Members of the Norwegian-American Historical Association should know that their board of directors is an incredible group of dedicated people who faithfully come together for important discussion, debate, dialogue, and consensus in our common commitment to the core message of NAHA: to capture the cultural richness of the Norwegian-American experience, uniting the community for the benefits of extending cultural awareness, scholarship, and understanding.

Board committees explore several additional opportunities for our members and guests to engage in thoughtful conversation with scholars and leaders of the Norwegian-American community. For example, in the summer of 2014 our tour, "Bridging the Continent, Bridging the River," sparked a collaboration with the Minnesota Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians. At our 90th anniversary luncheon, the panelists — Lee Pao Xiong, director of Concordia University’s Hmong Studies Center; Philip Anderson, president of the Swedish-American Historical Society; regional historian Annette Atkins; and NAHA archivist Gary DeKrey — engaged us in thinking about the future of our past. This coming May, members will have the opportunity to visit the earliest Norwegian-American churches in Goodhue and Rice counties. And of course, our biennial meeting and conference offers opportunities for learning and connecting with fellow members in October.

Over the last three years a strategic plan has been in place that challenged and stretched us to a new horizon. With the strategic plan in hand, we have accomplished policies and plans for the archives, considered the future of our publications, redesigned and expanded our newsletter to include stories from our collections, gently refined our logo, and strengthened our commitment to our mission.

Perhaps the biggest strategy and challenge of the strategic plan was this question: Could we undertake our first-ever fundraising campaign? With the goal of climate-controlled archives in our sights we launched Club 2014. The board of directors participated 100 percent, and — thanks to our donors — we are nearly to our goal! From Washington, Wisconsin, Indiana, New York, Iowa, Minnesota, Florida, and Saskatchewan, the board is at work meeting challenges and setting new goals in step with NAHA’s mission to locate, collect, preserve, and interpret the Norwegian-American experience with accuracy, integrity, and liveliness.
SPECIAL BOOK OFFER FOR MEMBERS

As a special member benefit, the June 2011 conference proceedings of the association’s sister organization, Det Norskamerikanske historielaget i Norge (NAHA-Norge), are now available. Norwegian-American Essays 2014, “Migrant Journeys: The Norwegian-American Experience in a Multicultural Context” (Terje M. Hasle Johanger, editor, and Harry T. Cleven, assistant editor) contains 11 essays discussing the transnational nature of the emigrant story from a variety of disciplinary perspectives. For more information, including a table of contents and list of authors, visit tinyurl.com/NAEssays2014.

This offer is available to NAHA members for a limited time only. To receive a complimentary member copy, email naha@stolaf.edu or call 507-786-3221 by March 31, 2016. Please include your preferred shipping address.

THANK YOU TO OUR CLUB 2014 DONORS!

$9,377
Left to raise

GOAL
$160,000
Contributions and commitments as of February 1, 2016

$150,623

Thank you to all those who have contributed to the 2014 Club’s annual fundraising goal. With just $9,377 remaining to reach the goal, we are asking our hard-working donors to step up and close out the year on a strong note. Thank you for your generosity and your continued support of NAHA’s mission.

ANNUAL REPORT AVAILABLE ONLINE

The 2015 Annual Report of the Norwegian-American Historical Association is now available online. For an overview of the association’s programs, activities, accomplishments, and challenges in 2015, along with a list of our generous donors, visit the NAHA homepage to find a link to the report: naha.stolaf.edu. Request a printed copy by contacting naha@stolaf.edu or 507-786-3221.

MORE ON UNDERSTANDING NORWEGIAN CHURCH RECORDS

EDITOR’S NOTE: This article continues to highlight the information found in Norway’s church records. For Part 1 of “Understanding Norwegian Church Records,” see the Fall 2015 issue of Currents (available on naha.stolaf.edu).

Church records are available on the Norwegian Digital Archives site: arkivverket.no/URN:kb_read. The English version of these scanned images of church records is called “Digitised Parish Registers.” Records are accessed by browsing the scanned book pages; it is not possible to search for individual names.

The example below is from a klokkerbok of Løten Church in Hedmark. It includes the birth and baptism record of Norwegian artist Edvard Munch.

