The Dream of a Norwegian University in America: Luther College, 1861 – 2011

This article was originally prepared as one of the keynote addresses at the eleventh Seminar of the Norwegian-American Historical Association of Norway held at Luther College on June 14–17, 2011. It was the first time the NAHA seminar was held outside of Norway. Over 100 people attended from Norway, Canada and the United States. Sessions were held on a variety of topics with nearly fifty papers delivered. For pictures of the event, please visit the Luther College Archives Flickr site.

I. Why Decorah?

Luther College began with a dream.[1] It was the dream of a Norwegian university in America.

The little town of Decorah lay far out on the fringes of the western world in 1861. It was only twelve years old, and the total population in 1860 was 1,865. Three hundred seventy eight of these Decorah settlers—one-fifth of the town's population—were Norwegians, living on a thinly populated frontier on the edge of Indian territory.

DECORAH				
Total Population and Norwegian Percentage				
	1856	**1860**	**1870**	**1880**
Total	759	1865	2104	3483
Norwegians	90	378	518	954
% Norwegian	11.9%	20.3%	27.8%	27.4%

In 1861, travel was on foot or by covered wagon, and the center of Norwegian settlement was far from Iowa, in southeastern Wisconsin and northern Illinois or scattered in seaports like Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and New Orleans. Why was this little town, which had been Indian territory until 1849, chosen as the site for the first Norwegian school in the New World?

The reason was largely due to the influence of one man, a native of Bergen named Ulrik Vilhelm Koren.[2] He and his bride, Elisabeth Hysing from Larvik, like most of the settlers, were young when they came to northeastern Iowa, late in the year 1853. Vilhelm Koren promoted the dream, and another young man, Peter Laurentius Larsen from Christiansand, who signed himself Laur. Larsen, made it a reality.[3]

In order to understand this dream of a Norwegian university in America, we need to go back to the student days of Koren and Larsen in the city they knew as Christiania, where their ideal of a university was formed.[4]

by
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II. Student Life in Christiania

In 1844, Vilhelm Koren matriculated in Norway's only university. Oslo, then called Christiania, was densely packed into a small quadrant of streets laid out in the seventeenth century between Akershus Castle and Our Savior's Church (now Oslo Cathedral). A grand new boulevard named for King Karl Johan was taking shape to the west of the old town along a sweeping axis running towards the half-finished Royal Palace.[5] Christiania was a cosmopolitan little city in the 1840s. Many families of condition still spoke French and English, while the actors at Christiania Theater spoke Danish, Swedish officers strutted about (for Norway was still under the King of Sweden), and German artisans came in to build the many new structures along Karl Johan Boulevard.[6]

Norway's only university was barely thirty years old, and all the students were males.[7] The university was housed in temporary quarters scattered throughout the city. Young Vilhelm Koren came from Bergen, Norway's largest city. Many of his university friends were also from Bergen. He took long walks with the renowned poet, Johan Sebastian Welhaven, "who liked to have an audience," and when another Bergen friend, J. D. Behrens, organized the first university chorus, Koren sang first tenor.[8] Students met at the student union, *Studenterforeningen,* to hold debates, put on amateur plays, read Norway's first newspaper, *Morgenbladet,* and have long discussions over glasses of wine. In 1845, Koren and other students marched in the funeral procession of the popular poet, Henrik Wergeland. They could also be a rowdy crowd in the balcony of Christiania Theater on Friday evenings or attending touring performances of Italian opera or Bournonville's Royal Danish Ballet.[9]

Vilhelm Koren's religion was the old-fashioned kind of Lutheran orthodoxy defined by the Augsburg Confession and Luther's Catechisms until his religious life was changed

by reading Søren Kierkegaard.[10] One observer noted that Kierkegaard was so popular many Christiania students "affected even an imitation of his language and mannerisms."[11] What Koren learned from Kierkegaard was an attitude of critical religious activism: "A critical attitude towards all pretensions regarding Christianity, both in oneself and in others … a longing for genuine and meaningful work and the spiritual struggle that comes with it."[12]

Laur. Larsen was seven years younger than Koren, and the mood of the Norwegian capital had changed by the time he arrived. Larsen was an army officer's son and grandson of a signer of the Norwegian constitution. He took the university entrance examination, the *artium*, in 1850 with eighty-six others, including Henrik Ibsen and Lyder Siewers, the brother of Norway's last baroness.[13] There were also some peasant students, fresh from the mountains, who clustered together and seemed ill at ease in the city. One was my great-grandfather, who walked all the way from Ringsaker to Christiania to study but never made it into the university; he went back home and then emigrated to America. Larsen passed the *artium* exam with honors. Like many students of the 1850s, he grew a beard and became an avid participant in the Pan-Scandinavian movement, which aimed to build bonds of brotherhood between Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Iceland.

The cultural life of Christiania was blossoming. The Eidsvoll Constitution of 1814 guaranteed self-government to Norway. Norwegian laws were debated and passed by the *Storting* in Christiania, then signed by the king in Stockholm. In 1852, the university moved into splendid new buildings on Karl Johan Boulevard. Paolo Sperati arrived from Turin by way of Copenhagen to become musical director of Christiania Theater. He took charge of the garrison's military brass band, and they began march down Karl Johan to perform open-air concerts near the university.[14]

National Romanticism was in the air. Young writers like Henrik Ibsen, A. O. Vinje, and the future Nobel prize winner, Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, all hung out at *Studenterforeningen,* along with Koren, Larsen, and their friends. In 1856, Danish actors were shouted off the stage by Bjørnson and other students, who demanded plays in Norwegian. That same year, Ibsen's play, *The Feast at Solhoug,* with music by Sperati, became the playwright's first big hit. Meanwhile, Camilla Collett's novel, *The Governor's Daughters,* pointed to new directions of feminism and realism in Norwegian literature. University students of the 1850s may have lived in garret rooms on little or nothing, but they were experiencing the cultural excitement of a dawning Golden Age. For the rest of their lives, they would never forget those student days in Christiania.

