

americaletter

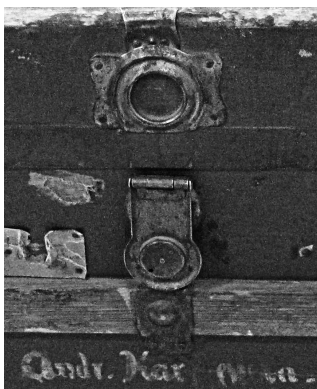


SUMMER 2020 | A BENEFIT OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE MUSEUM OF DANISH AMERICA

CONTENTS



Danish Jewish Museum



07

Danish
Jews

12

Travel
Trunks

18

Pandemic
of Yore

28

Prairie
Jewels



*1986.050.047**



04 Director's Corner

14 Calendars

23 Old & New Friends

05 Virtual Board
Meeting

16 Amanda's Search

31 Recipe

06 New Staff

20 Danish-American
Radio

ON THE COVER

Verona, Susanne Thea. Hand-colored copper etching. "*Hans Christian Andersen rises early and, being addicted to sunshine, he drinks from the first rays of the sun while thinking of Denmark.*"

America Letter

Summer 2020, No. 2

Published three times annually by the Museum of Danish America
2212 Washington Street, Elk Horn, Iowa 51531
712.764.7001 | www.danishmuseum.org

staff & interns

**Executive Director &
Albert Ravenholt
Curator of Danish-
American Culture**

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

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

**Prairie Maintenance
Assistant**

Kiara Rodriguez

**Associate Curator of
Exhibitions**

Diya Nagaraj, M.Litt.
E: diya.nagaraj

**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
Assistants**

Terri Amaral
E: terri.amaral

Cindy Pash
E: cindy.pash

Development Associate

Shelli Larson
E: slarson

**Genealogy Center
Manager**

Amanda Skellenger, M.A.,
M.L.I.S.
E: amanda.skellenger

Genealogy Researcher

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

**Executive Director
Emeritus**

John Mark Nielsen, Ph.D.

INTERNS

Julia Jessen, USA
Heather Olsen, USA

To contact staff, use
the prefix shown after E:,
followed by
@danishmuseum.org

*Any collections catalog numbers (xxxx.xxx.xxx) found in this edition may be researched at
<https://danishmuseum.pastperfectonline.com/advancedsearch>

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!

director's corner

One Monday morning in March, my first-grade son came downstairs and asked us, “Is there school today?” He was confused because usually my husband or I would actively wake him up on a school day. What he didn’t know was that about 12 hours earlier, the State of Iowa had recommended closing all schools, and now we were faced with suddenly adjusting our family routines to accommodate a child at home.

We all have a story like this – the story of when the coronavirus pandemic became real in our daily lives, our families, and our workplaces. We all have experienced disruption, stress, and unexpected outcomes. Some have dealt with temporary inconvenience, others have faced deep personal loss.

As I write this in late May, we are all still in a period of uncertainty, not sure how to strike the right balance between our individual health and safety, the larger public health needs, and the economic needs of our society. Equally challenging is not knowing how long this will last, and whether the social distancing required of us today will still be the norm next month, next season, or even next year.

In the face of all of these challenges, what role does a museum play? We are not an “essential service” as defined by our government leaders – after all, museums were formally closed by

state order in Iowa and are only now allowed to reopen. We do not feed the hungry, care for the sick, or house the homeless.

But as we all know, there is more to life than the basic needs of keeping our physical selves fed and sheltered. We seek connection with each other, we seek inspiration and joy, we seek to nourish our curious minds. And to fulfill those needs, museums are essential.

When the coronavirus became “real” for the Museum of Danish America, we closed the front doors but never stopped moving forward. Staff members rearranged their schedules and work locations to find the best solution for each person, whether working from home, coming into the office, or a bit of each. We have continued to preserve and share Danish-American culture in every way possible – caring for the collections, sharing programs online, shipping store items to customers, and communicating with our members and friends.

Most importantly, we’ve been trying to keep connected with you, our members, and all of the communities throughout Danish America. In a normal year, we would hope to welcome you to Elk Horn, meet you at festivals and events across the country, and bring our programs and exhibits to your communities. Instead, we’ve had to be more creative while we stay in place. Our Brown Bag Lunch programs are now shared through Facebook

(and no brown bag is required if you’re watching from home). We’re creating new videos about caring for old photographs, Nordic Cuisine recipes, and traditions of the summer solstice. We have virtual tours of our museum spaces available on our website. And we celebrated Sankt Hans Aften together while remaining apart.

Our doors in Elk Horn have reopened with limited hours. Eventually we will again travel to visit different corners of Danish America. But while we take careful steps in our return to normalcy, we can still fulfill those essential functions of a museum. We will connect you with the stories of Danish America. We will share the joyful moments that inspire us – from the purple martins hatching in the Jens Jensen Prairie Landscape Park, to the paintings that fill the walls of our art gallery. We will invite all curious minds to explore our collections and resources online.

Through all of these efforts we seek to remain essential to *you*, our members. It is your support that sustains our institution every year. Whether you connect with us through the pages of this *America Letter*, through online webinars, or by visiting in person, thank you for being part of our museum community.

On behalf of the staff and board of the Museum of Danish America, we wish you good health and good spirits!



By Tova Brandt

board of directors meeting

**JUNE 11 - 13, 2020
VIDEO CONFERENCE**

Even a pandemic cannot prevent the Museum of Danish America's board of directors from meeting. What was to be a much-anticipated convening in Salt Lake City morphed into the museum's first virtual board meeting.

Nearly all board and staff members were able to participate in the scheduled summer meetings (and an online happy hour), thanks to Zoom conference room software that kept everyone safe yet connected in their homes all across the United States.

The next strategic plan was a great topic of discussion, and a new slate of board members was presented and elected - look for more information about them in the Winter edition.



**The museum's next
board meeting, including the
Annual Meeting, will be held
October 15 - 17, 2020.**

EXECUTIVE

President

Beth Bro-Roof, Cedar Rapids, IA

Vice President

Pete West, Denver, CO

Secretary

Toni McLeod, Mesa, AZ

Treasurer

Karen Suchomel, West Branch, IA

MEMBERS

Anders Sand, Kansas City, MO
Carl Steffensen, Houston, TX
Carol Bassoni, Gilroy, CA
Carol Svendsen, Denver, CO
Chris Kofoed, West Branch, IA
Connie Hanson, Glendora, CA
Daniel Jensen, Columbus, OH
David Esbeck, San Diego, CA
David Hendee, Northfield, MN
Dennis Gray, Winston-Salem, NC
Elly Jorgensen, Prairie Village, KS
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
Mike Nielsen, Altoona, IA
Peder Hansen, Omaha, NE
Randy Ruggaard, Hudson, OH

EX-OFFICIO

Dennis Larson, Decorah, IA
John Mark Nielsen, Blair, NE
Nils Jensen, Portland, OR

On screen
Webcams and
conferencing
software connected
board members in
June.

new staff

HELP US WELCOME:



Diya Nagaraj

I am thrilled and honored to join the staff of the Museum of Danish America. The story of immigration is one that is personal to me; therefore, I am excited to learn more about the history of and contributions by Danish immigrants and to have the opportunity to share that story with a broader audience. During my time as an undergraduate student in St. Louis, I studied Environmental Policy and Art History and recently completed my Master's degree in Technical Art History at the University of Glasgow. Having spent time working at The Royal Highland Fusiliers Museum during my stay in Scotland, and then as a volunteer for a traveling exhibition in my hometown of Pittsburgh, I am eager to apply my experiences and background to new materials and in a new environment. When I'm not working, I love baking, gardening, going on hikes with my dog, and birdwatching. I look forward to getting to know the community at large.



