

Norwegian-American Historical Association



Vol 144

Winter 2012

From the NAHA Office to Association Members

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From the President

2012 promises to be a great year for your organization!

We've just concluded a very positive year for NAHA. In 2011, we increased the level of contributions and stabilized our membership. Our publication program was back on track with two offerings for our members. We reached out to more new people and groups than we have for many years. We received some important press attention in Norwegian-American publications. And we were graciously recognized by His Majesty, King Harald V during his visit to St. Olaf College.

We need to build on these successes. In 2012, we'll continue our work on development and membership. We'll host our first-ever New York City event to build new connections and make new friends. We'll launch a campaign to focus on critical facility needs for our archives. We'll embark on a new oral history project. And we will end the year with our biennial meeting and election of new board members and officers.

Of course, the regular work of the organization goes on daily. Every day, our staff and volunteers tend to the collection and maintenance of our archival treasures, and make them available to all types of researchers from doctoral students to genealogical enthusiasts.

On behalf of your Board, I want to thank you for your interest and support. We could not run our organization without many gifts of time, treasure and talent. A special thanks to those who volunteer in our office in Northfield! Our sense of purpose and mission for keeping the records of the Norwegian-American experience and sharing it with the world remains clear and strong. We need your continued guidance and your help!

As always, feel free to share any ideas, comments, concerns or questions with me or your staff.

-- Brian Rude, NAHA President

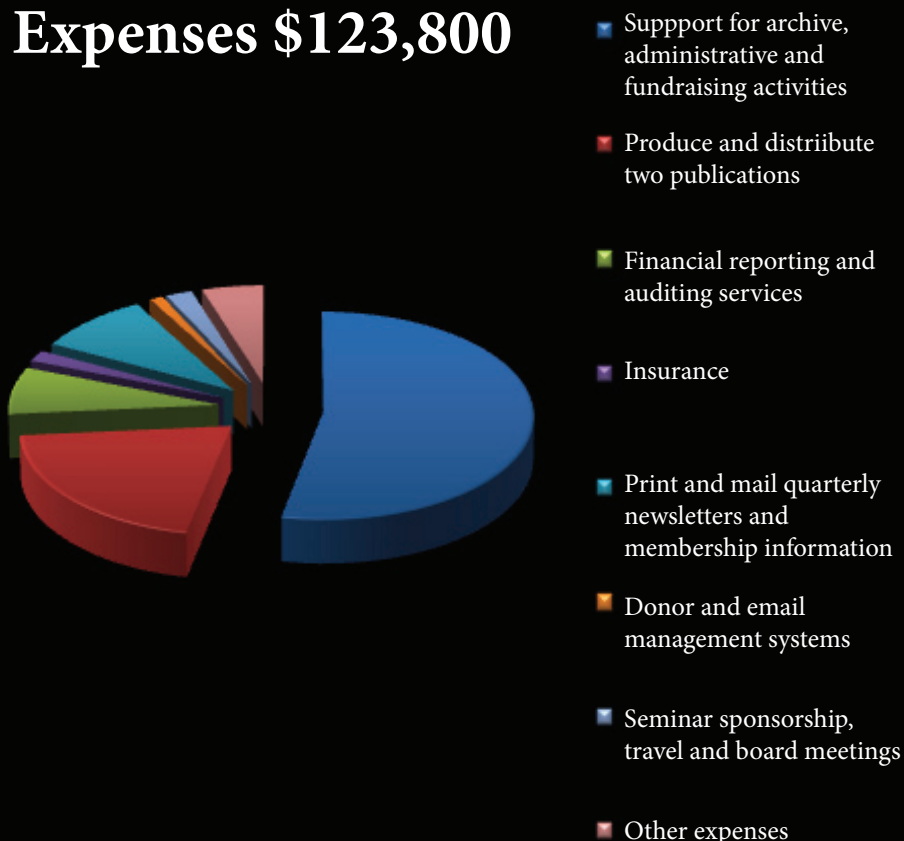
Annual Report of the Norwegian-

Revenue \$123,800



<u>Investment Fund Balances</u>	<u>Dec. 31, 2011</u>
O.E. Rolvaag Memorial Fund (Endowed Fund for Operations)	\$817,760
Theodore C. Blegen Fellowship Fund (Editor's Fund)	\$336,725
Sigvald Quale Norwegian Society Fund	\$192,414
Operating and Temporarily Restricted Funds	\$256,552

Expenses \$123,800



<u>Investment Income</u>	
Realized Gains	\$72,886
Interest and Dividends	\$23,704
Unrealized gains (losses)	(\$89,767.13)

In October 2011, the NAHA board approved a conservative endowment distribution policy of 5% of fund balances per year to supplement the revenue received by gifts, membership fees and book revenue.

