



Board Endorses Endowed Chair

The Executive Board of the NAHA endorsed at its October meeting a plan to create an endowed chair in immigration studies. The person holding this chair would also serve as editor of the NAHA publications and would pursue sustained research in this special area. Kenneth O. Bjork, president of the NAHA, who is approaching retirement age, has for a number of years promoted this plan. He emphasized that the future of the NAHA may well hinge on the success or failure of this project. The Board agreed that times and attitudes change, and that the professional standards of the NAHA cannot forever rely on volunteer work. It acknowledged that, in its search for a successor to Dr. Bjork, it would be unrealistic to expect a history professor to hold down two positions, and that it would be less than generous of the NAHA to expect that the college that hires such a professor should pick up the salary tab should the editor be relieved of some of his teaching duties.

At the same time, however, astonishing developments were taking place elsewhere. Dr. Sidney A. Rand, president of St. Olaf College, officially opened the Centennial Year for that college when he gave the Founders' Day Address on November 6. In his speech, President Rand announced that out of the \$9,500,000 fund drive which the College will launch "we shall seek \$1,000,000 in new money for the endowment fund. We hope that one-half of this amount can be designated for an endowed professorship in immigrant studies, a field particularly of interest to St. Olaf in view of its history and its roots among immigrant people."

The implications are clear. Any doubt or hesitation which may have attended the plan is now relegated to the past. The NAHA, together with all Americans of Norwegian extraction, must collectively do no less than what St. Olaf College intends to do.

A NOVEL ON PIONEER WOMEN

Oddmund Ljone, a prominent Norwegian author, is currently writing a novel on the Norwegian pioneer woman, a semi-fictional work which portrays the woman's life on the immigrant scene. The setting is in Iowa and the story covers the period 1860 to 1880. *Frontier Mother: The Letters of Gro Svendsen*, published by the NAHA in 1950, serves as a nucleus for this novel.

Mr. Ljone, who has just returned to Denmark where he currently lives, has spent considerable time in this country

and in the NAHA archives doing research. He was specially interested in letters written by immigrant women. The novel, to be published in Norway, will be one of several books coming out in that country celebrating the Sesquicentennial.

Seemingly with increased tempo, the archives and the publications of the NAHA inspire or enter directly into publications, which reach readers far beyond the immediate supporters of the NAHA.

SPECIAL FUNDS MAKE PROGRESS

The Theodore C. Blegen Memorial Fund, designated to provide grants for scholars who must revise and polish manuscripts accepted for publication by the Association, is nearing its goal of \$30,000. The fund drive received new vitality in June, 1972, when Gunnar Gundersen, M.D., LaCrosse, Wisconsin, pledged to match all future contributions until the hoped-for goal was reached. The fund currently stands at \$28,000, which means that another \$1,000 needs to be raised in order to derive full benefit from Dr. Gundersen's generous pledge.

The NAHA History Fund came into being when Arthur O. Davidson, president of Wagner College, made a matching pledge of \$1,000. This goal has been reached. Professors Kenneth O. Bjork and Odd Løvoll will work jointly on the history of the NAHA scheduled for publication in the Sesquicentennial year 1975, which is also the fiftieth anniversary of the Association. We wish to repeat our earlier expressions of gratitude to Dr. Gundersen and President Davidson.

AN EXPLANATION

At no time has the Association been better off in terms of manuscripts ready for publication. On the other hand, at no time have we experienced such delay in the printing process. Twayne Publishers, New York, received the manuscript for *Pioneer Churchman: The Narrative of J. W. C. Dietrichson, 1844-1950* in the spring of 1973. The manuscript for *Studies*, volume 26, was sent to the same firm several months later. For reasons not clear to us, Twayne Publishers, who do not do their own printing, have been unable to deliver the books. After considerable waiting, a new target date was set for December 21, 1973. However, another delay was announced with no new date specified.

The members of the Association have every right to be impatient. The delay, however, is not the fault of the editor or his assistants. Professor Odd Løvoll's manuscript on the *bygdelag* movement in America is also ready for printing.

CAN WE TRIPLE OUR MEMBERSHIP?

The Sesquicentennial, which also marks the 50th anniversary of the NAHA, must necessarily be marked with activity in many areas. One of these activities should clearly be the recruitment of new members. Existing members, when they make the effort, remain our best recruiting officers. They can be this by direct solicitation or by informing the Secretary about potential members. The Secretary's office follows up each lead provided.

Our goal is to enter our 51st year with our membership tripled. We are told that there are more persons in this country of Norwegian background than there are Norwegians in Norway, so there should be no lack of potential support. The basic formula is that each present member recruits one new member a year; this seems reasonable and feasible.

MEMBERSHIP PROMOTION

Lauritz Krefting, a Minneapolis wildlife specialist who has done extensive research on the moose both in this country and in Norway, will be recruiting new members for the NAHA. Mr. Krefting hopes to do this by means of a slide lecture which will feature the accomplishments and objectives of the Association. He will be working in the Minneapolis and St. Paul area. Mr. Krefting intends to work through existing organizations which have Norwegian affiliations. Members in the Minneapolis and St. Paul area are urged to assist and encourage Mr. Krefting in this venture. In keeping with the spirit that has prevailed in the NAHA, his services are volunteered.

POPULATION STUDY

Dr. Carlton C. Qualey, emeritus professor of history, Carleton College, is supervising an in-depth study of nationality groups that have made up Minnesota's population since 1850. Minnesota is the first to inaugurate such a study in the nation. Dr. Qualey is a member of our Publication Board and the author of *Norwegian Settlement in the United States*.

