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DIGITIZATION WILL ALLOW
our members, researchers, and students from across the globe to access important records that document the Norwegian-American experience for generations to come.

Kristina Warner, Archivist
naha-archivist@stolaf.edu

**MOVING TOWARD DIGITIZATION**

Digitization of archival materials requires strategic planning. The first step is to assess and ensure an organization’s digital readiness. What does “readiness” mean in this context? Digital readiness is defined broadly as having the knowledge, tools, resources, and infrastructure to provide online public access to archives and historical records. Initial steps NAHA is taking toward digital readiness include creating digital preservation guidelines and writing policies that document best practices. These policies are essential for developing a strong and sound program. With funding from a State of Minnesota Legacy grant, we have completed a plan for digitizing the O. E. Bulvaag Collection. That plan is sure to serve as a blueprint for many projects in the future.

Our goal is to create accurate digital representations of the original analog objects in our collections, and to do so at the highest level of quality we can afford to create and maintain. While digitization is not a form of preservation in itself, it will allow our members, researchers, and students from around the globe to access important records that document the Norwegian-American experience for generations to come. At the same time, we must remember that digitizing complements, but does not replace, the proper care and storage of the original material.

NAHA continues to identify the knowledge, tools, resources, and infrastructure that we need in order to support our digital readiness. In my work with other organizations, I have had the opportunity to learn what goes into a successful digitization program, and I’m looking forward to sharing this knowledge with the association. The remaining elements of readiness—tools, resources, and infrastructure—have the potential to be costly, both in terms of labor and equipment. Digitizing to meet industry standards means purchasing appropriate scanners; securing digital archival storage in two geographically different locations; and investing in a digital collections database software to allow researchers to see these digital surrogates.

We’re fortunate and grateful to have the interest and support of our members as we set out on the work of digitization. If you have questions and want to know more about our digitization initiative, you are welcome to contact me at naha-archivist@stolaf.edu.

**TRAVEL WITH NAHA: TOUR NORWAY IN JUNE 2020**

June 17-20 NAHA-Norge Conference (optional)
June 21-28 “Artistry and Industry of Norway” Tour

Two opportunities to learn and explore await NAHA members next June. First, our sister organization, NAHA-Norge, offers its triennial seminar at the Norwegian Emigration Museum near Hamar. Titled “Nordic Identity Formation in a Transnational Context,” the seminar takes place June 17-20 (dates are tentative). Enjoy the company of NAHA members from both sides of the Atlantic and learn about the ties between Nordic emigrants and their countries of origin. Prospective presenters should submit proposals by January 1. For details, visit nahanorge.wordpress.com.

Next, NAHA offers a week-long tour, “Artistry and Industry of Norway,” blending cultural, industrial, and agricultural history. Stops include Hadeland Glassworks, the Olea knitwear factory, the Telemark Canal, fish and fruit farms in the Hardanger region, and the Rjukan-Notodden Industrial Heritage Site, designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. NAHA Editor Anna Peterson, associate professor of history at Luther College, will guide the tour, and Amy Boxrud, executive director of NAHA, will lead it.

June flights to Norway are always in high demand, so sign up for the tour soon to get the best possible airfare. Itinerary highlights are shown at right. A full itinerary is available at naha.stolaf.edu. Contact Nicole Anderson at nico@bortonoverseas.com, 800-843-0602 to reserve your spot for this adventure.

**COST:** $2,845* per person for NAHA members, double occupancy • $3,045* per person for nonmembers, double occupancy • $397 single occupancy supplement

*Preliminary price, based on 12 tour participants. Tour price does not include airfare to and from Norway, lunches, and some dinners (as noted on the detailed itinerary on the NAHA website). Also excluded from the tour price are the NAHA-Norge conference registration and fees, and all personal expenses.

**on the cover**
Born into a family of amateur musicians near Eidsvoll, Norway, in 1871, F. Malius Christiansen learned to play violin as a boy. Here he plays for a group of students from St. Olaf College music organizations, circa 1951.

