

# America Letter

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An International  
Cultural Center



**THE DANISH IMMIGRANT MUSEUM**

*Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II of Denmark, Protector  
Member of the American Association of Museums*

Your Museum in the  
Heart of the Continent  
BOX 470 • ELK HORN, IOWA 51531



*The photograph that started it all: the family of Lorentz Iskov. This nineteenth century photo helped an Australian, Marg Newstead, locate relatives in Iowa.*

## Striking Gold: Connecting a Family Across Three Continents

The Danish Immigrant Museum's motto "Across Oceans, Across Time, Across Generations®" became more concrete last December when an Australian school principal, Margaret "Marg" Lewis of Newstead, in the southeastern state of Victoria, contacted The Family History & Genealogy Center.

Marg's great-grandfather, Christian Iskov, was one of four brothers born to Jacob Christian Iskov and Anna Margrethe Nicholaisen in Ketting parish on the island of Als in Sønderborg County in the northern part of what was then the Duchy of Slesvig.

Slesvig fell under German rule following the Dano-Prussian War of 1864 and shortly thereafter Jacob and Christian,

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## Across Oceans, Across Time, Across Generations®: The Walker Johnson Family

*By Eva Nielsen*

When Britta, Karma, and ErikPeter Walker inherited the estate of their grandmother Marion J. Walker and her brother Anker E. Johnson, they made a list. This was not a list of the bills they could pay or the cars they would buy or even the trips they might take. Instead, they made a list of places they thought deserved a gift.

The Danish Immigrant Museum was on the list. These

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*Marion Walker and Anker Johnson grew up on a ranch near Solvang, California. As third generation Danes, being Danish was central to their lives. When Marion's grandchildren inherited the estate, they chose to give money to Danish American institutions to honor their grandmother and their great uncle.*



## Director's Corner By John Mark Nielsen

On February 2, Lonnie G. Bunch, founding director of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of African American History and Culture, spoke to Cleveland's City Club Forum, the nation's oldest continuous free speech forum. His topic was the planned construction of a new museum on the Mall in Washington, D.C., honoring the heritage of the African American experience.

In his opening remarks, Bunch described the excitement of creating a national museum where the stories and artifacts of the African American population will be collected, preserved and interpreted. Given the experience of slavery, the struggle for emancipation, and the fight for equality, Bunch hopes the museum's exhibits will at once inform and provide healing, legitimacy and identity. At the same time this museum will celebrate the diversity and richness of the American experience.

The challenges Bunch faces in founding a museum, beginning collections, identifying resources and soliciting architectural concepts reminds me of the challenges we faced when we founded The Danish Immigrant Museum in 1983. Unlike our experience, however, The National Museum of African American History and Culture has the support of the Smithsonian Institution and is sustained in part by allocations from Congress. Nevertheless, Bunch faces challenges as he seeks the nearly \$250 million in private support that it will take to complete the project.

It is unlikely that Congress or the

Smithsonian Institution will approve a National Museum of Danish American History and Culture to be built in our nation's capital; ours is a smaller segment of the population with a different story. And we already have a national museum, here in the heart of that area of the country where so many Danish immigrants settled at the end of the nineteenth century. We do, however, face similar challenges, as all private, non-profit institutions do, in assuring that we have the resources to conserve and exhibit the treasures entrusted to us.

This is why we turn to our members for their support through annual renewal of museum membership, through gifts and memorials and through appeals to accomplish specific projects. I celebrate each of our members and contributors for his or her support.

Sometimes, we receive especially generous commitments. Recently, I visited Richard Hellman of Ocean-side, California. A native of Atlantic, Iowa, Richard took over a successful metalworking business that his father Peter, a Danish immigrant, had founded in 1919. Peter built the business with support from his wife Karen, also a Danish immigrant.

When Richard retired, he sold the business and traveled, ultimately settling in California. He shared with me that he wanted to leave a sizeable portion of his estate to The Danish Immigrant Museum. He also indicated that he wanted to take advantage of the Pension Reform Act of 2006 by immediately giving a gift from his IRA. I am humbled by Richard's generosity and I know that all of us who support The Danish Immigrant Museum are

very grateful for this commitment to the Museum's future.

I asked Richard to share with me in his own words what inspired his gift. His response is eloquent.

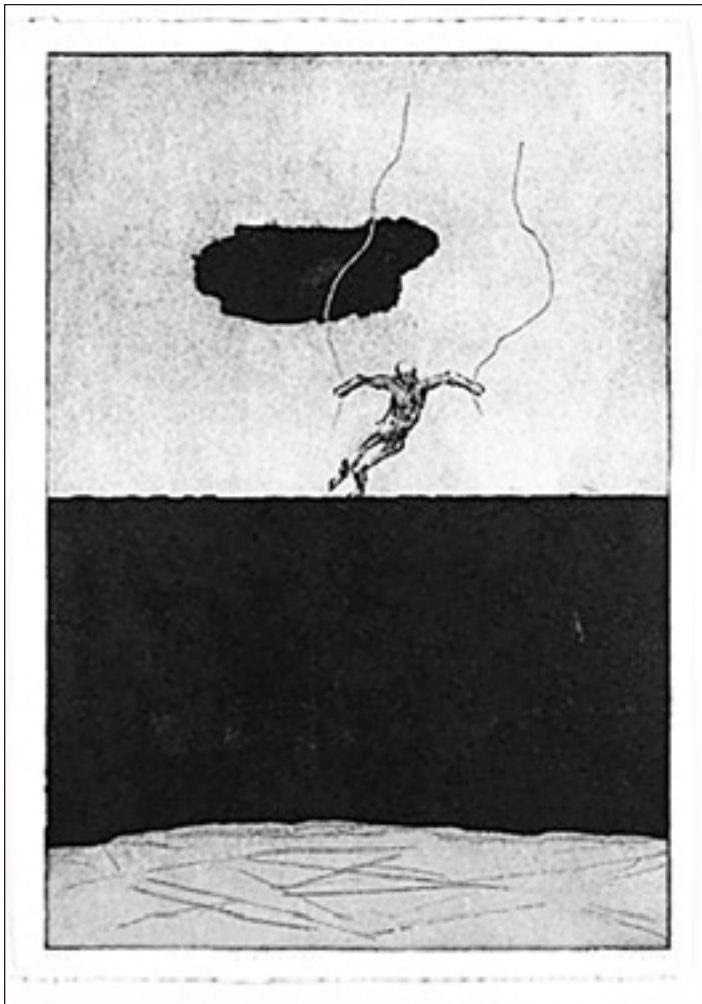
*As a young boy I knew my parents came from Denmark and I was proud to be of Danish heritage. I was too young to realize all the hardships that they had. The only thing mom told me was how seasick she got on the ship when they crossed the Atlantic Ocean. Later I made a trip to Europe and trips to the islands in the South Pacific and Thailand. I was shocked that you can walk around all day and nobody spoke English and if they did it was just a few words. I think back about mom and dad coming to a new country, having to learn the language, finding a place to live, and getting work to support themselves. I admire my folks for coming to America. They made a good life for my sister, brother and me. As an expression of my gratitude and admiration for what my parents did, I want to leave a significant part of my estate to celebrate and honor them.*

I know there will be those within the African American community who will step forward to support the construction of the National Museum of African American History and Culture. I am grateful to Richard Hellman and to all our donors and members, past and present, who have stepped forward to invest in The Danish Immigrant Museum. Your generosity ensures the existence of a national museum that collects, preserves, and tells one chapter in the dramatic story of the making of our nation.

# "Immigrants: Graphic Images from the Funen Graphic Workshop"

In the summer of 2005, The Danish Immigrant Museum's director, John Mark Nielsen, and Marianne Forssblad of the Nordic Heritage Museum in Seattle began working with Ole Lejbach of the Funen Graphic Workshop, an artists' cooperative founded in 1976 and located in Odense, Denmark. The hope was to put together a traveling exhibit of contemporary Danish art that would tour the United States in 2007.