In addition, they approved an investment allocation policy that establishes an equities to fixed income and cash ratio of 60/40.

American Historical Association - 2011

Archive Activities

In Person Visitors

Scholars, 30

Family historians, 33

Other, 6

Email, Telephone and Postal Inquiries

Genealogy, biography and local history, 56

Professional inquiries, 54

Donation arrangements, 28

Group visit arrangements, 2

Publishing Activities

In June 2011, NAHA-Norge offered the Norwegian-American Historical Association the opportunity to print and distribute *Norwegian-American Essays, 2011* to our membership. Editor Øyvind Gulliksen compiled these essays from the 2008 NAHA-Norge conference "Transnationalism and the Norwegian-American Experience".

In October 2011, NAHA released the 36th volume in the series *Norwegian-American Studies*. Dedicated to Their Majesties King Harald and Queen Sonja, the first book was presented to them during a luncheon in their honor at St. Olaf College.

Membership and Outreach Activities

NAHA hosted a visit by 18 Norwegian Home Guard members and their Minnesota National Guard compatriots in February 2011.

In May, NAHA board member Judge John Tunheim gave a presentation on Norwegian-American Civil War soldiers and the Civil War letters in NAHA at the Twin Cities Sons of Norway meeting.

NAHA staff attended the 2011 NAHA-Norge conference held on the campus of Luther College in Decorah, Iowa in June. NAHA also helped sponsor the event.

Jeff Sauve gave two presentations at the Seven Lag Stevne in Fargo, North Dakota in August. Talks were titled "Keeping Family Histories" and "NAHA-An Archivist's Bird's Eye View"

Jackie Henry gave a presentation on how family researchers use NAHA resources at the Tre Lag Stevne in Austin, Minn. in September.

NAHA hosted a group of 52 Norwegian tourists from the Trondheim area in September.

Jeff Sauve gave a presentation to the Faribault Scandinavian Club in September.

Approximately 70 people attended the *Norwegian-American Studies* book launch in Edina, Minnesota in October.

Our Mission

The mission of the Norwegian-American Historical Association (NAHA) is to locate, collect, preserve and interpret the Norwegian-American immigrant experience with accuracy, integrity, and liveliness. In doing so, Norwegian Americans will have an identifiable position in America's past, present, and future.

Donor Honor Roll

The following individuals and organizations provided financial support to the Norwegian-American Historical Association in 2011. On behalf of the NAHA Board of Directors, staff and fellow members, we express our deepest appreciation for your contributions.

\$1000 and up

Lois Drews
Liv Hustvedt †
Jacqueline L. Ranby,
*In memory of Richard
and Harriet Rye Madson*
Razoo Foundation
Brian D. Rude †
Gerald R. Sime
Lloyd A. Svendsbye
Frank A. Tysver +

\$500 to \$999

Karen F. Davidson †
Fidelity Charitable Gift
Fund
Rev. Richard Halom
Bonnie C. Harwick
Trygve Lonnebotn
Adrienne S. Morrison
John Nilson †
Lee & David Rokke
Lee & Cecilia Sandwen+
Solveig Zempel †

\$250 to \$499

Liv Dahl,
In honor of Lois Rand
Ruth Hanold Crane, †
In memory of Jim Hillestad
David Hansen +
Katherine Hanson † +
Sonja Hillestad,
In memory of Jim Hillestad

Dave Holt
Karen Annexstad
Humphrey † *
Judge Derwood Johnson
John Karevoll
Lois Kathan,
In memory of Esther Dahlby
Alice S. Kirn
Severt & Mary Kvamme
Ann M. Legried,
*In memory of Dorothy
Burton-Skårdal*
Delores Thorson Lewis
Frieda E. Nowland
John E. Peterson +
St. Paul Foundation
Shirley Lillehaugen Santoro

