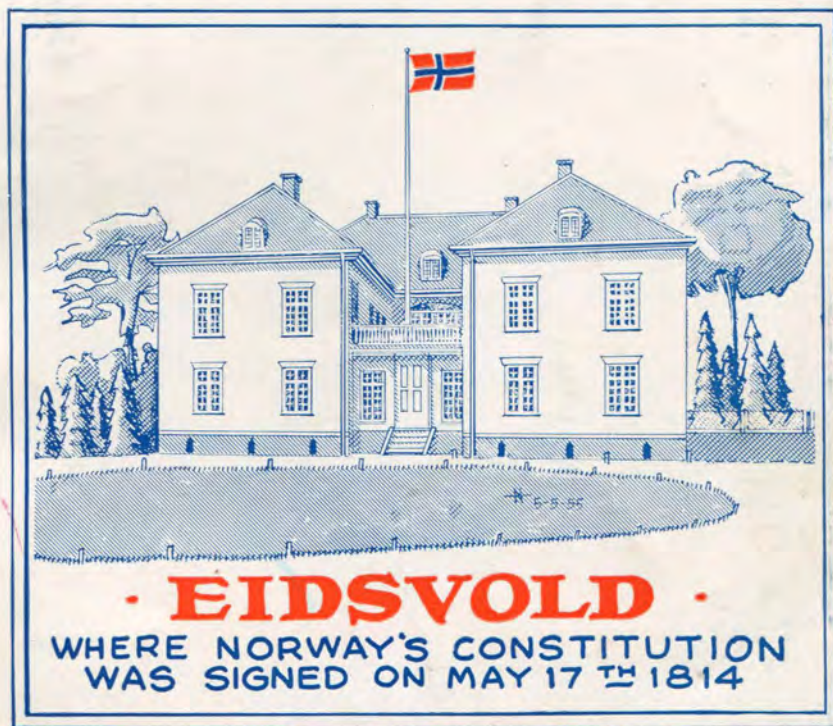


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Norwegian National League

17th of May Celebration

SOUVENIR-PROGRAM



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SATURDAY, MAY 14, 1955

WISHING YOU A HAPPY
17th OF MAY CELEBRATION

Bjornson Male Chorus

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BJARNE N. OLSEN, President

17th of May Festival

Sponsored by

THE NORWEGIAN NATIONAL LEAGUE

One hundred and sixty-six years ago the United States adopted its Constitution. Twenty-five years later it was the pattern for the Constitution adopted at Eidsvoll on May 17, 1814.

To the Norwegian people, Syttende May (Seventeenth of May) carries a double impact . . . Independence Day and Constitution Day . . . and compares with the Fourth of July and September Seventeenth wrapped in one glorious package.

In Norway the observance as a national day started in 1827. Chicagoans of Norwegian birth or descent have observed the Norwegian Constitution Day for the past seventy-one years. The pattern



NORWEGIAN NATIONAL LEAGUE—OFFICERS 1955

Front row: Birgith Jensen, 3rd V.P.; John A. Lindrup, Pres.; Bertha Floistad, 1st V.P. Standing: Reidar Rosenvinge, Treas.; Steiner Nordskog, Cor. Secretary; Al Newgard, Rec. Secretary and George Andersen, 2nd V.P.

for the celebrations have changed with the times, but it may be of interest to mention that a parade has been held every year, with the exception of 1917, when it was cancelled because of the war. In 1918 it was re-instituted at the unofficial request of the American Government.

In 1825 the first organized group of Norwegian immigrants came to the United States. It is significant to note that the party chose to leave Norway on the Fourth of July. The spirit of freedom of the new world prompted them, and it is in the same spirit that one million

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HANS EIDE, President

TH. THORSTENSEN, Secretary

Norwegians since have emigrated to the United States. Today, the number of Norwegian-born and of Norwegian descent, totals about three million in the United States and is nearly equal to the population of Norway. On the basis of population, possibly only the Irish have a higher percentage of immigrants.

The early immigrants were mostly farmers, later came the sailors and the tradesmen and the professional men. But one thing in common for all of them was that they were imbedded with a deep understanding of independence, liberty and democracy. The Norwegian people have an old dictum—"By Equity and Justice the Land shall be ruled."

The Norwegian immigrant also came here with the firm training and conviction that life is give and take. He never felt that the State or Nation owed him a living without recompense.

With this background it has been easy for the immigrant from Norway to find his place in the American society, to adjust himself to the American Way of Life. Nearly without exception they sought and obtained their American citizenship as soon as Uncle Sam would permit. They did not and do not take the citizenship lightly. Ask any one of them about the solemnity of the naturalization oath . . . and they will tell you, each in his own way, that it is a sacred obligation.

