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INTRODUCTION

This second edition of *Working Americans: Immigrants* updates the seventh volume in the 14-volume *Working Americans* series. It includes 36 profiles of immigrants, from 1880-2017. Like the other titles in the *Working Americans* series, this work observes the lives of working Americans decade by decade. The unique focus of this volume is that all of the individuals covered are immigrants—born in another country and traveled to America with the intention of living a better life here. It covers men, women and children from a wide range of countries, social backgrounds, and professions. Some careers focus on fortune, some on fame, some on a regular paycheck, and some on no paycheck at all. All profiles, however, demonstrate the continuous challenge faced by immigrants in America, whether they push papers, teach students, make art, join the armed forces, or give facials.

Arrangement

Profiles are arranged chronologically, in decade chapters. Generally, each decade chapter includes three profiles, and a **News Feature** that discusses an issue important to the time. Each profile averages 12 pages. The first page includes a brief intro and photograph of the subject. Three sections of bulleted text includes details about the journey from the subject's native land, and about the transition to American culture. This personal information is followed by some historical background and a sense of the immigrant's new community's economy and recreational opportunities.

An **Historical Snapshot** follows these sections, which is an interesting collection of firsts and significant events that happened in the year profiled. **Selected Prices** present the cost of a number of everyday items, from socks to iPhones. **Original Source Documents**, including magazine and newspaper articles, speeches, letters and diary entries, help put the life of the profiled individual into historical context.

Following the profiles is a new **Facts & Figures** section—24 pages of current facts and statistics from the Office of Immigration Statistics. Included is information on U.S. Lawful Permanent Residents, U.S. Naturalizations, and DACA (Deferred Action Childhood Arrivals). **Further Reading** and **Index** end the volume.

Content

Like the other volumes in this series, *Immigrants* is a compilation of original research—personal diaries, school files, family histories—combined with government statistics, commercial advertisements and news features. The text is presented in bulleted format, and supported by hundreds of graphics—from personal photographs to political material and advertisements.

This volume celebrates those who have immigrated to America, chronicling both the progress they have made and the roadblocks they have faced. In a detailed fashion, the profiles and primary source materials help the reader reflect on immigrants and their transition not only into the workplace, but into a new country.

As in previous volumes, each story is unique, as each of us is unique. Some immigrants portrayed in this volume found the better life they were looking for and some did not. Many of their stories continue. As one immigrant realized his or her dream, dozens more board ships, planes and trains to the American dream. *Working Americans 1880-2017: Immigrants, second edition*, presents an engaging way to study their progress.

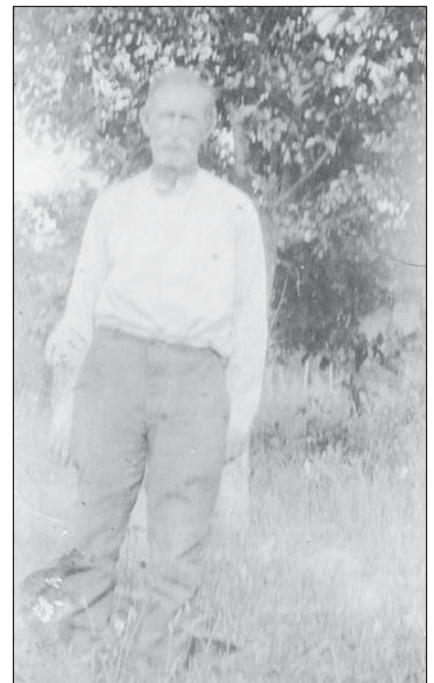


1892 PROFILE

Christian Holberg, a Norwegian immigrant, has found success and prosperity in America for himself and his large extended family.