\$100 to \$249

Harry H. Anderson
Harold P. Bakke
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George S. Bergh, Jr.
Betty Ann Bergland †
Grace Birkestol
Louis H. Blumengarten
Michael J. Bovre
Amy Boxrud †
Joan Naglestad Buckley,
*In memory of Wendell
Buckley, Else Lovoll and Anne
Svendsbye*
Conrad J. Christianson, Jr.
John R. Christianson
J. Randolph Cox
Patricia Cutshall
James Ellingboe +
Luther O. Forde
Janet K. Geronime
Frederic A. Giere ,
*In memory of Dr. Lloyd
Hustvedt*
Richard Gilman
Robert E. Glesne
Robert Granrud
Harlan D. Grinde
Rhys Hanson,
*In memory of Elmer
Abrahamsen and Sidney
Rand*
Leif Hatlen +
Blaine Hedberg †
James T. Heg
Karin O. Holt †
Stan Hultgren
Clair D. Husby
Nelson Huseby
Clatyon L. Johnson
Steven L. Johnson †
Terje Hasle Joranger †
Lois Jorstad
Roald Kindem +
Robert L. Kittelson
Susan Koon and Family,
In memory of Jim Hillestad
William J. Korsvik
Lars Erik Larson
Phillip Larson
Lew Linde
Fritjof T. Lokensgard *
Joan Losen
John V. Lovell
Odd S. Lovoll
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Helen Ann Nelson +
Eugene J. Nordby
Richard D. Olson +
John M. Ophaug
Paul Otteson Foundation
Harry and Virginia Papcke
John E. Quam,
In memory of Jim Hillestad
Joel Quie
Paul G. Quie
Melanie Remple +
Lois M. Rand
Barbara Renton
Kek Robien

Wayne A. Rohne
John L. Rokke,
In honor of Lee Rokke
Brynhild C. Rowberg
Cynthia Elyce Rubin †
Sons of Norway Fæder
Lodge 109
Sons of Norway Kristiania
Lodge 47
Sons of Norway Nidaros
Lodge 1
Sons of Norway Solglimt
Lodge 546
Sons of Norway Twin Cities
Area Lodges
Sons of Norway Wegeland
Lodge 28
Norris Sandvold
Kathleen Bergan Schmidt
Erlaine H. Seeger,
*In memory of Freda Johnson
Hovden and Erling J. Hovden*
Joseph M. Shaw
Marilyn & Narvel Somdahl,
*In memory of Susan I. Geye
and in honor of four bygdslag
100th anniversaries*
Allan Sortland
Arnie Sovik
Tyrone Steen +
Richard Stenerson
Thrivent Financial for
Lutherans Foundation
Robert R. Tollund,
*In memory of Wendell
Buckley*
Judge John Tunheim † +
Marcia Turcott
Ole Tweet
Jacob Vedvik Jr.
Norman Vinnes +
Donald Wang
Evelyn Ostraat Wierenga
Hans R. Wilhelmsen
Patricia T. Williams
Vincent and Verla Williams

January 1- December 31, 2011

\$1 to \$99

Tuck Aaker +
 Nancy Aarsvold
 Helen Aase
 Esther Alcorn +
 R. W. Anderson +
 Merrill C. Austin
 Howard D. Baumgart
 Donald L. Berg,
In memory of Else Lovoll
 Roy Berg
 Donna L. Bergan
 Kenneth M. Bergo
 William T. Bowler
 Thomas Branigar
 Margie Brant
 Phyllis L. Breddin
 Sarah & J. Ben Buck +
 Julie Buckley
 Donna Butler
 Bygdelagenes Fellesraad,
In memory of Christian K. Skjervold II
 Camilla Cai
 Julien H. Collins, Jr.
 Ruth O. Cornils
 Dale & Beth Curtiss +
 Richard & Joanne Dahlin,
In memory of Jim Hillestad
 Fran Debnam +
 Paul Dovre +
 Robert S. Duxstad +
 Phillip L. Edwardson
 Andrea Een
 Dale R. Eggen
 Arland O. Fiske,
In memory of Gerda Fiske
 Luther & Vee Fjelstad
 Richard Flisrand +
 Robert M. Fossum
 Cheryl Larson Freitag +
 Joy Ann Asker Gault
 Rolfe Gjellstad +
 Darrel Gonyea
 Richard Graving +
 Eric W. Greenfeldt

Torbjorn Griepsland
 Eric A. Hallen +
 Christen Hallen +
 Robert A. Halvorsen
 Edward R. & Eunice Hansen
 Jean Skogerboe Hansen
 Borg Hanson
 Ray Hanson
 David J. Hardy
 Paul & Carol Hasvold +
 Ronald Hendrix
 Jackie Henry *
 Renee & Sheldon
 Hermanson
 Philip H. Hoff
 Steven E. Holland
 Torild Homstad,
In memory of Jim Hillestad
 Mary Hove
 Michael Hovland +
 Leslee Lane Hoyum
 Steven Huffman,
In memory of Jim Hillestad
 Phyllis Jacobs
 Audrey Johnson
 Bernt B. Johnson
 Cynthia Johnson
 James L. Johnson
 Kirt Johnson +
 Mitchell K. Johnson +
 Kjell Jordheim
 Roy E. Jorgensen
 James & Doris Jorgenson
 Robert D. Juve
 Ruth Kahn
 Joan Kark,
In memory of Jim Hillestad
 Carl R. Karlsson
 Ruth Kawashima
 Joann Kleber
 Rachel Knudsen +
 Doris Kornfeld +
 Lori Ann Lahlum,
In memory of Else Lovoll
 Thor Larsen
 Paul Delbert Larson