III. Realizing the Dream 1853-1865

The "real world" of the 1850s, however, was far less glittering. When they graduated, there were no jobs—certainly not for Candidates of Theology. Norway's population soared from under 900,000 to nearly a million and a half between 1800 and 1855, but active pastors in the Church of Norway increased in the same period by only *two*: from 469 to 471.[15] Ironically, Koren said that theology was considered a "bread and butter"

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Elisabeth and U.V. Koren, played by KayCee Bucher, '14 and Ryan Gjerde in the August 2011 History Walk.

course when he entered the university.[16] Now, there were three hundred theology graduates without calls, trying to pick up any kind of work they could find.[17]

Lack of opportunity was the name of the game in Norway of the 1850s. Emigrants were leaving, and small colonies of Norwegian immigrants were springing up in America.[18] As early as 1844, when Koren entered the university, a frustrated theology graduate who had gone for more than a decade without a call finally decided to request ordination in order to follow the emigrants.[19] His name was J. C. W. Dietrichson. He came to Wisconsin, organized a string of congregations in Norwegian settlements, and started the process of sending American letters of call to church authorities in Christiania.

Dietrichson was soon followed by two other Norwegian pastors, H. A. Stub and A. C. Preus, who arrived to serve the calls he had established. In 1851, together with the Dane, C. L. Clausen, who had been serving Norwegian communities in Wisconsin since 1843, these two Norwegian pastors organized a body of eighteen congregations that grew into the Synod of the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.[20] In 1853, newly arrived pastors, including Herman Amberg Preus and Jacob Aall Ottesen, helped to establish orthodox confessional Lutheranism as the theology in the Norwegian Synod. It became the dominant Norwegian-American religious body for the next thirty years.

Later that same year of 1853, Vilhelm Koren and his bride, Elisabeth, took their Kierkegaardian leap of faith into an unknown world.[21] Now, there were nine Norwegian clergymen in America. They all came from well-known families

whose high social status came, not from wealth, but from the offices their ancestors had held as clergymen, bishops, judges, and officers. As a group, they formed an egalitarian elite. Koren was the first to accept a call west of the Mississippi River. In America, they lived mainly in rough log parsonages and often had to make their own furniture, while their wives cooked, sewed, stuffed sausages, and brewed ale. This was not the life they had dreamed of, but at least they were pastors: they had calls.

Few Norwegian university graduates, however, were willing to take that leap into the unknown New World. The demand far exceeded the supply. Almost immediately, the pioneers saw the need for a Norwegian university in America, not only to train pastors, but also to train leaders in all fields. In 1857, the Synod sent Nils Brandt and J. A. Ottesen to examine German Lutheran schools in America.[22] German Lutherans had been in America since the eighteenth century. Of the four schools they visited, they liked Concordia College and Seminary in St. Louis best.

That year of 1857, the annual meeting of the Norwegian Synod was held west of the Mississippi for the very first time, at Koren's pastorate on Washington Prairie near Decorah. On 10 October 1857, the Synod voted to establish a "University Fund." Until they could afford to build a Norwegian university in America, they would send Norwegian students to Concordia College and establish a Norwegian professorship there.[23] A few students went off immediately, and a teaching call was issued in 1859 to young Laur. Larsen, who had immigrated to a pastorate in Wisconsin in 1857.

Larsen assumed the professorship in St. Louis. He had eight Norwegian students his first year and twelve the second. His German immigrant colleagues took the Bible literally and told him that they preferred the polemical Formula of Concord to the more irenic Augsburg Confession as a statement of Lutheran faith, and so did Larsen's former teacher in Christiania, C. P. Caspari, who came to Norway from Leipzig. During fall semester of 1860, Larsen was sent to Norway to recruit more pastors and discovered, after only three years in America, that the Church of Norway seemed foreign to him.[24] Norwegian theologians criticized his rigid Biblical literalism.

When the Civil War broke out in 1861, lay delegates to the annual meeting of the Norwegian Synod and some of the pastors rose in revolt against continuing to send their future ministers to a seminary in a slave state.[25] Clausen was the only pastor to stand with them. They demanded a separate Norwegian university in a free state, not later, but now! In June of 1861, only two months after the attack on Fort Sumter, the Norwegian Synod gave in to this lay majority and voted to establish a separate school.

The dream of a Norwegian university in America was implemented in haste, and it had to be modified. They could not establish a full university with the traditional faculties of the liberal arts, law, medicine, and theology. That was still beyond their resources, and they also recognized that law and medicine were adequately taught at American universities. What they needed right now was a faculty of arts to prepare students to go on to theology or enter Norwegian-American communities in other positions of leadership. They began to use the American word "college," rather than the Norwegian *universitet*.[26]

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Several alternative sites were considered. Vilhelm Koren was quick to point out the advantages of Decorah. Immigration was increasing, and all the new immigrants were heading west of the Mississippi. Decorah was already surrounded by several large Norwegian settlements in northeastern Iowa and southeastern Minnesota. The town itself had a significant Norwegian population. Moreover, Koren's frontier congregations were generous contributors to the University Fund, so there was a solid base of financial support in the Decorah area. Finally, Koren, in his aggressive, Kierkegaardian manner, had already acquired an option to buy a scenic, thirty-two acre campus site on the edge of Decorah. The Synod listened and took action. They voted to organize a building committee and authorized Koren to purchase the Decorah campus site for $1,500.[27]

A suitable temporary building could not be found on short notice in Decorah, so the new school was housed for one year in a vacant parsonage at Halfway Creek near La Crosse, Wisconsin. Larsen moved there. He wanted a colleague who was fluent in English because he knew that English was essential in the globalized environment of America. The choice fell on F. A. Schmidt, pastor of the first English-language congregation in the Missouri Synod. Larsen and Schmidt had a dozen students that first year, half of whom had already studied in St. Louis.[28] The following summer, they moved to Decorah, and for the next three academic years, they resided in temporary facilities, across from the courthouse in downtown Decorah, while the main building of the college was under construction.

During those years, a third faculty member was recruited from Norway.[29] He was Lyder Siewers, a bachelor who was accompanied by his refined and beautiful sister, and whose charm and poetic nature contrasted with an austere family man like President Larsen.[30] Siewers and Larsen both taught Norwegian language and literature, while Larsen taught history, including Norwegian history, one of his favorite subjects.

On the campus site, the huge brick Main building of Luther College gradually arose. It was dedicated on October 14, 1865. "Never before on any occasion has so large a crowd of Norwegians been assembled on one spot in this country," wrote a contemporary observer, who estimated the crowd at nearly 6,000.[31] In terms of percentage, this may have been the largest group of Norwegians ever assembled in America.

By 1865, *Det norske Luther College*, as it was officially called, consisted of four teachers and eighty-one students,

divided among four college classes and two preparatory classes. The faculty grew to five in 1867 and seven in 1868, while enrollment soared towards 200 and kept on climbing.

