

americaletter

WINTER 2014 | A BENEFIT OF MEMBERSHIP TO THE MUSEUM OF DANISH AMERICA



Clint Hansen, *First Glimpse*, 1998.
Museum purchase, painted for the
10th annual Christmas card.

INSIDE

Christmas on the Prairie
Curatorial Center Grand Opening

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Cover "We found an old image of Elk Horn that I used as reference for the little town the family is seeing for the first time as they reach their destination after a long trip 'home.'"
– Clint Hansen, artist

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director's corner

On Saturday, October 18, an excited crowd of members, donors, staff, contractors and the public gathered to celebrate the completion of the museum's new Curatorial Center. This capped three years of work. The result: 8,000 square feet dedicated primarily for climate-controlled care and storage of large artifacts and textiles. There are also spaces for exhibit preparation and storage of our growing collection of traveling exhibits, as well as offices and work rooms for the curatorial staff, volunteers and interns. The new center also houses the servers for our computer network. Finally, we have a loading dock, accessible to semi-trailers, which we have already used to transfer pallets of exhibits and artifacts to and from the museum. (Color photos on pages 18 and 19 hint at the dramatic changes this addition brings.)

Even the entrance to the museum has been redesigned. Greeting the visitor is a large, circular plaza, suggesting the "council rings" that are a signature of Jens Jensen landscapes. To the west a paved walk leads to our prairie green roof over the new Curatorial Center. Interpretive signage explains green roof technology and identifies the 17 varieties of prairie plants native to Southwest Iowa that cover our green roof. To the east of the museum entrance, the paved path leads into the heart of the

Jens Jensen Prairie Landscape Park. Here, more new interpretive signs describe the native prairie and how homesteading led to the breaking of the prairie and the growth of farms. Walk along the path and one comes to the Rose Meadow, replete with varieties of native prairie roses. Our intent is that visiting the museum is not just about the story of Danes coming to the United States and the ongoing relations between our two countries, but the experience is also an invitation to consider the natural environment in which the story takes place.

As I reflect back over my history with the museum, I can't help but recall how different this celebration was from earlier ones when we broke ground and opened the museum. The difference? This time the new addition was paid for, and we are growing the endowment by \$1 million to support the increased cost of operating the expanded space. Following the opening of the museum in 1994, we struggled to meet loan payments and to operate. Over time and through the generosity of many, we have been able to lay down a solid foundation of support. That you are reading this suggests you are part of this support, and I thank you.

Building the Curatorial Center differed from earlier projects. Our members enable us to carry out our mission through membership

dues and generously responding to our summer and/or end-of-year appeals. We depend on this support to operate. An additional appeal to our membership for funds to build the Curatorial Center inevitably would have negatively impacted our ability to meet our annual operating expenses. Consequently, we approached a limited number of members and foundations for support. Additionally, we directed all or a portion of unrestricted estate gifts received during 2013 to the project.

At our celebration on October 18, I publicly acknowledged and thanked the families and foundations for their contributions and acknowledged the deceased individuals who had provided for the museum through their estates. Together, these gifts provided over \$3 million, enabling our success. I want to acknowledge and thank these major donors again.

DONOR GIFTS Anonymous; Mogens and Cindy Bay, Omaha, NE; Bill and Berniece Grewcock, Omaha, NE; Stew and LeNore Hansen, Des Moines, IA; Audrey Kofoed, West Branch, IA; Lowell and Marilyn Kramme, Des Moines, IA; Peter and Irma Ørum Family and their companies – Midwest Groundcovers and Midwest Trading, St. Charles, IL; Charles and Eleanor Rosenquist, Pendleton, OR; Randall and Margaret Ruggard, Hudson, OH.



By
John Mark Nielsen



FOUNDATION GIFTS

Anonymous; Iowa West Foundation, Council Bluffs, IA; Irving F. Sr. and Elizabeth Jensen Foundation, Sioux City, IA; John and Elizabeth Lauritzen Foundation, Omaha, NE; Peter Kiewit Foundation, Omaha, NE; Petersen Family Foundation, Harlan, IA.

ESTATE GIFTS E.J. Carlson, Columbus, OH; Richard Hellman, Oceanside, CA; C.J. Jensen, Seattle, WA; Robert S. Kroman, Elk Horn, IA; Meta J. Reed, Hot Springs, AR; E. Irene Starrett, Audubon, IA.

I am so grateful for each of these gifts, and I trust that museum

members share my gratitude. The expanded facility assures that we have opportunity to continue collecting important artifacts that tell the story of Danish immigration to the United States. This was the intent of our first donors to the project, Berniece and Bill Grewcock. After visiting the museum in November 2011, they sent a major gift and Berniece wrote that it was to be used to begin planning for an addition with expanded artifact storage. They followed up with another major gift in the summer of 2013 to help assure that we would meet our \$3 million goal.

Just as estate gifts have been important in completing the new

Curatorial Center, estate gifts have also contributed to our endowment growth. Many of us cannot make major donations during our lifetime, but through estate planning we may be able to make a larger gift. These estate gifts help assure the museum's future. In our 2011-2015 strategic plan, we determined that by 2015 we would invest 50% of every *unrestricted* bequest to endowment growth. I invite you to consider providing for the Museum of Danish America as you make plans for your estate. You can do so knowing that you will be contributing to a legacy of "celebrating Danish roots and American dreams!"

museum of danish america

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danish christmas on the prairie



01

WHEN THOUSANDS OF DANISH IMMIGRANTS CAME TO AMERICA THEY BROUGHT MANY DANISH TRADITIONS ALONG WITH THEM, WHILE OTHERS DISAPPEARED OR CHANGED IN THE PROCESS OF AMERICANIZATION. ONE OF THE RESULTS OF THIS MERGING IS THE CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS THAT LIVE ON AMONG SOME DANISH AMERICANS IN THE U.S.

If you visit the two small neighboring towns of Elk Horn and Kimballton by car – and it is hard to do it any other way on the prairie in Iowa – you come by the sign: “Welcome to the Danish Villages.” Elk Horn and Kimballton are called “The Danish Villages” because they have the largest rural concentration of people of Danish descent in America. Danish immigrants to America often dispersed widely and

merged into the American melting pot quickly, so Danish settlements were not very common. Elk Horn and Kimballton were exceptions, and they have been dominated by Danish Americans since the late 19th century. It is also here that the Museum of Danish America is located. The museum is the only one in the country focused on Danish immigration to America and Danish-American culture generally.

“DENMARK ON THE PRAIRIE” COMPARES DANISH AND DANISH-AMERICAN TRADITIONS

“The Danish Villages” is one of the few places in the US where Danish heritage is celebrated and kept alive as a community. Therefore, visitors – especially Danish tourists and journalists – often look at the traditions in Elk Horn and Kimballton with



**By
Nick Kofod
Mogensen**

01. Christmas Tree Annette Andersen’s family walks around the Christmas tree decorated with Danish flags, paper clippings, and red and white woven Christmas hearts. ▶

great interest. The two towns suddenly became much more popular in Denmark when a new documentary called *Denmark on the Prairie* was aired on Danish public television, Denmark's Radio, in 2013. The Danish filmmakers used the lives of several town residents to compare the traditions of "The Danish Villages" and Denmark.

As mentioned before, Danish immigrants generally merged into American culture and became "American" pretty quickly after their arrival. In the *Denmark on the Prairie* documentary, a few citizens of Elk Horn and Kimballton said that their parents or grandparents refused to speak Danish – because "now they were American." And that was in one of the "Danish strongholds" in America!

Yet not every Danish tradition was left on the deck of the ships that brought them to America. Many Danish Americans have kept a Danish identity and some Danish characteristics and traditions. Elk Horn and Kimballton are very good examples of this, as Danish could be heard on the streets and in local churches at least as late as the middle of the 20th century.

Some of the traditions that live on the longest are the Christmas traditions, both in the community and the individual families. Christmas traditions were the focus of a follow-up documentary, *Denmark on the Prairie – Back to Elk Horn*, which aired in spring 2014. This sequel featured the preparations for Julefest, a festival started by the Danish Windmill and celebrated by the villages every year since 1978. Here,

local businesses, organizations, and citizens join together for several events, and in the center of it all the yearly "juletræsfest" (Christmas tree festival) in Elk Horn's Lutheran church. Julefest is one of the biggest events in Elk Horn and Kimballton, and it always takes place on the Friday and Saturday after Thanksgiving.

At Julefest a number of things are going on which Danes would clearly recognize. As at any Danish "juletræsfest," there is dancing around the Christmas tree, decorated with all the tricks in the book, including little Danish flags on a string and woven heart baskets. Danish Christmas songs are sung – though typically translated into English so everyone can sing along.

The Danish Christmas tree tradition began in the 19th century. The first known Christmas tree in Denmark was put up in 1808 by Countess Wilhelmine Holstein from Skælskør, Denmark. The Countess got the idea from some of her relatives in Germany, where the tradition had been going on for many years. It quickly spread to the Danish capital of Copenhagen and became fashionable there in 1810. The Christmas tree slowly spread to the rest of the country, and by the end of the 19th century, you could see a nicely decorated Christmas tree in most homes throughout Denmark. Popular decorations included garlands with the Danish flag, paper cuttings (*papirklip*), and glass balls and figures.

As most of the Danish immigrants came to the US after the 1860s, they emigrated at a time when a

Christmas tree had become the standard in most Danish people's Christmas traditions. Therefore, many Danish immigrants took this tradition with them when they came to America. Christmas trees decorated in the Danish fashion were seen wherever Danish immigrants settled.

