

# The Norwegian-American Historical Association

Northfield, Minnesota



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

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Editor, LLOYD HUSTVEDT

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## *Lovoll Named to New Chair*

It hardly comes as a surprise that our editor, Odd S. Lovoll, Professor of Norwegian and History at St. Olaf College, was named recently by President Melvin D. George to be the first holder of the King Olav V Chair in Scandinavian-American Studies, effective as of September 1. The chair will be inaugurated on November 6, St. Olaf College's Founder's Day. Members will receive a brochure in September detailing the two-day program.

In terms of the new position that will be his, Dr. Lovoll offers an ideal background. After higher education and some years of teaching in Norway, he — together with his wife Else and two children, Audrey and Ronald — moved to the States in 1967 to study American history. He earned his MA at the University of North Dakota and his Ph.D. at the University of Minnesota. While he built foundations in history as a discipline, he also turned his attention to the Norwegian-American scene. He explored Norwegian-American newspapers and his Ph.D. dissertation was later published by the NAHA (1975) under the title *A Folk Epic: The Bygdelag in America*. His *Promise of America* (1984) was first published in Norway—*Det løfterike landet*. He manages both the English and Norwegian languages with equal competence. His *Century of Urban Life: The Norwegians in Chicago before 1930*, published in 1988, opened an area in immigration studies that had received little earlier attention. We will not attempt to account for Lovoll's many articles and papers that further support his qualifications.

## **Improved Working Conditions**

Lovoll's life may not be dramatically changed because of the new position. The chair stipulates that the holder shall serve as editor of the NAHA publications. But, he is already in his twelfth year as editor and 19 publications have come to life during his watch. The position, however, assures the editor of a reduced teaching load so as to provide time for research and editorial work. The fact that the editorial duties are now a component of a position as opposed to being an extra or supplemental task is a significant change and will make for better working conditions.

## **Editorial Responsibilities**

Because editorial work does not call much attention to itself, a hasty survey of the editor's major responsibilities is in order. The editor must pass judgment on submitted manuscripts. There are hours of meticulous and at times tedious grooming of manuscripts, making them fit for publication. This is followed by reading several sets of page-proof. It is the function of editors to make authors look better than they really are, but not all authors agree with this. The editor must formulate a long range publication program. Sometimes a suitable manuscript will fall from the sky, as the saying goes, but this is rare. More often the editor must solicit manuscripts, encourage others to be written, and maintain a lively contact with migration scholars both in the States and in Norway. When things are going well, the editor knows what books will be published five years into the future.

The NAHA is fortunate and its future is a promising one. It shares in an endowed chair that will support our publication program, and a competent editor has been appointed to fill that position. As we congratulate ourselves, we congratulate Odd S. Lovoll on his appointment. While we are at it, we also thank him for all that he has already done for the NAHA during the past 12 years.

## NAHA Moves into New Quarters

After a year of living in improvised facilities, the NAHA has recently moved into its new and permanent quarters on the second level of the St. Olaf College library. It occupies a separate area in the library set aside for special collections. Close neighbors are the St. Olaf College Archives and The Kierkegaard Library. Except, however, for a common conference room, each party has completely separate quarters.

The new facilities provide separate offices for the archivist, editor, secretary, and the assistant secretary. The last mentioned office doubles as a reception area. The former facilities did not provide an office for the editor. Now, fortunately all functions of the NAHA are housed close to each other.

The archives utilize a system called "compact shelving." The shelves rest on tracks and can with ease be moved from side to side in order to create the needed corridor whenever document cases are removed from or returned to the shelves. This system is 80 percent more efficient than stationary shelves with permanent corridors. A work room is located at the rear of the archives.

### A Bit of History

When the Rølvaag Memorial Library was finished in 1942, President Lars Boe set aside the 7th stack level of that library for the NAHA. These quarters were spacious, but hardly attractive, and there were no individual offices. Visitors were rare.

The NAHA moved into smaller but much more polished quarters when an addition to the original library was completed in 1964. There were separate offices for the archivist and secretary. The new facilities combined with the organization of the archives along professional lines introduced a new era for the NAHA when it came to receiving visitors and serving researchers.

Now 28 years later the NAHA occupies its third home in the St. Olaf College library. A home that adequately meets our needs and one that is most pleasant, if not downright elegant. When opportunity affords, do not fail to pay a visit. It would be a delight to show you around.

We are a fortunate group. All this has come to us at no cost to the NAHA. But we can reciprocate, indirectly perhaps, by building our Bjork endowment fund to the needed level for a full partnership with St. Olaf College in sustaining the King Olav V Chair. The new quarters provided by the College makes it imperative that we do so.

