# The Norwegian-American Historical Association

Number Sixteen

## October, 1941

# R FROM THE SECRETARY'S OFFICE TO THE ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

Edited by J. JÖRGEN THOMPSON, Secretary KENNETH BJÖRK, Co-editor

### VOLUME TWELVE

The next publication of the Association, scheduled to appear later this fall, is the twelfth volume in the series of Norwegian-American Studies and Records.

One of the most interesting articles to be included is a careful study of "Norwegian-American Surnames" by Marjorie M. Kimmerle.

The complete table of contents for the volume is not yet available, but the Managing Editor reports that the publication will be one of varied interest and much value. Miss Clara Jacobson's fascinating account of "A Journey to America Sixty Years Ago" will be made available for the first time in English. Professor C. A. Clausen has trans-lated and edited the "Recollections of a Norwegian Pioneer in Texas." Professor Kenneth Björk has contributed an essay on "Ole Evinrude and the Outboard Motor." Dr. Martin L. Reymert has written a paper on "James Denoon Reymert and the Norwegian Press." From John Heitmann comes an interesting article on O. E. Rölvaag. The Managing Editor has edited an important official report on Norwegian and Swedish immigration written in 1870. Miss Ella Valborg Rölvaag has prepared an article on the "Norwegian Folk Narrative in America."

Other articles and documents will round out a volume that should prove of great interest to the members and friends of the Association.

## A REPORT

[Ed. note: Dr. Kenneth Björk, who is preparing a volume on Norwegian engineers and architects in America, spent the period February-September, 1941, gathering materials and beginning the preparation of his book, and during that time was Fellow of the Norwegian-American Historical Association.]

Our Secretary who is also editor of the News Letter insists that a report on my activities of the past seven months is long overdue. It is really impossible, of course, to condense the experiences of so long a period into the few paragraphs at my disposal, but who can say an absolute nay to the good Dean?

First of all, if report I must, I want to thank the many people who in one way or another made my work easier or more fruitful. Fortunately many of these people engineers, architects, journalists, and others—are members of the Association and will therefore receive a copy of this *News Letter*. Wherever you live—in the east, west, or middle west—thank you for the graciousness and kindly interest you have shown and continue to show in my project.

At the same time I wish to make special mention of the co-operative spirit of the Norwegian newspapers in America, particularly *Skandinaven*, *Nordisk Tidende*, and *Decorah-Posten*; the Norwegian-American Technical Society, which turned over to me all its fine collection of records; the Norwegian Engineers Society of Oslo; and Mr. Carl G. O. Hansen of Minneapolis, whose colossal private collection of Norwegian-Americana was of great value. And, too, I want to make a record of an unusually fine gift to the archives. Mr. John A. Lindrup, formerly publisher of *Scandia* in Chicago and now a member of *Skandinaven's* editorial staff, entrusted to my care an almost complete file of *Scandia*, which might be said to represent a left-wing or liberal urban element among our people. This collection, only narrowly saved from a fire, together with a number of other items, constitutes a valuable addition to our archives.

As for my work, let it be said that there is normally little drama or excitement about research—except for the researcher himself. Consequently little interest can be said to attach to the spadework, however vital, which is preliminary to writing and is usually confined to libraries and archives. I spent many months reading in the excellent libraries of the University of Michigan, where I also taught during the first semester of the past academic year. Technical books, periodicals, and other records are written in a deadening style but they have helped to provide the necessary background against which to study the Norwegian engineers. These publications also deal directly in many cases with men who will be discussed in my monograph and have therefore been indispensable as a source of information.

The study also frequently took me far from Ann Arbor. Several trips were made to Chicago, where I was able to consult Norwegian newspaper files, interview engineers, and profit from materials in the possession of the Norwegian-American Technical Society. Last spring I made a somewhat extended trip to the east, contacting engineers and others in Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, New York, Corning, and other industrial cities. In August, 1940, I also met groups of engineers on the west coast, chiefly in San Francisco and Seattle. Unfortunately space does not permit mention of the names of those who assisted me or made gifts of records to the archives.

I should much prefer to delay giving a detailed account of the contents of the volume on which I am now working. In general it will contain chapters dealing with the background of the migration of technical men, the migration itself, the various kinds of work the engineers have performed in America, their social and cultural life, and the like. The book will probably have the title Norwegian Engineers and the American Economic Revolution or one similar to that. Two chapters have been written and it is hoped that the others will be done in time to permit publication early in 1943.