What struck the most Danish viewers of the two documentaries, however, was probably the food: *æbleskiver* and *medisterpølse*. Both are very Danish and a part of many Danes' Christmas traditions. But few Danish people would serve them on the same plate. For Danish Americans in Elk Horn, though, a plate with a couple of *æbleskiver* and a piece of *medisterpølse* is the most normal thing in the world and an integral part of Julefest.

The *æbleskiver* are homemade in the *æbleskiver* pan that many Danish Americans still have and often use – unlike in Denmark, where premade, frozen *æbleskiver* are the norm nowadays, and *æbleskiver* pans are mostly used to hold tea lights. And "often use" does not just mean around Christmas. In the US, *æbleskiver* are not reserved for Christmas, as they are in Denmark today, and can perfectly naturally work as breakfast – another thing you don't see in Denmark.

So some Danish elements are certainly present.

CHRISTMAS FOR A KIMBALLTON FAMILY

If you ask Annette Andersen, born in 1934, Julefest is an important part of her Christmas traditions.

The local community is energized at Christmas when people get together to decorate and generally have a nice time – and in that respect, Julefest is central to the holiday celebrations. Even on a family level, the Danish Christmas traditions are probably more prominent for Annette than for most Danish Americans.

Both of Annette's parents emigrated from Denmark to the US, so she is a second-generation Danish American. Her mother emigrated from a town near Skanderborg, Denmark, at age 11 in 1916 with her parents and three siblings. Her father, from Dyngby, Denmark, came to the country by himself in 1926, at around the age of 21. They met each other in Kimballton, where Annette has lived most of her life. Annette was actually born on a farm in Guthrie County, 30 miles from Kimballton, but they moved to Kimballton shortly after her birth when the Great Depression hit and made their farm an insufficient source of income.

So her Danish roots are firmly attached, even though she was born in the US and has lived there all of her life. Her parents spoke Danish in the house, and therefore she didn't know many English words when she started school at five years old. English has since taken over as her everyday language, but she can still shift to Danish when her family in Denmark calls. Annette Andersen still talks to her Danish family, and her second husband was an immigrant from Denmark.

Annette isn't very conscious about having a Danish Christmas. She says that she just celebrates Christmas as she did in her childhood, as most people do, she interjects. The first Christmas Eve that she clearly remembers does also sound very Danish – especially considering the period in which her parents left Denmark.

It was a Christmas Eve with her parents and siblings. The celebrations started when her father took the family to a Christmas church service at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Kimballton. Naturally, the church had a Christmas tree decorated with real candles. The candles stayed on the tree for a long time, she said. At least until the 1940s, a person was sitting beside the tree, ready with a bucket of water so the candles, and hopefully not the rest of the tree, could be put out when necessary.

Her mother stayed at home, and the reason for this became bright as a Christmas candle when the

church service had ended and the family returned home to the opening living room doors. While they were at church, her mother had decorated the Christmas tree and the rest of the living room and the Christmas dinner had been prepared. The tree was decorated as beautifully – and Danish – as they could afford: paper cones, various homemade decorations, Danish flags and real candles on the tree.

With the house decorated for Christmas, the dinner was served, either goose or duck. With their stomachs full of the good Christmas food, they danced around the tree, sang Danish Christmas songs, and opened presents – on Christmas Eve itself and not on Christmas morning, as is the American custom.

The little family didn't stay the same size forever, but no matter how much the family was increased, Annette's father insisted on at least one thing: that the family was together for



02. At the Table The big family eagerly waits for the Christmas food at the dinner table, decorated with paper clippings and red and white colors. ►

Christmas. When there was no longer room for all the family members around the usual dinner table, he had to be creative. First, he moved them into the basement, where there was room for a significantly bigger dinner table. The family kept growing, though, but he didn't give up his principle of being together when the basement was also too small. Instead he just said that they should celebrate Christmas in the church if there wasn't enough room in the house.

Everything changes over time, and that is true for Annette's Christmas traditions as well. Children get married and move out. Grandchildren arrive. So it can be hard to keep the family together to celebrate Christmas. The pragmatism that made

Annette's father move Christmas Eve, first into the basement and later to the church, is apparently still used today. With a family of around 150 people, it is obviously no longer possible to get everyone together for every Christmas Eve. Instead, they get together every three years to celebrate Christmas together in the church in Kimballton. Usually around 75 people show up, so it is quite a feast!

The Christmas dinner is still very Danish. The dinner table on Christmas Eve typically consists of ham, medisterpølse, potatoes, red cabbage and the like. Although the *risengrød* has been replaced by a rum pudding, they still put an almond into it which they look for. It was Annette's mother who changed the

risengrød back in the days, and Annette isn't entirely sure why. Maybe she just thought that they should "eat something better," as she says.

After having gorged on the Danish-inspired Christmas food they still dance around the Christmas tree while singing Christmas songs. They used to try to sing in Danish as much as possible, but they have had to give that up over time. Two songs remain in Danish, though: "*Nu har vi jul igen*" and "*Jeg gik mig over sø og land*." The tree is no longer decorated only by the mother or the women. Instead, it is a common project that takes place a good deal of time before Christmas Eve.



03. Dishes Another Danish Christmas tradition is seen here, where the family members help each other with the many dirty dishes!

The Christmas tradition that has changed the most is probably the opening of presents. Where Danish children are allowed to open their presents on Christmas Eve after dancing around the Christmas tree, American children don't open their presents until Christmas morning. If Annette had Christmas at her own house, she would continue this tradition, but the family has taken over an American present-opening custom by now. So the youngest children of the family have to wait an extra day before opening their presents compared to when Annette was a child.

So even though Annette is correct in saying that she celebrates Christmas in a very Danish fashion, Americanization has still affected her Christmas traditions. The songs have mostly been translated into English, the *risengrød* has been scrapped, and the children unwrap their presents at the same time as most other American children.

A couple of generations have also gone by since the first family members arrived to the US, though. Immigrants' ethnic affiliations often naturally drift towards the ones of the new country they are now part of. As mentioned earlier, many Danish

immigrants quickly decided to drop into the American melting pot and become "Americans" – not just legally, but also culturally. Maybe it is impressive, then, that the Danish Christmas traditions have survived as intact as they have until this day. Annette at least doesn't think that other Danish Americans in the area have kept as many Danish Christmas traditions as her family has.

Do you want to introduce some Danish Christmas traditions into your family's life but aren't sure where to start? Then pack your family in the car on Thanksgiving weekend and go to Julefest in the Danish Villages and have a very merry Danish-American Christmas!



04

Julefest® 2014

36th Anniversary

Friday and Saturday

November 28 and 29

Celebrate the arrival of the
Christmas Season in the Danish Villages
of Elk Horn and Kimballton

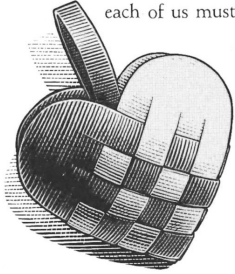


Festival Office:
Danish Windmill • Elk Horn, IA
www.danishwindmill.com

05

04. Papirklip Annette actively creates cut-paper art for the Museum Shop, to decorate the museum's annual Christmas tree, and for pleasure. **05. Julefest 2014** The front of the flyer for this year's Julefest in Elk Horn and Kimballton.

It is Christmas Eve. The doors to the parlor have been opened to reveal the beautiful Christmas tree decorated with woven heart baskets, strings of Danish flags, and candles. After the songs around the tree and the usual presents, Farfar (grandfather) shows the children the special present he has made for the Church, a ship to hang above the congregation's heads and remind them of the spiritual journey each of us must make.



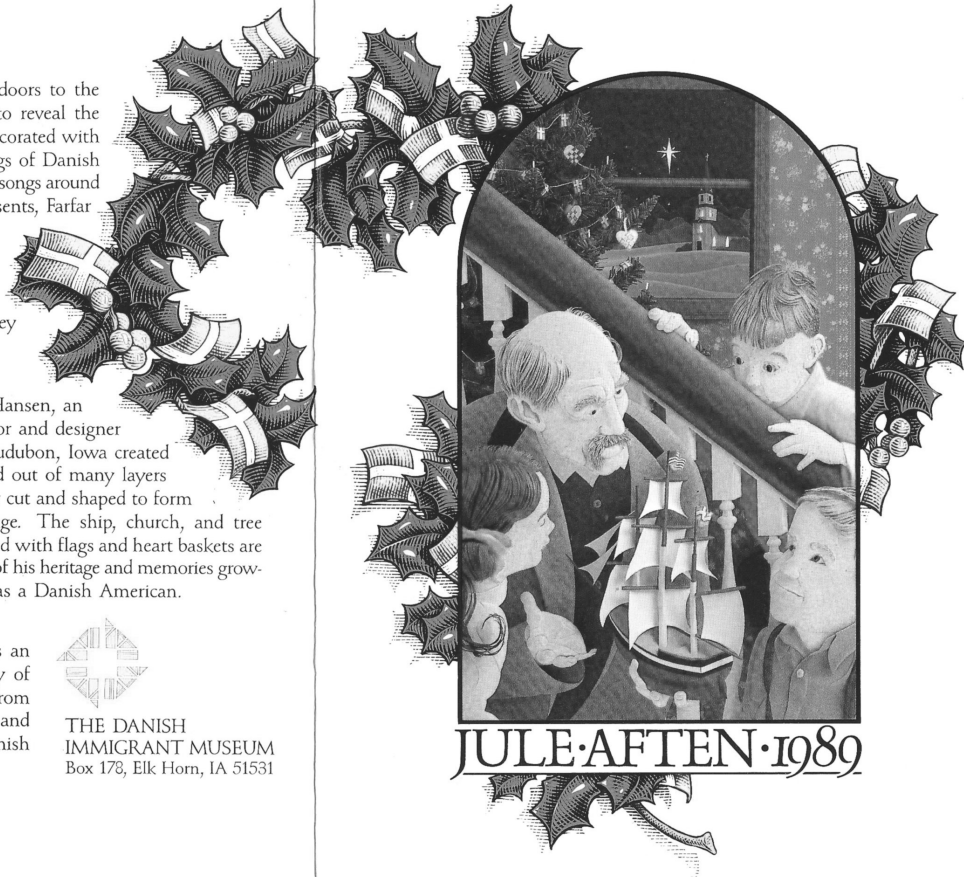
Clint Hansen, an illustrator and designer from Audubon, Iowa created this card out of many layers of paper cut and shaped to form the image. The ship, church, and tree decorated with flags and heart baskets are all part of his heritage and memories growing up as a Danish American.

