

NAHA Norwegian American Historical Association

RESEARCH PROSPECTUS

Throughout its history the Norwegian-American Historical Association (NAHA) has been an exemplar organization regarding the scholarship of the ethnic and immigrant experience. Moving forward, NAHA will continue to be a leading advocate for pursuing quality research and publication of the experiences of Norwegian immigrants and their descendants. Toward that goal, NAHA envisions that future publications will address one or more the following criteria:

1) New Historical Eras

Traditionally, historians have emphasized the first century of the Norwegian immigration to North America, namely 1825-1925. In the context of assimilation to American culture, many historians viewed the 1925 Norse-American Centennial as the final “hurrah” for the Norwegian immigrants and thus studying the years beyond 1925 was not thought to be necessary. More recent scholarship, however, impugns this view and argues that the immigrant experience is more sustainable than initially thought. Thus, NAHA looks for scholarship that examines “the second century” of Norwegian immigration. Various historical eras remain to be explored including the Great Depression and World War II, the Cold War era, and others.

2) New Geographical Areas

The core of the traditional Norwegian-American immigrant community has been the upper Midwest and, not surprisingly, histories of the Norwegian immigrants have tended to focus there. Yet, Norwegians travelled widely, and other geographical areas are under-researched or given scant attention at all. For instance, sizeable Norwegian populations are found in the Pacific Northwest, while other communities can be found in New York, Texas, and many western states, which all deserve further scholarly treatment. Canada is another area that requires further research. Norway also deserves more attention as a country of departure and destination. NAHA maintains that the Norwegian immigrant experience must consider Norwegian immigrant communities in Latin America, Asia, and Africa as well.

3) Cross-cultural Encounters

As immigrants Norwegians interacted with other immigrant groups and indigenous peoples. NAHA encourages research that explores the cross-cultural encounters between Norwegians and other groups. Research of this type places the Norwegian immigrant experience in a larger context, which suggest linkages to the larger historical trends of world history.

4) Application of Theoretical Models

In the past two decades new theoretical models have enriched the study of history and the study of Norwegian immigration history would likewise benefit from the application of these theoretical models. NAHA therefore encourages research that covers Norwegian immigration using models such as identity theory, whiteness theory, transnationalism, feminist critique, borderlands theory, core and periphery theory, and others. NAHA has long enjoyed a reputation for publishing innovative approaches to immigration research and will continue to do so.

NAHA will also consider research that falls within the traditional categories, such as the time frame from 1825-1925 and the Upper Midwest, provided it meets other innovative criteria, especially with regard to criteria 3 and 4.