americaletter

FALL/WINTER 2016 | A BENEFIT OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE MUSEUM OF DANISH AMERICA

"What is a weed? A plant whose virtues have not been discovered."
–Ralph Waldo Emerson

INSIDE

New Executive Director
Whimsical Winter

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ON THE COVER
A common roadside weed is at the center of an industry that got its start in both war and oil. Read about it beginning on page 10.

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director's corner

This is the last "Director's Corner" I will write as the museum's executive director. In fact it represents the 40th "Director's Corner" I've written since 2003. Anticipating the end of my tenure, writing this has proven more difficult than I thought.

Why? Having taught American Literature for many years at Dana College, it's almost as if I want to make a statement akin to George Washington's "Farewell Address." Can you understand why I'm having difficulty? There's so much I want to share. I want to celebrate the many accomplishments that all of us working together have made over the last 13 years. I want to convey my excitement over the hiring of my successor, Rasmus Thøgersen. I want to also look to the future and share perceived challenges and threats. I want to encourage and invite your continued support as the Museum of Danish America continues to evolve.

In my first "Director's Corner," I shared four goals that I had. First, I wanted to expand the vision of the museum. Second, I hoped that we could focus on the museum's educational programming. Third, I wanted to attract more families and children by making the exhibits and programming more child-friendly. Finally, I wanted to increase the museum's visibility across the country through programs, traveling exhibits, and an enhanced website.

As I reflect back on those early goals, I believe we have been mostly successful -- sometimes not in the way that I envisioned 13 years ago, but, if not, it was because we responded to changing situations and evolving needs. Our name change from The Danish Immigrant Museum to the Museum of Danish America opened up possibilities for exploring ongoing relations between our two countries, even as we continue to celebrate the immigrant story.

The implementation of our internship program has been a great success, and we continue to work with area schools and young people to provide programming. Over the years this has included focus on the rescue of the Danish Jews during World War II, the implementation of the Victor Borge Legacy Awards, and more recently involving students in helping to develop the Jens Jensen Prairie Landscape Park. At the same time I have also come to recognize that since the museum is in a rural area, we lack the school age population and the resources to establish the kinds of successful educational programs I have witnessed in museums located in metropolitan areas.

WHY "AMERICA LETTER?"

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

By John Mark Nielsen

As we redesigned our core exhibit, *Across Oceans, Across Time*, we tried to incorporate more child-friendly activities. This is most evident in the Lego play area. We have also hosted activities on the grounds for families and children. These have included *ringridning* (bicycle ring jousting) and playing the Viking game, *Kubb*, as well as showing Danish movies appropriate for children. Currently, we are once again redesigning our core exhibit, and staff recognizes this continues to be an important goal.

The museum's visibility across the country and in Denmark has increased dramatically. Our partnership with organizations such as the Rebild National Park Society, the Danish American Archive and Library, DANE (Danish Archive Northeast), The Danish Home of Croton-on-Hudson, the Danish American Center in Minneapolis, the Danish Church in Yorba Linda, the Danish House in San Diego's Balboa Park, and on and on evidence this. We have created exhibits both large and small that have traveled to museums and communities across the country, and we have shared artifacts and given programs and presentations in Denmark and Canada as well. This has meant that staff has had to travel. In fact, I regularly keep a log of my own travel, and in 2015 I spent 40 percent of my time on the road -- and I'm not the only one traveling! We recognize that the world is not going to come to Elk Horn, so we have to reach out and be visible.

An issue that I was not sensitive to when I became the executive director was that of museum infrastructure. Several weeks into my tenure, I discovered the fire extinguishing system had not been tested regularly. When we tested it, there was an explosion and fire in the electric pump that had not been tested in two years! This led to setting up a testing and maintenance schedule as called for by manufacturers. Because of generous donors who understand the importance of infrastructure, we have had the resources to be certain that the facilities are well-maintained. In fact, we have just received word that we are the recipients of a grant from MidAmerican Energy to replace our three boilers with high-efficiency models.

In meeting these goals, we have strived for professionalism. Earlier this year we completed a self-study in preparation for a site visit by representatives of the American Alliance of Museums (AAM). It is a part of our effort to receive AAM accreditation, a designation fewer than five percent of the nation's museums have achieved. Whether we achieve accreditation on our first application or not (though I'm optimistic we will be successful), I know that we have exceeded the expectations of those of us who founded the museum 33 years ago. This is largely because I have been surrounded by a dedicated staff who share a vision of excellence for our museum.

Now the time has come for transition. I am so excited by the opportunities I believe are possible with the hiring of Rasmus Thøgersen. Why? Since this past March, I have met with him a number of times, and he has an engaging personality. He brings experiences and skillsets that complement an already strong staff, a staff that also shares my excitement. Additionally, as a native Danish speaker, he will reach out to Danish foundations, Danish-American Chambers of Commerce, and Danes living or traveling in the United States. As an individual who is becoming an American, I know he will relate well to you, our members.

In his application letter to the search committee, he outlined his qualifications and then went on to state:

Beyond my qualifications, I represent the very narrative being told by the museum. Originally a librarian from Denmark, an undergraduate study abroad experience in the US spurred me toward international opportunities – in Belgium, Norway, Estonia, Italy, Switzerland, and New Zealand. In 2014 I followed my wife back to her native Nebraska. (Jennifer is on the faculty at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.) Over the next year, I acquired my green card… becoming the director of the Morton-James Public Library.

I consider myself a Danish-American achiever and take a great deal of pride in that identity. As such, I can represent the museum in both America and Denmark and will as the executive director, seek new funding sources in Denmark and increase brand awareness on both sides of the Atlantic.

I look forward to the energy and enthusiasm that I believe Rasmus will bring to the position. I also have confidence that his approach to working with our exemplary staff is one of collaboration and cooperation. We will have continuity.

Finally, I cannot conclude without a few statements of the challenges ahead and our need for your continued support. When the museum was founded three decades ago and located in Elk Horn, we made that decision based on a number of factors. Before the deregulation of the airline industry, many people traveled or vacationed by car, driving down one of America's main streets, Interstate 80. The museum would make an interesting stop. It would be located midway between Omaha and Des Moines, communities with significant Danish-American populations. At that time, Omaha was the headquarters of the Danish Brotherhood in America (DBIA), which had been founded in 1882, and the DBIA had a representative on the committee charged with finding a community for our museum. It would also be located halfway between the two institutions founded by Danish immigrants, Dana College and Grand View College, now Grand View University. Dana College no longer exists, and the DBIA is a shadow of what it once was.

Elk Horn and the surrounding communities were aggressive in advocating to have the museum located here. There were historic reasons for siting the museum in Elk Horn. It was the site of the first Danish American folk high school, and many an immigrant passed through its doors especially to learn English. Even today the three counties of Audubon, Shelby (in which Elk Horn is located), and Cass have high percentages of the population claiming Danish heritage – indeed, Audubon County is the number one county in the nation. The people of Elk Horn and the area had demonstrated a commitment to volunteerism in bringing a windmill from Nørre Snede, Denmark, and reconstructing it as a bicentennial project.

Much has changed in 33 years. Farms have grown larger. Businesses and churches have closed. The rural population has declined. Many young people have lost their sense of heritage despite local support for the windmill and the museum. The consolidated school team is now the Spartans, when once it was the Elk Horn-Kimballton Danes and Lady Danes and Exira was the Vikings. There is anxiety about the future in rural America.

Despite this and ironically, I believe our location has been a strength. We who are associated with the museum have had to look outward and to connect with communities across the country. Sometimes I look at the activities of Danish-American organizations in metropolitan areas: Los Angeles, Phoenix, Portland, Minneapolis, Chicago, Houston, Atlanta, Washington, D.C., New York City. It's easy to be envious of what is going on in each of these communities. But I do believe had we located in one of these cities, we would have been an institution that served and was identified with that particular metropolitan area. Examples of this are the American Swedish Institute in Minneapolis, the Swedish American Museum in Chicago, and the American Swedish Historical Museum in Philadelphia. To thrive, we have had to reach out to the entire nation, and we will continue to do so.

►

We cannot reach out, however, without your support. To earn that support we have to continue being creative and innovative and to constantly strive for quality. That takes investment from you: your membership, your response to our two annual appeals, and even providing for the museum in your estate planning. With the coming transition in leadership, your support is even *more* critical, *more* necessary.

Often, when I arrive at the museum in the clear morning light, the flags of the United States, Denmark, and Iowa are snapping in a brisk, prairie breeze. I'm filled with a sense of pride and possibility and an appreciation for the beauty of the rural landscape. And when I leave the museum in the evenings, with the sun casting long shadows across the museum and the grounds, I often hear the chimes from Elk Horn Lutheran Church playing in the distance. I'm filled with a deep sense of gratitude at what we, together, have been able to accomplish. A new day will dawn, and I look forward to playing some part in that day, trusting that you, too, will be joining us as we continue celebrating our "Danish roots and American dreams."

Tak, og på gensyn,
John Mark

meet rasmus

My Danish American story began nine years ago on a particularly rainy day in Copenhagen. On a whim, I met with the international coordinator at my university and told her I wanted to study in America. The two options were an internship at a museum in Iowa or a semester at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. I went to North Carolina and immediately realized "This is what I want to do!" Travel. See the world. Meet new and interesting people. So I did. I was fortunate enough to study, work, and live in a number of different countries, and, along the way, I met Jennifer from Nebraska.

Jennifer and I eventually got married in New Zealand, where she was doing a Fulbright Fellowship. We ended up in Nebraska, she as a faculty member at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and I as the director of a public library - more or less according to our plan.

