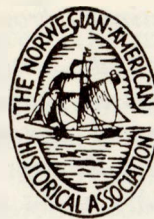


The Norwegian-American Historical Association

Northfield, Minnesota

NEWS



LETTER

From the Secretary's Office to the Association Members

NUMBER 45

Editor, LLOYD HUSTVEDT

MARCH 1972

The NAHA in 1971

PUBLICATIONS

A new series, Topical Studies, was introduced in 1971. The first volume, *A Voice of Protest* by Jon Wefald, has been distributed to all members. Any member who may not have received this book should notify the secretary. We call attention to Editor Kenneth O. Bjork's preface, which explains the long-range intent of this new series.

Volume 25 of *Studies* is in its final stages of binding. Perhaps at no time in the past have two publications appeared in so short a span of time. In the making is a book, not yet approved for publication, which includes accounts of J. W. C. Dietrichson. Dietrichson was the first clergyman on the immigrant scene who represented the state church in Norway. E. Clifford Nelson (St. Olaf College), assisted by Harris Kaasa (Luther College) and Malcolm Rosholt (Rosholt, Wisconsin), is preparing the manuscript.

Looking into the future, we anticipate a history of the *Bygdelags* by Odd Løvoll, a book of plays by Marcus Thrane, translated and edited by Henriette Naeseth, and a study of Kristofer Janson in America by Nina Draxten. Considerable material is also at hand for *Studies*, volume 26.

MEMBERSHIP

As of December 31, 1971, our total membership stood at 1028: associate 664; sustaining 216; patron 13; life 135. Because life membership dues go into a permanent fund, deceased life members are generally added. When this is done our membership totals 1092.

Thirty-nine members were added in 1971: associate 27; sustaining 8; life 4. There were 80 cancellations: deceased 13; by request 5; no response to statements for dues 42. Cancellations exceeded enrollment of new members for the first time since 1957. From 1958 to 1971, 1106 members were added. There were 697 cancellations for the same period.

The increase in dues which went into effect in 1971 undoubtedly contributed to the heavy cancellations. After Miss Folkedahl's death in January of 1971, much of her work had to be absorbed by the secretary, making it nearly impossible for that office to undertake major recruitment programs. The above figures make it clear that vigorous efforts must be launched in 1972, lest the Association lose the forward momentum it has enjoyed in the area of membership the past fourteen years. Existing members are reminded that they have been and continue to be our best sources for new members.

BOOK SALES

A total of 400 books were sold in 1971. Of these, 104 were *A Voice of Protest*. *John A. Johnson: An Uncommon American* was the second best seller. *The Lady with the Pen*, consistently strong, was third. Reflected in our reduced sales is the fact that some of our more popular books are now out of print. Our stock of volumes 2, 3, 7, and 12 of *Studies* has been depleted, together with six titles from other categories. The following have an inventory of less than

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fifty copies: *The Lady with the Pen, America in the Forties, Norwegian Settlement in the United States, Diary of Elisabeth Koren, and Rasmus Bjørn Anderson*. Members who might want copies of these books should order soon. Total sales for 1971 amounted to \$1490.36. Our record sales figure was in 1963 — \$2,525.19.

ARCHIVES

New materials continue to enter the archives in the form of papers, books, and letters. The striking feature about the archives for 1971 is, however, its increased use by scholars, particularly by graduate students who are working on dissertations for advanced degrees. A renewed interest in O. E. Rølvaag is clearly evident. Some of our visitors engage in casual research, while others have literally moved to Northfield for periods of up to a month or more in order to exhaust available material.

Requests for mail-order services have increased to problem proportions. Letters from persons preparing family histories outnumber by far other types of requests. From these letters one concludes that many think genealogy to be our principal business. While it is true that our archives contain much that is of value to family historians, they address themselves in the main to broader immigrant issues.

NORWEGIAN MIGRATION ON TV

The Motion Picture and Television Service of the United States Information Agency is currently producing a program series entitled "The American Experience." It treats the various ethnic groups which settled in the United States. A program on the Norwegian immigrants is currently in the making and should be finished in several months.

