

## HISTORICAL SKETCH

### Family History

Near the close of the eighteenth century, Gunbjørn Haugen lived in Eggedal (Sogn), Sigdahl's parish (prestegjæld) Norway. He was married twice. By his first wife, Aase, he had three children: Reiar, Bjørn, and Eli. By his second wife he had two children: Aase and Lars.

Gunbjørn Haugen became quite wealthy, lived to the good old age of ninety-nine years, and was buried in Eggedal's cemetery. Reiar emigrated to America and settled in one of the Southern States, where he and his entire family died during the cholera epidemic. Eli lived in Eggedal. Aase married Anders Veggstru of Sigdal. Lars moved to Drammen. Bjørn obtained his father's estate, called Nord Haugen, which he operated for twenty-one years. He was married to Ingeborg Teigen on December 15, 1833, in Eggedal's Church. Bjørn became quite wealthy. By his birthright he obtained his father's farm, and he purchased two adjoining farms.

In 1854, in his forty-eighth year, he decided to go to America. In all haste the estate was sold and Bjørn Haugen and family embarked for America. The difficult trip by sailship required almost fourteen weeks. Bjørn Haugen carried somewhat over \$2,000.00 in gold on his person.

From the eastern seaboard these immigrants came to the Middle West by way of the Erie canal, where the immigrants were crowded into open canal boats, then through the Great Lakes to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and thence by ox-cart to Lansing, Iowa, where the trip was suddenly stopped. Mother was ill. The authorities pronounced her illness cholera. Word was sent to her sister, Mrs. Embregt Haugen living three miles southwest of Decorah, who immediately left with her son Peter. However, travel with oxen was slow and before this sister could reach Lansing, Ingeborg died and was buried.

Bjørn Haugen bought land in Madison township, Winneshiek County, Iowa. Although he had spent his youth and energy farming in Norway, he now could apply the knowledge obtained in agricultural pursuits to the best advantage.

Bjørn Haugen and family became members of the Little Iowa congregation soon after coming to America. When a Lutheran congregation was organized in Decorah in 1863, Bjørn Haugen and family transferred to that congregation.

For twenty-five years the Haugen family lived a quiet, frugal, industrious life. Then changes came. The eldest daughter, Ragnhild,

died in 1879, followed soon by the eldest son, Gunbjørn, whose death was a severe blow to the family. Gulbrand died in 1884. On September 23, 1890, Bjørn Haugen died, leaving his estate to be divided between his two remaining children, Aase and Jorand.



Aase Haugen

Aase Haugen was thirteen years of age when she came to America. She had obtained her early schooling in Norway, but it was quite meagre. Writing and arithmetic were not taught the girls attending school at that time. Upon the death of her mother at Lansing, Iowa, it devolved upon Aase to take her mother's place in the home.

She walked ten miles from her home to the Washington Prairie parsonage to prepare for confirmation and was confirmed by Rev. V. Koren the first Sunday after Easter in 1856. The confirmation took place in the home of Thore Skotland in Calmar Township. In spite of her meagre schooling and the heavy duties resting upon Aase, it is most gratifying to read the testimony of her pastor at the time of her confirmation, "Meget god kristendomskundskab."



In her younger days Aase became engaged to a young man, Ole Baglie from Sigdal, Norway, but her father objected to the match. Not wishing to do anything which might displease him, she postponed her marriage. Baglie died a few years later and was buried at Ada, Minnesota. Aase placed a monument on his grave. The engagement ring Aase took with her to her grave.

August 25, 1893, Aase's sister Jorand died and Aase was now alone. She often spoke of the following days and years as dark and dreary, but "days in which God led me to love Him more and to understand His ways better." Aase often asked, "Why has the Lord dealt thus with me? All my dear family is taken from me. Here I am left with more wealth than I can ever use. But the Lord will show a way."

Aase was very kind-hearted. Many were her gifts to needy people and often her kindness and generosity were shamefully abused. To the Church and its many activities she gave liberally. "It makes me so happy to give of the means God has intrusted to me," Aase said to one soliciting funds for a children's home. To Decorah Lutheran Church, of which she was a member, she gave a pipe-organ costing \$1,650.00. She gave generously to young men preparing to enter the ministry.

Aase was a woman of few words. She preferred to listen to others. She was regular in her church attendance, taking an active part in all church work.

A few years before her death her physician informed her that she was suffering from cancer and that an operation was necessary. She immediately sought her pastor, Rev. Otto E. Schmidt, requesting that he make all the arrangements for an operation.