The exhibit's contents would arise from an assignment to the 250 artists from seventeen countries who are members of the Workshop. The assignment: create graphic works that represent immigrants and the challenges they face.



"Immigrant" Color lithograph by Tine Hind, Funen Graphic Workshop.

The artists of the cooperative responded and over 240 pieces by eighty-four artists were selected to be a part of the exhibit. In addition, a catalog including thirty-one full color prints has been published with essays by Søren Møller, president of the Danish Cultural Institute; Ole Lejbach, artist and exhibit organizer; Torben Grøngaard Jeppesen, director of the Odense City Museums, and Nielsen of The Danish Immigrant Museum.

Since the exhibit includes so many works and because artists are showing multiple pieces, organizers decided to divide the show into smaller exhibits. *Immigrants: Graphic Images from the Funen Graphic Workshop* is scheduled at the following venues in the United States. On its return to Europe it will be exhibited in Sweden and Denmark.

The Nordic Heritage Museum, Seattle, Washington (January 25 through March 25) 3014 NW 67th Street; (206) 789-5707; [www.nordicmuseum.org](http://www.nordicmuseum.org)

The Elverhøj Museum, Solvang, California (January 27 through March 25) 1624 Elverhoy Way; (805) 686-1211; [www.elverhoj.org](http://www.elverhoj.org)

The Iowa Heritage Gallery, Des Moines, Iowa (April 25 through June 21) 111 Court Avenue; (515) 286-2242; [www.heritagegallery.org](http://www.heritagegallery.org)

The Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, Omaha, Nebraska (May 11 through June 23) 724 South 12th Street; (402) 341-7130; [www.bemiscenter.org](http://www.bemiscenter.org)

Danebo: The Danish American Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota (May 4 through June 24) 3030 West River Parkway South; (612) 729-3800; [www.dac.mn](http://www.dac.mn)

The organizers are most grateful for the generosity of Steen Sanderhoff and Leman USA for making arrangements and providing transportation from Denmark and throughout the United States.

Members of The Danish Immigrant Museum will note that the exhibit is currently not scheduled for the Museum in Elk Horn. The reason is to reach out to communities where the Museum has significant membership.



## The Museum Assists with Minneapolis Institute of Arts Exhibit

The Minneapolis Institute of Arts (MIA) will feature a Nordic-inspired children's literature exhibition in their Family Center from March 24 through September 16, 2007. They are working with several Scandinavian museums, including The Danish Immigrant Museum, to supplement their exhibit with materials from each of the countries represented. The MIA will be borrowing and displaying three children's books from The Danish Immigrant Museum's collections. These books are Danish fairy tales that specifically feature *nisse* characters.



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# Johnson Walker . . .

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*A Danish American family across generations: Anker Johnson pictured with his great-nephew Erik Peter Walker and two great-great-nephews, Britta's son Aksel (standing) and Karma's son Calvin (sitting on Erik Peter's lap).*

three grandchildren sent a sizable donation to the Museum to honor their grandmother and great uncle, along with a note saying that Marion and Anker “deeply valued the preservation of their Danish heritage.”

“We are our grandparents’ grandchildren.” That’s how Britta explains the decision.

It was, in fact, Britta’s great-great-grandparents—Anker and Marion’s grandparents—who left Denmark, immigrating to the United States from the island of Fyn in the late 1800s.

Neither Anker (who still lives in Solvang, California), nor Marion was born in Denmark. Yet being Danish was central to their lives.

Growing up on a ranch near Solvang in the 1920s, Marion and Anker were surrounded by Danes—many who had recently arrived from Denmark. Marion and Anker’s parents spoke Danish. The family attended Bethania Evangelical Lutheran Church (part of the Danish

Lutheran Church of America at the time). They walked or rode their bikes to Atterdag College, a Danish folk high school where Marion and Anker did Danish folk dancing, sang, and were steeped in a culture that aimed to help people live richer lives.

Marion’s daughter-in-law, Sonja Hansen Walker, says throughout their lives Marion and Anker were “proud of their existential Grundtvigian thinking.” (N.F.S. Grundtvig inspired the Danish folk high school movement.) Their sense of connection to Grundtvig was real: a relative had been the *skuder*—literally, the shooter or the hunter—on Grundtvig’s personal estate. But also, as Sonja puts it, Marion and Anker lived by the old adages that your life is your prayer—that you should live your life to the fullest.

Marion and Anker, Sonja continues, had a strong work ethic. They worked on the ranch, viewing themselves as stewards of the land. “They

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loved the land,” says Sonja. “It was their world.”

Though they were rich in land, they didn’t have a lot of money. Marion and Anker were frugal people, but, Britta says, they “gave and gave and gave” of themselves. Marion volunteered with the church and at the Lutheran home. Anker built a large room on to the ranch house—a way to open their home to others. They were both very active in many of the valley community organizations.

When it came time for Marion’s son David to leave for college, he went to a Danish school, the same college his grandmother Mary Hansen (born in Kerteminde) had attended—Grand View College in Des Moines, Iowa—even though he had been accepted at Harvard. There, he met another Danish American, Sonja Hansen from Tyler, Minnesota. The two married and moved to Minneapolis, Minnesota where Britta, Karma, and ErikPeter were born.

If being Danish was an inherent part of Marion Walker’s life, the same was true for her grandchildren.

“Our parents,” Britta says, “fostered a strong sense of Danish-ness in us.” The family attended social and cultural events at The Danish American Fellowship. The kids did Danish folk dancing on Saturdays. Sonja participated in Virkelyst, a Danish charitable women’s group.

And many of the family’s Christmas traditions, for example, were and are Danish—the songs they sing, the foods they eat. “I’ve never in my life,” Sonja says, “not had red cabbage at Christmas.” And the Danish-ness showed up in more subtle ways: “I didn’t know,” Britta says, “the English word for dustpan until I was ten... We always called it *fejebakke* at home.”

And now that Britta is married with a son of her own—a 3-year-old named Aksel—being Danish is part

of the lives of a new generation. Britta explains, “We say *vær s’god, tak for mad, velbekomme*. Aksel calls my mom *Mormor*...Aksel does things at The Danish American Center.”

Meanwhile, as Marion and Anker grew older, the ranch in Solvang had to be sold. And when Marion passed away in February of 2006, Britta, Karma, and ErikPeter had to make some decisions. One of their decisions was to use the funds from the Johnson-Walker Trust to support institutions that celebrate and work to preserve the Danish heritage in the United States.

Britta explains, “We felt privileged to be able to give. We feel blessed and it makes sense to give gifts that honor them [Marion and Anker]. They would never have done it, yet all they did was give.”

They are, as Britta says, “their grandparents’ grandchildren.”



*A Danish American family across time: Marion and Anker pictured on the ranch with a spinning wheel brought from Fyn by their grandparents. Now, Britta is using the wheel, spinning wool for a sweater for a baby due in May.*

### **The following Danish American organizations and communities received gifts from the Johnson-Walker Trust:**

- The Danish Immigrant Museum, Elk Horn, Iowa
- The Danish Immigrant Archive at Dana College, Blair, Nebraska
- Bethania Evangelical Lutheran Church, Solvang, California
- Grand View College, Des Moines, Iowa
- The community of Solvang, California
- The community of Tyler, Minnesota
- The Danish American Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota
- Solvang Lutheran Home, Solvang, California
- St. Peder’s Evangelical Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota
- Elverhoj Museum of Danish History & Art, Solvang, California



# Gold . . .

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the eldest and youngest of the brothers, struck out for Australia to work in the goldfields near Castlemaine in central Victoria. The two middle brothers, Lorentz and Peter, followed them Down Under in July 1870.

Jacob later returned to Denmark where he married and raised a family, but his brothers remained abroad.

