Queensland by steamer in 1893.⁷ This was during an economic crisis in Queensland. He may have jumped ship, although we have found no evidence of that. Or he may simply have been discharged according to regular procedures. It seems likely that he had an accident at some point, hence his broken wrist and amputated left arm. A couple of records suggest that Olsen, at least from time to time, employed himself as a labourer while he lived in Queensland.⁸

Although information is scarce, Halvor Olsen, with his 59 imprisonments over 19 years, is nevertheless a fascinating figure in the motley crew of Norwegian Queenslanders.

⁴ *The Brisbane Courier*, 10 January 1913.

⁵ *Morning Bulletin*, 27 January 1902 and 4 February 1902.

⁶ Index of death records, QLD BDM, ref. 1916/B22989.

⁷ Register of prison admissions, HM Prison Brisbane, QSA, ID 2928.

⁸ Queensland naturalisation records, ref. 1897/126; *The Brisbane Courier*, 1 October 1912.

Appendix 4 – The long road to settlement

THEODOR FOLKENBORG'S journey of migration to Australia in 1889 took him from Rødenes in Smaalenene (Østfold) county via Kristiansand, Bremen, Hamburg, Antwerp, and then onto the steamship *Habsburg* with stops in Genoa, Port Said, Aden and Colombo before he disembarked in Melbourne. Total travel time was about eight weeks, half of what many of the migrants in the 1870s experienced. During his first eight years in Australia, Theodor wandered a lot, living in Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia, and later retiring to New Zealand.¹

The example of Theodor Folkenborg shows that migration could involve a much more complicated trajectory than a simple transfer from A to B, full stop. While the main thesis has attempted to isolate the case of Norwegians *in* Queensland, migration quite often included many intermediate stops with a sequence of destinations. This appendix will by no means offer a full analysis of the migrants' geographical mobility. But it is nevertheless worthwhile to look at a number of cases along 'the long road to settlement'; the purpose being to gain a broader understanding of the complex movements many migrants undertook in the process of transferring from a place of origin in Norway to eventually settling down for good (if ever) somewhere on the other side of the globe.

From Tromsø to Queensland

We have seen how most Queensland-bound Norwegians travelled on ships from Hamburg or England. But the itinerary did not commence there; it started in the rural or urban locality where the immigrants lived prior to departure. For some, that meant a very long journey just to get to the Norwegian capital Kristiania from where they could board a steamer to Hamburg or England. We have no register of the place of origin for all the Norwegians who migrated to Queensland prior to 1914. However, for those 750 or so passengers who travelled via Hamburg in the 1870s, their home-town or district was systematically recorded upon departure from the North German port. The majority lived in or around the Norwegian capital prior to departure: 57 per cent originated from Kristiania (now Oslo) or neighbouring Aker. Parallel to the American migration, it is reasonable to believe that some of these people in fact were folk from the countryside who had stayed in the city for a while before leaving Norway.² The rest mainly came from areas near the coast in South Eastern Norway.

¹ Letters from Falkenberg, written 1889-1934 to family in Rødenes, Norway, privately held.

² Semmingsen 1978: 113.

There was one notable exception, though. 44 emigrants hailed from the town of Tromsø in northern Norway, a journey of approximately 2000 kilometres from the capital Kristiania. The group comprised six per cent of the total number of Norwegian migrants over Hamburg. Seven families and a few unmarried men and women left Tromsø and travelled to Queensland in 1873 on the ships *Herschel* and *Reichstag* arriving within a few days of each other in July of that year.³

