

# The Norwegian-American Historical Association

Northfield, Minnesota

# NEWS



# LETTER

*From the Secretary's Office to the Association Members*

Number 23

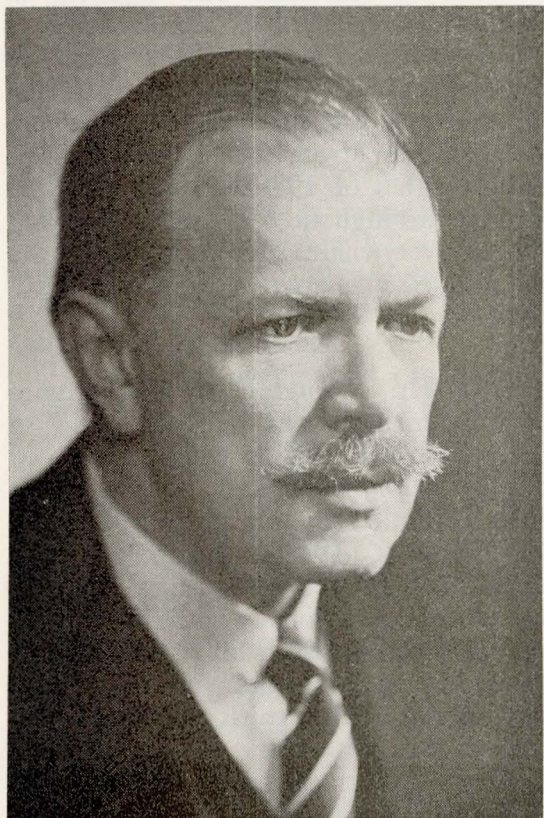
APRIL, 1963

Editor, L. HUSTVEDT

## Speaker at Triennial Meeting

### A Member of the NAHA

The principal speaker at our Thirteenth Triennial Meeting, Walter Muir Whitehill, Director and Librarian of the



WALTER MUIR WHITEHILL

Boston Athenæum, is no stranger to the NAHA. He has been a member for three years. It was through his initiative that the Boston Athenæum bought a complete set of our publications. In his recent book, *Independent Historical Societies* (distributed by Harvard University Press, 1962), he performed a great

service for the Association, and for other societies throughout the country, by making public their histories, objectives, problems, and contributions.

### Student of Romanesque Architecture

Mr. Whitehill, as we will learn shortly, is a cosmopolitan Bostonian. He was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1905, and received his A. B. and A. M. from Harvard University in 1926 and 1929 respectively; he earned a Ph. D. Degree from the University of London in 1934. His dissertation, *Spanish Romanesque Architecture of the Eleventh Century*, was published by the Oxford University Press, 1941. His love of libraries must have expressed itself early in life. At the age of fourteen, while attending the Boston Latin School, he served as page boy in the Boston Public Library.

Mr. Whitehill's early studies pointed toward a career in the area of fine arts. He spent the summer of 1927 in Spain, and returned to that country for the academic year 1928-29, studying Spanish Romanesque architecture and examining manuscripts. In 1930 he married Jane Revere Coolidge; they moved to Barcelona, Spain, where they remained for six years, spending part of each year in England.

### Turns to American History

In order to have something to do for the duration of the Spanish Civil War,

Please Note Proxy and  
Questionnaire on page 4

Mr. Whitehill accepted the position of Assistant Director of the Peabody Museum of Salem in 1936. During this time, he has confessed, he became so involved in American history that he never returned to Spain or the middle ages.

### Maritime and Naval Historian

In 1941 he founded and became the principal editor of *The American Neptune: A Quarterly Journal of Maritime History*. When he gave up the editorship in 1951, he continued as a senior member of the Board of Editors. He entered the Navy as a lieutenant in 1942 and was a commander when released from active duty in 1946. During his tour of duty, he served in the Office of Naval Records and Library and later for the Office of Naval History. Among Mr. Whitehill's many publications is a biography of Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King.

### The Boston Athenæum

The Boston Athenæum, of which Mr. Whitehill has been Director since 1946, was founded in 1807. Its objective is to meet the needs of both the scholar and the general reader; it seeks to promote both research and pleasant reading. Among its 422,000 volumes one can also find a number of rarities, including substantial portions of the libraries of George Washington and John Quincy Adams. In addition, it contains vast collections of pamphlets, tracts, and newspapers. According to Mr. Whitehill, its primary usefulness to scholars, however, is the fact that it contains thousands of less spectacular books not found in the newer libraries. According to reports, one can still buy a cup of tea for three cents at the Athenæum.

### Breadth of Active Interest

If the task of directing a major library has a confining effect, it has done no harm whatsoever to Mr. Whitehill. The entire field of American history and the humanities in general is his field of operation. Currently he is a trustee of one college, four museums, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and a number of corporations owning historic sites along the East coast. He has served

as senior tutor of the Lowell House, and as lecturer on history at Harvard University. He has been closely involved in the work of the Massachusetts Historical Society, the Colonial Society of Massachusetts, the American Antiquarian Society, and the Institute of Early American History and Culture at Williamsburg. He serves or has served on the editorial boards of the *New England Quarterly*, *William and Mary Quarterly*, and the Adams and Franklin papers.

### Independent Historical Societies

Against a background of widespread financial crisis, four Eastern historical societies informally joined in 1958 to seek foundation support for a study of the problems of independent historical societies in America. The Council on Library Resources, Inc., a subsidiary of the Ford Foundation, made a grant for the project. Mr. Whitehill was selected for the task, and the Boston Athenæum released him from his normal duties. From the fall of 1959 to June, 1960, he traveled throughout the country, visiting groups everywhere. His book, *Independent Historical Societies*, appeared in 1962.

