



Sons of Norway
HERITAGE PROGRAMS



IdeaBank#23

IMMIGRATION PLAY FOR CHILDREN

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American School
Stavanger, Norway

1985–1986

Immigration Play for Children

An original musical production written and performed by the fourth, fifth, and sixth grade classes of Stavanger American School, Stavanger, Norway.

The stage has a set of risers in the center rear with musical instruments in front of them. Lights are set for nine areas, so the stage can be controlled in three levels in thirds. Spots are used for upstage where the dialogue and readings take place. Diary entries are read from books with black covers; quotes from books; newspapers are read from old-looking newspapers. Two screens flanking the stage used to show slides of student work on emigration themes and scenes of Norway and America. Performers stay on stage for the entire performance and enter from four entryways. All are dressed in white and black, and girls wear white scarves. A mural background shows the mountains of Norway (stage left–SL) and the wheat fields of America (stage right–SR). The scenery is dimmed during the opening which is a slide show accompanied by Grieg’s “Peer Gynt.”

The decision to leave this section will be assigned to students in grade six.

SONG: PER SPELMANN WITH VIOLIN AND DANCE

First verse: *With violin only, all performers move to position on stage.*

Second verse: *Groups from down SR, SL and up SR and SL sing, up SR and SL dance. All sing same verse.*

Third verse: *Center group move to risers, down SR and SL dance, all sing same verse.*

Fourth verse: *First speakers SC move to SL by movement of the fiddler. All others move to positions on risers. All sing same verse.*

Fifth verse: *All sing same verse in place.*

Verse text: Per Spelmann han hadde ei einaste ku, (rep.)
Han bytta bort kua fekk fela igjen. (rep.)
Du gamle, gode fiolin, du fiolin, du fela mi.

DEAR DIARY,

It’s sad to leave my family. I don’t know if I will ever see them again in my entire life. I feel lonely, scared, and excited all at the same time. It is very hard to take.

Girl: I’m not sure about going.

Girl: Oh hush up!

Girl: I'm going to miss this place.

Girl: Me too.

Girl: Well, it's time to leave Norway.

(Group DS kneels and turns)

SONG: OLEANA

Kom til Oleana, der er det godt a være
I Norge vil jeg ikke lenger slavelenken bære.

CHORUS: Ole Oleana Oleana
Ole Ole Ole Ole
Ole Oleana

In Oleana land is free,
The wheat and corn just plant themselves
There they grow four feet a day,
While on the bed you rest yourselves. (*Chor.*)

The little pigs they roast themselves
And trot about this lovely land
With knives and forks stuck in their mouths
Inquiring if you'd like some ham. (*Chor.*)

The cows and calves do all the work,
They milk and churn till the dairy's full,
While the bull keeps herd production high
And sends reports to Ole Bull. (*Chor.*)

The sun keeps shining day and night,
Till the moon politely asks a turn,
As the harvest here is once a month,
We've time to waste and money to burn. (*Chor.*)

So if you'd like a happy life,
To Oleana you must go,
The poorest man in the old country
Becomes a king in a year or so. (*Chor.*)

(Group DS rises)

Father: Mama, we are going to America.

Mama: Why, Papa, what's gotten into you? Surely you aren't going to leave everything we have for some silly whim?

Father: Sure am. We leave next week.

Girl: I will bring my dolly Greta (Greh 'ta), my favorite clothes and my big straw hat. I can't bring everything, but we're going.

(Background hums "Oleana")

QUOTE: Why did so many people leave Norway? There were many reasons.

There were many children born in the 1820s. When these children grew up and had to support themselves, they were forced to join the ranks of the unemployed until they could find a job. There just was not enough work at home in Norway, while America was experiencing a tremendous expansion and especially needed technical expertise in the areas of transportation, mining, and construction.

America lured people to her with the promise of free land. The Homestead Act of 1862 promised every man or woman over the age of 21 160 acres of land free of charge except for a small registration fee. American wages were considerably higher than those in Norway. In America in the 1880s, a summer farmhand could expect to earn about \$15 per month. In Norway, a hired hand or day laborer would only earn \$22–\$30 PER YEAR!