The Danish Immigrant Museum is an international project to tell the story of Danes in North America. Proceeds from this card will benefit the Museum and help to preserve the heritage of Danish Americans.



THE DANISH IMMIGRANT MUSEUM
Box 178, Elk Horn, IA 51531

01



artwork from christmases past

Since 1989, the Museum of Danish America has produced a Christmas card that features original art created specifically for the card. The Danish-American artists involved in our Christmas cards use media ranging from paintings to cut-paper to photographs, both traditional and digital. Every card is unique and serves as a fun example of now 25 Danish-American artists.

The original art from five of the cards are in the museum's collection. The very first card

in 1989 featured a cut-paper picture designed by Clint Hansen, a Danish-American artist from Audubon, Iowa. **01** The picture shows a grandfather holding a sailboat in his hand with his three grandchildren gathered eagerly around him. In the background is a Christmas tree decorated with Danish flags and woven hearts. This piece is three-dimensional and framed.

Hansen, who was the focus of one of the museum's early installments of the Danish

American Artist Series, has also designed two subsequent cards in 1998 and 2008. The original painting used for the 1998 card shows a family out for a horse and wagon ride in the snow. **02**

The art for the 1992 card was a mix of carpentry and painting. The artist, Ardis Overgaard Petersen of Kimballton, Iowa, took lathe from an immigrant's home in the area, created a small, barn-like door, and used that surface as her canvas. The painting shows

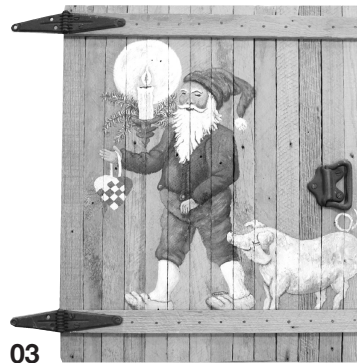


By
Angela Stanford

01. Inaugural museum Christmas card. Original art was a museum purchase, 1990.016.001. **02.** Museum purchase, 1999.168.001.



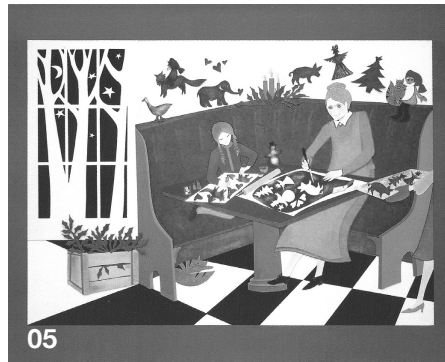
02



03



04



05

a nisse carrying a woven heart basket and being followed by an inquisitive pig. **03**

Annette Andersen, also of Kimballton and sister to the 1992 artist, created a cut-paper picture of a Christmas tree for the 2000 card. The tree, elegant in its simplicity, is fixed inside a box-like structure with open doors through which the viewer sees the tree. Topped with a star and decorated with candles, hearts, and flags, the tree rests on fluffy white snow in front of a blue backdrop. **04** This piece and the cut-paper

picture by Clint Hansen are on display in Visual Storage for all museum visitors to behold in their “3D” glory.

The most recent Christmas card art in our collection was created for the 2007 card. Cynthia McKeen, who grew up in Exira, Iowa, represented her Danish grandmother at Christmastime and the artistic skills she shared with her family. This cut-paper picture shows the grandmother and young Cynthia sitting at the kitchen table creating art much like this piece. **05**

With changing technology and different types of media, there is sometimes no physical art piece. The 2014 card featuring a photograph of the Jens Dixen cabin with a nisse peering inside is one example. In this case, a digital file serves as the “art piece.” But this is illustrative of the art world, and of concerns for and challenges with long-term art preservation. The art collection here at the Museum of Danish America will continue to grow, and undoubtedly, additions will include some of those used for the annual Christmas card. **06**

03. Donated by Ardis Overgaard Petersen, 2011.033.001. **04.** Donated by Annette Andersen, 2003.002.001. **05.** Donated by Cynthia McKeen, 2007.037.001. **06.** This year’s Christmas card and a coordinating ceramic ornament are available for purchase through our Museum Shop. Please see the back cover for details.

current exhibitions

DANISH CHILDREN GROWING UP AMERICAN

Now through April 4, 2015

Impish grins from the back of a tricycle, studio portraits of well-dressed siblings, snapshots of daily chores from the back of a tractor – these are some of the photographs featured in the current exhibition on view in the Kramme Gallery on the museum’s mezzanine level. The photographic exhibition was organized by the Danish American Archive and Library in Blair, Nebraska. For this installation, clothing and toys from the museum’s own collection complement the black and white photos.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY DIANA VELASCO: TWO NATIONALITIES

November 28, 2014 through March 15, 2015

Diana Velasco is a Danish-Spanish photographer who explores contemporary questions of identity and ethnicity, especially those of families that span multiple nationalities. Thanks to a grant from the Iowa Arts Council, Diana Velasco will also be pursuing an artist-in-residence project in Elk Horn that will focus on the community identity as expressed through public spaces.



EXPLORING DANISH HAPPINESS

Now through April 2015

Denmark frequently makes news as “one of the happiest countries on Earth,” but what does that really mean? How does one measure the “science of happiness?” A group of researchers in Denmark formed the Happiness Research Institute and created an exhibition to share their findings. This 10-panel exhibition is on view at the museum in the new multimedia room. As of summer 2015, it will be available to travel to other organizations throughout the country; contact curator Tova Brandt to inquire about borrowing this exhibit for your community.



By
Tova Brandt

01. Dorthea Marie Sorensen, born September 3, 1915 in Kansas City, Missouri, the daughter of Danish immigrant parents from Jutland. From the collection of the Danish American Archive and Library. **02. “Ramon”** by Diana Velasco, 2013

exhibitions on the road

Many of the museum's exhibitions are traveling to other venues--maybe to a museum near you!

**SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN:
TURMOIL ON THE DANISH-
GERMAN BORDER**

On view at the German American Heritage Center, Davenport, Iowa
Now through January 4, 2015

**NUDE VASES, CUBIST FACES:
MODERNISM AT ROOKWOOD
POTTERY**

On view at the Dubuque Museum of Art, Dubuque, Iowa
December 13, 2014 through
March 1, 2015

**DANISH MODERN:
DESIGN FOR
LIVING**

On view at the Figge Art Museum, Davenport, Iowa
March 28 through
June 21, 2015



HAPPY DANES ON THE PLAINS

An international traveling exhibition

We are proud to present the American version of “Grundtvig på prærien – danske indvandremiljøer i USA,” an exhibition organized by the Skanderborg Museum in Denmark and currently touring Danish museums. This exhibit explores the history of Danish-American communities that were organized with the goal of preserving Danish heritage in America, inspired by Danish theologian N.F.S. Grundtvig. Now translated into English, the exhibit is traveling this country, especially visiting the communities that comprise its story.

Danish Lutheran Church, Yorba Linda, CA
Elverhoj Museum, Solvang, CA
Racine Heritage Museum, Racine, WI
Luck Historical Society, Luck, WI
Museum of Danish America, Elk Horn, IA
Columbia Hall, Dannebrog, NE

November 30, 2014 – January 25, 2015
February - March 2015
June 2015
July 2015
November 2015
June 2016

03. Chair No. 8 by Helge Sibast, designed in 1953. Collection of Rosalie Andersen.

coming soon

CURATOR'S CHOICE: ART FROM THE PERMANENT COLLECTION March 28 through May 10, 2015

What artistic treasures has the museum collected over the years? Highlights from the museum's own collection of paintings, prints and sculptures will be on view for a springtime celebration of Danish-American artists. Some pieces have been acquired from artists previously featured in museum exhibitions, and other works have been acquired from family collections and from the former Dana College. Plan to visit the museum to view familiar favorites as well as pieces new to the museum galleries.



SKÅL! SCANDINAVIAN SPIRITS

A traveling exhibition organized by the Museum of Danish America

Denmark, Norway and Sweden share a “spirited” tradition of enjoying beer and akvavit – sometimes together, sometimes separately. This exhibition explores the cultural history of these beverages, follows those drinking traditions to Scandinavian-American communities, and answers questions like *What IS aquavit, anyway?* and *How do you “skål” correctly?*

This is a traveling exhibition organized by the Museum of Danish America, in partnership with other Scandinavian-American museums.