Cindy Pash

I was born and raised on a small dairy farm in the Loess Hills of Western Iowa. I graduated high school in Elk Point, SD and then pursued a legal secretarial career in Sioux Falls. After getting married and starting a family, we ventured to explore our lives in various areas including Colorado, Omaha, Boston, Minnesota, and then back to my hometown in Iowa. At that time, I achieved my real estate brokers license and continued to raise my family. I have lived in the Southwest Iowa area now for seven years and have recently been given the privilege to become part of the remarkable Museum of Danish America family. So far, I have found Danish history to be very fascinating, and I welcome the opportunity to learn even more about the museum and the background of the Danish community as we never know where life's adventures are going to take you next.

American Interns



Heather Olsen is a Family History Major at Brigham Young University and has focused her research in the Scandinavian countries. She has taken four semesters of Danish classes to help her to read and understand old Scandinavian records. Heather also enjoys sewing, painting, and spending time with her family. She will be completing her internship "virtually," due to virus precautions taken by her university.



Julia Jessen graduated from Syracuse University in May with master's degrees in art history and museum studies. She received her B.A. in art history, journalism, and studio art from the University of Iowa. Julia's museum work has focused on expanding limited narratives and engaging untold stories. She is excited to further her interest in the stories objects tell through her collections internship. Julia is learning about the museum's textile collection while completing an inventory of each object in that collection.

belonging

Just as Danes have for hundreds of years emigrated to all corners of the world seeking fortunes across the oceans, so, too, have people from around the world made Denmark their home. One of the oldest groups to have immigrated to Denmark is Jews, from all over Europe. For more than 400 years, they have been an integral part of Denmark's history and development.

BY ROYAL DECREE

In the early 1600s Denmark was ruled by King Christian IV. In 1616 Christian IV founded the city of Glückstadt in Holstein, a duchy ruled by the Danish king. In order to attract business to the newly founded city, he extended an invitation to Jewish merchants to settle in the city. The first Jews to settle in Glückstadt were Sephardic Jews, who originally came from Spain and Portugal. Following the expulsion of Jews from the Iberian Peninsula in the late 1490s, thousands of Jews settled in various places in Europe, many in the Netherlands, which had a reputation for religious tolerance.

The Sephardic Jews were regarded as being good merchants, which was the main incentive for the king's invitation. King Christian IV was well known for spending vast amounts of money on building projects and wars with neighboring countries. Some Jewish immigrants worked

as moneylenders to the king, supplying him with funds to support his projects.

When the king first invited Jews to settle in Denmark, the Church protested vehemently, arguing that Jews had killed Jesus and that they were dangerous and thus should not be allowed to settle in Denmark. Even though the king allowed them to settle, Jews did not have the same rights as Christians, since the Danish government did not provide freedom of religion.

Jews living in Denmark in the 1600s and 1700s were, in most instances, considered second-class citizens, who were subject to special regulations. They were allowed to practice Judaism but only behind closed doors as not to "offend" the Christian public. They were not allowed to marry Christians, employ Christian servants, move around the country freely, or be members of the guilds - effectively making most professions closed to them.

WINDS OF CHANGE

In many ways, Jews in Denmark lived as a separate nation within a nation. They had little opportunity for contact and relations with non-Jews, and they were not equal citizens in the eyes of the law. This gradually started to

change with the advent of the Enlightenment (1715-1789), which eventually gave them the same rights as the Christian population.

The first half of the 1800s was a period of rapid change for the Jewish community. One of the big discussions of the day, both among Jews and non-Jews, was the position of the Jewish community. *Could and should they integrate into the wider society?*

In 1813 an event called the "anti-Jewish pamphlet war" broke out. This was a debate carried out in books, newspapers, and pamphlets among Christian and Jewish intellectuals, authors, etc. who debated whether or not Jews should and could be accepted as equal citizens. Some argued that Jews were just like Christians and should have the same rights, while others argued that the Jews were to blame for everything that was wrong in the country.

In the early 1800s Denmark was in severe financial trouble. In 1807, as a result of Denmark's involvement in the Napoleonic war, Copenhagen was bombarded by the English in order to capture the Danish fleet, and in 1813, the country went bankrupt. Some chose to blame the Danish Jews for the country's misfortune and

By Christina Damgaard Andersen
Scan | Design Foundation Intern,
Spring 2020





played on age-old stereotypes of Jews as people who secretly controlled the government and stole money from innocent Christians. This debate was carried out only on paper, and antisemitic riots never erupted.

Shortly after, in 1814, an important document in Danish-Jewish history saw the light of day: The Regulation of 1814. This document granted Danish Jews almost the same rights as the Christian population. Some exceptions were that Jews could not be part of the civil service, and all Jews had to be registered by the state. Not until 1849 did the first Danish Constitution promise freedom of religion, and Jews received full civil rights.

The Regulation of 1814 was a fundamental change for Danish Jews. Before the Regulation, the Jewish community was completely independent from the wider society: they had their own “courts” which followed Jewish law (for instance, regarding

divorces, inheritances, etc.), schools, elder care, and poverty assistance. They chose their own rabbis and primarily used Hebrew or Yiddish.

While the Regulation gave Danish Jews better rights (for example, by opening up the job market), it also meant that they had to become part of the wider Danish society and submit to state regulations. As a result, the Jewish community lost much of the autonomy it enjoyed prior to the Regulation. The Regulation dismantled Jewish “courts” and forced Danish Jews to accept Danish law over Jewish law. The king became the one to officially appoint rabbis and oversee the running of the community. Instead of using Hebrew or Yiddish, Danish Jews had to start using Danish or German, so that Danish officials could understand what was going on in the community.

The Regulation was widely debated inside the Jewish community. It is important to note

that, just like today, the Jewish community was not homogenous, but rather a group with diverse opinions. Some conservatives within the community were against handing over autonomy to the state, while progressives saw the Regulation as an opportunity to integrate and move up in society.

The path to equal rights was not without its opponents *outside* the Jewish community, as well. In 1819, inspired by similar events in Germany, antisemitic riots erupted in Denmark, most violently in Copenhagen. Jewish shops were ransacked and Danish Jews were attacked in the streets. Around Copenhagen, posters were hung encouraging people to rid the country of Jews. One poster read:

“Honored citizens call to arms against the Jews who mock and ridicule our fatherly government, mock the citizens, steal the bread from the poorest and make bankruptcy to enrich themselves on behalf of their fellow citizens.”

01. Early 1900s Russian Jews in Copenhagen.

*This and following
photos courtesy
of The Danish
Jewish Museum,
Copenhagen.*

As the quote clearly illustrates, Danish Jews were portrayed as a group of people who were greedy, stole money from poor Christians, and worked to overthrow the Danish government. While the accusations were completely fabricated, the riots went on for several days. In Copenhagen, the police were unable to stop the riots, and the army was called in to quell the violence. Sporadic attacks and riots continued throughout 1820 before dying out.

While the Regulation had its opponents, it enabled many members of the Jewish community to climb the social ladder and become part of the bourgeoisie without having to convert to Christianity.

The Regulation increased interaction between Jews and Christians. One of many examples is the partnership between the Jewish merchant brothers Meyer Bing (1807-1883) & Jacob Bing (1811-1896) and Christian sculptor Frederik Vilhelm Grøndahl (1819-1856). Together the three men founded the world-famous porcelain factory Bing & Grøndahl in 1853 – renowned for its Christmas plates.

NEW ARRIVALS

Throughout the 1800s Danish Jews integrated very well into Danish society. The biggest change to the social cohesion of the Jewish community came in the late-1800s and early-1900s, when thousands of Jewish refugees came to Denmark. This was a period when millions of Jews fled persecution and poverty in Russia and Eastern Europe. For the vast majority, the final destination was America.

Nevertheless, around 3,000 Jews settled in Copenhagen, many because they could not afford to continue onwards to America.

The new arrivals were not entirely well-received in Denmark, neither by Christians nor Jewish Danes. Many Danish Jews had integrated and become part of the upper class, and they feared that too many poor immigrants would spark a wave of antisemitism in Denmark. The new arrivals not only differed significantly from the established Jewish community in terms of customs and language, but they were also an economic burden for the established Jewish community who were financially responsible for them. (This was before the significant social reforms of the 1930s, which became the foundation of the modern Danish welfare state.)