Life at Home

- The Holberg family left Norway in 1885 with more expectations than knowledge of America.
- In all, the family included 13 members comprising Christian and his wife, uncles, aunts, mother-in-law and children—all of whom had been born in Ringsanger, Norway.
- As a family they had decided to emigrate together, leaving no one behind.
- Several major crop failures and the systematic consolidation of farmland had forced the Holbergs three years before to begin discussing their future in Norway.
- After the second crop failure, America was on everyone's lips; after the third, little discussion was needed to reach consensus.
- To finance the voyage, Christian sold his farm equipment, woodworking tools, cattle, sheep, goats and a tiny strip of land that had been in the family for so many generations no one could remember its history.
- The journey, which took 57 days, was generally peaceful aboard a Norwegian ship that bucked and rolled almost continuously.
- The ship carried 181 other immigrants to North America; two passengers died on the journey, including a small three-year-old boy whose mother continued to cradle the dead child in her arms everywhere she went.
- The family had formed most of its impressions about America through reading Samuel Freeman's *The Emigrant's Handbook and Guide to Wisconsin*, one of many immigrant guidebooks published to lure Europeans.
- From this book they learned that New York City was a dangerous place, debt would get you into trouble, and life was better in Wisconsin if you were willing to work hard.
- Several people had also seen letters from America bragging about the money that could be made, the richness of the soil, and the sophistication of the farm equipment.



Christian Holberg left Norway in 1885.

- Dockage records in Québec, Canada, recorded that the 194 passengers aboard the ship brought a total of \$7,200 to launch their new lives.
- To meet the baggage limitation, Christian’s wife Inge wore five dresses atop each other during the trip—an exhausting experience.
- But as Christian and his family soon learned, the rigorous ocean trip to Québec was only part of the journey.
- Next was a two-day, often interrupted train ride to Detroit, Michigan, the sometimes pell-mell pace of which frightened Christian’s mother-in-law more than did the giant ocean.
- The train ride was followed by a boat trip to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, aboard a cattle boat that stank of its previous occupants.
- No effort was made to clean the boat of manure or even soiled hay before loading the new arrivals for the trip to Milwaukee.
- Immigrants rarely expected first-class treatment and rarely found any.
- And in the chaos of their trip, and despite his best efforts, Christian and Inge lost two of their five children among their fellow passengers in one of the many hidden crevices of the boat.
- Both were eventually found sleeping but that did not save them from a stern spanking from Christian and his worried wife.
- The last leg of the trip was another train ride, followed by a wagon trip powered by oxen from Milwaukee to La Crosse, their new home—a place to rest, work and prosper, where they could celebrate life in America and the traditions of Norway like *Sytende Mai* (Seventeenth of May), the day in 1814 when a constitution was established by the Kingdom of Norway at the Constituent Assembly at Eidsvold, ending 400 years of Danish rule.
- In Norway, the Holbergs had always celebrated this day with parades of dressed-up children and adults carrying flags, singing and folk dancing.
- Happily, the people in La Crosse, Wisconsin, understood the old ways, including the Norwegian observance of Christmas on the evening of December 23.
- Called “*Lille Julaften*” or Little Christmas Eve, this day was when most families decorated their Christmas trees and homes.
- Trees were decked out with handmade Christmas baskets made out of red and green paper woven together and then filled with fruits, candy, and nuts.

- On Christmas Eve, the tradition called for the Holbergs to attend church, pay their respects to those who had died, and leave a bowl of porridge in the barn for the nisse, or gnome, who protected the animals.
- A special Christmas meal, which featured steamed lamb ribs called *Pinnekjøtt*, was then served toward evening.
- After the meal, gifts were distributed.
- On Christmas Day, family parties were often held and some people attended church services.