Upon her return from the hospital, realizing that her days were numbered, she made her will. She gave her entire estate to the Church. The second paragraph of her will reads as follows:

"I give, bequeath, and devise all of my property which I may own at the time of my death to the United Norwegian Lutheran Church of America to be used in establishing and maintaining a home for aged people under the name of 'The Aase Haugen Home.'"

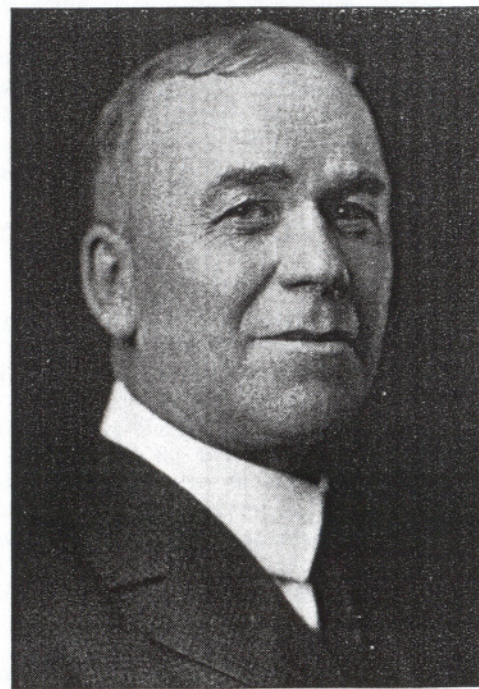
Aase began to lose strength and it became apparent that she would soon finish her sojourn here. But she was happy, thanking God for His goodness and mercy, for His Fatherly guidance and care, "at jeg som en fattig synderinde har fundet fred, trøst, og hvile i Jesu blod og retfærdighed" (that I, a poor sinner, have found peace, comfort, and rest in the blood of Jesus and His righteousness).

Aase Haugen died August 13, 1910, aged sixty-nine years, four months, and five days.

### Founding of the Aase Haugen Home

In 1911 the Decorah Circuit elected Rev. O. E. Schmidt to solicit subscriptions, in the congregations belonging to the circuit, for the erection of The Aase Haugen Home. The people responded very generously, \$32,483.60 being subscribed during the year, of which amount \$24,317.46 were paid in cash.

At the annual meeting of the former United Norwegian Lutheran Church in 1912, the Board of Trustees recommended "that the proposed Aase Haugen Home be established on the Aase Haugen farm near Decorah, Iowa." A resolution was passed, instructing the Board of Trustees of the Church to proceed with the erection of the Home. (Report of the annual meeting of 1912, page 237.)



Mr. W. B. Ingvaldstad

Has been a member of the Board for twenty-five years with the exception of one year



At the annual meeting of the former United Norwegian Lutheran Church in 1913, the following members were elected to the Board of Directors for The Aase Haugen Home: Rev. N. Arveson, of St. Olaf, Iowa; Rev. Jacob Fjelde, of Waukon, Iowa; Mr. E. R. Thompson, of Cresco, Iowa; and Rev. Otto E. Schmidt, Mr. W. B. Ingvaldstad, and Mr. H. C. Hjerleid, of Decorah, Iowa. (Report of the annual meeting of 1913, page 210.)

The Board of Directors of The Aase Haugen Home at its third meeting (March 25, 1914) received bids for the erection of the Home based on plans and specifications made by Mr. Ralston of Waterloo, Iowa. The Board accepted the bid of Mr. J. A. Austad for the erection of the building at \$28,528.00, and the bid of Peter Johnson & Sons, plumbing and heating, at \$6,385.00.

The erection of the building was begun in April, 1914. To supply water, a cement reservoir was built on the highest point near the farm buildings, the water being conveyed to the building site by a two and a half inch pipe-line, which assured an adequate water supply. Later a septic tank system was added to dispose of all sewage.

The building was completed late in December, 1914. The interior varnishing was completed in January, 1915. Several applications for admission to the Home had already received favorable action by the Board of Directors. It was decided to open the Home as soon as the necessary furniture and other equipment and househelp could be secured. March 3, 1915, the Board of Directors met at The Aase Haugen Home and opened the institution for residents, two of whom were present.

The total cost of the building was \$45,800.00. Furniture and fixtures cost \$3,800.00.