When I heard about that museum in Iowa again, I decided to visit. In part, I went to experience it myself. I also went to discuss a job opening - *this* job opening - with John Mark Nielsen, whose big shoes I will now do my best to fill. Like so many others who visit Elk Horn, I was struck by the ambition, professionalism, and sheer quality of the museum. I vividly remember driving back west that afternoon; the rolling hills and wind turbines of Iowa reminding me of Denmark - once again thinking "This is what I want to do!"

Some people might find it surprising that a librarian would want to manage a museum. To me, librarianship has always been about stories. Whether a story is expressed through words on a page, a piano recital, faded photographs, a delicate piece of textile, or a timeless and beautiful prairie landscape, is of less importance than the fact that it is being preserved by - and passed on to - people that are passionate about it. Being a steward of stories about my two homes is the most exciting job I can imagine.

I will be asking for your support and advice in the coming years as we continue to develop the museum and ensure that our priceless artifacts, and the stories they tell, are preserved and made available for current and future Danish Americans.

I cannot wait to meet all of you. And hear your stories.

Alt godt,
Rasmus

By
Rasmus
Thøgersen

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DANISH INTERNS
Mads Madsen Henriksen
Vincent Moroz Henriksen

meet kelly doonan, new design store manager

After graduating from Tri-Center High School in Neola, Iowa, I spent four years in the United States Navy stationed at the Naval Hospital in Portsmouth, Virginia. I've worked in the medical and mental health fields, and most recently spent 10 years as an office manager at a funeral home. Becoming the new Design Store Manager at the Museum of Danish America is both thrilling and terrifying! I'm very excited to learn in this new field of business, more about the Danish history and culture, and about our upcoming Bjørn Wiinblad exhibit!

I live on an acreage here in Shelby County (where I've called home for nearly 20 years) with two of my three children: my sons Tyler and Beckett, three dogs, at last count six cats, and one pot-bellied pig. My daughter Megan and her husband Alex have just made me a first-time grammy to a beautiful little girl named Riley – I'd say we're all adjusting very well!

I am very much an outdoors gal – camping, running, hiking – and am very sad to see summer end. As the leaves change and the cooler weather arrives, so does all of our new holiday merchandise, making now a perfect time to venture to the museum and start your holiday shopping! Hope to see you soon.

By Kelly Doonan

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

danish henriksens join museum team through end of january

Mads Madsen Henriksen and Vincent Moroz Henriksen (no relation) are our newest Danish interns. They will be with us through January, and their internships are generously funded by the Scan Design Foundation of Seattle, WA.

MADS

My name is Mads Madsen Henriksen and I am 26 years old. I have a bachelor's degree with a major in history and a minor in social sciences. I have lived all my life on the island of Fyn, and I am currently living in Odense, the birthplace of Hans Christian Andersen. It has been a dream of mine to go the United States and explore this amazing country's culture, people, and history.

I will work with Curator of Collections & Registrar Angela Stanford through my internship. My primary project at the museum will be to finish the institutional archive of the museum's internal documents and records. It has already given me an insight to the exciting process of establishing a museum that can provide the narrative for the Danish-American population. I will also get the opportunity and experience of working in the other departments of the museum, and I look especially forward to meeting and experiencing the different Danish communities around the US.

VINCE

My name is Vincent Henriksen, and the coming winter will be my 27th. I just finished my bachelor's thesis at the University of Southern Denmark in Odense, where I'm majoring in History and doing a minor in English Studies. I am a Danish citizen, but I do not have a traditional Danish background. I was born in 1990 to a Danish father and a Polish mother. They moved to Los Angeles in the 1990's to start a new life with me and my brother. The American Dream did not work out for us, and since 2000 I have been back in Denmark, most of the time in the historically and culturally rich border region of Sønderjylland (Southern Jutland).

During my stay at the Museum of Danish America (September-January 2017), I will be working with the Albert Ravenholt Curator of Danish-American Culture Tova Brandt on the coming exhibits. I'm especially excited about the Bjørn Wiinblad exhibit, which opens November 25 at Julefest, as I grew up surrounded by his art. I'm also excited about the Jens Jensen Prairie Landscape Park at the museum, and during my stay in the US, I plan to explore many beautiful sceneries like this.

MEET THEM

Several opportunities exist for members of the public to cross paths with these Danes. Visit the museum's Facebook page to get current updates: www.facebook.com/danishmuseum

Vincent, left, and Mads Henriksen

board of directors meet in elk horn

OCTOBER 20-22, 2016

The October meeting is always a busy one for board members and staff. Included in the agenda were committee meetings, orientation sessions for new board members, and, of course, socializing with each other, the staff, and members of the community.

This October we included a walk through of the Jens Jensen Prairie Landscape Park with Jensen's great-great-grandson, Jens Jensen, who also serves on the park's advisory committee. Jensen was also the guest speaker at the Brown Bag Lunch held as part of the activities.

Members of the community joined in on Thursday evening at the Cottonwood Barn in Kimballton for dinner and a movie where the Danish film "Klumpfisken" (The Sunfish) was shown.

Outgoing board members Peter Nielsen (Naples, FL), Brent Norlem (Monticello, MN) Mittie Ostergaard (Mission Viejo, CA) and Danny Warren (Fairmont, MN) were recognized, and new board members Marnie Jensen (Nebraska City, NE), Honorary Consul Karen Nielsen (Overland Park, KS), Anders Sand (Kansas City, MO), and Carol Svendsen (Denver, CO) were welcomed. Board members are elected in June and begin their terms at the annual meeting in October.

If you would like to learn more about how you may support the museum by becoming a board member, please contact Deb Christensen Larsen at the museum.

BOARD MEMBERS

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By Terri Johnson

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

the fluff of dreams

ONE PERSON'S WEED IS ANOTHER PERSON'S WILDFLOWER

As a museum whose core is based in immigration, *migration* is a topic that we're quite familiar with. And since you're receiving this magazine, it's likely that you can relate to migration in some way as well. "Migration" typically refers to a population set, while "immigration" and "emigration" refer to an individual or family.

Of course, humans aren't the only species to engage in migration. In recent years, a lot of attention has been paid to the migration of monarch butterflies as they face population decline due to environmental factors. The great monarch experienced an 81% decline in the Midwest from 1999 to 2010. In 2013 the lowest overwintering population on record was measured at 1.65 acres. While the overwintering population may not be as low as those days, the numbers for 2016 are unlikely to exceed a measly 5 acres, as predicted by Chip Taylor of MonarchWatch.org.

Chip has identified three factors that have contributed significantly to the loss of monarch and pollinator habitats: the adoption of herbicide tolerant crops, the ethanol mandate, and development. Another scientist points to fewer flower nectar resources, the lack of uninterrupted and clean landscapes, and the degraded overwintering forests in Mexico. In any case, due to the economic forces involving crop production and human population growth, these losses will continue.

By
Nicky
Christensen

1. A monarch butterfly visits a milkweed blossom. Photo by Tom Koerner.

A key piece of monarch habitat is the sole food source of its caterpillars: milkweed. Every monarch's story begins on milkweed. Monarchs travel hundreds of miles to find the milkweed they need for egg-laying. From 1999 to 2010, it is estimated that there has been a 58% decline in milkweeds on the Midwest landscape.

The milkweed plant, named for the milky juice that oozes out when any plant part is broken, has long been seen as a bane of farmers - reducing crop yields and poisoning livestock and range animals. Monarch butterflies feed primarily on milkweed, and milkweed toxins collect in their bodies. Birds poisoned by eating monarch butterflies have learned to avoid them. So the toxic properties of milkweed help to protect monarchs during their migration. Milkweed is not poisonous to humans, and animals usually do not eat milkweed unless good forage is scarce.

A medium-sized perennial, it has a tough central stalk and thick, leathery leaves. Each cluster of attractive, complex blossoms is followed by one or two large, warty pods with a central seam that pops open when the pod becomes ripe and dry. Inside is a tight roll of several hundred flat brown seeds arranged like fish scales, each attached to a tuft of silky fibers (floss). Gradually, these fibers form parachutes that catch the early fall winds and carry the seeds away.

It is clear that if the goal is to sustain the monarch migration, we must find a way to mitigate the loss of habitat. Thankfully there are, indeed, some economic forces that actively benefit the monarchs instead of harming them - including an industry that got its start in both war and oil.

In the 1980s Herb Knudsen had worked his way up to Manager of Corporate Ventures for Standard Oil out of Cleveland, Ohio. Much of his career revolved around top secret and cutting-edge ideas. In short, at Standard Oil and previously at Dow Chemical, he served as head of the patents and licensing departments in roles that made him chief of international conflict negotiations regarding advanced petrochemical technologies. He says he's "lived an incredibly crazy life."

His position at Standard Oil had him negotiating with East Germans in the early 1980s and making difficult connections with Japanese counterparts in Tokyo. When companies in East Germany, Romania, Bulgaria and Russia failed to honor patents and licenses, Knudsen took them to international arbitration. His general approach of going "easy on the people and hard on the problem" made him popular with his opposition. In fact, Herb took his family on a European motorhome trip through Checkpoint Charlie in Berlin to celebrate the end of negotiations with the team he had been negotiating with.

Following research by Nobel Laureate Melvin Calvin in the late 1970s that projected billions of barrels of synthetic crude oil could be made from the biomass of the common milkweed, Standard Oil conducted its own studies that concluded the price of doing so was too high and the yield was too low to be economically viable. But they didn't give up on milkweed. In the mid-1980s they asked Herb to take a look at the milkweed opportunity and explore alternative uses. With years of experience growing milkweed out of the way, arrangements were made with the Kimberly-Clark personal care corporation to handle product development for the milkweed that Standard Oil would grow. Kimberly-Clark was interested in the potential of milkweed floss for use in its disposable absorbency products.

