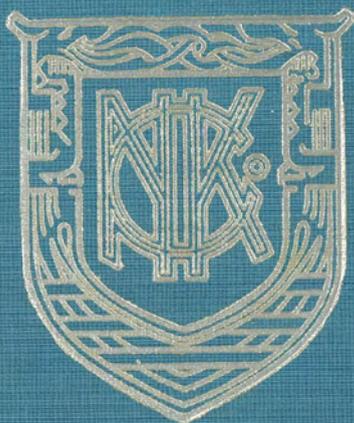


Chicago
Norske Klub



1890 - 1950

Robert A. Abaker
Oct. 1978

Given to Robert Abaker, Pres.
of B-B Lodge #97 Sons of Norway.





CHICAGO NORSKE CLUB
2350 NORTH KEDZIE BOULEVARD



Chicago
Norske Klub



1890 - 1950

PRINTED IN UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
CHICAGO



P R E F A C E

THIS sketch is gratefully dedicated to the men and women who throughout the years have given of their time and energy to keep our Club's standards high.

It is the hope of the writer that all our members will take to heart the real purpose of the Club, as stated in our Constitution:

"Its object shall be the advancement of Norwegian cultural interests and the promotion of social intercourse among its members."

Often the first part of this has not been understood, or it has been forgotten by a part of our membership.

The last historical sketch of the Club was printed in 1930, at our 40th anniversary. An earlier, more detailed history was published in 1917, when we moved into our present Club house. A book planned for our Golden anniversary somehow did not materialize.

The editor confesses freely that he has borrowed considerably from both books mentioned, and hereby gives all possible credit to the authors.

Such pilfering was necessary for various reasons: Only a few of us remember details of 50-60 years ago, and in this case members who could have told interesting stories about special subjects were not very willing to do so. The writer realizes quite well that to write new obituaries of activities long dead may not be very interesting.

Nevertheless he has written the following in the hope that our newer members, when they know something of its history, will be even more interested in their Club, not as a pleasure-place of today only, but as the great force it has been, and may continue to be, for the upkeep of Norwegian culture in this country. It has in that respect had an honorable past, may



WILLIAM GERNER,
FIRST PRESIDENT

Board were elected, as follows: Hilmar Andresen, Librarian, C. F. Arnet, Carl F. Berg, C. E. Faye and H. Sundby-Hansen

Of this first Board of Directors Johan Borge, Olaf Balstad and Carl F. Berg are still decidedly in evidence, and Knud Lassen and C. E. Faye live in Oslo.

The amalgamation was a sound one in every way, and the leaders had all the energy and ability necessary to build a strong organization.

The first goal was to obtain a suitable meeting place, as the temporary quarters, Wabansia Hall, were not at all satisfactory.



OLD HALL LOCATED AT
MILWAUKEE AND KEDZIE AVENUES

The building committee, of which Joachim G. Giaver was chairman, submitted a report on Sept. 5th, recommending the construction of an additional story to the building located on the northwest corner of Milwaukee and Kedzie Avenues. Plans were drawn — and donated — by Chr. U. Bagge and Halfdan Strøm, construction started in October, and on

May 1st, 1912, the club took possession, the official dedication being held on June 4th. The ladies of the Club presented a large American silk flag; presentation speech was made by Mrs. Cecilie Gerner.

The chorus was re-organized on Sept. 12, 1912, with C. F. Arnet as President, Olaf Bernts, Vice President and Carl F. Berg as Secretary.

The club's incorporation under the laws of the State of Illinois was reported by Mr. Andrew Hummeland at a directors meeting on December 4, 1911, and the charter presented.

The Club took its rightful place in Norwegian American life from the very start, and the years which followed were busy ones. Many prominent visitors were entertained, and the social activities were varied and interesting. In the guest book we find such names as: Roald Amundsen, Counsellor of State Lehmkul, Prime Minister Joh. Ludw. Mowinckel, Albert Balcken, Jane Addams, Dr. Henry Goddard Leach, A. B. Wilse, famous Norwegian photographer, Prof. N. Wille, Carl J. Hambro.

It is not the writer's idea to go into detailed reports of events of so long ago, but it probably should be reported that the small beginning of our later so glorious Dramatic Society's activities came in 1912 with "Ingvald Enersen", a Norwegian "studenterkomedie", with President Gerner himself in the title role. In 1916 the actors went to work again with "Rationelt Fjøsstel".

About this time it was clear to our members that a new club house had to be built. Due credit should be given our leaders in those days, for there was no hesitation, and the right men were available for the job.



BIRGER OSLAND

A committee consisting of Birger Osland, Chairman, Oscar H. Haugan, Andrew Hummeland and Peter W. Stuhr, Chairman of the Finance Committee, went to work.



FIRST WORLD WAR ROLL OF HONOR



MAIN CLUB ROOM

Our present Home was started in November, 1916, and on July 1st, 1917, the building was completed. The ground cost \$4,750.00 and the building \$21,000.00 exclusive of furnishings.

The Club was fortunate in having fine architects, builders and artists as members, and they all took the greatest interest in their new club home. Plans for the building were made by the firm of Giaver & Dinkelberg, at no expense to the club, Chr. U. Bagge designed the Norwegian Fire Place, and our ladies took hold of such things as curtains, draperies etc., so necessary to a real home atmosphere.

Chr. U. Bagge and Emil Biørn had much to do with the artistic part of the work, and should be given credit for the quiet but impressive decorative scheme of the club.

The lighting fixtures are by Emil Biørn, the club emblem by Einar Kling.

The new Chicago Norske Klub was opened officially on July 4th, 1917, with almost 300 people present.

That year the U.S. entered the first world war.

The Dramatic Society was founded in 1919, and began its fine work with lighter plays. Soon, however, it set itself higher goals. We remember such plays as "De Unges Forbund", "Jeppe paa Bjerget" (with Wm. Ivarson from Bergens Nationale Scene as guest), "En Fallit", "Gjengangere", "Geografi og Kjærlighed", "Lille Eyolf", "Erotik", "Karen Borneman", "Charleys Tante" and others. Many of these plays were surprisingly well given, most of them with Mr. and Mrs. Thv. Koht in charge.



The club orchestra was formed the same year under Emil Biørn's instruction. This did much to help our Dramatic Society along, and to make their evenings perfect. The orchestra's Tivoli Evenings also were decidedly popular.

Many Norwegians in and near Chicago remember our theater evenings with gratitude. They filled a long felt want in their lives.

Our first Art Exhibit was held in 1920, and repeated annually for some years. During the depression years no such activity was possible, and later we have had only one regular exhibit, and two "one man shows"; a memorial showing of Karl Ouren's works and a very successful Ben Blessum exhibit.

In trying for another regular exhibit in 1949 we found few artists interested in taking part. It looks at this time as if this particular form of



club activity soon will come to an end except for special exhibits.

It should be noted that these exhibits often have been of high artistic



ART EXHIBIT

merit. The jury, consisting of well known American artists, has been surprised over the excellence of some of the works exhibited.

These Art Exhibits have also done much to endear the Club to the general public. The foremost Norwegian-American organizations have had their special evenings, and the public has shown great interest.

In the summer of 1924 one of our best known members, Dr. Anders Doe, passed away. He was an often brilliant, humorous speaker, and will always be remembered in "Det Norske Chicago."

From 1912 and for a number of years thereafter the Singing Society helped to put festivity into club affairs. It died out after a while, but came back to life in 1924. It had as directors Eivind Børsum, Emil Biørn, Joel Mossberg, Olav Rye, Otto Clausen and Knute Hansen, with one exception all members of the Club, so that they either directed or sang willingly in the chorus. Unfortunately the many doctors could not keep the patient alive, for some reason. If our Singing Society at present is only resting or is "dead as a doornail" we are not prepared to say.

In 1925 we had a welcome visit by the Norwegian Mixed Student Chorus formed to take part in the one hundredth anniversary of emmigration to the U.S. The director was Alfred Russ, the president, Rolf Pande. It was a very festive occasion, with more than 200 present.

During the years 1920-30 we had many famous visitors in our Club. We remember with pleasure the great humanitarian and statesman Fridtjof Nansen, the authors Johan Bojer and O. E. Rolvaag. In 1926 Queen Marie, Prince Nicolas and Princess Ileana of Rumania visited our Art Exhibit.

de dage i Humboldt Park og høre hebraiske kvindeglam udstødt av tykke sylfider og deres yngel.

