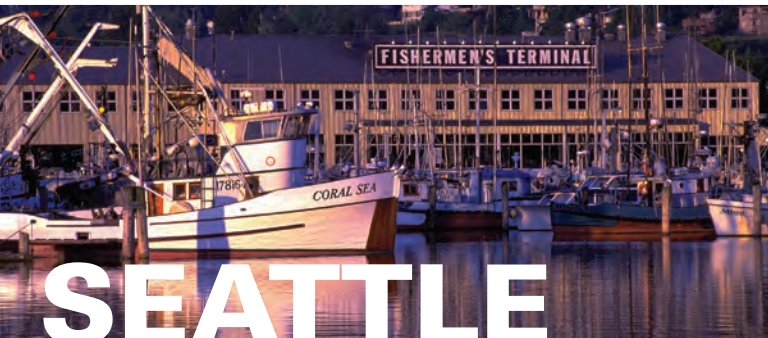


SEATTLE

NORDIC AMERICAN HERITAGE



FISHERMEN'S TERMINAL

CORAL SEA

SEATTLE CULTURAL GUIDES



WHAT'S INSIDE:

MUSEUMS, PUBLIC ART, HERITAGE SITES, SPECIAL EVENTS AND MORE...

SPECIAL EVENTS & FESTIVALS



Rosemaling by Beauty Edwards

Immigrants from Nordic countries – Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Iceland and Finland – settled in large numbers in the Pacific Northwest in the late 19th century, drawn to a landscape of saltwater fjords, farmland, forests and mountains that reminded them of home. By 1910, Scandinavians were the largest ethnic group in Washington State, comprising over 30 percent of the foreign-born population.

Letters from immigrants to their friends and family back home described economic opportunities around Seattle, and these letters were supplemented by pamphlets in Swedish and Norwegian from transcontinental railroads promoting lands available for settlement.

Many Nordic immigrants worked as fishermen and in canneries, as loggers and in mills, and as farmers, miners and boat builders. In rural communities, settlers constructed hand-hewn log houses with notched corners reflecting Old World craftsmanship, and farmers worked together to form cooperatives that reflected traditional social values.

In urban settings such as Seattle and Tacoma, Swedish and Norwegian language newspapers thrived, and numerous churches and social organizations were established to provide a safety net and sense of community for the region's Nordic population. Many iconic local businesses were established by Nordic immigrants and their descendents, including Nordstrom, now one of the largest department stores in the country, and Ivar's Seafood Restaurants, founded by Ivar Haglund, a local character known as the "King of the Waterfront."

Today, Seattle's Nordic heritage is celebrated through traditional festivals, exhibits, and performances open to the public. Numerous community organizations offer instruction in Nordic languages, sponsor choruses and dance groups, and teach traditional folks arts such as rosemaling, a Norwegian technique of decorative painting on wood. Several churches in the Ballard neighborhood and beyond continue to offer services in Nordic languages.

Organizations such as the Sons of Norway, the Daughters of Norway, the Swedish Cultural Center, the Northwest Danish Association, the Icelandic Club, the Finlandia Foundation and the Swedish Finn Historical Society document genealogy and community history, and sponsor special events throughout the year.



Syttende Mai, Norwegian Constitution Day – May 17

Market Street in Ballard

On this day in 1814, Norway's Constitution was signed, and the anniversary is celebrated in towns throughout Norway with parades and other festivities. In Seattle, the day has been celebrated since 1889 with proclamations, speeches, and a parade. Ballard's celebration includes one of the largest parades outside of Norway and is a joyful and historic community celebration. www.17thofmay.org

Midsummer Festivals – late June

Outdoor Midsommarfest events celebrate the summer solstice at several locations in the Puget Sound region.