To read more about the contents of fields in the handwritten Norwegian records, see the “Column headings” sections of John Follesdal’s article on Ancestry.com: tinyurl.com/follesdal.

BY DALE HOVLAND

CHARITABLE GIVING JUST GOT EASIER

Thanks to a 2015 congressional year-end tax and budget deal, the IRA charitable rollover is now a permanent part of tax law. If you are 70 ½ or older, you can make a rollover gift of up to $100,000 from your IRA directly to the Norwegian-American Historical Association. This gives you a tax benefit and greatly benefits NAHA’s mission to “locate, collect, preserve, and interpret the Norwegian-American experience with accuracy, integrity, and liveliness.” The gift is both tax-exempt and the amount of the rollover gift can be used to meet your required minimum distribution, reducing your taxable income. And since this tax provision is now permanent, you can simplify your giving by using this donation method year after year. To learn more, talk with your financial adviser or contact NAHA Director Amy Boxrud at naha@stolaf.edu or 507-786-3221.

Entry number: 53
Baptism date: 15 April 1864
Baptismal Sponsors: Parish Pastor Deinboll, Captain Schjelderup, Anton Thingstad from Engeloug, Miss Magdalene Laura Marie Lowzow, Miss Johanne Hansteen
If baptized at home, by whom: Pastor Eriksen (Could be done if a child was not expected to survive. Note the church baptism record was recorded several months after birth.)

Parents’ full names, status (occupation), and residence: Military Doctor Christian Munch and wife Laura nee Bjølstad living on Østre Engeloug
For illegitimate children, person reporting status — child’s mother or known and trusted member of parish

Birth date: 12 December 1863
Child’s full name: Eddevard. (Recorded as Edvard in the corresponding ministerialbok)
Residence: Østre Engeloug

Legitimate or illegitimate birth: Legitimate

WAY TO OUR 2014 DONORS!

Goal
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WHITENESS EXPLORED IN OSLO CONFERENCE

“Nordic Whiteness: Export of and Assimilation into the Ideal in a Comparative Historical Perspective,” was held at the National Library of Norway in Oslo on November 11, 2015. Archives curator at the National Library, Dr. Jana Sverdliuk, and lecturer at the University of Oslo and former NAHA-Norway chair, Terje M. Hasle Joranger, planned the event. Formal organizers were the National Library of Norway and The Norwegian-American Studies Center.

The conference introduced the concept of whiteness to a Nordic audience. Whiteness is both a social and ideological construct that has become a powerful symbol around the world, in that it addresses privileges and properties said to be unique to “white people.” Whiteness studies became influential in the United States in the late 20th century, inspired by David Roediger’s seminal study, *The Wages of Whiteness* (Verso, 1991).

The event was opened by Hagne Stensrud Husstein, deputy of the Department for Research and Dissemination at the National Library of Norway, and Nils Olav Østrem, NAHA-Norway chair and professor at the University of Stavanger. Following the opening, Sverdliuk and Joranger introduced the conference, which focused on the concept of whiteness historically and geographically, linking the critical notion of whiteness to migration studies. It combined two historical cases, namely 19th- and 20th-century emigration from Nordic countries to the United States and contemporary immigration to the Nordic countries. Presenters discussed aspects of whiteness in relation to migration, ethnicity, gender, and class in two defined locations and in two time periods.

The first section of the conference, “Integration of Migrants from the Nordic Countries in the USA in the 19th and 20th Centuries,” emphasized the historical transformation of people who come from the Nordic countries Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Finland as immigrants to the United States. In the second section, titled “Contemporary Migration and Integration in the Nordic Countries,” presenters discussed the contemporary integration process of different migrants in the Nordic countries and traced the development of “Nordic whiteness” over time.

A number of presentations from the conference and additional articles will be published in an anthology on Nordic whiteness edited by Sverdliuk and Joranger. For more information on the conference, including a list of presenters and their topics, visit tinyurl.com/nordicwhiteness. 

