

america|letter

WINTER 2018 | A BENEFIT OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE MUSEUM OF DANISH AMERICA



How the events of 1918 shaped a Danish-American family.

INSIDE

More stories of
war and peace

contents



14
ENDINGS &
BEGINNINGS

23
RESISTING
IN WWII

32
BIKING
VIKINGS

38
WARTIME
MEMORIES



04 Director's Corner

06 Survey Results

08 Nordic DC

11 Events Calendar

12 Meeting in Elk Horn

14 Across Oceans,
Across Time,
Across Generations

23 Occupation and
Resistance

27 Exhibits

28 Collection
Connection

30 CAP Program

32 Bicycle Tour

38 Wartime Tales

41 News in Brief

42 New Members
and Old Friends

46 10-Year Interns

48 Holiday Craft



ON THE COVER

John and Meta Nielsen suffered extraordinary hardships before finding each other and building their family. Read about it, beginning on page 14.

America Letter

Winter 2018, No. 3

Published three times annually by the Museum of Danish America

2212 Washington Street, Elk Horn, Iowa 51531

712.764.7001, 800.759.9192, Fax 712.764.7002

danishmuseum.org | info@danishmuseum.org

staff & interns

Executive Director

Rasmus Thøgersen, M.L.I.S.
E: rasmus.thoegersen

Administrative Manager

Terri Johnson
E: terri.johnson

Development Manager

Deb Christensen Larsen
E: deb.larsen

**Communications Specialist,
America Letter Editor**

Nicky Christensen
E: nicky.christensen

Accounting Manager

Jennifer Winters
E: jennifer.winters

Building & Grounds Manager

Tim Fredericksen
E: tim.fredericksen

**Albert Ravenholt Curator of
Danish-American Culture**

Tova Brandt, M.A.
E: tova.brandt

**Curator of Collections
& Registrar**

Angela Stanford, M.A.
E: angela.stanford

Archival Collections Manager

Cheyenne Jansdatter, M.L.I.S.
E: cjansdatter

Design Store Manager

Nan Dreher
E: nan.dreher

Administrative Assistant

Terri Amaral
E: terri.amaral

Genealogy Center Manager

Kara McKeever, M.F.A.
E: kara.mckeever

Genealogy Assistant

Wanda Sornson, M.S.
E: wanda.sornson

Executive Director Emeritus

John Mark Nielsen, Ph.D.
E: johnmark.nielsen

WEEKEND STAFF

Rochelle Bruns
Beth Rasmussen
Rodger Rasmussen

Interns

Christine Jensen
Camilla Stagis

WHY “AMERICA LETTER?”

Letters that were written by immigrants to family and friends back in Denmark are called “America letters” by historians. These letters are often given credit for influencing people to come to America, because they were full of details of how good life was here. We call our magazine *America Letter* because we also want to tell the good news about the museum and encourage people to join us!

To Contact Staff Use the prefix for the staff member shown after E:, followed by @danishmuseum.org.

director's corner

Dear members and friends,

After many unforgettable moments with the Museum of Danish America, I have chosen to resign from my position as its executive director. I have learned an incredible amount about the ongoing influence of Denmark in America, and I would not trade this wonderful experience for anything. Ultimately, however, I've found myself missing the library profession that I was trained for, and that I now look forward to transitioning back into.

I am very proud of having had the chance to serve this museum.

On a more festive note: Danes are not known for excessive bragging, but, having obtained my U.S. citizenship recently, I feel like I have earned the formal credentials to brag a bit about our staff and the two years I have had the pleasure of working with them.

Our Albert Ravenholt Curator of Danish-American Culture, Tova Brandt, continues to excel as a curator, educator, and grant writer. She did an excellent job updating our core exhibit last year to encompass a broader narrative, adding more personal immigrant stories and faces to our walls, and she recently ensured that our museum became an Iowa Cultural Leadership Partner. Her recent exhibit in our Kramme Gallery, *Denmark — America's Smallest and Biggest Ally*, received much positive feedback.

One of my fondest memories was visiting with two Danish veterans from the Wounded Warriors organization who attended our opening in Elk Horn. They received a warm welcome in our community, and, during a reception, former museum board member Harold Jensen presented them with an American flag. To us, it was the ideal way to celebrate the long-standing, unbroken diplomatic relationship between Denmark and the U.S. and to honor those who served—and sacrificed—for the values our countries share.

Last year, we achieved accreditation by the American Alliance of Museums. This was a team effort led by our Curator of Collections and Registrar, Angela Stanford. Angela did such a good job that the American Alliance of Museums subsequently asked her to become a reviewer herself.

Angela also procured a grant that allowed us to hire Cheyenne Jansdatter as our Archival Collections Manager. Cheyenne is doing important work consolidating our archives, and we hope to secure another grant so that she can begin to process the comprehensive Danish Sisterhood Collection, of which we were granted stewardship in 2016.

In your hands you hold the *America Letter*, itself a testament to the dedication and great taste of our Communications Specialist, Nicky Christensen, as well as a physical reminder that membership to the Museum of Danish America is a premium package—even for those of you unable visit us in Elk Horn. Nicky has significantly grown our social media presence and entertains us all with her witty and informative posts.

Another top-notch publication is our new catalog that you should have recently received in the mail. Thanks to our Design Store Manager, Nan Dreher, our Design Store is the ideal place to do your Christmas shopping—with our online store at danishmuseum.org being a close second.

Thanks to a generous donation by former board member Dennis Andersen, we now own our Genealogy Center on Main Street in Elk Horn. The Genealogy Center Manager, Kara McKeever, and Genealogy Assistant Wanda Sornson make great ancestral detectives, connecting our members to their heritage, and they have an endless supply of great and touching personal stories from Danish immigrants. If you want to learn more about your own Danish-American roots, get in touch and get started.



By
Rasmus
Thøgersen

Behind the scenes, down in the machine room, our bookkeeper, Jenni Winters, and Facilities Manager, Tim Frederiksen, put in the extra effort *every time* to make sure that all the numbers add up and that everything is running smoothly and looking great. (If you ever ask Tim about the Great Sewage Pump Debacle of 2018, he may give you a tired look, but he should be proud of how well he handled it!)

Finally, I have to mention Administrative Manager Terri Johnson and Development Manager Deb Christensen Larsen. They do so much for us that it was hard to choose what to highlight, but, in the end, I would like to frame their contributions in the context of parties. Here is what you need to know about these two: Terri is the one orchestrating all our great parties in Elk Horn and around the country; she has the logistics down to a science for board meetings, Tivoli Fest, volunteer appreciation, Sankt Hans Aften, and more.

Deb, on the other hand, is the one who attends *other people's* parties. In her job as Development Manager, she is a key part of our relationships with the Rebuild National Park Society and the many Brotherhood and Sisterhood lodges she frequents, among other groups. She turns *æbleskiver* with the best of them. You are very encouraged to reach out to us and learn more about how we can help enhance your

Danish cultural event—be it with traveling exhibits, information, or our personal presence. We always love the invitation.

On the topic of parties and being grateful for the hosts: elsewhere in this *America Letter*, you can read more about an evening I was honored to co-host at the Embassy of Denmark in Washington, D.C. with His Excellency Lars G. Lose, Ambassador. The event was an indication of where our museum is going. Our wonderful facility in Iowa is meant to be the permanent repository of our material culture and our collections, while our exhibits, staff, and board members are nimble and flexible. Being the national museum means more than simply collecting objects from across the country; it means being present nationally, and I can hardly think of a more prestigious location for us to be than the embassy. With the impressive turnout we enjoyed, I am hopeful that we will be able to do something similar again in the future.

As you will read in Tova's survey summary, the continuing preservation of our heritage is of critical importance to our members. To me, this museum, along with its collections and outreach, will always instill a sense of togetherness and belonging. This is why I, like all of you, will continue to be an advocate and cheerleader for the museum and its mission wherever I go. It has been an honor - and a lot of fun.

None of what has been built or accomplished would have been possible without your ongoing support and trust in our museum. I want to thank you for that, not just as the executive director, but as a Danish American who is proud of his roots.

I will leave you with yet another thing I am grateful for: in my extensive travels to visit all of you, I have enjoyed more open-faced sandwiches, *frikadeller*, *akvavit* and *æbleskiver* than I ever had in Denmark. Everywhere the staff goes to represent the museum, we are met with a friendliness that has been a delight to experience. As a Dane traveling to meet other Danes, it's nothing but *hygge* from coast to coast. Thank you for that!

Alt godt
Rasmus Thøgersen

An executive director search committee has been formed under the direction of board president Beth Bro-Roof. For details of the position requirements, visit www.danishmuseum.org/employment/executive-director

we asked, and you answered

2018 AUDIENCE SURVEY

Thank you! Earlier this spring we asked for your help with an audience survey, so that we could learn more about museum members, non-members, neighbors, visitors, and anyone else with a connection to the Museum of Danish America. We heard from over 1,100 people - a wonderful response! We know there were a lot of questions, but we try to make the most of these surveys so that we don't bug you too often.

Who did we reach?

The survey was distributed online through the museum's E-newsletter and social media, generating a strong response from both members and non-members. In addition, paper versions of the survey were mailed to all members for whom the museum had no email address on file, and a number of lapsed members with no email addresses. Overall, 55% were current members and 45% were not members.

What did we learn?

First of all, we learned that our audience is dedicated. This survey took an average of 12 minutes to complete, and most people who started the survey stuck it out to the end. *Well done!*

Notable data – things we knew, but now have numbers to describe:

- Less than 25% of our audience visits the museum at least once a year. Many people who support the museum have never visited in person.
- Our audience identifies preservation and interpretation (sharing stories) as both the museum's top strengths and the aspects of the museum most important to them, personally.
- Among membership benefits, "supporting the museum's mission" ranks on top with over 67% selecting it as "very important."
- There is a strong consensus that the museum "meets the needs of the community of Elk Horn" and "meets the needs of the national community of Danish America."
- Less than 25% typically visit a museum accompanied by children or grandchildren.
- Even among our audience, there is confusion between the Museum of Danish America and the Danish Windmill. Only 37% correctly responded that the Danish Windmill is **NOT** managed by the museum. 63% thought that it was or were unsure.
- Our complete audience is slightly younger than our membership, but not by much. 75% of respondents are 60 years old or above. 49% are 70+. Only 8% of respondents have a household with children under 18.



By
Tova
Brandt

Surprises – things that made us feel good, or say “wow!”

- Among those who have visited in person, 58% selected “completely satisfied” to describe their visit, with another 35% “quite satisfied.”
- When provided with a list of 30 words/phases and asked to select three that describe the museum, over 60% selected “Educational.” The next highest selections were “Valuable” (27%) and “Professional” (26%).

What do we do with this data?

The museum is always looking for the best way to connect with people all across the country, within the resources of time, staff, and finances available to us. The results of this survey help us evaluate where we are doing well and how we might improve in efficiency and effectiveness. We shared the results of this survey with the Museum Assessment Program and two peer reviewers who visited the museum in July; their recommendations will help inform the museum’s next Strategic Plan.

With members in nearly all 50 states and visitors from around the world, the museum’s audience is diverse and dispersed. We aim to provide a welcoming, engaging experience for everyone, regardless of age or background. A comprehensive survey like this one helps us better understand how people interact with the museum, either in person or from a distance.



We have a tiny house but no windmill.

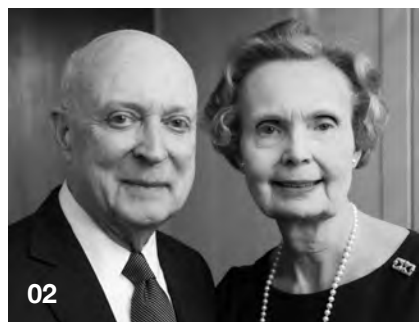
something new, something nordic

On October 30, we tried something our museum has never done before. After months of planning, great Danes from all over the country descended on Washington, D.C. to participate in a benefit dinner for our next big exhibit, *New Nordic Cuisine*, at the residence of the Ambassador of Denmark to the United States, His Excellency Lars G. Lose.



Our evening began at the nearby Phillips Collection, where our guests were treated to a private tour of the *Nordic Impressions* exhibit by Chief Curator Klaus Ottmann. We were then bused to the Embassy for a cocktail before enjoying a violin and piano concert by Hasse Borup and Andrew Staupe. They performed beautiful interpretations of works by the Danish composer Carl Nielsen. The following Nordic-inspired dinner was prepared by the renowned chef Jens Fisker. After remarks, we were free to mingle, enjoy the fantastic setting, and discuss how we intend to make our next exhibit into a hit.

You will hear more about *New Nordic Cuisine* in future issues of the *America Letter*. For now, you simply need to know that this exhibit will be about more than just food – that it will appeal to our loyal audiences and potential new members alike, and that it is more ambitious in scope than any exhibit we have created before – which is why we've been experimenting with new ways to find the funds to make it happen.



