

NA Norwegian American
HA Historical Association

Inspiring connections to Norwegian American
experiences through discovery, scholarship,
and stewardship

2025

ANNUAL REPORT



Willfred Nordlund (left) and Bård Ludvig Thorheim, members of Norway's parliament, or Storting, visited NAHA in February, where they viewed items from the World War II digitization project, the 1925 Norse-American Centennial, and the Ole E. Rølvaag Papers.

COMMEMORATING NAHA'S CENTENNIAL AND A MIGRATION BICENTENNIAL

The October visit of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Haakon of Norway was a meaningful moment of connection between Norway and the United States during NAHA's centennial year. The prince's visit commemorated Crossings, the bicentennial of organized Norwegian migration to North America. His trip included a stop at St. Olaf College, where he viewed materials from NAHA's World War II digitization project, and students presented research they've done in the NAHA archives. During a special convocation, the crown prince recognized NAHA's century of work preserving and sharing Norwegian American history, noting the importance of the association's archives.

The prince's US visit in October concluded in New York City, where he welcomed a replica of the *Restauration* after its transatlantic voyage from Stavanger, retracing the journey made by emigrants in 1825. The ship's arrival at the pier drew thousands, including members of NAHA and of Vesterheim Norwegian American museum, who enjoyed a joint tour of the city and Norwegian American heritage sites there.



NAHA's 100th anniversary celebration took place in October, on the University of Minnesota–Minneapolis campus, a nod to the legacy of longtime NAHA Editor Theodore Blegen, who was a professor of history there. The evening's program featured storyteller and author Kevin Kling and music by Ole Olsson's Oldtime Orkestra.

NAHA staff members Amy Boxrud and Jenny Wright at the opera



In April, NAHA members and friends traveled by bus to Sioux Falls, South Dakota, for a rare performance of the opera *Giants in the Earth: The Norwegians in the Dakota Territory*. The event was part of the Crossings bicentennial observations and marked the return of this work to the stage after more than 50 years. The South Dakota Symphony Orchestra's performances were recorded by South Dakota Public Broadcasting. NAHA was honored to serve as a broadcast sponsor.

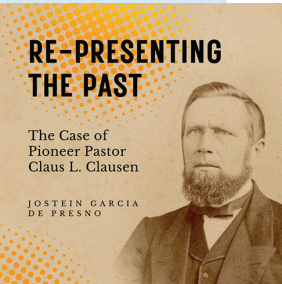
Borgen Family Archivist for NAHA Kristina Warner shows the crown prince and his delegation photos taken by Campbell Norsgaard, who documented the activities of the Royal Norwegian Air Force in exile in Canada during World War II. Many of his photos and films show members of Norway's royal family—including King Harald V as a young child—visiting Camp Little Norway in Canada.



For academics as well as the general public, [NAHA] is a unique source of insight into migration history."

—Crown Prince Haakon of Norway

An online event in March invited participants to reconsider a slice of migration history through new research. Jostein Garcia de Presno was our guest speaker for "Re-Presenting the Past: The Case of Pioneer Pastor Claus L. Clausen." Clausen, a co-founder of the Norwegian Synod, was also the founder of St. Ansgar, Iowa, a chaplain to Scandinavian soldiers during the Civil War, and an early editor of the newspaper *Emigranten*.



FROM NAHA'S CENTENNIAL EXHIBIT

NAHA's founding in 1925 was in part a consequence of that year's celebration of the Norse-American Centennial, which marked 100 years of organized migration. The celebration heightened people's interest in Norwegian American history and their awareness of the need to preserve it. Here, pictured in Decorah, Iowa, May 1926, NAHA's executive board meets for the first time since the founding. Standing, from left: Kristian Prestgard, O. E. Rølvaag, B. L. Wick, O. Boe, Oscar L. Olson, Einar Lund, Sigurd Arneson, T. Stabo, J. M. Rhone, Knut Gjerset, Birger Osland, Georg Strandvold, J. Jorgen Thomson, Theodore C. Blegen. Seated: Sir Karl Knudsen, O. M. Olesen, D. G. Ristad.