## A Farewell to Harry

Memorial services were held for Harry L. Williams (1895-1992) on January 16, at the Kenilworth Union Church, Kenilworth, Illinois. Throughout his long life he supported vigorously many idealistic and benevolent causes. Among these was the NAHA. He was a member of the executive board for 20 years. He was a generous spirit, the ultimate gentlemen, ever kind and concerned, and astute in matters of business and organizational life. His many contributions to the NAHA went unheralded, because he requested anonymity. This much can be said without fear of betrayal. His enduring interest made the NAHA a better organization.

## NAHA Receives Major Bequests

A bequest of \$30,000 was received recently from the Harry L. Williams Estate. The late Leif J. Melgaard provided a bequest of \$20,500. Both gifts have been allocated to the Kenneth O. Bjork Chair Fund.

Leif Melgaard died March 9, 1991 in Minneapolis at the age of 92. Though a cabinet maker by trade, he became renowned as a woodcarver. He was the first Minnesotan to receive a National Heritage Award for his accomplishment in a traditional arts field. Melgaard was born on a farm in Gudbrandsdalen and emigrated to the United States in 1920. A feature story about him appeared in the Minneapolis *Star Tribune*, July 8, 1985. A separate article on Harry L. Williams appears elsewhere in this newsletter.

## Editorial

Elsewhere in this *Newsletter* appears the good news that the King Olav V Chair in Scandinavian-American Studies will be inaugurated this coming November and that Odd S. Lovoll has been named to fill that chair, effective, September 1. Less heartening is the fact that we have yet a distance to go before the NAHA obligations to the forthcoming chair have been met. Our Bjork Fund now stands at a little more than \$300,000, leaving \$200,000 yet to be raised in order to provide a wholly honest inauguration.

The NAHA officers are currently busy with an appeal for funds from non-members, mainly the business community and its leaders. The officers hoped that further solicitation from the NAHA members would not be needed, but circumstance dictates otherwise. The members are

invited to consider a second contribution, or a first one if none has been made earlier. No formal letter of appeal will be mailed, but when statements for dues are sent a note will be included requesting that a contribution over and above the dues be made. There are 1700 of us now. If we share the load, our goal is manageable. The Executive Committee has ruled that all future unspecified gifts to the Association are to be allocated to the chair fund and will remain in force until our obligations to the chair have been met.

It is never easy to grasp fully the many beneficial implications of a new enterprise, not least one that is educational in nature. One thing is certain, the forthcoming chair will secure the interests and the program of the NAHA for years to come. This writer believes that coming generations will praise us for our foresight.

L.H.

## Random News

\*Received from Egil A. Gundersen his *Oscar Borg: Norges Marsjkonge*, Skien, Norway 1991, 120 pages. Borg's (1851-1930) largest composition, "Leif Erikson" (solo, choir, and orchestra) was composed for Nordmennene's Chorus in Chicago. The notes unfortunately arrived too late to be included in a concert given during the 1893 World's Fair.

\*Received from Rolf Erickson his *A Walking Tour of Lessor Cemetery, Shawano County, Wisconsin*. Typescript reproduction, spiral bound, 37 pages, 1992. A brief history of the cemetery is combined with a listing of names of those buried at this cemetery.

\*Received from Arlene J. Pettersen her *The Ancestors and Descendants of the Vardals Who Came from Åsen to Stillwater*. Typescript reproduction, photos and maps, hardcover, 190 pages, 1991. This Åsen is in Nord Trøndelag.

\*Received *Swedish-American Life in Chicago: Cultural and Urban Aspects of an Emigrant People*. Edited by Philip J. Anderson and Dag Blanck, University of Illinois Press, 1992, price \$42.50. The book contains 22 articles by as many authors. "Swedish-American Artists and Their Exhibitions" was written by Rolf Erickson, and "A Scandinavian Melting Pot in Chicago" by Odd S. Lovoll.

\*Received from Sigurd Urberg *En synodeprest blir teksthistorie: Søren S. Urberg i Wisconsin 1893-1930* by Øyvind T. Gulliksen, Telemark distriktshøgskole, Bø, Norway, 1992. A typescript reproduction of 8 pages.

\*Received from Robert Firing *The Norwegian Hardanger Violin in the Upper Midwest*,

an MA dissertation, University of Minnesota, by Kevin Francis Hoeschen, 1989. Spiral bound, 278 pages.

\*Received from Christine Green (b. 1895) her *Five Centuries of Pioneering*. Helena, Montana, hard cover, 115 pages. Christine, one of 12 children born to Halvor and Marie Sandness, grew up near Melville, Montana, a Norwegian settlement started in 1879. Her parents moved from Rushford, Minnesota, to Melville in 1888. She was an elementary school teacher.