During the summer of 1866, Larsen made a tour of several American colleges and universities.[32] His assessment, in a word, was "humbug!" He would stick with the model of Christiania. And stick with it he did, with what he called "good, old-fashioned Norwegian thoroughness."[33] Instruction at Luther College was thorough beyond the standards of American institutions of the day. The beginning classes followed the curriculum of a Norwegian Latin school that prepared students for the *artium* examination. The following years were similar to preparation for the second university examination in Norway, the *philosophicum*. The languages of instruction from the very beginning were both Norwegian and English, and so they remained for the first half-century of the college's existence.

The system proved to be effective. When Schmidt assessed one student in the very first class, Rasmus B. Anderson, after three and a half years at Luther College, he said that Anderson could "manage all but the most difficult passages in Greek and Latin," had mastered German completely, pronounced English correctly, and had "considerable ability" in Norwegian, as well as having "successfully completed the prescribed courses in mathematics, religion, and elementary music."[34] Hebrew, history, geography, and penmanship were also part of the curriculum.

IV. The Crucible of America, 1865-1911

The model of a Norwegian Latin school, or the arts faculty of a university, suited Luther College very well, and the college continued to prosper and grow. In 1865, a teachers' training program was added and maintained for twenty years, although Larsen had misgivings about mixing the two Norwegian models of a *universitet* and *lærerseminar* (teachers' college).[35] In 1874, a new wing was added to the Main building. Enrollment stood at 229, with 146 in the college division. The faculty had grown to ten.[36]

Their constant aim was to train leaders for the Norwegian communities in America. However, most of the students were not drawn from a traditional elite like the leaders of the Synod. These students were mainly raw Norwegian-American farm boys, who did not arrive with the *savoir-faire* of a Vilhelm Koren or Lyder Siewers. Somebody needed to teach them the social and cultural roles of leadership. Diderikke Brandt, wife of the college pastor, was the one who did so.[37] Like Camilla Collett and a few other Norwegian women from elite families, she had been schooled in the Moravian community of Christiansfeld in Danish Schleswig. The Moravians were famous for their strictly egalitarian social organization and for their so-called Lovefeast, a sort of religious coffee klatch with music, used as a ceremony of social integration. Diderikke Brandt adapted this custom by inviting a few students to the parsonage every Sunday afternoon for coffee, cookies, and music. These shy farm boys were honored to attend, and many a future Norwegian-American leader learned to cultivate the manners of the Norwegian elite at the Brandt parsonage.[38] The polished manners of a gentleman, on top of a solid classical humanist education, propelled Luther College graduates into the egalitarian Norwegian-American elite.

Another pressing need was the education of women. Among the Norwegian elite, women were not educated in a Latin school setting, but rather, were tutored in modern languages and other subjects at home. This practice continued in Decorah, where Luther College professors helped with the tutoring and Elisabeth Koren held an informal literary *salon* for young women at Washington Prairie parsonage.[39] Some of these women went on to complete their education in co-educational American colleges and universities, and several had distinguished careers.

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Laur. Larsen was editor of the Synod's journal, *Kirkelig Maanedstidende,* and he needed a printing press in Decorah. In 1867, the Synod engaged a typographer named Brynild Anundsen, a native of Skien, who moved to Decorah to publish the Synod's periodicals.[40] In 1874, Anundsen started a newspaper of his own, *Decorah-Posten*. In order to publish Norwegian books, the Synod needed big presses. The Lutheran Publishing House was established in 1877 in Decorah.[41] Under the leadership of Einar Wulfsberg, whose grandfather had founded Norway's first newspaper, it grew into a large and profitable enterprise. These two publishing houses soon made Decorah a rival to Chicago as America's leading center of Norwegian-language publishing and added many families of typographers, bookbinders, editors, and graphic artists to the local population. Decorah was no Christiania, but it did begin to take on the social profile of a small Norwegian city.[42]

The influence of Luther College radiated far beyond Decorah as graduates spread throughout America. As early as 1869, the University of Wisconsin hired a former Luther College student, Rasmus B. Anderson, to teach Norwegian and Scandinavian culture, as well as Latin, Greek, and logic.[43] This resulted in a permanent transplantation of Luther College's academic traditions to another American institution. Anderson's dream was not a dream of a Norwegian university—he had never been to Norway—but of Nordic languages and culture as part of the curriculum of an American university, where they remain to this day in Madison. Before long, teachers from Luther College founded similar programs at the Universities of Minnesota and North Dakota.[44]

In 1874, the Synod approved a proposal to establish an academy in Northfield, Minnesota, under another Luther College graduate, Th. N. Mohn. St. Olaf's School started as a co-educational, English-oriented preparatory school and enrolled fifty students the very first year.[45] Mohn had never studied in Christiania, and his dream of higher education, like that of Rasmus B. Anderson, was an American dream.

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Carlo Sperati, played by Richard Simon Hanson, the August 2011 History Walk.

By 1874, however, an alternative version of the dream of a Norwegian university had come to America. Georg Sverdrup and Sven Oftedal had just arrived, and theirs was a dream that reflected Christiania of the 1870s, which was different from the Norwegian capital of the 1840s or '50s. Two influential professors of theology in Christiania, Gisle Johnson and C. P. Caspari, had inspired a puritanical religious movement called the Johnsonian awakening. Caspari brought the Formula of Concord from his native Saxony. Gisle Johnson merged this hard-edged Saxon theology with the fervid intensity of Haugean revival practices.[46] Sverdrup and Oftedal experienced this awakening when they were students and brought it to the previously peripatetic Augsburg College and Seminary. They established New Testament Greek, not Latin, as the fundamental classical language, and gave the course of study at Augsburg a theological ardor that contrasted with the more humanist classical curriculum of Luther College.[47]

Det Norske Luther College continued to recruit many faculty members directly from Norway, including Throng Bothne, whose Norwegian literature classes were "like a feast" but who always insisted that things be done as they were *hjemme* (at home).[48] They also recruited American-educated teachers like Andrew Veblen, brother of the famous economist, Thorstein Veblen. Sometimes, talented students like Carlo Sperati, a son of the famous maestro in Christiania, served as part-time instructors. The classical humanist curriculum remained virtually unchanged for decades on end.