Some of these families were close neighbours in Tromsø, with the men working in maritime occupations. Johan Severin Helstad, originally from Stor-Elvdal in South Eastern Norway, was a skipper and lived in Nordre Strandgade with his wife Sara Louise and his three children from a previous marriage, Christine, Hilda and Johan.⁴ In the same street the Davidsen family resided too. Husband Johan Adrian was a seaman or a ship carpenter.⁵ He took his wife Marie and their four children Antonie, Hanne (Anna), Johan and Fredrik and left for Queensland in 1873, like his neighbours. So did a third family in Nordre Strandgade, the Mathisens. Father Jacob, born in Finland, made a living from sailing to the Arctic archipelago of Spitsbergen. His wife Ane Katrine was born in Sweden. They seem to have had six children with them to Australia. A fourth family, that of fisherman/seaman Karl Martin Larsen resided in Bakkegaden in 1865, but is said to have been close neighbours to the Davidsens and probably acquainted with them long before the voyage took place.⁶

Why did these families choose to go to Queensland? To begin with, 1873 was a year of crisis in Tromsø, increasing the number of emigrants. Two-thirds of the town's overseas emigrants that year went to Queensland, and they travelled together. Historian Astri Andersen reckons they chose an antipodean destination instead of America because ship transport was available, implicitly in the form of subsidised passages.⁷

A closer look reveals that the local agent representing Queensland was no other than Gustav Kjeldseth, proprietor and editor of the leading local newspaper *Tromsø Stiftstidende*. What arrangements he had with Blichfeldt & Co in Kristiania we do not know, but from February to May 1873 Kjeldseth used his paper to advertise frequently for available berths on the Queensland bound ships from Hamburg. He also published propaganda articles about the virtues of the colony.⁸ Furthermore, books and prospectuses about Queensland were circulated in

³ Koppittke 2001: 1, 16; *Emigrants from Hamburg to Australasia 1850-1879*.

⁴ 1865 Census for Tromsø, NDA. Residence data based on 1865 census.

⁵ *Ibid.*; Ministerial book No. 13, Tromsø parish, 1872-1877, pp. 294-298, NDA.

⁶ Nordberg and Eilertsen in Manderson 1997: 60. Also census and parish register, see above note.

⁷ Andersen 1994: 306-308; Ytreberg 1946: 693; Svendsen 1997: 37.

⁸ *Tromsø Stiftstidende*, 20 February 1873, 13 March 1873, 6 April 1873, 10 April 1873.

Tromsø.⁹ Yet advertisements for ships to America were even more frequent and visible. Perhaps the discounted rate persuaded the emigrants in favour of Australia? Could Kjeldseth's personal influence have been a determining factor? In fact, he lived in Nordre Strandgade like many of those who decided to migrate, but exactly what mechanisms were at play in the streets of Tromsø in the late winter of 1873 remains to be revealed.

The question of migrating to Queensland was a topic of dispute in Tromsø in March and April 1873, when the recruitment drive was at its strongest. The competing newspaper, *Tromsøposten*, raised a critical voice, first by publishing extracts from an emigrant letter complaining about misery on the sea voyage, an unhealthy climate and a lack of church life in Queensland. The newspaper encouraged their readers to think carefully and investigate the conditions thoroughly before making a decision whether to go or not.¹⁰ Later came warnings that Queensland migrants would possibly be facing slavery (chapter 2), with a bottom line that the conditions in the colony are unknown to us but "in all probability they are intolerable".¹¹

Some of the Tromsø migrants did in fact experience misery of the worst sort en route to Queensland. Travelling on the *Reichstag*, leaving Hamburg 14 April 1873 (see also chapter 2), Marie and Johan Adrian Davidsen lost two of their four children: Hanne (aged 9) from scarlet fever and her brother Fredrik (2) from bronchitis and diarrhoea. The Helstads were equally decimated: Johan Helstad (aged 8) died at sea from dysentery. A week after their arrival, his father Johan Sr. lost his life as well. The cause of death was again dysentery and he had been ill for 40 days.¹² In other words, his widow Sara Louise and her two step-daughters Christine and Hilda were off to a difficult start in Australia after disembarking in Maryborough.

