



Northfield, Minnesota

From the Secretary's Office to the Association Members

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Editor, LLOYD HUSTVEDT

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A Survey of 1977

As in former years, quiet but steady progress characterized the year 1977. Kenneth O. Bjork and his editorial assistants hold daily sessions where they weigh each sentence in the manuscripts they edit. Charlotte Jacobson, our Curator, underwent surgery in September and was away from her office for several months, but she is fortunately back at her desk. Elaine Kringen, Assistant Secretary, has now absorbed all the office routine in the NAHA. We are indebted to all of them.

Trends started earlier have not changed. The demand for services through correspondence continues to rise, involving checking, research, and xeroxing documents. Queries regarding family history are the most frequent. Inflation continues to make evident that the NAHA cannot fulfill its publishing mission on income from dues alone. Direct gifts and contributions are and will be essential. Valuable material continues to enter the Archives, and we urge that our members be alert to collections, papers, and organizational records which deserve a permanent home in it.

MEMBERSHIP

Our total membership stood at 1196 as of December 31, 1977. When deceased life members are added, as they should be because their dues are a part of a permanent fund, the figure is 1276. The patterns of growth and decline are indicated below:

	<i>January 1, 1977</i>	<i>December 31, 1977</i>	<i>Gain or Loss</i>
Associate	772	752	-20
Sustaining	163	172	+9
Patron	32	37	+5
Life	213	235	+22
	1180	1196	+16
Deceased			
Life	74	80	+6
	1254	1276	+22

Each year brings its own complicated patterns of membership transfer to higher or lower categories. For example, 28 new life members were added in 1977, but 17 of these had earlier held membership in other categories. The adjustments here were favorable: 59 members moved to higher categories, while 26 reduced their membership to associate.

A total of 107 members was added in 1977. Of these, 72 were associate, 15 sustaining, 9 patron, and 11 life. Cancellations, due to death or no response, amounted to 85, leaving a net membership gain of 22. While we regret the loss of so many members, the total membership is higher than it has ever been.

BOOK SALES

Book sales amounted to \$4379.99. Of this sum \$915.76 came as royalties from Twayne Publishers. Total sales were approximately \$1000 less than the record high set in 1976. Volume 27 of *Studies* understandably led sales with 172 copies; *Cultural Pluralism vs. Assimilation* was second with 100 copies. A total of 564 books was sold in 1977.

Of 59 NAHA publications, 15 are now out of print and 20 have an inventory of less than 100. Total copies in stock amount to 6777, reflecting an estimated income potential of \$35,000.

In the event members are planning to reduce their libraries, the NAHA would be happy to receive older NAHA publications.

GIFTS

The importance of contributions over and above dues has been indicated earlier. The cultivation of a generous attitude may prove to be more beneficial and less irritating than arbitrary increase in annual dues. Past patterns make clear that high cancellation figures follow a dues increase, often offsetting the anticipated additional income.

We are pleased to report that 37 members made contributions of \$10 or less. The NAHA received \$150 from Anne Blegen, \$125 from Clarence Clausen, \$100 from Freda Hovden and O. L. Hydle, \$75 from Gunner Gundersen and Harry J. Williams, \$50 from Harold Larson and Gladys Weseth Nelson. The following contributed between \$15-\$25: Harold Bakke, Ole Braaten, Myron Floren, Otto Glesne, George Hafstad, Sigvald Holden, Gerald Larsen, Adam Ristad, Lloyd Svendsbye, Sverre Svendsen, and Mrs. Francis Wendt. Thank you.



GOOD NEWS!

Three gifts to the NAHA merit special attention. The first is an unrestricted gift of securities amounting to \$5000. Proper acknowledgment is difficult because the donor requests anonymity, but this, of course, in no manner reduces the value of the contribution.

The second, in essence a joint gift from four donors amounting to some over \$2500, was specified for the Ole Edvart Rolvaag Memorial Fund. Of this amount, \$1000 was given by Attorney James Berdahl and his wife Ann. James Berdahl is a brother of the late Mrs. Ole (Jennie) Rolvaag. The balance comes from Karl F. Rolvaag and Ella Valborg (Rolvaag) Tweet. As is well known to NAHA members, Karl and Ella are son and daughter of the noted author.

The Rolvaag Memorial Fund has in the main been built up through life membership dues. The gift lifts that fund to approximately \$34,500. Only the accrued interest from this fund is used for operating expenses.

The third gift, amounting to \$718.05, came from the National Co-

ordinating Committee for the Norwegian Immigration Sesquicentennial 1975. Unlike most committees, this one closed its accounts with a surplus. It decided to contribute one-half of its surplus to the NAHA. The Committee's President, Arthur O. Davidson, and its Secretary-Treasurer, Erik J. Friis, presented the gift to the NAHA.

To all our generous friends mentioned above — a sincere thank you.

THE BERDAHL-ROLVAAG HOUSE

Plans are under way to restore what has come to be called the Berdahl-Rolvaag house, located some fifteen miles north of Sioux Falls, South Dakota. They also call for moving the building to the Augustana College campus in Sioux Falls.

The house, built by Anders Berdahl in 1881, replaced a sod hut. Berdahl was among the first pioneers to settle along Slip Up Creek in 1873. In this home Rolvaag heard about people, places, and events which he later used in *Giants in the Earth* and its sequels. Jennie Berdahl, Rol-

vaag's wife, was born in the house. It was also the location of the Rolvaag wedding reception and honeymoon in July, 1908.

