

# The Norwegian-American Historical Association

Northfield, Minnesota



*From the Secretary's Office to the Association Members*

NUMBER 80

Editor, LLOYD HUSTVEDT

SEPTEMBER 1990

## TWENTY-SECOND TRIENNIAL MEETING

Twenty-one triennial meetings have come and gone. By human standards the NAHA has now become a senior citizen. The twenty-second triennial meeting will be held October 20, 1990, at the Woman's Club of Minneapolis, 410 Oak Grove Street, Minneapolis. We might note that the club has ample free parking space. The Executive Board will conduct a separate meeting at 1:00 p.m. The general meeting will convene at 3:30 p.m. A social hour with a cash bar will begin at 6:00 p.m., followed by dinner in the ballroom at 7:00 p.m. Events have been scheduled in such a manner that persons who attend the general meeting need not make a separate trip to attend the social hour and dinner.

The burden of the general meeting will consist of reports from the officers that cover the different functional areas of the NAHA: publications, archives, membership and finance. Unless there are proposals for revisions or additions to the NAHA Charter (none are on the agenda to date), the major official item of business will be to elect a new executive board. A nominating committee consisting of Rolf Erickson (chair), John Christianson and Lois Rand will present a slate of nominees. Nominations from the floor will be in order.

Distance understandably makes it prohibitive for many members to attend. Those who cannot come are requested to forward their proxy (see page 5) to the secretary. Also note that a dinner reservation form appears on the same page. Those who will attend the dinner but not the general meeting should also forward their proxy. The dinner is not exclusively for members. In fact, members are encouraged to bring guests.

The program at the dinner will include a slide presentation prepared by Dr. John Christianson of Luther College. He has written a narration script that will accompany a compilation of slides that feature past accomplishments and future aspirations of the NAHA. The plan is to have a completely automated "slide show" that can be sent abroad to better acquaint the Norwegian-American community with our work.

### Charlotte Jacobson Retires as Archivist

Whether to bemoan the loss of Charlotte's retirement or celebrate the contribution she has made is the question. Some of both seems to be in order. Organization of the NAHA Archives in accordance with professional standards began with the coming of Beulah Folkedahl in 1961. In fact, Charlotte Jacobson, then working at the St. Olaf College library, sat on a committee that guided the processing of several target collections that would serve as models for later work. The first gift specifying the archives came from Charlotte. The amount was \$500 and it provided the archives with its initial installment of acid-free document cases.

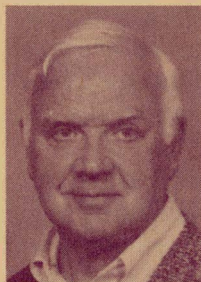
When Beulah Folkedahl died in 1971, no successor was found until 1974 when Charlotte retired from her duties at St. Olaf College. First came the task of processing a backlog of material that had accumulated over a three-year period. She also presided over a steady increase in the use of the archives and in written requests for information.

Charlotte graduated from high school in Decorah, Iowa; attended St. Olaf College, graduating *magna cum laude* and with distinction in English in 1931. Later came advanced degrees in Library Science from the universities of Minnesota and Michigan. This led to a career at St. Olaf

College that divided her time between the library and the Department of English. At the time of her retirement she was Associate Librarian and Associate Professor of English.

She brought to her position as curator and archivist her years of library experience, a knowledge of the Norwegian language, impeccable use of the English language, a kind, generous, and soothing disposition, a critical but also a sympathetic view of the immigrant setting, and finally a mind that automatically transformed chaos into order. The NAHA is a much better organization because of her and out there somewhere must be a thousand or more persons who have made claims on her time, skill, knowledge and generosity who also owe her thanks. Some of the NAHA's most valuable assets are not recorded in the financial report.

## Forrest E. Brown Takes Over Archives



Forrest E. Brown

Once again St. Olaf College has provided the NAHA with an archivist. Forrest E. Brown retired as that college's library director in August of this year and assumed his new duties as NAHA archivist on September 10.

Brown graduated *summa cum laude* from Hamline University in St. Paul in 1950 with majors in history and philosophy. He earned a M.A. degree in history in 1952 and a M.S. degree in library science in 1954, both from the University of Minnesota. His first position (1954-56) was that of catalog librarian at Lawrence University, Appleton, Wisconsin. He then became library director at Cornell College, Mount Vernon, Iowa, and five years later, in 1961, was given the same position at St. Olaf College.

During his 29 years of tenure, he presided over a library in constant expansion in staff, facilities and services. A few examples will have to suffice. The library staff grew from 10 to 25; book purchases increased from 2,652 volumes in 1960-1961 to 11,061 in 1989-1990, and library expenditures (salaries excluded) moved from \$22,216 to \$681,627. When he left his post, library services had undergone a revolution involving automation and a computer network with other libraries. Also, from the day he arrived, he has been a valuable friend of the NAHA.