Although neighbours at home, remaining close after arrival in Queensland was not necessarily possible. To begin with, the two immigrant ships *Reichstag* and *Herschel* arrived at different ports. While the Helstads, for example, came to Maryborough, others were shipped off to Townsville. In the latter town, there was a small group of Tromsø people who travelled on the *Herschel*. From a letter published in *Tromsø Stiftstidende*, it seems likely that the Mathisen family were there, as well as Hans and Fredrikke Bertelsen and their daughter Johanne, in addition to Laura Styrvold, who migrated as an unmarried girl.¹³ A young woman, probably Caroline Mathisen, aged about 20, apparently felt a need to justify their decision to

⁹ *Tromsø Stiftstidende*, 8 January 1874.

¹⁰ *Tromsøposten*, 8 March 1873.

¹¹ *Tromsøposten*, 26 April 1873. Original quote in Norwegian: "Sandsynligheden taler for at de ere utaalelige".

¹² Death certificate Johan Severin Helstad, QLD BDM, ref. 1873/817.

¹³ *Tromsø Stiftstidende*, 8 January 1874.

migrate to Australia; and to impress upon people back home that Queensland was in fact a good place. Her postscript to her father's letter home reveals some of the contention among people in Tromsø about the prospect of migrating to Queensland:

Here is lovely, believe me; I wish by God that all of mine were here so they did not have to freeze or starve [...] All kinds of work is paid well here, so there is no lie in the prospects and books about Queensland which were given to us before departure. Anyone who can do a bit of different work makes large amounts of money [...] The trees are never dead here. There are always flowers and normal health among all folks [...] In terms of insects we are bothered by mosquitoes in summer, just like home. There is fish in abundance and I only have to go to the wharf to fish in the river [...] Here we became masters not slaves like the stupid people in Tromsø told us; and no one seems to wish to return to Norway.¹⁴

Others from Tromsø settled in different parts of Queensland. Martinius Normann, a baker, ended up at Herbert River where he selected land (see chapter 5). Peter Olsen, who came out with wife Ragnhild and three small children in 1873, lived in Charters Towers a decade later and made mining his occupation.¹⁵ After arriving in Maryborough on the *Reichstag* in July 1873, the Larsen family supposedly went on to nearby Burrum where Karl Martin Larsen got work for six months for £50. Later, they moved to Maryborough where their second son started school in 1878. Wife Ingeborg died in 1879 and Karl Martin was killed in an accident at the Neardie Antimony Mine in 1881.¹⁶

In summary, the story of the Tromsø migrants show the incredible distance that could be travelled in search for a better life, yet how powerless the migrants were faced with accident and death. Although a comparatively large group of people from the same town migrated to Queensland at the same time, and many of them probably knew each other before departure, they did not recreate a 'Little Tromsø' in Queensland.

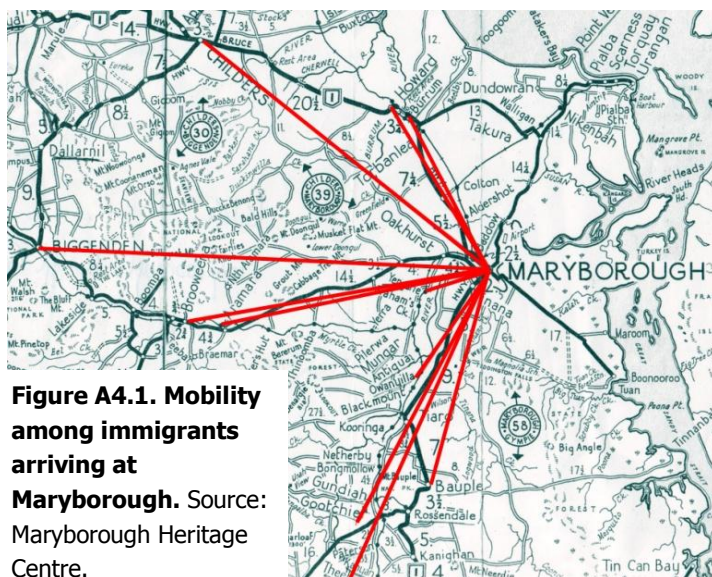
A moving pattern

These examples also point to a more general pattern among the Norwegian migrants: A large number of them moved residence once, twice or even several times after they arrived on the shores of Queensland. Broadly speaking, there were three different reasons for moving: Firstly, some had to relocate, forced by lack of work or other circumstances to find a new place of living. Secondly, others found it profitable to move; they changed residence in order