The Jewish immigrants congregated around the streets of Borgergade and Adelgade in the heart of Copenhagen. Today these streets are some of the most sought-after and expensive places to live. But in the 1900s, it was an area with terrible living conditions. Over time, the differences evaporated between the new arrivals and the established Jews (sometimes referred to humorously as “Viking Jews,” because of their long history in Denmark). The outbreak of World War I effectively stopped the streams of immigrants across Europe, and for the next few decades, very few Jews immigrated to Denmark.

DANISH JEWS DURING WWII

In the 1930s, with the rise of Nazism, hundreds of thousands of European Jews were desperate

to emigrate. The rescue of the Danish Jews is well-known across the world, but it is important to note that, while Denmark rescued Jews, Denmark primarily rescued its *own* Jews. As a neighboring country to Germany, Denmark would have been an obvious destination for the thousands of German Jews looking to escape Germany. But the Danish border was effectively closed. The criteria for being allowed to enter were extremely strict, and only a couple of thousand people were able to gain entry – not only Jews, but also political refugees like socialists and communists. Some of those who were allowed to enter were young people sponsored by Zionist youth organizations. They came to Denmark on a kind of internship to learn agriculture on Danish farms before emigrating to British-controlled Palestine to help build a Jewish state there. However, the outbreak of World War II meant that travel to Palestine became impossible, and many ended up staying in Denmark until after the war.

In many ways, Denmark represents a unique story during World War II. On April 9, 1940, German troops occupied Denmark. Instead of completely taking over the country, the Danish government negotiated a cooperation policy with Germany. This meant that the Danish government continued to function and that life as a whole continued as before the occupation. In other countries occupied by the Nazis, Jewish citizens were required to wear the Star of David to clearly identify them as Jews; many lost their jobs and housing before being deported to concentration





and death camps. While the cooperation policy was in effect (until the summer of 1943), none of this happened to the Danish Jews.

Following public strikes and an uptick in sabotage by the Resistance in 1943, the Nazis became frustrated with the situation in Denmark and demanded stricter restrictions and the death penalty (which had not been used in Denmark since 1892) for sabotage. This was the final straw for the Danish government, who resigned in protest.

The Nazi official responsible for Denmark was Werner Best. Best's main objective was to maintain order in Denmark and secure a steady supply of food and goods from Denmark to Germany. But the increase of sabotage and attacks angered Hitler, who demanded that Best get the situation under control. It was Best himself who suggested a deportation of the Danish Jews, but from the beginning, Best played a very strange role. He planned the deportation while at the same time also sabotaging his own work. Through his associate



Georg Duckwitz at the German Embassy, information that the arrest would take place during the night between October 1 and 2, 1943, was leaked to Danish Jews. Having been warned in advance, thousands of Jews fled Denmark to neutral Sweden.

Ordinary Danes played a big role, as did the fishermen who sailed the Jews to Sweden. It is important to note that transport to Sweden was not free, and in recent years the role of the fishermen has been the subject of much discussion. The average price for a "ticket" to Sweden was 1,000 kr (around \$3,000 today), although some people paid a lot more (upwards of 50,000 kr, or around \$170,000 today). Therefore, it was by no means inexpensive to go to Sweden.

It is also an important note that no one was left behind if they could not pay. If someone could not afford it, other people would pay their fare. While some fishermen took advantage of people in a desperate situation, they also took a considerable risk of not only being arrested, but also

losing their fishing boat and thus, their livelihood. Today we know that risk was considerably less, since the Germans had devoted almost no resources to capturing escaping Jews. They did not, for instance, patrol the waters between Denmark and Sweden. Even those Danes who were arrested were given very light sentences. But none of this was known in 1943.

The rescue was a huge success. Around 7,000 Danish Jews managed to escape to Sweden, where they stayed until the end of the war. But 472 Jews were arrested by the Germans and deported to the concentration camp of Theresienstadt, outside Prague. Theresienstadt was not a death camp with gas chambers but a "transit camp" where people were sent before being forwarded onwards to the death camps in German-occupied Poland.

Several factors made the experience of the Danish Jews different from other prisoners in the camp. A special agreement between Denmark and Germany ensured that Jews deported from

02. Learning to farm, 1930s

Jewish refugees in Denmark preparing for immigration to British-controlled Palestine.

03. Early April 9, 1940

Photo taken by a Danish Jew showing German planes over Copenhagen.

Denmark (both Danish citizens and foreign nationals) were only deported to Theresienstadt and not death camps like Auschwitz. They were also allowed to receive packages of food and clothing. In April 1945 a special agreement between Denmark, Sweden, and Germany secured the release of thousands of Danish and Norwegian prisoners (Jews, resistance fighters, etc.) from concentration camps across Europe in a humanitarian action known as the White Buses, under the auspice of the Swedish Count Folke Bernadotte.

All in all, 99 percent of Danish Jews survived the Holocaust. Following the war, Danish Jews returned to Denmark and began rebuilding their lives. Unlike as in most other countries in Europe, Jewish sites (synagogues, cemeteries, etc.) had not been destroyed during the war.

MODERN COMMUNITY

The most recent sizable wave of Jewish immigration to Denmark began in the late-1960s, when around 3,000 Polish Jews came to Denmark. Escaping

communism and increasing antisemitism in Poland, the Polish Jews were generally welcomed and quickly integrated into Danish society.

For 400 years, Jews have been an integral part of Danish society. But across Europe, an increase in antisemitism has led to thousands of Jews leaving Europe for Israel, including Danish Jews. In the 2010s there were several terrorist attacks on Jewish communities in Europe. In February 2015 a terrorist attacked a free-speech event in Copenhagen, killing Danish filmmaker Finn Nørgaard, and the next day attacked the Great Synagogue on Krystalgade where he killed a Danish Jew named Dan Uzan.

The increased threat of terrorist attacks has resulted in Jewish institutions in Denmark being under armed police protection. Despite this, most Danish Jews continue to feel at home in Denmark. Following the 2015 attack, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu encouraged European Jews to leave Europe and return “home” to Israel. The

current and former Chief Rabbis of Denmark said that they were disappointed by the remarks and underlined that Danish Jews were already home. An analysis also shows that there has been no increase in Danish Jews leaving Denmark for Israel following the attack.

The Danish Jewish community has never been large. Today, as during the war, it numbers around 7,000 people. As this article shows, the Jewish community is not one homogenous group. Danish Jews come from different backgrounds and arrived at different times – some recently, some hundreds of years ago.

The degree of religiosity is also not homogenous. The small community boasts three synagogues (reform, orthodox, and ultra-orthodox), a kosher supermarket, a Jewish kindergarten and school, a nursing home, and the Danish Jewish Museum.



04. Star of David

This star belonged to a Danish Jew who was interned in the concentration camp of Theresienstadt.



05. Ship Hotel

Starting in 1969, thousands of Polish Jews came to Denmark. In the beginning, some

were housed in ships converted into hotels, like the one shown here.

When someone thinks of late 19th and early 20th century immigration, visions of large ships packed with people flit through the mind. Piles of trunks and suitcases on docks waiting to be claimed, and identification and immigration paperwork being reviewed and stamped are all easily imagined as one tries to travel back in time to what must have been both an exciting adventure and an overwhelming and uncertain experience.

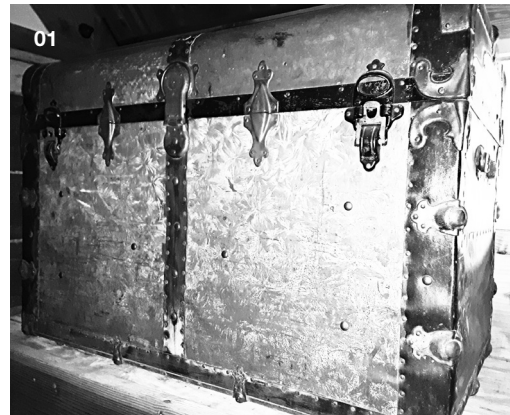
Some of the most tangible illustrations of the immigration experience found within the museum's collections are trunks. There are wood trunks of varying sizes: a few as large as four and a half feet long by over two and a half feet tall and a few smaller than two feet long. There are metal trunks and even a few wicker ones. A wardrobe steamer trunk was acquired several years ago with drawers inside and space for hanging one's clothing. Some of the trunks have a number of stickers attached that reveal their travel histories, and many have painted-on names and names of the traveler's destination city. All have unique, yet similar stories.

collection connection

Here we highlight a handful of those trunks, which you may see at the museum and online. To view our collections database, called "View Our Collection," just go to our website: www.danishmuseum.org.