Phillip P. Larson +
 Ron Lien +
 Sharon Loe +
 Ted Loftness +
 Cynthia & Eric Lund
 Carsten Lunde +
 Joanne Martin
 Zona Mathison
 Amy Elverud Michelsen
 Dagfinn & Lydia Moe,
In memory of Jim Hillestad
 Bonnie J. McLellan +
 Jeff Mueller +
 David Nasby +
 Carl Nilsen
 Franklin Norman +
 Peggy Norris +
 Michael I Ofjord
 Margaret Hayford O'Leary
 Clyde & Ellen Olson
 Gary D. Olson
 Magne Olson +
 N. Thomas Olson
 Lois Olsrud
 Gregg Orwoll
 Donna & Burton Paulson,
In memory of James Hillestad
 Robert & Ruth Paulson +
 Julie Pavri +
 Herbert F. Petersen
 David & Andrea Peterson
 Ham Peterson
 Gloria Porter,
In memory of James Hillestad
 Norval E. Poulson
 Joyce Powell +
 Sally Pundt
 Philip J. Ramstad
 Leland Randall
 John T. Redfern
 Ann Romo
 Paul Rood
 Alan Roskos
 Charles Russell
 Warren Saetre
 M. Hildegard Sanderson

Thomas Sando
 Celia Sawyer
 John Schevenius
 James E. Schlosser
 David F. Schmidt +
 Nina Schroepfer +
 Elaine Schulstad
 John D. Serkland
 Eugenie Shaw
 Marvin G. Slind †
 Diane Snell +
 Curtis Solberg +
 Thomas N. Solie
 Allan G. Solomonson
 Dennis R. Sorheim
 Robert W. Sorteberg
 Dorothy G. Stavig
 Helen Steele
 Solveig Steendal +
 Kathleen Stokker
 Milo Sulentic
 Allan R. Thoreson
 Edith Thorstensson
 Jule Craig Tukua
 Arlen Tvedt +
 Kevin Tvedt +
 Richard Tvedten
 Paul T. Vangerud
 Joel A. Watne +
 Ingrid A. Weatherhead

Estate Gifts

The Estate of Norman Erickson, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

† indicates 2011 NAHA Board Members

* indicates Patron Members

+ indicates Sustaining Members

Nels and Jorgina Voldeng,

I have written a biography of my great-great-grandparents, Nels and Jorgina Voldeng, whose story would be typical of many of those of Norwegian background that moved from the northern USA to homestead in Saskatchewan. At the same time, I will highlight sources for finding information on these early settlers.

*- Garth Ulrich
Genealogy Specialist for
Sigdalslag*



Nels and Jorgina on their wedding day 1897, Marshall County, Minn.
Photo courtesy of Garth Ulrich

Nels Voldeng was born near Sacred Heart in Renville County, Minnesota in 1876. His father had been born in Toten and his mother in Valdres. As a child, Nels moved with his family to northern Minnesota -- Kittson and Marshall Counties.

Jorgina Green was born in 1876 in Sigdal and came to the USA with her parents, celebrating her sixth birthday aboard the Rollo. The family settled in Marsh Grove Twp. in Marshall County, MN.

Nels and Jorgina were married in Marshall County in 1897. Her wedding dress is now on display at the museum in Naicam, SK and her wedding ring is a cherished possession of a great-great-granddaughter.

Nels was a station agent in Marshall county but, having received glowing reports of the land in Saskatchewan from Nels' parents who had moved there in 1905, they decided to follow, along with their four children. (One daughter had passed away prior). On August 9, 1909 they arrived by train at Watson, Saskatchewan, which was as far as the rail line extended at that time. They travelled by wagon approximately twenty miles to the home of Nels Voldeng's parents, east of Spalding, where they spent the first winter. Looking back, their oldest children later laughed that when they moved to Canada they all spoke English, but after spending part of their first year with their grandparents they'd forgotten the English and spoke only Norwegian. Four more children were later born in Canada.

