

The Norwegian-American Historical Association

Northfield, Minnesota



From the Secretary's Office to the Association Members

NUMBER 101

Editor, LLOYD HUSTVEDT

MARCH 1998

1997 in Review

The below consists of selected excerpts from the Secretary's Report presented to the Board of Directors, February 7, 1998.

General

True to patterns of the past, the NAHA made progress in all areas of endeavor in 1997. Odd S. Lovoll made available for the members and the larger world *The Colony that Rose from the Sea* by David Mauk. This publication enjoyed two "coming out" parties. The first was hosted by the South Street Seaport Museum in New York on November 16. The second, hosted by Lois and Larry Hauge, took place in Minneapolis, November 24.

Our archives, a silent but useful partner in our operation, saw steady and increased use. Beyond visitors, many seek our services via telephone and letter; e-mail is on the increase. Bjørn Gunnar Østgaard who began work on his America-America Letters project last August plans to be with us a full year. Lee Rokke, our faithful volunteer, has done remarkable things for our photograph collection and has indexed the thousands of letters in the Rølvaag, Prestgard and C. G. O. Hansen collections.

Membership

We added 158 members in 1997 for a net gain of 57: 93 associate; 30 sustaining; 3 patron; and 22 life (double the normal number). Our attrition of 101 (17 due to death) may strike one as high and invites the thought that retaining members is as important as adding new ones. A pattern approaching a law is that we lose about ten percent of our members (excluding life members) each year. The higher our membership, the higher will be our cancellation figures. A total of 147 changed their membership status: 79 moved to a higher level while 69 lowered theirs.

Forty percent of our members fall into

the life category and are not subject to cancellation. Upon death they are moved to a memorial category but remain on our roster. Life membership dues, if we can call them that, come as investment returns from the endowment life membership dues (single payments) have created. We estimate that this fund generated about \$21 per active life member in 1997, four dollars less than the dues paid by an associate member. Life members, however, require little clerical work. They provide stability in our membership structure. Yet, when it comes to dollar income, sustaining and patron members are our big bread winners. We closed out the year as follows: associate 749 (+24); sustaining 241 (-3); patron 130 (+5); life 749 (+21); memorial life 256 (+10); total 1869 (+47); total, including memorial life, 2068 (+57).

Gifts

Once rare, save for planned fund drives, gifts from members over and above dues now mark a significant income feature. Some 260 members made undesignated gifts in 1997 which added \$22,600 to our O. E. Rølvaag Fund. The Haugen Scholarship fund grew by \$18,500. A NAHA member, Brit Aabakken Peterson, accounted for \$10,000 of this amount and in so doing insured that an Ellen and Kaare Nygaard Foundation grant of that amount was matched. Our major contributors are mentioned in a separate article.

Books

Our book sales came to \$9,166.63, a new high by \$2,000. The figure reflects more the higher prices our books now command than an increase in total sales.

Our inventory of unsold books dropped

from 7,147 to 6,743. The peaks in our inventory are being shaved down due to our practice of awarding high inventory titles to members who make a gift of \$20 or more. We will continue this practice as long as we have books with an inventory exceeding 200 copies.

Of our 90 publications, 55 are still in print, with only three titles having more than 300 copies; seven show an inventory ranging from 200 to 299; sixteen fall between 100 and 199; and, thirty-one fall below 100. Ten of these will in all likelihood go out of print within the next two years.

The following titles will be offered as bonus books in 1998: *Saga in Steel and Concrete*, by Kenneth O. Bjork, 1947. *Theodore C. Blegen: A Memoir*, by John T. Flanagan, 1977. *Land of the Free: Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson's America Letters*, edited and translated by Eva and Einar Haugen, 1978. *Nordics in America: The Future of Their Past*, edited by Odd L. Lovoll, 1993. *Material Culture and People's Art*, edited by Marion Nelson, 1994; *Norwegian-American Studies*, volumes 27, 28, and 29.

Financial Picture

Professional auditors will make available a full financial statement this coming May. The comments that follow are general to the extreme. Our endowment funds, which now exceed the million dollar mark, brought in record earnings of 10% in 1997. Approximately one-half of our permanent funds are in the Kenneth O. Bjork Chair Fund. Its income supports the King Olav V Chair in Scandinavian-American Studies occupied by Odd S. Lovoll and supported jointly by the NAHA and St. Olaf College.

Operating costs amounted to \$102,000, while income flowing into our Current Fund came to \$95,000, creating a deficit of \$7,000. Since the deficit figures reflect payments for printing costs incurred in 1996 and paid for in 1997, there is no need for alarm.