**CURRENTS, Winter 2019**

“DIGITIZATION WILL ALLOW
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**NORWAY’S MAP IS CHANGING**

On January 1, 2020, Norway will enact changes in its governmental structure that have been in the works for several years. As a result, the map of Norway will change, too. Kommuner, which are municipal or regional governments, will merge in many places at the fylke, or county, level. The number of fylker will go from 19 a couple of years ago to 11 at the start of 2020. Telemark will merge with Vestfold, for example, and Hedmark will merge with Oppland. Already in 2018, Nord-Trøndelag and Sør-Trøndelag joined to become simply Trøndelag.

The mergers result from a plan approved by Norway’s Storting, or parliament, in June 2017. It aims to decentralize some government functions by moving them from national to regional control, while at the same time strengthening regional governments.

For historians and genealogists, the changing map is worth noting, but it is not likely to disrupt their research. Arkivverket, the National Archives of Norway, long ago consolidated its holdings of local government and church records at eight regional facilities (plus a ninth for Sami records), which will continue to operate as before. Arkivverket’s digitized records will not be reorganized, either. They are accessible at digitalarkivet.no (or digitalarkivet.no/en for the English-language version of the site).

“We do not expect that the new [government] structure will affect the data on the website,” Helena Ingegerd Eriksson, an advisor on staff at Norway’s National Archives, explained last year. “The data at digitalarkivet.no is based on the 1947 subdivision of Norway [into governmental and church units] and there is no plan to change that.”

**FYLKER**

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**Holiday Gift Memberships Available**

Share NAHA with friends and family this holiday season. New this year: Gift memberships include your choice of a NAHA mug or tote bag. Also included are four issues of Currents, our quarterly newsletter; free use of the archives; discounts on special events and publications; and a subscription to our newly relaunched journal, Norwegian-American Studies, which will be published annually. Memberships start at just $55. Order at naha.stolaf.edu by December 17 to ensure delivery of the mug or tote bag to your gift recipient by December 24.

**MARRIAGE RECORDS IN NORWEGIAN CHURCH BOOKS**

**BY DALE HOVLAND**

Previous articles in Currents have dealt with Norwegian church records: birth and baptism records in the Winter 2016 issue, and migration data in the Spring 2018 issue. Those back issues of the newsletter can be found at naha.stolaf.edu/genealogy/research_hints.htm. This article takes up marriage records.

Often in Norway, two sets of records were generated for a parish. The pastor made entries in the minnestedbok. The klokkerbok, the pastor’s assistant, made entries in the klokkebok. The two books were stored in separate places to prevent a total loss of records in case of fire, flood, or other misfortune.

**The groom is “Bachelor Pastor Bernt Julius Muus.” The bride is “Miss Oline Christine Krogsgaard Pind.”**

The pages shown below include the marriage record for Bernt Julius Muus from the ministerial book of Fet Parish, Akershus County, 1847–1859 (media.digitalarkivet.no/view/507154). Muus was the founder of St. Olaf College. Ordained in Trondheim July 8, 1859, he married four days later. By September 5 that year, the newlyweds (who later divorced) had registered in Oslo their intention to depart for America.

To read more about the contents of Norwegian church books, read John Foles’ article at homepages.rootsweb.com/~norway/na20.html. From there, link to his translations of the column headings in parish records.
A SONG WITH A MIGRATION STORY

HOW DID “BEAUTIFUL SAVIOR,” A GERMAN HYMN, BECOME AN EMBLEM OF NORWEGIAN-AMERICAN CHRISTMAS?

BY GRACIA GRINDAL

For most of a century, audiences at the St. Olaf College Christmas Festival in Northfield, Minnesota, have been able to anticipate one of the hymns on the program. “Beautiful Savior,” the concert’s finale, would begin quietly, simply, then swell and shimmer aloft in the packed auditorium.

The author of that Christmastime choral tradition was Fredrik Melius Christiansen (1871–1955). Known as “F. Melius,” he was a Norwegian immigrant to America who founded and led the St. Olaf Choir. When he semi-retired in 1943, his son Olaf succeeded him, and “Beautiful Savior” survived the transition.

It’s likely that few people at the time understood why this particular hymn had emerged as a favorite of the choir and of Norwegian-Americans at Christmastime. Even as it did emerge, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, most people probably did not see that immigration, tradition, and assimilation were at play. The hymn’s long history crossed paths with a Norwegian-American community that wanted to both keep and let go of its past. 