They soon filed on their own homestead and built a house but they had left many relatives, a good job and

a nice home in Minnesota, and Jorgina later told her children that it had been a rather bleak beginning in a strange land. When I visited with descendants of Jorgina's siblings in Minnesota they said that when their Aunt Jenny, as they called her, came to visit from Canada and they asked her where she lived she always replied, "East of the sun and west of the moon".

The farm was located at NW-27-39-17 W2. Nels built a house on his land in March 1910 and his wife and children joined him on the homestead on April 27. In 1910 he broke 7 acres, cropped nil, and owned 13 cattle. In 1911 he broke 10 acres, cropped 7 acres and owned 22 cattle and 1 horse. In 1912 he broke 17 acres, cropped 22 acres and owned 14 cattle and 3 horses. In 1912 the house was 14' x 22' and valued at \$250; the barn was 28' x 32' with a sod roof and valued at \$100.

In 1910 Nels was hired to build Littlestone School, which derived its name from nearby Lake Edward, known by the Indians as Littlestone Lake. It was here that the Voldeng children would attend school. Nels served as chairman and trustee of the school board for many years.

Nels and Jorgina were first members of the Bigstone Norwegian Lutheran Congregation, east of Spalding. When it disbanded in the 1920s several of the members formed the Vor Frelser's (Our Savior's) Lutheran Free congregation, rather than join one of the already existing Lutheran congregations in the district. Later they were members of Immanuel Lutheran in Naicam.

Nels also served as a counselor of the Rural Municipality of Spalding for several years. As a point of interest,

Saskatchewan Pioneers by Garth Ulrich

it is noted in the minutes, "Moved Mathison that we pay Gopher Bounty during 1918 at the rate of two cents per tail. For: Robertson, Mathison, Schloendorf, Voldeng. Against: Strat, Knutson."

While Nels was very active in local politics, Jorgina played a supportive role behind the scenes. She is remembered as a very kind and soft-spoken person, with a love of horses, and was often called upon to act as midwife as the nearest doctor was approximately twenty miles away. July 1st (Canada Day) was a big day, and for several years July 4th was also celebrated as many of the settlers had come from the USA. In a local history book a former neighbor recalled that at these events there was always homemade ice cream made by Mrs. Voldeng.

In approximately 1920 Nels sold his first farm and bought another a few miles east, bordering Lake Charron, where he also operated a sawmill in the winter. One day when the younger children were at school they saw their brother go by at top speed with his team of horses and a sleigh and they knew that something must be wrong. When they arrived home from school they found that their father had lost a finger on his right hand in an accident with the sawmill.

In 1927 their oldest son Ole passed away, and this was very hard on his mother, already mourning the loss of two children-their daughter who passed away in Minnesota of tuberculosis and an infant son. Ole had been in and out of the hospital for a couple years suffering from complications due to a ruptured appendix.

When Nels and Jorgina first settled

on their homestead, the nearest community was Spalding, but Naicam later came into being, and when they grew older they spent a couple winters living in town, but realized that town life was not to their liking, and returned to their farm permanently.

Jorgina passed away at the Spalding Hospital on Sept. 7, 1952 and Nels on July 24, 1955. They are both buried at the Immanuel Lutheran Cemetery at Naicam, SK.



Voldeng Family, Saskatchewan ca. 1916
Photo courtesy of Garth Ulrich

Resources:

¹ A list of Saskatchewan museums can be found at <http://www.saskmuseums.org/museums2>

² Border Crossing Records: US to Canada, 1908-1935 are available at <http://www.ancestry.com>

³ The Saskatchewan Homestead index can be found at <http://www.saskhomesteads.com/> and copies of homestead

files are available from the Saskatchewan Archives <http://www.saskarchives.com/web/index.html>

⁴ A list of Saskatchewan one-room schools can be found at <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~cansk/school/schooldistricts.html> and many of their reports and minutes are held by the Saskatchewan Archives

⁵ A list of active ELCIC congregations can be found at <http://notes.elcic.ca/ELCIC/WebData.nsf/SK?OpenView> and many of the older records from Lutheran churches can be found at the Lutheran Seminary Archives, 114 Seminary Cres., Saskatoon, SK S7N 0X3

⁶ A list of Saskatchewan municipalities and rural municipalities along with contact information for each can be found at <http://www.mds.gov.sk.ca/apps/Pub/MDS/welcome.aspx>

⁷ Many Saskatchewan local histories have been digitized at <http://www.ourroots.ca/>

⁸ The Saskatchewan Genealogical Society has indexed many cemeteries, see <http://www.saskgenealogy.com/saskcemindexintropage.html>

New Additions to the Archives

The Archives continue to benefit from the generosity of members and friends who have made important donations. Although we aren't able to acknowledge all donations here, we do appreciate every donation, large and small. We welcome additional donations of Norwegian-American letters, diaries, photographs, family histories, and community and congregational materials. Families can be sure that their donations will remain open for family consultation in the NAHA archives. They can also be certain that family treasures will not be discarded in a hasty move or by future generations who may have lost touch with their Norwegian-American heritage.