01. Metal Steamer Trunk

Axel Madsen, born April 30, 1896, in Åsnes, Denmark to Christin and Patrina (Rasmussen) Madsen, came to America early in 1917 with this trunk aboard the *Frederik VIII*. Madsen settled in the Dike, Iowa area and gained his citizenship through military service. He was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1918 and discharged a year later. He died in 1995. (1997.006.001, gift of Lorraine Isley)



02. Wardrobe Steamer Trunk

The donor's mother Johanne Thomsen Larsen used this trunk when she immigrated to the U.S. shortly after marrying in 1931. With sturdy metal sides, it contains eight hangars and six drawers, as well as a suitcase that can be removed and carried separately. Larsen and her husband traveled to this country aboard the German flagship *Bremen*, and they settled in the Harlan, Iowa area. (2014.043.001, gift of Kenneth Larsen)



By Angela Stanford



03. Wood Trunk, destination painted on top

Jane Hansen's trunk was made in Hjørring, Denmark, in either Heinrich Tanck's shop or Miss Hansen's father's shop. Both men were in the same business. Hansen's sister Karen came to America with her baby, Agnes, to join her husband, Fritz Christian Tanck, who had already arrived. Jane's and Karen's mother did not want Karen to make the trip alone, so it was agreed that her older sister Jane should go with her and later return to Denmark. However, once in Wisconsin, Jane met her future husband, Niels, married, and remained in the U.S. (1998.089.001, gift of Susan Mortensen Penn)

04. Wicker Trunk

This 19" x 30" trunk was used by Kristian and Anna Langaard, who immigrated as their honeymoon after marrying in Denmark in 1924. Both were originally from Snedsted, Denmark, and the couple settled in Guthrie County, Iowa and took up farming. (1999.023.001, gift of Erwen and Neva Langaard)



05. Wooden Steamer Trunk

The only trunk in the collection known to have traveled across the ocean twice is this one, which belonged to Andreas Karstensen. The first trip was his immigration to the U.S. in 1892. Shortly thereafter, he married Nicoline Juel, and the couple settled in Atlantic, Iowa. He did some farming but also studied law and served in the military. The second trip was in 1914, when Andreas used it for a visit back to Denmark. (1988.074.001, gift of Esther Karstensen)

exhibition calendar

current

KINGS, QUEENS, AND COMMONERS: PORTRAITS FROM THE PERMANENT COLLECTION

Main Floor Gallery
Through September 13, 2020
*Sponsored by the Danish
Sisterhood Lodge #15,
Milwaukee, WI*

MIGRANT

Kramme Gallery
Through February 2021

SNAPSHOTS: TRAVELING WITH THE POET, HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

Artwork by Danish artist
Susanne Thea
Multimedia Room
Through Spring 2021



coming

ART NOUVEAU INNOVATION: DANISH PORCELAIN FROM AN AMERICAN COLLECTOR

Main Floor Gallery
October 2, 2020 - January 3, 2021
*Sponsored by The Danish Home
of Croton-on-Hudson and the
Albert Victor Ravenholt Fund*

traveling



**New Nordic
Cuisine** will be at
the following venues:

**American Swedish
Historical Museum**
Philadelphia, PA
Through August 23, 2020

Nordia House
Portland, OR
December 5, 2020 -
March 28, 2021

Major support for New Nordic Cuisine comes from the American-Scandinavian Foundation, Erik and Eva Andersen, and the Estate of Erik Sorensen. **National tour** sponsored by Cynthia Larsen Adams & Gary M. Adams, Embassy of Denmark in Washington, DC, O&H Danish Bakery, The Danish Pioneer Newspaper, Humanities Iowa, Nordic Council of Ministers, Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs, Anna Thomsen Holliday & Hal Holliday, and the Honorable Lynette Skow Rasmussen & Kurt Rasmussen.

Codfish with raised gill

Royal Copenhagen,
design by Carl F.
Liisberg in 1888,
made 1889, painter
Marianne Høst.

events calendar

DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, ALL PROGRAMS AND EVENTS ARE TAKING PLACE IN DIGITAL FORMATS. PROGRAMS WHICH WERE DOCUMENTED THIS SPRING ARE STILL AVAILABLE ON THE MUSEUM'S FACEBOOK PAGE AND YOUTUBE CHANNEL.

replay online:

BROWN BAG LUNCH

Foraging and the Fascinating Travels of Plants

By Rich and Marion Patterson
April 16

BROWN BAG LUNCH

Islam and Immigration In Denmark

By Todd Green
May 21

SANKT HANS AFTEN

Our annual celebration of Danish-style Midsummer
June 20

**DANISH SISTERHOOD
ARCHIVES VIRTUAL TOUR**

Cheyenne Jansdatter, Archival
Collections Manager
June 30

PRAIRIE WALK

Kiara Rodriguez
August 20

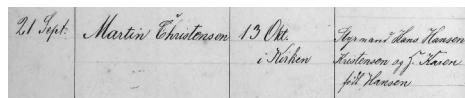
SUBSCRIBE & WATCH

Also visit our Nordic Cuisine channel on YouTube for a delightful variety of how-to demonstrations, food autobiographies, and visits to Nordic food destinations.

www.youtube.com/nordiccuisine

WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/DANISHMUSEUM | WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/DANISHMUSEUM

discovering surprise connections



01

I am not of Danish descent. My heritage is mostly Ukrainian, Scottish, English, Irish, Dutch, and German with, according to my DNA profile, a bit of the Baltic States thrown in for good measure. In all of the years that I have been doing genealogy, I never considered myself as having any connections to Denmark or Danish heritage. However, once I got curious about my extended family, I realized I was quite wrong.

Prior to starting my position here at the Genealogy Center, I really wasn't familiar with much of anything that was Danish. I never felt a need to know, because I didn't have a connection to that world. I wasn't aware of traditions or foods and didn't recognize surnames as being linked to Danish heritage. Sad, I know. But once I began learning more about the heritage and the immigrants that came from Denmark, I realized that I have had lifelong connections to Danes all this time, and I just never realized it.

Once I started learning the common Danish surnames – Jensen, Andersen, Christensen, etc. – I discovered that I had a lot of those people in my life. One of my closest and longest friends is an Andersen. Quizzing him, he

told me he knew he had Danish ancestry but didn't know much about who his people were or when/where they came from. All he really knew was that when his family immigrated, they settled around Sioux City, Iowa and in southeastern South Dakota. The great friend and dedicated genealogist that I am, I have now decided that he needs to know *everything* – and will – by the time I'm done with his family's research.

Another “unknown Dane” in my life was a man whom I had known forever. His name was Marlin Burdette Jensen (1928-2012), and he had grown up around Exira and Brayton, Iowa. He was a farmhand for a cousin of mine, and it wasn't until recently that I learned he was not only of Danish descent, but that his father was an immigrant from Denmark. A good man and a hard worker, he was soft-spoken and always kind to us kids. It was very sad when he passed, and looking back now, this man is a fixture in all my memories of time at that farm.

The biggest discovery was a surprise and turned out to be a close family connection. You see, my grandfather was married before he wed my grandmother. He had previously fathered

three children: a son and two daughters. Through random family discussions growing up, I knew grandpa's first wife was a Christensen. But it wasn't until I realized that Christensen was a Danish surname that I became curious enough to look more into my aunts' and uncle's family heritage.

My grandfather married his first wife on June 2, 1921. She was the second child and only daughter born to Martin Christensen and Bodil Marie Nielsen. While my grandfather's wife and her brothers had been born in Iowa, her parents were natives of Denmark.