The two main sources of income that flow into our Current Fund are membership dues and the revenue provided by the Rølvaag Endowment Fund. The latter pro-

vided \$34,000. The associate, sustaining and patron dues amounted to \$29,000. These figures make clear that our operation, at least as we now know it, could not survive on dues alone.

Our two major expense items are predictable. In 1997 publication and related expenses came to \$44,000 and salaries amounted to \$20,000.

Hidden Assets

Though impossible to measure with numbered precision, some of our human assets merit mention. Most notable are perhaps the following: We have in Odd S. Lovoll a competent and productive editor, and the same can be said for his assistant, Mary Hove. We have a gracious and able archivist, Forrest Brown. Ruth Crane, assistant secretary, seems to absorb a growing work load without increasing her hours. Luther Forde, an alert and hands-on treasurer, gives professional care to our investment funds. Lawrence O. Hauge, our generous president, presides over a board of directors whose executive committee is more involved in the ongoing operation of the NAHA and more involved in charting its future course than has been true in the past, save perhaps for the piping years that followed organization in 1925. We have had a good year.

Correction!

We erred in our previous *Newsletter* when we stated that the Brampton (North Dakota) Lutheran Church was relocated at the Hamar Museum. *It was re-erected at Sletta on Radøy island, just outside of Bergen.*

This church will be joined by a fully equipped schoolhouse (1893) from Sargent county, North Dakota; a pioneer home (1869 log cabin) from Otter Tail county, Minnesota; and by a small school teacher's abode reported to be the first building in Brampton. The date of its construction is uncertain.

Asbjørn Odd Ystebø informed us that plans are also underway for building a facility that will provide a reception area for tourists, lecture room and exhibit facilities. We apologize for the mistake.

Editorial

Gifts to the NAHA in the form of bequests and securities are becoming more frequent. But we say this against a background where such gifts were once all but nonexistent. In an age when Dow-Jones averages keep setting new records, appreciated stock make for fine gifts and they provide tax advantages. Beyond a standard deduction for the full market value of the securities no capital gains taxes are assessed. In a word, it would be fiscally unwise for a donor to liquidate appreciated shares and then later disburse the proceeds as gifts.

Should you wish to convert securities into a gift, contact our treasurer, Luther Forde, 5500 Vagabond Lane, Plymouth MN 55446 (612/478-9752). In the event of his absence contact the secretary's office.

If you wish to include the NAHA in your Will the following wording will do:

I give to the Norwegian-American Historical Association, a nonprofit corporation located in Northfield, Minnesota, all of my residuary estate (or ____ percent of my residuary estate) (or the sum of \$ ____) to be used as the Board of Directors shall determine.

If the gift be a Designated Bequest:

I give to the Norwegian-American Historical Association, a nonprofit corporation located in Northfield, Minnesota, all of my residuary estate (or ____ percent of my residuary estate) (or the sum of \$ ____) for the _____ Memorial Endowment, the income from which shall be used for _____ (publications, archives, research stipends, operations, etc.).

If you already have a Will and wish to change it to include a gift to the NAHA, you need only prepare a Codicil to the Will. Such a document should first make reference to your Will and to your wish to add an amendment. The next paragraph should clarify the amendment in language as cited above. The final paragraph affirms the other provisions of your Will:

Subject to the above amendment, I hereby ratify and confirm all of the remaining terms and provisions of my Will, dated _____.

A Codicil, like a Will, must be signed and witnessed.

We know that members of the NAHA support many causes. We neither can nor want to change that. But we do not want our members to overlook the NAHA because we did not register interest.

L. H.

Concerning Our Heritage

Our next publication, a translation of Solveig Zempel of O. E. Rølvaag's *Omkring Fædrearven* will, according to current plan, come off the press late in May of this year. As a rule, distribution of copies to members begins the day our books arrive. Members who have had a change of address or anticipate one should notify the secretary.

Omkring Fædrearven, an extended essay of 200 pages, was published by the St. Olaf College Press in 1922. The first part (108 pages) discusses "Norwegian heritage" as understood by Rølvaag and the second (92 pages) treats Norwegian-American literature.

The book came out in the wake of World War I, a time when ethnic identity was under attack as un-American. Solveig Zempel, the translator, discusses the his-

torical setting in which Rølvaag wrote this treatise in an introduction that will run from forty to fifty pages.

News in Brief

- "My life membership in the NAHA subscribed to some years ago has proved to be one of the best investments that I ever made. I am enjoying the current publication about the Brooklyn colony. The beginning analysis of immigration waves and the technology changes in shipping vessels is the type of information I have been looking for. Keep up the good work! Merry Christmas, Claire Husby."