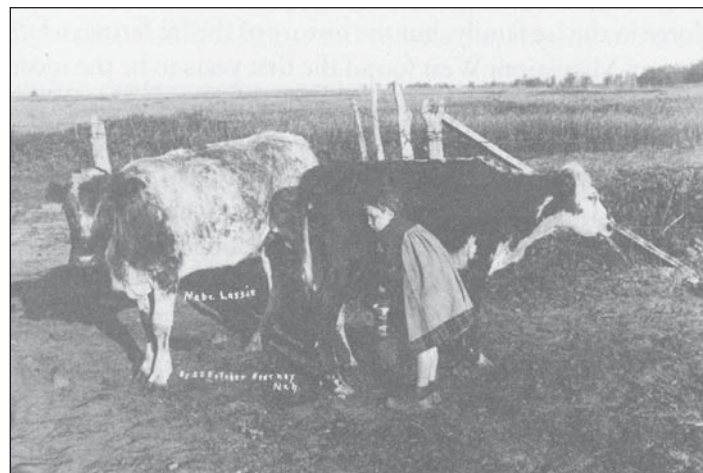
Life at Work

- For the first two years the Holberg family rented a log cabin from Swen Hansen before they were able to build a home of their own, a two-story wood frame house.
- Christian calculated that 60 acres was enough land to support his growing family and achieve his dream of being a successful farmer.



Christian farmed about 60 acres to support his growing family.

- There he taught his three boys to handle a three-yoke team of oxen from dawn to dusk, often breaking ground that had never been tilled before.
- Even his youngest son's accident, which cost the child three fingers on his left hand, did not daunt Christian's enthusiasm.
- The steel plows he bought the second spring for \$8.00 each paid for themselves the same year, thanks to more acreage under cultivation.
- Working beside his boys on a farm of his own was a dream come true, especially on land so fertile.
- The grass was so tall and plentiful, often the oxen were unhitched and left to pick their own feed at night.
- Christian also cared about the future; he insisted that all the boys finish the sixth grade and acquire enough education to attain Yankee success.
- For the first several years the family spoke Norwegian almost exclusively, finding little need on the farm and in the close-knit Norwegian community to use English.
- That attitude lasted until Christian was cheated in a wheat transaction at the market by a German immigrant who knew the language.
- He demanded that his sons teach him English immediately.
- Although Norwegian was widely spoken in the community, English was taught in the schools attended by his children.
- Within two years his English skills were so admired that he became the unofficial notary of the settlement and often assisted his neighbors in writing letters or translating legal documents.
- Despite these skills, nearly all the books in the home were printed in Norwegian or German, and most of them were religious in nature.
- After arriving in America, the entire family became Lutherans, drawn to the faith by its doctrine that "the evidence of conversion must and will appear in the daily conduct of a living Christian."
- The only English language publications in the house were almanacs published free by patent medicine makers such as Ayer's, Green's and Hostetter's.
- The duties in the home were clearly divided: looking after the cows and hens and making butter were within Inge's sphere; farming the wheat was Christian's responsibility.
- He grew a tough strain of wheat, resistant to cold and drought, that was imported from Russia.



Looking after the animals were Inge's responsibility.

- Early on, the littlest children were taught to plant seed behind the plow.
- They also learned to spot wild grass fires that occasionally swept across the plains.
- Inge's signature dish was *lefse*, a type of potato flatbread that was fried until it started to bubble and was then buttered and sprinkled with cinnamon.
- Trips away were uncommon on the farm; Christian and Inge did not like leaving their animals.
- Besides, a journey of only a few miles could become an all-day affair if the ferry was out, roads turned muddy or frozen creeks had to be forged.
- So when Christian wrote to friends about life in America, all he could talk about was La Crosse, a county 40 percent foreign-born.
- Two years earlier, Christian had had to make a decision about his future: either invest money in more land or diversify by starting a grain mill.
- The final decision was made as a family once again; they would build a mill to grind flour.
- This decision allowed Christian to start a new business and leave his oldest son to take charge of the farm.
- The past two years had been frustrating and exciting; the cost of starting the mill was higher than anticipated, but when hail damaged Christian's crops the second year, grinding wheat and corn for the community supported the family very nicely.
- Because Christian's youngest son, Gunnar, hated the dusty atmosphere of the mill, he was drawn to the emerging business of dairy farming.