A fellowship grant from the Association made it possible for me to devote the major part of this year to work on the engineer project. The book itself will serve as a final and complete report and should—I speak now only of its content—prove something of a surprise even to those familiar with Norwegian technical men.

KENNETH BJÖRK

## What Reviewers Say About

I. STUDIES AND RECORDS, XI.

- American Historical Review: "ranks with the best publications of our state historical societies."
   Mississippi Valley Historical Review: "These nine
- 2. Mississippi Valley Historical Review: "These nine essays . . . conform to the high standards of scholarship set by the association's managing editor."
- II. NORWEGIAN MIGRATION TO AMERICA: AMERICAN TRANSITION, by Theodore C. Blegen.
  1. Social Studies: "An important study, delightful to
  - 1. Social Studies: "An important study, delightful to read, of the interplay of the European heritage and the American environment."
  - 2. Oregon Historical Quarterly: "an outstanding contribution to the growing body of scholarly literature dealing with immigrant groups in America."
  - 3. Arthur M. Schlesinger (Harvard) in *Minnesota History:* "a book that is outstanding in the historiography of American immigration."
  - 4. Henry Steele Commager (New York U.) in New York Herald Tribune: "although it concerns itself exclusively with the Norwegian experience, it illuminates, by implication, the whole story of the transplanting of European peoples and cultures from the Old World to the New. And that is a very great story—."

## From One of Our New Members

Mr. A. G. H. Andersen, one of our new sustaining members, has permitted us to quote from the letter he wrote us when he applied for membership in the Association.

"The accomplishments of the Association are impressive. As I read about the work of the Association and go through the titles of the books and publications sponsored by it, I sense a body of tradition rich in achievement, native American though of Norwegian origin.

"Of this tradition I, like most who from Norway settled in the East during the last score of years, know very little. We stepped immediately from Norway to America, from one finished society into another with our major problem that of adjustment only. We became aware of churches, hospitals and other social organizations in our vicinity, built and maintained by Norwegian immigrants and their descendants. We had heard about the toil and hardships of the settlers who trekked west and their outstanding participation in the development of great Western regions. But I am sure few of us realize the mighty and fruitful efforts of the earlier immigrants in actually forming new social bodies on American soil and integrating them with the nation.

"Little have we realized that as we trickled in here we were part of that tradition in the sense that we were among the later flow of the long stream of Norwegian immigration, being impelled by variant phases of the same historic force activating the main stream.

"Now I hope to be able gradually to acquaint myself in some measure, with that great tradition of Norwegian American life and its place in the nation's fabric. As a beginning I anticipate with keen interest to read the publications of the Norwegian American Historical Association as they appear."

#### From Many Lands

From time to time in these columns we call attention to books which in one way or another draw from our publications or records. While Louis Adamic's *From Many Lands* (Harper, 1940) is silent on the Norwegian element in America, it does deal sympathetically with representatives of other national origins. It is probable that in another volume Adamic will utilize materials about the Norwegians collected in Minneapolis and Northfield during the summer of 1939.

## The Norwegian-American Historical Museum

#### A Report by S. T. REQUE, Curator

The following is a brief summary of information and report on the Norwegian-American Historical Museum for the years 1939 and 1940.

The museum exhibits are on display in the main museum building—the former Lutheran Publishing House; in the Luther College library; and in the out-door museum, the pioneer cabins, located on the Luther College campus.

An inventory taken recently shows more than 10,000 objects on display in the main museum building, and, in addition, more than 5,000 in the various depositories on the campus.

In the spring of 1939, the interior of the main museum building was improved materially in anticipation of the visit of their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Olav and Crown Princess Märtha. During their visit they presented a collection of exhibits sponsored by thirty museums in Norway, a most interesting and valuable accession.

Gifts to the number of 800 or more have been received during the two year period.

A strenuous effort has been made to improve the display of the exhibits, and to protect them from deterioration.

Many additional display cases, floor and wall cases, have been procured, most of them as gifts.

Ninety or more glass cases are now in use, many of them large.

