

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 NORMAN NORDSTRAND, Co-editor

The Fourteenth Volume of Studies and Records

Notwithstanding the great difficulties of preparing a new volume of *Studies and Records* in these times, the Board of Editors is able to announce that Volume XIV is now being sent to press and that it will be ready for distribution this summer.

The volume will have a wide range of interest. The leading article will be a searching and significant study of the Norwegian-American engineers by Dr. Kenneth Björk under the title "A Migration of Skills."

Lieut. Arlow W. Andersen is the author of an article on "Knud Langeland: Pioneer Editor."

Professor B. H. Narveson writes the story of "The Norwegian-American Lutheran Academies."

"Memories of Perry Parsonage" are recalled by Clara Jacobson.

Dr. C. A. Clausen tells of "An Immigrant Shipload of 1840" and presents the complete passenger list of the *Emilie*, the emigrant ship that brought the Heg family to America 104 years ago.

The Verdandi Study Club of Minneapolis has translated under the title "An Immigrant Exploration of the Middle West in 1839" an important letter written by Johannes Johansen and Sören Bache.

Dr. Blegen presents a complete verse translation of the famous ballad "Oleana."

One of the most interesting documentary contributions in the volume is entitled "Behind the Scenes of Emigration: A Series of Letters from the 1840's," by Johan R. Reiersen, translated by Carl O. Paulson and the Verdandi Study Club and edited by Dr. Blegen.

Dr. A. N. Rygg contributes an article on Karel Hansen; Dr. Björk, in a second article, tells of "Pioneering on the Technical Front"; and Mr. Jacob Hodnefield continues his bibliographical survey in "Some Recent Publications Relating to Norwegian-American History."

This is not necessarily the final or complete list of contents, but it is sufficient to promise a very rich and interesting addition to the *Studies and Records* series.

Dr. Blegen is editing the volume from Washington, with the assistance of members of the Board of Editors.

Osland Reminiscences

Dr. Blegen announces the forthcoming publication of a special volume which probably will bear the title *A Long Pull from Stavanger: The Reminiscences of a Norwegian Immigrant*, by Birger Osland of Chicago.

The volume will shortly be sent to press and will be published in the fall.

Dr. Blegen regards it as one of the most fascinating and significant volumes in the long series of publications issued by the Association.

From the Treasurer

In the last issue of the *News Letter*, Dr. Meicislaus Haiman, Director of the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences, was quoted as saying in a letter to Dr. Blegen that he considered the Norwegian-American Historical Association "the best and most efficient of all such historical societies."

In this issue, Mr. James Delargy, Director of the Folk Lore Institute in Dublin, Eire, is quoted as saying that of the many historical associations in America, the Norwegian-American Historical Association is an outstanding example.

Both statements are entirely spontaneous and unsolicited. American historians say the same. Do you know of any other Norwegian-American cultural undertaking meeting with such unanimous professional commendation?

The Association now has in the making important works which will cost about \$15,000.00 to publish. This includes a book on the contributions of Norwegian-American engineers to the industrial development of the United States, which Dr. Kenneth Björk will soon have ready for publication, and one on Norwegian pioneering on the Pacific Coast and in Alaska, for which Dr. Sverre Arestad is now beginning his research work. The work involved in research subsequent to the writing of these books is tremendous, and both these scholars should be commended for the time and energy they are expending in the preparation of these works.

Of approximately one million Norwegian-Americans of the first, second, third, and fourth generations, the Historical Association after twenty years of productive existence has exactly 1,028 members. There are 926 associate members, paying \$2.00 a year; sixty-three sustaining members, paying \$10.00 a year; and thirty-nine life memberships for which \$100.00 each has been paid. Note that we have only 1,028 members out of one million prospects!

Once in a while I wonder why we have so comparatively few members. One thousand out of one million! One-tenth of one per cent! Maybe it is the old idea, "Let George do it." I would rather believe that about my Norwegian-American fellow citizens than that they lacked understanding. It is one or the other.

This is not primarily a matter for the first generation and the Norwegian language press to promote and maintain. I trust I shall never meet a Norwegian-American of the second, third, or fourth generation so lacking in racial pride and social understanding as to avow his lack of interest in this work. To me, it would denote a loss or deterioration of something which has no substitute.

And so I keep on wondering whether our present members would not look around and each get us one new member.

