

# Nordic-American Psalmofonforbundet

“ A Society dedicated to the education and preservation of the Psalmofon and Sifferskrift Music. ”



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## Notes from

### MUSIC-ON-A-STRING

Beatrice Hole

*The wonderful warm days of summer have arrived. As I write this, I am at the neighboring Arboretum in Chanhassen, Minnesota thinking and letting my thoughts take shape. This is a wonderful place of new growth, scents, colors and sounds and yet silence. Have you noticed how scents can stir our memories and we can recall certain times and places of long ago?*

*It's the same with music on the old psalmodikon. How thankful we can be for the gift of music. Recently I've heard from many of you who have been busy playing at different venues. I've written of my recent visits to historical churches and studying the old hymns filled with many memories. How thankful we can be for our ancestors with their religious beliefs and who built so many fine churches and colleges. By playing our psalmodikons we, too, are contributing to carrying on a tradition of church history.*

*In going over the mailing list, I see a few of you are not current with your dues. Please check the date on your address label. Look forward to hearing from you.*

*I'm thankful for all of you and your continued interest of the psalmodikon.*

*May you always have a song in your heart and music at your fingertips!*

## TOUR OF HISTORICAL CHURCHES IN MINNESOTA

Beatrice Hole

The Norwegian-American Historical Association is located in Northfield, Minnesota. [NAHA](#) has a large membership and board of directors, who not only publish several newsletters throughout the year, but work to fulfill the mission of NAHA, which is to locate, preserve, and interpret the Norwegian-American experience with accuracy, integrity, and liveliness. They also have several items relating to the history of the psalmodikon, a musical instrument of the early immigrants.

In May, NAHA arranged a tour of three 19th century Norwegian-American rural churches in Minnesota's Rice and Goodhue counties. These rural churches are no longer used for regular worship services but have been preserved with a keen appreciation of their historical importance and with the time and monies required to preserve them.

The psalmodikon and I were invited to participate in the program at the [Valley Grove Church](#). The psalmodikon always plays such sweet soft music in these old historic churches. It was very interesting to make the compar-



Next stop was the two Valley Grove Churches near Nerstrand, Minnesota.

son with the nice little pipe organ which is in very good condition and is still played for special occasions.

No doubt the psalmodikon was played for worship services here until they could afford the pipe organ. Then as often happened, because of the limitations of the psalmodikon, it was put aside.

Special services are held in the church on the right (see picture). It was built in 1862, and worship continued until 1973. It is now open for special occasions.

The first church, on the left was built in 1862 and was where we were served a lunch. It is now used for meetings and serving food.



Above: The first stop was at the [Hauge Lutheran Church](#) near Kenyon, Minnesota (1875-1902). It is interesting how such buildings have shaped the Norwegian-American experience.

Two names on the wall records, that I recall, were Pastors [Bernt Julius Muus](#) and Preus, who were early immigrant pastors.

The third and last stop was at the Old [Trondhjem Church](#) located near Lonsdale, Minnesota, in Rice County (see picture below). It was built by Norwegian immigrant farmers on a hilltop with a view of the rolling countryside. The first church on this location was constructed in 1878. In 1899, it was redesigned and rebuilt incorporating parts of the first church.

It is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is used to display the history of the church and for appropriate functions such as community events, concerts, family reunions, and weddings.

History of this area begins with the Dakota Indians who lived here for untold generations and were the first corn farmers here. In the 1850s after a treaty was signed with the Dakota Indians, the land was opened to European settlers. When the Norwegians arrived, this area reminded them of Trondhjem, the town in Norway where they originated from, and thus the name was given.

Something unusual about the Trondhjem Church is an eye that is painted in the round blue circle on the outside wall. This is depicted as the eye of God keeping watch over all. 



## GRATULERER MED DAGEN!

On behalf of the Nordic-American Psalmodikonforbundet, I would like to extend a special birthday greeting to **LARRY GJENVICK** of Brookfield, Wisconsin, who will be celebrating his 90th birthday on August 28th! -B.H.

# WEST COAST REPORT

from Jean Akre

Again this year, we played for Johan Vineyard's 17th of May celebration on Saturday, May 14. Dag Johan Sundby is from Oslo and likes having a celebration at his winery. This year the Psalmodikons were not making music alone. The Scandinavian Choir also sang several songs and a Leikarringen group from Portland danced their hearts out. The weather was rather cold, however, no major downpour. We were playing outside and under cover. They were prepared this year for rain as they had a big tent put up where people could sit to enjoy the wine and food.