Hav hjerte! Hvad siger ikke digteren: "Er jeg mand for at sige JA, er jeg ogsaa mand for at tage mit ord tilbage."

Hr. Politimester! Sig som Alladin til klubbens dør:

Sesam, luk dig op!

Ærbødigst

Emil Biørn.

He received a reply at once:

"Dit rørende brev til vor huskomite hadde naturligvis den forønskede virkning, efterat styret hadde hatt mye morro av epistelen.

Er det mig derfor en ære og glede at meddele, at ordren om lukning er for død at anse, saa du kan nyde din kaffe med alt lovligt i klubben ogsaa om søndagene.

Og hr. Politimesteren udtaler sin særdeles sorg over den dig overgaaede tort og svie og saan . . ."

Din forbundne

O. C.

The same year we note that

"You are cordially requested to PATRONIZE OUR DINING ROOM, where a good dinner, including smørgeasbord, is served daily for 75 cents."

The announcement was dated April 1st, but it was no fooling matter, at that.

Our Chief Steward, Mr. Otto A. Olsen, came to us on August 12th, 1933, after having served as a helper for some time. At the same time Mr. and Mrs. Christ Olsen took over the Kitchen Department.

In 1934 a new attempt was made to blow new life into the "Tuesday Singers Evenings", which in earlier days had been very pleasant. The singers and their friends sat around a long table in the middle of the club room, singing, telling stories, enjoying "pølser og øl", or, at special occasions, a tremendous ham, of which generous slices were distributed to one and all. At a price!

The attempt did not succeed; quite possibly many had too many worries just then to keep up the interest.

On June 7th Emil Biørn was 70 years old, and the Club and the

Norwegian male choruses gave him a fine birthday party and a substantial gift. Alfred Alsaker was toastmaster and Ben Blessum came from New York to give the main speech.

Our Free Fish Dinners started about this time. It was one of Alsaker's ideas, which many thought would completely bankrupt us. Instead, they proved to be of great benefit, helped to get in dues, helped in business before and after dinner, and, most important of all, helped to a better club spirit.

Oh Yes! It was about this time also that an utterly digusted Chairman of the House Committee complained bitterly over the fact that "Our bill for water is higher than for the strong stuff!"

At the 45th anniversary in 1935 we had a surprise visit by the great Norwegian poet, Herman Wildenvey. We quote

"Skandinaven":

"Hr. Osland presenterte derpaa hr. Wildenvey, og begeistringen over denne velkomne overraskelse truet med ikke aa ville ta ende. Kun et faatal av de tilstedeværende hadde gjenkjendt digteren da han kom sammen med Otto Clausen og frue, og med det samme Hr. Osland nevnte hans navn var det som en bombe ble kastet ind."

Mr. Wildenvey gave several recitals of his poems in Chicago, among others also one at the Club, assisted by the American poet Joseph Auslander, translator of Wildenvey's "Owls to Athens".

On Tuesday, July 30th, Emil Biørn passed away. He left memories of pleasant comradeship, and was, perhaps, the most versatile member we have had in the arts in its several forms. The HIGH SEAT with "The Discovery of Vinland" is a selfmade monument both to his artistry and to his love of the Club.

In 1935 we received a very fine book entitled "Det Stavangerske Klubselskab og Stavanger By i 150 Aar."

Your editor particularly likes the explanation of the Stavanger Club's object as given long ago:

"Selskabets Øiemed er blandt Venner og Bekjendte af begge Kjøen, I en behagelig og underholdende Kreds at finde Hvile efter Forretninger og Glede ved en dannet og blid Omgangstone, hvorfra al Chikane, Bitterhed og Raahed for stedse skulde være forjaget."

To which we hastily add: Yea, verily! Amen!

The Norwegian consul in Chicago, our friend and fellow member Olaf Bernts, passed away on January 21st, 1936.

On May 19th the Club, together with Normendenes Sangforening, gave a wonderful birthday party for Otto Clausen, who was 50 years old on "17de mai". It is known to your editor that he appreciated it very much.

In July we had a visit by Oslo Speidertrop nr. 31.

Alfred Alsaker passed away on August 3rd. On a visit to New York he was run into by a motorcycle out of control, and died a few days later, 52 years old. He was a brilliant man, with many interests, and more than that: he was a true and kind friend.

The year 1937 also had a sad beginning. Our former President Col. Tryggve A. Siqueland, died on February 7th, and was buried in Arlington Cemetery, Washington, D. C.

In November a dinner was given for Norway's minister of foreign affairs, Dr. Halfdan Koht.

Our Ladies Auxiliary, founded March 26, 1918, celebrated its 20th anniversary on April 1st, 1938. An over-filled house testified to the popularity of the ladies, and the affair was very well arranged.

In 1938 we note several occasions just marked "Labskaus and Ping Pong". If the labskaus came before or after we do not remember. It was, however, about this time that our Ping Pong table was utterly and irreparably crushed. It looked like a very large spider some giant had stepped on . . .

On July 19th a dinner was given for Carl J. Hambro, the president of the Norwegian Storting, and we had "Herremiddag" on November 11th. Some excellent photographs were taken at our "Herremiddage". As we remember it John H. Hille was the instigator of these affairs, which ought to be annual, and given as "Herremiddage" should be given.

ROYAL VISITORS

In May Norway's Crown Prince and Princess came on a visit to the United States, and Their Royal Highnesses took part in a Soupe in the Club on May 4th, after the Royal University Chorus' concert at the Auditorium.

We believe that the invitation for that occasion should be given — a similar visit may never occur again.

The soupe was very well arranged, and the president, Mr. John H.



*In Honour of
Their Royal Highnesses,
Crown Prince Olav and Crown Princess Märtha
of Norway*

*Chicago Norske Klub
requests the pleasure of your company
at a
Soupe*

*at the Club House
2350 North Kedzie Boulevard*

*Thursday, the fourth of May
One thousand nine hundred and thirty-nine
at eleven o'clock in the evening*

Please reply

“Skandinaven” had the following editorial on Feb. 23rd:

C.N.K.'S 50-AARS FEST.

Naar Tilreisende, enten fra den andre Siden av Havet eller indenlandske, besøker det norske Chicago, og nytter Høvet til at avlægge et Besøg i Chicago Norske Klub, er det vanligvis Tilfældet, at det hidfører en Overraskelse av glædeligste Slag. Man er forbauset over at det norske Chicago har et saadant Landemerke, og begeistret for den gjennemførte norske Aand som hviler over Bygningens Stil og Indredningen.

Værtsfolket er blit vant til dette, og tar det nær sagt som en Selvfølge, for det er, som kjendt, yderst faa norske Klubber udenfor Norges Grænser, som har evnet at naa saa langt. Siden 1917 har Chicago Norske Klub holdt tilhuse i sin nuværende Bygning, hvor det har været rig Grobund for mange Tiltag av bredt Omfang. Udenom sine selskabelige Opgaver, som er et Ledd i det begrænsede Medlemstalls Forret, og sin Representationsevne, har Chicago Norske Klub tat mange store Løft av vidtrækkende Betydning. Man behøver bare at nævne de store norsk-amerikanske Kunststillinger som Klubben har gjennemført i Aarenes Løb, for at forstaa at den har hat Udsyn og Særinteresser av Værdi.

At “Klubben” sidste Sommer hadde den Ære at faa modta Norges Kronprinspar med Følge som sine Gjester, og at den kunde modta de høie Gjester i saa norskprægede Omgivelser i en amerikansk Verdensstad, kaster sin egen Glans over Chicago Norske Klub. Naar denne Klub Lørdag Kveld er samlet til Fest omkring sit 50-Aar Jubilæum, ønsker man den tillykke med de Aar som er gaat, og fortsat Trivsel.

* * *

In time for the jubilee the following article by this writer had been sent to all well known papers in Norway, and given prominent place:

C.N.K. HAR JUBILEUM

Chicago Norske Klubb er iaar femti aar gammel, og begivenheten blev feiret med en større festlighet den 24. februar.

Klubben hadde sin begynnelse som Den skandinaviske kvartettklubb i Chicago, et navn som i 1897 blev forandret til Den norske kvartettklubb. “Den norske klubb i Chicago” blev stiftet i 1905, og sammenslutningen av disse to fant sted i 1911 under det nuværende navn, Chicago norske klubb.