Life in the Community: La Crosse, Wisconsin

- Since statehood in 1830, community leaders in Wisconsin had actively recruited Europeans to the vast farmlands of the state.
- La Crosse began to grow following the completion of the La Crosse Milwaukee Railroad in 1858; for the first time people and their goods could travel without having to take a steamer connection.
- By 1870, luring new farmers to the area was a major business.
- The California gold rush had resulted in a loss of approximately 50,000 residents—almost one-third of the region's population.
- In addition, fertile prairie lands further west had begun to attract many easterners, European immigrants, and Wisconsin residents eager for the government's Homestead Act land still available there.
- By 1892 La Crosse County posted production of 596,000 pounds of butter, 24,000 pounds of cheese, and four million gallons of milk.
- The county claimed 6,000 horses, 53 mules, 79 oxen, 17,000 swine, and 70,000 chickens.
- The county's farmers produced 924,000 bushels of oats that year, 195,000 bushels of wheat, 654,000 bushels of corn, 243,000 bushels of potatoes, 77,000 bushels of barley and 5,300 pounds of tobacco.



Fertile lands of Wisconsin attracted many European immigrants.

- Lumbering also played an important role in the economy of the area; many New Englanders became rich harvesting the seemingly endless supply of pine, while thousands of new immigrants found their first jobs in the lumber yards.
- There, new arrivals could earn enough money to buy a farm; however, the work was dangerous, difficult and often resulted in accidents.
- But many Norwegians viewed emigration to the United States as temporary; the dream was to get rich in America and return home to Norway for permanent settlement.



At the turn of the century, Americans relaxed in parks and tree lined streets.

HISTORICAL SNAPSHOT

1892

- The first issue of the *Afro American* newspaper was published in Baltimore, Maryland
- Fire seriously damaged New York City’s original Metropolitan Opera House
- The *Moravia*, a passenger ship arriving from Germany, brought cholera to the United States
- The first heavyweight-title boxing match fought with gloves under the rules of the Marquis of Queensbury ended when James J. Corbett, “Gentleman Jim,” knocked out John L. Sullivan in the twenty-first round
- An early version of “The Pledge of Allegiance” appeared in *The Youth’s Companion*
- John Philip Sousa’s band made its first appearance
- The Diamond Match Co. patented book matches
- The University of Chicago opened
- The Dalton Gang, notorious for its train robberies, was practically wiped out while attempting to rob a pair of banks in Coffeyville, Kansas
- The federal government convinced the Crow Indians to give up 1.8 million acres of their reservation in the mountainous area of Montana for \$0.50 per acre
- The first long-distance telephone line between Chicago and New York was formally opened
- Chicago dedicated the World’s Columbian Exposition
- Former President Cleveland beat incumbent Benjamin Harrison and became the first president to win non-consecutive terms in the White House
- The pneumatic automobile tire was patented in Syracuse, New York
- The U.S. Immigration Service opened Ellis Island in New York Harbor, a new facility for processing immigrants, replacing Castle Garden, which was closed because of massive overcrowding and corruption
- In Springfield, Massachusetts, the rules of basketball were published for the first time
- Former president Abraham Lincoln’s birthday was declared a national holiday
- New York State unveiled the new mechanical lever, automatic ballot voting machine
- General Electric Co., formed by the merger of the Edison Electric Light Co. and other firms, was incorporated
- The prototype of the first commercially successful American automobile was completed in Springfield, Massachusetts, by brothers Frank and Charles E. Duryea
- Congress passed the Geary Chinese Exclusion Act, which required Chinese in the United States to be registered or face deportation
- Charles Brady King of Detroit invented the pneumatic hammer
- The Sierra Club was organized in San Francisco by John Muir
- Homer Plessy was arrested after buying a railroad ticket in New Orleans and seating himself in the white-only section to test the enforcement of the 1890 Louisiana law mandating separate cars for whites and blacks
- Andrew Beard received a patent for the rotary engine

Norwegian Immigration Timeline

1825

The sloop *Restauration* sailed from Stavanger, Norway, with 52 passengers, considered the beginning of the movement of 900,000 Norwegians to North America; among countries in Europe, only Ireland had greater mass migration.

