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## Commentary

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## COMMENTARY

One of the better ideas to emerge from the welter of plans and programs and propaganda surrounding the celebration of the Bicentennial is the American Issues Forum, co-sponsored by the National Endowment for Humanities and the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration. The idea is simple, but important. Throughout the coming months Americans should be attuned to the issues which face us today and which have been faced since 1776. The Forum program asks that we, as a nation, engage in a serious discussion of the fundamental ideas of our society. In other words: what is America?

To spark interchange on this widest of all possible questions, the American Issues Forum has drawn up a calendar which proposes that Americans think about special questions during speci-

fied time periods. The calendar runs from August 31, 1975 to May 29, 1976. There are no groups to join in order to participate, and anyone may organize in whatever way they wish to engage the issues. Both institutions and individuals are invited.

During the coming months *The Palimpsest* will attempt to coordinate at least part of its contents with the schedule of the American Issues Forum. From late August until late September the topic was "A Nation of Nations," which focused on the many streams of nationalities which have flowed together to form the American nation. The happy coincidence of the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of Norwegian immigration to these shores brings the three topics to the fore.

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J. R. CHRISTIANSON is Professor and Chairman of History at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa. A native of Mankato, Minnesota and a graduate of the University of Minnesota, his special interests are Scandinavian history and immigration. He has written more than a score of articles on Scandinavian subjects. He has crossed the Atlantic several times to study in Norway and Denmark, to visit friends and relatives including those of his Danish born wife, and to keep his young sons bilingual. He has served on various professional committees and is currently a member of the Executive Committee of the Norwegian-American Historical Association and Assistant Director of Vesterheim, the Norwegian-American Museum, as well as a "Symrianer" and past president of Symra Society. In 1968 and again in 1975, he served as chairman of the committee that arranged visits to Decorah of His Majesty Olav V King of Norway.