Museum of Danish America, Elk Horn, IA	April – October 2015
Nordic Heritage Museum, Seattle, WA.....	December 2015 – March 2016
Swedish American Museum, Chicago, IL	March – July 2016
Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum, IA.....	August – December 2016
American Swedish Historical Museum, Philadelphia, PA.....	January – June 2017
American Swedish Institute, Minneapolis, MN.....	July – October 2017

This project is supported in part by the Albert Victor Ravenholt Fund and by the American Swedish Historical Museum. If your family, business, or organization would like to support this national project, please contact the museum to discuss the opportunities and benefits associated with exhibit sponsorship.

04. “UP Lighthouse 2” by Jens Carstensen, circa 2000. Museum collection 2009.039.001 **05. Sankt Hans Aften** (Midsummer) is a typical event for Danes and Danish Americans to make sure they’ve “got akvavit.” Photo by Charlie Langton. Ball cap available in the Museum Shop.

october meeting in elk horn

The October Board Meeting kicked off with a well-attended Brown Bag Lunch on Thursday, October 16. Board member Dr. Craig Molgaard presented "Dr. Panum and Measles in the Faroe Islands." Molgaard is Professor and Chair at the School of Public and Community Health Sciences at the University of Montana.

While committee meetings were held on Thursday and Friday, new board members met with museum staff for introductions

and orientation to the various departments and operations. Social events included a reception at the museum's Genealogy Center and a catered dinner for 60 at the museum on Friday night. It was at this gathering that John Mark Nielsen recognized and thanked out-going board members Erik Andersen (NY), Bill Jensen (IA), and Cynthia McKeen (MN) for their contributions and years of service. New board members Beth Bro-Roof (IA), Glenn Henriksen (IA), David

Hendee (NE) and Karen Suchomel (IA) were welcomed to the organization.

After the annual and regular meetings were held Saturday morning, everyone gathered at the museum at 2 p.m. for the Curatorial Center Grand Opening Celebration. And for anyone unable to attend, we can attest that it was indeed a wonderful celebration with a couple hundred in attendance, delicious food and drink, and a beautiful fall day!



By
Terri Johnson

Board members L-R Cindy Adams, Linda Steffensen, Bente Ellis, Tim Burchill, Dorothy Feisel, David Hendee, Karen Suchomel, Carolyn Larson, John Mark Nielsen, Dennis Larson, Brent Norlem, Dagmar Muthamia, Ron Bro, Ken Larsen, Erik Andersen, Bill Jensen, Dan Christensen, Mark Strandskov, Cyndi McKeen, Kristi Planck Johnson, Beth Bro-Roof, Garey Knudsen, and Mittie Ostergaard. **Not present** Glenn Henriksen, Anna Thomsen Holliday, Craig Molgaard, Jerry Schrader and Henrik Rasmussen.

curatorial center completed

Sometimes we are asked, “What does a curator do?” The simplest answer is that a curator both cares for and interprets museum artifacts. So what does a Curatorial Center do? The new Curatorial Center is designed to facilitate both of these museum functions – providing space to properly care for a wide-ranging collection of artifacts as well as supporting the exhibition activities that share those artifacts and their stories with museum visitors.

At the end of August, we began moving our large objects like furniture, immigrant trunks, plows, and household machines (such as stoves and sewing machines) into the larger of the two vaults. A few weeks later, the entire textile collection moved into the second vault. In total, more than 3,100 artifacts have been relocated. The updated home location for

each individual artifact has been changed in both the collections database and in inventory spreadsheets. Box labels have been changed and cabinets and shelves have been relabeled to reflect their new locations.

Staff and interns are also settled into the offices and workspaces in the new building. Windows allow us to see trucks and other workers as they arrive in the loading dock area. Semi-trailer trucks and other large delivery vehicles have already put our dock to work, bringing traveling exhibitions to and from the museum. The dedicated room for exhibition preparation includes new tools: a washer and dryer for laundering cleaning materials and tablecloths; new shelving to organize the exhibits that travel across the country; and a permanent work surface

for preparing exhibit labels and customized artifact mounts. A quarantine room provides a space for new artifact acquisitions to be monitored for pests, mold, or other “yuckies” before they are stored with the rest of the collection. And a multimedia room – open to all museum visitors – is a space to view digital images and videos that share more Danish-American stories.



By
**Tova Brandt and
Angela Stanford**

Dramatic new landscaping around the front entry of the existing building and the perimeter of the new addition is extremely welcoming to visitors. The look of the entry ties in the rest of the design elements of the Jens Jensen Prairie Landscape Park.

The plantings on the Curatorial Center's roof have filled out and are now identified by large signs along the walkway.

After a year of construction, we are so pleased to be able to introduce this expanded facility

and to know that it provides space for our collections and exhibitions to continue to grow for many years. The new spaces in the Curatorial Center are truly dedicated to the work of the museum to celebrate Danish roots and American dreams.

grand opening celebration held

The Curatorial Center's Grand Opening was held on Saturday, October 18 at 2 p.m. The ceremony opened with a welcome by John Mark Nielsen followed by singing of "Der er et Yndigt Land (There is a Lovely Land)" and "America the Beautiful," accompanied by Board Member Kristi Planck Johnson on Victor Borge's first piano.

John Mark then shared the history of the project and the names of the donors that made it all possible (see pages 3-4). Brief remarks were given by the guest speakers including Linda Washburn, Executive Director of the Glenwood Area Chamber of Commerce on behalf of the Great Places Advisory Board and the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs; Mardy Holst, AHTS Architects; Angela Stanford, Curator of Collections and Registrar; and Tova Brandt, Albert Ravenholt Curator of Danish

American Culture. Recognition of other project partners was given after the remarks.

Following the program a ribbon cutting was held in the new multimedia room by the Better Elk Horn Club and the Shelby County Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Staff and volunteers were stationed throughout the center to greet visitors and tell them more about the functions of each space.

FILM DEBUT

In addition to the tours, there was free admission to all four exhibits currently open at the museum. Celebration guests were treated to a first look of the film *Simple Gifts of Walnut Grove*, a 17-minute film by John Richard produced by the Museum of Danish America. The film features 96-year-old Walter Hansen of rural West Branch, Iowa, sharing the

story of the farm that was built by his Danish immigrant father, Hans Hansen (1876-1953). The farm and its working sawmill have been lovingly maintained and preserved by Walter and his family. The film, which covers all seasons of life on the farm, is of breathtaking quality. The film includes a soundtrack featuring works performed by Victor Borge and the Danish String Quartet. Walter and daughters Carolyn and Lucy were in attendance for the Grand Opening.

Refreshments were enjoyed by many in the Bro Dining Room on the main level. Guests also enjoyed exploring the 11 new interpretive panels that have been installed throughout the Jens Jensen Prairie Landscape Park and atop the green roof. In addition, the plantings for the park's Rose Meadow were also put in place in time for the festivities.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND STAFF WOULD LIKE TO SINCERELY THANK THE 200+ PEOPLE WHO ATTENDED FOR MAKING THE GRAND OPENING SO GRAND!



By
Nicky Christensen





by the numbers

8,000

Size of the Curatorial Center in square feet, which nearly doubles the footprint of the existing building.

26

Trucks of concrete needed to pour the roof of the Curatorial Center. It contains 32,000 pounds of rebar.

260

Artifacts housed in the Main Vault of the center. This includes furniture, agricultural machines, altar sets, sewing machines, trunks, and more.

2,900

Artifacts housed in the South Vault, including textiles and our education collection.

275

Shelves and end panels that had to be cleaned prior to moving the collection. Sprinkler pipes and ductwork were also thoroughly cleaned.

160

Working hours needed to move large artifacts into the main vault.

65

Working hours to re-label, relocate, and complete data entry for the textiles alone – about 2,500 pieces. The location of every artifact in the center had to be updated in the database and on inventory sheets.

1.5

Months it took staff and interns to move the appropriate pieces of the collection into the Curatorial Center.

37,750

Artifact and library records available online through View Our Collection. Members at the \$100+ level receive access to this part of our website.

\$35

Average cost to care for one artifact for one year.

two new danish interns join museum team

NICK KOFOD MOGENSEN

Exhibits Intern from Copenhagen, Denmark

Nick is a graduate student in History at the University of Copenhagen. He has a special interest in Danish and American political history and can read Gothic Danish texts. Nick's Bachelor's thesis was about the rise of Evangelical Christians as a political factor in America from the 1970s and 1980s. He has been a writer and music critic for Danish music websites and for the non-profit organization Rapolitics.

Nick will be helping with the development of a 2015 exhibit currently titled *Skål! Scandinavian Spirits* that will travel to several other Scandinavian-American museums in the U.S, among other assignments. Nick's internship will be completed in January.

MARIANNE FRØSIG SØRENSEN

Collections Intern from Fredericia, Denmark

Marianne is a graduate student in Cultural and Social History at the University of Southern Denmark in Odense. Her Bachelor's degree is in History from the University of Southern Denmark, with a minor in European Studies from Aarhus University. She has worked at the Museum of Fredericia and its archive. She is particularly interested in Danish immigration and the role of our museum in

helping to preserve and document Danish culture.

Marianne will be working mainly on the organization of the museum's institutional archives. In coalition with museum staff, she will develop a cataloging system for this specific collection and also a finding aid to assist locating the contents of the collection, once the project is completed. The institutional archive includes records beginning with the museum's founding in 1983, board meeting minutes, promotional materials for programs and events, different types of correspondence and so on. Marianne will complete her internship on January 31.