BIRGER OSLAND

Financial Report of the Norwegian-American Historical Association

January 1, 1943—December 31, 1943

Birger Osland, Treasurer

Balance from 1942\$ 1,882.86

Receipts:

Life memberships	\$ 200.00
Associate and sustain- ing membership dues	1,959.70
Book sale	513.49
Interest and dividend on investments	911.83
Profit on bonds sold.....	50.18
Bequest (Ola Johan and Martha Saervold)	4,338.27
Contributions (Pacific Coast Project)	
Olaf Halvorson	\$1,500.00
Ole Gullicksen	100.00
Churchill Cabinet Co.	100.00
	1,700.00
Total receipts for year	9,673.47

\$11,556.33

Disbursements:

Publications (including postage, freight, ex- press,	\$1,341.44
Research (Pacific Coast project)	500.00
News Letter	45.70
Student help in secre- tary's office	81.08
Stationery and office supplies	96.34
Postage	200.00
Telephone and tele- graph	1.20
Exchange on checks	47.99
Traveling expense	57.84
General expense (bank's safekeeping fee \$20.29)	31.29
Total expenses for year	2,402.89

\$ 9,153.44

Amount invested during year:

Purchased	\$ 6,304.38
Sold (cost)	1,606.33
	4,698.05
Cash balance at end of year 1943.....	\$ 4,455.39

Endowment Fund

INVESTMENTS

Par Value

\$ 2,000	U. S. of America Treasury 4s 12/15.54
2,000	Cincinnati Street Railway Co. 1st "B" 6s 4/1.55
2,000	Saguenay Power Co., Ltd., 1st 4 1/4s 4/1.66
4,000	National Gas and Electric Corp. "A" 1st 5s 8/1.53
5,000	United Public Utilities Corp. "B" 5 1/2s 1/1.60
6,000	Wabash Railroad Co. 1st "A" 4s 1/1.71

\$21,000 par value, at a total cost of \$20,515.63 with an annual interest income of \$1,000 or 4.7% on the invested amount.

Also 45 shares Consolidated Gas Utilities Corporation stock received as bonus.

The Saga of Old Muskego

Readers of the *News Letter* will be interested to know that Mr. N. N. Rønning, a writer familiar to Norwegians and Lutherans everywhere, has published a small volume dealing with the *Saga of Old Muskego*. Issued in connection with the Centennial of organized church work by the Norwegian Lutherans in America—the years 1943 and 1944 have been designated the Centennial years—this volume was published by the Old Muskego Memorial of Waterford, Wisconsin. It is naturally interested primarily in church affairs.

Old Muskego, a few miles southwest of Milwaukee, was settled as early as 1839. Rich in pioneer experience, this rural community knew both sorrow and joy, and was at the same time a mother settlement in the westward movement, a center of religious controversy, and an inspiration in Norwegian-American life. Today it is one of the proudest symbols of our immigrant past.

This little book is the best possible proof that the Norwegian people in America are becoming history-minded. Those already acquainted with Rønning's interests and style will find in *Old Muskego* what they have learned to expect of the author, including the charm and poetic mood of his earlier writings. Others will see in the book a new challenge facing the Association—the need to examine more closely than has yet been done the history of individual settlements, widening the focus of research, and subjecting these communities to intensive sociological analysis.

KENNETH BJÖRK

From the Secretary's Desk

One of our members, Dr. Homer Halvorson, Librarian of Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland, writes us:

"During the winter of 1940-41, Mr. James Delargy (Seamus O'Duilearga), the Director of the Folk Lore Institute in Dublin, was on a visit to the United States. While in Cambridge, Massachusetts, he was the guest

of Dr. F. N. Robinson, Professor of English and Celtic at Harvard. Dr. Robinson invited a number of us to his home to meet Mr. Delargy in an informal way. During the course of the evening, Mr. Delargy expatiated on the necessity of establishing an Irish-American Historical Society and cited the Norwegian-American Historical Association as an outstanding example of a similar organization, saying that the Irish would do well to emulate the example of the Norwegians. As I had kept myself somewhat in the background, Mr. DeLargy was not aware of my membership in the Norwegian-American Historical Association and his remarks were perfectly spontaneous. Needless to say, I have cherished it as a pleasant memory ever since."

In his review of *Studies and Records*, Volume XIII, in the January 1944 number of the *American Historical Review*, Dr. B. J. Hovde has this to say:

"Every year for thirteen years there has come from the desk of the editor of the Norwegian-American Historical Association, Dean Theodore C. Blegen, one of these trim, handsome little volumes. The set is rapidly attaining monumental proportions and shows no sign of coming to an end. The quality continues high, as has come to be expected as a matter of course from Professor Blegen, but Volume XIII seems to the reviewer to achieve something of a climax."

An indication of the influence of the Association in placing before American historians the story of Norwegian-American life is had from the following paragraph in Professor Merle Curti's widely-acclaimed book, *The Growth of American Thought*:

"The vigorous cultural life maintained by various immigrant groups is well exemplified by the Norwegian-Americans. Strongly nationalistic and Lutheran, many Norwegian communities maintained their own

parochial schools and established denominational colleges. They welcomed leaders from the mother land. . . . The Norwegian press published newspapers, magazines, religious books, and the fiction that Norwegian-Americans began to write. An interest in Norwegian-American history also developed."

