

The Norwegian-American Historical Association

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From the Secretary's Office to the Association Members

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The Western Home

The Western Home: A Literary History of Norwegian America, a book of 450 pages, by Orm Øverland, professor of American literature at the University of Bergen, will be published September 15. This book, volume eight in our Authors Series, will also be distributed by the University of Illinois Press and retail for \$44.95.

Øverland examines Norwegian-American literature in a broad sense. Institutions such as publishers, journals, newspapers, literary societies and bookstores, the necessary support structures for a viable literature, are examined. Countless novelists and poets, both the successful and the less fortunate, pass in review. They all strove to give artistic expression to their experience in an age when material concerns were primary.

Separate consideration of six major writers concludes the book: Simon Johnson, Dorothea Dahl, Jon Norstog, Johannes B. Wist, Waldemar Ager and Ole Edvart Rølvaag. Some of the above authors have been treated in book-length biographies (Rølvaag and Ager) and by articles found in *Norwegian-American Studies* and other publications. *The Western Home* marks the first attempt at defining Norwegian-American literature as an organic entity. Øverland views Norwegian-American literature as a segment of American literature. The language, to be sure, was Norwegian, but the experience was American. "The Western Home" is derived from *Vesterheimen*, a term in Norwegian used for Norwegian America. In a more poetic sense it embodies the entire Norwegian community in America, its institutions, hopes and aspirations.

The *Newsletter* congratulates Orm Øverland and Editor Odd S. Lovoll for a publication of immense value. A nod of thanks also goes out to our members. Their support made the publication possible.

Bon Voyage

Volume 34 of *Norwegian-American Studies* was properly launched on Saturday afternoon, March 23, at the Minneapolis Hilton Hotel. If not sent to sea with a splash of champagne, there were a choice of wines and a tray of cheeses, fruit and other tasty things. As true for earlier book parties, our president, Lawrence O. Hauge, and his wife Lois, hosted the pleasant affair.

Lois Rand, NAHA vice president, presided over the program. Odd S. Lovoll spoke to the volume he had edited. He noted that many of the articles concerned education and educators to the extent that

education could be seen as a pervading theme. The editor called upon the authors present, Olga Nilsen Berglund, Peter Thaler and Erik Luther Williamson, to say something about their contributions. This led to stimulating questions and audience participation from persons who had related experiences to share. The way book parties should be.

America—America Letters

Beginning next summer (1997), Bjørn Østgård from Fagernes, Norway, will collect letters Norwegian Americans wrote to each other during the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Little attention has been given earlier to these letters as sources for

examining the process of settlement and the evolving social and cultural life of the immigrant.

Letters the immigrants sent to Norway ("America Letters") have played a vital role in immigrant research. O. E. Rølvaag based his first novel on letters he had written home, *Amerika breve* (1912). In recent years Norway has shown interest in collecting the letters ("Norway Letters") Norwegians wrote to their counterparts in the New World as valuable historical sources. In keeping with earlier naming patterns, Editor Odd S. Lovoll has dubbed this third letter group as "America-America Letters."

Some of the sought-for letters may well have made their way into newspapers, and into archival collections, the NAHA among them. Many, to be sure, exist in private possessions. We ask for your help in locating these treasures.

An appropriate selection of these letters will be translated into English and published by the Association. Contact Mr. Østgård through the NAHA, c/o Editor Odd S. Lovoll.

Arlow William Andersen

Professor Arlow Andersen, for many years a dear friend of and a scholarly asset to the NAHA, died May 27, 1996, 90 years old. A professor of history, he taught at colleges in Illinois, North Dakota and Texas and joined the faculty at the University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh, in 1964 where he remained until retirement in 1976. His major publications were *The Immigrant Takes his Stand: The Norwegian-American Press and Public Affairs, 1847-1872* (a NAHA publication, 1953); *The Salt of the Earth: A History of Norwegian-Danish Methodism in America* (1962), and *Norwegian Americans*, published in 1975, marking the Sesquicentennial.

Services were held at Asbury United Methodist Church in Minneapolis. He is survived by his wife Katherine and a son William. Arlow was an exceptional person: kind, gentle, generous and ever gracious in manner. We shall miss his warm presence at our meetings and his valuable counsel on the Board of Publications.

Rasmussen — College President

Janet E. Rasmussen, vice president of academic affairs at Nebraska Wesleyan University at Lincoln, Nebraska, and a member of the NAHA Board of Publications, has been chosen as the ninth president of Hollins College in Roanoke, Virginia.

Rasmussen earned her Ph.D. at Harvard University, specializing in Norwegian studies. She taught at Pacific Lutheran University, at Tacoma, Washington, before going to Nebraska. Her *New Lands New Lives: Scandinavian Immigrants to the Northwest* was published by the NAHA in 1993. The book was based on oral interviews conducted by Rasmussen.

Random News

- Received from Thomas C. Hanson, papers that relate to Østen Hanson, the noted Haugean minister who served a congregation at Aspelund, Goodhue County, Minnesota. The collection includes a reproduction of a notebook kept by Østen Hanson and a tender biographical sketch of his first wife, Marie Sophie.

