

# The Norwegian-American Historical Association

Northfield, Minnesota

# NEWS LETTER



*From the NAHA Office to the Association Members*

NUMBER 109

EDITOR, KIM HOLLAND

APRIL 2000

## VANDRINGER CONFERENCE – HUGE SUCCESS

Scholars from across the United States and Norway convened April 6-8 in St. Paul at the Minnesota History Center to explore the topic of Norwegian emigration. NAHA, with the Minnesota Historical Society, sponsored this seminar to commemorate the 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the first Norwegian immigration to the United States. We are grateful to the group led by John R. Christianson of the Luther College faculty and the NAHA Board, for this highly successful review of Norwegian emigration to America. Vandringer drew over 240 participants from across the U.S and from Norway.

## VANDRINGER ART EXHIBITS

The conference started April 6<sup>th</sup>, with Robert Bly discussing his Norwegian-American roots and their influences on his poetry. The opening of an art exhibit at the James J. Hill House in St. Paul followed Bly's presentation. Dr. Marion Nelson, Professor Emeritus of Art History from the University of Minnesota, organized the exhibit of paintings by Norwegian Americans from 1870-1970. The exhibit runs through October 14, 2000. Stop by this unique exhibit in one of Minnesota's finest historic homes. Call the James J. Hill House (651) 297-2555 for the exhibit hours.

The catalog of the exhibit, *Paintings by Minnesotans of Norwegian Background 1870-1980*, was/will be sent to you with the latest NAHA publication *Norwegian-American Studies* vol. 35. We think you will enjoy the broad range of paintings Dr. Nelson selected for this exhibit. For those members unable to attend the exhibit, the catalog will help you learn more about the artists and their creations. Our thanks to the Vesterheim Museum and private individuals who loaned their paintings for this special exhibit.

## SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY EVENT NAHA turns 75!!

Please reserve the date - October 6<sup>th</sup> on your calendars. It was on October 6, 1925 the Norwegian-American Historical Association was formally created. To celebrate this event and honor those foresighted individuals, NAHA invites you to an Anniversary dinner on Friday October 6, 2000.

Details will come to you in an upcoming newsletter, but please plan to join us on the campus of St. Olaf College. We have reserved the "Kings Room" and will also show a recently located 1925 documentary film from the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Norwegian emigration to the United States. Plan to share in this piece of history!

## NEW NAHA DUES STRUCTURE

As mentioned in the January 2000 newsletter, the NAHA Board has evaluated the need to increase the dues. While we strive to be a value to our members, we must also live within our means. Costs of printing, paper, postage and maintaining an office lead us to this new structure. We would like to make you aware of this increase now before it takes effect on September 1, 2000. *This is the perfect time to upgrade your membership to the Life membership.*

The new **Associate** level of membership will be **\$40**.

The new level for **Sustaining** membership will be **\$75**. (Money above the basic \$40 Associate level will be a tax-deductible gift to NAHA. This allows you to make a meaningful gift to NAHA and take a deduction for yourself.)

The new level for the **Patron** member will be **\$125**. (Each Patron membership includes a gift of \$85 to NAHA with your annual membership.)

**LIFE** memberships are currently \$250, but will be going to **\$500** on September 1, 2000.

**Student** memberships are new for NAHA. NAHA wishes to encourage the study of Norwegian-American studies and make memberships available to fulltime undergraduate and graduate school students pursuing a degree program. The **Student** rate will be **\$25** annually, upon proof of registration. (This can be either a copy of a current fee statement from a college or university or a copy of a current Student Identification card.)

Long-term Life members are invited to make a gift to NAHA upgrading your Life membership to the new level. If you have enjoyed the benefits of NAHA from the days when you joined for \$100 or \$200, we invite you to make a gift to NAHA that places you at the upcoming Life level. This tax-deductible gift will be much appreciated.

### NEW TO THE WEBSITE

If you have access to the Internet we invite you to visit the NAHA website at [www.naha.stolaf.edu](http://www.naha.stolaf.edu). We are fortunate to have a member in California who has scanned some of the earliest NAHA publications. The *Norwegian American Studies and Records* series is being added to our website. Currently, volumes 1-8 are on line. More will be added. You will enjoy the authors and topics.

### HAUGEN SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED FOR 2000

The Haugen Scholarship Awards committee has named two young scholars as recipients of this year's scholarship.