By
Rasmus
Thøgersen

01. Board president Beth Bro-Roof and John Roof of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, at the Phillips Collection tour of “Nordic Impressions” exhibit in Washington, D.C. **02.** Lowell and Marilyn Kramme of Des Moines, Iowa **03.** Anders Sand, left, and Peder Hansen **04.** Annemarie Sawkins, Honorary Danish Consul for Wisconsin, and pianist Andrew Staupe at the Danish Embassy in Washington, D.C.

With this event, our museum wanted to accomplish two things. First, we wanted to have an impressive turnout at the embassy to show “official Denmark” how dedicated our friends can be in their support. That we can pull-off something like this shows that we are serious about being national in scope, and I cannot think of a better way for us to be present and visible than by attending an event at the Ambassador’s residence. Second, we naturally hoped that attendance at the event would inspire financial support of the exhibit.

I am happy to report that we were very successful on both fronts. We had initially hoped that 40 of our friends would make the trip, but, in the end, 78 people attended, and the invitees have, as of December 1, either donated or pledged \$150,000 towards the exhibit!

Being such a success, we consider this an inaugural event and hope to dream up more projects in the future that the official Danish representation in America will be willing to get behind and support in a similar way.

We are so grateful to His Excellency Lars G. Lose, Ambassador of Denmark to the United States, and to Ms. Ulla Ronberg for agreeing to host our event and to the staff at the embassy for making it an enjoyable, impressive, and smooth experience. Our own parties here in Elk Horn are – obviously - the best Danish-American celebrations out there, but a dinner at the Ambassador’s private residence is a close second.



05. Royal portraits stand on the Yamaha grand piano in the music room at the Danish Embassy in Washington, D.C. ►

06. MoDA board member Randy Ruggaard is interviewed by embassy press interns Julie Dahlgren Korr, left, and Pernille Schultz Kjær after dinner for MoDA’s “New Nordic Cuisine” project. 07. Laura, David, and Polly Hendee pose outside the Embassy. 08. From left, Embassy staff member Lone Hjortbak Kanaskie, Belgian Embassy Chef Dries Molken, Danish Embassy Chef Jens Fisker, and Ambassador Lars G. Lose.

If you want to learn more about *New Nordic Cuisine* and how you can support it, visit our website at www.danishmuseum.org/nordic-cuisine/ or get in touch with our Albert Ravenholt Curator of Danish-American Culture, Tova Brandt.



09. MoDA board member Randy Ruggaard, left, and Rasmus Thøgersen 10. MoDA board members Anders Sand, left, and Randy Ruggaard read about Swedish painter Nils Dardel's 1918 oil "The Dying Dandy" at the "Nordic Impressions" exhibit 11. Jens Fisker, executive chef for Danish ambassador Lars Lose, in his kitchen 12. Tova Brandt describes MoDA's "New Nordic Cuisine" project 13. Dessert 14. MoDA board members Peder Hansen of Omaha, left, and Randy Ruggaard of Hudson, Ohio, right.

events calendar

PERFORMANCE: “ANGELS AND TROUBLEMAKERS”

April 6

Professional storyteller Pippa White presents the voices of those who advocated for social reform.

PIANO RECITAL: VICTOR BORGE LEGACY AWARDS

April 27

Enjoy classical piano music performed by the talented winners of the Victor Borge Legacy Awards.

LECTURE: VICTORIAN CHILDHOOD IN POPULAR MUSIC

May 25

Social historian Michael Lasser explores how the Victorian era viewed childhood, using popular songs to illustrate American culture of the time.

TIVOLI FEST

May 25-26
Elk Horn, IA

MIDSUMMER

June 22

Our annual celebration of *Sankt Hans Aften* (Danish-style Midsummer) will be extra tasty as we open the new exhibition “New Nordic Cuisine.”

BROWN BAG LUNCH PROGRAMS

All programs begin at 12 noon and are free to the public. Bring a lunch to enjoy! Beverages provided.

“THE DANISH SOLUTION”

March 21

Documentary film about the rescue of Danish Jews in 1943

“TREASURES OF THE ARCHIVES”

April 11

By Cheyenne Jansdatter

“THE HISTORY OF CHILDHOOD IN THE RURAL MIDWEST”

May 16

By Pamela Riney-Kehrberg

MUSEUM VISITOR HOURS

Monday-Friday 9 am – 5 pm
Saturday 10 am – 5 pm
Sunday Noon – 5 pm

Business hours are
Monday-Friday 8 am – 5 pm

GENEALOGY CENTER

4210 Main Street, PO Box 249
Monday-Friday 9 am – 5 pm
Saturdays by appointment only

Research assistance appointments welcomed to 712.764.7008.

BEDSTEMOR’S HOUSE

2105 College Street
Memorial Day – Labor Day
1 pm – 4 pm

ADMISSION

Museum members FREE
with membership card
Non-member Adults \$5
Children (ages 8-17) \$2

Price includes one-day admission to Jens Diken House, Jens Jensen Prairie Landscape Park, Genealogy Center, and Bedstemor’s House.

All facilities are closed on New Years, Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

board of directors meet in elk horn

October 17-20, 2018

This past October board meeting was even busier than usual with the addition of a public event on the Wednesday preceding the official start of meetings. The museum was filled with a standing-room-only crowd of over 100 for the showing of the documentary, "The Danish Solution" with a reception following. Filmmaker Karen Cantor was on-hand for a Q & A session as well. Thanks to museum member Gracie Lernø for sponsoring this event in honor of her late husband and former board member, Bent.

I think the highlight of all the events was a dinner and a concert by Grammy-Award-winning jazz violinist Mads Tolling and Danish guitarist, Jacob Fischer. The Kimballton Town Hall was filled to capacity for this extraordinary performance, sponsored by Lynette Rasmussen, Honorary Consul, Kingdom of Denmark, Des Moines, Iowa.

As we welcomed seven new board members, we also said farewell and thank you to our "Magnificent Seven" – Cindy Larsen Adams (Littleton, CO), Tim Burchill (Jamestown, ND), Anna Thomsen Holliday (Houston, TX), Garey Knudsen (Hutchinson, MN), Dagmar Muthamia (Long Beach, CA), and Linda Steffensen (Hoffman Estates, IL); each served two consecutive three-year terms. We are grateful for their contributions and years of service to our beloved museum.

EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

President Beth Bro-Roof, Cedar Rapids, IA

Vice President Peder Hansen, Omaha, NE

Secretary Carolyn Larson, St. Paul, MN

Treasurer Karen Suchomel, West Branch, IA

BOARD MEMBERS

Anders Sand, Kansas City, MO
Bente Ellis, San Jose, CA
Bruce Bro, Phoenix, AZ
Carl Steffensen, Houston, TX
Carol Bassoni, Gilroy, CA
Carol Svendsen, Denver, CO
Connie Hanson, Glendora, CA
Craig Molgaard, Little Rock, AR
David Esbeck, San Diego, CA
David Hendee, Northfield, MN
Eric Olesen, Racine, WI
Gerry Henningsen, Monument, CO
Glenn Henriksen, Armstrong, IA
Karen Nielsen, Overland Park, KS
Lars Matthiesen, Edmonds, WA
Marnie Jensen, Nebraska City, NE
Merlyn Knudsen, Elk Horn, IA
Peter West, Denver, CO
Randy Ruggaard, Hudson, OH
Toni McLeod, Mesa, AZ

EX-OFFICIO

Dennis Larson, Decorah, IA
John Mark Nielsen, Blair, NE
Kai Nyby, LaPorte, IN
Nils Jensen, Portland, OR



By
Terri
Johnson

If you would like to learn more about becoming a member of the board of directors, please contact us at the museum.



Photos from Elk Horn and Kimballton, IA, by David Hendee, except above.



1918:

THE END OF THE “WAR TO END ALL WARS”

AND THE STORY OF A FAMILY YET TO BE

In October 1918, my grandfather was fighting in France. That same month in southern Minnesota, my grandmother married the older son of the neighboring farm family. As 1918 drew to a close, dramatic events would change both their lives and shape our family’s history.

But to begin, my grandfather, Johannes (John) Nielsen was born on a farm in Denmark on July 21, 1894 to Ane Marie Olesen and Niels Nørgaard Nielsen. (Only after service in WWI did he change his name from Johannes to John.) He was baptized in Hee, a small town north of Ringkøbing on the west coast of the Jutland peninsula. He had an older brother, Niels, born in 1885, and would have two sisters, Magdalene and Marie, born in 1898 and 1903.

In the spring of 1914, shortly before his 20th birthday, Johannes left Denmark, never to return. His destination was southern Minnesota, where his mother’s older sister, Maren, lived with her husband, Peter Fredericksen. The couple farmed near Windom, Minnesota. Here my grandfather had cousins, and here he planned to find work on neighboring farms. He was also following his older brother, Niels, who had immigrated several years before my grandfather but had settled in Cincinnati, Ohio where he was a carpenter and later a homebuilder.



By
**John Mark
Nielsen**

01. Family home The Nielsen Family in front of their farm on the west coast of Denmark circa 1908. Johannes’ older brother had already immigrated to America.

Arriving in Windom, the county seat of Cottonwood County, Johannes quickly found work. His employer was a farmer by the name of Manley Harper who lived in nearby Bingham Lake. Here Johannes settled into the rhythms of farm life. However, by the autumn of 1914, the Europe my grandfather left was at war. The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria on June 28, 1914 in Sarajevo, then a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, set in motion forces that would ultimately drag the United States into what President Woodrow Wilson would label the “war to end all wars.” (Though the phrase is commonly associated with President Woodrow Wilson, who used it once, it was inspired by the title of a book by the British writer H.G. Wells that was published in 1914 and titled *The War That Will End War*. H.G. Wells is best known in the United States for his novel *War of Worlds* that Orson Welles adapted as a radio play and caused a panic in the United States when it was aired in 1938.)

My grandmother’s story is also one of immigration, though she was the daughter of German immigrants. Meta Frieda Helena Augusta Wolter, my grandmother, was born on June 15, 1898 on the family farm in rural Martin County, Minnesota, east of Northrup, and baptized at St. James’ Lutheran Church, then located in the country. She was the sixth of eight daughters born to Heinrich Johann Hermann Wolter and Augusta Fredrickka Wilhemina Treichel and the first to be born in Minnesota.

Her father, Heinrich, had immigrated in 1884 to an area west of Chicago, and her mother, Augusta, followed in 1885. They were both from the German duchy of Pomerania on the southern shores of the Baltic Sea and northeast of Berlin, an area now within modern-day Poland. On Thanksgiving Day 1885, they were married and settled on a farm near Elk Grove in Cook County. In 1896 Heinrich and Augusta followed his brother, Ferdinand, to Martin County, where they purchased a farm for \$27 per acre.

Here my grandmother, along with her sisters, attended the Lutheran parochial school located in Rutland Township that was established by local German Lutherans in 1897. The pastor was the teacher, and instruction was in German. As was the custom for many Lutheran farm families, formal schooling ended following confirmation. My grandmother and her sisters worked as “hired girls” on neighboring farms, but they also helped out on the family farm. When teased that he had no sons, their father is said to have responded that with this good help, he didn’t need sons.



02. Sisters Heinrich and Augusta Wolter and their seven surviving daughters (the oldest died while they lived in Illinois). My grandmother, Meta, stands between her mother and father.

One of the Wolter's neighbors were the Kaedings, German Lutheran immigrants who had four children – Arthur, Elsie, Ella, and Hugo. Ella Kaeding was the same age as my grandmother, and they became close friends. Many of my grandmother's childhood stories revolved around the fun times the Wolter and Kaeding children had playing together. It was also not unusual that she should fall in love with Ella's older brother, Arthur, who was six years older than she.

1917 saw the United States becoming increasingly involved with the war in Europe. Ever since the sinking of the *Lusitania* by a German U-boat in 1915, when 128 Americans lost their lives, there was increasing pressure for the United States to enter the war on the side of Great Britain and France. On March 1, 1917,

the U.S. government released the text of what is known as the Zimmermann Telegram. In it, Germany offered to give the American Southwest back to Mexico if Mexico would declare war on the United States. This so incensed American popular opinion that Congress, on April 6, 1917, heeding President Wilson's request, declared war on Germany.

Entrance into what was then known as "The Great War" created challenges for German-Americans. One-third of the American population in 1917 was foreign-born or the children of immigrants, with German-Americans making up the largest segment of this population. This inspired fears of disloyalty among other Americans and led to the creation of the Committee on Public Information on April 13, 1917. The committee's mission was to inspire loyalty and rally American support for the war effort. Inevitably, questioning the loyalty of foreign-born residents was a result, with individuals under suspicion required to publicly state or sign oaths of loyalty. My great-grandfather, Heinrich Wolter, who had served in the Prussian Army as a conscript before immigrating, was required to sign a loyalty statement in Mankato, Minnesota.