The **Skandia Folkdance Society Midsommarfest** at St. Edward State Park in Kenmore features traditional music and dancing, the raising of a garlanded

Midsommar pole, a crafts market, and specialty foods. This organization also sponsors classes and performances throughout the year. www.skandia-folkdance.org

Vasa Park Resort on Lake Sammamish also sponsors a Midsummer Festival each year, with traditional foods, family activities and a song and dance program. Named for Swedish King Gustav Vasa, this private park includes an old-fashioned dance hall, dating from an era when family resorts once dotted the lakes surrounding Seattle. 3560 West Lake Sammamish Parkway SE, Bellevue. www.vasaparkresort.com

Viking Days – mid-July Nordic Heritage Museum in Ballard

This annual weekend celebration features traditional foods, folk music and dancing, craft vendors, demonstrations and activities, and Viking re-enactments. The Nordic Heritage Museum sponsors other events throughout the year, including a traditional Yulefest in November. www.nordicmuseum.org

Leif Erikson Day – October 9 Sons of Norway Lodge, Ballard

While Norse sagas do not record Erikson's birthday, the hero of Scandinavian immigrants is commemorated in the U.S. on the anniversary of the first landing of a Norwegian immigrant ship, the *Restauration*, in 1825 in New York. The Leif Erikson International Foundation sponsors an annual celebration at Ballard's Sons of Norway Leif Erikson Lodge. www.leiferikson.org

Saint Lucia's Day – December 13 Various locations

One of the few saint's days traditionally observed in Sweden, the Feast of Saint Lucia features a procession led by a young woman wearing a crown of candles. Saint Lucia's Day has transitioned to a largely secular celebration, and processions are held each year at various Seattle locations including Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church in Ballard, and the Swedish Cultural Center near Lake Union.

Left: Nordic Spirit prow by Jennifer Tatroe

Below: Syttende Mai Parade by Ken Lambert/Seattle Times; Midsommarfest photo by Dale Abraham/Skandia Folklore Society; Viking Days photo by the Nordic Heritage Museum



DID YOU KNOW?



Denmark Finland Iceland Norway Sweden

The terms **Nordic** and **Scandinavian** are often used interchangeably. Traditionally, Scandinavia refers to the countries of Norway, Sweden and Denmark, while the list of Nordic countries also includes Iceland and Finland.

When they are not going after King crab in Alaska's Bering Sea, some of the vessels featured on the television series *The Deadliest Catch* are homeported at Seattle's **Fishermen's Terminal**, which was founded in part by Norwegian fishermen.



The weekly newspaper *The Western Viking*, founded in Ballard in 1889, is the oldest Norwegian newspaper in the U.S. It continues publication today as the *Norwegian American Weekly*.

The Scandinavian Hour, a fixture on Seattle radio for more than half a century, is currently heard on radio **KKNW 1150 AM** on Saturday mornings, and features interviews, announcements about community events, and accordion, fiddle and dance music. www.thescandinavianhour.com

Bergen, Norway became Seattle's second sister city in 1967, and **Reykjavik, Iceland** became a sister city in 1986.

The University of Washington's **Scandinavian Studies Department**, which celebrated its centennial in 2009, is one of the largest in the U.S. depts.washington.edu/scand



One of the city's best-known arts events, the **Seattle Opera's** production every four years of the *Ring Cycle*, was written by German composer Richard Wagner, but was inspired in part by Norse mythology.

Snoose Junction was once a nickname for the Ballard community – it refers to the fondness that many old timers had for *snus*, a type of chewing tobacco.

Fishermen's Terminal Postcard courtesy of University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections No. SEA1924; Seattle Opera production of *Die Walkure*, photo ©Chris Bennion

SEATTLE

NORDIC AMERICAN HERITAGE

ABOUT THE CULTURAL GUIDE SERIES

Seattle Cultural Guides are a resource for visitors who want to explore the city's rich cultural heritage. The guides feature museums and historic sites, public art works, and attractions that offer an insider's view of Seattle's ethnic communities and unique history.

Seattle is proud of its diverse ethnic and cultural heritage, and its communities continue to value traditions of language, music and dance, food, arts and crafts, and celebrations that mark seasonal cycles and commemorate special events. Visitors are invited to experience these traditions and participate in these events and, in doing so, to see more of Seattle's rich cultural dimensions.

The Cultural Guides series was created by the Cultural Tourism Program of Seattle's Convention and Visitors Bureau, with funding from 4Culture (King County Lodging Tax) and the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation. The places, events and stories featured in the Cultural Guides are preserved and shared by dozens of community organizations and small businesses. Seattle's Convention and Visitors Bureau thanks them for their work, and extends a special thanks to the many community volunteers who reviewed and contributed to this project.

Visit Seattle Cultural Guides online at visitseattle.org/heritage for updates and printable guides, as well as additional information on featured cultural sites. This web site also offers a comprehensive searchable calendar of cultural events including museums, performances and festivals.