\*Received *In America the Men Milk the Cows: Factors of Gender, Ethnicity and Religion in the Americanization of Norwegian American Women* by L. DeAne Lagerquist, Carlson Publishing, Inc., Brooklyn, NY, 1991. Edited by Jerald C. Brauer and Martin E. Marty, 255 pages.

\*Received from Rolf Erickson *Bright Patches* by Norman Reitan, edited by Rolf H. Erickson and Wilbert S. Peterson. Paperbound typescript reproduction, 87 pages, Chicago 1991. Norman Reitan, a founding partner of the Reitan-Lerdahl Insurance Company, Madison, Wisconsin, wrote a number of sketches and stories that drew upon his own experiences and those of his family. Erickson and Peterson have gathered them under one cover.

\*Received from Myles C. Stenshoel his *Nels Peter Stenshoel, 1864-1941*. Stenshoel, a mortician by trade in Crookston, Minnesota, was a liberal political voice and a defender of the unfortunate and economically oppressed. A number of his articles, written in Norwegian, appear in English in this work. 1991. 40 pages.

\*Received from Jens T. Anker his *I Remember 1940*. After living in Chicago for six years, Anker returned to Norway with his mother at the age of 10. His account tells of the German occupation of Norway, his return to the States and concludes with his entry into the Royal Norwegian Airforce, in Toronto, Canada, September 21, 1941. Spiral bound, 68 pages, 1990.

\*Received from Valerie Sønstenes *Mads Madson Genealogy* by Mary Hoeve. Paperbound typescript reproduction, photos, 163 pages. The Madsons emigrated from Hurdal, Norway, in 1856 and settled near Hartland, Freeborn County, Minnesota.

\*Received from The Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center *Collective Memory and Ethnic Groups: The Case Swedes, Mennonites, and Norwegians* by John Bodnar. Booklet, 39 pages, 1991, \$3.00.

\*Received from Dr. Lyle E. Siverson *Erick and Stina: The Ties That Bind*, paper bound, 215 pages, illustrated by Philip J. Thompson. Erick Siverson and Stina Anderson (Swedish) mar-

ried in 1878 and settled in Lac qui Parle county. It is a well-written family narrative that centers on Erick and Stina but includes the second generation.

\*Received from Verne W. Kindschi his *The Fuller and Johnson Story: Gasoline Engines*, Prairie du Sac, Wisconsin, 1992, 250 photos and drawings, 142 pages, \$20. While of first interest to engine collectors, this book relied heavily on our *John A. Johnson: Uncommon American* (1969) by Agnes Larson, for information.

\*Received from Richard Rodning *A Sketch of the Life of Syver Swenson Rodning*, typescript, 52 pages, 1987. Rodning (1869-1937) emigrated from Hallingdal in 1894 and settled in North Dakota. He was school teacher, farmer, merchant, and Register of Deeds. Richard Rodning is a son.

\*Received from Roger L. Anderson *The History of the Anderson Family*, hard cover, 712 pages, photos, charts, name index, 1992. John Anderson Kåsa and wife, Kjersti (b. Jontvedt), together with children emigrated from Telemark in 1853 and settled in Waupaca county, Wisconsin.

\*Received from Robert Remole *Slekten Wally, Jacobsen* by Brit Jacobsen Kavli Miflere. Paper bound typescript reproduction, photos, maps, 118 pages, Oslo, Norway, 1986.

The main narrative begins with Carl Lauritz Jacobsen (1836-1879) and his wife Louise Wally (1883-1932, born in Holstein). The American connection is limited to Haagine Emilie, a sister

of Carl, who married Nils Kristiansen. When she died in 1890, Nils and children emigrated and settled near Waseca, Minnesota.

\*Received from Frode Hermundsgård *Slekta vår* by Petter P. Hermundsgård. Hard cover, photos, 105 pages, Nesbyen, Norway, 1983. Members of the family that emigrated to the States and their descendants are included.

\*Received from Michael Bovre, *Norwegian Surnames of Koshkonong and Springdale Congregations in Dane County, Wisconsin*, a doctoral dissertation by Marjorie Kimmerle, University of Wisconsin. 175 pages, 1938. The introductory portion explains the social, economic and geographic features that governed the naming of Norwegian homesteads. This may be the only work in English treating this subject. An article based on this work appeared in *Studies*, vol. 12, 1941.

\*Received from Nell Hoyem *Nes or Byness and Buvik* a translation of Olav J. Høyem's *Bynes og Buvik*, Trondheim, 1894. Hard cover, typescript reproduction, 328 pages. This history of two communities in Sør Trøndelag also lists the emigrants, 1860-1893, and their later location and profession in the States.

\*Received from Consul General Bjarne Grindem a video tape of the memorial service honoring the memory of His Majesty King Olav V (1903-1991) held at the Norwegian Lutheran Memorial Church, Minneapolis, January 30, 1991.

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