In June, NAHA co-hosted the five-day Crossings and Connections conference on the St. Olaf College campus to commemorate and examine 200 years of migration history between Norway and North America. The event was organized in partnership with our affiliate NAHA-Norge, as well as the Norwegian Researchers and Teachers Association of North America, and the Norwegian department at St. Olaf. The conference drew nearly 275 participants, including more than 50 who traveled from abroad. Support from the Sons of Norway Foundation made it possible to record 12 plenary sessions at the conference so NAHA could make them available on our YouTube channel.



PHOTOS: (TOP) ANNO MUSEUM; (MIDDLE) EVAN PAK; (BOTTOM) MICHAEL WOOLHEATER

IN OUR CENTENNIAL YEAR, NAHA WELCOMED 80 NEW MEMBERS!

THE CENTENNIAL CAMPAIGN FOR THE NAHA ARCHIVES

NAHA launched Archiving Norwegian America: the Centennial Campaign for the NAHA Archives at our biennial member meeting in October 2024. This fundraising initiative was a mission-critical effort to strengthen our preservation and stewardship of the NAHA collections. By securing long-term endowment funding, it ensures that the treasures of Norwegian American history remain accessible and protected for generations to come.

The campaign surpassed its \$2 million goal, drawing \$2.5 million in gifts. This strong and diverse support—from members, friends, past and current board members, and other Norwegian American and community organizations—reflects a shared commitment to preserving and sustaining Norwegian American history. The results will be felt, appreciated, and enjoyed for many years. The response was heartwarming, and we are deeply grateful to all who contributed.

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FROM NAHA'S CENTENNIAL EXHIBIT

1 Members of the Norwegian Literary Society of Chicago take part in a parade. **COLLECTION:** Norwegian Literary Society of Chicago Records 2 Vision- and mobility-impaired skiers and their guides at a Ski for Light event. **COLLECTION:** Ski for Light Records 3 The Rognlie Trio (Katharina, Julia, and Margarethe Rognlie) near their family farm outside Franklin, Minnesota, circa 1930. **COLLECTION:** Reverend Parelius H. Rognlie Papers. 4 Daughters of Norway, Freya Lodge, Minneapolis, 1904. **COLLECTION:** Sons of Norway and Daughters of Norway Papers.



THE ARCHIVES

Throughout the year, NAHA continued to actively collect the primary sources that are safeguarded in our archives. We accessioned more than 72 donations to our collections. Each is appreciated and tells a unique story.

Grants

NAHA carried out three months of work under a grant awarded to us by the National Endowment for the Humanities, which was then rescinded as part of a broader federal government action. NAHA also received funding from the State of Minnesota through its Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund to digitize portions of the Jacob Stefferud Papers. We received web archiving support through the Community Webs program of the Internet Archive to preserve online resources related to the migration bicentennial. Our sincere thanks to each of these grant funders.



Archives Fellowship

Mikael Lyngaas was awarded NAHA's 2025 Archives Fellowship. The \$2,000 award promotes new understandings of the Norwegian American experience through research that relies on materials in the NAHA archives. Lyngaas, a PhD candidate at the University of Oslo, has been researching the Scandinavian American Socialist movement, 1880-1920.



NAHA archives staff (from left) Erin Wiebe, Otelia Lighthill, and Kristina Warner at work on the centennial exhibit.

Exhibit

In June, NAHA opened an exhibit on the St. Olaf College campus, "Illuminating 200 Years of Migration: A Centennial Exhibit of the Norwegian American Historical Association." Displays drew on our archives collections, showcasing stories of Norwegian Americans who have shaped the cultural landscape of North America in areas including literature, the arts, the press, and industry.