BYGDELAGENES FELLESRAAD HOSTS CENTENNIAL

BY ANNA QUANBECK

This spring, Bygdelagenes Fellesraad will celebrate an important milestone: its 100th anniversary. Since 1916, the Fellesraad has served as the national advisory council for bygdelag, which are organizations of Norwegian-Americans with ties to specific regions in Norway. To commemorate this anniversary, the Fellesraad is hosting a centennial celebration May 5-8 in Brooklyn Center, Minn. The theme of the celebration will be “Norway to America — Memories and Dreams.”

The event begins on Thursday evening, with a reception and special presentation. Festivities continue on Friday with a two-track conference focusing on the themes “Norwegian-ness: Past, Present, and Future,” and “21st Century Norwegian Family History.” The conference will also include special exhibitions and displays from genealogical resources throughout the country. Saturday’s events will celebrate the Fellesraad centennial, and will be held in the nearby Earle Brown Heritage Center. The Norwegian Dancers of Stoughton High School will kick off the day’s events, which include renowned speakers on Norwegian current events and culture, lag displays, a luncheon, and a gala banquet. Children and teens are invited to explore Norwegian heritage and culture by attending a day camp on Saturday. To wrap up the weekend, additional events are scheduled on Sunday at Mindekirken Norwegian Lutheran Memorial Church and Norway House in Minneapolis. Everyone is invited to attend the celebration—including those who don’t claim Norwegian heritage. Registration is required, either online or by mail. Check the Fellesraad’s website for more information, including updates on speakers and special presentations.

Anna Quanbeck ’19 is a NAHA office assistant and a student at St. Olaf College.

READ MORE ABOUT THE BYGDELAG MOVEMENT...

NAHA Editor Emeritus Odd Lovoll has written extensively on the bygdelag in America. While these titles are out of print, they are available in many libraries and for sale online. Used copies may be available through NAHA.

_A Folk Epic: The Bygdelag in America_  
By Odd Sverre Lovoll (NAHA/Twayne, 1975.)

_Norwegian-American Studies_  
BY JEFF SAUVE, NAHA ASSOCIATE ARCHIVIST

An opportunity to solve a mystery using archival resources presented itself this past November. NAHA board member Blaine Hedberg asked the archivists to help identify the church depicted in a photograph he owned. Unfortunately the back side of the image did not contain any annotations. The only clue offered was the image’s caption in white ink, “N. L. synod church going-up-in flames Nov-17-11.” Several assumptions may be made by closer inspection of the image. “N. L.” signifies that the church was affiliated with the Norwegian Lutheran Synod. An internet search on the date of November 17, 1911, reveals that it was a Friday, which means this was an event other than normal Sunday services, perhaps a wedding or funeral as a large, well-dressed crowd is shown watching the church burn. Finally, the photographer “H. Pederson” might have an association with the church, since he was present at whatever event was occurring at the time. Hedberg believed the church was located in the Midwest, perhaps Minnesota or Iowa.

The first step was to consult the Minnesota Historical Society’s compiled list of photographers and their working locations. “H. Pederson” did not appear, nor did his name appear in a Google search of photographers. Therefore, it must be assumed the photographer was an amateur.

The next step was to utilize various free, online newspaper databases, such as the Library of Congress’s “Chronicling America,” and the Minnesota Newspaper Digital Hub. By limiting the search scope to the time frame of the fire and using the phrase “church burn,” the following result was immediately obtained in the Library of Congress database: “Synod Church Burns at Benson. Fine Structure Becomes Prey of Flames An Hour Before Funeral of Minister’s Wife” (Willmar Tribune, Nov. 22, 1911). A quick comparison to congregational records in the NAHA archives confirmed the church as Our Savior’s Lutheran Church in Benson, Swift County, Minnesota. As to the photographer in question, most likely “H. Pederson” is 18-year-old Hans F. Pederson, the son of Our Savior’s Rev. Chr. Pederson.

According to the newspaper clipping, the fire started by “an overheated pipe in the basement, leading from the furnace to the chimney, which was too close to the woodwork. The janitor after starting the furnace some time in the forenoon to have the church warm for the funeral services of Mrs. Chr. Pederson, the beloved wife of the pastor.” Fortunately no one was injured and several objects were saved from the slow-burning building, including two organs, the piano, the altar portrait, the seats and carpets, the dishes, and several stained glass windows. The church was erected in 1901, at a cost of almost $15,000 and only in the previous year of 1910 was the debt paid off in full. Rev. Christopher Pederson said of that time of double sorrow, “What a tragedy, a church in ashes and a new grave.”

