

The Norwegian-American Historical Association

Northfield, Minnesota

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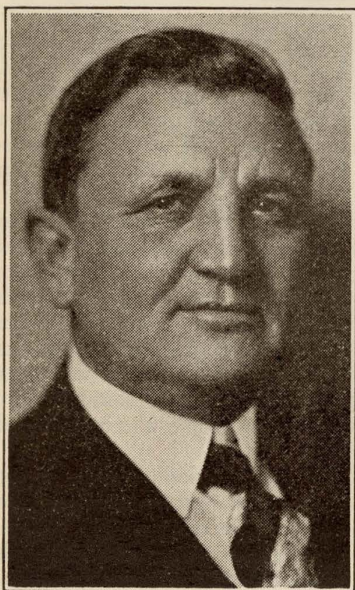
NEWS LETTER

FROM THE SECRETARY'S OFFICE TO
THE ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

Edited by J. JÖRGEN THOMPSON, Secretary

KENNETH BJÖRK, Coeditor

The Third President of the Norwegian-American Historical Association



ARTHUR ANDERSEN

On January 10, this year, our Association suffered the loss of one of its outstanding leaders. From the day Mr. Andersen became a member of the Norwegian-American Historical Association until the day when his life came to its close he maintained an active interest in the affairs of the Association. He served as President from 1936 to 1942 at which time his doctor advised him that he ought to ease up on his activities. He declined the nomination for a third term, but his interest caused him to accept the office of Vice President for a term of three years.

During these years the Association benefited from the leadership of an exceptionally dynamic personality. Mr. Andersen was a man of vision. His vision was that of the long range type. He was quick at getting the perspective of a situation and he never lost his effectiveness by becoming entangled in minor details. He was daring in his planning for the Association. He laid the basis for a broad and effective program of objectives which has resulted in a period of accomplishments far beyond what we had dared hope for. His contribution was not confined to planning and challenging every member of the Executive Board as well as the membership at large to more intensive action. He supported the work with many generous donations. Surely we have lost an extraordinary leader and benefactor.

Executive Board Meeting

On February 27, this year, the Executive Board held a meeting in the Union League Club, Chicago, Illinois. In his report as Managing Editor of our Association, Dean Blegen stated that Dr. Bjork's book on Norwegian-American architects and engineers, which will have the title "A Saga in Steel and Concrete," was at that time in the hands of the printers and that he expected the book would be ready for distribution not later than August of this year. It was decided that this book should be sent to all members of the Association without any extra charge. Dean Blegen further stated that the Reverend O. F. Duus letters have been edited and are ready for the printers, likewise the material for STUDIES AND RECORDS, VOLUME XIV. It is the plan to bring out one of these last named books before the close of the year 1947.

The Board next considered what is probably the largest project undertaken by our Association so far. This project is the writing of a history showing the contribution made by Norwegian-Americans in the development of the Pacific Coast area of our country. The Board selected Dr.

Kenneth Bjork, Professor of History in St. Olaf College, to carry on this research work and to write the history of the Norwegians who have settled from Southern California to Alaska. Dr. Bjork has been granted leave of absence from St. Olaf College for the coming year, and he will give his full time to research in this field.

The sum of \$1,000.00 was set aside to be used during the present year for expenses connected with cataloging and classifying materials of the archives.

For some time past there has been some discussion regarding the change of date for the Triennial meeting. The Board by unanimous vote decided to recommend to the members of the Association that the articles of incorporation be changed so that the Triennial meeting will be held on the first Saturday of May instead of the first Tuesday in January. When the first Saturday of May falls on the first of May, then the meeting is to be held on the second Saturday. This resolution will be presented to the Triennial meeting of the Association, which is to be held on January 6, 1948.

The Archives

To the members of the Norwegian-American Historical Association:

Leola Nelson Bergmann, author of Music Master of the Middlewest, has been engaged by Lippincott to write the story of the Norwegian-Americans. This work is being done under the general editorship of Louis Adamic.

—Editor's Note

Although many of you are well acquainted with the Association through its splendid publications that come to you in the mail, perhaps not so many of you know much about another important branch of the Association's work—The Archives, located on the seventh floor of the new Rølvaag Memorial Library at St. Olaf College. I have recently spent a few weeks working there and have seen the value, the potentialities, and the needs of the Archives.