OTHER INTERNS

Including Nick and Marianne, a total of five interns have been working at the museum recently. In addition to American Inventory Assistant Madeline Mongar, the Curatorial Center's completion warranted the extra help of Chelsea Jacobsen, Inventory Assistant, and Kate Ehrig-Page, Genealogy Center Library Assistant. These interns have been featured in past issues of the *America Letter*.

READ ABOUT THE INTERNS' ACTIVITIES ON THEIR BLOG, DANISHMUSEUMINTERNS. TUMBLR.COM.



By
Nicky Christensen

Danish Graduate Student Interns Marianne (left) and Nick (right) will be assisting museum staff with special projects this fall and winter.

where are they now?

TINA (WITTORFF) LUND WAS THE MUSEUM'S SECOND DANISH INTERN. READ WHAT SHE IS UP TO NOW, 10 YEARS AFTER HER TIME IN ELK HORN.

From August 2004 to January 2005 I completed a five-month internship at the Museum of Danish America (at that time The Danish Immigrant Museum). The internship was a part of my Masters Program in Culture, Communication and Globalization at Aalborg University, Denmark.

Going to rural Iowa was not an obvious choice at the time, and I remember my teachers being opposed to the idea because they feared that I would not learn enough from the experience (I was the first student from Aalborg University to intern at the museum). But luckily I stood firm and ended up with a once-in-a-lifetime experience – and being the first of many students from Aalborg University, obviously.

My internship at the museum was my first hands-on experience with the marketing trade, and

it being the first, therefore, a very important one. At the time, I thought that I would end up working in the tourism industry. Life has brought me in a different direction – still working with marketing but in a different context. I have specialized in technical communication and marketing, and I have worked for companies in telecom and online payment, among others.

The experience at the museum was a boost to my career. I doubt that I would have been able to find relevant employment had I not had the marketing experience from the museum. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity given to me by the museum board and staff.

Three and a half years ago my life changed dramatically when my son, Mikkel, was born. After giving birth my perspective on life changed, and I discovered that taking care of the little one suddenly meant a lot more than working up to 45 hours a week. Therefore, my husband and I decided that I would quit my job and start working freelance

instead. So I did, and I have done so for the past year and a half. Running your own business is hard work and it causes quite a bit of stomachache at times, but it has also been fun to work with other businesses than IT companies. Time has come now to start looking for a job again, so I'm hoping to return to the IT business.

I live with my husband and son in an apartment in Brønshøj on the outskirts of Copenhagen. Four years ago I visited the museum as a part of a trip to the US, and I hope to be able to return with my husband and son some day.

As you are probably well aware, Elk Horn has reached quite a cult status here in Denmark with two documentaries broadcasted on Danish TV in the past year. For me it has been fun to see the town again but also to be able to show – in pictures – my friends and family the place that means so much to me. After both TV shows I have received phone calls and text messages from old friends asking me whether it was “my Elk Horn?” It sure is and always will be!



By
Tina Lund

events calendar

Julefest

November 28-29

Brown Bag Lunch:

Christmas Hygge

December 11, Noon
Bro Dining Room

Board of Directors Meeting

February 5-7
Atlanta, GA

Brown Bag Lunch:

Confirmation: Coming of Age in Denmark and the U.S.

by Michele McNabb
March 19
Bro Dining Room

Rebild National Park Society's Annual Meeting Hosted by the Heartland Chapter and the Museum of Danish America

April 22 – 26
Omaha, NE and the Danish Villages of Elk Horn & Kimballton, IA

Skål! Scandinavian Spirits

Members' Preview

April 24, 4-6 p.m.

Spring Open House

April 25
Museum Shop

Victor Borge Legacy Award

Recital

April 26
Bro Dining Room

EXHIBITS ON VIEW

Photography by Diana Velasco:

Two Nationalities

November 28 to March 15
Main Floor Gallery

Danish Children Growing Up American

Now until April 4
Kramme Gallery

Exploring Danish Happiness

Now until April 30
Multimedia Room

Across Oceans, Across Time

Permanent
Lower and Main Levels

UPCOMING

Curator's Choice: Art from the Permanent Collection

March 30 – May 10
Main Floor Gallery

UPCOMING

Skål! Scandinavian Spirits

April 24 – October 25
Kramme Gallery

MUSEUM

VISITOR HOURS

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

Business hours are

Monday-Friday 8 am – 5 pm

GENEALOGY CENTER

4210 Main Street, PO Box 249

May-October

Tuesday-Friday 9 am – 5 pm
Saturdays 10 am – 5 pm

November-April

Tuesday-Friday 9 am – 5 pm

Research assistance appointments welcomed to 712.764.7008.

BEDSTEMOR'S HOUSE

2105 College Street

Memorial Day – Labor Day

1 pm – 4 pm

ADMISSION

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

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

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

Did you know? In 1912 a group of Danish Americans purchased 200 acres of heather-covered land in the hills of Rebild, Denmark, in order to have a place to annually celebrate America's Independence Day with their Danish families and fellow emigrants. The Rebild National Park Society, Inc. was established, and later the organization donated the property to the State of Denmark. The land became Denmark's first national park! The organization continues over a century later as a Danish-American friendship organization with three chapters in Denmark and thirteen chapters in the U.S. The annual 4th of July festival lives on as the biggest celebration of America's national day outside the U.S. and attracts thousands of people and dignitaries from across the globe. Society leaders and members meet each year in the U.S. This coming April the annual meeting will be held in Omaha, NE and the Danish Villages!

Long-time researchers know that the field of genealogy has changed drastically in the past decade or so. Previously relatively inaccessible records are now increasingly available through a multitude of online indexes, databases and digital reproductions. And during this time a generation of individuals comfortable with online searching has entered the genealogy community. All to the good, but unfortunately and far too often, it is still the case that less-experienced genealogists often stop at the computer keyboard and neglect the wealth of records and resources that are not online. Successful genealogical research involves both utilizing online resources as well as looking beyond the keyboard for resources and materials not yet available digitally.

searching for marie

In 2004 Danish researcher Flemming Nielsen contacted us to see if we could assist him in finding a lost relative. On July 5, 1892, 29-year-old **Marie Laurentina Sofie Jacobsen** (born November 13, 1862 in Sandby parish, Maribo County) registered her emigration contract for herself, a single woman, and her 3-year-old son, **Christian Frederik Jacobsen** (born July 19, 1888, also in Sandby parish). She left behind two older sons who were placed in foster homes in Denmark when their mother emigrated. Flemming was able to match the Castle Garden arrival record of the two aboard the S/S *Norge* on July 22, 1892, to the pair's departure record, but there the trail abruptly ended. Could we help find out what happened after that point?

Immediately the search was complicated by the subjects' names. Some Danish given names often do not withstand the transition into English, and "Marie" is often one of them, frequently changing to "Mary" in US records. She might also have used one of her other given

Form 1 <i>734</i>		713 REGISTRATION CARD		No. <i>92</i>	
1	Name in full	<i>Fredrick Christian Jacobson</i>		Age, in yrs. <i>28</i>	
2	Home address	<i>1405 4th Ave Grinnell Ia</i>			
3	Date of birth	<i>July 19 1888</i>			
4	Are you: (1) a natural-born citizen, (2) a naturalized citizen, (3) an alien, (4) or have you declared your intention (specify which)?	<i>Declarant</i>			
5	Where were you born?	<i>Simberg Lowland Denmark</i>			
6	If not a citizen, of what country are you a citizen or subject?	<i>Denmark</i>			
7	What is your present trade, occupation or office?	<i>Labourer</i>			
8	By whom employed?	<i>Grinnell Clay Product Co</i>			
9	Where employed?	<i>Grinnell Ia</i>			
9	Have you a father, mother, wife, child under 12, or a sister or brother under 12, solely dependent on you for support (specify which)?	<i>Mother</i>			
10	Married or single (which)?	<i>Single</i>		Race (specify which)? <i>Caucasian</i>	
11	What military service have you had? Rank	<i>None</i>			
12	Do you claim exemption from draft (specify grounds)?	<i>Yes (Dependent mother)</i>			
I affirm that I have verified above answers and that they are true.					
<i>Fredrick Christian Jacobson</i>					
(Signature or mark)					



By
Michele McNabb

01. WWI After much fruitless searching, an online World War I draft registration provided the key to unlocking this genealogical puzzle.

names as the name she went by. The same was true for her son, who might appear in US records by just one of his two given names, or as "Chris(t)" or "Fred." Consequently, a large number of search possibilities existed. Also complicating the search was the fact that Marie's ticket was only purchased as far as New York City, leaving her ultimate destination unknown. Additionally, there was a strong possibility that she might have married during the intervening eight years before the next US census enumeration.

Genealogy Center staff did a thorough search for the two in census and other records available at the time and also placed an inquiry in *The Danish Pioneer* newspaper. A few likely leads were found, but in each case the possible candidate was ruled out. Regretfully, we had to report negative results to

Flemming, created a file on Marie and her son, and went on to other projects.

Flemming, however, didn't let matters lie and continued searching on his own, pursuing leads as new online sources appeared. In mid-2006 he located a tantalizing new online record: the WWI draft registration of one **Fredrick Christian Jacobsen**, born in "Sinberg, Lowland, Denmark" on July 19, 1888. **01** At the time, Fredrick was a laborer living in Grinnell, Poweshiek County, Iowa, single, but indicated that he had a dependent mother to support. **02** The similarities in this record to what was known about Marie's son were too striking to ignore. Once again, we were contacted. Since this record indicated that Marie was still living, could we follow up and find more information? In the meantime, Flemming, using the

USGenWeb as a resource, started hitting the international telephone lines, calling courthouse offices and local genealogical societies for information. Combining online federal census and other records, information provided by local county resources, library collections, and information found during a visit to the small community of Kellogg, in Jasper County, Iowa, the story of what happened after Marie and her son set foot in America was gradually pieced together.