We are particularly interested in collecting materials from post-World War II Norwegian immigrants. This important immigrant group is under-represented in the archives. Please contact us if you have letters, photographs, recordings, or diaries that document the experiences of Norwegian immigrants since 1945 or if you know of the existence of such material.

- **Gary DeKrey,**
Archivist

- **Jeff Sauve, Associate**
Archivist

Recent additions to the manuscripts collection include:

- **Waldemar T. Ager Papers, P0601.** Additions include 16 photographs (1890s-1930s); miscellaneous family documents, including letters and clippings scrapbook (1898-1941); assorted handwritten manuscripts by Ager; collected poems of Nick Sundal (1960-1964); and published family history by Ole Garmager, *Christoffer Andersen Garmager: Smelter and Farmer* (1957, translated and updated by Conrad Garmager in 1972-73). **Donated by Borgny Ager.**

- **Mrs. Realf Brandt Papers, P1575.** Additions include over 200 Brandt and Galby family letters (1874-1916), Brandt family histories, and published church histories. Of particular interest are courting letters between Realf Brandt and "Lettie" Galby (married Sept. 1883). Collection compiled and partly transcribed by Lois Edel Brandt Drews. **Donated by Michael Drews on behalf of his mother, Lois.**

Recently donated Norwegian-American family histories, memoirs, and organizational histories include:

- Debnam, Fran. *The Fostvedts from Vestvold, Norway...an oral tradition and Family History* (2011). Peder Emil Fostvedt emigrated from Norway in 1907, following the earlier emigration to New York of his sisters, Lena and Anna. Readers learn about their life in America and about their siblings who remained in

Norway. Added to Collection P0539, Family Histories and Genealogies. **Donated by author.**

- Dudley, Roger L. Kravig. *Family From Buskerud Fylke, Norway to Lincoln County, Colorado* (2011). Added to Collection P0539, Family Histories and Genealogies. **Donated by author.**

- Kvale, Dagfinn. *The Church by the Golden Gate* (2011). Contents include: 1906 earthquake, Andrew Furuseth, the church and the Olympic Games, Gjøa, the first ship to sail through the Northwest Passage, and Norwegian royal visits. Added to Collection P0537, Congregations: History of The Norwegian Seamen's Church, San Francisco, CA. **Donated by Håkon Sødal.**

- Lee, Daniel E. *Letters from a Sailor: America at War 1917-1918* (2011). Based on eighty-five letters written by Conrad Lyman Ostroot, navy enlistee from Moscow, Idaho. Added to Collection P1711, Norwegian-Americans Servicemen in World War I. **Purchased by NAHA.**

- Lewis, Anne Gillespie. *Ingebretsen's Saga: A Family, A Store, A Legacy of Food* (2011). Located at 1601 East Lake Street, Minneapolis, Minn., the shop has remained a staple in the community for all things Scandinavian for over 90 years. Includes 61 favorite and new Nordic recipes. Added to Collection P0539, Family Histories and Genealogies. **Donated by Jackie Henry.**

From the Front Desk

• Therkelsen, Linda Tollefson. *The Diary of Gilbert J. Gilbertson, in Archives of St. Ansgar Heritage Association*, trans. by Ervin Dietrich, c. 1975; annotated by Therkelsen (2010). Added to Collection P0539, Family Histories and Genealogies. Sporadic diary entries from 1860 to 1912 with family events. **Donated by author.**

• Utne, Eric. *Brenda My Darling: The Love Letters of Fridtjof Nansen to Brenda Ueland* (2011). Added to Collection P0253, Fridtjof Nansen Papers. **Purchased by NAHA.**

Recently donated fiction includes two novels by Gunval Gulbrandson:

The Wanderlust Bug (2002).

A fictional account of four generations of the Brevik family.

Just One More Time (2007).

A fictional account of a military family from the first Gulf War through the U.S. response to 9/11.

