NAHA to Digitize Rolvaag
Spring Member Meetup
Remembering Jackie Henry
Memories of the Prairie
New to the Archives
I’m delighted to be writing to you for the first time as editor of NAHA, and I want to use this opportunity to present you with a summary of NAHA’s publication last year and share our hopes for the year ahead.

In 2018 NAHA partnered with University of Minnesota Press and Minnesota Historical Society Press to publish two major works: the much anticipated indexes to the three volumes of From America to Norway edited and translated by Orm Øverland and Odd Lovoll’s memoir, Two Homelands. While these books differ in topic and time period, they both highlight the important links immigrants established, negotiated, and maintained between Norway and the United States. They promise to enrich the study of the Norwegian-American experience for many years to come.

Another major development in the realm of NAHA book publishing involves the Twin Cities History Project. As many of you may be aware, NAHA has been working with historian David Mauk to publish a comprehensive history of Norwegian Americans in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis/St. Paul. I am pleased to announce we are in the final phases of editing and revising Dr. Mauk’s manuscript. NAHA looks forward to publishing this important work soon.

During this past year, we’ve also made some exciting decisions regarding NAHA’s academic journal, Norwegian-American Studies. Since 1926, Norwegian-American Studies has been dedicated to showcasing the best scholarly work being done in the field of Norwegian-American history, literature, and other related fields. We are currently undertaking a redesign of Norwegian-American Studies that will build on this commitment and facilitate increased intellectual exchange. The journal will now be published annually and feature original research articles alongside discussions of scholarly works in progress, the teaching and learning of Norwegian-American studies, reviews of books recently published in the field, and more. Rich images will accompany engaging scholarly content and keep readers up-to-date on emerging discussions in the field. We are working hard in hopes of having the new version of Norwegian-American Studies in your mailboxes in Fall 2019.

With best wishes for the new year,

Anna M. Peterson, NAHA Editor
At its October 2018 meeting, the St. Olaf College Board of Regents voted to award the King Olav V Chair in Scandinavian-American Studies to Dan Dressen, Professor of Music and Associate Provost, for a three-year term. This position, created in 1992, is held by a senior faculty member whose professional work contributes to the study of Scandinavian and Norwegian-American culture. Dan Dressen’s work in this regard includes serving on the governing board of the Edvard Grieg Society for a decade and serving as one of the college’s representatives on the board of NAHA.

Dressen joined the St. Olaf faculty in 1982 after receiving his master of fine arts degree from the University of Minnesota, which is also where he received his doctor of musical arts degree. Currently serving as the associate provost, he has also served as the associate dean for the fine arts and as chair of the college’s music department. He recently began a term as President of the National Association of Schools of Music. Dressen’s career as a tenor spans nearly forty years and includes performances in opera, concert, and recital.

Dressen has developed for St. Olaf’s music library a collection of more than 500 items in the area of solo Norwegian vocal music, produced a Norwegian lyric diction guide for singers, and mentored other faculty members in developing scholarly and performance expertise in Scandinavian vocal music. He has cultivated significant relationships in Norway, with institutions such as the Grieg Academy, the Trondheim Conservatory, and the Royal Norwegian College of Music in Oslo.

In an announcement to the St. Olaf community, Provost and NAHA Board Member Marci Sortor wrote “Dan has also played a pivotal role in helping renegotiate the several ways in which the College and the Norwegian American Historical Association cooperate with each other. In so doing, he has helped set that relationship on a good footing for decades to come.”

Odd S. Lovoll, professor emeritus of Norwegian and history, was the first holder of the King Olav V chair (1992–2001), followed by Todd Nichol, professor emeritus of history (2001–2017). Margaret Hayford O’Leary, professor of Norwegian, held the chair most recently until her death in June 2018.

NAHA Receives Planning Grant

NAHA recently received a Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage Grant from the Minnesota Historical Society to develop a plan for the digitization of the O.E. Rølvaag Papers, one of its largest and most significant collections. NAHA has begun working with the Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts, a nonprofit organization based in Philadelphia, to develop a plan for the preservation, digitization, and enhanced cataloging of the 65-box collection. Following the completion of the plan, NAHA will be equipped to seek further funding to digitize the materials, which includes correspondence, manuscripts, clippings, and photographs. The Archives Committee of the NAHA Board of Directors identified the O. E. Rølvaag Papers as one of its highest priorities for digitization, based on the collection’s overall significance, its potential for interdisciplinary research, and its fragile condition.