- Received *A Folk Divided: Homeland Swedes and Swedish Americans 1840-1940*, by Arnold Barton, Southern University Press, 1994, 403 pages. What happens to a people when it becomes divided through overseas migration? How do the two parts relate to each other? How do time and circumstance cause them to develop along separate lines? Arnold Barton seeks to answer these interesting questions.

- Received from Carl Solberg his *Solberg*. Typescript reproduction, paperbound, photos, maps, genealogical tables, 83 pages, 1996. The Solbergs were cotter folk in Nissedal, Telemark. The first Solberg emigrated in 1860. They settled in Rushford, Minnesota, and some moved later to Clarkfield, Minnesota.

- Received from Wayne S. Cole, his *The Story of the Paternal Norwegian Ancestry of Thomas Roy Cole*. Typescript reproduction, plastic cover, charts and notes, 46 pages, 1996. Skjeldahl (Etne), Bryne (Jæren) and Granseth (Oppland) enter this history. All settled in central Iowa.

- Received from Wilma Kleive Alilunas her *The Way it Was for Me: Growing up on Locust Hill*. Typescript reproduction, spiralbound, photos, maps, sketches, 114 pages. The author, born in 1910, tells of growing up on a farm near Capron in Boone County, Illinois. The author's

parents left Norway as newlyweds in 1903. First they rented land, then bought a farm of their own in 1910.

- Received from Arnold O. Haugen his *Life of the Norse Haugen Families on Canoe Creek*, a topical approach to life on a farm in Winneshiek County, Iowa. The author is a grandson of Peder Larson Haugen and Anna Saetermoen, who left Troms, Norway, in 1852, and took up farming in Iowa in 1853. The narrative is sprinkled with pen-drawn sketches.

- Received from John P. Nelson who compiled and edited *Letters and Diaries of David T. Nelson 1914-1919*. Hardcover, 189 pages, 1996.

Covers the years that David Nelson attended Oxford as a Rhodes scholar; his relief work in Belgium; his stint with the American ambulance Field Service in France; and, his two years (1917-1919) of service in the U.S. Army. He began teaching at Luther College in 1921 where he built a distinguished career. His history of Luther College was published in 1961, the same year he retired.

- "I thoroughly enjoyed volume 34 of *Studies*, as I did the Knute Nelson biography. I have concluded that my dad's admiration for Knute Nelson is what steered him away from joining the Non-Partisan League." Conrad Byre.

- Received from Boral R. Biorn *Three Hymns by Ludvig M. Biorn: An Essay by Boral R. Biorn. Salmebog for Lutherske Kristne i Amerika* contained three hymns written by L.M. Biorn, pioneer clergyman, that are translated and analyzed so as to better understand the author. Spiralbound, 32 pages.

- Received *A Modern View of Theodore Theodorsen: Physicist and Engineer*. Contains four essays by as many authors. Edited by Earl H. Dowel of Duke University. Theodore Theodorsen (1897-1978) emigrated after graduating from Trondheim's School of Engineering. After earning a Ph.D. in physics from Johns Hopkins in 1929, he then embarked upon a brilliant career in the new and expanding aeronautical sciences.

- Received from Michael Bovre his *Eidsvollsmann Nils Johanneson Loftenes Descendants in America*. Typescript reproduction, photos, tables, index, 203 pages, 1994. Six of eight Loftness children (Sogndal, Norway) emigrated and settled mainly in Wisconsin.

- Received from Eyvind Ager *The Life of a Viking in America*, a personal account by Hans H. Solum, who emigrated at age 19 from the Bergen area to America in 1930. He first joined relatives in Cloquet, Minnesota, and moved later to South Dakota. Worked as a welder during World War II, then in turn became a hardware dealer, building contractor and land developer in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. Booklet format, 59 pages.

- *New York Folklore*, vol. 20, Nos. 3-4, 1994, pp. 95-98, carried a thorough and insightful review of *Material Culture and People's Art Among the Norwegians in America*, edited by Marion Nelson, NAHA, 1994. Philip Nusbaum was the reviewer.

- Received from Per Øverland, Trondheim, Norway, three documents: *The Memoirs of the Reverend Elling Severin Solheim*, translated and annotated by Øverland. Solheim (1880-1955) emigrated in 1904, became a minister. This moving and at times troubling human story covers the first 35 years of Solheim's life. 93 pages, 1994. *The Brobakken-Hagen Family Tree: Martin O. Brobakken and his Descendants*. They settled in Wydonndel, British Columbia. 34 pages, 1994. And *The Birkeland Family Tree*, 40 pages, 1994. both compiled by Øverland.

- *Great Plains Quarterly*, vol. 15, No. 2, 1995, pp. 105-115, contains an interesting article entitled "Breaking the Silence: Hymns and Folk Songs in O. E. Rølvaag's Immigrant Trilogy."

- Received from Arlen Twedt his *Biographies of Arlen Twedt's Ancestors (1985) and Descendants of Anders Axelsson Helvik Who Emigrated to Iowa 1852-1892 (1993)*. Both paperbound typescript reproductions, 175 and 206 pages respectively. Mainly from outer Hardanger, the first family members left for Illinois in 1848.