Rev. Otto E. Schmidt was elected permanent manager of The Aase Haugen Home by the Board of Directors on March 3, 1915. This election had been recommended by the Board of Charities and was unanimously approved by the Board of Charities and the Board of Trustees of the former United Norwegian Lutheran Church.

June 30, 1915, was the date chosen for the dedication of the Home, and Rev. Th. Dahl, President of the United Norwegian Lutheran Church, was requested to officiate. Dr. Dahl, however, had a previous engagement for the day, and appointed Dr. J. N. Kildahl to officiate.

### Aase Haugen Farm

The farm given by Aase Haugen consisted of 240 acres of good land in Madison Township. It had good farm buildings, several fine springs, and a good stone quarry. At different times valuable farm lands were

acquired by the institution at auction sales, so that today the farm consists of 620 acres.

Many improvements have been made, such as enlarging the dairy barn, building silos, and enlarging implement sheds. In order to prevent erosion, the plans as carried out by the United States government department of agriculture through its C. C. C. have been in operation for several years. Several dams have been constructed and others are under construction. Contour plowing is rigidly observed, as also strict rotation of crops, thus bringing erosion to a minimum. Under the direction of the C. C. C., about 400 tons of limestone have been crushed at the farm quarry and spread over the land. This soil conservation is of inestimable value to the farm. Three wild-life sanctuaries have been established for the protection of birds, and much tree-planting has been done. The whole farm is a wild-life refuge, no hunting or trapping on the farm being allowed.

## MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

### Ownership

The Aase Haugen Home is the property of the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America and is under the general supervision of its Board of Trustees and Board of Charities, which prescribe the general rules and regulations under which the Home is operated. The administrative officers of the Home are a Board of Directors, elected by the Church, and a manager appointed by the Board of Directors with the approval of the Board of Trustees and the Board of Charities. The manager is under the immediate authority of the Board of Directors and works in cooperation with the Board. The accounts of the Home are audited annually by an auditor appointed by the Board of Trustees of the Church to audit the accounts of institutions owned by the Church.

### Location

The Aase Haugen Home is located three and a half miles southwest of Decorah on the Decorah branch of the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific Railroad. It is situated on a knoll beside a creek, on the other side of which is a densely wooded, somewhat semi-circular bluff that in summer presents a resplendent view of various shades of green and in autumn is a gorgeous mass of variegated colors of exquisite beauty. On the knoll immediately in front of the building, is a well kept lawn with two flagstaffs and some flower beds and evergreens. At the rear of the building is a very large triangular flower bed containing a 166 named varieties of iris, 2800 tulips, something



over 2000 gladiolus, and a great variety of summer flowers. In addition, there are evergreens and other ornamental trees and shrubs. Beyond these to the west and the north, is the 620 acre farm that belongs to the Home and provides considerable financial income for the Home besides all that the Home needs of farm produce, such as meat, milk, butter, eggs, and vegetables. In an earlier day, traffic between the Home and Decorah was by railroad train. Now it is chiefly by automobiles over paved state highway No. 9 and a short crushed-rocked side-road, which passes through the Home farm.

### The Building

The Home, which faces eastward, is a large, handsome structure 96 feet long, 57 feet wide, and three stories high. It has a full basement, which is two-thirds above the ground level; an attic, which is used as a store-room; and a spacious front veranda. The foundation is concrete and cut Bedford stone to the first story, the walls are brick and tile to the eaves, and the roof is covered with red tile. The building is semi-fireproof, two solid concrete walls dividing it into three parts.

On the main floor are the office, the chapel, the reception room, two parlors, two baths, and twelve rooms for residents. On the second and third floors are thirty-six residential rooms, two parlors, and four baths. In the basement are two dining rooms, one for the men and one for the women; a kitchen; two pantries; a laundry; two baths; a smoking room; a janitor's room, and the boiler room, which contains the steam-heating and the electric-lighting plants. There are two stairways in the building, one in the north wing and one in the south wing, and, in addition, two outside stairways.

### Equipment and Care of the Home

The Home is well equipped with all that is required to provide for the needs and the comfort both of the residents and the operating personnel. Each residential room is supplied with a bed, a dresser, a table, a clothes closet and such chairs as the resident desires. The furniture is substantial and comfortable and meets all the requirements of a good home. The Home has a good library and, in addition, provides the residents with a good assortment of periodicals and newspapers. A radio is also at the disposal of those who wish to use it and, it may be added, is frequently used by the residents sometimes individually and sometimes in groups.