Donors to Our World War II Digitization Project

We continue to digitize items from five NAHA collections that focus on World War II thanks to our members and friends who have made contributions specifically to support this project. *Mange tusen takk!*

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IMAGE: (TOP) AMY BOXRUD

PUBLICATIONS

Publications Fellowship

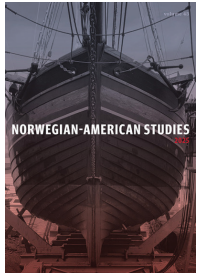
JoAnn Conrad, professor of social sciences at Diablo Valley College in Contra Costa County, California, received NAHA's 2025 Publications Fellowship. The \$2,500 award supports research in Norwegian American studies that has potential to be published by NAHA. Conrad's research is on shifting portraits of Norway in American children's literature in the years 1900-1945.



Norwegian American Studies

In addition to our quarterly newsletter *Currents*, NAHA members receive our annual scholarly journal *Norwegian American Studies*. First published in 1926, the journal is dedicated to showcasing the best work in the field of Norwegian American studies, including the related disciplines of history, literature, religion, art, and cultural studies. Research is featured along with book reviews, photographic features, works-in-progress, and updates on teaching and learning.

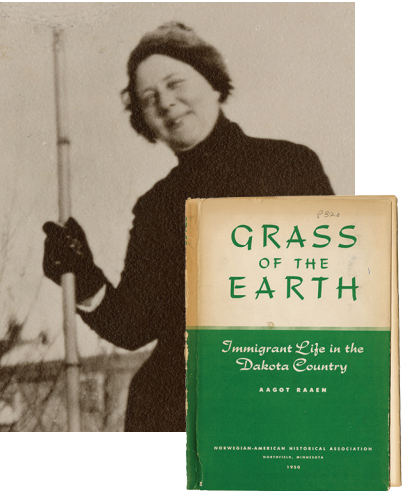
NAHA members have free digital access both to the current volume of *Studies* and to all past volumes via our partner, the Project MUSE digital library. Visit the "Publications" page of our website to learn more.



Volume 43 of *Studies* includes "A Feminism of Its Own: Revisiting the Scandinavian American Woman and Home, Circa 1888-1920" by NAHA fellowship recipient Mona Holm.

FROM NAHA'S CENTENNIAL EXHIBIT

In 1950, NAHA published the writing of Aagot Raaen, who taught at rural schools in North Dakota in the early 1900s. Raaen wrote *Grass of the Earth* to tell the story of Norwegian immigrant homesteaders on the Dakota prairie.



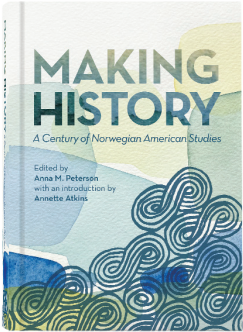
FROM NAHA'S CENTENNIAL EXHIBIT

(From left) Together in the 1980s were NAHA Editor (1960-1980) Kenneth Bjork, NAHA Editor (1980-2000) Odd Lovoll, and NAHA Secretary (1959-1999) Lloyd Hustvedt.

Centennial Anthology

NAHA published *Making History: A Century of Norwegian American Studies* last summer as part of our centennial commemorations. The anthology marked a century of publishing our journal, and

it features an essay from each of our ten decades of publishing. The project includes some of the most innovative and important scholarship the journal has showcased over its history. Encountering these articles years or decades after they were first published gives insight not only into the subjects they address, but into our changing perspectives on historical events over time.