- Received from Swedish-American Historical Society *Scandinavian Immigrants and Education in North America*. Edited by Philip J. Anderson, Dag Blanck and Peter Kivisto, Chicago, 1995. Thirteen articles by as many authors. Proceedings of an earlier conference. J. R. Christianson represented the Norwegians: "Shaping the Culture of an Immigrant College Town: Decorah, Iowa, 1850-1890."

- Received from Jay and Dorothy (Bergh) Steinberg *Peder (Pederson) Jenson and Caroline Jensdatter Branes Genealogy, 1848-1995*. Typescript reproduction, photos and genealogical tables, 82 pages, 1995.

- Received from Margaret Hutcheson her *The Flatvads of Sunndalen Who Became Flatweds in America*. The family began to emigrate in the 1870s, settling mainly in Goodhue County, Minnesota. Typescript, photos, maps, clippings, 50 pages, 1995.

- Received from Barbara Vorseth Benson *Seventy-fifth Anniversary: Pleasant Lutheran Church 1883-1958*. (Willow Lake, South Dakota), typescript, 22 pages.

- Received from Linda Lawrence Hunt *Memories of a Prairie Girlhood* by Mary Poulson King. Story begins in Fillmore County, Minnesota, around 1875 and concludes in Yellow Medicine County (Canby), Minnesota. The family moved there in 1878. An authentic and

charming story of unusual literary quality where pioneer experiences are seen through the eyes of a child and a teenager. The story ends when the narrator moved to town to learn dressmaking, seventeen years old.

- Received from Patricia Rutherford her *They Came from the Fjords, A Lomen, Johnson, Gjesme and Gallingsrud Family History*. Photos, maps, tables and charts, typescript, paperbound, 146 pages. Also, Tosten Lomen Diaries for 1895 and 1907.

- Received from Harald Wenaas his *Stener, the Sheriff from Telemark*, a novel based on Stener Wenaas, who emigrated in 1870. He served first as a deputy but later as full sheriff (1895-1899) of Traill County, North Dakota. This county includes the Norwegian strongholds of Mayville and Hillsboro. Employing a topical and anecdotal approach, the novel describes the folkways of that region while at the same time it renders a story about a good and decent man. Published by North American Heritage Press, Minot, North Dakota, no date, paperbound, 196 pages.

- Received from Walter Rugland *The Sigdalslag*, a translation by Rosella Goettelman of books three (1927), four (1932), and five (1941), published in Norwegian by the Sigdalslag. Hardbound, index, 231 pages, 1996.

- Received from Bennie A. Bungum *South Zumbro Congregational Minutes*, translated by Eyvind Evans. Minutes run from February 17, 1868 to January 6, 1899. Located southeast of Kasson, Minnesota, in Olmsted County.

- Received from Marwin Wrolstad *Hallvard Gråtopp from Lindheim Skipreide and the Events of 1430* by Birger Kirkeby. Translated from Norwegian by Evelyn D. Christenson, 208 pages. Also, *Hallvard Gråtopp and the Rural Landowners' Revolt, 1438*. 77 pages.

- Received from Elizabeth D. Martinson *Family of Henrik Olaus Martenson (1885-1962) and Millie Bakken Hauge (1883-1961)*. 21 pages, 1996.

- Received from Elouise Herigstad Hazelett two family histories: *The Herigstad Family*, 189 pages, and *The Skaaden Family*, 410 pages, loose-leaf, photos, maps, charts and tables. The Herigstad family began to emigrate from Rogaland in 1901, settling in North Dakota, Oregon and Washington. Skaaden family members, Gudbrandsdalen, settled around Starbuck, Minnesota.

- Received from Rosemary Nachman two family histories: *The Families of Holt Parish, Aust Agder County, Norway and Johnsdatter Arnesen of Valer and Moss, Østfold County, Norway and The Families of Anders Grundesen; Grunde Andersen; Anders Kittilsen*. Both volumes, handsomely bound, contain maps, documents, clippings, photos and charts.

- Received from Helge Groth three family accounts compiled by Claire H. Groth: *Groth Family Record* (an update); *Saga Braten-Thorson Family Record*; and, *Ericksen-Gunderson Family Record*. Plastic cover, spiralbound, 422, 161, and 329 pages respectively. Mainly charts and tables with scattered narrative insertions.

- Received from Olav Golf his *Haugebevegelse og Folkeopplysning 1800-1860*. Paperbound publication of 253 pages, published by the Pedagogical Research Institute, University of Oslo. Several years ago Golf wrote his Ph.D. dissertation (University of Oslo) on *Red Wing Seminarium: Et Haugiansk skoletiltak i Amerika*. He did much of his research in the NAHA archives — more evidence of scholarship in Norway for emigrant topics and themes.

NOTA BENE!

The Twenty-Fourth Triennial Meeting of the NAHA will be held at the Woman's Club of Minneapolis on October 26, 1996. A banquet will follow the afternoon general meeting. Our next newsletter will provide details about this meeting.

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