DEAR DIARY,

Today everybody is getting ready to leave. Mama told me to decide what to bring, and what to give to friends. Some of my friends are also leaving. Papa is selling our horse and land to buy tickets. Mama told me to say goodbye to all of my friends. What am I going to do?

QUOTE: The trip that faced the emigrants in the days of the sailing ship was a long one and many preparations had to be made before they could leave. A farm owner had to sell his farm, including tools, house, and livestock—most of it at an auction. The emigrants also had to equip themselves with provisions for the entire journey. Then they had to have sheepskin coverlets and blankets since they furnished their own bedding, and they had to have enough cooking utensils with them to prepare food for eight, ten, or twelve long weeks.

(Group moves to instruments)

They also brought a number of objects they thought they might need after they arrived. It might be a spinning wheel or an iron griddle, a good harness, or an ax. Jon Ellingbo brought all the equipment from his farm smithy, even the bellows. Another man took a wagon and many farm tools.

SONG: I'LL SELL MY HAT

I'll sell my hat,
I'll sell my coat
To buy my wife a little flat boat

Down the river we will float
Come bibble in the boo shee loo ree.

CHORUS: Shul shul shul a roo
Shul a rack a shack
Shul a barbeque
When I sell my sally balayal
Come bibble in the boo shee loo ree.

I'll sell my pants I'll sell my vest
To get enough money to go out west
And there I think I can do my best
Come bibble in the boo shee loo ree.

I'll sell my pants I'll sell my vest
To get enough money to go out west
And there I think I can do my best
Come bibble in the boo shee loo ree.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

(Tramping ostinato) (Movement to and from risers for next scene)

POEM:

One voice: One morning I awaken and think what lies ahead.

All: America, the key to answered prayers

Second voice: I do not want to leave, but I leave my country true

All: The brown leaves fall against my coat and tie,

First voice: I journey to Stavanger, where I must say goodbye.

SONG: A NEW BALLAD OF EMIGRATION TO AMERICA

I will now write with a pen that I'm holding,
Write down a verse just as best as I can,
Sing about Stillen, his boat and his shipping
Sing about me, of my dear motherland,
Sing about those who from Norway are leaving,
Those that America fever is plaguing,
Now that the thousands in these days of dawning,
Journey from country from their motherland.

DEAR DIARY,

The people came from far away. The roads were bad and muddy.

QUOTE: “A letter to ‘Morgenbladet’ in July 1846 reports hardships emigrants might encounter in Le Havre if they failed to find passage. Nearly 300 Norwegians spent several weeks in an open field lying like cattle “in tightly close knots, in an atmosphere tainted by the stench rising from the marsh soil under the influence of the hot sun.” (*Line of people to get on the boat. Spot on a girl*)

Girl: I am in line to go into the boat; scared, curious, sad I go as I step in. I’ve traveled for days, weeks, and months, carrying only my belongings.

Father: Hurry along now so we can get settled. (*Carrying supplies*)

Daughter: Okay. (*Walks ahead*)

Mother: Where do we put our things on the boat? (*Carrying a bag*)

Father: We have a spot under the deck.

JOURNEY:

At this point, the sixth grade stops and grade four continues:

(Movement to and from risers during second verse of this song)

SONG: BOUND FOR THE PROMISED LAND

On Jordan’s stormy banks I stand
And cast a wistful eye
To Canaan’s fair and happy land
Where my possessions lie.

I’m bound for the promised land,
Bound for the promised land.
O, who will come and go with me?
I’m bound for the promised land.

POEM: ON THE BOAT by Lars Hallstrom

The sea dark and self-reliant
The waves roll over and over
The islands some so small—others so giant,
I look and see the land I will never see again
—ever

**CHORAL
READING:**

**HELLO AMERICA
by Lars Hallstrom**

Girls: The wind is strong
Boys: The waves are high
Girls: I turn around to sigh
Boys: Goodbye
Girls: Goodbye Norway
One Voice: Country of mine
All: I hope we meet, in another time.

SONG: SCHOONER ROGALAND

Glide out, your lovely sail free.
Sail from your mother's hand.
The sea calls you in welcome
You sailing *Rogaland*.
Its combers you're now slicing,
Take on their fight with glee,
Like wings your sails will carry
Your luck from sea to sea.