However, BP soon took control of Standard Oil of Ohio, and they weren't interested in continuing the diversification efforts that Herb and others had started. In 1987 Herb took the milkweed venture into his own hands and founded Natural Fibers Corporation with a big dream of a new agricultural industry – comparable to the size of the cotton industry - that had milkweed at its core.

►

Product development was coordinated with the University of Nebraska, the Southern Regional Research Center of USDA's Agricultural Research Service, and various private corporations. Prototypes showed that it was possible to make an impressive number of products with milkweed floss by itself and in blends with other fibers. Milkweed biomass could be used in paper, pet litter, and fireplace logs. Seed oil was analyzed for its lubricating properties and for use in cosmetics.

Herb's challenge was to determine which markets were economically promising at given levels of milkweed production and cost. Even with grants from the University of Nebraska and the USDA, the resources of his start-up were substantially less than those he had known at Standard Oil. Herb needed a high-value, low-volume market to get his company off the ground.

MAGICAL MILKWEED

The genus name Asclepias honors Asklepios, the Greek god of healing, as milkweed was used for ailments from warts to kidney stones. One species was listed in the US Pharmacopoeia as recently as 1936 as having anti-spasmodic and anti-rheumatic properties, among others.

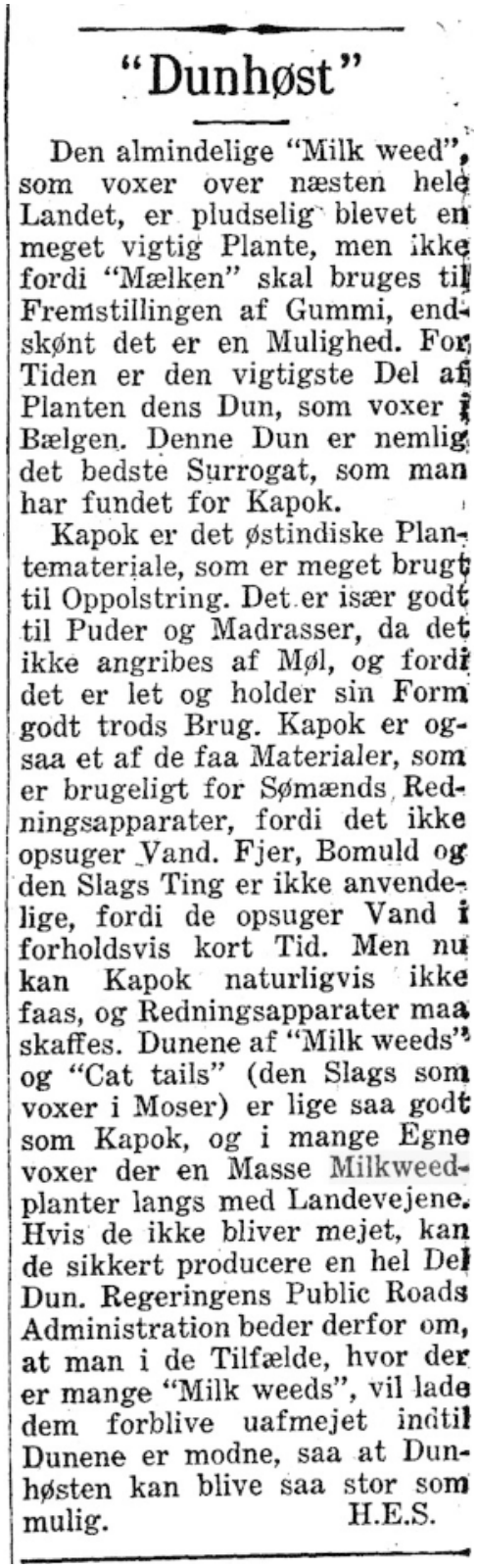
American Indians knew the value of milkweed; they used the fibrous stems to make nets, cordage, and basketry. They used the floss as a soft, warm lining for their children's cradles. In 1635, the French produced silk-like fabrics from milkweed fibers. In Salem, Massachusetts in the 1860s, milkweed floss was used as a mattress filling, and other parts of the plant went into making netting and socks. When World War II interrupted supply lines to the US, milkweed's latex-containing sap was tested as a rubber substitute, and its floss was successfully used in Navy lifejackets instead of tropical kapok material.

Herb Knudsen's predecessor in the milkweed industry was Dr. Boris Berkman (1907-1980), a Chicago physician and inventor who had been studying the many uses of milkweed since the late 1930s. It was thanks to Dr. Berkman that the US Navy discovered that a little over a pound of milkweed floss could keep a 150-pound man floating in the water for more than 40 hours. Due to the fibers' hollow shape – a unique feature in nature – and wax coating, they are waterproof and buoyant.

A campaign encouraging schoolchildren to pick milkweed pods and dry them in onion bags helped meet the war need and came with a reward of 15 cents per onion bag full. Petoskey, Michigan's milkweed processing plant was the first factory of its kind in the world, active from 1942-1944. More than 1.5 billion pods were collected to make 1.2 million life vests.

After the war ended and the supply of cheaper kapok resumed, Berkman continued to champion the milkweed cause, registering various patents including the use of the plant's floss as an "ear defender" (ear plug) and clothing liner. But he was never able to raise interest in developing another processing facility.

2. Fluff Herb Knudsen shows a handful of processed milkweed floss.



"Dunhøst"

Den almindelige "Milk weed", som voxer over næsten hele Landet, er pludselig blevet en meget vigtig Plante, men ikke fordi "Mælken" skal bruges til Fremstillingen af Gummi, endskønt det er en Mulighed. For Tiden er den vigtigste Del af Planten dens Dun, som voxer i Bælgen. Denne Dun er nemlig det bedste Surrogat, som man har fundet for Kapok.

Kapok er det østindiske Plantemateriale, som er meget brugt til Oppolstring. Det er især godt til Puder og Madrasser, da det ikke angribes af Møl, og fordi det er let og holder sin Form godt trods Brug. Kapok er ogsaa et af de faa Materialer, som er brugeligt for Sømænds Redningsapparater, fordi det ikke opsuger Vand. Fjer, Bomuld og den Slags Ting er ikke anvendelige, fordi de opsuger Vand i forholdsvis kort Tid. Men nu kan Kapok naturligvis ikke faas, og Redningsapparater maa skaffes. Dunene af "Milk weeds" og "Cat tails" (den Slags som voxer i Moser) er lige saa godt som Kapok, og i mange Egne voxer der en Masse Milkweedplanter langs med Landevejene. Hvis de ikke bliver mejet, kan de sikkert producere en hel Del Dun. Regeringens Public Roads Administration beder derfor om, at man i de Tilfælde, hvor der er mange "Milk weeds", vil lade dem forblive uafmejet indtil Dunene er modne, saa at Dunhøsten kan blive saa stor som mulig.

H.E.S.

03

"Floss harvest"

The common milkweed that grows almost everywhere in this country has suddenly become a very important plant, but not because the "milk" is to be used for rubber production, albeit it is possible. The floss that grows in the milkweed pod has become the vital part as it is the best replacement for kapok we have.

Kapok is an East Indian plant material that is very often used as filling. It is especially good for filling pillows and mattresses as it is not prone to moth infestation and because it is light and keeps its form after use. Kapok also does not absorb water making it one of few usable materials for filling seamen's flotation devices. Feathers, cotton and other materials cannot be used because they absorb water quickly. However, kapok cannot be supplied now and flotation devices are still needed. The floss from milkweed and cattail is just as good as kapok and milkweed grows abundantly along the roads in many regions. If they are not mowed they will surely be able to produce much floss. The Government's Public Roads Administration has therefore requested that roadsides rich in milkweed growth be left unmowed until the floss ripens, in order to make the floss harvest as great as possible. H.E.S.

3. An excerpt from the June 15, 1944 "The Danish Pioneer" newspaper regarding milkweed for the war effort. ▶

More recently, milkweed floss has been studied for improving sound quality in stereo speakers, its oil for use in cosmetics, and its ground seeds as a nematode repellant. A Canadian company found that the fibers can absorb more than four times the amount of oil than conventional oil clean-up products can, at a rate twice as fast, all while repelling the water that the oil is spilled in.

"NOTHING WARMS YOU UP LIKE OGALLALA DOWN"

As he considered the research, Herb identified the following important features of milkweed floss: it's a hypoallergenic cellulose fiber, its fill-power is comparable to high quality goose down, it's white in color (and thereby more attractive to consumers), it's more durable than down and 20 percent warmer per unit of weight than down. In addition, as milkweed floss absorbs moisture, it continues to allow more air to move through the fibers compared to down, making it more ''breathable."

Natural Fibers Corp decided to target the waterfowl down market; they would grow the milkweed and process the floss to supply the loose-fill market for products such as comforters, pillows, sleeping bags, and jackets. But after years of trying to kill milkweed, farmers found that growing it was nearly as difficult! To their advantage, milkweed grows in the same regions as corn and is planted with traditional row crop equipment. It's harvested with an ear corn picker the second year after planting. However, without an ideal variety of milkweed identified for cultivation, or years of research on cultural needs, fertility requirements, and blight control, Natural Fibers Corp's production fields took a big hit from disease and hail. They were able to produce 1,500 pounds of floss in 1991 from production fields and supplemental wild collections – far short of the 500,000 pounds of floss it saw as necessary to penetrate the nonwovens market.

After seven years of problems, they decided to stop trying and use wild patches of established milkweed communities by employing WWII-era collection methods. Today they average 125,000 pounds of pods per year. They pass out onion bags and pay for pods picked throughout many states including Wyoming, Michigan, and New York.

