

# americaletter



**WINTER 2020** | A BENEFIT OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE MUSEUM OF DANISH AMERICA



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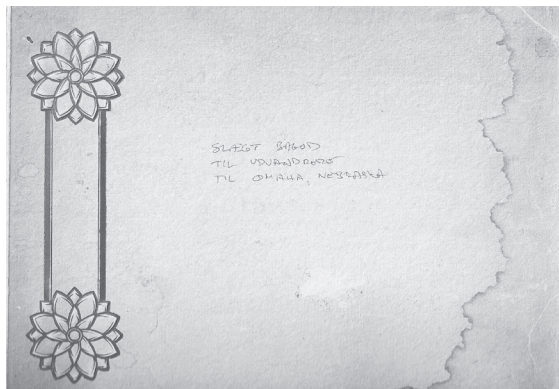
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Flying reindeer motif based on an 1895 jar by Effie Hegermann-Lindencrone for Bing & Grøndahl.

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**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

Earlier this September I was a guest on the statewide public radio program "Talk of Iowa." The topic was museums across the state and how they were handling the present and future uncertainties of operating during this ongoing pandemic.

Some Iowa museums have reopened to the public; some are still closed. Some, like the Museum of Danish America, have opened on a reduced schedule while maintaining a strong schedule of online programs and new digital content.

One of the questions posed by the radio host was "What changes at your museum might become permanent?"

As I reflect on the many changes of the past several months, some are likely to stay with us for a long time. We have accelerated development of programs and storytelling that can be shared online. We have grown online sales into a larger share of our Design Store activities. A new Genealogy Group on our Facebook page provides a focused space to share questions and triumphs in Danish family history research. These new plateaus have been goals for a long time, but the pandemic served as a catalyst to focus our time and energy on achieving them.

Not only has our staff team become more experienced and comfortable with new digital formats, but our audience has

become more familiar with Facebook, Zoom, and YouTube. When we started sharing our Brown Bag Lunch programs virtually, many more people watched them online than could have ever gathered at the museum for an in-person presentation. We have all had to adapt in our personal and professional lives to new formats and technologies, and that opens opportunities for the future.

Another question discussed on the radio was "What are the challenges that make you worried?"

As I look ahead, the biggest challenge of our current time is the uncertainty of "When." *When* will we be able to gather in groups? *When* will live performances and festivals resume? *When* can we start planning for those activities, which often require several months to arrange?

Museum staff would normally be spending a lot of time traveling to festivals, speaking to groups, visiting members across the country, and participating in events with our peer organizations. Without those face-to-face interactions, we miss opportunities to speak to our members – and perhaps attract new members!

And we miss those in-person Brown Bag Lunch programs, which also serve an important role of bringing people together in the Danish Villages for learning,

lunching, and companionship. We miss welcoming school groups to our galleries and seeing students make connections between history and their own lives. We miss the fun bustle of events that become highpoints of the year with good food, good music, and good company.

But not to worry, we will gather in person again. In the meantime, we find other ways to nurture and grow connections through Danish America. The community that supports this museum is strong, dedicated, and committed to our national mission.

The radio discussion of Iowa museums could have been depressing, but it was not. Every museum director on the program shared the conviction that museums continue to be important civic institutions and will continue to serve their communities now and into the future. Every museum has received support from their members– from words of encouragement to extra financial gifts. Every museum has examples of how creativity and flexibility have allowed them to remain connected with audiences near and far.

**Thank you** for your words of encouragement, your participation in new programs with new formats, and your ongoing support. Together we will continue to share Danish-American stories with audiences near and far, now and into the future.



By Tova Brandt



# board of directors meeting

**OCTOBER 15-17, 2020  
VIDEO CONFERENCE**

The annual board of directors meeting is always held in Elk Horn with days of meetings and evenings full of good food, *skålling*, and reconnecting with friends. Despite the pandemic, we did that again this year via video conference, with 18 virtual meetings, two social hours, 25 board members, 15 staff members, across 4 time zones, with only a few minor glitches! We also had good attendance at our virtual annual meeting by museum members across the country who normally would not be able to attend a meeting in Elk Horn.

New board members who were elected in June and took their posts at the annual meeting are Erik Andersen (Croton-on-Hudson, NY), Joy Clemens Gajda (Lindenhurst, IL), Marcia

Jante (New Berlin, WI), and Kurt Rasmussen (Johnston, IA). Read more about them on the next page.

We are always sad to see board members leave when their terms are up, and we are grateful for their contributions to the museum. Leaving the board this fall are Beth Bro-Roof, President (Cedar Rapids, IA), David Hendee (Northfield, MN), Glenn Henriksen (Armstrong, IA), and Karen Suchomel, Treasurer (West Branch, IA).

New officers are listed at right.

## **EXECUTIVE**

### **President**

Pete West, Denver, CO

### **Vice President**

Toni McLeod, Chandler, AZ

### **Secretary**

Marnie Jensen, Nebraska City, NE

### **Treasurer**

Chris Kofoed, West Branch, IA

## **MEMBERS**

Erik Andersen,

Croton-on-Hudson, NY

Carol Bassoni, Gilroy, CA

David Esbeck, San Diego, CA

Joy Clemens Gajda, Lindenhurst, IL

Dennis Gray, Winston-Salem, NC

Peder Hansen, Omaha, NE

Connie Hanson, Glendora, CA

Gerry Henningsen, Monument, CO

Marcia Jante, New Berlin, WI

Daniel Jensen, Columbus, OH

Elly Jorgensen, Prairie Village, KS

Merlyn Knudsen, Elk Horn, IA

Lars Matthiesen, Edmonds, WA

Karen Nielsen, Overland Park, KS

Mike Nielsen, Altoona, IA

Eric Olesen, Racine, WI

Kurt Rasmussen, Johnston, IA

Randy Ruggaard, Hudson, OH

Anders Sand, Kansas City, MO

Carl Steffensen, Houston, TX

Carol Svendsen, Denver, CO

## **EX-OFFICIO**

Dennis Larson, Decorah, IA

John Mark Nielsen, Blair, NE

Nils Jensen, Portland, OR

By Terri Johnson



**Erik Andersen**, Croton-on-Hudson, NY

- Born in Lincoln, NE
- New York University Graduate School of Business Administration (GBA), MBA
- Retired as Vice President of Trading from AIG Financial Products, NYC, Westport, and Wilton, CT in 2004
- Executive Director/Administrator of the Danish Home for the Aged, Inc., Croton-on-Hudson
- Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson 2004 – 2019, Board Member, Treasurer, VP, President
- Former MoDA board member 2011 – 2014
- Wife, Eva, is a nurse practitioner

**Joy Clemens Gajda**, Lindenhurst, IL

- Native of Elk Horn, IA
- Iowa State University, Bachelor of Landscape Architecture
- Worked for Hitchcock Design Group, Des Plaines Park District, and Forest Preserve District of DuPage County, IL
- Extensive volunteer work with her church, the Village of Lindenhurst, Vista Health System (baby cuddler) and Lake County Illinois Master Gardner Trainee
- Mom, Rosa, is a beloved volunteer at the front desk of the museum

**Marcia L. Jante**, West Berlin, WI

- University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, Administrative Leadership and Supervision, MS
- Former educator; Director, Waukesha County UW Extension; Professor, UW Extension
- Danish Sisterhood of America, current member, served as National Trustee and National President
- Danish Sisterhood of America, Milwaukee Chapter, program and membership chair, co-chair Scandinavian Festival booth, past president, vice president and trustee of local lodge and the Midwest District
- Stout University Foundation Board of Directors

**Kurt Rasmussen**, Johnston, IA

- Grandview College, Des Moines, BA
- The fourth generation to work for the family business, starting out working summers during school, to President/CEO, currently Chairman
- Associated General Contractors of America Board of Governors; AGC of Iowa, Vice President, Sr. Vice President, President
- Wife, Lynette, is Honorary Danish Consul for the State of Iowa and former MoDA board member 2006-2012

MAJOR GENERAL

# john b. anderson

THE IOWA FARMBOY WHO  
TOOK WINSTON CHURCHILL  
OVER THE RHINE IN 1945.



As a six-year-old boy, I stared at a black and white photograph in a simple, black wooden frame hanging on a nail in my grandparent's house and wondered, "What's Granddaddy doing in a boat?"

Later, I learned the picture was my grandfather taking Winston Churchill across the Rhine River in 1945. Years later, I learned he had many other memorable adventures: he chased Pancho Villa with George Patton in 1915; in 1917 he served in France with General "Black Jack" Pershing; he wrote rules of war during the

1929 Geneva Convention; and in December 1944 he helped blunt the German attack during the Battle of the Bulge. His life was an American success story, devoted to the cause of freedom.

John Benjamin Andersen, nicknamed "Ben," was born into an immigrant Danish family in Parkersburg, Iowa on March 10, 1891 to Louisa Kirstine Frederikke Simonsen and Carl Kristian Andersen. His mother, Louisa, was born on April 23, 1844 in Sejlstrup, Denmark, where she grew up on her family's estate, Aarhus. Louisa's father was said

## 01. Rhine River Crossing

Anderson far left wearing helmet with two stars, 1945

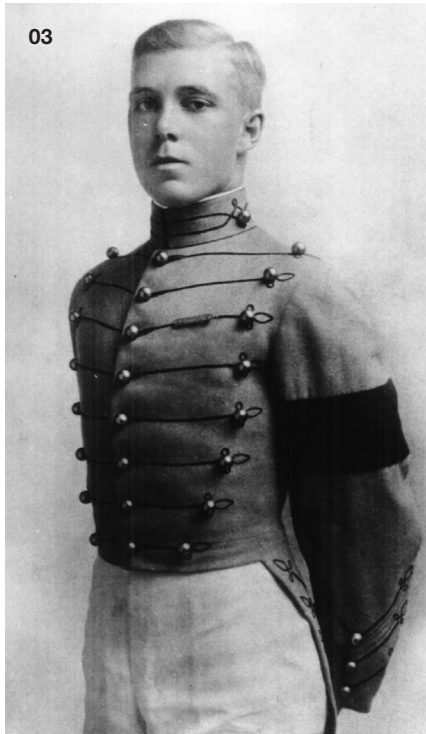
## 02. Circa 1891

Young "Ben" Andersen

By Dr. Michael Van Ness







to have been privy counsellor to King Christian IX and a legislator in the lower house. Carl was a farmer. Ben had one brother, Nels, and three sisters born in Denmark: Hanna (Johanna Antoinette), Symona (Marie Simone), and Amelia (Emilie Elisabeth). The family immigrated to Iowa in 1882, settling first in Franklin County, where his favorite sister, Margaret, was born shortly after the family's arrival. Ben, the youngest, born nine years later, was raised in Parkersburg. He was inspired to join the army by brother Nels's service with the 7<sup>th</sup> Iowa Infantry in the Spanish-American War.

John B. Andersen departed for West Point in late March 1910. Years later, he admitted to intense homesickness. Three months shy of his high school graduation, he had never travelled more than a hundred miles from home. The West Point registrar changed his name from Andersen to Anderson, and his classmates nicknamed

him "Swede." When he mourned his mother's death in 1913, Anderson wore a black arm band on his cadet uniform.

Anderson graduated in June 1914. His first duty station was El Paso, Texas. There, his commanding officer, General "Black Jack" Pershing, drove him to the Mexican border – Anderson's first-ever car ride. On the border, Anderson had a close call. A Mexican artillery shell blew Anderson and his friend, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. John Starkey, off a caisson, shaken but unhurt. While life on the border was hot and dusty, Anderson found comfort in the arms of his first wife, Grace Amolyetto Wingo of El Paso. She accompanied him on a visit to Parkersburg in late winter 1915.

Anderson, now a Captain, and his Sixth Field Artillery sailed for France to join Pershing's First Division in the summer of 1917. As he departed New York and



watched the Statue of Liberty recede over the horizon, he must have felt so alone. His father had died in January. Grace had sent him a "Dear John" letter. He knew the US Army was ill-prepared to confront the professional soldiers of the German army, and a severe test of his manhood lay ahead.

Anderson survived his time in the trenches; in fact, he thrived among the officers and men of the American and British armies. His Sixth Field Artillery, Battery C, fired the first shot into German lines. Anderson prepared his men for the 1918 German spring offensive. When poison mustard gas drifted into the American trenches and redoubts, Anderson led them away to safety, despite getting "a pretty good whiff myself."

Anderson was dispatched to the United States to prepare the next wave of artillery officers for combat on the Western front.

### 03. Mourning

Cadet Anderson at West Point, 1913

### 04. Second Lieutenant

John and Mrs. Grace Anderson with his sisters Amelia and Margaret, 1915



In June 1918 he shared his experiences with the townspeople of Parkersburg: the horror of trench warfare, the resilience of our British allies, and the use of his steel helmet and claustrophobic gas mask.

