

America Letter



The Danish Immigrant Museum

AN INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL CENTER

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Director's Corner

by John Mark Nielsen

On April 25, the trustees of the Albert Victor Ravenholt Fund of Seattle, Washington signed papers pledging support to endow the Albert Ravenholt Curator of Danish-American Culture at The Danish Immigrant Museum.

Albert Ravenholt's story, indeed the story of the entire Ravenholt family, is a fascinating one. I am pleased that in this *America Letter* we can share just a little of their story. It captures in many ways our mission of celebrating "Danish roots and American dreams." While Albert was a noted journalist, serving as the Asian correspondent for the *Chicago Daily News* and United Press International, his letters written in Danish to family in Luck, Wisconsin when he was a student at Grand View College reveal his appreciation for their Danish heritage. This is a feeling evident among family members today.

I am so grateful that his siblings who serve as the Fund's trustees, Eiler Ravnholt (who died suddenly on March 8, 2012), Reimert Ravenholt, and Agnes Nussle, responded favorably to my proposal to endow a professional position. The task of the Albert Ravenholt Curator of Danish-American Culture will be to study and interpret through exhibits and programming the unfolding story of Danish Americans.

Establishing endowed positions is an important way we can build our endowment. Endowed positions also guarantee that The Danish Immigrant Museum will have the resources to attract and employ a professional staff with the knowledge and training to preserve the artifacts of the

Danish-American experience. One of my many dreams for our museum is that, in addition to the Albert Ravenholt Curator of Danish-American Culture, we can also endow the positions of curator of collections, registrar, and our Family History Center genealogist.

Endowment growth will help provide security for the future of our museum. I invite you to consider one of four ways you might contribute to securing the future of The Danish Immigrant Museum and thereby leave a legacy to future generations.

One. Create a gift by naming the museum as a beneficiary in your will or living trust. Known as a bequest, this allows you to leave a legacy to our museum without parting with any assets today.

Two. Name the museum as a beneficiary of your IRA. As a tax-exempt institution, you can avoid heirs being exposed to income taxes and possible estate taxes.

Three. Leave our museum all or a portion of your life insurance policy. This is an option many people overlook and yet may enable you to leave a legacy and make a difference.

Four. Provide income for yourself now at attractive returns and a gift to the museum later through investing in our charitable remainder trust.

I and members of the development staff welcome the opportunity to discuss with you any or all of these ways whereby you might help us build our endowment and secure the future of our museum. This was the opportunity I had with members of the Ravenholt family. The result of our discussions is the Albert Ravenholt Curator of Danish-American Culture – a result for which all supporters of The Danish Immigrant Museum can be grateful.

As this issue went to press, we learned of the sudden and untimely death of Kay Esbeck North, vice president of the museum's board of directors. All associated with the museum offer sincere condolences to her family.

COVER PHOTO: Ansgar and Kristine Ravnholt Family in West Denmark, Wisconsin, July 4, 1935. Back row from left to right: Johanne, Kristine, Ansgar, Albert, Halvor. Front row from left to right: Gerda, Astrid, Agnes, Eiler, Reimert, Otto. "Across Oceans, Across Time, Across Generations: The Ravenholts" begins on page 4.



Albert Ravenholt (1919-2010).

Albert Victor Ravenholt Fund of Seattle Endows Museum Position

The Danish Immigrant Museum is pleased to announce a gift and pledge of \$750,000 from the Albert Victor Ravenholt Fund of Seattle, Washington to endow the position of Curator of Danish-American Culture.

The endowment of the position – named the Albert Ravenholt Curator of Danish-American Culture – ensures that there will be a permanent, professional staff person with the knowledge and training to study and interpret through exhibits and programming the unfolding story of Danish Americans. Creating such an endowed position reflects The Danish Immigrant Museum’s commitment to preserving and interpreting this story for future generations.

Albert Ravenholt, born in 1919, grew up in the Danish American community around Luck, Wisconsin. Despite enduring the loss of the family farm in the Great Depression, he and his eight siblings all went on to have interesting careers. Albert became a noted journalist and an expert on Asian affairs, serving as correspondent and Asian bureau chief for United Press International as well as a writer for the *Chicago Daily News* and ultimately a fellow of the Institute of Current World Affairs at Harvard University.

“I am so grateful that Albert’s siblings who serve as the Fund’s trustees, Eiler Ravnholt (who died suddenly on

March 8, 2012), Reimert Ravenholt, and Agnes Nussle, responded favorably to my proposal to endow a professional position at The Danish Immigrant Museum,” said Dr. John Mark Nielsen, the museum’s executive director. “We have a very strong staff, and this is the first step in my dream of endowing each of our professional positions.”

Current Curator of Exhibitions Tova Brandt will now assume the title Albert Ravenholt Curator of Danish-American Culture. Prior to joining The Danish Immigrant Museum staff in 2009, Brandt served as curator of non-textile artifacts at Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum in Decorah, Iowa. A native of Minneapolis, Minnesota, she received her degree cum laude from Bryn Mawr College in 1997 and her Master of Early American Culture from The Winterthur Program of the University of Delaware in 2001. Brandt has been active professionally, curating over thirty exhibits, presenting at numerous conferences, and most recently serving on the board of directors of the Midwest Art Conservation Center in Minneapolis.



*Tova Brandt, Albert Ravenholt
Curator of Danish-American Culture*

Across Oceans, Across Time, Across Generations: The Ravenholts

By Eva Nielsen

“Our family’s current situation is far from what we would wish and that troubles me greatly, but we must work together and help make life fortunate for us all.”

Albert Ravenholt was 20 years old when he wrote this line (translated from Danish) in a letter to his younger brother, Reimert. This was March of 1939. Albert was studying at Grand View College in Des Moines, Iowa, while 14-year-old Reimert was back at home in the Luck, Wisconsin area.

In 1939, it was home itself that was part of the troubling situation that Albert alluded to in his letter. Like so many in that decade, the Ravnholts (many family members later changed the spelling to “Ravenholt”) suffered deep financial challenges, losing their farm to foreclosure in 1935. Yet, despite facing real hardship (or, arguably, because of it), Albert, Reimert and their siblings would all go on to make remarkable lives for themselves – lives rich in both public service and in support for one another.

There were ten children born to Danish-American parents Ansgar and Kristine Ravnholt. Their first-born, Thora, died as an infant, but the remaining nine grew to healthy, productive adulthood. A look at some of the highlights from the nine siblings’ biographies (boxed on page 5) gives a sense of their professional experiences.

Given how well these nine Ravenholts navigated life’s eccentricities, it seems fair

*Ansgar Ravnholt
and Kristine
Petersen*



*All photos used
courtesy of the
Ravenholt family.*



The siblings and some of their spouses in 1986, celebrating the life of Kristine Petersen Ravnholt, November 6, 1892-September 23, 1986. From left: Otto and Barbara Ravenholt, Paul and Agnes Nussle, Albert Ravenholt, Johanne and Ernest Fremont, Astrid Ravenholt, Eiler and Edna Ravnholt, Reimert and Betty Ravenholt, Gerda and Bob Bune, and Halvor Ravenholt.

Each of the nine Ravenholt siblings has a story that would take pages to tell. Listed here are just a few highlights from their biographies.

Albert became a war correspondent for the United Press International in China, Burma and India, interviewing the likes of Mao Tse-tung and Ho Chi Minh. He was a writer for the *Chicago Daily News* and a Fellow of the Institute of Current World Affairs at Harvard University.

Halvor arrived for divers' training at Pearl Harbor on December 1, 1941, experienced the Japanese bombing and was part of the clean-up effort. He later joined the Underwater Demolition Unit of the Navy, which took him to the war in the Pacific – to Iwo Jima and the Philippines. Halvor worked for the U.S. Soil Conservation Service.