The Association is young, just over twenty years of age, and this is a very short time in which to build up a substantial archives and to become a recognized center for materials in a special field. But even in this brief span of years a surprising amount of Norwegian-Americana has been deposited in and collected for the Archives. One finds there the correspondence and papers of significant figures in the Norwegian-American world; record books of social and political organizations, schools, church congregations; newspaper clippings, brochures, and pamphlets concerning events significant in the history of the Norwegians in America; files of old literary periodicals; the beginnings of a collection of existing Norwegian-American newspapers; files on institutions and individuals; publications of Norwegian-Americans. Many of these files have just been started; each year's harvest of additional material will be "pure gold" for the historian of the future.

For many years Prof. J. Jørgen Thompson spent whatever time he had left over from other full-time duties in building up the Archives. It is amazing that he was able to collect as much as he did. Now he has a secretary and a trained librarian to assist him. This small staff is working hard organizing and cataloguing the accumulated material in order to make it usable for those interested in research. At the same time the staff hopes that it can broaden the resources of the Archives. In this task the members of the Association can be of assistance, not only by giving *interested* support to the work, but by giving *active* support as well. To keep abreast of all the printed matter pertaining to and written by Norwegian-Americans is an impossibility for a staff concerned primarily at present with organizational and cataloguing problems. But here the Association members can render a great service to the staff of the Archives by sending to them newspaper clippings and magazine articles by and about Norwegian-Americans; by sending in copies of their own published works—books, reprints of articles, pamphlets, reviews, etc., and by urging other Norwegian-Americans to do the same.

The contributions of national groups to American civilization have become of increasing importance to historians, sociologists, anthropologists, novelists, and poets. The Norwegian-American Historical Association Archives should be *the* center in America where these people could come for information and material on the Norwegian group; our co-operation and support can help the Association to realize this goal.

LEOLA NELSON BERGMANN
Iowa City, Iowa

THE BOARD OF ARCHIVES earnestly invites your co-operation in the work of gathering and preserving records that relate to the Norwegians in America.

Some of these records are printed, such as books and newspapers. Many of them are manuscripts, such as diaries, letters, reminiscences, and account books. In such materials is recorded the story of the coming of the Norwegian pioneers and of their life in the new world. They are precious documents. They have historical value. They ought to be preserved.

If these Norwegian-American records are not gathered up and preserved now, many of them will be lost forever. In that quaint old diary, with faded ink on yellowing pages, a human personality still lives. It is a unique record. Do you want to see it lost or destroyed? Such records have many enemies—fire, dust, water, rodents. Sometimes precious letters and diaries are destroyed as rubbish. Sometimes through carelessness or indifference, they are lost or scattered.

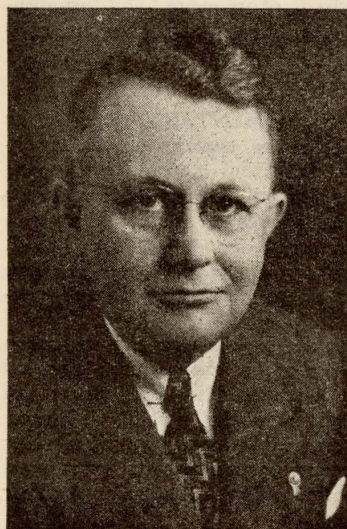
The time has come to take action. We need to gather up and preserve our records in a safe place. In this work we feel that we can appeal with confidence to intelligent men and women everywhere. By preserving the records we achieve two things, both of them important. We create memorials to the people who have gone before us—our grandparents, our mothers and fathers. And we make available for those who are writing our American history the records of one of the groups of people who have shared in the making of that history.

A considerable body of records, including some of the kinds of materials listed below, has already been gathered into the Archives of the Association at Northfield, Minnesota. But this is only a beginning. Most of the records remain scattered about in homes and institutions throughout the United States, Canada, and Norway.

Will you not take a few moments of your time to fill out the form on the back of this folder? If you cannot do so yourself, will you not be so kind as to give it to someone who can? You will be performing a service to the Norwegian-American Historical Association and at the same time you will be reflecting permanent credit upon yourself.