Kvartettklubbens virke trenger ingen forklaring; men det skal nevnes at den tok del i en sangerfest i Minneapolis i 1891, sang ved “Viking”s mottagelse ved verdensutstillingen i Chicago i 1893, sang ved banketten for Nansen i 1897 o. s. v. Klubben møtte i almindelighet i medlemmenes hjem, og dette gav anledning til mangen festaften. Dirigenten var fra den tidligste tid Emil Biørn, og klubbens første formann var William Gerner, naa i Oslo. — “Den norske klubb i Chicago” blev stiftet vesentlig med litterære og selskabelige formal for øie, og naar de to foreninger sluttet sig sammen i Chicago Norske Klubb blev det en klubb med mange interesser.

Disse interesser gav sig utslag gjennom oprettelse av spesielle grupper innen klubben: sangforening, dramatisk selskap, dameforening o. s. v., og alle disse har nedlagt et stort og verdifullt arbeid for klubbens trivsel og hygge.

Sangforeningen har vel stilnet av en del i de siste aar; men norsk sang staar høit i kurs ved enhver anledning — ja man maa vel si at ingen virkelig festlig aften kan settes i scene uten at taket løfter sig en smule, naar sangen klunger.

Om Det dramatiske selskap gjelder ogsaa at det har stilnet av noe; men det kan i alle fall puste ut paa vel fortjente laurbær. Dets innsats var ikke for klubben alene, men for Chicago's norske i almindelighet, og det var ikke smaating man gav sig i kast med: “En Fallitt” — “Gjengangere” — “De Unges Forbund” — “Geografi og Kjærlighet” — “Lille Eyolf” — “Karen Borneman”; og naturligvis den lettere kost: “Baldevins Bryllup” — “Erotikk” — “Charleys Tante” etc. Det skal fastslaaes at et virkelig hardt og interessert arbeid blev nedlagt for aa gjøre disse forestillinger ofte helt fremragende.

I en rekke av aar hadde man ogsaa et klubborkester som var til stor hjelp ved alle anledninger — og anledninger har det aldri skortet paa i C. N. K.

Dameforeningen feiret sin 20-ars dag i 1938, og har i de forløpne mange aar gjort meget for klubben, ikke minst med alt slikt som kun kvinnehender og kvinners omtanke kan skape helt riktig og vakkert.

Aarlige kunstutstillinger av norsk-amerikanske kunstneres arbeid blev holdt i en aarrekke, inntil nedgangstiden kom og satte stopp for dette som for saa mange andre ting. Disse utstillinger vil uten tvil bli tatt op igjen saa snart det kan gjøres med haap om et rimelig utbytte for de utstillende kunstnere.

I 1917 flyttet man inn i eget hus paa en av Chicagos vakre boulevarder, og dette er blitt et kjært samlingssted for klubbens medlemmer med

familier. Samme aar var C. N. K. vert for den første norske ingeniør- og arkitektkongress, og var samlingsstedet ogsaa i 1927 da Norwegian American Technical Society blev stiftet. Under Chicago-utstillingen i 1933 var klubben igjen samlingspunktet for denne forening. Det norsk-amerikanske historielag holdt ogsaa sitt første styremøte i Chicago Norske Klubb.

Klubben har hatt den glede aa motta mange fremragende gjester i tidens løp, og dens store dag i saa henseende var 4. mai 1939, da kronprinsparet var klubbens gjester, en straalende og uforglemmelig aften. Mange navn kommer frem i erindringen naar man tenker tilbake noen aar: Fridtjof Nansen — Roald Amundsen — Johan Bojer — C. J. Hambro — Bjørn Bjørnson — David Knudsen — William Ivarson — J. L. Mowinckel — minister W. Morgenstjerne — Herman Wildenvey — Erik Bye — Arne Kildal — Kapt. Irgens — Sir Karl Knudsen . . . Spinnesiden har ogsaa vært utmerket representert: Dronning Marie av Rumænia med følge — Sonja Henie — Eide Norena — Betzy Kjelsberg . . . Saa har man hatt velkomne besøk av Det norske akademiske kor av 1925, Den Norske Studentersangforening 1939, "Sørlandet's" gutter og speider-troppen av 1936, skøiteløpere og skiløpere for Olympiaden og mange, mange andre.

Formann i jubileumsaaret er ingeniør Alf Kolflat, og styret for øvrig bestaar av de herrer A. E. Williamson, John Hofgaard, Ole Garø, O. Buer, S. E. Næss, Hans Torgersen, S. Woxvold med Otto Clausen som sekretær.

Klubben er kommet igjennem de farlige nedgangsaar med megen honnør, og dens finansielle stilling er meget god, takket være det utmerkede arbeid dens beste menn har nedlagt saa villig i aarenes løp. Man kan derfor se fremtiden i møte med tro og tillit, til fortsatt glede for en del av det utflyttede Norge.

* * *

Congratulations in the form of telegrams, letters, flowers were received from former members and friends in various parts of the world. All Scandinavian clubs, choruses, etc. sent greetings, among them Normendenes Sangforening of Brooklyn, which celebrated its own 50 anniversary the same evening.

We received this with the greatest pleasure:

*"Jeg sender Klubben mine beste lykønskninger
i anledning 50 aars jubileet."*

Kronprins Olav.

Never before or since has the Club's prominent position and leadership been more willingly acknowledged.

This was good for many reasons. Its willingness to make the sacrifices its position called for should soon be tested.

AND THE CLUB CAME THROUGH, AS USUAL.



The War Years and After

THE occupation of Norway on April 9th, 1940, came as a distinct shock to all Norwegians, no matter where they happened to be in the world. To our members, who hurried to the Club for the latest news, the whole thing seemed like a bad dream, from which one could not awaken.

But—even if at first we were stunned by it all, we, who could not fight, had to find other outlets for our feelings, and so plans were made to the extent possible at the time.

A meeting was called on April 19th, at which various ideas were presented. The result proved that there could be no criticism of any Club members “nationale samvittighet”, an expression which later frequently was used in Norway. A number of the members became active in the “Relief for Norway” movement, later called “American Relief for Norway”.

Within the Club the Board of Directors took energetic steps. The beginning was made at a luncheon for a number of selected members early in May. The idea was to make a real good beginning on a drive for funds which would take place on May 17th.

Mr. Alf Kolflat was President that year, and after the menu had been done justice in an atmosphere rather serious he asked for pledges, in few but decidedly well chosen words.

The President and the Executive Secretary had been hoping to get some two or three thousand dollars, and both followed the list as it passed around the table with almost anxious interest.

Little was said by any one, and when the list had made its round and was added up we were almost unable to say anything for a while: \$16,000.00 pledged! Sixteen Thousand Dollars! Tears of emotion were not far from appearing, that is certain.

The day continued to be remarkable: One member, who had pledged \$5,000, went home and told his wife about it. Then he telephoned: “My

wife also wants to give \$1,000, and my son \$100.00.” It was a most wonderful day!

A special call for contributions on May 17th was sent out, and a special committee formed: Otto Clausen, Isak H. Falcide, H. W. Guettler, Ole Gullicksen, Johan H. Hille, Alf Kolflat, Birger Osland, Jens A. Paasche, Marshall E. Pedersen and Ludwig Skog. Mr. Clausen became the committee’s decidedly busy Treasurer.

Then came the 17th of May, a day not ever to be forgotten! The whole Club membership gathered to give its support to Norway in the only way we could. The President spoke briefly, and the writer sang Nicolay Lindtner’s “Norge, mit Norge”, and that was all.

As the pledges came in and were added up they came to a stop at \$36,000, which one member quickly upped to \$40,000. This from less than a hundred members. Later some members added to the amount, either through the Club or direct to the RELIEF offices, so that the final amount came to around \$56,000.00.

A good beginning had been made, and the writer went to work collecting. All in all about \$65,000 was taken in for various Norwegian causes.

* * *

An interesting visitor came from Norway in October, the mayor of the city of Narvik, Theodor Broch. He was sentenced to death by the Germans, paroled, then again given a death sentence. He escaped, however, through a window, crossed the mountains into Sweden, and continued from there via Russia and Japan to the West Coast of the United States. He spoke in the Club on October 13th, and later gave several hundred lectures in mid-western states.