Brown admits with a grin that he is of British rather than Norwegian ancestry, but hastens to add that he became interested in Norwegian-

American history through his association with St. Olaf College and the resources for that library and in the NAHA collection. In 1973 he researched his wife's Norwegian ancestry in preparation for a family trip to Norway. As a result he became familiar with the principles and resources for Norwegian-American family history research and began helping the many people who wrote or visited the library each year to research their family history. Through this experience he has developed into an expert in the field and has spoken widely and led workshops. He has for many years collected information about the early settlers of the large Norwegian community in Goodhue County, Minnesota. He hopes to continue this study in the coming years.

## Rølvaag and Japan

Twelve years ago a charming, gracious and smiling Japanese youth paid us a visit. He explained that the Japanese firm he was destined to work for had financed a year's stay in the States. He could study whatever he wished and go wherever fancy directed. He presented the secretary with a written statement which bore the title "An outline of my projects in Independent Study." After what must be a proper waiting period, we share his statement with the members of the NAHA:

- 1) During my stay in Northfield (from now to June 1978), I will do what nowhere else can be done; manuscripts and unpublished articles of O.E. Rolvaag sleeping in our library will be awakened.
- 2) Fairly local materials like *Manitou Messenger* and *Northfield News* are also my foods for future thoughts.
- 3) Therefore, reading of Rolvaag's main works is not my focus in this Study. They will be studied after I finish perspiratory (*sic*) works in the library.
- 4) "Formation of Thought of young Rolvaag" is my tentative subject.

## Editorial

When loyalty to broad and long-range goals rises above more narrow though legitimate loyalty to institutions fine things happen. A case in point will be mentioned later.

The NAHA and the Norwegian-American Museum (Vesterheim) pursue a common goal but exercise division of labor. Given a different set of historical circumstances the two independent organizations might well have emerged as a



consolidated operation. But since they are two separate entities, the thought that they might vie with each other for members and for resources within the Norwegian-American community is not unthinkable. For the time being at least, such notions can be put to rest.

On June 11, 1990, Marion Nelson, the director of the Decorah museum, sent a letter to the members and friends of Vesterheim urging that they subscribe to membership in NAHA. "We usually promote ourselves." Nelson wrote, "In this mailing we are taking another turn — promoting the Norwegian-American Historical Association."

The response was excellent — 102 new members to date, a landslide when compared to earlier recruitment efforts. We are grateful to Marion Nelson and the museum he serves, and we are grateful to the museum members who found it possible to carry memberships in both organizations.

Marion Nelson personally paid for the printing, postal and labor costs related to this mailing. So in addition to his good will he also made an indirect gift of \$1,000. By way of reciprocity this writer invites you to think kindly of Marion Nelson and the museum he serves.

L.H.

## Seminar Papers Published

A selection of papers given at the seminar on Norwegian-American literature and history held at Hamar, Norway, in 1989, have been published under the title, *Essays on Norwegian-American Literature, Volume II*. This work, edited by Øyvind T. Gulliksen, Ingeborg R. Kongslie and Dina Tolsby, was published by NAHA Norway. This book is not for general membership distribution.

As yet we do not know the cost of the book nor to what address orders can be sent. Interested parties may send orders to the secretary who will forward them to the right station when this becomes known.

### Note!

Our latest publication, *Vivacious Daughter: Seven Lectures on the Religious Situation among Norwegians in America* by Herman Amberg Preus, edited and translated by Todd W. Nichol, has been mailed to all members. Members who have not received a copy should notify the secretary. Mishaps can happen because of unreported changes of address, labels that do not stick, or inadvertent mistakes in the mailing process.

## Parliament President Visits Archives

When Jo Benkow, president of the Norwegian parliament, visited St. Olaf College on May 21, a tour of the NAHA Archives was a part of his itinerary. He plans to return to the archives in November, this time for several days of research. In the picture below, President Benkow is about to sign the guest register. Standing beside him is Anne Lise Hoegh, a prominent member of the Norwegian parliament, and President Benkow's wife.



## Our Next Publication

*In Their Own Words: Letters from Norwegian Immigrants*, edited, translated and introduced by Solveig Zempel, will be distributed to the members late in October or early November. This book is published by the University of Minnesota Press in cooperation with the Norwegian-American Historical Association. It will retail for \$39.95.

A pre-publication review in *Publishers Weekly* (Aug. 31, 1990) commented as follows: "A moving collection of letters composed between 1870 and 1845 by nine Norwegians who keenly depict the day-to-day experiences of immigrants in this country."

# Norwegian-American Historical Association

## Proxy to Vote

Members who cannot attend the Twenty-second Triennial Meeting are requested to send their proxies to the secretary. If you do not know of any member who will attend the convention, you may wish to appoint a member of the executive board as your proxy. Some of the officers who will attend are listed below:

Arley Bjella	Odd S. Lovoll
Ruth Crane	Elsie M. Melby
Rolf Erickson	Marion Nelson
Lloyd Hustvedt	Lois R. Rand
Lawrence O. Hauge	

I \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_  
in the state of \_\_\_\_\_ appoint \_\_\_\_\_  
will full power of substitution, to be my substitute and proxy, to vote at the meeting of the members of the  
Norwegian-American Historical Association, to be held in Minneapolis, October 20, 1990,

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Return to: Norwegian-American Historical Association, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota 55057. A self-addressed envelope is enclosed.

