

# The Norwegian-American Historical Association

Northfield, Minnesota



*From the NAHA Office to the Association Members*

NUMBER 127

EDITOR, KIM HOLLAND

WINTER 2006

## CREATIVE GIVING OPPORTUNITY!

Long-time NAHA member, Jim Heg, who lives in Washington State, happens to be the great-grandson of Norwegian-American Colonel Hans Christian Heg. Jim wanted his family to have a sense of connection to their Norwegian-American ancestor and the well-known citizen of Wisconsin. The challenge of locating enough copies of NAHA's 1936 publication was daunting as time passed and number of family members increased. The original book was published when NAHA had only been in existence for about 10 years and NAHA published enough books for its members. There are just not many copies of the 1936 book in existence. Jim received permission from NAHA to reprint the 1936 publication, *The Civil War Letters of Colonel H.C. Heg* for his own family members.

Jim Heg appreciates the unique resources located at NAHA and challenges all the NAHA members to remember to include NAHA in your 2006 charitable giving. In the spirit of the challenges we hear on Public Radio and Public Television, we are pleased to announce that Jim is giving you an incentive to make a gift to NAHA.

**The first 200 people to make a tax-deductible gift of \$50 or more to NAHA will be sent this reprint of *The Civil War Letters of Colonel H.C. Heg*.** Perhaps you grew up in Wisconsin. Perhaps you've seen the statue of Colonel Heg at the Wisconsin State Capitol. Perhaps you want to read the letters between a husband and father at war and family back home. Perhaps you have a friend who is a Civil War buff. Here is a chance to read the letters of Hans Christian Heg and a great gift idea – all in one package.

A copy of this publication can be yours with a tax-deductible gift of \$50 to NAHA. This can be a great way to share your interest in Colonel Heg, the 15<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Regiment, and the Civil War in general with a friend or relative. NAHA will pay postage fees when you make your donation to NAHA of \$50 or more.

Inside is a contribution form for you to complete. You may wish to give copies to family members as a gift.

## BOLD SPIRIT author arrives in NORTHFIELD

Linda Hunt, the author of *Bold Spirit* will be here to meet with NAHA members and talk about her book March 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>. There are two ways to meet Linda and hear about her ongoing journey to learn about of Helga Estby's walk across America and the impact this had on Helga's family. Linda will also update us on the most recent information she has learned about Helga both in Norway and in the United States since her book was published. As mentioned in the last NAHA newsletter, the author used NAHA publications and the Archives in her research of *Bold Spirit*. This program is co-sponsored by NAHA and St. Olaf College.

**Thursday, March 16<sup>th</sup>** Linda will speak at St. Olaf College's **Viking Theater** at **3:30 p.m.** The Viking Theater is in Buntrock Commons on the first floor. The St. Olaf College Bookstore will have copies of *Bold Spirit* available for purchase, and Linda will autograph her book following her presentation. This session is open to the public and no reservations are necessary.

**Friday March 17<sup>th</sup>** you are invited to join us for a **12:30 "Lunch with Linda"** in the Valhalla Room at Buntrock Commons, St. Olaf College. Linda will talk about *Bold Spirit* and Helga Estby's family after the lunch. Cost of the buffet luncheon will be \$9.05 including tax.

**Reservations are required.** (Call NAHA at 507-645-3221 or email [holland@stolaf.edu](mailto:holland@stolaf.edu) no later than March 7<sup>th</sup>.)

## UNDAUNTED: A NORWEGIAN WOMAN IN FRONTIER TEXAS

As NAHA members you might be aware of NAHA's 1961 publication, *The Lady With the Pen*. Elise Amalie Wærenskjold emigrated from Norway to Texas in 1847 and lived in the Lone Star State until her death in 1895. Her letters back to Norway show an enthusiasm for America and for Texas, even though she loathed slavery and was glad her sons were too young to fight for the

Confederate Army. Charles Russell has not allowed Wærenskjold and the Norwegians in Texas to be forgotten.