On July 27, 1892 – a mere five days after entering the US -- **Maria L. S. Jacobson**, age 30, married stone quarryman **Hans Matson**, age 59, in Kellogg, Iowa. **03** A widower, Hans Madsen had immigrated to the US in 1868. His first marriage (to a woman who was named "Maren" but recorded as "Mary" in the 1870 and 1880 censuses) was childless and ended with her death in 1891.

Register of Marriages,

1. No. of License. 2. Date of License.	1. By whom affidavit, if any, is made. 2. By whom consent to Marriage given.	1. Full Name of Groom. 2. Place of Residence. 3. Occupation.	1. Age next Birthday. 2. Race or Color. 3. Place of Birth.	1. Father's Name. 2. Mother's Maiden Name. 3. No. of Groom's Marriage.
12067 2 July 26 1892	J. H. Russell	1 Hans Matson 2 Kellogg Iowa 3 Stone quarryman	1 59 years 2 W 3 Denmark	1 Mada Larson 2 Carrie S. Jensen 3 As usual

Jasper County, Iowa.

199

1. Full Name of Bride. 2. Maiden Name, if a Widow. 3. Place of Residence.	1. Age next Birthday. 2. Race or Color. 3. Place of Birth.	1. Father's Name. 2. Mother's Maiden Name. 3. No. of Bride's Marriage.	1. Where and when Married. 2. Witnesses. 3. By whom Certified, Name and Office.	1. Date of Return. 2. When Registered.
Maria L. S. Jacobson 2 3 Denmark 03	1 30 years 2 W 3 Denmark	1 Lars Larson 2 Carrie S. Jacobson 3 First	1 At Kellogg Iowa July 27 1892 2 J. H. Russell 3 J. H. Russell	1 July 29 1892 2 3

02. Ancestry.com. *U.S., World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc., 2005. Registration State: *Iowa*; Registration County: *Poweshiek*; Roll: *1643349*. **03. Marriage** Less than a week after her arrival in New York harbor, Marie Jacobsen married an older widower in Jasper County, Iowa. ►

Was Marie Jacobsen a mail-order bride? Or did she make a connection with Hans, who was nearly twice her age, via mutual family or acquaintances? We don't know, but her marriage to Hans was apparently amicable, resulting in five children in the following decade:

1. Mary Sophia Madsen (June 5, 1893-July 9, 1944)
2. Mads "Max" Lars Madsen (October 27, 1895-July 24, 1967)
3. Theodore Herman Madsen (October 6, 1896-December 23, 1972)
4. Nels Peter Madsen (April 14, 1898-May 12, 1960)
5. Harry LeRoy Madsen (March 31, 1901-February 12, 1960)

An 11-year-old Christian was enumerated as a Madsen, i.e., as his step-father's son, in the 1900 census of Kellogg Township in Jasper County, so he was definitely considered a part of the family. Hans died on December 23, 1909, leaving Marie (enumerated variously as "Mary S.," or "Marie" Madson/Madison in later censuses) a widow with four children still living at home. In the 1910 census she was listed as having her own income, but perhaps this was supplemented by Christian's earnings, as reported on his draft registration.

By 1920 Marie's daughter Mary Sophia had married an immigrant from Mexico, John Ortiz, and moved to Rock Island, Illinois, where John was employed in a plow factory (likely the John Deere Plowworks). Accompanying them and residing in the same household were Marie, Marie's son Frederik Christian (now listed under the surname Jacobsen), and her three unmarried Madsen sons, all of whom were employed by the plow factory. In subsequent censuses, as the Madsen brothers married and started their own families, they appear as "Madison," a name they apparently all elected to use.

Marie died in Moline, Illinois, on October 27, 1936, at nearly 74 years of age. As "Mrs. Hans Madison" her obituary in that day's *Rock Island Argus* hides her original identity quite well, but provides enough information to link her back to her original residences in Kellogg, Iowa, and Denmark. **04** Her remains were transported to the Kellogg, Iowa, cemetery, where she was buried alongside Hans.

This single mother who had arrived in the US over four decades earlier became the ancestress of a large American family, leaving six children, thirteen grandchildren and two

great-grandchildren at the time of her death--in addition to a number of descendants of the sons left in Denmark.

And what of her son Christian Frederik Jacobsen, later known variously as Fred C. Jacobsen or Chris Jacobson, whose World War I draft record provided the key to finding the family in America? He served as a blacksmith in the US Army during WWI from May 1918 to September 1919. Sometime after 1920 he moved from Rock Island to Ottawa, LaSalle County, Illinois, where he found employment in a coal yard and later as a janitor at the Orpheum Theatre. In 1926 he married a widowed German immigrant, Johanna Saager Eichelkraut, whose daughter had married Christian's half-brother Theodore Herman the previous year. The marriage, which produced no children, lasted until Johanna's death in 1956. Some years later, Christian became a resident of the Soldiers and Sailors Home (known today as The Illinois Veterans Home) in Quincy, Illinois, where he resided until he died at the age of 92 on September 13, 1982, having outlived all his younger half-siblings. He was buried with military honors at the Rock Island National Cemetery with a niece mentioned as his only survivor.

Moline Deaths

Mrs. Hans Madison.

Mrs. Hans Madison, 73, a resident of Moline 20 years, died at 3:10 o'clock this morning in her home, 2426 Thirty-first street, after a brief illness.

Funeral services will be at 7:30 o'clock Thursday evening in Esterdahl chapel. The Rev. Maynard Force, pastor of Calvary Lutheran church, will officiate. The body will be taken to Kellogg, Iowa, Friday morning for burial.

Mrs. Madison, formerly Miss Marie Jacobsen, was born in Denmark on Nov. 13, 1862. She was married to Hans Madison in Kellogg, Iowa, 45 years ago. Mr. Madison died a number of years ago.

Surviving are a daughter, Mrs. John Ortiz of Moline; five sons, Max and Herman Madison of Moline, Chris Jacobsen of Ottawa, Ill., and Nels and Harry Madison of Shreveport, La.; 13 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Subsequent to our filling in some of the gaps in Marie Jacobsen Madsen/Madison's later life, the indefatigable Flemming Nielsen contacted local courthouses and historical and genealogical societies in Iowa and Illinois, traced down documents pertaining to family members and amassed photographs and many additional pieces of information. The material gathered was compiled into a book, *Family History of Marie Laurentine Sophie Jacobsen of Denmark and Moline, Illinois, 1862-1936*, by Carol Kroeger of Moline, Illinois, to which Flemming has added two Danish-language supplements to the volume with additional information. The compilation is profusely illustrated with copies of newspaper clippings, documents and historical and family photographs, and would have been much thinner had the only sources consulted been those available online. Any readers of this article whose Madison or Ortiz ancestry traces back to the Rock Island, Illinois, area are welcome to visit the Genealogy Center to learn details about their Danish ancestry.

Special thanks should also be given to Lois J. Hinshaw, of Kellogg, Iowa, who found innumerable buried pieces of information about the Madsen/Madison family in Jasper County. And of course to Flemming Nielsen for all his efforts in researching his family puzzle.

04. Marie's Obituary is an example of how difficult it may be to find immigrant women, when tracing them involves the double-barreled problem of their identity being "hidden" behind a husband's name and the transition to an Americanized version of the original Danish surname.

genealogy center activities and collection news

2015 PHOTO EXHIBIT: CENTENARIANS

Next year's Genealogy Center photo exhibit will feature Danish immigrants who reached the age of 100 or more. If you have such a centenarian in your family, brush off their history, find one or more photographs, and put the photos aside for next spring. Further details will appear in the next *America Letter*.

DANISH BROTHERHOOD MEMBERSHIP REGISTERS

This autumn we concluded a more-than-a-decade-long collaborative project between the Genealogy Center and the Danish American Archive & Library in Blair, Nebraska, to index the membership registers of all 339 Danish Brotherhood in America lodges formed prior to 1975. With the exception of four "lost" lodges (New Denmark, Rutland, and Pelican Lake in Wisconsin and Burlington, Iowa) the membership registers of these lodges have

been input with a number of identifying data points.

Outgrowths of the project include the Danish Brotherhood Death Index, 1916-1995, containing some 20,000 names, which has been on the Genealogy Center section of the museum webpage for a number of years. With the completion of the project, the Danish Brotherhood Pre-1916 Death Index, consisting of some 2,000 names, has been added to the webpage. Information about the origins of the Danish Brotherhood, a listing of lodges by location and number, and information about how to acquire copies of individual members' records may be found under Library & Genealogy > Danish Brotherhood & Sisterhood.

Indexing and proofreading these records, often a tedious task, have been done by a large number of volunteers at both institutions. From the Genealogy Center end a number of volunteers have worked on the project, but special kudos should go to



**Carolyn Sand
of Prairie
du Chien,
Wisconsin.**

By my count, Carolyn has proofread and entered data for 239 of the lodges, some

of them more than once, and has never lamented the tedium of doing so.

Born in Illinois, Carolyn is a retired Family & Consumer Education teacher. When not indexing Danish Brotherhood records, she finds time to be a costumed interpreter at Villa Louis Historic Site in Prairie du Chien and volunteer at Bok Tower Gardens in Florida, where she and her husband of 46 years, Kenneth Sand of Kimballton, Iowa, go each winter. She is an avid golfer and has traveled with Ken to Denmark and Germany to visit family ancestral locations. Carolyn and Ken have two children, Michael and Julie, and four grandchildren.

