The history of Norway

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Content
Pages 2–7  The history of Norway up until 1814
Pages 8–14  The history of Norway from 1814–1990

The history of Norway up until 1814

Main points:

- The first Norwegians. Who were they? Where did they come from?
- The Viking Age. Background. Consequences.
- The unification of Norway
- Norway's decline in the Late Middle Ages.
- The Union

Your own notes:
The history of Norway up until 1814

–10,000 BC  The Ice Age

9000–7000 BC  Settlement begins  
– Coastal areas inhabited first

8000–4000 BC  Early Stone Age

4000–1500 BC  Late Stone Age  
– Agriculture is introduced.

1800–500 BC  The Bronze Age

500 BC–500 AC  The Iron Age  
– Roman Times  
– Migration Time  
– Merovingian Period

800–1030  The Viking Age  
Starting point: Agricultural Society  
1. Population Growth – resources scarcer  
2. Emigration, adventure lust  
3. The iron – The ships  
4. Patrician social background

872  The Battle at Hafrsfjord  
– King Harald Fairhair wins  
– Beginning of the unification of Norway

1030–1536  The Middle Ages

1030–1130  Early Middle Ages

1030  The Battle of Stiklestad  
– Olav the Holy dies

1130–1319  High Middle Ages
1130–1240  Civil War
1152–1153  Archbishop Seat Nidaros created
1152–  Nationwide national meetings start
1162/63  Succession Act
1177–1202  King Sverre's reign

1200's  The Norwegian Empire
         Western orientation

1217–1263  King Håkon IV Håkonsson
1263–1280  King Magnus VI Lagabøte/Magnus the Law Mender
1274–  "Landslov" (National law)
1276–   "Bylov" (Town law)

1319–1536  The Late Middle Ages
1319–1343  Personal union with Sweden

1349  The Black Death
         Civilization Collapse

More about the Middle Ages/Summary:
1030–1130 Early Middle Ages
1130–1350 High Middle Ages
1350–1536 Late Middle Ages

Major Points

1. The Unification of Norway
   The process was started around year 800 by King Harald Fairhair, and was completed around year 1300:
   – The outer geographic unification: about 800–about 1240.
   – The inner organizational unification (government formation): about 1150–about 1300.

2. The development of state and church
   – Rivalry versus cooperation between church and state (Crown).
   – Centralization and consolidation of church and state.

3. The development of the agricultural community
   – Population growth and settlement expansion (up until the 1300s).
   – “Tingene” (legal institutions) (from 800–900).
   – Growth in total agricultural production (up until the 1300s).

4. Norway's decline in the Late Middle Ages
   – The Black Death and subsequent plagues led to over half of the population of Norway dying. The whole of Europe was affected, but Norway spent more time to rebuild the nation again. Political dissolution.
Some important years:

1130: King Sigurd the Crusader dies.
(Provisions on the church's relation to the monarchy and society).
1163–64: National Assembly Meeting. Magnus V Erlingsson crowned, Succession Act
(revision of provisions from 1152 to 1953).
1177: The Birkebeiners make Sverre Sigurdsson their new king.
1194: Sverre crowned in Bergen.
Succession Act decision.
1247: National Assembly Meeting. King Håkon Håkonsson crowned.
1263: King Håkon dies. Magnus VI the Lawmender crowned king.
1319: Agreement about Swedish-Norwegian king reached under Magnus Eriksson.
1349: The Black Death
1380: The Danish-Norwegian union begins.
1397: The Kalmar Union, common Nordic king. “Norsk riksråd” (Norwegian Council of
the Realm).
1536: “Norsk riksråd” (Norwegian Council of the Realm) abolished. Norway becomes a
Danish “province”.
1536: The Reformation.
1380–1536 The Danish-Norwegian union begins.
1397–1521 The Kalmar Union.

1536–1814 Union Time (see the next page)
– Norway becomes a Danish “province”.
– New industries
– Population growth
– Constitutional state

1536 The Reformation
1536–1660 Aristocratic Monarchy
1536 Christian III's coronation charter

1660–1814 Autocracy

1807–1814 Napoleonic War
Blockade
Famine
1536–1814 Union Period

General developments

1. Population growth throughout the entire period (4–6 fold), uneven growth until 1750, then steady growth throughout the country.

