

The Norwegian-American
Historical Association

Northfield, Minnesota

NEWS



LETTER

From the Secretary's Office to the Association Members

Number 31

JANUARY 1965

Editor, L. HUSTVEDT

NAHA In 1964

The year 1964 has been one of quiet but steady progress for the NAHA. The collection of manuscript material that had accumulated since 1925 has now been classified and described in accordance with the highest standards for repositories.

By the middle of December, membership reached the long projected goal of 1000. The fact that many of the new members chose to enroll as sustaining members is most encouraging.

Although no book came out during the calendar year 1964, Volume 22 of *Studies* is currently being printed. *The Klondike Saga* by Carl L. Lokke is expected to appear shortly after *Studies*.

MEMBERSHIP

The NAHA began 1964 with 957 members. For the first time in many years the oft proclaimed goal of 1000 was clearly in sight. As of December 16, our membership stood at 1002. An impressive total of 85 new members were added. Less heartening is the fact that 10 members were lost through death, and 30 members were dropped, either by request or because they did not respond to statements for dues. The records also show that unless dues are promptly paid, 19 more members will be dropped during the month of January. Should this cause our membership to drop below 1000, we are certain that replacements shortly will be found.

BOOKS

The NAHA received 183 book orders in 1964, and a total of 596 volumes were sold. Sales amounted to \$1,752.92. Because no new book came out in the calendar year 1964 (two will come out in 1965), these figures are considerably lower than those for 1963: Total orders, 222; total books sold, 1,018; total sales, \$2,525.19. Since the 1964 figures reflect the sales of only older publications, the record is still satisfying.

Hjalmar Hjorth Boyesen by Clarence Glasrud led the sales with 59 copies. *Norwegian Migration to America, 1825-1860*, was second with 39 copies, and *Norwegian Migration to America: The American Transition* sold 37 copies. Both books were written by Theodore C. Blegen. Kenneth O. Bjork's book, *West of the Great Divide*, 23 copies. *The Lady with the Pen*, 20. A total of 201 copies of *Studies* were sold. Volume 21 led the sales with 31 copies. All other publications sold less than 20 copies.

The book sales for the past seven years are as follows: 1958, \$877.09; 1959, \$1,422.49; 1960, \$1,887.64; 1961, \$2,296.61; 1962, \$1,869.75; 1963, \$2,525.90; 1964, \$1,780.80.

The following volumes are out of print: *Frontier Mother, Norwegian Sailors on the Great Lakes, Laur. Larsen: Pioneer College President, Grass of the Earth*, and Volume 7 of *Studies and Records*. Should anyone have extra copies of these books, or copies he no longer wishes to keep, please send them to the Secretary.

ARCHIVES

All of the papers collected by the NAHA from 1925 to 1965 have now been processed. Had not the NAHA assumed responsibility for the O. M. Norlie Collection (see article below), this task would now have been finished, except for the editorial work that still needs to be done on the descriptions prepared for each collection.

The manuscript section of the NAHA archives now contains 599 separate collections, totaling 157,964 items. An item may be a manuscript of several hundred pages or it may also be a letter of a single page. Descriptions and inventories of each collection have been entered on 8 x 5 cards and are filed alphabetically. This file, consisting of 787 cards, is now available for use by researchers. Hopefully these descriptions will be published, making a book of about 200 pages. They will also be entered in the *National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections*, currently being prepared by the Library of Congress.

Because so little drama accompanies major achievements related to the processing of documents and papers, the significance of such work is easily and even understandably underestimated by the larger world. It is therefore all the more commendable that the members of the NAHA, who through their dues have made much of this work possible, have continued their steadfast support. If assurance is needed, the members of the NAHA can be justly proud of what has been accomplished in the dual program of publication and the preservation of papers and documents. Unsensational as the preservation of historical documents might be, it must be kept in mind that if we did not have the sources, the publication of historical books would be impossible.