Anderson served the United States in other ways. Secretary of State Henry Stimson appointed Anderson as Technical Advisor to the United States delegation to the 1929 Geneva Convention, convened by the Red Cross to establish international standards for the treatment of prisoners of war, war wounded, and civilian captives. Anderson's real-life experiences in the trenches of World War I proved invaluable to the US delegation.

Anderson did not return to Europe for 15 years. When the "War to End All Wars" ended, Anderson and his fellow officers entered a time of limbo, low pay, frozen promotions, and little opportunity

to apply the lessons learned "over there." Anderson served on staff at the Infantry School at Fort Benning, attended the Army War College in Washington, and graduated with honors from the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth. He also remarried, taking Sue Moore Palmer of Columbus, Georgia as his wife. They had a daughter, Sue, and forged a life together at postings far and wide, including Fort Stotsenburg, Philippines; Fort Bragg, North Carolina; and Fort Riley, Kansas. Like George Patton, Dwight Eisenhower, Omar Bradley, William H. Simpson, and many others, he prepared for war.

Anderson was promoted to major general and command of the 102<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division, the "Ozarks," followed by command of the new US XVI Corps. He joined the fight in France in late summer 1944 under the command of Lt. Gen. William H. Simpson, commanding officer of

the US Ninth Army. Anderson's XVI Corps held the "honor spot" in the crossing of the Rhine River. Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery joined the celebration.

Anderson retired in 1946 and faced the age-old question, "What do you do with a general when he is no longer a general?" For my grandfather, the goods of family became his top priority. After numerous career moves, my grandparents settled into a quiet life in the suburbs of Washington, DC. He wore his "pink and greens" for my parent's wedding in 1947 – the last time he was in uniform. And he surrounded himself with his three grandsons: Scott, John, and Michael.

When I began to research his life, authorities at West Point, at the Army War College, and at Fort Leavenworth knew nothing of his career. Anderson was virtually

#### 05. Geneva Convention

Major Anderson (front row, tan suit), 1929

unknown among the 34 corps commanders of the US Army in World War II.

When I travelled to London and visited the Churchill War Room museum, I found that Anderson was cropped out of the official British version of the photograph of the Rhine River crossing. That indignity was the last straw; I was determined to write Anderson's story.

Anderson left the family a treasure trove of documents: a handwritten diary from World War I, numerous letters to my mother and grandmother during World War II, and film from his victory speech in Roermond, Netherlands in June 1945. They formed the backbone of my book, *General in Command: The Life of Major General John B. Anderson from Iowa Farm to Command of the Largest Combat Corps in World War II*. I was aided in my writing by my wife, Sandra, and my daughter, Emma. My brother, Scott, unearthed photos, letters, and documents that

greatly enhanced the work.

Among Anderson's papers, I discovered a letter from General Simpson recommending a third star for Anderson, a promotion to lieutenant general, the rank commensurate with corps command. Simpson's recommendation was seconded by General Omar Bradley, the US 12th Army Group commander. Forwarded to Eisenhower's headquarters, the recommendation was spiked.

I was interviewed by Mr. Rob Maharry of the Parkersburg, Iowa *Eclipse News Review* in 2017. He wanted to know my reason for writing a book about Anderson. My reply, "I want his story to be told, and I want him to receive his third star. I want a post-humous promotion for Anderson."

Maharry put me in touch with Iowa Senator Charles Grassley. We all knew the promotion would be a long-shot, even though it would cost the government nothing. The family would bear

the responsibility to change Anderson's Arlington Cemetery tombstone. After a six-month effort of record gathering, documentation, and letter writing, we submitted the appeal with Senator Grassley's cover letter. In little more than a week, the Army Board of Corrections responded. The answer was, "No, his post-war service does not warrant a third star."

Anderson's legacy lives on in the hearts and minds of the Dutch. Every five years, on March 1, the people of Roermond, Netherlands commemorate their liberation by the men of the 15<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Group under Anderson's XVI Corps. Every year at Christmas I bake a batch of Anderson's sister Margaret's rock cookies. With a cup of coffee, I am taken back to Iowa, to a farm outside Parkersburg, where Danish was spoken and memories made.

**Find Aunt Margaret's cookie recipe on page 47.**



**06. Caisson Ride**  
Major John and  
Mrs. Sue Palmer  
Anderson, Columbus  
Georgia, 1924



**07. Major General**  
Anderson addresses  
men of the 102nd  
"Ozarks" Infantry  
Division, 1943



Further reading and resources:

- Van Ness, M. M. *General in Command: The Life of Major General John B. Anderson*, available at the Museum of Danish America
- Cullum Register, John B. Anderson 1914, West Point Association of Graduates
- MAPS Air Museum, Canton Ohio, exhibit devoted to Anderson's life
- YouTube Video: search 'Major General Anderson SD 480p'
- YouTube Video: search 'Van Ness Canton'
- My blog: [www.drmichaelvanness.com](http://www.drmichaelvanness.com)



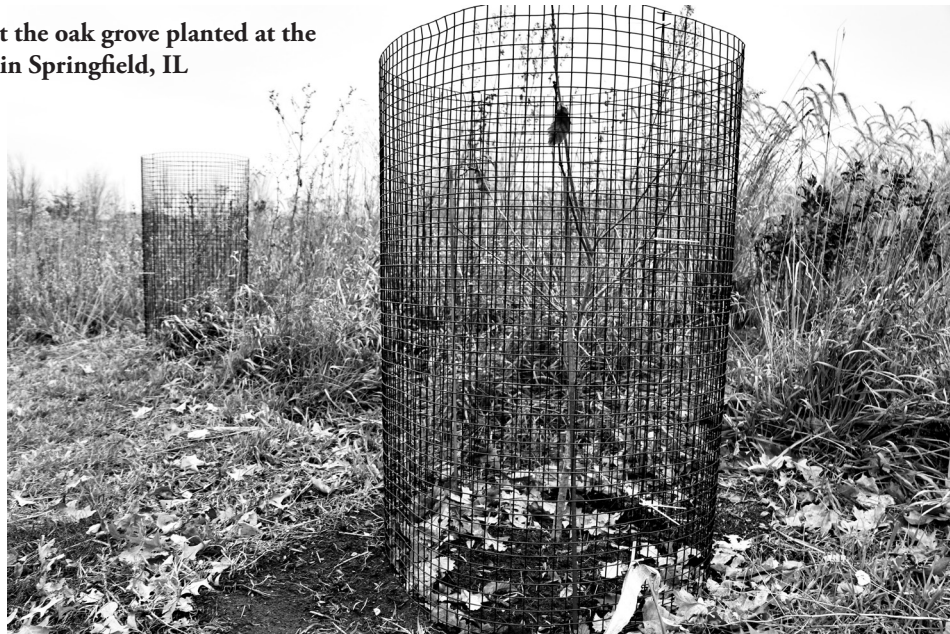
**08. Sue Anderson**  
escorted by her father,  
Washington National  
Cathedral, 1947

**09. Grandsons**  
Anderson with  
Grandsons Scott,  
John, and Michael  
Van Ness, 1958

“

If [the oaks] are permitted to scatter their acorns and so perpetuate themselves, and the glaciers or other disturbances are not to change the climate of the land, there will be white oaks on this hillock thousands of years hence when every artificial monument erected in [Lincoln's] honor has long gone to dust.”

**- Jens Jensen, writing about the oak grove planted at the Lincoln Memorial Garden in Springfield, IL**



This year the museum formally dedicated an area on the far eastern edge of the Jens Jensen Prairie Landscape Park as “the Sindberg Oak Grove.” In early 2018 more than 100 oak trees (really more like oak “sticks” at the time) were planted to reflect a native oak savanna, complementing the ecology of the recreated prairie. Now, several of the young oaks have grown, branched out, and established themselves as a presence in the landscape. Over time, just as Jens Jensen envisioned with the oak grove at the Lincoln Memorial Garden, these trees will serve as a living memorial to Bernhard Sindberg and his heroic story.

The Sindberg Oak Grove is supported by Ole and Eva Sindberg, Peter and Irma Orum, Annette Sorensen, and Paul Sindberg.

These oaks were “tucked in” for the winter with rabbit-proof caging by Kiara Rodriguez, who spent the past two summers looking after the park and educating staff and visitors along the way.

# the story of bernhard sindberg

## AND THE NANJING (NANKING) MASSACRE

My half-brother, the late Bernhard Sindberg from Århus, Denmark, is being honored as a hero in China for his actions in saving thousands of Chinese lives during the Japanese occupation of Nanjing (then called Nanking in English) during World War II.

Bernhard was from my father's first marriage, and even though I only got to know him in the last 21 years of his life, he became a big part of my life. At the time we met, he was a sea captain and I was a bush pilot. He lived in California and I in Canada, but I slowly got to know him and hear about his very unusual life. Every so often he would talk about some event that took place long ago, but in the beginning, I was never completely sure that all the stories he told were true.

Then in May of 2000 I got a call from my half-sister, Bitten, who lives in Denmark and is from the

same marriage as my brother. She had just been reading her Danish newspaper and on the front page there was an article about the Chinese Embassy looking for Bernhard Sindberg or any of his family. Bitten's call to me was the beginning of a relationship between the Chinese people and the Sindberg family.

Actually, it started in 1937. By December, the Japanese invasion of China had reached the city of Nanjing, inland from Shanghai about 160 miles. The city resisted the attack, but the overwhelming Japanese force prevailed and then turned ugly. The result was what we now know as the Nanjing massacre, called the Rape of Nanking in the West. The death toll is debated, but historians outside Japan generally agree that about 300,000 non-combatant civilians - men, women and children - were killed by Japanese troops.

Bernhard was in Nanjing at the time. He was one of a handful of foreigners who helped the Chinese in whatever way they could. My brother sheltered about 20,000 Chinese. It is estimated that he may have saved the lives of 6,000 of these people.

Last September was the 60th anniversary of the end of hostilities between China and Japan. China wanted to celebrate this anniversary in a big way and decided to invite as many foreigners who helped them during the war - or their surviving families - as they could locate to a celebration in China.

Bernhard died in 1983 so they invited his family. As a result, my wife, Eva, and I, my sister Bitten, her daughter and her daughter's husband spent nine days in China last September.

Bernhard's actions in 1937 and 1938 made him a real hero to China. When a Chinese delegation came to Denmark in the spring of 2000 with a traveling exhibit about the Rape of Nanjing, they wanted to find Bernhard and, failing that, to find his relatives. They knew very little about him and nothing about the adventurous life he led before and after his time in China. Bernhard was born in 1911 in Århus. He was one of seven children of our dad's first marriage, which ended in divorce. My dad remarried and I am from his second marriage. He married a third time, and two years ago I met my half-brother from that marriage. My dad died in 1947.

I had no contact with my half brothers and sisters when I was growing up. I met Bernhard in 1962 when we both happened to

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By Ole Sindberg ►

Published by *The Danish Pioneer*,  
July 31, 2006



be working in Vancouver, Canada. This led to a bond that lasted until his death in 1983 in San Pedro, Calif., and to my meeting all the other siblings and their families. The only surviving sibling from my dad's first marriage is Bitten.

Bernhard was an adventurous soul. He ran away from home at age 14 but was intercepted by our dad in Hamburg, Germany. A year later he did it again, this time successfully. He did not return until many years later. He became a sailor and eventually a master mariner, licensed to sail the biggest ships on any ocean. But it was not a smooth progression by any means.

At age 20 in 1931, he found himself in Paris without a hire or any other job. He was penniless and hungry. He sent off telegrams for help but the telegrams were never received, and no help was forthcoming. In desperation he enlisted in the French Foreign Legion. The Foreign Legion would accept just about any young person in good health. He was sent to a garrison in North Africa, and he soon discovered that enlisting in the Legion was a bad mistake. The working conditions were terrible, the food horrible, and the officers sadistic, he told me.

Bernhard decided to desert. He knew if he were caught he could be executed by firing squad. The shortest and most obvious route to freedom was north towards the Mediterranean, but this was also the route they would be looking for him to take. Instead, he bicycled across the desert to the west coast of Africa, a trip of about 1,100 miles, stowed away on a ship and got away.

A few years later, in San Francisco, he hired on as third officer on a ship bound for Shanghai, China, but he didn't get along with the engineering office. The captain solved the problem by throwing my brother in the ship's brig. He was discharged in Shanghai but couldn't get another ship.

Instead, he found work as an accountant and desk clerk at the famed Cathay Hotel in Shanghai. Among his customers were Charlie Chaplin, heads of states, and important business and political figures from all over the world. General Douglas

MacArthur, General Joseph "Vinegar Joe" Stillwell, Chiang Kai-shek and other notables were on the guestlist.

