

**The Norwegian-American
Historical Association**

Northfield, Minnesota



From the Secretary's Office to the Association Members

NUMBER 52

Editor, LLOYD HUSTVEDT

OCTOBER, 1976

October--Promotion Month

The Executive Committee of the NAHA declared that October of each year should be set aside for intensive promotion. Promotion here is understood as any activity which would make the NAHA better known throughout our country and especially in areas where support can be expected.

The Committee believed that simultaneous effort on the part of many would stimulate a sense of solidarity, would prod the reluctant and give courage to the timid. It also hoped that a limited time period with a prescribed beginning and end would make the promotional task more appealing.

The members of the Executive Board will be participating, but their reach is limited to the region in which they live, and they will need help from the membership at large. Below are listed several guidelines which the members are invited to consider.

INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERSHIP

Encourage Norwegian-affiliated organizations in your community or of which you may be a member to subscribe to an institutional life membership. Past experience has made clear that memberships which call for annual payment of dues are less successful. Most organizations have an annual change of officers with the result statements for dues frequently get lost in the transfer process. Those with a modest treasury should be encouraged to allocate certain sums over a period of time until the required \$100 is reached. One need not be apologetic in this matter. The NAHA provides many services for these organizations and will ultimately process, preserve, and house their minutes, journals and records. When rightly conceived, the NAHA is a service organization for all other organizations.

GIFT MEMBERSHIP

Consider a life membership for your children, nephews or nieces, or for anyone else you feel deserving of an enduring gift. No matter how well intentioned, a gift membership of one year only, wherein the recipient is expected to continue paying later dues, has its pitfalls. In some cases they can cause diplomatic problems wherein the recipient feels that he has been tricked into membership. Life memberships given to persons representing the younger generation will make for a more secure future.

PUBLICATIONS

If not already a practice, consider ways and means to have the NAHA publications placed in your local or high school library. One method would be the outright purchase of available past publications and a standing order for future ones. More successful perhaps would be an arrangement whereby a local organization subscribes to a life membership and requests that the publications be automatically sent to a library of its choice.

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PROMOTION

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RECRUITMENT OF INDIVIDUALS

The true life line of the Association has been and will continue to be individual memberships, regardless of category. A word to an acquaintance or a friend as one goes about one's duties of the day or at a social function can produce remarkable results. In some cases a phone call or a short note will suffice. Other members prefer to send names of acquaintances to the Secretary's office, which in turn writes letters of invitation. Members who have done this in the past have rendered the NAHA a great service because the response is generally good.

The Executive Committee does not wish to overburden faithful members. One productive gesture from each some time in October would alone make 1976 a record year in growth.

DET NORSKE SELSKAP ABSORBED BY NAHA

Det Norske Selskap i Amerika (The Norwegian Society), founded in 1903, has transferred its assets of approximately \$5,000 to the NAHA. Although the Society never attained the support it had envisioned, it was for many years a cultural and literary stimulant among the Norwegian Americans. It published from 1905 to 1919 a journal entitled *Kvartalskrift* with Waldemar Ager as editor.

In recent years the Society had been reduced to a board of trustees that met once a year to disburse accrued income. It has subsidized the publication of Norwegian-language teaching materials, provided scholarships for the International Summer School in Oslo, and in more recent years directed a large portion of its income to the Concordia Norwegian Language Camp. At each meeting the board members ceremoniously paid their annual dues of one dollar, the Society's only source of external income. The good humor and fellowship which attended this ritual was, however, worth much more.

The fund originated in a gift from the Qvale family of Wisconsin in mem-

ory of their son, Sigvald. For many years the fund sponsored the Sigvald Qvale Memorial Declamatory Contest, popular in schools and in Norwegian urban and rural communities. Winners were awarded a silver medal, and they in turn could compete with each other for a gold medal.

Under the leadership of Odd S. Lovoll, a selection of essays and articles from *Kvartalskrift* have been translated and will be published. This publication will make a suitable monument for a proud organization which has officially ceased to exist.

The Society's assets will remain a separate and permanent fund, and the NAHA will utilize its income in harmony with the former objectives of the Society.

TWO APPEALS

Not all requests for announcements are published in the Newsletter, but the two below deserve our attention.

The Committee for Local History in Bø, Telemark, would like to have the names and addresses of immigrants (individuals and their descendants) who came from Bø. This information, needed for a book on emigrants from that parish, should be sent to Mrs. Sina Sande, 3800 Bø, Telemark, Norway.

The National Endowment for the Arts is planning a nationwide craft arts survey. If you are a craftsman working in materials, techniques, and designs which continue the craft traditions of your country of origin (occupation or hobby), you should send your name, address, and a description of your craftwork to Craft Survey Plan, Suite 416, 2101 L Street N.W., Washington, D. C. 20037.

KIND WORDS

"The Kristofer Janson biography was a magnificent publication. I thoroughly enjoyed reading it and learned so much about my home state history. The author and your board are to be congratulated."

DR. HANS LILLEVIK

RØLVAAG SEMINAR

In observance of the 100th anniversary of Ole Edvart Rølvaag's birth, a three-day seminar (June 24-27, 1976) was held on the island of Dønna in northern Norway, where Rølvaag was born and lived until he was twenty years old.