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## Banquet Reservations

### \$22.00 per plate

My payment for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed for \_\_\_\_\_ reservations for the Twenty-second Triennial Banquet of members and friends of the Norwegian-American Historical Association, 7:00 p.m. Saturday, October 20, 1990, Woman's Club of Minneapolis, 410 Oak Grove Street, Minneapolis, MN 55403.

Your banquet tickets will be issued upon arrival. Please return reservation to the secretary's office (see enclosed self-addressed envelope) by October 7.

Name \_\_\_\_\_



## News in Brief

- Received from Ingeborg R. Kongslie her *Draumen om fridom og jord: Ein studie i skandinaviske emigrantromaner*. The study compares and contrasts the views of Johan Bojer, O.E. Rølvaag, Vilhelm Moberg and Alfred Hauge. Det Norske Samlaget, Oslo, 1989.
- Received from Dagfinn Worren 36 America letters written by Adolf A. Rødvik to his wife over a period of two years, 1907-1909. Rødvik, who came from Sunnmøre died in an accident at work at Thorp, Washington, at the age of 40.
- Received from Sanford K. Fosholt his *The Charcoal Burner's Legacy: A History of the Goplerud Family*. Few family histories can compare with this work in terms of thoroughness and organization. The work, amply illustrated with maps, photos, and charts, is a hardbound book of 800 pages. Published by Fosholt, 1990.
- Received from Roland J. Krogstad his *Eidem Family History 1667-1989*. Photos, maps, charts, and documents, paperbound, 109 pages, 1990. The Eidems came from Selbu, Norway.
- Received *Grandmother's and Grandfather's Ancestors and Descendants: Rone and Krogness Families in America*, a translation of Ivar Eikrem's *Mormors og morfars slekt og etterslekt*, Molde, 1979. Typescript reproduction, paperbound, photos, 76 pages.
- Received from Norman Rone *Utvandrarhistorie frå Rindal* by Lars Nergård, paperbound, 1977. The emigrants are listed in order of departure and under the name of the farm from which they came. In scattered instances some biographical information is provided.
- Received from Carl Solberg *Tobias and Malinda Varland: Their Lives and Their Children* (94 pages, 1983), and *The Varland Family* (125 pages, 1987). Both are typescript reproductions containing photos, maps and other illustrations. Tobias Varland (1855-1931) left Rogaland in 1873 and settled in La Salle County, Illinois. *The Varland Family* includes a diary (73 pages) kept by Tobias.
- Received from Thomas Locke Dahle his *A History and Genealogy of the Dahle-Kittleston and Locke-Ness Families*. Typescript reproduction, hard cover, photos and maps, 254 pages, 1984.
- Received from Josefa and J. Harry Andersen their *Kaspersen-Hansen Family: Edward Martinus Hansen, Mandal, Norway, Genealogy*. Typescript reproduction, hard cover, photos, maps, documents and newspaper articles, 246 pages, 1986.
- Received from Frances Womeldorf Jeffers *Descendants of Ole Bendiksen and Bertha Sjursdatter: Johannes Arneson Flaten and Kari Olsdatter Dahl*, typescript reproduction, photos and charts, 45 pages, 1990. Flaten left Hafslø, Sogn, in 1875.
- Died. Jørund Mansåker (1921-1990), Norwegian scholar who specialized in how the Norwegian emigration to the States was treated in Norwegian literature. His book *Emigrasjon og diktning* came out in 1971. He was a visiting professor at St. Olaf College in 1955-56.
- Orm Øverland, English Institute, University of Bergen, has translated, edited, and introduced *Johan Schrøders Travels in Canada, 1863*, McGill-Queen's University Press, Quebec, Canada, 192 pages, \$24.95. Professor Øverland is spending the current academic year doing research in our archives. He will teach a course on Norwegian immigrant literature during the second semester at St. Olaf College.
- The Vesterheim Genealogical Center has more than reached its fund-raising goal of \$350,000. A grant from the John A. Johnson Foundation (amount unknown) was of significant help. Congratulations!
- The Center for Western Studies at Augustana College, Sioux Falls, S.D., has published *An Illustrated History of the Arts in South Dakota* by Arthur R. Huseboe. Huseboe is a member of the NAHA Executive Board.
- The Norwegian Emigration Center, Stavanger Norway, has published *Norse Heritage — 1989 Yearbook*. The book features articles by eleven different authors (Norwegian and American). 175 kroner (195 airmail).
- Died. Clarence Kilde (1905-1990), a devoted friend of the NAHA. After his retirement as an Episcopalian minister in 1978, he pursued a Master's degree in Scandinavian Studies, writing his dissertation on Waldemar Ager, which was published in condensed form in *Studies*, vol. 28. The material he gathered on Ager has been donated to the archives.
- Received from Oliver Olson *Memoirs of Pioneer Days* by Elias Steernerson, typescript reproduction, 40 pages. Elias was a son of Stenner Knutson who emigrated from Telemark in 1850 and settled in Houston County, Minnesota. Later the family moved to Polk County near Crookston, Minnesota. Elias Steernerson was a man of parts, school teacher, farmer, farm machinery and insurance salesman.