Bernhard next found a job in Nanjing selling Nimbus motorcycles and Madsen machine guns (both Danish companies) to the Chinese army. Jorgen Juncker Jensen, in his book, *Facts & Episodes*, describes an almost fatal live-fire demonstration given by him and Bernhard to Madame Chiang Kai-shek and dozens of high-ranking generals.

"There were little shacks in the distance to aim at," Jensen wrote. "We rolled out with the 20 MM



anti-aircraft machine gun popping away round after round when we made an impressive hit on a shack some way out. It happened to be the wrong shack. Out scrambled two people hopping and screaming holy murder. The projectiles, about a couple dozen of them, had slammed through the whole house including the bedposts of the bed they were sleeping in."

In July 1937 Bernhard left China for a two-month vacation in California. Upon arrival there he learned the Japanese-Chinese situation had deteriorated significantly and, after four days, he headed back to China.

My brother kept a diary in English during this period and I have a copy of it. He witnessed atrocities committed by the Japanese and wrote about them:

"A group of nine Chinese men were led up to the edge of the dock. They were tied together, in a file, by a rope and their hands were tied behind their backs. Ten Japanese soldiers made up the execution squad, one executioner for each Chinese and an officer to give commands.

These Chinese stood perfectly quiet and solemnly awaited their fate while the Japanese were running around brandishing swords, bayonets and revolvers, shouting cries and spitting at the poor Chinese. Then upon an order from the officer, one Japanese lined up in front of each of the Chinese. The officer in charge barked out another order and each Japanese executioner used his own ingenuity in killing his victim.

The first victim was brought down on the edge of the dock by the thrust of a bayonet. Then the executioner leisurely drew his sword and decapitated the Chinese, the head falling into the river. The next Japanese executioner resorted only to his sword and by 'gently' pricking this man got him to lie down on the dock. The executioner then severed the rope attaching him to the others. Then, with the nonchalance of a butcher, he took hold of one arm by the hand and with one thrust cut it off at the shoulder. The same operation was performed on the other arm. Still not satisfied with his mode of execution, the Japanese pushed the captive over the dock and into the water to see if the poor chap could swim without arms."

Over the next several months, Bernhard trained Chinese soldiers and drove new trucks from Shanghai to Nanjing, returning to Shanghai by train. This was dangerous work as both trucks and trains were subject to attack from Japanese planes. Bernhard survived without a scratch.

In September 1937, Bernhard found work as a driver and photographer for a London *Daily Telegraph* correspondent, Pembroke Stevens. "For two months we were busy covering the war from various fronts," Bernhard wrote in his diary. These many trips led to numerous narrow escapes from Japanese planes, artillery shells and gunfire. The Japanese used gas and "acid" shells in China, Bernhard said. "The effect of the acid shells was to burn away all the clothing and skin, leaving the wounded

writhing in agony," he said.

In November 1937, as the Japanese were attacking, Stevens, my brother, and others climbed a water tower near Shanghai to witness a Japanese attack. A salvo of machine gun bullets hit the tower, killing Stevens and wounding my brother and several other foreigners. This left my brother as the correspondent for the *Daily Telegraph*.

On December 1, 1937, Bernhard again changed jobs. He was put in charge of a Danish-built cement factory on the outskirts of Nanjing. Other employees had fled, leaving Bernhard the only person at this large facility. As the Japanese neared Nanjing, he opened the plant to refugees.

*Asia* magazine wrote in its March 24, 1938, issue: "Due to Mr. Sindberg's humanitarian endeavor in organizing an improvised hospital and his resourcefulness in handling the Japanese, the cement works became a haven where some 10,000 Chinese refugees were able to escape the horrors to which many thousands of their compatriots were subjected."

Eventually, Bernhard's luck in persuading the Japanese of the neutrality of his operation ran out. In March 1938 he was advised by telegram to leave immediately for Shanghai. In Shanghai, he shipped out for Brindisi, Italy, and wired our Dad in Denmark to meet him in Italy or wire 500 Danish kroner to Brindisi. Dad suspected a swindle as he knew Bernhard was far from poor so he decided to go to Italy.



They met in Trieste and Dad, a newspaper editor, later wrote a series of articles about the difficult journey he made from Denmark.

From Trieste, Bernhard and Dad proceeded to Geneva, Switzerland, where they met with the Chinese diplomatic delegation. Bernhard showed the Chinese a two-hour-long film he had taken of scenes of the war. The whereabouts of this film is unknown.

During World War II my brother, among other things, sailed ammunition ships, primarily from the United States to the Pacific war zones. This was dangerous work but well paid.

After the war Bernhard became a legal resident of the United States and found he had accumulated about \$100,000, about \$1 million in 2005 dollars. He managed to spend it all within a year. In 1946, he contracted with the Chinese government to teach fishing. Until his retirement, he continued sailing the oceans of the world. He married several times, all short-lived marriages.

When I met Bernhard in Vancouver in 1962, he was drinking heavily and worked only when he ran low on money, and then usually as a second officer, well below his qualified rank and license. He took early retirement in the 1970s.

Eventually, he moved into a senior citizens apartment overlooking the harbor in San Pedro. He died in 1983, and I inherited his belongings. A distant relative in Austin asked for his diaries and pictures and, later, donated the material to the University of Texas.

In early April 2006 we returned to China for 19 days. My sister turned 80 in April, and she decided to celebrate this event by inviting all her close relatives to China to celebrate there. So, 18 of us went to Shanghai and Nanjing and had a great party.

There is a museum in Nanjing, The Memorial to the Victims of the Nanjing Massacre by Japanese Invaders, which is planning an exhibit about my brother and his deeds in 1937-1938. We visited the cement factory where Bernhard sheltered refugees and even got to meet people who remembered him.

**About the Author:** Ole Sindberg was born in Århus and raised in Aalborg, Denmark. Now a U.S. citizen, he was a pilot in the Royal Danish Air Force and a bush pilot in Canada. He is retired from United Airlines and lives in Cary, IL.



THIS EXHIBITION SHOWCASES ART  
NOUVEAU DANISH PORCELAIN FROM  
A PRIVATE COLLECTION, ACQUIRED  
OVER TWO GENERATIONS.



a r t  
nouveau  
innovation  
DANISH PORCELAIN FROM AN AMERICAN COLLECTOR

**01. Vase with caramel colored glaze, gold washed sterling silver**  
Royal Copenhagen, glazed by Valdemar Engelhardt in 1893, silver  
by Anton Michelsen in 1900.



During the Art Nouveau period at the turn of the 20th century, the leading Danish porcelain factories, Royal Copenhagen and Bing & Grøndahl, introduced new techniques, forms, and styles. Their innovations resulted in unique works inspired by the natural world and cross-cultural contacts. Their works during this time not only garnered critical acclaim but served as technical and stylistic inspiration for porcelain companies throughout Europe and beyond.

### HISTORY OF DANISH PORCELAIN

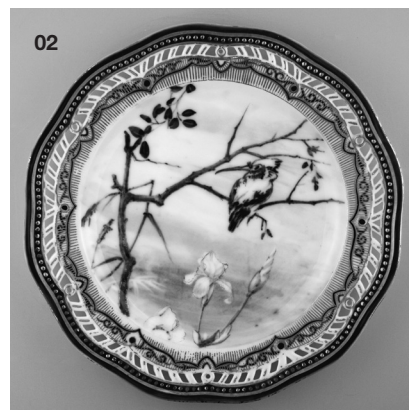
Danish porcelain has a long and storied history. By the mid-1700s, several Danish companies started making faience, a relative of porcelain made using different materials and a lower firing temperature, but no porcelain factories existed. With hopes of establishing a porcelain manufacturer in the country, King Frederik V brought Louis Fournier to Denmark from France in 1760.

Although that first experiment was a failure, and Fournier's soft-paste porcelain could not carve out a lasting place in the market, not everyone was disillusioned. Within the next decade, The Royal Copenhagen Porcelain Manufactory would be founded, later followed by the establishment of their major competitor, Bing & Grøndahl. Founded in 1775 by Frantz Henrich Müller, a pharmacist trained in minerology, The Royal Copenhagen Porcelain Manufactory acquired its name when the Danish crown, at the urging of Queen Dowager Juliane Marie, took control of the company in 1779. The royal monopoly was key to getting the factory off the ground, and by 1780, they began selling large quantities of underglaze-painted blue and white dinnerware, along with more ornate overglaze-decorated pieces, including their first figurines.

Müller retired from daily management of the factory in 1802, and after his departure, the factory's work declined in quality and quantity. While continued production of the iconic blue-fluted table service and commissioned pieces kept them in business, it would not be until the 1880s that the factory took a leading role in European porcelain. It shifted to private hands in 1868, with Phillip Schou of Aluminia, a faience factory, becoming the owner in 1882.

Bing & Grøndahl was established in 1853. Frederik Vilhelm Grøndahl was a former Royal Copenhagen employee who left due to artistic disagreements with the leadership. Combining his technical knowledge with the resources of the businessmen M.H. and J.H. Bing, they formed the Bing & Grøndahl Porcelain Factory.

Unfortunately, Grøndahl died shortly after the company was set up, and the Bing brothers had to bring craftsmen from outside Denmark to keep the company afloat. In 1891 and 1895, Schou attempted to purchase Bing & Grøndahl. However, both attempts fell through and it would not be until 1987 that Royal Copenhagen acquired their competitor. Today, almost all of their porcelain production has shifted to Thailand to save costs.



### 02. Plate with a bird on a branch

Royal Copenhagen, attributed to Arnold Krog, form for the *Flora Danica* open dessert plate, 1885. In the early years of underglaze, the painting often blurred during firing, visible here, and was sometimes sharpened with gilding.

### TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENTS

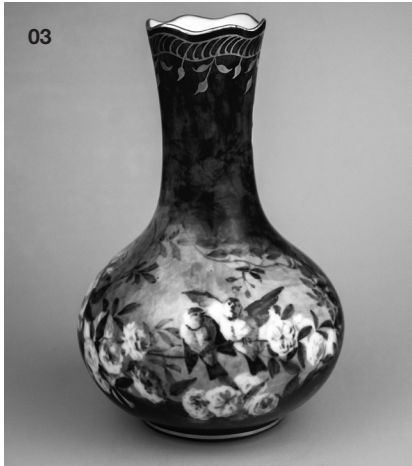
In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, several developments allowed for and supported a stylistic shift in Danish porcelain. One of the most important was the focus on underglaze painting and development of new colors specific to this technique.

This stylistic change was brought about by Arnold Krog, who became the artistic director of Royal Copenhagen in 1885. Feeling that the intrinsic beauty of porcelain was lost when paint was applied over the glaze, he steered Royal Copenhagen towards the now-famous Danish naturalistic style of underglaze painting and also revitalized the blue-fluted dinnerware (Fig. 2).

In underglaze painting, the unglazed porcelain is painted before being dipped into a clear



By Diya Nagaraj

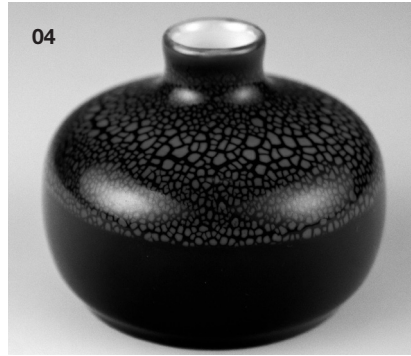


**03. Vase with birds on a branch surrounded by wild roses and gilding**  
Royal Copenhagen, painted by Marianne Høst, 1886. Arnold Krog considered this vase to be one of the first successful examples of the new underglaze painting technique.

glaze and fired. With overglaze, the piece must be fired once after the glazing and again after painting. Adolphe Clément, the factory's chemist, set about perfecting the technique by developing new colors that could withstand the higher firing temperature (Fig. 3).

Clément and, later, Valdemar Engelhardt developed a range of new glazes, which led to the introduction of a highly successful new line of porcelain. These new glazes included crystalline and snakeskin glazes in a variety of colors (Fig. 4). When combined with specially developed forms for vases, figurines, and other items, these new glazes yielded astounding effects.

As Royal Copenhagen's underglaze pieces grew in popularity, Bing & Grøndahl



**04. Vase**  
Royal Copenhagen, painted by Valdemar Engelhardt, 1904. On this piece, "blue snakeskin" is used with a deep blue-purple glaze.

looked for a new artistic direction to take them beyond utilitarian ware. Their earliest underglaze attempt, the 1888 "Heron Service" featuring blue underglaze painting and gilding (Fig. 5), became an international sensation. However, the factory only fully mastered the technique in 1895, when Frans August Hallin, a former underglaze signature artist at Royal Copenhagen, joined the company.