Peter Iskov worked in a variety of mining and farming jobs; he married twice, but had no children and died in Castlemaine.

Christian married Margaret “Maggie” Jean Whyte, the daughter of Scottish settlers, in 1874. After working in the mines until 1880, he and Maggie purchased a “selection” (farm) at Glenluce about eighteen miles from Castlemaine where they raised a variety of livestock, grain crops, and fruit—much of which was sold at local markets. The couple prospered and lived to celebrate their fiftieth wedding anniversary. Local historical accounts and their numerous descendants recall them fondly, telling how Christian

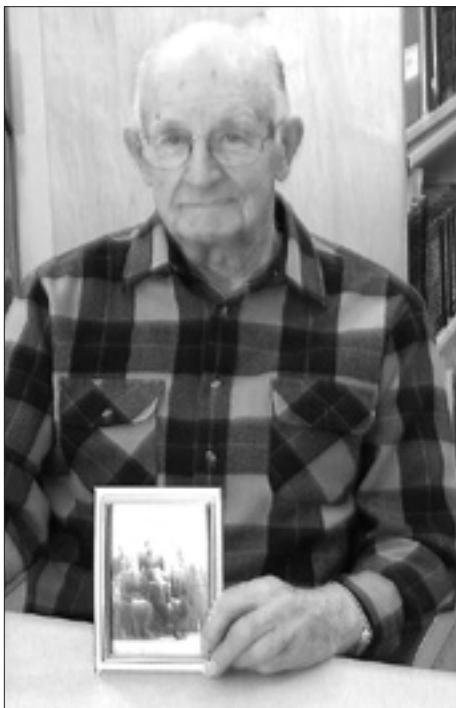
loved the opportunity to meet up with other Danish migrants at the Castlemaine Market where he could converse in his native tongue, much to the amusement of his English-speaking offspring. Christian’s offspring currently number nine children, twenty-seven grandchildren (nine still living), seventy-six great-grandchildren, one hundred and seventy-four great-great-grandchildren, and fifty-eight great-great-great-grandchildren.

The subsequent history of the fourth brother, Lorentz Iskov, was somewhat murky. Oral history accounts among family descendants in both Australia and Denmark related that en route to Australia, Lorentz (born in September 1846) had met a woman who was either going to or coming from the United States. The eventual outcome of this encounter supposedly was that he decided to leave Australia and come to America.

While contact was maintained between the Danish and Australian branches of the family, over the years the link to America was lost. Then a late nineteenth century photograph of a couple and five children with the notation “Miller’s Studio, Elk Horn, Iowa,” was unearthed in the papers of a deceased member of the Australian family. The photo led Marg to the Danish Immigrant Museum; she asked whether we might be able to find out anything about an Iskov family who had lived in the area. She indicated that variants of the surname had been found as Iskow, Iskra, Skarr, Eskov and Eskow in records.



*Jacob Christian Iskov (1815-1892) was a cottager and the father of the four Iskov boys who left Denmark to mine gold in Australia in the 1860s and 1870s.*



*Lawrence Eskov, grandson and namesake of Lorentz Iskov/Eskov, shows his copy of the picture that connects his family to relatives on three continents.*

It did not take long to find an answer to Marg’s query (considerably aided by the fact that the family name of interest was not Petersen or Christiansen). The close resemblance of Iskov to a local family named Eskov led to a search of a recently published Elk Horn history book. There, in a write-up of early settlers ‘Lorens’ and Anna Eskov, was an identical picture to the one Margaret Lewis had sent and with all the persons identified!

Further research turned up much documentation about the couple. Lorentz and Anne Marie Petersen had both arrived in the U.S. in 1881. They were married in Harlan in 1883 and farmed in Clay Township near Elk Horn where

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# Svend Christensen, Danish Police Officer during WWII, Speaks

Svend Christensen spoke about his experiences as a Danish policeman during World War II on January 13, 2007 at the Jewish Community Center in Omaha, Nebraska. His presentation, which is a part of the annual "Tribute to the Rescuers" Essay Contest, was sponsored by The Danish Immigrant Museum and



*Svend Christensen shares his World War II experiences.*

made possible by a gift from the Erik and Joan Norgaard Charitable Trust.

Christensen was a police officer in Copenhagen in the early years of the German occupation of Denmark. He was also a member of the Danish resistance movement that helped to protect some seven thousand Danish Jews from Nazi concentration camps.

One of Christensen's police duties was to inspect boats in the harbors for any Jews who might have been hiding inside, escaping to neutral Sweden. He "didn't see" any Jews on these boats and the stowaways remained safe.

In September of 1944, the Nazis began rounding up Danish police officers. Here's what happened. Christensen remembers sitting in a dentist's chair having work done when the air raid siren sounded. He and the dentist went to the window and saw that Danish policemen were being herded into the streets and arrested. Christensen donned the dentist's coat, took his gun and fled to another city for a few days before hiding in the

bottom of a ferry bound for Sweden. He left behind his wife Elly who was pregnant with their second child.

Christensen remained in Sweden until Denmark was liberated in May of 1945. He made it home just in time for the birth of his second child.

Christensen, his wife and children immigrated to the United States in 1954, making Des Moines, Iowa their home. He worked as a photo engraver at a few publishing houses in the city, including the Register and Tribune Company. After retiring, he worked in the State Capitol as a Senate doorkeeper and later as the Senate postmaster.

In 2002, Christensen donated a number of items to The Danish Immigrant Museum. Among these artifacts were his police baton and two badges used while he was an officer in Denmark, and a handful of photos of himself and his fellow officers. They are an important part of the small World War II collection the Museum has been working to build, and are among some of the most well documented artifacts in that collection.



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## Striking Gold ■ ■ ■ continued from page 6

they had six children: Maggie, Jacob, Chris, Anne Marie, Katrine and Hans Peter. According to her obituary, Anne Marie was also from the island of Als, but whether she was the woman Lorenz reportedly met en route to Australia is presently unknown.

Local family recollections reported that Lorenz had spent time in Australia, but hadn't liked it, so decided to come to the U.S. and that he had lived in Illinois prior to coming to Iowa. His passenger arrival record in this country has not yet been located, so his exact arrival date and destination are not presently known.

Four of Lorentz Eskov's children married and had children; family members still reside in the immediate area. Lorentz's grandson and namesake,

Lawrence Eskov, the son of Hans Peter Eskov, lives in Elk Horn a short distance from The Family History & Genealogy Center. And Lorentz's 160-acre farm is presently owned by Larry Eskov, the grandson of Lorentz's son Chris, making it one of Iowa's farms that have been in the same family for over a century.

Via e-mail The Family History & Genealogy Center was able to connect Margaret to Lawrence Eskov's son, Chuck, so now these second cousins are exchanging family information and photos, re-establishing the broken link between Australia and the U.S. as well as communicating with interested relatives back in Denmark.

On October 6, 2007, the Australian

Iskov family will be holding a reunion near where Christian Iskov lived and was buried, and a family history is being compiled that will include information on Lorentz and his descendants.

For The Family History & Genealogy Center this contact has been pure gold. Besides learning something of the history of Danish immigration to Australia, the Eskov family file has been greatly augmented by these links connecting family across three continents, one hundred and sixty years and five generations.

Anyone with additional information about members of the Iskov/Eskov family may contact Margaret Lewis at [lewis@gcom.net.au](mailto:lewis@gcom.net.au).

# From a Curatorial Perspective

By Barbara Lund-Jones

Imagine visiting a museum and being invited into the very heart of its collection—the invitation including a close scrutiny of fine jewelry, an examination of exquisitely done needlework, a study of pipe-making art through the generations. As amazing as it may seem, that is the invitation we are now extending to Museum visitors.

The Danish Immigrant Museum has long encouraged a close visitor relationship to its collection through the large visual storage area in the lower level. Visitors have enjoyed the overview of the collection but have often expressed the desire to see some of the smaller objects more closely. We have taken steps to make their wish a reality.