From Green Bay, Wisconsin, comes the news that the *Norwegian Historical Society of Brown County* has recently filed articles of incorporation with the Secretary of State at Madison, Wisconsin. The society was organized April 21, 1939, by the following: Martin Onstad, Olaf Olsen, Hartwig Hansen, Anton Jarstad and Rev. T. S. Hansen.

The articles explain the society's purposes as to preserve the records, books, papers and letters of early Norwegian settlement in Brown county, to reduce to written record the reminiscences of older Norwegian residents of the county, and to preserve historical articles and relics dating back to the earliest Norwegian settlements.

The members of the Society have sponsored lectures and exhibits.

Tusen Norske Skip

The *News Letter* is digressing from the usual practice in the past regarding the announcement or review of books. In the deluge of war books recently published *Tusen Norske Skip* by Lise Lindbæk deserves special mention. The book is an anthology of interviews, letters, reports and log-books which combined give a graphic picture of the dramatic contribution made by Norwegian sailors toward the cause of the Allied Nations in the present world war. The book arrests ones interest from beginning to end. This book would undoubtedly receive a large circulation if it were translated and thus made available to the American reading public in general.

This volume costs \$2.25 and may be ordered from Arnesen Press, Inc., 6515 Fifth Avenue, Brooklyn, N. Y.

New Members Since Last News Letter

LIFE

Capt. Gronner Gallis, San Francisco, Calif.
Rolf B. Schou, San Francisco, Calif.

SUSTAINING

Mrs. Elise Andersen, Seattle, Wash.
Allan Johnson, Elkhorn, Wis.
Lt. Comdr. Carl Moe, Seattle, Wash.
O. A. Moxness, Encinitas, Calif.
Sverre Nord, Seattle, Wash.
Bjarne Nordstrand, San Francisco, Calif.
August Werner, Seattle, Wash.

ASSOCIATE

Alfred Abrahamsen, San Francisco, Calif.
Mrs. Josephine Andersen, Oakland, Calif.
Dr. T. W. Buschmann, Seattle, Wash.
H. P. Devick, Los Angeles, Calif.
O. L. Ejde, Seattle, Wash.
Grant Ellis, Los Angeles, Calif.
Mrs. Clarence E. Englund, Chicago, Ill.
Ole Fjerlie, East Stanwood, Wash.
Olaf Funnemark, Wesley, Ia.
Jorgen Galbe, San Francisco, Calif.
Henry A. Hendriksen, Orick, Calif.
Kristen Husby, Tacoma, Wash.

R. A. Jensen, Mobile, Ala.
John G. Lee, Hayfield, Minn.
Lt. Comdr. Isak K. T. Lystad, Seattle, Wash.
Royal Norwegian Consulate General, New York, N. Y.
H. Rindal, Vancouver, B. C., Can.
S. C. Roinestad, Oakland, Calif.
Dr. Harold Ronning, Parkland, Wash.
Julius Skaug, Mobridge, S. D.
Thoralf Storwick, East Stanwood, Wash.
Ansgar Svanoe, St. Louis Park, Minneapolis, Minn.
Dr. A. H. Thorsen, San Francisco, Calif.
Thomas Tilson, Sitka, Alaska.

A CHALLENGE

Highlights of Address Given by ARTHUR ANDERSEN, Vice President

1. I am of Norwegian blood and my pride of race compels me to recognize the fact that our Association is the only agency in this country whereby the true facts regarding the history of our people in the U. S. can be brought to light and be presented with authoritative voice and scholastic prestige.
2. I am an American; and as such am interested to see that American history is written honestly and that it reflects truly the part played in its settlement and development by various racial groups, particularly the Norwegian. Research work done by our members, both as individuals and for their group, has been of great importance in writing American history honestly so far as the Norwegian part of it is concerned.
3. Norwegian culture, tradition and philosophy represent a heritage which all of us here (possibly unconsciously) draw upon and live by. I, for one, am not willing to see it die out or melt away with the growth of coming generations without contributing some effort to preserve it; or at least have a part in making a record of it. Again I find the N.A.H.A. the vehicle for the preservation of this heritage.
4. If we of this generation do not make every effort to obtain and preserve records of the part the Norwegians played in the development of our country, there will be no authoritative data available for our sons and daughters and their sons and daughters. Even now there are very few people living who can give us first hand information regarding the pioneer days. In a few years it will be too late. We must therefore strike while the iron is hot or our cause is lost.
5. Our organization and the marvelous work that it has done is to me manifestation of one of our strongest racial traits—the ability to organize and work together for mutual interest. It is said of our group that it is the outstanding example of organized effort of any racial group in the country to preserve records of its people. Our pride will not allow us to lose this reputation.