#### STYLISTIC DEVELOPMENT

The term "Art Nouveau" was popularized by the Frenchman Samuel Bing to describe a reactionary movement against academic art that emerged in Britain, growing out of the Arts and Crafts Movement and spreading throughout Europe. Their goal was to break down the historical divide between sculpture and painting and the



**05. Sauceboat in the form of a heron with gilding for the "Heron service"**  
Bing & Grøndahl, designed by Pietro Krohn, 1888-1890. The "Heron service" debuted at the Copenhagen Exposition of 1888 and marked Bing & Grøndahl's first major artistic success.

applied arts, such as metalwork, glass, and textiles. Decorative art, including porcelain, were viewed as an important intersection of artistic skill and craftsmanship. Therefore, ceramics were deemed as worthy of beautification as painting and sculpture.

Artists during the Art Nouveau period often drew inspiration from the natural world. The factories of both companies were a short walk from the Copenhagen Zoo, giving artists and modelers easy access to a wide range of wildlife (Fig. 6). In some cases, modelers kept animals in their studios or on the grounds for study, and casts were made directly from some plant and animal specimens. In 1888, Royal Copenhagen introduced their first underglaze figurines, beginning with two codfish and an eel by Carl Liisberg, likely cast from specimens.





Danish porcelain showed a major shift away from neo-classicism (Fig. 7) and towards naturalistic forms, a sentiment captured by Dr. F. Dencken in the *Kunstgewerbeblatt*. In 1889, he wrote:

"These products mark a gigantic leap from the industrial to the artistic plane. . .the old style had been definitely abandoned and a refreshing art inspired by nature, whose finely chosen subjects have a touch of the national and personal, had made its appearance. And finally, there was the

realization that artistic effect is not achieved by extravagance but by reserve."

The other major influence on Art Nouveau artists and Danish porcelain was the introduction of Japanese art to the European market. After a policy of isolationism for over 200 years, American military pressure forced Japan to open their ports to trade in 1858. This allowed Japanese art to reach a wider audience, which had a significant influence on European art of the late nineteenth century. Many Danish porcelain artists borrowed motifs and forms from Japanese works (Fig. 8), especially woodblock prints.

## MARKETING

Both companies had highly skilled teams of signature artists, whose primary job was the production of unique pieces, which commanded a high price. However, in response to the growing popularity of underglaze porcelain, increased attention was soon given to bringing the product to more budget-conscious consumers.

The new "Kurant Kunst" (Market Art) division at Royal Copenhagen began in 1893 with an initial group of 16 female artists, which steadily expanded, ranging from 30 to 70 artists from 1900 to 1920. They produced a line of budget-friendly products including figurines, boxes (Fig. 9), vases, inkwells, buttons, and plates, among other items. By 1918, about 2,100 different designs, used on



**06. Figural dish with a drinking polar bear**

Royal Copenhagen, designed by Arnold Krog, painter number 32 (unidentified), 1902-1905. It showcases underglaze painting, with both green crystalline and white snakeskin glazes.



**07. Planter with nude men on horseback**

Royal Copenhagen, painted by Gerhard Heilmann, 1898. Neo-classicism was popular in Denmark in the mid-19th century with the sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen. Some works, such as this planter, continued to reflect that earlier taste.



**08. Vase with honeycomb pattern and flowers**

Royal Copenhagen, painted by Johanne Oppermann, 1890. This motif came directly from *Le Japon Artistique*, a magazine started by Samuel Bing to promote Japanese aesthetics.

600 different objects, had been developed by the “Kurant Kunst” department.

To compete with Royal Copenhagen, Bing & Grøndahl hired modelers and painters to create a similar, albeit less varied, line of underglaze pieces for the wider market. Figurines of children and animals were most popular, but the company also produced vases, plates, and even clock cases (Fig. 10).

Participation in international exhibitions was critical in broadening the global market for Danish porcelain. Both Bing & Grøndahl and Royal Copenhagen won top honors at the Paris World’s Fairs of 1889 and 1900, with Royal Copenhagen also receiving gold

medals at the Chicago and St. Louis World’s Fairs of 1893 and 1904, respectively. These events attracted the attention of major art critics and retailers, including Samuel Bing and Louis Comfort Tiffany, both of whom were frequent customers.

At international exhibitions, Bing & Grøndahl was sometimes criticized for their lack of originality and merely following in the footsteps of Royal Copenhagen. After such criticism during the Stockholm Exposition of 1897, J.F. Willumsen was hired to create a new artistic identity over the next three years. The focus shifted to the production of elaborate and extremely costly carved vases with openwork for the 1900 Paris World’s Fair, allowing them to surpass their domestic rival (Fig. 11).

## THE END OF ART NOUVEAU DANISH PORCELAIN

The Art Nouveau style peaked between 1890 and 1910, with Royal Copenhagen’s international popularity leading to the opening of retail shops in London, Paris, and New York. After World War I, the new Art Deco style emerged, and earlier Art Nouveau pieces declined in popularity.

In response, many pieces went out of production, along with Royal Copenhagen’s walking stick handles, belt buckles, and other items that were no longer in demand. To keep up with changing tastes, both factories introduced new lines of grey, crackle, and matte-glaze porcelain, as well as elaborately decorated overglaze figurines and stoneware, which were well



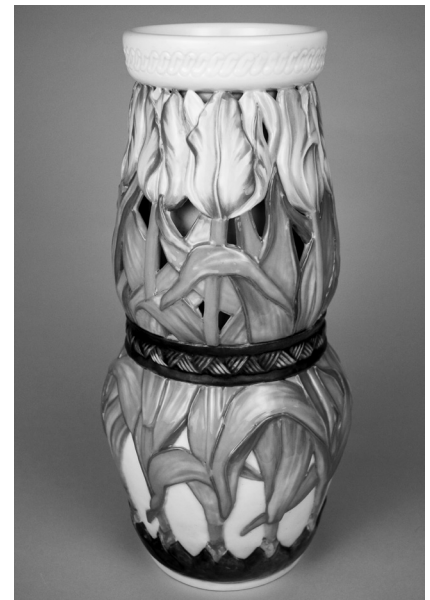
### 09. Figural box

Royal Copenhagen, designed by Erik Nielsen in 1895, unidentified painter, made 1895-1897. Figural boxes were popular items made for the general public, and models for many smaller animals were cast directly from specimens.



### 10. Clock case with pair of birds and French clock

Bing & Grøndahl, designed by Hans Peter Kofoed in 1901, made 1901-1902. By the 1900s, both companies were trying to reach a wider audience with mass-produced pieces, such as this clock.



### 11. Vase with open-work tulip bouquet with a second liner vase inside in underglaze blue

Bing & Grøndahl, designed by J.F. Willumsen; modeled and painted by Elizabeth Drewes, 1899-1900.

received at the 1925 Paris World's Fair.

International and domestic climates contributed to the market problems faced by porcelain makers. The Great Depression had a negative impact on production and sales. At Royal Copenhagen, the number of underglaze signature artists dropped dramatically, with the motifs now shifting to rural landscapes and seascapes, intended primarily for Danish audiences. The last hired underglaze signature artist was Lars Swane, who worked at Royal Copenhagen from 1954-1959. Despite his attempts to modernize the underglaze painting technique using new colors, he was unsuccessful in restoring the factory's earlier glory.

Although modern audiences primarily recognize Bing & Grøndahl and Royal Copenhagen for their Christmas plates, the period from 1885 to about 1920 represents a unique stylistic and technical moment in Danish porcelain. This "New Renaissance" in porcelain production marked a turning point, with many other factories throughout Europe adopting the same underglaze painting technique.

The intersection of an interest in organic forms, Japanese art, and restraint over gaudiness, combined with relentless experimentation, makes Danish Art Nouveau porcelain a fascinating and unique area of study in the ceramics world that has withstood the test of time.



**12. Vase with a mouse emerging from inside**

Royal Copenhagen, painted by Carl Mortensen, 1889. This vase was purchased by Louis Comfort Tiffany for his personal use.



# exhibition calendar

## current

### **ART NOUVEAU INNOVATION: DANISH PORCELAIN FROM AN AMERICAN COLLECTOR**

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

### **MIGRANT**

Kramme Gallery  
Through May 2, 2021

### **SNAPSHOTS: TRAVELING WITH THE POET HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN**

Artwork by Danish artist  
Susanne Thea  
Through June 6, 2021

## traveling

**New Nordic Cuisine** is being  
hosted by the following venues:

### **Vesterheim Norwegian- American Museum**

Decorah, IA  
NOW through September 2021

### **Hjemkomst Heritage Center**

Moorhead, MN  
November 15, 2021 -  
March 7, 2022

**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.



### **SUBSCRIBE & WATCH**

Visit our "Nordic Cuisine" channel on YouTube for a delightful variety of how-to demonstrations, stories, and visits to Nordic food destinations.

**[www.youtube.com/nordiccuisine](http://www.youtube.com/nordiccuisine)**

## watch & learn

**MANY PROGRAMS AND EVENTS ARE NOW AVAILABLE ON THE  
MUSEUM'S FACEBOOK PAGE AND YOUTUBE CHANNEL.**

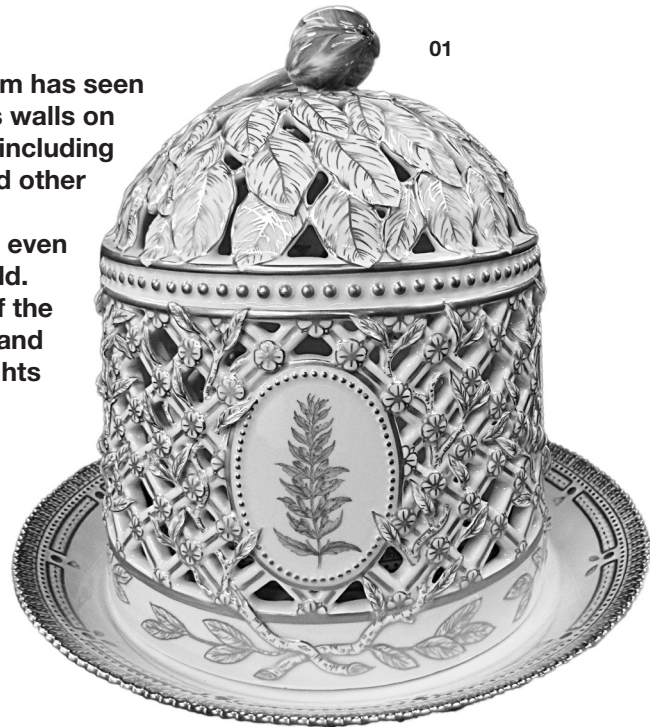
**[WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/DANISHMUSEUM](http://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/DANISHMUSEUM) | [WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/DANISHMUSEUM](http://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/DANISHMUSEUM)**

# collection connection

Anyone who has visited the lower level of the museum has seen **Visual Storage**, an artifact vault with full-height glass walls on three sides. About 8,500 pieces call this vault home, including several hundred made of porcelain, earthenware, and other breakables. Figurines of animals and people, vases, candlesticks, cups with saucers, hatpin holders, and even smoking pipes grace the shelves for visitors to behold. While the largest portion of the collection consists of the annual Christmas plates from both Bing & Grøndahl and Royal Copenhagen, there are a few non-plate highlights to look for during your next visit!