The Danish Immigrant Museum has acquired three custom-made display/storage units. These units feature large glass-covered pullout drawers, which allow an intimate view of smaller items within the collection. The acquisition of these units has been made possible through the generosity of the local Danish Brotherhood, Lodge 347 of Kimballton and Elk Horn, the Eric and Joan Norgaard Charitable Trust of Northbrook, Illinois and Robert Stovall of New York City. Each of these donors has made a gift of one full unit, designed to the Museum's specifications.

As curator, I am coordinating the project. It is our visual storage volunteers, who have worked closely with the collection for many years, who are selecting, arranging and securing the items within the drawers. Six drawers have been completed to date. One focuses on jewelry, three on pipes and two on items related to the Danish Brotherhood and Danish Sisterhood. As we move on to the seventh drawer, we are returning to jewelry. After that, we will select from our extensive display of silver. Then we will move on to textiles.

Once the volunteers have selected the display items for each drawer, they verify the assigned artifact numbers, condition report the objects and photograph the individual pieces. The condition reports and photographs are passed on to Angela Stanford, collections manager/registrar, for integration into the PastPerfect collections database. Collections intern Kate Fox has prepared a notebook con-



*Get a close look at The Danish Immigrant Museum's collections. New drawers installed in the visual storage area allow visitors to see artifacts like these pipes close-up.*

taining the PastPerfect records for each item in the completed drawers, allowing visitors to identify donors and explore available artifact stories.

This project will remain a work-in-

progress for some time. Do come and enjoy this presentation of our collection. It is an experience you will remember for a long time.



## Post-WWII Artifacts Needed to Strengthen Museum Collections

When you ask people what they think an artifact is, the response is, invariably: "Something old." It is difficult for people to consider something they played with as a child or something they just bought or made a few years ago to be an artifact—something worthy of being offered to a museum.

Because of this, the range of many museums' collections ends prior to World War II. "Modern" artifacts tend to be underrepresented and much more difficult to find in museums across the country. The Danish Immigrant Museum is no different.

Though The Danish Immigrant Museum's collections include thousands of artifacts, most date from before WWII. More recent generations are, therefore, unable to be exhibited as comprehensively as earlier ones.

There is a push at many museums to actively collect artifacts from recent generations and to preserve that history now while the opportunity exists. Childhood toys, clothes, photographs, homemade tools and decorations, household

appliances, military-related materials all dating from the 1940s through today are in high demand. If artifacts from these generations are not collected now, they may be lost or discarded. In this throw-away society, it is increasingly important to cultivate these generations and make sure they are represented in museums in the future.

The Danish Immigrant Museum strives to tell the complete story of Danish immigrants and their descendants. Immigration continues today and the museum needs the artifacts to illustrate those stories and experiences. Incorporating more modern artifacts into exhibits will also help attract a younger generation of museum visitors, making the Museum a viable and necessary part of many more generations.

If you are interested in finding out more about what the Museum collects or if you have artifacts you are interested in donating, please call. The Danish Immigrant Museum's collections will be strengthened as they become more comprehensive.





*Danish American sculptor Elmer Petersen at work. Petersen's work is currently on display at the Museum.*

## Elmer Petersen's Sculptures on Display

Many travelers in southwestern North Dakota have seen what is billed as the world's largest buffalo, a prominent tourist attraction in Jamestown. The buffalo is a cement sculpture forty-six feet long and twenty-six feet high. It was constructed with considerable inventiveness from I-beams, rebar, mesh and blown-on cement in 1959 by a young Danish American sculptor, Elmer Petersen.

Petersen's work is currently featured in the Museum's "Danish American Artist Series." The exhibition of his work marks a first for the Museum—the first time a display has focused exclusively on sculpture.

After the Jamestown buffalo, Petersen went on to explore

many different sculptural mediums. For a time he worked with the welding of found objects, creating such ingenious sculptures as a razor back hog from "C" clamp vice grips, a creature at once fascinating and formidable.

Welding became crucial to Elmer Petersen's work as an artist. In his own words:

"It wasn't until I was in my mid-twenties that I took myself seriously (as a sculptor); and that was when I was introduced to welding as a medium of expression...I developed a style which had the look of the materials and processes that I worked with; i.e., sheet metal, a metal nibbler ('unishers'), a roller to curve the flat sheet metal and an oxy-acetylene welding torch...."

But Petersen has never remained still in his work. After welding, he moved on to cast bronze, finding that he now prefers working in that medium and that the mold for the casting can be made from almost any material he chooses.



*Petersen used welding to create his Head of Sculptor, one of the mediums of expression used in his work.*

Still active at 78-years-old, Petersen has spoken about the various stages through which he has passed as artist and sculptor. The exhibit, which opened in January, unfolds through his own words and his reflections upon his work.

The monumental sculptures Petersen has done for public spaces are represented through photographs, as are a number of other pieces now residing in private collections throughout the country. The sculptures displayed in the exhibit have been chosen from his smaller pieces done in cast bronze.



## Are You a Danish Immigrant or Long-term Resident?

You may not think you're history yet, but you will be some day! We would like to have some information in our library on more recent immigrants or long-term residents from Denmark. If you would be willing to fill out one of our "Immigrant Information Forms" or distribute it at meetings of your local Danish American organization, contact the Family History and Genealogy Center for copies.

# Museum Partnership Brings Danish Christmas to Tempe, Arizona

How fortunate for the Tempe, Arizona area that in 1871 Danish pioneer Niels Petersen decided to homestead there rather than California or Iowa where many Danish immigrants of that period settled.

Petersen, born in 1845 in the small farming village of Vilslev in southwestern Denmark, set sail for the United States in 1870. He arrived in Tempe around 1871, homesteaded one hundred and sixty acres and eventually became one of the wealthiest ranchers in that area. For his bride he built a lovely two-story Queen Ann style home.

Donated by the family in 1979, their home is now called the Petersen House Museum and is operated by the Tempe Historical Museum. Visitors to the Petersen House get to see a glimpse of life during Tempe's early settlement days. And throughout this past Christmas season, the Tempe Historical Museum partnered with The Danish Immigrant Museum to bring an authentic Danish Christmas to this house built by a Danish immigrant.

This partnership came about when John Mark Nielsen, executive director of The Danish Immigrant Museum, and Thomas Hansen, director of development, toured the Petersen House in January 2006. Ann Poulos, curator of collections at Tempe Historical Museum, and Betty Jane Dunn, curator of the Petersen House, were instrumental in the year-long collaboration leading up to this partnered effort.

The first Sunday in December 2006 Nielsen returned to Tempe for the opening of the Danish Christmas exhibit along with Deb Larsen, development staff member, who had spent the previous five days leading the staff and volunteers in decorating the Petersen House Museum.



*Volunteers decorate the exterior of The Petersen House in Tempe, Arizona in preparation for the Danish Christmas celebration.*

Attention was paid to detail, re-creating Christmas as Niels Petersen and his family would have experienced it. Three rooms of the elegant home were decorated with Danish Christmas trees of various time periods. Ornamenting the trees were small paper ornaments called *papirklip*, Danish flags, candles, woven heart baskets, strings of popcorn, mouse stairs and other items.

A closing reception of the Danish Christmas exhibit was held on January 6, 2007 with over seventy-five people in audience. The guests were treated to Danish kringle provided by Kirsten's Danish Bakery of Burr Ridge, Illinois and O & H Bakery of Racine, Wisconsin.



