

The Norwegian-American Historical Association

Northfield, Minnesota

From the NAHA Office to the Association Members

NEWS LETTER



NUMBER 134

FALL 2009

FROM THE PRESIDENT

On behalf of the Board of the Norwegian-American Historical Association, I want to send special greetings to all of our members. We thank you very much for your patience as we have not sent out a newsletter for awhile. We promise to get back on a regular schedule of communications to our loyal members. As you all know, our longtime Administrative Director Kim Holland left us early this year because of a family move. Kim served us well for many years and we have adjusted to NAHA without her. The Board has used this time to examine closely how the Norwegian-American Historical Association can proceed successfully into the future. Our goal has been to preserve the intentions of our founders and ensure a vibrant and successful organization including both our publications program and the NAHA Archives at St. Olaf College.

Primarily, our concern has been making sure that NAHA continues to have a strong publications program that celebrates and records the Norwegian-American immigrant experience. In addition, we are all justifiably proud of the exceptional Archives we maintain at St. Olaf. We want to be able to make the Archives accessible to all and to ensure that it both grows and is well-managed. The financial crisis that has affected everyone has made NAHA, like all non-profit organizations, more careful and cautious. We want to ensure our future with a strong Endowment Fund. We have been exploring different organizational models, including the possibilities of closer ties to St. Olaf, and the alternative possibilities of focusing our staff more pointedly on financial development. The Board has a fiduciary obligation to NAHA, and we are taking that responsibility seriously. Kim's departure and the financial crisis have given us the opportunity to examine the organization in different ways and it is our hope that we can move forward with our planning this fall.

You can be assured that the Board will proceed with NAHA's best interests foremost in our minds. That is our obligation. Although our financial situation remains strong, and has improved significantly with the improvements in the financial markets, NAHA needs to remain

strong and vibrant for many years to come. That important goal is the guide for the discussions that we are currently having and before any changes are finalized, we will communicate fully with our members. Do let us know if upon reading the newsletter you have any questions or concerns at all. We will be happy to be in touch with you.

- Jack Tunheim

ARCHIVES ANNOUNCES THE CREATION OF THE HOVLAND INDEXES

The latest finding aides on the Archives page of the NAHA web site (<http://www.naha.stolaf.edu/archives/index.htm>) are the **Hovland Index** of *bygdebøker* in the Rolvaag Library collection at St. Olaf and the accompanying **Hovland Map Index**. Each index helps identify *bygdebøker* by county and current municipality (or comune). For instance, if you are interested in a family that came from Hedmark, you can designate that county name in the drop down list in the Hovland Index; and, by clicking on the "submit query" button, you will generate an author and title list of every *bygdebøker* in the library for that county, arranged alphabetically by the names of its municipalities. A further click on the call number of any book of interest will take you to the appropriate entry in Bridge, the online library catalog used at St. Olaf. If you are interested only in one municipality within a country – Grue in Hedmark, for instance – you can also type the name Grue into the second search box to find only *bygdebøker* for that municipality. The Hovland Map Index produces the same results employing Norwegian county and municipality maps. It also assists researchers in determining which localities are adjacent to each other, information that is quite helpful, given boundary changes over time and kinship connections across local boundaries.

Please note that almost all *bygdebøker* in Rolvaag Library have been moved from their former location (5th floor) to the 1st floor.

Both Hovland indexes are based upon data compiled by NAHA volunteer Dale Hovland, for whom they are named. Another NAHA volunteer, Dale Haaland, created the online search capability for each index. Our thanks to the two Dales for their hard work! NAHA volunteers play

an indispensable part in making our resources accessible.

The two Hovland indexes join several other online search tools. These include: 1) **Leif**, our online collection search engine, 2) **Norwegian-American Newspapers**, an index and guide to library holdings of Norwegian-American newspapers, and 3) **Norwegian-American Images**, a collection being developed with our best historical photographs. Norwegian-American Images currently includes some 85 images from Minnesota; but it will soon include an additional 100 images from Wisconsin.

PUBLICATIONS

As friends of NAHA are aware, we have taken a pause in the publication program in order not to strain the finances of the organization and to provide time for the board of directors to consider reorganization of the structures of the association. Those discussions continue, but the situation is now favorable enough to permit us to begin publishing again. At present it appears that we will be in the position to publish one title every two years for the foreseeable future.