The following list of kinds of records is purely suggestive and is by no means to be regarded as all-inclusive. It may serve as a guide, however, and as such is herewith presented:

1. DIARIES: of Norwegian pioneers;
2. CORRESPONDENCE: letters to and from relatives and friends in Norway or in other communities in America;
3. REMINISCENCES: of pioneers, written by themselves or secured by interview;
4. NEWSPAPERS: published anywhere in any Scandinavian language—particularly Norwegian-American newspapers;
5. PERIODICALS: Norwegian or English, relating to the Norwegians in America or elsewhere;
6. CHURCH PUBLICATIONS: annual proceedings, periodicals, pamphlets, etc.;
7. CONGREGATIONAL RECORDS: proceedings, birth, baptismal, communion, marriage, and death registers, ministerial reports, congregational publications such as newspapers and pamphlets;



LIONEL GEORGE THORSNESS

We wish to introduce the Vice President of our Association to our members.

Mr. Thorsness hails from DeForest, Wisconsin. He chose Law as his profession and received his training at Northwestern University. In 1917 Attorney Thorsness was admitted to the Illinois Bar. The same year he was commissioned second lieutenant in the United States army and served overseas fifteen months. During his period of service he was advanced to the rank of captain.

Mr. Thorsness took advantage of the educational opportunities open to the men in service and in 1919 he attended the University of Edinburgh and then transferred to Lincoln's Inn, Council of Legal Education, London, England, taking two terms of graduate work in International Law.

That our Vice President is a public minded man is evidenced by the many positions of leadership and responsibility he has held down through the years. We will name a few. Past Commander, Second District of the American Legion; Past President of the Scandinavian Bar Association; Chairman of the Character and Fitness Committee being commissioned by the Illinois Supreme Court; Public Panel Chairman, War Labor Board, 1943-45.

Mr. Thorsness has already shown a deep interest in and a vital grasp of the problems facing our Association. We extend to him a hearty welcome.

THE ARCHIVES (Continued)

8. BUSINESS RECORDS: of farmers, merchants, manufacturers, publishers, tradesmen, professional men, etc.;
9. AUTOBIOGRAPHIES, BIOGRAPHIES, FAMILY HISTORIES: either published or unpublished;
10. BYGDELAG PUBLICATIONS: and the publications of other Norwegian-American societies and organizations;
11. PICTURES: of pioneers or of pioneer scenes;
12. BOOKS, PAMPHLETS, ARTICLES: or any material, printed or manuscript, dealing with or bearing any relationship to Norwegians or to events and conditions affecting Norwegians in America.

EXCELLENT RESULTS

The Newsletter for November 1943 listed the books that were wanted for the Hjalmar Hjort Boyesen collection in the archives. The results have been far greater than we dared to anticipate. At this time all of these books with the exception of one, "A Fearless Trio, 1890" have been secured for the archives. Besides these books, the Goethe and Schiller translations, and some periodical material have been received. These gifts have come from Mr. Jacob Frohlin of Bayonne, New Jersey, Mr. Sam Rask of Blooming Prairie, Minnesota, and from another of our members who wishes to remain anonymous.

We are still interested in getting short stories and articles by Boyesen, many of which appeared in magazines of his day. If any of our members should find such an item, we would be pleased to get it for our Boyesen collection.

In the same newsletter we also asked for books written by and about Thorstein Bunde Veblen. Our requests netted us the following volumes:

- Essays in Our Changing Order, 1934
- What Veblen Taught (selected writings), 1936
- Dorfman, J., Thorstein Veblen and His America

But there are many more. Who will assist us in getting the rest of his works?

A Norwegian-American writer whose books occupy a prominent place in the holdings of the Norwegian-American Historical Association is WALDEMAR AGER. We have the following of his works:

Christ before Pilate
 Fortællinger for Eyvind
 Fortællinger og skisser
 Gamlelandets sønner
 I Sit Alone
 Hverdagsfolk
 I strømmen
 Kristus for Pilatus
 Ny samling, fortællinger og skisser
 Oberst Heg og hans gutter
 Om at bevare vort morsmaal
 Paa drikkeondets konto
 Paa veien til smeltepotten
 Presten Conrad Walther Welde
 Skvldfolk og andre
 Udvalgte fortællinger
 Under forvandlingens tegn
 Det vældige navn

We are interested in building a complete file of his works and would be happy to receive books written by him that are not noted on the above list. Among the works are the following:

