

NORDIC AMERICAN PSALMODIKONFORBUNDET

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DID YOU KNOW?

That this issue of the Newsletter is being mailed to 78 members and friends of the Psalmodikon Forbundet that live in 16 states plus Sweden and Canada? From Maine, New Jersey and Maryland on the East Coast to Washington and Oregon on the West Coast. Minnesota has the most with 42 and Iowa second with 9. Please check your label and note the date - if it reads 1999, you are current with your dues - if it reads 1998 its not too late to send in your \$5.00 for this year's dues to continue receiving the Newsletter for this year!

Larry Gjenvick

Notes from MUSIC-ON-A-STRING

The coldest days of Winter are now behind us along with all the birthdays of famous presidents and so forth.

The long dark days of Winter always give me time for rest and renewal and I got to thinking that there should be a holiday set aside to honor the **PSALMODIKON** *WHOSE BIRTH DATE IS* **JUNE 15, 1835!**

For it was on that date that Lars Roverud of Norway received the authorization from the Royal Resolution in Norway, allowing the Psalmodikon, as an acceptable musical instrument, to be played in church and to improve the choral singing.

From then on, the use of the Psalmodikon became very popular. Hymn books were written in the Sifferskrift (numerical) method and the Psalmodikon became well known throughout Sweden and Norway. Rev. Johannes Dillner was ordained in the Ostervalla Parish of Sweden in 1839. He was very influential amongst his parishioners in encouraging everyone to make these simple little instruments and learn to play them. At one time there were over 10,000 Psalmodikons in this area and many of them are still in existence today. The popularity of the Psalmodikon contin-

ued to increase and soon many were being played in the homes and schools throughout Norway and Sweden as well.

When the first wave of immigrants began, many of them brought these favorite little instruments with them or they made them after they arrived in America. They continued to use the Psalmodikons in their homes, schools and churches. The Psalmodikon was a very popular instrument used by the traveling preachers. In the early beginning there were no churches and the church services were held in the homes. The Psalmodikon certainly continued to be useful in this manner also.

The Psalmodikons were popular for about 100 years in total. Today the Psalmodikon is nearly a forgotten part of our Scandinavian heritage. Perhaps, because of its limitations, the Psamodikon could not compete with the newer instruments that came along and the few remaining Psalmodikons today are tucked away in Museums or attics.

The enthusiasm and work that the members of the Nordic-American Psalmodikonforbundet are doing today certainly help keep this tradition alive. I am a firm believer that even if the Psalmodikon may not rank with the violin or the mighty pipe organ, it still deserves an honored place in the orchestra of sacred music. And it is up to each one of us to keep it there.

Let us celebrate the Psalmodikon whose birth date is June 15, 1835!

In the meantime....."keep practicing".

Beatrice Hole