03

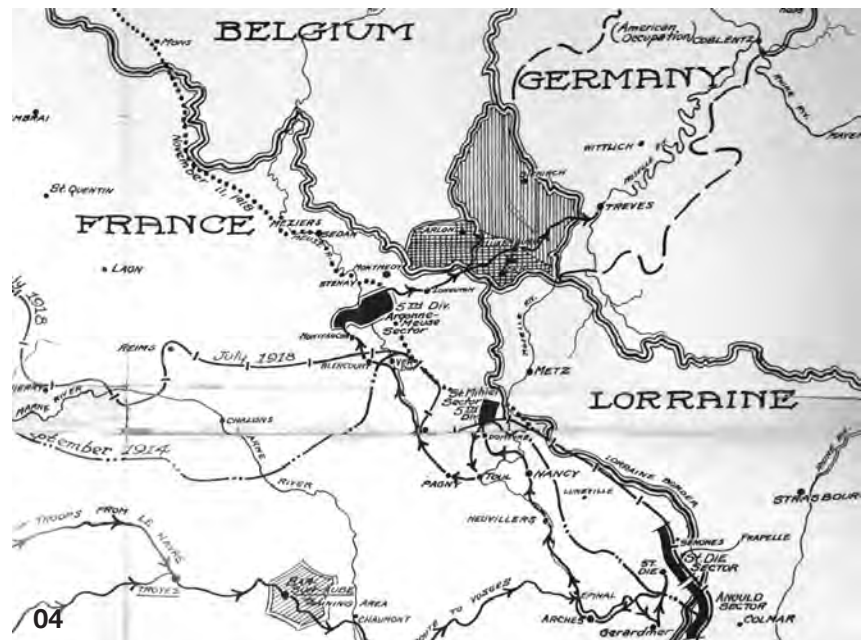
03. Induction photo My grandfather, Johannes Nielsen's induction photograph on February 3, 1918 at Camp Green, North Carolina.

On June 5, 1917, the Selective Service Act was passed, requiring all men between the ages of 21 and 31 to register for the draft, regardless of citizenship status or national origin. My grandfather, who was 23 and a farm laborer for Manley Harper, dutifully registered for the draft in Bingham Lake, Minnesota. In January 1918, he was drafted. (A popular notion has been that foreign-born recruits or draftees automatically became U.S. citizens. This was not the case. However, in recognition of the many non-citizens who were in active duty, Congress, on May 9, 1918, amended the naturalization law to allow those serving abroad to fast-track the citizenship process. After the war, my grandfather would take advantage of this.)

On February 3, 1918, Johannes Nielsen reported for duty at Camp Green, North Carolina. Here he was assigned to Company M of the 61st Infantry as a rifleman. The 61st Infantry was a part of the Fifth Division of the U.S. Army, known as the Red Diamond Division. He could not know that the Fifth Division would play a key role in the first action that the Americans would take as an army, independent of the French and British armies. Initial training occurred at Camp Green in weapons use, bayonet charges, and trench and gas warfare.

By early April 1918 the Red Diamond Division had been brought up to full strength (991 officers and 27,114 soldiers), though the entire division had never assembled in the United States. They were ready to embark for Europe. On April 16 Johannes sailed with the 61st Infantry from Hoboken, New Jersey on the steamship *Czaritza*. The ship was relatively new, having been constructed in Glasgow in 1915 for the Russian East Asiatic Steamship

Company. With the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the fall of Czarist Russia, the ship had been requisitioned as a troop transport. (Following WWI it would be purchased by the Danish East Asiatic Company.) Its destination was Brest, France, where it landed on April 28. After several days in so-called “rest camps” to recover from the voyage, the 61st Infantry left Brest in French railroad boxcars, traveling to Bar-sur-Aube, 100 miles southeast of Paris.



04. Map Map from *The Fifth U.S. Division in the World War 1917-1919*. The blackened areas show where the 5th Division served. First, at the lower right, in the Arnould and St. Die Sectors in the Vosges Mountains. Next, in the center, the St. Mihiel Sector. Finally, left and above, the Meuse-Argonne Sector during which American forces suffered their greatest casualties.

After reaching France and before entering battle, units of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) underwent further training. Bar-sur-Aube, in Champagne, some 75 miles from the front, was selected as the training site for the Fifth Division. The 61st Infantry, which included my grandfather, arrived there on May 2. Over the next several weeks, the entire Red Diamond Division assembled for the first time. In addition to the 61st Infantry, the Division also included the 6th, 11th, and 60th, Infantry, the 19th, 20th, and 21st Field Artilleries and the 7th Engineers. Here the entire Fifth Division began more intensive training in trench warfare. Special emphasis was placed on gas warfare and the use of gas masks.

On June 1 the 61st Infantry was ordered to move closer to the battlefield for further training under French command. This was the final preparation before entering the trenches in the Voges, an area of rugged, forested hills above Strasbourg and Colmar along the Rhine River and at the very eastern edge of the Western Front. This was a relatively quiet part of the battle lines, and it was seen as an appropriate place for regiments of the AEF to gain initial battle experience. On June 16 my grandfather saw his first action in a raid near the villages of Viollu and la Cude. However, most of his experience was keeping watch from the trenches over “no-man’s land” for enemy attack.

While the Fifth Division was engaged in the Voges during the summer of 1918, a heated debate was occurring between Marshal Ferdinand Foch, a French general and Supreme Allied Commander, and General John J. “Black Jack” Pershing, commander of the AEF. Marshal Foch wanted to incorporate American divisions into the French and British armies in a major offensive in the Meuse-Argonne region north of Verdun. General Pershing insisted that his forces fight as an independent American army under Foch’s command but not until after the fledgling army was tested. This occurred in a campaign around the French city of St. Mihiel, an area of fields, forests, and hills along the west bank of the Moselle River that had been held by the Germans since the beginning of the war. The two



05. Machine gun nest German machine gun emplacement in the Voges Mountains. Because of the difficult, densely forested terrain, this was a relatively quiet area of the Western Front. **06. Frapelle monument** John Mark standing beside the 5th Division Marker in the Village of Frapelle. This was the first French community liberated by an American unit in World War I. Following the war, the Fifth Division Association erected monuments like this to mark important sites where the Division had seen action.

leaders reached a compromise: the French would provide artillery, tank, and air support for the St. Mihiel offensive. Once the initial objectives were achieved, the “American First Army” would move to the Meuse-Argonne.

In August 1918 the Fifth Division was withdrawn from the Voges and repositioned for the St. Mihiel offensive. The attack began on September 12 with a heavy bombardment, and at 5 a.m., the American First Army, numbering half a million men, advanced into the German lines. The Fifth Division was engaged in a mile-wide sector of forests interspersed with meadows and farm fields, from the village of Regnieville north to Rembercourt

on the Mad River, a tributary of the Moselle River. After overrunning the enemy trenches, fighting involved crawling through dense undergrowth and taking out machine gun nests. By September 18, the objectives were reached and exceeded, and regiments of the Fifth Division, including the 61st Infantry, were withdrawn and repositioned for training and resupply before their participation in the Meuse-Argonne offensive, the first phase of which was planned for September 26.

Company M and my grandfather, Johannes, had seen their first real battle at St. Mihiel and now prepared for what was to be its greatest, longest, and costliest battle.

Back in Martin County, Minnesota, a double wedding on the Wolter farm was being planned. My grandmother, Meta, would marry Arthur Kaeding, and her next older sister, Hedwig (“Hattie”), would marry Herb Ehlen, a German Lutheran parochial school teacher who was teaching in Mankato. Following their marriage, Meta and Arthur were to take over the Kaeding farm as his parents were planning to retire. In preparation for the double wedding reception, Meta and Hattie’s parents, Heinrich and Augusta, had a new building erected which, after the reception, would be used for storing farm implements. They did this despite the fact that they, too, were retiring and selling their farm before moving to Mankato.



07



08

07. Landscape The gentle, rolling hills of fields and forests leading to Dun-sur-Meuse across which the 5th Division fought at the close of the war. **08. Double wedding** The Double Wedding of Hattie Wolter to Herb Ehlen and Metta Wolter to Arthur Kaeding on October 6, 1918 at St. James’ Lutheran Church in rural Northrup, Minnesota. ►

It was a good time to sell farms. During the war commodity prices had steadily risen, which in turn led to increases in farm values. Indeed, farming was seen as an important part of the war effort. According to the Selective Service Act of 1917, young farmers who were assisting their parents were temporarily exempted but available for military service. This meant that young farmers like Arthur were less likely to be drafted.

The double wedding was held on October 6 at St. James' Lutheran in rural Northrup. The reception that followed lasted for three days and was a chance for the extended community to celebrate. The only dark note was that Meta's engagement ring, which she had left in her bedroom in the upstairs of her parents' house, was stolen. She and her sisters thought they knew who stole the ring, but it was never returned. Following the wedding reception, she joined Arthur on the Kaeding farm.

Meanwhile, back in France, the Meuse-Argonne offensive had begun, although the Fifth Division had yet to join the battle. Fighting took place on what was generally agreed to be the most difficult terrain on the Western Front, and it was not going well. Regiments of the American First Army were making slow progress. On October 14, the Fifth Division joined the battle. Though it advanced, between October 14 and November 4, the Division was only able to move forward a distance of just over three miles. Combat was often hand to hand, particularly in two dense forests, the *Bois des Rappes* and the *Bois de Foret*.

Units in the American army did not constantly fight. Companies were sent into battle, and then, after several days to a week, withdrawn for rest, resupply, and to replenish forces; the number of those killed, gassed, or wounded were high. An additional factor contributing to weakened units was the growing number of those sick or dying from the Spanish Flu. A worldwide pandemic, the strain of influenza was first recorded in late 1917, in a French military hospital near the English Channel. It became known as the "Spanish Flu" because Spain, which remained neutral during the war, did not censor news about the pandemic. The first recorded case in the United States was in Haskell County, Kansas in January 1918.

Sometime late in October or early November, Company M was pulled from the line for rest. Their captain indicated that they would not need their gas masks. My grandfather later told his children that this was a tragic mistake. The German artillery lobbed mustard gas shells into the assembled troops of Company M.

"They're all dead."

These are the words my grandfather said he heard after regaining consciousness. He struggled to move his feet.

"Wait! There's one alive here."



09. Cemetery The Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery. This is the largest American cemetery in Europe, with the remains of over 14,000 Americans who lost their lives in World War I, most in the Meuse-Argonne campaign.

Over the next days, he was moved from a field hospital to a gas hospital, finally reaching AEF Base Hospital 26 in Allerey, France on November 20, nine days after the Armistice. During those intervening days, the allied forces, including the Fifth Division, pushed on, breaking the back of German resistance and leading to the warring sides agreeing to an armistice.

The Armistice ended fighting on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918. Though the Treaty of Versailles officially ending the Great War was not signed until June 28, 1919, exactly five years from the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand in Sarajevo, my grandfather's war was over. He felt lucky to have survived and would lie in a hospital for 50 days until he was released. By April 12, 1919 he would be back in the United States, honorably discharged as a Private First-Class and returning to work for Manley Harper in Bingham Lake.

In Minnesota, Arthur and Meta had settled into newly married life on the Kaeding farm. In early December, Arthur came down with the Spanish Flu. Though he seemed to be recovering, on December 9, he died of pneumonia. The funeral was at St. James' Lutheran Church, where just two months earlier they had been married; now he was buried in its cemetery. Within days after the funeral, Meta learned she was pregnant. Widowed and expecting, she left the farm and moved to Mankato to live with her parents.

I sometimes try to imagine what the Christmas of 1918 must have been like for each of them – my grandfather in a foreign hospital, my 20-year-old grandmother having just lost her husband and expecting a child – but I really cannot. I'm too aware that within five years they would meet in Mankato.

Johannes, now John Nielsen, would use his "War Bonus" to attend the Dunwoody Institute in Minneapolis, studying civil engineering. After completing his coursework in 1923, he would get a job in the county road office in Mankato and board at the Drewes Boarding House. There he would meet Meta Wolter Kaeding, who was working for Mrs. Drewes. Meta had given birth to a daughter, Luella, on August 23, 1919.

Doctors had suggested that, due to his internal injuries from having been gassed, my grandfather might not be able to have children. This may have contributed to his breaking off of an engagement with Clara Petersen, a Danish-American girl from Luck, Wisconsin whom he had met while living in Minneapolis, but I know it was much more, as I have read some of his letters to my grandmother.

On June 15, 1924 (my grandmother's 26th birthday), Meta and John were married at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Mankato. Together they would have seven children, although one died shortly after birth. My father, John Wolter Nielsen, is the oldest. In 1926, a year after my father was born, my grandparents moved to Albert Lea, Minnesota where my grandfather eventually became the County Engineer for Freeborn County.



10. Wedding day Meta and John Nielsen's wedding on June 15, 1924 in Mankato, Minnesota.



11

Grandpa Nielsen was always proud of his service to his country. In fact, often on Armistice Day, he would put on his old uniform and be photographed. I especially cherish one picture: it was taken in 1938, 20 years after the end of the “Great War.” He is standing with my grandmother and their children at the time – two more daughters were yet to be born, and Luella was a second-year student at Dana College. My father is holding the American flag. I have a feeling that both my grandfather and grandmother felt proud and profoundly blessed.