Fewer than 300 of the estimated 300,000 plant species in the world are used in organized agriculture. Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote: "What is a weed? A plant whose virtues have not been discovered." The possibilities for new discoveries seem extraordinary.

4-5. The main milkweed processing unit in Ogallala, NE, a rural ranching community of 5,000 people.

The company's website explains: "We pay cash for milkweed pods. Modeled after the wild collection effort mounted in World War II, we supply 'collection points' with onion bags, and independent 'pickers' go out and pick pods. We look for organized, self-motivated people who are well connected in their community to head the effort in their area.

The pod-picking window is only 4-6 weeks, so it is a lot of work in a short amount of time. We pay for bags and shipping to our processing plant in Ogallala, Nebraska. So that it makes economic sense for everyone, we try to choose areas that are able to grow over time and start with a minimum of 3,000 pounds. One collection point brought in over 100,000 pounds one year! Collection goals are set and agreed upon before the harvest."

05

To process the pods into useable floss and separate out the seeds and hulls, the company created a processing unit that is still turning out beautiful, clean floss today: a 1942 John Deere combine – coincidentally the same year that milkweed floss "went to war" – was cleaned and modified, much to the dismay of the generations of raccoons that had made it their home. Two cracked fertilizer tanks were converted into separating units.

But the company wasn't going to compete entirely *against* down in the loose-fill market. Through prototyping with jackets, they found that milkweed floss is best used *with* down. Floss by itself clumps together after being washed. It "lines itself up like a stack of straws," Herb says. When mixed with down, floss smoothes out the texture of down without compromising down's other qualities. Through consumer testing they've identified a proper ratio of floss-to-down that has superior washability. Plus, the floss stabilizes components in down that cause allergic reactions.

After a short exploration of the jacket market, they switched down product types and started hand stuffing their mixture into comforter shells ("This is not fun," says Herb.) and after experimenting on another company's equipment, they built a developmental filling facility in Ogallala, Nebraska, where Standard Oil had once cultivated milkweed. Here the end-process is contained in its entirety: pods are dried, separated into floss, seed, and biomass, then collected and bagged for future use. Down and floss are then air-blended and filled into the fabric shells of comforters, pillows, and mattress enhancers from crib to super king size that are sewn and shipped on-site.

To sell the product, the name "Ogallala Down" was adopted in 1989 (drawing on a fabricated legend of an Ogallala Sioux maiden), and the slogan "Nothing warms you up like Ogallala Down" was coined. In 1990, their second year of comforter sales, they achieved sales of a little over $100,000. In 2000 the company sold $1.4 million to stores and the Four Seasons hotel chain. The products, now sold under the name Ogallala Comfort Company, have been increasingly popular with bed and breakfasts and boutique hotels that enjoy delivering a top-quality product while readily accommodating the allergy needs of their growing environmentally-conscious clientele.

06

Part of the products' appeal lies in the fact that floss is a natural vegetable fiber and not an animal byproduct. Milkweed is also attractive because it is grown in low-impact agriculture or collected from native stands, which provide habitat for monarch butterflies. The warm comforters allow users to turn back their thermostats in the winter and save energy and money. In addition to the environmental benefits, the floss makes the down more breathable, more durable, and helps the body regulate temperature by moving moisture away from the body faster than down by itself or synthetics.

Choosing the right comforter or pillow might make your head spin at first. There are at least four factors to consider when ordering from Ogallala Comfort Company: size, fabric, fill power, and fill weight. Thankfully, they have trained "sleep consultants" that can walk you through the company's options (800.658.4370). Their bestselling comforter, the queen-size Monarch 700 in Classic weight, runs $823 for many years of comfy, cozy sleep.

Under the name Asclepias Seed Company, the milkweed seeds they collect are sold for land reclamation, highway beautification, butterfly gardens, and to butterfly farmers. They also sell a balm made from milkweed seed oil that Herb credits for relieving his hip pain and allowing him to avoid surgery. Altogether, they've become the world's largest supplier of wild-crafted, sustainably harvested milkweed products and raw materials.

6. Ogallala Comfort Company's bedding products are filled with Hypodown®, an innovative combination of white goose down and sustainably-harvested Syriaca clusters (milkweed floss).

Herb's title is now the official "Chief Dreamer," and woven into the fabric of his company's structure are key players – members of his family. Like milkweed, their roots grow deep in Nebraska, but they've also grown in Illinois, Michigan and Ohio. Wife of 50 years, Karen, does bookwork, invoicing, and shipping. Son Peter has played a big role on the financial side of things, and daughter, Deborah, also prone to big ideas like her father, does marketing work. Other sons Karl and Mark cheer them on from New York and Colorado, respectively.

Herb says meeting Karen was the best thing to ever happen to him. It's likely true; their dynamic works well together. He says he's the type to "charge Hell with a bucket of water," while Karen gladly plays the role of, "Hey, let's figure this out."

It was through the urging of another wife – his great grandfather's wife – that Herb's great grandfather emigrated from Søndjellinge, Hyllested Sogn, Sorø Amt in June 1879 after being captured and released as a soldier during the War of 1864. Peter and Caroline Nielsen ended up in Council Bluffs, Iowa, across the Missouri River from Omaha, Nebraska. Their son Niels Peter Nielsen decided that he did not want to be a farmer like his father, and so he attended Trinity Seminary instead. As institutions of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church, Trinity Seminary shared a campus in Blair, Nebraska with Dana College until 1956. It was at Dana College where chemistry student Herb met Karen Nielsen, whose parents were both from Denmark. Herb served as student body president there, and Karen's father had served on its Board of Regents after immigrating in 1925.

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Together they've kept Danish traditions alive, *especially* the ones around Christmastime. Though they serve turkey instead of goose, they enjoy red cabbage and always have *risalamande* (rice pudding) for dessert. **08** Additionally, they decorate with Danish flags and Bing & Grøndahl Christmas plates, read Hans Christian Andersen's *The Little Matchgirl,* and sing and dance around the Christmas tree – things that haven't always seemed entirely "normal" to their friends and the friends of their children.

The Knudsens have a desire for their legacy to include that they created a great family that thinks for themselves and isn't afraid to argue for what's right when necessary. Their story will also reflect their role in creating a whole new industry from "dreams and crazy ideas."

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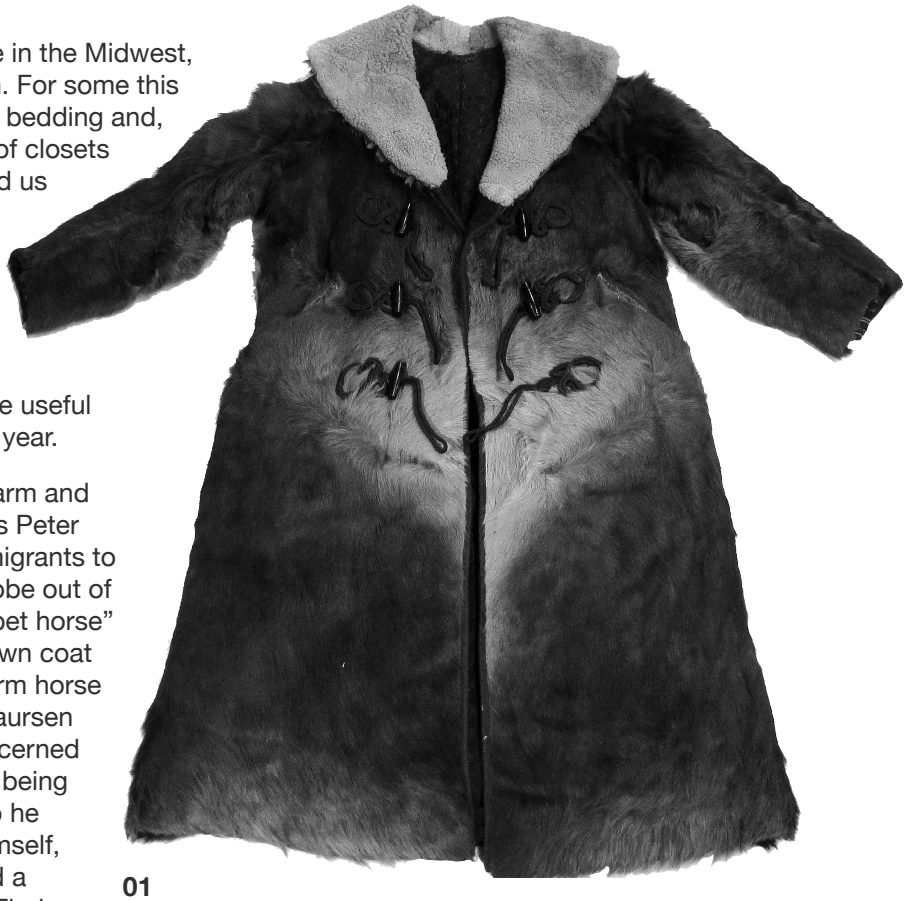
7. Herb and Karen Knudsen have been married for 50 years. They met while students at Dana College.
8. Find a recipe for *risalamande* on page 39!

keeping warm

As the chill returns to the air here in the Midwest, we prepare for the winter season. For some this means freshening up the heavier bedding and, for others, it is pulling coats out of closets to have at the ready. This inspired us to take a look at those artifacts in our collection that helped earlier generations keep snug and warm. We found a wide variety of unique and useful pieces, as well as some decorative ones that could still be useful during the coldest season of the year.

