

The Norwegian-American Historical Association

Northfield, Minnesota



From the Secretary's Office to the Association Members

NUMBER 59

Editor, LLOYD HUSTVEDT

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A Look at 1979

The most significant feature of 1979 was the launching of the Chair Fund, stimulated by the matching gifts of \$5,000 each from Kenneth O. Bjork and Clarence Clausen. Gifts and pledges now approximate \$20,000. When the earlier balance and the matching funds are added, we have a total of \$42,000. The Association's economy was also much helped by a \$15,000 grant from the Grants Division of the Minnesota Historical Society, by \$5,000 from the Emigrant Fund 1975 (Norway), and by \$5,000 from an anonymous donor.

MEMBERSHIP

A total of 142 members were added in 1979, and there were 82 cancellations, leaving a net gain of 60. Of the new members, 38 subscribed to a life membership, an unusually high figure when compared with former years. Membership now stands at 1251. It has never been higher. The breakdown is as follows:

	January 1, 1979	December 31, 1979	
Associate	703	731	+28
Sustaining	176	143	-33
Patron	37	39	+ 2
Life	275	338	+63
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	1191	1251	+60

PUBLICATIONS AND BOOK SALES

Three publications fell within the scope of 1979. *Land of the Free*, published late in 1978, was distributed early in 1979. *Guide to Manuscripts Collections* became available in September. Volume 28 of *Studies* was completed late in 1979 and was mailed to the members in January, 1980.

Book sales, which have averaged \$4,600 over the past five years, reached \$5,195 in 1979. As this amount includes a bulk sale of *Norwegian Sailors in American Waters* (300 copies) for \$1,200, no increase in general sales took place.

Of our 63 publications, 20 are out of print; 16 have an inventory of less than 100; 12 fall between 100-200; and 15 titles have an inventory above 200. The total inventory amounts to 7989 copies.

STAFF

Elaine Kringen, Assistant Secretary, and Charlotte Jacobson, Archivist, continue to serve the NAHA as its indispensable office personnel. Susan Anderson, a St. Olaf College student from Milwaukee, works part-time. The past years have been marked with increases in membership, publications, archival acquisitions, demands for services, visitors and correspondence. The three ladies have absorbed the extra burden; no staff has been added. To them must go much of the credit for the fact that things are going well — and they are going well.

DR. L. R. HAFSTAD

Dr. Lawrence R. Hafstad, physicist, inventor, and industrialist, has turned over a large portion of his papers to the NAHA Archives and more are forthcoming. The first installment passed through the Truman Library for xeroxing before arriving here.

A brief statement cannot do justice to Dr. Hafstad's fascinating career. He began as a maintenance engineer for Northwestern Bell Telephone Company in Minneapolis (where he was born) at the age of sixteen. Twenty-four years old, he entered the Carnegie Institution in Washington, D.C., where he joined noted scientists like Odd Dahl and Merle Tuve. In the early 1930s they built an accelerating device which marked early experimentation in atomic physics. The instrument (28 feet tall), if it can be called that, is on permanent exhibit at the Smithsonian Museum.

Shortly before and during World War II, Hafstad worked under the National Defense Research Committee and for the Office of Scientific Research and Development. He played a major role in the development of the proximity fuse for bombs and rockets. He was professor of physics at Johns Hopkins from 1946 to 1954, and also served as Director of Reactor Development for the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission from 1949 to 1955. In 1955 he traveled to countries around the world as an emissary for peaceful uses of atomic energy. In that same year, he became a vice president for the General Motors Corporation, in charge of the Corporate Research Laboratories (1955-1969).

Dr. Hafstad is now retired. He and his wife Mary live in a beautiful home on a 21-acre point on Chesapeake Bay, near Chester, Maryland. This writer had the pleasant opportunity of visiting them last summer. Inspiring as the house and setting were, equally exciting was their alertness and quickness of mind in exploring all areas of human accomplishment. Besides taking care of acres of lawn, Hafstad cuts gems as a hobby. I saw

his workshop and could only conclude that he is good at his work there too. When asked what advice he might have for a young scholar who wished to emulate a career such as his, his swift answer was, "Learn the basics." Way out on the Hafstad point stands an oak tree — half as old as time. The encroachment of salt water threatens its life, and so it receives periodic medication and transfusions. Dr. Hafstad is determined that this tree shall live. I left with the feeling that it will do just that.

L.H.

OUTSIDE HELP

Mildred M. Sebo, a member of the Women's Progressive Literary Society in Minneapolis, informs us that the group will have as one of its special projects the promotion of the NAHA. Her society hopes to make the Association better known in the Minneapolis area, will urge general as well as membership support, and will call attention to both old and new NAHA publications at its meetings.

The Literary Society, founded in 1921, has a proud history. Voluntary action of this kind from an independent organization is most rare, and, needless to say, we wish it immense success in the project.

ARTHUR O. DAVIDSON

By this time most of our members know that our recent president, Arthur O. Davidson, died November 18, 1979. Our loss and that of anyone who knew him is great. He had the rare quality of being able to combine executive skill with infinite kindness and concern.

