

# The Norwegian-American Historical Association

Northfield, Minnesota

# NEWS



# LETTER

*From the Secretary's Office to the Association Members*

NUMBER 83

Editor, LLOYD HUSTVEDT

JANUARY 1992

## *Kenneth O. Bjork*

Kenneth O. Bjork, 82, professor emeritus of history at St. Olaf College and the Association's editor from 1960 until 1980, died of bone cancer, August 11, at Three Links Care Center in Northfield. Memorial services were held at St. John's Lutheran Church in Northfield, August 15. Odd S. Lovoll, who succeeded Professor Bjork as NAHA editor, spoke both for St. Olaf College and the NAHA.

Dr. Bjork wrote two books published by the NAHA: *Saga in Steel and Concrete* (1947), and *West of the Great Divide* (1958), and a number of articles for *Studies*.

We quote from *Makers of an American Immigrant Legacy: Essays in Honor of Kenneth O. Bjork* (1980): "Bjork has served with distinction and he has promoted the goals of the Association with energy and imagination. His commitment and capability are reflected in the high quality and impressive number of valuable historical studies and translations that have been issued by the Norwegian-American Historical Association during his tenure."

We salute the memory of Kenneth O. Bjork, the contributions he made, the person he was, and his legacy of high standards which he has now entrusted to us to maintain.

## **The Chair**

The King Olav V Chair in Scandinavian-America Studies, jointly funded by St. Olaf and the NAHA, will be officially inaugurated on November 6, 1992. The date is most appropriate — Founders Day for St. Olaf College. A two-day program (November 6-7) will highlight the event.

Sidney A. Rand, former president of St. Olaf College, will open the festivities with a Founders Day address during the regular chapel hour. Steensland Gallery will open an exhibit, "Highlights in Norwegian-American painting," under the supervision of Marion J. Nelson, (Vesterheim).

John Bodnar, Department of History, University of Indiana, will keynote the conference, speaking on immigrant symbolism. The three sessions that follow will treat "The Educational Heritage," "The Historians of Scandinavian America" and "The Literary Image." Four papers will be given at each session. The authors and titles of these papers will be announced in a later newsletter.

A banquet, November 6, will have as guests diplomats from all the Nordic countries (Iceland and Finland included) and representatives from Nordmanns-Forbundet and other organizations. A concert by a Norwegian artist will conclude the program.

## **Sámi-American Journal**

*Báiki: The American Journal of Sámi Arts* is the title of a new quarterly edited by Faith Fjeld, 2127 Fillmore Street #10, San Francisco, California 94115. It is designed to provide a medium of communication and a source of information for Sámi Americans. In the Sámi language "báiki" [bi'-e-ke] means group interdependence and survival. Subscriptions: \$10 in North America; \$15 for all other countries.

## **Book Party**

Lawrence Hauge (NAHA president) and his wife Lois hosted a reception at their Edina home on Sunday, October 6, in honor of Lowell J. Soike, the author of our latest publication, *Norwegian Americans and the Politics of Dissent 1880-1924*.

Editor Odd S. Lovoll introduced the author to some 70 guests. Dr. Soike explained how he came to make this study and responded to questions from the audience.

This publication has been distributed to all members. Should any member not have received this book, be sure to notify the secretary.

## Friends in Need

For a number of years Orville Bakken, Northwood, North Dakota, has gleaned newspapers in the Red River Valley region and beyond for biographical information (mostly obituaries) on Norwegian-Americans. His work supplements our existing Andrew Rowberg Biographical File.

Bakken's installments of clippings have, however, far exceeded our capacity to mount and file them properly. Members of the Northfield chapter of Nordmanns-Forbundet have come to the rescue. We deliver to the volunteers' home a packet of 200 clippings together with a needed supply of 3x5 cards and glue. Beyond the mounting, the person's name must be entered at the top of the card. In the industrial world the process would be known as "labor intensive." Thanks to these volunteers, a task is being accomplished which otherwise would have been too costly through hired help.

## Memoirs by Lully Lund

Added to our collection recently was *Minner fra mitt liv* by Lully Lund (1882-1971). This account, first recorded on tapes in the 1960s, has been transcribed and edited by her daughter Eva Lund Haugen. This lively and matter-of-fact autobiography (116 pages) tells of Lully Hansen's childhood in Kongsberg, Norway, her education and studies at a business college which led to positions with different newspaper firms.

In 1901 she married a young journalist, Einar Lund. They emigrated with two children in 1919. After 10 years in Fargo, North Dakota, they moved to Decorah, Iowa. In the years that followed both Lully and Einar worked for *Decorah Posten*, Einar as editor. This fast-moving account, void of any sentimentality, reveals unmistakably an efficient and intelligent woman with considerable spunk.