RESEARCHING THE STORIES OF WORLD WAR ONE VETERANS

Those attempting to learn more about their ancestors who served in World War I face a challenge. The reason – on July 12, 1973 there was a fire at the National Archive in St. Louis, Missouri. The fire destroyed about 80% of the individual records of those who served between 1912 and 1960. (My grandfather’s records were among those destroyed.)

Despite the potential lack of evidence, it is important to begin research at the National Archives as there may be a chance that the records survived the fire. Research and requests related to Veterans’ Service Records can be made online at: www.archives.gov/veterans

A second resource is The National World War I Museum and Memorial in Kansas City, Missouri. This is the only museum in the United States dedicated to preserving the history of this war and is well worth a visit. One can learn more about the museum and the resources the museum offers at its website: www.theworldwar.org/ Note that the website offers an “Online Collections Data Base” under the drop-down menu “Explore.”

A third resource is the state historical society of the state where an ancestor was drafted or enlisted. A Google search will provide access to appropriate websites. Potential resources can vary dramatically. For example, the Minnesota State Historical Society in 1920 circulated a four-page questionnaire to all World War I veterans and created files for each one who responded, including discharge papers and “war bonus” applications. (Fortunately, my grandfather completed the questionnaire.) History Nebraska (the Nebraska State Historical Society) maintains a record of “World War I Draft Registration Cards,” but has few personal records.

Finally, a visit to the courthouse and if there is one, the county historical museum, in the county where an ancestor enlisted or was drafted can provide unexpected information. Shortly after WWI, Cottonwood County, Minnesota (the county where my grandfather was drafted) published what looks like a “high-school yearbook” with pictures of all the young men from the county who served along with brief descriptions of their service. (I was able to purchase a copy since the Cottonwood Historical Museum had extras!)

11. 1938 Armistice Day Armistice Day, November 11, 1938. My father John (13) holds the flag. My Aunt Marion (4), Uncle James (8) and Aunt Eleanor (10) stand in front of my grandparents.

denmark, october 1943: occupation and resistance

ON VIEW IN THE KRAMME GALLERY THROUGH MARCH 24, 2019

This exhibition is made possible thanks to generous support from

The Danish Home, Croton-on-Hudson, New York

Thanks to Scandinavia, Inc., New York City, New York

IMAGINE:

Your family has lived in Denmark for generations. Though Nazi Germany has occupied the country for over three years, most aspects of daily life have been unchanged.

Now you hear that your family might be arrested or deported.

Do you believe the rumors?

In the summer of 1943, Denmark had been occupied by Nazi Germany for three years. For most of that time, daily life had changed little: people still went to work, children attended schools, and both churches and synagogues held regular services. But in August 1943 more and more Danish citizens started to openly resist the Nazis through public actions: strikes, passive resistance, and sabotage. The rising tensions ultimately led to the resignation of the Danish government and much tighter restrictions on public gatherings. The Nazis, who up to that point had made no overt threats to the Jewish residents of Denmark, began to plan for the arrest and

deportation of all Jews in the country.

IMAGINE:

Your neighbor warns you that German soldiers are planning arrests on Friday. Your coworker says they heard things might happen sooner, maybe tonight.

Do you take time to plan or to pack?

Do you seek a hiding place immediately?

A massive round-up of over 7,000 Jewish people was planned for September 30, 1943 – timed to coincide with Rosh Hashanah, the holiest day of the Jewish year. However, news of the action was leaked and quickly spread among Danes from all walks of life, Christian and Jewish alike. This sparked one of the largest rescue efforts of World War II to save the lives of thousands of people by ferrying them across the water to neutral Sweden.



By
Tova
Brandt

01. Resistance Resistance fighters in position behind a barricade. 2007.050.002 –
Gift of the Royal Danish Embassy

IMAGINE:

A stranger brings a message to meet at a warehouse near the harbor late at night.

Do you trust this person?

During the fall of 1943 over 7,000 people were first hidden – sometimes for weeks – and then smuggled out of Denmark by boat. Sweden had announced that its borders would be open to refugees, and prepared to welcome individuals and families. Ultimately, the rescued Danes spent the rest of the war in Sweden and returned home in 1945, many to homes and businesses kept safe and intact by friends and neighbors.

Nearly 500 Danish Jews were arrested and sent to Theresienstadt concentration camp. Through the efforts of Danish diplomats, the Nazis pledged that no Danes would be sent to other locations, such as Auschwitz or other death camps. Though some Danes did die in the camp of disease and starvation, most survived to return to Denmark at the end of the war.

In total, over 95% of Danish Jews survived the Holocaust. A tree planted in honor of the Danish resistance stands on the Avenue of the Righteous at the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial in Israel.

SVEND CHRISTENSEN

Born: July 10, 1921, Copenhagen, Denmark

Occupation during the war: Photoengraver and Police officer

Died: May 20, 2012, Des Moines, United States

Svend was born in Copenhagen and worked as a photoengraver. However, during the occupation he enrolled in the Danish police force and became a member of the resistance. Part of Svend's job was to patrol the harbour and inspect any boats to see if they were hiding Jews, but he "didn't see" any and so the Jews remained safe. By luck Svend managed to escape the police roundup in 1943 because he was at the dentist at the time. Svend and the dentist heard the air siren go off and saw the Danish policemen being herded into the streets and arrested. Svend grabbed his gun and the dentist's coat and fled to another city before hiding in a ferry and sailing for Sweden. Svend remained in Sweden until the liberation. In 1954 Svend and his wife Elly immigrated to the United States.



02. Officers Photograph of Svend Christensen (back row, left) and fellow police officers, November 11, 1940.
2002.139.011 – Gift of Svend Christensen.

STEEN METZ

Born: May 5, 1935, Odense, Denmark.

Occupation during the war: Elementary school student

Currently living in the United States

Steen was born in Odense, 5 years before the start of the German occupation and exactly 10 years before the subsequent liberation. Steen's family was Jewish, but for the first 3 years of the occupation this did not pose a great problem; with the Jewish roundup in 1943, things changed. The family did not escape, likely because the threat did not seem as great in Odense in comparison to Copenhagen, and was therefore arrested on October 2, 1943 and sent to Theresienstadt. On March 13, 1944, Steen's father died of starvation. After the death of Steen's father, the Danes in the camp started receiving care packages from the Danish Red Cross, which contained food, clothes and vitamins. While the Germans took most of the contents of the packages, they were vital for the survival of the Danes in concentration camps. In April 1945 the white buses arrived at Theresienstadt and Steen and his mother were brought to Sweden, and later they returned home to Denmark. In 1962 Steen moved to the United States together with his Canadian wife Eileen.

MONICA WICHFELD

Born: July 12, 1894, London, England

Occupation during the war: Housewife

Died: February 27, 1945, Waldheim, Germany

Monica was born into British nobility, and through social gatherings she met her husband Jørgen Wichfeld. After their wedding in 1916 the couple moved to Jørgen's estate Engestofte on Lolland, and Monica gained Danish citizenship.

As the Germans took over Denmark Monica wanted to aid the resistance, but she lacked contacts. In 1942, she rented out a cottage on their property to Hilmar Wulff, a communist

and member of the communist resistance faction, and through him Monica became involved. She helped distribute illegal newspapers, hide British/Danish parachutists, and receive packages dropped from British airplanes. Throughout these missions she never involved her husband or two sons, but her daughter Varinka followed in her mother's footsteps and even married fellow resister Flemming B. Muus.

In 1944 Monica was betrayed by a parachutist who had cracked under the German interrogations, and was arrested by Gestapo. Monica was interrogated for months, and in the end she received the death penalty. The verdict was later overturned and instead she received lifetime imprisonment. She was sent to a women's prison in Germany and died in 1945 from tuberculosis and viral pneumonia.



ANNE IPSEN, *A child's tapestry of war*:

"Meat was never really rationed because that required accounting for how much meat there was. If the Germans knew that Denmark actually had meat, they would have shipped most of it back to Germany or to the front. Thus, we pretended that there was very little, but a steady customer would be handed a wrapped package, take-it-or-leave-it. Sometimes it was frankfurters, sometimes a larger roast. Smart shopper that Mor was, she was a 'steady customer' at several shops and gladly accepted whatever she could get. She developed her own novel recipes to take advantage of whatever we had."

SAM BESEKOW, quoted in *The Rescue of the Danish Jews* by Leo Goldberger:

"In the dark of night my wife and I squeezed into herring cases, thoughtfully provided with breathing holes. Actually the cases could barely contain a human body and we lay in our boxes cramped like unborn babies. (...) at last we were in Swedish waters and could break out of our cases into fresh air. (...) a bottle of champagne was opened, 'Welcome to Sweden!' these words were to follow us for the rest of our years in exile."

VALDEMAR KOPPEL, quoted in *The Rescue of the Danish Jews* by Leo Goldberger:

"I was told by an eminent doctor from Aarhus, whose Jewish origin had caused him to flee to Stockholm, that a lady, totally unknown to him, had come up to him in the days before he fled when things were looking bad, saying, 'You don't know me, but I know you. My name is so and so, this is my address and there is the key to my house if you ever should need it.' Once when I told this incident to a lady from Copenhagen who similarly had been in danger, she remarked, 'Oh, yes. The same happened to me. At one point I had four keys in my pocket for houses entirely unknown to me.'"

exhibition calendar

Balancing Act – Peter Juhl

Main floor

On view through March 17, 2019

Dannebrog at 800

Multimedia Room

On view through 2019

**Denmark, October 1943:
Occupation and Resistance**

Kramme Gallery

On view through March 24, 2019

**Vessel: Ceramic Art
by Michael Geertsen and
Morten Løbner Espersen**

Main floor

Open March 22 through
September 2, 2019

**Jacob Riis: How the
Other Half Lives**

Kramme Gallery

Open April 6 through May 27,
2019

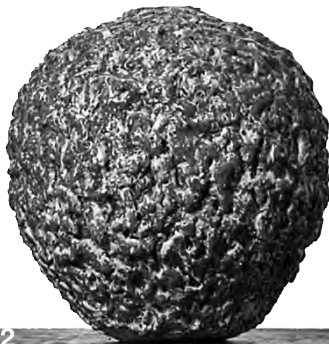
New Nordic Cuisine

Kramme Gallery

Opens June 22, 2019



01



02



03

01. Michael Geersten, Grey Standing Sculpture. 02. Morten Løbner Espersen, Blood Moon 03. Jacob A. Riis, "I Scrubs" – Little Katie from the West 52nd Street Industrial School, 1891-1892; reproduction on modern gelatin printing out paper, original 4 x 5 inches; From the Collection of the Museum of the City of New York, 90.13.4.132

wartime artifacts

There are thousands of stories connected to World War II and just as many artifacts around the globe from that period in history. Within the collections of the Museum of Danish America are many pieces that illustrate both the military and the human sides of the war.

Several enlistment documents, registration cards, and identification cards are part of the archives. This registration card was issued to immigrant Rasmus Moritz West, who left Falster, Denmark by 1910 and farmed near Kimballton, Iowa. After his U.S. military service, he and his wife, Gudrun, returned to Denmark in the early 1950s, settling in Helsingør. Another ID card belonged to Elin M. Sveen, who was born in Chicago, Illinois in 1926, but was raised by her mother in Denmark. During the war she was required to carry this ID with her anytime she was away from home. Elin and her mother returned to the United States in 1947 following the war.

Photographs taken by soldiers often depicted large military machinery or the rubble left by bombing raids. Some of the photos taken by Junior Rasmussen and his fellow serviceman Merle Merritt are similar, featuring tanks and airplanes or destroyed buildings, but others are more personal and lighthearted. Since both men were raised on farms, they took photos of livestock and fields. There are also a few photos of quiet times in their barracks, such as a photo of Junior writing a letter.

A well-known story from World War II is the rescue of most of Denmark's Jewish population following the German occupation. Svend Christensen was a police officer in Copenhagen. One of his responsibilities was to inspect boats for possible Jewish stowaways, but he "didn't see" any, allowing many lives to be saved. As a show of resistance to Germany, some Danish citizens found other ways to protest the occupation. Some wore ribbons, jewelry, or other decorations to affirm their national identity. This pin consists of a red and a white



By **Angela Stanford** **01. Registration card** Gift of Joan Grønhoj, 2003.078.005. **02. ID card** Gift of Karen Hildmann, 2016.020.001. **03. Resistance ribbon with coins** Gift of Richard and Blanche Nielsen, 1989.131.001. **04. Photo from album** Gift of Merle Rasmussen, 2015.059.016.

ribbon, the colors of the flag, and four Danish coins, each from 1940, and together representing the date that the occupation began. The donor's sister, who is unnamed in our files, wore this in quiet protest from 1940 to 1945.



05

Once the war was over, many families, churches, schools, and social clubs honored those who served, not only here in the U.S., but throughout the countries who participated in the allied efforts. Mass-produced scarves commemorating VE Day, needlework kits memorializing the many components and faces of Danish resistance, and name quilts are some of the pieces in the museum's collections. This flag was a joint project between the Danish Sisterhood and Danish Brotherhood lodges of Clear Lake,

Iowa. Its 15 stars represent lodge members who served, including one Sisterhood member. Four members represented here had been injured, and one was killed.

