



America Letter

THE DANISH IMMIGRANT MUSEUM

An International Cultural Center

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Classical pianist and humorist Victor Borge dies at 91

Victor Borge, the irrepressible Danish American immigrant who created his own art form with classical music, sight gags and verbal quips, quietly passed away in his sleep on December 22 at the age of 91. Death came as family members were already gathering to celebrate Christmas. He would have turned 92 on January 3.

He had just returned to his home in Greenwich, Connecticut after a trip to his birth-city of Copenhagen. His birth name was Borge Rosenbaum and his father was a distinguished violinist with the Royal Theater's symphony orchestra in Copenhagen. A few years ago he accomplished his dream of conducting that orchestra and was scheduled to conduct there again in 2001.

Borge began to play piano at the age of three and was considered a child prodigy. He won a scholarship to The Royal Danish Music Conservatory where he could study under renowned pianists. In 1926 he made his professional debut and during the next 10 years became one of Scandinavia's top performers. When Hitler's forces began to sweep through northern Europe, Borge (a Jew) began to ridicule Hitler from the stage. He was fortunate to be in Sweden when Denmark was invaded in 1940 and he and

his American wife, Elsie, were able to catch the last ship out of Finland just as the gangplank was to be raised.

He learned English by watching movies and soon started performing as a warm-up act for Rudy Vallee and later on the Bing Crosby show. In 1953 he set a record for the longest-running one-man show on Broadway with 849 performances of his *Comedy in Music*. His style of one-liners, exaggerated pronunciation complete with nonsense sounds for punctuation marks, and his sight gags (which included falling off the piano bench) took years to perfect. He made fun of classical music but he made people love it at the same time.

He had an ambitious concert schedule and continued to practice daily up to the day he died. He was honored by

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An exceptionally vital community is documented in the exhibition *Danish American Cultural Life in Chicago*

Chicago's 20th Century Danish community was, for many decades, characterized by exceptional vitality and productivity that is cherished in the memories of those who lived, loved, worked and played there. Its cultural activities from the turn-of-the-century through the early 1960's were the focus of this exhibit, which opened to the public in June 2000.

By the early 1900's the new arrival from Denmark would have found a flourishing Danish-speaking colony known as "Little Denmark" in the North Avenue area of Chicago's Northwest side near Humboldt Park. There were Danish-



The first piano Victor Borge ever owned was given to the Museum in 1994 and occupies a prominent location in the permanent exhibit. In a personal letter accompanying the piano, Borge wrote "I have long considered this the dearest of my personal possessions, and it is of great comfort to leave this part of me in your care."

Danish American Cultural Life . . . – continued from page 1

owned businesses of all kinds including grocery and hardware stores, bakeries, restaurants, Danish newspapers, doctor's offices, and, boarding houses. Danish Brotherhood and Sisterhood organizations were in place and Danish Churches firmly established. Dania Society, the Singing Society Harmonien and the Danish American Athletic Club were conveniently located in the area. Concern for the elderly was expressed by the community's support for The Danish Home.

The Dania Society of Chicago, founded in 1862, is the oldest Danish society outside

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The Danish American Cultural Life exhibit was on display at the Museum from June 19 through October 9, 2000 and at the Danish Home in Chicago from October 26 through December 31.

The display on the right wall depicts the Danish American Athletic Club (DAAC). The Club has been an enduring fixture of the Danish American community of Chicago. DAAC has provided a place for new immigrants and their families to meet and socialize with one another. It has been a place where parents brought their children who could then learn some of the physical culture of the mother country. It has provided the forum for bringing Danish gymnastic and folk dancing teams to the United States and sending similar teams to Denmark. It rallied the Danish American Chicago community during World War II through the activities of the Danish War Relief. Through the past seventy-eight years the Danish American Athletic Club has for so many reasons served the Danish American Chicago community as an organization of exceptional value.

Victor Borge . . .

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the US Congress and the United Nations and was knighted by five Nordic countries. Of the latter distinction Borge said he had been knighted so much, that "I practically became a weekend." In 1999 he was one of five performers recognized with the Kennedy Center Awards, America's most prestigious honor for those in the performing arts.

In 1994 Borge gave The Danish immigrant Museum his dearest possession, the first piano he ever owned. He bought it in the late 1920's, first making weekly payments with his allowance money and then with money earned as a pianist. During the Occupation the piano was placed in hiding with his other possessions and later stored with friends until 1960 when he and his wife bought an estate north of Copenhagen. After that it was sent to Borge's winter retreat in St. Croix where it stayed for more than 25 years until Hurricane Hugo destroyed the home and damaged the piano. He later had the instrument restored and gave it to the Museum. Behind the Hindsberg grand piano hangs a portrait of a smiling Borge,



Along with his precious piano Borge gave The Danish Immigrant Museum this portrait of himself (partial at left) painted by Birgit Jacobsen. It was presented to Borge following his speech at the Danish Constitution Day Celebration on Croton-on-Hudson, New York, on June 6, 1993. The event was sponsored by the Danish Home for the Aged.

wearing his medals.

"I think he brought laughter to every person he came in contact with," said his daughter Rikke Borge. "He had a long and happy life."

His second wife, Sanna Borge died in September. Borge is survived by two sons, Ronald Borge of Rowayton, Connecticut, and Victor Bernhard Borge of Manhattan; three daughters, Sanna Feirstein of Manhattan, Janet Crowle of St. Michaels, Maryland, and Frederikke Borge of South Egremont, Massachusetts; nine grandchildren and one great grandchild.



The display case in the foreground features the Danish National Committee. Among other activities, the National Committee encouraged reciprocal cultural exchanges between the United States and Denmark, continued awareness of national events in the mother country, and philanthropic activities among less fortunate fellow immigrants.

The display case to the immediate right (highlighted in inset) titled “Anniversaries, Testimonials, Birthdays” features celebratory occasions within the community. Chicago Danish Americans celebrated special events in great style in keeping with the Danish tradition of speeches, toasts and special songs and/or poems written for the occasion. Details often included formal invitations, assigned seats, printed programs, decorations and elegant table settings. Most of those honored here were Danish immigrants who established themselves as a distinct presence in Chicago’s Danish community and beyond.

Cultural Life . . .

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Denmark, and as such greatly influenced the development of other Danish groups in Chicago. In its early years Dania would establish a library, form an immigrant aid society, and, provide lectures, recitals and debates. In the 1900’s its ballroom, dining and clubrooms on North Kedzie Avenue were the site of many activities and elegant parties.

Founded in 1866, the Singing Society Harmonien first performed at Concordia Hall on May 14, 1887 and in 1924 traveled to Denmark where they sang in Tivoli’s Concert Hall and on July 4th at the Rebild Festival. Whether at Harmonien’s Hall or at other locations they were enthusiastically received.

The Danish American Athletic Club (DAAC) was founded early in the century for serious male sports competition and by the early thirties gymnastics and folk dancing programs were in place for all age groups and both genders.

Perhaps no group did more to foster the community’s cohesiveness than The Danish National Committee, organized in 1909 to bring together the various Danish societies for celebration of Grundslovsfest and the promotion of cultural activities between the United States and Denmark.

Danish theater, under the direction of Ove Knudsen, was

exceptionally popular and drew talent and audiences in great number from the Danish community. Paul Hoff Kunst wrote many witty scripts for the annual “Revy” productions of the Dansk Glee Klub.

During W.W.II, many rallied to the aid of Occupied Denmark through War Relief activities and The Rear Squad supported those in the US military.

Throughout the years there were testimonial dinners, anniversaries and birthdays celebrated in fine Danish style marked with speeches, toasts, original songs and poems, and, of course, traditional Danish food. Visits by the Danish Royal family were celebrated and over the years several in the community received medals from the King for their work in preserving the Danish culture in America. Famous Wagnerian Tenor Lauritz Melchior was a frequent visitor to the Chicago meetings of former members of the Danish Royal Guard. He also dined often at Dania Hall.

The Book of Memories and Interviews collected for this exhibit brought to life in vivid detail the activities of the various concerts, plays, athletic events, picnics and Danish celebrations of the Chicago colony.

In the process of compiling documentation and artifacts for this exhibit, Curator Barbara Lund-Jones, her staff and a host of volunteers have unearthed information that will be invaluable.

Cultural Life . . .

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able to future historians. Board member Katrine Vange Keller originally envisioned this exhibit and worked extensively in the Chicago area on its behalf.



Dania's framed documents of incorporation (1865) may be seen to the immediate right of the large painting of Hans Christian Andersen which graced Dania's halls for many years. Founded by Johan Foster on November 23, 1862 at Chicago's Kinzie Inn, the society met in rented properties within the Danish Colony until it purchased a building on West Chicago Avenue in 1891 (papers documenting this purchase and financing displayed in case at left). Then, in 1911, a lot was purchased on North Kedzie Avenue on which Dania Hall was built. The dedication of the building was on November 24, 1912, in time for the 50th anniversary of the society. Dania's attractive hall and meeting rooms were greatly admired and used by many of Chicago's Danish societies for important events.

To the right of Dania's incorporation document are artifacts and memorabilia that narrate the history of the Singing Society Harmonien. On November 10, 1886 a young South Jutlander named Helmer Hansen called some young men to a meeting held at Dania to form a Danish singing society in Chicago's Danish Colony. Thus was born the oldest such society outside Denmark. (The original name was the Danish Workmen's Singing Society but this would be changed in later years to Singing Society Harmonien.) Early on, Theodor Elberg, an experienced musician and director, traveled weekly from Racine, Wisconsin to direct the fledgling chorus. Over the years Harmonien gave support to Danish artists such as the singer Valborg Andersen, actress Elizabeth Riis, poet Holger Drackmann, singer Karl Brisson, and the great Wagnerian tenor Lauritz Melchior.

While at the Museum, the Chicago exhibit included a 13-Panel display tracing the history of Den Danske Pioneer. During its historic 128 years, The Danish Pioneer, the oldest Danish-American newspaper in the USA, has only had a handful of editors. Mark Hansen founded The Danish Pioneer in 1872 in Omaha, Nebraska. Sophus Frederik Neble served as editor from 1887 to 1931 and his wife Olivia and son Eyvind continued the publication after his death. In 1958 The Danish Pioneer moved to Elmwood Park in Chicago, Illinois and Hjalmar Bertlesen served as editor until 1981. Chris Steffensen has served as the editor of The Danish Pioneer since 1984 and was appointed Knight of the Order of Dannebrog by Queen Margrethe II in connection



with the newspaper's 125th anniversary in 1997.

The newspaper continues to be a vital link for Americans of Danish and Scandinavian descent supplying news from Denmark and from areas in the USA with Danish communities. Articles appear in both the English and Danish languages.



The DDD Emblem displayed in the upper corner, far left, was designed for the Daughters of Denmark's Daughters (DDD). This group was organized in the mid-1930's by a group of young teenage girls in the Chicago area dedicated to the preservation of their Danish heritage. They conducted and recorded their business meetings in Danish. They chose as their pin the leaves of the beech tree associated with Denmark. If members forgot to wear their pin, they were fined. Money saved in their treasury bought them special outings. They occasionally put on plays and during W.W.II, profits from these plays were donated to the Dania Rear Squad, formed to benefit the Dania members serving in the military.

