

THE NEWS LETTER

The Norwegian-American Historical Association

Secretary and
"Newsletter" Editor,
LLOYD HUSTVEDT

St. Olaf College
Northfield, Minnesota

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J. JÖRGEN THOMPSON RETIRES

Secretary and Archivist for Twenty-Eight Years

J. Jørgen Thompson submitted his resignation to the Executive Board when it met at St. Olaf College on May 23. All these years his name has appeared on all letterheads and envelopes leaving this office. To the members of the Association, this name has undoubtedly become a household term—to many, perhaps, a name nearly synonymous with the Historical Association itself.

Made Honorary Member

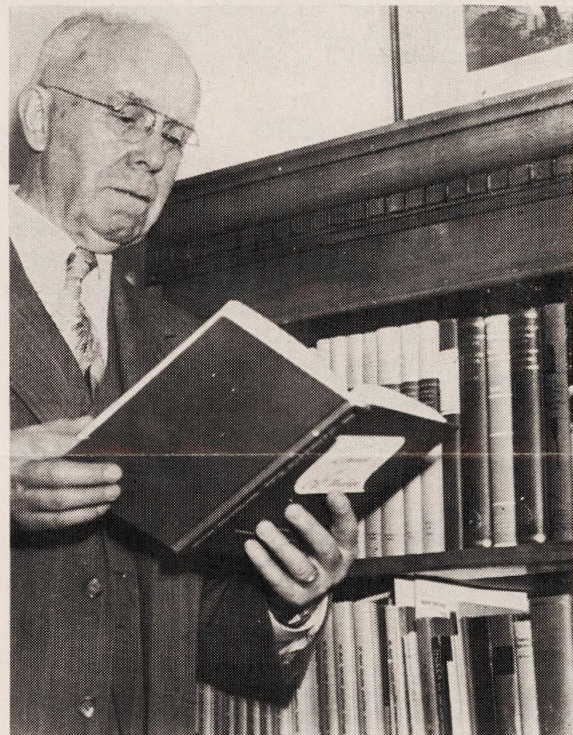
Before succeeding Dr. O. E. Rølvaag as Secretary in 1931, Mr. Thompson had served as Assistant Secretary from the time the Historical Association was organized. It was for good reason, then, that "Jørg" was immediately elected an Honorary Member of the Executive Board. His years of experience are therefore not lost to the Association.

A Work of Dedication

The duties of the Secretary defy definition. On the Secretary falls the responsibility of correspondence, the keeping of the membership records, the mailing of statements and the receipting of dues as they come in, and the addressing and mailing of all books published. He must serve as guide to visitors and as recruitment officer for new members. The Secretary must by necessity be a businessman, a salesman, an advertiser, a diplomat and a bookkeeper. But, above all, he must be dedicated to the objectives of the Historical Association; otherwise, no one would attempt to combine all these features in one personality. As there is no salary with the office, it cannot possibly be filled for the sake of money. It is especially for this dedication we are so grateful to J. Jørgen Thompson, and proudly hold it up as an example to be imitated by others.

American Born

Mr. Thompson was born in 1881, in Green Bay, Wisconsin, of Norwegian parents who came to America in the 70's. After first attending Scandinavia Academy in Wisconsin for several years, he enrolled in the St. Olaf Academy in 1904, continued his undergraduate work at St. Olaf College and graduated in 1909. He received a stipend from the Norwegian Lutheran Church to study one year at the University of Oslo (then Kristiania), and upon returning in 1912 was granted an A.M. degree by St. Olaf College. In



J. JØRGEN THOMPSON

1957 Augustana College, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, awarded Mr. Thompson an L.H.D. (Doctor of Humane Letters).

An Educator

Among the many positions held by Mr. Thompson, only the most important ones can be mentioned. As a student he was particularly active in the area of music. He served as principal of the St. Olaf Academy from 1914-17; was president of Spokane (Wash.) College, 1917-20. He then returned to St. Olaf College as a teacher in the Department of Norwegian and in 1923 became the Dean of Men, a position he held until 1942, at which time he took over as acting President of St. Olaf College (1942-43). He then became assistant to the president, a position he held until he reached the retirement age.

In addition to offices directly connected with colleges, Mr. Thompson has served for many years as

the president of "Det Norske Selskap," and of the "Nordmanns Forbundet" Chapter in Northfield. For one term he was president of the Folk Art Foundation of America (1951-52). He helped organize and continued to serve as advisor for the Blue Key Honorary Fraternity at St. Olaf College, and retired from this position just this past year.

J. Jørgen Thompson and his wife, Stella Sogn Thompson, have one son, Jørgen, Jr., who, as a very young man, became the Dean of Men at Augustana College, the position he holds at present.

