

# The Norwegian-American Historical Association

Northfield, Minnesota



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

NUMBER 67

Editor, LLOYD HUSTVEDT

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## The Year That Was

On the whole 1983 was a good year. Our publication program moved along at its customary tempo. The archives added much new material and processing kept pace with incoming acquisitions. The archives saw steady use by researchers, including several scholars from Norway whose stay added up to months. Book sales produced an income of \$6,200, and the overall financial picture looks good. Only in the area of membership did we suffer a loss.

### Membership

The year began with 1,296 members and closed with 1,272. New members totaled 70, but there were also 94 cancellations for a net loss of 24. As of December 31, 1983, the breakdown stood as follows: Associate, 635; Sustaining, 160; Patron, 34; Life, 443. An encouraging feature was that the life membership roster increased by 24 members.

### Financial

This was the first year that the accrued interest from the Kenneth O. Bjork Chair in Immigration History was directed toward its specific purposes and it helped a great deal. No special fund raising campaigns were conducted, yet the Chair Fund attracted \$4,500 in gifts. The O. E. Rolvaag Memorial Fund (permanent) saw an increase of \$8,000 through life membership dues and direct contributions. In fact, income from investments (\$13,700) exceeded slightly income from dues (\$13,500) in 1983. In this connection, we might add that our Treasurer, Arthur E. Andersen, is an astute investor. How the NAHA managed in its earlier years when

dues alone had to carry the day is now difficult to understand.

### Looking Ahead

Our editor informs us that publishing plans are reasonably concrete for the next four years. We hope to continue to build our permanent funds through "voluntary increase in dues" which in essence are gifts and are allocated to these funds.

A neglected area in the archives has been the Norwegian-American newspapers. Correction should take place in two stages: First, the purchase of microfilm copies of those newspapers that have been microfilmed by other repositories; second, the microfilming of our own newspaper holdings that are not duplicated on microfilm elsewhere.

We must regain lost ground in the area of membership, emphasizing subscription to life memberships. We need to continue to urge Norwegian-American organizations to subscribe to institutional memberships (life) in the NAHA. Since the NAHA does, or eventually will, house and preserve the records, minutes and files of these organizations, such action seems appropriate.

### "Scandinavians and Other Immigrants in Urban America"

The NAHA and St. Olaf College are jointly sponsoring a research conference that will convene on the St. Olaf College campus on October 26-27, 1984. The conference, which is being funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, will assemble a distinguished panel of scholars. The keynote address will be delivered by Dr. John Higham, John Martin

Vincent Professor of History at the Johns Hopkins University.

The discussion will focus on the Scandinavians who settled in America's great cities and compare and contrast their experience with the life of their urban neighbors of other nationalities. Program director is Dr. Odd S. Lovoll, who has developed the form and content of the conference. Association members are welcome to attend.

## Migration Studies Everywhere!

For one interested in Scandinavian migration, there is no lack of conferences to attend in 1984 which treat that topic. The Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Study, meeting at the University of Washington, Seattle, May 3-5, offers sections where papers will be read on "Scandinavian Immigrant Newspapers in the United States" and on "Immigration in Fact and Fiction."

The International Association of Scandinavian Studies, also meeting in Seattle, August 12-18, will conduct its conference under the theme "Scandinavian Literature in a Trans-cultural Context." One segment of the program will deal with "The Immigrant Syndrome and Literary Authorship." A workshop will also be conducted, dealing exclusively with immigrant literature.

Nine days later (August 27-30), an international conference entitled "Scandinavian Migration and Assimilation," involving scholars from the Scandinavian countries and the United States, will be held at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, Wisconsin.

Should one happen to be in Norway in June, remarkable things are taking place in Oslo. The exhibit, *Reisen til Amerika* (The Journey to America) will open June 23 at Høvikodden (Oslo), the art center established by Sonja Henie and her husband Niels Onstad in 1961. This exhibit, an outgrowth of Odd Lovoll's book *Det løfterike landet* (*The Promise of America*), will be shown

in this country in 1985. It will travel first to Houston, Texas, and then go to the Minnesota Historical Society in the spring of that year.

As a supplement to the opening of the exhibit, the Norway chapter of the Norwegian-American Historical Association is sponsoring a five-day "Symposium on Norwegian-American Culture," June 26-30. The first three days will be devoted to Norwegian-American literature. This segment of the program is under the supervision of Dr. Dorothy Burton Skårdal of the American Institute at the University of Oslo. The final two days will focus on history. This portion of the program is being guided by Dr. Kjetil Flatin, Director of the International Summer School in Oslo and a member of the NAHA Executive Board. Other persons in Norway close to the NAHA have helped to plan this event, among them Dr. Ingrid Semmingsen. To prevent any misunderstanding, it should be mentioned that the NAHA has only peripheral connections with the exhibit itself, which in the main has been promoted by the University of Oslo Press.

Finally, there is the October Conference sponsored by the NAHA and St. Olaf College. This is treated separately in this *Newsletter*.