Arne Lunde, Department of Scandinavian, University of California, Berkeley, will travel to Stockholm to conduct research at the Swedish Film Institute and the University of Stockholm's Film Studies Department to gather material on the Swedish cinema figures during the early twentieth century both in the United States and in Sweden.

Kendra Wilson, Department of Scandinavian, University of California, Berkeley, is working in the field of linguistics, and will travel to Iceland to conduct field work on possible correspondences between nicknames and names in modern Icelandic.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

April 26, 2000 –**Norwegians in New York 1825-2000, Builders of City, Community and Culture.** This exhibit will be opened by Their Majesties, King Harald and Queen Sonia. Speaking on behalf of Norwegian Americans will be The Honorable Ambassador Walter F. Mondale. From this NAHA life member, we learned the importance of his Norwegian roots when Mr. Mondale spoke to us at the NAHA Triennial dinner in October 1999.

This exhibit contains contributions from all over the United States. You will find informative material in the exhibit catalog from NAHA Editor, Odd S. Lovoll, and from David Mauk the historian working on the Twin Cities History Project. NAHA Board member Marion Nelson is an Honorary Director along with NAHA-Norway member Knut Djupedal. The exhibit runs through October 14, 2000. Should your travels take you to New York, you will want to schedule a visit to Ellis

Island for this important exhibit.

Our West Coast members will want to attend an exhibit commemorating the **150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the first Norwegian immigrant settlers in the Oregon Territory/Washington State.** Zacharias Martin Taftezon arrived in the Oregon Territory area now known as Stanwood, Washington, in December of 1849. The story of this first Norwegian settler and his family is told through letters, maps, drawings and photos, some coming from the NAHA archives. The exhibit runs March 23-May 14 at the Pearson House in Stanwood, Washington. Call (360) 629-6110 for hours.

The exhibit travels to Seattle where it opens on May 17<sup>th</sup> at the Nordic Heritage Museum. The phone number for the Seattle location is (206) 789-5707. In September the exhibit moves onto Whidbey Island at the Island County Historical Society Museum. Call (360)-678-3310 for hours of the exhibit.

### NAHA NORWAY

The NAHA-Norway chapter invites you to attend their seventh seminar on Norwegian American Studies, entitled **175 Years in America.** This event will be held at the Norwegian Emigrant Museum in Hamar August 2-4. The seminar then moves to the National Library of Norway August 5, 2000.

NAHA-Norway has reserved a block of rooms at a special rate. Reservations must be made by June 15<sup>th</sup>. For more complete information please check the NAHA website at [www.naha.stolaf.edu](http://www.naha.stolaf.edu). Questions concerning practical arrangements in Hamar may be directed to Knut Djupedal, The Norwegian Emigrant Museum, tel. 6257 4850 or email [knut.djupedal@emigrant.museum.no](mailto:knut.djupedal@emigrant.museum.no).

### 19<sup>th</sup> INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF HISTORICAL SCIENCES

The University of Oslo is hosting this important gathering of historians from around the world. Themes to be examined include: Perspectives on Global History, Millenium, Time and History and The Uses and Abuses of History. Dates are August 6-13, 2000. For more information visit [www.oslo2000.uio.no](http://www.oslo2000.uio.no) Information in English is available at this website.

### A VISIT TO NAHA

When summer vacations start to appear on the calendar we notice an increase in visitors to the NAHA office. We are always pleased when you make the special trip to visit the archives, however we want your experience to be a good one. We are a staff of three, all part-time. We sometimes have meetings outside the office and take vacations too.

If your trip includes a detour through Northfield, please call (507) 646-3221 and see what our hours will be for the day you plan to visit. We don't want you to be disappointed. Parking is available to the north of the new Buntrock Commons building. On the lower level of the Commons is a hallway connecting to Rølvaag Library. NAHA is located in the Library's Special Collections area in the lower level.

## A FOND FAREWELL

It is with mixed feelings that I say goodbye to you, members of NAHA. I will retire on May 31, 2000. For over fourteen years I have sent you your membership renewal reminders, newsletters and assisted with book mailings as well as received your checks and tried to answer questions. Although I have never met most of you, your names are very familiar to me and I think of you all as good, although distant friends. Thank you for your dedication to the Association in the past and as we move on to the future.

