

The Norwegian-American Historical Association

Northfield, Minnesota

NEWS



LETTER

From the Secretary's Office to the Association Members

NUMBER 73

Editor, LLOYD HUSTVEDT

FEBRUARY 1987

Secretary's Report 1986

Publications

It has been a productive year. Two publications came to be. *Georg Sverdrup: Educator, Theologian, Churchman*, by James S. Hamre, opened a new biographical series. Volume 31 of *Studies* came out in new format and cover, in keeping with a past pattern of a change after ten uniform volumes have been produced. Older members will recall that the first ten volumes of *Studies* were paperbacks, but all later issues have hard cover.

As is often true in other years, the major significance of 1986 may have been carefully hidden away from the members; namely, the progress made on the Chicago history project, which moved into its later stages at the turn of the year. We have not spared our editor, Odd S. Lovoll. Beyond doing research and writing the Chicago history, he has kept pace with the routine editorial work on other forthcoming publications and has directed the work of two research assistants. Kay Carr, a Ph.D. candidate in history at the University of Chicago, is still working. Jostein Molde, a student at the University of Oslo, worked mostly in Northfield from September until Christmas.

Membership

No significant claims can be made in the area of membership growth: 74 new members were added, a figure not to be faulted, but 72 dropped their membership, producing a net gain of two. No planned membership drives took place, and recruitment consisted mostly of casual promotion from the Northfield office. On the brighter side, 124 members transferred to higher membership categories as opposed to 53 who reduced their status.

Beginning and Closing Figures

	Jan. 1 1986	Dec. 31 1986	+/-
Associate	603	555	-48
Sustaining	238	246	+8
Patron	64	75	+11
Life	494	510	+16
Deceased Life	108	123	+15
	<u>1507</u>	<u>1509</u>	<u>+2</u>

New Members and Cancellations

	Added	Cancelled	+/-
Associate	43	51	-8
Sustaining	19	15	+4
Patron	4	6	-2
Life	8	0	+8
	<u>74</u>	<u>72</u>	<u>+2</u>

Staff

Charlotte Jacobson, our curator, continues to apply her skills to processing and organizing incoming materials. She reports regularly on new acquisitions in *Studies*; for example, see volume 31, pages 317-323. Her work includes heavy correspondence concerning appeals for information on many subjects. The NAHA is apparently listed in many genealogical guides as a possible source of information. This has stimulated an astonishing number of queries concerning family histories, and tends to lead the uninformed to believe that genealogy and family history is our main task.

Ruth Crane assumed the position of Assistant Secretary in March. Over time the NAHA has become a major operation by way of record keeping. We report annually to the

Minnesota Department of Commerce and to the Internal Revenue Service. Both demand exact and thorough records. These reports are in the main extracted from the regular monthly reports prepared by Ruth Crane where all figures must balance. We might add, she is efficient to a frightening degree. Nothing pleases her more than prompt payment of dues and she does not mind a bit writing out receipts for gifts. In fact, she seems to enjoy it.

Gifts and Grants

As has been reported earlier, all unspecified gifts are allocated to the O.E. Rølvaag Memorial Fund where the accrued income is used for current expenses. In former years only life membership dues fed this fund, but there was a need to build this endowment at a faster pace. We are pleased to report that unspecified gifts amounted to \$9,300 in 1986. Gifts from four persons accounted for \$6,000 of this amount. The balance consisted of smaller gifts from many donors. The Rølvaag Fund now exceeds \$110,000.

In addition, there were grants directed toward the Chicago history project: Lutheran Brotherhood, \$6,000; Minnesota Historical Society, \$6,000; Josefa and Harry Andersen, \$1,800; Chicago History Committee, \$2,000, for a total of \$15,800. In the main these funds, now all but depleted, were directed toward salaries for research assistants and other editorial expenses.

It should be noted that the Chicago History Committee (Chicago based) has been raising funds for the project and the committee has its own treasurer and its own roster of donors. Rolf Erickson, chairman of the committee, reported a balance of approximately \$7,000 in January, 1987.