Animal hides made especially warm and durable blankets and coats. Niels Peter Thomsen, the son of Danish immigrants to Omaha, Nebraska, made a lap robe out of one of his horses. He used his "pet horse" until the day he died. A large brown coat was made out of the hide of a farm horse named Dick. After John Phillip Laursen retired from farming, he was concerned about his horses Dick and Florie being mistreated by another master, so he killed and dressed the horses himself, making this coat out of Dick, and a blanket and some gloves out of Florie.



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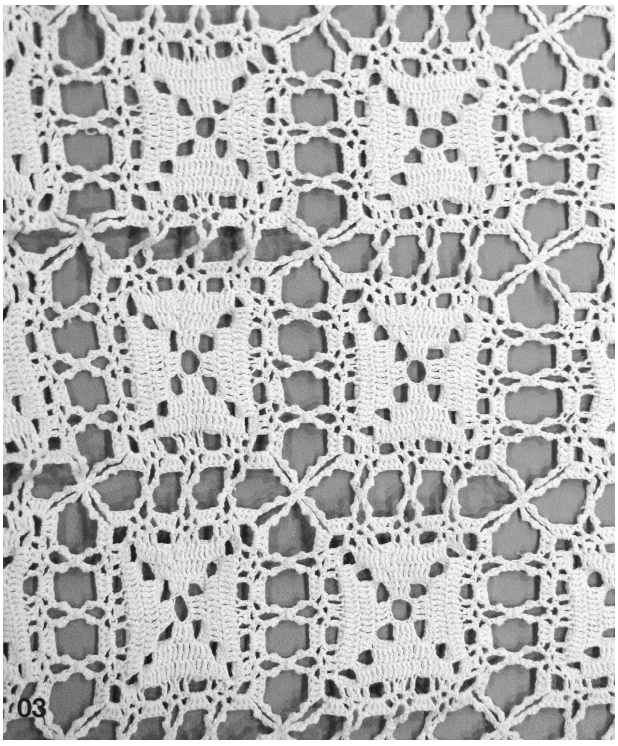
By Angela Stanford

1. Coat made of an old farm horse named Dick. 1992.140.001 **2. Lap robe** made of horsehide. 1995.090.001

The collection boasts more traditional bedding as well, such as examples of crocheted bedspreads, like the one made by Maren Larsen Jensen in the 1930s. Measuring roughly 69” × 106”, it is white with repeating square patterns. Though not a common Danish tradition, “crazy quilts” are frequently found in the U.S. Three such quilts exist in our collection, including this one made primarily by Christine Jørgensen Nielsen, with help from some friends, over the course of about 13 years. Stitched onto many of the quilt pieces are names of the women who helped, as well as a range of years - the earliest being 1894 and the latest 1907. Christine emigrated from Denmark at age two with her parents and settled in Nebraska where the family farmed just outside of Dannebrog.

Sometimes quilts can be fundraisers or memorials while also being practical. A large blue and white quilt honors all of the servicemen from Elk Horn and Kimballton, Iowa during World War II, a total of 99 names. Those with gold stars next to them were killed in action. The quilt was made and donated in 1981 to the Salem Home Bazaar by the seamstress, Mattie Reich, and donated to the museum in 1993. In 1918, the Ladies Aid of St. Peter’s Danish Lutheran Church in Detroit, Michigan made quilt tops to sell as fundraisers, including the one here with the Danish and American flags crossed near the center. People paid to have their names included on the quilt tops and paid again later to purchase raffle tickets to win. This particular quilt top was won by eight-year-old Harriet Jensen. It later ended up in the possession of Ina Christiansen, who was a charter member of the church.

Little ones especially need to be protected from the cold winter nights. Here we see a blue and white crocheted blanket measuring 25” × 31”. It was donated in 1998 by Ingrid Christiansen of Brookline, Massachusetts. The blanket had been made by her maternal grandmother. Also pictured is a white cotton blanket with embroidered images of little girls doing things like looking out a window and making a bed. It was used by Evelyn Bertelsen who weighed only 5 ½ pounds when she was born in 1918. The doctor left instructions for the family to place the baby in a shoebox inside the oven to keep her warm. He was so specific as to even tell them the number of corn cobs to use to maintain the temperature! Evelyn survived and lived to adulthood, later having children of her own.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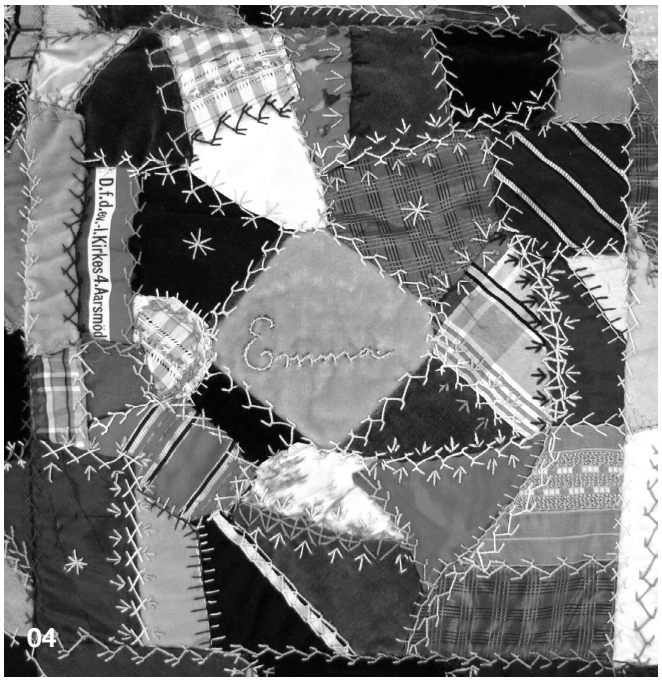

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3. Crocheted bedspread dating from the 1930s. 1996.097.001 **4. Crazy quilt** donated in 2014 by the granddaughter of the maker. 2014.057.002

These and many more examples of warm textiles fill an important section of our collection, and not only connect to similar contemporary traditions, but illustrate unique events and styles from the past. For more examples of the museum's cold weather-related artifacts, learn more about View Our Collection, a benefit of museum membership at the $100 level and above. Users have access to almost 42,000 artifact records and more than 117,000 images of pieces in the collection. Find out more about the artifacts referenced in this article, and see our tools, jewelry, art, photographs, and more!

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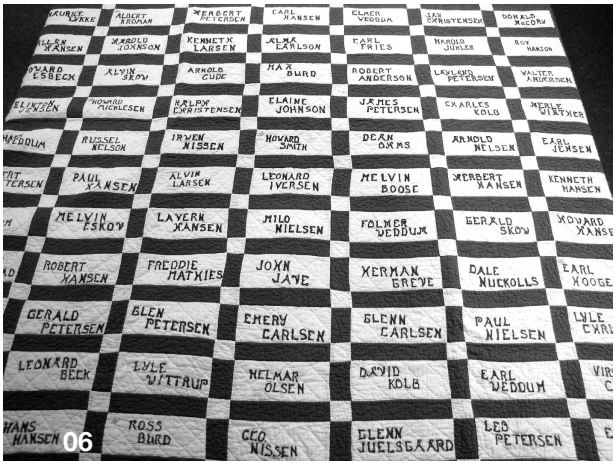

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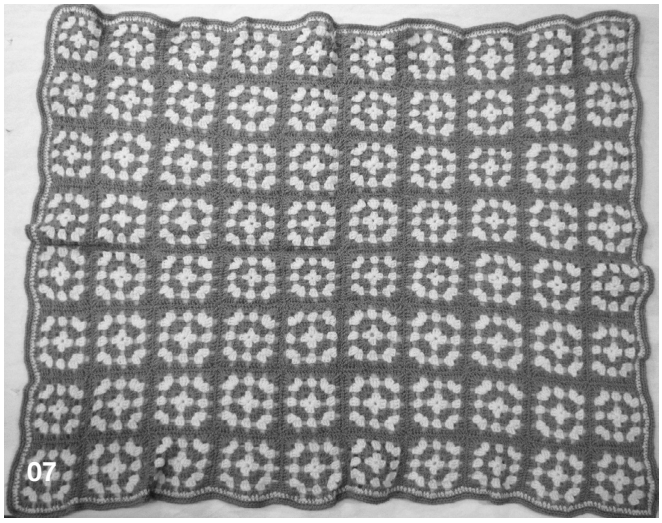
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5. WWII honor quilt made in 1981. 1993.063.001 **6. Ladies Aid** fundraiser originally won by eight-year-old Harriet Jensen. 2014.018.002 **7. Baby blanket** made by Ingrid Christiansen's grandmother. 1998.086.009 **8. Blanket** that kept Evelyn Bertelsen warm as an underweight baby in 1918. 2014.023.008

the Whimsical World of BJØRN WIINBLAD

- On view at the Museum of Danish America from November 25, 2016 through May 30, 2017
- On view at the Nordic Heritage Museum in Seattle from July through November 2017

An exhibition organized by the Museum of Danish America in cooperation with Arken Museum of Art in Ishøj, Denmark

Bjørn Wiinblad (1918-2006) is an artist who embraced it all: one-off ceramics, plaques, posters, theatrical costumes, stage design, tapestries, and large sculptures – from the smallest to the largest, from the handmade to the mass-produced. Like some exotic bird, he landed in 1945 in the midst of Danish art and design history. From there he left a clear imprint on the visual culture of the coming decades with his fantastical, always-recognizable line and style.

Wiinblad made his appearance on the art and design scene at a time when straight lines and simple design dominated the modern ideal. With his characteristic curving lines and his colorful pictorial universe, Wiinblad occupied his own unique position in Danish cultural life from the outset.

His imaginative style has fascinated people all over the world and has been embraced by new generations.

Italicized quotes by Wiinblad in the following paragraphs are excerpts from "40 Years' Creativity," published by the Danish Museum of Decorative Art, Copenhagen, 1981.