J. Jørgen Thompson was decorated Knight of Order of St. Olaf in 1936, and was awarded the Medal of St. Olaf by Haakon VII in 1939.

ADJÖ

My parting message is short. If I have during these years rendered some service, I ask for no other reward, unless it be this: that you continue your support even more vigorously than you have in the past, that you keep the Historical Association in mind when you draw up your will, that you consider it when a memorial is in order, that you speak well of it to your friends and call their attention to our publications, and finally, if you feel that you can, that you change your membership from Associate to Sustaining, from Sustaining to Patron, or even to Life. Thank you for years of most pleasant relations.

J. JØRGEN THOMPSON

St. Olaf College Takes Over Archives

Leigh D. Jordahl, St. Olaf College Librarian, speaking for President Clemens M. Granskou, presented the Executive Board with the offer to take over the management and organization of the Archives. Mr. Jordahl explained that two sets of cataloging cards would be prepared; one set would be filed under the name of the Historical Association, and the other would be integrated with the college card catalog. He further explained that a full time cataloger would begin work upon notification of the Board. The Association would exercise full authority as to what material should be included in the collection. This offer was unanimously accepted by the Executive Board.

Strong Support from St. Olaf

The support the Norwegian-American Historical Association has received from St. Olaf College is most generous. Since the beginning of the Association the College has supplied the facilities. At present the entire seventh level of the library is at disposal of the Historical Association; the College has provided office space on the first floor for the Secretary and his assistant. Were such facilities to be built or rented, and if a cataloger were employed, they would absorb

more than our annual income in dues, leaving nothing for publication, our essential task.

Treasurer's Annual Report for 1958

[Itemized Report not included]

Stimulating activity and growth for the Norwegian American Historical Association are reflected in the financial report for 1958.

Compared with the previous year:

Life Membership fees increased..\$	350.00
Dues from Association and sustaining members and patrons increased	838.00
Gifts and bequests increased.	1,259.18
Book Sales increased	377.40
Total Revenue receipts were	
\$7,003.94, an increase of	2,301.71

The most important accomplishment of the year, however, was the publication and distribution of *West of the Great Divide* by Kenneth Bjork. This significant volume of over 600 pages is filled with the living contemporary record of the settlement of the vast American West as told, to a large extent in their own words, by the Norwegian Americans who took part in that great movement of people across the frontier country.

The publication of this large book and its distribution to members account for most of our publication expense of \$9,361.80 and a substantial part of the expense of the Secretary's Office.

Total Disbursements were \$12,190.36 or \$5,186.42 in excess of revenue receipts. This figure should not be labeled a "Deficit," but rather an "Investment" in a highly valued new publication.

As in every year since foundation the Norwegian American Historical Association received in 1958 untold contributions of time, effort, professional services, and traveling and other expenses from members of the Editorial Board, and from Officers and members of the Executive Board.

A. E. WIGELAND
Treasurer

Three Anthologies Draw on NAHA Publications

Three anthologies of historical materials on American history and life have drawn upon the publications of the Norwegian-American Historical Association. Henry Steele Commager in his *America in Perspective* (New York, 1947) devotes one chapter to "Social Life and Customs of the Frontier," with excerpts from Ole Munch Raeder's letter in *America in the Forties*, a volume published by the Association in 1929. Dr. Commager writes that Munch Raeder's letters, which comprised our volume, "give us some of the liveliest pictures of life along the farmer's frontier that we have in our literature." Similarly Professor Oscar Handlin of Harvard in his anthology *This Was America* (Cambridge, 1949) has a chapter

made up of selections from *America in the Forties*. He calls it "Correspondent from the Homeland." A more recent anthology edited by Paul Angle of Chicago, *The American Reader* (New York, 1958), contains passages from Gro Svendsen's Iowa letters as published by the Association in its volume entitled *Frontier Mother*.

FIVE NEW LIFE MEMBERS

William T. Evjue Becomes Life Member

Since the last issue of the *News Letter*, four Life members and one Memorial membership have been added. Among them is William T. Evjue, publisher of *Capital Times*, Madison, Wisconsin. Down through his many years of journalism, Mr. Evjue has supported many organizations interested in things Norwegian, and those who know him, know that his support has been spoken with a voice strong enough to be heard.

Professor David T. Nelson of Luther College, a Vice President of the NAHA and translator and editor of our publication, *The Diary of Elisabeth Koren*, purchased a Life membership and, in addition, gave the Association a gift of \$109.00.

The most recent to become Life members are Dr. E. J. Norby of Madison, Wisconsin, and Professor Clarence A. Clausen of St. Olaf College, for many years a member of our Editorial Board and who is currently busy editing the letters of Elise Wærenskjold. Our sincerest gratitude goes to all these men.

Mr. S. C. Simonson of Fort Meade, South Dakota, subscribed to a Memorial membership in the name of his late brother, Olaf A. Simonson.