By John Renee, and Kristen Kingsley (*Group to instruments*)

DEAR DIARY,

I lost my diary today, but I found it again. Martha nor I can wait. Both of us have been getting frequently seasick, and my sea legs are not the greatest. Now the days seem long.

**CHORAL
READING:
by David Kuang**

Speaker 1: They came from the ocean, they come from the sea
Speaker 2: They left for America
All: Just like me.

Speaker 1: They sold their cows, they sold their pans

Speaker 2: To buy a ticket to the adventure land.

Speaker 3: The boats were loaded, the boats were full.

Speaker 4: They left for the promised land where they could rule.

SONG: SAILING ON THE OCEAN

Sailing on the ocean the tide rolls high
Sailing on the ocean the tide rolls high
Sailing on the ocean the tide rolls high
You can get a pretty girl by and by.

(Group SL rises)

POEM: ALONE
by Sonya Walker

Alone on my journey,
With only my brother,
He misses his friend,
And I, know only one thought,
Nothing will go wrong—it WILL NOT! *(in a whisper, but strongly)*

POEM: OH LAND
By Alison Ellenor

America I hope is free,
As free as birds in the sky,
That for days on end fly,
I am leaving you, oh land—The land that cradled me.

SONG: NORWAY, MY NORWAY

Still lies the land in its mantle of white,
When the winter his vigil is keeping
Oh, no one is dreaming so softly at night
While rivers are fitfully sleeping
And no one is smiling so peaceful and good
When the song of the chaf-finch has fled from the wood
A hush o'er the forest is creeping.

(Kneeling SL)

DEAR DIARY,
by Don Coleman

It's cold and windy but no sleet or snow. There is lots and lots of rain. People's clothes smell bad, and there are no facilities for bathing whatsoever. I stink, myself. The food is terrible. The meat is all salted to keep it fresh, but after seven weeks we are butchering the pig—that's a big improvement.

POEM: **THE BEAUTIFUL LAND**
by Sonya Walker

Boys: The moon ever, ever so light,
Girls: The wind thin and so crispy,
Boys: Tomorrow the sun will be bright.
Girls: My hair blows, thick and wispy.

POEM: **KNOWING**
by Molly Trent

You know you're going to get there
So you dream of a place where
Friendship is near
And things that you hear
Are pleasant to the sound in your ear.

DEAR DIARY:

On the ship, people are getting sick and one lady died. She died of pneumonia. Soon a short lady with blond hair, who was with her when she died, ran to the door leading to the outside deck. Working her way through the crowd, she got to the captain's cabin. Then she knocked on the door and told him what had happened. He told her that they would have a funeral for her. So after the funeral some men picked up the coffin and put it in the sea.

POEM REPRISE: **ALONE**
by Sonya Walker

One Voice: And I know, only one thought, Nothing will go wrong.
All: It Will NOT

A SHORT PLAY EXCERPT
From a work by Karoline Melli

Girl: *(Looking up at mother)* Mother, will the journey soon be over?

Mother: *(Looking at daughter)* Not quite dear, but I do hope the time will go fast.

POEM:
by Kirk Stinson

The sun was out, the tide was in,
We all waited for the wind.
There I sat, with wife and son,
America—I thought—America.
We battled winds, we battled storms,
For 28 days and 28 nights we sailed the ship along.
Then one day I heard some one say, “America! America!”
The land was big and bold,
We made it! America! America!

DIALOGUE:
by Donald Coleman

Speaker: Why are we all standing around? Shall we go dance?

SONG: SAILING ON THE OCEAN-REPRISE

Speaker 1: Look! Over there! *(All on risers look to the slide screen)*

Speaker 2: I believe that is land

Captain: Land Ahoy!

(Mass controlled confusion, talking and movement)

(Groups move to and from risers for the next scene)

THE ARRIVAL:

(At this point, grade four ends and grade five continues)

NEWSPAPER ARTICLE:
From the New York Daily Advertiser of October 15, 1825

A vessel has arrived at this port with emigrants from Norway. The vessel is small and

brought 46 passengers—male and female—most of whom belong to families from the vicinity of the little town of Stavanger at the southwestern tip of Norway. The appearance of such a party of strangers, coming from so distant a country, and in a vessel of a size apparently ill-calculated for a voyage across the Atlantic, could not but excite an unusual degree of interest. They have had a voyage of 14 weeks and all are in good health.