ORDER THE EXHIBIT CATALOG

Immerse yourself in "The Whimsical World of Bjørn Wiinblad" with our full color publication of his life and artistic career. 144 pages published by the Museum of Danish America. Item #5054. $22. Call or go online to order.

IMAGERY

Wiinblad created his first poster design, *Spil Selv* (Play Yourself), in 1946 for Music Week in Copenhagen, encouraging people to make music themselves. Throughout his career Wiinblad made posters for concerts, theater productions, Tivoli Gardens, book publications, advertisements for biscuits, and much else. Wiinblad loved working with posters because he thought they surprised and delighted people on their way around town.

In my opinion, a poster should be like a stone hitting you in the face while you are walking in the street – something you cannot avoid seeing. It must be quite clear, what the poster is for, but it should be clear in a new and surprising way.

01

By Tova Brandt

1. Poster, Copenhagen Boys' Choir, 1983 Museum of Danish America 2011.010.003 – Gift of Jim Iversen.

BRUSH-DECORATED FAIENCE

From 1952 on, Wiinblad, assisted by his staff of so-called "painter girls," embarked on an enormous production of large and small decorated faience works – the same ones as are produced today by the "painter girls" in The Blue House after Wiinblad models. The faiences are usually blue-painted, inspired by Chinese porcelain and Dutch faience.

NYMØLLE

January, February, March, April, May... the monthly plaques from Nymølle are one of the things Bjørn Wiinblad is best known for. Perhaps you have a collection of Nymølle plaques of your own? The small faience plaques with copperprint tell the story of a young couple who meet, fall in love, go to the theater, and become parents. Wiinblad was enthusiastic about the wealth of detail that can be created in copperprint. The technique makes it possible to mass-produce items, and that was exactly what Wiinblad wanted, so that many people could take pleasure in them. In 1946 Wiinblad began working together with Nymølle Keramiske Fabrik, and the result was a lifelong collaboration.

WAIT, WHAT'S FAIENCE?

"Faience" refers to ceramics with a glazed decoration over earthenware pottery. Often the background is white, achieved by adding tin oxide to the glaze – thus another term for faience is "tin-glazed earthenware."

ROSENTHAL

Fire-engine red, sparkling yellow, stark green and lots of gold – the colors are not stinted in Wiinblad's plaques for Rosenthal. Are they fantastic or just too much? The director of Rosenthal Porzellan in Germany was enthusiastic. In 1957 he was introduced to Bjørn Wiinblad's works for Nymølle, and this was the starting point for an important, lucrative collaboration that lasted for the rest of Wiinblad's life. Wiinblad designed a large number of products for the firm, and for some years he functioned as chief designer for the German porcelain giant. The services *The Magic Flute*, *Romance,* and *Lotus* are among the classics that Wiinblad created for Rosenthal. The collaboration brought Wiinblad international fame, and his production is still in great demand among collectors all over the world.

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2. Mermaid candleholder On loan from private collection. **3. Calendar plaque, May, circa 1965** Museum of Danish America 2009.005.009 – Gift of Fern Krohn. **4. Plate, "Oriental Night Music Mandolin"** Museum of Danish America 2013.001.005 – Gift of Karen F. Beall in memory of Karen Juul Vejlø Friedmann.

05

THE THEATER

In the course of his long life, Wiinblad managed to create stage design, props, and costumes for a large repertoire of theatrical productions for the Royal Danish Theater, the Pantomime Theater, Odense Theater, Dallas Theater Center, and others. In the theater Wiinblad's delight in creating whole universes could really come to expression. Wiinblad's fantastical style swings gaily over the surfaces of both front curtains and backdrops, and through the colorful materials of the costumes.

Creating stage settings and costumes is always a compromise, because of the duality involved in defending one's own view, believing they are right, and at the same time learning to understand the views of others. Thus, for instance, it is no good insisting on having a dancer look as you think she should look, not even if you are right. Even if she looks absolutely right and marvelous, she may not be able to express herself and dance, if she thinks she looks wrong.

DINNER WITH BJØRN WIINBLAD

Bjørn Wiinblad's artist home was The Blue House in Kongens Lyngby, where he lived from 1966 until his death in 2006. The house is an Aladdin's Cave of colors, furnishings, books, art treasures, and Wiinblad's own works. His collection of Asiatic, pre-Columbian, Dutch, and Middle Eastern arts and crafts underscores his aesthetic collecting principle: he collected what attracted him and what he thought was beautiful.

Bjørn Wiinblad loved parties. He gave dinners for guests in his home several times a week in his Blue Dining Room. The lucky guests had champagne with cucumber slivers and a specially-painted faience place card that the guest could take home afterwards. The table was always laid with a blue-painted service and decorated with a profusion of flower arrangements and candlelight only. How do you lay a beautiful table at home? And what can a guest experience at your table?

I became a designer because it is natural for me to make things that are to be used in everyday life, just as it is natural for me to use things. I love to have guests and make everything as beautiful as possible for them. And the things look the way they do because I love to decorate. Sometimes, perhaps, I should have stopped a little earlier!

06

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5. Costume designs for The Tempest, Dallas Theater Center, 1965 On loan from private collector. **6. The Blue Dining Room in Wiinblad's home and studio, The Blue House** Photo by Ole Akhøj.

ART FOR THE PEOPLE

As Wiinblad's ceramics and posters became popular in Denmark, his work became part of the visual landscape for Danes. The interest in designing beautiful things for everyday people led to a partnership with the grocery store chain Irma. Wiinblad designed brightly colored storage tins, jigsaw puzzles, wrapping paper and playing cards – all available at reasonable prices through Irma stores across Denmark.

It can never be the quantity of a thing which is wrong, only the quality can be wrong. I devote as much thought, as much consideration, and as much eagerness to do everything right in my work, whether I create decorations for the Royal Ballet, design a tapestry for The Jade Room of the Hotel Anatole, or design a poster for the Tivoli Gardens. And in my opinion, the first and the last of the papers designed for Irma are some of the best things I have ever made.

***The Whimsical World of Bjørn Wiinblad* is supported by:**
Iowa Arts Council, Des Moines, Iowa
Albert V. Ravenholt Fund, Seattle, Washington
Iowa Tourism, Des Moines, Iowa
The Danish Home, Croton-on-Hudson, New York

7**. Jigsaw puzzle, 1973** Museum of Danish America 2015.050.002 – Gift of Kristi Planck Johnson.

events calendar

JULEFEST
November 25-26
Visit the Danish Villages of Elk Horn and Kimballton for this holiday celebration. At the Museum of Danish America enjoy hands-on activities, free refreshments, and a first look at "The Whimsical World of Bjørn Wiinblad"

CHRISTKINDLMARKET DES MOINES
December 2-4
We'll be setting up a mini Design Store at this new, European-style open air holiday street market, to be held at Cowles Commons

CHRISTMAS HYGGE
December 15 at noon
Celebrate the songs, stories, and traditions of the Danish holiday season

WINTER SOLSTICE
December 21
Including an evening bonfire, warm beverages, and family activities to welcome Winter

HOLIDAY CLOSINGS
December 24-25
December 31-January 1

BOARD MEETING
February 17-19
Yorba Linda, CA

WHIMSICAL WINTER FUN
January 16
(Martin Luther King, Jr. Day)
Spend a school holiday at the museum with indoor and outdoor activities, depending on the weather. If there's snow on the ground, bring your sleds, skis, and outdoor gear for some snowy fun! Indoors, enjoy paper crafts, decorate your own Wiinblad-style plate, and build some whimsical LEGO creations.

WHIMSICAL WINTER FUN
February 20 (Presidents' Day)
Another holiday means another invitation to enjoy indoor and outdoor activities at the museum.

SAVE THE DATE: 40TH ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE OF THE DANISH AMERICAN HERITAGE SOCIETY
October 5-7, 2017
To be held at the Hyatt in Schaumburg, IL. A call for papers is open until December 15, 2016.

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 House, Jens Jensen Prairie Landscape Park, Genealogy Center, and Bedstemor's House.

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

more than just a name: filling in sparse immigrant records

One of the many great resources at the Genealogy Center is our vertical file collection. An imposing wall of filing cabinets houses more than 4,000 folders, each with information on an immigrant, his or her spouse, and any biographical information we have on them. Any new immigrant we turn up in our research is given a new folder. The vertical file database is usually the first thing we check when we sit down to do research with a patron, and it's exciting when we find we already have a file on their ancestor. Often folders include information submitted by family members, and the patron discovers that their interest in genealogy is shared by a distant cousin. Recently I pulled a folder for a man curious about his Danish ancestry; he and his wife were having their first baby, and wanted to choose a familial name. The folder we had on his great-grandfather included several pages of family history submitted by one of his relatives, of which he had been entirely unaware. He was thrilled to learn that one of the names they were considering was right there on his family tree.