In Seattle, stop by the **Seattle Visitor Center** at the Washington State Convention Center, on Pike Street between 7th and 8th Avenues, for a full range of information to enhance your visit.

For information about public transit serving sites in this guide, please call 206.553.3000 or visit tripplanner.kingcounty.gov.

www.visitseattle.org/heritage



Content: Past Forward Northwest Cultural Services
Design & Production: Seattle's Convention and Visitors Bureau

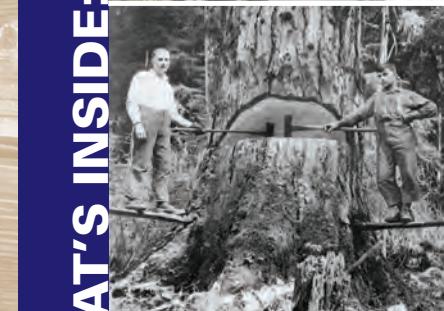
Front cover images: Ballard Avenue Shops, photo by Tracey Wickersham; St. Lucia Ceremony, photo by Jack Storms; Fishermen's Terminal, photo by Don Wilson, Port of Seattle; Edvard Grieg, photo by Mary Levin, University of Washington; Historic Logging, photo courtesy Nordic Heritage Museum; Peace Lutheran Church near Silvana, photo by Holly Taylor.

Background image: Dovetail notches on Norwegian immigrant family's log cabin, courtesy of the King County Historic Preservation Program

Nordic American Cultural Guide, First Edition, 2011



SEATTLE CULTURAL GUIDES



WHAT'S INSIDE:

MUSEUMS, PUBLIC ART, HERITAGE SITES, SPECIAL EVENTS AND MORE...

Nordic Heritage Museum

3014 NW 67th Street, 206.789.5707
The center of Seattle's Nordic community is the Nordic Heritage Museum in Ballard, and it is the only museum in the U.S. that represents the cultural heritage of all five Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. Permanent exhibits highlight Nordic culture, the immigration experience, and settlement in the Pacific Northwest, while special exhibits feature contemporary and historic arts and cultural themes. The museum presents a wide range of programs including contemporary art exhibits, concerts, lectures, and special events such as the Nordic Film Festival.
www.nordicmuseum.org



Finland Room Objects, courtesy Nordic Heritage Museum

Fishermen's Terminal

3919 – 18th Avenue W, 206.728.3395
Since 1914, this terminal has been a home port for the North Pacific fishing fleet, providing fresh water moorage for a variety of fishing vessels, many operated by second and third generation Norwegian families. A ceremonial Blessing of the Fleet is held each May, and a Fishermen's Memorial honors those lost at sea. These working docks are busiest in spring as crews prepare to depart for the summer fishing season, to catch halibut, cod, salmon and crab.
www.portseattle.org/seaport/marinas/fishermensterminal/



Photo by Holly Taylor

Swedish Hospital

1201 Madison Street [location of historical displays]
More than a century ago, Dr. Nils Johanson, a surgeon and Swedish immigrant, convinced ten of his fellow Swedish Americans to buy \$1,000 bonds in order to finance the opening of Swedish Hospital. Historical displays feature the stories and people associated with this internationally recognized medical center, and the history of the surrounding First Hill neighborhood.
www.swedish100.org



First nursing staff, 1910. University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections No. UW4661



Photo by Holly Taylor

Swedish Cultural Center

1920 Dexter Avenue N, 206.283.1090
Founded in 1892 by newly arrived Swedish immigrants, this organization's current facility overlooking Lake Union was built in 1960, and is a striking example of mid-century Modern architecture. The Center hosts performances, classes, and special events such as a famed monthly pancake breakfast.
www.swedishculturalcenter.org



Old Norway Hall, courtesy Museum of History & Industry

Old Norway Hall (now Raisbeck Performance Hall)

2015 Boren Avenue, 206.726.5011
Commissioned by the Sons and Daughters of Norway, this social hall built in 1915 originally featured carved dragons on each of the four gables, and hosted dances and social events for Seattle's large Norwegian immigrant community. The dragons have moved on, but the building retains some traditional Norwegian design elements. After serving as a dance club for many years, the Hall is now a classroom and performance venue for Cornish College of the Arts.
www.cornish.edu