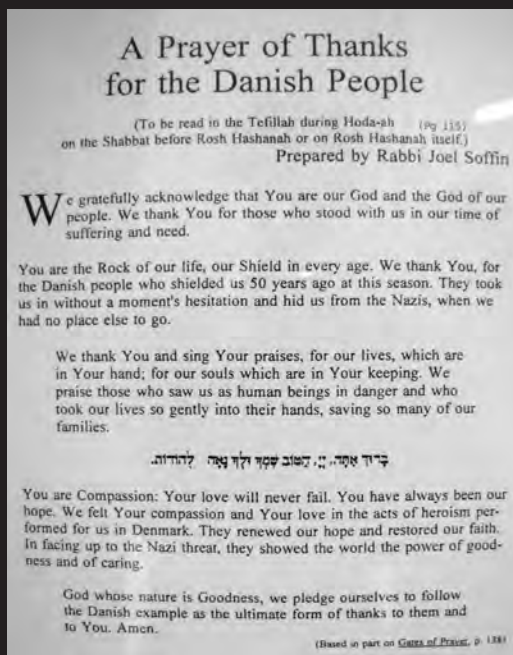
Invitations to "Welcome Home" celebrations, lists of relief supplies sent to Denmark by American aid groups, souvenirs picked up by servicemen, uniforms, medals, and more illustrate Danish and Danish-American participation in World War II. They are preserved in order to add depth to the names they represent.



06



Albert and Karen Hansine Vejlo received a pair of identical bird figurines as a thank you gift from a Jewish girl they helped during the German occupation of Denmark. Gift of Karen Beall, 2017.009.005



This "Prayer of Thanks for the Danish People" was prepared by Rabbi Joel Soffin. It reads, in part, "We thank You, for the Danish people who shielded us 50 years ago at this season. They took us in without a moment's hesitation and hid us from the Nazis, when we had no place else to go... In facing up to the Nazi threat, they showed the world the power of goodness and the power of caring." Gift of Arvid Bollesen, 1993.166.001

05. Flag Gift of Thorvald Sorensen, 2010.020.001. 06. Baton Gift of Svend Christensen, 2002.139.005.

collections assessment for preservation program

In order to stay on top of current trends and to make sure professional standards are being met, museums often participate in assessment programs. These programs typically involve self-evaluations by the museum staff and/or board members, as well as site visits by outside assessors who have expertise in the many facets of museum work.

This year, the Museum of Danish America participated in the Collections Assessment for Preservation Program. CAP is managed by both the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the Foundation of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works. The purpose of the program is to help small museums and mid-sized ones like MoDA identify areas of improvement in the care of artifact collections. This involves things like examining

artifact storage methods, taking detailed climate and light level readings, and looking at the buildings themselves and noting any structural, equipment, or maintenance improvements that can be made. The final report submitted by the assessors provides helpful recommendations which can then be used to direct long-range planning and as leverage for funding from granting agencies and private donors.

CAP provides two assessors, a conservator and a historic buildings expert. In August, Elisa Redman and Jerry Berggren came to Elk Horn as MoDA's assessors. Elisa is the Director of Preventative Conservation at the Midwest Art Conservation Center in Minneapolis. Her expertise is in preventive conservation and museum management, and she conducts numerous surveys each year and teaches workshops on a wide range of collections care topics. Jerry is the founder and principal-in-charge of Berggren Architects in Lincoln, Nebraska. With more than 40 years of architectural experience, he has also developed an expertise in the preservation and restoration of historic structures.



By
Angela
Stanford

01. Speaker Elisa Redman, center, Director of Preventative Conservation at the Midwest Art Conservation Center in Minneapolis speaks to the group.

Out of a two-day visit and many conversations with staff, technical readings, and photos, the assessors created a final report containing details of their observations and a list of recommendations. These range from more day-to-day, practical tasks to longer-term strategic planning goals. Three of the key recommendations were:

1 | Upgrades in lighting systems

– Converting to a purposefully designed system of LED lighting with fixtures that are more versatile than the current system and produce less damaging light and heat. This would allow for more appropriate and easily adjusted light levels, and would be far more energy efficient.

2 | Upgrades in security –

Moving from traditional, keyed doors to an electronic key card system and adding security cameras. Both options would allow for an additional level of protection both for the collection and the facilities.

3 | Fire safety/disaster planning

– Installing fire systems at the Genealogy Center, Bedstemor's House, and the Jens Dixen Cabin. These systems are valuable steps toward protecting people, collections, and buildings. Currently, only the main museum building has a full detection and suppression system in place.

Other recommendations included installing crack monitors on select interior walls of Bedstemor's House, in order to observe further separations; adding additional portions of museum operating systems to the emergency generator, in case of loss of power; and developing a long-range collections plan, which would assist with clear and intentional development of collections based on its existing strengths and weaknesses.

The recommendations that come from assessments like CAP are incorporated into departmental goals as well as larger institutional strategic plans. The museum participated in CAP for the first time in 2011, and almost all of those recommendations were accomplished; we expect to show the same progress with the 2018 list.

While the museum already offers a high level of professional care to our collections, there are always improvements to work toward. Assessments like these help us prioritize and plan as we move from goals to reality.



02. Bedstemor's House, built in 1908, requires preservation of the structure itself and the collection it holds.



a danish bike tour

It was a week of kilometers and calories. Kilometers were counted; calories were not.

A group of nine Americans with ancestral or business ties to Denmark bicycled around a slice of the Danish mainland last summer during a tour inspired by a board member of the Museum of Danish America.

The group included two museum board members (David Hendee of Omaha and Carol Svendsen of Denver, and their respective spouses, Polly Hendee and Jay Mead), a board member-elect (Bruce Bro of Carefree, Arizona, and his wife, Stacie Pinderhughes), and three others (Alexandra Hernández-Nørgaard and Frank Meckel of Houston, and Sam Mason of Philadelphia).

Bro and Pinderhughes were newlyweds.

“The special part for us was simply experiencing it together as part of our honeymoon,” Bro said, “and introducing Stacie to Denmark by bicycle.”

Bro had been to Denmark several times and biked around Copenhagen, but never much around the Danish countryside.



By
David
Hendee

01. David Hendee, left, Jay Mead, Alexandra Hernández-Nørgaard, Polly Hendee, and Carol Svendsen line up in their Museum of Danish America jerseys for a photo before pushing off on the second day of a bicycle tour in Denmark. The group spent two nights in cottages at Knudhule Badehotel in the provincial village of Ry.

“Our favorite day was the last day as we biked along the coast back to Århus,” he said. “The views along the coastline as we biked through the woods were lovely. There was something special and intimate about seeing the countryside by bike that you can’t experience by car.”

A month after returning home, Hernández-Nørgaard said it still made her laugh to remember how many rookie navigators were needed to decipher maps daily.

“It definitely was cycling by committee!” she said.

Svendsen launched the idea of a bicycle tour of Denmark when introducing herself during her first meeting as a board member at the museum in October 2016. She said she and her husband enjoyed bike touring. They have biked in England, France, Italy, and in Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, New England, Oregon, South Dakota, and other places across the United States.

“We think it’s the best way to see and feel a place,” Svendsen said recently. “You intimately experience the geography as you ride up and down. You experience the sights and smells and sounds without the barrier of engine noise, metal, and windshield. And local people are interested in talking to you about your travels. I’ve always thought it would be great to ride in Denmark, the home of my ancestors.”

Denmark ranks at the top of the world’s bicycle-friendly places. A national network of more than 6,800 miles of sign-posted routes criss-crosses the kingdom, largely on dedicated off-highway trails.



02. Map-reading by committee was an hourly occurrence. Fresh off the ferry to Samsø, Stacie Pinderhughes, Frank Meckel, Sam Mason, and Jay Mead gather around Alexandra Hernández-Nørgaard and her map. **03. Jay Mead and Carol Svendsen** pose for a portrait after a picnic of smoked fish and pastries along the coastline south of Århus.

A few board members expressed initial interest in Svendsen's tour idea. During the next year she wrote an information sheet that pointed out the potential for hills and rain, and included an estimate of daily mileage. Then she set up the week-long outing through Ruby Rejser, a small tour and travel agency in Århus. All participants paid their own travel and tour expenses. Primal Wear of Denver worked with Nicky Christensen, the museum's communications specialist, to design a custom cycling jersey featuring a museum theme in Danish colors. Most of the tour participants purchased the red-and-white shirts to wear during the daily rides.

Svendsen selected Ruby Rejser's "East Jutland à la Carte" tour for the group. The travel agency described it as "a week with sandy beaches, wind in your hair, salt on your skin, fairytale views, idyllic rural life, fascinating museums, Nordic cuisine, romantic villages, and peaceful bike paths."

The tour started and ended in Århus, with riders leaving in rain and returning in sunshine. The city was Europe's designated Culture Capital of 2017. It's a city of cobblestone streets, charming squares, many cafés, trendy shops, forests, and beaches. It's within biking distance of some of the highest points in Denmark, the scenic Lake District, and Samsø, the "renewable energy island." Riders stayed at either the Comwell Hotel or the Scandic City Hotel.

Here's a daily recap of the August tour, with comments or impressions from some participants:

Day 1 of the tour featured an easy day's cycling from Århus to Ry. The path out of Århus followed the stream Århus Å past wetlands and along lakes, before reaching a hilly stretch of road. The 41-kilometer (25 mi) route crossed the diverse and rich countryside before ending at Knudhule Badehotel in the provincial village of Ry. The village sits on the banks of Gudenå, the only real river in Denmark.

Meckel: "Flags and vimpels everywhere!"

Svendsen: "Great camaraderie with the group. Only a small amount of whining about the rain."



04. Polly Hendee spins down a rural road during the first leg of the tour from Århus to Ry. **05. Stacie Pinderhughes** flies a Danish flag in her bicycle's luggage rack.

Hernández-Nørgaard: “The dinner at the Knudhule Badehotel was awesome! Loved the beautifully set table and the scrumptious dinner. The dishes were not only awesomely beautiful but extremely tasty! I would say it was one of our top meals.”

Svendsen: “Danes enjoying a beer and a round of miniature golf at Knudhule Badehotel. Who knew miniature golf was the national sport?”

Day 2 was an out-and-back route that included a 300-meter (984 ft) climb over the 51 kilometers (32 mi) between Ry and Silkeborg. The outbound leg took riders through the unspoiled countryside of Central Jutland, crossing hilly moraines into flatter terrain. They pedaled around Salten Langsø and through woodland clearings with blueberries, junipers, and heather. At the end of a long climb, after reaching the top of a hill rimmed with Bronze Age burial mounds in the midst of farm fields, Svendsen said she wondered: “Is my great-uncle Thor buried there?”

The bike trail followed an old railway track and passed by Vrads Station, where several riders stopped for desserts. Then it was on to Vrads Sande, a landscape of inland sand dunes. The stage ended in Silkeborg, capital of the Lake District. Most cyclists returned to Ry by train. Two, however, finished the day riding 24 kilometers (15 mi) to Ry across hilly woodlands.

Hernández-Nørgaard: “We ate apples off trees (I just love to forage), and ate the most delicious dessert ever at the Old Vrads train station. I followed the advice on their blackboard: ‘Skinny people are easier to kidnap. Stay safe, eat cake.’ Am still dreaming of the lagkage (layer cake) that Carol and Jay shared, my flourless chocolate cake, and y’all’s apple tart.”

Svendsen: “Riding through a forest on narrow trail that used to be a railroad line. Surprised by the amount of forested land we rode through.... the smell of manure as we rode through the farm country.... a cold Tuborg Classic at the end of a long day of riding.”

Hernández-Nørgaard: “We continued to need a whole village to get from point A to point B.”

Day 3 took the riders 43 kilometers (30 mi) from Ry to Odder, via the charming lakeside town of Skanderborg. The trail passed by some of the nicest lakes in Denmark with views to the highest “mountains” in Denmark, all less than 200 (656 ft) meters above sea level. Sites included Bronze Age burial mounds and the ruins of a medieval monastery at Øm. Once through Skanderborg, the cyclists passed by Stilling Lake and then back into the hills and views of the sea before reaching Odder and the Park Hotel.

Mason, who had been in Copenhagen on business, joined the group in Skanderborg for the ride to Odder. Ole Sønnichsen, a former museum board member from Bjert, Denmark, planned to join the group for dinner in Odder, but canceled when work required him to be in Copenhagen.

Svendsen: “Friendly, articulate Danes interested in us, and concerned about America. Danes, proud of their country, and its egalitarian society.”

Mason: “Bad news: weight of the bike; good news: granny/grandfather gears.”

Hernández-Nørgaard: “I finally got a taste of Mirabelle plums, which I had seen on the trails, but didn’t know if they were edible. Met a lady searching for her lost cat, and (met) her husband (not lost).



