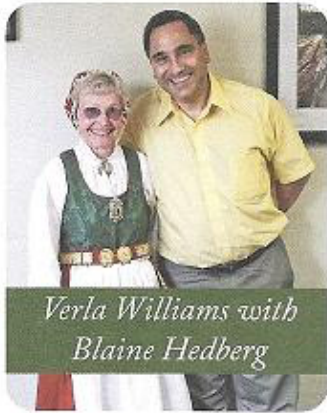


VOLUNTEER CORNER



Verla Williams of Iowa City, Iowa, has won the distinction of being the Norwegian American Genealogical Center and Naeseth Library's longest-serving volunteer. Verla has logged nearly 30 years of loyal service to NAGC & NL.

Verla began volunteering in 1981 preparing a first name card index of emigrants from Holla in Telemark, Norway for Gerhard Naeseth. She went on to complete other immigrant lists including those who emigrated from Birkenesand Bygland in Aust-Agder, a card index to the head of households for Winneshiek County, Iowa, and a card index for all Norwegians listed in the 1900 census records for every county in Iowa. By October 1987, Verla had completed the index for all counties in Iowa, which took her approximately 1300 hours to record 23,634 Norwegians, plus their families. In 1989, Verla began a similar project for the 1900 Minnesota census and she typed over 100,000 index cards of Norwegians in Minnesota census. Verla telephoned recently and said she had found the last Norwegian in Minnesota!

In addition to her volunteer efforts, Verla has been working on her and her husband's genealogy for many years. She has provided the NAGC & NL with copies of four manuscripts, Asbjørn Hallvardson Raa Family, an 1852 immigrant family from Laerdal, Sogn og Fjordane; Seming Hogansen Haarset family, an 1880 immigrant family from Nes, Akershus and the Sigvart Williams Descendants, history of an 1864 immigrant family with roots in Krakstad, Akershus, who left from Toten.

Verla has served on the NAGC & NL Advisory Council for the first year of its existence. Her knowledge of genealogy was a great benefit to the organization, helping to look to the future with a keen eye on all that had gone before. She decided it was time to step aside from her role on the Council and she will be greatly missed by all the Council members and NAGC & NL staff that work with the Council.

Verla and her family have lived in Iowa City since 1977. At that time husband Vincent, a dentist in Decorah, Iowa, joined the faculty at the University of Iowa - College of Dentistry, retiring in 1997. The Williams' children are Jené, Dawn, Mark, and Arik.

Verla is an inspiration to all of us and we are grateful for her dedication and commitment to the mission and goals of the Norwegian American Genealogical Center & Naeseth Library.

SOURCE: *Norwegian Tracks* 34:1 (Fall 2009), p. 5.