Johanne had a long, distinguished career as a nurse, including serving as director of operating rooms at The Research Medical Center in Kansas City, Missouri.

Eiler, Johanne's twin, served in the U.S. Army, 104th Infantry Division in the European theater. He became a teacher and served as Assistant to Vice President to Hubert H. Humphrey and as the Chief of Staff to Senator Daniel K. Inouye of Hawaii, participating in the Watergate hearings.

Reimert went to medical school and became an epidemiologist and a researcher, directing the Office of Population for the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Otto joined the U.S. Army Counter-Intelligence Corps in Japan. He became a physician, directing the Clark County Health District in Las Vegas, Nevada and concurrently served as coroner for the county.

Gerda taught home economics for over thirty years in schools in California, Minnesota and Washington.

Agnes served as a pastor's wife and worked in schools for many years as a speech therapist.

Astrid, twin to Agnes, became a Foreign Service nurse in embassies around the world, giving care in American embassies from Brazil to South Korea, from Italy to Laos.

to suppose they had parents who did something right. And, indeed, the children give great credit to their mother, Kristine.

"We really did have the ultimate mother in Kristine Petersen," says Reimert Raveholt, speaking from his home in Seattle, Washington. "She really was such an example for us of endless, cheerful work."

Work is clearly something Kristine knew well. The eldest of eleven children born to Danish immigrant parents, Kristine grew up caring for children. And, then, as a mother with nine children – including two sets of twins – Reimert says she was "at work long before daylight and long after dusk."

Reimert also credits his father, Ansgar, describing him as a "brilliant person," a person with "his mind on lots of big matters." Ansgar attended Grand View College for college preparatory work and spent a couple winters at the University of Wisconsin studying horticulture. Reimert adds, "He [Ansgar] should have gone in to one of the professions, but his father died in 1913 and he got trapped in taking care of the farm in order to take care of his mother."

This farm near Milltown, Wisconsin was a homestead farm. Ansgar's parents settled the land in 1884 when they arrived there from Denmark by way of Ashland, Michigan and then the Elk Horn, Iowa area. Creating farmland from Wisconsin forests was a hard job. According to memories written by Ansgar himself, in those days area farmers cleared the timber from the land by hand, leaving the stumps to rot out for four to six years before it was possible to dig them out of the soil. In the meantime, farmers planted oats, clover and timothy between the stumps. Ansgar's father cleared away timber and the couple was part of establishing one of Wisconsin's first cooperative dairies. Ansgar collected cream from farms;

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Ansgar's mother, Hanne, made butter. (Hanne had learned butter making in Denmark, practicing her craft on an estate on Fyn before she married.)

When Ansgar's father died, the farm fell to him, and that is where the Ravnholt children grew up, speaking Danish before they spoke English, taking part in the nonstop responsibilities of running a dairy farm, going to school, and attending the Danish Lutheran Church, a Grundtvigian congregation in nearby West Denmark, Wisconsin. Reimert describes this upbringing as "quite ideal." He continues, "We were in many ways fortunate. Most of Kristine's family [the Petersen family] lived around West Denmark so it was an excellent social gathering place."

Growing up as one of nine siblings, written remembrances by the Ravnholt siblings are full of growing-up stories – of hunting with slingshots, carving boats from wood logs, riding home from fetching the cows on the backs of heifers, sleeping in the woods, getting into manure fights when they were supposed to be spreading it on the field. Eiler Ravnholt, writing about this particular game, mentions a time that he got into one of these fights with both Reimert and Otto at the same time. "That proved to be more than I could handle," he wrote, "and from that time on I honed my political skills to avoid displeasing both of them simultaneously." (Of course, these political skills would serve Eiler well later in Washington, D.C. as he advised Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey and later Hawaii's Senator Daniel K. Inouye.)

This must have been an anxious time for Ansgar and Kristine – "shattering" was the word Eiler used in a written recollection of the experience. But the kids were free from the chores of the



Reimert (8 years old) and Albert (14 years old), 1933.

dairy farm and, Reimert says, "That first summer, we loved it. We could fish and swim all day."

In the fall, the family moved to a one-room school house, a building with no insulation, in West Denmark where they stayed through a Wisconsin winter. Eiler said in his writing about the experience: "The winter of 1935-36 proved to be the coldest on record with twenty days in January when the temperature never got above zero and one day it fell to 47 degrees below zero."

After a year, the family moved to a rental farm near Milltown and in 1939 to a small subsistence farm near Luck. In 1940, with World War II looming, Ansgar's WPA program ended and he found himself not knowing what to do; he experienced

a mental breakdown and spent the next two years in a state hospital. This time period, Reimert calls "the bottom of our family economy." Reimert recalls January of 1941, "I can remember I had a nickel I had gotten for Christmas and I was determined to nourish that nickel as long as I could. And I waited till the middle of the month and then I bought that Snickers candy bar."

And here again, Reimert reiterates the strength of Kristine. He says, "Our mother was so talented at making the best of whatever. We had our dairy cows, chickens, geese and a few hogs and a vegetable garden and our mother canned 200 quarts of tomatoes. We were living better with our mother under those circumstances than many other



Albert interviewing General Claire Chennault, then commander of the U.S. 14th Air Force at Kunming, China.

people with better circumstances.”

The younger siblings also give credit for the tenacity and subsequent successes of the Ravnholt siblings to the older brothers, Albert and Halvor who provided financial help as soon as they were able to do so. “Albert,” says Reimert, “was exceptionally capable and the leader by example to all of us that if you wanted to do something you just pick up and go do it.”

Albert certainly did “pick up and go do” some remarkable things. (Reimert would later write down and publish many of Albert’s experiences in a book, *West Over the Sea to the Orient: Life Adventures and Asian Writings of Albert Ravenholt, Writer, Correspondent, Agriculturist.*)

In 1935, Albert and Halvor had been sent off to work for their board and room with family friends. This is when Albert decided he would be a foreign correspondent. So, off he went to do it. Here’s how he did it, in brief.

Albert figured learning to cook might be a way to work his way around the world. So, when he graduated from

high school, he went to Minneapolis where he joined the hotel and restaurant workers union, talked his way into an apprentice chef position for the summer at the Radisson Hotel, and learned to cook. Upon his return to Luck in the fall, he learned he had won an essay competition, a cash prize of \$300 and a scholarship to several Big Ten universities. Albert chose to attend the Danish Grand View College that winter before heading out during the summer of 1939 to work at the New York World’s Fair.

Albert then hitchhiked his way across the country to San Pedro, California. Using those culinary skills, he signed on as a cook on a Swedish ship sailing for Asia, then to the Mediterranean Sea and Marseilles, France, before returning around Africa to Shanghai. And in Shanghai he remained, writing articles, doing occasional radio broadcasts for an English radio station and studying Chinese, French, Russian.

This was 1941. Japan and China had already been actively at war with each other for several years.

As a Japanese invasion of Shanghai loomed, Albert headed off again, taking an appointment from the International Red Cross, trucking medical supplies (and some non-medical essentials) to mission hospitals and first aid centers on the Burma Road, which ran from Burma to the Chinese interior. While recuperating from a severe intestinal illness in Delhi, India, one of Albert’s acquaintances offered him the job as a war correspondent for the United Press International in the China-Burma-India theatre during World War II.

Albert’s memories of those years, recorded by Reimert, give a personal angle to the history books’ telling of that front in the war, as well as the concurrent conflict between the Chinese Communists and Nationalists. As he grew through his career, Albert had extensive experience in the region as well as professional contact with many of the well-known individuals of the time, such as General Joseph Stilwell, Mao Tse-tung, Chiang Kai-Shek, Ho Chi Minh. Both Albert and his wife, Marjorie Sevrins, who was working for the Office of Strategic Services (the forerunner to the Central Intelligence Agency) when she met Albert, became leading experts on Asian affairs.

