

THE NEWS LETTER

The Norwegian-American Historical Association

Secretary and
"Newsletter" Editor,
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St. Olaf College
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SPECIAL ISSUE FOR GENERAL DISTRIBUTION

A Look At The Historical Association

The Norwegian-American Historical Association was organized October 6, 1925 (incorporated February 4, 1926) by a group of far-sighted historically-minded Norwegian-Americans, with the avowed purpose of recording the history of the Norwegian people who immigrated to the United States. It was their plan that this history should chronicle the contributions of the Norwegian immigrants and their descendants to the development of this country.

In the period from 1925 to 1959 the Association has, in fulfillment of the above purpose, published 41 books; promoted Norwegian-American historical research and literary work; helped maintain and develop archives of Norwegian-American Historical material; from time to time published a news letter devoted to Association news and accomplishments; and encouraged contributions of historical interest to the Norwegian-American Historical Museum at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa.

The books published are to be found in the Congressional Library, Washington, D. C., in the libraries of 35 universities in the U.S.A., Europe and Japan and in many high school and public libraries.

One Publication A Year

Norwegian - American Historical research continues; books are in the making; source material is being gathered and assimilated for future publications. All members are entitled to receive a copy of each new publication. With one or two exceptions, each member in the past has received one book a year and sometimes two.

What You Can Do To Help

Those who are interested in our work are invited to participate. They can do this by bringing in new members, sending in letters, documents, etc., of historical value in showing contributions by Norwegian-Americans to the development of our country. They can obtain contributions for the publication of new books. They can organize local groups for the above purposes.

Memberships

There are four classes of membership: life — \$100.00; sustaining — \$10.00 per annum; associate — \$5.00 per annum. Then there is the patron membership—give as much as you like and as often.



PRESIDENT LIONEL G. THORSNESS

Funds required to carry on the Association's work are also obtained by gifts. Several bequests have been received by the NAHA from friends remembering the Association in their last wills and testaments.

Here is what professor Franklin D. Scott of Northwestern University has to say about the NAHA: "Here is a prototype for other groups who would search the past to gain understanding of themselves, and of the America they have helped to build."

The rich program has attracted to the Association members who have been, and are, the leading citizens of the United States, governors, congressmen, men of the highest military rank, and educators.

The members of the Association meet in general session every third year.

—LIONEL G. THORSNESS

A Word About Our President

The Historical Association has thrived under the aggressive leadership of Chicago attorney Lionel G. Thorsness. Since he took over the helm three years ago two larger publications, *West of the Great Divide* and *Studies and Records*, Volume XX, have appeared, and a third, treating the letters of Elise Wærenskjold, will see print in the near future. In addition, 150 new members have joined the Association during this period.

Sets Pace for Other Members

Beyond being a president in the administrative sense, attorney Thorsness has truly stepped forth as the "first member" of the organization he leads. He has set an example of loyalty to a cause which is an inspiration to all who learn of what he has done. He has enrolled his own children as life members, has initiated membership drives, and has personally purchased 35 gift memberships. Through his efforts men like General Lauris Norstad, Chief Justice Earl Warren, Governor Arthur B. Langlie, Secretary Ezra T. Benson, Assistant to the President Gabriel Hauge, Larry Rue of the *Chicago Tribune* and Mr. and Mrs. Steven Rockefeller have been enrolled as members.

Make December Thorsness Month

A leader who does not spend his time turning around to see if he is being followed provides the highest kind of leadership. Because our president is such a man, the *News Letter* proposes that December be set aside as the month when all of us will express our appreciation to Mr. Thorsness for all he has done. This should be done in the manner that would please him the most, namely, by following the pattern he himself has provided for all of us.

In Essence – American History

The objectives posed by the Historical Association are vastly greater than the desire of a racial group to understand its own immediate past. Though such a desire in itself has profound merits, the program of the Historical Association calls for a contribution to the study of American history. A paragraph appearing in *A Review and a Challenge* bears repeating:

The history of the United States cannot be written exclusively in terms of adaptation and assimilation. The conservation of cultural riches brought to the western world in what has been termed the "transit of civilization," and the contributions made by all the diverse elements composing the national whole must be studied and appraised before a larger understanding of American history and American civilization is possible. As President Wilson once declared, "We are a composite and a cosmopolitan people." It follows, with inevitable logic, that the racial groups must themselves make known the circumstances and incidents attending their migration to America and their life in the New World. They must gather up precious records and inter-

pret them. Both in language and in that subtle understanding which they have absorbed by natural circumstance of the way of life of their own folk, they possess keys to unlock doors that bar the way to a full comprehension of the social history of America.*

*A *Review and a Challenge* set forth the accomplishment of the Historical Association as of 1938, and articulated a broadly conceived program for the future. Copies are still available without cost.