The participants were many and their topics varied. Aksel Coldevin, a local historian and descendant of the manor family on Dønna, lectured on social and economic conditions at the time Rølvaag emigrated. Arnfinn Engen spoke on emigration in general. Gudrun Hovde Gvaale from Telemark and author of Rølvaag's biography, *O. E. Rølvaag: nordmann og amerikaner*, presented two lectures on Rølvaag as author. Unn Ribe, a young scholar of emigration from Trondheim, read a paper on women characters in Rølvaag's novels. Lloyd Hustvedt of St. Olaf College gave two papers, one on Norwegian-American literature before Rølvaag and the other on Rølvaag as cultural leader. Ella Valborg Tweet, Rølvaag's daughter, read a well-received paper which can be best summed up under the heading "Life with Father." Ingrid Semmingsen, Norway's leading historian of emigration, was scheduled to participate but could not attend because of temporary illness.

The major promoter of the seminar was Halldor Sandvin, headmaster (rektor) of Framnes Folk High School in Hardanger. He was formerly the rektor of a folk high school in Rognan, not far from Bodø, where in 1975 he spearheaded a seminar under the title *Det Norske Amerika*.

Jon Austad, Director of Schools at Dønna, co-ordinated all local arrangements, including the housing and feeding of guests, a tour along the Dønna coastline in a large fishing vessel, a tour to the Rølvaag homestead and other sites, a festive evening with good food, music and speeches, and finally the ceremony of unveiling Rølvaag's bust, which now stands next to the Rølvaag homestead.

Assisting in the arrangements was Johan Hambro of Nordmanns Forbundet. Bjarne Guttormsen represented Nordmanns Forbundet at the seminar

and was the main speaker at the evening program. He also performed the unveiling, representing Aschehoug, Rølvaag's Oslo publishers, who financed the preparation of the bust.

The unveiling ceremony, which followed Sunday church services, attracted a large audience and was a moving affair. The veil was not woven of traditional velvet or silk, but was an old and worn piece of sailcloth. The bust understandably faces west.

Nature at Dønna is dramatic and spectacular. In June there were twenty-four hours of daylight.

KENNETH O. BJORK HONORED

Our Editor, Professor Kenneth O. Bjork, returned from Norway on September 6. His mission to that country had been an unusually pleasant one. On September 2, the University of Oslo conferred upon him an honorary doctor of philosophy degree. The ceremony took place in the Aula, the Old University's sanctified auditorium on Karl Johan, Oslo's main street.

In his response, Dr. Bjork noted that his work in the NAHA had undoubtedly done much to bring about this recognition, and for this reason he hoped that the honor might be shared with all who have actively supported the Association.

MEMBERSHIP

In 1975 there were 174 new members, 52 cancellations, or a net gain of 122 members.

Through September 20 of 1976, there have been 101 new members, 60 cancellations, a net gain of 41.

Membership Totals through September 20, 1976

	Jan. 1, 1976	Sept. 20, 1976	Gain or Loss
Associate	741	781	+40
Sustaining	189	161	-28
Patron	38	32	-6
Life	167	202	+35
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	1135	1176	+41

Note the significant increase in Life memberships.

HERITAGE RESOURCE CENTER

Elaine and Charles Graham now operate the Heritage Resource Center, formerly owned by Paul Rusten. The Grahams have exclusive sale of all American-Scandinavian Foundation publications and carry the NAHA publications and many other ethnically orientated books. It is a home operation and trade is mail conducted. All queries should be sent to Heritage Resource Center, Box 26305, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55426. The Grahams provide a valuable service and we wish them well.

CONGRATULATIONS TO LOVOLL

Two honors have recently come to Dr. Odd S. Lovoll. The State Historical Society of Wisconsin presented him their "Award of Merit" for his recent book, *A Folk Epic: The Bygdelag in America*. The award was given in June. Last week he received the news that the Immigration Fund of 1975 had elected him to receive a study grant of \$4,000. The Immigration Fund is sponsored by the Norwegian Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The total appropriations for 1975 amounted to \$15,000. Five awards were given. There were seventy applicants.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

We are happy that researchers continue their use of the Archives. Almost daily requests come from persons of Norwegian descent inquiring about genealogy and family history. There is a wealth of information in the Archives, especially in the Rowberg and Carl G. O. Hansen files.

Two researchers who have done more extensive work were here at the end of the school year. Miss Hilde Brungot, student at the University of Oslo, looked up material for her thesis on Dorthea Dahl, Norwegian-American writer. Dr. Peter L. Petersen, of the department of history at West Texas State University, continued his study of the Grevstad Papers in connection with a paper on Texas history. Dr. Petersen has promised to add to our collections dealing with Norwegians in Texas.

At the end of the summer Mr. Forrest Brown, librarian at St. Olaf College, arranged for a meeting of librarians in the area to discuss resources for genealogical study. Present were Mr. Oivind Hovde of Luther College, Mr. Verlyn Anderson of Concordia College, Mr. Gerhard Næseth of the University of Wisconsin, Mr. Brown and Miss Charlotte Jacobson, curator of the Archives. The meeting was very helpful in making available to each of the participants information about resources outside his own institution.

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