Friendships among the DDD members have often lasted a lifetime. They continued to meet through the years, accom-

panied by husbands and children. In the late 1980's, they gathered again for a reunion.

The textile articles to the right of the DDD emblem comprised a small section of the exhibit titled "Danishness in Daily Life". The Danish immigrants and their families preserved many aspects of their heritage in the various rituals and objects of their daily lives. Jenny Sorensen, an active participant in Chicago's Danish theater and recipient of King Christian X's Medal of Liberation (displayed in the theater section), made egg-warmer dolls dressed in authentic Danish folk costume. Her family referred to them as the "Jenny" dolls. Others established boarding houses, which they opened to newly arrived immigrants from Denmark. These privately run businesses kept the Danish language, foods and traditions vividly alive for extended periods. The folded white Pynthandklode was used at the boarding house run by Karen and Christian Thinghøj

Petersen on Chicago's Northwest Side; it covered towels in use in the kitchen area.

The embroidered tablecloth unfolds a story of immigrant struggle and support during the difficult 1930's. Dania Hall was managed for many years by Carl M. Hansen, who lived on the premises with his family. He and his wife, Anna Roge Hansen, frequently fed hungry friends during the Great Depression, paying for the meals from their own incomes. The tablecloth (and eight matching napkins) were given to the Hansens by Lars Ove Jensen in grateful appreciation of their help during this difficult period. He had kept himself busy making this set as well as several other pieces during the long interval that he had been unable to find employment.



The Danish Home in Chicago is a living part of Chicago's history

The Danish Home in Chicago has among its residents and visitors many people who were part Chicago's Danish American community during the years when the city's "Little Denmark" had a very identifiable physical presence. Therefore, the Home was a most appropriate location for the Chicago run of the Museum's exhibition Danish American Cultural Life in Chicago. During the time of the display at the Home, from October 23, 2000 through the end of the year, the Home's administrator, Leif Nielsen, graciously made available a prime first floor location for the exhibition.

The Danish Home itself is an integral part of Chicago's Danish American heritage. In 1891 a group of ladies concerned with the needs of older Danish immigrants decided to form a society to fund a Home. By 1902 the society was able to purchase its first home, a large frame house on spacious grounds in Norwood Park, the same location on which the Danish Home stands today. A new building was constructed in 1915; additions were added in 1924 and 1964. Many remodeling projects and improvements have been made during the years.

The Home has always been a center of Danish American

activities including the annual Summerfest held in conjunction with the Danish National Committee. Over the years many Danish dignitaries, including Danish royalty, have visited the Home.



Preparatory work for the Chicago exhibit uncovered a unique find – the "Christmas Morning Club Journal"

The journal of the Christmas Morning Club, maintained primarily by the club's long time secretary, Aage C. Rye, was given to the Museum by his son, Jack A. Rye of California. Aage Rye, signing his reports as "A. C. Rye", chronicled the history of a closely-knit group of Danish immigrant men in

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Unique find . . .

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Chicago, who, in addition to their activities during the year, faithfully (and with much good cheer) held their annual meeting every Christmas Morning. Journal entries begin with Christmas Day 1925 and end with general meeting entries in 1933, the financial stresses of the time clearly in evidence.

A copy of the translated journal was made available for reading by visitors to the exhibit. The translation from Danish to English was made by Ralf and Inga Hoifeldt of Des Moines. Helen Stub of Minneapolis, who served as a second reader for the translation, has ably summarized this unique record:

“A. C. or Brother Rye, Secretary of the Christmas Club, chronicles with tongue in cheek humor the hilarious and poignant friendship of ten Chicago Danish immigrants, Emil Henriksen, Otto Andersen, Wilhelm Iversen, Carl Christiansen, Louis Carlssen, Bull Olsen, Tycko Odelius, Christ Iversen, A. C. Rye and later Wilhelm Hersleb.

“The journal details in running Danish the celebrations, goose with Danish trimmings Christmas dinners at “mother’s” (attendance required), birthdays, an annual Summer picnic complete with a procession of flag draped automobiles, swim-

ming, performances, food, and drink. Woven into descriptions of parties the journal tells of the meetings to plan and collect dues and charge fines to pay for the fun. Fines are assessed for any trumped up capricious failing, missing meetings, being late, or failing to produce on demand the cork they all carry as the emblem of the club. The cork typifies their love of partying with many references to the wet stuff, ammunition, medicine and Tycho’s exceptional Christmas glogg.

“This chunk of Chicago Danish American ethnic culture contributes to the total fabric of the American experience. The translation by Ralf and Inga Hoifeldt captures the devil-may-care mixture of Danish idiom and English expressions in an amusing and entertaining way.

“Throughout the journal several of the club members’ names are subject to different spellings. Close observation reveals that each individual secretary had their preferred way of spelling the names. There are other indications that in some instances, variations in spelling reflected an “Americanizing” of the names.”



Interest in the rich history of Chicago’s Danish community continues

Although the exhibition, Danish American Cultural Life in Chicago, officially closed at the end of the year, interest in the rich, vital community it depicted continues to be very strong. The Danish Immigrant Museum encourages ongoing contributions of memories, stories, photographs and memorabilia from Chicago’s Danish community. The preservation of the history of such communities is a very important part of the Museum’s mission.

In preparation for this exhibit, we contacted many individuals throughout the country who were linked in one way or another to Chicago’s earlier Danish colony. Many shared both memories and memorabilia with us, adding rich dimensions to our exhibit. But we realize that there were a great many we missed. We continue to invite all who lived in this earlier Chicago to share their experiences and memories of special activities, events, clubs and organizations of that time, as well as related artifacts they may have.¹ It is most important that the rich history of Danish Chicago be preserved for future generations.

¹ Communications may be directed to the Museum’s Curator, Barbara Lund-Jones.



Hans Christian Andersen Exhibit explains a Danish legend

The fascinating life and career of the famous Danish author Hans Christian Andersen was shown at the Museum last summer through a 20-panel exhibition of text and pictures. The traveling exhibit, on loan from the Odense City Museums in Denmark, covered the period of the author’s life from his humble birth to a poor shoemaker and washerwoman in Odense in 1805 until his death in 1875.

At the age of seven Andersen first visited the theatre in Odense where the boy’s imaginative gifts began to find di-

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Danish legend . . .

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rection. His father died in 1816 and his mother remarried in 1818. In 1819, a few months after his confirmation, Andersen went alone to Copenhagen to seek his fortune in the Royal Theatre as a singer, dancer or actor while living in extreme poverty. Influential people took an interest in Andersen and provided tuition for him. In 1822 he became the ward of the Director of the Royal Theatre, financier Jonas Collin. His famous poem “The Dying Child” was written while he was attending the Helsingør school. He continued his studies at Copenhagen University.

The author’s life is as interesting as any of his works. He is best known today for his fairy tales such as “The Ugly Duckling”, “The Little Mermaid”, “The Steadfast Tin Soldier”, “The Princess on the Pea”, and “The Tinderbox”. However, he wrote poetry, plays, novels, travel accounts, texts for operas, and, at least three autobiographies as well. The exhibit that the Museum obtained from the Museums of the City of

Odense displayed the broad intellectual scope of Andersen through letters and recollections by Andersen himself.

Andersen loved to travel and made 30 trips abroad during his lifetime. He was entertained by royalty throughout Europe and counted among his friends sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen, composers Franz Liszt and Felix Mendelssohn, author Charles Dickens, Grand Duke Carl Alexander, and, singer Jennie Lind.

It is ironic that Andersen’s greatness was accepted in other countries sooner than in Denmark. Yet, in 1869 Danish literary critic Georg Brandes wrote a lively and penetrating article about Andersen in *Illustreret Tidende*, an article still worth reading. Now Andersen is known as the Danish national writer above all others and artists continue to respond to the amazing visual dimensions of his fairy tale texts.



Looking back at the Year 2000

Arnold Bodtker is remembered for his contributions to Danish American Heritage

The year 2000 marked the passing of Arnold N. Bodtker in his home town of Junction City, Oregon on March 28. He was 95 years old.

A distinguished leader in agriculture during his career, he devoted his retirement years to the preservation of Danish heritage. Bodtker founded, and served as first president of the Danish American Heritage Society. For ten years he also served as editor of the Society’s historical journal, *The Bridge*. While serving as president of DAHS, Bodtker encouraged the Board of Directors to appoint a midwestern committee to examine the establishment of a Danish Immigrant Museum, which ultimately led to the creation of The Danish Immigrant Museum in Elk Horn, Iowa. He supported research and writing of Danish American history with perceptive advice, generous contributions, unflinching enthusiasm, and mental alertness.

His parents were Hans Nielsen Bodtker and Susanne Jacobsen Bodtker, from Denmark and the Faeroe Islands, respectively. They were among the very first Danish immigrants to settle in the newly founded Danish colony in Junction City, where Bodtker was born on December 5, 1904.

After graduating from high school in Junction City in 1923, he alternated between farming and studying at several colleges and universities including Oregon Agricultural College

(as Oregon State University was then known); Grand View College in Des Moines, Iowa; the University of Oregon; the University of Minnesota; Nebraska State Teacher’s College and Drake University in Des Moines, from which he graduated with a bachelor’s degree in Sociology and Biology in 1930.

It was at Grand View College that he met Edith Gravesen from Askov, Minnesota. They married in Junction City, Oregon, in 1932. They taught together for one school year at Nysted Folk High School and then farmed with Bodtker’s father in Junction City. In 1937 he earned a Master’s Degree in Agricultural Economics & Soils.

In 1937 Bodtker embarked on his lifelong career with the United States Department of Agriculture, eventually serving from 1954-1973 as Oregon State Executive Director of the Agricultural Conservation and Stabilization Service.

While living in Portland, Bodtker was active in urban affairs, serving on several committees dealing with metropolitan government, transportation, and downtown issues. He was active in agricultural and environmental organizations as well.

Upon his retirement from the Department of Agriculture in 1973, Bodtker and Edith moved from Portland back to his home town of Junction City, where he engaged in a wide variety of community activities. He was on the board of the Junction City Scandinavian Festival, and was active in the Junction City Danish Brotherhood Lodge Vestens Stjerne (Star of the West), of which he was a lifelong member.

Bodtker received the Grand View College Distinguished Alumni Award in 1990 and also received the William Niskanen trophy from the Oregon/Southwest Washington Associates of the Scandinavian American Foundation.

He was preceded in death by his wife Edith in 1993.

Number the Stars enjoys a successful run

Our inaugural outdoor theater production of *Number the Stars*¹ was a huge success, exceeding our greatest expectations. Reminiscent of the Danish Rebild Hills, where Danes and Americans celebrate the Fourth of July each year, our outdoor amphitheater brought together the Danish American love of culture and theater into 14 summer evenings of entertainment.

The production was put together by an army of volunteers and staff, numbering 128. From stage builders to stage crews to actors, through a host of supporting players, the spirit of volunteerism and commitment to the Museum was and is truly inspiring. Without their time and efforts, this production would not have been possible. Each played a significant role in beginning a wonderful tradition.

In the end, the weather cooperated to allow 14 of the 15 scheduled performances. Beginning on Thursday July 6 the Museum produced performances each Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evening until Friday August 4. Our August 5 performance was rained out. We had just under 2,500 people from all over the country attend these performances. The success of the performances is evidenced by the large number of people who have expressed disappointment at not having seen the production, as well as by the enthusiasm of those who attended. For this reason, we have decided to perform *Number the Stars* again next year.

