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From the Secretary's Office to the Association Members

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Editor, LLOYD HUSTVEDT

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A Chair in Immigration Studies

NEED AND PURPOSE

Past experience makes it clear that future editors of the NAHA publications will be professional historians who hold teaching positions at some college or university. This was true for Theodore C. Blegen and later for Kenneth O. Bjork. The editorial assignment is so demanding that some released time from teaching is necessary. The alternative is unreasonable expectations, and, what may be worse, we may not be able to find or keep editors who discover that if they tend properly to one duty they neglect another.

Realism dictates that a Chair in Immigration Studies be developed one step at a time. In its initial stage the "Chair Fund" would be used to buy, as it were, released time for the editor. For example, if the editor's full teaching load is six courses per year but, by special arrangement, he teaches only five courses, the Chair Fund would reimburse the college or university an amount equal to one-sixth of the editor's salary as a faculty member.

THE FIRST STAGE

"Chair in Immigration Studies" is a rather pretentious title for a function as limited as that explained above, but, with generous support down through time, the fund could grow to an amount that would support a position worthy of its title, i.e., a chair that would incorporate the editorship with research and the teaching of courses in immigration studies. For the time being, however, we will focus on the first and most urgent function. When this goal has been reached, specific plans for succeeding stages can be determined.

The first stage calls for the raising of \$100,000. When this amount has been raised, the "Chair Fund" would be operative. The annual accrued interest, or the portion of it required, would be directed toward released time for the editor.

BJORK-CLAUSEN MATCHING FUNDS

Kenneth O. Bjork, our current editor, and Clarence A. Clausen, retired history professor and a member of the NAHA Board of Publications, have each pledged \$5,000 as matching funds. This means that contributions from the members totaling \$10,000 would in fact produce \$20,000. Their matching pledge extends to the close of 1980. Pledges as well as cash contributions will be honored. We hope, as do Professors Bjork and Clausen, that they will have to go to the full limit of their pledge.

FUND DRIVE PROJECTIONS

The Association currently has 1,200 members. An estimated 1,000 of these can be seen as potential contributors. An average gift of \$100 per member would bring us well above the figure set for the first step. The time period seen as realistic is three years, hence an annual average contribution of \$33.00 per year would bring the same results. Because of the available matching funds which expire at the close of 1980, we hope that 50 percent of the total might be reached by then.

Precise projections for fund-raising programs are as difficult to make as they are to realize, for the character of a drive can change suddenly. We hope that more matching funds will be made available, certainly for the years 1981 and 1982. In rough outline the projections are as follows:

1979-1980	Current balance	\$ 12,000.00
	Matching funds and gifts	20,000.00
	Direct gifts	18,000.00
	At close of year	<u>\$ 50,000.00</u>
1981	Matching funds	\$ 10,000.00
	Gifts	10,000.00
	At close of year	<u>70,000.00</u>
1982	Matching funds	\$ 10,000.00
	Gifts	10,000.00
	At close of year	<u>\$ 90,000.00</u>
	Accrued interest, grants, bequests	<u>\$ 10,000.00</u>
		<u>\$100,000.00</u>

PLAN AND METHOD

Our limited staff and the ongoing work of the NAHA will hardly allow for any elaborate or even carefully organized fund drive. There will be at best only incidental personal solicitation. There will be no traveling agents or promotional lectures. Additional matching funds will, however, be actively sought by members of the Executive Board. Apart from periodic reminders and progress reports, very little by way of promotional literature or brochures will be printed and distributed. We wish to avoid excessive overhead expenses, but we may be guilty of making virtue out of necessity when we say this.

In all events, we are relying more on your good will and dedication than on the more professional patterns of fund raising. We are aware that the expectations are excessive, perhaps unreasonable, but the vision of what can be done is grand and the need is great.

RECOGNITION

We wish to express our appreciation to members who contribute to the Chair Fund. Those making gifts or pledges of \$25.00 or more will receive a copy of *Guide to Manuscript Collections of the Norwegian-American Historical Association*. It provides a description of the 950 separate collections found in our archives. This work, recently published, was supported by a grant from the Records Commission, Washington, D.C., and therefore falls outside the category of general distribution to members. The agreement was that the cost of production should be covered in part by the grant and the balance through sales.

In addition, the donor will receive an attractive membership pin (lapel type). The design is copied from the NAHA seal. The name of the Association is in gold on a red band, with the ship *Restauration* in the middle. The ship is gold, the sails are white, the sky is blue, and the sea is black.

Contributors are reminded that gifts to the NAHA are tax deductible.

Editorial

Good causes can be argued to death, and it may be foolish to elaborate on what has already been stated. But this writer claims the privilege of an old Norwegian proverb: "One should always listen when an old dog barks." With much regret, I qualify.

A fully endowed chair means that a particular discipline will be permanently taught and researched. Such a position is not left to the mercy of popular whim, of financial circumstance, or the rise and fall of student enrollment. The thought that the editor of the NAHA publications should be tied to such a chair has much merit.