Choral Traditions Meet in America

Christiansen left Norway in 1888 and sought a musical career in the United States. After some years as a student at Augsburg Seminary and the Northwestern Conservatory in Minneapolis, he left for Leipzig, Germany, in 1897, where he studied violin and piano. He returned to Minneapolis in 1899 to teach at the conservatory. He also began directing a male chorus called Kjerulf. The chorus gained renown and...
From Silesia to Scandinavia

“Beautiful Savior” is a complicated, but good, example of Christiansen's work at the intersection of traditions. The tune is thought to be Silesian. Now a part of Poland, the region called Silesia sits near the Czech Republic and was once a part of Germany. The Silesian melody migrated. It appears in works by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791), Swedish composer Johan Helmich Roman (1694–1758), and Swedish troubadour Carl Michael Bellman (1740–1795). In a German Catholic hymnal from 1677, it is the tune for the hymn “Schonster Herr Jesu,” “Beautiful Lord Jesus.”

A friend brought the tune to Danish hymn writer Bernhard Severin Ingemann (1789–1862) who wrote his own text, “Deilig er Jorden,” “Fair is the Earth,” “known also as “Fairer Lord Jesus.” Ingemann's version appeared in a Danish hymnal in 1850. At first, it was used for funerals, both in Denmark and in Norway. (In 1957, it was sung at the funeral of Norway's King Haakon VII.) By the end of the 19th century, however, it came to be associated with Christmas because of its last stanza, about the Savior's birth.

Ingemann's hymn did not appear in the Norwegian hymnal from 1869 commonly known as Landstad's Church Hymnal. However, Norwegian-American immigrants did include it in their American version of Landstad, published in 1893. It was evidence of the growing popularity of Ingemann's work, not only in Scandinavia but also among Norwegian Americans. The American hymnal had been prepared by pastors from the United Norwegian Lutheran Church in America. One of them, Ludwig Marinus Boer (1835–1908), was the longtime pastor of the Land congregation near Northfield.

A 1920s Turning Point

When the St. Olaf Choir went on its first tour in 1912, Christiansen's anthem was the second piece on the program. It appeared on the choir's programs again in 1914, 1916, 1917, and 1919. The next year, however, in 1920, the tune appeared not with Ingemann's Danish text but with a new text chosen by Christiansen, in English. “Beautiful Savior” was a translation, done by Joseph Seiss (1823–1904), of the German hymn “Schönster Herr Jesu,” a leader in the German Lutheran churches in America. Many thought at first that the St. Olaf Choir's new text was a translation of Ingemann's “Deilig er Jorden,” but it was not. And after the switch in 1920, the Danish text was no longer used by the choir, except in 1930, on a European tour.

Scholars peg 1922 as a turning point for Norwegian-American Lutheran congregations. For the first time that year, more of them used English than Norwegian. Christiansen understood that song creates community. He and other Norwegian-American college and church leaders wanted to embrace their immigrant community even as they recognized that it was changing. They worked to pass on something of their Scandinavian musical heritage to the growing number of students who did not share their familiarity with it.

He made a shrewd choice in using Seiss's text. Although it was not a translation of the Danish, it sang well. Germans would know it as “Schönster Herr Jesu,” while for Scandinavians it would bring to mind “Deilig er Jorden.”

“Across the Stream”

Beautiful Savior was first sung at the St. Olaf Christmas program in 1924. Over time, it became the choir's signature anthem.

NAHA board member Gracia Grindal is professor emerita of rhetoric from Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota. She has authored articles and books on Scandinavian hymnody and has translated hymn texts from the Norwegian tradition. She says, “For much of the above, I am indebted to Joseph M. Shaw’s The St. Olaf Choir: A Narrative (St. Olaf College, 1997).”
significant additions to the archives from recent months are listed below. Although we aren’t able to acknowledge all donations here, we do appreciate every donation. We also welcome your help in building the NAHA collection. Materials illustrating all aspects of Norwegian-American history and culture are of interest. NAHA collection guidelines are available on the “Archives” page of our website, naha.stolaf.edu/archives/guidelines.pdf. Please contact the archives at naha-archivist@stolaf.edu with your questions.