Then the thunderbolt of the Election Controversy struck Luther College. Around a third of its supporting congregations left the Norwegian Synod around 1886 and merged with others to form a large, new church body. Th. N. Mohn transformed his Northfield academy into St. Olaf College, which became the official college of this new body.[49] The first eleven male faculty members of St. Olaf College were all Luther College graduates.[50] With the loss of one-third of its base, Luther College's enrollment declined sharply in 1887-88. The following year, Main building was destroyed by fire. A new Main building, erected on the foundations of the old one, was dedicated in 1890.[51] This splendid new structure was attractive, and the college gradually recovered during the last decade of the century, but now, it had substantial rivals among Norwegians in America.

By the 1890s, the Norwegian Synod was ready to deal with the issue of women's education in a new way. Two models existed among American colleges and universities. One was the co-educational model followed by St. Olaf College.[52] The other was a separate "sister college" for women, such as Harvard and Radcliffe, Yale and Vassar, or Columbia and Barnard.[53] This model was adopted by the Norwegian Synod.[54] The classical curriculum of Luther College was not modified to accommodate co-education, but rather, the Norwegian Synod established a sister college for women in Red Wing, Minnesota.[55]

Koren, Larsen, and the other the founding pioneers were growing old by the last decade of the century. They and their contemporaries among Norwegian immigrants began to reflect on what their generation had achieved. A meeting of Luther College alumni in 1895 discussed the need to collect records of the history of Norwegians in America. Luther College already had a small museum of miscellaneous objects. Haldor J. Hanson, a music teacher, was placed in charge of it and quickly began to add artifacts, paintings, documents, and photographs that reflected the Norwegian experience in America. He started Luther College's unrivalled collection of Norwegian-American newspapers, which is now on microfilm. "By 1900, he had ten wall cases and seventeen show cases full of artifacts. By 1901, he was running out of room."[56] In a few short years, Haldor Hanson transformed a miscellaneous college collection into a remarkable Norwegian-American historical museum and archive. This was the beginning of a shift away from trying to replicate a Norwegian dream in America and towards a new emphasis upon preserving the best of the Norwegian legacy.

The students at the turn of the century were largely American-born and educated. They sometimes rebelled against Luther's rigid classical curriculum. The faculty was split, but Larsen would not yield, nor would his successor, C. K. Preus, who became president in 1902. When the matter came to a head in a faculty meeting in 1904, opposition was so fierce that two faculty members, Haldor Hanson and Knut Gjerset, resigned.[57] Gjerset relented and stayed, but the talented Hanson was gone forever.

Knut Gjerset was a graduate of the University of Minnesota with a German Ph.D. from Heidelberg.[58] He taught History and Norwegian and once commented that his students generally spoke some Norwegian but came from homes where the rigors of American frontier life had left little time for cultural pursuits. In college, they came in contact with "the treasures of Norwegian culture" for the first time, and Gjerset said that these treasures gripped their minds "with

great power. For them, the old becomes new, and it glows with the aura of a great saga of the ancient fatherland where their own ancestors had their origins."[59] Teachers like Gjerset; his predecessors, Laur. Larsen, Lyder Siewers, Throndand Gisle Bothne; and their successors to the present day have helped many students regain their heritage as Norwegian Americans.

In 1911, Luther College celebrated its semicentennial while its mother university in Christiania celebrated its centennial. The classical curriculum was still firmly in place at Luther College. The languages of classroom instruction were still Norwegian and English. Change was in the air, because the world was changing, but change came to *Det Norske Luther College* at a creeping pace.

V. The Dream Remembered, 1911-1960

With the departure of Haldor Hanson in 1904, Carlo A. Sperati returned to lead Luther College's music program for the next four decades. In 1914, on the centennial of the Eidsvoll constitution, he was back in his hometown of Christiania, leading the Luther College Band down Karl Johan Boulevard on the Seventeenth of May, along the route his father's band had marched for so many years.[60] The First World War broke out later that summer, and America's entry into the war in 1917 brought a frenzy of anti-immigrant hysteria that almost ended the use of Norwegian as a language of instruction.[61] In 1918, the name of the college was changed from *Det Norske Luther College* to *Luther College.*

Despite constant discussion, however, little changed in the curriculum, except that Hebrew was finally dropped as a graduation requirement in 1919 and the preparatory department was closed in 1928. Meanwhile, under President Preus as curator, the museum grew into a distinctively Norwegian type of folk museum that reflected the lives of ordinary people, rather than the culture of the elite, and in 1913, Luther College started the first open-air museum division in America when the pioneer log home of the Korens was moved to campus.

Koren Library, dedicated in 1921, contained the museum collections as well as the library.[62] It was a state of the art facility designed in consultation with J. C. M. Hanson, a Luther graduate who developed the Library of Congress system and later headed the University of Chicago library.[63] The library and archival collections grew to comprise a major resource for Norwegian-American research with unrivalled collections of Decorah imprints and Norwegian-American newspapers. When President Preus died suddenly of a heart attack in 1921, Oscar L. Olson, an English professor, took over as president, still dedicated to maintaining the classical curriculum.

Knut Gjerset became museum curator and organized exhibitions at the Norse-American Centennial celebration in St. Paul in 1925. The success of these exhibitions motivated Gjerset to move forward with his dream of transforming the Luther College Museum into a national Norwegian-American institution with the archive and an historical association. Gjerset spent the summer of 1925 traveling around to enlist support for his dream. His friend, Ole E. Rölvaag, arranged a meeting in Northfield. At that meeting, Gjerset's dream underwent a metamorphosis and was divided into two parts. The Luther College Museum was renamed the Norwegian-American Historical Museum, while the new Norwegian-American Historical Association came to be located, not in Decorah, but at St. Olaf College. Both were self-designated national Norwegian-American institutions.[64] In 1932, Gjerset acquired a large building in downtown Decorah and moved the museum collections there, where they remain to this day.

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Emily Frank, who taught education and psychology and was first dean of women and Helen Marion Hoff (later Haatvedt), first woman graduate, played by Martha Davis and Jaci Wilkinson in the August 2011 History Walk.