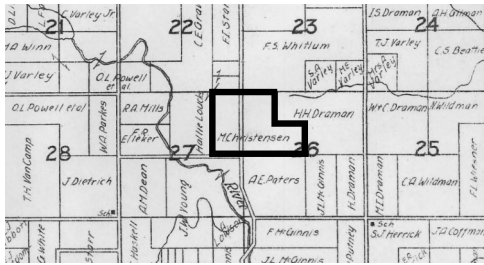
Martin Christensen was born on September 21, 1872 in Svendborg, Ærøskøbing Sogn, Denmark to Hans Hansen Christensen and Karen Hansen. 01

When Martin was three years old, his father passed away, and upon the age of 14, he left Denmark alone to come to America, arriving in 1887 and settling in Iowa. His mother eventually came to join Martin in America in 1901.

Martin first settled in Audubon County, Iowa, where he worked as a butcher. Martin eventually relocated to Clinton, Iowa,



By Amanda Skellenger



02

where he continued his trade in butchering, and, on April 26, 1899, he married Bodil Marie Nielsen. Bodil was born May 15, 1873 in a Danish community in Schleswig-Holstein to Nick Nielson and Mary Lund. She and her family had immigrated to America in 1892 and settled around Clinton.

Around 1907, Martin and his family moved to Adair County, Iowa, where he had purchased land in Jefferson Township, south of Menlo. His farm was around 200 acres and located in the northern part of the county. This farm is where he lived out his days until his death on January 20, 1931. 02

It has been interesting looking into this family and their connections to me and mine. By looking through the census records, I discovered that my grandfather was one of Martin Christensen's hired hands in 1930. That's likely how he met and married his first wife, Martin's daughter. 03

Through various articles and mentions, my local newspaper archives revealed many ways in which our families were linked. They were great at documenting how the Christensens were often part of Skellenger family

1920 United States Federal Census for Martin Christensen

Iowa - Adair - Jefferson - District 0009

Household Number	Name	Relation	Married in Iowa	Age	Sex	Color	Year Born	Year of Immigration	Native Born	Birthplace	Tongue	Birthplace of Father	Tongue of Father	Birthplace of Mother	Tongue of Mother	Occupation	Industry	Employer
1	Martin Christensen	Head		37	M	W	1883			Denmark	Denish	Denmark	Denish	Denmark	Denish	Butcher	Self-employed	
2	Bodil Marie Nielsen	Wife		26	F	W	1899			Denmark	Denish	Denmark	Denish	Denmark	Denish	Butcher	Self-employed	
3	John Skellenger	Boarder		19	M	W	1901			Iowa	English	Iowa	English	Iowa	English	Farmer	Worshiping out of	
4	Charles Skellenger	Son		12	M	W	1908			Iowa	English	Iowa	English	Iowa	English	Farmer	Worshiping out of	
5	Edna Skellenger	Daughter		10	F	W	1910			Iowa	English	Iowa	English	Iowa	English	Farmer	Worshiping out of	
6	William Skellenger	Son		8	M	W	1912			Iowa	English	Iowa	English	Iowa	English	Farmer	Worshiping out of	
7	Robert Skellenger	Son		6	M	W	1914			Iowa	English	Iowa	English	Iowa	English	Farmer	Worshiping out of	
8	Marion Skellenger	Daughter		4	F	W	1916			Iowa	English	Iowa	English	Iowa	English	Farmer	Worshiping out of	

03

gatherings and celebrations. One of my favorite newspaper finds was about my great-grandparents' 50th wedding anniversary and how they had actually been married on Martin Christensen's farm. 04

According to the *History of Adair County Iowa and Its People, Vol II, 1915*, and articles in the local Stuart, Iowa newspapers, Martin had a positive impact on the county and communities in which he was involved. He had been a member of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows Lodge 697, located in Menlo, Iowa, served as a Jefferson township trustee, and was the director of the telephone company for a time. The story in the *History of Adair County Iowa and Its People* provided many accolades to Martin Christensen for who he was, the impact he had on the community, and what he had accomplished in life.

Before starting this position at the Museum of Danish America's Genealogy Center, I didn't think I had any connections to Denmark or the Danish people in my family. But, through the information I have learned, the joy of researching genealogy, and a healthy dose of curiosity, I have finally been able to discover my own familial ties to the emigrants from Denmark.

R. O. Skellenger and Kate McCaulley were married 50 years ago on the Martin Christensen farm near Menlo. They are the parents of seven children, grandparents to 28 grandchildren and 8 great grandchildren.

Page 8 of The Stuart Herald, published in Stuart, Iowa on Thursday, March 7th, 1940

04

parallel pandemics

The United States is experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic, as is every other country in the world. This is certainly not the first time that our country or the world has faced such a situation, nor will it probably be the last. And you are now asking yourself how this pandemic can relate to genealogy.

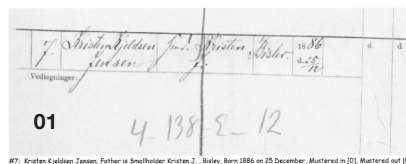
As I have gone through the past few months being isolated from my family, my friends, and my colleagues, I began to think about something my father told me regarding his experience in World War I. He was one of many Danish immigrants who served for the United States in World War I and experienced the Pandemic of 1918.

My father was born in Djørup, Bislev Parish, Aalborg County on December 25, 1886. He was the eighth child of ten born to Kristen Jensen and Mette Kirstine Nielsen. The name given to him at his baptism was Kristen Kjeldsen Jensen. He was located in the Danish census of 1901 as a 15-year-old working as a *vogterdreng* (shepherd boy) for another family. It was the practice in Denmark that every male person was expected to contribute to the defense of the country. My dad's conscription record for the Danish Army was

filed in 1904 when he was 18 years old. 01

As with many other young men with little hope of a promising future, he eventually decided to emigrate from Denmark. He arrived at Ellis Island on April 15, 1913, as Kristen Kjeldsen Jensen. But as a new immigrant, his name was quickly Americanized to Chris K. Jensen. He first settled in Audubon, Iowa, and was found there in the 1915 Iowa census.

In 1917 he registered for the draft, and on September 30, 1918 he



#7: Kristen Kjeldsen Jensen, Father is Smallholder Kristen J. Bislev, Born 1886 on 25 December. Mustered in [2], Mustered out [2]

02



was shipped out of Hoboken, New Jersey, headed for France.

Here he is in his uniform, 31 years old, heading for France. 02
He returned from Brest, France in 1919.

I don't know if you have ever tried to get information from your parents or grandparents about their lives in Denmark, but my dad was a man of very few words. Attempts to get him to talk about his family and life in Denmark yielded little to no information.

As I grew a bit older, I tried to get him to talk about his time in the army in World War I. That was pretty much stonewalled, also. After a few more attempts, he finally broke down and said he would tell me one thing. His statement was that *they had lost more men from the flu on the ship while going to France than they lost in the battles.*

At the time, I was more interested in the fact that they had buried them all at sea rather than in the cause of their deaths.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, I recalled my dad's statement about the shipboard deaths of soldiers from the flu. Of course, he was talking about the Spanish Flu, which was a worldwide pandemic. I



By Wanda Sornson

began seeking more information regarding the Spanish Flu and discovered that “more U.S. soldiers had died from the 1918 flu than were killed in battle during the war.” This certainly confirmed my dad’s statement. This same article stated that 20 million to 50 million people died from that virus worldwide - some estimates were as high as 100 million deaths.

Scientists are not sure where the Spanish Flu originated, but they often mention France, China, Britain, or the United States. The first known case was in Fort Riley, Kansas, on March 11, 1918. It was referred to as the Spanish Flu because Spain was a neutral country that had free media and could report on the disease.

As I continued reading about the Spanish Flu pandemic, I realized I could be reading about the COVID-19 pandemic of today. Hospitals in some areas were at capacity, and they were forced to place patients in schools, private homes, and buildings that were converted to hospital-like settings. Officials in communities imposed quarantines, shut down public places, and told people to stay home. Businesses were shut down, farm workers couldn’t work, and basic services were affected. In some cities people were ordered to wear masks. Does this sound familiar?