My term at NAHA has brought me in contact with a core of dedicated people working tirelessly for the good of the Association. When I began work at NAHA Charlotte Jacobson was the Archivist. For the past 10 years Forrest Brown has held that post. Both of them skilled in cataloging donated material and assisting visitors to the archives. Our editor Odd Lovoll and editorial assistant Mary Hove have impressed me with the steady stream of varied, well-written and well-edited NAHA publications. Former Secretary Lloyd Hustvedt and current administrative director Kim Holland directed the operations of the office and archives with dedication and supervised my work. I couldn't ask for better bosses. And lastly, I have enjoyed the relationships with our directors led by president Lawrence Hauge. All of these wonderful people have been unfailingly supportive to me as a colleague and I will miss them immensely.

My retirement will bring new experiences that I am eager to begin. Thank you all for the privilege to work for such a fine organization.  
Ruth Hanold Crane

## ADDITIONS TO THE ARCHIVES

Received from Sandra A. Fjestad-Johnson, the *Fjestad Family History and Directory*. Compiled for a 1996 Family reunion, this 43 page, loose-leaf history includes the important dates for the Fjestad family of 10 children born between 1873 and 1895. Included for each of the 10 children is a directory of descendants and family memories.

Received from Norma Gilbertson, the *Larson Family History, the descendants of Peter Larson who emigrated from Fåberg, Norway in 1849 to St. Olaf, Clayton County, Iowa*. Peter Larson married Bertha Halverson. With four children they left Norway to eventually settle in Iowa where four more children were born. Iowa was a springboard location for some of the family. Sixty-six grandchildren of Peter are now located across America. This 65 page history is indexed, and includes photos of family members.

Received from Spener Lloyd Bull Dahl, the *Autobiography of Ole Halverson Dahl*. 13 page book translated by Ole's grandson, Spener Lloyd Bull Dahl. Mr. Dahl was born in 1836 in Ostfold County, Norway. Ole left home to avoid a very strict father and became a master carpenter. Over the years, Ole underwent a conversion and became a Christian. Eventually Mr. Dahl spent 6 years in St. Paul, Minnesota, before moving to Morris, Cyrus, and Montevideo, Minnesota.

Received from Roswell Aga, *The Aga Family History*. 144 pages in a binder with photos, addresses, and email directory. This family history includes photos, an essay from 1932 when Velma Sorenson was a college student, general information on Norwegian emigration as well as an article on Norwegian Lutheran funeral customs in the early 1900's in Iowa. This is helpful general information. Ridgeway, Iowa was the first home for the family after leaving Hardanger, Norway in 1858.

Received from John Jewett Henry, *Letters Home from the United States Civil War 1862-1865. Gilbert Gulbranson*. 167 pages in spiral bound format. Mr. Henry has letters written by Gulbranson back to his family in Norway. Included are the letters in Norwegian followed immediately by the English translation. Also included is Gulbranson's Civil War diary, and a

brief history of the Lunde immigrants from Ådalen, Norway. Gulbranson spent several months in the Invalid Corps. The letters and explanations will be enjoyed by anyone taking the time to read this.

Received from Theron E. Odlaug, *Vor Egen Stamme- the Odlaug Family Tree, the Ancestors and Descendants of Jorgen and Anna Odlaug*. Approximately 120 pages including general information on name changes in Norway, copies of photographs, newspaper articles, maps, and family tree charts with pictures. Jorgen left Ringeby, Norway for America in 1869. Anna left Norway a year later. The two were married in Preston, Minnesota, before leaving for Dunn county, Wisconsin. Eight children were born in the United States.

Received from Theron E. Odlaug, *Reishus Family Tree, the Ancestors and Descendants of Torjus and Ellen Reishus 1738-1999*. Approximately 100 pages, including copies of photos, obituaries and maps. Torjus came from Telemark and Elen from Drammen. Elen and her father came to Minneapolis, Minnesota in 1871. Later they moved to Rushford, Minnesota, where Elen met the young Torjus Reishus. After years of working as a lumber agent Torjus decided to enter the seminary in Madison, Wisconsin. His first call was to Sacred Heart, Minnesota, where the family were pioneers. Eleven children make for many descendants, who have been documented in the attachment section.

