



# America Letter



**The Danish Immigrant Museum**

AN INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL CENTER

Summer 2010 • Vol. XXIII, No. 2

2212 WASHINGTON STREET • ELK HORN, IOWA 51531 • 712-764-7001 • [www.danishmuseum.org](http://www.danishmuseum.org)



**Across Oceans, Across Time, Across Generations:  
Celebrating the Seventieth Birthday of H.M. Queen Margrethe II of Denmark**



# Director's Corner

Excitement is building as The Danish Immigrant Museum anticipates hosting the National Danish Performance Team on the American leg of their 2010-2011 World Tour. This is the gymnastics team of the Danish Gymnastics and Sports Association, the largest organization of any kind in Denmark.

Beginning in Washington, D.C. and New York City, and crossing the country to Portland, Oregon and Los Angeles, California, the team will perform in sixteen cities. Included in the tour will be visits and performances in the Danish American communities of Tyler, Minnesota, Junction City, Oregon and here in Elk Horn.

A highlight is that the National Danish Performance Team has been identified by the White House as celebrating healthy living in the fight against child obesity. This is largely due to the hard work and generosity of Mia Hansen, a museum board member from Tucson, Arizona who has traveled the country soliciting support.

Accompanying the team will be a traveling exhibit designed by the museum's staff. In addition we plan museum events in each of the cities the team visits. This is a wonderful opportunity to engage Danish American organizations in each of the cities the team visits and to share our work here at The Danish Immigrant Museum.

On another note, September 13, 2010 marks the 150th anniversary of the birth of Jens Jensen. Considered the "father of the prairie school of landscape architecture," his story was told in our *America Letter* (Fall 2009). As many of you know, we are developing a Jens Jensen Prairie Landscape Park on museum grounds

that will be a living tribute to this important Danish American. The park will attract an additional traveling public interested in horticulture.

We have received a generous pledge from Peter and Irma Ørum, owners of Midwest Groundcovers of St. Charles, Illinois, to provide all the plantings for the park. This is the same family who recently donated a 1951 Nimbus, a Danish motorcycle, in memory of their son, Stig (see "The Collection Connection" on page 10 for the story). Their support for The Danish Immigrant Museum is an important example of in-kind gifting, for which we are all grateful.

Finally, I must end with an observation about financial support for The Danish Immigrant Museum. When I assumed my position in 2003, I believed that we had to make major efforts to increase our visibility through programming and partnerships with members around the country. This we have done. Space does not allow me to enumerate the many exhibits and programs we have provided or sponsored since that time. Our efforts are inspired by the phrase from the film *Field of Dreams*, aptly set in Iowa: "If you build it, they will come."

If we provide the programming, the support will come. This is not always true. Due to the downturn in the economy,

contributions have fallen. At the time I write this, unrestricted gifting is down by over \$60,000 from last year. This makes planning for the future difficult.

What programs can we develop to better serve our membership? What do we continue to fund and what might we have to cut?

As you are aware, The Danish Immigrant Museum has been blessed to receive generous bequests that have helped us meet operating expenses even as we have invested in our endowment. Many of us do not have the expendable income to make major annual gifts in our lifetime. A bequest gift can provide an opportunity to create a named legacy.

I invite you, after making provisions for loved ones, to consider providing for The Danish Immigrant Museum in your estate. I would also ask you to share the fact that you have done so with the museum. Such information is confidential and of course subject to change. Knowing, however, that the museum will be the beneficiary of future bequests does assist us as we plan for the future.

The underlying reason for my raising this issue is planning – planning that directs loved ones and/or friends to carry out what you desire. If you haven't already done so, I encourage you to contact an attorney to assure that the results of your life and work will be directed as you desire. It really is about planning for the future.

**John Mark Nielsen**  
*Executive Director*



# America Letter

Published Three Times Annually By  
The Danish Immigrant Museum  
2212 Washington Street  
Elk Horn, Iowa 51531  
712-764-7001 800-759-9192  
FAX 712-764-7002  
Eva Nielsen, editor

www.danishmuseum.org  
email: info@danishmuseum.org

## Board of Directors

**President** – Harriet Albertsen Spanel,  
Bellingham, WA

**Vice President** – Mark Nussle, Palos Park, IL

**Secretary** – Dennis Andersen, Atlanta, GA

**Treasurer** – Clark Mathisen, Omaha, NE

Carlo Christensen, Glendale, CA

Lone Christensen, Brown Deer, WI

Ane-Grethe Delaney, Wayzata, MN

Mark Frederiksen, Falcon, CO

Kurt Hansen, Rosemount, MN

Mia Hansen, Tucson, AZ

**Vice Consul Anna Thomsen Holliday**,  
Houston, TX

Kristi Planck Johnson, Bethesda, MD

Kenneth Larsen, Calistoga, CA

Steven Lund, Yuma, AZ

Cynthia McKeen, St. Paul, MN

Carol Jensen Mills, Dubuque, IA

Kay Esbeck North, Ames, IA

Benedikte Ehlers Olesen, Eugene, OR

**Consul Lynette Skow Rasmussen**,  
Johnston, IA

**Consul Eva Robinson**, Butler, PA

Mark Strandskov, Mount Pleasant, MI

Janet M. Thuesen, Sausalito, CA

### Ex-Officio

Marc Petersen, Omaha, NE

Kai Nyby, LaPorte, IN

Vern Hunter, Fargo, ND

Nils Jensen, Portland, OR

Dennis Larson, Decorah, IA

## Staff

### Executive Director:

Dr. John Mark Nielsen,  
director@danishmuseum.org

**General Information, Group Tours,**

**Volunteering Opportunities:**

Terri Johnson,  
info@danishmuseum.org

**Development Director:** Bruce Bro,  
dkdevdir@metc.net

**Wall of Honor, Donations,**

**Memorial Gifts & Memberships:** Debra  
Christensen Larsen,

development@danishmuseum.org

**Bookkeeping & Financial**

**Inquiries:** Jennifer Winters,

acctng@danishmuseum.org

**Exhibit Questions:** Tova Brandt

dkcur@metc.net

**Artifact Donations & Museum Loans:**

Angela Stanford,  
registrar@danishmuseum.org

**Museum Shop:** Joni Soe-Butts,

giftshop@danishmuseum.org

**Donation of Books & Library**

**Questions:** Michele McNabb,

librarian@danishmuseum.org

**Genealogical & Translation Inquiries:**

genealogy@danishmuseum.org

**Custodian:** Tim Frederiksen

**Museum & FHGC Data Entry:** Wanda

Sornson, dkgen2@metc.net

# New Programming at Bedstemor's

Have you visited  
Bedstemor's lately?

Bedstemor's House is  
now open to visitors  
every afternoon.

Owned and operated  
by The Danish  
Immigrant Museum,  
Bedstemor's House is a  
historic house restored  
to its original 1908  
appearance. Bedstemor  
is the Danish word for  
"grandmother," and the  
house is furnished in  
the style of a Danish  
American grandmother  
from a century ago.



*Bedstemor's House is open daily, 1 to 4 p.m., until  
mid-September.*

Visitors to Bedstemor's House this year enjoy several new additions. A new 12-minute video is available to introduce the story of the original owner, Jens Otto Christiansen, the families who lived there, and the local residents who restored the house. Families will enjoy the photo puzzles and "Can you find it?" activities that encourage hunting for details through the house. On weekends, Bedstemor's House hosts a series of craft demonstrations, hands-on activities,

and back yard games. Visit the museum's website calendar for details about a particular day's events, which are funded by a grant from the Shelby County Community Foundation.

The museum has hired three local students to welcome visitors at Bedstemor's House this summer. Courtney Ericksen, Katie Zellmer, and Preston Waymire join the museum team to welcome visitors and share the history of the house.

Even if you can't visit in person, you can still enjoy the 12-minute video, "The Story of Bedstemor's House" on the museum's YouTube channel. This video was made possible with support from the Marne & Elk Horn Telephone Company and Humanities Iowa. On YouTube.com, enter "DanishMuseum" in the search field to find all of the museum's available videos.



