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The Warden's Sons: Albert E. (1850-1931) and Ingvard Sibbersen (1862-1931) - Many 19th-century Danish immigrants came alone to America. Such was the case when Ingvard Sibbersen, the youngest son of the local prison warden, left his hometown of Nyborg sometime in the 1880s. Especially close to his eldest brother, Albert, a pharmacist and bibliophile, Ingvard corresponded with him regularly over the years. Like so many other emigrant Danes, his letters to Denmark increasingly became peppered with American words, to the extent that at the end of his life he hardly wrote Danish at all.

When he left Nyborg, Ingvard didn't know how the skills learned during his apprenticeship to a wine merchant might be put to use in America. However, his mastery of English, Swedish, German and some Dutch, in addition to Danish, soon landed him a position in Omaha, Nebraska, with a German-owned financial firm, in which he later became a partner. He met and married a young woman of Danish descent named Drexeline and fathered three sons. His financial firm thrived and in the beginning of the 20th century got in at the ground level in the financing of a new form of large building project, the skyscraper. Ingvard gradually became a very rich man.

Although his daily work involved offices and financial transactions, the Danish-born banker apparently enjoyed spending time outdoors as well. One day he purchased a neglected fruit orchard outside Omaha without knowing anything at all about the fruit business. Even as a free-time enterprise "Sibbersen's Orchard" became a profitable success, and 'farmer' proudly joined 'banker,' 'stockbroker,' 'county assessor,' and 'notary public' on Ingvard's resume.

He and his family visited Nyborg several times. In 1909, after one of these visits, Ingvard wrote to Albert about giving something back to their hometown. Over several years the two brothers floated various ideas before deciding upon a new library and museum, to be located in a historic building in Slotsgade in Nyborg. Albert shared his book, furniture, painting and coin collections, while Ingvard donated some 50,000 kroner - a princely sum in those days -- to purchase the building. On October 17, 1917, Nyborg saw the opening of its new library and museum which, according to a history of the library, marked a new era in the town's cultural life.

Both brothers died within a few days of each other in 1931. Their joint gift to Nyborg was the product of Danish and American thrift and enterprise, and one example of how successful Danish immigrants remembered their roots in and love for their homeland.