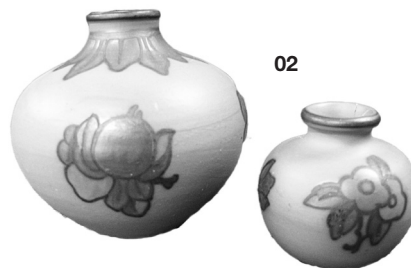
## 01. Ice Dome

Originally created by Royal Copenhagen in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Flora Danica ice dome has continued to be in production. This 20<sup>th</sup> century version belonged to Norma Wilson of Iowa and of Danish descent. The dish and cover together stand almost 12" tall and is just as large in diameter. They feature delicate gold trim with details of pastel pink and green, and a bright pink tulip on top. *Gift of Robert Wilson, 2015.009.002ab.*



## 02. Vases

These two very small vases were made by L. Hjorth, who set up his pottery in the city of Roenne on the Danish island of Bornholm in 1859. It operated until 1993, and two years later the site became a museum. Both pieces are brown ceramic with fruit and flowers painted on the sides. Called bud vases, these stand 2" and 3" tall, respectively. *Gift of Oma Gronbech Weltscheff, 1991.113.018, 019.*



## 03. Platter

Bjørn Wiinblad, a well-known 20<sup>th</sup> century Danish artist, created this white platter with blue details for a man affiliated with the D.N.O.T. or D.N.T.O. (the initials appear both ways on the same platter!). On back, an inscription reads "Thank you Kenneth Hansen for your outstanding contribution to Danish Tourism! D.N.T.O. 1949-1974". It is not known what that organization or group might have been. The platter is large, measuring almost 20" long by 14" wide. *Gift of Christian Castenskiold, 2018.027.002.*



By Angela Stanford

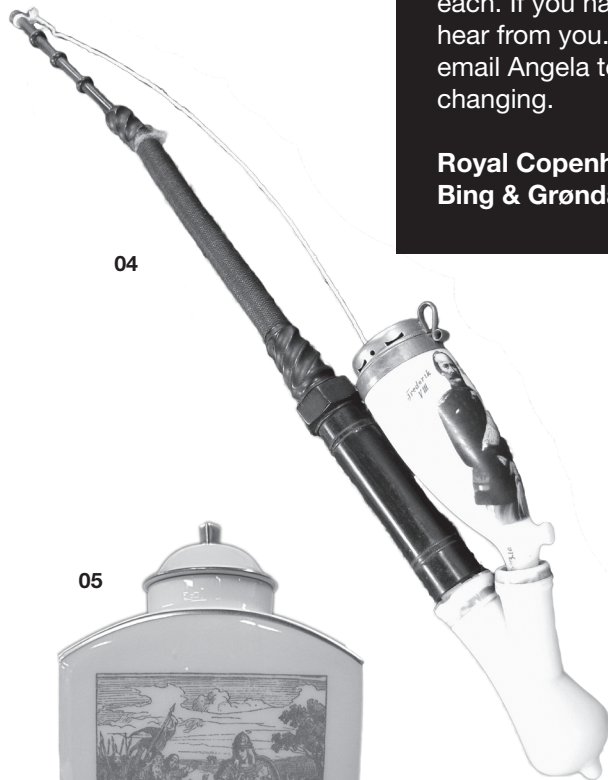
Any collections catalog numbers (xxxx.xxx.xxx)  
found in this edition may be researched at  
<https://danishmuseum.pastperfectonline.com/advancedsearch>

## ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PLATES

The museum has a full set of both Royal Copenhagen and Bing & Grøndahl Christmas plates and a nearly-complete duplicate set of each. If you have plates that may fill these gaps, we would love to hear from you. *But!* Before you mail or deliver them, please call or email Angela to make sure your plate is still needed, as the list is ever-changing.

**Royal Copenhagen:** 1922, 1950, 2006-2012

**Bing & Grøndahl:** 1913, 1916, 2004, 2006, 2008



### 04. Smoking Pipe

The likeness of Denmark's King Frederik VIII graces this white porcelain pipe bowl. With a silver cap and a wooden stem, this pipe belonged to Hans Hendrich Bruhn, born in 1847. He immigrated to the U.S. before 1872 and died in 1921. Frederik VIII was born just four years before Hans and reigned from 1906 until his death in 1912, serving as Crown Prince prior to becoming King. *Gift of Dora Hedevig Bruhn Dunlap, 1998.043.001.*



### 05. Decanter

This 8.5" tall white decanter was presented as a gift to Ejner Andersen of Audubon County, Iowa and his daughter Eleanor when they visited Denmark in the winter of 1945-1946. The illustration depicts *Uffe hin Spage* (Uffe the Meek), the youngest son of King Vermund. Uffe won a great victory against a German foe using his father's sword and thereby protected Denmark's independence. *Gift of Eleanor Hansen, 1994.168.001.*



### 06. Saucer and Cup

Called "Hoyrup," this pattern was designed and produced by Danish company Nymølle. This cup and saucer is part of a larger set, each with similar designs printed in greens and blues against a white background. While small, this saucer is almost twice as large in diameter as the cup is tall, with the latter being 2.5" high. *Gift of Donald Jensen, 1996.140.002b, 004.*



# victor

# borge



## archive

### THE WHEN & WHERE

Back in February Angela Stanford and I traveled to New York to retrieve the much-anticipated Victor Borge Professional Archive Collection. We were able to visit with two of Borge's children, Vebe and Rikke, and close family friend Jim Colias while we sorted and loaded the treasures.

Angela and I drove this unique collection through eight states and two blizzards (the hazard of traveling in February) to make it home to MoDA in just two days.

### THE WHY OR THE WHO (NOT THE BAND)

Victor Borge, born Børge Rosenbaum in Copenhagen in 1909 to musical parents Bernhard and Frederikke (Lichtinger)

Rosenbaum, was a piano prodigy. He studied at the Royal Danish Academy of Music, giving his first major concert in 1926. He quickly became a popular pianist, comedian, and conductor.

When Germany occupied Denmark in April of 1940, Borge was performing in Sweden. From there, he went to Finland and later to the U.S. He learned



By Cheyenne Jansdatter

**01. "The folk in this photo are,** from left to right: Janet, Frederikke (sitting), Sanna. Then from top to bottom: Ronald, Papa & Vebe (they must have glued us both down!). Then there is Mama, surveying the chaos as usual." - Frederikke (Rikke) Borge

English by watching movies and began making a name for himself with the stage moniker Victor Borge. After more than 80 years of entertaining, Borge died in December of 2000, leaving behind five children.

### THE WHAT

Once the collection had safely arrived, Angela and I went through each box to perform a preliminary inventory and rehouse the paper materials into archival grade, acid-free boxes. Through this process, which took about two days, Angela and I were given a general idea of the materials that make up the collection. Victor Borge's professional archive consists of boxes of both documentary material and audio-visual material.

The documentary collection consists of 21 boxes of programs, music, clippings, magazines, scripts, photos, books, and professionally assembled scrapbooks.

The bulk of the collection is audio-visual material, approximately 1,000 pieces of varying media including:

- 8mm, 16mm and 35mm film
- 7" and 10" reel-to-reel audio tape
- ¾" Umatic Video Tape
- VHS, Betacam, Cassette tape, DVD, and CD

After organizing these materials, Angela and I recognized that the next step we needed to take would be to have a digitization professional evaluate the A/V materials. Neither Angela nor I are familiar enough with media to determine whether the materials were salvageable or what it would

take to digitize and make available a collection of this magnitude.

Luckily, a few months after inventorying the collection, we visited the Union Pacific Museum in Council Bluffs, Iowa for a behind-the-scenes intern trip. While there, their registrar shared with us that they had been digitizing their massive A/V collection through an Omaha-based company. Angela then contacted Todd Murphy of Universal Information Services and arranged for him to evaluate the collection. Todd returned an itemized proposal for costs of digitizing the whole project, including parceling out the process into smaller increments.

The estimate provided for digitization alone is just under \$42,000 – this does not include the cost of materials for storage of the originals, nor salary for a project archivist.

### THE WHAT'S NEXT

Angela and I have selected six reels to digitize, hoping to gain a preview of the material we have inherited. The reels were delivered to Universal Information Services on October 1, and we look forward to sharing them with you!

These are the titles of the selected film canisters:

- *Vebe at Shops '72* – 8mm – \$50
- *Borge at Home* – 16mm – \$75
- *Victor Borge Show Pt. II, 12/11/56* – 16mm – \$100
- *3 Musketeers, Act II* – 16mm – \$100
- *Kellog TV Show, 14 April 1951* – 16mm – \$75
- *Victor Borge Replacing Ed Sullivan/Taste of the Town/Lincoln Mercury* – 16mm – \$75

We will then be looking for funding opportunities to finance digitization of the remaining 1,000 pieces.

02



### 02. Film containers

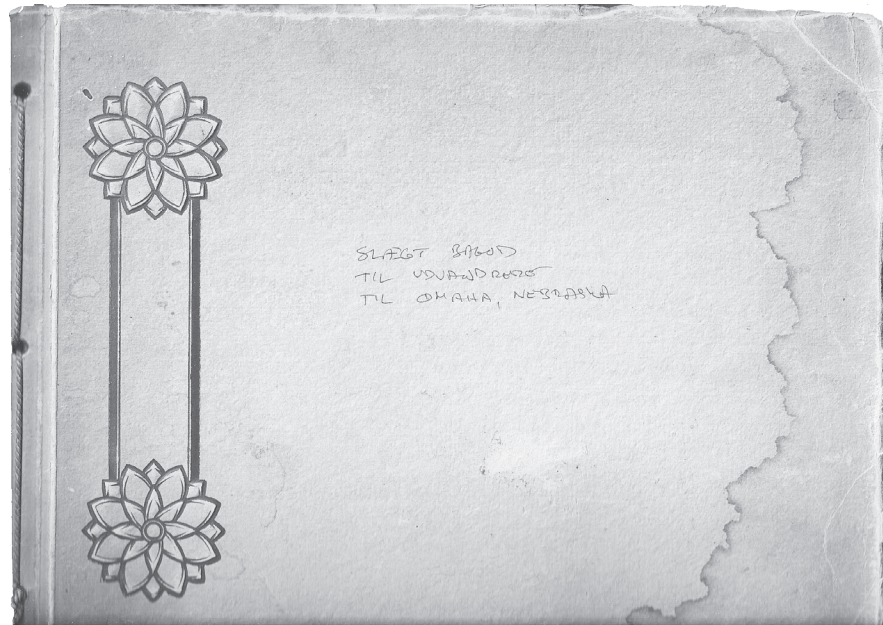
Six reels were selected for the initial round of digitization.

**Mark your 2021 calendars:** A new exhibition, *The Victor Borge Legacy Award: Celebrating 10 Years of Music*, will open at the museum on February 6. The piano recital scheduled for May 2 will honor the 10th anniversary of this annual award program!



# finding family in photos

“Photos of unknown ownership – with photos of relatives that immigrated to – Omaha?”



This was a note attached to a photo album, sent from Denmark, and donated to the Genealogy Center.

Normally, we'd decline a donation without any identifying information or clear provenance, but looking through the beautiful, candid photos – ones that showed parents snuggling children, family enjoying picnics, a couple swimming in the ocean, and some of the cutest children you could imagine – I wanted to try to find this family and learn their story.

Finding information from a photo can be challenging. Photos like headshots or studio portraits tend to have little-to-no identifiable information, unless there is an imprint of the studio's name. That mark can provide a location to start searching.

Photos taken in front of trees or on beaches could be located anywhere in the world. Unless you know the general area the individuals were from, or are extremely familiar with an area, there is often little helpful information with those.

If you have a clue that can provide a foundation of a beginning, identifying individuals is possible.

To find those clues, you have to look at the details.

In regards to the gifted photo album, we were lucky. The donor provided a location

from which this family emigrated, and that gave me a place to start. In regards to the photos themselves, many of them had been trimmed and glued to the pages. Some had been removed from the pages, perhaps in hopes of discovering names on the back. Fortunately, a few did have names, but unfortunately, they were first names only.



By Amanda Skellenger





Looking through the loose prints, I noticed a commonality – in several, one blonde-haired girl who seemed to be named Elsa. There were photos of her alone, showing her playing with a doll, holding a kitten, or just looking sweet. Some photos included a boy, Carlo, who appeared a few years older, and some were with a man called Oswald. Finally, some of the loose photos showed Elsa, Carlo, and Oswald within a group of people.

After staring at the photos and translating some Danish writing, I wanted to figure out who this family was. I had the names Elsa, Oswald, and Carlo. It wasn't much, but it was a start. Since I knew the family was from Denmark and had lived in Omaha, I also had two important locations.

Based on the photos and how many had the same people, it seemed logical to believe they were close family members, rather than cousins or friends. Although I had no dates and the information

was minimal, I wanted to see if I could find them on Ancestry.com. I based my search on Oswald, as he was the adult. From there, I added the birth location as Denmark and that he'd lived in Omaha. Finally, since I didn't know parent names or any information about a spouse, I added the two children's names to the search. I made sure that I had identified the gender as male, and, with a wish for luck, I clicked search.

Behold! What to my wondering eyes should appear – but two little census records for an Oswald Christensen from Omaha, Nebraska.

Amazingly and to my delight, the 1930 and 1940 federal census from Omaha were listed as the first two results of the search. Starting with the 1930 census, I looked to see if I could confirm

First & Middle Name(s)  Last Name

☐ Exact...

Place your ancestor might have lived  Birth Year

City, County, State, Country

Show fewer options ^ ☐ Match all terms exactly

Add event: Birth Marriage Death Lived In Any Event More ▾

Year  Location

Birth  Denmark

☐ Exact to country

Lived In  Omaha, Douglas, Nebraska, USA

☐ Exact to...

Add family member: Father Mother Sibling Spouse Child

First & Middle Name(s)  Last Name

Child elsa

Child carlo

Keyword

Occupation, street address, etc.