It is altogether fitting that the play, *Number the Stars*, be the inaugural production of our outdoor theater. The play is a fictionalized story within the context of real events. Those who participated in this heroic effort to rescue the Danish Jews experienced real danger. Their very lives were put at risk to save others. Why were so many willing to risk so much? While many try to pry the answer to this question from a modest people, we would simply say that it happened. It appears that a time which showed how truly brutal we can be with each other, also demonstrated how very good and generous we can be towards each other. We look forward to producing this play again next year.

¹ The play is based on Lois Lowry's internationally acclaimed young adult novel, *Number the Stars*. The play unfolds the story of the Danish rescue of the Jews in World War



Director and Playwright Doug Larche and cast members pour over the script during an early rehearsal.



Executive Director Rick Burns opens one of the performances at the Museum's outdoor theater.



Some members of the Museum's production of *Number the Stars*: back row (l to r) Jerry Schrader, Tom Potts, Bill Rollins, Kathleen Darling, Corey Harbour; front row (l to r) Jan Larsen, Jessica Gates, Emily Johnson, John Greving.



Unsmiling guards set the initial tone for the production.

Theater . . .

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It through the lives of three young Danish girls. It was the Museum's good fortune to have the play's author, Dr. Doug Larche, serve as director of the production. Dr. Larche is an internationally known playwright, director, children's book author, composer and poet.



The young girls experience the harsh reality of the Occupation as they are stopped on the way home from school.



Left to right: Kathleen Darling, Emily Johnson, Jessica Gates.



Board to meet in Phoenix, Arizona

The Board of Directors of The Danish Immigrant Museum will meet for its regular winter meeting at the Embassy Suites Airport West Hotel in Phoenix, Arizona, February 9-10, 2001. Museum members residing, wintering or vacationing in Arizona are invited to meet Board members and staff at the hotel on Saturday evening for dinner and an evening of fellowship honoring our Danish heritage. Please contact the Museum at 1-800-759-9192 for additional information.

The Museum's summer theater production wins recognition

During the October ceremonies for the Iowa Community Betterment Recognition Day, the Danish Villages of Elk Horn and Kimballton were awarded first place in the Special Events Category. The award resulted from The Danish Immigrant Museum's outdoor summer theater production of *Number the Stars*. In addition to the first place entry, the Museum's theater production received a Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc. Award for excellence. This award is bestowed upon one community in each population category, for outstanding work in areas of the environment, quality of life, economic development, or community service.

The play, *Number the Stars*, written by Doug Larche, is based on Lois Lowrey's Newbery Award winning book of the same title. The play is a fictionalized story within the context of real events under the German occupation of Denmark during World War II. This moving story tells about the efforts of two sisters and their family to smuggle their Danish Jewish friend to the safety of Sweden. The inaugural production of the Museum's outdoor theater event required the marshaled talents of many volunteers to perform as actors, stage, lighting and construction crews, ushers, and many more behind-the-scenes roles. The volunteers came from the three-county area of Shelby, Audubon, and Cass counties.¹

Other individuals were cited at the recognition ceremony for their work to promote both community and Museum efforts. They were recognized for their significant contributions to the planning and implementation of the play, as well as for their long history of support for community and Museum development.

Long-time supporter of the Museum, Jeannette Lillehoj (top photo on right), received the Leadership Award for her on-going community betterment leadership. Jim Breining (bottom photo on right) of Des Moines, Iowa was awarded the Good Neighbor Award in recognition of his efforts to promote the Museum through his bus company, Four Oaks Charter. Jim regularly promotes tours to the Museum, as well as transporting performing groups between destination points, such as Den Jyske Opera group which toured this past September. The community newspaper, *The Danish Villages Voice*, was also recognized through the Media Award for exemplary media coverage of community betterment activities and projects.

The Danish Immigrant Museum is proud to sponsor events such as the production of *Number the Stars*. In the coming months, we hope to sponsor many more activities, programs, and events that will educate and entertain, while telling the



story of the contributions of Danish Americans.

¹ Play performances began on July 6, 2000 and ran every Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evening through August 4, 2000. Our 15th and last performance was called off due to tornado warnings and rain. We were, however, very pleased that the weather cooperated for 14 out of 15 performances. Some 2,500 people enjoyed wonderful performances of this story of Danish heroism and courage. For more detailed information about the production of *Number the Stars*, see pages 8 and 9.

Danish Immigrant Museum winter 2000 Museum Shop Catalog now available

The Museum Gift Shop has been extremely busy filling telephone and mail orders ever since the release of the Winter 2000 Museum Shop Catalog. The 32-page full color catalog is our largest, most ambitious to date. It features a delightful collection of Danish related gift items in a range of prices for every budget. Our most popular past products are offered as well as a great many new items.

Several new artists are featured in this publication and, as usual, descriptive information about them and their work is included. Educational information about Danish traditions and history is presented as well.

Your Museum Shop purchases help the Museum to broaden and strengthen our educational programs and to share and preserve the Danish Immigrant Museum for generations to come. Your support is greatly appreciated. If you did not receive your catalog in the mail or wish to have one sent to a friend, please phone (800) 759-9192 during Museum hours or email the Museum Shop at dkgift@netins.net and we will be happy to help you.



Demonstrations in Danish Cross-stitch continue

Aveline Marks of Omaha, NE, who has worked extensively in Danish cross-stitch and demonstrated widely in this form of needlework, will continue to demonstrate her craft from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the Museum on the third Saturday of each month, with the exception of this January. Her schedule for Winter 2000-2001 is as follows: Saturday, February 17 and Saturday, March 17. Severe winter weather may force cancellation. Visitors coming specifically for these demonstrations are advised to verify scheduling with the Museum that weekend.

Exhibition Displayed in Atlanta

The Danish Immigrant Museum's exhibit October 1943: The Rescue of the Danish Jews from Annihilation was on display from March 12, 2000 through May 3, 2000 at the Breman Jewish Heritage Museum in Atlanta, GA. It was part of a larger exhibition titled A Light Among Nations: Denmark and the Jews.

The October 1943 exhibit consists of 34 large posters with photos and text dramatically portraying the events surrounding and leading up to this historic rescue. From 1941 onwards, the campaign against the Jews had been carried out throughout all of German occupied Europe. By the time the war in Europe ended in 1945 more than half of the ten million Jews in German-controlled Europe had been murdered in Hitler's quest for so-called "ethnic purity".

In September of 1943 the occupying German forces determined to sweep through Denmark arresting all Jews in a mass operation that would take place on the evening of October 1, 1943. Word of these plans leaked out and other Danes stepped in to thwart the Nazi plans. In a matter of hours they provided the Jewish Danes with hiding places and then with boats to make the short sail over the Kattgut to neutral Sweden. The effort is described as a civilian's rebellion against the inhumanities brought upon Denmark by the occupation. More than 7,000 Jews were rescued and lived as refugees in Sweden until the end of the war. Only 481 ended up in Theresienstadt, and they succeeded in avoiding further deportation to extermination camps.

The exhibit was developed in 1993 by The Museum of Denmark's Fight for Freedom 1940-1945 for the historic 50th anniversary of this amazing event, and, The Danish Immigrant Museum was given circulation rights in the United States. The showing of the exhibit at the Breman Jewish Heritage Museum was presented in cooperation with the Scandinavian American Association of Georgia.

Julefest 2000 celebrated in traditional style

The annual Julefest celebration in Elk Horn, Kimballton and at the Danish Immigrant Museum was held November 24, 25 and 26. The celebration included Danish food, craft boutiques, entertainment and appearances by Father Christmas. Local gift shops were decorated in holiday splendor and holiday shoppers enjoyed Danish hospitality throughout the two villages.

Julefest at The Danish Immigrant Museum was celebrated in traditional style. The Museum lobby featured the annual Christmas tree decorated with traditional Danish ornaments; the elegantly decorated Museum Shop enjoyed brisk business; and homemade Danish Christmas cookies were served to visitors along with hot, spiced cider and coffee. The featured temporary exhibit, Olaf Weighorst, Artist of the American West, enjoyed an enthusiastic reception.

The Julefest celebration at the Museum was marked by an additional special event this year. Annette Overgaard Andersen, designer of the 12th annual Museum Christmas card, was in attendance to autograph cards for appreciative visitors. The artwork used for the card, "Christmas Memories", is an original papirklip by Annette, a second generation Dane, born in Kimballton, Iowa.

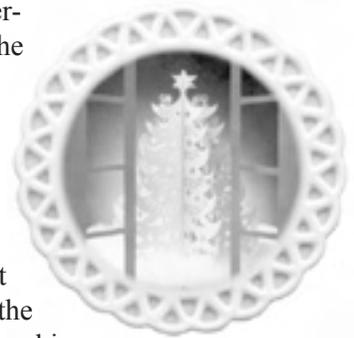
The three dimensional scene was inspired by vivid memories from Annette's childhood. As a young girl of eight, she remembers coming home from the 5 o'clock Christmas Eve service at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Kimballton, Iowa to open the parlor doors. There, immediately revealed, stood her mother's magnificently decorated tree in all of its enchantment.

Annette's artwork is presented as a still life photograph. Warm tones of white and crisp vibrant blue dominate the

Artwork used for the Museum's Christmas Card 2000, "Christmas Memories", is an original papirklip by Annette Overgaard Andersen inspired by childhood memories of her mother's tree.



Above, Museum Executive Director Rick Burns and Annette Overgaard Andersen. At right is the Museum's first annual companion keepsake ornament.



scene and create an ethereal mood of quiet simplicity that allows full appreciation of the intricate detail and craftsmanship employed in the creation of the original papirklip.

In addition to the tradition of the annual Christmas card, the Museum produced the first annual companion keepsake Christmas Ornament. Created of fine porcelain, the ornament is embossed with the "Christmas Memories" design in tones of blue. The back of the 3 1/4" diameter ornament is inscribed with Annette's "Christmas Memories" story and the date, Jule Aften 2000. In the future, each Christmas card will have its own keepsake ornament as a companion piece.

A limited supply of Christmas cards is available for immediate shipment. The overwhelming demand for the Christmas ornament necessitated a reorder with the manufacturer and ornaments will be back in stock by February for those who wish to start their collection. Christmas cards and companion keepsake ornaments are available by ordering through the Museum Shop by mail or e-mail (dkgift@netins.net). You may also phone, (800) 759-9192, during Museum hours.



Den Jyske Opera made the Danish villages a stop on their national tour

In September, The Danish Immigrant Museum and the Danish Windmill sponsored a performance of Den Jyske Opera, The Danish National Opera Quartet, at the Elk Horn Lutheran Church. The entertainers from Den Jyske Opera were Soprano Linda Valantiute, Mezzo-soprano Birgit Demstrup, Baritone Morten Wang, Tenor Jørgen Dal and Pianist/Organizer Knud Rasmussen. Their performance was very enthusiastically received.

The repertoire included opera pieces by Bizet, Verdi, and Carl Nielsen. Operetta and musical selections included songs from *My Fair Lady*, *Die Fledermaus*, *The Merry Widow*, and *Farinelli* by the Danish composer Emil Reesen. Selections also consisted of Danish songs by composers N. W. Gade and Kai Normann Andersen, as well as English and American pieces, "What a Wonderful World" and "Time to Say Goodbye".