After touring the Petersen House Museum, one of the many visitors during the five-week Christmas exhibit submitted a story to The Tempe

Republic. Here is an excerpt of her and her children's cultural experience:

*Over the holiday break, I took my kids to see "Night at the Museum," a whimsical tale featuring Ben Stiller as a security guard at The Museum of Natural History in New York City who discovers that at night, after the doors close, the figures in the museum come to life. Forget what the critics say, it's a very funny movie for both kids and adults, and it inspired us to pursue our own "afternoon at the museums" right here at home.*

*With the weather deliciously chilly and wet, perfect for spending time inside, we spent the day exploring Tempe's rich historical museums. Our first stop was the Niels Petersen House. I'm embarrassed to say that I've passed the quaint little house on the corner of Priest and Southern a thousand times. I once had to seek refuge in its' parking lot when my car*





A Petersen House Museum visitor and John Mark Nielsen, executive director of The Danish Immigrant Museum, at The Petersen House Museum's Danish Christmas celebration.

## Petersen House . . .

continued from page 8

*busted a radiator hose during rush hour, but I'd never set foot in the museum itself.*

*As we entered the foyer, it felt like we'd been invited into a Victorian doll house. Decorated for the holiday with handmade traditional Danish ornaments, the Christmas trees provided a perfect backdrop for scrap-book photos. The kids were delighted by the nisse and julebukkes (elves and goats) hidden at every turn, and we imagined what Christmas must have been like in the nineteenth century. My son got to feel the heft of the old, coal black telephone, peeked through an old time viewmaster in the parlor and took a turn or two at a butter churn. We were amazed by the detail in the workmanship of the hand laid tile in the bathroom, and coveted a nap under the crazy quilt in the grand Danish wood bed. I imagined Mrs. Petersen in her big, open kitchen, baking cookies and preparing her holiday feast. The kids were each given their own handmade paper ornament, which they guarded with care. As we left, we couldn't help but wonder if at night, when the doors closed, did the piano come alive with the sounds of Christmas carols? Did the nisse ride up the staircase on the little straw julebukkes? . . .*

Reprinted with permission from *The Tempe Republic*; written by Rosalie Lopez Hirano.



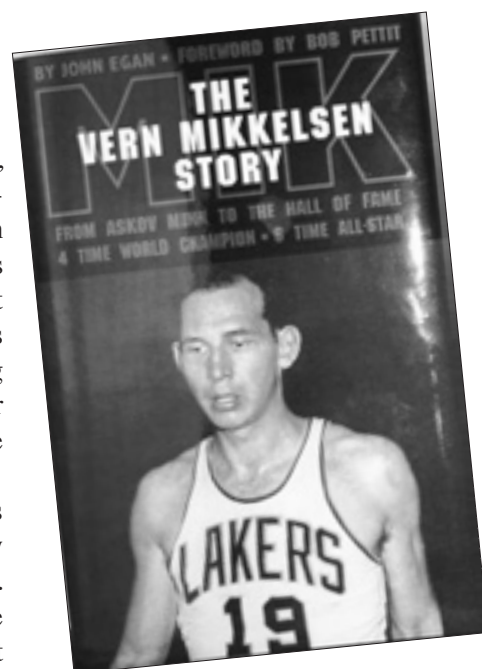
## The Vern Mikkelsen Story

In the early years of the National Basketball Association, one team dominated the league: the Minneapolis Lakers. The team won four NBA championships during the 1950s before moving to Los Angeles. Vern Mikkelsen, the son of a Danish immigrant pastor, was one of the forwards on this star-studded team. Known for his tough defense and play-making ability, Mikkelsen scored over 10,000 points during his career. In 1995 he was named to the NBA Hall of Fame.

*The Vern Mikkelsen Story* by Joe Egan, longtime sportswriter, editor and columnist for the *Sioux Falls Argus Leader*, is a readable biography of this man with Danish roots.

Mikkelsen was born in 1928 in Pariler, California, where his father, Michael Mikkelsen, was serving the Danish Lutheran Church. Later, Mikkelsen moved with his family to Askov, Minnesota, where he got his start playing basketball. Egan traces Mikkelsen's story from his upbringing in rural Minnesota through his career with the Lakers in a style that is at once enjoyable and informative.

*The Vern Mikkelsen Story* is 184 pages in length, hardcover, and published by Nodin Press of Minneapolis, Minnesota. The book may be ordered through the Museum Shop at The Danish Immigrant Museum at a cost of \$19.95 plus \$6.50 for postage and handling.



*The Vern Mikkelsen Story by Joe Egan is available at the Museum Shop.*

# Museum Shop Renovation Continues

The Museum Shop is pleased to announce the completion of another step in the renovation process: a new front counter. With additional shelves, storage and end beam, the counter beautifies the shop, blending well with the new shelving units placed throughout the store. A secure jewelry case was also added, which displays the collection of jewelry and adds more lockable storage below.

This addition was built by a locally skilled cabinet-maker, Tim Andersen of rural Elk Horn. Cynthia McKeen of St. Paul, Minnesota—formerly of Exira, Iowa—designed and drew the plans. She started this renovation in honor of her mother Ethel Peterson who loved to visit the museum and voiced ideas on enhancing the Museum Shop.

The last phase of the renovation will be to add new bookshelves, which were purchased by McKeen. A call is out for an estimate for removal of the old bookshelves so an immediate timeframe is not available. Be sure to visit the Museum to view the improvements.



*Become a member of  
The Danish Immigrant  
Museum today!*  
It's easy to do, call 1-800-  
759-9192 or go online at  
[www.danishmuseum.org](http://www.danishmuseum.org)

# The Danish Immigrant Museum: Upcoming Events

The Danish Immigrant Museum is participating in or sponsoring the following upcoming events:

- January 25-March 25 ... *Immigrants: Graphic Images from the Funen Graphic Workshop*, The Nordic Heritage Museum, Seattle, Washington
- January 27-March 25 ... *Immigrants: Graphic Images from the Funen Graphic Workshop*, The Elverhøj Museum, Solvang, California
- March 30-31 ..... Historical Administration Program Association Symposium, Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, Illinois
- April 9 ..... Better Elk Horn Club Banquet, Elk Horn, Iowa
- April 14 ..... Maia Quartet performs at Grand View College, Des Moines, Iowa
- April 14 ..... Hans Christian Andersen Birthday Celebration Reception to Benefit Kimballton's Little Mermaid Restoration
- April 21 ..... Danish Night at the Scandinavian Club of Columbus, Ohio
- April 25-June 21 ..... *Immigrants: Graphic Images from the Funen Graphic Workshop*, The Iowa Heritage Gallery, Des Moines, Iowa
- April 29 ..... Danish American Heritage Society Board Meeting, Ames, Iowa
- April 30 ..... The Danish Immigrant Museum's Volunteer Banquet, Elk Horn, Iowa
- May 4-June 24..... *Immigrants: Graphic Images from the Funen Graphic Workshop*, Danebo: The Danish American Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota
- May 11-June 23..... *Immigrants: Graphic Images from the Funen Graphic Workshop*, The Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, Omaha, Nebraska
- May 13-17 ..... American Association of Museums Annual Meeting, Chicago, Illinois
- May 16 ..... Frontrunner Program sponsored by the Danish Embassy, Seattle, Washington
- May 25-27 ..... Tivoli Fest, Elk Horn, Iowa
- May 26 ..... Grand Opening of Jens Dixen House, The Danish Immigrant Museum, Elk Horn, Iowa
- June 6-8 ..... Danish Immigrant Museum Board Meeting, Omaha, Nebraska
- June 23 ..... Sankt Hans Aften, The Danish Immigrant Museum, Elk Horn, Iowa



# Fox and Petersen Contribute Talents as Interns

In 2004, The Danish Immigrant Museum began a partnership with Aalborg University in Denmark and undergraduate institutions in the United States to create an internship program for various departments within the Museum. Kate Fox is currently interning in collections and Karina Petersen in marketing.

In collections, Fox aids the collections manager/registrar in the care and processing of artifacts. When an artifact arrives at the Museum as a gift, Fox participates in the collections committee meeting.

Fox's other duties include completing a full inventory of all objects housed in the Museum, rearranging storage areas, completing data entry of older gift lots, aiding in the creation of short-term exhibits, and producing an artifact guide to the flat files in the lower level gallery.