The "chair plan" is not an impulse of the moment; it has been discussed by the NAHA leadership ever since I became secretary twenty-one years ago. Professor Kenneth O. Bjork has brought up the issue more frequently than anyone else. He fostered the idea in the first instance. When it comes to collective enterprises, Norwegian Americans present an impressive record. They have built schools, colleges, churches, hospitals, and other benevolent institutions. When the need was there, they have supported charitable causes in Norway. They have produced a formidable array of organizations which have sustained and revived interest in their cultural heritage.

Save for the successful efforts of a few in Chicago, they have not, however, revealed any particular zeal in establishing chairs or similar educational positions which would submit their history, their heritage, and their attitudes to scholarly analysis. Icelanders, though fewer in number, have done better.

One can only speculate on the reasons. The one certainty is that there are many of them. Intolerant moods have swept across our country, but at the moment the climate is good. In some sectors fear can be found that such a chair would become a propaganda station, but, ironically, from other directions can come fear that the position would be lacking in proper ethnic fervor. There also may have been a lack of will and leadership, combined with the fact that most professors make the worst fund raisers in the world.

One reason is clear. Such projects find it difficult to generate popular appeal because they lack visibility. A chair in Immigration Studies will not and cannot be attended by external fanfare — perhaps only a book party now and then. A chair, functioning as it should, consists of a scholar who works quietly in classroom, office, library, or archive. Appreciation of this person's work may not surface for many years, and whatever visible impact that exists may be restricted to students and to educational circles quite removed from the busy intersections of Norwegian-American life.

The trade-off for this lack of visibility, however, is durable values in the form of self-examination, leading, we hope, to the truth about ourselves and the world in which we live. It requires a bit more faith and maturity to get excited about such things. But when these virtues are in order, the plan for a "Chair" will receive the support it deserves and will be realized under a sensible step-by-step approach. This will have to be enough barking for now.

LLOYD HUSTVEDT

A Word from the President

My position is not unlike that of a magician I saw performing on a street corner in New York City. "My final and most difficult act," he said, "is to make money appear in this hat without the audience disappearing."

The NAHA has not passed around the hat very often, and we trust that it will not become a perpetual practice. Our changing times, however, make it

clear that the operation of the NAHA cannot be managed in the future on income from dues alone. Endowment funds for specific purposes are essential.

My appeal and arguments are simple and direct. As you know, none of the officers of the Association receives any salary for his services and there is no plan to change the policy. We do, however, have a strong obligation to provide our future editors with favorable working conditions. None of us knows exactly — not even the editor himself — how many hours are devoted to this task. Let us assume a very conservative estimate of 500 hours per year. Under carpenter and plumber wages, this makes for a contribution of \$5,000.00 per year in services. My hope is that realization of this fact alone will prompt reciprocity from the membership.

I wish to thank Professors Kenneth O. Bjork and Clarence Clausen for their pledges of \$5,000 each. The realities of fund raising are such that it requires an initial impetus before serious action can get under way.

The members of the Executive Board and the undersigned will do all they can to assure success. Thank you!

ARTHUR O. DAVIDSON
President, NAHA

News in Brief

- The Secretary's office just received word that the NAHA has been awarded a grant of \$3,000 (15,500 kroner) from the Immigration Fund, 1975. This fund was established by the Norwegian government in 1975, commemorating the Sesquicentennial. The grant is given in memory of Carl Søyland, for many years the editor of *Nordisk Tidende*. Details concerning the use of the fund are not yet known.

- Two members of the Executive Board died during the course of the summer: Gunnar Gundersen, M.D., La Crosse, Wisconsin, and G. Norman Wigeland, Evanston, Illinois. Dr. Gundersen served as president of the NAHA (1970-1972). His efforts and personal contributions brought the Theodore C. Blegen Memorial Fund up to its announced goal of \$30,000. G. Norman Wigeland, has likewise been a generous supporter of the NAHA. These men will be sorely missed and will be difficult to replace.

- The Berdahl-Rølvaag house, which was moved from the Berdahl farm some twenty miles north of Sioux Falls to the Augustana College campus, has been completely re-

stored and was dedicated July 15. The dedication ceremony included statements from Clarence Berdahl, Ann (Mrs. James) Berdahl, Ella Valborg (Rølvaag) Tweet, and Karl F. Rølvaag.

The dedication was preceded with a two-day seminar which treated the Sioux River region and the pioneer novels of O. E. Rolvaag.

- Ingrid Feingold, a writer, and Jeanne Singer, a composer, plan to prepare a song cycle or a one-character chamber opera based on *The Diary of Elisabeth Koren*. Both live in New York.

- We are grateful to those who subscribe to gift memberships. Many members are brought into the Association this way. In order to prevent misunderstanding, we kindly ask that the secretary's office be informed at the time of subscription as to which party should receive the future statement for dues — the giver or the receiver?

- We urge all members to notify us in the event of a change of address. The post office does not forward books and double postage is charged when they are returned to this office.