The Norwegian-Americans are justly proud that among the nationality groups they have an outstanding and enviable record as law abiding citizens.

When they gather, like here in Chicago, to commemorate the "Syttende Mai"—it is in the basic spirit of the Constitutions of the United States and Norway, and it is also in the light of the fourth Commandment.

To Norwegian-Americans the Syttende Mai is Mother Norway's Day and they honor her without the least disparagement of their beloved foster father, Uncle Sam.

John A. Lindrup

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Former President of the N.N.L.

The Norwegian Independence Day will be celebrated under the auspices of the Norwegian National League, in all its splendor, May 14th. It cannot be said or implied that the observance of this day render us less loyal and patriotic toward our adopted country. The



Alfred O. Erickson

celebration has continued so long as to have become traditional. Norwegians, young and old, resplendent in regal raiment of silk, tinsel and fringe, form in line, marching to the tune of band music up North Avenue to Humboldt Park, with the American and Norwegian national colors fluttering in the breeze, portraying a panoramic procession wonderful to behold. Even the businessmen along the route are profuse with friendly salutes.

It has never been difficult to procure prominent religious and national speakers for the occasion. I had the honor to serve as its President for five years in the early twenties. We had as speakers such as U.S. Senators Robert M. LaFollette, Sr., Henrik Shipstead, U.S. Secretary of Labor James J. Davis, founder of the Loyal Order of Moose,

Governors John J. Blaine of Wisconsin, Ragnvald Nestos of N. Dakota, and others. In other respects the League was not so up-to-date as at present. The evening program was held at Brand's Park, and not always so orderly.

Norwegians are a God-loving, intrepid, industrious, rugged and wholesome people. The crags, the cataracts and snow-capped glaciers served as their play-ground, and sailing, fishing and lumbering their principal occupation. Norway has less than 4% tillable soil, hence, imbued with the Norwegian propensity to rove, to roam, to explore, to see what lies beyond, they ventured hither in open ships, fraught with much hardships and anxiety.

And what architects, builders, engineers and skilled technicians they have proved to be! Behold the skyscrapers in the large cities, while others trekked onward, invading the seemingly vast and endless plains of the central west, taking up farming and webbing the prairies with homes, churches and school houses. Behold how, with brawn and unconquerable will, they have turned the furrows, and developed and prospered! And note, if you please, how as skiers, singers and athletes, they predominate and excel! What law-abiding citizens they are, and how they appreciate their colorful heritage.

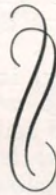
The Governments of America and Norway being so similar, blending so admirably, why shouldn't we celebrate together the ties of friendship, good will and independence?

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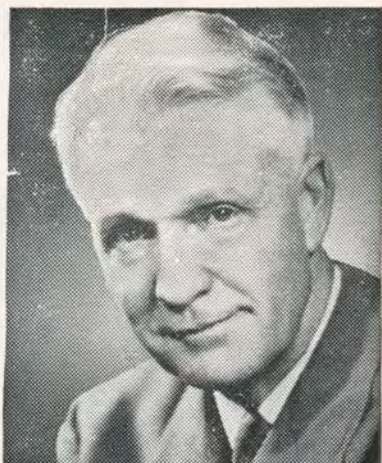
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Horace Lund, Violinist

17th of May Parade

Saturday, May 14, 1955

Line-up at Rockwell and Wabansia Avenues at 2:30 p.m. Parade to enter North Avenue from Artesian at 3 p.m. sharp. Last minute changes will be announced over loudspeakers.

Line of March: East on Wabansia, south on Artesian, west on North, south on Humboldt drive to Refectory building review stand.

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Bjornson Chorus
Grieg Ladies
Oselio Ladies
Norena Ladies

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Sverre Haug, Marshal

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Bjornstjerne Bjornson Lodge
North Star Lodge
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Nordfelles
Skjold Lodge
Norge Ski Club

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Gorden Bergstrom, Marshal

Salvation Army Band
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JA, VI ELSKER - - - Salvation Army Staff Band
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HENRIK LYSSAND, Director

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Vice Consul for Norway

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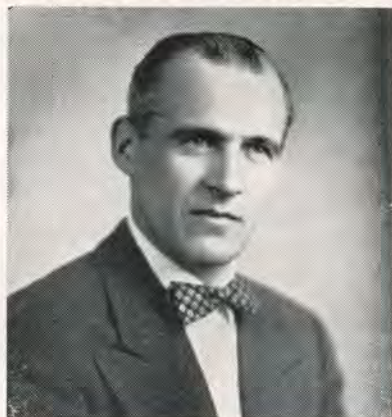
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