Fox hails from Virginia where she earned her bachelors degree in biological anthropology at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia. This coming fall, she will return to university to earn her masters degree in museum studies. Fox plans to make a career in the field, specializing either in anthropology/cultural studies or exhibition design.

Petersen, meanwhile, is writing a proposal concerning the marketing strategies of the Museum. This proposal will focus upon the ideal target audience for the Museum: younger generation families with children. The bulk of her research is focused on how to interest this target audience in the Danish heritage and entice them to visit.

Petersen has also designed several programs and brochures for Museum events, created a draft for The Holger Danske Endowment Campaign, and aided in the design and content of the 2006 annual report and museum shop catalogs. She is also translating the Museum's website from English into Danish.

Petersen, from Hjørring, Denmark, has already obtained a degree in international market and communication and

is now in the process of completing her master's degree in tourism at Aalborg University.

Fox and Petersen live together in Elk Horn where they spend their time working, reading, exercising at the gym, and socializing with friends. They both are enjoying their stay in Elk Horn and their internship experiences at The Danish Immigrant Museum.



*Karina Petersen (left) and Katherine Fox are interning at The Danish Immigrant Museum.*



## Volunteer Spotlight: Millie Eskov

The Volunteer Spotlight is on Millie Eskov. Eskov volunteers as a front desk greeter every Thursday and has been a dedicated volunteer since 1993. She loves visiting with the guests and can be counted on to recruit at least one new member each time she is here. Eskov always takes time to have lunch with the staff and loves to bring goodies for everyone to enjoy.

Eskov was born in Council Bluffs, Iowa and graduated from Thomas Jefferson High School there. Her first work experience was making radio crystals during World War II. In 1943 she married the love of her life Albert Eskov and shortly, thereafter, they moved to Elk Horn. They were happily

married for twenty-five years when he died suddenly; she has been a widow since then. Eskov is very proud of her family: two children, four grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Eskov loves to play cards and to get together with neighbors to play board games. She is a member of the Red Hat Society and has been a member of the Elk Horn Lutheran Church since moving here.

Millie, we are so grateful to you for all the time you give to the Museum, for all of the goodies you bring and all the stories you share each Thursday. You are a very special member of the Museum family.

# From Our Development Director

By Thomas Hansen

Greetings from the cold and wintry campus of The Danish Immigrant Museum where we are eagerly anticipating the spring season!

A new year has begun, and we are off to a great start here in 2007. Building on our growing development efforts recently, this year has the making of being another banner year as we seek to expand our outreach, exhibits, facilities and endowment.

As I reflect on our accomplishments this past year, I am particularly touched by the many long-time and generous friends across the country who, since we began in 1983, have been steady supporters of the Museum. Through your annual membership, your support of special projects and appeals, placing loved ones on our Danish Immigrant Wall of Honor, or leaving us in your estate, you have demonstrated your strong interest in our ongoing efforts here at The Danish Immigrant Museum.

Your thoughtful giving, large and small, has truly made a difference as we continue to share and tell the stories of the Danish immigrants, their descendants, and Danes currently living in the US. We have come a long way in the last twenty-four years, but there is still much to accomplish, and we look forward to working with you.

There are several significant recent contributions that we wish to highlight:

- The Danish Immigrant Museum was the recipient of an amazing gift of \$100,000 from long-time members and supporters Tony and Gwen Berg of DeKalb, Illinois. At the request of Tony and Gwen, the gift was placed in the Museum's Holger Danske Endowment Fund.
- A major in-kind contribution from Leman USA Inc., Racine, Wisconsin to fully support transportation costs associated with bringing the *Immigrants: Graphic Images from Funen Graphic Workshop* from Denmark to various venues within the United States. We are especially grateful

to our long-time supporter, Leman USA's President, Steen Sanderhoff.

- Last October, we were the recipients of a significant gift from the Estate of Caroline Olsen, Minneapolis, Minnesota. According to her son, Byron D. Olsen, his mother was a student of Danish immigrant history and an enthusiastic promoter and preserver of her heritage.
- As of February, we have received over \$30,000 in contributions towards the 2006 End of Year Appeal to support our daily activities, to renew memberships or to help us complete several special projects.

I am also pleased to share with you that we have received a number of gifts in response to the Pension Protection Act of 2006. If you are over age seventy and a half, you can take advantage of this legislation should you be interested in making tax-free gifts to charities directly from your IRAs. This legislation is in effect only throughout 2007, and you are allowed to make charitable contributions in any amount up to \$100,000. If you have questions about making a special gift to us using your IRA, please contact me at 1-800-759-9192 or email me at [dkdevdir@metc.net](mailto:dkdevdir@metc.net)

On behalf of Deb Larsen, Membership Coordinator/Development Associate, and the entire Museum staff, we especially appreciate the generous giving of



time and resources from our national board of directors and our dedicated volunteers. Thank you to all of our members and donors for thinking of us and for your continued partnership.



## 2007 Rebuild Annual Meeting, March 21-25 in Denver

Christian Christensen, long-time Museum member and current Colorado/Wyoming Rebuild Chapter president, encourages everyone to attend the 2007 Rebuild Annual Meeting. Members of the Colorado/Wyoming Chapter will be hosting the meeting at the Marriott Denver South at Park Meadows.

For more information about the program and activities, please visit [www.annualrebuildmeeting.com](http://www.annualrebuildmeeting.com). You can also contact Christian Christensen at 1-303-526-1303 or e-mail him at [christianiusa@yahoo.dk](mailto:christianiusa@yahoo.dk). For tour and dinner reservations for Saturday, March 24, please contact Consul Nanna Nielsen Smith, Hans Nielsen, Inc, at 1-303-980-9100.



## "2006 Annual Report" Note

We recently learned that some of the copies of the *2006 Annual Report* contained duplicate and/or omitted pages. If you received one of these copies, please call Debbie Larsen at 1-800-759-9192 to report the error and to receive a new copy.



# Thank You Businesses and Organizations

These businesses and organizations have contributed annual memberships of at least \$100. We recognize their generosity and support in each newsletter during their membership.

A & A Framing (Annette Andersen), Kimballton, Iowa  
The American-Scandinavian Foundation, Central Iowa, Des Moines, Iowa  
AmericInn, Elk Horn, Iowa  
Answers (Rick Tighe), Atlantic, Iowa  
Atlantic Friends of The Danish Immigrant Museum, Atlantic, Iowa  
Carlson Wagonlit Travel (Ted and Barb Stenberg), Omaha, Nebraska  
Carroll Control Systems, Inc., Carroll, Iowa  
Cedar Valley Danes, Cedar Valley, Iowa  
Childs & Hall, P.C., Harlan, Iowa  
Cutler Funeral Home (Bob and Cynthia Cutler), LaPorte, Indiana  
Danebod Lutheran Church, Tyler, Minnesota  
Danish American Club of Milwaukee, West Bend, Wisconsin  
Danish American Club in Orange County, Huntington Beach, California  
Danish American Vennelyst Club, Omaha, Nebraska  
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #14, Kenosha, Wisconsin  
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #15, Des Moines, Iowa  
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #35, Homewood, Illinois  
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #39, Hayward, California  
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #56, Overland Park, Kansas  
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #84, Lincoln, Nebraska  
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #268, Eugene, Oregon  
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #283, Plentywood, Montana  
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #341, Kimballton/Elk Horn, Iowa  
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #348, Eugene, Oregon  
Danish Club of Tucson, Tucson, Arizona

