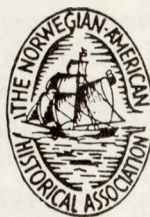


The Norwegian-American
Historical Association

Northfield, Minnesota

NEWS



LETTER

From the Secretary's Office to the Association Members

NUMBER 51

Editor, KENNETH O. BJORK

FEBRUARY, 1976

Our New President



ARTHUR O. DAVIDSON

Dr. Arthur O. Davidson, retiring president of Wagner College, Staten Island, New York, was elected president of the Association at its seventeenth triennial meeting at St. Olaf College on September 27, 1975, an occasion that also marked the organization's fiftieth anniversary. He succeeds Kenneth O. Bjork, who continues to serve as editor.

The new president assumes his duties after a strenuous year as chairman of the Norwegian Immigration Sesquicentennial Commission of New York and also of the National Coordinating Committee. Among other things, he accompanied

the royal party as King Olav V of Norway toured the United States last October.

In addition to serving as president of Wagner College since August, 1961, Dr. Davidson has been active in a variety of professional, civic, church, and other activities. He has served as director of the Protestant Council of New York City and of the Staten Island chamber of commerce, as president of the Lutheran Education Conference of North America, as chairman of the Intersynodical Lutheran Committee on Public Policy and of the

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DAVIDSON

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Lutheran Church of America's Commission on Advance and Development. He has also been president of the Council of Higher Educational Institutions in New York City and of the Empire State Foundation.

Before 1961, Dr. Davidson was a faculty member and vice president and director of development at Luther College, Decorah, Iowa, and chairman of the department of education at Dartmouth College.

Dr. Davidson's ancestors, on his father's side, came to America from Nordfjord in 1872, and, on his mother's side, from Sognefjord in 1846. His interest in the work of the Association has been reflected in several ways during his term on the executive board; it was, for example, a financial gift by him that stimulated the preparation and publication of the recent history of the NAHA.

EDITORIAL

Several aspects of the Association's fiftieth anniversary observance in Northfield on September 27 were gratifying in the extreme. First of all, the executive board decided to investigate the possibilities of utilizing college students in research projects. Then, at the general triennial meeting in the afternoon, Mr. Lauritz Krefting reported on his vigorous work in recruiting members. After his talk, the floor was opened for discussion. The many ideas submitted for increasing membership were especially appreciated. Then, before, and later there was excited talk about the possibility of establishing an endowed chair of immigration history and relating this to the editorship in the Association.

At the banquet in the evening, Dr. Rudolph J. Vecoli, professor of history and director of the Immigration Research Center at the University of Minnesota, said among other things that the "study of a particular ethnic group can illuminate the general contours of American history," and that the Association "has been able to wed . . . commitment with scholarly excellence." Other

speakers, too, stressed the significance of the NAHA—to the children of immigrants, of course, but also to Americans of all backgrounds and experience.

Before and after the banquet, a spirit of quiet joy and optimism seemed to prevail. This spirit was reflected in statements such as these: "We should meet in this way more often." "We simply must double our membership." "Why don't we have a full-time salaried director?" "We must encourage more financial contributions." Such sentiments, however, often evaporate after the excitement of anniversary festivities. For the moment, let us concentrate on only one goal: let's double the membership of the Association! Let every present member feel it vitally essential that he add one new member, and—if possible—three or four! In almost every instance, we are surrounded by individuals who, if approached, would be glad to join the NAHA—persons who have a potential interest in our work. If the sesquicentennial activities proved anything at all, it is that there are numerous persons in city and country who are eager to identify with organizations that set a high price on their heritage. K.O.B.

PUBLICATIONS

Three books were distributed to members in 1975. The first, *A Folk Epic: The Bygdelag in America*, was written by Dr. Odd S. Lovoll and was a Sesquicentennial Publication. The second volume, also designated a Sesquicentennial Publication, was written by Professor Arlow W. Andersen, a member of our board of publications, but was issued by Twayne Publishers in its Immigrant Heritage of America series. The third book sent to members was a history of the NAHA prepared by Odd S. Lovoll and Professor Kenneth O. Bjork.

We are waiting now for Professor Nina Draxten's *Kristofer Janson in America*, which will soon be delivered to members. Work is also well advanced on *Norwegian-American Studies*, volume 27. The editor has a number of interesting manuscripts on his desk; these will be discussed in a later number of the *Newsletter*.

Valuable Gift from Norway



Charlotte Jacobson, curator, and Kenneth O. Bjork, editor, examine one of a set of volumes presented to the NAHA on September 27 by Consul General B. Augdahl, Minneapolis, on behalf of the Public Archives and the Organization of Historians in Norway. The beautifully bound volumes contain the migration lists in the parish registers of Rogaland (Stavanger) Amt, 1815-1895. They were brought to this country by Professor Ingrid Semmingsen.

The emigration lists kept by the police in Stavanger unfortunately were destroyed by fire. Similar records in Oslo, Kristiansand, Bergen, and Trondheim, however, are preserved. Hence the value of the parish lists in Stavanger, an important area in the emigration story. The Association has complete freedom in the use of this important source.

A letter accompanying the gift refers to the volumes as "a token of our deep respect and gratitude for what your As-

sociation has accomplished during the first half century of its existence."

HUSTVEDT ON LEAVE

Our secretary, Lloyd Hustvedt, has been on leave this year from St. Olaf College and the Association. His first semester was spent as leader of a group of St. Olaf students at Chiangmai University in Thailand. The second semester will be spent in study at the University of Wisconsin.

During his absence, the work of the office has been ably performed by the acting secretary, Elaine Kringen.

BOOK SALES

Book sales for 1975 totaled \$4,637.54. Biggest sellers were Blegen's *Norwegian Migration to America: The American Transition* and Lovoll's *A Folk Epic: The Bygdelaag in America*. The stock of the Blegen book is now depleted.

NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Three new members were added to the Association's executive board at the seventeenth triennial meeting. They are Ms. Elsie Melby, Norwegian vice-consul in Duluth, Minnesota; Professor Kjetil Flatin of the University of Washington, Seattle; and Mr. Sverre Svendsen, printing engineer with residence in Minneapolis.

Members re-elected Roy Thorshov of Minneapolis as vice-president, Lloyd Hustvedt as secretary, Leonard Arentsen of Chicago as treasurer, and Kenneth O. Bjork as editor.

A ROYAL MEMBER

The executive board voted on September 27 that His Majesty, Olav V, King of Norway, be given a life membership in the Association. His membership card was presented by Kenneth O. Bjork at the convocation held on the occasion of the royal visit to St. Olaf College on October 14.

FINANCES

In spite of heavy expenses during 1975, the Association finished the year with \$44,054.74 in investments, as compared to \$54,054.74 at the closing of 1974. Cash in banks in December totaled \$6,916.51; a year earlier the figure was \$6,502.52. The Theodore C. Blegen Fellowship Fund climbed from \$31,144.62 to \$33,408.58, and the Ole Edvard Rølvaag Permanent Fund increased from \$25,390.37 to \$26,890.37.

The balance in the current fund was \$15,792.44 at the beginning of 1976, as compared to \$28,960.39 on January 1, 1975. Total income in 1975 was \$15,946.16; in 1974 it was \$14,798.02. Under expenditures the biggest item in 1975 was publications, which came to \$22,671.45. In 1974 it was \$8,002.42. Total expenditures in 1975 were \$29,114.10; in 1974 they were only \$12,991.08. Readers will remember that they received three books in 1975.

An encouraging fact is that we have started a fund toward a chair of immigration studies. Only recently announced, it has \$4,781.94 and will surely grow in coming years.

MEMBERSHIP

A hundred and sixty-nine members were added in 1975. There were 52 cancellations.

MEMBERSHIP TOTALS 1975

	Jan. 1, 1975	Dec. 31, 1975	Gain
Associate	657	738	81
Sustaining	175	189	14
Patron	29	37	8
Life	153	167	14
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	1,014	1,131	117

BOOKS

A Norwegian rare books dealer lists the following:

Dietrichson, J. W. C. *Reise blandt de norske emigranter i "De forenede nordamerikanske Fristater."* Stavanger, 1846.
4,200.00 kr.

Reiersen, J. R. *Veiviser for norske emigranter til De forenede nordamerikanske Stater og Texas.* Christiania, 1844.
14,000.00 kr.

Rynning, Ole. *Sandfærdig beretning om Amerika, til oplysning om Amerika* . . . Christiania, 1839. 6,800.00 kr.

A krone is worth about 20 cents.

All three of these titles are in the collection of the Norwegian-American Historical Association, securely stored in the vault of the St. Olaf College library. The Dietrichson and Rynning accounts have been translated and are among our publications. The Rynning title is out of print, but Dietrichson is available under the title *A Pioneer Churchman*. Reiersen's *Veiviser* is being translated for eventual publication by the Association. Another of these early accounts, *Peter Testman's Account of His Experiences in North America*, was also published in translation by the NAHA.

A very popular book, *The Lady with the Pen*, is being reprinted by the Texian Press for the Bosque Memorial Museum in Waco, Texas.

New members might like to add to their libraries or use as a gift *Klondike Saga*, the adventure story of an intrepid group of Norwegian Americans who set out from Minneapolis to seek their fortunes in the gold fields of Canada and Alaska.

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OUT-OF-PRINT BOOKS

Most of our out-of-print books are now available from Xerox University Microfilms. They may be ordered directly from Xerox University Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106. The order numbers and xerographic prices are given below:

Laur. Larsen, PB 69, *The Diary of Elisabeth Koren*, PB 76, \$20.00.

America in the Forties, PB 71, *Norwegian Sailors on the Great Lakes*, PB 75, *Grass of the Earth*, PB 78, \$15.00.

Frontier Mother, PB 72, *Frontier Parsonage*, PB 74, *Studies*, Vols. 2, 3, 7, 12, \$10.00.

Ole Rynning's True Account of America, PB 79, \$6.00.

All of the above are also available on microfilm for \$5.00 (*Laur. Larsen* and the Koren diary, \$7.00).

IMMIGRATION LECTURES

The college course in Norwegian immigration, jointly directed by Dr. Carl Chrislock of Augsburg College and Dr. Odd Lovoll of St. Olaf College, has now been successfully completed. The lectures, given by scholars in the area, were also broadcast weekly by WCAL, which now has an invaluable library of tapes. Many favorable reports have been heard about the lectures.

REVIEWS

The *Scandinavian Review* has kind words for Odd S. Lovoll's *A Folk Epic: The Bygdelag*. "Norwegian-born and educated through the undergraduate level," its reviewer says, "Lovoll displays a masterful command of the Norwegian language sources concerning this important manifestation of Norwegian ethnicity in America [the *bygdelag*] . . . their history could not have been better expressed than through the pen of Professor Lovoll."

Minnesota History echoes these sentiments, stating that "Lovoll has produced a detailed yet readable account of these organizations [the *bygdelag*]." His book, it continues, "constitutes an important addition to the long and distinguished list of publications of the Norwegian-American Historical Association."

The *Scandinavian Review* also passes judgment on the general work of the Association. "Unlike other immigrant groups which have been only recently engaged in the laborious task of freeing accounts of their historical experience in the United States from the bounds of filiopietistic history, the Norwegian-Americans have had for many years scholars . . . devoted to a dispassionate, objective analysis of their ethnic group's existence in America."

NORWEGIAN-AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
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