An enterprise like this argues a good deal of boldness in the master of the ship, as well as an adventurous spirit in the passengers. The ship passed through the English Channel and then steered directly for New York, where she arrived with the addition of one passenger, born on the way.

POEM:
by Rachel Kokjer

The Island of Ellis
The fears and the tears
The many hopes and dreams
That were killed over the years!

**CHORAL
READING:**
by Teri Vion

All: Tired, nervous, scared
1st Voice: Yet curious when I got off the *Restauration*
All: And went into the immigration station
2nd Voice: Oh why can't we stop?
3rd Voice: Oh why can't we rest?
All: Oh why?
1st Voice: Oh why?
All: Oh why?

**CHORAL
READING:**
by David Kuang

1st Voice: They went to the island.

All: The island of tears.

2nd Voice: They said goodbye to the ones that they loved.

All: They said goodbye to the ones that they feared.

3rd Voice: They go in a room.

4th Voice: They wait in a line.

All: To get inspected.

1st Voice: Then go to the sign.

All: The ones with the chalk marks .

2nd Voice: The ones without.

3rd Voice: They both get separated.

4th Voice: On different routes.

All: “Phew!,” they say,

1st Voice: “Now I’m free.”

All To go to the land that belongs to me.

DEAR DIARY,

From writings by Denise Jansson, Angelina Christofferson, Jessica, Sareth, and Kari Smid

(Violin music of Oleana in the background)

We were all right (we made it through the immigration station) so we headed out west close to Minnesota. I took a rake, clothes, and food to eat on the train. It took 15 days on the train to get there. It got boring and was crowded. In the train there were people who spoke different languages. Some spoke German, Norwegian, and all sorts of different languages from other places in Europe. Minnesota is a beautiful state although it does not have the same character as Norway. There are not many hills here. The land here is good and there are more crops so there is more food. Some people say you just drop seeds in the soil and you get a huge harvest the next year. I am really looking forward to seeing Indians. I heard the Indians are really kind. We are having a good time in America. The food is different but it is good. I have made some nice friends over here.

**CHORAL
READING:
by Kari Smid** **AMERICA**

All: America

1st Voice: America

All: As my new homeland

All: You are beautiful, beautiful with your golden sand.

All: America

2nd Voice: America

All: With your trees so high

3rd Voice: With your multi-story buildings that reach the sky.

4th Voice: Although Norway is the land I've always known,

All: I can now accept you as my home.

QUOTE: The “America Fever” raged in many places in old Norway and drove large numbers to the New World. The fever was not always quieted by the establishment of a home in the New World. Those who lived in the older settlements learned that great reaches of fertile and free lands were to be had to the west, and so they again turned toward the new and the unseen. The “west fever” even seized upon older settlers who had already established homes, but who started west in the hope of greater opportunities. Many Norwegians in this manner settled the prairies of Dakota, and the frontier and wilderness were constantly pushed farther and farther westward under the plow. The desire to go west did not seem to have any geographic boundary, for the farther west one went, one heard always the same cry: “I want to go west!”

**NEXT ENTRY
by Renee Kroll**

DEAR DIARY,

Now the days seem long. I spend most of my time doing quilting in bed or thinking about things I'll miss from Norway.

**A CHORAL
READING:
by Alison Ellenor**

1st Voice: In my heart I will not be free.

Boys: Even though I am.

1st Voice: America is not my home,

Girls: Even though my house is there.

2nd Voice: My heart is with my wife,

All: Who is in my land.

2nd Voice: Until she comes with me,

All: I will never be free.

3rd Voice: My heart is like a butterfly

All: Flying in the sky.

3rd Voice: My heart is like a tree

All: That sways in the wind.

3rd Voice: My heart is like a clover patch

All: That I will soon lay in.

4th Voice: America,

All: They say

4th Voice: Will have all of these,

4th Voice: But I suppose it will never be

All: Like the land I used to live in.

(At this point, grade five ends and grade four continues).