Received from Robert B. Firing, a number of volumes and individual issues which were lacking in the NAHA file of three important journals: *Barnevennen, Folkebladet and The Lutheran Messenger*.

Received from Harold Haugen, three articles in Norwegian about his father Hans Haugen. Hans Haugen was born in 1880 in Dalen and was known for his skills as a Hardanger fiddler. Mr. Haugen lived in western North Dakota, and was awarded the St. Olaf medal in 1963.

Received from Cynthia Elyce Rubin, an article she researched and wrote on Mathias O. Bue, a Norwegian-American photographer. Bue trained and became a photographer in Oslo before leaving for the United States in 1907, eventually purchasing a studio in Lanesboro, Minnesota. He did photography work for high schools in the area and for Luther College in Decorah, Iowa. Bue also traveled to Norway several times and took photos of the countryside. Back in Lanesboro he hand tinted and sold the photos to fellow emigrants as souvenirs of the "old country". In 1940 Bue was elected president of the Photographers Association of America.

Received from Cynthia Elyce Rubin, copies of approximately 30 pages from the *Grand Forks County Heritage Book, a History of rural Grand Forks County, North Dakota*. These pages detail the early Norwegian settlers in Walle, North Dakota. Also included are census records and obituaries for some of the county's citizens who listed Norway as their place of birth.

Received from NAHA Norway, *Norwegian-American Essays 1999*. 283 pages soft cover. Contains essays in both English and Norwegian from 13 different authors on a wide range of topics. NAHA has a limited supply available for \$10 each.

Received from James T. Engh, *Slægten Engh - A Collection of Information about the Descendants of Peder and Marthea*. Contains approximately 60 pages of family history, photos, documents and an index to the genealogical listings. A relative compiled a small family history in 1918, and the author expands upon the brief information. The author's grandfather was born in Hurdal Prestegjeld, Norway and came to America in 1867.

Received from James T. Engh, *Slægten Reishus- A Collection of Information about the Descendants of Sondre and Ragnild*. Approximately 120 pages of photos, records, and obituaries. The Reishus family history is traced back to 1777 in Telemark. The author explains the name changes and includes other family histories that have been written over time. Sondre was the first relative to come to the United States in 1843. Other family members followed in 1848. Minnesota became home to some of this pioneer family. Also includes an index to the genealogical listings.

Received from Dina Tolsby, *Bibliografi, Norsk og norsk-amerikansk korrespondent og forfatter Johan A.N. Selnes*. 271 pages soft cover. Selnes was a prolific writer and frequent contributor to Norwegian-American newspapers and periodicals, as well as the author of several books.

Received from Arland O. Fiske, *Betty-a Story of Courage and Love*. 149 pages, softcover. The author personalizes the hardships of the Danish people during the Nazi reign. A love story involves a young couple and their struggle to be reunited after Betty arrived in America to live. This describes how difficult travel, communications and life were in the late 1930's and how conditions grew worse just before World War II started.

Received from Johan Ronningen, *Så nær hverandre - Ei samling Amerikabrev fra Midtvesten til Nissedal 1850-1875*. This 128 page soft cover book of immigrant letters was compiled by Øyvind T. Gulliksen and is in Norwegian.

Received from Paul T. Vangerud, information on the Christiania Lutheran congregation and church in rural Kindred, Cass county, North Dakota. The

information includes the church history for the church's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 1929, originally written and delivered in Norwegian, and a booklet published to commemorate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1954. Also included were reprints of newspaper articles from the 1970's after the congregation ceased to exist in 1968.

Received from Lambrecht Haugen and Maxine Mess, *Skålnes og Haugen slekta frå Skånevik*. 211 pages, soft cover, family history in Norwegian.

Received from Lambrecht Haugen and Maxine Mess, *Tungesvik slekta frå Skånevik*. 194 pages, soft cover, family history in Norwegian.

Received from Genesis forlag, *Otto Tank-pioneren fra Rød Herregård* by Jostein Vormeland. 122 pages, hardcover, in Norwegian.