Nearly all exhibits have been relabeled in more legible type.

type. The Greater Winneshiek County League and the local Relief Corps have recently donated valuable replicas and historical material.

The collection of photographs of leaders of Norse descent is growing rapidly, and is a field that has valuable possibilities.

The museum is always grateful for additional gifts portraying Norse craftsmanship and the handiwork of the pioneer, which constitute the basis of the museum collections. As is well known, many of the exhibits in this field, in the museum, cannot be duplicated. Recent gifts by individuals have been numerous and valuable. Space alone prevents an account in detail.

Fine publicity has been accorded by The National Geographic Magazine, by the Smithsonian Institution, by Dr. Theodore Blegen in his "Norwegian Migration to America, the American Transition," by Prof. Arthur M. Schlesinger in "A History of American Life," by various daily and other newspapers, and publications.

The Decorah Chamber of Commerce has in various ways been very helpful.

An illustrated prospectus and a printed catalog of exhibits should be listed as among the needs of the museum. Likewise additional glass cases for better preservation of exhibits.

During the two years 22,000 visitors were registered at the main museum and a considerable additional number visited the campus exhibits.

The museum is open daily from 9:00 A.M. and 6:00 P.M. from April to November, inclusive, with attendants in charge.

October, 1941

## NEWS LETTER

## Association Adds Large List of New Members

The Association has enjoyed a very substantial increase in its membership, which now stands at a total of 1,101. The following are those who have joined us during the current year:

#### LIFE MEMBER

Lajla Skartvedt Hertsgaard, Minneapolis, Minn.

#### SUSTAINING MEMBERS

A. G. H. Andersen, Brooklyn, N. Y.
G. A. Ellestad, Rochester, N. Y.
Anton Grönningsæter, New York City, N. Y.
Owen J. C. Norem, Northfield, Minn.
Naurice Nesset, Glenview, Ill.
S. E. Sonnichsen, Los Angeles, Calif.

#### ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Inga Abrahamson, Northfield, Minn. Abe Abrams, Berthoud, Colo. Clara Amundson, Manitowoc, Wis. Geneva Amundson, Madison, Wis. Herbert D. Amundson, Winona, Minn. Ejde Anders, Poulsbo, Wash. Adolph Anderson, St. Paul, Minn. Archie M. Anderson E. R. Anderson, St. Paul, Minn. M. L. Anderson, Highland, Wis. Harold M. Anderson, Wheaton, Minn. N. O. Anderson, Duluth, Minn. Odin Anderson, Duluth, Minn. Odin Anderson, Ann Arbor, Mich. R. C. Angelbeck, Kohler, Wis. B. Arvesen, Cambridge, Minn. H. W. Arveson, Albert Lea, Minn. Frnest A. Asleson, St. Cloud, Minn. J. S. Aslakson, Minneapolis, Minn. Ray Aune, Rochester, Minn. Harry M. Ayers, Anniston, Ala. A. H. Arneson, Clarkfield, Minn. H. W. Babcock, Ft. Davis, Tex. Amelia Johnson Bakken, Decorah, Ia. Henry H. Bakken, Madison, Wis. Clarence A. Benson, Chicago, Ill. Elmer A. Benson, Appleton, Minn. Selmer Berg, Rockford, Ill. Selmer Berg, Rockford, Ill. Selmer Berge, Fargo, N. D. B. E. Bergesen, Jr., Drexel Hill, Pa. J. Arnt Bergh, Northfield, Minn. John E. Bergh, Volga, S. D. Elizabeth Bestul, Merrill, Wis. Joran Birkeland. Washington, D. C. C. O. Birkelo, Detroit, Mich. Norman Bjornnes, Owatonna, Minn. Josephine Bjornson, Moorhead, Minn. Julius P. Blegen, Minneapolis, Minn. Esther V. Boe, Winona, Minn. Just, Blegen, Minneapolis, Minn. Esther V. Boe, Winona, Minn. Bratie, O. M., Berthold, N. D. E. N. Branstad, Forest City, Ia. H. I. Burtness, Santa Barbara, Calif. George S. Bull, Brooklyn, N. Y. A. N. Brudvig, Clifford, N. D. Edvin Brye, Chicago, Ill. Dagmar Carlsen, Racine, Wis. Christian Stokstad, Santa Rosa, Calif. Christopher Aarthun, Minneapolis, Minn.