For a little bit of trivia, Paul and Rodger went to a store close to where Beatrice and Rodger live for a bottle of wine and that is how we discovered Johan Vineyard. Paul

thought it sounded a little Norwegian — and sure enough it is.

Then on June 4, we put on a program for the West Hills Assisted Living facility where our 97-year-old Norwegian friend, Johanna, lives. There were around 15 residents that attended, and we received lots of comments after the performance. Some of residents have not recently heard the old familiar hymns and really enjoyed them. (Not a one fell asleep, including Johanna, who usually falls asleep during programs!) The Psalmodikon players stayed for lunch, and everyone enjoyed the choices of food. I will see if we can go back sometime this autumn.

We would love to have you visit — It has been almost 16 years since the Minnesota and Wisconsin group came to Portland. — Can you believe that? It is time to come West again!!

## EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT THE PSALMODIKON — AND MORE!



MUSICMAKERS KITS, INC. in Stillwater, Minnesota has several videos on [YouTube](https://youtu.be/Tdzm9y7frit4) (<https://youtu.be/Tdzm9y7frit4>)

pertaining to the Scandinavian Psalmodikon. They show some basic tips on playing and building your own instrument. "How to Play the Psalmodikon" as well as "How to Build a Psalmodikon". They are very well done and informative.

Another interesting video is music played on the New Cypress Psalmodikon. This is a slightly different version of the psalmodikon in that it has a hinged top and inside the box is where you can store your bow, etc.

Another video shows a player on the [langspil](#), a folk instrument from Iceland. It resembles a zither and has three strings. 

*An old fiddler was once asked a question:  
"What is the secret to good fiddling?"  
The old fiddler replied: "You've got to have a  
good drummer."*

# Hans Nielsen Hauge

text borrowed from *New Book of Festivals & Commemorations*

**H**ans Nielsen Hauge was born 3 April 1771, on a farm, *Hauge*, from which Hans took his surname, in Rolvsøy in Østfold, Norway. His father was Niels Mikkelsen Evenrød. His family was deeply Christian, with regular family prayers and daily Bible reading, and attended lay religious meetings. Young Hauge thought deeply about religious matters. He feared that he would not go to heaven when he died, a fear intensified through several experiences that brought him face to face with death.

Not formally educated, Hauge was very skilled in carpentry and machinery repair. As a village handyman and helping on the family farm, Hauge continued to engage in religious work.

His first interest was religion. He read deeply in Lutheran catechetical and devotional literature, participated in parish worship, and private prayer meetings. He spoke to others about their faith. His friends called him “Holy”.

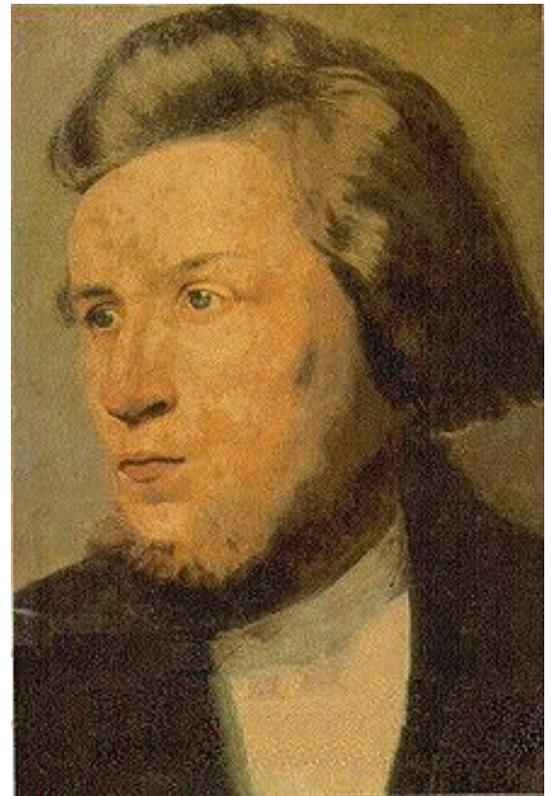
On 5 April 1796, [Hans Nielsen Hauge](#) had a mystical experience that set the course of his life! He felt suddenly at peace about his own salvation, feeling

sure of his call to preach. In 1800 he launched a one-man preaching crusade, traveling throughout Norway and Denmark. He wrote about his faith, producing about 30 books. The best known is *Reiser og Vigtigste Hændelser (Journeys and Important Events)*.