During the war years, when possible, Albert and Halvor sent money back home to Wisconsin. This points to another source of these siblings’ successes: their support for one another. Meg Ravnholt-Hankin, Eiler’s daughter and Albert’s niece, says, “They all felt the need to help the next one behind. Hands were always extended to the next sibling to help with tuition and that sort of thing.”

As the Ravnholt siblings came of age, some were helped along by opportunities that arose around World War II (three went to college on the GI Bill) and all were well-served by

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the work ethic that was part of their upbringing.

Reimert talks about studying at the University of Minnesota and working simultaneously as the business manager of the Students' Cooperative, collecting the dues of the young men who lived and boarded there, hiring the cook, paying all the bills and keeping profit-loss statements good to the penny.

Reimert says years later when heading up the global population program of U.S. AID and making decisions about millions of dollars, "The money thing was so ingrained in me that I didn't feel handicapped in the discussions with these economists from eastern universities."

As the Ravnholt siblings traveled their career paths from jobs like cleaning barns and working the Dakota harvest fields to professions like nursing, teaching, medicine, politics, they made lives of service. Meg comments, "Nobody was out for themselves; it was about giving back."

As the siblings left home and moved to various locations around the country – around the world – they kept in touch through letters and visits, sometimes even living in the same cities for spells of time. Over the years, too, Kristine stood at the hub of the family, keeping the nine connected. "She was the matriarch," says Meg.

And the siblings would regularly return to Luck – eventually with children of their own. Meg remembers catching rides back to Minnesota on Vice President Humphrey's plane during the summer to spend a few weeks with Kristine and the extended Petersen family. Meg says, "The Ravnholts did not



Reimert (left) and Albert in 1973 in the Philippines. Reimert was the director of the Office of Population for U.S. AID in those years and Albert was a correspondent. Albert and Marjorie made their home in Seattle, Washington and in the Philippines.

vacation; they went to visit family... They maintained their roots. They kept going back to Luck and most of them are or will be buried there."

Nine of the Ravnholt siblings lived into their eighties. Five have passed away – Eiler and Otto in March 2012.

"As they pass away it is truly sad because they are losing a best friend and a part of themselves; their lives are truly intertwined," says Meg. "They were a family that came through adversity with their humor and their family relationships intact."

And, thanks in part to some encouragement from Albert, Meg's



Eiler (seated, front third from left) during Senate Watergate Committee hearings. As an advisor to Senator Inouye of Hawaii, a committee member, Eiler worked on developing questions and strategy for the hearings.

generation will continue to stay in relationship – they will keep returning to Luck. Before his death at age 90 in 2010, Albert set up a trust for his twenty-five nieces and nephews. Here's the deal: if the



Reimert shaking hands (on the left) during the swearing-in ceremony to his position as director of the Office of Population for the U.S. Agency for International Development at the State Department. Astrid is standing beside Reimert and next to her is Eiler.



Albert with Deng Xiaoping in China in 1985. Albert and seven others who served as U.S. war correspondents in China during World War II were invited to return and tour the country.

nieces and nephews hold a family reunion somewhere in Polk County, Wisconsin every two years and if they attend, they will receive a small dispersal from Uncle Albert's trust.

The first reunion was held in September of 2011 – all of the surviving Ravnholt grandchildren were there. Meg says, "People were surprised at how much it meant.

It was like a salute to their roots, a salute to Kristine. We're looking forward to doing it again. It was a wonderful thing to do."



The twenty-five surviving grandchildren of Kristine and Ansgar.

The Collection Connection

By Angela Stanford, curator of collections

This spring The Metropolitan New York Synod donated a significant piece to The Danish Immigrant Museum's permanent collection: a sculpture, entitled *Jesus the Light of the World*, by Gutzon Borglum.

Borglum's most recognizable work is Mount Rushmore in South Dakota. The son of Danish immigrants, Jens and Ida Borglum, Gutzon was educated in both the United States and France and had a studio in New York City for a time. This sculpture is likely one of his earlier works.

Borglum's sculpture came into the possession of the synod from Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church in New York City. Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church was organized on April 21, 1895 in a home at 152 Eleventh Street in Brooklyn, New York by a group of fourteen Danes. A year later, Salem was accepted as a member of the United Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The church purchased property at 128 Prospect Avenue, and called its first pastor, J.J. Kildsig, the same year. Salem also organized a home next to the church so that new immigrants would have a place to live while they found permanent homes and jobs.

In 1940, the church was required to vacate its building to make way for a freeway, so they purchased a site at 345 Ovington Avenue

and began plans for a new church. After nearly two years of worshipping in a Masonic Hall, Salem was able to move into the new building. Groundbreaking was in May 1941, and the new church was dedicated on March 15, 1942, with C.M. Videbeck, who designed the building, as pastor. On that day, in honor of the dedication, The Danish-American Women's

Association donated the Borglum sculpture to the church. The Women's Association appears to have been one dedicated to the arts in the 1940s and 1950s in New York City.

After many changes within the larger Lutheran community, Salem began holding two services in 1994 – one in English and one in Arabic. In the end, the church became the Salam Arabic Lutheran Church, the Danish congregation closed, and a few important items from the congregation were given to the Metropolitan New York Synod. Because the synod is primarily archive-based, they contacted the museum about donating the sculpture.

Borglum's *Jesus the Light of the World* is a wonderful addition to a growing art collection here at The Danish Immigrant Museum. We look forward to sharing this beautiful sculpture with the public.



Jesus the Light of the World by Gutzon Borglum

Jens Jensen Prairie Landscape Park update

How to Plant a Prairie

You will need:

- Experts from Country Landscapes (Ames, Iowa) to prepare the ground and seed native grasses
- 10,000 young plants from Midwest Groundcovers (St. Charles, Illinois)
- Over 50 volunteers from Nebraska and Iowa with gardening gloves
- One nice sunny day (not too hot) followed by a good soaking rain



Voila! A Jens Jensen Prairie Landscape Park becomes another step closer to reality!

It's been a busy spring as the museum grounds continue to transform into the Jens Jensen Prairie Landscape Park. New trees are planted, a new stone council ring offers a place to sit and enjoy views of the landscape, thousands of small native flowers and grasses are taking root, and even more thousands of seeds are underground to make their appearance later. In addition, the walking path from the museum to Bedstemor's House is being paved to be accessible to pedestrian traffic of all sorts – strollers, joggers, bicyclers, walkers – as part of the Danish Villages' Little Mermaid Trail.

The completed park will offer walking trails through restored prairie areas, a wetland featuring water-friendly native plants, and a chance to see what the landscape around Elk Horn looked like when European settlers – Danes and others – first arrived. Each season will bring a different perspective on the plants and surrounding landscape, and we welcome you to enjoy the park and the museum at any time of the year.

The Jens Jensen Prairie Landscape Park is made possible

thanks to the dedication and generosity of many companies, foundations, and individuals. Major in-kind contributions from Country Landscapes and Midwest Groundcovers have provided the plant materials and the expertise to make them flourish. Grants from the Iowa Great Places Program, the Iowa West Foundation, Prairie Meadows, and the Shelby County Community Foundation have supported the planning, implementation and maintenance of the park. And a special *mange tak* to the individuals

"Planting a Prairie"

Watch volunteers and landscapers plant 10,000 native flowers and grasses in a single day – condensed into a five-minute video! Visit the museum's YouTube channel, "DanishMuseum," to watch this and other videos.

who have supported the park, whether with their muscles or their checkbooks!

Throughout this year, the Jens Jensen legacy is on view in the museum galleries as well as in the growing outdoor park. The exhibit *Jens Jensen: Celebrating the Native Prairie* remains on view at the museum through March 3, 2013; a traveling version is also available to share with your community. Special speakers are also scheduled throughout 2012 who will address different topics related to Jens Jensen and landscape development. One of those speakers is Rich Patterson, director of the Indian Creek Nature Center in Cedar Rapids, Iowa; as part of the museum's cooperation with the Nature Center, all Danish Immigrant Museum members may enjoy member benefits at the Nature Center's gift shop through 2012!