More letters and information about Elise Wærenskjold have come to light through research both in Norway and in the United States. NAHA member, Charles H. Russell, who holds his doctorate in history from Columbia University and lives in Texas, has been determined to learn more about this early pioneer and her influences. *Undaunted: A Norwegian Woman in Frontier Texas* is the full biography of this strong and independent thinker who had an amazingly interesting life even before she emigrated from Norway.

Texas A & M University Press has published *Undaunted* which highlights Texas history as well as a gives a clear and entertaining window into immigrant life in frontier Texas and the issues that shaped women's lives. You may order the book at [www.tamu.edu/upress](http://www.tamu.edu/upress) , or call 1-800-826-8911. Dr. Russell will be in Northfield this spring to discuss his book and the pioneer life of Norwegian American Elise Wærenskjold.

### NORWEGIAN-AMERICAN PAINTER JONAS LIE (1880-1940)

An exhibit of the works of Norwegian-American painter Jonas Lie is being held at the Spanierman Gallery LLC, 45 East 58<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY 10022. The exhibit opened on January 12, 2006 and runs through February 31<sup>st</sup>.

Did you know the famous Norwegian writer Jonas Lie had a namesake nephew who became an accomplished painter? The younger Jonas Lie was born in Moss, Norway, the son of a Norwegian engineer and his American wife. When the artist's father died unexpectedly in 1892, he was sent to live with his famous uncle and namesake in Paris. Here the young Lie was surrounded by famous Scandinavian literary figures. Henrik Ibsen and Edvard Grieg were visitors and colleagues of the writer Jonas Lie. His uncle enrolled Jonas in a private art school when he learned of the boy's talent and interest in drawing.

Lie joined his mother and sisters in New York in 1893 and went on to become known for his views of New York City and the New England Coast, working in a vigorous and colorful style. If you are going to be in New York you owe it to yourself to see the works of this Norwegian-American artist!

### WHO HAS BEEN RESEARCHING AT NAHA?

It started with a young scholar researching her Ph.D dissertation on Norwegian women who encountered the prairies and plains of the upper Midwest. Former Archivist

Forrest Brown suggested to Lori Lahlum that there were diaries of a woman named Ingeborg Bergeim which might be of interest to her. Years later the dissertation was completed and is now in the NAHA archives with the title, "There Are No Trees Here: Norwegian Women Encounter the Northern Prairies and Plains." The research continues as the cover article for *South Dakota History*, volume 35, number 3, Fall 2005. The cover of the journal includes a photograph of settlers proudly displaying their Norwegian flag on top of their tar-paper shack on the prairie.

### BOOK PARTY TO CELEBRATE THE RISE OF JONAS OLSEN

We hope you have started your winter reading in the form of *The Rise of Jonas Olsen, A Norwegian Immigrant's Saga*. **Circle Saturday, April 8<sup>th</sup> on your calendar** for a gathering to talk about your 2005 NAHA publication and learn more about the author, Johannes Wist. NAHA Editor Todd Nichol and Dr. Solveig Zempel will talk about the novel and the observations Wist made about Norwegian-American culture and the struggle to preserve identity and character while at the same time striving to be fully accepted as an American.

**DATE:** Saturday, April 8, 2006  
**LOCATION:** St. John's Lutheran Church,  
500 3rd St.W., Northfield, MN  
**TIME:** 10:30 a.m.

Post-card invitations will be sent out in March to members in the immediate area. Please contact the NAHA office if you live outside the Northfield/Minneapolis area and wish to attend ([naha@stolaf.edu](mailto:naha@stolaf.edu) or 507-646-3221) We will be happy to send you a reminder postcard.

### OUR SINCERE THANKS!

We thank the many people who gave generously during 2005 to support the work of the Norwegian-American Historical Association. This listing is June – December of last year. We can't do it without you!

