



NORWEGIAN-AMERICAN
HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Strategic Plan 2020–22

The Norwegian-American Historical Association (NAHA) is a national center for the collection and preservation of historical material relating to Norwegian-American life. **Its mission is to locate, collect, preserve, and interpret the Norwegian-American experience with accuracy, integrity, and liveliness.**

With one of the oldest and largest ethnic manuscript collections in the United States, the association is a leader in the field of ethnic migration studies. The NAHA collection includes letters, ledgers, books, periodicals, photographs, diaries, and audio and video recordings. The materials bring life to thousands of individuals, organizations, and businesses comprising the Norwegian diaspora in North America since migration began in the early 19th century.

Ole E. Rølvaag, the author of *Giants in the Earth*, served as the first secretary and archivist for NAHA, and he established the archives. Through later growth and careful organization, the archives have become an invaluable source for the public and scholars of immigration history worldwide.

Now, nearly a century after its founding in 1925, the association continues to thrive.

- NAHA maintains a growing archive of more than 2,200 individual collections.
- Our staff fields more than 200 inquiries annually—in person, by phone, and via email. Hundreds of others research our online resources.
- The association has published more than 100 publications. In the fall of 2019, it relaunched its scholarly journal, *Norwegian-American Studies*, now published in partnership with the University of Minnesota Press and available on JSTOR digital library.
- NAHA offers regular tours, programs, and events for its nearly one thousand members and the general public. It maintains close ties to NAHA-Norge, a sister organization in Norway, as well as other Norwegian-American and academic organizations.
- Since its founding in 1925, NAHA has been housed at St. Olaf College. In the summer of 2020, the college will begin construction of a new, state-of-the-art facility in Rølvaag Library for NAHA and the college's special collections.

As it looks to the future, NAHA will broaden its interpretation of the Norwegian-American experience within its archives, publications, and events. Through increased attention to new audiences, new historical sources, and new perspectives on migration, NAHA will expand its reach by incorporating evolving technology, sound scholarship, and emerging areas of research.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

The NAHA board and staff developed this strategic plan during meetings and conference calls throughout 2019. They began with an environmental scan to better understand current conditions and stakeholders perspectives, and to assess strengths and areas for growth.

Strengths & Assets

As a well-established nonprofit organization with a nearly 100-year history, the association has many strengths. The top assets and advantages that the group identified were the following:



Stakeholders

One of the purposes of any organization is to provide service or value to its stakeholders. Key stakeholder groups for NAHA include the following:



Top Opportunities

Of the many opportunities NAHA could pursue over the next three years, results from the environmental scan suggest prioritizing the categories of membership, relationship building, scholarship/publications, and fundraising.

Membership	Relationship Building	Scholarship and Publications	Fundraising
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engage younger audiences• Use technology to expand outreach• Connect to 2025 migration bicentennial commemoration• Increase visibility with new facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Broaden partnerships• Increase contact with Norwegians• Build on relationships with migration historians and other Norwegian-American organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote young scholars• Expand areas of research• Include study of current migrations• Expand access through journal and digitization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Endow full-time archivist position• Be more imaginative and assertive with efforts• Increase donor recognition

PROGRAM AREAS, VISION, AND GOALS FOR 2020-22

The Board used the information gathered from the environmental scan, as well as discussion around visions and goals, to develop the following summary of NAHA program areas for its archives, publications, and membership.

ARCHIVES

Vision

The archives will connect people to the experiences of Norwegian-Americans by:

- making its collections broadly accessible,
- promoting research in many disciplines, and
- cooperating with organizations that have related collections, shared interests, and similar goals.

The foundation of this effort will be collecting and preserving relevant documentary materials from throughout North America in paper, photo, audio-visual, and digital formats.

Goals:

- Increase the capacity of the archives program with a focus on improved equipment and policy development
- Promote and increase the use of materials through outreach and digitization

- Prepare to move the NAHA collection to the new Rølvaag Library Special Collections facility, improving cataloging and discoverability while maintaining archival standards

PUBLICATIONS

Vision: NAHA Publications will present Norwegian-American history and culture to academic and general audiences—in the United States, Canada, and abroad—who are interested in the experiences of immigrants to North America and their descendants. The publications will maintain high academic standards and their outreach will be valuable to understanding the Norwegian-American experience based on a historical past and its relevance to current migration and ethnic cultural encounters.

Goals:

- Stimulate the field of Norwegian-American studies
- Continue to build connections between scholars, their work, and a broad general audience
- Broaden approach by redefining areas of publication focus

MEMBERSHIP

Vision: NAHA will maintain and cultivate a base of members through retention and new memberships. NAHA outreach and programming initiatives will foster a sense of community and engagement—in the Upper Midwest, throughout North America, and internationally.

Goals:

- Utilize NAHA events to attract, engage, and retain members
- Cultivate membership throughout the Norwegian-American diaspora through the newsletter, the journal, tours, exhibits, and the internet
- Maintain a membership level that provides critical funding to support NAHA’s annual budget for programming and activities

ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT 2020–22

In order for NAHA to carry out its programs and reach its goals, the organization must continue to thrive. In 2019, NAHA worked with a consultant to create a fundraising strategy that is reflected in the development goals of this plan. Additionally, staff have developed a list of administrative and communication goals to aid in managing and promoting the organization.

DEVELOPMENT

Vision: The NAHA development committee’s vision for strengthening the association’s financial future by building and implementing a diversified development plan. The key to this plan is to build the archives endowment while also maintaining and improving systems for annual giving.

Goals

- Maintain and improve the effectiveness of annual giving mechanisms
- Increase emphasis on planned giving to build the endowment
- Lay groundwork, conduct study, and launch campaign for the archives

ADMINISTRATION AND COMMUNICATION

Vision: NAHA will continue to improve its promotions, communications, and management methods to help accomplish the goals of the association.

Goals:

- Develop, promote, and strengthen NAHA communications and brand
- Promote the use of NAHA archives, publications, and programs among scholars and the general public
- Manage and strengthen the association's relationship with St. Olaf College
- Facilitate greater board effectiveness

STAFF AND BOARD

STAFF

Amy Boxrud, Executive Director
Anna Peterson, Editor
Kristina Warner, Archivist

BOARD

Executive Committee

Dennis Gimmestad, President
Deborah Miller, Vice President
Ronald Johnson, Secretary
Scott Knudson, Treasurer
Kim Kittilsby, Member-at-large

Board Members

Kristin Anderson
Marit Barkve
Dan Dressen
Gracia Grindal
Dave Holt

Jim Honsvall
Kyle Jansson
Ann Marie Legreid
Daron Olson
Paul Rolvaag

Marci Sortor
Ingrid Urberg
Bruce Willis
Nils Olav Østrem