By 1932, America was deep in the Great Depression. Enrollment at Luther College held firm until the academic year 1931-32 and then dropped like a rock, with devastating effect. This deep enrollment crisis provoked serious action. In September of 1931, the faculty carried out a complete modernization of the curriculum. The Latin and Greek graduation requirements were abolished and a system of electives established, with more options in sciences and social sciences.[65] The Norwegian requirement was replaced with a course in Norwegian culture, which remained a requirement until 1952.[66] Once the classical curriculum was gone, nothing stood in the way of co-education. Moreover, Luther's sister school in Red Wing had closed in 1920, strengthening the case for admitting women to Luther. In October of 1931, one month after the curriculum revision, the faculty voted in favor of co-education.[67]

Slowly, the college adjusted to co-education and the new curriculum under President O. J. H. Preus, who took over in 1932. Gradually, Luther began to recover from the Great Depression. In 1936, the Luther College band toured Norway again, and in 1939, Crown Prince Olav and Crown Princess

Märtha made the first of seven Norwegian royal visits to the college.[68]

The Second World War reached deeply into the male student body and saw the Main building destroyed by fire in 1942. The college struggled along until a new Main with the clean, austere lines of the international Bauhaus style could be occupied in 1952. By then, an influx of war veterans drove enrollment to record heights, and an era of postwar expansion had begun under President J. Wilhelm Ylvisaker, who took over when Preus retired in 1948.[69]

VI. Luther and Norway in the Last Half-Century: A Memoir

Luther College celebrated its centennial in 1961. That same year, a major faculty crisis swept away the doctrinaire religious approach that had prevailed since the beginning of the college.[70] In 1963, E. D. Farwell, a proactive, Berkeley-trained administrator, became president and for the next twenty years moved the college steadily into the American mainstream of higher education without losing the egalitarian spirit of leadership and strong sense of community that had always been hallmarks of the college.[71] In 1964, the Norwegian-American Historical Museum received a separate charter and began to separate from the college. Marion J. Nelson served as director from 1964 until 1999 and led the museum in its march toward the status of a major American ethnic museum and the largest museum in the nation devoted to a single ethnic group.

When I came to Luther College in 1967, Norwegian names still dominated among the students and faculty, and the percentage of Lutherans was high. Gradually, the Norwegian character of the college and community faded during the next half-century. The dream of Luther College as a Norwegian university in America had long since given way to the ideals of American liberal education. The local Norwegian-language newspaper, *Decorah-Posten,* ceased publication in 1973 after ninety-nine years. When my generation of faculty colleagues retired in the 1990s, most of our replacements were not Lutherans of Norwegian ancestry, as many of us were.

To this day, however, in the Luther College archives and library, and in the some academic departments, as well as at Vesterheim museum, the Norwegian legacy remains a driving force. Preus Library remains a major resource—in some areas, a unique resource—for research on Norwegians in America.

In 1963, Knut T. Gundersen established an annual summer institute in American studies for teachers from the five Nordic countries as a way of keeping contacts alive between Luther College and contemporary Scandinavia. In 1978, Kathleen Stokker brought her energy, teaching skill, and scholarship to the task of teaching Norwegian language and culture. She was joined by others, including Harley Refsal in Norwegian and folk art. The establishment of the King Olav V endowment in 1982 provided funds to bring teachers from Norway on a one-year basis. Among them has been Øyvind T. Gulliksen.[72] Since 1967, Marv Slind and I have offered courses on immigration history or Scandinavian history, and I established a Museum Studies minor in 1969 that has been taught in cooperation with Vesterheim curators.

At one stage, in a manner unique in American higher education, Norwegian studies were a part of the required first-year curriculum at Luther College. For thirty years towards the end of the twentieth century, Paideia included a Norwegian and Norwegian-American unit with readings like Henrik Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler*, Elisabeth Koren's diary of pioneer life, O. E. Rölvaag's *Giants in the Earth,* and Ingrid Semmingsen's history of Norwegian immigration. A guided tour of Vesterheim was part of the unit. This unit introduced all first-year students to the dreams and traditions that have been part of Luther College from the very beginning. More than that, it was paired with a unit on Africa and African-American life. Through these parallel case studies, more than 10,000 Luther undergraduates were introduced to the processes that have woven ethnic elements from around the globe into the fabric of American life and literature.

The dream of a Norwegian university in America has become an American dream, but it remains a dream with a difference.

In other ways, the Norwegian legacy of the college played a role in establishing programs that extended beyond the campus. The Nobel Peace Prize Forum since 1989 has rotated among five Midwestern colleges founded by Norwegians: Augsburg, Augustana, Concordia, Luther, and St. Olaf. It was held most recently at Luther College in 2011. For two decades, this forum has enriched academic life and international understanding by bringing winners of the Nobel Peace Prize and other outstanding speakers to campus.

In addition, Luther College students and faculty have benefitted from many January, semester, and year-long study programs to Norway.

Promotion of Scandinavian scholarship has also been part of the mix. Between 1979 and 1985, on my initiative, Luther College hosted three international conferences to stimulate cooperation among scholars of Danish, Finnish, Icelandic, Norwegian, and Swedish immigration. In 1985, in celebration of Luther College's 125th anniversary, we hosted the annual meeting of the national Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Studies.

The ties to Norway remain strong. In 2011, the President of Oslo University came to Decorah to inaugurate Luther College's sesquicentennial year [and his convocation address is in the spring 2011 *Agora*]. In June, some 120 scholars from Norway, Canada, and the United States came to Luther College for an international conference on Norwegian immigration. In October, King Harald V and Queen Sonja of Norway will make the eighth visit of Norwegian royalty to Luther College to join the sesquicentennial celebration.

The dream of a Norwegian university in America has become an American dream, but it remains a dream with a difference. Enduring ideals of leadership, academic excellence, egalitarian solidarity, and a shared sense of community have given strength to the college and shaped its ideals for a century

and a half. A legacy of scholarly resources makes Norwegian-American studies the only area in which Luther College is unsurpassed by any other research center in the world. Moreover, Luther College's strongest resource for promoting international understanding still lies in its unbroken tradition of ties to the small, beautiful, peaceful, and environmentally sensitive country of Norway in northern Europe. Agora

Endnotes

[1] Histories of Luther College include J. Th. Ylvisaker, *The Norwegian Luther College* (Decorah: Lutheran Publishing House, 1890); Gisle Bothne, *Det Norske Luther College 1861-1897* (Decorah: Forfatterens Forlag, 1897); Enoch E. Peterson, ed., *Luther College Semi-Centennial 1861-1911* (Des Moines: The Homestead Company, 1911); O. M. Norlie, O. A. Tingelstad & Karl T. Jacobsen, eds., *Luther College Through Sixty Years 1861-1921* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1922); David T. Nelson, *Luther College 1861-1961* (Decorah: Luther College Press, 1961); and Leigh D. Jordahl & Harris E. Kaasa, *Stability and Change: Luther College in Its Second Century* (Decorah: Luther College Press, 1986).

