

Digitalarkivet: Church Records

Norway “How to” Guide, Beginner Level: Instruction

November 2015

GOAL

This guide will teach you how to locate and use Norwegian church records on the website *Digitalarkivet*.

INTRODUCTION

The most widely used database for Norwegian genealogical research is *Digitalarkivet*, found at <http://arkivverket.no/eng/Digitalarkivet>. This online archive contains various record types including church records. Keep in mind that as the population grew, a parish could be split into two or more parishes. The records before the new parish was established will be found under the original parish.

HOW TO

To access the digitized parish registers, follow these steps:

- Click on or type in <http://arkivverket.no/eng/Digitalarkivet> in your website browser. If the site opens in Norwegian, click on the tab “English” found on the top right of the page.
- Look in the middle column of the website, labeled “Shortcuts”. Find the section labeled “Parish registers” and click on “Digitised Parish Registers”.
- When you have opened the “Digitised Parish Registers,” you may find the website has defaulted back to Norwegian. If this is the case, click on “English,” found in the blue bar at the top of the page.
- On the upper left side of the page, you will find a box where you can select a county. Click on the down arrow, where you will see a list of all the counties in Norway.

Click on the county you are interested in and an alphabetical listing of all the parishes in that county will appear in blue writing. Each line is a link to a specific book.

You may see two types of books labeled official and copy. After 1812, the priest kept the official book, while the priest’s scribe kept a copy. The books were held in different places so that in case of fire or water damage, one set of books would be safe. At the end of each year, the priest and his scribe would compare volumes, and any missing information would be added. If available, check both volumes, particularly if the official book is difficult to read. The scribe’s handwriting may be easier to decipher.

- Identify the parish, time period, and record type of interest, and click on the link. Keep in mind that the Norwegian letters Å, Æ, and Ø come after the letter Z.
- Each parish book is separated into event type (i.e. baptism) and years. Each year is followed by a blue page number in parenthesis. Click on the page number to go to the first page of the year and event type.

Using the image viewer

The page typically opens with an image size of 40%, as indicated in the light purple bar at the top of the page. To increase the size, click on the down arrow by the words saying “Image size” or “bilde størrelse”. There is no “Zoom” option to focus on one particular portion of the page.

To move one page (forward or backwards) click on the arrow pointing right or left. You can also move 5 pages, 20 pages, or to the very beginning or end by clicking on the corresponding arrow. If you click anywhere on the image, it will automatically move one page forward.

To go back to the table of contents just click on “Contents page”, found in the same line as the page arrows. To choose to a new parish in the same county, click on “My selection”; to move to another county, click on “New selection”.

There are two options to print an image. PDF-1 will print both pages on one sheet; PDF-2 will print each page on a sheet, giving you a more detailed image of each page. When you are done printing the PDF-1 or PDF-2, click on the back button to return to the image viewer.

Further information

For additional help in your Norwegian research, check out the following resources:

- A word list can be very helpful in Norwegian research, and one can be found on the Norway wiki page on FamilySearch.org:
https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Norway_Word_List
- Norwegian script can be difficult to read. For further help with learning Scandinavian script, watch the video courses found on the FamilySearch Learning Center and the article on Norwegian Handwriting from the following links:

<http://familysearch.org/learningcenter/results.html?fq=place%3A%22Scandinavia%22>

https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Norway_Handwriting

PRACTICE

Identify the baptismal record of Hans Jørgen Halvorsen who was born on 6 October 1840 and baptized on 6 December 1840 in Råde parish, Østfold county, Norway.

- Go to *Digitalarkivet*, found at <http://arkivverket.no/eng/Digitalarkivet>. If the page is in Norwegian, click on “English”, found in the upper right corner of the website.

- Under the middle section labeled “Shortcuts,” click on “Digitised Parish Registers.” In the upper left side of the website, find “Select county,” click the down arrow, and select Østfold.
- The alphabetical parish listing of Østfold County will appear. Hans Jørgen was born in the parish of Råde; scroll down until you find Råde. Keep in mind that the letter “å” comes at the end of the alphabet. This means that Råde will be after the parish of Rygge and Rødenes.
- Hans Jørgen was born in 1840. Identify the parish register containing the year 1840; it will be “Råde: 1830-1853, Parish register (official). Click on this register.
- You will see the list of event type and years. Find the birth and baptism records for 1840, and click on the blue page number (036).
- Page through the parish register until you find the entry for Hans Jørgen Halvorsen. His baptism is recorded on page 41.

ACTIVITY

Now, test your skills you have learned in this “How to” Guide. The Activity is a way to check your knowledge and let you know you’ve mastered the Guide! [Click here](#) to try out the Activity.