


1825-1975



Norwegian American Immigration Anniversary Commission 1825-1975

This is an excerpt from an article in the *New York Daily Advertiser* of October 12, 1825; which announced the arrival in New York of the Norwegian sloop *Restauration* with a crew of seven and forty-six passengers, including a baby born during the voyage. The emigrants, whom the *Advertiser* so admired for their boldness and adventurous spirit, had left Stavanger, Norway, on July 4 of that year and had arrived in New York on October 9 following a voyage that had its full share of hardships and difficulties.

The date of the arrival of the *Restauration*, a ship of only 45 tons, has gone down in history since the passengers comprised the first organized party of Norwegian emigrants to the New World. They were the trail-blazers of a movement which during the next hundred years was to bring close to 800,000 Norwegians to the United States. Unlike later emigrants, however, the so-called Sloopers who arrived on the *Restauration* did not primarily have an economic motive for leaving their homeland. Their reason for emigrating was chiefly a religious one; many of them were religious dissenters and desired to live in a country where their freedom to worship in their own way would not be interfered with by the authorities.

The way had been prepared for the pioneers by Cleng Peerson, who has been called the "Father of Norwegian emigration to the United States." Prior to the arrival of the immigrants he had traveled widely in the United States in order to discover a suitable place for a Norwegian settlement. At Kendall in upstate New York he had found what seemed a promising tract of land, and that is where the immigrants built their first homes. Some years later, however, most of them pulled up stakes and moved on to Fox River, Illinois, where a permanent Norwegian settlement was founded. Many descendants of the Sloopers are still living in that area.

It is true that Norwegians had arrived in this country long before 1825. We need think only of Leif Erikson and his men and also of the many Norwegians who