The Club’s Treasurer, Mr. John Hofgaard, passed away on January 13th, and our former President, Thomas G. Pihlfeldt on January 23rd. A reception for Sigrid Undset was given on Feb. 26th, and on April 19th Dr. Horace Bridges spoke of “The Coming Victory of Democracy”.

May 17th was rather solemn. There seemed to be little to be happy over just then. In July the Club gave a lift to the writer’s very hard work for books for Norwegian Seamen by donating 400 books from the library. Individual members also helped the good cause along later.



THE FIRE PLACE

It should be recorded that during the war years we had a great number of visits from the Norwegian Flyers in Toronto. Around Christmas and Easter many of them had the Club as some sort of headquarters. Great efforts were made to do something for all Norwegian forces in the field, seamen, flyers and soldiers.

In another place in this book will be found a number of letters from our visitors, who have not forgotten the Club.

Our prize effort of 1943 undoubtedly was a "Sjømannsaften" on January 23rd, to which H.R.H. the Crown Princess had been kind enough to

donate a fine gift. Thanks to excellent work by a fine committee, with Mr. Clausen as Chairman, it was an outstanding affair. All four floors of the Club were used, and ways and means of spending money freely were gladly provided. Our members entered into the spirit of the thing, the ladies of the club worked hard, helped by the "Grieg Ladies Chorus", all in Hardanger "bunader". Help was also given by Pearl Gran and Margaret Smith, Duo pianists, and some of Oslolagets fun-makers assisted. Mr. Blessum gave a fine painting, and the steward and his family really did wonders that night.

It is a fine thing to know that when there really is something worth while to work for most of us will do our level best. A few days later a check for \$2,000.00 was sent to "Socialkomiteen for Norske Sjømenn", and this letter received:

New York, 10 Feb. 1943.

"Vi erkjenner herved med stor takk mottagelsen av Deres sjekk paa US \$2,000.00 til Socialkomiteens gavefond.

Vi tør be Dem bringe Chicago Norske Klubbs vedkommende og alle medvirkende, sjømennenes og Socialkomiteens varmeste takk for den storartede gave. Vore utflyttede lannsmenn i Chicago kan være forvissnet om at det hjertelag og den forstaaelse som ligger bak dette usedvanlig vellykkede tiltak vil vurderes høyt, og i høy grad medvirke til aa opmuntre de tusener av norske sjøfolk som gir al sin kraft og al sin evne i kampen for gjenerobringen av vort fedreland og for de forente nasjoners kamp for verdens frihet.

Gaven vil bli offentliggjort av skipsfartsdirektør Øving Lorentzen i forbindelse med aapningen av feriehjemmet Eidsvold førstkommende torsdag.

Vi skal efterhvert faa lov til aa holde Chicago Norske Klub underrettet om de mange tiltak som Deres store gave vil medvirke til aa gjøre mulig. Igjen vor hjerteligste takk."

Fredrik Haslund, Sekretær.

On the 10th of February the club celebrated its 53rd anniversary, with Mr. Haslund as guest of honor.

Our fellow member, the well known painter Karl Ouren, passed away in 1943, and a memorial exhibit of his works was arranged for November.

On March 25th our Ladies Auxiliary celebrated its 25th anniversary.

Speeches were given by Mrs. Cecilie Gerner, Mr. Hans Torgersen, President of the Club, and by Mr. Birger Osland. Special guest was Else Margrethe Røed of Oslo, here for a number of lectures. It was a very successful occasion.

A "Grieg Evening" was given on the one hundredth anniversary of his birth, June 15th, 1943. It was an exceedingly successful affair, in spite of a very hot day. The Club was filled to capacity by a really interested audience.

Sylvia Larson, Esther Arneson Dyrness, Otto Clausen and the Margraff Ensemble took part in the program.

Something quite unusual happened: The speaker spoke for one and a half hours — taking a chance on being completely and suddenly murdered, —and lived to hear a request from the floor to PLEASE CONTINUE! It will never happen again, not in our club!

* * *
Our Vice President, Dr. Sverre H. Nannestad, passed away in October.

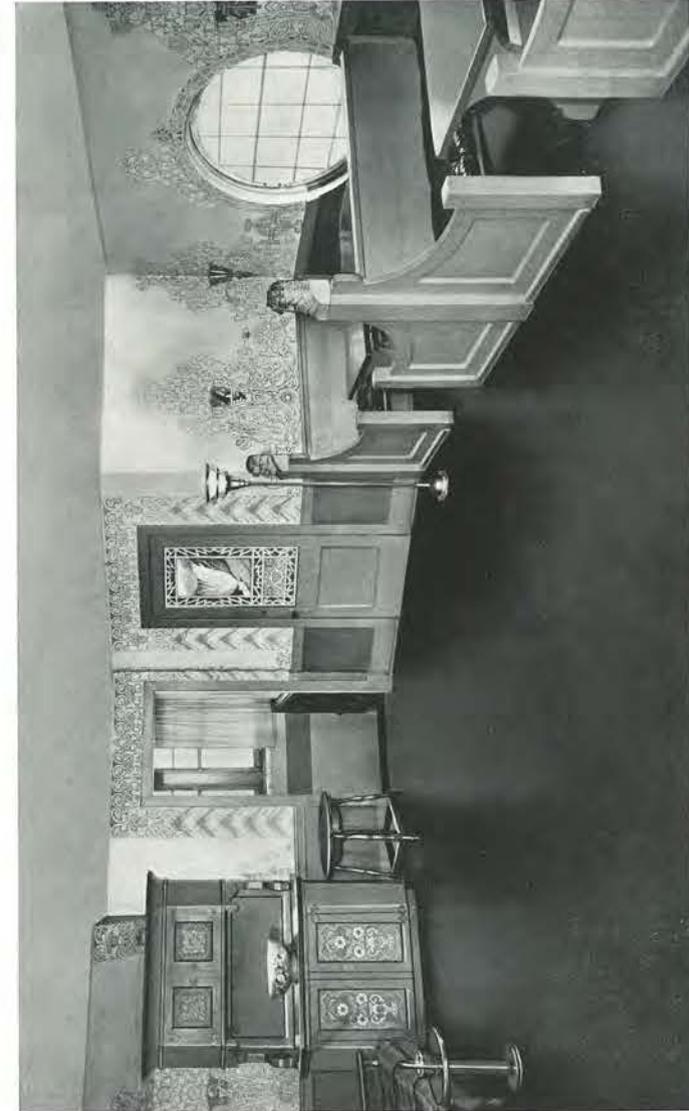
* * *
The Club's Executive Secretary tried as best he could to keep in touch with our service men. As a special Christmas greeting that year the Club sent Sumner Welles book "The Time for Decision" with greetings of the season to all those whose address we had.

Dr. Karl Evang, chief for the Norwegian Health Service, was the Club's guest on February 14th.

A family dinner for "Sjøforsvarets Hjelpfond" was given on March 26th, and \$500.00 sent to that organization. We had the pleasure of receiving this letter from the Norwegian Naval Attache in Washington, Capt. E. Hostvedt:

"On behalf of Sjøforsvarets Hjelpfond I wish to express my sincere thanks to Chicago Norske Klub for its splendid contribution in sending a check for \$500.00. It is the first institution in the Western Hemisphere which has shown the initiative and sympathy to make arrangements for the benefit of this fund. It is quite remarkable that the people in an inland town should understand and be more keen to contribute to the Navy than any other community.

I say this on this occasion, because I have also previously experienced results from the same interests from Chicago when I was commanding



THE THIRD FLOOR ROOM — DECORATED BY BEN BLESSUM
CLUB OFFICE IN BACKGROUND

officer of the Naval Establishment in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and later as we moved to New York, I have substantially had the same gratifying experience . . .”
Erling Hostvedt.

The memorial evening for the Norwegian author and poet Capt. Nordahl Grieg, who was shot down during an attack on Berlin in December 1943, was given on Feb. 27th. An interesting program was given by Hildur Wold Midttømme, Sigurd Duvold, Otto Clausen and the Margraff Trio.

Mr. Ben Blessum’s one man exhibit was opened on Nov. 28th, and proved a pleasant surprise. The artist had kept in the background for some time, and his “comeback” was tremendous. The Club purchased the painting “Sunday in Valle”, so popular with members and guests. He later also decorated the 3rd floor room, where we find,—if we look hard—this “hjer-tesukk“:

THIS ROOM AND FURNITURE
DESIGNED AND PAINTED BY
BEN BLESSUM
DURING THE SWELTERING
SUMMER OF 1945,
WITH MUCH SWEAT AND A
REASONABLE AMOUNT OF
PROFANITY.