Treasures from the Lauritz Melchior Collection Come to the Museum

One of the most famous tenors in the world of opera was Lauritz Melchior. Born in Denmark in 1890, where he debuted with the Royal Danish Opera in 1913, Melchior went on to perform with all the leading opera companies in the western world. When the Nazis came to power, he refused to sing in Germany and ultimately immigrated to the United States where he later became a citizen. He is best remembered for being a member of the Metropolitan Opera, appearing in more performances of Wagnerian operas than any other artist.



Melchior in the opera Pagliacci.

Following Melchior's death in 1973, his son, Ib, lent a collection of artifacts and archival materials from his father's life to Dana College. With the close of Dana College, The Danish Immigrant Museum has received important artifacts, including costumes, musical scores, and photographs from Ib Melchior that help to tell the story of his father's life. Among the items are forty-nine scrapbooks containing reviews and articles on Lauritz Melchior's career. These are being digitized and will be made available online at the museum's website. Museum staff members continue to work with Ib Melchior to ensure that the music collection goes to an appropriate music archive.

Sale to Support Care of Collections

When Dana College closed, The Danish Immigrant Museum was offered the opportunity to purchase for \$30,000 items that the museum and the Danish-American Archive and Library in Blair were holding for care and security. Past Dana College donors were approached to pay for this purchase, and they responded generously. (Some of the artifacts the museum received appeared in the last *America Letter*.)

At the time donations were solicited, it was made clear

that any items that were not historically relevant or lacked provenance would be sold and the proceeds would be divided between the two institutions and would be used for the care of the collections.

On the afternoon of Saturday, October 6, 2012, the museum and the Danish-American Archive and Library will host a sale in Blair, Nebraska of items not deemed appropriate for either collection. These items include porcelain, glass, brass and bronzeware and some framed art. The sale is being held in conjunction with the 2012 Homecoming activities planned by the Dana College Alumni and Friends Association.

Details of time and location as well as items being offered for sale will be available by late August. Museum members who subscribe to our ENews will receive further information about the sale in August and September. Information is also available by contacting the museum at 712.764.7001 or info@danishmuseum.org or the Danish-American Archive and Library at 402.426.7910 or daaljill@gmail.com.

Victor Borge Legacy Awards Celebrate the Career of a Great Musician and the Achievements of Piano Students!

The halls of the museum rang with the sounds of Victor Borge's piano this spring. At two different recitals, talented high school students performed classical piano music for an appreciative audience of family, friends, and museum visitors. These performers were the first four winners of the Victor Borge Legacy Awards, a new project organized by the museum and supported by a generous gift from R. James and Janet Borge Crowle of St. Michaels, Maryland. Additional support was provided by the Eric and Joan Norgaard Charitable Trust.



Janet Borge Crowle, daughter of Victor Borge (left), and John Mark Nielsen, director of The Danish Immigrant Museum (right), with recipients of the Victor Borge Legacy Awards, Harry Simmons and Michelle Sargent.

Named in honor of the beloved comedian and musician, the Victor Borge Legacy Award is designed to encourage young pianists in the Omaha and Southwest Iowa regions. Four talented piano students have earned cash prizes of \$1000 or \$500 dollars. The winners were selected in piano competitions organized by the Southwest Iowa Music Teachers Association and the Omaha Music Teachers Association. Each competitor performed multiple piano

solo works in front of a judge, and winners have also prepared a written essay about the legacy of Victor Borge.

All four prize winners are involved in many musical activities in addition to studying classical piano music. Mallory Huggins (Council Bluffs, Iowa) is a junior in high school; in addition to studying piano, she plays the flute in her high school band and in the Iowa Western Community College Flute Choir. Justine Petersen (Omaha, Nebraska) is also a junior and participates in her school's marching band and show choir. Michelle Sargent (Pacific Junction, Iowa) plays the violin and sings with a choir; a high school senior, she plans to pursue a college degree in music so that she can teach piano and violin. Harry Simmons (Omaha, Nebraska) is also a high

school senior and already applies his piano skills to accompanying church services and school musicals; he plans to major in music in college with an emphasis on piano performance or musicology.

Entry information for next year's competitions will be available on the museum's website

by the end of this summer.

Excerpts from prize winners' essays, writing in response to the question, "What part of Victor Borge's life and career do you find most inspiring?"

"Victor Borge was an inspirational person during his life, and his legacy continues to inspire me today to live my life for others and bring joy to their lives. Victor Borge understood something that not many do. Laughter brings people together. No matter how bad a day seems to be, a smile or joke makes the

day a little bit better, because everyone can relate to a smile, no matter their background. It breaks down walls, makes friends, and comforts. Throughout his life, and even after, Victor Borge inspired so many people by bringing a moment of laughter to their life. His ultimate paycheck was making someone smile."

--Justine Petersen, winner of the essay prize

"Borge's true gift was not merely making people laugh. It was making them laugh one moment and cry the next. His humor was instantly communicable, which made people listen all the more carefully to what he played. His love for the music was also clear; it rewarded audiences for their attention with unexpected moments of pure beauty. What Victor Borge showed us and future audiences is that serious music is worth nothing if it's not taken with a dose of humor."

--Harry Simmons

"I admire Victor Borge because he was able to introduce classical music to people who probably would not have heard it otherwise. Many came to his show simply to be entertained (and they certainly were), but they also got to hear quality performances of music classics. They might not have realized it, but they were starting to grasp the significance and joy of classical music through Borge's show. Victor Borge had a way of endearing his audience by poking fun at himself. He never appeared conceited or haughty."

--Michelle Sargent

"I don't aspire to perform piano as my career, as Victor Borge did. I do, however, wish to play piano as long as he did. The knowledge that it is possible to continue playing for one's entire life makes other things seem trivial. I can't be certain about much in life. I can't say for sure what job I will end up with or when I will meet the person I will spend the rest of my days with. But I can be certain that the piano will always be a part of my life...I dream of one day inspiring my grandchildren to play an instrument as long as they are able, just as Victor Borge inspired me."

--Mallory Huggins



Masthead of the Danish newspaper, Den Danske Pioneer.

Project to Digitize Danish-American Newspapers Moving Forward

On December 3, 2011 the museum received a letter from The A.P. Møller and Chastine Mc-Kinney Møller Foundation of Copenhagen announcing that The Danish Immigrant Museum had been awarded a major grant of \$158,000 to digitize and provide global, online access to historic Danish-American archival newspaper collections. This is the foundation for the Mærsk Company, the world's largest, privately held shipping company.

The project, organized and administered by the museum, is a partnership with the Danish-American Archive and Library, the Danish

Immigrant Archive Grand View University, the Danish-American Heritage Society, and the Library and Archive of the Church of Latter Day Saints. The newspapers being digitized are: *Den Danske Pioneer* and *Bien* (both secular), *Dannevirke* and *Danskeren* (both Lutheran), and *Bikuben* (LDS).

In addition to these newspapers, forty-nine scrapbooks created by Lauritz Melchior are also a part of the project. Melchior, the Danish-born, world-famous tenor who performed more Wagnerian roles at the Metropolitan Opera in New York City than any other artist, began creating these scrapbooks in 1925. They contain articles and reviews spanning his career.

Northern Micrographics, Inc. of La Crosse, Wisconsin is providing the digitizing services. The project, which involves the filming and digitizing of over 260,000 pages of text, will be completed by early 2013. At that point, researchers and visitors to our website will be able to globally search the different newspaper titles and to discover a wealth of information online.