1833

Cleeng Peerson walked from Kendall township in New York State to Ohio, where he founded the first Norwegian settlement in the Midwest, in La Salle County in Illinois, southwest of Chicago.

1836

Two ships with 167 emigrants sailed from Stavanger, Norway, for the newly established Fox River settlement in Illinois.

1837

A Norwegian minister condemned “America fever” as a contagious disease.

Ole Nattestad wrote *Beskrivelse over en reise til Nordamerika* (*Description of a Journey to North America*).

1838

Ole Rynning’s emigrant guide, *True Account of America*, was published.

Ole Nattestad founded the first Norwegian settlement in Wisconsin—Jefferson Prairie in Rock County.

Bishop Neumann’s pastoral letter *A Word of Admonition to the Peasants in the Diocese of Bergen who Desire to Emigrate* provoked Norwegians in America.

1840

In the 1840s Wisconsin became the main region of Norwegian settlement and remained the center of Norwegian activity until the Civil War.

1841

The first book in America printed in Norwegian, *Doctor Martin Luther’s Small Catechism, with Plain Introduction for Children, and Sentences from the Word of God to Strengthen the Faith of the Meek*, was published.

1842

Lay preacher Elling Eielsen built a combined dwelling and meeting house in La Salle County called a *forsamlingshus*, an assembly house, not a church.

1844

The first Norwegian Lutheran confirmation in America was conducted.

Johan R. Reiersen published *Veiviser for Norske Emigranter til De forenede Nordamerikanske Stater og Texas* (*Pathfinder for Norwegian Emigrants to the United States and Texas*).

1845

The first Norwegian church building was inaugurated in Muskego, Wisconsin.

The Muskego Manifesto, an open letter signed by 80 men, was issued in defense of the immigrants in America.

Johan R. Reiersen led a group of Norwegian peasants from Agder to land he had selected in Texas later named Normandy.

1846

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was founded by Elling Eielsen.

Selected Prices

Apple Macintosh Computer	\$2,500.00
Butter, per Pound	\$1.99
China, 10-Piece Tea Set	\$69.00
Coffee, per Pound	\$2.19
Gas Grill	\$179.99
House, Four-Bedroom, New York	\$156,000
Lawn Mower, Craftsman	\$299.99
Screwdrivers, Stanley Set of Four	\$26.95
Shotgun, Winchester 12-Gauge	\$1,200.00
Woman's Leather Bag	\$49.00

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**“107 Immigrants Arrested As
Illegal in Jersey Raid,”
Associated Press,
August 20, 1983:**

The Immigration and Nationalization Service has arrested 107 suspected illegal aliens and is holding them in custody awaiting deportation hearings as a result of a raid on a South Plainfield handbag factory, authorities reported today.

Immigration agents spent more than a day processing employees of the factory, all but three of them Haitians.

They were detained as they arrived at the Bag Bazaar factory early Thursday morning, according to the supervisory investigator, Louis Galoppo.

Mr. Galoppo said that of the 167 people detained, 60 were found to be in the country legally and were released. The others are being held at an immigration facility in Brooklyn and in county jails pending deportation hearings before an immigration judge, he said.

Officials said it was the largest round-up of suspected illegal aliens by the Immigration Service in Newark in memory.

Mr. Galoppo said the factory's owners do not face legal action because there is no law preventing employers from hiring illegal aliens.

He said that besides the Haitians, one of the persons detained was Costa Rican and two were from Panama. Officer Green said the investigation was continuing.