*Bedstemor's is a historic house restored to  
its original 1908 appearance.*

**COVER PHOTO:** *H.M. Queen Margrethe II of Denmark by photographer Steen Evald, Copenhagen. "Across Oceans, Across Time, Across Generations: Celebrating the Seventieth Birthday of H.M. Queen Margrethe II of Denmark" begins on page 4.*



*Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II is an accomplished artist. Here she creates decoupage illustrations for a new publication of Hans Christian Andersen's tale, "The Wild Swans."  
Courtesy of JJ Films, Copenhagen, Denmark.*

## Across Oceans, Across Time, Across Generations: Celebrating the Seventieth Birthday of H.M. Queen Margrethe II of Denmark

*by John Mark Nielsen*

***This article was adapted from a speech honoring H.M. Queen Margrethe II's seventieth birthday at a banquet in Illinois sponsored by the Midwest Danish American Chamber of Commerce.***

April is the cruelest month, breeding  
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing  
Memory and desire, stirring  
Dull roots with spring rain.

So begins one of the most important poems of the 20th Century, T.S. Eliot's "The Waste Land."

April is a time of hope and desire, a time when we plant seeds in anticipation of reaping rich harvests. As the April sun warms the earth and snowdrops, crocuses, tulips and, yes, lilacs burst forth,

there is a renewed sense of possibilities.

April is also a time of remembering – remembering the cruel winter which still lingers in a late snowstorm, in a harsh frost that stunts budding plants or in cold, spring showers.

April is the cruelest month, mixing memory and desire.

In April, seventy years ago in Denmark, memory and desire too were mingled. On April 9, 1940, the forces of Nazi Germany swept across the border and occupied Denmark. On that April day, a free Denmark became a memory. Even as Europe was in the grip of war and the Danish people were adjusting to



*The Queen visits an exhibit of her decoupage work. Her work was on display at The Meridian International Center in Washington, D.C. this spring. Images from the exhibit can still be seen at the Meridian's website: [www.meridian.org/wildswans/imagegallery.html](http://www.meridian.org/wildswans/imagegallery.html).*

a new reality, there were stirrings of hope. For just one week later, on April 16, 1940, a princess was born: Margrethe. Her very name is the name of a flower, *margarete*, what we in English know as the daisy, a flower whose yellow center and white petals suggest all the bloom of summer.

Seventy years later, we celebrate the seventieth birthday of the now beloved H.M. Queen Margrethe II of Denmark.

There is an irony for those of us who are Americans in remembering the birthday of a monarch. After all, one of the steps our ancestors – or you who are immigrants – took on becoming American citizens was forswearing loyalty to any foreign monarch or power.

But, as the 18th century French philosopher Voltaire said, “Every man has two countries, his own and France.” I suspect many of us in the 21st century are

still people of two countries. For me, though, those two countries are Denmark and the United States.

America's greatest export is not McDonald's or Coca-Cola, Boeing or Microsoft, *Avatar* or *Toy Story*. It is not fast food, technology and popular culture; it is our values and our ideals. I am proud to be an American, a citizen of a country whose highest ideals are equal opportunity, equal justice under the law, self-determination, self-governance, self-reliance and a spirit of generosity, compassion and optimism.

At the same time, my family heritage and my experiences living in Denmark make me proud of my Danish roots. I have experienced that wonderful bond that is affirmed when families and friends, young and old, gather around a table. There is eating and talking, and more eating and more talking. The conversation is often spirited, even contentious, as differing points of view

are discussed. But always I have experienced a kind of equality – a respect for differing opinions and for the deeper ties that bind us together as humans.

The habit of the Danes to gather in such a way ripples out into Danish society. Caring for one another has given rise to a social welfare net that secures its citizens against poverty and ill health and affords all educational opportunity. Respecting diversity of opinion has ensured an equally dynamic business environment allowing for innovation and change. The public and private sectors can work together as they have in maintaining high energy taxes to invest in sustainable energy. Future potential seems more important than immediate gain. As numerous Danes have said to me, “We want to see the results of our taxes, and we do.”

Like the Americans, the Danes are a generous and compassionate people. In terms of percentage of GNP (gross national product), the amount of humanitarian aid Denmark provides developing nations exceeds that of the United States. In the area of human rights, the U.S. and Denmark are equally committed to affirming the dignity and equality of all.

Yes, I believe many of us can say with pride that we are citizens of these two countries.

Though we share many common values, there is a fundamental difference in the structure of our two governments: Denmark has

a monarch. That person, in the best of examples, represents all the finest qualities of the Danish people.

In her lifetime, H.M. Queen Margrethe II, Denmark's head of state, has endeared herself to the Danish people. She has gained their love and respect because she possesses many admirable qualities. She is intellectually gifted, having matriculated with distinction and studied political science, economics and archaeology at universities in Copenhagen, Århus, Cambridge, Paris and London. She is fluent in Danish, German, French and English.

Though the Danish monarch has no formal political influence, H.M. Queen Margrethe has inspired respect by speaking out on controversial issues. In her annual address to the Danish people on New Year's Eve, an event that most Danes watch before beginning their New Year's celebrations, she has openly encouraged the Danish people to confront issues of racial intolerance, environmental degradation, human rights, the need for innovation in a global market place and the strength of Danish cultural roots.

One quality that she, herself, acknowledges gives her strength to conduct her responsibilities as monarch is her artistic talent. As she stated to Peter Thygesen, a reporter

– *Continued on page 6*



# H.M. Queen Margrethe II

continued from page 5

for *Politiken*, “I get strength to do my ‘job’ as head of state by permitting myself to express myself through the arts. I think I can also demonstrate that this has made my life as Queen easier for me. Without being able to express myself in a creative way and use the fantasy I have always had, I would probably have felt that it was hard to ‘reload the batteries.’”

From childhood, H.M. Queen Margrethe has developed her artistic talents, first in drawing and then moving on to painting, needlework, textiles and even set-designs for theatrical, dance and film productions. In 1977, her illustrations appeared in the first Danish translation of J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings*, under the pseudonym Ingahild Grathmer. Since 1988, she has exhibited under her own name. That H.M. Queen Margrethe should be a noted artist underscores the appreciation the Danish people have for creativity, design and innovation.

Just this past year, a new version of Hans Christian Andersen’s tale “The Wild Swans” has been published with forty-two decoupage illustrations by H.M. Queen Margrethe. These illustrations exemplify her sensitivity to design and composition, and underscore how art is a part of her character.

Fittingly, “The Wild Swans” also has something to tell us about being a citizen of two countries. The story is about a king with twelve children – eleven sons and one daughter (see pages 7 and 8 for a summary of the tale). When the children’s mother dies, the king remarries and the new queen casts a spell on the eleven princes, turning them to swans during the daytime. The eleven princes

are forced to fly away. Later in the story, when the princes reunite with their sister, they tell her where they have been living. Here is their description from Diane Crone Frank and Jeffrey Frank’s translation of the tale:

“There’s a country as beautiful as this one on the other side of the ocean. It’s a long distance. We have to cross the big ocean... We can visit the home of our ancestors only once a year... That’s when we fly over the big forest and see the castle where we were born, where our father lives, and see the tower of the church where our mother is buried. Here it feels as if the trees and bushes are a part of us... Here’s where the charcoal maker sings the songs that we danced to as children. This is our country – it draws us and we’ve found you our dear little sister. We can stay for another two days – and then we have to go away across the sea to the beautiful country.”

The brothers have discovered what many an immigrant has felt: they have new lives in a beautiful country far away and yet memory draws them back to the land of their birth. I know this was the experience of my immigrant grandparents, and I suspect it is the same for many of you.

The Danish Immigrant Museum is a place where the stories of immigration are preserved and where we are proud to have Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II as our protector. Each immigrant story has its unique elements, even as there are shared experiences. Common to all is a desire to realize new possibilities. There is also, like in “The Wild Swans,” the discovery of memory and a longing to return from where we have come.

To celebrate the birthday of H.M. Queen Margrethe II of Denmark here in America, a person who embodies so many Danish cultural values, reminds us that we are bound by a common memory, a common heritage, even as we pursue individual desires and dreams here in the United States.

I believe all of us who are Americans can say with love and pride, “God bless America, my home sweet home,” but we can say with equal love and pride, the phrase with which H.M. Queen Margrethe ends each New Year’s Address to the Danish people, “*Gud bevære Danmark*,” God protect Denmark. And most importantly in celebrating her seventieth birthday, we can say, “Long live H.M. Queen Margrethe II of Denmark.”