With this in mind, we are planning to publish the next edition of *Studies* in the autumn of 2010. This will include a number of fine essays on a variety of themes.

Publications in prospect include a multivolume edition of America-Norway letters selected and translated by Orm Øverland. This will be based on the acclaimed Norwegian edition of these letters, and is now nearing completion. Other possibilities include a study of Norwegian-American church architecture and an atlas of Scandinavian-American populations in the United States.

We look forward to our reappearance in print and are confident that you will enjoy our forthcoming publications.

- Todd Nichol

VISITING THE ARCHIVES

We ask that all visitors call (507-786-3229) or e-mail (naha-archivists@stolaf.edu) in advance to make an appointment. Our public hours are generally 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Monday to Friday, and afternoon appointments can also often be made on week-days. However, the archivists do have work that takes them outside the archives; and vacation days, illnesses, and special events require occasional closures. Advance appointments minimize disappointments and help the archivists plan their work. The presence of several volunteers with family history expertise on Thursdays provides us with superior staffing on that day. We also appreciate advance notice of what materials visitors will request: this can easily be done by using Leif to identify appropriate items and e-mailing the information to the archivists. We will try to help visitors without appointments to the extent that other

work allows, but we cannot always guarantee that any help will be available or even that the archives will be open. Use of the archives is free for current NAHA members: lapsed memberships may be renewed at the beginning of a visit. Non-members pay a daily fee of \$15.00 or may join NAHA upon arrival. Visitors should bring coins for any copying to be done.

- Gary Dekrey / Jeff Sauve

NEW ARCHIVAL MATERIALS

Thanks to everyone who has donated materials since the last newsletter. We aren't able to mention all of those donations here (donations are now acknowledged individually) but we are grateful for all of them. We do continue to collect Norwegian-American letters, diaries, photographs, family histories, and community and congregational materials. We are especially interested in gathering items that reflect the experiences of post-World War II immigrants. We generally do not accept books, however: we make rare exceptions only, generally for Norwegian-American imprints (books published in the U.S. in the Norwegian language) and *bygdebøker* that are not already in the St. Olaf collection.

Recent additions to the collection include:

- Norway-America Letters:
Over 20 letters from Norway to Berit Easted of Orchard, IA
Photocopies of about 20 letters from Norway to John Rufsvold of Buffalo, SD
Over 70 letters donated by Arthur F. and Delma Peterson, Elmhurst, IL
- America-America Letters:
Over 20 Norwegian letters from Iver Lahren (Walcott, ND; Hawley, MN) to his sister
- America-Norway Letters:
Over 20 translated Hanshus family letters (mostly from Jens Hanshus, Washburn, WI)
- John R. Reiersen papers: Texas diary, letters, and deeds received from Judge Derwood Johnson on behalf of Mrs. Jean Reiersen
- Langland and Brekhus papers (Harold S. Langland, S. S. Langland, Edward Brekhus): letters, photos, biography, and autobiography
- Family histories. New historical writing and materials about the following families and individuals: Hagebak and Mork, Ole and Marit (Eidsmo) Husby, Einar Almdale and Ruth Holmbach, Joanne Alfreda Wickoren Englund, Herman Hanson (Rue), Bernard Lyngstad.
- Qualey-Glasrud-Vaaler Papers. We are in the process of making photocopies and scans of numerous Qualey, Glasrud, and Vaaler family materials collected by David Rudrud of La Crosse, WI.

We have also completed the digital transfer of some older recordings in the NAHA collection, and we have acquired new digital copies of some recordings of Norwegian-American interest. Notable in the first category are films taken of Camp Little Norway, Toronto, Canada, in 1943. Newly acquired DVDs include a KSTP film of the Minnesota visit of King Olav V in 1968 (purchased from the MN Historical Society) and a 1909 film (date is not a typo!) of the Norway Day celebrations in Seattle, WA, during the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition, including a segment with the St. Olaf Band (purchased from the Seattle Archives). - *Gary Dekrey / Jeff Sauve*

THANKS TO OUR MANY SUPPORTERS!

NAHA gratefully acknowledges the generosity of the members and friends of NAHA who have made financial gifts to NAHA September 2008– September 2009.

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Italicized denotes NAHA Board Members

Norwegian-American Historical Association
St. Olaf College
Northfield, Minnesota 55057
www.naha.stolaf.edu
507-786-3221

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