

The Norwegian-American Historical Association

Northfield, Minnesota

NEWS



LETTER

From the Secretary's Office to the Association Members

Number 24

NOVEMBER, 1963

Editor, L. HUSTVEDT

TRIENNIAL MEETING

The triennial meeting held May 11, 1963, in the Sons of Norway Building in Minneapolis, was attended by thirty members. Fifty-eight members were present for the banquet held in the evening.

Executive Board

The executive board met in the forenoon. A plan to establish membership committees in larger cities and in regions heavily populated by Norwegian-Americans was approved.

Considerable time was given to discussion of the Charter and the By-Laws. The board appointed Judge Derwood Johnson to make a study of the Charter and By-Laws, and instructed that he should propose such revisions as he felt necessary at the next meeting of the board.

In his "Editorial Report," Dr. Kenneth O. Bjork presented three proposals for approval: 1) That the NAHA finance the costs of publishing a list of available Norwegian newspapers and their location. 2) That the NAHA finance the publication of an index for *Studies and Records*. The plan is to carry the index for *Studies*, 21, in Volume 22, etc. Ultimately all volumes of *Studies* will be indexed under one cover. 3) That the editor be authorized to enter into agreement with the University of Minnesota Press, whereby the Press would copyedit, print, distribute and publicize our publications through their channels. All of the proposals were approved.

All Officers Re-elected

The thirteenth Triennial meeting was called to order by President Lionel G.

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First Volume of Authors Series Nears Completion

A new Authors Series has been ushered in by our editor, Kenneth O. Bjork. The first volume to appear in this category is Clarence A. Glasrud's biography of Hjalmar Hjorth Boyesen. In the past, our publications have fallen under three headings: Studies, Travel and Description, and Special Publications.

In his foreword to *Hjalmar Hjorth Boyesen*, Dr. Bjork states that the new series "invites scholarly contributions about Norwegian Americans whose works have become, or should be, an integral part of our culture." Dr. Bjork is confident that the future will bring studies of creative writers of stature like O. E. Rølvaag, Marcus Thrane, Waldemar Ager, Simon Johnson, Julius Baumann, Johannes B. Wist, and Jon Norstog, as well as such journalists as Svein Nilsson, Rasmus B. Anderson, Knud Langeland, and Kristian Prestgard. This series intends also to include the American writings of such Norwegian authors as Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, Kristofer Janson, and Knut Hamsun.

Hjalmar Hjorth Boyesen should be ready for distribution to all members in November. The book contains 238 pages, is divided into thirteen chapters, and includes bibliography, index, and illustrations. It will retail for \$5.50.

Wanted: Used copies of *Frontier Mother*, and *Laur. Larsen — Pioneer College President*.

TRIENNIAL MEETING

(Continued from Page One)

Thorsness at 2:30 P.M. Greetings from journalist Larry Rue, General Lauritz Norstad, and Governor Karl F. Rølvaag were read.

Following the reports from the secretary, editor, and treasurer, the officers for the next three years were elected. All officers were re-elected: President, Lionel G. Thorsness; first vice president, Marthinus A. Strand; second vice president, David T. Nelson; third vice president, Magnus Bjørndal; treasurer, Andrew E. Wigeland; secretary, Lloyd Hustvedt.

Evening Banquet

The evening program was a notable success because of fine food and good speeches. Governor and Mrs. Karl F. Rølvaag both spoke. Governor Rølvaag noted that he did not found the NAHA, but pointed out that as a youngster in his father's home he was present when it WAS founded. Governor Rølvaag expressed the gratitude of the State for the work done by the NAHA.

Charming and inspiring Dr. Walter Muir Whitehill, director of the Boston Athenaeum, gave the main address. Dr. Whitehill had become familiar with the work of the NAHA while preparing his book *Independent Historical Associations*. "My admiration for the accomplishments of your society is all the greater because of my experience with three other groups of 'scholars with a plan,'" stated Dr. Whitehill. The three groups Dr. Whitehill treated were in *The American Neptune, A Quarterly Journal of Maritime History*; *The New England Quarterly, A Historical Review of New England Life and Letters*; and the Hakluyt Society (founded in London, 1846). In his discussion of the objectives and the operation of these societies, astonishing parallels with the NAHA became evident.

In his summary Dr. Whitehill noted, "First, they all depend completely upon scholars who care too much for history to count their time or worry about royalties. Second, they all lean upon friendly institutions, whose direct or indirect support makes the difference between

success and failure. Without St. Olaf College, the British Museum, the Colonial Society of Massachusetts, and the Peabody Museum of Salem, the role of the editors of these groups would be nearly impossible. Third, their standard is so high and their fields so specialized that there is little help to be had from commercial publishers or distributors who are geared to large scale operations."

In his closing statements, Dr. Whitehill proposed a common catalogue for historical societies like the NAHA. Since none of the societies can afford heavy advertising, collectively they could inform the larger public about the books they have available for sale.

The entire address given by Dr. Whitehill will appear in the next issue of *Studies*.

Professor Knaplund

Publishes Memoirs

The State Historical Society of Wisconsin recently announced the publication of *Moorings Old and New: Entries in an Immigrant's Log*, by Paul Knaplund, Professor Emeritus, University of Wisconsin history department.

In this warm and human book, a distinguished American historian has recorded the story of his boyhood in Norway, his emigration to America at the age of twenty-one, and his battle with loneliness as he came to feel and to be an American.

Moorings Old and New tells the story of his early years on a remote island within the Arctic Circle. It describes the common life of Norway, of a family of farmer-fishermen, a parish, a fjord, and the nearest market town.