Hauge encountered stern opposition. It was unthinkable that a farm boy should teach religion. That was the calling of the clergy. He was in violation of the “Ordinance of 13th January 1741” (Conventicle Act of 1741), *requiring that the local pastor be informed of the time and place of any religious meetings to be held within the parish. The pastor was obliged to attend and had authority to forbid such meetings. Only a few people were permitted to gather, the meetings had to be held during the day, men and women were to meet in separate places, and it was forbidden that lay people travel about and preach* — also known as itinerant preaching.

Church authorities were opposed to Hauge because some thought he put too much stress on good works; the civil authorities were opposed to him because some feared he would stir up a peasants’ revolt. After repeated arrests, he was taken into custody in 1804 to be held for full investigation, and his imprisonment lasted ten years.

With his health broken after a long ordeal of arrests and time served in prison, he died on 29 March 1824. He



is buried in the cemetery at Old Aker Church in Oslo.

Hauge’s influence in Norway was at its peak during the greatest Norwegian immigration to America. The [Haugean](#) spirit was among the main streams of Norwegian-American Lutheranism its growth and deepening spiritual life, particularly that of the laity.

The [Hauge Synod](#) — formally, Hauge’s Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Synod in America — was established in 1846 and merged in 1917 with other Norwegian Lutheran church bodies. A few congregations in North America are named for Hauge.

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*I have felt that the psalmodikon came into being because of the Hauge era. Many people were renewed of their faith and returned to church worship. Oftentimes they only had the psalmodikon to lead them in their worship services. — B.H.*



Haugianerne (*Haugeans*) by [Adolph Tidemand](#) (1848-1852).



# Visiting Dillner's Grave Site

from Beatrice Hole

The organization of the Swedish Psalmodikon players will be holding their Annual Meeting at the Aspånäs farm in Östervåla, Sweden on 26-28 August 2016.

In reading their itinerary for the weekend it took me back to August, 1995 when the psalmodikon and I attended the meeting of the Nordiska Psalmodikonförbundet under the direction of Rodney Sjöberg of Trollhättan, Sweden.

The above photo is of me at the grave site of Pastor [Johan Dillner](#)<sup>1</sup> where we held a brief prayer service.

What a rewarding experience for me to play my psalmodikon standing on the same spot in the church where Johan Dillner played his psalmodikon. — Which, by the way, was still located in the Östervåla Church. I remember leading the congregation that evening as we sang “Children of the Heavenly Father” and how amazed I was when they sang all six verses without a text book.

Another highlight was to attend the Grand Opening and Dedication of the Psalmodikon Museum next to the Östervåla Church. The museum is home to about 40 psalmodikons, part of a collection of Rodney Sjöberg of Trollhättan and many pieces of literature and photos about psalmodikon history. I donated my first recording of Psalmodikon Music (a tape cassette in those days) to the Museum! What a great trip that was!



I visited the Museum once again in August, 2005. More psalmodikons had been added and was being kept up very nicely. I noticed the shelves that Rodger and I helped assemble, under the direction of Rodney Sjöberg and his wife were still there!

The Nordic-American Psalmodikonförbundet sends our best wishes for a fun-filled meeting with lots of good psalmodikon music.



<sup>1</sup> Swedish link

## Mulling over the Norwegian Hymns

Beatrice Hole

Often times when I've been looking for something different to play on the psalmodikon, I try to think back of when I grew up in the Norwegian Lutheran Church and try to recall the names of my favorite Norwegian hymns. In my search, I came upon several items of interest in the history of hymns.

One of my favorite springtime hymns is “The Leaves upon the Linden”, long associated with Syttende Mai. These are the first two verses of twelve:

1. *The leaves upon the Linden, are growing in the lees / The whole creation blossoms with budding summer trees.*
2. *The lovely days when springtime comes north and water flows, / and out of this great wonder, new life springs forth and grows.*

The text above is written by Elias Blix (1836-1902), one of Norway's most well-known writers about springtime. The tune is by Ludvig Lindeman (1812-1887).

Lindeman was a Norwegian composer and collector of over 2000 folk songs, as many of the hymns today will bear witness to. He traveled the county transcribing the music that people sang and played. Perhaps the most well-known hymn, “Built on a Rock”, is by Lindeman also. Another is “Easter Morrow Stills our Sorrow”.