MYSTERIOUS PHOTO OFFERS CLUES

USEFUL RESEARCH TOOLS

The following online websites are free and recommended for those interested in general research and family history:

- The Library of Congress’s Chroncling America provides digital access to historic newspapers published in the United States from 1836 to 1922. chroniclingamerica.loc.gov
- Minnesota Historical Society’s Minnesota Newspaper Digital Hub provides digital access to newspapers published in Minnesota between 1856 and 1922. mnhs.org/newspapers
- Minnesota Historical Society’s Directory of Minnesota Photographers provides biographical and historical information about commercial photographers and photographic studios. The most complete data is about 19th- and early 20th-century photographers (1850-1920s): http://www.mnhs.org/people/photographers/

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If you have Norwegian-American letters, diaries, photographs, family histories, recordings, and community or congregational materials at home, or if you know of such items in the hands of others, please contact us about a donation. Perhaps this list of recent donations will suggest some possibilities. The archives continue to benefit from the generosity of members and friends who have made important donations, and we welcome your help in building the collection. We are particularly interested in materials that bear on the experiences of post-World War II Norwegian immigrants and in Canadian materials, but we welcome donations illustrating all aspects of Norwegian-American history and culture. For guidance on what we collect, please consult the guidelines at the bottom of the Archives page on the NAHA website: naha.stolaf.edu/archives/guidelines.pdf.

Although we aren’t able to acknowledge all donations here, we do appreciate each one, large or small. Families may be sure that important donations made to the NAHA archives will remain open for future family consultations.

**DONATED OCTOBER 1 – DECEMBER 31, 2015**

**FAMILY HISTORIES, MEMOIRS, AND ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORIES**


- Paulson, Carl O. (1909–2002) Papers. Carl was the grandson of Rev. Ole Paulson, one of the founders of Augsburg College, Minneapolis. The collection includes several hundred photographs of the extended family (ca. 1870–1980), materials regarding Argyle and Adams Lutheran Churches, Argyle, Wis. (correspondence, histories and photographs), and biographical materials regarding Ole Paulson. Added to P0539 Family Histories. Donated by Ron Nagel.

- Waterville, Iowa, historical materials (translated and transcribed by Rev. Donald L. Berg): A Little of Old East Paint Creek Congregation’s History 1851–1926 (compiled by L. A. Grangaard and A. P. Lea); Minutes of Joint Meetings for Old East and West Paint Creek, Faegre and Lansing Congregations (1887–1945); Minutes of Proceedings for Faegre Prairie Congregation (1867–1919); and Faegre Prairie Congregation’s Financial Reports (1876–1919). Added to P0537 Congregation Papers. Donated by Rev. Donald Berg, NAHA Lifetime Member.

**PHOTOGRAPHS**

- Stereoviews (Norwegian): Waiting to welcome Dr. Nansen, Christiania, Norway (1897); Christiania’s Largest Market (1900); and Arrival of the New King and Queen at Trondhjem and Their Reception by the Diplomatic Corps—Coronation of King Haakon and Queen Maud (1906). Donated by Chester C. Graham.

A recent donation from the Paulson family includes several hundred photographs of the extended family, circa 1870–1980.

Courtship letters between Ann Emilie Garberg and Lars Knutson Tronvold, 1910–11
Logging camps, or “pineries,” provided an important source of employment for Norwegian-American men in the 19th and 20th centuries. “These rugged men of Norway, skilled in the use of ax and saw, had no difficulty getting work, and how they throve on it!” writes Alfred O. Erikson in Norwegian-American Studies, Vol. 15 (NAHA, 1949). At the turn of the century, however, the logging industry was transformed by a revolutionary innovation: the steam engine. Oxen and horses were no longer the most efficient means of transporting colossal trees to ports, where they would be shipped to other parts of the country. To read more about logging in the Pacific Northwest, see these essays in Norwegian-American Studies: Vol. 13, p. 133 and Vol. 30, p. 196.