Above all, *Moorings Old and New* is a self-portrait of a gifted teacher and scholar at the University of Wisconsin who learned in his twenties to write English with grace and clarity, a man whose personal experiences and insights reveal a great intellectual curiosity, strength, sensitivity, and wise judgment.

The book is available for \$4.00 from the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 816 State Street, Madison, Wisconsin.

IN MEMORIAM

J. Jørgen Thompson

It is with deep regret that we announce the death of J. Jørgen Thompson, who for 27 years served as Secretary of the NAHA. His life was one of abiding interest in all aspects of Norwegian-American life.

J. Jørgen Thompson, born in 1881, died in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, on September 2. The funeral was held at St. John's Lutheran Church in Northfield, Minnesota.

Mr. Thompson first attended Scandinavia Academy, and in 1904 enrolled in the St. Olaf Academy. He received his A.B. degree from St. Olaf College in 1909, and then studied one year at the University of Oslo. Upon returning from Oslo in 1912, he was given the A.M. degree by St. Olaf College. In 1957 Augustana College, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, awarded him an L.A.D. (Doctor of Humane Letters).

Mr. Thompson served as principal of the St. Olaf Academy from 1914-17 and as president of Spokane (Washington) College, 1917-20. He then returned to St. Olaf as a teacher in the department of Norwegian. In 1923 he became the unforgettable dean of men at St. Olaf, a position he held until 1942, when he became acting president. In 1943 he was made assistant to the president, a position he held until his retirement.

Mr. Thompson also served as president of *Det Norske Selskap*, of the *Nordmanns-Forbundet* chapter in Northfield, and for one term was president of the Folk Art Foundation of America. He helped organize and served as adviser for the Blue Key Honorary Fraternity at St. Olaf College.

Mr. Thompson is survived by his wife, Stella Sogn Thompson, Luther Manor, 2900 South Lake Avenue, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and one son, Jørgen, Jr., who is dean of men at Augustana College.

Mr. Thompson's papers have been turned over to the NAHA and are now being processed.

IN MEMORIAM

Birger Osland

The death of Birger Osland removed from the scene one of the giants in the history and development of the Norwegian-American Historical Association. To our cause, as well as to many others, he gave unstintingly of his wisdom, time, money, and energy, and, most important, of himself. The feeling prevailed that if Birger Osland supported a cause, it was one that merited the support of all who knew him.

Birger Osland, 93, died at the Norwegian-American Hospital in Chicago on August 1. He is survived by two daughters, Mrs. John Sonstebj and Mrs. Omer B. Dahm.

Mr. Osland came to Chicago from Norway in 1888 and became a close associate of the late Charles H. Wacker. Shortly after World War I, he founded his own investment bank, retiring from this business in 1940. He helped organize the Norwegian-American Steamship Line in 1911. During World War I, he was military intelligence attaché to the American Legation in Oslo, and subsequently food administrator for northern Europe under Herbert Hoover. During World War II, he was national treasurer for Norway Relief, Inc.

He was a member of the board of trustees of the Norwegian-American Hospital for 35 years, a trustee of the Chicago 1933 Century of Progress Exposition, a founding member of the NAHA, and Association Treasurer for 25 years. He was also the author of one of our publications, *A Long Pull from Stavanger*.

Birger Osland's papers are in the NAHA archives. This collection, which totals over 19,000 pieces, has been processed.

Do not forget to enlist new members for the Association. If potential members are outside of your reach, please send their names to the secretary.

Decorah Museum

Members of the NAHA will be pleased to learn of new developments affecting the Norwegian-American Historical Museum in Decorah, Iowa, owned and managed by Luther College since its origin in 1877.

Meeting in regular session, August 29, the Luther College board of regents resolved to establish a Norwegian-American Historical Museum Board. The proposed board will consist of "distinguished and devoted men and women interested in the preservation and development of Norwegian-American artifacts."

Important in the change will be the designation of a dedicated scholar with executive ability as director of the museum.

The regents also voted to find a site for a suitable building on the Luther College campus. At the present time, the museum is located downtown in Decorah.

NEWS IN BRIEF

- President Lionel G. Thorsness donated a complete set of our publications to Norway Grove Church, DeForest, Wisconsin.
- Dr. Theodore C. Blegen's book, *Minnesota, A History of the State*, is now available from the University of Minnesota Press. \$8.50 (\$7.50 if purchased before January 1, 1964).

- Ingolf P. Olsen, Brooklyn, New York, donated from his personal library a complete set of our books to the Haugesund (Norway) Public Library. The attention this donation received in the Haugesund newspapers indicates that the books are highly valued and the gesture much appreciated.

- *O. E. Rølvaag: Nordmann og Amerikaner* by Gudrun Hovde Gvåle has just been published by Universitetsforlaget, Oslo. 436 p.

- *The Cotter's Son (Husmandsgutten)*, translated from the Norwegian by Joel G. Winkjer of Bethesda, Maryland, was recently published by Park Region Publishing Co., Alexandria, Minnesota. This book, written by Hans Anderson Foss, enjoyed considerable popularity when it appeared in Norwegian in 1884. It sells for \$1.00.

- Otto M. Bratrud, 9800 - 41st Southwest, Seattle, informs us that copies of his interesting book *Beating to Windward* are still available. It can be obtained from Mr. Bratrud or from Anundsen Book Center, Decorah, Iowa.

- Deceased. Christian Birger Christophersen, 1879-1963, member since 1927.

- Deceased. Hjalmar Rued Holand, 1872-1963, author and historian.

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NORWEGIAN-AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
St. Olaf College
Northfield, Minnesota

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