The 2025 bicentennial of Norwegian-American immigration and the 2026 sesquicentennial of Rølvaag’s birth makes this a timely project. NAHA aims to have these materials readily available for patrons in advance of these milestones.
2018 HAUGEN SCHOLARSHIP AWARDED

The Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Study (SASS) has awarded the 2018 Einar and Eva Lund Haugen Memorial Scholarship to Sant Mukh Khalsa of City University of New York Graduate Center. Her working dissertation title is, “Understanding Intersections of Medieval Fishing, Trade, and Craft Production at Gufuskálar, Iceland.”

The Haugen Scholarship is an annual stipend intended to support an outstanding graduate student whose doctoral dissertation examines a Scandinavian or Scandinavian-American topic in the social sciences or history, broadly defined. Administration of the scholarship was transferred from NAHA to SASS in 2008, and a NAHA representative participates in the annual selection process. For more information, visit scandinavianstudy.org.

LEAVE A LEGACY

Join NAHA members who have made a lasting gift to the Association and the Norwegian-American community. When you make a planned gift to NAHA and become a member of the Legacy Circle, you become a partner in our mission to collect, preserve, and interpret the Norwegian-American experience. With a little planning and some common financial tools, you can leave a larger legacy than you might have imagined, without affecting your current lifestyle or your family’s financial security. For more information, contact NAHA Executive Director Amy Boxrud at boxrud@stolaf.edu or 507-786-3221.

SPRING MEMBER MEETUP

Save the date! Members and friends of NAHA are invited to a reception and program featuring Sigrid Lien, professor of art history at the University of Bergen and author of Pictures of Longing (University of Minnesota Press, 2019).

Tuesday, April 30
Norway House
913 East Franklin Ave.
Minneapolis
5 pm reception
6 pm program

Published originally in Norwegian as Lenselens bilder (Norli, 2009), Lien’s work highlights more than 250 America—photographs as a visual account of Norwegian migration in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Lien presents these photographs, many of which are found in the NAHA collection, alongside letters from immigrants, as a moving expression of the Norwegian-American experience. Learn more and register at naha.stolaf.edu.
REMEMBERING JACKIE HENRY
1960–2019

Former NAHA Director Henry passed away at her home on February 2 at age 58 after a 3-year journey with cancer.

Jackie had a passion for research, and she pursued it in both her career and her hobby as a family historian. Equally at home with digital detective work or exploring traditional archives, she found joy in serving others as well as following her interest in her Scandinavian heritage.

She received her bachelor degree in education and psychology from St. Olaf College and earned a masters in library and information science from St. Catherine University. In 2000, after serving as prospect researcher and director of advancement services for St. Olaf College, she began working in her “dream job” as administrative director for NAHA, where she spent five years before retiring in 2015.

During her time as director, she brought the Association to a new level administratively. “Jackie brought a steady hand to managing the Association’s daily business, and a steadfast commitment to its future work. We so appreciate her many contributions.” says NAHA President Dennis Gimmestad.


Jackie will be remembered for her love of travel. She spent a semester student teaching in India and two summers studying at the International Summer School in Oslo, Norway. During her retirement, she and her husband Bob traveled extensively, including trips to Europe, Scandinavia, Canada, and Australia. Their last trip together was to Hawaii, just two months before her death.

Jackie is survived by her husband, her parents, three sisters; two children, two step-children, and four grandchildren. A celebration of Jackie’s life was held on February 10 at St. Olaf College.

“JACKIE BROUGHT a steady hand to managing the Association’s daily business, and a steadfast commitment to its future work.”

— Dennis Gimmestad, NAHA President

In her chapter, “Collective Identities in Life Writings of Norwegian Immigrant Woman,” Berglund commented on women of more ordinary circumstances who left behind snippets of life stories: “Yet those fragments can illuminate self-conceptions in the same way slips of the tongue, dreams, or snapshots can reveal an individual’s inner life. [...[the] unpublished narratives in archives are awaiting discovery.”