Danish Countryside Vines & Wines (Allan and Carol Petersen), Exira, Iowa  
Danish Mutual Insurance Association, Elk Horn, Iowa  
Danish Sisterhood Lodge #102, Johnston, Iowa  
Elk Horn Pharmacy (Tim and Mary Waymire), Elk Horn, Iowa  
Elk Horn-Kimballton Community School, Elk Horn, Iowa  
Elk Horn-Kimballton Optimist Club, Elk Horn, Iowa  
Elverhoj Museum of History & Art, Solvang, California  
Exira Family Medicine Clinic (Dana and Joan Shaffer), Exira, Iowa  
Faith, Family, Freedom Foundation (Kenneth and Marlene Larsen), Calistoga, California  
Goldsmith Helle Jørvad, Ringsted, Denmark  
Hardi Midwest, Inc., Davenport, Iowa  
Harlan Newspapers, Harlan, Iowa  
Heart of Iowa Danes, Ames, Iowa  
Heartland District of the DBIA, Ventura, Iowa  
Jacquelyn's Danish Bake Shoppe, Elk Horn, Iowa  
Kessler Funeral Homes, Inc. (Mark Kessler), Audubon, Iowa  
King of Kings (Richard and Bonnie Andersen), Anchor Point, Arkansas  
KNOD Radio, Harlan, Iowa  
Knudsen Old Timers, Glendale, California  
Marge's Hair Hut (Kent & Marge Ingerslev), Elk Horn, Iowa

Marne & Elk Horn Telephone Co., Elk Horn, Iowa  
Midwest Groundcovers (Peter and Irma Orum), St. Charles, Illinois  
Nebraska District of DBIA, Kearney, Nebraska  
Nelsen & Nelsen, Attorneys at Law, Cozad, Nebraska  
O & H Danish Bakery, Racine, Wisconsin  
Olsen, Muhlbauer & Co., L.L.P., Carroll, Iowa  
Outlook Study Club, Elk Horn, Iowa  
Proongily (Cynthia McKeen), St. Paul, Minnesota  
Rebild National Park Society, Upper Midwest Chapter, Maple Plain, Minnesota  
Rebild National Park Society, Southern California Chapter, Glendale, California  
Red River Danes, Fargo, North Dakota  
Ringsted Danish American Fellowship, Ringsted, Iowa  
Royal Danish Embassy, Washington, D.C.  
Shelby County State Bank, Elk Horn, Iowa  
Symra Literary Society, Decorah, Iowa  
The Viking Club of Orange County, Seal Beach, California  
Westergaard Farms and Scandinavian Bed & Breakfast (Dale and Ellen Westergaard Jackson), Whiting, Iowa

*Have you  
been to our  
website lately?*

[www.danishmuseum.org](http://www.danishmuseum.org)



# New Additions to the Wall of Honor

## October 1, 2006 – January 15, 2006

The Danish Immigrant Museum's Wall of Honor provides families and friends with a means of preserving the memory of those who emigrated from Denmark to America. Over 4,500 immigrants are currently recognized on the Wall. Their stories and the stories of their families contribute importantly to the growing repository of family histories at the Museum's Family History and Genealogy Center.

If you would like to memorialize your forbearers by adding their names to the Wall of Honor, contact Debbie Larsen, development associate.

**Nels Christian Block**, *Nels & Gwendolyn Block, Harlan, Iowa*

**Anna M. Haahr**, *Lowell & Esther Haahr, Newell, Iowa*

**Kirsten Pedersen a/k/a Pedersdatter, Henriksen**, *Alvina Hjortsvang, Council Bluffs, Iowa*

**Axel Valdemar Jensen**, *Erna*

*Jensen, Des Moines, Iowa*  
**Else Marie (Prip) Jensen**, *Erna Jensen, Des Moines, Iowa*

**Johanna Catherine Back Jensen**, *Nancy Darst, Omaha, Nebraska*

**John Jensen**, *Erna Jensen, Des Moines, Iowa*

**Karolina Marie Nielsen Jensen**, *Erna Jensen, Des Moines, Iowa*

**Orla Norup Jensen**, *Erna Jensen, Des Moines, Iowa*

**Oscar Laurits Jensen**, *Erna Jensen, Des Moines, Iowa*

**Otto Ville Jensen**, *Erna Jensen, Des Moines, Iowa*

**Theofil Christian Jensen**, *Erna Jensen, Des Moines, Iowa*

**Albert Johnson & Anna Katrina Knudsen Johnson**, *Sally Ketcham, Ft. Collins, Colorado*

**Peter Christopher Nelson**, *Stanley & Judith Nelson, Belle Vista, Arizona*

**Bodil Marie (Jensen) Nielsen**, *Erna Jensen, Des Moines, Iowa*

**Knud Nielsen**, *Roger Nielsen, St. Paul, Minnesota*

**Niels Christian Nielsen**, *Erna Jensen, Des Moines, Iowa*

**Anna Nielsen Petersen**, *Erna Jensen, Des Moines, Iowa*

**Ella Nicoline Willadsen Petersen**, *Astrid Willadsen, Irwin, Iowa*

**Karoline Fredericka Katrina Petersen**, *Erna Jensen, Des Moines, Iowa*

**Anders George (Jensen) Seaholt**, *Erna Jensen, Des Moines, Iowa*

**Anker Hedegard Siersbeck**, *Luther & Doris Kloth, Wauwatosa, Wisconsin*

**Ingvard & Mathilde Georgia Jacobsen Skobo**, *Glenn & May Jackson, Rochester Hills, Michigan; Carol J. Weckmuller, Blair, Nebraska; Alan & Anne Jackson, Ann Arbor, Michigan; Dan & Kirsten Young, Naperville, Illinois; and Rees & Edna McFarlane, Houston, Texas*

## Memorials

October 1, 2006 – January 15, 2007

Memorials have been received in loving memory of the following individuals:

Linda Ahrenholtz  
Hans Albertsen  
Harold Albertsen  
Donald N. Andersen  
Alfred "Bud" Clausen  
Shirley Craig  
Edna Fredericksen  
Vernon Frost

Donald Haahr  
Anna Marie Hansen  
Axel Hermansen  
Neal Hood  
Guy Huffman  
John Jacobsen  
Bernice Johnson  
Anna Jorgensen  
Edward C. Krause  
Peter & Eva Larsen

Grace Mardesen  
Virginia J. Nielsen  
Leroy Pedersen  
Glenn E. Petersen  
Mae Petersen  
Delbert Rasmussen  
Jens Reerslev  
Annelise & Jørgen Skelgaard  
Joel Sorensen  
Holger Thompson



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# Board of Directors Meet in Houston

The 75th regular meeting of the Museum's board of directors was held in Houston, Texas, February 8 through 10, 2007 at the Embassy Suites Houston, near the Galleria. Staff members and the executive committee arrived on Wednesday, February 7 and were guests for dinner at the home of Royal Danish Vice-Consul Anna Thomsen Holliday and her husband Hal.

Thursday was a daylong meeting for the executive committee as the other members of the board arrived throughout the day. Twenty of the twenty-four members of the board were in attendance and gathered to hear a presentation that evening from Vern Henricks, who is working with the board and staff in developing a vision for the Museum's future.

On Friday morning the entire board, staff, and guests took a field trip to the Danish community of Danevang, approximately seventy-five miles south of Houston. They viewed an orientation video, toured The Danish Museum and

took in the sights. The various board committees held their meetings there and the entire group was treated to a lunch provided by the community.

On Friday evening the Museum hosted members of the Danish American community at a banquet held at the Embassy Suites. Honored guests were Royal Danish Consul Ray Daughjerg and his wife Cherry and Vice-Consul Anna Thomsen Holliday, and her husband Hal.

Lan Chase Bentsen was the guest speaker at the banquet. Bentsen is Honorary Consul for the Republic of Georgia and son of Lloyd Bentsen, Jr., former United States senator from Texas and Treasury secretary. Bentsen shared a compelling description of the family's immigration from Denmark to South Dakota. He closed with a letter his father had written to his grandfather during World War II when he was serving as a bomber pilot in the European theater. The letter captured his father's pride in family, heritage, and country. The nearly

seventy people in attendance responded with a standing ovation.