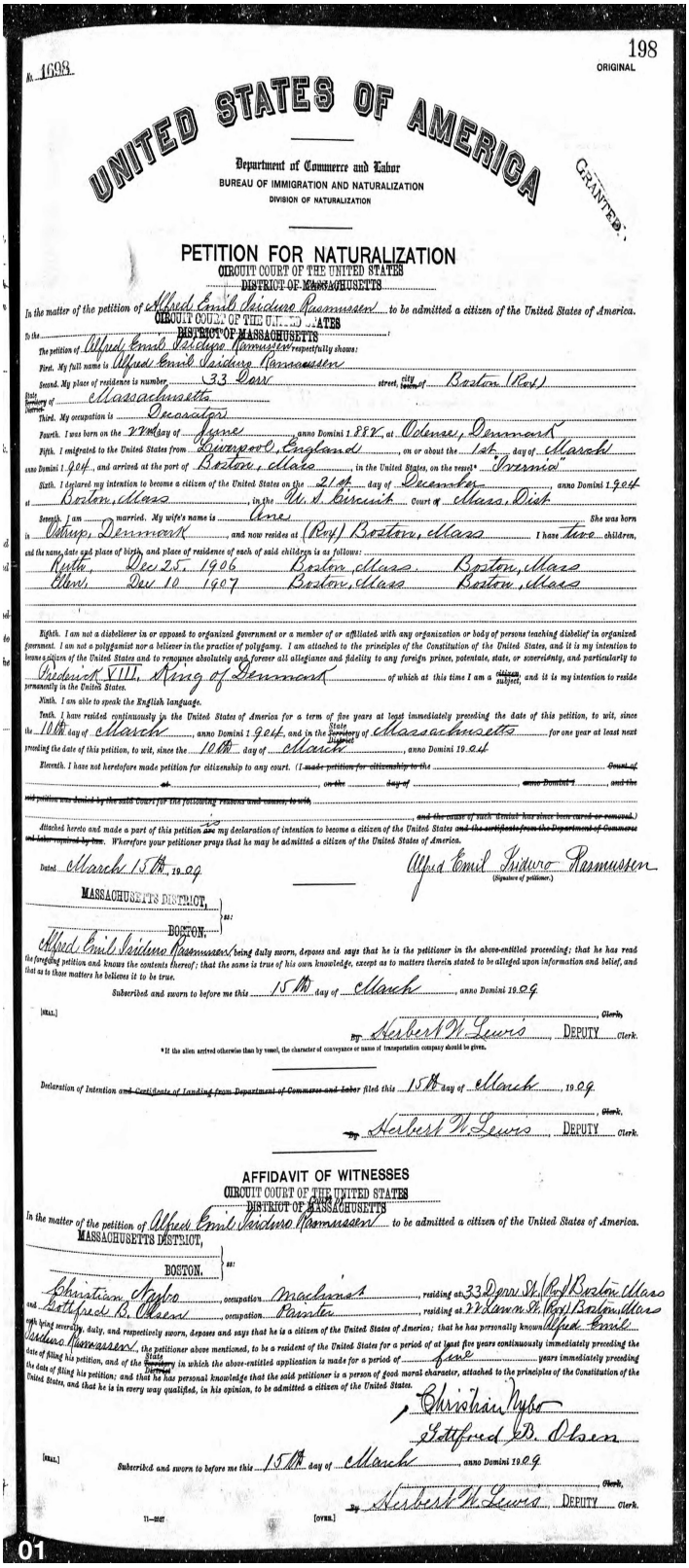
All names on the museum's Danish Immigrant Wall of Honor are represented in our vertical files, but many are yet missing biographical information, if it was not provided by family when the plaque was placed. Some of our volunteers have been doing research to fill in these empty folders—no easy task with little information to go on. The following is an example of one such research project.

Alfred Emil Isiduro Rasmussen's unique name might catch your eye on the Wall. He settled in Boston, Massachusetts, but we knew nothing else about him, not even when he immigrated. A simple search of his full name on Ancestry.com (to which we have a library subscription) led to a goldmine of information, the first hit being his Petition for Naturalization.

In 1906, naturalization forms became standardized across the country with the creation of the Federal Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization. Immigrants first filed a declaration of their intent to obtain citizenship. Following five years' residency in the United States, they could submit their petition, and if approved they received a certificate of naturalization or certificate of citizenship. Of these documents, the petition contains the most biographical information.

From Alfred Emil Isiduro Rasmussen's March 1909 petition, we get his birth date (June 22, 1882) and birthplace (Odense), when he emigrated (from Liverpool, England in 1904) and on what ship (*Ivernia*). He's married to a Danish woman and has two daughters. In 1909 he's living at 33 Dorr Street in Boston, and his occupation is "Decorator." He's wasted no time in submitting his petition; he has resided in the United States for five years and five days. He avows that he speaks English and is neither an anarchist nor a polygamist. He renounces allegiance to Frederick VIII, King of Denmark. *Welcome to American citizenship, Alfred Emil Isiduro Rasmussen!*

By
Kara
McKeever



198
ORIGINAL

No. 1698.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

GRANTED

Department of Commerce and Labor
BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION
DIVISION OF NATURALIZATION

PETITION FOR NATURALIZATION
CIRCUIT COURT OF THE UNITED STATES
DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS

In the matter of the petition of Alfred Emil Isiduro Rasmussen to be admitted a citizen of the United States of America.

CIRCUIT COURT OF THE UNITED STATES
DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS

To the
The petition of Alfred Emil Isiduro Rasmussen respectfully shows:
First. My full name is Alfred Emil Isiduro Rasmussen
Second. My place of residence is number 33 Dorr street, city town of Boston (Roxbury) State Territory of Massachusetts
Third. My occupation is Decorator
Fourth. I was born on the 27th day of June anno Domini 1882 at Odense, Denmark
Fifth. I migrated to the United States from Liverpool, England on or about the 1st day of March anno Domini 1904 and arrived at the port of Boston, Mass in the United States, on the vessel* "Ivernia"
Sixth. I declared my intention to become a citizen of the United States on the 21st day of December anno Domini 1904 at Boston, Mass in the U. S. Circuit Court of Mass. Dist.
Seventh. I am married. My wife's name is Anne She was born in Ostrup, Denmark and now resides at (Roxbury) Boston, Mass I have two children, and the name, date and place of birth, and place of residence of each of said children is as follows:

Ruth	Dec 25, 1906	Boston, Mass.	Boston, Mass
Alan	Dec 10 1907	Boston, Mass	Boston, Mass

Eighth. I am not a disbeliever in or opposed to organized government or a member of or affiliated with any organization or body of persons teaching disbelief in organized government. I am not a polygamist nor a believer in the practice of polygamy. I am attached to the principles of the Constitution of the United States, and it is my intention to become a citizen of the United States and to renounce absolutely and forever all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty, and particularly to Frederick VIII, King of Denmark of which at this time I am a citizen subject, and it is my intention to reside permanently in the United States.
Ninth. I am able to speak the English language.
Tenth. I have resided continuously in the United States of America for a term of five years at least immediately preceding the date of this petition, to wit, since the 10th day of March anno Domini 1904, and in the State Territory District of Massachusetts for one year at least next preceding the date of this petition, to wit, since the 10th day of March anno Domini 1904
Eleventh. I have not heretofore made petition for citizenship to any court. (I made petition for citizenship to the Court of on the day of anno Domini, and the said petition was denied by the said Court for the following reasons and causes, to wit:
and the cause of such denial has since been cured or removed.)
Attached hereto and made a part of this petition are my declaration of intention to become a citizen of the United States and the certificate from the Department of Commerce and Labor required by law. Wherefore your petitioner prays that he may be admitted a citizen of the United States of America.

Dated March 15th, 1909 Alfred Emil Isiduro Rasmussen (Signature of petitioner.)

MASSACHUSETTS DISTRICT, } ss:
BOSTON, }

Alfred Emil Isiduro Rasmussen being duly sworn, deposes and says that he is the petitioner in the above-entitled proceeding; that he has read the foregoing petition and knows the contents thereof; that the same is true of his own knowledge, except as to matters therein stated to be alleged upon information and belief, and that as to those matters he believes it to be true.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 15th day of March anno Domini 1909
[SEAL.] Clerk,
By Herbert W. Lewis DEPUTY Clerk.

*If the alien arrived otherwise than by vessel, the character of conveyance or name of transportation company should be given.

Declaration of Intention and Certificate of Landing from Department of Commerce and Labor filed this 15th day of March 1909
Clerk,
By Herbert W. Lewis DEPUTY Clerk.

AFFIDAVIT OF WITNESSES
CIRCUIT COURT OF THE UNITED STATES
DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS

In the matter of the petition of Alfred Emil Isiduro Rasmussen to be admitted a citizen of the United States of America.

MASSACHUSETTS DISTRICT, } ss:
BOSTON, }

Christian Nylso occupation machanist residing at 33 Dorr St. (Roxb) Boston Mass
and Gottfred B. Olsen occupation Painter residing at 27 Dorr St. (Roxb) Boston Mass
each being severally, duly, and respectively sworn, deposes and says that he is a citizen of the United States of America; that he has personally known Alfred Emil Isiduro Rasmussen the petitioner above mentioned, to be a resident of the United States for a period of at least five years continuously immediately preceding the date of filing his petition, and of the State Territory in which the above-entitled application is made for a period of one years immediately preceding the date of filing his petition; and that he has personal knowledge that the said petitioner is a person of good moral character, attached to the principles of the Constitution of the United States, and that he is in every way qualified, in his opinion, to be admitted a citizen of the United States.

Christian Nylso
Gottfred B. Olsen

[SEAL.] Subscribed and sworn to before me this 15th day of March anno Domini 1909
Clerk,
By Herbert W. Lewis DEPUTY Clerk.

11—3527 [OVER.]

01

Because the Massachusetts state and federal naturalization records for 1798-1950 have been uploaded on Ancestry, Alfred's declaration (both federal and state copies), filed in December 1904, and his oath of allegiance, sworn in July 1909, are also available online. Stamped on the oath is a form filled in with a brief physical description: Alfred is 5 feet 5 ½ inches tall, with light complexion, light hair, and blue eyes. For "visible marks," he has a "mole on left side of neck," and his wife's age is given as 26 (at this time she would be given derivative citizenship through Alfred).