Gender  Race/Nationality

Male

Collection Focus

All Collections

☒ Historical Records ☒ Family Trees

☒ Stories & Publications ☒ Photos & Maps

Clear search

the family relationship. I was able to verify that Oswald was the father to Elsa and Carlo in addition to another child, Harriet. It also listed his wife as Margaret Christensen.

From the 1930 census, I was able to obtain quite a bit of vital information that would assist in expanding my research of this family. Birth years, birth locations, years of arrival, whether they

Christensen, Oswald	Head	R	30	R	No	M	W	28	M	22	No	Yes	Denmark
— Margaret	Wife	H			V	F	W	36	M	21	No	Yes	Denmark
— Carlo	Son				V	M	W	15	S		Yes	Yes	Nebraska
— Elsa	Daughter				V	F	W	10	S		Yes	Yes	Denmark
— Harriet	Daughter				V	F	W	4 1/2	S		No		Nebraska

1910	AL	Yes	Mechanic	Garage
1913	AL	Yes	None	
		Yes	None	
1920	AL	Yes	None	
		Yes	None	

were naturalized or not (AL means they were not naturalized), and, for Oswald, occupation were all found in this one, single record.

The occupation here is important, because it can be backed by photos from the album. There are several that show a building with words on it, including “welding and repairs” and “oil.” Oswald’s occupation as a mechanic in a garage could explain why that building appears in some photos.



Christensen, Oswald	Head	0	M	W	48	M	No	4-2	1	Denmark	67	Pa
— Margaret	Wife	1	F	W	47	M	No	4-2	1	Denmark	61	Al
— Carlo	Son	2	M	W	35	S	No	5-2	50	Denmark	67	Al
— Harriet L.	Daughter	2	F	W	14	S	Yes	8	8	Nebraska	67	
Monrad, Ivan	Brother-in-law	5	M	W	44	Wd	No	4-4	30	Denmark	67	No
— Elizabeth M.	Niece	5	F	W	15	S	Yes	4-2	10	Nebraska	67	
— Ivan J.	Nephew	5	M	W	9	S	Yes	3	3	Nebraska	67	
— Mary Lou	Niece	5	F	W	8	S	Yes	2	2	Nebraska	67	

Returning to the search results, I looked at the 1940 census. In addition to the information provided in the 1930 census, the 1940 record provided the likely maiden name of Margaret Christensen. This is because, in addition to Oswald’s family being in the house, there was a Monrad family living there also. From the relationship to the head of household, which was Oswald, it was listed that Ivan Monrad was his brother-in-law, and Elizabeth,

Ivan J., and Mary Lou were his nieces and nephew. Being a brother-in-law, it’s likely he is Margaret’s brother, making her maiden name Monrad.

Taking the information I had obtained from the two censuses and adding it to my original search terms, I was able to find a church record for a marriage between a Lars Oswald Christensen and a Margrethe Monrad that occurred on August 25, 1913 in Omaha.

Aug 25 <sup>th</sup>	Oswald Christensen Margrethe Monrad	Denmark	23	Christen <sup>24</sup> Christensen	Laura Jeppesen
		"	21	Axel Monrad	Sophie Kayser

This record also provided the names of Oswald and Margrethe's parents: Christian and Laura (Jeppesen) Christensen and Axel and Sophie (Kayser) Monrad, respectively.

Finally, on the marriage record, a Ludwig Christensen was listed as a witness to the marriage. Looking back through names on photos and doing additional searches on the family within the various Danish databases, I was able to identify siblings of both Oswald and Margrethe, and I was able to verify that Ludwig Christensen was one.

Over the last few months, between other projects, I've continued to identify more individuals in the photos through a combination of research and looking at the details on the photos. This information has allowed me to trace the Christensens and the Monrads to locations in Denmark and then back several generations. I'm currently in the process of trying to identify living relatives, in order to learn more about the family.

Taking a chance on a photo album of an unknown family has made

for an interesting project. The details and processes required to find useful genealogical information were challenging, but what a worthy challenge it has been.



# three amigos

On Friday morning, March 20, I received a call from Terri Johnson, MoDA's administrative manager. She informed me that Kai Nyby, a former president of the museum's board of directors who had become a personal friend and who had just celebrated his 67<sup>th</sup> birthday, was extremely ill and not expected to live. I was stunned. Although he had a stroke two years earlier, he had recovered. In November, I had seen him at his parent's home in Indiana, and I had spoken with Kai in January. He had called from his new home in Texas to discuss plans to celebrate in 2020 his father's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday and his parents' 70<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. Before the day was over, Terri called again to tell me that Kai had died.

The next day I wrote cards to Kai's wife, Starr, and to his parents, Folmer and Vera Nyby. I also began thinking of how I could share the impact Kai had on our museum since joining the board in February 2002. And then I realized that Kai would not have wished the focus to be on him alone, but rather as one of the museum's "three amigos." This, however, takes some explaining, as it involves two other board members: Clark Mathisen, who passed away on July 1, 2016 and John Molgaard, who died on October 14, 2019. In celebrating them and sharing how they played a role in building our museum, I

also hope it will underscore how board members, who receive nothing for their service – not even incurred expenses, contribute so much.

But to the museum's "three amigos." As 2002 came to an end, the museum was going through transitions. Rick Burns, the executive director, had been called up for service as war was anticipated in the Middle East. He recognized that he would be unable to carry out his museum responsibilities and so resigned. The board, on which I, too, was serving at the time, accepted his resignation and named an executive management team consisting of Clark Mathisen, John Molgaard, and Kai Nyby. These three agreed to serve while the board sought a new executive director, the position I assumed just six-and-a-half months later, on July 15, 2003.

While each of them brought important skills to the team and they set in motion changes that impacted museum management, they also developed a close and fun-loving friendship. This led them, and I'm sure this was Kai's doing, to dub themselves "the three amigos," after the comic film of the same name that was released in 1986. *The Three Amigos*, starring Steve Martin, Chevy Chase, and Martin Short, told the story of three down-and-out silent film actors who are

mistaken for real gunslingers and are invited to a small, Mexican village to rid the community of bandits who were extorting protection money. While there was no protection money involved at the museum, the three of them were riding in to set things in order!

**Clark Mathisen** was the senior and more serious member of the "amigos." Born in Elk Horn in 1934, he graduated from Atlantic High School in 1953 and then joined the US Marine Corps in 1954, serving until 1962. While in the Marine Corps in southern California, he met and married his wife, Joanie, who was of proud Irish heritage. Together, they had three children: two sons and a daughter. During Clark's service, he was able to pursue his college studies, graduating from Northwest Missouri State University in 1958 with degrees in economics and accounting. Following his honorable discharge from the Marine Corps, he worked in the accounting offices of a number of businesses in Atlantic, Iowa and Omaha, Nebraska. In 1970 he assumed the role of executive vice president for Nebraska Methodist Health Systems/Methodist Hospital, a position that he held until his retirement in 2003.

Clark's expertise was finance. His first task was to get the finances in order. He began



By John Mark Nielsen



working with Jenni Winters, who had been hired in 1999 as the museum's bookkeeper. The museum's longest serving employee, Jenni says Clark was the one who brought order to the budget process, designed the accounting system for the Design Store, and took the time to explain accounting principles to her. In fact, while he was comfortable managing finances using *QuickBooks*, he believed the old-style accounting sheets were useful for teaching accounting principles. He made Jenni keep financial records in pencil and reconcile them monthly. Jenni recalls that one time after she had sent him the monthly report, he called. "You're a dime off," he said.

"Where?" Jenni responded.

"Find it," was Clark's response.

Another time, Jenni told him that she was a penny off. Again, his response was "find it!"

In each case, Jenni did. In the

thirteen-and-a-half years that I served as executive director, and even up to today, as I receive the monthly financials for review, I have always been confident in Jenni's work; both of us credit Clark for this.

**John Molgaard** was three years younger than Clark and the "facilities" man of the "three amigos." John was born in Atlantic, Iowa in 1937, played on the same football team as Clark, and also graduated from Atlantic High School before attending Iowa State University, where he received his degree in mechanical engineering. After graduation from ISU, he enlisted in the United States Army, serving as a combat engineer and instructor pilot. Following his honorable discharge from the Army, in 1965 he began working for Ingersoll-Rand, a global leader in complete air compressor systems. That same year, he married Karen Radcliffe in Philadelphia. His entire career was spent with Ingersoll-Rand, holding various management roles. Before

he retired in 1990 and returned to Atlantic, he, his wife, and two sons were living in Geneva, Switzerland, where he was the company's division president, in charge of operations for Southern Europe and North Africa.

John was interested in preservation of historic buildings. He was a founding member of a group in Atlantic that purchased and restored the Rock Island Depot, now occupied by the city's Chamber of Commerce, and the Atlantic Armory, which serves as a community gathering place but also a museum that celebrates the stories of area servicemen and women. Given his interests, he was naturally interested in the museum's Bedstomor's House and Genealogy Center, which, in the spring of 2003, was being moved to the building on Elk Horn's Main Street where it is now located. After Clark left the board due to term limits, John also served as treasurer. After a particularly contentious board meeting, he told Jenni that she was going to learn how to do the treasurer's report. His first gift to her was a big gum eraser, which she still has. His comment, "Here's what I use!"

John's insistence on maintaining the facilities was important to all of us. Deferring maintenance will end up costing more in the long run. I had a lesson in this, late in the summer of 2003. We

**01. Clark and John Mark**  
Reviewing financials  
in the museum's  
conference room.



discovered that the emergency fire extinguishing system had not been tested in several years. When we tested the system, the electric pump seized up with a flash and a loud explosion! Following this, John, Jenni, and I did an inventory of all systems and created a testing and maintenance schedule to which staff has adhered.

The third and youngest member of the “three *amigos*” was **Kai Nyby**. Born in Hammond, Indiana in 1953, he grew up in nearby Portage and graduated from Portage High School, where he met and several years later married his wife, Melody “Starr” Cartwright. Kai attended Butler University in Indiana for one year, but as he would say to me, he lacked the patience for academic work and enjoyed socializing too much. So, he left school and went to work for the family trash-hauling business. When it was sold to Waste Management, Kai joined that company, negotiating

the purchases of other small garbage companies around the country. Quick with calculating figures and a “people person,” he was a natural. The number of communities around the country that he visited, the people he came to know, and his ability to make connections was impressive. Later he left Waste Management to join United Rentals in a similar role. Shortly before his death, he was still putting together deals for United Waste, a company working to recycle industrial oils.

Kai was the natural “development” person of the three. He was also, as one employee at the museum said in early 2003, “the whirlwind.” The way he worked was: let’s find, identify, and correct the problem, and let’s get people involved. While John and Clark lived in the area, Kai, at that time, lived in Indiana; he thought nothing of jumping on a plane or driving over 500 miles to be present at a meeting. And if he couldn’t be

present, there was always the telephone.

Getting people involved was important to him, and it started with family. It was not unusual for Kai, his wife, Starr, and his parents, Folmer and Vera, to show up at the museum to work. Later his sister, Osa, and her husband, Frank, came too. Over the years they completed numerous projects, and during these occasions they became good friends with Clark & Joanie and John & Karen. This led to wonderful parties that exemplified Danish “*hygge*.” For one board meeting held in Arizona, long after he had left the museum’s board of directors, he flew his personal friends down to act as servers at a party he and Starr hosted for board members at their home in Fountain Hills. One board member was shocked to learn that the bartender was a banker back in Indiana and Kai’s close high school friend.

“Kai was such a giving person. He would give the shirt off his back to help.”

That’s the way Deb Larsen, the museum’s development manager, described her friend and mentor.

Shortly after I assumed the position in July 2003, and in consultation with the “three *amigos*,” I needed to reduce staff. One of the individuals I felt could be better positioned to

**02. John, left**  
With former  
Board President  
Marc Petersen at a  
reception in 2007.



help our development effort was Deb, who had begun working in the curatorial department in May 2000, making her the museum's second-longest employee.

Kai did much to encourage and help Deb in her new position. She says he “could read between the lines of staff meeting minutes and just knew when a call was needed. He was a real cheerleader for development.”

So valuable was his advice that she would turn to him concerning her parents and two sons. Whether she was up or down, he always ended his telephone conversations with her with the words, “Keep smiling, kiddo!”

When Kai was hospitalized in March and she was talking to Starr by telephone in his hospital room, Deb asked her to repeat those words to Kai; Starr said he smiled.

As I think back over the years since 1983, when I was a founding member of our museum, I remember and could write about so many board members who contributed so much and in so many ways. But I have to agree with Jenni and Deb, “The three *amigos* worked so well together. They left a mark; that’s for sure.”