We are blessed to be citizens of two countries.



*“The City of Bird’s Eye View.”*

# Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II Illustrates ‘The Wild Swans’

*By John Mark Nielsen*

That Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II of Denmark chose to illustrate a tale by Hans Christian Andersen is not surprising. In the introduction to the new publication of “The Wild Swans,” she writes that her interest in Andersen began at an early age when her father, King Frederik IX, read aloud his many tales to her and to her sisters.

She writes, “I think I must have been about eight-years-old when ‘The Wild Swans’ was read aloud to me. I can remember that I was very taken with the story, and I was paralyzed with fear by the scene in the graveyard.”

She goes on to say that she has always been fascinated by how Andersen inspires readers and listeners to create pictures in their minds—to

inhabit the worlds that he describes in his stories.

Briefly, the story of “The Wild Swans” is this. In a land faraway, there was a king who had twelve children, eleven sons and the youngest a princess, named Elisa. Sadly, the queen died leaving the children without a mother. So the king remarried. But the new queen, who was really a witch, turned the king against his children and cast a spell over her stepsons, turning them into eleven swans (though they regained human form each night) and forcing them to fly away. The new queen banished Princess Elisa, who was both beautiful and good, to live in the countryside with a peasant family.

When she was fifteen Elisa had to return home as her father, the king, wanted to see her. Before they could meet, however, the queen covered Elisa with a stinky ointment and made her appear so ugly that her father denied that she

was his daughter. Forlorn, she crept out of the palace and disappeared into the forest nearby. Deeper and deeper she wandered until she came to a beautiful pool where she lay down and dreamed of her eleven brothers.

The next morning, when Elisa went to wash her face, she was frightened by her own reflection, but after bathing her beauty was restored. Later, she met an old woman and asked her if she had seen eleven princes. The old woman replied that she had not, but that she had seen eleven swans with gold crowns on their heads, swimming in the sea. She directed Elisa to where she might find them.

Following the old woman’s directions, Elisa discovered the swans sleeping on a bed of seaweed. As the sun dipped below the horizon, the swans were suddenly transformed into the eleven princes and were reunited with their sister.

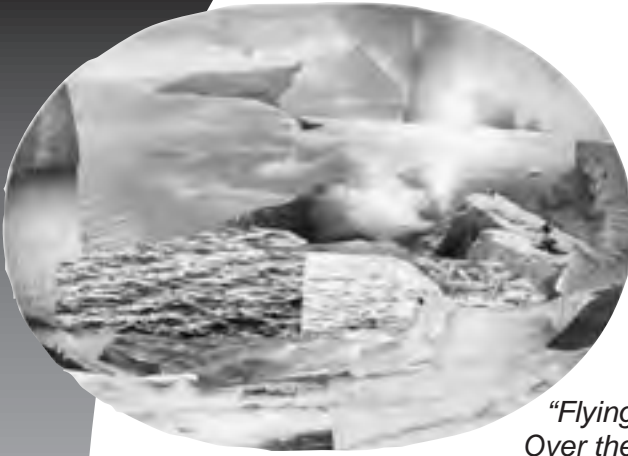
They explained their plight

of being swans during the day and regaining human form at night. They told her that they now lived in a beautiful land beyond the ocean, to which they must soon return. Elisa begged to journey with them. Since she cannot fly, they weave a net and carry her across the ocean to the beautiful land, arriving as night falls.

There, her brothers leave Elisa at the entrance to a cave where she can sleep in peace. She goes to sleep wishing that she could break the spell over her brothers and dreams that she is approached by a beautiful fairy who also looks like the old woman she had met in the woods. The fairy shows her nettles that grow in graveyards and tells her that to break the spell she must pick the nettle, crush and make it into flax and then spin and weave eleven cloaks, one for each brother. However, from the moment she begins the task, Elisa must not speak for if she utters

# Wild Swans

continued from page 7



*"Flying Over the Sea."*

even one word, it will pierce her brothers' hearts like daggers and they will die.

Despite the nettle that burns like fire and leaves her arms and legs blistered, Elisa gladly sets about picking the nettles, making them into flax and then spinning and weaving them into cloaks. She is making progress when she is interrupted by a hunting party led by the young king of the land, who immediately falls in love with the beautiful but mute young woman. He takes her to his castle and provides her with a room where she can continue her work. In a short time he proposes that she become his queen.



*"The Churchyard."*

The Archbishop of the land believes, however, that Elisa is a witch. When she runs out of nettles and must slip out of the castle one night to collect more nettles in the graveyard, the Archbishop follows her. Watching her, the Archbishop is convinced Elisa is a witch; he persuades the young king to try Elisa for witchcraft. Since she can speak no words in her defense, Elisa is convicted and sentenced to be burned at the stake.

Elisa's brothers approach the young king in the night and attempt to convince him of their sister's innocence, but despite his grief, he will not be persuaded. In the prison, Elisa continues her work, assisted by the mice that drag nettles to her feet and a thrush that sings at the window to lift her spirits.



*"The Prison."*

In the morning, Elisa is taken by cart to the castle square where she is to be burned. Even as she is transported through the streets, she is sewing the last cloak. When the people see this they are enraged and try to destroy the cloaks, but eleven swans appear around her and beat back the crowd with their wings. The people interpret this as a sign from heaven of her innocence; still the executioner will not be dissuaded. Elisa, however, is able to throw the cloaks over the eleven swans gathered about her, and the spell is broken. The eleven princes appear; only the youngest retains one wing as his sister was unable to complete the last cloak in time.

Elisa can now speak, but faints from exhaustion, so her brothers must tell her story. Miraculously, the firewood that had been stacked around the stake bursts into red roses. At the top is a white rose that the young king plucks and presents to Elisa as a sign of her courage. They are married, she becomes queen in the new land and is reunited forever with her brothers.

To see images of H.M. Queen Margrethe's illustrations for "The Wild Swan," visit The Meridian International Center's online image gallery: <http://www.meridian.org/wildswans/imagegallery.html>





*Candy Pharmaceutical*

## Next in the Danish-American Artist Series: Paul Solevad

*On view July 24, 2010, through January 2, 2011*

Paul Solevad will be sharing his most recent series of oil paintings, inspired by current events and scientific exploration. Born in California in 1970, Paul lives and works in the Portland, Oregon area. He will discuss his work during an artist reception at The Danish Immigrant Museum on July 30 from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m.



*Radiolarial Elements*

**America Letter • 9**

# The Collection Connection

*By Angela Stanford, curator of collections*

On May 29, Peter and Irma Ørum made a unique donation to The Danish Immigrant Museum: a 1950 Nimbus motorcycle. This bike, given during a special ceremony on the museum grounds during the Tivolfest celebration, has traveled between Denmark and the United States more than once.

What is a Nimbus, you might ask? It is the most well-known motorcycle ever produced in Denmark. Approximately 14,000 of these bikes were made by the Copenhagen firm of Fisker & Nielsen between the years of 1919 and 1960. The Nimbus was intended primarily for the Danish postal, military and police services, but was used by civilians as well.

In 1960, production of the Nimbus motorcycle was stopped due to the introduction of foreign motorcycles into the marketplace, as well as cheaper scooter alternatives. Fisker & Nielsen is still in operation today, now as a manufacturer of quality vacuum cleaners. One of their most recognized vacuums is the Nilfisk GM-80, a machine used by museums all over

the world, including The Danish Immigrant Museum.

Peter Ørum loves the Nimbus motorcycle. In the late 1980s, while visiting Enghave Motors in Copenhagen, he saw a restored 1950 Nimbus. He purchased the bike and had it transported across the Atlantic to St. Charles, Illinois. Peter discovered a group of Danes and Americans in the Chicago area that shared his love for the distinct motorcycle and soon he formed the Midwest Nimbus Club.

The Ørum family hosted many Nimbus Club events on their plant nursery property in St. Charles. One of these events was a spring ride held in 1990 that began in the nursery and continued through the rolling farmlands west of St. Charles. Peter, along with his 16-year-old son Stig, was excited to participate in this annual event.