One such manuscript, donated to NAHA in 2011, is Emilie Sveen Hovdesven’s 44-page reminiscences, *From Mother to Daughter* (begun in 1933 and completed in 1957 at age 93). Her account provides a richly detailed narrative of life growing up on the western Minnesota prairies in the 1870s and early 1880s.
JULEBUKKING IN 1883

There was much gaiety as we knocked at the door. It was flung open and I remember someone grabbed me and said, “I know who you are!”

At age 19, julebukking, or Christmas fooling, proved an indelible moment for Hovdesven. As a young lady, dark haired like her mother, she was romantic, full of life, and “welcomed the chance to do something different.”

Several days before Christmas, she joined her cousin John to spend the holidays at his sister’s house near Canby, Minn., about 30 miles from Milan. While en route, they stopped at Ole Brusven’s home. His children, Olaf and Clara, were good friends. Hovdesven recalled being asked if they would like to stay for a few days and have a good time. On Dec. 23, Olaf announced, “Let’s go Julebukking!” She recollected, “I dressed in boy’s clothes, although I don’t remember now whose they could have been, as the boys there were six footers and I was small.”

The merrymakers piled into a sleigh adorned with many jingling bells, and crossed the snowy prairies to the Hovdesven home. Their son, Arne, who was a friend of Olaf’s, met the masked revelers at the front door. Arne gripped Emilie Sveen, mistakenly thinking it was Anna Nyberg, his then current girlfriend. She happily noted, “So that was how I met Arne, my future husband!”

Arne’s mother then asked everyone to please come inside. Hovdesven wrote that she was self-conscious attired in boy’s clothing and shyly refused. Not wanting to send away the julebukkers without a treat, “punch” (presumably containing alcohol) was served to everyone. Emilie accepted out of politeness, but slyly emptied her cup in the snow.

LIFE IN A DUGOUT

Born in Coon Prairie, Wis., Hovdesven (1864–1961) and her family migrated in 1869 and settled near Milan, Minn., in Chippewa County. Their wagon was drawn by a pair of oxen named Buck and Bright, one “zebra striped,” the other dark red with a white face. In tow were a few cows, and some young cattle. After many weeks of traveling, the family arrived at dusk to their primitive new home — a dugout on a hill with a window on either side, a sod roof and a door facing west. To five-year-old Emilie, their place was a far cry from the former quaint little home they left in Wisconsin.

The next morning, Emilie and her older sister Randine spent the morning exploring. “All we saw was prairie and more prairie. Here and there we noticed bleached buffalo skulls and relics left by the Indians.” The living conditions on the frontier were difficult at best, but the children, “enjoyed the newness of it all.”

Like other pioneers living on the Midwest plains they suffered natural calamities like bone-chilling blizzards, prairie fires, and severe grasshopper plagues. Mixed with retelling those events, Hovdesven wove stories from births to deaths, from soap making to Christmas—a loving tapestry of a Norwegian-American household.

Significant childhood memories for Hovdesven included the mid-March blizzard of 1870, when the
family awoke to near darkness as the windows were entirely obscured by snowdrifts. “When Father opened the front door, it seemed as if tons of snow rolled in. After long, arduous shoveling, he dug himself out and cleared the windows. We saw nothing but snow as far as the eye could see. It was a sea of whiteness.”

The following summer, instead of a blanket of winter white, a red inferno of tall, dry prairie grass flamed on the horizon. Absent was her father, fair haired and tall Ole Sveen, a Lillehammer, Norway native, who had gone for a few days to New London, Minn. Her expecting mother, Mattia, also a Lillehammer native, and siblings were home; transfixed in terror as the fiery evening sky marched closer to their humble home.

Her mother quickly started a backfire. “We stood petrified, watching that great red monster coming nearer and nearer.” In dire straights, her mother sent the children home and told them to wait inside as she alone battled the menacing conflagration. Seventy years later, Hovdesven captured the moment her mother entered their dugout:

> How well I remember how she looked—this small, indomitable woman, weighing about one hundred pounds, leaning against the door, with her hands and face grimy with smoke and dirt; her dress, what was left of it, the same. She smiled and held up the handle of our one broom, saying, “I have only the handle left.” But she saved our home!

