

The Norwegian-American
Historical Association

Northfield, Minnesota



From the Secretary's Office to the Association Members

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Editor, LLOYD HUSTVEDT

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NAHA: 1976

We must be pleased with 1976. Nina Draxten's excellent work on Kristofer Janson came out in June. Volume 27 of *Studies* came off the press at the turn of the year. A total of 154 new members were added, with a notable increase in life memberships. New materials steadily enter the Archives and their use by both casual and serious researchers continues to climb. Requests for services by correspondence exceeds what our staff can adequately handle. New interest in emigration has awakened in Norway, and many appeals for information come from that country.

On the less pleasant side, we have to report the loss of 109 members, most of them by failure to pay their annual dues. Inflation is keenly felt, especially in the area of printing costs. The past few years have made it clear that the normal operation costs of the NAHA cannot be met through income from dues and book sales alone. Fortunately, 1976 brought gifts from two sources amounting to \$15,000, a sum which more than offset the deficit.

MEMBERSHIP

Our current membership stands at 1,254, the highest it has ever been. The lowest membership figure of 527 was recorded in the depression year of 1934. Total membership crossed the 1,000 mark in 1965 and has remained above that figure in succeeding years. Since the Association's founding in 1925, a total of 4,545 persons have subscribed to membership. Most encouraging is the fact that of the 154 new members, 46 were life members. Less attractive is the cancellation of 109 members. This indicates that there can be no relaxation in the recruitment of new members. The membership statistics are given below:

	<i>January 1, 1976</i>	<i>December 31, 1976</i>	<i>Gain or Loss</i>
Associate	741	772	+31
Sustaining	189	163	-26
Patron	38	32	-6
Life	<u>167</u>	<u>213</u>	<u>+46</u>
	1,135	1,180	+45
Deceased Life	<u>74</u>	<u>74</u>	<u>0</u>
	1,209	1,254	+45

ARCHIVES

The most recent additions to the Archives consist of an interesting collection from Carl Soyland, former editor of *Nordisk Tidende*, and materials from Ruth Lima McMahon treating the settlement of Griggs County, Dakota Territory, with accounts of pioneer life there. Some additions to the August Reymert papers have also been received. As yet only partially processed is a scrapbook compiled by Arne Fremmegaard and donated by Roy Thorshov. Also being processed is a group of America letters written in the 1880's by mem-

bers of the Hedemark and Lindbak families, who settled in Ransom County, North Dakota. The largest collection of papers and the slowest to process have been those of the late Bertram Jensenius. He was the editor and publisher of *Vinland* in Chicago.

We are grateful for the many family histories we receive. The most notable acquisition must be that of the Mundahl-Mondale family. There are daily requests for assistance in compiling family histories and genealogies.

PUBLICATIONS: PAST AND FUTURE

The statements below quote in full the first six paragraphs of Kenneth O. Bjork's Editor's Report to the Executive Committee, which met February 12, 1977:

Some years ago, at a meeting of the Executive Board in Chicago, the late Andrew E. Wigeland, then our Treasurer, made a somewhat startling remark. In reply to my question concerning an optimum annual number of publications, he said without hesitation, "We should issue two books." Our average to that date had been only slightly more than one volume per year, and neither our financial condition nor the number of suitable manuscripts seemed to call for a stepped-up program of publication.

The situation recently has changed, partly because of the Sesquicentennial of Norwegian immigration in 1975 and our national Bicentennial in 1976, and even more significantly because of the preparation of an increased number of high-quality manuscripts.

You will recall that in 1975 we published Odd S. Lovoll's exciting study, *A Folk Epic: The Bygdelag in America*, purchased enough copies of Arlow W. Andersen's *The Norwegian-Americans* to distribute them to our members, and, in addition, put out a history of *The Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1925-1975*, written by Odd S. Lovoll and me. The number of pages in these three books is 668. In 1976 we issued Nina Draxten's excellent biography, *Kristofer Janson in America*, a carefully researched work of 401 pages. Thus, in 1975 and 1976, we circulated a total of 1,069 pages of well-received history.

Because of the strain on our financial resources and to give greater balance to our output, I held volume 27 of our *Norwegian-American Studies* for distribution early in 1977. You will receive in March copies of the book planned and edited by the Norske Selskap, *Cultural Pluralism versus Assimilation: The Views of Waldemar Ager*. Funds from the Selskap, now merged with the Association, will finance the publication of this documentary volume over a period of years. I am planning to publish John Flanagan's *Theodore C. Blegen: A Memoir* and to distribute it in late 1977. And volume 28 of *Studies* could be completed in the same year. This calendar year is thus a repetition of 1975 in number of books, but the pages will be fewer and the costs considerably less.

Assuming two volumes in 1978, in effect, we will have attained the average annual production recommended by Andrew Wigeland. Thus far, this achievement has been made without special effort or by lowering our editorial standards. While it is impossible to predict the future, I feel reasonably safe in saying that we can now anticipate the publication of an average of two books per year.