DONATED JULY–SEPTEMBER 2019

• Norwegian Glee Club records, circa 1900–circa 2000: The Norwegian Glee Club of Minneapolis was formed August 7, 1912, by members of the Norwegian Good Templar Singing Society and the Hugnad Male Chorus. The club is a member chorus of the Norwegian Singers Association of America. Journalist Carl G. O. Hansen, the glee club’s first director, led the Minneapolis group until 1944. Included in these records are journals, letters, rosters, audio recordings, pamphlets regarding the National Sangerfest, photographs, and sheet music.

Addition: NAHA 2019/087. Donated by Robert Olson on behalf of the Norwegian Glee Club.

• Lenorah Erickson papers, circa 1960: Travelogue and itinerary of Lenorah’s experience as a Norwegian missionary in India, China, and Taiwan. Also included are letters and manuscript materials about life as a missionary. Lenorah was influential in helping to establish the Taiwan Lutheran Church in 1952.


• Thrane family papers, 1920–circa 1960: Photographs, letters, and manuscripts of members of the Thrane family, including Dr. Marcus Thrane of Hood River, Oregon; his siblings, Victor and Robert; and son, Marcus Cecil. They are descendants of Marcus Møller Thrane, a radical reformer and socialist who spent a number of years in prison in Norway for his views. Addition NAHA 2019/048. Donated by Marcus Thrane.

• Haukom family papers, circa 1800–circa 1920: Letters, genealogical material, and records from Olaf Haukom, who immigrated to the United States in 1870. He attended Augsburg Lutheran Seminary in Minneapolis and was an ordained pastor with a parish in Manvel, North Dakota, in 1886. Included are letters from Aslak Haukom, who immigrated in 1887, and records from relative Ole Bjornson’s time in Norway’s government (1805–1845).


• Marcus Thrane papers, 1900–circa 2000: The Marcus Thrane papers, 1900–circa 2000, are comprised of genealogical material, and historic papers belonging to Marcus Møller Thrane, who was a member of the Norwegian Socialist Labour Party. They are descendants of Marcus Møller Thrane, a radical reformer and socialist who spent a number of years in prison in Norway for his views. Addition NAHA 2019/050. Donated by Marcus Thrane.

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• Arthur F. Giere collection, 1929–circa 1950: Materials include Arthur G. Giere’s copies of the Gale Bulletin from July 1929–August 1932; History of Galesville University, 1854–1940; The Vossings in America; Glimpses of Gale by Arthur F. Giere; and the Eric Clauson Tesdal Himle notebook. Arthur F. had a long relationship with Gale College (also known as Galesville University) in Galesville, Wisconsin, and began teaching there in 1903 at the age of 18. For several years in the 1930s, he served as president of Vosselaget. The notebook contains memories from Arthur G. Giere; Arthur F.’s father, Reverend Nils Giere, who was a pastor at Crow River, Renville, and Sacred Heart, Minnesota (1883–1933); and his brother, Dr. Eric O. Giere, who operated Giere Clinic in Minneapolis with his sons.


• Civil War letter dated June 20, 1864: From Gudmund Trisoth of the 21st Wisconsin Infantry to Andrew Conradson of St. Croix County, Wisconsin. The letter describes lying low during the Atlanta Campaign. Added to: P468 Civil War papers.

Donated by Mary Broderius.

DIGITIZING IS UNDERWAY FOR THE NORSE-AMERICAN CENTENNIAL PAPERS

NAHA is working with the Minnesota Digital Library, a collaborative that includes the Minnesota Historical Society and the University of Minnesota, to digitize items from the Norse-American Centennial papers, a collection of material from the 1925 celebration of the 100th anniversary of organized Norwegian immigration to the United States. The images will be accessible at https://reflections.mndigital.org/. Stay tuned for an announcement when the images are available.

Musicians from Eau Claire, Wisconsin, rehearsed for their part in the centennial celebration. Choirs from Norwegian-American colleges also performed.
Members of Sognalaget at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds during the Norse-American Centennial. Sognalaget and other bygdelag drew together people who had in common their ties to a particular region of Norway. The bygdelag movement in America was stimulated by two events: the 1914 centennial of the Norwegian constitution and the 1925 Norse-American Centennial, which marked 100 years since the first organized group of Norwegians immigrated to America. The four days of celebration in 1925 drew an estimated 200,000 people. The event was largely organized by the bygdelag. Read about the bygdelag in Norwegian-American Studies at https://www.naha.stolaf.edu/pubs/has/volume25/vol25_1.htm.