In November 1871, her brother Ole Magnus was born. She and her sister had remained in their loft bedroom and “pulled the bedclothes over our heads so as not to hear Mother’s cries.” A midwife was on hand and all went well. Her father was pleased to have a son, and “With a twinkle in his eye, he dryly remarked, ‘That’s what Minnesota did!’” The trials and tribulations of moving from Wisconsin to Minnesota were worth it, at least in her father’s eyes, as the family grew and prospered.

**LIFE IN A LOG CABIN**

By the summer of 1872 the family was living in a new log home. It contained a large living room, bedroom, and kitchen downstairs, and a loft bedroom upstairs. When Christmastime arrived and in preparation for expected visitors, the floors were scrubbed until they were white. This was done by making brushes from coarse, porous weeds found in a nearby slough.

She added, “We helped make pølse, rullepølse, and blod klub.” Cheeses were also made including gjetost and primost. Cakes were prepared for company. Candles were dipped, ready for Christmas Eve. “I cannot remember that we received any gifts from our parents. There was no easy way to shop in those days. Christmas was a happy time nevertheless.”

Another fierce blizzard, the untimely October storm of 1880, was also recounted by Hovdesven. Considered one of the harshest ever, and immortalized by Laura Ingalls Wilder in her novel, The
Long Winter (1940), Hovdesven remembered:

No one was prepared. It came in the night beginning with rain, thunder, and lightning. Father and mother managed to feed the stock, although many lives were lost doing just that. On the third day the wind died down. No stable was visible and we saw only the top of trees. We had been threshing before the storm struck and now we saw only the top of the strawstack. Many cattle froze to death.

That winter, blizzard followed blizzard. Railroads were blocked so we received no mail. We lacked reading material. For pastime Randine and I composed a song, twenty-three verses long. We read over and over our few books, books by Jonas Lie and [Bjørnstjerne] Bjørnson and others. That winter food and fuel were scarce. Some of our neighbors ground wheat in their coffee mill. The snow lasted until late spring.

In reflecting on her childhood experiences, Hovdesven penned, “Now I am nearing the end of my journey and look back at my life … Those pioneer days were difficult but somehow satisfying. For where there is love and understanding, there is happiness.”

Editor’s Note: To read Hovdesven’s account of the legendary 1873 blizzard, see page 3 of the Fall 2012 NAHA newsletter at naha.stolaf.edu/about/newsletters/Fall2012.pdf

**OTHER WRITINGS BY PIONEER WOMEN**

More writings by Norwegian-American pioneer women are found in these NAHA collections:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title/Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oline Ernsten</td>
<td>(1882–1966) Eleven pages of handwritten recollections by a pioneer homemaker at Bear River, Minnesota, of her passage to America and of early pioneer days. Reminiscences (Item no. P0084)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanna Bugge Jensen</td>
<td>(ca. 1841–1921) Papers of a Norwegian-born Lutheran minister's wife at Highland Prairie, Minnesota. Papers P0187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sigrid Knutsdatter</td>
<td>Nomeland (1867–1944) Manuscript account of her childhood in Aust Agder, Norway, and her American life in Minnesota. Memoir P1073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingeborg Olsdatter</td>
<td>Bergheim (1858–1923) The daily records (52 notebooks, 3,500 pages) of a woman who emigrated from Surnadal in 1880 and settled in Watertown, Dakota Territory. Diaries P1378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen Erikson Bakke</td>
<td>(1861- c.1953). Typed transcript (50 pages) &quot;Besta: A Story of the North Dakota Pioneering.&quot; Reminiscences of an early settler as told to her daughter, Cyrene Bakke Dear, and published in the Grand Forks Herald in 1950-51 and again in 1978-79. The story includes her childhood in Wisconsin, the trek in 1871 to the Red River Valley country, a short stay at Fort Lincoln and acquaintance with General Custer. The emphasis is on life as wife and mother on a Trail County farm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellen Knudtson Howard</td>
<td>(1891–1987) Typed manuscript (400+ pages, incomplete) of a Norwegian-American woman born in Independence, Trempealeau, Wisconsin. Family Histories P0539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura Edsseth Johnson</td>
<td>(1876–1962) Reminiscences in manuscript of a housewife who spent her childhood at Halstad, Minnesota. Papers P0740</td>
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Photo postcard, Bear River, Minn. From the Oline Ernsten Collection.
Some significant additions to the archives over the past few months are listed here. We welcome donations from members and friends illustrating all aspects of Norwegian-American history and culture. Do you have Norwegian-American letters, diaries, photographs, family histories, or community and congregational materials at home? Do you know of such items in the hands of others? If so, please contact the archives at naha-archivist@stolaf.edu. Perhaps this list of recent donations will suggest some possibilities. We also have continuing interests in Canadian materials and in materials relating to the experiences of post-World War II Norwegian immigrants.