We also hear talk of the disease having a resurgence. In 1918 Philadelphia held a parade which caused a huge upsurge in the disease resulting in more deaths than the first wave. This pandemic

came to an end in the summer of 1919 because those that were infected died or became immune. Just what does this talk of a pandemic have to do with genealogy? I find it interesting that some things in history *do* seem to repeat themselves. It seems to me that maybe we don’t take the time to be aware of historical information, especially things that affected our ancestors or our families. I think of my dad on that ship full of soldiers, with so many of them dying. And did he get sick, was he immune, did he have any close friends on that ship? How did this affect him? How did it affect my aunt, who lost two little boys to that flu?

Well, I think it points out that we need to talk to the older people in our families, listen to their stories, and glean as much information from them as we can. In my case, I could not get information from my dad about his life in Denmark but did get the comment about the Flu and World War I. That comment and the connection to the current pandemic opened in me the desire to know more about the Spanish Flu and how my ancestry could have been affected by it.

Genealogy is too often just a series of names and dates going back through the years. But just imagine how genealogy comes alive when you know some of the unique stories, some of the history surrounding our ancestors, and then can explore similar events in our lives to form a more meaningful bond to those that went before us.



Army-issue olive-green WWI sleeping bag. Made from wool. This sleeping bag belonged to the donor’s father, Carl Peter Larsen. Carl Peter Larsen was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1917. He spent his entire enlistment at Fort Dodge, Iowa. Carl served as a hospital corpsman during the 1918 influenza pandemic that precluded Carl’s unit from shipping overseas to fight in Europe. *1995.186.001*, gift of Robert A. Larsen.

Sources:

<https://www.history.com/topics/world-war-i/1918-flu-pandemic>
<https://www.wbur.org/commonhealth/2020/05/11/historian-draws-parallels-between-the-1918>

the wall that talks

STORIES FROM THE DANISH IMMIGRANT WALL OF HONOR



“

*Let's get the coffee
on the table.”*

For 40 years, Danish immigrant Peder K. Back spoke this phrase – in Danish – every Thursday night on Racine, Wisconsin radio station WRJN. One of the best-known radio shows ever produced in Racine was Back's "Danish Hour," heard on WRJN from 1928-1970.

Back's radio broadcasting story was documented in interviews and articles published in the *Racine Journal Times* and *Milwaukee Journal* newspapers during the 1950's through the 1970's, copies of which are contained in Back's Danish Immigrant Wall of Honor file.

His radio career began in 1928 when a friend suggested that because he lived near Racine – then known as the "Danish Capital of America" – he should launch a Danish radio show. For about five years after his first broadcast, Back spoke only Danish on the air, but his programs gradually gave way to English.



By Shelli Larson

01. Peder Back, 1957

His collection included several thousand records. 1995.056.009, gift of June Hansen.

02



He played mostly modern Danish music, which included fox trots, waltzes, and polkas. He'd turn "a Danish jazz tune, such as those played by Svend Asmussen and his Unmelancholy Danes," according to deejay Back's interview with the *Milwaukee Journal*.

Back debuted his second weekly radio program in 1931, "The American-Scandinavian Hour," which featured Norwegian and Swedish modern music. In addition, he did an annual Christmas morning show with records of the Royal Danish Orchestra playing Yuletide music. In the 1930's Back also did Danish

broadcasts on radio station WTMJ in Milwaukee.

According to the *Racine Journal Times*, Back purchased his radio time and secured his own advertisers. By his retirement, his "Danish Hour" program was one of the oldest foreign language programs on the air and one

02. On Air
Broadcasting at
his desk at WRJN.
1995.056.010, gift
of June Hansen.



of the oldest programs of any type in the country conducted continuously by one person.

Back's recordings were mostly purchased and imported from Europe. He acquired a vast library of Scandinavian songs – between 6,000 and 7,000 records.

Back was born in Aalborg, Denmark, in 1888 on June 5, Danish Constitution Day (*Grundlovsdag*). As a teenager he attended horticulture school in Denmark, and after immigrating to the United States in 1906, he worked nearly 10 years as a gardener in New York, Connecticut, and Illinois. In 1917 he moved to Racine, Wisconsin, and started a seed business, the Back Seed Co.

His devotion to advancing Danish culture in the United States was acknowledged with the award of the Royal Gold Medal from King Frederick IX in 1954. He was a member of the Danish Brotherhood and Dania Society. Peder died in 1974.

Lad os få kaffen på bordet.

**DANISH IMMIGRANT
WALL OF HONOR**
Column 54 Row 39
Peder Back (1906)
Racine, Wisconsin



03. Form 678
Photo of coffee
service designed by
Henning Koppel
(1918-1981).
2007.050.044

new additions to the wall of honor

FEBRUARY 12 – MAY 21, 2020

The Danish Immigrant Wall of Honor provides families and friends with a means of preserving the memories of those who emigrated from Denmark to America. Over 4,600 immigrants are currently recognized on the Wall. Their stories and the stories of their families contribute to the growing repository of personal histories at the museum's Genealogy Center. You may find a list of the immigrants on the Wall of Honor at www.danishmuseum.org.

The information at right includes the immigrant's name, year of immigration, location where they settled, and the name and city of the donor.

MARINUS JENSEN & OLENA SORENSEN JENSEN (1889, 1889) Verdon, SD – Douglas & Marie Jensen, Aberdeen, SD

PETER KNUDSEN (1913) Jacksonville, IA – Garey & Sherry Knudsen, Hutchinson, MN, Tom & Phyllis Tucker, Corydon, IN, and Dennis & Sharon Littlejohn, Des Moines, IA

jens jensen heritage path

FEBRUARY 12 – MAY 21, 2020

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: May and October.

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

Tim & Janice Andersen, Audubon, IA
Jerry & Ricke Bly, Marshall, MN
Barbara Jacobsen, Atlantic, IA
Jens C. Jensen 'Cousins'
Craig Cadman & Pixie Jensen, Sioux Rapids, IA

Dorothy Kerkhoff, Audubon, IA
Nancy Lee Christensen King, Faquay-Varina, NC
Thomas Laursen & Eric Laursen, San Francisco, CA
Cindi Rasmussen, Nevada, IA
Mark & Karen Stacey, Omaha, NE
Mary Topp, Mankato, MN
MJ Wagenson, Pine Island, MN

By Deb Christensen Larsen



memorials

FEBRUARY 12 – MAY 21, 2020

**Through various funds, donors
have provided gifts in memory
of:**

John Andersen
Rev. Virgil Anderson, my father,
and Tim V. Anderson, my brother
Folmer & Martha Bonnesen
Milton Oscar Christiansen
Christen Thompson Clausen
Lucille Clausen
Lola Danielsen
Dr. Darrel Dibbon
Hans & Mathilde Farstrup
Howard & Mildred Fauerby
Gertrude Gronbech
Bent & Lydia Hansen
Hans Christian Have
Calvin Hoegh
Henrik Holmskov

Janice Jacobsen
Arne B. & Irene Jensen
Doug Jensen
Douglas Dale Jensen
Paul M. & Johanne Larsen
Jeanette Lillehoj
Galen Lillethorup
Linda Knudsen Lilly
Harald & Margaret Madsen
Christine Martens
Gladys McCrory
Jimmy Molgaard
Lars Kongensholm Nelson & Ane
Marie Dybdahl Nelson
Kai Nyby
Edith Paulsen

Jane Paulsen
Niels M. Pedersen
Hans & Ivy Peitersen
Lyle Petersen
Peter L. Petersen
Helen Jensen Pigg
Sig Ross
Bob Rubel
Robert K. Rubel (Bonnesen
Family)
Marilyn Schaefer
Vera Hansen Schafersman
Betty Jacobsen Stuhr
Marion Svendsen
A.P. & Dorthea Marie Vithen

in honor

FEBRUARY 12 – MAY 21, 2020

**Through various funds, donors
have provided gifts in honor of
people or special events.**

Jensine Caspersen Clausen
Dannebrog, Nebraska
Dorothy Kerkhoff
Dorothy Kerkhoff's family
Museum Staff and the Museum
of Danish America's Board of
Directors
Chris & Mary Poldberg
Angela Stanford
Donna Christensen Thomas

new members

FEBRUARY 12 – MAY 21, 2020

**The Museum of Danish America
is pleased to identify the
following 37 individuals and
2 organizations as its newest
members:**