*1950 Nimbus Motorcycle*

During the ride, a motorist failed to heed a stop sign and struck Peter and Stig, who were riding together on the green Nimbus at the head of the column of motorcycles. Both Peter and Stig were thrown from the motorcycle, suffering terrible injuries. Peter survived, but Stig did not.

Peter and Irma kept the wrecked Nimbus for many years in a shed, unsure of what to do with it. Through associations with The Danish Immigrant Museum in Elk Horn, a future for it was found.

In 2009, Peter and Irma commissioned Niels Nielsen, a well known Nimbus mechanic located in Frederikssund, Denmark, to restore it to factory specifications. The Ørums brought the bike to Elk Horn and rode it in the Tivoli parade before presenting it to the museum for its permanent collection. It is a poignant tribute to Stig Ørum by his family, and will soon be on display on the lower level of the museum.

*Special thanks to Craig Keller, member of the Midwest Nimbus Club, for providing much of the information for this article.*



*Peter and Irma Ørum of St. Charles, Illinois immediately after the presentation of the Nimbus to the museum.*



# Interns Join Collections Department

Two new interns have joined The Danish Immigrant Museum staff as collections assistants, working with the artifact collections.

Bethany Pape, who just finished her first year as a business major at Dana College in Blair, Nebraska, will spend the summer converting artifact inventory records from paper to electronic form. She is adding artifact descriptions, provenance, and images to the museum's collections database, PastPerfect. In

so doing, she is helping to expand the content that is available to some members via the museum's website.

Brittany Deeds is a graduate student in public history with a museum studies certification through Indiana University-Purdue University in Indianapolis. Brittany's primary project over the next year will be the inventory, cataloging, and rehousing of the museum's textile collection. Descriptions, condition assessments, measurements, and photos will be taken of every piece and then added

to PastPerfect. As part of the project, Brittany will insert new acid-free tissue between each layer of textiles and will help develop a new location code system for this collection.

The full inventory of the artifact collection is a major project for the museum to complete. Summer and long-term interns are essential for completing this project, which will make more information about the collection accessible for staff and available via the "View Our Collection" benefit available



*Bethany Pape (left) and Brittany Deeds intern with the collections department.*

to museum members at the \$100 level and above.



## Vacation in Denmark and Support The Danish Immigrant Museum

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

- Located in the middle of Jutland, a 10-minute drive from Viborg, two hours to Skagen to the north, two hours to the German border to the south, one hour to the North Sea on the west, and one hour to the Kattegat on the east.
- 45-minute drive to Århus, and 40-minutes to Aalborg.
- Views of the Limfjord from most rooms in the house.
- Three bedrooms—two with queen-sized beds and one with two bunk beds. It sleeps six adults comfortably, but can

sleep a total of eight.

- Two bathrooms with showers and one has a hot tub.
- Kitchen with refrigerator, oven, and microwave.
- Flat screen television and DVD player.
- Five minute drive to shopping: bakery, butcher shop, bank, post office.
- The house is available for rental in 2010 for a minimum of \$1,000 a week. (Usually, it costs around \$3,000.) In 2011 the cost will rise to a minimum of \$1,250 a week.

*Interested individuals should contact Benedikte Ehlers Olesen at [ehlers01@earthlink.net](mailto:ehlers01@earthlink.net)*

# Dania Sko Wooden Shoes

*By Morten Birkerød Tofte,  
former exhibitions intern*

The museum recently accepted a very interesting artifact into its collection: a pair of wooden clogs. The museum, of course, already has a sizable collection of clogs of all shapes, sizes and ages. The old, hand-carved, worn pairs tell the story of Danes immigrating to the United States from rural parts of Denmark, bringing along inexpensive, but durable shoes made of wood, and the habit of wearing them. The new pair in the collection, though, isn't old, worn, or hand-made; it's not even brought over by a Danish immigrant. These shoes have the modern look of an industrially-produced consumer item, complete with the manufacturer's label: Dania Sko in Kimballton, Iowa.

When the museum first received this pair of clogs, not much information about the company that made them was available. In a museum, good knowledge about the artifacts in the collection is essential; so it was decided that we investigate the

story of this company and the people behind it.

As part of this



*This pair of Dania Sko wooden shoes was donated to The Danish Immigrant Museum in 2010 by Bob and Joyce Lewis of Audubon, Iowa.*



*Howard Juel poses with Dania Sko wooden shoes in 1973. The Dania Sko shoes were shipped to 49 states and a few even went to Denmark.*

*Photo used with the permission of The Audubon County Advocate Journal.*

investigation, a meeting with both of the original founders, Howard Juel and Jens Sorensen, was set up in Howard's home in Kimballton. An interview was recorded on video with the idea that their story, in addition to being part of the collection record, could be made into a video to be published on YouTube, as part of the museum's new efforts to reach its audience through the Internet.

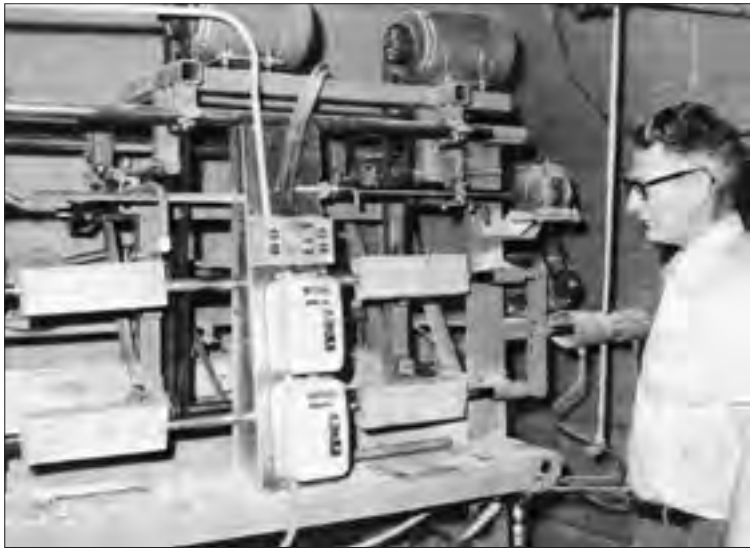
As turns out, the museum's new pair of clogs represents a part of Danish American history that is worth telling and remembering: the story of the company Dania Sko, its founders, and the community that supported the enterprise through the 1970s.

Jens Sorensen is now retired and lives in

Kimballton. He was born in the small village of Boulstrup, south of Aarhus in Denmark, where he worked as a farmhand in his early youth. All the while he dreamed of going to a foreign country and hoped to do so working as an engineer. Unfortunately, he did not get in to the Danish engineering school, but decided to go to America anyway. He first went to Canada where he worked in mining for several years, then arrived in the United States in 1954. Here he trained and worked as a milk tester and later as a telephone installer in Benton County, Iowa. In 1970 he bought a grocery store in Kimballton from his mother's cousin and moved to town with his wife and daughter.

Howard Juel, a third-generation Danish





Howard Juel is pictured in 1973 with a machine he invented known as a "tracer." It cut blocks of wood into the shape of soles, four at a time. The machine was built by a local machinist named Earl Madsen. Photo used with the permission of The Danish Villages Voice.

American, grew up on a farm southeast of Elk Horn, Iowa. During and after World War II he served in the army, first as a cook and later as a construction engineer and was stationed two years in Japan. After returning, Howard settled in Kimballton where he has lived since. In the early 1970s he had a business that serviced two-way

radios in a nine-county area.

It was around 1970 that the two men met in Kimballton and Howard told Jens his idea about manufacturing wooden clogs in town. They soon decided to go into business together.

For the people of Kimballton, the creation of the Dania Sko factory on Main Street in the early



Jens Sorensen operating the factory's "stamper" machine in 1973. By pressing down with great force on a steel die the stamper cut leather used for the top part of the wooden shoes. Different shapes of dies can be seen hanging on the wall behind Jens. Photo used with the permission of The Danish Villages Voice.

1970s must have been interesting to follow, and must have been widely discussed; the emergence of a new factory very much concerned the entire town. People knew Howard Juel as an active member of the community who, as president of the The Progressive Danes of Kimballton, had been working on attracting industry to town to develop economic growth and create jobs. This effort, though, had yielded little success. No companies seemed to be interested in setting up production in town. After talking to the Iowa Development Commission, Howard had come to realize that any new industry in town would have to be homegrown. For Howard and Jens, this was a challenge they were willing to face.

