

NEW LAND, NEW LIFE!

Norwegian Immigration in Minnesota: 1825-1925



Fine Arts



F. Melius Christiansen. Norwegian-American Historical Association

F. MELIUS CHRISTIANSEN emigrated in 1888 at age 17 with a fiddle under his arm. After studying in Minneapolis and in Germany, he joined the St. Olaf music faculty as chair in 1903, teaching concert choir, band, and violin. Reviving the Norwegian chorale, he became a world renowned choirmaster of a cappella student choirs, singing with unbelievable perfection in Carnegie Hall and Europe. A prolific composer, Christiansen's best known works are "Fiftieth Psalm," an arrangement of "Beautiful Savior" and "Lullaby on Christmas Eve," an old Norwegian folk melody arrangement.

HERBJØRN GAUSTA emigrated at age 13 from Telemark, Norway. He left the family homestead at Harmony, MN to study in Decorah, Iowa; Oslo, Norway; and Munich, Germany. From 1881, Gausta earned his living painting landscapes and portraits. He painted over 400 altar paintings for Norwegian churches in Minnesota. After teaching at Luther College, he painted and established art societies, such as The Minneapolis Art League and The Norwegian Art Society in Minneapolis.

JAKOB FJELDE, sculptor, followed his father, a wood carver, to America in 1887 and settled in Minneapolis. Before his premature death in 1896, he finished the relief above the University of Minnesota Library entrance; a monument to the First Minnesota regiment on the Gettysburg battlefield; a bust of playwright Henrik Ibsen in St. Paul's Como Park; figures of Hiawatha and Minnehaha in Minnehaha Park in Minneapolis; and the Ole Bull statue in Loring Park, Minneapolis.



Painting, Young Mother by Herbjørn Gausta. Luther College Fine Arts Collection, Decorah, Iowa



Ole Bull Statue by Jakob Fjelde, Loring Park, Minneapolis

PAULINE FJELDE, Jakob's sister, also arrived in 1887 from Ålesund, Norway. With training in textile weaving design in Norway and in Paris, Pauline set up an embroidery firm in Minneapolis with her sister THOMANE FJELDE HANSEN who joined her later. Together, they earned a gold medal for their embroidery of the first Minnesota state flag in the Columbia Exposition, Chicago World Fair in 1893. Pauline earned fame for her wildlife tapestries.



Jakob Hendrick Gerhard Fjelde with siblings. From left: unknown, possibly their mother; Herman Fjelde; Pauline Fjelde; Thomane B. Fjelde Hanson and Jakob Fjelde, 1890. Minnesota Historical Society



13th Minnesota regimental battle flag. Made by Fjelde Sisters. Carried in the Spanish-American War, 1898. Minnesota Historical Society



Henrik Ibsen Bust, Como Park, St. Paul, MN Donated by Synnove-Nordkap Sons of Norway Lodge