[2] Sources on Ulrik Vilhelm Koren include Paul Koren, ed., *Samlede Skrifter af Dr. theol. V. Koren*, 4 vols. (Decorah: Lutheran Publishing House, 1911-12), and J. R. Christianson, "Ulrik Vilhelm Koren," in David Hudson, Marvin Bergman & Loren Horton, eds., *The Biographical Dictionary of Iowa* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2009), 293-4.

[3] Karen Larsen, *Laur. Larsen: Pioneer College President* (Northfield MN: The Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1936). See also J. R. Christianson, "Laur. Larsen," in Knut Helle et al., *Norsk biografisk leksikon*, 10 vols. (Oslo: Kunnskapsforlaget, 1999-2005), http://snl.no/.nbl_biografi/Laur._Larsen/utdypning (accessed 17 August 2011).

[4] Vilhelm Koren dealt with his school and university days in "Nogle Erindringer fra min Ungdom og fra min første Tid i America," Koren 1911-12, 4: 7-16. On Christiania/Oslo in the 1840s and 1850s, see also Else M. Boye, *Christiania 1814-1905* (Oslo: Grøndahl, 1976); Brynjulf Bull, ed., *Oslo* "Bygd og by i Norge" (Oslo: Gyldendal, 1984); and Knut Are Tvedt, ed., *Oslo byleksikon* (Oslo: Kunnskapsforlaget, 2000).

[5] Lajos Juhasz, "Da Karl Johans gate ble til," *By og Bygd* 1972, 23: 113-54. Sigbjørn Larsen, *Hele Norges Karl Johan* (Oslo: J. W. Cappelen, 1995).

[6] Edv. Mørch, *Da Kristiania var Smaaby* (Kristiania: H. Aschehoug & Co., 1901), gives a lively picture of social life in the cosmopolitan little city of Christiania during the first half of the nineteenth century. On Karl Johan Boulevard as a promenade for all social classes, see 31-45.

[7] Fredrik Barbe Wallem, *Vort universitet gjennem hundrede aar* (Kristiania: Mittet & Co., 1911). Christian August Orland, *Université royale Frédéric à Christiania* (Christiania: W. C. Fabritius & Sønner, 1911).

[8] Koren 1911-12, 4: 9. Years later, Koren would organize the first male chorus at Luther College and edit the hymnal of the Norwegian Synod; see Nelson 1960, 118, and *Psalmebog, udgiven af Synoden for Den Norsk Evangelisk Lutherske Kirke i Amerika* (Decorah: Synodens Forlag, 1875).

[9] On the lively theater crowds of the day, see Mørch 1901, 128.

[10] Koren 1911-12, 4: 11.

[11] Larsen 1936, 23.

[12] Koren 1911-12, 4: 12-3.

[13] Larsen 1936, 17. Susanne Sophie Catharina Siewers (1825-1921) was married on 29 December 1853 to Baron Anton Fredrik Wedel-Jarlsberg (1813-58). The Eidsvoll Constitution abolished titles of nobility for people born after 17 May 1814, so their three children were born commoners, but Siewer's sister remained a baroness until her death in 1921.

[14] Camilla Sperati Strom, *Carlo A. Sperati: The Grand Old Maesto,* ed. J. R. Christianson (Decorah: Luther College Press, 1988), 4, 94-5.

[15] Dagfinn Mannsåker, *Det norske presteskapet i det 19. Hundreåret* (Oslo: Det norske Samlaget, 1954), 19-22. In 1800, there had been 53 pastors for every 100,000 inhabitants, but in 1855, there were only 32, see 68-75.

[16] Koren 1911-12, 4: 11.

[17] Larsen 1946, 31.

[18] On Norwegian immigrants in America, see Ingrid Semmingsen, *Norway to America: A History of the Migration,* trans. Einar Haugen (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1978), and Odd S. Lovoll, *The Promise of America: A History of the Norwegian-American People* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

[19] E. Clifford Nelson, ed., *A Pioneer Churchman: J. W. C. Dietrichson in Wisconsin 1844-1850* (New York: Twayne for NAHA, 1973), 21.

[20] T. F. Gullixson and J. C. K. Preus, "Focal Point of History—Luther Valley," in J. C. K. Preus, T. F. Gullixson, and E. C. Reinertson, eds., *Norsemen Found a Church: An Old Heritage in a New Land* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1953), 63-5.

[21] David T. Nelson, trans. & ed., *The Diary of Elisabeth Koren 1853-1855* (Northfield MN: The Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1955. Vilhelm Koren's memoir in Koren 1911-12, 4: 5-40, deals with his student days in Christiania, but also with their trans-Atlantic journey in 1853 and early days in America.

[22] Nelson 1960, 27-9.

[23] Nelson 1960, 20-33.

[24] Larsen 1936, 15-25. See also Nelson 1960, 40-44.

[25] At the outbreak of war, Concordia College moved from St. Louis to Fort Wayne, Indiana, while Concordia Seminary remained in St. Louis. See Franz A. O. Pieper, "Theological Seminaries, 5. Concordia (St. Louis)," *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1911), 11: 359-60. When the pastors on the University Committee of the Synod (Larsen, Koren, H. A. Preus) submitted a minority motion to continue sending students to St. Louis until the Norwegian college building was finished, Pastor J. N. Fjeld abstained while Pastors A. C. Preus, N. E. Jensen, and C. L. Clausen voted with the large lay majority that defeated the motion, see *Kirkelig Maanedstidende,* September 1861, 267-68. When the minority motion was defeated, the Committee proposed that F. C. Schmidt of the Missouri Synod, rather than a Norwegian, be appointed as Larsen's faculty colleague, and this proposal was adopted

[26] They had also simply spoken of a *skole* and sometimes also used the German *gymnasiet,* see Nelson 1960, 47.

[27] Nelson 1960, 45-47, 379.

[28] Nelson 1960, 48-53.

[29] Norlie 1914, 558. Gisle Johnson arranged for a highly qualified Norwegian student named F. W. Bugge to apply, but when the call came with conditions, Bugge declined it. He went on to teach at Christiania University and eventually became Bishop of Norway's capital. One of Larsen's star pupils, Jacob D. Jacobsen, filled in as a substitute teacher in 1863. J. A. Ottesen recruited Siewers on a trip to

Norway. See also J. Magnus Rohne, *Norwegian American Lutheranism Up to 1872* (New York: Macmillan, 1926), 221-2, and Nelson 1960, 379.