¹⁴ *Tromsø Stiftstidende*, 8 January 1874. Original quote in Norwegian: "Her er deilig kan Du tro; give Gud at alle af Mine var her, saa behøvede de ikke hverken at fryse eller sulte [...] Alle Arbeider betales her godt, saa der er ingen Løgn hvad der staar i de os før Afreisen leverede Prospekter og Bøger om Queensland. Den som kan tage sig til lidt af hvert tjener store Penge [...] Trærne er aldrig vissen her. Blomster bestandig og en almindelig Sundhed hos alle Folk [...] Af insekter plages vi af Myg en Tid om Sommeren ligesom hjemme. Fisk er her nok af og behøver jeg kun at gaa paa Kajen og fiske i Floden [...] Her blev vi Herrefolk og ikke Slaver som de dumme Mennesker i Tromsø fortalte og der vil vist ingen reisje tilbage til Norge".

¹⁵ Queensland naturalisation records, ref. 1883/6542.

¹⁶ Buchanan in Manderson 1997: 66.



to maximise their opportunities. Finally, some made a habit, even a preference, out of wandering, as seen in chapter 4 where we applied Edvard Bull’s concept of ‘wandering culture’ to Queensland’s transient population.

Seen from Queensland the mobility was mainly three-directional: 1) Many moved around the colony/state over long time

spans and resided at several locations, often for years in each place; 2) Norwegians left Queensland in considerable numbers for the southern parts of Australia, predominantly Victoria and New South Wales; 3) Others simply left Australia altogether, re-migrating to Norway or moving on to New Zealand, North America or other destinations.

As for mobility within Queensland, in chapter 3 we showed how the assisted migrants arrived at various ports along the coast and had to take whatever jobs were available. Figure A4.1 shows the destinations of general migrants who arrived at Maryborough; we have already mentioned some of them. In fact, it seems that most of the Norwegians moved on from the port towns they arrived in. Persons naturalising from 1904 onwards had to list places of residence after arrival in Australia, and for many of the Norwegians in Queensland these lists were long, reflecting not only the protracted period which often elapsed before naturalisation but also how they moved home several times during their life in Queensland. These records show that the Norwegians typically spent a few days or weeks in the coastal town where they arrived before moving on. A common pattern of mobility also involved living in Brisbane at some point in time.¹⁷

Family life on the move may be illustrated by the example of the Norwegian woman Maren (Mary) Jacobsen who relocated several times with her husband and children (chapter 5). Arriving at Keppel Bay in September 1871, the family first moved north to Bowen where her spouse Iver found work as a farm labourer. After two years, the Jacobsen family followed the gold rush to Charters Towers. First they lived on a station south of the ‘Towers’ before they took up their own land at Sandy Creek. Mary, Iver and their son Sigvart (Sid) decided to

¹⁷ Records of 53 naturalised Norwegians who changed citizenship after 1904, but arrived before 1915.

leave Charters Towers after ten years to select land at Frances Creek south of Ingham (near the Herbert River). In 1905, when Mary had lost both husband and son, she returned to Sandy Creek to spend her final years with her daughter Pauline.¹⁸ This is by no means a unique tale: Families and individuals relocating frequently were common among the Norwegians.