Well,—It was a hot summer, all right.

The club’s first President, William Gerner, passed away in Oslo in the month of March.

A family fish dinner was given on April 14th, for the benefit of Norway. Our speaker was Mr. Arne Skouen, known from the Norwegian underground as “Bjørn Stallare”, who had many things of interest to tell. The dinner was free, BUT envelopes were laid out for money. It is a joy to report that \$1,000.00 was taken in.

A few days later the war was over on the European front, but continued elsewhere, with both Norway and the United States as participants.

Only a few had a slight suspicion of the “Cold War” at that time.

A “Victory Ball” was given on May 17th, and it was all that could be expected, and then some. Mr. Fredrik Haslund was again our guest,



SECOND WORLD WAR ROLL OF HONOR

and gave an interesting talk about Norway's future, as he saw it. It was the first real "17de mai" in five years, and the happiness felt by one and all over the victory was great.

Telegrams were sent to H. M. King Haakon both in May, when victory was won, and in June, when the royal family came home.



1ST LT. ALEXANDER E. TRODAHL

At the end of May we received with deep sorrow the information that our young fellow member, 1st Lt. Alexander E. Trodahl, had been killed in action on Iwo Jima on April 29th. He was a flyer, and the only son of Alfred J. Trodahl, one of the most active men in our Club. At the May membership meeting a gold star — the only one — was placed on our service flag by Major Erwin Larsen, while the last few strains of the "Star Spangled Banner" was played softly, and the whole Club, at attention, faced the flag. Words of sympathy were spoken quietly.

* * *

On June 7th, the 40th anniversary of 1905, a program was arranged. Counsel General Sigurd Maseng spoke, and Pearl Gran and Otto Clausen provided the musical part.

In the fall of 1945 Norwegian Students began to arrive in Chicago, and have continued to come to our Universities.

It has been a pleasure to receive them in our midst, and male students have been given limited membership privileges. The first group which came had special difficulties with that unpleasant thing called "valuta", and the

Club immediately put a fairly substantial amount at their disposal, as a help toward education. At festive occasions they are welcome among us, and several very pleasant letters of thanks show their gratitude and appreciation.

It has been a real pleasure to have had these young people coming to the Club for the past five years.

In September we had a pleasant visit by five Norwegian journalists, Jorunn Johnsen, Per Thomsen, Olav Brandsvann, Oscar Hasselknippe and O. C. Kirkebo. They made a strong impression in a quiet and dignified way, and were fine representatives of Norway's press.

Our JUNIORS showed some signs of activity about this time, and the Club did its level best to help along. It seems, however, that they live too far apart in this large city of ours, and have their main interests in their schools or in their immediate neighborhoods. It has been noted also, that often they come back to the Club when they get slightly older. So all is well.

A long hoped for occasion finally came along on November 17th, 1945, when the whole Club gathered to see the burning of the mortgage. The President, Mr. Bjarne Dahl, and the Executive Secretary, Mr. Otto Clausen, spoke, and soon after the Club was free of all debts. It was a great party, and free of charge, too!

Our "Herremiddag" was given for "a Norwegian purpose", and was interesting and well attended.

This year had a very sad beginning, as three of our members passed away in a few days: Magnus Gundersen, former president of the club, Ole Garo, vice president, and Mr. George Thoresen, former member of the Board of Directors.

May 17th was quite an affair, as Chicago's mayor, the Hon. Edward J. Kelly, accepted an invitation to be present. He seemed to enjoy the occasion.

Thanks to the efforts of Major Erwin Larsen we received in July a French flag and a book of photographs from "Den Norske Klub in Paris". A letter of thanks was sent, and later we sent a large album of photographs, programs etc. from our Club in return.

A very well arranged luncheon for Oslo Haandverker Sangforening was given on Sept. 13th, and we received many compliments on our beautiful Club.

On April 13th a benefit concert for the Hammerfest Hospital was given

by Asta Jørgensen Dahlseng, soprano, and Daniel Løvdal pianist. It was well attended.

In April a reception was also given for the male chorus KLANG from Lillehammer, touring this country. The singers seemed much impressed by the Club.

A similar visit by the male chorus RAN from Bergen took place on Thursday, Sept. 25th.

* * *

After a number of committee meetings the three Scandinavian clubs: Chicago Norske Klub, The Swedish Club of Chicago and the Dania Society in 1947 entered into an agreement to extend certain limited membership privileges when a member of one club wished to visit another. This had been more or less the understanding before, but there were no set rules for it. The meetings, in all three clubs, were decidedly pleasant, and should lead to greater friendship and understanding. It is but fair to give the Dania Society the credit for having instigated these meetings.

Another ART EXHIBIT was given in November, and this time we also had a number of paintings by the Norwegian artist Even Ulving.

A very successful reception and dinner for Den Kvindelige Studenter-sangforening from the University of Oslo was given on March 31st. They enjoyed the Club very much, and the chorus was presented with a set of photographs etc. from the Club. Just think of it: 70 Norske *Kvindelige* Studenter!

This was a year of much activity of a social character, such as a "Rhumba Class", a "Norsk Eftermiddag", a Tivoli Aften, "Platter Party", Excellent movies from Norway, a Hawaiian Night, a Lecture by Marie Lous Mohr, a Halloween Dinner Dance, a Cocktail Party, etc. etc. Plus 17de mai, and New Year's eve!

The Norwegian violinist Gunnar Knudsen gave a recital in the Club on Jan. 9th, made a tremendous hit, and was re-engaged for March 13th. He was assisted by Pearl Gran. These were two very fine evenings.

The Club has its annual Golf Tournament, which is looked forward to by quite a few members. Messrs. G. Rusing, F. W. Nannestad, R. Sande and E. Fidler have held the championship from time to time.

On March 25th, at our monthly fish dinner and business meeting, the Mayor of Oslo, Mr. H. E. Stokke, who was then visiting Chicago, was our

guest. A little later in the evening, Chicago's Mayor, Martin Kennelly, dropped in also, and both gentlemen made very fine speeches. Both also took part in our business meeting upstairs, and Mr. Kennelly seemed surprised to see how fast such a meeting could be finished: The meeting was set, one member moved adjournment, the gavel fell, and that was that. Chicago's mayor liked his stay with us, and wanted to come back soon. On Saturday the 26th an informal reception for Mr. Stokke was given in the club. It was a pleasant evening, with a fine audience.

Our Scandinavian Evening, April 9th, turned out to be one of the best affairs we have had for some time, and we had the pleasure of receiving the Consuls General of Norway, Sweden and Denmark, who all spoke both in English and in their own language. The President of DANIA, Mr. Anker Jensen, also spoke, and the musical entertainment was good.

During the summer the work started on the Plaque to honor our service men and women. A photograph of it will be shown elsewhere in this book.

The Norwegian American Technical Society had its Convention in the Club on September 2nd, 3rd and 4th.

On September the 14th the "Norway Ensemble" from Sandefjord visited our Club and the Hangesund Chorus came to us on October 4th.

Our Ex-Presidents were honored on October the 8th at a well arranged Dinner and Ball. They were given nice bill folds as mementos of the occasion.

November the 6th we had a "Norsk Kveld" and the Hangesund Chorus' baritone soloist, Gunner Sandvold, and pianist, Øystein Larsen, were the artists of the evening.

Armistice Day, November 11th, is the date of our annual "Herremiddag". The large group photograph in this book was taken that evening.

On November the 19th the Club will honor its service men and women from World War II. A Plaque inscribed with 58 names of members, their sons and daughters will be dedicated.

This historical sketch was finished on November 11th, 1949.

O. C.



Chicago Norske Klub's Ladies Auxiliary

THE Ladies Auxiliary was started on March 26th, 1918, a few months after we had moved into our new Club house. The ladies had taken an active part in the working out of the finishing touches so necessary for the cozy home atmosphere for which our Club is justly famous, and they wished to continue the good work as a Club organization.

This was during the first World War, and the Auxiliary at once formed a Red Cross Chapter. They worked most faithfully till victory came.

In the second World War the Auxiliary started work for Norway soon after the invasion of that country. Later, when the United States entered the war, the ladies again worked as a Red Cross Chapter, doing splendid work both for Norway and for the United States.