Received from Dorothy Burton Skårdal, *Dr. Agnes Mathilde Wergeland – Historian, Poet, and American University Professor*, a 1995 doctoral dissertation by Lisa B. Løken. The thesis examines the life of an overlooked pioneer of women's education and women's rights. Agnes Wergeland was born into a famous family in Norway. Her life involved many interesting people, including the first advocate for women's rights in Norway, her cousin Camilla Wergeland Collett, and her tutor in piano – Edvard Grieg. Famous does not mean wealthy. Agnes defied the odds for a woman without means. She obtained not only an education, but an advanced degree from the University of Zürich. Finding the climate for academic and professional women more responsive in America, Dr. Wergeland received a fellowship from Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania. This led to her position at the University of Wyoming, where she was eventually named chair of the History Department. 161 pages soft cover.

Received from E. Richard Ensrud, a brief history of the John B. and Guro Henjum family. 23 pages originally compiled by Christie Sætveit Mills in 1962, 100 years after her grandparents left Norway for America. Includes copies of photos, family trees, birth dates and dates of death, as well as written memories from Hannah, the last surviving Henjum child. These memories include hard work, friends, and a stop by three men at their home looking for food. Later they learned the three men included a fellow named Jesse James!

Received from Keith D. Hage and Dennis P. Spande, *Haga/Hage Family of Rogaland, Norway and America*. 221 pages, indexed and spiral bound. To assist the reader, the authors have provided a general background of life in Norway before the family left Norway. The history of the local area is also placed in context. The maps, translated letters and photos make this history

useful as well as educational. Descendents are listed with summary information from many generations. Sources are also given regarding various census reports and church records.

Received from Dorothy Myhre, *Hanlontown, Iowa 1899-1999*. Many of the earliest citizens of Hanlontown were Norwegian Americans. 184 pages with photos of people and buildings through the years.

Received from Roger H. Dykstra, *125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration, Fertile Lutheran Church*. 56 pages, soft cover. The congregation was formed by Norwegian Americans in 1874. The history includes yearly lists of all baptisms, confirmations and marriages performed in the church. Also includes memories recorded in 1947 by an early member of the church and member of the Ladies Aid.

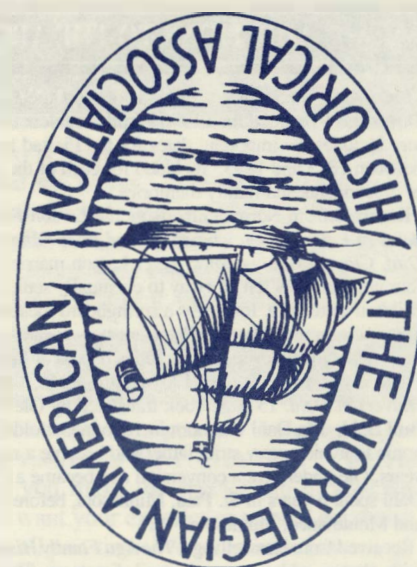
Received from Jorunn E. Gunnestad Carlson, *“Decorah-Posten –vor felles Ven” en norsk-amerikansk avis ogdens brobyggerarbeid*. 131 pages soft cover, in Norwegian.

Received from Charles H. Russell, a copy of the passenger list where Elise Tvede (later married to Wilhelm Wærenskjold) is named as the 12<sup>th</sup> passenger on the ship “New England” destined for New Orleans in 1847. (You will note there is an article in the newest NAHA publication about the Wærenskjolds. This information adds to the NAHA collection of material surrounding Elise and her husband.)

Received from June Adele Dolva, a set of the Valdres Samband newsletters from December 1992 through December 1969. These have been spiral bound and fill a gap in the NAHA collection for this lag.

Received from Maureen Borell and Rebecca Haugo, *Brunsvold: A Genealogy*. This 422 page family history includes photos, maps, addresses, and several county histories for settlements in the U.S. The patriarch of the family, Asle Knudsen Brunsvold, had 10 surviving children who grew up near Nesbyen, Hallingdal. Seven of the ten children emigrated to the U.S.

Received from Olga Nilsen Berglund, *What Became of Little Ole: The Life Story of Pastor Ole Nilsen*. Soft cover, 94 pages, with photos. Ole became a teacher before leaving Ål for America in 1871. In Minnesota Ole attended Augsburg Seminary. Over the years communities from Iowa, Wisconsin, North Dakota, and Minnesota came to know Pastor Ole Nilsen. He retired from the ministry at age 76 and became the editor of the Hallinglag quarterly magazine. At the age of 89 Ole lived to see his youngest child graduate from Concordia College.



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Norwegian-American Historical Association

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