2. Solid economic growth throughout the entire period, and increased trade with the world. New industries took form and grew strong: Forestry–timber, craftsman industry, mining, and last but not least: shipping.

3. A new strong society-supporting elite takes form (rooted in the new industries). An important prerequisite for the prelude to 1814.

4. The development of a consistent constitutional state and profound legislation. The Danish-Norwegian administration was a model for other countries in Europe. Example: Poverty legislation from the mid 1700s.

Some important years:

1563–1570: Seven Years’ War
1660: Autocracy introduced
1662: Town Law Privileges introduced
1711–1720: The Great Nordic War
1801: First census of names in Norway
   10 April: National Assembly and Chrisian Frederik gather at Eidvoll
   War with Sweden. Peace 14 August. Union with Sweden.
The Constitution of 1814

2 Constitutions: 17 May
4 November

Key principles:

1. The Sovereignty of the People principle: The power should lie with the people.
2. The separation of powers: The power should be shared. The king had to share the power with an elected assembly. Power divided between the elected bodies.
3. The rights of the individual:
   All Norwegian citizens should be ensured:
   – Freedom of speech
   – Legal protection

   – The right to vote was linked to real estate.
   – The elected assembly was given the name “Storting”.
   – Allodial rights written into the Constitution.

Own notes/Summary of the History of Norway until 1814:
The History of Norway
1814–1990

Major Points:

- 1905 Union Resolution. Norway as an independent state.
- Population Development
- Industrialization and urbanization
- From ranked society to class society
- World War II
- Restoration after the war. Welfare and prosperity.
- The Oil Age
- Norway and the world

Own notes:
Main Lines 1814–1940:

1. **Population Development**
   1801: 883 500
   1900: 2 240 000
   1946: 3 156 000

   – 1840–1920: about 800 000 people emigrate
   Strong population growth.
   Main reasons: Lower mortality (better nutrition, health care).

2. **Industrialization and urbanization**
   – From agriculture to industry.
   – Moving to the towns.

   Industrial Production:
   Phase 1: 1845–60 "Industry for the domestic market"
   Phase 2: 1860–70: Export-oriented industry
   Phase 3: 1890–1914: Electricity, waterfalls

   Population:
   1801: 90 % of the population work within agriculture.
   8.8 % of the population live in the towns.
   1850: 12 000 industrial workers
   1900: 80 000 industrial workers
   48 % work within agriculture.
   43.4 % of the population live in the towns.
   1920: 200 000 industrial workers

3. **Trade and Industry/Economics**
   1814–1840: Stagnation
   1840–1870: The onset of industrialization.
     Economic progress
   1918—1940: The interwar period. Depression, decline.

Main industries:
Agriculture
Industry
Shipping
Timber
Fishing
4. The development of the Norwegian state

Two main periods:
1814–1905 Union Period (union with Sweden).
1905–1940 Norway as an independent state.


1814–70: Official Government (the King and his council). From 1840:
The government becomes dominant. The Power of the King de-personified.

New public sectors emerge:
1. New press
2. Political rallies
3. New municipal councils

1884–1940: The age of the business bourgeoisie (Multi-Party State):
New power apparatus, political parties, organizations.
The Union battle starts (consular service).

1905: The Constitution of 1814 retained (with some exceptions).
Norway becomes an independent state.

1918–35: Minority Governments/Government Crises, strong populist forces, strong conflicts/offsets in the party system.

5. From ranked society to class society

1870--: The emergence of organizations (community of interest).
Emergence of the labor movement.

Key words:
Industrialization
Urbanization
Organization based on classes
1814–1940 Some important years

1814: 14 January: Kiel Treaty (Norway ceded to Sweden).
     16 February: Prominent Norwegians meet at Eidsvold.
     10 April: National Assembly at Eidsvold.
     17 May: Norwegian Constitution signed.
     Christian Frederik elected king of Norway.
     14 August: Moss Convention.
     7 October: Christian Frederik relinquished from the throne.
     4 November: New revised constitution completed.
     Carl 13 King of Norway.