**\$1 - \$50**

Molly Aasten · Olaf Kvamme · N Thomas Olson · John David Peterson · Russ Wangen · Gerd Myren · John Schevenius · Earl & Shirley Evenstad · Peter E Johnson · Paul Delbert Larson · Esther R Miller · Beverly J Smith · Alf Svendsen · Helen Aase · Egil Almaas · Reidar B Bjornard · William T Bowler · Marian J Christopherson · Christian Finne · Glen Fors · Irene Gubrud · Laurel Hale · Rev. Gordon J Hanson · Gretchen Hardgrove · Dr Elvin F Heiberg · Ronald Hedrix · Philip Hoff · Mary Hove · Edward Jorgensen · Emilie Larson · Donna Libal · Susan Lyback-Dahl · Lydrasil Society · Jean Marck · Robert Minish · David Torrison Nelson · Arnold H Nelson · Arnold Ness · Roger Ostby · Herbert F Petersen · Ruth M Peterson · David W Preus · M Hildegard Sanderson · Richard Stenerson ·

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Luther Forde · H Theodore Grindal · Nils Lang-Ree · Lois Rand · Ms. Lee Rokke · Solveig Zempel · John R Tunheim

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**\$5000+**

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**Special Donations**

*In Honor of Paul & Jo Scheffel - Kristen Crisp, In memory of S.L. Jordah- JoAnn Kleber, In loving memory of Rev. Rolf Storlie- Lydrasil Society. In memory of Varlborg and Chris Chrislock -Deborah Miller, In honor of Lee Rokke-John Rokke, In memory of S.T. Lillehaugen & Hazel Lillehaugen - Shirley Lillehaugen Santoro - In memory of Freda Johnson Hovden and to celebrate NAHA 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary- Erlaine Seeger, In memory of Marion J Nelson -Clarence Sheffield, In memory of Arne & Dora Olson -Agnes Vogel, In Honor of Lois Rand's Birthday - Katherine Hanson, Pearl Husby, Ms. Lee Rokke, Brian Rude, Marilyn Somdahl, Solveig and Elden Zempel.*

**ADDITIONS TO THE ARCHIVES**

Received from Allan G. Solmonson, *Growing Up Rural, Boyhood Memories of Farm Life in Mid-Century North Iowa*. Spiral-bound, 141 pages. Includes recollections of a typical day on the farm with animal chores, harvest, thunderstorms, polio epidemics, convoluted conversations between Norwegian-American farmers, the *Lutheran Herald*, REA, the Sunday afternoon drives, Luther's Small Catechism as well as high school lyceums and many other recollections. Photos and newspaper articles illustrate. A fictional letter to the parents informing them about their children's lives and their great-grandchildren was a warm conclusion.



Received from Harland Grinde, *Scandinavian Evangelical Lutheran Emanuels Church 1883-1983: A Century of Blessing*. Soft-cover, 23 pages. The centennial publication for what is now known as Immanuel Lutheran Church in Wausau, Wisconsin. The original congregation was founded by Norwegians who came to Marathon County for the lumbering industry. Paul Koren from Washington Prairie, Iowa accepted the first pastoral call. Certain families are highlighted for their instrumental roles in the early church. The Ladies Aid is credited with major contributions to remodeling and purchasing the organ, lighting fixtures, and many of the necessary items for a church. Improvements, changes after WWII, and the chronology of pastors are noted.

Received from Arland O. Fiske, *The Taming of the Norsemen, A Historical Novel*. Soft-cover, 79 pages. A fictional account of how the Norsemen were tamed by eventually accepting the Christian beliefs of the people they conquered. Fictional characters interact with historical figures. Available at North American Heritage Press, P.O. Box 1, Minot, ND 58702. (701)852-5552.

Received from Orton L. Enstad, *A Bit of History About the Enstad Family*. Loose-leaf, approximately 200 pages. Ola Lars Enstad was born in Lesjaskogen, Gudbrandsdalen Norway and settled in the Albert Lea, Minnesota area in 1869 before moving on to western Minnesota. The Syvert Hendrikson Kvam family and the Enstad family were neighbors in the Lesja district and became relatives through marriage. Includes copies of records, newspaper articles, photos of the farms in Norway and the family here in America. Obituaries document that the family was part of the Stony Run Lutheran Congregation in Yellow Medicine County.