Niles & Vickie Andersen,
Casselberry, FL
Nancy Anderson, Brainerd, MN
Clark & Lou Ann Christensen,
Iowa City, IA
Danish Sisterhood Lodge #6,
Omaha, NE
Danish Sisterhood Lodge #168,
Bakersfield, CA
Rebecca Elliott, Greenback, TN
Erik Frodsham, Fresno, CA
Kathlyne Gaines, Mason City, IA
Frode & Kitty Jensen,
Park City, UT
Ken Jensen, Seattle, WA
Richard & Diane Juel,
Cedar Falls, IA
Mark & Shawneene Kenan,
Rippey, IA
Nancy King, Faquay-Varina, NC
Lisbeth Kohloff, Golden, CO
Eric Laursen & Thomas Laursen,
San Francisco, CA
Glenda Madrid, Solvang, CA
Patricia Murphy, Royal Oak, MI
Kathleen Nielsen, Salinas, CA
Donald & Gerda Nightingale,
North Oaks, MN
Liv Norderhaug, Chanhassen, MN
Trisha Ostergaard, New York, NY
Marsha Rosenthal, Athens, GA
Gloria Schwartz, Greenville, NC
Matt & Susan Smith, Omaha, NE
Bente Vibeke Strong, Flint, MI
Lezlie Vermillion, Shakopee, MN
Matt & Lisa Christoffersen Verona,
Sugar Land, TX
MJ Wagenson, Pine Island, MN
Joseph & Kirsten Wodushek,
West Bend, WI

MUSEUM MEMBERSHIP MAKES A GREAT GIFT

For lives that are already stuffed full of “stuff,” a museum membership gives back while also giving access. Even last minute, a new membership or renewal is easy to arrange, thoughtful, and rewarding. Contact us any time for gift-giving throughout the year.

organization associates

FEBRUARY 12 – MAY 21, 2020

These 81 organizations have contributed memberships or gifts-in-kind of \$100 or greater 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.

Aalborg and Linie Aquavits,
Arcus AS, Hagan, Norway
American Swedish Historical
Museum, Philadelphia, PA
Atlantic Friends of The Danish
Immigrant Museum, Atlantic, IA
Audubon Family Chiropractic
(Douglas & Nichole Olsen),
Audubon, IA
Boose Building Construction
(Marty & Connie Boose),
Atlantic, IA
Carroll Control Systems, Inc.
(Todd & Jalynn Wanninger),
Carroll, IA
Country Landscapes, Inc. (Rhett
Faaborg), Ames, IA
Danebod Lutheran Church,
Tyler, MN
Danes Hall of Waupaca, LLC,
Waupaca, WI
Danish American Athletic Club of
1922, 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 Lodge #1,
Omaha, NE
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #15,
Des Moines, IA
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #29,
Seattle, WA
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #35,
Homewood, IL
Danish Brotherhood Gimle Lodge
#95, Eureka, CA
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #268,
Junction City, OR
Danish Brotherhood Polarstjernen
Lodge #283, Dagmar, MT
Danish Brotherhood Lodges,
Heartland District, Iowa-
Minnesota & surrounding states
Danish Brotherhood Centennial
Lodge #348, Eugene, OR
The Danish Canadian National
Museum, Spruce View, Alberta,
Canada
Danish Club of Tucson,
Tucson, AZ
Danish Cultural Center of
Greenville, Greenville, MI
The Danish Home, Croton-On-
Hudson, NY
The Danish Home of Chicago,
Chicago, IL
Danish Mutual Insurance
Association, Elk Horn, IA
Danish Sisterhood Lodge #3,
Davenport, IA
Danish Sisterhood Dagmar Lodge
#4, Chicago, IL

Danish Sisterhood Lodge #6,
Omaha, NE
Danish Sisterhood Dronning
Margrethe Lodge #15,
Wauwatosa, WI area
Danish Sisterhood Lodge #19,
Tacoma/Olympia, WA
Danish Sisterhood Katherine
Lodge #20, Kenosha, WI
Danish Sisterhood Ellen Lodge
#21, Denver, CO area
Danish Sisterhood Lodge #102,
Des Moines, IA area
Danish Sisterhood Frihed Lodge
#153, Hartford, CT
Danish sisterhood Lodge #168,
Bakersfield, CA
Danish Sisterhood Flora Danica
Lodge #177, Solvang, CA
Danish Sisterhood Amber Lodge
#186, Brainerd, MN
Danish Sisterhood Hygge Lodge
#188, Enumclaw, WA
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), Santa Rosa, CA
Federation of Danish Associations
in Canada, Gloucester, Canada
Hacways (Helene & Nanna
Christensen), Hals, Denmark
Wayne Hansen Real Estate, LLC,
Elk Horn, IA
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
Kirsten's Danish Bakery (Kirsten &
Paul Jepsen), Hinsdale, IL
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
Midwest Groundcovers LLC,
Saint Charles, IL
Nelsen and Nelsen, Attorneys at
Law, Cozad, NE
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), Fort Dodge, IA
PH-Consulting Group, Inc. (Peder
& Andrea Hansen), Omaha, NE
Proongily (Cyndi 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
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
Supreme Lodge of the Danish
Sisterhood of America
Symra Literary Society,
Decorah, IA
Upward Mobility (Susan Vitek),
Hinesburg, VT

MUTUAL BENEFITS

Sponsorships of exhibits and programs support the museum's mission while simultaneously increasing visibility for the sponsoring organization. Contact us for ideas on how your business or organization can reach out and make an impact!

our prairie

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT TO SEE?

There is a general pattern to the colors of the prairie throughout the growing season. It might not seem prominent, but as you visit the grounds, keep an eye out for the “trending color.” During the transition between spring and summer, the first blooms will be white. This will include plants such as white wild indigo, Canada anemone, and fox-glove beardtongue. The next display of color will appear mid-June as brilliant purples. We have an abundance of this color with coneflowers, asters, and beebalms throughout the grounds. Then, towards the end of July and beginning of August, the prairie will be flooded with yellow. This will primarily come from partridge pea, goldenrods, and yellow coneflower. Of course, these patterns overlap throughout the summer. This allows for a constant change in accent colors and for the beauty of the prairie to shine through.

WHAT'S FUN TO LOOK FOR?

Watch for these plants when walking in the prairie. These happen to be some of my favorites, for their unique looks and functionalities.

White Wild Indigo: This is rare to see, but if you look towards the wetland from the prairie path, you might see a couple individuals. It stands out because of its height and early bloom time. The flowers



By Kiara Rodriguez

01. Prairie Dock

This mid-July bloom rises over six feet above the base of its broad leaves.

grow much higher than the bluish-green stems and leaves. The leaves take a similar shape to clovers, but they are flat and more pointed.

Butterfly Milkweed: This is also a rare find. It can be seen in a couple spots along the prairie path hiding among the taller vegetation. It is one of the only native plants with its bright orange color, which helps attract butterflies to it. The blooms appear in June. They are similar to its relative, the common milkweed, in the way the individual flowers look. However, instead of forming into balls of small flowers, they grow in a line on the stem.

Cup Plant: Cup Plant is related to Compass Plant and Prairie Dock (Genus: *Silphium*). Their tall, yellow flowers look almost identical, but you can tell them apart by their unique leaves. The Cup Plant's leaves go all the way up the stem and look fused together. This is where the "cup" forms. In it, they can store water that is used by other wildlife.

Compass Plant: Compass Plant has leaves that are deeply lobed and located at the base of the plant. Its leaves can be used as a "compass," since they are upright and arranged in a north-south direction. This is so that the broadest part of the leaves face east and west. When the

sun is at its highest and hottest, the only part of the leaf exposed to the rays are the margins, which keeps it from drying out. The combination of the leaves and position of the sun can help you know where the cardinal directions are!