James O. Berdahl of Sioux Falls, a son of Anders Berdahl, has donated the house and added a gift toward the cost of moving the building. Additional funds must, however, be raised for its restoration and maintenance. Apart from its connection with the Berdahl-Rolvaag family, the home is typical of the kind built by homesteaders throughout the Sioux River Valley.

NORWEGIAN-AMERICAN WRITERS

Under the supervision of Dorothy Burton Skaardal, a number of Norwegian students in the American Institute of the English department at the University of Oslo have undertaken to write their theses on Norwegian-American authors.

Some of the studies have already been completed and copies of the theses have been forwarded to the NAHA: "Lars Andreas Stenholt," by Odd-Gunnar Andreassen; "Dorthea Dahl," by Hilde Brungot; "Einar Lund," by Baard Meyer-Myklestad; "Johs. B. Wist," by Jan-Eirik Imbsen; "H. A. Foss," by Svein Ove Sandvik.

Other studies are in progress. Veslemoy Omenaas is working on Nicholas S. Hassel, Drew Rodgers on Simon Johnson, Liv Smith on Ole Buslett, Beth Hirsch on Antonette Tovsen, and Barbara Alnaes on Borg-hild Dahl.

These theses make a significant contribution to Norwegian-American studies.

A FOLK EPIC IN NORWEGIAN

Odd S. Lovoll's book, *A Folk Epic: The Bygdelag in America*, issued by NAHA in 1975, was recently published by Det Norske Samlaget in Norway under the title *Bygda i den Nye verda: Dei norsk-amerikanske bygdelaga*. The Norwegian edition is not a direct translation: the versatile Lovoll condensed the original into *nynorsk* for a Norwegian audience.

TWO WORKS ON ROLVAAG

Curtis D. Ruud, department of English at Augustana College, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, recently met the requirements for the Ph.D. by completing his dissertation, "The Dakota Prairie as Changing Force in Ole E. Rolvaag's *Giants in the Earth*." The dissertation, 300 typewritten pages, traces how the main characters in the novel attempt to come to terms with the land, "perhaps as if he or she were a new Adam or Eve in a New World."

The second work, by Aashild Sorheim, University of Oslo, is entitled *To fedreland — Eller intet* (Two Homelands — or Nothing). Miss Sorheim visited the NAHA several months ago and left a copy of her work for our collection.

NAHA RECEIVES NATIONAL GRANT

The National Historical Publications and Records Commission has awarded the NAHA a grant of \$4000, to support the publication of a book describing the content of our manuscript collection. The existing card catalogue descriptions will serve as a basis for the forthcoming volume. When published, it will be distributed to repositories throughout the country where researchers near and far away will have access to information about our Archives. In all likelihood, a large enough edition will be printed to provide a copy for each member. This is the first grant the NAHA has received from public sources.

AUTHORS SERIES VOLUME FOUR

The Association published late in 1977 and early in 1978 distributed copies to its members of John T. Flanagan's *Theodore C. Blegen: A Memoir*. Only 181 pages in length, it is a worthy tribute to our first Editor and a keen appraisal of his career as scholar and administrator.

Dr. Blegen served as Editor for the NAHA from 1925 to 1960. He was also director of the Minnesota Historical Society and, later, dean of the Graduate School at the University of Minnesota.

This book has been sent to all members whose current dues are paid. Any member not receiving this book should notify Elaine Kringen.

BALLADS BY BYE

The Norwegian American Cultural Institute, an arm of Sons of Norway, is publishing a collection of Erik Bye's ballads and poems under the title *Blow, Silver Wind*. The NAHA has agreed to support the printing of this book and a copy will be distributed to each member.

The ballads treat themes and topics relating to Norwegian-American life and some were written to commemorate the Sesquicentennial.

Erik Bye, a noted Norwegian television personality, produced in 1975 a long series of TV programs about Norwegian-American life. His book, *Harmonica under Open Sky* (translated title), an account of his vagabond days in America, was for several years a best seller in Norway. His ballad "Anna Lovinda," inspired by a tombstone inscription on the east coast, proved to be equally popular.

This publication will contain an introduction by Eric Severeid.

AN OLD REFRAIN

Even beautiful music can get tiresome if the same string is plucked too often. Nevertheless, we strike a familiar and perhaps a tedious note.

Analysis of our recruitment methods reveal that existing members are the most successful recruiters. This does not hold true in terms of numbers, but they do provide the NAHA with new members who tend to support the Association with a greater degree of permanence. One cannot escape the thought that only they can reach the many who, in fact, might have become members years ago, had there been proper external stimulation.

Statistics concerning the acquisition of new members can be misleading. For example, one member who is faithful over thirty years makes a greater contribution than thirty who drop out after a short time. One hundred new members might look impressive on an annual report, but it is possible that a mere ten new ones with long-range commitments could prove to be more valuable.

For these reasons we are grateful to all who explore their own circles for additional members. Their efforts are effective and appreciated. It follows as a matter of course that we encourage similar efforts by those who have not yet done so. A word of gratitude must be extended to the "old-timers." The comments made earlier make clear how important is their contribution. For all those who do not qualify as "old-timers," we have consolation. If they pay their annual dues regularly, time will take care of that problem.

NORWEGIAN-AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
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