NAHA TAKES OVER

O. M. NORLIE COLLECTION

Some years before his death in June, 1962, O. M. Norlie, teacher, author, and collector, turned over to the St. Olaf College Library a vast collection of papers, manuscripts, newspapers, periodicals, pamphlets, books, and maps. The dimensions of this collection can hardly be described. It fills a large portion of the attic in the St. Olaf College Library.

After negotiations with Mr. Forrest E. Brown, St. Olaf College librarian, the NAHA assumed responsibility for processing the Norlie Collection. Miss Beulah Folkedahl began preliminary sorting early in December. Mr. David Grose, a St. Olaf College student from Austin, Minnesota, is assisting part time in processing the periodicals. A reasonable estimate is that it will take at least one year to classify and describe this collection in accordance with the standards used in processing earlier materials.

Because the Norlie Collection contains much that falls outside the special inter-

ests of the NAHA, the Association is working in close harmony with the St. Olaf College Library, with Luther Theological Seminary, and particularly with Pastor E. W. Sihler, assistant archivist for the American Lutheran Church. Items presumed to be of primary interest to the church are set aside. Pastor Sihler, who lives in Minneapolis, comes periodically to Northfield and forwards what he selects to the church archives. Material of interest to the St. Olaf College Library is handled in a similar manner.

Many items found in the Norlie Collection must be added to collections of papers already classified and described. This will undoubtedly prove to be the most time-consuming aspect of the Norlie project. When this occurs, inventories have to be changed and descriptions modified to cover the new entries.

The value of the NAHA archives will be much increased through the Norlie papers. A happy by-product of processing this collection is that the NAHA can be of direct service to the American Lutheran Church and to the St. Olaf College Library.

STUDIES, VOLUME 22

From the Preface by Kenneth O. Bjork

In his wise appraisal of the independent historical society, Dr. Whitehill speaks of "a gratifying number of people"—amateurs as well as professionals—who "cultivate the arts" and maintain the highest standards of historical research and writing. The unselfish efforts of just such people provide the materials for this, the twenty-second, volume of *Studies*, a series that is slowly piecing together the colorful mosaic of Norwegian-American life.

Nelson, Draxten, Arestad

Marion John Nelson draws on a rich knowledge of art to evaluate the creative work of Lars Christenson, and interprets the carved wooden altar by this folk artist with a warmth that comes from admiring a masterpiece. Similarly, Nina Draxten presents, with sympathetic understanding, an artist of the written word and the improvised stage: Kristofer Janson, whose lecture tour in 1879-80 brought poetry to the hearts of immigrants in the Middle West and culminated in a blast against Lutheran orthodoxy. Sverre Arestad once again takes the simple narrative of a transplanted Norwegian—this time on the Montana farming frontier—and, with only the slightest alterations, shows it to be rich in imagery and informative of experience.

Rosholt, Qualey, Cartford, Levorsen

Malcolm Rosholt, who has hunted down records in churches, courthouses, and private dwellings, goes back to the beginnings of community life in Waupaca County, Wisconsin; in a close examination of an early clergyman and a pioneer storekeeper, he proves the value of local history when read in the light of universal experience. Translating and fitting together seven America letters to Valdres made available by Norwegian scholars, Carlton C. Qualey adds new details about the Atlantic crossing, the journey overland from Quebec, and the transition to American patterns of life.

Gerhard M. Cartford provides an interesting insight into both Old-World cultural contributions and New-World influences by studying the hymns sung by second-generation Norwegian Americans in their Lutheran churches. And Barbara Levorsen draws for a second time on her phenomenal memory to describe the securing and preparation of food in a Norwegian settlement in North Dakota, and more generally to recall the grueling tasks of a pioneer woman.

Whitehill, Folkedahl

The remaining three contributions constitute a species of stock-taking by the Norwegian-American Historical Association. Walter Muir Whitehill relates its program to that of other independent societies, such as the Hakluyt Society in England and the Peabody Museum Marine Associates in New England, and likens its publications to the *New England Quarterly* and the *American Neptune*. Beulah Folkedahl, from her desk in the archives, reviews "Some Recent Publications" of interest to Association members, and writes a second installment of informal notes that will alert scholars to the wealth of our source collections.

