

The Norwegian-American Historical Association

Northfield, Minnesota

From the Secretary's Office to the Association Members



NUMBER 81

Editor, LLOYD HUSTVEDT

DECEMBER 1990

A Chair in Immigration Studies!

An earlier communication has been sent to the members of the NAHA telling of the plan to create a chair in Scandinavian-American Studies. What follows is therefore more a reminder than news in the usual sense.

The plan rises hardly from sudden impulse. St. Olaf College hoped that such a chair might be announced at its 1974 centennial. Efforts on the part of the College (though then unsuccessful) to aid us in our work did much to stimulate the NAHA to establish the Kenneth O. Bjork Chair in Immigration Studies which at the close of 1989 amounted to \$165,000, a figure that hardly justifies the term "chair." Yet, since 1980 income from this fund has made life easier for the editor by way of salary for an editorial assistant and other expenses related to preparing manuscripts for publication.

In 1974 St. Olaf College received a monetary gift from the Norwegian government, paid out over a period of five years. This gift plus later accrued interest now exceeds \$400,000. This endowment brought about the King Olav V professorship in Norwegian Studies. With the permission of the Norwegian government the college has redirected these funds to a new purpose with a new title: The King Olav V Chair in Scandinavian-American Studies. While considerable sums must yet be raised to bring about a self-sustaining chair, we do have a running start.

The NAHA and St. Olaf College have jointly prepared a detailed description of the functions of the chair and the duties of the occupant. Briefly stated, the occupant would carry a fifty percent teaching load which could be viewed as services to the college. The other half would be given to editorial duties, publication planning, research and supervision of research, work that could be construed as services to the NAHA.

As one of our board members noted, "Since we are destined to receive half of the benefits, it would seem proper that we provide half of the funds." Each institution will continue to control its separate endowment funds, only the income from both funds will be merged to maintain the chair.

Board Members and Officers for Coming Triennium

One of the main functions of our triennial meetings is to determine who will govern the NAHA for the coming three years. The members elect the executive board, and the board in turn elects its own officers. Seven members of the old board asked to be relieved of their duties and eight new members were added at the October 20th general meeting. A brief statement about each new member is provided later in this article. Save for the entry of a new vice president the officers remain the same.

Executive Board

President — Lawrence O. Hauge
First Vice President — Rolf Erickson
Second Vice President — Lois Rand

Secretary — Lloyd Hustvedt
Treasurer — Arthur E. Anderson III
Editor — Odd S. Lovoll

Re-elected

Arley Bjella, Henning C. Boe, John R. Christianson, Karen Davidson, Russell W. Fridley, Arthur Huseboe, Alf Lunder Knudsen, William Korsvik, and Marion J. Nelson.

New Board Members A Brief Introduction

Joan Naglestad Buckley, Professor of English, Concordia College, Moorhead, Minnesota, wrote her Ph.D. dissertation (University of Iowa) on the novelist Martha Ostenso. Together with

Einar Haugen, she translated and edited *Han Ola og han Per* and *More Han Ola og han Per*.

Robert B. Fering, attorney, Moss and Barnett, P.A., Minneapolis, studied at the University of Minnesota and received his law degree from Duke University and was admitted to the bar in Minnesota in 1975. He is also a CPA. Fering lives in Northfield, Minnesota.

Øyvind Gulliksen, American Studies *lektor* at Telemark College, Bø, Norway. His research and publications have dealt mainly with immigrants from Telemark. He recently replaced Dorothy Burton Skårdal as president of NAHA-Norway.

Todd W. Nichol, Assistant Professor in Church History at Luther Northwestern Seminary, St. Paul. His educational background includes St. Olaf college, Luther Seminary, and the Graduate Theological Union (Th.D.). He translated and edited our latest publication, *Vivacious Daughter*, the lectures of H. A. Preus.

Kathleen Stokker, Professor of Norwegian at Luther College, studied at St. Olaf College and the University of Wisconsin (Ph.D.). She has published a Norwegian language textbook and articles on Norwegian folklore, history and languages.

Judith Torvik lives in Norway. Beyond serving as treasurer for NAHA-Norway, she has played a strong leadership role in that organization since its inception in the early 80s. She holds degrees from St. Olaf College and the University of Oslo. Judith is American-born and moved to Norway when she married Dag Torvik, a medical doctor in Porsgrunn, where they also have their home.

Kevin Tvedt works for Compex, Inc., Los Angeles, a firm that provides litigation services to other law firms. He studied at the University of California-Berkeley (B.A.) and received his law degree from Southwestern University School of Law. Kevin Tvedt lives in Sylmar, California.

Solveig Zempel, Associate Professor, Department of Norwegian, St. Olaf College. She holds a B. A. degree from St. Olaf College and a Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota, writing her dissertation on the novels of Johannes B. Wist. Our next publication, *In Their Own Words: Letters from Norwegian Immigrants* has been edited, translated and introduced by Zempel.

