

THE NEWS LETTER

The Norwegian-American Historical Association

Secretary, J. JØRGEN THOMPSON
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St. Olaf College
Northfield, Minnesota

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Executive Board Meets in Chicago

Forty or More Volumes

When the Executive Board met at the Union League Club in Chicago October 3, much of the discussion revolved around the problem constantly before the Association: how to increase the membership roll, which in turn will safeguard future publications in keeping with established scholastic standards. Dean Theodore C. Blegen struck the major note which prevailed throughout the meeting when he said that the Historical Association must never relax, never sit back and delight in the forty volumes it has already published, but rather it must constantly think in terms of the forty or more volumes that yet need to be published.

Eleven Board Members Present

Professor Sverre Arestad from Washington and Magnus Bjørndal of New Jersey traveled the greatest distance. From the Middle West were J. A. Aasgaard, Kenneth Bjork, Theodore Blegen, Clarence Clausen, L. Hustvedt, David Nelson, J. Jørgen Thompson, Andrew Wigeland, and the President, Lionel G. Thorsness.

20,000 Letters

David Nelson and Kenneth Bjork announced that President Clemens M. Granskou of St. Olaf College and President J. W. Ylvisaker of Luther College had undertaken to support the NAHA in a most magnificent manner. In a letter which they sent to each of their respective alumni, the Presidents followed an explanation of the past accomplishments of the Association with a personal appeal that each alumni member join and otherwise support the Historical Association. This appeal touched over 20,000 people, those most likely to be sympathetic to our work. This marks the largest single effort toward membership expansion yet made. The Executive Board and the entire membership express their sincerest gratitude to President Clemens M. Granskou and President J. W. Ylvisaker for their unqualified support. For the results see the special article in this issue.

The 'Texas Book'

Regarding future publications, Dean Blegen called attention to the forthcoming *Studies and Records*, volume 20. Dean Blegen also stressed the need for an index, complete and detailed in scope, which would serve as a guide to all the information compiled in *Studies and Records*.

Clarence Clausen, who is editing the Elise Wærenskjold Letters—popularly but unofficially called the "Texas Book"—reported on the progress of his work.

Clausen also gave a short personality sketch of the remarkable Elise Wærenskjold, one of the first Norwegian immigrants to settle in Texas. This one-time wife of the Norwegian inventor, Svend Foyn, was an able and intelligent woman who had far more than just an intuitive understanding of being involved in something of great historical significance. As a journalist and writer of many letters, she explained and defended Texas to the rest of her countrymen both in Norway and in the Northern States. Though her husband was murdered during the Civil War for his anti-slavery views, she in no manner became embittered. She continued in her calm, even-tempered, but firm manner to defend truth, women's rights, her Norwegian heritage, and her newly found home, Texas.

The immigrant hall of fame is filled with noble pioneer women, yet few of them, perhaps, can captivate one as does Elise Wærenskjold. During Clausen's discussion of her, the thought persisted—without the NAHA, Elise Wærenskjold might have remained forever in obscurity. When the book is published, it is certain that each member will be justly proud of having had a share in bringing into the open another unconquerable pioneer spirit.

Because the South has not been treated in earlier publications, this neglect will now be partly corrected. In addition, the geographic spheres of interest embraced by the Association will be greatly expanded.

Dinner Given by Andrew Wigeland

After the business meeting Andrew E. Wigeland, the Treasurer, was host to a dinner at the Union League Club. Besides the Executive Board, a number of other guests, all of the Chicago area, attended the dinner: Gunnar E. Gunderson, Kristofer Oddsen, Jr., Leif Skadberg, G. Norman Wigeland, Carl Abrahamson, Jens A. Paasche, Sivert I. Klefstad, Knute Nelson, A. G. Stensland, and Marshall Peterson.

President Thorsness and Andrew Wigeland gave the speeches of welcome. Following the dinner, Dean Blegen spoke on the history and the development of the NAHA and explained the unique cooperation that had prevailed between scholars and business men ("town and gown"), which had made possible the existence of such an Association.

Dr. Kenneth Bjork spoke as the author of the most recent publication. He, too, emphasized that the publications put out by the Historical Association were as much products of dedicated and farsighted business and professional men, together with the

membership at large, as they were products of historians and other men trained in the field of research.

Dr. Clarence Clausen, the last speaker, further elaborated on the person of Elise Wærenskjold, giving many interesting anecdotes about her experience and her contributions to her community in Texas.

Thus the three speakers tied together the past, the present, and the hoped-for future of the Historical Association.

On behalf of the Executive Board and the other guests, this writer has been asked to express a sincere "takk for maten" to Andrew Wigeland.

From the Reviews: West of the Great Divide

Nationen (Oslo)

"During the past recent years there have appeared towering works about the migration from Norway to America. The most central and comprehensive works have been written by Theodore Blegen (*Norwegian Immigration*) and by Ingrid Semmingsen (*Veien mot vest*). Both of these works have pulled all the phases of the migration into one total picture, and have given an exhaustive and colorful survey of this significant event in Norwegian history.