Why did they move? Obviously, on the individual level there was a complex mix of reasons. In order to generalise, at least some patterns are visible: In many cases, the nature of employment and the availability of work required frequent relocations. General labourers and builders followed road and railway developments whereas miners followed the rushes that occurred in the wake of new mineral discoveries. Farm labourers were dependent on the changing seasons as well as drought and floods. For farmers taking up their own piece of land it was often necessary to move away from the port towns where they arrived, as seen by the example of Warwick in chapter 5. The best land on the coastal plains had been settled first as Queensland developed as a European colony from the 1840s onwards. The opening up of new regions for agricultural settlement provided new opportunities in later decades. Others again gave up the idea of being farmers and settled in the growing towns and cities. Furthermore, in line with the ‘family perspective’ presented in chapter 4, it is clear that in some cases forces of kin influenced the choice of settlement. Apart from that, the opportunities for living among other Norwegians were limited, but there is some evidence that Norwegians chose to live near other Scandinavians, as seen by table A4.1, particularly in the Maryborough and Wide Bay area, and in Warwick and Mackay as discussed in chapter 5.

Table A4.1. Most populous districts, Danes, Swedes and Norwegians, 1881 & 1901

1881					
Danes		Swedes		Norwegians	
Brisbane	219	Brisbane	101	Mackay	57
Maryborough	209	Bundaberg	41	Brisbane	54
Bundaberg	172	Clermont	38	Kennedy	45
Tiaro	142	Kennedy	35	Townsville	42
Mackay	129	Maryborough	33	Maryborough	19

1901					
Danes		Swedes & Norwegians		Norwegians alone (est.)	
Brisbane	307	Brisbane	319	Brisbane	115
Bundaberg	250	Townsville	162	Townsville	89
Wide Bay	202	Bundaberg	145	Kennedy	60
Moreton West	146	Darling Downs East	103	Darling Downs East	43
Maryborough	144	Kennedy	103	Mackay	31
Mackay	143				

Source: Census data 1871-1901 in Historical Census and Colonial Data Archive. See also table 5.3.

¹⁸ Lyons 1992: 5-7.

The secondary migration which took place within Australia has been pointed out in previous writings about Scandinavians in Queensland.¹⁹ There was a considerable ‘pull of the south’, i.e. a movement of people from Queensland to the colonies of New South Wales and Victoria. This is most clearly illustrated by the fact that around 750 Norwegians, predominantly young, disembarked in Queensland as assisted migrants in the 1870s. However, in the 1881 census, the Norwegian-born population in the colony stood at only 442. Given that most of these migrants were rather poor, it seems unlikely that many of them bought new tickets and left Australia, but rather relocated within the continent. Unfortunately, there are not corresponding data available which allows us to measure any increases in the Norwegian population in New South Wales and Victoria, but Lyng reckons the number of Scandinavians in those two colonies rose by more than 5000 during and immediately after the assisted migration to Queensland.²⁰ According to historian William Ross Johnston the southern Australian colonies benefited indirectly from Queensland’s migration scheme: “Many, though the exact number is uncertain, did not stay in Queensland, showing little gratitude for the assistance they had received,” he comments.²¹

The flow to the south can be observed through a report written in 1880 by the Norwegian pastor Lauritz Carlsen who worked in Sydney, New South Wales, at the time. About the composition of Scandinavians in Sydney, Carlsen noted that many of them, mostly Norwegians, were families who had gone to Queensland six to eight years earlier on free passages. They were labourers or craftsmen, and some widows, mostly having a secure albeit poor income. These families came predominantly from Kristiania and Tromsø, Carlsen observed.²² One of the widows from the Tromsø lot was Sara Louise Helstad who had lost both her husband and one of her step-children within a week after arriving in Maryborough. Eventually, she drifted to Sydney and settled there for 36 years until her death in 1911. Her son Haldor from her first marriage also migrated to Sydney, and they lived together in their home Nidaros in Marickville.²³

What made the Norwegians leave Queensland? Personal tragedy aside, Jens Lyng has suggested that the warm climate was disadvantageous to the Scandinavians; many preferred the cooler conditions of the southern colonies.²⁴ We have seen how farmers struggled to make

¹⁹ Lyng 1939: 123.