Documenting the Immigrant Experience

Our editor, Odd Lovoll, was one of about forty immigration scholars, curators, and editors from the United States, Canada, and Europe invited to

a conference sponsored by the History Committee, Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation at the IDS Oak Ridge Convention Center in Chaska, Minnesota, November 15-17, 1990.

The purpose of the conference was to devise a collective strategy for preservation, collection development, and access to materials for immigration research, and to explore the feasibility of publishing a series of volumes to document the history of immigrant groups through their own writings on the immigrant experience.

Preliminary actions were taken to form a cooperative to spearhead the effort and to lobby Congress for support. It was estimated that on the average an investment of two million dollars would be required for each ethnic group. A pilot project to publish a series of documentary histories of ethnic groups with well established archival collections will likely be adopted.

Rølvaag-Boyesen Study

Neil T. Eckstein's *Marginal Man as Novelist: The Norwegian-American Writers, H.H. Boyesen and O.E. Rølvaag, as Critics of American Institutions* was recently released by Garland Publishing, New York and London. This study, based on Eckstein's Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1965, examines the social, economic, and political criticisms of Boyesen and Rølvaag.

Boyesen and Rølvaag held opposing views on the question of immigrant assimilation, yet they viewed American institutions from a similar critical perspective. The thrust of the study is that it was as "marginal men" that they spoke and wrote their most penetrating criticisms. A marginal man is understood as "one who is poised in psychological uncertainty between two (or more) social worlds . . . one of which is often dominant over the other; within which membership is . . . based upon birth or ancestry (race or nationality). . . ." The fifth chapter in this work appeared in *Studies*, volume 24.

Essays Available

A shipment of *Essays on Norwegian-American Literature and History* (volume II) has been received from NAHA-Norway. This book of 216 pages, edited by Øyvind T. Gulliksen, Ingeborg R. Kongslien, and Dina Toflsby, contains 17 papers presented by both Norwegians and Americans at the 1989 Hamar seminar on Norwegian-American literature and history, the third of its kind sponsored by NAHA-Norway. The cost (includes postage) is \$15.

Editorial

In Rølvaag's novel, *Giants in the Earth*, the consuming goal of the main characters is to provide a secure material and spiritual future for the coming generation. Berit's fears concern less her own welfare, and center more on the fear that without the civilizing forces of tradition, church and school, the coming generation will be reduced to materialistic barbarism. Per Hansa, the eternal optimist, entertains no such fears. It does not matter, he says, if they for a time live like moles in sod huts, as long as they do not end up living like that.

When there is evidence that a proper church congregation and a school will be established, Berit's dark mind finds some relief. Per Hansa's last recorded thoughts as he faces death in a snowstorm are musings about his youngest son, Peder Victorious, and the great things he will accomplish in the promised land. For the main characters in *Giants in the Earth*, meaning in life or the lack of it, rests in the future they visualize for the coming generation.

All politics aside, this theme stands in sharp contrast to recent developments in the "promised land." Some analysts have labeled the 80s as a "Decade of Greed." In a fiscal sense, others feel we have mortgaged our future generations. One might with justice ask whether some of Berit's fears have not come true; namely, that the neglect of transcendental values brings materialistic greed.

Now, the commentary above marks an effort to provide a philosophical dimension or perspective to our recent plan to establish together with St. Olaf College a Chair in Scandinavian-American Studies. The plan may well be as daring as that of conquering the prairie and all the hostile forces it embodied in Rølvaag's novel. The kinship with the novel goes further. The proposed chair concerns what durable values we will pass on to future generations. It concerns the transmission of tradition and lore worth preserving, and more specifically, such a chair will assure continued research, study, and publication in and the teaching of a discipline that might cease to exist if left to the shifting winds of popular mood or opinion. The creation of "chairs" in highly established disciplines is nice but not essential. They give relief to the salary budget and prestige to the occupier, but the discipline would be taught anyway. Endowed chairs attain highest educational significance when they guard against the neglect or even the extinction of a worthwhile discipline.

Barring later emulation by other ethnic groups, this "chair" would be the only one of its kind in

American education. It is difficult to conceive of any other plan that would better implement and safeguard the goals the NAHA laid down at its founding in 1925. Beyond being an idealistic investment in the future, such a chair would be a living, working, yes deeply human monument to the Norwegian people that settled in this country and their descendants. A monument that this writer believes to be as culturally valuable and to be sure more productive than those built of bronze or stone.

L.H.

Books

As a rule we have a waiting list for used out-of-print NAHA publications that come our way. At the moment some titles exceed advance requests. The number of copies available are entered in parentheses and the quoted prices include postage. In the interest of space only the titles have been entered.

Studies vols. 13 (3); 14 (2); 15 (2) \$15 each.

Frontier Parsonage: The Letters of Olaus Fredrik Duus, Norwegian Pastor in Wisconsin 1855-1858 (5) \$8.