North Central Publishing Company estimates that **Studies** will be completed in February. All members whose dues were paid for the year 1964 will receive this book. Distribution will take place immediately after the book comes from the press.

ARCHIVES ARE USED

Professor Neil Eckstein of Wartburg College has spent much time working in the NAHA archives during the past year. He is writing a Ph.D. dissertation in American civilization at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. The title of his dissertation is *The Immigrant Writer as Critic of American Institutions: Hjalmar Hjorth Boyesen and Ole Edvart Rølvaag*.

NEW MEMBERS

It is an unusual pleasure to be able to welcome 35 new members.

LIFE

H. P. Skoglund, 1750 Hennepin Avenue, Minneapolis. Mr. Skoglund is president of North American Life and Casualty Company, and chairman of the St. Olaf College board of regents. In June, 1964, Mr. Skoglund announced a gift of \$1,750,000 to St. Olaf College.

Andrew A. Kindem, 5508 Dever Drive, Minneapolis. Mr. Kindem is vice president and treasurer of A. A. Kindem & Sons Millwork Company. He was born in Voss, Norway, and came to this country in 1909.

PATRON

Peter Strong, Saw Mill Lane, Greenwich, Conn. Mr. Strong is president of the American-Scandinavian Foundation. During his recent trip to the Middle West, we had the pleasure of visiting with President Strong.

SUSTAINING

N. E. Quam, Route 2, Northfield, Minnesota

Olav Underdal, 225 2nd St. E., Rugby, North Dakota

Mrs. Anna H. Rutt, 851 Delgado Drive, Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Valdimar Bjørnson, 2914 46th Avenue So., Minneapolis, Minn.

K. E. Brunsdale, 1307 Mt. Curve, Minneapolis, Minn.

Hendrick W. Helberg, P.O. Box 345, Clanton, Alabama

Marvin O. Wrolstad, 66 So. Meadows Drive, Appleton, Wisc.

Rolf K. Jensen, 5302 - 44 Ave. N., St. Petersburg, Florida

ASSOCIATE

Allan R. Lund, 832 Midland Bank Bldg., Minneapolis, Minn.

Mrs. Pearl Underdahl, Route 3, Kenyon, Minn.

Olaf Jorgenson, 5632 Edgewater Blvd., Minneapolis, Minn.

Ronald Flugum, 317 E. 5th Street, Spencer, Iowa

Mrs. Paul Rabe, Kings Canyon Ranch, Carson City, Nevada

Harold Naess, University of Wisc., Madison, Wisc.

Carl Olson, Box 44, Route 1, Maple Plain, Minn.

Martha Torrison, 918 Golfview Road, Glenview, Illinois

A. Moltke-Hansen, 2700 McKenzie Point, Wayzata, Minn.

Owen H. Wangensteen, 2832 W. River Road, Minneapolis, Minn.

George C. Hellickson, 2825 Overlook Drive, Minneapolis, Minn.

Morton Eriksen, Jr., 60 Roosevelt St., Babylon, New York

Ira J. Melaas, Jr., 3221 - 36th St., Rock Island, Illinois

Harold I. Lunde, 2096 Fry St., St. Paul, Minn.

Harold A. Ulring, 5324 Chateau Pl., Minneapolis, Minn.

U. Schuyler Anderson, Veterans Admin. Center, Fargo, N. D.

Magne Smedvig, 1455 W. Lake Street, Minneapolis, Minn.

Orville C. Dalager, 1455 W. Lake Street, Minneapolis, Minn.

Bent Vanberg, 1455 W. Lake Street, Minneapolis, Minn.

Leonard Thompson, 1455 W. Lake Street, Minneapolis, Minn.

Ole J. Braaten, 5152 29th Ave. So., Minneapolis, Minn.