Vacation in Denmark and Support The Danish Immigrant Museum

Benedikte Ehlers Olesen, a member of The Danish Immigrant Museum's Board of Directors, and her husband Poul Olesen are offering their Danish summer home for rent at a reduced price—and all proceeds will be donated to the museum.

- Located in the middle of Jutland, a 45-minute drive to Aarhus and 40-minute drive to Aalborg.
- Three bedrooms—two with queen-sized beds and one with two bunk beds. It sleeps six adults comfortably, but can sleep a total of eight.
- Two bathrooms with showers and one has a hot tub
- Kitchen with refrigerator, oven, and microwave.



Interested individuals should contact the museum at 1-800-759-9192.



From the Development Department

A major Danish-American event takes place on July 4, 2012 as the Rebuild Society celebrates its 100th anniversary. Rebuild, the Danish-American friendship society, annually holds the largest American Independence Day celebration outside the U.S. at its park in the Jutland hills near Aalborg. This year will likely bring a substantially larger crowd than usual in Denmark with visitors from both countries, including Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II for the first time in several years.

The annual Rebuild celebration is one of the greatest examples of the longstanding friendly relationship between Denmark and the U.S. In fact, one could easily make an argument that the ties America has had with Denmark have consistently been stronger than with just about any other country. Denmark looked to America with hope and gratitude through two world wars and through desperate European economic times in the late 1800s and early 1900s. This history was the basis for the fondness with which Danes looked to the U.S. America, too, has always been able to count on Denmark as a strong ally. It still does today as Americans admire Denmark's example as innovators in areas like green energy, technology and social programs. As a Danish American I'm very proud of the strong, positive ties between the two countries.

Next year, another landmark

anniversary will celebrate the close Danish-American ties as The Danish Immigrant Museum celebrates its 30th anniversary. It's hard to believe that the museum has already existed thirty years. Many of us remember well when the museum was created and we are proud to see it today as one of the leading Danish-American institutions. As I travel across the country to visit Danes and Danish-American clubs and organizations, so many people tell me how pleased they are with what the museum has accomplished in preserving our heritage.

Elk Horn has proven to be a phenomenal location for the museum, as we have the space to house the approximately 30,000 artifacts, three ongoing exhibits and now a beautiful park surrounding the museum honoring Danish-American naturalist and park-builder, Jens Jensen.

Electronic media have allowed us to

reach tens of thousands of people every year who might otherwise find it difficult to "visit" the museum. But I also find that so many people from all parts of the country make the pilgrimage to Elk Horn at some point.

With that in mind, please consider this your first invitation to participate in celebrating our 30th anniversary in 2013. In the coming months, we will be announcing exhibits and activities to mark the anniversary. Most of all, thank you for your ongoing support which makes the museum's existence possible. We are honored that so many of you support our mission of "celebrating Danish roots and American dreams." And, with your support, our descendants will someday observe the museum's 100th anniversary with another great Danish-American celebration!

Bruce Bro
dkdevdir@metc.net

OPPORTUNITY TO CELEBRATE DANISH HERITAGE

Gift Memberships are now: **\$25** for "NEW" museum members

All members
receive:

- ➔ **Free** Admission to the Museum
- ➔ **Free** Admission to Family History & Genealogy Center and Bedstemor's House
- ➔ **Reduced** translation and research fees from the Family History & Genealogy Center
- ➔ **10% Discount** on most Museum Shop purchases
- ➔ **Free** *America Letter* newsletter
- ➔ **Free** Annual Report
- ➔ **Free** E-Newsletter
- ➔ **Free** or Discounted prices to museum-sponsored events

***Our Mission** – The Danish Immigrant Museum celebrates Danish roots and American dreams.*

A new member is defined as any individual or household who has not been a member in the past three years. Your active membership helps support and fund activities sponsored by the museum.

America Letter • 15

New Additions to the Wall of Honor

February 18, 2012 - May 28, 2012

The Danish Immigrant Museum's Wall of Honor provides families and friends with a means of preserving the memory of or honoring 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 to the growing repository of family histories at the museum's Family History and Genealogy Center.

**ERHARD SUHR SORENSEN and
ESTHER HELENE (MADSEN)
SORENSEN (1913 & 1905) Des Moines,
Iowa** – Gary Christensen, Minnetrista,
MN; Jon & Patti Christensen, Franklin, WI;
Forrest & Jane Dockery, Simi Valley, CA;

Susan Fox, Racine, WI; Michael & Ann Kassenbrock, Phoenix,
AZ; Denny & Nancy Kerr, Plano, TX; Arthur & Joan Sorensen,
Rohnert Park, CA; Conrad Sorensen, Peoria, AZ; Mark & Tonya
Sorensen, Glendale, AZ; Paul & Carol Sorensen, Glendale, AZ;
Peter & Mary Jo Sorensen, Mill Valley, CA; Philip Sorensen,
Petaluma, CA; Robert & Cathy Sorensen, Windsor Heights, IA;
David & Carol Stewart, Des Moines, IA

New Members February 18, 2012 - May 28, 2012

The Danish Immigrant Museum is pleased to identify the following individuals and organizations as its newest members.

Paul & Dianne Anderson, Seattle, WA
Jack & Lois Beal, Bothell, WA
Preben & Anne Dorte Brandenhoff,
San Francisco, CA
Dawn Breining, Des Moines, IA
Frank & Edith Christensen, Shoreline, WA
Jon & Patti Christensen, Franklin, WI
Nancy Christensen, Madrid, IA
Jeff & Cherisse Croll, Castle Rock, CO
Danish Sisterhood Lodge #21, Lakewood, CO
Robert & IllaMae Hansen, West Bend, WI
Julie Houser, Santa Ana, CA
Suzanne Jebe, Minneapolis, MN
George & Dorothy Jensen, West Des
Moines, IA
Clarice Jeppesen, Eugene, OR
Barbara Kadlec, Guthrie Center, IA
Bryan & Brenda Kite, Atlantic, IA
John & Patty Lentfer, Geneva, NE

Tom & Teri Masters, Littleton, CO
James & Nicola Maxwell, Eugene, OR
Frances McGee, San Leandro, CA
Larry & Wendy Neppl, Gretna, NE
Terry Nisson, West Jordan, UT
Allan Nyegaard, Eugene, OR
Lynne & Karen Olesen, Redwood City, CA
Arlyce Olsen, Missouri Valley, IA
Scott & P.J. Owens, Indianapolis, IN
William & Margaret Petersen, Mazeppa, MN
Dennis & Linda Robertson, Manchester, IA
Douglas & Barbara Rossbach, Humboldt, IA
Leroy & Norma Schafersman, Arlington, NE
John & Connie Scott, Sidney, IA
Carl & Carol Sexton, Junction City, OR
L.A. Forest & Winnie Sherman, Grinnell, IA
David Stickrod, Glenwood, IA
Mark & Amy Werner, Pekin, IL
Søren & Sue Wolff, Holland, MI
Bing & Ann Nielsen Yen, Laguna Beach, CA

Memorials February 18, 2012 - May 28, 2012

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

Peder E. Buck
Burton Esbeck
Roland H. Eskov
Hans & Mathilde Farstrup
Vernon (Bob) Hansen
Hans P. and Florence Hansen
Reverend Fred and Betty Hedberg
Mary Ann Hopkins
Gudrun Jacobsen

Byron Jensen
Paul C. Jessen
Charles B. Larsen
Herman and Anna Larsen
Louis Lauritsen
Arlene Leisted
Beulah Nielsen
Richard and Mary Nielsen

Edwin S. Pedersen
Karen K. Petersen
Erhard and Esther Sorensen
Norma Jean Sothman
Elie Steffensen
Bonnie Christensen Testa
Gay D. Terkelsen
Burton Wittrup