These gifted and talented musicians also entertained students at the local Elk Horn-Kimballton Community School. The students gained a new appreciation for opera as well as other kinds of music. The national tour of Den Jyske Opera included performances in Seattle, San Francisco, Solvang, Blair, Elk Horn and Chicago.



Burns appointed new Executive Director



The Board of Directors of The Danish Immigrant Museum selected Rick Burns as Executive Director to replace Leo Hensley. Burns served as Interim Director from March 15 through July 31, 2000. His vision of the Museum's potential was foremost in his acceptance of the Director's position: "There are many exciting challenges lying before us as we work together to fulfill the vision of this great institution."

Rick brings a unique mix of both experience and education to the director's position. Having spent two years in Denmark, he speaks Danish and has a strong appreciation for and love of the Danish culture and people. Graduating from Brigham Young University with a bachelor's degree in History and a minor in Scandinavian Studies, Rick also holds an MBA from the University of Phoenix. Rick is an officer in the United States Army Reserves, much of that time having been spent as a military intelligence linguist officer. He has worked for a number of years in the computer software industry where he has managed large, multi-million dollar international projects. Burns has also been involved in contract negotiations, marketing, and product development. The Board of Directors looks forward to working with Rick in his position as Executive Director.

Just a Reminder –

The Museum's FALL AND WINTER HOURS

(September 15-May 15) are:

Mon.-Fri. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.;

Sat. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. &

Sun. Noon to 5 p.m.

Admission: \$3.00, adults; \$1.50, children
Free for current members

The America Letter: Published Quarterly
Available through annual membership in The Danish Immigrant Museum. Contact the Museum for membership levels and benefits.

P.O. Box 470, 2212 Washington, Elk Horn, Iowa 51531
712-764-7001, 1-800-759-9192 • FAX 712-764-7002

Barbara Lund-Jones, Editor • Marilyn K. Miller, Senior Staff Writer
Museum staff writers: Rick Burns; Marnell Fox; Barbara Hansen; Connie Johnson,
Pat McClure, Joyce Petersen

Photographers: Ronald Jones, Museum Staff

Newest Exhibit Features Western Artist Wieghorst

Currently on display at The Danish Immigrant Museum is the exhibit, Olaf Wieghorst: Artist of the American West. Wieghorst, who in 1919 at the age of 19 immigrated United States from Viborg, Denmark, arrived just in time to personally experience the quickly vanishing life of the old west. Years later he would immortalize these images on canvas and become one of the premier interpreters of the American West. His works have been displayed in museums all over the country and in private collections of former Presidents Eisenhower, Nixon, Ford, Reagan and actors John Wayne and Paul Newman.

How did a Danish youth with no formal art training eventually come to be compared with his idol Remington? Like many a boy he loved horses and dreamed of becoming a cowboy. His boyhood vision of the American West came from prints by Remington, novels about Buffalo Bill, and from an American cowboy circus he attended. He was determined to pursue his dream.

Wieghorst's father began teaching Olaf acrobatics as soon as he could walk. At age nine he performed on the stage at Tivoli Theatre in Copenhagen but Olaf was not interested in a career as an acrobat. When he was fourteen-years-old he took a job on a stock farm where he could work with horses and then went on to be a motion picture stunt man and a trick rider for a circus. He sketched constantly, perfecting his knowledge of how horses looked and moved.

In 1919 after arriving in New York on a Danish steamer he jumped ship and spent a few months working and learning English. One evening he saw a movie newsreel about the 5th Cavalry's activities on the Mexican border and he enlisted the next day. While in the cavalry he earned his US citizenship. When he completed his tour of duty Wieghorst bought a saddle horse and pack mule and with two friends spent two years working for various cattle ranches in Arizona and New Mexico. In New Mexico, Wieghorst worked on the "Quarter Circle Two-C" ranch. He sometimes used a hot running iron to do sketching on fencing and shed walls. Years later he would incorporate the brand used by the ranch as part of his signature on all his works.

After three years in the US Cavalry and two years as a cowboy, he returned to New York City. During his absence he had corresponded with his friend, Mae, who had taught him English when he first arrived in this country. They married on October 25, 1924.

Even in New York he was able to work with horses. He joined the New York City Mounted Police training new horses for the Mounted Police Division and riding the bridle paths of Central Park.

Upon retirement from the Police Department in 1944, Wieghorst moved his family to El Cajon, California and



devoted himself to recapturing in his paintings the West he had known as a trooper and cowboy. He painted cowboys on the range, Indians, and horses, of course ... all set within wonderful panoramas of magnificent natural landscapes. He worked from memory in his studio but traveled extensively throughout the western states.

He once told a writer, "All the information future generations will get of the passing of the West must come from the author's pen and the artist's brush...it dawned on me that as an artist of the American West there was more of a responsibility on my part than just painting pretty pictures. There was a story that needed telling, honestly, the way it was, and there was a heritage worthy of preservation." He was a keen observer of light, motion and subject matter and his advice to other painters was, "Practice. Practice. Practice." Devoted to authenticity he said that he often spent more time researching a painting than he did painting it. His impressive body of work earned him the unofficial title, "The Dean of Western Painters". He passed away in 1988.

Signed, limited edition prints were made from many of his paintings and drawings. The prints in this exhibit were donated by Asta Forrest and are a treasured part of our collection. The exhibit can be seen through April 22, 2001.

Looking back at the Year 2000

Boats In The Night presentation and signing event brought overflow crowds to the Museum



On April 26th, Knud Dyby and Martha Loeffler, the subject (Dyby) and author (Loeffler) of Lur Publications' book, *Boats in the Night*, presented a program at The Danish Immigrant Museum as part of a three-city tour in the area. An overflow crowd attended the evening event. The program featured Dyby's first hand account of his experiences as he participated

in the rescue operations of the Danish Jews during WW II and Loeffler's experiences as she wrote the book. A reception and book signing followed the program.

Knud Dyby was a Danish policeman sought by the Nazis during the war for his participation in the rescue of Jews. After the war, he left Denmark and moved to the United States. Dyby's name appears on the Commemorative Wall in the Avenue of the Righteous of the Nations at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. Today, he is a well-known lecturer across the country.

Martha Loeffler is the daughter of Jewish immigrants from Russia. She is a frequent contributor to the Modesto Bee (California). Her articles have won numerous awards. As a member of the National League of Pen Women, she was asked by the San Francisco Holocaust Oral History Project to write a book based on their interviews with Knud Dyby. This initiated an association with Dyby and resulted in the publication of the book.

Boats in the Night summarizes the background for Hitler's invasion of Denmark and the Jewish role in Danish society. It focuses primarily on Knud Dyby's story as he became a participant in the slow but increasing resistance to the Nazi

regime and in the dramatic rescue of his Jewish fellow countrymen. Perhaps nothing so coalesced the Danish people in their opposition to the Nazis as the threat of annihilation confronting a part of their population. People from all walks of life joined in the dangerous but overwhelmingly successful venture of first hiding, then transferring these fellow Danes to safety in Sweden. When asked why the experience for Jews in Denmark was so different compared to other parts of Europe, Dyby responded, "We didn't see them as Jews, they were just good Danes. And we Danes were brought up to do what is right."

In addition to their stop at the Museum, the pair also made appearances at the Omaha Jewish Community Center, Omaha, NE; Gerald Otte and Arbor Park Middle Schools, Blair, NE; Elk Horn-Kimballton Public School, Elk Horn, IA; Grand View College, Des Moines, IA.



The Museum is represented at Høst Fest

During October, The Danish Immigrant Museum participated for the first time in Høst Fest in Minot, North Dakota. Høst Fest is regarded as the largest Scandinavian festival in the United States, attracting thousands from all over the country. The Museum was able to use a newly created traveling display to explain the purpose and importance of The Danish Immigrant Museum. Our booth was very popular and introduced The Danish Immigrant Museum to a large number of people.

In addition to the display, Marilyn Gift provided wheat weaving demonstrations, creating items that were then sold for the benefit of the Museum. Kirsten Larsen, author of several Danish cookbooks, also participated by signing some of her cookbooks. Many Christmas items from our Museum Shop were offered for sale as well.

The Danish Immigrant Museum and Composer Jonathan David Neal collaborate to produce a new music CD; the music is featured in a concert they host

In the first year of the new millennium, The Danish Immigrant Museum stepped out to collaborate in the production of a new music CD entitled *A Danish Christmas Fantasia* by renowned composer, Jonathan David Neal. Included on the CD are songs such as “Det kimer nu til julefest”, “Sikken voldsom trængsel”, “Glade jul, dejlige jul”, “Et Barn er født I Betlehem” and “Julen har gragt velsignet bud”. Lyrics are in both English and Danish. This very special collection of Christmas music was composed by Jonathan and produced by the Museum. Mr. Neal is a composer and arranger of Danish American heritage. He has had an extensive career in the US and Europe.

In the words of Jonathan David Neal, “Christmas is the magical time of year that everyone looks forward to, all over the world. In Denmark it is no different. Yet Danes have their own wonderful traditions such as the ‘dance around the tree’, stories of the ‘nisser og rotterne’ and some of the most beautiful songs that the rest of the world seldom hears. Those who grew up in Denmark will remember these songs with joy and for the rest of us, it will be a joy to learn them. We want to preserve and continue these wonderful traditions. Musically these songs really should be a fantasia. So I have grouped them in ‘fantasias’ and also included some international favorites that are sung in almost every culture of the world, especially Denmark. With this project we hope to create a ‘fantasia’ atmosphere of a wonderful Danish Christmas.”

On December 9, The Danish Immigrant Museum sponsored a Christmas concert featuring artist, Jonathan David Neal, at the Elk Horn Lutheran Church. Neal performed music from the new CD, *A Danish Christmas Fantasia*, as well as selections from his first CD, entitled *Dreams of Denmark*, released last year. The concert also included performances

by Elk Horn-Kimballton High School vocal students and Atlantic High School students from Jodi Greiner’s Voice Studio. The evening of Christmas music and song concluded with a reception.

Music CDs may be ordered through the Museum Shop by mail (P.O. Box 470, Elk Horn, IA 51531); by e-mail (dkgift@netins.net); or by phone (800) 759-9192 during Museum hours.



Calendar of 2001 Events for the Danish Villages of Elk Horn and Kimballton

- **MAY 26, 27, 2001 - TIVOLI FEST** in Elk Horn. Parade, folk dancing, authentic Danish foods, craft demonstrations, etc.
- **JUNE 23, 2001 - SANKT HANS AFTEN** (Burning of the witch) held on the grounds of The Danish Immigrant Museum.
- **NOVEMBER 23, 24 - JULEFEST 2001** Craft boutiques, Danish foods, entertainment, Father Christmas visit.



DAHS plans a major conference for 2002

The Danish American Heritage Society in cooperation with The Danish Immigrant Museum in Elk Horn, Iowa; Dana College in Blair, Nebraska; and Grand View College in Des Moines, Iowa, is pleased to announce a major conference on Danish - North American relations to be held in Omaha, Nebraska, on October 10-13, 2002. The conference focus will be on (but not limited to) relations between Denmark and North America since World War II. Sessions will examine the economic, social and cultural factors that have motivated immigration, the laws relating to immigration, and the experiences of those who immigrated. The conference will also explore how immigrant communities as well as the rise of international travel, business and study contribute to relations between Denmark, the United States, and Canada and what this might mean for future relations.