[30]On Siewers, see Norlie et al. 1922, 18, 94,119; Johs. B. Wist, ed., *Norsk-Amerikanernes festskrift 1914* (Decorah: The Symra Company, 1914), 77-8; Larsen 1936, 197; Bothne 1897, 48. His sister, Ada (1828-1912), accompanied him to America. In 1868, Lyder Siewers married Trine Brandt (1841-1909), a relative of Pastor Nils Brandt.

[31] Knud Throndsen in *Emigranten,* quoted in Nelson 1960, 68.

[32] Karen Larsen, "A Newcomer Looks at American Colleges," *Norwegian-American Studies and Records* 1938, 10: 107-26.

[33] Laur. Larsen, "Course of Instruction, Luther College, 1872," translated by J. R. Christianson, *Agora: A Journal of Interdisciplinary Discourse* (Decorah: Luther College, 1997), 9/1-2: 96-101, see 97. In his introduction to what was essentially the first catalogue of Luther College, Larsen explained that the three ancient languages, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, took nearly half of the six-year curriculum (counting two years in the preparatory department), while Norwegian, English, and German were also required subjects. He added that these six languages and world history and geography, arithmetic, algebra, geometry, natural history, and Christianity were all to be learned "with good, old-fashioned Norwegian thoroughness." This curriculum and Larsen's defense of it expressed a Lutheran humanist ideal of higher education that went back to Wittenberg University under Martin Luther and Philipp Melanchthon in the first half of the sixteenth century. Larsen concluded, "it is of utmost importance to be able to understand the exact words used by the Holy Spirit in speaking to humanity, and to be familiar with the people and the times within which this part of the word of God was written."

[34] Lloyd Hustvedt, *Rasmus Bjørn Anderson: Pioneer Scholar* (Northfield: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1966), 51.

[35] Nelson 1960, 48.

[36] Norlie et al. 1922, 89-90, 133.

[37] Bothne 1897, 182-9, contains a description of Diderikke Brandt and her achievement written in part by Laur. Larsen.

[38] Nelson 1960, 124-25. A fictionalized version of her parties for students is described in Peer Strømme, *Halvor: A Story of Pioneer Youth*, trans. Inga B. Norstog & David T. Nelson (Decorah: Luther College, 1960), 135-7. Cf. P. O. Strømme, *Erindringer* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1923), 211.

[39] Nelson 1960, 127-28. Elisabeth Koren knew that her grandmother, Christiane Koren, had been a literary figure of sorts in Norway and also held a literary salon, see Sofie Aubert Lindbæk, *"Moer Korens" Dagbøger* (Kristiania: H. Aschehoug & Co., 1915). J. R. Christianson, "Literary Traditions of Norwegian-American Women," in Odd S. Lovoll, ed., *Makers of an American Immigrant Legacy: Essays in Honor of Kenneth O. Bjork* (Northfield: NAHA, 1980), 92-110. These young women also had a strong social conscience. They and their friends started a charitable organization in 1881 that met weekly to sew, perform music, and listen to readings of literature. Every second meeting was conducted in Norwegian, and the readings included modern social realism such as Ibsen's plays and Nordahl Rolfsen's *Smelte Isak,* and Ruskin's Christian socialism. They made a point of inviting Norwegian kitchen maids from the country to participate. Two of these young women eventually joined the Schreuder Mission in Zululand. See "Young Ladies' Society (Resumé written about 1899)," manuscript in the archives of First Lutheran Church, Decorah.

[40] J. R. Christianson, "Brynild Anundsen," in David Hudson, Marvin Bergman & Loren Horton, eds., *The Biographical Dictionary of Iowa* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2009), 20-1.

[41] Halvorsen 1903, 211-15.

[42] J. R. Christianson, "Shaping the Culture of an Immigrant College Town: Decorah, Iowa, 1850-1890," in *Scandinavian Immigrants and Education in North America*, eds. Philip J. Anderson, Dag Blanck & Peter Kivisto (Chicago: Swedish-American Historical Society, 1995), 76-100. J. R. Christianson, "Small Towns and Scandinavian-American Urban Life: A Case Study in the History of Mentality," in *Swedes in America: Intercultural and Interethnic Perspectives on Contemporary Research,* ed. Ulf Beijbom (Växjö: The Swedish Emigrant Institute, 1993), 78-90. J. R. Christianson, "The Urbanization of Immigrant Peasants: Can Music Help?" in *Scandinavians and Other Immigrants in Urban America,* ed. Odd S. Lovoll (Northfield: Saint Olaf College Press, 1985), 171-87.

[43] Hustvedt 1966, 89-103.

[44] The Scandinavian program at the University of Minnesota was founded in 1884 by O. J. Breda, a Christiania-educated scholar who taught at Luther College 1879-84. He was succeeded at Minnesota by Gisle Bothne, a graduate, faculty member, and son of a faculty member at Luther College. George T. Rygh founded the Scandinavian Studies program at the University of North Dakota in 1891, and John Tingelstad was his successor for many years; both were Luther College graduates. See George T. Flom, "Nordiske studier ved amerikanske universiteter," *Symra* 1906: 166-67. George T. Flom, *A History of Scandinavian Studies in American Universities* (Iowa City: University of Iowa, 1907), 25-26.

[45] Joseph M. Shaw, *Bernt Julius Muus: Founder of St. Olaf College* (Northfield: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1999), 233-49. Mohn brought in two more teachers that first year: Lars S. Reque, also a Luther College graduate, and a woman named Ella Fiske. Reque returned to Decorah after one year and joined the Luther faculty.

[46] Einar Molland, *Church Life in Norway 1800-1950,* trans. Harris Kaasa (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1957), 35-65.

[47] Carl H. Chrislock, *From Fjord to Freeway: 100 Years, Augsburg College* (Minneapolis: Augsburg College, 1969), 9-13 and 20.27. James S. Hamre, *Georg Sverdrup: Educator, Theologian, Churchman* (Northfield: Norwegian-Americn Historical Association, 1986), 50-51. Theodore C. Blegen summarized the early histories of Luther College, Augsburg College, and St. Olaf College in "The Problem of Higher Education," *Norwegian Migration to America: The American Transition* (Northfield: NAHA, 1940), 517-42.´´

[48] P. J. Eikeland, "Throndsen Bothne som lærer," *Symra* 1908, 10-24: "[Man] gik til Bothnes timer som til en fest." A. A. Veblen, "At Luther College, 1877-1881," *The Palimpsest* 1975, 56/5: 153-54. Johannes B. Wist characterized Bothne i vivid terms in Wist 1914, 112-14.

[49] Joseph M. Shaw, *History of St. Olaf College 1874-1974* (Northfield: St. Olaf College Press, 1974), 59-85.