### The Man

That Mr. Whitehill is much more than so many books published and so many positions held is made evident in *Walter Muir Whitehill: A Record*, a book compiled by his friends (Minot, Massachusetts, 1958). Julian P. Boyd opens his foreword by saying, "The object of this spontaneous outburst of feeling is a humanist who takes such a robust joy in his work and in dealing with others of like spirit that we, being used to for the most part to the grim academic pallor, cheerfully invent ways of describing him."

One of these descriptions appearing in a postscript by L. H. Butterfield must be cited. Mr. Butterfield recalled a stately antique limousine that passed everything on the road because a new engine was installed in it each year:

"So with Walter. In a community whose older institutions are still dominated, for better or for worse, by descendants of the Brahmins, a man must

at least *look* orthodox if he is to be wholly accepted and trusted. With a moustache that would have graced an Anglo-Indian officer in Kipling's day and with his splendid brocaded waistcoats, Walter looks as orthodox and safe as Great-grandpa himself, and his advice is accordingly sought and taken with perfect confidence that nothing radical, foolish, or in bad taste can possibly ensue. But inside the comfortable Edwardian exterior hums a mental mechanism that is as up-to-date as a guided missile and that moves with the same steady power and unswerving purpose toward its target. In Walter's case the target is the advancement of the means, the amenities, and the ends of humane learning."

### TRIENNIAL MEETING

The Thirteenth Triennial Meeting of the Norwegian-American Historical Association will open at 2:30, Saturday, May 11, at the Norway Center in the New Sons of Norway Building, 1455 West Lake Street, Minneapolis, Minnesota. At this meeting reports will be given by the officers, new officers for the coming three years will be elected, and other matters of importance to the association will be taken up.

The evening events will consist of a smørgåsbord dinner followed by an address by Walter Muir Whitehill. The price per plate is \$4.50. This covers both the dinner and cost of facilities. The evening meeting is open to all who are interested, and members are encouraged to bring guests.

### SALT OF THE EARTH

*Salt of the Earth: History of Norwegian Danish Methodism in America*, by Dr. Arlow W. Andersen, marks a significant addition to church history. The book, 338 pages, published by the Norwegian-Danish Methodist Historical Society, sells for \$5.00. Orders can be sent directly to the author, 2134 Woodard Street, Abilene, Texas.

Dr. Andersen is a professor of history at McMurry College, Abilene, Texas. He has written several articles for *Studies and Records* and is also the author of *The Immigrant Takes His Stand*, Norwegian-American Historical Assn., 1953.

## NEW MEMBERS

December, 1962

### Associate

- Mr. and Mrs. Hans Larson  
640 Woodland Avenue  
Kalispell, Montana  
Mrs. Raymond Peterson  
Wittenberg, Wisconsin  
Dr. and Mrs. A. R. Rikansrud  
711 Vernon Street  
Decorah, Iowa  
Mr. John R. Sclater  
3036 Yale Station  
New Haven, Connecticut

1963

### Sustaining

- Mrs. S. L. Barber  
1400 Hermann Drive  
Houston, Texas

### Associate

- Mrs. Dorothy Burton Skårdal  
Sørkedalsvn. 229  
Røa pr. Oslo, Norway  
Mr. Otto J. Knudson, Jr.  
Box 764  
Ozona, Texas  
Mr. Jens M. Hovelsrud  
5240 Interlachen Boulevard  
Edina 24, Minnesota  
Mr. Rolf G. Westad  
290 Madison Avenue  
New York 17, New York  
Mr. Oddvar K. Hoidal  
707 West 30th Street  
Los Angeles 7, California  
Mrs. T. A. Hill  
1512 North 12th Street  
Waco, Texas  
Mr. Sverre O. Braathen  
Attorney at Law  
R. F. D. #3, Waubesa Avenue  
Madison 13, Wisconsin  
Mr. Willard A. Gullicksen  
Red Haw Road  
Northbrook, Illinois  
President E. D. Farwell  
Luther College  
Decorah, Iowa  
Mr. Everette Lee, Appleton, Wisconsin, listed earlier as a subscriber to a life membership under the four-year payment plan, is now a paid-up life member.

# NORWEGIAN-AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

## Proxy to Vote

This blank for the appointment of proxy has been prepared for the use of members who will be unable to attend the Triennial meeting on May 11. Every member should have a voice in the proceedings of the convention. For that reason, all who cannot be present are requested to send proxies to the secretary, Lloyd Hustvedt.

If you do not know a member of the Association who will attend the convention and whom you would appoint as your proxy, you may wish to have someone on the Executive or Editorial Board vote for you. Members of the Boards who are expected to be present are the following:

Sverre Arestad  
Kenneth O. Bjork  
Magnus Bjordal  
Clarence C. Clausen  
Reidar Dittmann  
Gunnar E. Gunderson  
Lloyd Hustvedt

Derwood Johnson  
David T. Nelson  
Carlton C. Qualey  
Marthinius A. Strand  
Lionel G. Thorsness  
Andrew E. Wigeland  
Harry J. Williams

I \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_  
in the state of \_\_\_\_\_, appoint \_\_\_\_\_  
with the full power of substitution, to be my substitute and proxy, for me and in my name and behalf, to vote at the meeting of the members of the Norwegian-American Historical Association, to be held at Minneapolis, May 11, 1963.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

*Please fill in the questionnaire below and return to the secretary.*

- I will attend the business meeting scheduled for 2:30 in the afternoon.
- I will attend the evening program.
- I will not be able to attend either of the meetings.

Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ plates for myself and my guests. Payment will be collected upon arrival.