06. Jay Mead cruises on a rain-glistened road past a Bronze Age burial mound.

Svendsen: “Getting lost and multiple interpretations of what the ride directions meant.”

Mason: “Horses on a hilly field outlined against the blue Danish sky... Thatch, thatch, thatch.”

On **Day 4** the group biked to the port at Hou to board a ferry for a one-hour trip to Kolby Kås for cycling around the northern part of Samsø, with its hilly seaside landscape, uncrowded beaches, and scenic villages. It was roughly a 68-kilometer (42 mi) day after the ferry trip back to Jutland and the final bike stage to Odder.

At one point, Hernández-Nørgaard, who had been cycling in the northern reaches of the island, detoured to Langør, a village on Samsø’s east coast. She had received an email notification that her husband, Frank, who was cycling with Polly Hendee, had made a credit card charge at a restaurant on the harbor there. She changed course to join them there.

On a hilltop near Issehoeved at the northern tip of the island — more than 4,400 miles from Elk Horn — two cyclists were astonished to encounter an English-Danish couple who buy Christmas gifts online from the museum’s Design Store for their American relatives.

Hernández-Nørgaard: “This must be one of the most memorable days. The sun finally came out. Samsø is just picture perfect ... old straw-thatched roofed homes ... self-serve grocery shopping with mobile pay. ... the Viking hideaway channel.”

Mason: “Samsø potatoes with onions, mayonnaise sauce ... and thatch.”

Meckel: “Unplanned encounters were the order of the day. A funeral, the friendliest cows, and the bluest cabbage.”

Svendsen: “Good coffee and pickled herring for breakfast.”

Day 5 from Odder to Århus took the cyclists along the east coast and past vacation homes and views of wind turbines in the sea. They crossed the lock at Norsminde Fjord, which separates the sea from the lake. Then it was on through Marselisborg Forest to Århus Bay before leaving the coastline to cycle through the Moesgard Museum grounds and past the summer residence of Queen Margrethe II.

Mason: “Cozy, unassuming summer cottages lining the shore (not thatched).”

Svendsen: “Smoked fish and kringle picnic on the beach.”



07. During a chance encounter on Samsø, two cyclists met Bettin Petersen and her husband, John Bridge, who live in England and Denmark. Petersen orders Christmas gifts for her American relatives from the Museum of Danish America’s Design Store! **08. Alexandra Hernández-Nørgaard** takes a rolling selfie with David Hendee on Samsø.

Hernández-Nørgaard: “And the *wienerbrød* from Bagergården in Saxild was out-of-this-world good! Am still dreaming of it and can’t wait to try making some of my own! Plus the salmon sandwiches at Fiskehuset på Norsminde Havn that they prepared for us were awesome. Ahhh, the bread: crispy on the outside, soft on the inside. Just glorious!”

Meckel: “My surprise to discover that ‘fried bacon’ was in fact, perfectly translated on the menu at the Raadhuus Kafeen in Århus.”

Mason: “Dogged restaurant research by Frank.”

For the record, the five-day tour covered 254 kilometers (158 mi). The caloric consumption was considerable, but confidential.



Author David Hendee recently retired from a 44-year career as a newspaper journalist in Nebraska, all but two of the years at the *Omaha World-Herald*. He and his wife recently moved to Northfield, Minnesota, to be nearer to their grandchildren. His longest post-Denmark bike rides have been to local high school football games.

09. Fresh *wienerbrød* from Bagergården in Saxild was paired with salmon sandwiches for a coastline picnic on the final leg of the tour.

perspectives from wartime

COUNTLESS NARRATIVES ARE PRESERVED IN THE GENEALOGY CENTER'S LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES. HERE ARE JUST A FEW, RELATED TO WAR AND ITS EFFECTS ON INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES, WHICH HAVE SURFACED RECENTLY.

Carl August Mørch was seven years old when the second Slesvig-Holsten war broke out between Denmark and Prussia. Born in Løjt Parish in Aabenraa, he later moved to Copenhagen, and at age 63 in 1919, he set out to hand-write his memoirs. He recalled his father getting arrested and imprisoned in 1864 [translation by Peter Dam-Hein]:

“...[T]hey were let out into the garden to have some fresh air, closely guarded of course, and they were not allowed to talk to each other, nor talk to others. The door between the 2 rooms, where the 3 from Løjt were kept, was, however, not very solid, so a conversation could be heard through it. Then, when someone in one of the rooms wanted to talk to someone in the other room about something, he would sit down by the door and loudly tell his roommate what he wanted to communicate to the other room, where their attention had been drawn by some practised sign, I do not know what.

The time was, probably for a large part of it, spent reading, and, regarding Father, with playing chess. They were also allowed to send home letters, but they were censored before they were posted.

They were also in several interrogations. In one of these, Father was asked whether he was Danish. ‘Yes! In life and soul’ was Father’s answer.

A Prussian officer said to Father, during such an interrogation: ‘I do not actually think that you are a spy at all, but we have to get hold of such a well-known and prominent man in your area, as there easily, in

conversation with strangers, can be given pieces of information that, no matter how innocent they seem, can be harmful to us.’

My brother Frederik was in Flensburg one day to visit Father, and he was given access, presumably 1 hour, but the conversation had to be in German and in the presence of a German officer.”

How Carl Mørch’s notebook ended up in Washington is, for now, still a mystery, but fortunately the memories he took time and care to delineate a century ago are preserved for future generations.



01



02



By
Kara
McKeever

01. Notebook “Childhood Recollections from Slesvig”. 2018-106. Discovered at a thrift shop and donated to the museum by Sally York of Fircrest, WA in 2018.

02. Flag Carl Mørch holding the Danish flag in 1864.

Hans Christian Thygesen Christiansen was born in Cedar Falls, Iowa, five days before Armistice on November 5, 1918 to Danish immigrants Peder and Ellen Christiansen. He was their first child. From Ølgod and Amager, respectively, Peder and Ellen had met and married in Cedar Falls, but when Hans was two years old, they decided to try their luck further west. Peter got a job working rice fields in California, and the family lived in a tent until they could afford a house. Eventually they joined other Danes in Woodland, California, where Hans and his sister, Joy Peggy, grew up. Hans was active in Boy Scouts and became an Eagle Scout, played piano and basketball, and went to Sacramento junior college to study aviation. He enlisted in the Army Air Corps in August 1940, becoming a second lieutenant and pilot stationed in Honolulu, Hawaii.

Hans was killed in action at Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941. His death shocked Woodland and Yolo County residents, and for many, made the war suddenly personal. The December 8 edition of the *Woodland Daily Democrat* dedicated several columns to Hans, printing an excerpt from his last letter home. After updating his family about his movements and recounting the fun he had flying a bomber, Hans closed his December 1 letter: "Well, happy family, I guess I will sign off now. Oh, by the way, how goes it with the rice? And if you don't hear from me for a long time you will know I am seeing more of the world, so don't worry about it and I will write as soon as I can. As Ever, Hans."

"As part of his activity in scout work, Hans, who came of that stout Nordic stock which the world has reason to respect, worked and played and buddied with Japanese youth who have now by some strange quirk of fate become the foes of the likes of him," wrote Florence McGehee, regular columnist for the *Democrat*. "That those very youth will be the first to mourn him we do not doubt. This is a sad commentary on the sick world in which we have to live and in which we try to find reason and sanity."



03



04

03. "Scouts Construct Open Air Fireplace", *Woodland Daily Democrat*, April 23, 1934. 04. Dies "Hans Christiansen Dies in Battle with Japanese at Honolulu", *Woodland Daily Democrat*, December 8, 1941. ►

Mette (Axelsen) Haydt was born April 9, 1938 in Helberskov in northern Jutland. She turned two years old the day German occupation of Denmark began, marking her childhood with food scarcity and ration books. Christmases during the war meant a few precious extra treats, including a single orange. Mette remembers her father, Helge, carefully scoring the orange with his pocket knife, removing the rind, and sharing the wedges around with his family until it was gone. Her mother, Lea Kathrine, dried the orange rind on their wood-burning heater, later to grate it into a cake.

If Mette's father had been given his way, his family would not have been in Denmark during the war. He had immigrated to California in 1928 but returned to Denmark to farm when work was scarce in the

1930s. Still, he always hoped to return to the U.S. He met Mette's mother, who had no interest in moving to America, and once the war began, there was no chance of leaving anyway. After the war, Helge asked Lea Kathrine to reconsider leaving Denmark and made a deal with her: they would not sell their farm, but lease it out, and if after two years she wasn't happy in America, they could return to Denmark.

Thus, in 1949 Mette, her parents, and her younger brother, Claus, sailed from Copenhagen on the *M.S. Batory*. When a room steward on the ship discovered how much Mette and Claus loved oranges, he placed a fresh orange each day in the net on the wall next to their bunk beds. They were thrilled. When they reached New York and disembarked, Mette actually stepped off the ship into the United States with an orange in her hand.

There were more wonders ahead. Her family settled in California, where Mette saw oranges everywhere. She and Claus loved them, and ate so many that eventually, mindful of the enamel on their teeth, they were told to cut back on oranges by their dentist.

Like Mette, her mother loved America right away, and the Axelsen family stayed in their new home, where oranges were never scarce.



05. Mette (Axelsen) Haydt, 1949, *courtesy of Mette Haydt*; **06. Axelsen family**, 1949, left to right: Lea Kathrine, Mette, Claus, and Helge Axelsen, shortly before they immigrated to the United States, *courtesy of Mette Haydt*.

other noteworthy items

The Odense City Museums in Denmark have organized an exhibit on view at the Ellis Island Immigration Museum in New York through January 6. The Museum of Danish America has loaned 41 pieces from its permanent collection - *go look for them!*

During the past five years, researchers at the University of Copenhagen have taken a closer look at audio recordings of Danish immigrants and their descendants in Canada, the U.S., and Argentina. They've recently launched digital maps that provide access to sound bites of historical North American Danish along with information about the speaker and the language. <https://danskestemmer.ku.dk/lydkort/>

Time Travelers is a reciprocal membership network for historical museums, sites, and societies throughout the U.S. Museum of Danish America members receive exclusive benefits and privileges at more than 380 museums and historical sites in 45 states! You must show your current membership card to receive benefits. See the list at <http://timetravelers.mohistory.org/institutions/>

Soon, the dates of immigration will be added to the Wall of Honor index - all thanks to the volunteer help of Rosalie Andersen and Marilyn Andersen!

Cheyenne, our temporary, grant-funded Archival Collections Manager, is overhauling one of our collections categories: the vaguely termed "Special Collections." She says, "To date, I have updated approximately 4,400 digital records, and in January I will have reorganized over 6,000 documents and integrated over 8,000 into the Special Collections Archive."

The deadlines for applying to our Scan Design Foundation Internships for Danish graduate students are April 30 and November 1 each year. Information is on our website.

DanishMuseum.org accounts give you ease of access to your Design Store discount and wish list, View Our Collection (if applicable), and pre-filled renewal information. Our members' email addresses have been loaded into the secure system. Your username will always be the main email address associated with your membership. If you have never logged in to your account, please use the "Forgot Password?" feature to receive an email with instructions on how to create a personalized password. *Please note* that if you recently mailed a membership payment, your website account may not yet reflect your updated membership expiration date.



Danish *papirklip* artist Torben Jarlstrøm Clausen demonstrated his techniques and style in our lobby during the Danish Villages' Julefest this year. It was a big hit!

new additions to the wall of honor

AUGUST 1, 2018 – NOVEMBER 20, 2018

The Danish Immigrant 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 to the growing repository of family histories at the museum's Genealogy Center. You can find a list of the immigrants on the Wall of Honor at www.danishmuseum.org.

The information below includes the immigrant name, year of immigration, location where they settled, and the name and city of the donor.

BENT HANSEN (1957) Rockford, Illinois – Kristie Hansen-Mendez, Chicago, IL

ANE MAGRETHE (GANSBERG) MØLLER (1873) Orum, Nebraska – Sandra L. Wunder, Eaton, CO

DAGMAR AMALIE FRANCISKA NIELSEN NEWMAN (1882) Nevis, Hubbard, Minnesota – Phyllis (Newman) Holven, Toledo, IA

jens jensen heritage path

AUGUST 1, 2018 – NOVEMBER 20, 2018

The Jens Jensen Heritage Path is a place to celebrate an occasion or achievement, recognize an individual or organization, or honor the memory of a loved one. Twice a year the pavers will be engraved and placed within the Flag Plaza – October and May.

These individuals have contributed a paver in the sizes of small or medium.