Miss Louise Christiansen, Sheboygan, Wis.

Victor E. Dahl, Minneapolis, Minn.

Johan B. Dahlen, Palermo, N. D. Ruth Dahlgren, Stambaugh, Mich. F. K. Deinboll, Cleveland, Ohio Charles A. Dolan, Detroit, Mich. Julia Dragseth, San Francisco, Calif. Delmar L. Dyreson, San Francisco, Calif. Philip S. Dybeson, San Francisco, Calif. Philip S. Dybvig, Northfield, Minn. S. C. Eastvold, Eau Claire, Wis. Mr. F. W. Ehman, Logan, Ia. Alvin C. Eide, Columbus, Ohio Bennett Ellefson, Emporium, Pa. Agnes Ellingsen, Moorhead, Minn. Lloyd Ellingson, Menomonie, Wis. E. O. Ellingson, Morthfield, Minn. W. L. Ellickson, Britton, S.D. Emma M. Ellsworth, Omaha, Nebr. Agnes Elstad, Minneapolis, Minn. O. H. Eliason, Madison, Wis. June Engelstad, Aneta, N. D. T. C. Engum, St. Paul, Minn. J. Edward Erickson, Brooklyn, N. Y. Mrs. Bertina Estrem, Atwater, Minn. Emil Estenson, Blooming Prairie, Calif. Emil Estenson, Blooming Prairie, Minn. Nordis Felland, New York, N. Y. Anna Finseth, Portland, Ore. R. M. Fjeldstad, Thief River Falls, Minn. Minn. A. M. Foss, Minot, N. D. Mrs. Thea Foss, Northfield, Minn. Mildred Funnemark, Wesley, Ia. Mrs. Beulah K. Geiwitz, Minneota, Minn. Minn. L. O. Gjerde, Rugby, N. D. Norman Glendening, Arnold, Pa. C. M. Granskou, Sioux Falls, S. D. Ernest Gulsrud, Spokane, Wah. Ruth Gulsvig, Sunburg, Minn. Alfred Gunderson, Walker, Minn. Losenb R. Gunderson, Albert Lea Joseph R. Gunderson, Albert Lea, Minn. L. C. Gunderson, Madison, Wis. Robert Gustafson, St. Louis Park, Minn. H. T. Haagenson, Viroqua, Wis. Harold C. Hagen, Washington, D. C. R. A. Haatvedt, Decorah, Ia. Elizabeth Halvorsen, Minneapolis, Minn. Henry C. Halvorsen, Chicago, Ill. John V. Halvorson, Sunburg, Minn. Marley Halvorson, Chicago, Ill. Marley Halvorson, Chicago, Ill. Conrad Hansen, Elgin, Ill. Gudrun Hansen, Minneapolis, Minn. Alden Hanson, Faribault, Minn. A. E. Hanson, Brookings, S. D. Has. Hanson, Barnesville, Minn. Mendez N. Hanson, Madison, Wis. Rudolph Hanson, Albert Lea, Minn. T. C. L. Hanson, Holt, Minn. H. B. Hanson, Northfield, Minn. T. L. Harris, Morgantown, W. Va. Mrs. Helen Hanson Hartman, Mrs. Helen Hanson Hartman, Hyatsville, Md. Hyatsville, Md. Hermina Hartig, Minneapolis, Minn. B. J. Hatlem, Adams, N. D. A. I. Heggerston, Minneapolis, Minn. Thelma Heimarck, Minneapolis, Minn. Valborg Helseth, St. Paul, Minn. Anlaug M. Hendricksen, East McKeesport Pr McKeesport, Pa.

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Malvin Thompson, Towner, N. D.
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## TRIENNIAL MEETING

The next regular Triennial Meeting of the Norwegian-American Historical Association will be held at the Learnington Hotel in Minneapolis on Tuesday, January 6, 1942. Mr. O. I. Hertsgaard has been designated by the Executive Board to assist the Secretary in making the necessary arrangements. At this time we wish to report the following tentative outline of meetings:

> 10 o'clock A.M.—Meeting of the Executive Board. 2 o'clock P.M.—General meeting of all members.

6:30 o'clock P.M.-Dinner meeting.

May we ask you to note this date on your calendar and arrange to be present at both afternoon and evening meetings.