Received from the Northfield Nordic Arts Club, obituaries of members who have died, articles about the members, rosters of the membership, minutes of meetings held between September 1983 and August 1994.

Received from Emigrantforlaget, *Nordmenn i dødsleirene*, by Torbjørn Greipstrand. Soft-cover, in Norwegian with some English translations of letters, 222 pages. Includes photos, copies of letters, and documents. Much has been written about the prison camps during the United States Civil War. However, in Norway less is known about the prison camps. This book informs Norwegians about the experiences endured by some of the Norwegians who fought in America's Civil War.

Received from David Grubin Productions, all four segments of the PBS series, *Destination America*. NAHA was a source and Norwegian emigration was featured in part 1 of the series, "The Golden Door."

Received from Kathryn Parke, a copy of *Always on the Way, The Autobiography of Sigrid Helliesen Lund (1892-1987)*. Loose leaf, in Norwegian and an English manuscript version translated and edited by Parke. 151 pages. From a prominent family, Sigrid Helliesen Lund had a remarkable life. Prior to her work which involved rescuing Jewish children and adults during WWII, Sigrid was a founding member of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom in Norway and became a leader in the Religious Society of Friends. As a member of the Quaker observation team, she was involved in United Nations events where she met Indira Gandhi and observed the diplomatic ending of the Korean War. Lund was recognized and honored in her later years in Israel, Sweden, and Great Britain.

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## CONTRIBUTION FORM FOR CIVIL WAR LETTERS OF COLONEL H.C. HEG

Enclosed is my tax-deductible check or money order for \$\_\_\_\_\_. For each \$50 I donate to NAHA I will receive a copy of *The Civil War Letters of Colonel H. C. Heg*. Postage is paid by NAHA:

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Please send my copy of *The Civil War Letters of Colonel H. C. Heg* to:

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Received from Joan Greenblatt, several letters written by Ole E. Rolvaag to Joan Newburger Greenblatt when she was a young girl. Rolvaag was a family friend and Joan knew Rolvaag as Uncle Ole. Also included a newspaper article about Rolvaag from the September 25, 1930 *Cedar Rapids Gazette*.

Received from Nancy Rustad, *150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Highland Prairie Lutheran Church 1854-2004*, Peterson, Minnesota. Three ring binder, approximately 200 pages. A detailed history of an early Norwegian immigrant congregation in rural Minnesota. Nine chapters include the history of the settlement, the church, the pastors at Highland Prairie, the sons of the congregation, the Rustad family, with photos of the choirs, the band, Ladies Aid from 1930 and the Brotherhood, as well as historical tidbits. Many photos of the buildings, people, lists of confirmation classes and important events for the congregation are highlighted by excerpts from previous anniversary celebrations.

Received from Arland O. Fiske, samples of the Scandinavian Heritage Calendars. Dates on the calendars include important historical events and birthdates of well-known Scandinavians, a copy of the 2005 Scandinavian Heritage News, as well as the audio-tape for the book, *The Scandinavian Heritage*, chapters 1-12.

Received from Paul Wiste, *Revival in Houston, A Century of Serving Our Lord, Bethany Evangelical Free Church, Houston, Minnesota 1905-2005*. Soft-cover, 120 pages. The founders of Bethany were second and third generation Norwegian-American immigrants. Includes a review of religious life in the Scandinavian countries in the 18<sup>th</sup> and early

19<sup>th</sup> centuries, early revival and tent meetings, copies of programs from the revivals, letters, and earlier anniversary programs, as well as photos of pastors, men's and women's groups, youth convention delegates, and many confirmation classes. Copies of the centennial book are available for \$12 from the church office at 301 South Ellsworth, Houston, MN 55943.

Received from the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, a digital video disk entitled: *Understanding our Heritage Through the Stories Handed down from our Forebearers*.