- Erik Friis had an article on the NAHA in *Norway Times*, January 22, 1998. He reviewed the past accomplishments of the NAHA with special attention to our publications, citing authors and titles. He closed by urging his readers to subscribe to membership. Thank you, Erik!

- Received from Åsmund Ohnstad, "Emigrants from Aurland, Sogn 1844-1924." This valuable list has three parts: Church Records 1844-1875; Police Records 1874-1924; and Shiplists, Que-

bec, 1865-1871. The shiplists include 51 names not mentioned in the church records.

- Received from Torbjørn Greipsland his *Drøm og dramatik i det norske Amerika*, a compilation of earlier written articles. Of a total of 225 pages, 75 is given to naming Norwegian Americans who served in the Civil War. They are listed by regional origin in Norway. Sold at Vesterheim bookstore, Decorah, IA, 52101, Norwegian kroner 238. Dollar cost is unknown.

- Received from Arnold Ingvald Temte his *Flying Ember*, a two volume family history, 299 and 401 pages. Many families enter with origins in Telemark, inner Sogn and Eiker. Contains photos, maps and charts. Travelogues comprise a portion of the narrative material as does an autobiography. Temte grew up on a farm near Lisbon, Wisconsin, attended Luther College, and taught at the University of Wisconsin at La Crosse.

- Received from Gordon L. Jacobson *The Family's Journey: The Lives before and after Guttorm Olsen Kløften and Ida Nielsdatter Håvelsås*, a spiral bound family history of 195 pages. Maps, photos, sketches, clippings, charts and narrative accounts. Guttorm left Solør, Hedmark in 1881. Ida the following year. They married in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, in 1883 and homesteaded in northeastern Dakota Territory, near Glasston.

- Received from Dyre Dyresen his *Adventists and Immigrants in North America — A History*, a manuscript of 35 pages. Dyresen has provided foundation material for anyone interested in doing a study on the Danes and Norwegians who formed Seventh Day Adventist congregations in the United States.

- Received from Richard Johnson his *The Økland Family*, a spiral bound family history of 319 typescript pages, photos, charts, tables and name index. Members of the Økland family left Valestrand in 1857, settling first in Koshkonong, Wisconsin.

- Received from University of North Dakota Special Collections a microfiche copy of Olav Eidbo's Master's Thesis, *Songs of the Norwegian Folk Culture and Education in the*

United States, 368 pages, 1956.

- Received from David Ostby *Nils Christopherson and His Progeny 1844-1996*, a spiral bound family history of 250 pages. A few photos and some narrative material, but mainly genealogical tables and charts. Nils left Gran, Hadeland, ten years old, with his grandparents in 1854, who settled near Waterville, Iowa. After serving in the Civil War he married in 1865 and began farming near Spring Grove, Minnesota.

- Received from Arthur M. Bjørnstad his *Bjørn and Anna: The Story of an Immigrant Couple in America*, a 13-chapter family history that reads like a novel. Olaf, a cabinet maker, left Trondheim for Chicago in 1871, later married and settled in Spencer, Iowa. The narrative incorporates a life and times approach. The Bjørnstads settled in a community that had no dominant ethnic element. It is a tale of rapid assimilation.

- Received from Betty K. Edgar two items. Her *The Descendants of Salve Knudson 1830-1996*, a family history of 241 pages. Salve (1803-1889) left Tovdal parish for Brownsboro, Texas, in 1846, moving to Van Zandt county in 1858. And, *From Generation to Generation*, a spiral bound, 123 page supplement to the first mentioned title.

- Received from Ruth Hanold Crane *Ole Trondsen Rong/Ole R. Tillerson, Martha Håvardsdatter Nyre, Christie Eriksdatter Slæn* by Terrance Hanold and edited by the donor. Rong (AKA Tillerson) and his first wife left Voss, Norway, in 1846, settling in Boone county, Illinois. They had eleven children. When Martha died at age 36, Ole remarried Christie Slæn. They had nine children.

- Received from the Leif Erikson Foundation, Seattle, Washington *Family Sagas: Stories of Scandinavian Immigrants*, edited by Kristine Leander, softcover, 226 pages. A listing of the names of the persons that appear on the bronze plaque attached to the Leif Erikson statue presented to the city of Trondheim by the Leif Erikson Society in 1997. The statue is a replica of the one sculpted by August Werner for the Seattle World's Fair in 1962. Many of the entries include photos and biographical sketches.

NORWEGIAN-AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

St. Olaf College

Northfield, Minnesota 55057

Tel: (507) 646-3221

e-mail: naha@stolaf.edu

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