Blade af en dagbog
 Boken om Norge
 Hundegøine

Another Norwegian-American writer whom we would like to have represented by the entire body of his works is the poet JON NORSTOG. Of his works we already have:

Exodus	Kong Saul
Fraa audni	Livshorpa
Golatariket	Moses
Israel	Natten
Josef	Ørnerud
Josva	Tone
Kong David	Tornekronen

Here too we are asking the friends of the Association to give us books that will make our collection complete. Among the titles lacking of Norstog's works are:

Kain	Ygdrasil
Svein	Glitretind

THE NORWEGIAN AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

BIRGER OSLAND, *Treasurer*

REPORT FOR 1946

Balance from last year.....		\$1,876.27	
Receipts:			
Life membership.....	\$	100.00	
Associate and sustaining membership dues.....		1,899.10	
Book sales.....		548.97	
Interest on investments.....		1,031.69	
Profit on bonds called.....		103.87	
Contributions:			
Churchill Cabinet Co., Chicago..		50.00	
Ole Gullicksen, Chicago.....		50.00	
Ole Rynning Fund for purchases for the archives.....		185.51	3,969.14
(Balance in fund 12/31/46—\$144.96)			
			\$5,845.41
Disbursements:			
Publications (postage, freight, express included).....	\$	852.42	
News Letter.....		56.70	
Archives		167.15	
Books purchased for archives out of Ole Rynning Fund (see above)		40.55	
Stenographic and other assistance..		600.00	
Stationery and office supplies.....		116.09	
Postage		134.00	
General expense (bank's safekeeping fee, \$23.30)		35.54	
Traveling expenses.....		27.61	
Exchange on checks.....		28.25	
Telephone and telegraph.....		5.93	
Total expenses for year.....			2,064.24
			\$3,781.17
Amount invested during year:			
Purchased	\$	12,215.78	
Cost of bonds called.....		11,255.00	960.78
Balance in bank 12/31/46.....			\$2,820.39

ENDOWMENT FUND Investments

Par Value

\$14,000 U.S. Treasury 2½ 6-15-72 and 12-15-72
7,000 U.S. Savings Bonds, Series G 1-1-56 and 6-1-58
100 U.S. Savings Bond, Series F 11-1-56
8,000 Laclede Gas Light Co. 3½ 2-1-65

\$29,100 par value, at a total cost of \$29,501.78 with an annual interest income of \$805.00, or 2.73% on the invested amount.

Chicago, Illinois
January 13, 1947

From the Secretary's Desk

In his new book *Lost Men of American History* (pp. 202-3) Mr. Holbrook has picked up the story of J. R. Reiersen from our *Studies and Records*. He devotes a couple of interesting paragraphs to Reiersen and says that

Reiersen's book was "a classic of its genre," and "astonishingly accurate study of conditions in the American mid-west and in Texas."

The August number of COMMENTARY, published by the American Jewish Committee, contains an article, entitled "The Immigrant in American History," by Edward N. Saveth. In this article Saveth pays much attention to the work done by the late Marcus L. Hansen, who was a member of our Editorial Board, and also to Theodore C. Blegen, our Managing Editor. On page 185 of the above mentioned magazine, Mr. Saveth makes the following statement of recognition:

"It is to be noted that, despite their general reputation for unscholarliness, at least one of the national historical societies, the Norwegian-American Historical Society, has encouraged such an outstanding scholar as T. C. Blegen, and made the publication of his major work financially possible. This Norwegian organization is exceptional among the national historical societies for the high caliber of the studies it promotes".

The past year has evidenced an active interest in the Norwegian-American Historical Association. Our membership has increased, and we believe that it will be possible to add many more names to our membership list. This will be possible if every member will cooperate with us, by sending either one, or better still, both of the following blanks properly filled out—

Mr. J. Jørgen Thompson
St. Olaf College
Northfield, Minnesota

Please enroll Mr.....
Address.....

as an Associate, or Sustaining member in the Association.
I am sending \$_____ to cover membership dues.
(Signed).....

Mr. J. Jørgen Thompson
St. Olaf College
Northfield, Minnesota

I believe the following persons are interested in the work of the Association and would become members if invited to do so:

Name.....
Address.....

Name.....
Address.....

(Signed).....