LLOYD HUSTVEDT: NEW SECRETARY

Lloyd Hustvedt, Assistant Professor in the Department of Norwegian at St. Olaf College, was elected Secretary to replace J. Jørgen Thompson. He had earlier served as membership secretary and as editor of the *News Letter*.

STUDIES AND RECORDS: VOLUME TWENTY —

Volume twenty of *Studies and Records* is now at the press. According to Managing Editor Theodore C. Blegen, the printing will be completed during the summer; distribution to the members will most likely take place in September.

Dr. Clarence A. Clausen anticipates that his work of editing the letters of Elise Wærenskjold ("The Texas Book") will be completed this summer. Dr. Blegen announced at the meeting of the Executive Board that it is planned to distribute this book some time in 1960.

MEMBERSHIP SHOWS INCREASE

One year ago the total membership stood at 766, today 912—an increase of 142. The breakdown is as follows: Associate 78, Sustaining 131, Patron 1, Life 60, Memorial 15. Since the opening of the membership drive last October, 1958, a total of 116 new

members have been added: Associate 78, Sustaining 29, Life and Memorial 8. Most encouraging is the high increase of Sustaining members. While the total membership shows that 13% are Sustaining members, 26% of the members joining since last October subscribed to this membership.

Of the four million or so persons in this country who can claim a Norwegian background, it should be possible to attract another 600 persons (our goal 1,500), who are willing to support a movement to preserve the records and make public the historical facts pertaining to the Norwegian-American people. The Norwegian Americans must do this job. This writer is convinced that we have no right to expect that the Poles or the Irish should do it for us.

What The Reviewers Say: WEST OF THE GREAT DIVIDE

The author is to be commended for successful completion of an exhaustive and worthwhile study. Likewise, the Norwegian-American Historical Association deserves congratulation upon publication of another volume that is indispensable in its field. (ARLÖW W. ANDERSEN, *American Historical Review*, January, 1959.)

I venture to say that Bjork's present volume will always stand as number one source information concerning the migration of Norwegians and their descendants toward and to the shores of the Pacific Ocean. (O.G.M., *Lutheran Herald*, November 25, 1958.)

West of the Great Divide is a much-needed contribution in the general field of American immigrant history. It is based upon a wide variety of contemporary and secondary sources. . . (OSCAR OSBURN WINTHER, *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, December, 1958.)

An enormous amount of research has gone into the making of this vivid and fascinating account. The author has studied literally thousands and thousands of letters that "found a measure of immortality in the pages of the immigrant press." He has searched the Norwegian press from coast to coast, and in the old country, and from countless letters, the travel descriptions, the advice and warnings voiced in the writings of the immigrants and in editorials of these newspapers he has dug out the precious raw material from which he has woven a colorful fabric. (JOHAN HAMBRO, *American Scandinavian Review*, Winter Issue, 1958.)

The Scandinavians have had a hefty part in the development of the west, and it takes a hefty volume to tell of these accomplishments. (*Salt Lake City Tribune*, December 7, 1958.)

When one considers that no treatment has been given the whole subject previously, he is moved to admiration that so vast and heterogeneous a mass of material has been marshalled into shape, even in the span of a decade, by a person already heavily committed to his professional duties. We eagerly await volume two of this study. (SVERRE ARESTAD, *Scandinavian Studies*, November, 1958.)

NEWS IN BRIEF

- Dr. Kenneth O. Bjork, author of *West of the Great Divide*, has received a research grant under the Fulbright program and will spend the next year in Norway. He plans to leave in August.
- The "Vosselag" will meet at St. Olaf College on June 26-27.
- Undoubtedly the hardest worker in the field during the past months has been Dr. Einar Haugen of the University of Wisconsin. His efforts have provided many new members from Madison.
- Marthinus Strand of Salt Lake City, Utah, gave the Association another gift of \$100.00.

- Harry J. Williams of Kenilworth, Illinois, gave a gift of \$15.00; in addition, he has subscribed to a large number of gift memberships.
- Mr. Chris Halling of Los Angeles, California, recently purchased a complete set of the NAHA publications.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

When space permits, the *News Letter* will continue to carry an application blank for membership. Please cut this out, carry it with you until you find the person who will join. The line reading "recommended by" should carry your name.

Life Membership \$100.00. Patron Membership \$25.00 or more per annum. Sustaining Membership \$10.00 per annum. Associate Membership \$5.00 per annum.

Norwegian-American
Historical Association

LLOYD HUSTVEDT
Secretary
St. Olaf College,
Northfield, Minnesota

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

I hereby apply for.....
Membership in Norwegian-American Historical Association
and enclose check or money order for \$.....
in accordance with the schedule of dues listed above.

Name.....

Address.....

Occupation.....

Recommended by.....

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