The idea to make wooden clogs was shaped by the two founders' Danish heritage. Growing up on a farm in Denmark, Jens had personal experience with wearing clogs. One of Howard's treasured heirlooms is a single wooden clog that belonged to his great-great-great-grandmother, and, during a 1969 trip to Denmark, Howard had visited shoe factories there. Jens and Howard approached the project as an effort to continue the traditional Danish craft of making clogs by giving it a modern form, using innovative, industrial production methods. In this effort, Howard's experience in technical matters came to be of great use, as they, themselves, had to

invent several of the many machines used in the production.

During the time it was in existence, Dania Sko made several different models of wooden shoes. Even a boot version was put into production, though not many of these were sold, maybe because they seemed too strange and foreign to the American buyers. The regular shoes, though, became very popular—especially in the local area—and thousands of Dania shoes were shipped all over the United States. Two cases were even sent to Denmark.

The story of Dania Sko, in one sense, is a local story set firmly in the community of Kimballton; it is also a story tied into the larger history of Danish Americans and America in general. For example, the company hired a Vietnamese man, one of the Southeast Asian refugees brought to Iowa as a result of the governor's Task Force for Indochinese Resettlement. And when the production of wooden clogs at Dania Sko finally stopped in 1981, this was, in part, due to the difficulty of competing with large-scale production in countries in the Far East such as China and Korea, where cheaper clogs were made of a pressed-wood composition.

A five-minute video with Howard Juel and Jens Sorensen about Dania Sko can be found at the museum's YouTube channel at [www.youtube.com/danishmuseum](http://www.youtube.com/danishmuseum).



## From the Development Director: *Remembering Dana College*

It was 1968 when I first thought about attending Dana College. I was 10-years-old, my sister was a student there and about to

be married to a man graduating from Dana. My family and I took the hour and a half drive to Blair from our farm near Elk Horn, Iowa to visit my sister and her soon-to-be husband. I remember being so impressed with the lovely campus and the warmth that emanated from the people there. After that visit, I never considered going anywhere else.

Recently, we learned that after years of financial struggles, Dana College has closed its doors. For many of the thousands of alumni, it is a very sad time. We are losing our *alma mater*. To me it feels like losing another parent. I was looking forward to attending my thirtieth class reunion at Dana Homecoming this fall. The four years I attended there were four of the best years of my life. The professors I had at Dana—names like Darrell Dibben, Norman Bansen, John W. Nielsen, Luella Nielsen, Richard Jorgensen, Larry Stone and Paul Neve, and the list could go on—are some of the finest people I have ever known. Dana will now only live on in our memories. And it will be only a story we tell to our children and grandchildren.

One hundred and twenty-six years ago, Dana was a proud creation of Danish immigrants. At that time, no doubt, Danish culture

was a major influence in Dana's curriculum and make-up. Throughout the years, the Danish influence, although diminished, was maintained. I remember the Danish Dancers, Danish language classes, the Lauritz Melchior room in the library, a performance by Victor Borge and the visit by H.M. Queen Margrethe II in 1976. Over the last 100 years, very much like the way American Danes suppressed their culture and assimilated into American society, Dana College gradually suppressed its Danish identity, tried to become more main-stream, struggled to find its niche and was ultimately unable to compete for students and financial support. I'm not saying that maintaining a strong Danish identity would have saved Dana.

Perhaps broadening its scope to market itself to all Scandinavians may have helped. But it's a shame that we have lost an institution that had a wonderful history and a strong association to Danish culture.

Unfortunately, many Danish organizations around the country are struggling as well. Groups like Danish Brotherhood and Sisterhood chapters, Rebild, and Danish

clubs around the country are seeing dwindling memberships. Younger Americans of Danish heritage find it impossible to fit organization memberships into their busy lives. I see this with my own children who are in their twenties.

Fortunately, The Danish Immigrant Museum is strong. We're in the best financial condition of our twenty-six year existence. Our membership is strong and our visibility and popularity is as good as it's ever been. We continue to reach new audiences through the internet and outreach programs around the country. Our board of directors is visionary, decisive, engaged in worldwide Danish activity and culture. Our staff is dedicated, skilled and passionate about what they do.

That said, The Danish Immigrant Museum still needs you. We need your support to ensure the preservation of our Danish American culture. Thank you, museum members, for your continued support of our mission to preserve the stories of people and places—places like Dana College.

**Bruce Bro**  
**[dkdevdir@metc.net](mailto:dkdevdir@metc.net)**  
**Facebook –**  
**[bruce.dk.museum](http://bruce.dk.museum)**





## *Dana College Closes in Blair, NE*

Dana College, founded 126 years ago by Danish pioneers, has closed its doors permanently. The June 30, 2010 announcement leaves current Dana students scrambling to find new schools and Dana's faculty and staff members jobless.

Facing financial difficulties, Dana had announced plans in March 2010 to sell the college to a for-profit entity. The company, named the Dana Education Corporation (DEC), planned to continue carrying out Dana College's mission on the Blair campus.

The sale of the college, however, was contingent upon continued accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), the regional accrediting body for Nebraska and surrounding states. On June 30, Dana received word that the commission's board voted to deny Dana's request for a change of control. Based upon this news and Dana's precarious financial situation, the college's board of regents moved to close the school immediately.

According to a July 5 article in the *Omaha World-Herald*, a letter to Dana leaders from the Higher Learning Commission

"...cited the investment group's lack of experience running colleges as one of the reasons for its decision. It questioned Dana's financial stability. And it theorized that Dana's new owners would pull the school far from its original liberal arts mission, focusing instead on online education and study-abroad trips for non-Dana students."

A press release on the Dana College website takes issue with the commission's decision, calling it, "...inaccurate, unfair and based on speculation and information not included in the required change of control request."

There is no formal appeal process for the HLC decision.

Until it closed, Dana College was one of two post-secondary institutions founded by Danish immigrants. The other, still in operation, is Grand View University in Des Moines, Iowa. Faculty and alumni at both Dana and Grandview were instrumental in the founding of The Danish Immigrant Museum in 1983.

The Danish Immigrant Archives and Library, housed at Dana College, will remain open. Efforts are being made to establish the archives as a separate nonprofit institution.

## **Memorials February 12, 2010 – June 4, 2010**

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

Elmer Andersen  
 Gunver Marie Berg  
 Dorothy I. Bonnesen  
 John Christensen  
 Karl Christensen  
 Hans & Mathilde Farstrup  
 Maxine Grau

Lorraine Hall  
 Marge Hansen  
 Elaine Leistad Greve Hoffman  
 Mildred Holberg  
 Arthur Jacobsen  
 Marcella Jensen  
 Donna Andersen Koch  
 Lois Marie Bengard Kommes  
 Darrell Larsen

Alvin Madsen  
 Harlan C. "Matt" Mathison  
 Ivan Nielsen  
 Verna Nielsen  
 Lis Petersen  
 Norman Piercy  
 Carol Posekany  
 Virginia Roberts  
 Beulah Arlene Rockey  
 Sylvia "SaSa" McKinley Schnoebelen

June Scott  
 Janell Berkland Nelson Shain  
 Neil Simonsen  
 Knud Erik Sorensen  
 Richard H. Sorensen  
 Pauline Steffens  
 Poul V. Steffensen  
 Sharon Vreugdenhil

# Thank You Businesses and Organizations

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

A & A Framing (Annette Andersen), Kimballton, IA  
Answers (Rick Tighe), Atlantic, IA  
Atlantic Friends of The Danish Immigrant Museum, Atlantic, IA  
Audubon Family Chiropractic (Douglas & Nichole Olsen), Audubon, IA  
Carroll Control Systems, Inc., Carroll, IA  
Cedar Valley Danes, Cedar Falls, IA  
Dana College Library Archives, Blair, NE  
Danish American Athletic Club, Chicago, IL  
Danish American Club in Orange County, Huntington Beach, CA  
Danish American Club of Milwaukee, West Bend, WI  
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #1, Omaha, NE  
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #14, Kenosha, WI  
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #15, Des Moines, IA  
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #16, Minden, NE  
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #35, Homewood, IL  
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #56, Overland Park, KS  
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #75, Albert Lea, MN  
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #84, Lincoln, NE  
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #126, Los Angeles, CA  
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #144, Dike, IA  
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #219, Webster City, IA  
Danish Brotherhood Vestens Stjerne Lodge #268, Junction City, OR  
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #283, Dagmar, MT