"First and foremost, thanks to the Norwegian-American Historical Association that in recent years has published a series of specialized works in the same field. They have treated certain sides of the migration, journals, diaries, letter collections, biographies, and studies, chronological or geographical in their organizational pattern, and at times according to occupation.

"One of the most energetic scholars in this field is the professor of history at St. Olaf College, Dr. Kenneth O. Bjork. Born in North Dakota of Norwegian immigrants, he has constantly felt a natural attraction to the study of the Norwegians' life and achievements in the country to which his parents came. . . . And now this fall Professor Bjork has released a huge volume about the Norwegian immigration and migration to the American west coast during the years 1947-1893. Its title is *West of the Great Divide*. . . ."

From "Norsk innsats på Stillehavskysten," written by Arne Kildal.

Minnesota History

"This book contains a story of dreams and visions, heroic endeavors and heartbreaking disappointments,

unscrupulous puffing by greedy speculators, and ruthless exploitation of trusting immigrants. Hundreds rest in unmarked graves besides western trails or were broken by the strain of unaccustomed toil in a foreign land. But the majority survived to build homes, found churches, and establish mutual aid societies and musical organizations. The volume under review tells how Norse immigrants made valuable contributions to the upbuilding of their adopted country. Some won distinction as sailors and shipbuilders. And it was the intrepid Andrew Furuseth who mobilized brutally exploited seamen in their successful fight for decent treatment. His enduring monument is the merchant seamen's act which bears the name of Senator La Follette. Resourceful John G. North was a leading shipbuilder in San Francisco in the post gold-rush period. Other success stories center about Anton M. Holter, a Montana lumber tycoon, and John A. ("Snowshoe") Thompson, the fabulous mail carrier of the Sierras, who won fame if not fortune."

Reviewed by Paul Knaplund.

Pacific Historical Review

Professor E. Lindgren of Occidental College, California, concludes his review as follows: "This tremendous work of research and writing thrills a reader of Scandinavian descent and fills a void which has plagued historians of immigration. Professor Bjork is to be thanked, as is the Norwegian-American Historical Association, for *West of the Great Divide*. Although Bjork promises another volume, this work will stand without parallel, requiring only retouching in some few small places, as the story of the Norwegian in the Far West."

Inventory of Books on Hand

	No.		
<i>Ole Rynning's True Account of America</i> , Translated and edited by Theodore C. Blegen (\$1.50)	245	of Minneapolis and edited by Theodore C. Blegen (\$3.00)	97
<i>Peter Testman's Account of His Experiences in North America</i> , Translated and edited by Theodore C. Blegen (\$1.50)	259	<i>Frontier Mother: The Letters of Gro Svendsen</i> , Translated and edited by Pauline Farseth and Theodore C. Blegen (\$3.00)	36
<i>America in the Forties: The Letters of Ole Munch Raeder</i> , Translated and edited by Gunnar J. Malmin (\$3.00)	125	<i>Norwegian Sailors on the Great Lakes: A Study in the History of American Inland Transportation</i> , Knut Gjerset (\$3.00)	7
<i>Frontier Parsonage: The Letters of Olaus Fredrik Duus, Norwegian Pastor in Wisconsin, 1855-1858</i> , Translated by the Verdandi Study Club		<i>Norwegian Migration to America, 1825-1860</i> , Theodore C. Blegen (\$4.00)	347
		<i>Norwegian Sailors in American Waters: A Study in the History of Maritime Activity on the Eastern Seaboard</i> , Knut Gjerset (\$3.50)	496

The Civil War Letters of Colonel Hans Christian Heg, Edited by Theodore C. Blegen (\$3.50) 436

Laur. Larsen: Pioneer College President, Karen Larsen (\$4.00) 36

The Changing West and Other Essays, Laurence M. Larson (\$3.50) 530

Norwegian Settlement in the United States, Carlton C. Qualey (\$3.75) 329

The Log Book of a Young Immigrant, Laurence M. Larson (\$3.75) 308

Norwegian Migration to America: The American Transition, Theodore C. Blegen (\$5.00) 1022

A Long Pull from Stavanger: The Reminiscences of a Norwegian Immigrant, Birger Osland (\$3.00) 488

Saga in Steel and Concrete: Norwegian Engineers in America, Kenneth Bjork (\$5.00) 898

Grass of the Earth: Immigrant Life in the Dakota Country, Aagot Raaen (Out of print) 0

A Chronicle of Old Muskego: The Diary of Søren Bache, 1839-1847, Translated and edited by Clarence A. Clausen and Andreas Elviken (\$3.50) 289

The Immigrant Takes His Stand: The Norwegian-American Press and Public Affairs, 1847-1872, Arlow William Andersen (\$3.50) 334

The Diary of Elisabeth Koren, 1853-1855, Translated and edited by David T. Nelson (\$5.00) 258

West of the Great Divide, Kenneth O. Bjork (\$7.50) 677

Studies and Records

Volume	No.	Volume	No.
I	221	XI	395
II	82	XII	146
III	88	XIII	197
IV	301	XIV	265
V	276	XV	189
VI	265	XVI	225
VII	66	XVII	331
VIII	231	XVIII	439
IX	275	XIX	442
X	399		
		Total	4763

The Need to Sell

If the retail value of the above inventory be used, the stock totals over \$39,000. If the 25% discount allowed to members be the basis, then the figure reaches something more than \$29,000. Because a free copy is always given to each member (now *West of the Great Divide*) no accurate estimate can ever be reached. However, the inventory does suggest several things. First, OUR BOOKS SHOULD BE OUT AMONG THE PEOPLE, NOT ON OUR SHELVES. Second, the income from the sale of these books would go far to finance future publications, and also to pay for second and third printings of same books, should the demand be great enough.