Thank You Businesses and Organizations

February 18, 2012 - May 28, 2012

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

A & A Framing (Annette Andersen), Kimballton, IA
Andersen Windows (Sarah Andersen), Bayport, MN
Answers (Frank R. Tighe), Atlantic, IA
Audubon Family Chiropractic (Douglas & Nichole Olsen),
Audubon, IA
Carroll Control Systems, Inc. (Todd Wanninger), Carroll, IA
Cedar Valley Danes, Cedar Falls area, IA
Country Landscapes, Inc. (Rhett Faaborg), Ames, IA
Danish American Club in Orange County, Huntington
Beach, CA
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #14, Kenosha, WI
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #144, Dike, IA
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #15, Des Moines, IA
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #16, Minden, NE
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #161, Superior, NE
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #186, Luck, WI
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #211, Cairo, NE
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #268, Junction City, OR
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #283, Dagmar, MT
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #35, Homewood, IL
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #56, Lenexa, KS
Danish Lutheran Church & Cultural Center, Yorba Linda, CA
Danish Mutual Insurance Association, Elk Horn, IA
Danish Sisterhood Dagmar Lodge #4, Chicago, IL
Danish Sisterhood Ellen Lodge #21, Denver, CO
Danish Sisterhood Lodge #102, Des Moines, IA
Danish Sisterhood Lodge #176, Dike, IA
Danish Vennelyst Park, Omaha, NE
DBIA, Centennial Lodge #348, Eugene, OR
Den Danske Pioneer, Hoffman Estates, IL
Denver Danes, Denver area, CO
Exira-Elk Horn-Kimballton Community School District, Elk Horn, IA
Elk Horn-Kimballton Optimist Club, Elk Horn, IA
Elverhoj Museum of History and Art, Solvang, CA
Eric & Joan Norgaard Charitable Trust, Crystal Lake, IL
Faith, Family, Freedom Foundation (Kenneth & Marlene
Larsen), Calistoga, CA

Hall Hudson, P.C., Attorneys at Law (Robert Hall), Harlan, IA
Harlan Newspapers (Steve Mores & Alan Mores), Harlan, IA
Heartland District of the Danish Sisterhood of America,
Des Moines area, IA
Heartland District of the Danish Brotherhood in America,
Des Moines area, IA
Henningsen Construction, Inc. (Michael Henningsen), Atlantic, IA
House of Denmark, San Diego, CA
King of Kings Fishing Guide Service & Lodge (Richard &
Bonnie Andersen), Anchor Point, AK
Knudsen Old Timers, Glendale, CA
Los Angeles Naver Club, Monrovia, CA
LPB, Inc. (Lars Boerre), Earlham, IA
Marge's Hair Hut (Kent & Marge Ingerslev), Elk Horn, IA
Marne & Elk Horn Telephone Co., Elk Horn, IA
NE Gen Comm Danish Brotherhood, Omaha, NE
Nelsen and Nelsen, Attorneys at Law, Cozad, NE
O & H Danish Bakery (Eric Olesen), Racine, WI
Olsen, Muhlbauer & Co., L.L.P., Carroll, IA
Pacific NW District Lodges D.B.I.A., Eugene, OR
Proongily (Cynthia McKeen), St. Paul, MN
Rebild National Park Society, Southern California, Los
Angeles area, CA
Red River Danes, Fargo, ND
Ringsted Danish American Fellowship, Ringsted, IA
scan|design foundation BY INGER & JENS BRUUN,
Seattle, WA
Shelby County State Bank, Elk Horn, IA
Symra Literary Society, Decorah, IA
The Danish American Archive and Library, Blair, NE
The Danish Inn, Elk Horn, IA
The Rasmussen Group, Inc., Des Moines, IA
The Vault Antiques (David & Rashelle Thompson), Walnut, IA
Wayne Hansen Real Estate, LLC, Elk Horn, IA
Yah-Whooo Organic Garden (Kurt Rasmussen),
Vacaville, CA

In Honor February 18, 2012 - May 28, 2012

Through various funds, gifts have been received in honor of people or special events:

Anna Margrethe Nielsen

Janet M. Thuesen



Stamtræ –

Danish Roots, American Branches

News from the Museum's Family History & Genealogy Center

By Michele McNabb, librarian

genealogy@danishmuseum.org; librarian@danishmuseum.org

Joining the A's to the B's: A Tale of Two Siblings

In the fall of 2009 Mogens Abildgaard of Aarhus, Denmark contacted the museum's Family History and Genealogy Center about his great-grandfather's twin sister, Ane Mathiesen Bojsen, who had emigrated from Denmark in the latter part of the nineteenth century. His family previously had had frequent contact with their American relatives up to the German occupation of Denmark in April, 1940.

Nearly seventy years had passed since the last exchange of letters, however, and the Danish branch of the family, now few in number, wondered if we might help them find out what had happened to their American kinfolks.

All they had at this point was a photograph of an elderly woman with "Our dear mother, 1845-1924" inscribed on the back that had been sent back to Denmark. They also had an emigration record of Ane Mathiesen Bojsen, age 25, who registered her passage to New York with the Danish police authorities on July 8, 1870, indicating that her last place of residence in Denmark was Slesvig.

But let's wind the story back to an earlier date. On October 15, 1843, a 26-year-old bachelor named Mathias Simonsen Stadager from Tyrstrup parish in Haderslev County married 40-year-old spinster Mette Hansdatter in nearby Nustrup parish.



The only clue family in Denmark had was this photo with "Our dear Mother, 1845-1924" written on the back.

Around the same time he either inherited through marriage or acquired a farm in the hamlet of Bæk in Nustrup parish. It is here that his extended household – which included a daughter born to Mette out of wedlock in 1834, Mathias's brother and a grandmother – was enumerated early in 1845. Four months later, on June 12, Mette gave birth to twins who were given the names **Ane Mathisen Boisen** and **Hans Mathisen Boisen** upon their baptism two days later. This was apparently the first time that the Boisen/Boysen name, which was the patronymic of Mathias Simonsen's mother, was used as the family surname; it is still in use today.

The family was joined by another daughter, Anna Cathrine Mathiesen Boisen, on September 15, 1848, when Mette was 45. Life probably proceeded fairly predictably for nearly a decade, but then the family fabric was torn. Mathias Simonsen died of unknown causes in June of 1857 at the age of 41; Mette Hansdatter followed him in death a mere 18 months later, age 54. Who took responsibility for the couple's three children is not known, but Ane and Hans both remained in Bæk until their confirmation on the first Sunday after Easter in 1861. More turmoil was yet to come, however: the Dano-Prussian War of 1864 saw their home county in north Slesvig become part of Prussia and later, the German Empire. The resulting cultural upheaval may have precipitated Ane's decision to emigrate in 1870.

Hans Mathiesen Bojsen remained a lifelong resident of Nustrup parish. He married and had four children, three of whom died in young adulthood, one while fighting in the German Army during WWI. Their fourth child, Peter, was reported missing during that conflict, but fortunately was captured and survived to return home and marry. When Hans died on July 4, 1937 at the age of 92 he was the oldest living parishioner in Nustrup and left five grandchildren, two of which were Mogens Abildgaard's mother, Marie Bojesen, 81 years of age in 2009, and her brother Hans Gunner Bojsen, age 85. Both remembered Christmas letters coming from America when they were quite young, but neither had any idea who had sent them or where in the United States they had originated.

A closer look at Ane's emigration record did not indicate that she traveled with friends or other relatives. She came to America "indirectly," – in other words, via a third country, likely either England or Germany. Since she purchased her ticket only as far as New York, no indication was given of her ultimate destination.

FHGC assistant Wanda Sornson took on the task of discovering Ane Mathiesen Boisen's subsequent fate. The search involved looking at a wide variety of sources, both



The family left behind: Ane's twin brother, Hans Mathiesen Boisen and his family. Hans was the oldest person in Nustrup parish when he died in 1937.

online and in print, which in some cases had to be reviewed repeatedly as new pieces of evidence came to light. But the end result was successful.