Publications: Sales and Inventory

Book sales amounted to \$7,900 in 1986. While it is the highest on record, it reflects more the increased price of books than an increase in copies sold. Out of a total of 72 publications, 32 are now out of print. This figure includes 9 volumes of *Studies*. Our inventory, which amounted to 7,671 copies as of January 1, is not evenly distributed from title to title: 19 titles show an inventory of less than 100; 7 titles fall between 100-200; 8 fall between 200-300; and the remaining 6 command inventories between 300-600. Since the total stock reflects a sales potential of \$70,000, we are interested in devising means to sell off the peaks in our holdings. Titles that have 100 or less copies provide no problem.

Newspaper Microfilm Project

Thanks to the Archives Fund, established by Sanford K. Fosholt, the NAHA has started implementing a plan for acquiring microfilms of Norwegian-American newspapers. The project will be executed in four successive stages and will move as rapidly as staff and funding resources will permit. 1.) Acquire microfilms (copies) prepared by other repositories that duplicate our own deteriorating newspaper files. This will eliminate the need to do the same job twice. 2.) Acquire microfilms of newspapers where our own files are incomplete, fragmentary, or non-existent. 3.) Have microfilmed any residue newspapers in our collection that have not been microfilmed elsewhere. 4.) Seek permission to have microfilmed (at our expense) newspaper files found in other repositories.

As these films come in, we will discard our unbound files, but keep our properly bound volumes as long as they remain intact. Our storage facilities have been strained for years and we look forward to a less cumbersome arrangement.

Norway Chapter

The NAHA has an active partner in Norway under the leadership of Kjetil Flatin (board member), Dorothy Burton Skårdal, and Judith Torvik. Judith Torvik, treasurer, receives the dues from our 101 Norway members and distributes in Norway our *Newsletter* which we airmail to her in bulk form.

The Norway branch of the NAHA has published *Essays on Norwegian-American Literature and History*, edited by Dorothy Burton Skårdal and Ingeborg Kongslie. The book consists of the proceedings of a seminar held in Oslo, June 26-30, 1984, in conjunction with the opening of the *Reisen til Amerika* exhibit, which was later shown in the United

States under the title, *The Promise of America*.

This publication, though financially supported by the NAHA, will not be distributed to the members, but will be available for sale at \$10 (includes postage and handling). An edition of 500 copies was printed, and 100 copies have been shipped to our Northfield office.

Documentary Film on Rølvaag

Unity Productions, Aberdeen, South Dakota, under the management of Tim Schwab and Christine Craton, plans to produce "Letters from America: The Life and Times of O.E. Rølvaag." Schwab and Craton are currently appealing for funds, especially to the Humanities Commissions and Committees in South Dakota, Iowa and Minnesota. Their proposed budget calls for \$60,000. Approximately \$12,000 have been raised to date. The NAHA has agreed to function as the fiscal agent.

Among Unity Productions earlier films are *Boom and Bust: The Dakota Experience* which focusses on the economic cycles that have visited the prairies since Indian times to the present. *Prairie Politicians* looks at the lives of four politicians who embody the populist traditions in South Dakota. *There Is a Word* is a biographical study of Matilde Joslyn Gage, a feminist leader in the 19th century. Some of these films have earned enviable awards, and have been shown on public television, and at appropriate national conferences. Prospects for the realization of adequate support is promising.

Other than functioning as a fiscal agent, which means the disbursement of grant income in accordance with the proposed budget, and serving as a resource center for Rølvaag research, the NAHA will have no role in the actual production of the film.

Marcus Thrane Biography

Our next publication, *Marcus Thrane: A Norwegian Radical in America*, by Terje Leiren, a book of approximately 200 pages, should be available for distribution to the members in June. In fact, we anticipate the arrival of galley sheets (first proof reading copy) early in February.

Marcus Thrane, the noted Norwegian labor leader who suffered imprisonment in Norway, came to America in 1863. He was

a gifted man: journalist, playwright, lecturer, theater director, and perhaps, best remembered for his humorous and satirical book entitled *Wisconsin Bibelen* (The Wisconsin Bible). Thrane, born in 1817, died in Eau Claire, Wisconsin in 1890. Terje I. Leiren, a professor of history at the University of Washington, Seattle, is a member of the Scandinavian Studies Department, and serves on the NAHA Board of Publications.

Thank You!

We are grateful to all who have helped to provide a more secure future for the NAHA. Those who made contributions of \$100 or more are listed below. Unless otherwise indicated, these gifts were made in 1986.

