NAHA Norwegian American Historical Association

Collection Name:
Setesdalslag papers, circa 1956-1996

Collection Number:
P0465 (Setesdalslag)

Extent:
1 folder

About Setesdalslag:
Organized at Grand Forks, North Dakota, June 30, 1909.

Past presidents include:
Bjørgulv Bjørnaraa (1909-42)
Olaf Neset (1942-48)
T.O. Lien (1948-50)
Thore Skomedal (1950-57)
Knute B. Knutson (1957-58)
Osmund Haugen (1958-70)
Andy Nomland (1970-73)
Dreng Bjørnaraa (1973-1974)
Oliver Lien (1974-)

Past secretaries include:
Grunde Grundsen (1909-1913, 1916-17)
Gustav C. Torguson (1913-16)
John G. Johnson (1917-19)
Halvor Omlid (1919-26, 1948-50)
T.O. Lien (1926-48)
Selma Bjornaraa Johnson (1950-)

History of the Bygdelag:
Papers of "bygd" societies and their Common Council ("Bygdelagenes Fellesraad"), clippings, constitutions, correspondence, minutes and financial records, pamphlets, pictures, programs, and reports, dealing with conventions, officers, special projects, and the Norse-American Centennial of 1925. The bygdelag, organized around the turn of the century, are societies based on regional origins in Norway. They were active in the Eidsvoll Centennial in 1914 and the Norse-American Centennial in 1925. While activity dropped off after the beginning of World War II, a revival began in the 1980s as a result of renewal of ethnic interest, and with emphasis on family history. Odd S. Lovoll's "A Folk Epic; The Bygdelag in America" (NAHA, 1975), which includes a bibliography of lag publications.

Papers of the various "bygdelag," "social organizations of (Americans) from the same homeland district, usually rural" which began in 1899 with the organization of the Valdres Samband. About fifty other lag with national-wide appeal were formed, as well as many others which were more local. They held annual "stevner" (meetings) and many published periodicals, yearbooks, or monographs which often contained extensive genealogical materials. A decline came after World War II, with a revival in the 1970s particularly through renewed emphasis on genealogical research.

A Council of Bygdelags (Bygdelagenes Faellesraad) coordinates activities of the groups. They were very active in the Eidsvoll centennial celebrations in 1914, and the Norse-American Centennial in 1925. Holdings for the various lag vary, but usually include clippings of newspaper articles about their meetings, correspondence, programs, and copies of their publications, duplicates of library holdings, in the periodical and book collections (monographs and annuals included in the latter). In some cases regional associations are included with the national groups, and in others separate groups which later merged are included under the merged name.

Access Rights:
This collection is open to research.

Bibliographic Citation:
[Indicate the cited item here]. Setesdalslag Papers (Bygdelagenes Papers). Norwegian-American Historical Association, Northfield, Minnesota.

Box	Folder	Description
35	2	Setesdalslaget, circa 1956-1996 Includes: newspaper clippings, circa 1902-1996; “Setesdals Medlemsblad” (“Setesdals Members Newspaper”), February 1996; correspondence: Professor Odd Løvoll, Mrs. Erick Johnson; Setesdalslaget posters, (June 1956, the other is undated); list of presidents and secretaries, 1909-1974, 1974.