"Anna Borson" married **Charles Johnson** in Lee County, Iowa, on June 11, 1878. (Also a Danish immigrant from Slesvig, Charles was born Anton Peter Jørgensen, but determining this is a story by itself.) The couple was found residing in Keokuk in that county in the 1880 census, where Charles was employed as a diver on the Mississippi River canal locks. Their first child, Lucia "Lucy" Elizabeth Johnson, was born there in 1878 or '79, followed by Matilda in 1881, Christian A. in 1883, and an infant son who died unnamed in 1885.

In 1886 the family relocated to Estherville in Emmet County, Iowa, where their lives played out over the ensuing decades. A second son, John Maurice Johnson, was born in 1886, and son Christian died in 1890 at the age of seven. In 1917 "Charley Anton Johnson" died in Estherville of appendicitis and was buried in Oak Hill Cemetery; Anna "Boisen" Johnson passed away from heart failure in November of 1924 and was buried alongside her husband. Her lengthy obituary in *The Northern Vindicator and Republican* verified that she was indeed the Ane M. Boisen born in Nustrup parish.

Subsequent generations: Three Johnson children lived to adulthood. The surviving son, John M., died unmarried of typhoid fever and subsequent spinal meningitis in November, 1913. **Lucy Elizabeth Johnson** (1878/79-1950) married

pharmacist George W. Bale, Jr. (1871-1927) in Estherville on July 16, 1902. They had two children, both of whom were lifelong residents of Emmet County:

1. William Maurice Bale (1905-1947)
2. George W. Bale (1907-1972)

In 1907 **Matilda Johnson** (1881-1949) was employed as a stenographer in Emmetsville. She married Dr. Herbert B. Troyer on June 20, 1918 in Greencastle, Putnam County, Indiana. The couple was living in that city in 1920, but by 1925 Matilda had returned to Emmet County and was enumerated in the Iowa census that year in her sister Lucy's household. No record of any children has been found from this union, which must have ended in divorce. Mathilda Troyer next married clothier Charles Holmquist in Jackson, Minnesota, on July 9, 1926. They resided in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, but apparently had no children. Following Charles's death, Mathilda moved back to Emmet County to live with her sister. Both are buried in the same cemetery as their brothers and parents.

The whereabouts of members of later generations were ascertained using a combination of standard genealogical sources such as censuses and online vital records, as well as telephone directories, "people-finding" sites, and local researchers, aided by the happy fact that "Bale" is a relatively uncommon name and that the family stayed in one place over a long period of time. **William Maurice Bale** married Marian Stebbins in Cook County, Illinois, on June 3, 1931, and was a practicing

attorney in Estherville. He was listed in the 1940 edition of *Who's Who in Iowa*, which gave particulars about his family, including sons, **William George Bale** (b. 1934), **John Thomas Bale** (b. 1935), and daughter **Marilyn Hope Bale** (b. 1939). **George W. Bale** was the proprietor of a drug store in Estherville, where he married Doris Lorene Shirley, and had one son, **Lawrence Bale**. This branch of the Bale family later moved to Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Finding living individuals can at times be frustrating due to privacy restrictions on many public records and the frequent use of unlisted telephone numbers, but there seemed a good chance that at least some of the younger Bales were still alive and locatable. A stray posting on www.boards.ancestry.com about a Bale family prompted a 2000 response from a John Thomas Bale, who mentioned that he had a brother named William and a cousin named Larry, and that they were from Iowa. Eureka! A likely candidate for living Bale relatives in an unexpected place! Subsequent searching found an address for William G. Bale in Minneapolis, divorced from Margaret E. Bale in 1977. Telephone listings were also found for William G. and also for a John T. Bale the right age in Ridgecrest, California. Our fingers did a bit of walking and contact with living descendants of the family was confirmed.

Although officially no longer part of the Bale family, it turned out that Margaret "Meg" Bale was the family genealogist. Since our initial contact with Bill and Tom Bale, Meg has visited Elk Horn from Minneapolis, sharing photographs, copies of correspondence and additional family records. In return, we were able to join A to B, putting the **Abildgaard** family in touch with their long-lost **Bale** relatives, now living in several states.

As a postscript to this connection, emails went back and forth between Denmark and the U.S. In April 2011, Peter Abildgaard, the son of the man whose inquiry started the above search, came to the U.S. as part of an around-the-world trip and had the opportunity to meet many of his recently-found cousins.



Stamtræ

Activities and News

The FHGC is now on summer hours. Through the end of October we are open Tuesdays through Fridays, 9 to 5, and Saturdays 10 to 5. If you plan to visit from out-of-town, please call in advance (712) 764-7008 to ensure there is adequate staffing to assist you.

A big thank-you to all those individuals who sent in information and photographs about the location of various rural Danish-American cemeteries. FHGC staff has compiled a list by state and county. We don't have all cemeteries, so would be interested in knowing of other ones, particularly those no longer in use.

We will be welcoming a new Danish intern, Kathrine Lia Winkler from Aarhus University, in August. She will spend a couple of months in the FHGC before rotating to the Exhibitions Department. She will be followed by a second intern, Amel Rahba, from Copenhagen University, who will also be working in the Collections Department.

At long last, a new foldable map of present-day Denmark is available for \$10.95 (prior to member discount). Contact the Museum Shop or FHGC for ordering details.

We are currently copying and indexing obituaries, weddings, anniversaries and round birthday

notices from the *Audubon County Journal* from 1969-1993. When completed these indexes will be added to those from 1893-1968 currently on file in the FHGC. The ACJ was published in Exira, Iowa. We also have copies of obituaries from the *Audubon County Journal-Advocate* from 2011.

As of February 15, 2012 the cost of borrowing microfilms and microfiche from the FHL in Salt Lake City has gone up. Charges range from \$7.50 for a short-term loan to \$18.75 for an extended loan. For further information on ordering film – which is sent to the Family History Center or affiliate library of one's choice – go to www.familysearch.org/films.

The 2012 summer FHGC photo exhibit is “Long-term Lovers”

This exhibit features images and accounts of Danish immigrants who were married for at least 50 years and immigrant descendants married at least 60 years. The longest-term pair of lovers featured is Iowa-born Hans Nielsen and his Danish-born wife, Karen Jacobine Twenstrup, who were married and lived in western Iowa for 75 years! The exhibit also features love poems, songs written for golden anniversaries, a wedding dress pattern, and pictures of wedding parties.



The wedding dress pattern used by Viola Johnson when she married Immanuel Nielsen in 1935.



Viola Johnson wearing her wedding gown.

Preserve Your Family History

Are you thinking of compiling a family history for posterity? If so, regardless of whether your target group is grandchildren, relatives coming to a family reunion or a wider audience, please bear in mind that your history should have one key element: *a title page!*

The title of your work should clearly state the focus or scope of your compilation. A title such as *From*

Denmark to Nebraska is fine, but there should also be a subtitle with more specificity, such as *Ancestors and Descendants of Peder Nielsen and Maren Jacobsen of Hundborg parish, Thisted County*. Other information to be included on the title page are the name, address and contact information of the compiler, and, most importantly, the year of 'publication,' so future researchers

will know when the material was written or compiled.

Family histories come in all shapes and sizes, so it's helpful for researchers to have this information explicitly in print in the work. If you are having difficulties finding where in Denmark your ancestors came from, we may be able to help you.

FHGC Wish List

Books we'd like to add to the FHGC Collection

English-language:

Lars' and Dorthe's Kith and Kin, by Sylvia D. Neilson. North Conway, NH: The Reporter Press, 1977. Out of print.