Born in Hancock, Minnesota, Dr. Davidson taught at Luther and Dartmouth colleges before becoming president of Wagner College, New York, in 1961, a position he held until 1975. He was also chairman of the Norwegian Immigration Sesquicentennial Commission.

Roy Thorshov, our Vice President, will serve as President for the remainder of the term.

Editorial

THE CHAIR FUND

Because we are "in this thing together," as the saying goes, and because what we do we do in a sense for ourselves, it is difficult to know who should thank whom when things turn out well. Whatever may be correct, there is a cause for the NAHA membership to thank and congratulate each other for the response the fund appeal received. The officers and board members, who tend to feel success and failure more acutely than others, wish especially to thank the membership at large for their support.

As our readers may recall, we embarked on a three-year plan to raise one hundred thousand dollars, a plan that called for a goal of \$50,000 by the end of 1980. The Fund now stands at \$42,000 and there seems to be no reason why the remaining \$8,000 cannot be raised during the remaining nine months. Additional pledges for matching contributions have been promised, but firm announcements cannot be made at this time.

A copy of our record of gifts is shared with the members as a supplement to this *Newsletter*. Donations made after February 18 will be announced later. To date, 178 persons have made contributions, approximately 15 percent of our total membership. We need to be mindful that many members are retired and that others must share their resources with many causes, while still others are struggling students. We do hope, however, that when the three-year period is over and the project is laid to rest, the list of donors will include 75 percent of the membership.

Our appeal remains as it was, a simple one: Do what you can and we will surely win the day. There are enough of us to share the load. If it is true — and we hope it is — that success breeds success, then the initial phase of our fund drive offers much promise. Thank you!

LLOYD HUSTVEDT

News in Brief

- *Prairie Tales: Adventures of Growing Up on a Frontier*, by Orland E. Esval, is a readable, interesting, and honest account of being young on farms in North Dakota and Montana. 164 pages, Landmark House, Banner Elk, North Carolina 28604.
- Volume 28 of *Studies* has now been mailed to all members. Should you not have received your copy, please advise this office.
- Eyvind Evans added fifteen new titles to our book collection, volumes that deal directly with the immigrant experience. Because most book donations tend to duplicate our holdings, this acquisition is a notable one.
- From Dreng Bjornaraa: "While laid up with pneumonia the last month, I read the Waldemar Ager papers [*Cultural Pluralism versus Assimilation*] — very interesting — and nostalgic for me inasmuch as my father wrote and spoke much along his line in connection with *Fedrearven*. The book is an excellent translation of Ager's vigorous style."
- More of our out-of-print publications — *Frontier Mother*, *Frontier Parsonage*, *Grass of the Earth*, and *Rasmus Bjørn Anderson: Pioneer Scholar* — have been reprinted by Arno Press, New York.
- An interesting comparison: Printing and binding costs for 1500 copies of *Studies*, volume 1, came to \$694 in 1926. Volume 28 (1700 copies) in 1979 came to \$10,944.
- *Makers of an American Immigrant Legacy: Essays in Honor of Kenneth O. Bjork*, edited by Odd S. Lovoll, is now at the printers and will be delivered in May. General distribution to members will take place in June.
- Dr. Kenneth O. Bjork informs us that Johan R. Reiersen's *Veiviser for norske emigranter* is in the final stage of editing and will soon be ready for the printers. This work, translated by Dr. Frank G. Nelson, retired professor of English at the University of Hawaii, Hilo, will appear as volume 9 in our Travel and Description Series under the title *Pathfinder: Guide for Norwegian Emigrants*.

SPECIAL BOOK OFFER FOR 1980

The publication of the *Guide to Manuscripts Collections of the NAHA* was supported by a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. The agreement was that the uncovered cost balance would be met by sales of the book. The prorated cost not covered by the grant comes to \$2.00 per copy. The book can therefore be made available to members for \$3.00, which also covers postage and handling. Please note that this publication has been sent to all who have contributed \$25.00 or more to the Chair Fund. Those who plan to make similar contributions should not order the *Guide* as they will automatically receive a copy.

Members may select any three of the books listed below for \$10.00 plus \$2.00 for postage and handling.

1. *The Changing West and Other Essays*, by Laurence M. Larson
2. *A Long Pull from Stavanger*, by Birger Osland
3. *Saga in Steel and Concrete*, by Kenneth O. Bjork
4. *Hjalmar Hjorth Boyesen*, by Clarence Glasrud
5. *John A. Johnson: Uncommon American*, by Agnes Larson
6. *Guide to Manuscripts Collections of the NAHA*, by Lloyd Hustvedt (or sold independently for \$3.00)
7. *Peter Testman's Account of His Experience in North America*, ed. Theodore C. Blegen (a free fourth selection)
8. *Theodore C. Blegen: A Memoir*, by John T. Flanagan

When ordering, only the respective numbers need to be indicated.

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