## Chicago Churches

We received recently from Bert Benson a wealth of information about 61 churches founded in the Chicago area by Norwegian Americans consisting of anniversary histories, annual reports, periodicals, programs, newspaper articles and directories. Since documents of this kind are often viewed as having only local interest, few repositories collect and preserve them. Yet, they tell about "grass roots" of religious activity among Norwegian Americans. Especially wel-

come was the material on non-Lutheran churches (Baptist, Methodist, etc.) where our collection is weak.

This gift affords the opportunity to remind members of our interest in receiving material about churches founded by Norwegian Americans. To date our "Congregations" collection fills 36 document cases.

## The Norsgaard Collection

Norwegian Consul Generals John Bjørneby (New York) and Bjarne Grindem (Minneapolis) personally turned over recently to the NAHA a photograph, slide, and film collection with an appraised value of \$30,000. Consul General Bjørneby acted on behalf of Ernestine Norsgaard, the widow of the late Campbell Norsgaard, a professional photographer and cinematographer. Originally from Norway, Norsgaard lived much of his later life in Lakeville, Connecticut.

A large portion of the collection concerns the Norwegian Air Force and its activities in Canada (Camp Little Norway) during World War II. Included are photos of members of the Royal family who spent much of their time at Little Norway. There are slides from Norway during the liberation and a 16mm color film of King Haakon's return to Norway on June 7, 1945.

## One Way to Say "Yes"

In our collection is a 170-page book entitled *Norsk-Engelsk Brevbok*. It includes samples of business documents (deeds, power of attorney, contracts, etc.) One can also find models of letters for all occasions. Below is a recommended response for a widow who has received a proposal in marriage:

Dear Sir:

To prove to you that the arts of flattery are by no means necessary to find the way to my heart, I answer your letter by return of mail. I only esteem the language of truth, and your whole character, which I have always highly valued, guarantees to me that your language is such. You have no competitor to fear, though the number of suitors should be twice as large. On the contrary, I hereby give you the assurance, that as soon as the customary time of mourning, which I owe to the memory of my deceased husband shall have expired, I shall place my future weal or woe with confidence in your hands, and on my part consider it the problem of my whole life, to make you a true help-meet.

Your sincere

## Editorial

A Chair in Scandinavian-American Studies will be inaugurated in November, 1992, a year from now. This does not mean that all the funds are in place. The NAHA has a good distance to go — roughly \$250,000.

It was first a dream held independently by both St. Olaf College and the NAHA. When the two institutions agreed to form a partnership, the possibility of such a chair loomed into clear view.

Utilizing several grants from the Norwegian government, one dating back to the 1970s, plus foundation support, and contributions from the alumni (in the main Norwegian and history majors), St. Olaf College has build its fund to \$750,000. The College has done its part.

The NAHA launched its "Kenneth O. Bjork Chair in Immigration Studies" in the 1970s. This fund was activated when its initial goal of \$100,000 was reached in 1980. Since that time the income has been used to meet expenses related to preparing manuscripts for publication: editorial assistant's salary, photos, graphs, maps, charts, indexing, reading of proof, etc. In terms of the size of the fund and its function, the term "chair" in the title may have been a bit pretentious, reflecting more aspiration than reality. By the close of the year, this fund should approach \$250,000, one-half of the amount we hope to raise.

The planned chair is neither a luxury nor an added convenience. It is essential to the continuation of quality research and publication in the field of Norwegian migration, and to the teaching of college level courses in that field. It is unthinkable that future editors could volunteer or donate their services like Theodore C. Blegen, Kenneth O. Bjork, and Odd S. Lovoll. This does not mean that the old idealism is gone. Academic positions today are so carefully defined and advancement in rank so demanding that a heavy editorial assignment that is not already built into the position itself would be prohibitive.

The Executive Committee of the NAHA is seeking ways and means to solicit larger gifts and grants from corporations, foundations, and individuals. As a theoretical example, we might note that 25 gifts of \$10,000 each would win the day. Constant and steady support from the members will also be crucial — do what you can!

L.H.

## Random News

\*Received from Alf Swenson his *Alf Swenson Remembers: A Letter to My Grandchildren*, a staple-bound booklet of 31 pages. Swenson depicts his childhood and youth on a farm in Delafield Township, Jackson County, Minnesota. The account ends when he graduates from St. Olaf College.

\*Received from April Rose Schultz her *A Peculiar People: Celebration, Historical Memory, and The Creation of Ethnic Identity Among Norwegian Americans in the 1920s*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, 192 pages, 1991. Best classified as social history, this study examines how ethnicity is shaped and expressed in American culture. The main focus is on the 1925 Norwegian-American Immigration Centennial.

