

## A SALUTE TO CHARLOTTE JACOBSON

Charlotte Jacobson retired at age 65, and there is nothing unusual about that. It was, however, a short-lived retirement. A few days later she assumed responsibility for the NAHA Archives and began what we call her "second career." This happened 14 years ago. During these years Charlotte has provided the NAHA with a carefully organized archives which exhibit the highest professional standards. Moreover, she has kept pace with masses of incoming materials (not all donors exercise critical restraint), has assisted countless visitors and has responded to thousands of written queries.



Charlotte Jacobson at her desk.

Charlotte types her own correspondence.

In all events, Charlotte's contribution, first to St. Olaf College and later to the NAHA, had attained such enduring dimensions that something had to be done about it. These sentiments, articulated by a few but endorsed by many, led to the "Charlotte Jacobson Recognition Dinner." This took place in the King's Room at the St. Olaf College Center, Friday evening, May 13. Some 80 persons, friends, colleagues, officers and local members of the NAHA came to pay their respects to Charlotte.

There were speeches: Lloyd Hustvedt spoke for the officers and members of the NAHA; Odd S. Lovoll spoke for the board of publications which he heads as editor; Leigh Jordahl, who could not be present, reminisced in writing about the days he and Charlotte worked together at the St. Olaf College library. Ruth Crane, assistant secretary, read Jordahl's appreciative and entertaining account. Marion Nelson, director of Vesterheim, unfolded

the story of how the Jacobson family had donated to the museum their ancestral farm, established in 1850, being among the earliest in the Decorah area. The buildings themselves will offer an exhibit of rural immigrant life while the interiors will provide space for special exhibits and instructional programs. Forrest Brown concluded the tributes, speaking for the St. Olaf College Library.

In order to provide something more durable than speeches, John Maakestad of the art department at St. Olaf College had been engaged to create a work of art that would decorate Charlotte's home, a home shared by a sister Constance. Maakestad, known for his wit and charm, made the presentation, unveiling his own work. It proved to be a landscape from the Valley Grove area, approximately seven miles southeast of Northfield. The artist explained that the work had turned out far better than he had dared expect, that he had become very fond of it and was now reluctant to pass it on to someone else. He then consoled himself with the thought that he was, after all, Charlotte's distant relative and the painting would therefore in essence remain within the family. Charlotte responded to all that had preceded with her customary good humor, dignity and grace. (See Biographical Stetch, page 2.)

## A Biographical Sketch

Charlotte Jacobson's grandfather, Abraham Jacobson, came with his parents from Telemark, Norway, to Muskego, Wisconsin, in 1848 at the age of 12. The family settled two years later on what became the family farm near Decorah, Iowa. Abraham, who later operated the farm, is better known as pioneer minister, author and Iowa State legislator. Abraham and his wife Nicolene Hegg Jacobson had 11 children. Carl, Charlotte's father, stayed on the farm.

After graduating from the high school in Decorah, Charlotte attended St. Olaf College, graduating *Magna Cum Laude* and with distinction in English in 1931. Later came advanced degrees in Library Science from the universities of Minnesota and Michigan. Charlotte stayed on at St. Olaf College. This led ultimately to a career that divided her time between the library and the Department of English. At the time of her "retirement" she was Associate Librarian and Associate Professor of English.

Organization of the NAHA Archives along professional patterns began in 1961 with the coming of Beulah Folkedahl. In fact, Charlotte Jacobson sat on a committee that guided the processing of several target collections that would serve as models for later work.

The first gift to the NAHA on record specifying the archives came from Charlotte. The amount was \$500 and it provided the archives with its initial installment of acid free document cases.

When Beulah Folkedahl died in 1971 the archives were in excellent form, but no proper successor was found until Charlotte took over in 1974. Charlotte went to work. The first order of business was to process the large backlog of material that had accumulated. She brought to this position her years of library experience, a knowledge of the Norwegian language, impeccable English, a critical but also a sympathetic view of the immigrant setting, and finally a mind that somehow automatically organizes everything. Not all of the NAHA's assets are found in the Financial Report.

