

The Norwegian-American
Historical Association

Northfield, Minnesota

NEWS



LETTER

From the Secretary's Office to the Association Members

NUMBER 41

DECEMBER 1969

Editor L. HUSTVEDT

A Message From the President

Dear Members:

It was with trepidation that I read the letter advising me that, in my absence, I was elected to the presidency of the Association for the next three years. Had I been in Chicago, I probably would have declined. On second thought, however, it came to mind that here was probably my last opportunity to do something constructive for this organization, which has been my pet since I joined many years ago.

I believe that all the members know what a wonderful job our editors and secretaries have done. As you know, your Association has published forty-nine books in the forty-four years of its existence. Every member gets on the average at least one book a year. It is therefore obvious that dues are not sufficient to cover all costs of publication. Books are sold but not in quantities to take care of the deficit. We have been blessed, however, with dedicated editors who have done their work without a cent of compensation. These men are the late Professor Theodore C. Blegen and Professor Kenneth O. Bjork. In addition, there also have been dedicated secretaries and officers who have done their part as a labor of love, often giving personal funds to keep the publishing going.

It seems to me that our Association should by now be in a position where sufficient funds are available to obviate the continuation of such an unreasonable amount of unpaid work. When I accepted the position of president, therefore, I felt that perhaps I could use my common business sense to fund the research and publishing work on a sound basis, so that enough money could always be available to maintain our reasonable budgets. As a beginning in this direction, a collection was started by Dr. Gunnar Gundersen at the last triennial meeting. This fund will be called the Theodore C. Blegen Scholarship Fund, and \$11,000 has already been collected.

I am wondering whether all know that donations made to our Association are tax deductible? Any donation may therefore be deducted as if it had been another wife or a child. Do you also realize that the books which we publish will to a great extent be a "Who's Who" among Norwegians in America? I believe that your grandchildren will appreciate reading about you in these "American" history books. I feel, therefore, that you will not take offense when I follow the present practice of other similar organizations and beg every member to donate an amount as large as he can afford, remembering that this is a cause which will help to keep the memory of Norway and the knowledge of what Norwegians have done for all time. We now have over 1,100 members, so please be liberal when you make up your Christmas lists. It is well known that churches ask for 10 per cent of each member's income; why shouldn't we hope for a modest 5 per cent? Personally, I have found that the more I give, the more I get, so why don't you try this too? God bless you all, and may you have a joyous Christmas.

MAGNUS BJORN DAL

Christianson Named to Museum Post

Dr. John R. Christianson, chairman of the department of history at Luther College, has been named assistant director of the Norwegian-American Museum in Decorah, Iowa. He will assist Dr. Marion J. Nelson, who has been director of the museum since it became a corporation in 1964.

A news release from Luther College states that Dr. Christianson will have primary responsibility for the educational programs of the museum and for temporary exhibits. He will also be responsible for all museum collections not related to Norwegian-American history and culture.

According to the new contract recently signed by Luther College and the museum corporation, the assistant director is named by the college. Luther College continues to own most of the museum artifacts, but the museum corporation administers them and may also acquire collections of its own.

Prior to this new agreement, some problems had attended the relationship between Luther College and the museum corporation.

Dr. Christianson, a native of Mankato, Minnesota, received his Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota in history and art history. He specialized in Scandinavian history. He has also studied at the National Museum in Copenhagen. Since coming to Luther College in 1967, he has served on several museum committees. He also introduced a seminar on museum techniques, and last year organized a museum lecture series.

Norwegian-American Studies Volume 24

Volume 24 of *Norwegian-American Studies* is ready for the printer and should be in the hands of Association members early in 1970, according to Professor Kenneth O. Bjork, Editor.

The book, about 320 pages in length, will contain articles on a variety of subjects dealing with Norwegian-American life. Professor Einar Haugen has contributed an original paper on "Thor

Helgeson: Schoolmaster and Reconteur." Dr. Clarence A. Clausen has translated Per Hvamstad's "Letters of Mons H. Grinager: Pioneer and Soldier." Odd S. Løvoll has written an account of the "Norwegian Press in North Dakota." The late Professor Paul Knaplund submitted a study of "H. Tambs Lyche: Propagandist for America."

Dr. Neil T. Eckstein has studied the "Social Criticism of Ole Edvart Rølvaag." Mr. James S. Hamre has translated a "Thanksgiving Day Address by Georg Sverdrup." Professor Sverre Arestad offers translations of short stories under the caption "Hamsun and America." Mr. Thomas I. Benson submits, under the title "Gold, Salt Air, and Calouses," a study of the Norwegians in nineteenth-century California. Mr. Knight Hoover has written about the "Norwegians in New York." And Miss Beulah Folkedahl has compiled another listing of "Some Recent Publications" and has written her fourth report "From the Archives."

THE ARCHIVES Research

Mr. Albert Johnson, Morris, Minnesota, has spent several weeks in the archives, working on the music of F. Melius Christianson. Mr. Michael Brook, Minnesota Historical Society, is doing research on Marcus Thrane. The Reverend Roald Kverndal, the Norwegian Seamen's Church in London, is writing a history of Seamen's Missions. Dr. and Mrs. Bjoraker of Minneapolis also came to the archives for genealogical work.

