What might the village books reveal?

Bygdebøker (literally “village books”) are invaluable sources for the history of Norwegian family names. A bygdebok is a collection of the names of the landowning families and landless farmers in a county, parish or municipality. It contains the names of people’s parents and their homestead, and contains information on when a birth, marriage, or death took place. What makes bygdebøker especially valuable is that they often contain additional information such as occupation and residence for all family members of the landowner’s family, including the wife’s name at marriage. They may also provide information on the names of other people in the household and their relationships to the owner.

What might the censuses reveal?

Censuses are a complete collection of equivalents for Norwegian cities. The National Library has a complete collection of Norway are covered by bygdebøker. These provide a birthplace or birthdate.

Findagrave.com. A resource for burial places in the USA, sometimes providing a birthplace or birthdate.

Ancestry.com (subscription site). Scanned and indexed ECLA censuses have been added to the census collection on Ancestry.com. The censuses can be searched for by place of residence. The digital collections for 1845 to 1875 are available on Ancestry.com.

Familysearch.org (free). Indexed church records from Norway.

Which is best to use first?

Bygdebøker, census records, parish registers, church records, emigrant lists, and birth, marriage, and death certificates are the most important sources for researching Norwegian ancestry. The curation of Norwegian genealogical sources is ongoing, so it is a good idea to check back periodically to see if any new sources have been added.

What are Norwegian names today?

 Norwegian names today are composed of a first and last name, as written on the birth or baptism record. Names have historically consisted of a given name, a patronymic and a farm name:

Peder Johnsen Øvreberg

On Norwegian birth and baptism records the farm name is often written in uppercase letters, and these are the first to be changed, followed by the patronymic and then the given name. Most Norwegian last names are patronymics or farm names from a time when hereditary family names were made mandatory. To this day, some Norwegian names consist of a combination of patronymics and farm names, such as Øverby (patronymic) and Øverbygård (farm name).

Names that end in “-sen” or “-son” mean “son of”, and are therefore patronymics. Peter, Per and Peder are the same name, adjusted to suit local dialects. Also, spelling was not standardized, so variations on a name might exist.

People would also include a farm name. As with the patronymics, the farm name is often written in uppercase letters, and these are the first to be changed, followed by the given name. In some cases, the farm name might be replaced by a more common given name, such as Michael, John or Peter. These new names might be altered by local customs, and could also have been made up.

The names that end in “-sen” or “-son”, meaning “son of”, thereby can be digitally accessed here: tinyurl.com/farm-names.

What are Norwegian names?

The typical 19th century Norwegian name would be composed of three parts: The given name, the patronymic and the farm name. Beginning in the mid-1600s, Norwegian priests kept records of baptisms, marriages and funerals. Today, these records (called kirkebøker or parish registers) are valuable first-hand genealogy sources. Surviving parish registers are kept by the National Archives of Norway, which also preserves all records of the Oslo Diocese. A record covers a parish, its content ordered chronologically. A record covers a parish, its content ordered chronologically. When using sources from the Archives' regional repositories (state archives). Most of these can be accessed online: media.digitalarkivet.no/en/

Cenuses:

Censuses are a complete collection of Norwegian families. The National Library has a complete collection of Norway are covered by bygdebøker.

Since 1882, The National Library of Norway has preserved copies of everything published in Norway: books, newspapers, magazines, records.

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