Danish Brotherhood Lodge #341, Kimballton-Elk Horn, IA  
Danish Brotherhood Centennial Lodge #348, Eugene, OR  
Danish Club of Tucson, Tucson, AZ  
Danish Ladies Relief Society, Castro Valley, CA  
Danish Mutual Insurance Association, Elk Horn, IA  
Danish Sisterhood Lodge #176, Dike, IA  
Danish Vennelyst Club, Omaha, NE  
Den Danske Klub, Washington, MO  
Den Danske Pioneer, Hoffman Estates, IL  
Des Moines-Winterset-Atlantic Memorials, Des Moines, IA  
Elk Horn Pharmacy (Tim & Mary Waymire), Elk Horn, IA  
Elk Horn-Kimballton Community School, Elk Horn, IA  
Elk Horn-Kimballton Optimist Club, Elk Horn, IA  
Faith, Family, Freedom Foundation (Kenneth & Marlene Larsen), Calistoga, CA  
Grand View College Danish Immigrant Archive, Des Moines, IA  
Harlan Newspapers, Harlan, IA  
Heartland District of the Danish Sisterhood Lodge #102, Johnston, IA  
Heartland District of the DBIA, Ventura, IA  
Henningsen Construction, Inc., Atlantic, IA  
House of Denmark, San Diego, CA  
Jensen World Travel, Ltd. (Tor & Jeanette Jensen), Wilmette, IL  
Kessler Funeral Homes, Inc. (Mark Kessler), Audubon, IA  
King of Kings Fishing Guide Service & Lodge (Richard & Bonnie Andersen), Anchor Point, AK  
Knudsen Old Timers of The Danish Lutheran Church, Glendale, CA  
Leman USA, Sturtevant, WI  
Marge's Hair Hut (Kent & Marge Ingerslev), Elk Horn, IA  
Marne & Elk Horn Telephone Company, Elk Horn, IA  
NE Gen Comm Danish Brotherhood, Omaha, NE  
Nelsen & Nelsen, Attorneys at Law, Cozad, NE  
Nelson Machine & Forge (Steve Nelson), Marne, IA  
O & H Danish Bakery (Eric Olesen), Racine, WI  
Olsen, Muhlbauer & Co., L.L.P., Carroll, IA  
Outlook Study Club, Audubon, IA  
Pacific NW District Lodges D.B.I.A., Eugene, OR  
Proongily (Cynthia McKeen), St. Paul, MN  
Rebild National Park Society, Southern California, Glendale, CA  
Red River Danes, Fargo, ND  
Ringsted Danish American Fellowship, Ringsted, IA  
Shelby County State Bank, Elk Horn, IA  
Sons of Norway (Solglimt Lodge #1-547), Waverly, IA  
Symra Literary Society, Decorah, IA  
The Danish Inn (Verne Klein), Elk Horn, IA  
The Rasmussen Group, Inc., Des Moines, IA  
The Viking Club of Orange County, Seal Beach, CA  
World Cal, Inc., Elk Horn, IA



# New Additions to the Wall of Honor

## February 12, 2010 – June 4, 2010

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

Listed here are the recognized immigrants, their year of immigration, city and state named as their principal place of residence and donor(s) placing the name on the Wall of Honor.

If you would like to memorialize a family member or friend by adding their name to the Wall of Honor, contact Debra Christensen Larsen, development associate.

**LARS PETER CHRISTIANSEN (1910) Lake Benton, Minnesota,** Sally og Gordon Faber, Urbandale, Iowa

**SOPHIE CHRISTIANSEN (1912) Lake Benton, Minnesota,** Sally og Gordon Faber, Urbandale, Iowa

**FREDERIK E. FABER (1879) Chicago, Illinois,** Sally og Gordon Faber, Urbandale, Iowa

**THORVALD FABER (1910) Lake Benton, Minnesota,** Sally og Gordon Faber, Urbandale, Iowa

**HELEN CHRISTENSEN JACOBSEN (1902) Audubon County, Iowa,** Donald & Nancy Christensen, Austin, Texas

**JENNY CHRISTINE JAKOBSEN MACKENZIE (1949) Wyndmere, North Dakota,** Toni M. McLeod, Fargo, North Dakota

**PETER ANDREAS PETERSEN & KATHRINE MARIE (NIELSEN) PETERSEN (1910) (1910) Albert Lea, Minnesota,** Erna Berthelsen, Albert Lea, Minnesota

**DORTHINUS EDVARD EMIL ROUTHE & JOHANNE HENRIETTE KNUDSEN (1892) (1892) Redwood Falls, Minnesota,** Preben & Evy Routhe, Nyborg, Denmark

**RUTH GUNHILD WILLIAMS nee' SCHJUNK (1962) Leavenworth, Kansas,** Harold & Ruth Williams, Leavenworth, Kansas

## New Members February 12, 2010 – June 4, 2010

The Danish Immigrant Museum is pleased to identify the following individuals/organizations & businesses as its newest members. Museum membership is achieved in various ways—through gifts, complimentary or annual gifting. We do appreciate your support.

Scott & Mary Ann Andersen, Marine, MN  
 Ron & Jan Arkfeld, Defiance, IA  
 Delia Benton, Guthrie Center, IA  
 Erna Berthelsen, Albert Lea, MN  
 Thomas & Linda Brandt, Minneapolis, MN

Ling Bundgaard, Phoenix, AZ  
 Lyle & Gloria Campbell, Irwin, IA  
 John & Sondra Carver, Decorah, IA  
 Brian & Nancy Christensen, Lincoln, NE  
 Donald & Nancy Christensen, Austin, TX  
 Danish American Athletic Club, Roselle, IL  
 Helen Jensen DeGroff, Mesa, AZ  
 Cleo & Shirley Dodson, Lone Tree, IA  
 Patricia Durand, Rice Lake, WI  
 Margrethe Feldman, Los Alamos, NM  
 Judith Finnell, Lennox, SD  
 Robert & Vibeke Alnor Fong, Los Angeles, CA

Margaret Foster, Des Moines, IA  
 Sandra Gullstad, San Antonio, TX  
 Judy Hanson, Lake Crystal, MN  
 Daniel & Linda Holz, West Des Moines, IA  
 Larry & Linda Hopp, Harlan, IA  
 Sally Hoppe, Niles, IL  
 House of Denmark, San Diego, CA  
 Tarvis Iversen, Lansing, IL  
 Vincent & Phyllis Jensen, Audubon, IA  
 James & Beverly Keltner, Colfax, WI  
 Karen Kokos, Aurora, CO  
 Nancy Lottman, Villa Park, CA  
 Martin & Eva Miller, Marion, IA  
 Raymond & Wanda Nielsen, Homewood, IL

R. W. Petersen, West Des Moines, IA  
 Doris Peterson, Homewood, IL  
 Michael & Kathryn Pipis, Longmont, CO  
 Jim & Barb Rinell, Urbandale, IA  
 Preben & Evy Routhe, Nyborg, Denmark  
 Fred & Karen Schneider, Cincinnati, OH  
 Jorgen & Gerda Sorensen, Eugene, OR  
 Morten Tofte, Copenhagen, Denmark  
 Lee & Shirley Uldbjerg, Hutchinson, MN  
 Allene Weaver, Atlantic, IA  
 Harold & Ruth Williams, Leavenworth, KS

# PLACE YOUR NAME ON A BRICK

## *Jens Jensen Prairie Landscape Park*

*A unique opportunity to leave a lasting impression at The Danish Immigrant Museum with an engraved brick*



- ✦ Honor the memory of loved ones
- ✦ Recognize individual achievement
- ✦ Celebrate an occasion
- ✦ Recognize an individual, club or business
- ✦ Give a special gift

The “Heritage Path” with its tribute bricks is located on 30 acres surrounding The Danish Immigrant Museum. The path is named for Jens Jensen who was a colleague of the American architect, Frank Lloyd Wright and friend of poet Carl Sandburg.