As usual we must appeal to the membership for

aid. If each member, when in need of a gift, would consider one of our books, or, better yet, give a gift membership and designate one book as a free copy, then our stock would decrease rapidly. We would also like to emphasize the desirability of donating our books to local libraries and schools.

The total retail cost of a complete set of our books (*Grass of the Earth* not included) is \$114.00. When purchased by a member, the total is \$85.50. A complete set of *Studies and Records* is \$47.50. The membership discount reduces this amount to \$35.63.

**MEMBERSHIP DRIVE:
EIGHTY-TWO NEW MEMBERS**

As a result of the letters sent out by Presidents J. W. Ylvisaker and Clemens M. Granskou eighty-two new members were enrolled. Fifty-seven enrolled as Associate members (\$5.00); twenty-one became Sustaining members (\$10.00); and four enrolled as LIFE members (\$100.00).

In proportion to the number of people contacted the percentages might be small. Yet, the success or failure of this drive is not at all dependent on the number enrolled; rather, it is directly dependent on the permanency of the membership, and only the future can determine this. If these eighty-two represent permanent membership, the drive—still going on—can only be judged a most happy venture.

SIX NEW LIFE MEMBERS

Kenneth Bjork a Life Member

Since October 1, the Life membership roll has increased by six: Mr. J. G. Kjos of Mayville, North Dakota; Mr. Isaac Anderson of Hingham, Massachusetts. Special acknowledgments must go to Mr. and Mrs. Stavlo, Joel and Leona, of Gruver, Texas, who took out Life memberships. Dr. John A. Vieg, chairman of the political science department at Pomona College, Claremont, California, presented Dr. Kenneth Bjork with a Life membership. The latest application came from G. Norman Wigeland of Chicago. Our sincerest thank you to all for your splendid support.

NEW MEMBERSHIP IS OPENED

Because many have contributed funds beyond the \$10.00 demanded of them as sustaining members, and because no membership was provided for an amount between \$10.00 and \$100.00, President Thorsness announced that a "Patron" membership should be put into effect. Anyone contributing annually \$25.00 or more will receive the "Patron" classification. All applications and brochures printed in the future will list this membership along with the others.

PLEASE EXCUSE

Because our name plate service is in process of installing new machinery calling for smaller-sized name plates, we have been instructed to abbreviate

names and addresses in so far as possible. While we would prefer to use your name exactly as you send it to us, first names have by necessity been reduced to initials. All typewritten correspondence will, of course, continue to use complete names.

AN APPEAL

Need a Membership of 1500

Our membership now stands at approximately 900. Our goal is to stabilize our rolls at a very possible 1500 members. This number would provide a relatively worry-free existence for our President and our Treasurer, who constantly face the problem of having adequate funds to publish the manuscripts approved by the Editorial Board. It need not be called to anyone's attention that their duties go far beyond that of pre-

siding at meetings and preparing financial reports. Both men, Thorsness and Wigeland, have carried through a most energetic program, but they cannot do it alone; they, like all the other members, have their own professional and occupational duties to take care of.

We therefore appeal to the membership at large to do one of two things, or preferably both: In the application blanks below please write your name following the words "recommended by," and send them to persons you think would be willing to join the Association. The second is that you enter the names and addresses of persons whom you wish us to contact, inviting them to become members. Unless you state otherwise, we will use your name when writing to them. The application blank below may also be used for giving a gift membership. Sincerest thanks.

Life Membership \$100.00. Patron Membership \$25.00. Sustaining Membership \$10.00 per annum. Associate Membership \$5.00 per annum.

Norwegian-American
Historical Association

LLOYD HUSTVEDT
Membership Secy.
St. Olaf College,
Northfield, Minnesota

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APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

I hereby apply for.....
Membership in Norwegian-American Historical Association
and enclose check or money order for \$.....
in accordance with the schedule of dues listed above.

Name.....
Address.....
.....
Occupation.....
Recommended by.....

Your name.....
Street.....
City..... State.....

You are permitted to use my name when writing to the below listed persons. Yes () No ()

(1) Name.....
Street.....
City..... State.....

(2) Name.....
Street.....
City..... State.....

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Recommended by.....

(3) Name.....
Street.....
City..... State.....

(4) Name.....
Street.....
City..... State.....

(5) Name.....
Street.....
City..... State.....

SEND TO:
LLOYD HUSTVEDT, *Membership Secretary*
Norwegian-American Historical Association
St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota

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