The Danish American Heritage Society (DAHS) invites research projects that explore topics such as:

- the experience of individuals and families who emigrated after World War II to the United States, Canada or Denmark and the conditions that led to this emigration;
- the role business, professional and educational opportunities played and continue to play in motivating post World War II migration between these countries;
- the role business and investment opportunities play in shaping future relationships between Denmark, the United States and Canada;
- the role US foreign aid played in Danish society following World War II;
- the influence of American pop culture on attitudes in Denmark towards the United States;
- the global political situation since World War II and how it has affected attitudes and relations between Denmark, Canada and the United States;
- the role of immigration policy and laws in Denmark, Canada and the United States and how laws and policies have affected populations;
- the reactions of host populations to growing immigrant populations;
- the rise of interest in ethnic heritage and how such interest has contributed to community development efforts and business ventures;

- the changes in ethnic identity among Danish-Americans and Danish-Canadians over the last 100 years and the ways in which immigrants to Denmark have or have not adapted to Danish society;
- the ways in which ethnic identity is manifested through preparing special foods and celebrating special days (i.e. Christmas, Sankt Hans Aften, Grundlovsdag);
- the role religious affiliation has played in preserving ethnic identity or encouraging assimilation in the host country;
- the ways in which interest in genealogy and family history on personal and family level creates bonds between nations.

The DAHS Conference Planning Committee invites presentations of both an academic and popular nature. It hopes the conference will appeal to a wide population, interested in how the lessons of the past influence relations today and can shape political, economic and cultural relationships in the future.

The Conference Planning Committee will issue an official call for papers in the spring of 2001 with a deadline for submitting proposals by August 1, 2001. Notification of participation will occur in late fall 2001, allowing conference presenters adequate time to arrange for funding and travel. A program will be published in early spring of 2002 and advertising will occur at conferences and festivals in Denmark, Canada, and the United States.

For further information concerning conference plans or the Danish American Heritage Society, please contact: Dr. James Iversen, DAHS President, 4105 Stone Brooke Road, Ames, Iowa 50010; iversenji@uswest.net or Dr. John Mark Nielsen, Chair, Conference Planning Committee; Box 1206, Dana College, Blair, Nebraska 68008-1099; jmnielse@acad2.dana.edu

Museum co-sponsors Naturalization Ceremony

During the month of September, The Danish Immigrant Museum co-sponsored a Naturalization Ceremony in association with the regional office of Immigration and Naturalization Services. During this ceremony

fifty-two immigrants became citizens of the United States of America. A local Elk Horn citizen stated that his Danish father had been naturalized in a similar ceremony. It was particularly meaningful for him to witness what his father had done so many years before. Those attending found the ceremony truly inspiring as these immigrants took the oath of allegiance to their new home.

Chet Culver, Iowa Secretary of State, welcomed the new citizens on behalf of the state of Iowa. Culver also spoke about the importance of voting. Two of the recently naturalized citizens shared their feelings about being citizens of the United States of America. Rick Burns, Director of The



Danish Immigrant Museum, spoke about the importance of immigrants to America. He challenged everyone to make a difference through use of the freedoms that are ours as citizens. The ceremony provided all with a deep appreciation of the freedoms we enjoy in the United States.

The ceremony was held at the Elk Horn-Kimballton Community School auditorium with a reception following at the Museum. The Museum is looking forward to sponsoring another naturalization ceremony in 2001.



Looking back at the Year 2000

Ribbons of Memories project enriches Museum's holdings

The Danish Immigrant Museum is pleased to announce the acquisition of over 100 vital oral history tapes of Danish Immigrants, a donation from Gerda Sundberg (photo at right) of Santa Cruz, California, accumulated during years of scholarly interviewing by Gerda and her late husband Edward F. Sundberg. These oral histories represent the Danish portion of Ribbons of Memories, an American-Scandinavian ethnic heritage oral history research project that consumed most of the Sundberg's free time for well over 20 years. No grant money was ever received and Edward financed the travel and other expenses himself.

The project was an expansion of what began as the Sundberg's interest in their own family histories. Edward was born in Omaha, Nebraska, the son of Swedish immigrants who were very active within Omaha's large Swedish population. Gerda was born in Faaborg on Fyn in Denmark. Her full name



is Gerda Elise Rasmussen Pedersen Sundberg. Rasmussen is from her biological father, Viggo Rasmussen, who passed away when she was eight-years-old. Pedersen is from Hans Pedersen who married her widowed mother, Petra Jørgensen

Ribbons . . .

— continued from page 18

Rasmussen. In 1937 the Hans Pedersen family immigrated to Omaha, Nebraska and in 1938 moved into a house Hans built, just two houses up the street from where Edward's father was building a home. That is how the two teenagers, Gerda and Edward, met and became friends. They married June 10 of 1943 while Edward was in the service. They reared three sons.

Edward became interested in genealogy while on a teaching sabbatical in Scandinavia in 1968. In 1972 he hoped to tape a family history from his parents but, unfortunately, they were too frail. They decided to try Gerda's parents and taped hours of conversation with Hans Rasmussen. This inspired them to tape other older Scandinavian immigrants and record their first hand accounts of their immigration to the United States and their life experiences here — of learning the language, of hardships and successes. The project nearly took over their lives, especially after Edward retired in 1987.

In July 1982 an article by Edward and Gerda appeared in The Swedish-American Historical Society's quarterly magazine. By that date they had already traveled over 60,000

miles in pursuit of oral histories and had developed a thorough interviewing outline and an indexing method. Through the years they taught their interviewing techniques to others interested in preserving oral history.

Copies of all the tapes and their indices were donated to the University of Washington. Copies of all Danish tapes and indices were donated to the Danes World-Wide Archives in Aalborg and the Swedish tapes to the Emigrant Institute in Vaxjo. The Sundbergs donated all their tapes, pictures and articles to The Lutheran University in Thousand Oaks where the work is presently being continued.

The importance of the Sundberg's oral history project cannot be overstated as it records for posterity, in their own words, the memories of those whose who lived the immigrant experience. Many of those who were interviewed have since passed away but not before these experiences were documented on tape.



Lifetime Leadership Society

Those members who have given a cumulative amount of \$25,000 or more during their lifetime:

Anonymous

Anonymous

Mervin Bro, Scottsdale, AZ

*Marie Budolfson, Ames, IA

Alma Hartvigsen, Harlan, IA

Gunnar Horn, Omaha, NE

Stanley and Helen Howe, Muscatine, IA

Clyde and Emma Johnson, Omaha, NE

Lowell and Marilyn Kramme, Des Moines, IA

Bruce Lauritzen, Omaha, NE

Richard Ledet, Des Moines, IA

Adelaide Madsen, Iowa City, IA

Folmer and Vera Nyby, Michigan City, IN

Erik and Jackie Olsen, Mesa, AZ

*Olga Olsen, Watertown, SD

Archie Petersen Estate, Harlan, IA

John I. Petersen Estate, Waterloo, IA

Eugene Robinson, Pensacola, FL

Anelise Sawkins, Minneapolis, MN

Schultz & Schultz-Nielsen Memorial, Tustin, CA

*Ava Simonsen, Audubon, IA

*Harold L. Sorensen, Exira, IA

Wilber Williamson, Des Moines, IA

Danish Brotherhood in America, Highlands Ranch, CO

Danish Mutual Insurance Association, Elk Horn, IA

Elk Horn Lutheran Church, Elk Horn, IA

Kulturministeriet, Copenhagen, Denmark

Lutheran Brotherhood, Minneapolis, MN

Marne and Elk Horn Telephone Co., Elk Horn, IA

Peter Kiewit Foundation, Omaha, NE

Shelby County State Bank, Harlan, IA

State of Iowa, Des Moines, IA

Viking Metal Cabinets, Chicago, IL

*deceased



Elderhostel participants utilize facilities at the Family History Center

In early October (2 - 6), the Museum welcomed an Elderhostel group by extending hours in the Family History and Genealogy Center and providing extra assistants to accommodate the group's schedule. The week was spent learning about Danish heritage, history and genealogy. Tours, good food and entertainment were also part of the experience. Iowa Western Community College organized the event which was hosted by the Danish villages of Kimballton and Elk Horn. Next fall Elderhostel 2001 will take place October 7 - 12.

An exhibition featuring the work of Nulle Øigaard and Ib Spang Olsen offered visitors a dramatic encounter with original artwork

A special Fall 2000 exhibit of illustrations by Ib Spang Olsen and pictorial tapestries by Nulle Øigaard transformed the halls of The Danish Immigrant Museum into an art gallery. These two talented Danish artists are husband and wife with uniquely individual forms of artistic expression and interpretation. The exhibit, organized by the Nordic Heritage Museum in Seattle, presented our visitors with an overview of their work.

Images immediately recognizable as being inspired by the story tales of Hans Christian Andersen greeted the visitor. These works of Spang Olsen were followed with illustrations of a variety of subjects demonstrating his range of artistic interest and techniques. Spang Olsen's interest in Nordic mythology was represented in the display by his original drawings: "Tor is aided by his son Mange" and "Tor comes with Thunder". Also included was "Loke and Luke's eating competition" which combines film and water color in a manner that magnifies the primal intensity of the subjects.

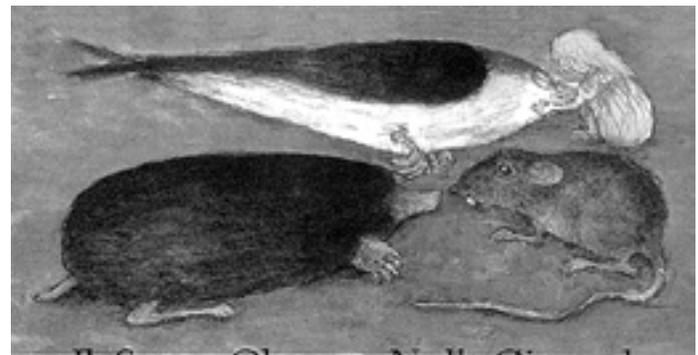
Ib Spang Olsen is a prolific and accomplished artist who works in a multitude of media. He is a much appreciated illustrator of books and magazines, author of children's books, and a graphic artist who has been the subject of three major bibliographies. In a unique publication, *Fra Direkte Kopi til Heliografik* (From Direct Copy to Heliography,) filled with examples from his multi-faceted career as an illustrator, Spang Olsen describes his process of emulating original graphics through a different method of reproduction.

Spang Olsen's illustrations cover a wide spectrum... people, nature, urban areas, and mythology. He can be both whimsical and serious and he has a deep interest in social issues and the status or condition of children. One of his specialties is portraits of young children and his drawings are much sought after by collectors. His work is known throughout Europe and Japan, and Denmark regards him as one of its premier artists.

Every other year the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) presents the Hans Christian Andersen Awards to an author and illustrator, living at the time of the nomination, whose complete works have made a lasting contribution to children's literature. It is the highest international recognition given to an author and illustrator of children's books. Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II of Denmark is the Patron of the Andersen Awards. Ib Spang Olsen received the award for illustration in 1972.