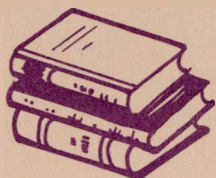
## Elaine Kringen Retires

Elaine Kringen, who has served the NAHA as Assistant Secretary for thirteen years, retired April 1. No officer in the Association has worked more closely with the members than she. She has processed the new members, recorded and receipted annual membership dues, and dropped from the roster those who refused to pay them. She has prepared the monthly reports, managed the book sales, typed final copy of manuscripts destined for the publishers and later supervised the distribution of the finished product in form of publications. She has answered thousands of phone calls and received hundreds of visitors. Elaine Kringen brought efficiency, precision and integrity to her position. We shall miss her.

## More America Letters

Letters written by Norwegian immigrants to friends and relatives in Norway continue to fascinate both the general reader and the professional historian. They have been referred to as the "fires that burn behind the footnotes." The University of Minnesota Press in cooperation with the NAHA has drawn up preliminary plans for publishing a collection of such letters. Because earlier publications, like Theodore C. Blegen's *Land of Their Choice*, and NAHA titles under the Travel and Description series, deal mostly with the early migration period, this volume will focus more on the later period, 1880-1950.

Dr. Solveig Zempel, Department of Norwegian at St. Olaf College, has been assigned the task of collecting, translating and editing this forthcoming collection. She would welcome receiving originals or copies of "America" letters which have not found their way into any repository. It is too early to predict when this volume will see publication.



## Our Next Publication

*The Promise of America*, by Odd Lovoll, which first appeared in Norway under the title *Det løfterike landet*, will see publication early this summer and should be distributed to the NAHA members this coming fall. The book, published jointly by the University of Minnesota Press and the NAHA, will have both paperback and hard bound editions. The NAHA will deal only in the hard bound cover, which will retail at \$35. Because of its size (10½" x 10") and its abundance of illustrations (a veritable photo album), the book differs greatly from earlier NAHA publications. The cost of publication will hardly be met under our current dues structure, but if there is adequate income from sales, expenses should be met.

The Norwegian version has been exceedingly well received in Norway, with laudatory reviews appearing in newspapers throughout the country. It has already undergone a second printing. We have indicated elsewhere that the book stimulated the emigrant exhibit to open June 23 in Oslo.

## Announcements

- The Triennial meeting will be held September 28 in Minneapolis. Specific details as to program and location will be announced later.
  - Members are urged to inform the secretary in case there is a change of address. Books are not forwarded by the post office. A return to us means double postage. A second mailing to the correct address means triple postage.
  - Strange as it may seem, we do not encourage gift memberships unless they are in the life category. If lower category memberships are given as gifts, a statement should be made as to which party should receive future statements for dues. If the gift membership is meant to be perpetual, all is well.
  - There are three billing periods for dues, January, May, September. A member's billing period is determined by the date membership subscription was received. Persons joining from January to April are billed in January, those from May to August in May, and those from September to December in September. In a word, membership periods are not restricted to the calendar year. The membership card which is detached from the statement indicates the category of membership held the previous year.
- We would be much helped if the need for second notices for dues could be reduced, if not eliminated.
- Our latest publication, *On Both Sides of the Ocean: A Part of Per Hagen's Journey*, translated by Harald Naess and Kate Stafford, has been distributed to all members. Should your copy not have arrived please, notify the secretary.

## Family Historian Awarded

Mrs. K. J. (Jennie) Hanson of Forest City, Iowa, was awarded a plaque by the NAHA, recognizing her outstanding work in family history, on December 2, 1983. Her original work, *The Hanson Heritage* (2 volumes), has stimulated the publication of two additional volumes on the same family. These publications excell in organization, in photograph reproduction, and in quality of paper and printing.

Robert Lillestrand and Reidar Dittmann, both members of the Executive Board, arranged the event. Also present at the award dinner held in Forest City were Odd Lovoll, Kenneth O. Bjork and Carola Bjørklund, Norwegian Consul in Minneapolis. Mrs. Jennie Hanson, lively and gracious, is ninety-seven years old. She is the mother of John K. Hanson, founder and chairman of the board of Winnebago Industries.

## News in Brief

- Received from Leif Hovelsen, *The Flying Norseman*, an account of the famous skier Carl Hovelsen (1877-1955). Hovelsen first made a name for himself in Norway and later came to the United States where he dominated and promoted the skiing sport for many years. Published by National Ski Hall of Fame Press, Ishpeming, Michigan, 1983. Paperback, 132 pages. The author, Leif, is a son of Carl.
- Received from Selma S. Casberg, *The Olstad Family* (typescript reproduction), 1983, 183 pages, a carefully prepared and richly illustrated family history. In the main it treats family lineage, with some narrative inserted.
- Kari Bye, Estes Park, Colorado, informs us that plans are being made for an emigration celebration at Voss, Norway, in the summer of 1986. The first emigrants left that community in 1836. The festivities would be a joint venture between Voss and Norwegian-Americans whose origins go back to that region.
- Received from the Aust-Agder (Archives in Arendal, Norway) sixty-eight America letters, transcribed in typewritten form. The letters cover the years 1895-1896 and have their origin in Brooklyn, New York and nearby points.

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