Editorial

THE ENDOWED CHAIR

The proposal for an endowed chair must be viewed from a broad perspective. The idea itself can be seen as a natural continuation of a building process which has taken place since the first Norwegian immigrants arrived in this country. In their own time, they built farms, communities, churches, academies and colleges. They founded organizations which met their social, psychological, and cultural needs. They established and supported an impressive journalism. By means of their own language, these newspapers familiarized the immigrant with the institutions in the New World. They did their task so well that they hastened their own extinction. From their midst arose critics, artists and scholars like O. E. Rølvaag, Thorstein Veblen, and F. Melius Christiansen. They supported benevolent causes, and not infrequently they sent portions of their resources back to their home communities in Norway. They organized a centennial celebration in 1925 which attracted national attention. One of its by-products was the Norwegian-American Historical Association, which, together with the museum in Decorah, has made a positive impact on the general field of American history. A logical entry into the creative processes, which have been going on for 150 years, would be an endowed chair in immigration studies.

Interested as the Norwegian Americans have been in education and despite the sacrifice they have made for its advancement, they have been somewhat modest about developing and guarding the future of studies which pertain to themselves. Some of the colleges founded by Norwegian immigrants no longer have departments of Norwegian; others are permitted to rise and fall with the ebb and flow of ethnic sentiment.

The University of Wisconsin has its Torger Thompson Professorship; the Norwegian Americans in Chicago support a chair at the University of Chicago. Some universities have Scandinavian departments by virtue of state laws. In a word, the future of Norwegian studies may be better safeguarded in public

institutions than in the very colleges the Norwegian immigrant founded. The Icelanders established a chair at the University of Winnipeg, and the Danes have a similar chair at the University of Washington. The aim here is not to charge neglect, but to point to the fact that the need for a chair in immigrant studies is clearly pressing.

Among the many things Norwegian Americans have built in this country are monuments in granite or bronze to notables they have felt should not be forgotten. This is as it should be. An endowed chair is also a monument, and, in the view of this writer, one of a higher order, for it is a living monument. Rightly understood, such a chair would be a memorial not only to those who attained personal fame, but also to the countless persons who quietly imbued whatever task was theirs with integrity, honesty, industry, and human compassion. It would also be a memorial to the misfits and victims, to the rascals and the selfish, to the cold and cruel, and to all the unhappy human conditions which caused them to be so. Above all, it would be a monument to all that which we yet do not know about ourselves and our past—but hope to discover. L.H.

PUBLICATIONS

As noted elsewhere in this *Newsletter*, the printing of *Pioneer Churchman*, dated 1973, has been delayed unduly for reasons not clear to us, but copies of this documentary volume should be in your hands very soon. Volume 26 of *Norwegian-American Studies* is scheduled for publication by early summer.

Editorial work on Dr. Odd S. Løvoll's definitive study of the *bygdelag* movement in America has been completed, and the book will appear in 1975, if not earlier. Considerable progress has also been made in preparing Miss Nina Draxten's exciting biography of Kristofer Janson in America for publication in 1975.

Contributions to volume 27 of *Studies* are being received, and it promises to be a book of considerable interest. Originally planned as a Sesquicentennial volume, it may not appear until early 1976. It is possible that Professor Hen-

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THE ARCHIVES

It is not possible to list each new acquisition in the archives. The following represents only a sampling:

From Paul Rorem, seven letters by O. E. Rølvaag to the Reverend Edv. Rørem. From Anna Viola Servold Bunn, her own *Erickson, Person, Vangsness and Allied Families*. From Ruth Louise Lien, *The Lien Family*. From Harold S. Langeland, his own *Sølfest Langeland and Ingeborg Brekhus*. From Verl L. Lekwa *et al*, their own *The Lekwa Family*. From Mrs. Chester Barnes, a diary kept by Ingebret Simonsen. From Lawrence E. Brynestad, the autobiography of Carl Swain. From the John Peder Kvamme family, two volumes of genealogy and family history, prepared by Carl M. Gunderson. From the Rølvaag family, a diary kept by O. E. Rølvaag when he left Norway for America and assorted other papers.

USED BOOKS WANTED

We have a long waiting list for used copies of our out-of-print books. If for some reason members of the Association must dispose of NAHA books or intend to do so in the future, and if they have no other repository in mind, the Association would be pleased to receive them.

The books out of print are *Studies*,

volumes 2, 3, 7 and 12, *Ole Rynning's True Account of America, Frontier Parsonage, Frontier Mother, The Lady with the Pen, Norwegian Sailors on the Great Lakes, Norwegian Migration to America, 1825-1860, Laur. Larsen: Pioneer College President, Norwegian Settlement in the United States and Grass of the Earth*.

PUBLICATIONS

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riette Naeseth's translation of Marcus Thrane's America-based plays may also be distributed in the same year.

By action of the Executive Board, NAHA members will receive copies of Professor Arlow W. Andersen's single-volume survey of Norwegian immigration to and life in America. This book is in a series on the immigrant being issued by Twayne Publishers, Inc., of New York.

Thus, as we approach 1975, we can anticipate reading materials that will contribute significantly to the general observation of the Sesquicentennial of organized migration to the New World, which began with the sailing of the "Restauration" in 1825.

California Lutheran College, Thousand Oaks, California, is featuring a Scandinavian Day on February 9.

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