Editorial Policy: Scope and Interest

The editorial policy of the Association has been professional from the start, if by "professional" one means a high standard of scholarship by men trained in the writing of history, a careful selection of materials, and a painstaking care in editing. One would expect these qualities in a board of editors which has seen members like Knut Gjerset, Laurence M. Larson, Kristian Prestgard, Brynjolf J. Hovde, Marcus L. Hansen, and Paul Knaplund. And one would expect no less from the current board composed of Kenneth O. Bjørk, Clarence A. Clausen, Einar Hauge, Carl L. Lokke, Carlton C. Qualey, and managing editor Theodore C. Blegen, who has held this position since the founding of the Association.

Tolerance and Breadth of Interest

The editorial policy permeating all of the publications, and the one prevailing with equal force today, was crystallized in a statement by Dr. Theodore C. Blegen in his managing editor's report for 1930. After insisting that the Association should strike the "note of tolerance and breadth of interest," he went on to sketch the scope of the Association's historical interests:

We are interested in ski runners who have brought northern sports into American vogue. We are interested in men and women who have pioneered on America's far-flung frontiers—and in their children and children's children. We are interested in the work of businessmen, professional men, artisans, laborers. We are interested in sailors who have gone down to the sea in ships, in soldiers who have followed the flag, in politics and parties and leaders, conservative, liberal, or radical. We are interested in the church and every denomination represented. We are interested in those who have not been identified with the church or have been hostile to it. We are interested in music, art, literature, the press, periodicals, scholarships. We are interested in the organizations that have been active among the Norwegian-Americans. We are interested in schools and colleges, their principles, methods, teachers, and achievements. We are interested in the tangled problems involved in the adjustment of people to the new environment. History must lift the curtain on a thousand varied activities, on men and women of all classes, on peo-

ple in every section, helping us to understand the onward march of human forces, with all their baffling interrelationships. Our interest in the human contingent that followed the trails of Cleng Peerson and Ole Rynning, that came out of the rock-bound land of the North and sought its destiny in the New World, is one with an interest in this American civilization of which we are a part and into the building of which have gone the varied cultural impulses of peoples drawn from all parts of the world, impulses modified by the contact of these peoples with one another, given new direction by the forces of the American environment, and working themselves out on the loom of time, one generation after another, with adaptation and conservation both playing into the weave.

Only a casual glance at the 41 books published by the Historical Association will give evidence that this goal is being achieved.

CARL L. LOKKE JOINS EDITORIAL BOARD

Carl L. Lokke, chief of the foreign affairs section in the National Archives at Washington, D. C., recently accepted an invitation to join the editorial board.

Though born in Minneapolis, most of his boyhood was spent in Alaska. He received his A.B. and A.M. Degree from the University of California (Berkeley) and his Ph.D. at Columbia University in 1932.

Prior to becoming archivist on the staff of National Archives in 1935, Mr. Lokke was professor of history at St. Stephen's College, and lecturer in history at Columbia University. He is the author of *France and the Colonial Question; A Study of Contemporary French Opinion, 1763-1801* (New York, 1932) and has published a number of articles on historical and archival topics, including several relating to Alaska. He has also contributed to our *Studies and Records* series and is associate editor of *The American Archivist*.

VOLUME TWENTY CONTAINS CONTENT OF STUDIES AND RECORDS SERIES

Thirteen of the 246 pages which make up *Studies and Records*, volume twenty, contain a topical classification of the subject matter found in *Studies and Records*, Vols. 1-20. "Church and Religion," "Community and Regional Studies," "Education and Scholarship," "The Emigrant Journey," and "Literature, Art and Verse" are a few examples of the fourteen different categories.

These contents, compiled by Helen Thane Katz, should prove valuable as a guide for anyone doing research. Anyone interested in buying copies of *Studies and Records* might find it worthwhile first to acquire volume twenty.

KEEP IN MIND THAT OUR BOOKS
MAKE EXCELLENT CHRISTMAS GIFTS.