Leslie Brady, Papillion, NE
Kristie Hansen-Mendez, Chicago, IL

Barbara Havick, Stone Mountain, GA
Linda James, Papillion, NE
Verner Laursen, Esther Haahr and
Paul Laursen, Crawfordsville, IN
Todd & Camille Nielsen, Waukegan, IL

Nancy Sand, Kimballton, IA
Robert Stofferson, Papillion, NE
Welu, Thornell, and Denniston
Families
Kris Wertz, Pekin, IL



By
Deb
Christensen
Larsen

Paver order forms can be found at www.danishmuseum.org/get-involved/recognition/commemorative-bricks

memorials

AUGUST 1, 2018 – NOVEMBER 20, 2018

Through various funds, gifts have
been received in memory of:

Richard Lee Andersen
Beverly Bjelde
Virginia M. Bonvicini
Virgil L. Christensen of Harlan, IA
Virgil Christensen, "One Good
Man!"
Donald J. Christensen, my
husband
Lloyd Christensen, my husband,
and Virgil Christensen, my
brother-in-law
Cora E. Fagre
Cora Fagre, long time friend and
fellow Dane
Cora Fagre, long-time member of
the Denver Danes
Hans & Mathilde Farstrup
Kay Feisel

Peggy Jo Henriksen Gragert, my
daughter
Ingrid Hansen
Ingrid Hansen of Lincoln, NE
Howard Henriksen
Howard C. Henriksen, my
husband
Winifred LaRayne Cavnar
Jergensen, Charter Member of
The Denver Danes
Vera Johnson
Vera K. Laursen Johnson, Eagle
Grove, IA
Roberta Lynn Jones
Carol Jorgensen
Phyllis Jorgensen
Bryan Kite
Torben Klarlund and Erik Klarlund
Doloros Landblom

Mabel Madsen
Mabel Madsen, Elk Horn, IA
Donald Madsen, formerly of Iowa
City & recently Cedar Rapids, IA
H.C. Mathison, my husband
Four Danish grandparents of
Marilyn Meyer
Hans & Joan Miller
LeVern & Marilyn Nielsen, my
parents
Bruce G. Ohms of Anita, IA
Edith Ousky, grandmother of
Jenessa Denniston
Helen Parker
Herbert & Mabel Petersen
Miriam Rodholm Showalter
Dale Leslie Stofferson
Pamela Whitmore

in honor

AUGUST 1, 2018 – NOVEMBER 20, 2018

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

Atlantic Friends of the Museum's
meeting entertainment
Lotte Christensen
My dear Elk Horn Friends,
Barbara Jacobsen, Deb Bieker,
Pat Nielsen, Jerri Hemmingsen,
Jackie Andersen, Eileen
Sornsen, Karma Sorensen (and
her Overgaard sisters)

David Iversen and Phillip Iversen
Erna C. Jensen
Lise Just
Bent Lerno and in honor of the
Holocaust and thanks to the
Danish people for their part
in helping their citizens at this
dark time in their lives

Kara McKeever for help in
tracking down translations
of old church records from
Schleswig
MC McNabb
MoDA's Board of Directors
holding their June 2018 board
meeting in Tyler, MN
John Mark Nielsen
Rasmus Thøgersen and his
wonderful staff

Are you getting our monthly news? If not, we may not have your current email address.
Visit www.danishmuseum.org to update your information, or email deb.larsen@danishmuseum.org.

thank you, organizations

AUGUST 1, 2018 – NOVEMBER 20, 2018

These 72 organizations have contributed memberships or gifts-in-kind of \$100 or more or have received complimentary or reciprocal memberships in recognition of exemplary service to the museum. We acknowledge their generosity in each edition of the *America Letter* during their membership.

Arcus AS, Hagan, Norway
Atlantic Friends of The Danish
Immigrant Museum, Atlantic, IA
Boose Building Construction (Marty &
Connie Boose), Atlantic, IA
Carroll Control Systems, Inc. (Todd &
Jalynn Wanninger), Carroll, IA
Christopher Ranch LLC (Donald &
Karen Christopher), Gilroy, CA
The Copenhagen House (René G.
Kærskov), Solvang, CA
Country Landscapes, Inc. (Rhett
Faaborg), Ames, IA
Danebod Lutheran Church, Tyler, MN
Dania Society of Chicago, Chicago,
IL area
Danish American Athletic Club,
Chicago, IL area
The Danish American Archive and
Library, Blair, NE
Danish American Club in Orange
County, Huntington Beach, CA
area
Danish American Club of Milwaukee,
Milwaukee, WI area
Danish Archive North East (DANE),
Edison, NJ
Danish Brotherhood, Heartland
District Lodges, Iowa-Minnesota &
surrounding states
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #1,
Omaha, NE area
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #15, Des
Moines, IA area
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #16,
Minden, NE area
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #29,
Seattle, WA area
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #35,
Homewood, IL area

Danish Brotherhood Lodge #283,
Dagmar, MT area
Danish Brotherhood Centennial Lodge
#348, Eugene, OR area
The Danish Canadian National
Museum, Spruce View, Alberta,
Canada
The Danish Club of Houston,
Houston, TX area
Danish Club of Tucson, Tucson, AZ
area
Danish Cultural Center of Greenville,
Greenville, MI
The Danish Home, Croton-On-
Hudson, NY
The Danish Home, Chicago, IL
Danish Lutheran Church & Cultural
Center, Yorba Linda, CA
Danish Mutual Insurance Association,
Elk Horn, IA
Danish Sisterhood Dagmar Lodge #4,
Chicago, IL area
Danish Sisterhood Dronning
Margrethe Lodge #15, Wauwatosa,
WI area
Danish Sisterhood Ellen Lodge #21,
Denver, CO area
Danish Sisterhood Lodge #102, Des
Moines, IA area
Danish Sisterhood Flora Danica
Lodge #177, Solvang, CA
Danish Sisterhood Lodges, Heartland
District, Iowa-Minnesota &
surrounding states
Danish Sisterhood Lodges, Nebraska/
Colorado Districts, Lincoln, NE &
Denver CO areas
Den Danske Pioneer (Elsa Steffensen
& Linda Steffensen), Hoffman
Estates, IL
Elk Horn Lutheran Church,
Elk Horn, IA

Elk Horn-Kimballton Optimist Club,
Elk Horn & Kimballton, IA area
Elverhoj Museum of History and Art,
Solvang, CA
Exira-Elk Horn-Kimballton Community
School District, Elk Horn, IA area
Faith, Family, Freedom Foundation
(Kenneth & Marlene Larsen),
Calistoga, CA
Hacways (Helene & Nanna
Christensen), Hals, Denmark
Harlan Tribune Newspapers, Inc.
(Steve Mores & Alan Mores),
Harlan, IA
Henningsen Construction, Inc. (Brad
Henningsen, Vice President),
Atlantic, IA
House of Denmark, San Diego, CA
Independent Order of Svithiod,
Verdandi Lodge #3, Chicago, IL
area
Knudsen Old Timers, Glendale, CA
Landmands Bank (Jeff Petersen,
President) Audubon, IA
Main Street Market (Tracey Kenkel),
Panama, IA
Marne Elk Horn Telephone Co., Elk
Horn, IA
Nelsen and Nelsen, Attorneys at Law,
Cozad, NE
The Norden Club of Lincoln, Lincoln,
NE area
Northwest Danish Association,
Seattle, WA
O & H Danish Bakery (Eric Olesen),
Racine, WI
Olsen, Muhlbauer & Co., L.L.P.,
Carroll, IA
Oxen Technology, Harlan, IA
Petersen Family Foundation, Inc. (H.
Rand & Mary Louise Petersen),
Harlan, IA

Did you know? Families, groups, clubs, or businesses can sponsor exhibits, events, free admission days, our website, Brown Bag Lunch programs (including online videos for applicable presentations), or the whole Brown Bag Lunch series! Contact us to discuss the possibilities that await you: 712.764.7001 or deb.larsen@danishmuseum.org.

Proongily (Cynthia McKeen),
St. Paul, MN
The Rasmussen Group, Inc. (Sandra
Rasmussen and Kurt & Lynette
Rasmussen), Des Moines, IA
Rebild National Park Society,
Southern California Chapter, Los
Angeles, CA area
Red River Danes, Fargo, ND area

Ringsted Danish American Fellowship,
Ringsted, IA area
Royal Danish Embassy,
Washington, DC
Royal Danish Guard Society,
Chicago, IL area
Scan Design Foundation, Seattle, WA
Shelby County Historical Society &
Museum, Harlan, IA

Shelby County State Bank, Harlan
and Elk Horn, IA
Symra Literary Society, Decorah, IA
Upward Mobility (Susan Vitek),
Hinesburg, VT
Vasa Order of America, Omaha Lodge
#330, Omaha, NE

new members

AUGUST 1, 2018 – NOVEMBER 20, 2018

The Museum of Danish America
is pleased to identify the following
memberships: 78 individuals as its
newest members:

Jim & Nancy Barker, Freeport, IL
Dana Bovbjerg, Pittsburgh, PA
Leslie Brady, Papillion, NE
Larry Chase, Fort Collins, CO
Torben Jarlstrøm Clausen,
Odense, Danmark
Vicki Croft, Clarkston, WA
Sheryl Cuba, Omaha, NE
Governor Dennis & Mrs. Linda
Daugaard, Pierre, SD
Jenessa Denniston, Noblesville, IN
Annelise M. Dietz, North
Chesterfield, VA
Sharyn Hedbloom & Margaret
Frimoth, Astoria, OR
David & Charlotte Gensler,
Placitas, NM
Lois Held, West Bend, WI
Tim & Cari Hush, Racine, WI
Eric Hvolboll, Goleta, CA
Robin Ingle, Gainesville, FL
Jeremiah Jensen, Loveland, CO

Paul Jensen, Council Bluffs, IA
Colleen Johnson, Avalon, WI
Janet Johnson, West Des Moines, IA
Malcolm Johnson, Lapeer, MI
John & Sheila Joyce, Prairie
Village, KS
Lone Kanaskie, Olney, MD
Catherine Karlshoej, Roscoe, IL
Denis Kaufman, Bunker Hill, WV
Beth Kershner, Tulsa, OK
Kim & Vicky Kirkegaard,
Middleton, WI
Gary & Georganna Madsen,
Des Moines, IA
Susan Martin, Scottsbluff, NE
Kari Seppanen & Vera
Martinovich, Lake Stevens, WA
Pamela Mattera, Ridgewood, NY
Rita McClain, Clancy, MT
Charles Harry & Deborah
McDonald, Columbia, SC
Fredrick McGee, Southbury, CT
Robert Meyer, Sr., Omaha, NE
Roger & Marilyn Mollet,
Lakeville, MI
Mary O'Brien, Las Vegas, NV
Terrence & Karolee Olsen,

Georgetown, TX
Janne Osborne, Austin, TX
Marjorie Parsell, East Tawas, MI
Rennie & Marge Phillips, Scott
City, MO
Erik Poulsen, Clinton Township, MI
Travis & Sandra Randolph,
Saugatuck, MI
Julie Rasmussen, Exira, IA
Robert & Dorothy Rosenblatt,
Poulsbo, WA
Sandy Rosenblatt, Seattle, WA
Cathy Weigley & Laurence Schiller,
Deerfield, IL
Gail Shaw, Stockbridge, MA
Jo Sheetz, Houston, TX
John & Mary Stanley, Ceresco, NE
Delane Vanada, Monument, CO
Dale & Jane Vandre, Kalamazoo, MI
Rod & Valerie Vaughn,
Fort Thompson, SD
Paula Waters, Park Ridge, IL
Steve & Susan Watts, Hinsdale, IL
Kris Wertz, Pekin, IL
Michele Hacherl & William Zucker,
Tucson, AZ

life after iowa

IT HAS BEEN 10 YEARS SINCE THEIR INTERNSHIPS AT OUR MUSEUM. WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

HAYLEY CHAMBERS

Instead of getting a full-time job in 2008 after graduating with my MA in Public History, I opted to be an intern for about a year. It allowed me to apply the skills I had learned in school to real-life situations, and it gave me the freedom to travel. It is incredible to think that ten years ago I arrived in Elk Horn, fresh from Alaska, where I had interned at the Valdez Museum. Having lived on the east coast most of my life up until then, the endless corn and soybean fields of Iowa were a big change for me, and I thrived on the challenge.



A few weeks after I arrived, the museum celebrated its 25th anniversary, and it was an honor to participate in that landmark event. For the bulk of my nine-month internship, I worked with Angela Stanford on a variety of inventory, cataloging, and rehousing projects. Angela instilled in me a love for collections care, and I still strive to live up to her example of organization and detail. I am lucky enough to still count her as a friend and mentor today.

At small museums, employees and interns wear many hats, and I was lucky enough to be able to help with exhibits, including helping to set up the Victor Borge exhibit, education programs and tours, radio interviews, public speaking engagements, and every so often I would sneak away to the LEGO table to make some kind of creation. I will never forget making 300 *aebleskiver* in one day for a holiday program!

With the museum, I was also able to travel around the state for workshops and fun field trips to other museums. We also traveled to the state and regional museum conferences, where I was exposed to a wide professional network. The true value of the internship, though, was living with several Danish interns and being exposed to a new culture. We spent many nights discussing the similarities and differences of our world views. I still dream of one day visiting Denmark and meeting up with my fellow interns to see what their lives are like there.