Saturday morning from 8:30 a.m. until noon, the 75th regular meeting was held and was adjourned at approximately 12:00 pm. The executive committee stayed on for a short wrap-up session.

The board of directors meets three times a year: the annual meeting is held in Elk Horn in October and there are two other out-of-state meetings—one in February and one in June.

The board members are very dedicated. Each of them serves on several committees: collections, development, endowment, executive, facilities, family history and genealogy, finance, marketing, Museum Shop, and nominating. The board is strictly volunteer; members support the Museum financially and with the gifts of time and expertise. All expenses incurred during the course of the board meetings are paid by the board members themselves. We are truly grateful to have such a dedicated and supportive board of directors to lead us into the future.

## ADMISSION & HOURS

### ADMISSION

(Includes Bedstemor's House)

Current Museum Members:

FREE with Membership Card

Non-Members: Adults, \$5

Children (ages 8-17), \$2

**MUSEUM HOURS:** Mon.-Fri.: 9:00 am-5:00 pm; Sat.: 10:00 am-5:00 pm ; Sun.: 12:00 noon-5:00 pm

**BUSINESS HOURS:** Monday - Friday: 8:00 am to 5:00 pm

### FAMILY HISTORY & GENEALOGY CENTER HOURS

May-Oct.: Tues., Wed., Fri., 9:00 am-5:00 pm; 1st & 3rd

Saturday: 9:00 am-5:00 pm

Nov.-April: Tues., Wed., Fri.: 10 am-4 pm

*Other Times By Appointment*

All facilities are closed on

New Year's Day, Easter Sunday, Thanksgiving & Christmas.

*(Local weather conditions may cause occasional closures.)*



## News from the Family History & Genealogy Center

By Michele McNabb, librarian



*Between 1996 and 2007, Mae Petersen put in over 2,900 hours as an FHGC volunteer researcher.*

### In Memoriam

#### Mae Marie (Erickson) Petersen (1926-2007)

Mae, a valuable FHGC volunteer for over a decade, passed away unexpectedly at her home near Jacksonville, Iowa on January 5, 2007. She had spent the previous Tuesday, as usual, as a volunteer in the library and was e-mailing with several family historians until shortly before her death.

Born near Jacksonville, Mae received her Normal Training teaching certificate and taught in rural schools for a decade before marrying Glenn Edwin Petersen in 1954. She was active in the Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Jacksonville, where she was a lifelong member, a charter member of the Community Heritage Society in Kimballton, Iowa, the Nishnabotna Genealogical Society in Harlan, and The Danish Immigrant Museum. She was the co-author of a history of Jacksonville and also wrote a history of her church. Petersen was inducted into the Shelby County Fair Hall of Fame in 1995 and was recognized this past October for her efforts in helping to establish and staff the FHGC.

Mae's extensive knowledge of local history and families was of great benefit to researchers, and her tireless efforts to assist family historians and to go the extra step to find records will be sorely missed. She is survived by two sons, Wayne Petersen and Carl Petersen, both of Jacksonville, several siblings and two grandchildren.



## Wish List

There are several types of materials at the top of the FHGC Wish List. If you would like to make a donation of the following items or contribute toward the purchase of similar materials as part of our tenth anniversary fund-raising campaign, please contact Michele McNabb at 712-764-7008 or [librarian@danishmuseum.org](mailto:librarian@danishmuseum.org) or Thomas Hansen at 712-764-7001.

- *With a Brush and Muslin Bag: the Life of Niels Ebbesen Hansen* (2003), by Helen H. Loen.
- *A Global Citizen: Letter to my Descendants, part II* (2006), by Niels Aage Skov.
- **Family histories:** has someone in

your family written a family history or compilation of family data? If so, has a copy been donated to the museum? No matter the format—formally published volumes or photocopied material put together for family reunions—we take them all! If you're not certain whether a family history has already been donated, we'll be happy to check our records.

- **Biographies, memoirs and collections of family letters:** do you have a copy of reminiscences written down by a Danish immigrant or a transcription of family letters? These materials are invaluable resources for future family historians since they

### HeritageQuest Online™

Over two hundred and eighty Danish Immigrant Museum members are currently using the genealogical databases HeritageQuest Online™ in their homes. Subscriptions are available at the \$100 membership level and above and may be started by filling out the HeritageQuest form that comes with the annual membership renewal or by contacting Deb Larsen at the Museum. HeritageQuest offers access to images of U.S. censuses from 1790-1930, over 20,000 searchable family and local histories, the Periodical Source Index (PERSI) referencing nearly two million periodical articles, and Revolutionary War and Freedman's Bank records.

will shed light on the personalities and concerns of our ancestors long after they have walked this earth.

- **Danish newspapers published in the U.S.:** A number of Danish-language newspapers were published in various communities. They contain local news of interest to immigrants, including obituaries and social notices. Many have been microfilmed by various state historical societies and agencies. We have a list of newspapers from Minnesota, Nebraska, Wisconsin and Illinois that we would like to add to the FHGC collection. An average roll of microfilm costs \$70-80; you can "adopt" all or part of a roll of film.

## Activities and News from the Family History & Genealogy Center

- A sampling of photographs from the 2006 TivoliFest exhibit "There's No Place like Home" may now be seen in the Library & Genealogy section of the museum webpage under **Photo Gallery**. During TivoliFest 2007 the photograph exhibition will feature images of Danish immigrants who served in the military in both Denmark and the U.S. Photographs for the exhibit may be submitted beginning March 1 by email to Michele McNabb at [librarian@danishmuseum.org](mailto:librarian@danishmuseum.org) or by mail to the FHGC. If an image of an immigrant soldier, sailor or airman in your family is already in the library collection, please let us know about it so that it may be included in the exhibit.
- Thanks to the generosity of Melissa Partridge, editor of the Danish Villages Voice, bound issues of the newspaper and its predecessor from 1928 through 2004 are now stored and available for viewing at the FHGC. Volunteer Jim Kelgor has already begun indexing vital records out of the issues to allow ready access to this material for family historians.

### Recent and upcoming speaking engagements:

- February 17: "When Grandma Spoke 'Dane'"—The Nordic Heritage Genealogy Workshop at the Waco-McLennan County Public Library, Waco, Texas
- April 17: "Bound for Jova"—Northeast Iowa Genealogical Society meeting, Cedar Falls, Iowa.

If you would like a genealogical speaker or workshop on Danish or Danish-American genealogy check the Classes & Workshops section of the museum webpage for topics and contact information.

- **FHGC winter hours** (10 a.m.-4 p.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays) will last until the end of April. Appointments for other days must be made in advance by calling the library during open hours.



*Librarian Michele McNabb (front row, center) pictured with some of the FHGC volunteers who work each week.*

## FHGC celebrates 10th anniversary

The tenth anniversary of the FHGC was celebrated with an open house and banquet during the week of the board meeting in October. During the latter event former board members Helen Stub and Dennis Andersen and volunteers Margaret Christensen, Norma Lange Nelson and Mae Petersen were recognized for their major efforts in getting the library organized and facilitating the creation of a national collection of Danish and Danish-American family history. Announcing The FHGC Tenth Anniversary Fund-Raising Campaign, executive director John Mark Nielsen and library manager Michele McNabb spoke about future dreams and goals for the library with the aim of making the collection even more useful to visitors researching their Danish ancestry.



*In October 2006 The Family History & Genealogy Center celebrated its ten year anniversary.*



## Researching Your Ancestors

Are you looking for some good places and strategies for searching for your ancestors? The FHGC sells several resources for genealogists, including a sourcebook for beginning researchers called *Unpuzzling Your Past*, a guide to researching Danish ancestors, and several

other useful publications related to Danish research. In addition, there are useful tips for getting started under Genealogy Research on the Museum webpage and a list of useful webpages may be found under Links. These resources can also be sent by mail or e-mail upon request.



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