(Long instrumental introduction to the next song during this mov.) (Fourth grade may wish to add a quote or diary entry here about what Norwegians brought to America)

SONG: WHEN I FIRST CAME TO THIS LAND

When I first came to this land, I was not a wealthy man.
So I got myself a shack, I did what I could.
And I called my shack “Break my back”
But the land was sweet and good, and I did what I could.
Killed my cow. No milk now. And I called my shack “Break my back”
But the land was sweet and good and I did what I could.
*(Next verses: Replace “Shack” and called my shack, “Break my back” with:
duck, called my duck, out of luck.
wife, called my wife, run, for your life.
son, called my son, my work’s done.)*

**CHORAL READING:
by Kristina Watson**

All: America the promised land.

Girls: America my home to be.

Boys: What I see in America is land for me.

All: America the promised land.

1st Voice: America I see,

2nd Voice: America the high and mighty.

All: America for me.

3rd Voice: What I see in America is land for me

4th Voice: To plant with golden wheat and

All: Gorgeous clouds of fluffy white cotton.

1st Voice: What I see in America are mountains

2nd Voice: Full of gold and treasures for me.

All: America my home to be.

(Entries by Denise Jansson, Lesley Kemp, Jason Beasley, Ethan Payne)

DEAR DIARY,

I miss the mountains. I miss Mom and Dad. Here is America, it’s wonderful. Land is free

and you get high prices for grain and flour. There's plenty of wood for housing and fires. People are friendly and will help out when you're building or you're sick. Food is plentiful and there's lots to spare. We have settled in a Norwegian community. We had to become American. We had to farm on flat land. It was different. We had to adopt the language. It was not easy and we had to make our school and church. The people who live next to us don't like us because we are Norwegians, but I play with the girl.

(Background humming to "When I First Came to this Land")

QUOTE: "We have no reason to regret our decision to move here." This statement sums up the feelings of the authors of what has come to be known as the Muskego Manifesto, an open letter signed by 80 men and dated January 6, 1845. It shows the tremendous faith the Norwegians had in the future of America, its self-assertion and independence. They also wrote, "We harbor no hopes of acquiring wealth, but we live in a liberal government, in a fertile land where freedom and equality prevail in religious as well as civil affairs, and without any special permission we can enter almost any profession to make an honest living. This we consider to be more wonderful than riches, for by diligence and industry we can look forward to an adequate income and thus we have no reason to regret our decision to move here."

SONG: RIDING IN A BUGGY, LIZA JANE

Riding in a buggy Miss Mary Jane,
Miss Mary Jane, Miss Mary Jane
I'm a long way from home.
Who moans for me?
Who moans for me?
Who moans for me my darling
Who moans for me?

Come my love and go with me
'Lil Liza Jane.
Come my love and go with me
'Lil Liza Jane.

Oh, Eliza, 'Lil Liza Jane.
Oh, Eliza, 'Lil Liza Jane.

(These songs are sung now as a three-part round)

(At this point, grade four ends and grades five and six continue)

THE JOURNEY FROM AMERICA TO NORWAY—THE EASY WAY

A short play by works taken from Kristen Kingsley, Gaea Connary, Monish Kundrar, Pat Carroll, Tessie Eerligh, Jason, Guy, Michael, Molly Trent, Fobin, Leslie Kemp.

(The dialogue shifts from SR to SL and so forth. Slides appear on opposite side of the stage of the dialogue, no pause is made between shifts)

FIFTH GRADE:

- Father: No, I don't think so.
- Mother: But Norway is such a clean country.
- Father: But we've almost settled here.
- Mother: So this is the best time to go because we're not totally settled.
- Father: OK, you've convinced me. *(Loud and stern)* But now you'll have to convince the kids.

SIXTH GRADE:

(The next morning)

- Mother: Kids, we've got something to tell you. *(Seriously)*
- Kids: What? *(Disgusted)*
- Mother: Well, your father has got a new job in Norway. How do you feel about it?
- Boy: Mom, I'm going to miss America.
- Girl: Great, can I have a soda pop now?
- Father: *(On the phone)* Two taxis. Yes. OK, thank you.

FIFTH GRADE:

- Voice: All SAS boarders please board now. The plane takes off in 20 minutes. Thank you.
- Father: OK, kids stick together. No one run off.
- Mother: It's going to be a long time. I hope it doesn't change too much.
- Father: 1, 2, 3, 4,...Where's Janey?
- Girl: Here, Papa, I lost my teddy.