Petter Dass (1647-1707) is one of Norway's first great hymn writers. A pastor in Alstahaug, Norway, his poem “Nordland's Trumpet” was the first long poem about the northern regions of Norway. The hymn, “Jesus Came with Simple Things” is a new favorite baptismal hymn in Norway, with its vigorous tune and lively explanation of baptism from Dass' Singing Catechism.

Many hymns are of the influence of folk tunes. Edvard Grieg claimed that every note of his own compositions was influenced by Norwegian folk songs. While Grieg seldom set foot in the church, it is interesting that his final composition was

a collection of Four Motets of religious folk songs for choir.

While sacred texts from Danish and Swedish writers previously dominated the Church of Norway, the last few years we have seen an explosion of Norwegian sacred texts. This has promoted many composers to write new hymn tunes.

Several of them can be found in the new Evangelical Lutheran Worship Book:

- “We Raise our Hands”
- “Who Keeps the Watch in Creation's Night?”
- “Lord, When you Called your Disciples”
- “Seed that in Earth is Dying”
- “Oh Lord, I Place Into Your Hands”.

We should try playing these new songs on our psalmodikon and see if they work as well as the old faithful ones. Perhaps we could add something new to our repertoire.





Maple fret board w/frets	30.00
Sitka spruce top material:	
small psalmodikon	17.00
tapered psalmodikon	22.00
Cherrywood violin bow	28.00
Rosin	5.00

## ITEMS FOR SALE

**PSALMODIKON SONGBOOK** (revised edition) written in Sifferskrift and 4-part harmony for psalmodikons  
**\$19.00 pp**

**PSALMODIKON QUARTET CD** **\$15.00 pp**

*Send orders to:*

Singsaas Lutheran Church  
 Attn: Music CD's  
 P. O. Box 87,  
 Hendricks, MN 56136  
<http://www.countrychurchmusic.com/>

### PSALMODIKON COMPONENTS

Psalmodikon Pattern	\$10.00
Tuning Peg	3.75
String	1.25
Fine tuner w/tailpiece	17.75

*Send orders to:*

Floyd Foslien  
 567 High Ridge Drive  
 Hudson, WI 54016  
[www.fffoslien@sbcglobal.net](http://www.fffoslien@sbcglobal.net)

### Notes from Floyd:

These are usually the most difficult components for builders to obtain. I can, however, provide all of the other component parts required to make *psalmodikons*, if the builder is unable to make them or find them locally. You may contact me for prices.

I also sell a complete kit of parts to make a *psalmodikon* for \$130.00. This kit instrument is modelled after an antique Norwegian *salmodikon* (Norwegian spelling) similar to one used by Lars Roverud. He was the "Father" of the Norwegian *salmodikon* and is credited with using transposition sticks to allow playing in various keys without re-tuning so this kit includes a transposition stick. The parts are cut to size and need only to be glued together, sanded, and finished with varnish or lacquer.

## Greetings from Readers

2016 dues enclosed. "Keep that string humming!"

— *W. Reynolds – Poughkeepsie, New York*

Dear Beatrice,

We have fond memories of our day with you learning about the psalmodikon. We still hope to join you again at one of your meetings.

I don't play it very often but I did get a psalmodikon kit from Floyd foslien and completed the instrument. I did demonstrate the psalmodikon at a Sons of Norway meeting in 2014. Can't believe how fast the years go by.

We enjoy the Newsletter and enclose our membership. Thank you for all you do to spread the music.

— *Helen and Lee Lunos – Roseau, Minnesota*



## Nordic-American Psalmodikonforbundet & Newsletter

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The *Nordic-American Psalmodikonforbundet Newsletter* is published in the Spring, Summer, and Autumn. We are always looking for newsworthy items and photos that you want to share with other readers.

The **\$8.00 membership fee** helps to cover the cost of printing and postage for the Newsletter, annual fee for the Psalmodikon Web Site, and annual meeting expenses.

Check the date on your mailing label which indicates if your dues are current.

Send membership dues to: Beatrice Hole  
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## **ANNUAL MEETING**

*It has been decided that there will not be an official Annual Meeting this Summer. Hopefully we can put forth a little more effort and have a Summer get-together next year. — Would love to hear from you folks!*



### **NORDIC-AMERICAN PSALMODIKONFORBUNDET**



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