Jens Jensen (1860-1951) emigrated from near Dybbol in Slesvig, Denmark. He settled in Chicago, where

he pioneered “the prairie school” of landscape architecture, using native plantings to create natural environments. Later he founded “The Clearing” in Door County, Wisconsin, which still exists.

Visitors will enjoy and benefit from Jens Jensen Prairie Landscape Park for years to come. When you place a brick on the path, you pay tribute to a special person or occasion and support the creation of a distinctive landscape at the museum.

**SØREN HANSEN**  
**1919-2002**  
**BEDSTEFAR**

Your tax deductible gift is a lasting way to honor those you cherish while helping the museum in fulfilling its mission to preserve and promote Danish heritage, history and culture.

Cost includes: Commemorative brick installed on the Heritage Path. The museum shall be the sole judge of content and placement.



# Easy to Order

1.

*Online*  
www.danishmuseum.org

2.

*Mail*  
The Danish Immigrant Museum  
2212 Washington Street  
Elk Horn, IA 51531

3.

*Fax*  
712-764-7002

## CHOOSE YOUR BRICK

**Small** 4x8\* ..... **\$110**  
2-3 lines, 11 characters per line

**Medium** 8x8\* ..... **\$250**  
5 lines, 15 characters per line

**Large** 12x12\* ..... **\$500**  
Up to 6 lines OR Logo & 3 or less lines, 16 characters per line

\*Sizes approximate.

## ABOUT YOUR BRICK(S) ORDER

Groups of bricks may be clustered together for families or groups, provided all are ordered at the same time. For multiple brick orders, please use additional forms to fill in separate engraving information.

**Engraving Details:** See order blank above.

Three message lines are available on a SMALL brick at a

## THIS BRICK DONATION IS:

Gift       In Memory       In Honor

To / Of \_\_\_\_\_

Occasion \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

*The brick is a gift or is in honor/memory of someone special; a gift card needs to be sent.*

YOUR NAME \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Total Amount of brick order \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Check enclosed:   
(payable to *The Danish Immigrant Museum*)

Credit Card:  Mastercard     Visa

Card No. \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_ CVV# (3 digit code) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

maximum of 11 characters per line (includes letters, spaces and punctuation). Four to five message lines are available on the MEDIUM bricks at a maximum of 15 characters per line. Six message lines are available on the LARGE bricks at a maximum of 16 characters per line. If you choose to use only three or less lines of space on the large brick we can add a logo to the brick (include camera ready art).

Please print legibly.



# Stamtræ – Danish Roots, American Branches

## News from the Museum's Family History & Genealogy Center

By Michele McNabb, librarian  
genealogy@danishmuseum.org; librarian@danishmuseum.org

### From Aabel to Zwingli

What do 906 Christensens, 1555 Hansens, 1588 Jensens, 1368 Niensens, and 1245 Petersens have in common? They are a small portion of over 21,300 names listed in the Danish Brotherhood Death Index now available on the Library & Genealogy section of the museum webpage.

This compilation of DB members who died between 1916 and 1995 usually includes the age, date of death, place of birth, and lodge membership of each individual, along with instructions for obtaining copies of his original lodge membership records. Most birth references are to particular villages,

towns or parishes in Denmark.

One of the more unusual places mentioned was found in the entry for R.A. Rasmussen, a member of Lodge # 332 in Ripon, California, who died on December 12, 1965, at the age of 85. His birthplace was given as Strynø Kalv, a minute island off the somewhat larger island of Strynø in Svendborg County between Langeland and Tåsinge. In its heyday Strynø Kalv was home to as many as 29 people, but lost its last inhabitants in 1969, becoming a day-trip



*Perhaps R.A. Rasmussen was the only person to go to America from Strynø Kalv, a sparsely-populated islet in the 19th Century, now uninhabited.*

destination for vacationers in Denmark's "South Sea islands."

### Special Collections in the FHGC

In addition to books the FHGC has a number of photograph and documentary collections in its Special Collections section. Received as donations from a single individual or family or organized by subject matter, the collections range in size from small to quite large. Current collections include the following. Those marked with an \* indicate that descriptive inventories or finding aids have been created for in-house use:

- Asmus Christian & Valborg Dressler Vogt Family Collection\*
- Bertha Andersen Collection\*
- Capt. Christian Henrik Bruun Collection\*
- Christian Christensen Family Photograph Collection\*
- Christmas Annuals Collection\*
- Danish American Heritage Society Collection\*

- Danish Baptists Collection\*
- Danish Brotherhood in America Collection\*
- Danish Documents Collection\*
- Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church Collection\*
- Danish Family Bible Collection\*
- Danish Olympic Committee Collection\*
- Danish Royalty Collection\*
- Danish Sheet Music Collection\*
- Danish Sisterhood of America Collection\*
- Danish Song Collection\*
- Danish Vernacular Literature Collection\*
- Denmark WWII Collection\*
- Edna Christensen Scrapbook\*
- Elk Horn-Kimballton Local History Collection
- Finn Molvig Collection\*
- Harmonien Singing Society Collection\*

- Helen Stub Collection\*
- Ivan V. Peterson Family Photograph Collection
- Jacobsen Correspondence Collection (1887-1926)\*
- Jens & Margaret Johnson Keller Collection\*
- Jens J. Christoffersen Collection\*
- John C. Christiansen Family Photograph Collection\*
- Los Angeles Naver/Naverette Club Collection\*
- Military Veterans Oral History Collection\*
- Niels Hoegh Photograph Collection\*
- Rebild Festival Collection\*
- Refshauge Family Scrapbook & Misc. Papers\*
- Scandinavian Festivals Collection
- Soren Pallesen Collection
- Sorensen-Johnson Family Photograph Collection
- US World War II Collection\*





*The summer FHGC photograph exhibit, "G is for Generations," features several dozen images of 3-, 4-, and 5-generations of Danish immigrant families.*



- **Planning a reunion or want to show off your Danish heritage?** If so, check out the new t-shirt and natural color canvas bag now available through the museum shop or FHGC. The natural color bags and grey tees carry the FHGC logo and "Danish Roots – American Branches" on the front, with room for you to have reunion information printed on the back. Contact Joni Soe-Butts or Michele McNabb for further information.
- And please do keep the museum and library in mind when making copies of reunion booklets and other souvenirs. Remember that they become 'historical artifacts' as soon as your gathering is over.
- Thanks to the efforts of volunteers Carolyn Wittrup and Elinor Olsen, many of the reference binders holding obituaries and local newspaper articles have a clean new look.

## Activities and News

- This year's **FHGC photograph exhibit**, "G is for Generations," features some two dozen 3-, 4- and 5-generation family photographs that include a Danish immigrant. It may be viewed in the FHGC lobby through the end of August.
- Another series of **workshops on Danish genealogy** was held at The Danish Home in Chicago from June 10-12. Attendees came from Iowa and Wisconsin in addition to the Greater Chicago area. We would be happy to speak to your group for an evening or a day-long workshop. A list of topics and upcoming speaking engagements may be seen in the Library & Genealogy section of the website under Workshops and Talks.
- This autumn the hat will fall in the opposite direction when I travel to **Denmark** to present several **workshops** on finding Danish immigrants in the U.S. and their descendants in American sources. Workshops will be offered in Copenhagen, Rønne, Aalborg, at Aalborg University and the Danish Emigration Archives, the Regional Archives for Northern Jutland, the Viborg Area Genealogical Society, and Erhvervsarkivet in Aarhus. Further details are posted in the above section of the webpage as well as on the museum events calendar.
- **Family Websites:** Do you have a publicly-accessible webpage for your Danish ancestry? If so, we would like to know of it so that we can begin compiling a list of URLs for use both at the FHGC and on our webpage.