Dressed for the Photographer: Ordinary Americans and Fashion, 1840-1900 (\$48.27 on amazon.com)

Hartland to Capitol Hills: A Danish Immigrant Story, by Ernie Gunderson, 2011. (\$24 on amazon.com)

Birgitte's War, by Elsebeth Schoenberger, 2011. (\$18.96 on Amazon.com)

Dana College yearbooks: anything before 1927, 1928-1930, 1932-1944, 1946-1954, 1957-1963, 1968 to 2010

Grand View College/University yearbooks: anything before 1920, 1928-1929, 1933, 1935, 1940, 1944, 1947, 1950, 1953, 1958, 1960, 1962, 1972, 1977 to the present

Danish language:

Straffelejren. Fårhus, landssvigerne og retsopgøret (Fårhus, traitors and their judicial reckoning), by Henrik Skov Kristensen. Available from Landsarkivet for Sønderjylland.

Titanic – De danske fortællinger (Titanic – the Danish Stories), by Jesper Hjermand and Mette Hjermand McCall, 2012.

Ordbog for slægtsforskere, by Heini Madsen. 2nd ed.

I centrum ved grænsen - portræt af Sønderborg Kommune (In the Middle at the Border - Portrait of Sønderborg Municipality), by Peter Dragsbo. (2006; available from Historisk Samfund for Als og Sundeved).

Danske børnehjem i billeder og tekst (Danish Orphanages in Picture and Text; 1900), by various authors.

Nyboder: et københavnsk miljø, med en gennemgang af dets afspejling i litteratur, by Hanne Andersen (1981).

Nyboder og dets beboere især i ældre tid, by Hans D. Lind (1882). Out of print.

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:

Monday-Friday, 9:00 am-5:00 pm
Saturday, 10:00 am-5:00 pm
Sunday, 12:00 noon-5:00 pm

BUSINESS HOURS

Monday-Friday 8:00 am to 5:00 pm

All facilities are closed on New Year's Day; Easter Sunday; Thanksgiving; Christmas

(Local weather conditions may cause occasional closures.)

FAMILY HISTORY & GENEALOGY CENTER HOURS

May-October:

Tuesday-Friday, 9:00 am-5:00 pm

Saturday, 10:00 am-5:00 pm

November-April:

Tuesday-Friday,

9:00 am-5:00 pm

712-764-7001  www.danishmuseum.org

Of Genealogical Interest

See the Library & Genealogy section of the museum webpage for a listing of websites that are particularly useful for Danish and Danish-American research.



The newly-released 1940 census allows us to see ancestors recovering from the Great Depression and about to enter WWII.

- The 1940 census was released on April 2, 2012. As of early June over fifty percent of the census has been indexed by hundreds of volunteer indexers. You can see what the progress is on each state and search the eighteen states that have been completed by going to <https://familysearch.org/1940census/>.
- 1940 enumeration districts, a census street finder and other information may be found at <http://stevemorse.org/>, where you can also find one-step searches of passenger lists and New York City deaths and marriages.
- Many Danish church records are dated using the ecclesiastical calendar or reference "movable feast days." If you wish to know what secular date Quasimodogeniti Sunday (the first Sunday after Easter) fell on in 1749 or 1802, you can find the answer at https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Moveable_Feast_Day_Calendar_for:_Denmark.
- * If your ancestors were in the Danish Navy or worked in associated occupations at Holmen, the Naval Dockyard, they may have resided in Nyboder, housing set aside for such personnel by King Christian IV in 1631. An interesting overview in English may be found at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nyboder>. Some streets in this neighborhood, as well as elsewhere in the capital, changed names in the 18th and 19th centuries. The FHGC has bookmarked several Copenhagen sites which assist with street name changes and parish locations.
- Researching ancestors from Slesvig-Holstein presents a number of problems, including lack of access to many church records and a paucity of census records, particularly after 1864. Once again, a FamilySearch wiki provides a useful introduction to the area: https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Prussia_-_Schleswig-Holstein. The LDS library catalog has a listing of microfilmed parish records for military parishes in S-H and Oldenburg. For those who know German there is a blog posted by the Archives for the Danish Minority in Slesvig (Archiv der dänischen Minderheit in Schleswig) at <http://archiv/twoday.net/stories>. The site looks most interesting and references a collection of over 50,000 photographs, so hopefully there will be an English-language interface soon to make the resources more accessible.
- Church records from a number of parishes in Slesvig are now accessible on microcards at the Danish national and regional archives. However, there is a stipulation that only Danish citizens and German nationals may have access to them. Some of these records may also be part of the FHL collection, so check there first for your parish of interest before running down a Danish cousin who might be able to go look at the records.
- 2012 is the 150th anniversary of The Homestead Act, signed by President Abraham Lincoln in 1862, which allowed many of our immigrant ancestors to own land for the first time in their lives. As a beginning www.fold3.com, a subscription website now owned by Ancestry.com, has digitized the homestead records for Nebraska. Information is also available at the Homestead National Monument near Beatrice, Nebraska: <http://www.nps.gov/home/historyculture/landrecordsproject.htm>.
- Obituary look-up volunteers arranged by state and county or by country may be found at <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~obit/ovlist.html#states>.
- Browse the Illinois Digital Archives at www.idaillinois.org/cdm for accessible collections at the Illinois State Library in Springfield. Many other states have similar projects.

Volunteer Spotlight: Jimmie P. Kelgor

One of the longest-serving volunteers at the museum's Family History and Genealogy Center is Jim Kelgor of Atlantic, Iowa. Jim, or Jimmie, as he prefers to be called, has been volunteering since 1996, when the museum library was created and housed under the roof on the mezzanine level of the main museum building.

Of Danish descent – his paternal ancestors were originally named “Kjeldgaard” – and an Elk Horn, Iowa native, when he was 10 years old Jimmie and his family moved up the road to Kimballton, where his father ran a café in the early 1940s. Jimmie spent much of his youth in the downtown area of what was then a thriving small Iowa town and has many memories from that time.

After high school, he trained and worked as a barber for several years and then married a local girl named Dorothy Mendenhall. They lived in Audubon and Hawaii for

several years. Jimmie then attended electronics school in Omaha and worked in California and several places in Nebraska and Iowa with the telephone company before the couple settled in Atlantic, Iowa where they raised two children and Jimmie worked for seventeen years in various capacities for the Walnut Grove Company. Thirty years ago his arthritis became so bad that he had to take medical retirement.

For many years Jimmie and Dorothy were members of the Atlantic Friends of The Danish Immigrant Museum. Casting around for something to do in his spare time and interested in history, he decided to volunteer in the newly-formed Family History & Genealogy department of the museum. Over the years he has taken upon himself several tasks that require the patience of Job: transcribing most of some 85,000 names of Danish Brotherhood lodge members from microfilm, putting together information about the various DB lodges, copying and indexing obituaries and other vital

event notices from local newspapers.

These projects, later transferred to computerized databases, form the groundwork for some of the FHGC's unique and most valuable resources on Danish immigrants. Additionally, he always keeps his eyes out for materials pertaining to the Danish settlements in southwestern Iowa.

To keep his hands flexible, Jimmie has worked on a number of craft projects. To celebrate the move of the FHGC to Main Street nearly a decade ago he crocheted the large Dannebrog flag which hangs on the south wall of the library reading room and which many FHGC visitors have admired over the years. We certainly appreciate his past and current efforts.

Thanks, Jimmie!



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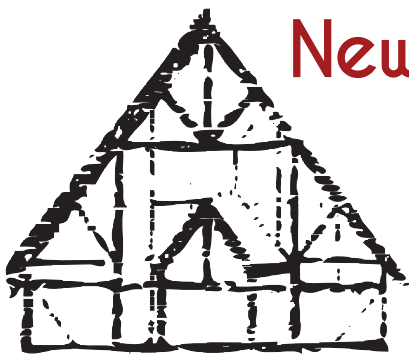
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