Photo courtesy of Historic Seattle

Washington Hall

153 – 14th Avenue, 206.316.7613
The local chapter of the Danish Brotherhood in America commissioned the construction of Washington Hall in 1908 to serve the Danish immigrant community as a fraternal lodge, settlement house and social center. As a performing arts venue, Washington Hall has hosted artists such as Duke Ellington, Jimi Hendrix and Billie Holiday. It is currently being restored by Historic Seattle, and it serves as an event space in one of Seattle's most ethnically diverse neighborhoods.
www.washingtonhall.org

Leif Erikson Statue at Shilshole Bay Marina

7001 Seaview Avenue NW

At the entrance to one of the largest marinas on the West Coast, an imposing statue of Leif Erikson looks toward the water, in keeping with Viking tradition. According to Norse sagas, Erikson was the first European to visit North America, in 1000 AD, and he is a folk hero for generations of Nordic immigrants.

The statue was created by sculptor August Werner, and was originally unveiled for the 1962 Seattle World's Fair. It is now surrounded by a series of runic-like stones with Viking designs created by artist Jay Haavik, and a tribute to Scandinavian immigrants in the Pacific Northwest.
www.leiferikson.org

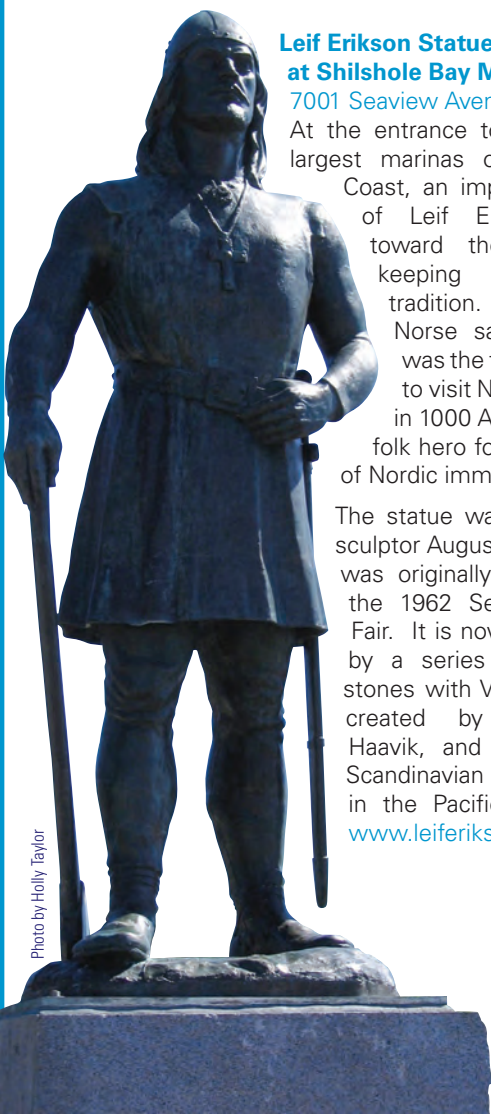


Photo by Holly Taylor



Photo by Mary Levin, University of Washington

Edvard Grieg Statue

Skagit Lane, University of Washington Campus
Seattle hosted its first world's fair, called the Alaska Yukon Pacific Exposition, in 1909 where the University of Washington is now located. The Norwegian and Swedish communities played active roles in that celebration, building a replica Viking ship to sail across Lake Washington, and sponsoring special Norway and Sweden Days during the fair. Another Nordic cultural legacy of the AYPE is a statue of Norwegian composer Edvard Grieg, which is located in a quiet grove just northwest of Suzzallo Library, near the heart of the neo-Gothic university campus.
www.washington.edu/discover/visit

FURTHER AFIELD

Town of Poulsbo

Kitsap County
This historic waterfront town on Liberty Bay, an inlet of Puget Sound, is located approximately one hour west of Seattle, via the Bainbridge or Kingston ferries. Poulsbo has earned the moniker "Little Norway" for its strong ties to the Nordic heritage of its 19th century settlers. A prominent Sons of Norway Hall anchors Front Street, which is lined with bakeries, boutiques and antique shops, and the hilltop First Lutheran Church built in 1886 watches over the town. Walking tours are offered by the Poulsbo Historical Society, www.poulsbohistory.org, and the community hosts special events and festivals throughout the year.
www.poulsbochamber.com