Both added to Norwegian-American Fiction Collection. **Donated by E.T. "Tom" Fjelde.**

This quarter's NAHA newsletter includes stories from our neighbor to the North. The Norwegian-American immigrant experience was at times experienced as a brief stopover before moving on into the Canadian wilderness. Those interested in additional Norwegian-Canadian stories may want to check out Odd Lovoll's 2001 article in the *Minnesota History* magazine, "Canada Fever, The Odyssey of Minnesota's Bardo Norwegians", available online at <http://collections.mnhs.org/MNHHistoryMagazine/articles/57/v57i07p356-367.pdf>.

Speaking of Dr. Lovoll, Odd was recently named in the Sons of Norway *Viking* magazine (January 2012) as one of the nine "most influential" Norwegian-Americans. NAHA co-founder O.E. Rolvaag was also included in that prestigious list.

I hope you will also spend some time looking at the association annual report on page 2-3. I think it is a representational picture of the organization's activities and finances. We are blessed to have had several significant estate gifts which have grown through careful investment strategies, and now are providing about 1/3 of the organization's operating budget. In order to continue growing and as we take on special projects such as electronic access and archival climate control, we will need to undertake special fundraising initiatives, but for the day-to-day operations, we are able to be sustained through the generosity

of our members, as well as past and present donors.

If you have, or are interested in supporting NAHA through an estate gift (will, life insurance or retirement plan beneficiary), we have a special recognition program for you. By completing a NAHA "Letter of Intent" you can designate your gift to support our publishing or archive programs or leave your gift undesignated, to be used to supplement the annual operating budget, or to be added to the NAHA endowed funds. The Letter is non-binding and enables you to be recognized in our Legacy Circle of planned gift donors. NAHA board member Cynthia Elyce Rubin is our latest Legacy Circle member. Thank you Cynthia! Send me an email if you would like me to send you a "Letter of Intent" to document your gift intentions.

Finally, our May newsletter will have details about the upcoming biennial members meeting which will take place in late October. We have lots of speaking engagements in the works as well, so please check our website at www.naha.stolaf.edu often for details on where we will be and when.

**- Jackie Henry
Administrative
Director**

Collection Spotlight: Herstory of Diderikke Brandt



*Photo courtesy of the Vesterheim
Norwegian-American Museum,
Decorah, Iowa*

So often history is told from the male perspective, but as a bumper sticker reminds us: History is herstory too. The recent publication edited by Betty Bergland and Lori Ann Lahlum, *Norwegian American Women: Migration, Communities, and Identities* (MHS Press, 2011) furthers the study of Norwegian immigrant women with nine contributed essays. The book's foreword asserts, "Norwegian American women forged their lives and their communities at the historical intersections of gender, ethnicity, immigration, time, and place."

One essay by Vesterheim Museum's Chief Curator, Laurann

Gilbertson, "Textile Production in Norwegian America," touches lightly on Diderikke Brandt, founder of a Decorah, Iowa, church sewing circle. Like similar women married to either church ministers or educators, Brandt assisted her husband, Rev. Nils Brandt, in encouraging a fledgling Norwegian community.

Her story deserves recognition, particularly as March is National Women's History Month. In addition, this academic year marks Luther College's 150th anniversary. Recently an extensive collection, with numerous items related to Diderikke Brandt, was donated by her descendent, Lois Brandt Drews (see New Additions to the NAHA Archives). The following excerpted address illuminates a woman described affectionately as "The Mother of the Luther College boys."

Dedication of Diderikke Brandt Hall

Luther College, Decorah, Iowa

Sunday, May 14, 1950

"Diderikke Brandt, an Appreciation,"
by Dr. Walther I. Brandt

Diderikke Brandt was born in Sande parsonage in Norway, where her father, Provst Ottesen, was pastor for forty years. Provision for anything beyond elementary education for women was then a rarity in both Norway and America, so she was sent to a Ladies' School in

Denmark. Her mental horizon was broadened by extensive travel on the Continent. Therefore when she came to America as the bride of the pioneer pastor, Rev. Nils Brandt, she brought not only physical strength and vigor, but also the best of Old World culture.

After some years in the service of the church in southern Wisconsin, the Brandt family moved to Decorah in 1865, where Rev. Brandt had been called to be pastor of the Lutheran congregation in Decorah, and also to serve on the teaching staff of the College. For two years the Brandts and their growing family of children occupied living quarters in the north wing of the recently constructed Old Main. Then they moved into the commodious brick parsonage on the College grounds, better known to the present generation of Luther College students as Campus House. This was Diderikke Brandt's home for the next sixteen years.

The student body of the seventies was less affluent and less sophisticated than the students of today. A weekend visit at home, except for those who lived in the immediate vicinity was utterly out of the question. Travel was expensive and difficult. The automobiles – luxurious and other wise – which now grace the campus were of course nonexistent. The great majority of students came from very modest homes, where sending a son to college involved a very real sacrifice on the part of the whole family. Many of these boys

by Jeff Sauve, Associate NAHA Archivist

were away from home for the first time in their lives. Small wonder that homesickness in its most virulent form occasionally found victims.