**03. Kai, right**  
With wife, Starr, at that same reception in 2007.

**04. Nybys and Deb**  
(L-R) Vera & Folmer Nyby, Deb Christensen Larsen, and Osa & Frank Nyby-Burnett.

# the wall that talks

## STORIES FROM THE DANISH IMMIGRANT WALL OF HONOR

In a *Los Angeles Times* article on May 9, 1937 called “Going Forward with Southern California,” Edith Mortensen Northman was featured in a list of 41 civic and business leaders. She was the only female architect chosen.

One of Southern California’s first woman architects, Northman shaped and enhanced cities and neighborhoods, designing some 120 buildings over her prolific and respected 25-year career.

Edith Mortensen Northman was born in Copenhagen on October 8, 1893 to a Danish father and a Swedish mother. Northman moved between Denmark, Sweden, and Norway during her childhood years before attending high school in Haugersund, Norway. She returned to Copenhagen to complete two years at the Studio School of Arts, Atelier Frede Aamodt, before immigrating to the United States in 1914 with her parents. The family settled in Brigham City, Utah.

Northman’s first employment in America was in a library, and the story goes that she “read something about architects” and decided that it was what she wanted to do. She relocated to Salt Lake City in 1918 and worked in an architectural office

as a junior draftsman. In 1920, she moved to Los Angeles where she worked as a draftsman in various architectural offices. Northman studied architecture at the University of Southern California from 1927-1930 and earned her license in 1931 at age 38.

Northman began her solo architecture practice in the worst of economic times, in the early days of the nation’s Great Depression, carrying on a remarkably prolific practice – making her success that much more significant. She designed homes, apartment buildings, churches, hotels, factories, and retail and commercial buildings. One of her largest commissions was in the mid-1930s with the Los Angeles-based Union Oil Company, designing more than 50 service stations up and down the Pacific Coast.

Northman worked in a variety of styles and building types. As examples:

- In 1934 a Union Oil super-service station in Westwood, California was designed in the Mediterranean style and starred a 69-foot tower topped with a neon sign advertising gasoline.
- In 1939 she designed the Normandie Mar Apartment

Hotel in Fresno, California in the French Eclectic style with chateau-esque characteristics.

- In 1941, Northman designed a home in the Danish farmhouse style which featured a steeply pitched roof, arched dormer windows, and a dining alcove in the living room, rather than a separate room.

In 1937 Northman designed the Emmanuel Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church at 4254-4260 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue in Los Angeles. The building was designed in the Danish country-church style with a meeting hall and a parsonage. Edith’s church design was designated a Historic-Cultural Monument by the City of Los Angeles in 1933 (HCM No. 578).

Northman joined the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers during World War II and worked on many building-related projects. After the war she resumed her private practice and designed mostly large apartment buildings and hotels in Los Angeles and Palm Springs.

Edith had clients in the movie industry. She worked on a Beverly Hills home for Danish-American actor Jean Hersholt, and she served as an advisor on the 1937 Samuel Goldwyn Studio’s film *Woman Chases Man*, the tale



By Shelli Larson

of a woman architect. She was active in the women's business community of Los Angeles and Pasadena and taught courses in a public education program.

In the early 1950s Northman was forced to retire, due to progressive complications of Parkinson's disease. She died in Salt Lake City in 1956.

In 1990 Edith's work was celebrated by UCLA's Graduate School of Architecture and Urban Planning in an exhibit featuring four female architects of the first 50 years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in California. In 2016 the City of Beverly Hills named her a Master Architect: "an architect of widely recognized greatness in the field of architecture whose individual genius influences his or her age and is now known to have contributed to creating the built environment in Beverly Hills."

In Los Angeles, she is recognized as one of the most prolific architects of apartments.

We celebrate Edith's collective work and enduring influence. This Danish immigrant shaped and enhanced the cities and neighborhoods of Southern California.

#### PARTIAL LIST OF SIGNIFICANT BUILDINGS BY NORTHMAN:

- Villa Sevilla Apartments, West Hollywood (1931)
- Sephardic Orthodox Congregation Ohel Avraham Synagogue of Los Angeles (1934)
- Emmanuel Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church, Los Angeles (1937) (HCM No. 578)
- Leimert Park Apartment Building, Los Angeles (1937)
- Berger-Winston Apartment Building, Los Angeles (1937)
- Normandie Mar Apartment Hotel, Fresno (1939)
- Danish Provincial House, Los Angeles (1940)
- Insley House, Los Angeles (1940)
- Altman Apartment Building, Los Angeles (1940) (HCM No. 1115)

#### DANISH IMMIGRANT WALL OF HONOR Column 39 Row 9

Edith Mortensen Northman (1914)



**01. Danish Lutheran Church**  
Los Angeles, 1937.



# touching history

As the Collections Assistant Intern at the Museum of Danish America, I spend most of my time cradling textiles as I lift them from archival boxes, gently fluffing out creases, padding smushed shoulders with tissue, and poring over database records. These records detail not only the object's physical attributes but also its history, its life, and the people that touched it, held it, and wore it before it made its way to the museum's shelves.

I get to have these experiences and learn these stories because the main project of my internship is an inventory of the museum's textile collection. That task may not sound particularly stimulating, and there *are* moments that get monotonous; for example, confirming that all 20 of the exact same objects are, in fact, in the box in which they are supposed to be. But, as cheesy as it sounds, it is a privilege to be the most recent person to encounter these items and the stories they tell. In the rush to get as much of the inventory done as possible and be as helpful as I can to the museum, I sometimes need to pause and fully absorb the history that I am handling and, in that moment, for which I am responsible.

The most recent object to give me this feeling is a brown, plaid wedding dress with floral embroidery. It is said to have been worn by Magdalena Lauesdatter at her wedding in Tyrstrup, Denmark in 1803. Eighty-eight years later, her dress was brought

to the United States, probably by Arendt Smidt (Magdalena was the mother of Arendt's first wife's stepmother) in 1891. It's not clear why the dress maintained such significance for Arendt, but it continued to hold enough importance to the family to be kept in good condition and preserved for close to another century before it was donated to the museum in the late 1980s by Arendt's great-granddaughter

Doris Hansen. Because it is safely housed in the museum, it can continue to have significance for generations to come, including to many museum-loving collections assistants like myself.

Julia's internship is made possible through generous support from the Danish Club of Tucson.

See it in color by searching Catalog Number 1989.080.001a on View Our Collection: [danishmuseum.pastperfectonline.com](http://danishmuseum.pastperfectonline.com)



By Julia Jessen

# new additions to the wall of honor

MAY 22 – SEPTEMBER 14, 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. More than 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](http://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.

**TAGE ANDREAS LAURSEN**  
(1915) Omaha, NE – Eric Laursen,  
Charlemont, MA, and Thomas  
Laursen, San Francisco, CA

**AXEL THEODOR SKELBECK**  
(1923) Omaha, NE – Bradley R.  
Sauter, Sheridan IN

**HANS CHRISTIAN HANSEN  
& BODIL MARIE ANDERSEN  
HANSEN** (1922, 1922)  
Montezuma, IA – Steve Ferguson,  
Grimes, IA

**PEDER CHRISTIAN &  
JACOBINA CHRISTIANSEN**  
(1882) (1892) Viborg, SD – Gloria  
Richelieu Fiedler, Davenport, IA

# jens jensen heritage path

MAY 22 – SEPTEMBER 14, 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.

Karen Anderson, Des Moines, IA  
Ryan & Susan Sand Brown,  
Maren Sand Peck, Ankeny, IA,  
Anders Sand, Kansas City, MO

Tricia Byrne, Williamsburg, VA  
Danish Sisterhood Lodge #21,  
Denver, CO  
Al & Nan Dreher, Kimballton, IA  
Charles & Joanne Frederiksen,  
Ames, IA  
Sune & Barbara Frederiksen,  
Berea, KY  
Lani D. Nielsen and Kristin Nielsen  
Habicht, Littleton, CO  
Jens, Kathy & Kirsten Jensen,  
Rockford, MN  
Terri Johnson, Manning, IA  
Kathy Jensen Kelly; Dan, Dennis &  
Randy Jensen, Grand Rapids, MI  
Doug & Lisa Mayo, Malvern, IA

Joel & Julie McKeever,  
Defiance, IA  
Tyler Sorensen and Jennie  
Sorensen-Jacobsen,  
Honolulu, HI  
Henrik C. Strandskov (Luck, WI),  
Annalee Strandskov, Phillip D.  
Grumstrup, Paul E. Grumstrup,  
Judith M. Grumstrup-Scott,  
Karin E. Grumstrup, Katherine  
A. Grumstrup, Elisebeth Sandlin  
Oates, James H. Sandlin, Neil  
A. Henriksen, Carol Henriksen  
Avery, Scott P. Henriksen, Julie  
Henriksen Bowe  
Peter Pallesen & Sharon Young,  
Overland Park, KS

By Deb Christensen Larsen





# memorials

MAY 22 – SEPTEMBER 14, 2020

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

Anton & Kristine Andersen  
John B. Anderson  
Niels Baade, whose parents  
immigrated to USA  
Peter Jacob Beyer  
Patricia Bonnesen Blake  
Patty Bonnesen Blake  
Judy Bornholdt  
Astrid Andersen Brewer  
Robert W. Brown  
Jimmy Christensen  
Joyce Christensen  
Joyce Christensen, a very sweet  
lady with a wicked sense of  
humor  
Joyce LaVonne Christensen  
Nels Madsen Christensen  
Lotte Christensen, my wife  
Clayton Ellingson  
Hans & Mathilde Farstrup  
Hannah Friis, Sherry's  
grandmother  
Doris Greve  
Lowell Haahr  
Doris Hansen  
Rita Neergaard Hansen  
Rev. Edward A. & Shirley M.  
(Bondo) Hansen, my parents  
Jens Ludvig Quedens Harboe  
Hans Christian Have  
Sister Dorothy "Kris" Helgersen  
Melba Hendee  
Ruth Swendiman Hovden  
Ahlmann Iversen  
Jens Jacobsen (grandfather)  
Lyle Jacobson  
Andy J. Nielsen Jensen  
Anton & Jorgine Jensen  
Jacquelyn Jensen  
Peter C. & Clara Jensen  
Roland & Anitra Jensen

Rosa Jorgensen-caring for her  
pieces of clothing  
Aase Vibeke Kiehn  
Otto & Valborg Kiertzner  
Esther Knudsen's family and  
parents  
Svend Koch  
John Rønnow Lauritzen  
Bent Lernø  
Elsie Rasmussen McNabb  
Laina Molbak, my wife  
Mrs. Eleanor Hellen Lindhardt  
Myers  
Clayton Nielsen  
Marian Nielsen  
Uffe Norgaard  
Kai E. Nyby  
Ole & Marie Olsen, my parents  
Martha (Mortensen) Ott  
Edith Paulsen  
Edith Paulsen, member of Danish  
Sisterhood Lodge #102  
Edith R. Paulsen  
Jane Paulsen  
Flemming V. Pedersen  
Deone Pedersen, my daughter  
David Pedersen, my son  
Jeannine Poldberg  
Jeannine Vithen Poldberg  
Jo Pearl Rasmussen  
Andrew and Rosa Rosenkild  
Robert Rubel  
Leroy Sand, my brother  
Lyle V. Schjodt, our nephew  
Charlotte Silverstein-Cohen, my  
beloved sister  
Harold C. Skow and  
Christian A. Skow  
Jens Sorensen  
Jens Verner Sorensen, from his  
Danish relatives

Elmer & Eleanor Sornson  
Russell Steffens  
Holger R. Stub  
Thomas Jorgensen Van Hon  
Fritz Vannornam  
Gerda Henriksen Westenberger

## in honor

MAY 22 – SEPTEMBER 14, 2020

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

Bruce Bro's Hiking for Danish  
America  
Kim Christensen  
Diana & Martin Christiansen  
Anne-Marie Douglas  
Ralf Hoifeldt's 90th birthday  
Chet Holland  
Cheyenne Jansdatter  
Laurence Jensen, our son  
Deb C. Larsen  
Theodore Larsen  
Ann Madsen  
Marilyn Meyer's four Danish  
grandparents who came to  
Brayton 10 miles east of the  
museum  
Paul Roge  
David Seymour  
Jens Sorensen