Harriet Hustvedt \$1,000 and \$2,000 in 1987; Einar and Eva Haugen \$2,000; Grethe (Mrs. Nils O.) Seim \$2,000; Alfred D. Olson \$500; Ole V. Groos \$265; Lawrence Hauge \$250; Clarence C. Clausen \$200; Freda Hovden, Ingrid Semmingsen and Ann W. Tuttle, each \$100. In addition, \$1,000 from an anonymous donor.

The following grants were specified for the Chicago History project: Lutheran Brotherhood \$6,000; Minnesota Historical Society \$6,000; Chicago History Committee \$2,000; Josefa and Harry Andersen \$1,800. It should be noted that a number of gifts have been made directly to the Chicago History Committee and will be acknowledged by that committee.

Triennial Meeting

The NAHA Charter calls for a general meeting every three years at which time all business requiring a vote by members is conducted, including the election of members to the Executive Board. Since its earliest days this general meeting has been combined with festivities, perhaps to compensate for the socially dry years between such meetings.

The 1987 meeting will be held in Chicago, Friday, October 9. The details will be announced later. Board members who live in Chicago will arrange the dinner and program. These meetings are generally conducted in Minneapolis. In fact, the original Charter stipulated that the triennial meeting be held there, but the revised Charter granted more freedom. Because of the forthcoming history of the Norwegians in Chicago, that city becomes a most appropriate setting for the 1987 meeting.

News in Brief

- Received from John E. Bye, Fargo, N.D., *Engevikslekta og dens etterkommere innen Meløy, Røddøy*, by Mary Einarson, Bodø, Norway, 1983. Hardcover, 226 pages, illustrated, index.
- Received from Hans Svenne, Drammen, Norway, *Beretning om en reise fra Drammen til New York i NordAmerika av smed Knud Knudsen*. This is a facsimile reproduction of a booklet that appeared in Drammen, Norway in 1840, with an introduction by Mogens Haaland and Hans Svenne. Beulah Folkedahl provided a translation of this account together with a narrative on Knudsen's later life in Wisconsin in *Studies*, vol. 23.
- Received: *The Grindelund Family Heritage from Distant Past to Present*, by Gordon and Carol Grindelund. Typescript reproduction, 300 p., illustrated, index. The Grindelund farm is in Voss, Norway.
- Robert Lillestrand, a NAHA board member and vice president and director of Control Data Corporation's government systems technology center, was recently honored by the company for being named in 10 or more U.S. patent applications.
- Died, Sept. 29, Peder H. Nelson of Northwood, N.D. He was an avid collector of Norwegian-Americana, and wrote many articles for *bygdelag* journals and newspapers.
- The Promise of America exhibit will open at the Heritage-Hjemkomst Center on April 2 in Moorhead, Minnesota. Odd Lovoll will participate in the opening ceremonies and give a public lecture later on that same day.
- Received from Eyvind B. Ager, clippings, correspondence and pictures related to Marcus Thrane. None of the correspondence is either by or to Thrane.
- Received from Marguerite Loftfjeld Hildreth, *Stamtavle over Loftfjeldslegten*. Typescript reproduction, spiral bound, 192 pages.
- Received from the Estate of Harold Larson, selected books, correspondence and notes. Larson lived in Virginia and worked as an historian for the United States Navy. In Scandinavian circles he was better known for his book *Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson: A Study in Norwegian Nationalism*, New York, 1945. He also made a bequest to \$300 to the NAHA.
- Received: *Peder og Marte fra Eidsvoll* by Myles and Eunice Stenshoel, a history of the Stenshoel - Sethre - Peterson and Edwards families. Bound, illustrated, 97 pages.
- Received from Mrs. Hazel Egeland, the papers of *Stavangeren*, a local bygdelag in Chicago, consisting of records, ledgers, correspondence, newsletters and programs.
- Received: *Paulsbo: Its First Hundred Years*, compiled and edited by Rangvald Kvelstad, Paulsbo Centennial Book Committee, Paulsbo, Washington. 300 pages, illustrated, index.
- Russell W. Fridley, former director of the Minnesota Historical Society, is now engaged in preparing a biography of Floyd B. Olson, the aggressive and liberal governor of Minnesota in the 1930s. He has received support from the George A. MacPherson Fund, St. Paul, Minnesota.

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