Particularly noteworthy, however, is the fact that, from basement floor to attic, everything is in perfect order, and cleanliness and sanitary conditions are maintained throughout the Home. Walls, ceilings, floors, furniture, are all kept washed or scrubbed or painted or var-



Mrs. Gunvor Steen, Mr. Mikkil Nyhus, Mrs. Henrika Nyhus, Mrs. Karstina Wold  
The 75th Wedding Anniversary of Mr. and Mrs. Nyhus celebrated at  
The Aase Haugen Home

nished, each as its need requires. No other feature of the Home is more attractive to the visitor than the neatness, orderliness, and cleanliness that is everywhere evident.

### What the Home Offers

Each resident of the Home is furnished all that he needs, including board, room, laundry, clothing, incidentals, nursing and medical care, and final burial in the Aase Haugen Home cemetery. Relatives who wish to make arrangements for the deceased elsewhere are usually permitted to do so. Residents are required to keep their rooms neat and in order. If they are not able to do this, their rooms are taken care of for them. Although most of the rooms are planned to accommodate one resident each, accommodations are available for man and wife to room together. In rare instances, arrangements are also made for two men or two women to room together, but only when a request for such arrangement is made and it seems advisable to grant the request.

### Requirements for Admission to the Home

Briefly stated, the requirements for admission to the Home are as follows: An applicant must be a person of good moral character and as a rule at least sixty-five years of age; be free from any infectious disease or physical disability that, in the opinion of the Board of Directors, would render his admission to the Home inadvisable; be willing to contribute to his own support according to whatever means, if any, he may possess; and agree to abide by the rules and regulations of the



Home, which are only such as experience and good sense dictate as necessary for the proper conduct of a Christian home for the aged.

### Operating Personnel

How many people does it take to operate such an institution as The Aase Haugen Home? First, of course, is the manager, Rev. Otto E. Schmidt, who manages both the Home and its 620-acre farm. In addition, are a nurse, an assistant nurse, a cook, two maids for general housework, and a janitor. Considering the size of the Home and the nature of work, this seems to be a rather small operating personnel; but under Rev. Schmidt's general supervision, they do their work extremely well and do it cheerfully.

### Food

The food furnished the residents is excellent. The meals are planned to be as nourishing and appetizing as possible and pains are taken to vary the meals from day to day. The Home does a great deal of canning of meat, fruit, and vegetables. For instance, in February and March, 1940, prime meat from twenty-seven hogs and eleven bees was put up in gallon cans in the form of beefsteak, porterhouse steak, pork roast, hamburger sausage, etc. The ham and bacon used is all Home cured. Fruit of all kinds raised on the farm or otherwise procurable is canned in large quantities in season. Likewise also vegetables, which are raised in sufficient quantities on the farm. The Home does all its own baking of bread, cakes, pies, etc., with high grade flour. Thus the Home furnishes its residents the best quality of appetizing food obtainable in sufficient quantities and variety to meet the requirements of a well-balanced diet.

### Christian Nurture

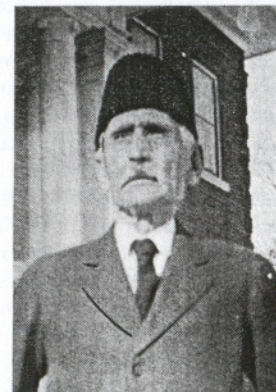
As the Home is a Christian institution, maintained by the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America as a part of its widespread activities under the general management of its Board of Charities, the spiritual welfare of the residents receives careful attention. Evening devotional services are held at the convenience of the residents after supper. Regular Sunday services are held every Sunday forenoon. The radio is tuned in every weekday for chapel services at Luther College or St. Olaf College, and for other services, both in English and Norwegian, from these institutions and from other sources. Individual spiritual care is given the residents in case of illness, and also whenever attention of this kind is requested or seems to be especially needed. Residents are encouraged to read devotional literature, and many of them devote much time to Bible reading, from which they receive a great deal of comfort.

### Medical and Nursing Care

The Home does not have a resident physician, as the presence of a physician at all times is not needed; but arrangements have been made with one of the leading physicians of Decorah to look after the medical requirements of the residents of the Home, and may be summoned to be present on short notice. In addition, the nurses, who are well acquainted with the physical condition of the various residents, are always at hand to look after their health. The health service of the Home is therefore excellent, and quite sufficient for every emergency. Deaconesses have also been employed by the Home.