FINANCIALS

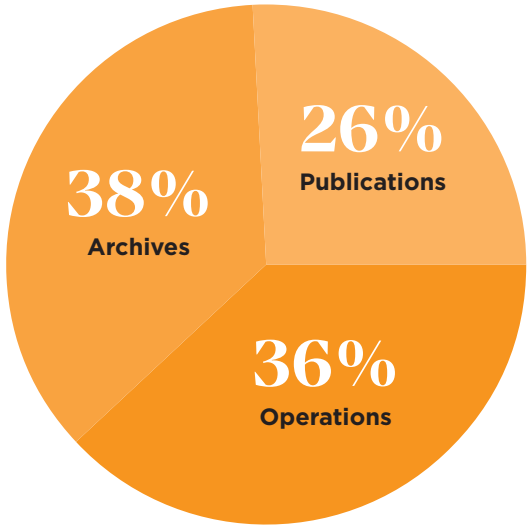
Funding for Operations

Distributions from investments	\$178,343
Donations (for operations)	\$102,923
Member dues	\$48,532
Operating reserves	\$49,224
Book sales and royalties	\$6,265
Fees from NAHA meetings/events	\$21,109
Grants	\$69,129
TOTAL	\$475,525

Summary of Expenses

Salaries and benefits	\$251,583
Programs and administrative items	\$106,988
Contract labor	\$26,780
Publications	\$29,504
Meetings and events	\$34,995
Supplies and equipment	\$9,972
Awards and fellowships	\$5,000
TOTAL	\$464,822

Designation of Endowed Funds



Named Endowed Funds and Sponsorships

NAHA is grateful for our donors who have established named endowed funds and sponsorships. Each gift is an investment in our mission and provides stability during economic downturns or other disruptions. You can contribute any amount to the funds listed here, or create your own fund with a gift of \$50,000 or more. Gifts can be made at one time or in installments. The following funds were established before December 31, 2025.

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Ole Edvart Rølvaag Memorial Fund **\$1,605,371**
Sigvald Quale Norwegian Society Fund **\$381,478**
Other Operations **\$15,108**

Publications

Blegen Bjork Publications Fund **\$1,338,957**
Other Publications **\$122,331**

Archives

Archives Fellowship Fund **\$77,086**
Arthur Ole and Corinne Hellie Davidson Memorial Fund* **\$50,335**
Borgen Family Fund* **\$235,000**
David A. and Barbara A. Holt Endowed Fund for the NAHA Archives* **\$112,533**
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Nathan and Denise Lindgren Endowed Fund for the NAHA Archives* **\$59,436**

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The Sigdalslag Papers: Sponsored by Narvel A. and Marilyn Dahlen Somdahl* **\$54,100**

*Denotes a gift to the archives endowment campaign

Our Supporters

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Dana and Jon Schroeder, in honor of
Karen Annexstad Humphrey

Newell Searle, in honor of Susan Stavig

In Remembrance

Janet Bolm, Al and Cindy Crowser, David Eliason,
Adam Emerson, Carol Hruby, Julie Knutson, Janna Lindoo,
Susan Nelson, Roberta Quick, Jennifer Rentz, Peggy Ruch,
Jean Svobodny, Michael Svobodny, Nancy Ward,
Sheldon Wiger, in memory of Gladys Svobodny

E. Duane Engstrom, Ann Lokensgard Oien, Ruth A. Olsen,
Genevieve and David Quarberg, Solveig Zempel, in memory
of David Hardy

Lucretia Ghastin, Ann Romo, in memory of William Knaak

Dale N. Hovland, Howard and Joanne Rokke,
Marilyn D. Somdahl, Gordon Thorpe, in memory of David Rokke

Ringerike-Drammen Districts Lag, Marilyn D. Somdahl,
in memory of Sherrie Anderson-Framness