## Norway Seminar in '89

Dorothy Burton Skårdal informs us that the Norway branch of the NAHA plans to sponsor Norwegian-American Seminar III on June 25-28 at Toneheim Folk High School at Hamar, Norway. Preceding seminars were held in Oslo ('85) and Stavanger ('87). Vesterheim is planning an exhibition in three parts to be shown in the same area: Hamar, Lillehammer, and Gjøvik. There is, however, no official connection between the seminar and the exhibition.

## The Norway Chapter

There are some over 100 NAHA members in Norway. A few years ago a regional chapter was formed there with its own governing body. The current board members are: Kjetil Flatin, Øyvind Gulliksen, Ingeborg Kongslie, Arvid Sandaker, Ingrid Semmingsen, Dorothy Burton Skårdal and Judith Torvik.

Dorothy Burton Skårdal, who is our Norway representative on the executive board, serves as chapter president. She has taken the dominant role in planning what has become a series of seminars.

Judith Torvik also merits special mention. As far as the Norway members are concerned, she is their secretary and treasurer. She collects their annual dues in Norwegian crowns and at the close of the fiscal year transfers these funds to the Northfield office. Because of expenses and other complications involved in cashing checks drawn on Norwegian crowns in American banks, Judith Torvik's services are much appreciated, not only by the home office, but by the Norway members as well. Another favor performed by Judith is that we airmail our newsletters to her in bulk form. She then applies the required Norwegian postage for domestic mailing with the result that a month to six weeks surface mail time is eliminated.

## Carlton C. Qualey

Carlton C. Qualey grew up with the Norwegian-American Historical Association. We might add that in a certain sense he never left home at any later date. As a young scholar he worked closely with our first editor, Theodore C. Blegen. In doing so he joined that small group of historians who gave new dignity and increased purpose to immigration and ethnic studies in American history.

His book, *Norwegian Settlement in the United States* (NAHA, 1938), remains a classic in terms of content and historical method. At a critical moment in time, he served the Association in the field, collecting material for the then fledgling NAHA Archives. He served without interruption on the NAHA Board of Publications for fifty-five years. He assumed full editorial responsibility for several of our publications when the regular editor cared for unexpected emergencies.

There were other contributions, less tangible in character perhaps, but no less valuable. Carleton C. Qualey did not only exemplify high standards in his own work, he demanded the same standards of the Association as well. Down through time he kept an alert and critical eye on the



publication program of the NAHA. He did not mince words when he encountered slip-shop work, inadequately documented articles, or hastily drawn conclusions. We owe this man much.

Carleton C. Qualey died March 25, 1988, at Abbott-Northwestern Hospital in Minneapolis. He was 83. He taught history at Columbia and

Swarthmore for 14 years before coming to Carleton College in 1946. He was chair of the history department from 1960 until he retired in 1968. He is survived by a son, John, and a daughter, Mary Webb. His wife Elizabeth, sister of the poet e.e. cummings, died in 1980.

## Book Parties: Two of Them!



Our president, Lawrence O. Hauge, hosted a reception celebrating the publication of *The Testing of M. Falk Gjertsen* and its author, Nina Draxten, at the Minneapolis Woman's Club on April 6. This pleasant evening affair was attended by some 40 persons consisting of NAHA members and some of Nina Draxten's close friends. Ms. Draxten discussed some of the research problems involved in this work, responded to questions, and, as is shown in the picture to the left, she autographed copies of her book.

Several months later, on July 23, the Chicago History Committee sponsored an afternoon "wine and cheese" reception which recognized the NAHA's 75th publication, *A Century of Urban Life: The*

*Norwegians in Chicago before 1930*, by Odd S. Lovoll. Fifty persons attended the affair held at Northwestern University. Dr. Lovoll and his wife Else were honored guests at the reception and at a

later dinner, also hosted by the Chicago committee. This was a suitable conclusion for what ranks among the NAHA's most ambitious publication projects. We are grateful to Rolf Erickson, William J. Korsvik, L. Charles Brewick and Darrell F. Trep-tow, all officers of the Chicago History Committee, for their earlier support and for their recent festive arrangements. We congratulate Dr. Odd Lovoll for a task well done.