Harriet S. Wrolstad, 7001 So. Logan Ave., Minneapolis, Minn.

Merald E. Wrolstad, 2643 Eaton Road, Cleveland, Ohio

Clarence A. Storla, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, Ark.

The first two members to be enrolled in 1965 are Miss Kathy Wangsness, 1725 Farnam Street, Davenport, Iowa (Sustaining), and George R. Qualley, 1724 Parmenter Street, Middleton, Wisconsin (Associate).

HOW MEMBERS CAN HELP IN 1965

—Invite acquaintances and friends to become members of the Association. If they are not within reach, please send their names to the Secretary, who will write them a letter of invitation.

—See if your local library has our books. If not, seek ways and means of getting them placed there.

—Encourage organizations with Norwegian interests to become institutional members of the NAHA.

—If you have the economic power to do so, change your membership from associate to sustaining, patron, or life.

—Notify the Secretary of interesting news about members of the Association.

—Submit to the Secretary suggestions or ideas that could be put to work for promotional purposes.

—Encourage gifts and bequests to the Association.

DR. NELSON ACCEPTS MUSEUM POST

As of July 1, 1965, Dr. Marion Nelson will serve as Director of the Norwegian-American Museum in Decorah, Iowa. Dr. Nelson, an authority on Scandinavian art, has been a member of the Department of Scandinavian at the University of Minnesota. He will continue to teach Scandinavian art on a half-time appointment.

Recent efforts to make the Decorah Museum one of the finest of its kind are progressing favorably. Nearly 1700 items in the museum collection have been catalogued and photographed. Not long ago the museum became an independent corporation under the laws of Iowa, and Luther College has transferred all responsibility for the museum to this corporation. Mr. George Strum, formerly a U. S. Naval chaplain, has been engaged as Executive Financial Secretary.

Dr. Gunnar Gundersen, president of the museum board, has energetically and efficiently moved his board and many committees through the difficult and necessary preliminary steps before a major fund-raising campaign can get under

way. Equally active have been President E. D. Farwell and his development office at Luther College. Soon the Norwegian Americans in this country will be given the opportunity to contribute to the success of this praiseworthy venture—the building of a new museum.

BECKS OF NORMANNA

Magnus Olaf Beck, a member of the NAHA from Normanna, Texas, recently published *Becks of Normanna*. As the title suggests, the book deals primarily with the author's family, which migrated from Norway in 1894 and settled on a 100-acre farm in Bee County, Texas. The author, one of ten children, was then fourteen years old.

The book tells of the adaptations needed to conquer a new environment. It deals with the role the author's family played in settling the community and the economic impact made when the family introduced broom corn to the area. The book, richly illustrated, sells for \$8.95. Anyone interested may order directly from the author. Mr. Beck, farmer, rancher, and head of a broom factory and cotton gin, is now 84 years old.

CIVIL WAR ARTIFACTS

Dr. George Svejda informed us that there have been no responses to the announcement which appeared in the preceding news letter. He requested that it be repeated:

The American Museum of Immigration, presently being built at the base of the Statue of Liberty in New York harbor, is looking for items used by Scandinavian soldiers during the Civil War. Particularly important would be relics of the Civil War, for example, weapons, items of uniform, personal memorabilia, musical instruments, etc., used by members of the 15th Wisconsin regiment headed by Colonel Hans Christian Heg. Members of the Norwegian-American Historical Association who are in possession of such Civil War relics are urged to get in direct contact with Dr. George J. Svejda, Historian, American Museum of Immigration, U. S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 15 Pine Street, New York, N. Y. 10005.

Lloyd Hustvedt, Secretary
Northfield, Minnesota

Please enroll me in the Norwegian-American Historical Association as:

Associate \$5

Patron \$25

Sustaining \$10

Life \$100

Name _____

Address _____

Occupation: _____

The latest NAHA book is given to all new members. All forthcoming publications are sent to all members at no other cost than annual payment of dues. Life membership consists of only one payment.

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