Klondike Saga: The Chronicle of a Minnesota Gold Mining Company (1) \$10.

Norwegian Migration to America 1825-1860 (Arno Press reprint) (1) \$15.

Grass of the Earth: Immigrant Life in the Dakota Country (1) \$15.

A Chronicle of Old Muskego: The Diary of Søren Bache, 1839-1847 (2) \$15.

The Immigrant Takes his Stand: The Norwegian American Press and Public Affairs (4) \$8.

A Folk Epic: The Bygdelaag in America (2) \$15.

Makers of an American Immigrant Legacy: Essays in Honor of Kenneth Bjork. This book was sold out shortly after publication. Five new copies that were improperly shelved have come to light, \$12. Used copies (10) \$8.

Rasmus Bjorn Anderson: Pioneer Scholar (7) \$15.

Lady with the Pen (3) \$15.

Pathfinder for Norwegian Emigrants (3) \$15.

Norwegian Sailors in American Waters (1) \$12.

Norwegian Settlement in the United States (2 — one an Arno Press reprint) \$15.

Norwegian Literature

Book donations to the NAHA at times include Norwegian classics which fall outside of our collecting policy and generally duplicate what is already in the St. Olaf College library. We have five separate sets of the collected works of Henrik Ibsen in Norwegian (\$5 + \$3 postage per set).

Henrik Ibsen: Samlede Værker, Mindeudgave,

Gyldendal 1906, 5 vols. 1907, 5 vols.; 1908, 5 vols.

Henrik Ibsen: Samlede Værker, Gyldendal, 1914, 8 vols.

Henrik Ibsen: Samlede Værker, Standard utgave ved Didrik Arup Seip, Gyldendal, 1918, 8 vols.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson: Samlede Værker, Gyldendal, 1914, 10 vols. (\$10 + \$4 postage).

Jonas Lie: Samlede Værker, Mindeudgave, Gyldendal, 1908, 5 vols. (\$5 + \$3 postage).

Norwegian-American Literature

We have over time accumulated a number of novels by Norwegian-American authors, particularly works by O.E. Rølvaag and Waldemar Ager. Because these books vary in condition, uniform prices cannot be assessed and orders for these books should not be prepaid. Novels in excellent condition, regardless of author or title have been arbitrarily set at \$10 with downward adjustments for books ranging from good to fair: Rølvaag: *I de dage, Riket grundlegges, Peder Seier, Længselens baat, Amerika breve, Paa glemte veie, Omkring fædrearven, To tullinger*. Ager: *Kristus for Pilatus, Gamlelandets sønner, Hundepine, Paa veien til smeltepotten, Hverdagsfolk, Oberst Hegoghans gutter, Presten Conrad Walther Welde* (Aschehoug, Oslo, edition of *Kristus for Pilatus*).

News in Brief

• Received from Dalton C. Bergan his *A History of the Bergan Family, 1805-1987* and *The History of the Hugos-Hindøien Family, 1844-1983*. Both are paperbound typescript reproductions, maps, photos, and documents. 224 and 252 pages.

The Bergans left Numedal in 1866 and settled in Renville county, Minnesota. The Hugos/Hindøien family came from the Trondheim area and settled first in Iowa, 1871, and later home-

steaded in South Dakota.

• Received from Claire Groth the Papers of Assor Halstenson Groth. Groth emigrated from Hallingdal in 1852 and was a member of the Claus Laurits Clausen party that settled at St. Ansgar, Iowa. Assor provided lodging for many later immigrants, aided them in locating homesteads and gave financial assistance when needed. He kept a diary from 1874 to 1897. The papers include an extensive collection of letters from relatives, friends, Civil War soldiers, and early settlers in the Dakota territory. Unlike most collections we receive, this one was carefully organized upon receipt.

• Received from Historisk Kjeldskrift Institutt, Oslo, 60 America Letters, ranging from 1848 to 1893. Eighteen of the letters were written by Hans Øverland who settled in Warm Springs, Montana. Four different families in Norway were recipients of these letters written by relatives that emigrated to Illinois, Minnesota and Montana.

• Received from Nancy Enevold Hatcher her *The Ancestors and Descendants of Oliver Tostensen Enevold and Kari Eriksdatter Voldum Enevold*. Typescript reproduction, photos, maps and documents. The Enevolds settled in Goodhue county, Minnesota, in the early 1870s.

• Acquired. *Emigranter fra Hallingdal fra 1839 og framover*, compiled by Botolv Baklien, spiralbound typescript reproduction of 90 pages, 1990. Many sources have been used. For emigrants leaving after 1870 the so-called "Police Lists" (*Politikammers Emigrasjonsprotokoller*) are the main sources.

Note!

For reasons known only to the printers, our next publication, *In Their Own Words: Letters from Norwegian Immigrants*, by Solveig Zempel, will come out a month later than first announced. Distribution to members will take place in January.

NORWEGIAN-AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
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