1837: “Formannsskapsloven” (Alderman Laws)

1850: Britain abolishes Navigation Act.

1860: National School Act (compulsory primary education for all children).

1873: Prime Minister: Frederik Stang.

1884: Parliamentarism introduced.
     The political parties Høyre (the Conservatives) and Venstre (the Liberals) formed.
     Prime Minister: Johan Sverdrup (V)

1887: The Norwegian Labour Party is formed (The United Labour Party).

1889: The Match Strike.

1894: Railway compromise.

1898: Public voting for men.

1905: 7 June: Parliament decides to dissolve the union.
     26 October: Union formally dissolved.
     25 November: Prince Carl of Denmark comes to Norway and takes the name Haakon VII.
     Prime Minister: Christian Michelsen (coalition)

1913: Public voting rights for women.

1914(–18): World War I

1940: 9 April: Norway occupied by Germany (World War II).

Nice to know...
1814: Post office established
1822: First savings bank
1850: First regular steamship route
1854: Stamp system adopted
1876: The first two phones (Ålesund)
1893: Hurtigruten started
1899: First car used in Norway
Summary:
Norway in union with Denmark from 1380–1814.
Norway in union with Sweden from 1814–1905.

Food for thought:
Why did the Swedish-Norwegian union collapse in 1905?
1. Constitutional conflict
2. From military security to military war risk
3. 1897: Sweden abolishes Swedish-Norwegian commercial treaty
4. Growing national self-consciousness in Norway

2 World War in Norway

9 April 1940–8 May 1945

9 April  Attack on Norway (Weserübung) 6 Norwegian cities
9 April  At 19.32: The leader of the National Union Vidkun Quisling's radio address
10 April  King says no to German ultimatum
          Fighting in Norway begins and lasts until June 1940

24 April  Joseph Terboven reichkommissar for the Norwegian areas. Direct subordinate to Hitler.

June 7   The King and the Government leave the country.
         Agreement that Norway is to be freed.

From 1941:  New organization of the resistance fight in Norway.
           – Milorg
           – Example: Telavåg
           – Opposition groups, organization of refugee traffic
           – Norwegian forces abroad
           – War sailors (30 000 in the merchant navy)

Home Front: Illegal newspapers, hidden refugees etc

Popular protest: Symbols against the occupation forces

Rationing of food, black market
1941: All radio equipment confiscated

1942: Nazi indoctrination plan
    – in schools/mass arrest of teachers
    – church conflict
    – sports

Sep 1944 Finland peace with the Soviet Union
    German withdrawal
    “The scorched earth policy” (all of Troms and Finnmark)

German surrender 8 May 8 1945

The war settlement
90 000 people were investigated; 45 000 were imprisoned or fined
25 Norwegians and 12 Germans were executed

More than 10 000 Norwegians lost their lives as a result of the war. Of these, close to 4000 were Norwegian sailors.
The period after World War II

"The Modern Norway".

Main Points:
1945–1952: Reconstruction years.
            The Gerhardsen era.
            Growth and protest.
1973–1981: The Oil Age and crises years.

Some important years:

1945: 8 May Liberation Day
       7 June The king returns
1946: SAS is formed.
       Family allowances introduced.
       University of Bergen founded.
1948: Norway starts to accept Marshall Aid.
1949: Norway joins NATO.
1953: The Nordic Council created.
1957: King Haakon VII dies. King Olav V.
       Norwegian 'no' to nuclear weapons on Norwegian soil.
1960: Norway joins EFTA.
       The television comes to Norway.
       The sale of cares becomes free.
       First oil discovery in the North Sea Ekofisk Field.
1972: Referendum on Norwegian EEC (EC) membership: No majority.
1973: Oil Crisis.
       Trade Agreement with the EC concluded.
1991: King Olav V dies. King Harald V.
       EEA Agreement signed.