The Auxiliary is in full charge of the Children's Christmas parties, also acts as reception committee at Art Exhibits and at other special occasions.

Their pleasant luncheons and card parties are always well attended and are enjoyed by all.

The grand piano in the main Club room is a gift from our ladies.

The beautifully furnished ladies room on the second floor is an example of the discriminating taste always shown by the ladies of the Auxiliary.

SILVER PUNCH BOWL IN GRAPE DESIGN
A GIFT FROM DEN NORSKE KLUB I CHI-
CAGO TO THE NEW ORGANIZATION, CHI-
CAGO NORSKE KLUB. INSCRIPTION: "ERIN-
DRING OM DEN NORSKE KLUB I CHICAGO,
1905-1911."



Den Norske Kvartetklub



(Excerpts from 1917 Historical Sketch)

DEN Norske Kvartetklub was founded Jan. 10, 1890 under the name of Den Skandinaviske Kvartetklub i Chicago. The Club's founders were Anton M. Kolderup, Thomas S. H. Kolderup, William Gerner, Axel Jurgens, Sigurd Mathiesen, Dr. David Wimmermark and Thor Mathiesen. Its object was the promotion of singing and the cultivation of sociability among the members. In 1897 its name was changed to Den Norske Kvartetklub. The club's first singing meeting was held on January 17th, 1890, with Professor August Elfaker as music director.

On June 6th, 1890, the club was admitted to membership in The United Scandinavian Singers of America, in the affairs of which it took a leading part and attended all singing festivals given by the association.

The first Sangerfest participated in by the club was the association's third meeting, which was held in Minneapolis June 23-27, 1891.

While the club was primarily a musical society it soon established itself as Chicago's leading Norwegian social organization. The club's annual balls, carnivals and similar events were brilliant affairs and noteworthy as the most interesting social functions of the city's Norwegian group.

In the summer of 1893 the Scandinavian Singers of America held its Sangerfest in Chicago, the fourth biennial meet. In this gathering the Kvartetklub likewise played a prominent part.

Among the numerous concerts at which the club appeared, in addition to its initial concert, was a large church concert held in 1891 under Mrs. Consul Svanøe's direction. It is of interest to note that the Kvartetklub was the first singing society in America to sing "Den Store, Hvide Flok".



CENTER, A. M. KOLDERUP; TOP CENTER, AUG. ELFAKER; READING CLOCKWISE, A. WIMMERMARK, THOS. KOLDERUP, THOR MATHIESEN, SIG. MATHIESEN, WM. GERNER, A. JURGENS.

(COURTESY BY MRS. GERNER)

On July 12th, 1893, the members of the club, as guests of Consul Ravn, Norway's commissioner general to the World's Fair, participated in receiving the viking ship, which with a crew of twelve sturdy mariners, including Capt. Magnus Andersen, had sailed from Norway across the Atlantic, up the St. Lawrence River and through the Great Lakes to the World's Fair at Chicago to prove that Leif Erickson's voyage in an open boat was not impossible.

On the occasion of Dr. Fridtjof Nansen's visit to Chicago in 1897, following his return from his famous "farthest North" arctic exploration trip, a reception was held in his honor in the old Battery D on the Lake Front, where Haldor O. Oppedal was orator of the day. On November 17 a banquet was given for Dr. Nansen at the Auditorium Hotel. The members of the club attended the banquet in a body, and the Kvartetklub was the only singing society which had the honor of singing on that occasion.

The club participated in receiving the Swedish Student Singers in 1904, and in receiving the Norwegian Student Chorus in 1905. The visit of the Student Singers from Norway under the presidency of Dr. Henrik Thomsen

and the musical direction of O. A. Grøndahl was an epoch-making event in the history of Norwegian choral singing. The work of the student singers was a revelation to all who heard them and an inspiration to our Norwegian singing societies on this side of the Atlantic.

In 1908 the ladies presented the club with a silk Norwegian flag, which was inherited by Chicago Norske Klub.

The club published an annual, paper called "Putriare", which contained a review of the year's activities, written for the most part in a pleasant, humorous vein.

The club was a member of the Norwegian Singers League of Chicago and the Norwegian Singers League of America, the latter being the successor to the United Scandinavian Singers of America.

The following have served the Kvartetklub as music directors: August Elfaker, 1890-1892, John L. Swenson, 1892-1893, Emil Biørn, 1893-1904, Alfred Paulsen, 1904-1911 and Rolf Hammer, 1911.

Aside from its manifold public activities, the club was in character really a home or family club. Its meetings were as a rule held at the homes of the members, where hospitality and warm-hearted fellowship dominated all who took part.

The first president of Den Norske Kvartetklub was Anton M. Kolderup.

NORWEGIAN DRINKING HORN

A GIFT TO THE KVARTET KLUB ON ITS TENTH ANNIVERSARY IN 1900 FROM EMIL BIØRN. MR. BIØRN DESIGNED IT, AND HAD IT MADE BY COURT JEWELER TOSTRUP, CHRISTIANIA. (OSLO).



Den Norske Klub i Chicago



By John O. Batzer

THIS year the Chicago Norske Klub is celebrating another milestone in its successful existence, namely its 60th anniversary, and as youthfully and happily as ever.

In our materialistic age it may be considered remarkable that an institution devoted exclusively to the private social and cultural tastes of a discriminating membership really has been able to survive and prosper beyond the half century mark. The answer to that can only be that its fundamental aims and purposes: The preservation of our Norse cultural heritage and manners and the cultivation of a high standard of social intercourse have not been lost sight of by the creative minds and capable leadership of the many who throughout the years unselfishly have contributed of their time, abilities and means, and who likewise have been aware that it never should descend to being a mere pleasure club.

Also there can be no questioning the fact that the avoidance of direct or indirect political or other interests largely have contributed to its long and honorable existence.

To analyze the factors leading to the club's conception and growth proved a rather difficult undertaking, mainly on account of the lack of written records of its formative period. Some information was obtained through the reminiscences of members still active who participated in the earliest activities. These, together with my personal memories as an early member cannot, of course, constitute an authentic general history, but they may perhaps be of sufficient interest to make it worth while to present them on this occasion.

The turn of the century witnessed a decided difference in the type of many Norwegian immigrants from that previously so plentifully entering the



GUTTORM VIKER, FIRST PRESIDENT
DEN NORSKE KLUB I CHICAGO, 1905

United States. The rural and skilled and unskilled laborers were still in the majority; but at that time a considerable number of technicians and others of a more advanced education found it necessary or desirable to look westward across the Atlantic. And they were welcome.

The rapidly expanding industries and other specialized activities needed as never before men professionally endowed. A very considerable percentage of these young professional men came to Chicago and the Middle West. And quite naturally these, no doubt chiefly for social reasons, sought each other in the strange land.

One late-winter evening of the year 1905 a number of these gentlemen were gathered to discuss something one of them wished to bring before them. Over their cigars the discussion, not as to the establishment of the proposed Norske Klub, which every one favored, but as to how to establish it, waxed lively.

The proponent of the enterprise was a young architect, Guttorm Viker, and he was enthusiastically supported by those present, among whom were Per Valboe, Olaf Schrøeder, Sophus Irgens, and Olaf Balstad.

Mr. Viker in introducing the subject then spoke about as follows: "I believe we have done well to come to the United States, and I think that we may all look forward to a successful future here. We left our native land and bade farewell to our homes and families in order to start a new life in a foreign country, to enrich our minds, increase our knowledge, lay the foundation for our future, and ultimately become loyal citizens of this land of freedom and opportunity.

But we are not entirely happy and satisfied in our new home. We found that we came to a land whose people, language and customs are foreign to us and will require years to assimilate. Our mother soil still is fresh in our souls, and we eagerly crave an organization in which we can perpetuate and cherish the traditions of our childhood and youth and maintain the cultural standard we brought with us across the ocean. We need no longer hesitate. All we have to do is to make up our minds — and start. We have the knowledge and the talent, the means will also come in time as we need it. What do you say, gentlemen? Shall we try it?"

The speech was received with applause, and it was decided to try to enlist enough young men together to give the proposed club a fair chance of survival.

The following young men were present at the organization meeting held March 1st, 1905: J. Halle, O. Sem, Johan Hirth, Carl Vestby, Ivar Bassoe, Gerhard Randers, Halfdan Christiansen, H. Storkle, Fred Roberts, Alv Satre, Otto Skarre, Sigurd Randers, Chr. U. Bagge, T. R. Scheen, Oscar Amundsen, Fred Haslund, Olaf Schrøeder, Guttorm Viker, Olaf Balstad and Per Valboe.