²⁰ Lyng 1939: 128-129.

²¹ Ross Johnston 1982: 90

²² *Evangelisk Luthersk Kirketidende*, 1880, VII, 21: 330-336.

²³ Death certificate Sara L. Helstad, Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, New South Wales, ref. 1911/015315.

²⁴ Lyng 1939: 128-129.

a living; the more developed colonies of New South of Wales and Victoria must have been tempting escapes. Sydney and Melbourne were much larger cities than Brisbane and had bigger ports. We have indicated above that more than half of the Hamburg migrants in the 1870s lived in or around the Norwegian capital prior to departure. As urban or semi-urban dwellers many of these may not have been too inclined to arduous land clearing in the bush. Instead, the bright lights of the southern cities could offer opportunities and jobs on a different scale than the Queensland frontier. N. A. Christiansen wrote to *Norden* relating a story about a dozen Norwegian and Swedish immigrants who arrived in Port Douglas, North Queensland, around the turn of the century. He assisted them in finding jobs, but the ‘new chums’ were not willing to work alongside the Pacific Islanders at equal conditions. After six months, all but one of the Scandinavians had left for New South Wales.²⁵

Concluding remarks

This appendix has provided a sketch of some of the patterns of movement which existed among Norwegian migrants. For many of them, Queensland was merely an intermediate stop in a long chain of moves, an observation commensurate with the temporary character of parts of the Norwegian settlement in the colony/state, as shown through the main thesis. However, to offer more than just preliminary explanations as to this process of geographic mobility would require deeper and more systematic probing into the stories of the migrants who moved around. That would perhaps be a worthy task for future research, asking questions such as: What triggered people to leave the colony to which they had been transported on subsidised tickets? Who stayed and who moved on, and what characterised the ‘movers’ and ‘stayers’? For now, however, we will have to leave these questions with just sketchy answers.

²⁵ *Norden*, December 1904.

Appendix 5 – Suggestions for further research

AS AN EPILOGUE to this thesis, I would like to briefly suggest some possible areas for further research. These are ideas which have emerged from two years of working with Norwegian migration to Australia. The following propositions rest on a basic presumption that even historical studies of ‘tiny’, faraway phenomena and developments can have a place in historiography as little pieces in a big picture.

Firstly, I suggest that more research should be undertaken on small Norwegian settlements and communities around the world, like it is currently being done with Latin America. Personally I am fascinated by how ordinary people from a small outpost in Northern Europe travelled to the opposite side of the globe to begin a new life. For example, the short burst of emigration from Norway to New Zealand, and subsequent settlement in a concentrated area (chapter 7) has, to my knowledge, never been properly analysed academically within the context of Norwegian global emigration in the 19th century. Generally, I think we should ask questions like: Why did people choose these destinations and not the mainstream ones? Which choices did they have? How did they settle in? What are the similarities and differences between Norwegian settlements around the world? Is it all down to ‘local’ explanations, or can any common patterns be detected?

Moving back to Australia, my own research is incomplete in the sense that it only deals with one part of the country, Queensland. By extending Olavi Koivukangas’ work and conducting a study of Norwegians all over Australia, we may get a more complete picture based on a much larger population, and it will also provide a chance to analyse variations between the different parts of the continent, and also more thoroughly examine structural differences between the small Norwegian-Australian migration system and the much larger Norwegian-American one. A part of such a project, or as an entirely separate task, could be a closer study of long-term geographical mobility among migrants (as discussed in appendix 4).