CONTENTS OF STUDIES AND RECORDS VOLUME TWENTY

- Ibsen in America* By EINAR HAUGEN
*Still More Light on the Kendall Colony: A Unique
Sloop Letter* By MARIO S. DE PILLIS
*A Texas Manifesto: A Letter from Mrs. Elise
Wærenskjold*
 Translated and edited by CLARENCE A. CLAUSEN
History and Sociology By PETER A. MUNCH
Beating to Windward By OTTO M. BRATRUD
 Edited by SVERRE ARESTAD
Pioneering in Alaska By KNUTE L. GRAVEM
*Marcus Thrane in Christiania: Unpublished Letters
from 1850-51* Translated and edited
 by WALDEMAR WESTERGAARD
*A Centenary of Norwegian Studies in American In-
stitutions of Learning* By HEDIN BRONNER
Elizabeth Fedde's Diary, 1883-88 Translated and
 edited by BEULAH FOLKEDAHL
 "With Great Price" By JOHN M. GAUS
*Some Recent Publications Relating to Norwegian
American History, XVI*
 Compiled by CLARENCE A. CLAUSEN

NOTES TO MEMBERS

Change in Mailing of Statements

Rather than send statements for dues to all members during the months of July and August, as has been past practice, the Association will bill each member for dues during the month he became a member. In some instances a full year will not intervene between the statement received for 1959 and the one received for 1960.

Permanent Membership Cards

During the year of 1960 a permanent membership card will be sent to each member. This card will replace the membership certificate sent to each member after payment of annual dues. Space will be provided on the reverse side of the card where the member can keep a record of his payments of dues. Only if dues are paid in cash or upon request will receipts be sent.

Need Copies of "Grass of the Earth"

Because *Grass of the Earth* by Aagot Raaen is out of print, we have been unable to fill several urgent requests. Should anyone have extra copies he no longer needs, they would be put to good use if sent to the secretary of the Historical Association.

Norwegian Sailors on the Great Lakes: A Study in the History of American Inland Transportation by Knut Gjerset is now also out of print.

Three New Life Members

Since the last *News Letter* three life members have been added: Mr. Christian J. Mohn of New York; Mrs. Nora B. Arneberg of Fargo, North Dakota; and Mr. C. Norman Brunsdale of Mayville, North Dakota.

Idun-Edda Pledges Support

As its service project for the academic year 1959-60, the Idun-Edda Society, a Norwegian interested student organization at St. Olaf College, pledged to assist the Historical Association. The resolution passed at the November meeting provided that each member should donate three hours of his time. The tasks they would do ranged from inserting circulars into envelopes to typing address labels, from preparing books for mailing to dusting books and shelves.

The president, Dennis Sorheim, believed that this might well become a traditional service project.

A statement of gratitude was forwarded to the Idun-Edda Society:

"On behalf of the members and the Executive Board, the office of the Secretary wishes to thank the Idun-Edda Society for its generous offer of support. Your assistance will be of vast importance in our continued plans for expansion.

"It is not only the material assistance you will provide which is appreciated, but the fact that you, young as you all are, have taken such action has, if not greater, then at least equal value in terms of the inspiration and the encouragement you have given all of us.

"Accept then our sincerest gratitude, together with the assurance that all forty of you will be called upon to give your pledged three hours of service."

NEWS IN BRIEF

- Miss Josephine Opsal, who served as secretary to J. Jørgen Thompson for fifteen years, retired September 1. Before coming to St. Olaf in 1940, she was the personal secretary to Senator Peter Norbeck of South Dakota. Miss Opsal now lives in Minneapolis. She was replaced by Mrs. Walter (Charlotte) Hughes, Jr. of Northfield, Minnesota.

- Two members of the editorial board are abroad this year. Dr. Einar Haugen is in Japan, and Dr. Kenneth O. Bjørk is in Norway. A half-page article about Dr. Bjørk appeared in *Morgenbladet* (Oct. 29, 1959) under the headline "Han skal studere norsk innvandring til Amerika" (He will study Norwegian emigration to America).

- Mr. and Mrs. Marthinus Strand of Salt Lake City recently returned from a trip to Europe. While in Norway they celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary with family members in Oslo.

- Deceased: Mrs. Beulah K. Geiwitz, Minnesota, a member since 1941. The Reverend Clarence J. Carlsen, Minot, North Dakota, a member since 1927. Mr. Lyder L. Undstad, Susquehanna University, Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania. He joined the Association in 1926 and has contributed to *Studies and Records*.

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NORWEGIAN-AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
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