The following were elected as the club's first officers: President: Guttorm Viker, Vice President: Per Valboe, Secretary: Olaf Schrøder, Treasurer: Olaf Balstad. Board Member: Fred Haslund.

Law Committee: Per Valboe, Otto Skarre, Johan Hirth.

The meeting was held in a large back room of a popular saloon on California and Wabansia Aves. This later became the club's regular meeting place until it was dissolved in 1911, upon the amalgamation with Den Norske Kvartett Klub.

The interest and enthusiasm with which the new club was accepted by the newcomers as well as the older generation proved the need for its creation. It grew steadily in membership notwithstanding the rather heavy turn over caused mainly by relocation of employment and permanent return to Norway. The club's program of entertainment and educational endeavors developed into an impressive series of activities, including lectures on a variety of civic and cultural subjects too numerous to enumerate in this brief sketch. The attempts at amateur theatricals revealed a surprising talent also in that direction, much to the great enjoyment of the members as well as of benefit to the club's finances.



J. O. BATZER

The result of all these activities was that the older generation of our local nationality took notice of the youngsters' doings, and when the club in 1908 adopted "Passive Membership" the roster added a host of these, most of whom were well established in business, professions and social standing in the community. This added greatly to the club's economical and social prestige.

Energy, talent and love of the mother country were the qualities from which emanated the formation of "Den Norske Klub i Chicago". A great impetus was given to its development by the experience, mature judgment and economic and social stability gained by the amalgamation in 1911, when the clubs pooled their efforts in order to create a better opportunity for social intercourse and cultural endeavors along traditional Norse lines.

This has been attained and our house has stood for 60 years. Let us always remember that this is not merely "a house that Jack built", but that every brick in its walls and every spike in its timbers were put there by unselfish labors and an indomitable will to cultivate the ideals of its members — and that Chicago Norske Klub cannot remain what it has been all these years unless these ideals are preserved, and indeed has no reason for being unless that is done. As the years and generations pass customs and minor things will change. All things do, or they stagnate and die. Evolution is life, and inexorable. But it may also be death, and will be if the high character the Club in the past has enjoyed is not jealously guarded and perpetuated.

Bear in mind that membership is not alone a privilege but also an obligation to maintain the spirit of the Chicago Norske Klub. That is: Its high, even in the best sense, aristocratic ideals.

On this occasion I cannot think of a better wish for the Club than this:
MAY YOUR FUTURE BE AS WORTHY AS YOUR PAST. J. O. Batzer.

Decorations & Paintings in the Club

A NUMBER of well known Norwegian-American artists are represented in the paintings found in the Club. In most cases the works have been purchased at our regular Art Exhibits.

At the 1947 Exhibit we also had a number of paintings by the Norwegian artist Even Ulving, and his "Children at Play" may be found on the west wall of the main club room. On the same wall, and high above all others, will be seen Lars Haukanes' "FRA HARDANGER", and below are two works by Ben Blessum: "AT CLOSE OF DAY" and "SUNDAY IN VALLE", very popular with members and visitors. On that wall are also "NORTHERN LIGHTS, SVOLVAER HARBOR" by Karl Ouren, and "AT EVENING" by Olaf Brauner.

On the East wall will be seen "STEAMERS WAKE" by Emil Biørn, "POLITICS" by Ben Blessum, "GOODBY SUMMER" by Sigurd Schou and "FISHING HARBOR" by Jonas Lie. (Also from Svolvær).

The North wall only has a small "STUDY" by Marie Løkke.

The South wall has the club's outstanding decoration, Emil Biørn's large tapestry painting "THE DISCOVERY OF VINLAND", an integral part of our famous HIGH SEAT. A special article about this will be found elsewhere.

In the Ladies Room we have two water colors by Emil Biørn and two by Aug. Werner.

In the library we find an interesting lithograph, "THEODORE ROOSEVELT", a gift to the club by the Norwegian artist Henrik Lund. There are also a number of historical drawings by Andreas Bloch, famous Norwegian artist and illustrator, an architectural painting by Chr. U. Bagge and some photographs of Norway's Royal family and Ibsen and Bjørnson. Over the bookcase is a frieze of Viking Ships under sail, by Biørn.

In the Dining Room, arranged as a dining room in the "S/S NORWAY", we, as it were, look out through the windows and see scenes from the coast of Norway, also by Emil Biørn.



DINING ROOM

On our way upstairs again will be seen Gilbert Risvold's very fine IBSEN relief. (In the stairway.) About 3rd floor decorations see special article.

THE HIGH SEAT DECORATION

Emil Biørn's work represents, in Norse tapestry style, the discovery of Vinland by Leif Erikson in the year 1000 A.D. according to the Flateyrbok, a collection of sagas put into writing in Iceland late in the 14th century after having for hundreds of years been told by word of mouth.

According to this saga a certain Bjarne Herjulfson, a merchant mariner, who sailed from Norway for Greenland in about 986 was driven by storm out of his course and saw a land, supposed to be Labrador or Newfoundland, but did not land. In time returning to Norway he told of his discovery, "and was much chided for his lack of enterprise in not landing and investigating the land". The saga then goes on to tell that Leif Erikson, the son of Erik the Red, the first known settler in Greenland, in or about the year 1000 decided to explore the land found by Bjarne, which he then did the summer of that year, remaining during the ensuing winter. Just where he built his cabin or cabins (they were 35 men in all) is not known; but it is believed that it was somewhere in Nova Scotia or at some place possibly as far south as Virginia. In the fall of the year a "southerner", one Tyrker, no doubt a slave, found ripe wild grapes suitable for wine-making; and as



THE HIGH SEAT
DECORATION
BY EMIL BIØRNS

wine was a costly and much appreciated liquid in the North, Leif named the country Vinland, a word which may mean Wineland or Vineland.

The small panels represent:

(1) Bjarne told of His journey. (2) Leif then found that land. (3) The man returned, and it was Tyrker. (4) It was possible to live there in winter. The picture represents the celebration by a religious service the first Christmas in North America. The inscriptions are in the Old Norse of the sagas.

The border around the main painting is a combination of grapes and

vines, suggesting the name Leif gave the land, plus gulls, fish and other objects of the sea.

Leif did not however attempt to make a permanent settlement, his disinterest in this fine and fertile land being strange, but not dwelt upon by the saga.

That is in the main the story of the discovery of North America according to the Flateyrbok. The story as told in another and much older saga, that of Erik the Red, written more than a hundred years before the date of the former, is however quite different and appears to be far more reliable. In this — and it is corroborated by the saga of Olaf Trygvesson written about 1230 — it is told that Leif had no intention of discovering the land Bjarne had seen, that he in fact never had heard of it, but, like Bjarne, was driven far out of his course by a storm and thus quite accidentally found some part of North America, where he probably was obliged to winter, the late fall weather of the North Atlantic compelling all mariners at that time of year to lie in harbor. The matter-of-fact and straightforward saga of Erik the Red is in sharp contrast to the rather fanciful story contained in the Flateyrbok, and seems far more credible as a historical document. And, as stated, it is in the most important part, that telling of how Vinland was found, corroborated by the saga of King Olaf, which throughout is notable for its evident regard for the truth. The fact that Leif appears in history almost solely as the discoverer of Vinland and seems never afterwards to have been interested enough in it to revisit it, not to say to attempt to colonize it, would also tend to show that whoever wrote the saga of Erik the Red had no inclination to embroider it with romantic inventions.

Nevertheless many prefer the somewhat novelistic tale of the Flateyrbok, and it is this Emil Biørn so well used as a basis for his excellent decoration.

Below the decoration will be found the coats of arms of 17 Norwegian cities.

Ben Blessum.

THE THIRD FLOOR DECORATIONS

The small room on the third floor is decorated in a style reminiscent of that often employed in such small rooms in the manors and castles of the late Middle Ages in Scandinavia.

As will be noted there are as many angles in it as often was the case in those medieval rooms, and these, as the artist pointed out at the time, made it pretty difficult to make a harmonious whole of it.