Carolyn: A job VERY well done –
mange hjertelige tak!



**By
Michele McNabb**

Reminder: The Genealogy Center is closed on Saturdays from November through April. Advance appointments for research assistance are always appreciated. Find the hours and admissions information on page 23.

LIBRARY INTERN

In mid-July we welcomed our new intern, Kate Ehrig-Page, to our Genealogy Center family. Kate's background information was included in the Summer 2014 *America Letter*.

Kate writes:

"The internship here has been great, for though my background is as a trained archivist, it has allowed me to not only broaden my skills base but also learn about Danish culture. Along the way, I have gained a very tiny Danish vocabulary; unfortunately, it all relates to types of books and their publication – not so practical beyond the Genealogy Center! As an immigrant to the United States from Britain, it has also been very interesting for me to see the parallels and differences between myself and Danish immigrants, the subject of the museum.

Working at the Museum of Danish America's Genealogy Center has enabled me to gain skills in the area of library cataloging, while also being able to explore the range of materials available to genealogists. This internship has been great because it has given me a foundation to explore the service side of genealogy, while also maintaining my archival skills through such things as developing a referencing system

in cooperation with one of the Danish interns, Marianne Frøsig Sørensen.

Working at the Genealogy Center has increased my interest in family history research, and seeing the other staff here bring satisfaction to patrons in that area has been great. I encourage you all to stop by the Genealogy Center and library to explore your roots and the fascinating experience of Danish Americans!"

JULEFEST

Christmas is coming, and with it, Elk Horn's annual Julefest celebration the weekend following Thanksgiving. If you're in town, be sure to drop by the Genealogy Center to look at our collection of *nisser* and to sample some Danish holiday treats.

WISH LIST

We are always looking for additions to the Genealogy Center Collection. Our listing of "most wanted" titles in both Danish and English may be found on the museum webpage under Library & Genealogy > Genealogy Center Donations and Wish List. We welcome donations of or toward these materials, but since this list changes frequently please contact us before purchasing or sending items so that we may avoid duplicates.

DO YOU KNOW A DANISH IMMIGRANT OR LONG-TERM RESIDENT?

Many Danes have immigrated to the US since WWII, participated in exchange student or internship programs or resided in this country for prolonged periods of time. We would like to have some information in our files on these more recent immigrants and shorter- or long-term residents. An Immigrant Information Form may be found on our website under Library & Genealogy > Research & Translations > Danish Immigrants. Please also distribute it to friends or at meetings of your local Danish-American organizations.

HEY, WHERE IS 'OF GENEALOGICAL INTEREST?'

Because of the web-focused content of our usual genealogy resources article, we have moved these updates online to our website (Library & Genealogy > Genealogy Links) and to a new blog, danishmuseumgenealogy.tumblr.com. You can subscribe to the blog to receive a notification when we add new links and tidbits. If you're working on your family history, you stand to benefit from these alerts and we encourage you to become a follower of the blog.



Article By
Kate Ehrig-Page

new additions to the wall of honor

JUNE 24, 2014 – SEPTEMBER 30, 2014

The Museum of Danish America's Immigrant Wall of Honor provides families and friends with a means of preserving the memory of or honoring those who emigrated from Denmark to America. Over 4,500 immigrants are currently recognized on the Wall. Their stories and the stories of their families contribute to the growing repository of family histories at the museum's Genealogy Center. The information below includes the immigrant names, year of immigration, location where they settled and the name and city of the donor(s).

JULIUS A. ERIKSEN (1885)
Lawrence, Kansas - Conrad Dale Eriksen, Fort Collins, CO

HANS HANSEN (1899)
Centerdale, Iowa - Walter Hansen, West Branch, IA

MARGRETHE RASMUSSEN KVARNES (1890) St. Paul, Minnesota - Larry Peterson, Grove City, OH

KURT KLARSKOV LARSEN (1978) Pell City, Alabama - Joy Larsen, Oneonta, AL

GEORGE HEMMING NIELSEN (1892) Racine, Wisconsin - Gordon L. Nielsen, Tulsa, OK; Lindbergh L. Nielsen, Waupaca, WI

FRIEDA KRISTIANA LYNGGAARD MIKKELSEN RAU (1927) Chicago, Illinois - Fern E. Rau, Joliet, IL; Lyn Rau Pence, Hampton, VA

in honor

JUNE 24, 2014 – SEPTEMBER 30, 2014

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

Danish Sisterhood Lodge #3, Davenport, IA
Elk Horn-Kimballton High School Class of 1964
Esther Frost's 90th Birthday
Jim Iversen, for history translation
Larsen Family Reunion, Hastings, NE

Merete Nieto's Birthday
Benedikte Ehlers Olesen, with thanks from the Danish Sisterhood of America for the Denmark Tour 2014
Gerald Rasmussen, for Father's Day



By
**Debra Christensen
Larsen**

Wall of Honor You, too, can memorialize your name or an ancestor's on the Danish Immigrant Wall of Honor. Contact us to request information, or print a form from www.danishmuseum.org/wall-of-honor.cfm and submit with a contribution of \$250 per name.

memorials

JUNE 24, 2014 – SEPTEMBER 30, 2014

Through various funds, gifts have been received in memory of

Marian Peterson Anderson
L. Dean Bartelson
Ralph E. Doonan
Millie Eskov
Hans & Mathilde Farstrup
Cleo & Esther Hansen
Emery Hoegh
Hans & Genevieve Hoiberg
Howard Juel
Kurt Klarskov Larsen
Harold & Lenora Madsen
Lorry I. Madsen
Svend Marckmann
Harlan C. Mathison
Judy Meehan
Godan Meng

Vern Mikkelsen and his early effort to help get the museum started
Frances (Sorensen) Miller
Jean Routhe Mitchell
Larry A. Nelson
Einer Juhl Nielsen
Tom Nielsen
Crystal Pash
Kenneth Paulsen
Harry & Frances Petersen
Ezra Potts
Charles Dale Rosenquist
Thorvald Sorensen
Edith Alisa Ledet Stolz
Adeline Tarsitano
Jens Thorsen
Melvin Weisbrod
Walter Westergaard

memorial bur oak tree planted

In September 2013, a bur oak tree was planted in the Jens Jensen Prairie Landscape Park in memory of former board member Kurt Klarskov Larsen from his wife, Joy. A memorial plaque next to the tree was unveiled on their 56th wedding anniversary.



Naming Opportunities Honor your family or a loved one with a lasting contribution to a project listed here:
Shrubs\$500
Trees\$1,000

Bench (concrete)\$2,500
Bench or Picnic Table (metal) ..\$2,500
Park Interpretative Sign.....\$10,000
East Council Ring\$25,000

new members

JUNE 24, 2014 – SEPTEMBER 30, 2014

The Museum of Danish America is pleased to identify the following 50 individuals and organizations as its newest members.

Ingrid Ancker, Yorktown Heights, NY
Floyd & Diane Beaman, Bath, SD
Ann Bokelman, Hanlontown, IA
Jim & Donna Brittsan, Sanford, FL
Lois Cardinal, Littleton, CO
Rita Christianson, West Des Moines, IA
Mary Copp, Elk Horn, IA
William & Judy Ellerman, Dallas Center, IA
James & Lisa Fredericksen, West Hartford, CT
Harlan & Virginia Hansen, Rutland, IA
Albert Hecker, Des Moines, IA
Scott Hecker, Des Moines, IA
Jeene Hobbs, Blair, NE
Janet Hoegh, Atlantic, IA
Henrik Hundevad, Burnsville, MN
Ivy Marketing Group (Debra Sheridan), Glen Ellyn, IL
Carlton King, Oro Valley, AZ
Roger & Nancy Knudsen, Winesburg, OH
Leonore Koptizke, Gillett, WI
Allan & Tammy Krueger, Sandy, UT
Jerry & Ginny Leppart, Eden Prairie, MN
John Madsen, Drexel Hill, PA
Gordon Nielsen, Tulsa, OK
Lindbergh Nielsen, Waupaca, WI

Steve & Susan Nielsen, Bainbridge Island, WA
Eric Nussle, Lake Tapps, WA
Chris & Sally Olsen, Cedar Rapids, IA
Mark & Kimberly Jensen Paltridge, Middletown, RI
Olin Pash, Harlan, IA
Lloyd & Vickey Pedersen, Medford, OR
Lyn Rau Pence, Hampton, VA
Ronda Petersen, El Cajon, CA
Mark Ravenholt, Kingston, WA
Barbara Rehmeier, Henderson, NV
Gordon Roesler, Blair, NE
Donna Ryterske, Lily Lake, IL
Donald & Jane Scaro, Edgerton, KS
Ellen & Claire Schloenvogt, Lincoln, CA
Michael & Judith Showalter, Palmetto, FL
Susan Sievers, Audubon, IA
Charles & Debra Smith, Omaha, NE
Edna Smith, South Dayton, NY
Dale Sorensen, Clear Lake, IA
Susanne Johansen & Ole Sorensen, Sunds, Denmark
Hele Spivack, Bellevue, NE
Kurt & Susan Stotts, Des Moines, IA
Kip & Laura Stransky, Durango, CO
Miriam Thomson, Kahoka, MO
Bonnie Warrington, Decorah, IA
Katherine Wilson, Wheeler, WI

UNIQUE GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING

Membership to the Museum of Danish America makes a meaningful gift for any occasion. Give the gift that keeps giving all year round. Make shopping easy while supporting the museum – Remember, we “gift-wrap” and ship, too!