# new members

MAY 22 – SEPTEMBER 14, 2020

**The Museum of Danish America  
is pleased to identify the  
following 38 individuals as its  
newest members:**

Barbara Allen, Lincoln, NE  
Andy & Cindy Andersen,  
Satellite Beach, FL  
Morten Andersen, Buford, GA  
Helen Austin, San Francisco, CA  
Tricia Byrne, Williamsburg, VA  
Timothy & Suzanne Canady,  
Kenosha, AL  
Michael & Geneva Donley,  
Salmon, ID  
Chris Gulbrand, Luxemburg, WI  
Kristin Habicht, Littleton, CO  
Leland & Debbie Hansen,  
Hiawatha, KS  
Winnie Hogoboom,  
Santa Rosa, CA  
Cheyenne Jansdatter, Elk Horn, IA  
Scott & Anne Jaspersen,  
Knife River, MN  
Milt E. Jensen, Castle Rock, CO  
Kathy Kelly, Grand Rapids, MI  
Roger Knudsen,  
West Jefferson, OH

Dennis Koch, Dike, IA  
Mary Laurie, St. Louis Park, MN  
Steve & Pamela Oliver Lyons,  
San Jose, CA  
Diane Madsen, Omaha, NE  
Doug & Lisa Mayo, Malvern, IA  
Penny McDonald,  
San Antonio, TX  
Edward & Joey McIlhon,  
Des Moines, IA  
Diane Nygaard,  
Shawnee Mission, KS  
Scott Lauritsen & Cindy Pash,  
Exira, IA  
Lois Scott, Chicago, IL  
Tyler Sorenson, Honolulu, HI  
Henrik Strandskov, Luck, WI  
Ron Wollard, Santa Clarita, CA

## 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

MAY 22 – SEPTEMBER 14, 2020

**These 82 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  
Carroll Control Systems, Inc.  
(Todd & Jalyann Wanninger),  
Carroll, IA  
Christopher Ranch, LLC (Donald  
& Karen Christopher), Gilroy, CA  
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  
The Danish American Archive and  
Library, Blair, NE  
Danish American Club in Orange  
County, Huntington Beach,  
CA area  
Danish Archive NorthEast (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  
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

Danish Sisterhood Lodge #19,  
Tacoma/Olympia, WA  
Danish Sisterhood Ellen  
Lodge #21, Denver, CO  
Danish Sisterhood Princess Marie  
Lodge #68, Burbank, CA  
Danish Sisterhood Lodge #102,  
Des Moines, IA  
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 NE/CO District  
Lodges, Lincoln, NE &  
Denver CO  
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  
Elverhoj Museum of History and  
Art, Solvang, CA  
Exira-Elk Horn-Kimballton  
Community School District,  
Elk Horn, IA  
Faith, Family, Freedom  
Foundation (Kenneth & Marlene  
Larsen), Santa Rosa, CA  
Federation of Danish Associations  
in Canada, Gloucester, Canada  
Greater Omaha Genealogical  
Society, Omaha, NE

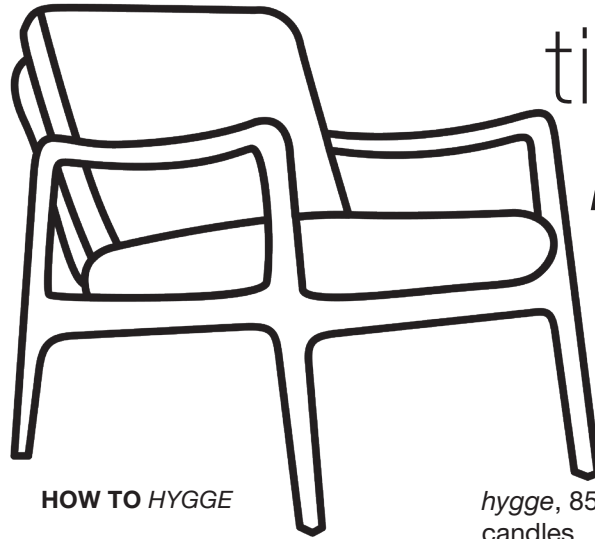
Hacways (Helene & Nanna Christensen), Hals, Denmark  
 Wayne Hansen Real Estate, LLC, Elk Horn, IA  
 Harlan Tribune Newspapers, Inc. (Steve Mores & Alan Mores), Harlan, IA  
 Henningsen Construction, Inc. (Brad Henningsen, Vice President), Atlantic, IA  
 House of Denmark, San Diego, CA  
 Independent 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  
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 Midwest Groundcovers LLC (Craig Keller & Christa Orum-Keller, Vice President), 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  
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 Royal Danish Embassy, Washington, DC  
 Royal Danish Guard Society, Chicago, IL  
 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  
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#### **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!





# time for *hygge*

What is “hygge”? Noun? Verb? How do you pronounce it? (For most English speakers, “HOO-geh” is close enough.)

*Hygge* is a Danish word that conjures a range of associations: comfort, coziness, hospitality, contentment, and a sense of belonging. There is no direct English equivalent, which is why *hygge* will have to stand on its own Danish self. In June 2017 “hygge” officially became a new word in the Oxford English Dictionary as a noun and adjective.

Other languages have similar words (*koselig* in Norwegian, *Gemütlichkeit* in German), but few cultures have a word that is used with such frequency and versatility.

What a *hyggelig* evening! (used as an adjective)  
Would you like to come *hygge* tomorrow? (used as a verb)  
I read a book in my *hygge*krog. (*Hygge* corner or nook)  
In December we bake cookies for *julehygge*. (Christmas *hygge*)  
Come for dinner and *hygge*. (used as a noun)

## HOW TO HYGGE

“Most people rush after pleasure so fast that they rush right past it.”

Søren Kierkegaard, 1813-1855

*Hygge* does not have to be expensive or exotic. In fact, most things associated with *hygge* are simple things that can be enjoyed without causing stress: the company of friends, sharing a meal, lighting a candle (or five), making something by hand.

*Hygge* should feel good. The trick to *hygge* is to be aware of the simple pleasures and enjoy them in the moment.

Here are some examples of *hygge* you can enjoy every day:  
Light a candle at supper time\*  
Pull on a warm, cozy sweater  
Host a potluck among friends or neighbors

\*Denmark burns more candles per capita than any country in Europe, roughly 13 pounds of candle wax per Dane per year. When asked what they most associate with

*hygge*, 85% of Danes mention candles. Over 75% of Danes light candles at least once a week; 28% light candles every day. When they light candles, over 50% of Danes will light four or more candles at a time. The word for “spoilsport” in Danish is *lyseslukker* - “the one who puts out the candles.” [*The Little Book of Hygge* by Meik Wiking, 2016]

## SHARING HYGGE

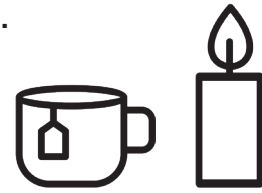
You can enjoy *hygge* by yourself, but often a *hyggelig* moment is shared with others. A dinner party, a board game, a coffee break – these are all moments that could create *hygge*.

There is also a value of egalitarianism that is inherent in *hygge*. Everyone participates, and everyone benefits – with good food, good conversation, and comfortable surroundings. Denmark as a nation is marked by a high level of equality among citizens, and this social value is expressed on a personal level through *hygge* with others. A *hygge* experience is one where everyone feels included and valued, without a sense of hierarchy or competition.



By Tova Brandt

YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS GATHER FOR A MIDSUMMER BONFIRE.  
THAT'S *HYGGE*.  
YOUR FAMILY PLAYS A BOARD GAME ON A FRIDAY EVENING.  
THAT'S *HYGGE*.  
YOU CURL UP WITH A GOOD BOOK AND A MUG OF HOT CHOCOLATE.  
THAT'S *HYGGE*.



### TASTE

The food we eat isn't just to meet our daily needs for nutrients. Food brings enjoyment, socialization, memories, traditions – all things that create *hygge*.

Often it's around a table that we are most likely to talk to each other, share stories of the day, unplug from modern devices, and be in the moment of sharing a meal in good company.

To be *hygge*, the food is most likely to be familiar rather than experimental, traditional rather than innovative, brownies rather than chocolate soufflé. Quality is more important than complexity. If December is the most *hygge* season, then traditional holiday foods and sweets – whatever that means for you – is a part of that experience.

It is not *hygge* to over-indulge, nor is it *hygge* to fast. If part of *hygge* is sharing with friends and family, then everyone participates in enjoying the food and drinks together.

### PLACE

It's hard to *hygge* under fluorescent lightbulbs – the cold glare of humming light tubes are a major barrier to creating a *hyggelig* space. Danes are quantifiably obsessed with candles and lighting design. A warm, welcoming soft light is a pre-requisite for *hygge*.

And what do you see in that soft, welcoming light? Comfortable furniture, natural materials like wood and stone, soft blankets and rugs of wool or sheepskin. A *hyggelig* home décor reflects an appreciation of craftsmanship in woodworking or textiles. Bonus points for a fireplace or wood stove.

A *hygge*krog is a “cozy nook” that could be just the right place to enjoy *hygge* by yourself. Maybe it's a window seat with just the right pillow. Maybe it's an armchair and a footrest beside a fireplace. Maybe there's room for a small child to join you for a favorite storybook.

Overall, a *hyggelig* place is cozy and inviting. How it makes you feel is more important than what it looks like.

### SEASONS

Every time of the year offers different ways to *hygge*.

Autumn and winter are the most obvious, as the cold weather keeps us indoors to seek warmth. But spring and summer have seasonal ways to *hygge*, too. If part of *hygge* is being in-the-moment, then enjoying the cycle of seasons is *hygge*.

#### Spring:

Gather a vase of spring flowers for the table. Teach a young child how to make May baskets.

#### Summer:

Invite friends for a backyard game of croquet. Light a midsummer bonfire. Host a “pantry party” to make jam with fresh berries.

#### Autumn:

Pick apples and make a pie. Go for a walk and enjoy the autumn colors. Invite friends over for a movie night.

#### Winter:

Warm up by a wood stove after skiing, sledding, or ice skating. Bake holiday cookies. Decorate for the season.



Some seasonal activities take a lot of work in preparation, but the result is *hygge* at last. For example, think of a big family holiday meal: lots of cooking, cleaning, preparing for guests, and travel logistics. But once everyone is together, the contrast with the hustle and bustle of preparation highlights the *hygge* of the moment.

#### WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HYGGE?

Tova Brandt will be presenting virtual programs on Hygge – watch the e-newsletter for program times and access.

*Hygge: The Exhibit* is available to borrow from the Museum of Danish America. Contact Diya Nagaraj to explore sharing this exhibit with your community.

*Hygge: The Exhibit* is made possible by **Cynthia Larsen Adams & Gary Adams, Littleton, Colorado**



## our annual christmas card

Recognition and thanks go to Nan Dreher and the late Kai Nyby for this year's image. In early 2020, Kai Nyby made a donation in memory of John Molgaard (see story on pages 28-31) to be used for the purchase of a new digital camera. Nan, our Design Store manager, took advantage early one snowy morning and captured several photographs of the Jens Jensen Prairie Landscape Park. It was from this group of photos that the Annual Christmas Card was created.

“During the closure we have had many visitors to the museum grounds. I felt it important to focus on the prairie for the card this year.”

- Nan



# aunt margaret's rock cookies

½ cup sugar	¾ cup nuts (broken pecans)
1 cup butter	1 tsp. ginger
½ cup molasses	1 tsp. cloves
3 eggs	1 tsp. cinnamon
1 tsp. baking soda	Dash nutmeg
1 cup raisins	4½ cups of flour, or more

Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees.

Cream butter and sugar together in a mixer. Add eggs and mix. Add the molasses, flour, and spices. When mixed thoroughly, add nuts and raisins.

Check to see if the batter is stiff enough. If the batter flattens out, add more flour. When stiff enough, drop spoonful on cookie sheet. Bake 12 minutes. Avoid overcooking. Dough can be refrigerated.

*Recipe courtesy of Dr. Michael Van Ness*

elk horn, iowa

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**GENEALOGY CENTER**  
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**712.764.7001**



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**Card front**



**Card back text**



museum of  
**danish america**

A blanket of snow covers the Jens Jensen Prairie Landscape Park. Stroll along the gentle curves of the Friends Walk and visit the Council Ring, both inspired by the design philosophy of Jens Jensen (landscape architect, 1860-1951). Jensen viewed the council ring as a symbol of democracy and intended it as a gathering place where all people would be equal. He developed this feature combining elements of ancient Nordic cultural tradition with the council fires of Native Americans.



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**Card inside text**

Glædelig Jul  
og Godt Nytår

**Ornament front and back**



**Annual Christmas Card:** With envelope(s). Single #6101, \$2. Pack of 10 #6100, \$16. **Porcelain Ornament:** Includes ribbon for hanging. #6102, \$16. Members receive a 10% discount! More to see online: [www.danishmuseum.org/shop](http://www.danishmuseum.org/shop). Orders by phone to 712.764.7001. Curbside pickup available at the museum during weekdays.