Prairie Dock: The leaves of Prairie Dock are also located at the base, but they are big and broad. If you place your palms on either side of the leaves, you can feel that they are cool to the touch. This is because of the deep taproot which draws cold water and other resources from underground. Keeping the leaves cool helps them to not get scorched when the sun is blazing hot. You can find some scattered throughout the prairie and the parking lot beds.

RESEARCH ON THE PRAIRIE

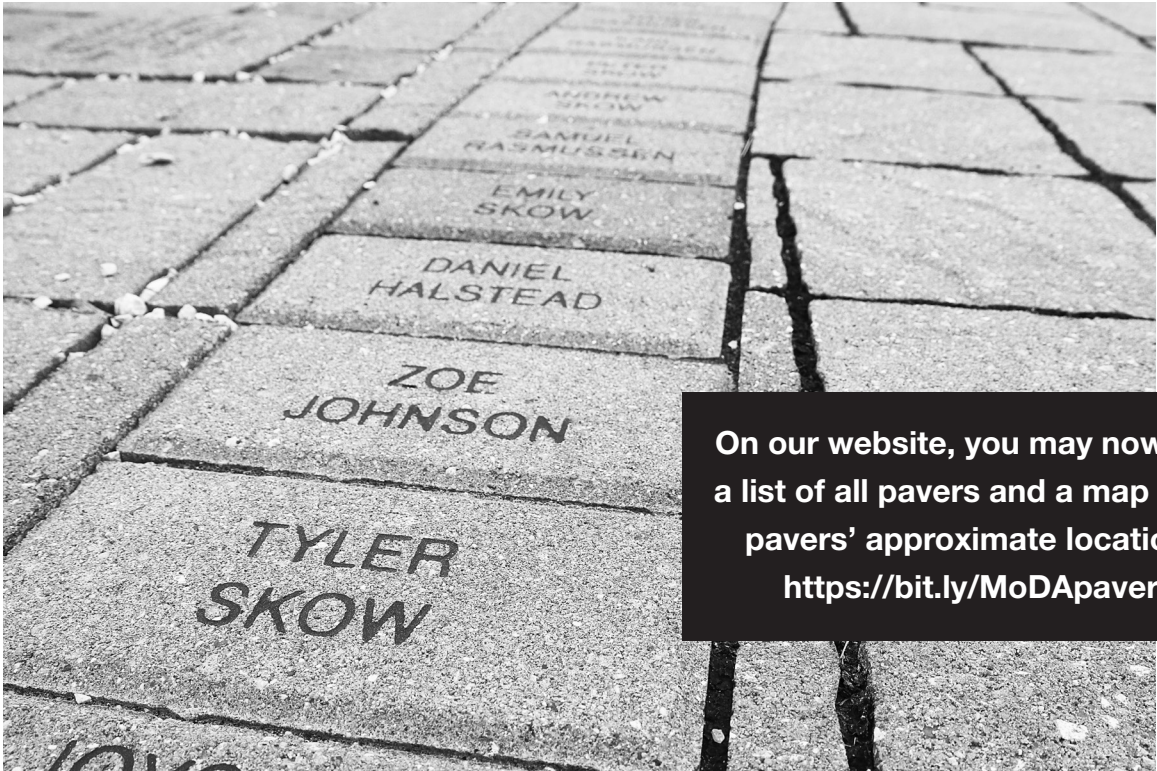
As part of the development of the prairie and this position, I will be volunteering with the Iowa Butterfly Survey Network (IBSN) this growing season. Thanks to the encouragement of Board President Beth Bro-Roof, we were able to set up a surveying route that runs along the path to the Jens Dixen house, through the prairie, and onto a portion of the Friends Walk. This will be one of the first sites in Western Iowa and will help the IBSN expand their knowledge of butterfly populations, migration routes, and habitat data. This opportunity can also help the museum see how the efforts put towards the prairie have increased its worth as habitat for butterflies and other pollinators.



02. Looking Northeast

The Jens Dixen
homesteaders cabin
sits surrounded.

A project which broke ground in 2011, the flag plaza and pathways, near the museum’s front entry, are designed in harmony with the Jens Jensen Prairie Landscape style and feature engraved pavers, stone seating areas, and three flag poles (U.S.A, Denmark, and Iowa) surrounded by native Iowa prairie plantings.



On our website, you may now view
a list of all pavers and a map of the
pavers’ approximate locations:
<https://bit.ly/MoDApavers>

personalize a paver

AT THE MUSEUM OF DANISH AMERICA

SMALL 4×8” PAVER | \$125
3 lines of 14 characters:

Return with contact information and payment to: Development Department, Museum of Danish America, 2212 Washington Street, Elk Horn, IA 51531. Engravings are typically completed twice a year. Paver text will be all capitals and centered.

red currant relish

From *Savory Sweet: Simple Preserves from a Northern Kitchen* by Mette Nielsen & Beth Dooley

MAKES 4 TO 5 HALF-PINTS

3 Tbs olive oil	¼ cup minced garlic	3 whole star anise
2 cups finely diced red onion	2 Tbs finely grated fresh ginger	2 tsp ground allspice
1¼ cups finely diced sweet red pepper	1½ cups white balsamic vinegar	2 tsp hot mustard powder
¼ cup finely diced medium-hot red pepper	1 cup sugar	2 tsp salt
		1 lb red currants (about 4 cups)

Place the oil, onion, and sweet red pepper in a 10" saute pan over medium-low heat. Saute until soft, but not browned, about 8-10 minutes. Scrape the vegetables into a bowl and set aside. Put the hot pepper, garlic, ginger, and ¾ cup of the vinegar in the pan and bring to a boil. Cook until most of the vinegar has evaporated, about 5-8 minutes. Stir in sauteed vegetables, the remaining ¾ cup of vinegar, the sugar, star anise, allspice, mustard, and salt. Taste, and adjust the seasoning. Bring to a gentle boil over medium-high heat and cook until the liquid begins to thicken, about 15-20 minutes. Carefully fold the currants into the mixture. Continue cooking until the currants are near-bursting but still intact, another 5 minutes. The mixture should be glossy and loosely hold its shape. Remove and discard the star anise. Place in jars to freeze or enjoy immediately upon cooling.

To see the method in action, refer to our Nordic Cuisine channel: <https://youtu.be/DMS9tcruQr0>



Red currants are intense, tart, gem-like berries that can be hard to find fresh in supermarkets. However, they are frequently frozen (as shown here). Members in cool, northern climates may find the perennial bushes (*Ribes rubrum*) easy to grow.

pandemic hours

MUSEUM & DESIGN STORE

2212 Washington Street
Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday
11 am – 4 pm

JENS JENSEN PRAIRIE LANDSCAPE PARK

2212 Washington Street
35 acres open daily, dawn – dusk

GENEALOGY CENTER

4210 Main Street
Tuesday-Friday by appointment
to 712.764.7008

BEDSTEMOR'S HOUSE

2105 College Street
Closed for the 2020 season

Closed: New Years, Easter, Thanksgiving, Christmas.



museum of
danish america

2212 WASHINGTON STREET
ELK HORN, IA 51531
@DANISHMUSEUM



The Nuance brand is rooted in timeless, simple Nordic design that is always highly functional. Behind each product is a Nordic designer or design team using innovative thoughts and offbeat ideas to create new functions and new designs. This collection of Nuance wine and bar products embodies the essence of Nuance: function, enhanced by beautiful design.

01. Cocktail Shaker, Black #1079, \$40. **02. Corkscrew with Handle** #6051, \$85. **03. Wing Corkscrew** #6052, \$40. **04. Waiter's Tool** #6053, \$20. **05. Wine Finer and Thermometer** #2567, \$45. **06. Penguin Pitcher**, Blue #6050 \$120. Members receive a 10% discount! More to see in-store and online: www.danishmuseum.org/shop. Orders by phone to 712.764.7001. Curbside pickup available at the museum during weekdays.