Photo by Jean Boyle / KitsapImages.com

Mary Olson Farm

28728 Green River Road, Auburn
Named for the matriarch of a Swedish American family who immigrated in the 1890s, this historic farmstead is tucked into a wooded canyon approximately one hour south of Seattle. The farmstead includes a restored 1902 farmhouse and 1897 hay barn, and is operated (limited seasonal hours) by the White River Valley Museum.
www.wrvmuseum.org

Stillaguamish Valley

Vicinity of Stanwood
Many Nordic immigrants settled in the Stillaguamish Valley in the late 19th century, establishing prosperous dairy farms. Timber frame barns still dot the agricultural landscape along the Pioneer Highway (from SR 530), approximately 1.5 hours north of Seattle. Notable historic sites include Silvana's Peace Lutheran Church, or the "Little White Church on the Hill," built in 1890, and the Toftozon Memorial in Stanwood's Lutheran Cemetery, dedicated by Crown Prince Olav of Norway in 1939, in honor of the first Norwegian settler to Puget Sound. The Stanwood Area Historical Society interprets local history.
www.sahs-fncc.org



Norway's Crown Prince Olaf at the Toftozon Memorial 1939, courtesy of the Stanwood Area Historical Society



Photo by Holly Taylor

Hovander Homestead Park

5299 Neilsen Avenue, Ferndale
This pioneer-era farm was built by a Swedish immigrant family, and includes 350 acres on the Nooksack River, approximately two hours north of Seattle.
www.co.whatcom.wa.us/parks/hovander/hovander.jsp

MAP LEGEND

- A. Ballard Avenue Historic District & Bergen Place Park
- B. Leif Erikson Sons of Norway Lodge
- C. Leif Erikson Statue
- D. Fishermen's Terminal
- E. Edvard Grieg Statue
- F. Nordic Heritage Museum
- G. Old Norway Hall
- H. Swedish Cultural Center
- I. Swedish Hospital
- J. Washington Hall

ATTRACTIONS MAP



BALLARD NEIGHBORHOOD

While Scandinavians settled throughout the Puget Sound region, the Seattle neighborhood of Ballard is most closely associated with Nordic heritage. Located northwest of downtown, Ballard was settled in the 1860s and incorporated as its own city in 1890. It was annexed by Seattle in 1907.

Once known as the **Shingle Capital of the World**, Ballard's milling and ship building industries provided employment, while restaurants and other businesses catered to Nordic immigrants.

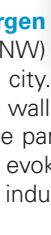
The nearby **Hiram Chittenden Locks** opened in 1917, connecting Lake Washington and Lake Union with Puget Sound through the **Ship Canal**. Nordic fishermen rallied the Port of Seattle to create fresh water public moorage along the Canal, which led to the establishment of **Fishermen's Terminal** near the Ballard Bridge. The locks and the terminal are both popular visitor attractions today.

A variety of religious and secular organizations serving the Nordic community are based in Ballard. Notable among these is the

Leif Erikson Sons of Norway Lodge at 2245 NW 57th (206.783.1274).



Photo by Holly Taylor



King Olav V of Norway dedicated the **Bergen Place Park** (at 5420 – 22nd Avenue NW) in 1975, in the name of Seattle's sister city. Historic murals decorate an adjacent wall, and a contemporary art installation in the park called **Witness Trees** by Jennifer Dixon evokes the area's Coast Salish heritage, fishing industry, Nordic mythology and folk art.

In 1976, King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden read an official proclamation establishing the **Ballard Avenue Historical District**, the commercial area south of Market Street. He also dedicated the small park located on the site of Ballard's Old City Hall, now called **Marvin's Garden** (22nd Avenue NW and Ballard Avenue).

Today, Ballard Avenue's modest commercial buildings from the 1890s through the 1930s are home to boutiques, galleries, restaurants and live music clubs. A Sunday market of farmers and craftspeople draws visitors year-round. **Market Street, 15th Avenue NW** and **24th Avenue NW** are home to a handful of Scandinavian bakeries, gift shops and traditional food markets.

A general interest walking guide to the **Ballard Avenue Historic District** is available at www.seattle.gov/tour/historicdistricts/ballardwalk.pdf

Another walking guide emphasizing architectural history is available from the **Ballard Historical Society** at www.ballardhistory.org



Stacks of lumber, Seattle Cedar Manufacturing Plant, Ballard. Museum of History & Industry, Webster & Stevens Collection 1983.10.1692.2