But a worse difficulty was presented by the low ceiling. It became necessary to raise its height by an optical illusion, using a perpendicular build-up in the decorations rather than the horizontal preferable on higher walls. That is the reason for the pyramidal construction. Floral motives, usually very flamboyant or tending to the other extreme, were almost entirely used in the decoration of such rooms centuries ago, often however, mixed with animals. In Sweden, which still has scores, or even hundreds, of medieval manors and castles well preserved, such decorations are common. In Norway royal and baronial castles and manors never were much in evidence; and what little there was has long ago been destroyed, the only really notable exceptions being perhaps Akershus Castle and Østraat Manor, and even these have long since been stripped of furniture, hangings and everything that could be called mural decorations, if such they possessed. A very crude floral decoration, however, still exists in the ugly and not especially noteworthy Archbishopal Palace at Trondhjem, this being painted only in black on the white plastered walls and grained ceiling.

What Steinviksholm, Hamar Episcopal Castle, Haakonshallen, Sverresborg, Tunsberghus and Bohus at one time contained in the way of murals is unknown. The destruction of ancient monuments has been exceptionally thorough in Norway. Fortunately there is enough left elsewhere in Scandinavia to furnish a good idea of what no doubt once existed also in Norway.

The frieze just above the wainscoting is composed of "hammer-headed" crosses, these symbolizing Christian as well as pagan Norway, the religion of Thor and Odin not at all losing its hold automatically on the advent of Olaf Haraldson, but indeed underground existing for at least two centuries after, and in the form of "magic" and other superstitions here and there even up to our own time. A number of shield-like decorations all about the room symbolize what so often is overlooked, namely that faithful work

by hand and brain is the real history and glory of Norway rather than blood-dripping kings and their wars.

To further attempt to enhance the height of the room the artist also used simple, vertical borders at the various corners, the running design of these pointing upward. In the spaces between the floral decorations he had intended to place a number of decorative inscriptions, these being verses from the Norse poets of more than a thousand years ago as well as some modern ones, and perhaps certain pithy sayings culled from the wisdom of nameless bønder. It is hoped that these may yet appear — as they should.

The booths with their carved heads represent the bonde, the merchant and the soldier of Norway's Middle Age. The "framskap" (sideboard) is typical of the kind used for centuries, but the decoration of it is in the style of the 18th century, such sideboards rarely or ever being painted before that time.

In addition the doors are decorated with, respectively, a waterfall (symbolizing natural power) and a 15th century cargo vessel representing shipping.

From an interview

Letters & Greetings

Chicago Norske Club —
2350 N. Kedzie Blvd., Chicago, Ill. —

Nordmanns forbundet sender Hjertelige Hilsener og Lykkønskninger femtiaars jubileet med takk for utmerket arbeid gjennem aarene.

Hambro. Thvedt. Kildal.

CERCLE NORVEGIEN DE PARIS
Den Norske Forening i Paris

1ste April 1948.

Styret i Den Norske Forening i Paris sender Chicago Norske Klub sin beste takk for det vakre album med fotografier, tilegnet vor forening.

Det har gledet vore medlemmer aa beundre det smagfulde interiør i Deres Klubb og samtidig faa en broderhilsen over Atlanteren, som vi gjengjelder paa det hjerteligste.

Deres ærbødige
Den Norske Forening i Paris
Leif Eitzen, Sekretær.

Royal Norwegian Air Force,
Little Norway, Ontario, Canada.
Velferdskontoret.
Chicago Norske Klub

26 Januar 1945.

Kjære Venner:

Jeg vil herved gjerne faa sende Chicago Norske Klub vor hjerteligste tak for al gjestevenlighet og elskværdighet vore soldater har været mødt med i Chicago, baade ved tidligere anledninger og nu under julen og nytt aar.

Vi har i tidens løp hørt mange lovord om Chicago nordmennes

imøtekommenhet, hjelpsomhet og interesse, samt det overstrømmende hjertelag. Jeg skulle ønske dere alle kunne høre lidt av det guttene selv forteller i brakker og messer efter en tur til Chicago. Da gaar det paa superlativer! De er lykkelige, glade og fornøiet.

For dette alt sammen vil vi gjerne faa si hjertelig takk! Mange av guttene har jo feiret sin første jul borte fra fedrehjemmet og det i landflygtighet, saa forstaar dere nokk takknemligheten. Vi kommer ikke lett til aa glemme alt det dere norske i Amerika har gjort for oss her ute. Dere har avhjulpet mangt et savn og gjort mange mismodige og delvis bitre unge menn igjen glade og lyse.

Med vennlig hilsen,

Deres ærbødige og takknemlige,
Vilhelm B. Neumann
feltprest/velferdsofficer.

Til

March 12-1943.

Chicago Norske Klub:

Vil gjerne faa lov aa sende vor hjerteligste takk for den venlighet vi ble møtt med, og tusen takk for bøkene som vi mottok av dere.

Med de beste ønsker fra oss ni som tilbrakte ferien her i Chicago, og fra alle her ombord.

K. K.,
Fredrikstad.

Norske Klubben, Chicago.

Jeg vil gjerne faa takke saa meget for den gjestfrihet og gavmildhet som klubben har vist meg. Allerede da jeg kom til England for ca. 1/2 aar siden hørte jeg fra en venn som nettop hadde fuldført sin utdannelse i Canada om Norske Klubben i Chicago, den gang kunne jeg ikke tro hva han fortalte; men naa er jeg overbevist.

Det er hyggeligt for oss som nettop forlot Norge aa treffe virkelige nordmenn paa den anden side av jorden.

Engang, forhaapentlig ganske snart, haaper jeg at vi gutta som har besøkt dere i klubben i Chicago kan faa anledning til aa være deres verter i ett fritt Norge!

Mange takk! Hjertelig Hilsen

T. R.

*On a piece of birch bark, from
Gardermoen, Norge*

Alle i Chicago Norske Klub:

Gledelig Jul, Godt Nytt Aar!

Takk for alle hyggelige minner om julen 1944.

Vil feire julen hjemme i ett fritt Norge iaar. Det kommer til aa bli en stor og særpreget jul, naar man har været borte fra hjemmet i 5 aar.

Beste flygende bjerkebarkhilsen fra

M. A.

Oslo 5/12-46.

“De beste ønsker om en gledelig jul og ett rigtig godt nyttaar ønskes alle medlemmer av klubben av en som fikk en hyggelig mottagelse og ett straalende opphold under krigens bitre dage . . .”

M.

Telegram January 1943:

“Thanks for your excellent efforts in behalf of Norwegian seamen. Be assured that our seamen will keep up the struggle till victory is won.”

Social Committee for Norwegian Seamen.

A few notes from Norwegian Students:

“Vi vil faa uttrykke vaar dypeste takknemlighet for den velkomne og storstilete støtte Chicago Norske Klub har ytet oss alle. Hjertelig takk!

Samtidig vil i faa ønske dere alle en rigtig god jul og ett godt nyttaar, med takk for hyggeligt samvær i det gamle.”

Nine Signatures.

20/5-46

“De Norske studentene ved Northwestern University sender en hjertelig takk for at vi fikk overvære den hyggelige 17 mai fest.”

Eight Signatures.

“For den straalende 17 mai vi feiret som Norske Klub's gjester vil vi gjerne sende vor hjerteligste takk. Vi takker ogsaa fordi vore venner her paa International House fikk anledning til aa feire dagen sammen med oss . . .”

1946

Six Signatures.

“Vi norske studenter her nede paa International House vil gjerne uttrykke sin hjertelige takk til Chicago Norske Klub for den storartede gjestfrihet som ble vist oss paa vor nasjonaldag. For oss var det en oplevelse aa være med paa en rigtig norsk 17de mai i Chicago. Vi var imponert over toget som var noe meget mer end vi hadde ventet, og vi følte oss hjemme paa den stilige festen i Klubben.

Det hele ble ett minne for oss som vi ikke glemmer. Vi takker Chicago Norske Klub at vi kan bringe dette minnet med oss hjem til gamlelandet.

Med de beste ønsker for Chicago Norske Klub.”

Venlig Hilsen

Seven Signatures.

The Editor, who knows the Club rather well, was fully aware that he "stuck his neck out" in taking this work upon himself. He also well knew that no one could do a job satisfactory to all.

But he still fearlessly took his pen in hand!

He will be at the Club for chastisement most Fridays between 6 and 7, but refuses to listen after 7 P.M.

O. C.

Most photographs used in this book are by our fellow member, Olav Rye.