SIXTH GRADE:

- Boy: This plane ride is kinda like what the Norwegians did when they went to America.
- Father: Son, they had hard times then.
- Girl: Is the flight going to be long?
- Mother: Yes, Anne, very long.
- Girl: Are they going to show the movie now?
- Mother: In a little while.
- Girl: Are we almost there?
- Mother: Just two more hours. Aren't you tired? Why don't you take a nap, it helps pass the time.
- Stewardess: Would you like some coke or something?
- Boy: Can I have ginger ale?
- Pilot: If you'll look over to the left of the craft, you'll have your first look at Norway.
- Boy: Hey, Gosh! Look at Norway!
- Girl: I've ridden on the plane for 10 hours from Houston.

FIFTH GRADE:

Immigration

Officer: May I please see your passport? How long will you be in Stavanger?

Father: We are going to be living here, and here are our passports. Do you need to see my work permit?

Immigration

Officer: Yes. (*Pause*) You may go on through now. Baggage claim is to the left.

SIXTH GRADE:

- Girl: There aren't even hamburgers in the airport, only bread and cheese.
- Boy: Do you think they have any hamburger joints here?
- Mother: There is going to be a lot to get used to in this new country.
- Girl: Yeah, a whole lot.
- Father: Isn't it beautiful?
- Boy: Yeah, I think I'm going to like it here.
- Girl: Me too.

FIFTH GRADE:

- Father: Well, here we are.
- Boy: Do we have to unpack all this stuff?
- Mother: Not today. Where's John?
- John: I'd thought I'd make some friends since we left our other ones behind.
- Girl: I'll have to get used to some new things like TV, new friends, homework being less, the fast food restaurant, school.
- Boy: To me things that are new are the language, not as busy or crowded as Houston, people much friendlier...

(New round of music, perhaps "I'm a Yankee Doodle Dandy" or other traditional folksong such as "Oh, Susannah")

DEAR DIARY, by Noelle Bodin

When I arrived in Norway it was snowing. I had heard about snow, but had never seen it. It was crystal glittering white. Even though the sky was dark, I could still make out a faint outline of low houses.

DEAR DIARY,
by Eric Heidbreder

It is very different here. The sun does not shine as much and it is not as warm. I am very lonely. The funnest thing to do is go out and explore. Sometimes I am very frightened when the Norwegians scream at me in their strange language.

DEAR DIARY,
by Jen Bredford

I have just moved to Norway. I have brought a skateboard over here. When I showed it to my Norwegian friend, it was like a whole new thing. I showed her my roller skates and she liked them very much. Now almost every day she would like to play or go roller-skating with me. We also brought over a microwave. She thought it was fast for cooking things in a hurry. Her mother thought it was great.

DEAR DIARY,
by Will Dangerfield

My family brought things to our neighborhood too. My sister brought the wide world of Barbies and my Dad brought his knowledge of engineering. My Mom brought foods over, they didn't last long. I brought a dirt bike, a Bamnpoi to be exact. I noticed that later the Norwegians around our house began getting dirt bikes.

DEAR DIARY,
by Lars Hallstrom

I think that in coming to Norway, I, or we, have introduced many new ways of thinking, such as the oil industry which we have expanded, new ways of cooking and eating. For example, in our house, we invited our next door neighbors for Thanksgiving. The not-so-new shopping mall—after all, Canada is the home of the biggest shopping mall in the world.

DEAR DIARY,
by Sonya Walker

America and many other countries have brought many things to Norway, 7-Up, Coke, iceberg lettuce, Wimpy's, and many useful sources. One of the many personal sources is Kleenex in a box.

DEAR DIARY,
by Jamie O'Connor

I feel I have brought an addition of population to Norway. There are things I'm ashamed of having in Norway and that is swearing. The Norwegians usually get them off of movies

and then say them to people who speak English and get into trouble. But still there are many good things too and we are all proud of those.

DEAR DIARY,
by Kari Smid

The things I have brought to Norway are American food, Oreos, root beer, Dr. Pepper, and others, but there are also movies that many Norwegians and Americans enjoy. We have brought video machines here. There are more personal things that I have brought. I brought the love of America and the willingness to make friends as well.

(Slide show to the recorded music of "They're Coming to America")

(One verse of "Per Spelmann" is sung by all, ending with a single line of the song by a single violin, spotted SC)