In one sense, Norwegian migration to Australia from around 1850 onwards is an expression of the globalisation and integration of the world economy which took place at that time. Norwegians participated in the European colonisation of Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific Islands. Some of these undertakings have been discussed in the informative anthology *Kolonitid: Nordmenn på eventyr og big business i Afrika og Stillehavet*, edited by Kirsten A. Kjerland and Knut M. Rio, 2009 (Colonial Time: Norwegians on Adventures and Big Business in Africa and the Pacific). From a Norwegian-Australian point of view, there is potential for further research to be done here: A closer examination of the rapid increase in

Norwegian shipping to Australia, during the transition from sail to steam, is one point. Moreover, this process was probably linked to Norwegian participation in trade, business, and possible exploitation, in the South Pacific Islands. Here we are seeing the contours of a triangular pattern of trade and migration between Norway, Australia and the Pacific Islands, a 'system' which may well deserve further research.

Moreover, we have shown that at a three-figure number of Norwegian seamen jumped ship in Australian ports, particularly in Melbourne. A complete analysis of this phenomenon was beyond the scope of my research questions this time, but I certainly desire a more exhaustive explanation as to why these sailors decided to leave their ships in Australia, and what happened to them after they deserted.

Staying in Melbourne, a localised study of Norwegians in the Victorian capital, from the first influx of Norse diggers during the 1850s gold rush until the demise of the Norwegian community there in the early 20th century, would also be relevant as a case study of a Norwegian migrant and maritime outpost in a period of growing global inter-connectedness. Not only did 'Marvellous Melbourne' receive many a Norwegian sailor; a sizeable group of wealthier countrymen also did maritime related business there (see chapter 4), and some of them invested much effort into organising the Norwegian community in Australia's leading city. However, that is another *Norwegian Waltz* yet to be written.

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Gold Mining Lease, 1891/87.

Immigration Agent, Maryborough, letters, ID 13064.

Sub-Immigration Agent, Warwick, register of passage certificates, ID 269450.

Land Agent, Warwick, register of agricultural farms 4 Oct 1886-3 Jan 1887, A/13377.

Letter from August Larsen to Queensland’s Agent-General, 30 June 1898, PRE/A9.

Letter from August Larsen to Queensland’s Agent-General, 14 October 1898, PRE/A13.

Queensland register of Births, Deaths and Marriages

Various consultations with their historical index, available online from Queensland’s Department of Justice and Attorney-General (www.justice.qld.gov.au).

Death certificate Johan Severin Helstad, ref. 1873/817.

Death certificate Christina Sorensen, ref. 5119330

New South Wales register of Births, Deaths and Marriages

Death certificate Sara Louise Helstad, ref. 1911/015315.

National Archives of Norway (Oslo)

Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs archives, papers regarding consulate in Brisbane, 1878-1898. RA/S-2259/Dm/L3558/0004. File: K5-6/142/Æ5.

Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs archives, papers regarding consulate in Brisbane 1906-1930. RD/S-2259/Dq/L4925/0010. File: K5-G-142.

Royal Norwegian Consulate General in Sydney, archives, papers regarding consulate in Brisbane, 1917-1930. RA/S-2595/D/Da/L0009/0003. File: A.5.G.5.

National Library of Norway (Oslo)

Letter from Carl Bjørndal, Brisbane, to Thomas Jenssen in Norway, 4 March 1900. Collection of handwritten manuscripts, 1973:33.

Museum of Emigration (Hamar)

Norwegians naturalised in Queensland 1863-1946. 517 names. Index cards, copied from original records held at state and national archives in Australia (see chapter 1).

Nordmandsforbundet, questionnaires, 1933-1935. Used for the project *Norwegians Around the World*.

Swedish National Archives (Stockholm)

Royal Swedish-Norwegian Consulate, Brisbane, consular archive, 1882-1892. SE/RA/231/231019.

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Registers of deserters at Melbourne 1878-1924. Series 946. Copy, original held in Public Records Office Victoria, Melbourne.

Nomination cards. Copies. Ulf Beijom's research collection, 9:5:18.

