

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** Oct. 11, 2013

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### **New State Historical Society Press Book Tells *Stavig Letters* Story**

PIERRE, S.D.—A new book from the South Dakota State Historical Society gives readers a personal look into the lives of Lars and Knut Stavig and other families divided by emigration. “Dear Unforgettable Brother’: The Stavig Letters from Norway and America, 1881–1937” tells the story of two brothers separated by time and distance.

Lars and Knut parted ways in 1876, when Lars left Norway for America. The brothers continued to write each other for the next 50 years. Though they never saw each other again, they documented their triumphs and sorrows from opposite sides of the ocean.

Jane Torness Rasmussen, the great-granddaughter of Lars Stavig, and her husband, historian John S. Rasmussen, provide background for the brothers’ letters in this new book from the South Dakota State Historical Society Press.

Although published for the first time, the letters were the subject of a 2011 award-winning South Dakota Public Broadcasting Corporation film.

“‘Dear Unforgettable Brother’ is an extraordinary story documenting the lives of Lars Stavig and Knut Stavig, but it is also a testament to the persistence of their heirs in preserving the letters and sharing their story,” said South Dakota Public Broadcasting’s Larry Rohrer. “This book is so much more than correspondence; it’s the story of every immigrant family, the heritage of settlement on the Great Plains, and the importance of family and community.”

More than 130 years later, the communication among the Stavig relatives still rings true to the hardships and joys that all immigrant families face. With essays by Edvard Hoem and Betty A. Bergland, “Dear Unforgettable Brother” explores life in Norway and the United States as both countries were affected by the exodus of Norwegians to America.

Jane Torness Rasmussen is active in the humanities and serves on the South Dakota Arts Council. An avid researcher, John S. Rasmussen is president of the Heritage Museums of Roberts County. Both work with the Stavig House Museum in Sisseton. Hoem is a Norwegian novelist and poet, and Bergland is a professor of history at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls.

“‘Dear Unforgettable Brother’: The Stavig Letters from Norway and America, 1881–1937” is available for \$19.95 plus shipping and tax and can be purchased from most bookstores or ordered directly from the South Dakota State Historical Society Press. Visit [www.sdshspress.com](http://www.sdshspress.com) or call (605) 773-6009.

*The South Dakota State Historical Society is a division of the Department of Tourism. The Department of Tourism is comprised of Tourism, the South Dakota Arts Council, and the State Historical Society. The Department is led by Secretary James D. Hagen. The State Historical Society, an Affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution, is headquartered at the South Dakota Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre. The center houses the society's world-class museum, the archives, and the historic preservation, publishing and administrative/development offices. Call (605) 773-3458 or visit [www.history.sd.gov](http://www.history.sd.gov) for more information. The society also has an archaeology office in Rapid City; call (605) 394-1936 for more information.*