Includes four areas of interest: "The Crossing and Early Settlement Period", with stories from the Lee and Reque families from Koshkongong Prairie; the "Arrival of Pastors From the Old Country", with scenes from *The Diary and Letters of Elizabeth Koren*; "A New Generation Born in a New Land", with vignettes from the boyhood of Peder Tjernagel; and "The Transition to the Twentieth Century" with reminiscences of Gladys Tolander. 124 minutes running time.

Received from Thora Phelps, *Relatively Speaking, A Mandt Family Saga* by Paul H. Mandt. Soft-cover, 48 pages. In 1906 Gunnar Tarjeson Mandt wrote the story of his life in Norwegian. In 1972 the story inspired a grandson to find out more about the ancestors who had been goldsmiths and left the Telemark area of Norway for the United States in 1843. Dane County, Wisconsin and Koshkonong were considered "the promised land" to this group leaving Telemark. Includes photos, translations of letters, and genealogy information, as well as stories about the ancestors and their exploits and journeys.

Received from Audrey Overland, *History of Elstad Lutheran Congregation, Lanesboro, Minnesota, 150<sup>th</sup>*



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*Anniversary, 1854-2004.* Sixty-eight pages, spiral bound. The authors provided a background on the Norwegian immigrants who settled in Fillmore County and what their lives were like in the new country. In the first 30 years the Elstad Congregation participated in over 1,200 baptisms and 900 confirmations. Turbulent times arose when the congregation was divided over the question of predestination. Includes photos of buildings, members, programs, newspaper articles, letters, rosters of members, pastors, confirmants, as well as activities and organizations of the church. Contact Audrey Overland at RR 2 box 109, Lanesboro, MN 55949 for copies of this publication.

Received from Carl G. Nilsen, *The Nilsen, Porter, Svensson Story*. Soft-cover, 215 pages. The author looks back at his heritage and how his parents' early years in Norway influenced his life in the Norwegian-American community in Staten Island, New York before entering high school at the Lutheran Brethren Bible School in Fergus Falls, Minnesota. Includes photos of people, buildings, copies of various articles, and pedigree charts with names and dates of spouses and children.

Received from Lowell Lykken, *Our Scandinavian Ancestry*. Soft-cover, 374 pages. Hadeland, Telemark and Sauda, Norway were the home locations for the Anderson, Oleson, Lykken and Orton families before coming to the United States. Includes maps and photos of current family members as well as histories of the farms from which the families left. Contains a description of what an immigrant brought with on the ship for nourishment during the journey to America. Muskego, Wisconsin was home before heading further west to the Christiania settlement in Dakota County, Minnesota Territory. The Aarthun (Orton) family was uncommon as they returned to Norway after the Civil War in America, only to

return again in 1887 after most of the family had emigrated to the United States in the intervening years.

Received from Sally G. Epstein, The Philadelphia Museum of Art catalog for Edvard Munch's *Mermaid* exhibit. This was sponsored by the Philadelphia based maritime company, Aker American Shipping. The Munch *Mermaid* was exhibited to help celebrate the Centennial of Norway's independence in 2005. Soft-cover, 58 pages. Includes black and white as well as color photos.

Received from Sally G. Epstein, *Edvard Munch: Mirror Reflection*. This catalog is from The Norton Gallery of Art exhibit which took place in 1986. Soft-cover, 122 pages. Photos in both black and white and color.

Received from Peder Ringdal, a seven page article in both English and Norwegian about *Knute Iverson Finney (1880-1972) The Vossing who became a successful violin teacher and violinist in Chicago*. The author learned a Vossing had become a well respected violin teacher in Chicago and conducted his own research to learn more about the life of this talented violinist. In 1896, at the age of 16 Knute left Norway. After a series of menial jobs, Knute obtained a position at the Marshall Fields department store. A vice-president of the store was John G. Shedd, who had great faith in Knute's abilities and economically helped the Vossing violinist get his start. Shedd's later philanthropy included the Shedd Aquarium. Knute developed the patented "Finney Finger Guide System." *The Saturday Evening Post* in May of 1929 contained a feature on Knute and his teaching methods.