### Daily Routine

Where so many people are assembled under one roof as at The Aase Haugen Home, a definite routine must be observed to promote good order and avoid confusion and irritating uncertainty. Breakfast is served at 7:30 a. m.; dinner, at noon; and supper at 5:30 p. m. The meals are served in the two dining rooms, one for the men and one for the women. Those whose rooms are on the second or third floors and cannot walk up and down the stairs have their meals served in their rooms. Meals are also served in the room of any residents who, on account of temporary or permanent illness or other disability, cannot be present in one of the dining rooms. In addition to the regular meals, residents who desire it are served a cup of coffee and a little to go with it at



**Mr. Ivar A. Brandt**  
The first resident — admitted  
February 15, 1915



any time of the day. The weekday and Sunday religious services, which form a part of the daily routine, are mentioned in the paragraph on "Christian Nurture."

### How Residents Employ Their Time

The manner in which the residents employ their time varies with their individual interests. Some do a great deal of reading. Some devote much time to correspondence with relatives and friends. Some of the women knit, crochet, or do various kinds of fancy work. Some of the men engage in wood-carving or other kinds of artistic work. Some excellent specimens of what has been accomplished by residents of the Home are in the Luther College Norwegian American Historical Museum. Able-bodied men are expected to put in a little time working for the Home, and this engages the attention of some of the residents when they feel disposed to occupy some of their time in this way. Others, both men and women, while away the time in conversation or whatever else appeals to them. For conversation and visiting, however, the residents are encouraged to use the parlors and not each other's rooms.

### Number of Residents

The capacity of the Home is fifty (50) residents at one time. The average number of residents per year has been about forty-five (45). The total number of residents that the Home has had since it was opened for occupancy in 1915 is two hundred forty-six (246). The number of residents this year as this is being written, shortly before the observance of the twenty-fifth anniversary, is forty (40).

### Gifts

The Home receives gifts of many kinds. It has received some real estate, but not much. Gifts usually consist of money and articles of various kinds. For instance, in 1939 it received memorial gifts to the amount of \$222.40, special donations to the amount of \$538.25, and legacies and bequests to the amount of \$456.73. From time to time the Home also receives contributions of fresh fruit, canned fruit and vegetables, clothing, and household linens. As an example of the canned fruits that are received, it might be mentioned that on one occasion a Ladies' Aid Society donated one hundred sixty-five (165) quarts of fruit in the fruit-canning season.

Gifts are always welcome and contribute much to the welfare of the Home, which owes its very existence to Aase Haugen's munificent original gift, and the many additional gifts that were needed to build the Home and that have since been needed to support it. The annual appropriations by the Church are made possible by the contributions,

that is, gifts, to the Charities division of the Church budget. Some of the residents contribute to their own support at the Home, but it is contributions in the form of gifts that have been made and are being made that renders it possible to operate this Christian Home for aged people, whose waning strength no longer enables them to take care of themselves.

### Visitors

Visitors are always welcome. The Home has many visitors, who come both singly and in groups. Most noteworthy among visitors in groups are Ladies' Aid Societies, some of which come from considerable distances. Each society usually brings and serves a lunch, which it shares with the residents. Each society is usually accompanied by its pastor, and before lunch is served a program is usually rendered, as a part of which the pastor conducts a brief devotional service.

Other groups that visit the Home regularly are the Volunteer Society, the Tuesday Club, the Aase's Friends Club, and the 1929 Club, which were organized to help support the Home. Groups that come to entertain the residents occasionally visit the Home. Among them are groups of students from Luther College, whose entertainments usually consist of vocal or instrumental music.

### Compliments

The management of the Home has received many compliments on the splendid manner in which the Home is conducted. There are few people who have visited the Home who do not have a good word to speak for it. However, to dwell on the favorable impressions carried away by casual visitors seems hardly necessary.

Somewhat different is the impression made on officials who have an intimate knowledge of how an old people's home ought to be conducted. Among such officials are members of the Board of Control of the State of Iowa, who have at intervals visited the Home and have expressed great satisfaction with the arrangements at the home for the care of the aged and have used very complimentary terms in characterizing the clean and sanitary conditions of the institution.

As some of the residents of the Home receive old age pensions from the State of Iowa, members of the Old Age Pension Commission of the State have also visited the Home and have frequently expressed themselves as very favorably impressed with the healthful conditions of the Home and its surroundings.

Such compliments are naturally very pleasing to the friends and supporters of the Home, as they give an assurance that the Home is being well conducted.