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*Never been a member, or membership has been lapsed for 3+ years.

Please allow 2–3 weeks from the date of your order for delivery of the gift membership packet. You may choose to have the packet sent to you or directly to your recipient.

thank you, organizations

JUNE 24, 2014 – SEPTEMBER 30, 2014

These organizations have contributed memberships or gift-in-kind of \$100 or more or received “complimentary” memberships. We recognize their generosity in each newsletter during their membership.

- A & A Framing (Annette Andersen), Kimballton, IA
Andersen Windows (Sarah Andersen), Bayport, MN
Answers (Frank R. Tighe), Atlantic, IA
Atlantic Friends of The Danish Immigrant Museum, Atlantic, IA
BIEN Publishing Inc. (René Gross Kærskov, Publisher), Pacific Palisades, CA
Boose Building Construction (Marty & Connie Boose), Atlantic, IA
Carroll Control Systems, Inc. (Todd Wanninger), Carroll, IA
Cedar Valley Danes, Cedar Falls, IA area
Country Landscapes, Inc. (Rhett Faaborg), Ames, IA
Danebod Lutheran Church, Tyler, MN
The Danish American Archive and Library, Blair, NE
Danish American Club in Orange County, Huntington Beach, CA area
Danish American Club of Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI area
Danish 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 #56, Lenexa, KS
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #268, Junction City, OR
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #283, Dagmar, MT
DBIA, Centennial Lodge #348, Eugene, OR
Danish Club of Tucson, Tucson, AZ area
Danish Crown USA (Stig Kjaeroe, President), Cranford, NJ
The Danish Home, Chicago, IL
Danish Home for the Aged, Croton-On-Hudson, NY
Danish Mutual Insurance Association, Elk Horn, IA
Danish Sisterhood Lodge #3, Davenport, IA
Danish Sisterhood Ellen Lodge #21, Denver, CO
Danish Sisterhood Lodge #102, Des Moines, IA
Den Danske Pioneer (Elsa Steffensen & Linda Steffensen), Hoffman Estates, IL
Elk Horn Lutheran Church, Elk Horn, IA
Elk Horn-Kimballton Optimist Club, Elk Horn, IA
Exira-Elk Horn-Kimballton Community School District, Elk Horn, IA
Faith, Family, Freedom Foundation (Kenneth & Marlene Larsen), Calistoga, CA
Furniture from Scandinavia, Washington, DC
Hall Hudson, P.C. (Robert Hall), Attorneys at Law, Harlan, IA
Hansen Interiors (Torben & Bridget Ovesen), Mount Pleasant, WI
Harlan Newspapers (Steve Mores & Alan Mores), Harlan, IA
Heartland District of the DBIA, Des Moines, IA area
Heartland District of the Danish Sisterhood, Des Moines, IA area
Henningsen Construction, Inc., Atlantic, IA
Ivy Marketing Group (Debra Sheridan), Glen Ellyn, IL
Kirsten’s Danish Bakery (Paul & Kirsten Jepsen), Burr Ridge, IL
Knudsen Old Timers, Yorba Linda, CA
Leman USA (Steen Sanderhoff), Sturtevant, WI
Marge’s Hair Hut (Kent & Marge Ingerslev), Elk Horn, IA
Marne & Elk Horn Telephone Co., Elk Horn, IA
Nelsen and Nelsen, Attorneys at Law, Cozad, NE
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 area
Proongily (Cynthia McKeen), St. Paul, MN
The Rasmussen Group, Inc., Des Moines, IA
Raymond James (Honorable Consul John Larsen & Jillian Larsen), Scottsdale, AZ
Rebild National Park Society, Southern California Chapter, Los Angeles, CA area
Red River Danes, Fargo, ND area
Ringsted Danish American Fellowship, Ringsted, IA
scan|design foundation BY INGER & JENS BRUUN, Seattle, WA
Shelby County State Bank, Harlan and Elk Horn, IA
Symra Literary Society, Decorah, IA
The Vault Antiques (David & Roshelle Thompson), Walnut, IA
TK Petersen (Thorvald K. Petersen), Santa Monica, CA

Did you know? Families, groups, clubs, or businesses can sponsor exhibits, events, free admission days, our website, Brown Bag Lunch programs, or the whole Brown Bag Lunch series! Contact us to discuss the possibilities that await you.

æbleskiver

A CHRISTMAS TRADITION

This issue, we have decided to feature two recipes from one of our current Danish interns, Marianne Frøsig Sørensen. The recipes are for æbleskiver, the Danish Christmastime treat that is often made by Danish Americans year-round as a representation of Danish cuisine. Just as there is “more than one way to skin a cat,” there is definitely more than one way to bake a delicious batch of æbleskiver! We encourage you to find and embrace your own recipe for these iconic “pancake balls” and share them with your family.

Æbleskiver are cooked on the stovetop by baking them in a special pan with several semicircular indentations. To do so, heat the pan over medium

heat. When warm, add a bit of butter or oil to each cup in the pan. Pour in about two tablespoons of batter so it levels close to the top edge of the cup. As soon as they get bubbly around the edge, turn them halfway so that the baked crust is standing vertically in the cup. After a while you then turn them the remaining 90°. This will give them a ball shape. Continue turning the ball to keep it from burning while the middle finishes baking.

The turning of æbleskiver takes practice, but we think you will agree that it is all worth it! Experienced æbleskiver bakers usually have a favorite “weapon

of choice” for turning. We have heard of pickle forks, bamboo skewers, and even crochet hooks being touted as the most effective instruments for this task. Marianne recommends a small knitting needle.

Æbleskiver can be dusted with powdered sugar, served with a side of black currant or raspberry jam, or even dunked in pancake syrup. Æbleskiver are often served with gløgg--warm red wine with spices, almonds, aquavit, and raisins. They will keep in the fridge for up to two days. You can freeze them for up to three months--though they will not taste as good as fresh. Reheat frozen æbleskiver in the oven for 10-15 minutes at 250° F.



By
**Marianne
Frøsig Sørensen**

01. Street Fair Fare Connie Hanson and Development Manager Debra Christensen Larsen show the æbleskiver they made and served at the Orange International Street Fair in Orange, CA on August 29-31. Under the red & white tent and in the beer booth, three Danish American organizations (Danish American Club in Orange County, Rebuild National Park Society-Southern California Chapter, and Yorba Linda's Danish Lutheran Church & Cultural Center) come together to provide a taste of food and drink from Denmark: æbleskiver and Carlsberg, of course.

grandma gerda's æbleskiver

I remember making these with my paternal grandmother. She lived in Aulum, a little town in the midwestern part of Jutland. Aulum is about the same size as Elk Horn, and it has a windmill similar to the one right here in Elk Horn. I remember these because they are made with yeast instead of baking soda/powder, and that is not something that is commonly done in Denmark. I think my grandmother got this recipe from a magazine. *–Marianne Frøsig Sørensen*

Yield: Approx. 75 æbleskiver

1¾ cups milk	3½ cups all-purpose flour
1¾ cups buttermilk	3 tbs sugar
½ cup heavy cream	¼ tsp salt
1 packet of dried yeast	¼ tsp cardamom
8 large eggs, separated	Finely grated zest of ½ a lemon
½ tbs melted butter	

The milk, buttermilk and cream need to be warmed up, but not more than you can tolerate having your pinky finger in. Add it to a mixing bowl. Add the yeast to the warm milk mix. Add the yolks to the mixing bowl with the milk and yeast. Also add the flour, sugar, salt and spice. Whisk the whites in a separate bowl and carefully fold them into the batter. Let the batter rest for 1½ -2 hours. Then, the fun part: bake 'em! We use salted butter in the æbleskiver pan, but you can also use oil.

grandma anna mariane's æbleskiver

This is the recipe used by my maternal grandmother. My grandparents had a big farmstead outside of Vibbjerg, between Herning and Holstebro in the western part of Jutland. My grandmother was always cooking or baking whenever we came by. These æbleskiver are cherished in my family, especially by my younger sister. During a vacation at their farm in the fall, we persuaded my grandmother to make æbleskiver--normally a thing done only at Christmastime. My sister, then about five years old, was sitting on the kitchen table beside the stove and would take one every time the pan was emptied into a bowl. I secretly kept count of how many she ate because I was envious of the good spot she had picked to sit. She ate 24 of them! Needless to say, my sister did not want dinner or dessert when it came time. *–Marianne Frøsig Sørensen*

Yield: Approx. 50 æbleskiver

4 XL or 5 L eggs, separated	2 tbs sugar
2 cups milk or buttermilk	4 tsp baking powder
½ tbs melted butter	If you are in a festive mood, you can add a pinch of cardamom (about a ¼ tsp)
2¼ cups all-purpose flour	

Whisk the yolks, milk, and melted butter together in a mixing bowl. Then add the flour, spices and baking powder. Whisk the whites and carefully fold them into the batter. Bake in an æbleskiver pan with salted butter or oil.

02. Want to receive this publication online instead of through the mail? E-mail media@danishmuseum.org to sign up to receive a link to future *America Letters* on Issuu.com. 03. **Membership expiration** Please note the date of your membership renewal appearing on the mailing label, near your name. All future *America Letters* will include this information as a gentle reminder to our members.



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01

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og Godt Nytår

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02

BACK



03



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02. Our Annual Keepsake Porcelain Ornament, \$15. Comes in gift box. Order early –
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