Working from a distinctly different vision, Danish tapestry artist Nulle Øigaard is recognized for her magnificent pictorial tapestries. Inspired by nature and the metaphysical world, she creates fabric collages filled with beauty and vivid colors. Eleven of Øigaard's framed textile works were shown as were 12 large works hung as tapestries.

Her works have been referred to as painting in cloth. The variety of materials, colors, shapes and textures used in Øi-



Ib Spang Olsen • Nulle Øigaard
Thumbelina Pictorial Tapestry



gaard's creations combine to express her unique vision. Her works are often inspired by trips to exotic regions in the world. Her first inspiration was found around the Mediterranean, but later trips have taken her to Mexico, South Africa, Honduras, and Tunisia. Her travels are a necessity in her creative process, but Denmark, with its cold and dark winters, also serves as a stimulus for her more metaphysical works.

She has produced stage designs for several opera and theater performances. Particularly noteworthy is her front curtain specially created for Tivoli's Concert Hall on the occasion of the Danish Radio's Gala evening in celebration of Her Royal Highness Queen Margrethe's fiftieth birthday anniversary on the 15th of April, 1990.

Øigaard studied with the Danish painter Axel Klingspor and at the Danish Academy of Art where she entered the School of Painting under Professor Olaf Rude and the School of Graphic Art under Professors Holger Jensen and Søren Hjorth Nielsen. A select list of exhibitions include the Danish National Gallery of Art, the Museum of Industrial Art, The Danish Foreign Ministry, Musee Chateau d'Annecy in France, New Carlsberg Glyptotek, Kastrupgaard, and various town halls, libraries, schools, and art associations throughout Denmark.

Julie Jensen McDonald presentation and book signing event

On Saturday, November 11, well-known author and Shelby County, Iowa native, Julie Jensen McDonald, returned to The Danish Immigrant Museum to present a program and autograph her latest novel, *North of the Heart*. The event presented an extraordinary opportunity to meet this accomplished and talented writer. The afternoon event featured a program by McDonald who spoke about her career and experiences as a journalist and author. A reception in her honor followed. She signed books in the Museum Shop for appreciative guests.

McDonald was born near Fiscus, Iowa and grew up in Harlan, a few miles away. Her father emigrated from Denmark as a teenager and her mother's parents came from Denmark in 1884. A Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of Iowa, she has enjoyed an extensive career in journalism and has authored 26 published titles to date. Her journalism career has included woman's editor, feature writer, arts reporter and columnist for newspapers in the Quad City area. She taught journalism at St. Ambrose University for 26 years and has taught numerous novel and biography workshops. She has also participated in the Iowa Arts Council's Writers-in-the-Schools/Communities program since 1974. She is a former chair of the Iowa Arts Council and currently serves as a trustee at the Davenport Museum of Art, Davenport, Iowa. A clarinetist, she is the concert mistress of the Bettendorf Park Band and editor of its newsletter. Her literary awards include the Johnson Brigham Award from the Iowa Library Association, an award from the Friends of American Writers and numerous first-place national ratings for novels from the National Federation of Press Women.

McDonald's most recent novel, *North of the Heart*, is the story of Alexandra Lund, a young Danish woman who is enjoying the bohemian life in Copenhagen at the dawn of the Roaring Twenties when she meets Stig Brand, a Polar

adventurer who has returned home to celebrate the proclamation of Greenland as Danish territory. They fall in love, Stig proposes and, over the objections of her family, Alexandra sails for Greenland with him three days after their meeting. They are married by the ship's captain. Upon reaching Greenland, Alexandra's adventure begins. The icy and primitive land, with its strange culture and customs, challenges the passion Alexandra feels for her husband and she sometimes wonders if this cold and dangerous place is north of the heart. She faces harsh realities when Stig is injured in an accident and must have his leg amputated. After medical leave in Denmark, Alexandra feels the pull of Greenland and they return to a place which they know is not north of the heart.

McDonald has written extensively about Danish customs and culture in the books *Definitely Danish* and *Delectably Danish*. Both best selling volumes include history on Danish customs and culture as well as favorite Danish recipes.

North of the Heart is available from The Danish Immigrant Museum, Elk Horn, Iowa for \$14.95 plus shipping and handling costs.



Original artwork . . .

— continued from page 20

Marianne Forsslad, director of the Nordic Heritage Museum, personally traveled to Denmark to make these selections from the works of Ib Spang Olsen and Nulle Øigaard. Lena Torslow Hansen, Art Consulting Scandinavia, served as an advisor on this project.



Director's Corner

One of our volunteers made the comment to me recently that once the Museum gets into your blood, you just can't let go. I believe The Danish Immigrant Museum has that kind of power. Many of you have been involved with the Museum from the inception of the vision, before there was even a physical building or artifacts. I am also sure there were many who secretly smirked at the very idea of establishing a Museum to the Danish immigrants. The detractors have been proven wrong and the Museum is now a monument to the vision of the early supporters.



Now we have a beautiful building, artifacts, wonderful and exciting exhibits and developing programs and events. We might think we have reached the vision, a time to sit back and rest on our laurels. We might...although we can't and we won't. There is yet much to do and the spirit that has driven so many to put the Museum where it is today, will drive us to even greater achievements in the near future.

We can't do it alone, however. We will need the help and support of others. I am excited to announce that we have hired Marnell Fox as our full-time development officer, devoted full-time to raising financial support, writing grants, and finding other means of financially strengthening the Museum. Marnell is highly qualified, energetic, and enthusiastic. We will need your help, however, to achieve our very large dreams for the Museum. Each of us needs to find ways to share with others the wonderful things happening at the Museum. Consider, for example, sending a gift membership, brochure or newsletter to friends and family. These are ways to help increase both our membership and financial support.

We appreciate the support you continue to give the Museum. The Danish Immigrant Museum has an exciting and challenging future. I look forward to working with you in the coming years to make The Danish Immigrant Museum the premier institution for the study of Danish-American immigration, culture, and heritage.



Annual Leadership Society

Due to the structure of the Museum's new computer software this society includes all patron members who have contributed \$1,000 or more from January 1, 2000 through November 30, 2000.

\$1,000 - \$2,499

Harold and Lois Berg, Ogden, Iowa
Mervin Bro, Scottsdale, Arizona
Thomas and Jan Christensen, Bettendorf, Iowa
Gordon and Janice Esbeck, Tipton, Iowa
Howard Esbeck, Ames, Iowa
Richard Hansen, Aurora, Nebraska
Rosa A. Hansen Trust, Hampton, Iowa
Stew Hansen, West Des Moines, Iowa
Gunnar Horn, Omaha, Nebraska
Frode Jensen, New Canaan, Connecticut
Norma H. Jensen Trust, Des Moines, Iowa
Roland and Joan Jensen, Ankeny, Iowa
Lis and Iver Jorgensen, Gilroy, California
Reola Lerager, Wichita, Kansas
Elcar and Norma Nielsen, Prairie Village, Kansas
Mark and Lori Nussle, Palos Park, Illinois
Folmer and Vera Nyby, Michigan City, Indiana
Tom and Nadine Paulsen, Bellevue, Washington
Carl J. Petersen Estate, Morris, Minnesota
Thelma Petersen, Harlan, Iowa
Tom and Julie Rosen, Fairmont, Minnesota
Lemuel and Edith Sprow, Mound, Minnesota
Svend and Lois Toftemark, Eugene, Oregon
Wilber Williamson, Des Moines, Iowa
K. E. Tygesen, Royal Danish Embassy, Washington, D.C.
Erik and Lissi Vange, Palatine, Illinois

Cedar Valley Danes, Cedar Falls, Iowa
Elk Horn Class of 1950, Elk Horn, Iowa
General Mills Foundation, Minneapolis, Minnesota
Georgia-Pacific, Atlanta, Georgia
Marne & Elk Horn Telephone Company, Elk Horn, Iowa
North Park College, Chicago, Illinois
Society Dania, Minneapolis, Minnesota
Upper Midwest Rebuild Society, Maple Plain, Minnesota
Viking Ball, Chicago, Illinois
Western Iowa Development, Red Oak, Iowa

\$2,500 or more

*Marie Budolfson,
Charles and Joann Frederiksen, Ames, Iowa
Caroline Hansen Estate, Harlan, Iowa
Vernon Hunter, Fargo, North Dakota
Clyde and Emma Johnson, Omaha, Nebraska
Martha Jorgensen Estate, Audubon, Iowa
Bruce Lauritzen, Omaha, Nebraska
Richard Ledet, Des Moines, Iowa
Irene Nissen, Cedar Falls, Iowa
Tom and Nadine Paulsen, Bellevue, Washington
Rand and Mary Louise Petersen, Harlan, Iowa
Halvor Strandskov, Alexandria, Virginia
Janet Thuesen, Falls Church, Virginia

AT&T Foundation, New York, New York
Vanguard Charitable Endowment, Southeastern, Pennsylvania
Walhalla Benefit Society, Countryside, Illinois
*deceased

The Danish Immigrant Museum
Condensed Financial Statements
99/00 Annual Report
As of August 31, 2000

Condensed Statements of Financial Condition for Years Ended August 31,

	<u>2000</u>	<u>1999</u>
Assets		
Cash and Investments	346 885	398 164
Contributions Receivable (Net)	109 286	125 215
Gift Shop Inventory	45 080	45 711
Property and Equipment (Net)	2 905 851	2 982 647
Other Assets	6 293	9 916
Total Assets	<u>3 413 395</u>	<u>3 561 653</u>
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	8 283	9 938
Notes Payable	804 108	882 986
Other Liabilities	<u>1 000</u>	<u>1 800</u>
Total Liabilities	<u>813 391</u>	<u>894 724</u>
Net Assets	<u>2 600 004</u>	<u>2 666 929</u>
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	<u>3 413 395</u>	<u>3 561 653</u>

Condensed Statements of Activities for Years Ended August 31,

	<u>2000</u>	<u>1999</u>
Support and Revenue		
Contributions	411 629	595 199
Grants	-0-	-0-
Admissions and Fees	24 291	22 453
Memberships	130 867	125 288
Gift Shop Sales (Net)	48 550	33 879
Investment Income and Other	<u>23 606</u>	<u>23 897</u>
Total Support and Revenue	<u>638 943</u>	<u>800 716</u>
Expenses		
Program	180 649	113 865
Supporting Services	<u>525 219</u>	<u>502 045</u>
Total Expenses	<u>705 868</u>	<u>615 910</u>
Change in Net Assets	(66 925)	184 806
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	<u>2 666 929</u>	<u>2 482 123</u>
Net Assets, End of Year	<u>2 600 004</u>	<u>2 666 929</u>



Volunteer spotlight

This issue of the America Letter features Aveline Marks in our Volunteer Spotlight. On the third Saturday of each month Aveline demonstrates Danish cross-stitch at a table set up near the gift shop at The Danish Immigrant Museum. She and her husband, Les, have faithfully made the trek from Omaha for the past three years so that Aveline can share this traditional needlework technique with the public.



Aveline Marks at right.

Aveline grew up in Omaha and, after obtaining a degree in Home Economics from the University of Omaha, she began secretarial work for Schweser Co., an investment and software company where she has worked for 37 years. A year after she finished college she met her husband, Les. They have been active members of several Scandinavian clubs: Danish-American Club of Omaha, Vasa, Sons of Norway and the Monday Club. Aveline also belongs to the American Needlepoint Guild, the Embroiderer's Guild of America and the Danish Handcraft Guild. She is a member of various needlework clubs, as well.