Since my internship, I have traveled around the country working at the Kentucky Historical Society in Frankfort, Deadwood History in South Dakota, Montana, and Idaho. At present, I am the Senior Curator of Collections for Ketchikan Museums in Southeast Alaska. Our organization has two facilities: one that focuses on local history and the other is geared towards celebrating local Native culture with a collection of original, 19th century totem poles. I am also in my fifth year as a board member for Museums Alaska, our state museum association. When I am not working, I spend time helping my boyfriend restore a 1920s-era machine shop and boathouse. I often think of my time in Iowa and am so grateful to have had the opportunity to intern at the museum.

HELLE HOVMAND-RASMUSSEN

Ten years ago, I was an intern at the Danish Immigrant Museum for half a year. Back then, I worked with the curator of exhibits creating a temporary exhibition about one of the most famous Danish-Americans, Victor Borge, among many other things. Though the internship added many new skills to my curriculum, it's the people whom I met and the cultural experiences they gave me that I remember clearly now, 10 years later: from summertime barbecues to Thanksgiving and Christmas which were spent in the welcoming homes of staff members; everyday life with an American roommate who broadened my perception of American culture; and last, but not least, the many meetings with Danish Americans, practicing their cultural identity despite being separated by time, distance, and sometimes even generations from Denmark.

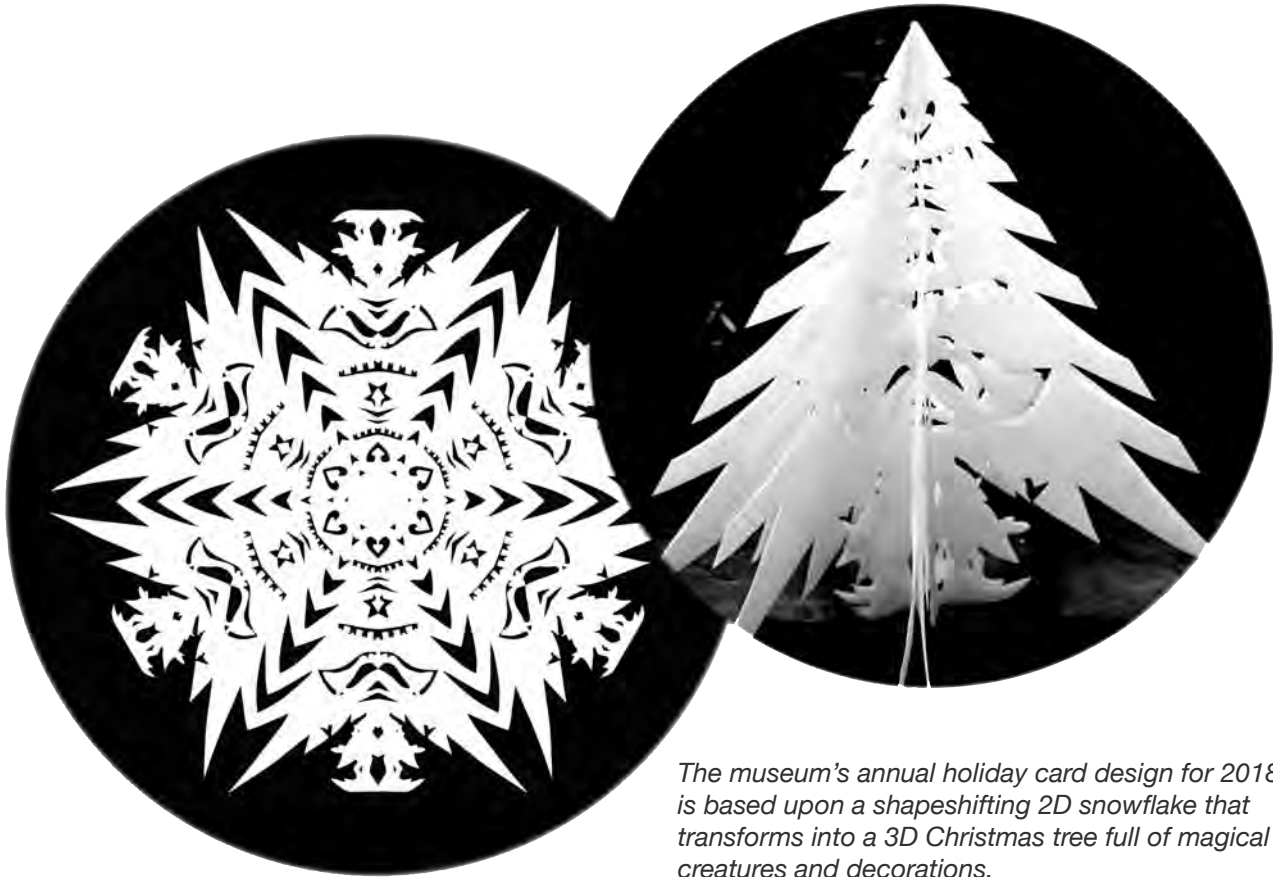
Many things have happened in the last 10 years - the museum's name has changed, to start with. On a personal note, I returned to Copenhagen, finished my degree, moved back to the southwestern part of Denmark, got married, and had three wonderful children. One thing recurs, however: I still work with the interpretation of famous Danish Americans, only this time it's Jacob A. Riis. Next year Sydvestjyske Museer will be opening a new museum in Jacob A. Riis' childhood home in Ribe (pictured here), and by means of my current job as pedagogical consultant in "MYRTHUE", the external learning environment in the municipality of Esbjerg, I am contributing to the development of interpretational tours on Riis for schoolchildren.



christmas tree snowflake

FREE TUTORIAL & PATTERN

A special holiday papirclip project brought to you by the Museum of Danish America, Elk Horn, Iowa. www.danishmuseum.org



The museum's annual holiday card design for 2018 is based upon a shapeshifting 2D snowflake that transforms into a 3D Christmas tree full of magical creatures and decorations.

Design © proongily 2018, Cynthia McKeen

christmas tree snowflake

HOW-TO

Design © proongily 2018, Cyntia McKeen

Paper

For cutting the Christmas Tree Snowflake, use a thin, strong paper that creases well. This *papirklip* was cut from Thai *unryu*, a 'rice paper' that has a fine grain and that comes in large sheets. Other papers that can work well for folding and cutting include origami paper (not easily available in large sheets), Danish *glanspapir* (not as easy to find as it once was) and sheet gift wraps. Rolled gift papers seem to retain their inclination to curl, but do often work well. Once you have a little experience, you will find that choosing papers for different designs becomes intuitive.

To cut this design with the intent of making a standing tree approximately 7" tall, start with a piece of paper 17" × 17" and increase the pattern size by 155%. Measure and cut paper exactly and crease sharp edges accurately for a good outcome.

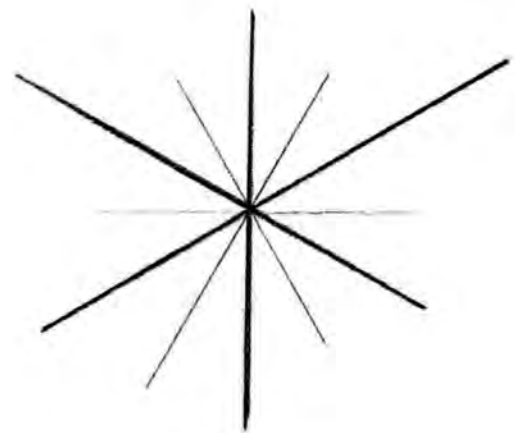
Folding

See instruction diagrams on page 50.

Folding in thirds, to produce 6 points, diverges from standard origami patterns, which is why I sketched those. The last step for this snowflake makes the design work as the tree.

USING THE PATTERN

Cut out the appropriate pattern (black and white triangle) from page 51. Align the pattern on the folded paper and fasten it by stapling in the black areas. There are left-handed and right-handed versions of the pattern which can make the cutting process easier.



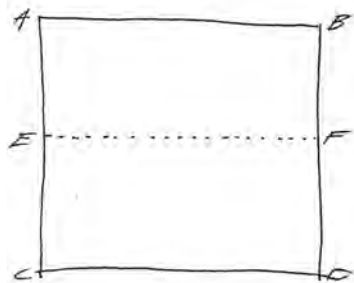
Cutting

This can be cut with scissors or blades or both. Use whichever is more comfortable.

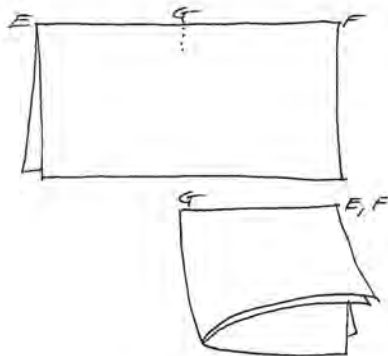
A Note from Cynthia:

"Some people may be tempted to use a bit of glue to connect the nisser at the base, but then the tree loses the look of layers of shadows. I did use a bit of glue inside the treetop for stability and the tree stands well, as long as the creasing is sharp. The bottom branches curl a little, which I like, but if you want to prevent that, press the folded tree under something heavy until just before you set it up."

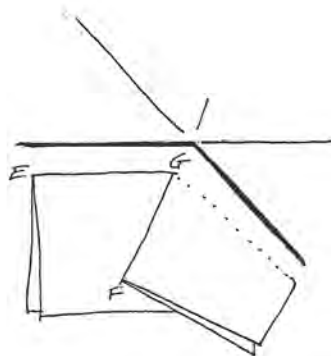
1. Begin with a square sheet of paper. Fold in half and crease well (AB to CD).



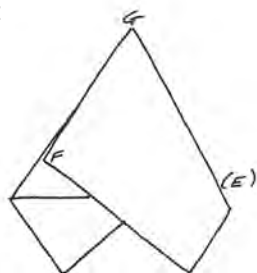
2. Along the folded edge, begin to fold in half again, but do not complete the whole fold (G). G is the center point of what will become your snowflake.



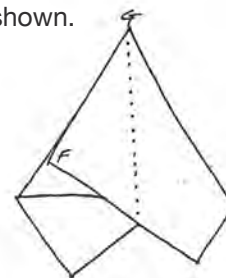
3. Fold the double sheet into thirds, using G as the pivotal point. (This can be difficult to judge at first - use the hexagon drawing as a guide.)



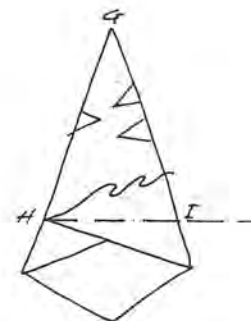
4. Fold EG back. Your sheet should look like this.



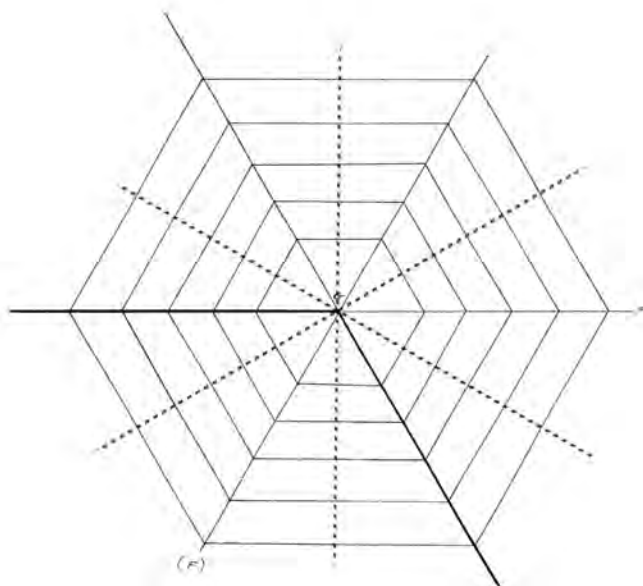
5. Fold the figure in half as shown.



6. Cut straight across from H to I. You can cut out shapes along GH and GI. To sharpen the points of your snowflake, use either H or I as those points and cut back the other, as shown with the wavy line.



7. Open sheet and re-crease the 6 diameter lines so that every other diameter line folds in the opposite direction. You will be creasing three long lines in one direction and three in the other. You should then be able to re-fold the snowflake, to find the 'tree' shape.



christmas tree snowflake

PATTERNS

Design © proongily 2018, Cyntia McKeen





museum of
danish america

2212 WASHINGTON STREET
ELK HORN, IA 51531

Non-Profit
US Postage
PAID
SP&D

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



01



INSIDE GREETING

Glædelig Jul
og Godt Nytår



02

includes white ribbon

BACK



museum of
danish america

2018 | PROONGILY PAPIRKLIP



03



04



05

Order early – quantities are limited. 01. Museum of Danish America's Annual Christmas Card 2018 Snowflake/Tree Papirklip, package of 10, #5885, \$12; Individual card, #5886, \$2 02. Museum of Danish America's Annual Keepsake Ornament 2018 Sold out. 03. Nisser Maks & Sylvi, #5688, \$60 (sold as set only) 04. Nisse Arne, #5676, \$30 05. Nisse Nico the Reindeer, Item 5664, \$20. Orders to 712-764-7001 or www.danishmuseum.org/shop. Members receive a 10% discount.