I am currently completing editorial work on the Flanagan manuscript and plan to work next on the translations of Bjornstjerne Bjornson's letters from America, a manuscript prepared by Eva and Einar Haugen. Simultaneously, I am editing Frank Nelson's translation of Johan R. Reiersen's valuable "America book," *Veiviser for norske emigranter til de Forenede nordamerikanske stater og Texas*. Such documentary material is of great importance in our program, and I am sure the Board of Publications will approve both volumes for publication. Serious illness has delayed Henriette Naeseth in completing her study of Marcus Thrane in America, but this invaluable work will one day be published by the Association. I am working jointly with Brynhild

Rowberg on the translation of O.E. Rolvaag's *Omkring Faedrearven*. Thus far, we have only a tentative translation, but it will soon be ready for serious consideration. I hope, too, if time and strength permit, to complete a volume on Norwegian migrations to the American and Canadian West, including Alaska. Odd Lovoll is working on a book that will concentrate on Norwegian backgrounds in the migration story. There are also other promising studies under way, but they will be discussed at a later date.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The report cited below is a much condensed form of the official one prepared by the Treasurer, Leonard Arentsen.

	<i>December 31</i>	
	1976	1975
Fund Balance, January 1	\$ 16,798.94	\$ 28,960.39
Income:		
Dues, associate, sustaining	9,968.50	8,039.50
Book sales	4,297.56	4,420.97
Book royalties	1,560.71	—
Interest on investments	3,114.66	2,811.27
Unrestricted gifts in memory of		
Andrew Wigeland	15,128.79	—
Miscellaneous income	<u>314.49</u>	<u>674.41</u>
Total Income	\$ 34,384.71	\$ 15,946.15
Expenditures:		
Publication Expense - Printing and binding		
Norwegian-American Studies Vol. 26	—	\$ 5,865.21
The Norwegian-Americans	—	5,140.73
A Folk Epic	—	6,375.00
Norw.-Amer. Hist. Ass'n. 1925-1975	—	2,348.69
Kristofer Janson in America	<u>8,499.63</u>	<u>—</u>
	\$ 8,499.63	\$ 19,729.63
Editorial, typing, etc.	1,341.25	561.00
Packaging, mailing, etc.	1,262.03	1,010.02
Other	<u>507.76</u>	<u>364.30</u>
	\$ 11,610.67	\$ 21,664.95
General membership expenses	\$ 6,605.58	\$ 6,442.65
Total expenditures	\$ 18,216.25	\$ 28,107.60
Current Income over (under) Current Expenditures	\$ <u>16,168.46</u>	\$ <u>(12,161.45)</u>
	\$ 32,967.40	\$ 16,798.94
ASSETS		
Current Fund	\$ 32,967.40	\$ 16,798.94
Theodore C. Blegen Fellowship Fund	35,897.75	33,408.58
Ole Edvart Rolvaag Permanent Fund	31,590.37	26,890.37
Norwegian Society in America Fund	5,019.66	—
The Chair in Immigrant Studies Fund	<u>5,872.44</u>	<u>4,781.94</u>
	\$ 111,347.62	\$ 84,379.83

EXPLANATION

For the benefit of new members, a brief explanation of the funds given above may be in order. The accrued income from the Blegen Fund is used only for grants to persons with manuscripts suitable for publication. The Rolvaag Fund consists of life membership dues and the income is used for current expenses. The Norwegian Society was absorbed by the NAHA. The NAHA must use the income from this fund in ways consistent with the objectives of that former Society. All undesignated gifts go to the "Chair Fund." It was recently established and, as with the Rolvaag Fund, the income passes into the current fund.

COON PRAIRIE HISTORY

Oivind M. Hovde, the librarian at Luther College, has translated Hjalmar R. Holand's *Coon Prairie*, originally published in Norwegian in 1927. The Westby-Coon Prairie Church, Westby, Wisconsin, published the book in recognition of the 125th anniversary of the first Coon Prairie Congregation.

More than half of the book contains genealogical information regarding the immigrants who came to the area from the 1840's to the 1860's. Oivind Hovde is a grandson of Halvor Halvorsen, one of the early ministers serving that congregation. For additional information, write to Oivind Hovde, Luther College, Decorah, Iowa.

THANK YOU! NORMAN

Shortly before Christmas, G. Norman Wigeland, a member of the Executive Board, presented the NAHA with a gift of \$10,000, the largest single gift ever received by the Association. We register, however, the hope that there will soon be many who will want to take this honor away from G. Norman Wigeland. The gift was an unspecified one and was made in memory of Norman's late brother, Andrew E. Wigeland, who died in October, 1970. Andrew was for many years invaluable to the Association as Treasurer and as gifted adviser.

A person close to the Wigeland family, but who wishes to remain anonymous, also presented the Association with securities that come to \$5,100. This gift was also in memory of Andrew E. Wigeland.

Both of these gifts come in the wake of heavy publication costs during

the past few years. Their impact can be fully appreciated when we note that they alone exceeded our total income from dues in 1976.

G. Norman Wigeland is now retired and continues to live in Evanston, Illinois. He has moved out of the home he and Andrew shared, and now lives at the Georgian Hotel, Room 605, 422 Davis Street. He was awarded the Knights Cross, First Class, of the Royal Order of Saint Olav in 1975.

THE BULLETIN BOARD

- The forthcoming book by Reader's Digest, *The Great American West*, will include a long excerpt from *Frontier Mother: The Letters of Gro Svendsen*, published by the NAHA in 1950.
- Carl H. Chrislock, professor of history at Augsburg College, Minneapolis, was elected to the Board of Publications.
- Elaine Kringen, who for a number of years has directed the clerical work of the Association, has been officially designated Assistant Secretary.
- The Heritage Resource Center, Box 26305, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55426, is an outlet for our publications as well as of many other related books.
- Members having copies of Sesquicentennial books or brochures, or of Bicentennial publications of local, regional, and national character that contain information about Norwegian Americans, are asked to get in touch with Miss Charlotte Jacobson, our Curator. We are eager to complete our files of such publications.

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