Left to right: Odd S. Lovoll, Rolf Erickson, Harry and Josefa Andersen.



## Random News

- Received. *Norsk: Turkey River Settlement 1852-1982*, by Merle Gregerson. Paper bound, photos, maps, charts, 275 pages.
- *More Han Ola og Han Per*, a second volume of 329 cartoon strips by Peter J. Rosendahl, edited by Einar Haugen and Joan N. Buckley, has been published by the University of Iowa Press, 119 West Park Road, Iowa City, Iowa 52242, \$19.95.
- Received. *Chris Jorgensen: California Pioneer Artist*, an elite catalog prepared by Katherine Mather Littell, Fine Arts Research Publishing Co., Sonora, California 95370-3615. Chris Jorgensen, born in Oslo, came to San Francisco with his mother in 1870 at the age of 10. A few years later his potential as an artist was discovered by the director of the School of Design in San Francisco. While Jorgensen's artistic production is varied, he is best known for his landscapes set in Yosemite National Park. Because he lived out his life outside of established Norwegian-American circles, his recent recognition marks something of a discovery. Jorgensen died in 1935. The catalog, 24 pages, features a number of colored reproductions, a brief biography and commentary on his art.
- Received. *Memoirs of a Norwegian Immigrant*, by Art Brunstad. Typescript reproduction, spiral bound, 83 pages. Brunstad came to Port Orchard, Washington, with his parents at the age of 12 in 1920. He worked his way through higher education, served with the OSS in Burma during World War II and later for the Atomic Energy Commission. It is a well-written and interesting account.
- Help Wanted! Anne Hvenekilde, who is researching old Norwegian-American primers, hopes to locate a copy of *ABC* (16 pages), printed in 1854, perhaps by *Emigranten* printing office, and *Norsk-Amerikansk A.B.C.*, Chicago (no date). Her address is: Anne Hvenekilde, Institutt for norsk som fremmedsprak, University of Oslo, N-0315 Oslo 3, Norway.
- Received. *Thor Johnson: American Conductor*, by Louis Nicholas, Music Festival Committee of the Peninsula Arts Association, 1982. Thor Johnson (1913-1975), born at Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin, taught music at Northwestern University and at the Interlochen Arts Academy. He was conductor of the Cincinnati Symphony orchestra from 1953 to 1958, and the Nashville Symphony from 1966 to 1975.
- Received. *Pioneer Memoirs and Stories of the Jacobson Immigration and Pioneer Life*. Compiled by Charlotte Jacobson and assisted by Rolf Hovey and his two daughters, Mary Bjerke and Janet Johnson. Typescript reproduction, photos, spiral bound, 80 pages, 1987.
- Received from Dr. Playford Thorson, *Plains Folk: North Dakota's Ethnic History*. Dr. Thorson, who helped to edit this North Dakota Centennial Heritage publication, wrote the chapter that treated the Scandinavians.
- *Blossoms of the Prairie: The History of the Danish Lutheran Church in Nebraska* by Jean M. and Edith M. Matteson is expected to see publication in December, 1988. P.O. Box 2774, Lincoln, Nebraska 68502. \$33.95.
- Died. The Reverend Carl W. Schevenius on April 19, 1988, three months short of reaching age 110. He was a loyal and dedicated member of the NAHA, and reviewed some of our publications for Norwegian newspapers. He gave a forceful invocation at our triennial banquet in 1981. Then he was 103 years old.
- Received. *The Hagebak Family* by Alan L. Kling and Floie M. Vane. Typescript reproduction, 20 pages, 1986, mainly a collection of photographs with generous captions.
- Rare Book. Received from Florence Hovde Melbostad and Marit Smaby Nowlin, *D. Johannis Lassenii Hans Bibelske Kierne og Korte Begrib paa den ganske Hellige Skrift*, Copenhagen, 1699.
- The way to do it! Stuart and Marian Aaker of Minneapolis subscribed to Life memberships for two grandchildren.

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