Visitors

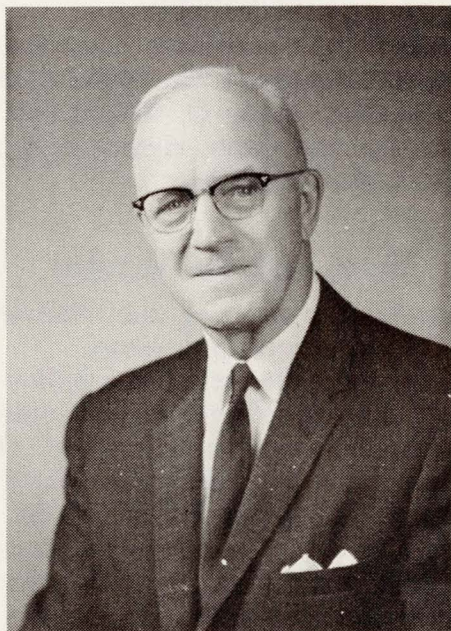
Miss Frieda Weenaas and Mrs. Magdalene Weenaas Widsteen from Norway, daughters of August Weenaas, the first president of Augsburg College, visited the archives on October 7. They were accompanied by members of their family and by Mrs. Martin Hegland. The Weenaas sisters came to the United States for the Augsburg Centennial celebration.

Mr. Robert Bruce, recently appointed librarian at Carleton College, toured the archives on November 4.

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DAVID T. NELSON

1891-1969



David T. Nelson, the senior member of the NAHA Executive Board, died suddenly in Decorah, Iowa, on October 9. He will be sorely missed, for he possessed those qualities that made him valuable to any cause he served: personal integrity, dedication, sound judgment, gentle firmness, high standards, and generosity. He began serving on the Board in 1938, first as financial secretary and later as vice president.

Born 1891 in Hillsboro, North Dakota, he attended the University of North Dakota for one year and graduated from Luther College in 1912. A Rhodes scholar, he later studied at Oxford University (New College).

He served with the American field service and in military intelligence during World War I. At the end of the war he was a member of a group sent to Paris with the American mission to negotiate peace. He also served under Herbert Hoover as a member of the Commission for Relief of Belgium.

Dr. Nelson joined the Luther College faculty in 1921, became head of the English department in 1932, and for a time acted as president of that college.

Among his literary productions are the *Diary of Elisabeth Koren*, published by the NAHA in 1955, *Luther College*

1861-1961, and *Halvor*, a translation of Peer Strømme's novel *Hvordan Halvor ble prest*.

St. Olaf College conferred on him the honorary degree of doctor of literature in 1946; the citation stressed his superiority as a college teacher and his vital influence in a college community. In 1961 he was named Knight First Class of the Royal Norwegian Order of St. Olav. He is survived by his widow, Esther, three sons, and one daughter.

NAHA on Norwegian TV

Erik Bye of Norwegian Television, together with his team, spent the greater part of November 18 in the Association's archives. He is preparing a series of fourteen forty-five-minute programs, scheduled to begin appearing on Norwegian television in February, 1970. Before coming to Northfield, Erik Bye *et al* had toured Norwegian settlements in Alaska, Seattle, North and South Dakota, Minnesota, and Wisconsin, and Iowa was to follow. He hopes to complete his filming marathon by December 15. "We should have at least a year to do the job we would like to do," said Mr. Bye.

The TV producer was especially interested in documents reflecting the reactions of the early immigrant to his new environment. A large number of pictures from the NAHA photograph collection are also being processed for the television screen. Among other things, the program which centers on the NAHA will carry an invitation to the citizens of Norway to become members of the Association.

The Erik Bye television programs, which in the past have covered such distant places as Ghana and Biafra, have been of such high quality that the producer himself has become one of Norway's most popular personalities. It is safe to predict that his Norwegian-America programs will be viewed by nearly all television owners in Norway, and there are many of them. It goes without saying that they will awaken more interest in Norway for their counterparts in this country than any previous enterprise of a similar nature.

New Members

Sustaining

Olaf E. Hagen, Closter, New Jersey
Dr. Earl L. Hullison, Evanston, Illinois

Associate

Orwin A. Rustad, Faribault, Minnesota
Mrs. William C. Olson, Scarsdale, New York
Miss Ingrid Stampen, Northbrook, Illinois
Mrs. Gladys Melcher, Bloomington, Minnesota
Miss Nell Marie Hoyem, Mankato, Minnesota
H. Morris Borstad, Tioga, North Dakota
Dr. Hardean K. Naeseth, Middleton, Wisconsin
Mrs. Carl A. Lange, Wauwatosa, Wisconsin
Wayne F. Moquin, Berwyn, Illinois
Mrs. Charles Wharton, Stamford, Connecticut
Miss Karen R. Halvorsen, Carmel, California
Mrs. Charles W. Hawley, Trumbull, Connecticut

Deceased

Oscar C. Ronken, a member since 1943.
Mrs. Paul Rabe, a member since 1964.
Claus Clausen, a member since 1950.

THE ARCHIVES

Continued from page 2

Donations

Books and papers have come to the archives from Mrs. T. G. Vikse, Richard H. Cartford, Nora O. Solum, all of Northfield, and from Herman Chilson, Webster, South Dakota.

Notes from the Secretary

The January issue of the *Newsletter* will be a membership directory.

Beginning with the January billing for dues, the membership certificate will accompany the statement for dues. This arrangement will reduce postal and clerical expenses by approximately 50 per cent. The method has its disadvantages. The advance membership certificate may lead a member to believe that he has paid his dues (he has the certificate to prove it) when, in fact, he may not have done so. Anyone paying his dues in cash will receive a receipt. For others, the cancelled check will serve as a receipt.

NORWEGIAN-AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
St. Olaf College
Northfield, Minnesota

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