Aveline's Scandinavian roots run deep. Her father, born in Sweden, moved with his family to Denmark when he was a year old. At 16, he immigrated to the United States and stayed with an aunt in Chicago. At some time he changed his name from Karl Nielsson to Karl Nelson. After serving in the army in W.W. I, he settled in Omaha where he met and married Mamie Horak. They later had a daughter, Aveline. When Aveline was 11-years-old, they returned to Denmark for a month to visit relatives.

Aveline and her husband Les have traveled to Europe eight times since they were married (mostly to Scandinavian countries) "to visit her cousin and see the sights." A highlight of last year's trip was taking the underground trains.

During one of the trips, in 1973, Aveline learned Danish counted cross-stitch from an aunt who showed her how to use a cross-stitch chart. The work is done on linen with a specially-made fine thread dyed with flowers. This year Aveline entered two needlework pieces at the Nebraska State Fair ... one counted cross-stitch (an unframed wall hanging) and a needlepoint Christmas stocking. Both entries earned blue ribbons.

Aveline's involvement with The Danish Immigrant Mu-

seum began when she first heard of plans to build the Museum. She and her husband came to Elk Horn with the Norwegian Club to view the building site. They then decided to donate some family items and became members.

Aveline has a shop (Aveline's Needlework Nook) in Omaha featuring Norwegian and Danish kits. Through the Danish Handcraft Guild, which has designers and a school in Denmark, she obtains catalogs, yarns, threads, needles and hardware for her shop.

This year The Danish Immigrant Museum gift shop has carried a limited edition of her hand-stitched ornaments.

We thank Aveline for sharing her time and talent with visitors to the Museum who want to learn more about the ever-popular Danish counted cross-stitch.



Volunteers fill an increasing variety of roles

Looking back over the years since the grand opening of the Museum's new building in 1994, it is amazing to note how the duties available for volunteers have expanded in their variety, specialization and sophistication.

We have front desk greeters, docents at Bedstemor's and tour guides at the Museum. Some volunteers help with special projects such as mailings, others with food and decorating for special events, or, helping in the gift shop. Some share their unique abilities through demonstrations – food preparation, crafts and many forms of fine handiwork. Those with an interest in research assist with exhibition documentation or work in our increasingly well-known Family History and Genealogy Center. A core of specially trained volunteers work with the curatorial staff doing condition reporting, artifact numbering and other projects. A number of volunteers contribute to the upkeep of our building and grounds. Our most recent venture, a summer theatre production titled Number the Stars, was a massive volunteer effort. As close as we can figure, approximately 2,075 volunteer hours were donated for the play.

The present number of volunteers in all areas, excluding the cast and supporting crew of the play, is 150. It is astounding how many hours are given so willingly.

The staff is very grateful for these dedicated people. It is with their help that we will continue to realize our dreams for The Danish Immigrant Museum.

The Board of Directors held their annual meeting in Elk Horn

The Museum's Board of Directors held their annual October Board Meeting in Elk Horn on the 19th through the 21st. The President's dinner was held Thursday evening at the S. F. Martin House in Atlantic, Iowa. On Friday morning, the Board was treated to an in-depth tour of different departments within the Museum, hosted by museum staff. This provided the board with a better understanding of the functioning of the various departments within the Museum and also allowed museum staff an opportunity to become more acquainted with board members.

During the afternoon on Friday, each of the committees met to discuss the needs of the Museum as it related to their focal interests. Friday evening John and Karen Molgaard hosted a reception in their home. Saturday activities included the business of the Board's general session. Each of the committees

presented reports, as did the Museum's Director, Curator and Gift Shop Manager.

As part of the Board meeting, good-byes were said to outgoing board members. We would like to thank those members who left the Board after many years of service – Svend Toftemark, Helen Stub, and Tom Paulsen. We would also like to welcome the newly elected Board members – Lee Jensen, Egon Bodtker, William Holmquist, Margaret Johnson, and John Mark Nielsen.



FAMILY HISTORY & GENEALOGY CENTER **Stamtræ**

Editorial note: The Family History and Genealogy Center is open from 10:00 AM until 4:00 PM every Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday.

A milestone was reached August 14, 2000 when the Family History and Genealogy Center celebrated its fourth birthday. We are now in our fifth year of existence. Through the efforts of a crew of dedicated volunteers, the goal of a well known and well used center for Danish history research has been achieved. I wish to share some specific examples of volunteer involvement.

One of the most helpful tools in research is a good index. With this in mind the Family History Center is making great strides in improving the quality of research available to you, our patrons and friends.

A comprehensive index of the microfilm rolls of the membership of the Danish Brotherhood Lodges has recently been completed and placed into a 10-volume set of notebooks. Easy to use, this extensive index is broken down into states. Each lodge within every state is listed, including its name, its number and its roster. If you wish to utilize this means of searching your Danish immigrant ancestor you must know the vicinity where he lived within the United States. With that knowledge it is possible to find the lodge nearest his residence, then search the membership rosters to determine whether or not he belonged to the organization. If he is listed the number of the microfilm reel is shown. The appropriate film is selected and put on the microfilm reader. One quickly



The Family History and Genealogy Center's three core volunteers: Mae Petersen standing at far left, Norma Lange Nelson and Margaret Christensen. The Center is open from 10:00 AM until 4:00 PM every Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday.

scrolls to the lodge of interest, then to the number of the member for genealogical information. The information given includes his full name, date of birth, place of birth, occupation, date of enrollment and the beneficiary the insurance policy.

Finding the place of birth is essential to Danish research. It is often difficult to find. The Danish Brotherhood microfilm reels most often reveal the name of the parish in which your ancestor's birth is registered. You should not overlook this source. Perhaps it is the only place where that piece of information can be found. This index of membership consists of approximately 100,000 names of Danish immigrants.

Though it is not in accordance with our policy for Stamtræ, I firmly believe that in this instance, Jim Kelgor, master of the index, should be commended for three years of intense commitment and for his steadfast patience in accomplishing this major project.

Additional compilations of indices are in progress. To complement the Lodge index, another volunteer has completed

Museum to place emphasis on traveling exhibits

One of the goals of The Danish Immigrant Museum is to provide educational outreach to other locations through traveling exhibits. Just as we have benefited from the loan of exhibits from other Museums, we will, in the future, focus on developing a certain number of exhibits that will travel to other sites.

The current exhibit, Olaf Wieghorst: Artist of the American West, will be available to approved borrowers after April 2001. Inquiries about space, cost; packing, shipping needs, security and insurance should be directed to the Curatorial Department.

During the past year the Museum once again loaned its panel display October 1943: The Rescue of the Danish Jews from Annihilation. This time it traveled to the Breman Jewish Heritage Museum in Atlanta (see page 11). This exhibit was organized in the early 1990's by The Museum of Denmark's Fight for Freedom and circulation rights in the US were given to The Danish Immigrant Museum.

Our Fall 1999/Spring 2000 exhibit, And the People Came . . . Elk Horn's Folk School, a Crucible of Danish Immigrant History, was later shown at the Elk Horn Lutheran Church on the occasion of its 125th Anniversary Celebration. The history of the Elk Horn Folk School and that of the Elk

Horn Lutheran Church were inextricably intertwined; the anniversary display revitalized the sense of historical bonds and linkages.

The Danish Home in Chicago hosted the Chicago run of our exhibition, Danish American Cultural Life in Chicago (see page 5). This showing closed at the end of the year.

Currently we are developing an exhibit, Wilderness Exodus: The Danish Mormon Experience in America to open here at the Museum May 7, 2001. Plans include allowing this exhibit to travel after the exhibit closes here. This will require raising funds for exhibition quality traveling cases.



Danish Mormon experience in America subject of upcoming exhibit

Nearly 17,000 Danish men, women and children settled in Utah between 1852 and 1900, greatly enhancing the development of the state. In fact, Denmark contributed more settlers to Utah during those years than any other country except for Great Britain. They came as converts to The Church of Latter Day Saints becoming part of the Great Mormon Migration to the "New Zion".

In an effort to elucidate this important part of Danish American history, The Danish Immigrant Museum is planning a new exhibit entitled, Wilderness Exodus: The Danish Mormon Experience in America, scheduled to open May 7, 2001.

In this exhibit we will look at missionary activity in Denmark, recount the arduous journey from Denmark to Utah, and, become familiar with the daily activities of the settlers in their new land. We will study the communities along the way that were founded by Mormons as well as satellite communities established throughout the West.

Some converts never reached Utah due to death, illness, lack of funds, or, a change of heart. Some became disenchanted with Utah and "backtrailed" to settle in other places, notably Nebraska, Iowa or Minnesota. These stories are of interest to us as well.

We invite anyone willing to donate photographs, letters, diaries, family stories, memorabilia or artifacts that relate to the Danish Mormon experience to contact our Curator, Barbara Lund-Jones. We hope that through this exhibit we will develop a rich resource collection documenting this fascinating chapter of Danish American history.



Stamtræ . . .

— continued from page 25

a volume of deaths of Danish Brotherhood members from pages that she has extracted from publications for the years 1941 through 1992, thus creating an invaluable resource. Three volumes entitled Our Elders feature hundreds of obituaries and life stories of Danish immigrants, an ongoing project by a volunteer. The oldest of the Elk Horn church records are currently being indexed, providing a time saving source for local vital records .

An ongoing project of copying Wall of Honor extractions continues. Volunteers are also involved in correspondence. Another has shared his expertise in the use of the computer and its tie to genealogy. All are appreciated for their interest in helping serve the flow of visitors and patrons in the Center.

Please continue to send books and histories to the Family History and Genealogy Center. Without your support, we could not help you with your research.

by Margaret Christensen

Exhibition Schedule for 2001

Olaf Weighorst: Artist of the American West November 10, 2000 - April 22, 2001

Wieghorst, who in 1919 at the age of 19 immigrated United States from Viborg, Denmark, arrived just in time to personally experience the quickly vanishing life of the old west. Years later he would immortalize these images on canvas and become one of the premier interpreters of the American West. Signed, limited edition prints were made from many of his paintings and drawings. The Weighorst prints featured in this exhibit were given to the Museum by Asta Forrest.

Wilderness Exodus: The Danish Mormon Experience in America May 7, 2001 - October 28, 2001

In 1849 the Danish national constitution was amended to allow religious freedom in Denmark. In 1850 Mormon missionaries began to proselyte in Denmark. With these two events came the conversion of some 18,000 Danes to the Mormon Church, the largest non-Lutheran religious movement in Denmark. Most of these Danes took part in the westward migration that settled the West. This exhibit will explore the contributions and experiences of the Dan-

ish Mormon immigrants to America as they left Denmark to a new home in the Midwest and unsettled West.

Scenes from Denmark: Images of the Homeland

November 12, 2001 - April 7, 2002

Scenes from Denmark have frequently been among the most treasured possessions in Danish immigrant homes. The scenes kept memories alive and allowed a fanciful revisiting of treasured places in the Old Country. Paintings or prints of Denmark were sometimes brought over at the time of immigration but were often purchased on a later visit or perhaps painted from memory. Sometimes a family member would return to Denmark to paint a favorite scene or a second generation descendant would return to capture in visual form the image of a place or of a traditional event about which so many stories has been told. This exhibit will explore images of Denmark and the meaning that they have had for those who produced them and/or those who possessed them.