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Note: Many naturalisation papers post 1904 have been digitised and made available online at www.naa.gov.au. Records for 53 Norwegian individuals were collected. The following have been cited:

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Archer, Cedric, ref. 15/11672.
Clausen, Christian Sigur, ref. 19/5529, 19/3561.
Horn, Carl Martin, ref. 17/17137, 18/856.
Svensen, John, ref. 08/5742.
Ødegaard, Olaf A, ref. 24/19738.

Australian National University, Pacific Manuscripts Bureau (Canberra)

Papers re Captain Oscar Svensen, 1896-1968, ref. PMB 975. Includes copy of article in *Pacific Islands Monthly*, February 1964: 77-80.

Cairns Historical Society

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Ministerial book No. 13, Tromsø parish, 1872-1877. Scanned and published online at www.arkivverket.no/digitalarkivet.

Passenger manifests

S.S *Almora*, passenger manifest, Townsville Immigration Depot. Copy obtained from Mr. Clive Jacobsen, Kingswood, NSW.

Privately held papers

Letters from Theodor Folkenborg to family in Norway:

A collection of 21 letters written between 1889 and 1934, during and after emigration to Australia and later to New Zealand. The following four items have been of particular interest:

From Rosedale, Queensland, 16 February 1896 to his brother.

From Rosedale, Queensland, 17 July 1896 to brother Arnt.

From Rosedale, Queensland, 2 August 1896 to sister Johanne.

From Rosedale, Queensland, 1 November 1896 to mother and siblings.

Transcribed letters have been courtesy of Ms. Solveig Krog Falkenberg, Rødnes, Norway.

Letters from Johan Jørgensen to family in Norway and relatives in Queensland:

From Lagoon, Lower Proserpine, 2 March 1897, to relative Kate in Norway.

From Pladsen, Biggenden, 18 September 1904 to relative Robert Archer, Gracemere.

From Pladsen, Biggenden, 22 May 1910 to Robert Archer, Gracemere.

Extracts from letters of George L. Barnard, 1892-1899 (Jørgensen's business partner).

Copies courtesy of Mr. Per B. Jørgensen, Drøbak, Norway.

Letters from Carl A. Egerström to his brother in Sweden

From Thornborough, 25 March 1899 to brother in Uppsala.

From Thornborough, 18 March 1900, to brother in Uppsala.

Transcribed and translated copies courtesy of Ms. Cate Harley, Tyrconnell, Queensland.

Personal papers David Dietrichson

"En australsk eventyrer beretter" (Account from an Australian adventurer).

Autobiographical writings by David Dietrichson, probably written during his stay at Dunwich Benevolent Asylum 1913-18.

“David Dietrichsons opphold i Australia 1885-1918” (D. D.’s stay in Australia). A summary of his life in Australia, including extracts from his writings and references to various records. Compiled by G.B. Tjomsland, 1991.

Material courtesy of Ms. Gerd-Birgit Tjomsland, Ski, Norway.

Other family history collections and compilations

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Modified Register for Michel Larson. Genealogical history of the Larson/Mikkelsen/Klæsted family from Gran, Norway, including references to various official records. Courtesy of Ms. Marilyn Smith.

Olsen/Jensen family history. Draft manuscript with genealogical chart and various information relating to the family who migrated to Queensland. Courtesy of Mr. Gunnar Aabøe, Kragerø.

Simonsen family history. Information about Magnus Simonsen, a Norwegian migrant, and his family. Includes copies of certificates, official records and photos of machinery. Also copy from *Georgetown Centenary Book*; *Cairns Post*, 16 April 1918; *Townsville Bulletin*, 2 January 1970. Courtesy of Ms. Robyn Wiltshire.

Nilsen/Johannessen family history. Various information about Johanna A. Nilsen and Borgen Johannessen, two Norwegian emigrants. Courtesy of Ms. Joan Connor, Brisbane, and Ms. Anne-Line Grimsbo, Harstad.

Other unpublished material

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