Susan Baasch, in memory of Walter and Ruby Satrom

Beverly Bachelder, in memory of Rev. Olaf O. Brandt
and Eleanor Berg Brandt

Sandra Bestland, in memory of Herbert Milton Bestland

Pauline Haug Fenelon, in memory of A. D. and Inger Johnson

Laurel P. Hale, in memory of Palmer LeRoy Florness

Elaine E. Hasleton, in memory of Oscar and Ella Helgeson

Melissa Hennrick, in memory of John and Ingeborg Thoreson

Beth Hickey, in memory of Jeanette Corey

Karen Annexstad Humphrey, in memory of Glenn Annexstad

Gary T. Johnson, in memory of Lloyd M. and Verna M. Johnson

Patricia Kasinak, in memory of Harlen Hegdal

Patricia Miller, in memory of Lucille R. Miller

Margaret Potter, in memory of Gimmestad and
Hegdahl immigrants

Kelly and Joann Ronningen, in memory of Jacqueline Ranby

Helen Schuck, in memory of Ronald Flugum

Anne Sladky, in memory of Gerald Grover

Marilyn D. Somdahl, in memory of Ronald Kavli

Carole Stempfley, in memory of Hazel Johnson Stempfley

Jacquelin Stenehjøm, in memory of Morris B. Thompson

Shirley Strand, in memory of Andrew Dambraaten Johnson

Elizabeth Willis, in memory of Bruce Willis

Johanna Worley, in memory of her Bestemor and Bestefar

FROM NAHA'S CENTENNIAL EXHIBIT

ABOVE: Members gathered in 1950 for NAHA's
25th anniversary on the date of the organization's
founding, October 6.

BELOW: NAHA's archival materials have been cared
for by generations of archivists. St. Olaf College
students who belonged to the Idun Edda Society, a
Norwegian heritage organization on campus, also
provided help, under the guidance of longtime NAHA
Secretary Lloyd Hustvedt (seated).



**Awards, Internships, and
Student Employment**

Each year, NAHA employs students, providing
meaningful opportunities to explore interests
and gain hands-on experience in archives,
public history, and nonprofit management. In
2025, six St. Olaf College students contributed
a combined 540 hours of work to NAHA's
programs and collections. Some of these
positions were supported through funding from
the Sigvald Quale Norwegian Society Fund and
the St. Olaf College Norwegian Department.
NAHA also provided two graduate students—
one from the University of Wisconsin and one
from the University of Nebraska—with valuable
archival training and professional experience.
The 2025 Odd S. Lovoll Award in Norwegian
American Studies, for originality, excellence, and
creativity in undergraduate research, was given
to Otelia Lighthill, St. Olaf College, '27, for her
project “New Women in the New World:
the Development of a Norwegian American
Female Identity.”

*Denotes 2025 board member

With Special Thanks



LEADERSHIP CIRCLE

The Leadership Circle recognizes the generous donors whose lifetime gifts to the association have reached \$10,000 or more.*

Gold Level

(\$100,000+)

Bjorn Borgen and the Borgen Family Foundation
David A. and Barbara A. Holt
Harriet Hustvedt[†]
Lois Jorstad[†]
St. Olaf College
State of Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund
O. Jay and Pat Tomson

Silver Level

(\$30,000-\$99,999)

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(\$10,000-\$29,999)

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Nancy Gossell
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Sonja Hillestad
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David[†] and Lee[†] Rokke
Brian and Karen Rude
Dennis Sorheim[†]
Lloyd and Anne Svendsbye[†]
Jack Tunheim
Ole and Ruth Tweet

[†] Deceased

*Gifts and pledges have been received by December 31, 2025, and do not include membership, event, or tour fees.



LEGACY CIRCLE

NAHA honors those who have included our association in their estate planning.

Marian Aaker[†]
Josefa Anderson[†]
Barbara Bauman[†]
Amy Boxrud
Valborg and Carl Chrislock[†]
John N. Dahle[†]
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Rakel Erickson[†]
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Harriet Hustvedt[†]
Odmund Hydle[†]
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Knut Magnus Wefald[†]
Nancy Wick[†]
Harry Williams[†]

We want to recognize you! If you have included NAHA in your estate plans, or if you believe you should be included in our Leadership Circle, please let us know. For more information about the Leadership and Legacy Circles, please contact NAHA Executive Director Erin Rothenbuehler.

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BY THE NUMBERS: 2025 IN THE ARCHIVES

Visits from on-site researchers:

58

Research requests to our staff:

465+

New archival donations:

72

Student interns and workers:

8

Items digitized:

6,425+