WALL OF HONOR

JANUARY 1, 2000 THROUGH NOVEMBER 30, 2000

Andrew Peter and Johanne Marie Andersen, Audubon, IA - A. Gwendolyn Christiansen, St. Paul, MN

Axel Miller and Olga Easterhope Andersen, Chicago, IL - Holger Christian Andersen, Chestertown, MD and Ellen K. Andersen, Oak Park, IL

Christian Jenus and Marie Kristine Andersen, Jamestown, NY - Mary L. Andersen, Cape Coral, FL

Jens Jakob Andersen, Clinton, IA - Andersen Family Descendants (Kathleen Hoegh, Trea., Des Moines, IA)

Mads and Mattie Kirstine Thompson Andersen, Brookings County, SD - Shirley Reed, Lansing, MI

Niels Jacob and Anna Nielsen Andersen, Audubon, IA - Einar and Elaine Faaborg, Puyallup, WA

Jane Hansine Dahl Anderson, Scranton, IA - Robert D. Anderson, Lakota, IA

Einar Richard and Elizabeth Hilker Brandt, Euclid, OH - Raymond and Marilyn Brandt, Cleveland Heights, OH

Andrew Christensen, (Christen Anders), Turton, SD - Kurt Christensen Family, Verona, WI

Nicolai Peter and Christine Didde Christiansen, Oneonta, NY - C. Arthur Christiansen, St. Paul, MN

Jim Clausen, Elk Horn, IA - Alfred Clausen, Elk Horn, IA

Soren Thomsen Corydon, Chicago, IL - Arlene Kingwill, Wilmette, IL, Patricia Larsen, Oak Park, IL and Joan Walton, Clarendon Hills, IL

Kristin Hansen Duus, Tyler, MN - Sybil Duus Needham, Tucson, AZ

Ane Marie Madsen Ericksen, Mt. Pleasant, UT - Nick Ericksen, Omaha, NE

Albert Hans Louis Eve, Chicago, IL - His children c/o Marie Louise Sorensen, DeKalb, IL

Sine E. Petersen Gregersen, Elk Horn, IA - Sylvia Hurley, O'Neill, NE; Kathleen Bliese, Grand Island, NE; Dalton Gregersen, Ellsworth, IA; Bernal Gregersen, Walnut, IA; Shirley Beier, Omaha, NE; Carolee Hopkins, Milwaukee, OR; Howard Gregersen, Anita, IA; Dolores

Connelly, Atlantic, IA; Marilyn Kangas, Pacifica, CA; George McNary, Atlantic, IA; Adele Robinson, Donna Scully, Denise Luft (c/o Mary Gregersen, Hanford, CA).

John Hansen, Poynette, WI - Conrad and Margaret M. Pedersen, New Brighton, MN

Knute Christian and Marie Thomsen Hansen, Ortonville, MN - Marilyn Storm, Minneapolis, MN

Wilhelm Hansen, Omaha, NE - Diane Kylander, Billings, MT

Engel Augustinus and Nicoline Petra Toxvaerd Hjortsvang, Camp Douglas, WI - Amy Hjortsvang, Martinez California; Herbert and Alvina Hjortsvang, Council Bluffs, IA; Mark Hoyer, Washington, IL; Phyllis and Clement Hunter, Beaver Creek, OR; Howard Jensen, Beaver Creek, OR; Valerie and Chris Rippee, Vancouver, WA and Carleen and David Smith, Rochester, NY

Marie Olesen Hogild, Westby, MT - Gregory and Merna Riersen, Casper, WY

Harald Groth Oxholm Holck, Chicago, IL - Adela Holck, Lincoln, NE

Niels Thomsen and Anne Sorensen Houmann, Racine, WI - Betty Kuessow, Kenosha, WI

Rev. Harald Ibsen - Joy Ibsen, Trout Creek, MI

Aksel Karl Jensen, Sandstone, MN - Mike Jensen, Woodward, OK

Chris and Petrea Jensen, Council Bluffs, IA - Bud Crowl, Council Bluffs, IA

Hans and Bertha Frederiksen Jensen, Racine, WI - Harris K. Jensen, Dallas, TX

Jens and Johanna Jensen, Waterloo, IA - Dr. James and Darlene Jensen, Carroll, IA and Jeanne E. Schmidt, Cedar Falls, IA

Jens Christian and Margrethe Munksgaard Jensen, Audubon, IA - Emmert and Norma H. Jensen Trust, West Des Moines, IA

Otto Jessen, Cedar Falls, IA - Mike and Dee Fowler, Fort Dodge, IA; Donald and Kathryn Jessen, Waterloo, IA; Thomas and Nyle Jessen, Carmel, IN; Morris and Betty Jessen, Waterloo, IA

Mary Jensdotter Jorgensen, Poy Sippi, WI - Elaine Brostrom, St. Peter, MN and Phillip Pagel, Blair, NE
George L. Jorgensen, Shelby County, IA - Keith L. Johnson, Scotia, NY
Julius Hansen Juel, New Hartford, IA - Marie Juel Meyer Family, Irwin, IA
Marie Rodholm Juhl - Joy Ibsen, Trout Creek, MI
Karl Knudsen, Tyler, MN - Johanne Knudsen, Mankato, MN
Peter H. and Bertha Catherine "Trina" Andersen Kroman, Elk Horn, IA - Peter and Arlene Kroman, Elk Horn, IA; Robert Kroman, Elk Horn, IA and Howard Kroman (deceased), Elk Horn, IA
Ernest C. E. Larsen, Harrison, NE - Lily Larsen, Harrison, NE
Kresten Fark Lauritzen, Wood, SD - Dennis Lauritsen, Wood, SD; Richard Lauritsen, Fremont, NE
George Meibom Madsen, Homer, NE - George W. Madsen, Omaha, NE
Harold Marthedal, Fresno, CA - Harold Marthedal, Fresno, CA
Martinus Mathiesen, Wolbach, NE - Lois Myoda, Wilmington, DE
Johanna Knudsen Miller, Harlan, IA - Bonnie R. Cameron, Grand Forks, ND; Mary C. Solberg, Tigard, OR; Heather Juntunen, Rolla, ND; Don D. Cameron, Westhope, ND; JoAnne Strohmeier, South Holland, IL; Paul Miller, Escondido, CA; Donald Miller; Mary Ellen Hoerman, Palatine, IL.
Peter Lauritsen and Kirstine Sandbeck (Moller) Miller, Marcus, IA - Linda Miller Chapman, Meriden, IA
C. O. and Karen Christine Nelson, Tyler, MN - Dennis V. and Sherry Johnson, Verdi, MN
Carl Madsen Norgaard, Harlan, IA - Howard Norgaard, Madelia, MN
Anne Ostrom Pallesen, Calgary, Canada - Peter J.M. Pallesen, Calgary, Alberta, Canada
N. Peter Pallesen, R. af Dbg. , Calgary, Canada - Peter J.M. Pallesen, Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Dorthea Pedersen, Grand Rapids, MI - Evelyn Strobridge, Greenville, MI
Konrad Pedersen, Minneapolis, MN - Conrad and Margaret M. Pedersen, New Brighton, MN
Marie Caroline Svendsen Petersen, Hardy, NE - Eugene and Geraldine Schultz, Ruskin, NE
Peter and Johanna Larsen Petersen, Atlantic, IA - Harris K. Jensen, Dallas, TX
Svend and Johanne Nielsen Petersen, Dagmar, MT - Carl J. Petersen Estate (c/o Carol Johnson, Morris, MN)
Peder Rasmussen, Ord, NE - Robert and Clara Wolfe, Ft. Wayne, IN
Ruth Elisabeth Nielsen Rider, Des Plaines, IL - Philip F. Rider, Des Plaines, IL
Christian Lauritz and Margrete Dorothea Frederiksen Sorensen, Council Bluffs, IA - Marie Ohms Miller, Coin, IA; Max P. Ohms, Eddyville, IA; Dewey N. Ohms, Anita, IA; Greta T. Ohms Ullerich, Atlantic, IA; Dean V. Ohms, E. Troy, WI; Donna N. Ohms Stephens, Omaha, NE; Marvin D. Ohms, Anita, IA; Jack I. Ohms, Palo Alto, CA
Lars and Ane Margrethe Sorensen, Elgin, NE - Jim and Ardes Weedman, Papillion, NE; Karen Sorensen, Lincoln, NE
Viggo Tarnow, Solvang, CA - Johannes and Marie Jaeger Nielsen, Solvang, CA
Anton and Mary Johanna Petersen Thompson, Council Bluffs, IA - Judith Tennant, Greenville, SC
Knud Johannes Tyge, Houston, TX - Ruth Tyge, Houston TX
Christian Magnus Videbeck, Indianapolis, IN - Richard Videbeck, Avon Park, FL
Olga Marie Wells, Atlantic, IA - Virginia Bond, Dexter, IA; Linda Bobst, Dexter, IA; Patricia McKee, Omaha, NE; Ted Lenocker, Dexter, IA; Edward Lanning, Bondurant, IA; Dorothy Snyder, Winterset, IA; William Keating, Peru, IA; Norma Wahler, Dexter, IA; Daisy Maddy, Earlham, IA; Vincent Wells, Dexter, IA
Niels and Marie Becker Westergaard, Coal Ridge, MT - Carl J. Petersen Estate (c/o Carol Johnson, Morris, MN)



Letter from the Editor

The year 2000 has been a very busy one at the Museum. This issue of the America Letter looks back upon the year, filling you in on those events that you were not personally able to attend. As you can see, we have been very busy, but even more is planned for 2001. You will be able to follow these activities in subsequent issues of the America Letter, which will be under new editorship effective with the Spring 2001 issue. It will most likely acquire a new look, as well.

I have edited the America Letter for the past four-and-a-half years. During this same time period I have also served as the Museum's Curator. It has been a very exciting period of growth and development for the Museum. Each year has brought significant changes and readily measurable forward growth. As Editor, I have sought to bring you news of the Museum's many faceted projects and activities.

As Curator, I have been caught up in the heart of a great many of these projects. Curatorial activities this year have absorbed so much of my time, attention and energy that I have found myself unable to meet the America Letter's quarterly schedule on as timely a basis as I would have liked. Faced with this dilemma, and knowing that demands in the curatorial area will continue to increase, I have found it necessary to pass on the editorship of the America Letter. I am very glad, however, that I have had the opportunity to work so closely with this publication.

During my time as Editor, I have come to regard the America Letter readers with great warmth and affection. I will continue to communicate with you through a curator's column which will appear in the quarterly issues. I look forward to continuing to share the Museum experience with you in this way.

In this final issue that I am editing, I want to thank all of the Museum staff who have so generously contributed articles and listings for their areas. I wish particularly to thank Marilyn Miller, who has served as Senior Staff Writer for the last year-and-a-half. Her help has been invaluable in making the America Letter a quality publication. Special thanks are also due Lori Christensen of Harlan Tribune Printing and Graphic Design who, over the years, has given generously of her time and expertise to manage the newsletter's layout and printing. The contributions of all have been much appreciated.

Barbara Lund Jones