

The Norwegian-American Historical Association

Northfield, Minnesota

1935—Number Two

March, 1935

NEWS LETTER

FROM
THE SECRETARY'S OFFICE
TO
THE ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

Monday April 29th the Executive Board will meet at the home of Mr. Arthur Andersen in Winnetka, Illinois, as the guests of Mr. and Mrs. Andersen. The day will be devoted to business matters of the Association. In the evening a general meeting will be held at the Chicago Norske Klub. The evening session will begin with a banquet which will be served at eight o'clock. The price per plate will be \$1.00. We hope to have many of our members from Chicago and vicinity present. And we would urge our members to invite their friends to come too. A good program is being prepared for the evening. Pleasantly vivid memories remain of the similar meeting held in these quarters in 1926.

The Norwegian-American Technical Society will meet in Chicago at the same time and we have been told that they may join us at this evening meeting. Many of the members of this Society are staunch supporters of the Norwegian-American Historical Association.

On to Chicago Norske Klub, Monday evening, April 29th, at eight o'clock!

ANOTHER ACCOMPLISHMENT

The Civil War Letters of Colonel Heg are in the press and will soon be ready for distribution. Through the courtesy of the Wisconsin Historical Society our Association has been given permission to publish these letters and our Managing Editor, Prof. Theodore C. Blegen, has again done us a great service by editing these letters. It is almost unbelievable what Mr. Blegen is able to accomplish for us when we consider the many other taxing duties he has to perform. This is a labor of love which seems to spring from an unlimited source.

FUND GROWS

Mr. O. M. Oleson, Fort Dodge, Iowa, has contributed \$100.00 toward the Colonel Heg Civil War Letters fund. This fund now amounts to \$1,350.00. We are still lacking about \$200.00.

LECTURES IN LONDON

Professor Marcus L. Hansen, a member of our Board of Editors, is giving a series of lectures on American immigration in the University of London this spring.

NEWS LETTER PRAISED

Many favorable comments on the New Letter have been received. A large number of our members have expressed the hope that funds will be provided to continue this project. Undoubtedly the Board will give this matter serious consideration at its next

THE ASSOCIATION

Will Be
TEN YEARS OLD
October 6th, 1935

meeting. We wish to remind our members of the fact that it is through the generosity of Mr. J. A. Holmboe that numbers one and two of the "Letter" have been made possible.

OUR PRESIDENT

Magnus Swenson came to America in 1868 when 14 years old.

He graduated from the University of Wisconsin in 1880 and taught chemistry there for three years.

He married in 1882 and had four daughters.

After a successful business career he returned to Madison in 1900, where he now resides.

Since his return to Madison he has held many positions of trust, among them being a member and president of the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Wisconsin Capitol Commission, Chairman of Wisconsin's Council of Defense and Food Administration during the war, and Chief of Mission of the American Relief Administration for Northern Europe under Hoover.

He is a director in the Norwegian America Line and also president of its American organization.

The University of Wisconsin has conferred on him the honorary degrees of Master of Science, Mechanical Engineer, and Doctor of Laws.

He has received the following decorations: United States Liberty Service Medal, St. Olaf of Norway, and White Rose of Finland.

WHAT OUR LEADERS SAY

On October 6, this year the Norwegian American Historical Association will pass the 10th milestone of its life upon the highway, as a messenger to present and future American and foreign student of the quantity, quality and worth of the material, cultural and spiritual contributions furnished by the Norwegian Americans to the building of America and American life and institutions.

The degree of success with which the Association, during the first decade of its existence and labors has pursued its objectives may be read in the record it has placed before the public in its publications. Only those men and women who have followed these publications and their contents, are able to judge fairly as to the usefulness and real merits of the mission undertaken by the Association. We dare say that its efforts during the first decennium are auspicious, and have won the approval of discriminating students of American historical source material.

As a charter member of the Association, and a firm believer in the importance and the value to our own

racial group, and to other Americans generally, of its mission, I have enjoyed to be associated with the men and women who from the beginning have been active in the ranks of its militant membership. It is an honor and a privilege to be a member of the Norwegian American Historical Association.

D. G. RISTAD,
Vice President.

Our financial position today, in my opinion, is good, which is due principally to the willingness and ability of a few men to make substantial contributions. Our membership (including sustaining members who pay \$10. and ordinary members who pay \$2. annually) has decreased from approximately 900 in 1930 to about 660 at present. This membership reflects the substantial interest of our people in their own history in the United States. We should have very many more members. I am wondering whether every present member could not send us at least one additional new member during 1935. Some day we shall have to cease boasting of the deeds of the Vikings of old and be satisfied to be judged by the record of our own doings here in the United States. It is that history which the Norwegian American Historical Association is busy recording for our own sons and daughters and for posterity in general.

BIRGER OSLAND,
Treasurer.

I am very sorry that I have been unable to attend the meetings of the "Norwegian American Historical Association" for some time, owing to other engagements or being away from home. But inasmuch as the balance of the members of the committee are so well qualified, and always willing to do this important work—why should I worry! I hope that all, who possibly can do so, will take out memberships in the association, and thereby help this fine organization to continue this most excellent and important work, which they so generously have done as a matter of love.

Yours very truly,
O. M. OLESON,
Member Executive Board.

THE ARCHIVES

Two things are essential to the growth and proper functioning of our organization. They are an active and representative membership, and a diligent search for materials that throw light on our history. The Association has its own archives as a depository for all such materials. The archives are located at St. Olaf College. The Secretary is often asked this question: "What are you interested in?" In answer to this question we wish to quote from the 1930 report of the Managing Editor.

"The Association strikes the note of tolerance and breadth of interest. 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 business men, 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, scholarship. 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 people in every section, helping us to understand the onward march of human forces, with all their baffling interrelationships."

THE NORWEGIAN AMERICAN HISTORICAL MUSEUM

When you plan your pleasure trips for the summer you should consider the possibility of a trip to Decorah, Iowa, to see the Norwegian American Historical Museum. Dr. Gjerset has built up an institution that is very much worth while seeing.

The museum has attracted the interest of many of our racial group with the result that valuable articles are constantly coming in to be placed in safekeeping. The most valuable contribution to the collection of recent date is the ship in which the Hamran brothers sailed across the Atlantic. This ship was purchased by Mr. Arthur Andersen of Winnetka, Illinois, and presented to the museum.

STE. GENEVIEVE, MISSOURI, Will Celebrate Its 200th Anniversary

From August 19 to August 22, both inclusive, the City of Ste. Genevieve, Missouri, will celebrate its 200th anniversary by historical pageantry and memorial services and addresses. The Governor of Missouri and official representatives of the French and Spanish governments will participate, the latter in commemoration of the early colonization of this region by these nations. The first brick house built west of the Mississippi River in 1799 is still a going concern in Ste. Genevieve.

Rev. J. B. Platisha, C. M., M. D., is directing the pageantry which will portray the successive Indian, Spanish, French, and American pioneer settlements at Ste. Genevieve.

NEW MEMBERS

Associate

Carl A. Bergendahl, Chicago, Ill.
Orville Dahl, Duluth, Minn.
C. M. Grastvedt, Northfield, Minn.
Marius Johnson, Minneapolis, Minn.
T. B. Madsen, Minneapolis, Minn.
Sam A. Rask, Blooming Prairie, Minn.
Herbert Roswell, Mauston, Wis.

Sustaining

Axel H. Oxholm, Washington, D. C.
Martin M. Tweeter, Elmhurst, Ill.

Life

Joseph M. Johnson, Chicago, Ill.