[50] Nelson 1960, 100. One attended Luther but did not graduate. There were also three women on the faculty.

[51] Nelson 1960, 133-37.

[52] Gisle Bothne, who graduated in 1878 and joined his father on the faculty in 1881, was a strong advocate of this approach, see Nelson 1960, 144.

[53] Radcliffe was founded in 1879, had joint instruction with Harvard from 1943, and was absorbed into Harvard in 1999. Vassar was founded in 1861; Yale first admitted female graduate students in 1876; Yale and Vassar both became coeducational in 1969. Barnard was founded in 1889 and affiliated with Columbia in 1900.

[54] Nelson 1960, 143-45. See also Norlie 1925, 375-99, for Norwegian-American higher education 1890-1925.

[55] H. Allen in Halvorsen 1903, 176-80. Red Wing Lutheran Ladies' Seminar was incorporated in 1889, but construction was

delayed by hard times until the autumn of 1894. Around the same time, the Norwegian Synod started a teachers's college in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and a number of local, co-educational academies sprang up in Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, the Dakotas, Texas, and the west coast, where Pacific Lutheran College was started in 1890. They were all founded and initially staffed by graduates of Luther College and affiliated with the Norwegian Synod, but the dream that inspired them tended to be a Norwegian-American dream, not one imported from Norway.

[56] J. R. Christianson, "Vesterheim," *The Palimpsest* 1975, 56/5: 133.

[57] Nelson 1960, 180-81.

[58] David T. Nelson, "Knut Gjerset," *Norwegian-American Studies* 1972, 25: 27-53.

[59] Knut Gjerset, "Litt om Nordmændene i Amerika i 1914," *Symra,* ed. Kristian Prestgard et al. (Decorah: The Symra Company, 1914), 151.

[60] A lavishly illustrated account of the 1914 Luther College band tour of Norway and Europe is J. C. K. Preus, O. A. Tingelstad & J. A. Molstad, *Norgesfærden: Luther College Concert Band and Chorus, koncertturnéen 1914* (Decorah: Udgivernes Forlag, 1914).

[61] Carl H. Chrislock, *Ethnicity Challenged: The Upper Midwest Norwegian-American Experience in World War I* (Northfield: Norwgian-American Historical Association, 1981).

[62] Karl T. Jacobsen, "The Reorganization of the Library of a Small College," *The Library Quarterly* 1934, 4/2: 234-243.

[63] W. W. Bishop, "J. C. M. Hanson and International Cataloging," *The Library Quarterly* 1934, 4/2: 165-68. Lois Mai Chan, "Still Robust at 100: A Century of LC Subject Headings," *Library of Congress Information Bulletin,* August 1998, at http://www.loc.gov/loc/lcib/9808/lcsh-100.html (accessed 22.08.2011). Pierce Butler, "James Christian Meinich Hanson," *The Library Quarterly* 1934, 4/2: 127-35, is a bio-bibliography of Hanson. See also Oivind M. Hovde, ed., *What Became of Jens?: A Study in Americanization Based on Reminiscences of J. C. M. Hanson, 1864-1943* (Decorah: Luther College Press, 1974).

[64] For various views on the origins of the Norwegian-American Historical Museum (now Vesterheim) and Norwegian-American Historical Association, see Nelson 1972, 34-46; Lloyd Hustvedt, "The NAHA and its Antecedents," in *Americana Norvegica*, *Vol. III,* ed. Harald S. Naess & Sigmund Skard (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1971), 294-306; Odd S. Lovoll & Kenneth O. Bjork, *The Norwegian-American Historical Association 1925-1975* (Northfield: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1975), 9-21; and J. R. Christianson, "Myth, History, and the Norwegian-American Historical Association," in *Nordics in America: The Future of Their Past*, ed. Odd S. Lovoll (Northfield: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1993), 63-72.

[65] The Bachelor of Arts remained the only degree, as it does to this day as an expression of the college's traditional position of egalitarian solidarity. A proposal to introduce the Bachelor of Science degree failed by one vote in the faculty during the 1990s.

[66] Nelson 1960, 214, 238-43.

[67] Shenanigans on the Board of Education of the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America delayed final approval of co-education by the larger church body until 1936. In the meantime, a community group including Pastor T. A. Hoff of First Lutheran Church in Decorah, the last president of Red Wing Lutheran Ladies Seminary and a strong advocate of co-education, set up a "sister college" in Decorah, whose students attended classes at Luther. This effectively made Luther College a co-educational institution from the academic year 1932-33.

[68] Jens Schive and Hans Olav, *Med Kronprinsparet – for Norge!: 70 dagers ferd gjennem stjernebannerets land* (Oslo: H. Aschehoug, 1939), 112-122.

[69] The boom era in higher education that began in the late forties was a new era of dreamers and dreams. Among them was a dazzling new dream of a Norwegian university in America. It came, not from Norway, but from California, the quintessential American land of dreams, and the dreamer was Orville Dahl, Ed.D., head of the Division of Higher Education of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (known 1917-46 as the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America). Dahl was appointed in 1957 to locate a site for a new Lutheran college in southern California. He found the site and began to promote a dream, not only of building a new Norwegian Lutheran college in southern California, but of linking all the Norwegian Lutheran colleges of America—Luther, St. Olaf, Augustana Sioux Falls, Concordia, Pacific Lutheran, possibly even Augsburg, which at that time was not affiliated with the ELC—into one large university system, scattered across half the continent. Each campus would continue to provide an undergraduate education, but specialized postgraduate programs would be developed on individual campuses in a way that would as a whole create a full university curriculum. It was a vision of staggering breadth, but only a pipe dream, because none of the colleges bought into it. Dr. Dahl was left with the task of building a new college, California Lutheran College, from the ground up as its first president.

[70] Kaasa and Jordahl 1986, 23-46.

[71] Within a year, the college had adopted the 4-1-4 calendar of two semesters separated by a January term. In 1966, non-Lutheran faculty members became eligible for tenure for the first time. However, Farwell's proposal for an experimental paracollege ran contrary to Luther's tradition of egalitarian solidarity and was defeated by one vote in the faculty in 1968.

[72] Pål Espolin Johnson also taught at Luther College in 1984-85 and wrote a series of letters to *Lillehammer Tilskuer* about his experiences in Ronald Reagan's America, which were published as a slender book called *Amerika-brev: Epistler* (Oslo: Cappelen, 1985), but he had very little to say about the college.