Diderikke Brandt, living as she did on the campus, became a sort of foster mother to the boys. The door of her home was always open to them. She would entertain them by groups at informal coffee parties, where they could enjoy a taste of home life during their careless – or should I say “carefree” – bachelor days. There was no College infirmary with a staff of nurses; did they fall ill she was often their nurse, administering the simple remedies with which every pioneer mother was of necessity familiar. Those in need of ready cash to enable them to remain in college would sometimes appeal to her, and rarely in vain. She maintained a little fund for this purpose, supplied by her own earnings.

No task was too humble. Laundries were few and far between that were equipped to handle the elaborate ruffs then regarded as an essential part of the clerical garb of a pastor brought up in the tradition of the state church of Norway. She would on occasion add to the fund by patiently ironing these ruffs. I have a vague recollection of having seen one of those peculiar pointed irons with which each separate hollow of the ruff had to be set.

And then there was “the stitch

in time that saves nine.” It was Diderikke Brandt who organized the women of the congregation into a sewing circle which met periodically to mend and patch the boys’ clothing and darn their socks, a custom which was still maintained during my own undergraduate days.

When Christmas vacation came with the general exodus of exuberant students bound for a holiday at home, there were invariably a few who because of distance or lack of funds were doomed to spend their vacation in the almost deserted College halls. For them the College authorities were sure to provide a Christmas party. President Larsen saw to it that each received some little gift. Diderikke Brandt was generally the life of the party, leading them in games and other entertainment. Not only Christmas Eve, but also other evenings of the vacation were often enlivened by these informal gatherings in the College dining hall.

Her assistance to the boys did not always end with their college days. One pastor, now long since deceased, tells how his approaching ordination found him utterly without funds with which to provide himself with clerical vestments. Diderikke Brandt made his white surplice, and pledged her credit at a local store for the cloth from which his gown was made.

Not only on the material side was she of help. Many a boy, especially as the

day of his graduation approached, would seek her advice, and she would stroll about the campus with him, giving him much sound motherly comfort and counsel.

Had the Luther College of that day admitted women, Diderikke Brandt would doubtless have mothered them in the same way that she did the boys. Now that our daughters, as well as our sons, may enroll at the College, it seems fitting that her memory should be kept living for them also. Her own children have all passed away, but we, her grandchildren, great grandchildren and great-great grandchildren wish on this occasion to express our deep appreciation of the compliment paid to our grandmother by the decision of the College authorities to perpetuate her memory by giving her name to the splendidly appointed women’s dormitory we are to dedicate today.



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Oldest Living Canadian has Norwegian-American Roots

Cora Hansen, who lives in Medicine Hat, Alberta, is presently the oldest living Canadian citizen. She will be 113 years old in March.

Cora was born in Clearwater County, Minnesota, on March 25th, 1899, as the youngest daughter of Else Marie Jensdatter from Grønnøya and Elling Klasson (Clausen) from Skjelbreid in Drangedal, Norway. Both her parents emigrated from Drangedal in Telemark to Minnesota in 1882 with their two children. Else Marie was then 26, Elling was 30. A daughter, Asborg, Cora's oldest sister, died as a child prior to her parents' emigration and is buried in Drangedal. So Cora has a sister who died before 1882. That is hard to imagine. Ten children (six boys and four girls) were born to Else Marie and Elling. Professor Clarence Clausen, born 1896, professor of history at St. Olaf College, was Cora's brother.

In 1882, when Cora's parents left Norway, her mother, Else Marie, already had three older brothers who had settled as farmers in Norman County, Minnesota, so

that is where they first settled. In 1896, they bought a farm in Clearwater County and moved there, but they still kept their farm in Norman County. Cora was born in Clearwater and here her older sister, Lise, died from jaundice at the age of 11. Lise is buried in Clearwater.

Cora learned to speak Norwegian in Minnesota before she learned English.

In 1911 the family went to Alberta, Canada. Else Marie and Elling sold their farms in Minnesota and bought new land in Canada. Elling went to Canada in 1911. In 1912 he had built a house and came back to Minnesota to pick up his family. Family and cattle went by train to Canada. On their way to Alberta in April 1912 they received the news of the sinking of Titanic (according to Clarence). Cora says she remembers the outbreak of World War I.

- Submitted by Øyvind Gulliksen, NAHA Norge member