NAHA collection guidelines are available on the archives page on our website: naha.stolaf.edu/archives/guidelines.pdf. Please be aware that we do not collect Norwegian language books other than rare Norwegian-American imprints (books published in North America for a Norwegian-language audience), bygdebøker, and other printed genealogical material. 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. Although we aren't able to acknowledge all donations here, we do appreciate every donation, large and small. Families may be sure that donations made to the NAHA archives will remain open for future family consultations.

DONATED JULY – OCTOBER, 2018

PUBLISHED MATERIAL:


  …it is safe to say that its purpose was not literary, nor was it to create an “entertaining counterbalance.” The full title continues: Containing Much Useful Advice on How One Leaves Home and the Journey to the United States and Information for Persons who Plan to Settle There. The title page further informs us that the book is “Published for the guidance and benefit of emigrants by a fellow countryman and friend of humanity.” Aarsager hvorfor Jens Jensen og hans familie udvandrede til Amerika is a promotional pamphlet for the Anchor Line disguised as fiction. Not only does the story demonstrate the advantages of this steamship company over its competitors in the Atlantic trade but the pamphlet includes advertisements, mostly for the Anchor Line but also for the Union Pacific railroad and its Nebraska Land Commissioner.

  Added to P0436 Articles: Pamphlets, Reprints and Clippings. Donated by Orm Øverland, NAHA-Norway lifetime member.

• Kindseth, Jeff and Carol Lozon, editors. *Norwegian American Heritage: Recipes and History* from Kenyon, Goodhue County, Minnesota (Faribault, Minn.: Sons of Norway Kenyon Viking Lodge #1-487, 2015). 79-page softcover saddle stitch bound volume. Added to P0591 Sons of Norway Papers. Donated by Jeff Kindseth, associate member.

FAMILY LETTERS, HISTORIES:


• Solwey, Pamella Wood. Knud Olsen Hundeby and Anne Guttormsdatter [Nordgarden]: Hundeby Family History: Goplerud, Gonvick, Gonwick, Godtland, Strand (Townsend, Mont.: self-published, 2011). 216-page softcover spiral bound. Donation includes family research notes and images. The couple, married in 1830, hailed from the Grue and Hof parishes, Sølor region of Hedmark fylke/county, Norway. They immigrated to America in 1852 with three children (Gunnerius/17, Oleane Marie/15, and Theodor/10); two children remained behind (Ole K. Strand/20 and Karen Matie/12). The family eventually settled in Silver Lake Township, Worth County, Iowa. **Added to P0539 Family Histories.** Donated by Pamella Solwey, associate member.


• Valle, Tor. Collected Immigrant Letters (1902–61). Three distinct subsets, including: (A) family correspondence (18 letters written between 1947 and 1961 from locations in Colorado, Illinois, and Minnesota) from Oline Skylstad Kvistad, born in 1869 at Hjørundfjord (present-day Ørsta) to Synnøve Nordang, Stettevik, Ålesund, Norway; (B) purchased family correspondence (22 letters written between 1906 and 1911 from locations in North Dakota, mostly Buffalo and Walcott) to Louise Lahren, Ft. Ransom, North Dakota; and (C) one 1902 letter from Robert Norheim, Secretary of the People’s Party County Committee, Fergus Falls, Minn., to his brother in Nordre Trondhjems Amt (present-day Nord-Trøndelag). **Added to P0435 America Letters.** Donated by Tor Valle, Norway.
Victor Bernell “Doc” Rossing (1924–2015) enjoys a snowy day. Rossing later attended Luther College and earned a master’s degree in public health from the University of North Carolina. He and his wife, Patricia Anderson, lived in Oshkosh, Wisc., where he was a public health officer. From the L. A. Rossing Collection.