# A Case of Too Many Names?

Figuring out the original name(s) of a Danish immigrant can often be puzzling and becomes even more so when the individual involved comes from Slesvig, where both Danish and German variants

may occur. Patron Sara Gaarde encountered the following variant names in U.S. records for one of her Danish-speaking ancestors from Haderslev

County who settled in Clinton, Iowa, where a large number of Danish- and German-speaking Schleswigians located:

- 1881 passenger arrival record: ..... "Kersine" Schmidt
- 1882 marriage of a daughter (surname Mains): ..... Anne K. Hedegaard
- 1885 marriage of a 2nd daughter (surname Mains): ..... Anna K. Jensen
- 1900 census: ..... Christine Smith
- 1900 obituary: ..... Anna K. Smith
- 1900 probate: ..... Anna Kristine Smidt
- 1919 death certificate of a daughter: ..... Christine Heldegard

So was this lady a Schmidt/Smith, a Mains, a Jensen, a Hedegaard, or all of the above? And if so, when did she use each name? An intense search of Danish records ultimately resolved the problem but showed just as much variation:

- 1880 census: ..... Anne Kjerstine Schmidt née Hedegaard
- 1879 daughter's confirmation: ..... Anne Kirstine née Hedegaard
- 1878 daughter's confirmation: ..... Anne Kirstine née Hedegaard, married to Knud Schmidt
- 1875 marriage: ..... Anne Kirstine Jensdatter Mayns, née Hedegaard
- 1875 daughter's confirmation: ..... Ane Kirstine Hedegaard
- 1868 son's confirmation: ..... Ane Kirstine Jensdatter Hedegaard, married to Jørgen Mainz
- 1863 daughter's birth: ..... Ane Kirstine Mainz, née Hedegaard
- 1861 daughter's birth: ..... Ane Katrine Hedegaard
- 1858 marriage: ..... Anna Kirstina Hedegaard
- 1853 son's birth: ..... Ane Kirstine Jensdatter Hedegaard
- 1845 census: ..... Anne Kjestine Jensdatter
- 1840 census & confirmation: ..... Anna Kiestine Jenses Hedegaard
- 1835 census: ..... Ane Kierstine Jensdatter
- 1826 birth: ..... Anna Kirstina Jenses Hedegaard (daughter of Jens Justsen Hedegaard)

Anna Kirstine was born to a man who used a fixed surname (Hedegaard), which she was given at baptism along with her father's patronymic ("Jenses," a southern Jutland/Schleswig variant for "Jensen/Jensdatter"). Records created during her girlhood fluctuated between these two surnames, and her given names also illustrate the fluid Danish spelling of the era. This same variability followed into her 1858 first marriage to Jørgen Mainz, although she continued to be

predominantly referenced by her maiden name. Only in the 1880 census do we see her carrying her second husband's surname, which she then used when she immigrated to America. Here the confusion continued, however, because some documents recorded her current name (Schmidt/Smith) and others her birth name. Under such circumstances deciding which form of the

name to put on a pedigree chart is thus somewhat problematic. Does one go with the Danish name given at baptism (Anna Kirstina Jenses Hedegaard) or the name most commonly used in this country (Anne Kristine/Christine Smith/Schmidt)? Either way, one's choice should be documented and justified. Then each instance where the name varies should be referenced by date and documentary source.



# Old Envelopes and Postcards as a Genealogical Source *by James R. Miller*

An old envelope or postcard from a postal history collection may hold a clue to where your Danish ancestors lived before coming to America.

An example can be seen on the Philatelic Genealogy website (<http://philgen.org>). Click on "Minnesota Case Study" in the Main Menu to see an envelope sent from Nakskov, Denmark to Goodhue Centre, Minnesota in about 1870. The website shows how the envelope was used to find a Danish immigrant's birthplace in Utterslev, Denmark.

An envelope sent from Skjelskør, Denmark to Oakland, California in 1893 is on the website's homepage. Other envelopes and postcards sent to and from Denmark can be found on the website (42 at present) by selecting "Search Database" in the Main Menu and typing Denmark into the Search box (set the Display Number to 50 at the bottom of the Search page, and then press Enter on your keyboard). You will see a list of people's names who received an envelope or postcard, where they lived, the date the item was sent and where it was mailed from. If you click on a name, you will see a picture of the envelope or postcard and U.S. census (or similar) information

regarding the sender and/or recipient.

Using old envelopes and postcards as a genealogical source is the subject of the "NEA" article and the "American Ancestors" article (accessible from the Main Menu). Small collections of envelopes and postcards with their stories can be seen by clicking on "Iowa" or "Ohio" (where there's an envelope from Denmark discussed in the section entitled European Birthplaces). New articles will be added as they become available.

The website was launched in March 2009 to begin building a digital archive of envelope and postcard images with

genealogical value and to promote an exchange between postal history collectors and genealogists. The site has grown to more than 1,250 envelopes and postcards. Every item includes a photo (used with the owner's permission). The website would welcome new digital photos or scans of envelopes or postcards sent between the U.S. and Denmark. You may send your submission, as well as any comments or questions, to [jim@philgen.org](mailto:jim@philgen.org).

*James R. Miller is a genealogist and postal historian and is the founder of Philgen.org. He lives in Caroga Lake, New York and Haguenau, France.*

## G is for (Danish) Genealogy – An Alphabet of Genealogical Terms

**Arkiver** – local, provincial, national and specialized archives: important places to find family information

**Boskifte** – Danish probate records

**Centralpersonregistret** – also called *Folkeregistret*, the Danish national registration system that tracks persons from birth to death

**Danish Brotherhood/Danish Sisterhood** – two important heritage organizations that often provide genealogical clues

**Enke(mand)** – widow(er)

**Fødselsstiftelsen** – Copenhagen maternity hospital for unwed and impoverished mothers

**Gård og gods** – farm and manor estate, the two highest classes of rural land ownership

**Husmand** – smallholder: a person owning or renting a small plot of land + residence

**Innsidder** – cottager: a per-

son renting a house with no appreciable attached land

**Jylland** – the peninsula of Jutland, Denmark's largest land mass

**København** – A county and Denmark's capital city

**Lægdsruller** – Danish military conscription rolls (mandatory enrollment for rural youths)

**Matrikelnummer** – property tax number; these can help identify land parcels where ancestors lived; sometimes found on census records

**Navneforandringslovgivning** – name change laws that led to fixed surnames and encouraged the adoption of names that don't end in "-sen"

**Onkel** – uncle, usually by marriage ("morbror" and "farbror" are used for blood uncles)

**Patronym** – surnames based on a father's given name + "son" or "daughter"

**Quindekøn** – an archaic

word for "female" (often found in church registers)

**Rejsepas** – passport; formerly needed to travel from one place in Denmark to another

**Skudsmålsbog** – character reference books issued to members of the working class after they attained confirmation age; contain records of employment

**Tyende** – a common word for "servant"

**Uægte** – illegitimate; births out of wedlock usually name the child's father and often give the mother's residence at the time she became pregnant

**Vejle** – city in southeastern Jutland; emigration tickets purchased here between 1879 and 1887 usually were for passage via Hamburg

**Wilhelm** – a variant spelling of Vilhelm; "w," "v" (and sometimes "u") were often used interchangeably in words

**X-kromosom** – inheritance from one's maternal ancestry

**Yuland, Yens & Yust** about anything misspelled by Anglo listeners when writing down what they "heard" Danish immigrants say

**Zealand** – Sjælland, Denmark's largest island on which Copenhagen is situated

**Ægteskabsregistre** – marriage registers, found in church books and, from the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, as civil records in urban areas and Slesvig-Holsten

**Ø** – the Danish word for "island." Often found as a place-name suffix (Ærø, Fanø, Sorø)

**Å** -- equals AA, but not A. The Danish alphabet, which formerly began with AA-, now begins with A and ends with Å. Å is found in place names (Århus, Åbyhøj, Langå); personal names tend to be spelled with AA (Aage, Aase)

# Danish Heritage Furniture in the Museum Shop . . .

For more information on these items and more, call Joni at 712-764-7001 or email us at [dkgift@metc.net](mailto:dkgift@metc.net)



## ADMISSION & HOURS

### ADMISSION

(Includes Bedstemor's House)  
Current Museum Members:  
FREE with  
Membership Card  
Non-Members: Adults, \$5  
Children (ages 8-17), \$2

### MUSEUM HOURS:

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

### BUSINESS HOURS

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

### FAMILY HISTORY & GENEALOGY CENTER HOURS

May-Oct.: Tuesday-Friday  
9:00 am-5:00 pm  
Saturday: 10:00 am-5:00 pm  
November-April:  
Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday  
10 am-4 pm

**All facilities are closed on New Year's Day; Easter Sunday; Thanksgiving; Christmas**  
*(Local weather conditions may cause occasional closures.)*