\*Received from Charles H. Chantland his *The Family Weltzin/von Weltzin in Norway and America*. Typescript reproduction, hard cover, photos, 585 pages. Ludvig von Weltzien came to Norway from Germany in 1749. He and his wife (Norwegian) established the Norwegian branch of the family through their nine children.

\*Received from Martha Wold Olson her *Fifty-one Trips around the Sun: Obed Henry Olson's Story*. Typescript reproduction, spiral bound, 101 pages, 1991. The story traces the movement of a family from Hadeland, Norway, to Wisconsin and later to South — and North Dakota (1888-1933).

\*Received from the Center for Western Studies, Augustana College, Sioux Falls, *Guide to Collections Relating to South Dakota Norwegian-Americans*. Compiled by Harry F. Thompson, paper bound, typescripts reproduction, 65 pages.

\*Received from Ann Urness Gesme her *Look to the Rock: The Dybdall/Anderson Episode*. Typescript reproduction, hard cover, maps, photos, 453 pages, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1991. It is a thorough, well-written and carefully organized family history.

\*Received from Neil A. Hofland a translation of Jon Laberg's *Årdal i Sogn: Bygd og Ætter*. Typescript reproduction, paper bound, 520 pages. Xerox reproductions of the original make up the left side pages and the translation appears on the opposite page. Carl, Joyce and Neil Hofland are the translators.

\*Received from Barbara Levorsen Quinn *Levorsen Letters: The First Generation*, typescript reproduction, paper bound, 250 pages, 1990. Amund and Ingeborg Levorsen left Numedal in 1868 and settled first in Ottertail

county, Minnesota, and moved to York county, Virginia, in 1901.

\*Received from Duane Fenstermann *Minutes of North Washington Prairie 1889-1943*. Unbound typewritten manuscript, 72 pages, translated by Donald L. Berg.

\*Received from Ringebu Historielag *Emigration to America from Ringebu* by Einar Hovdhaugen, translated by Janell E. Sorenson. Paper bound booklet. 35 pages.

\*Received from Michael Bovre and Marie Jerdee their *Erdahl - A Pioneer Family: 1306-1988*. Paper bound typescript reproduction, photos and maps, 112 pages, 1988. The Erdahl family came from Ulvik and Eidfjord, Hardanger and settled in Dane county, Wisconsin, in 1850.

\*Received from Paul R. Nelson an untitled family history in narrative form. The account centers on Lorentz Hanson [Groven] who homesteaded near Blair, Nebraska, in 1866, and married Johanna Anderson in 1871. They had seven children (two died in infancy). The lives of these children also enter the story. The narrative ends with the death of Lorentz in 1932, 92 years old. Some attention is given to political, social and economic changes that transpired from 1866 to 1932. Unbound typescript reproduction, 267 pages.

\*Received from the University of Trondheim *Arbeiderlederen Marcus Thrane som teaterman og dramatiker*, a 173 page dissertation by Jorun Marie Jonassen, 1988. The study includes a biographical sketch of Thrane, his theatrical interests prior to coming to America, his establishment of a theater in Chicago, and an analysis

of 20 plays that Thrane wrote and produced. Professor Henrietta Naeseth of Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois, had undertaken a similar study which had to be set aside due to illness and later death.

\*Received from Nancy Smith Bradshaw and Frances Huckstep Hamilton their *Velkommen til Norge*, a pictorial history of Norge, Virginia, 80 pages, 1989. Carl M. Berg, a land agent, encouraged Scandinavian immigrants to settle in James City county, Virginia. Most of those who settled here came from the Midwest.

\*Received from Erik Luther Williamson his "*The Norwegian Short-Term Parochial School (Religionsskole) in North Dakota Lutheran Congregations, 1880s-1930s.*" A Doctor of Arts dissertation, University of North Dakota, 1991. This study, perhaps the first of its kind, examines influences from Norway and from other states, educational controversies, the varied character of the schools, and their later transition into other forms like summer Bible camps. 87 pages, 1991.

\*Received from Margie Lee her *Kinfolk*, typescript reproduction, photos and maps, 233 pages. The story focuses mainly on six persons and their lives which involved farming, church building, journalism and business. It is not necessary to be a "kin" to enjoy this well written narrative.

\*Esther Gulbrandson, a charter member of the NAHA, died in the Northfield City Hospital, September 26, 1991, 97 years old. She joined the Department of Norwegian at St. Olaf College in 1920 and retired in 1963. She was an exceptional teacher and an able drama coach.

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