Playwright Kenneth E. Sale, producer and director of "The American Experience," recently researched the archives for materials and photographs which could be included in the show. This program, we hope, will appear on all local educational television stations.

A NORWEGIAN-AMERICAN POET

If one believes that Norwegian poetry in America went out of existence with the generation that included men like O. E. Rølvaag, Julius Baumann, Simon Johnson, and D. G. Ristad, then Arnfinn Bruflot of Tacoma, Washington, proves otherwise. The remarkable fact about Bruflot is that he made his debut at the age of 65 in 1969 with a collection of poems entitled *Junibåten*. His second collection, *Det Storkna Havet*, came out a year later. Bruflot migrated to the United States in 1928.

Bruflot's poetry is youthful, intense, and as modern as tomorrow. Many of his poems address themselves to contemporary problems. Both collections, which were published in Norway, have been well received by the Norwegian critics, who are hardly noted for being easy to please.

THEODORE C. BLEGEN

FELLOWSHIP FUND

The Blegen Memorial Fellowship Fund now stands at about \$14,000. Donations from members during 1971 amounted to \$1156.50. Two members of the Executive Board made gifts amounting to \$1500. The Executive Board has decided not to release the names of its contributors, but nearly \$12,000 has been donated by its members.

Members who contributed more than \$10.00 in 1971 are listed below:

John Litell \$50, C. A. Glasrud \$36, Henry M. Halvorson, Nell-Marie Hoyem, Ethel Odegard, Lars Onsager, and Della Madsen Wendt \$25, Harald P. Bakke \$20. Samuel Abrahamsen, Alf Altern, Hagbarth Bue, Bergthor F. Endresen, E. L. Fevold, Ronald Flugum, Rollo Gullickson, Olaf A. Haugen, Gertrude Hilleboe, Esther Kjørstad, Mrs. F. P. Lord, Thor Ohme, Edward N. Olson, Magnus Olson, Esther T. Nelson, Brit Peterson, Fredrik A. Schiotz, Olander Suldaahl, and Rolf Syrdahl all made contributions ranging from \$10 to \$20.

Ethnic Renaissance

Our country is experiencing an "ethnic renaissance." The most forceful thrust clearly comes from minority groups who seek dignity and self-identity in terms of their past. One finds pride in being Black, Chicano, Indian, Polish- Italian- and German American. Being different is no longer a fault, but a virtue. For some the desire to find a cultural home within an ethnic group may represent, if not a flight from, then at least a mental disassociation with, the majority culture which receives the blame for unpopular things like war, racism, poverty, crime, and unemployment.

Evidence that the new ethnic emphasis will be with us for some time is abundant. The United States Senate recently passed an Ethnic Heritage Studies Centers Act. It was defeated in the House of Representatives. The surprising feature is not its defeat, but that such a bill was introduced at all in a country where the "melting pot" concept has been cultivated as an ideal. The bill seems destined to be reintroduced next year. In the meantime, an organization—funded by the Ford Foundation—called the National Project on Ethnic America is currently very active. It hopes to promote ethnic education through regionally based Ethnic Heritage Cultural Centers.

Colleges and universities have responded by introducing new minority programs and by expanding old ones. The fact that American education is being criticized from many sectors for not being responsive enough bears out how urgent many feel ethnic education to be. In fact, for the time being at least, needs and wishes concerning ethnic studies are outrunning available facilities. The board of regents of the University of Wisconsin created recently an Ethnic and Minorities Studies Center at Wisconsin University—Platteville. Luther College, Gustavus Adolphus College, and Moorhead State College have introduced Scandinavian Studies programs. Professor Kenneth O. Bjork offered a course on migration during the interim at St. Olaf College. The course attracted more students than could be properly managed.

Alert publishing companies are reprinting older ethnic studies which they group into large sets. They are presumably sold to libraries which hesitated to buy these books when they were first published. Three NAHA books with expired copyrights have found their way into such sets.

Because of the NAHA and the Museum in Decorah, Iowa, Norwegian Americans hold a fortunate position within this new ethnic emphasis. Their story as immigrants to a new country—though far from finished—is told in fifty-two books. Books whose authors have promoted no other cause than to tell the truth—i.e., as far as careful scholarship will permit. Moreover, because of its early entry (1925) into ethnic studies, the NAHA will now perhaps more than before serve as a model for groups who are just getting their studies underway.

While current trends may provide the officers and members of the NAHA with many reasons for congratulating themselves, a more constructive action is evident to all friends of the Association. This would be to use the occasion for renewed effort and increased dedication. Perhaps the new mood that is sweeping the nation, combined with the Sesquicentennial coming up in 1975, will bring about a chair in immigrant history, will produce the endowment funds needed to finance a well-managed headquarters and archives, and will inspire us to multiply our membership. There are enough Norwegian Americans to accomplish this.

Whatever the "ethnic renaissance" will bring to the future, one hopes that it will not result in a competition over which ethnic group deserves the greatest honor; that its penetrating thought will reflect an earnest desire to learn to know ourselves, an age-old prerequisite for learning to know each other. It may be paradoxical, but not unthinkable, that as we explore what is different and unique among people, we also discover the commonality of man. Should this be true, we may well be moving toward a new "melting pot" theory, but one more profound—and, we dare say, one more free and noble than the one conceived earlier.

LLOYD HUSTVEDT

NEWS IN BRIEF

America in the Forties: The letters of Ole Munch Raeder, translated and edited by Gunnar J. Malmin and published by the NAHA in 1929, is included in the *Library of American Civilization*, published by Library Resources, Inc., an affiliate of Encyclopaedia Britannica. The medium used is called "Microbook," and is unique in that an entire book can be entered on a 3 x 5 film card. In fact, *America in the Forties*, a book of 244 pages, uses less than one half the available space on the film card. To date some 200 colleges, universities and public libraries have installed microbook reading facilities.

* * *

Scan-D-News, a program about Scandinavia and Scandinavians, is carried each Saturday morning from 8:30 to 9:00 on radio station WEAW, 1330 on the AM dial, Chicago, Illinois.

* * *

Dr. Robert Bjerke, a member of the NAHA, has compiled a second-year Norwegian reader entitled *Fifteen Modern Norwegian Stories*. The stories represent authors from Bjørnson to contemporary writers. The book, equipped with a complete glossary, is available through the St. Olaf College book store.

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Scott, Foresman Publishing Company is including a long excerpt from *Frontier Mother: The Letters of Gro Svendsen*, published by the NAHA in 1950, in a reading program designed for use in American schools.

* * *

The Wisconsin State University system has created an Ethnic and Minorities Studies Center at Wisconsin State

University — Platteville. Its obligations will range from developing bibliographies, syllabi, and booklists to acting as a clearing house for information and materials concerning ethnic and minority studies. Professor Norman Lederer is the head of the Center.

* * *

The Norwegian-American Museum in Decorah, Iowa, has recently completed the cataloging of over 8000 artifacts. The task, which was started in 1964, was done by Mrs. Lila Nelson and David Wright. Much of Mr. Wright's time and all of Mrs. Nelson's services were donated to the Museum.

* * *

A series entitled *Makers of America*, edited by Mortimer Adler and Charles Van Doren, is dedicated to Theodore C. Blegen. The dedication statement reads as follows: "Finally we wish to add a word of tribute to Theodore C. Blegen. . . . These volumes are, in a sense, one of the fruits of his half-century of labor in the field of immigration studies and ethnic history, and it is a pleasure to dedicate *Makers of America* to his memory."

NEW LIFE MEMBERS

Ansgar R. Berge, Westwood, Massachusetts. Mr. Berge was formerly an Associate member.

Michael Brook, a member of the staff at the Minnesota State Historical Society.

Reverend Ingolf Kindem, Wauwatosa, Wisconsin.

Stanwood Community Library, Stanwood, Washington. This membership was given by Miss Annabelle Birkestol in memory of her parents.

NORWEGIAN-AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
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