The Internet has more to yield on Alfred Emil Isiduro Rasmussen. His 1905 marriage to Ane Sørensen at Bethany Church in Boston is available in the Evangelical Lutheran Church records; there are six witnesses whose names we want to note.

His WWI draft registration card (1918) and WWII draft registration (1942, the Old Man's Registration, ages 45-64) are also available. He's moved a couple times since 1909 but remains married to Ane. In 1918 he's a painter for the Nilson Bros, of medium height, medium build, brown hair and blue eyes. In 1942, at age 59, he states that he is self-employed. Tracking him in the US census, his listed occupation is as follows: in 1910, "decorator;" in 1920, "interior decorator" for a "secretary company;" in 1930, he is a "house painter" and an "employer," so presumably running his own business; and in 1940 he is a "painter" with his "own business," and his son "Alfred Jr." is working for him. We can, of course, follow Alfred's children through the censuses as well.

►

1. Naturalization Alfred Emil Isiduro Rasmussen's Petition for Naturalization.

Lest this appear too easy, our immigrant is not to be confused with the Alfred and Anna Rasmussen, roughly the same ages, living in Chicago at this time, or the Alfred Rasmussen who supposedly also came from Denmark in 1904, but is living in the Alaska Territory with his wife. Each new record must be checked against the others, though fortunately Alfred's use of his full name on several official records makes this search easier than usual. He also appears to be the only Danish-born Alfred Rasmussen in Boston during this time period.

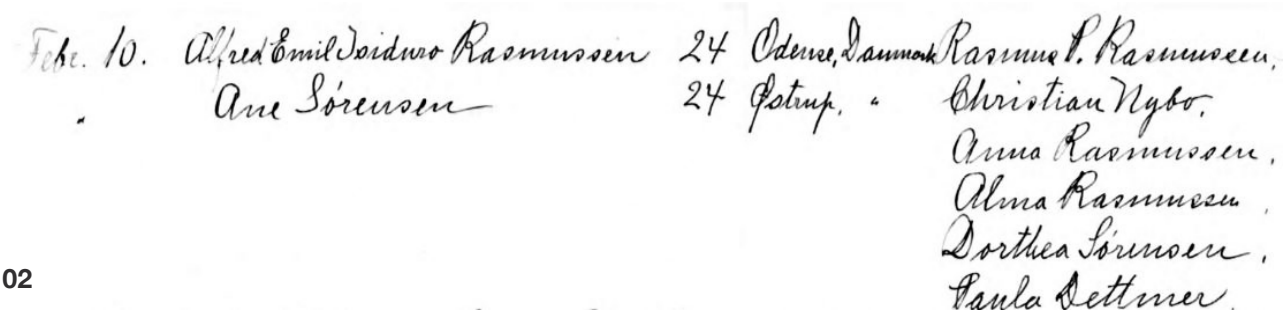
While an online newspaper archive search fails to bring up an obituary, it does yield two interesting articles for Alfred. On November 4, 1907, the *Boston Post* noted the dedication of the "new edifice of the Bethany Danish Lutheran Church" in Roxbury (Boston): "The structure is of brick. The interior decoration is the work of a member of the congregation, Alfred Rasmussen."

The same paper published a less cheery story on August 22, 1915. While out on a Bethany Danish Lutheran Church picnic, several people fell ill with typhoid after drinking from a contaminated brook: "Mrs. Anna Miller of New York is sick at the home of her brother, Alfred Rasmussen, of Glade Avenue, Jamaica Plain." The "children of Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Rasmussen" are mentioned as ill but not "dangerously so." (Anna Rasmussen is a witness to Alfred's marriage; we'll find her as his sister on a Danish census as well, and it appears she should be given her own folder as an immigrant.)

On the American side, there is one more record we want to note: a FindAGrave.com page for Alfred Emil Rasmussen in West Roxbury, Massachusetts. Not only is there an image of Alfred and Ane's headstone, there is also a photo presumably of a young Alfred and further biographical information. Because FindAGrave is user-uploaded, we'll treat this information as a guide, not necessarily fact (though this entry may have been created by a descendant, and we can strongly hope in its accuracy). Not only does it list Alfred's parents as Martin Rasmussen and Gregersine Panduro, but it gives his second daughter's middle name as "Isidura."

Now to find Alfred in Denmark. While we have an exact birth date, "Odense" contains a number of large parishes, and we need to know where to look. We turn to the Danish census records, and here it is nice to have the clue for Alfred's parents' names, though transcriptions often change spellings. One must search by county, and when Alfred Emil Isiduro Rasmussen fails to appear in the 1890 census for Odense county, it's worth checking Svendborg, the only other county on the island of Fyn—and sure enough, there he is, with his parents and six other siblings in Svendborg in 1890, eight years old.

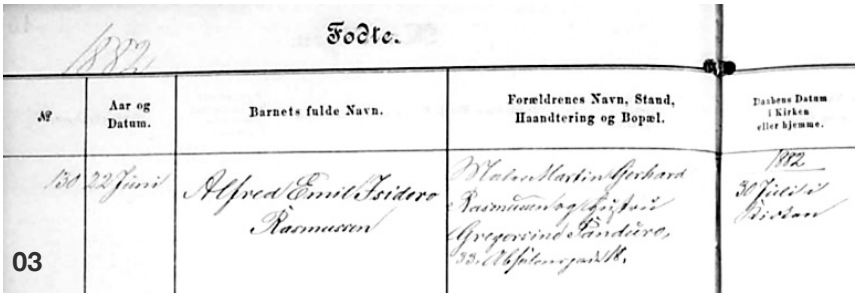
Where is his birth record? The clue lies in the 1880 census. Alfred isn't yet born, but Martin Gerhard Rasmussen and "Grægersine" Panduro are living in Odense at Nørregade 34. Their children are listed as born in St. Hans parish. But when we look in the St. Hans church book, Alfred isn't there. One of the families also living at Nørregade 34 has a child baptized in St. Knud parish, which is nearby, and that is, at last, where we find Alfred Emil Isiduro Rasmussen, his parents, Martin and Gregersine, having moved to Absalonsgade.



02

2. Marriage certificate AlfredEmil Isiduro Rasmussen's marriage to Ane Sørensen, February 10, 1905.

Two further notes. We can gather from censuses that the name "Isiduro" comes from Alfred's mother's family. And in the 1880 census, Alfred's father Martin's occupation is listed as *maler*—"painter." While so much remains undiscovered and much more is lost to history, these small, significant clues tell us something about the legacy Alfred Emil Isiduro Rasmussen carried with him to America.



sisterhood collection comes to museum

A special presence at this October's board meeting was that of several National Officers of the Danish Sisterhood of America, who met concurrently in the Danish Villages in cooperation with the museum. The purpose of their trip was twofold in that they not only accomplished regular meeting goals but also delivered an immensely important truckload to the museum from California: an official transfer of their organization's historical objects and archival documents to be accessioned into the collection of the Museum of Danish America.

The Danish Sisterhood of America was founded in 1883 by Christine Hemmingsen, a Danish immigrant from Orup, Denmark. Mrs. Hemmingsen established Christine Lodge #1 in Negaunee, Michigan. The Danish Sisterhood of today continues to grow with numerous lodges located throughout the United States and Canada. More information about the organization can be found at danishsisterhood.org.

3. Birth certificate Alfred Emil Isidoro Rasmussen birth record, 22 June 1882.

why not have your cake, and eat it too!

Is the long-term financial strength of MoDA important to you?

Would you like to receive more income from your savings and investments?

Would you like to pay less in taxes?

If you answer "yes" to these questions, then you may want to consider a Charitable Gift Annuity or a Charitable Remainder Trust (CRT) that will pay you income during your lifetime with the remainder amount benefitting your favorite charities!

A charitable *gift annuity* (CGA) pays you a guaranteed income as long as you and/or your spouse are living. And the older you are when you establish the gift annuity, the more income it pays! For example, a 70-year old currently gets 5.1%, an 80-year-old would get a 6.8% rate, while those 90 or over earn 9.0%!

A charitable *remainder trust* (CRT) is different in that it pays you a guaranteed *percentage* of the gifted asset (minimum of 5%), rather than a fixed dollar amount. While this means your income benefit will vary from year-to-year, it can benefit donors who expect to receive income for a longer time period because of the potential for income payments to keep pace with inflation. Another benefit of the CRT is that you can have this income stream continue to your children if you'd like!

So you can see that there's potential to provide you with more income. The tax benefits, of course, are a bit more complicated, but, depending on whether you give cash or appreciated property and what payout arrangement you choose, there's potential for income tax deductions, reduced capital gains tax, and possibly less estate tax. The good news is that we can calculate your approximate tax savings in advance so you'll have the information necessary to consult with your tax advisor before making a decision.

If you like the idea of enhancing your after-tax income by helping MoDA, please call Deb Christensen Larsen at the museum, or you can call my cell phone, (402) 201-7024. *Tusind tak!*

By Paul D. Johnson, CFP®

Paul Johnson is a CFP® professional under contract with MoDA to assist its donors with planned giving. Fellow museum members can contact him without charge or obligation at 402.201.7024 if they have any questions.

named gifts

For a more permanent legacy at the Museum of Danish America, we are pleased to offer a variety of naming opportunities. Support our vibrant and sustainable institution and help to preserve your Danish heritage while ensuring that your generosity will be recognized for years to come.

A range of naming opportunities are available for individuals, families, organizations, and corporations, enabling donors to pay tribute to their relationship with the museum or to honor and recognize someone special in their lives.

Please contact Development Manager Deb Christensen Larsen for more details and to see which of these named gifts may be available to suit your wishes.

Current naming opportunities include:

Forsamlingshus (Event Center)
Genealogy Center
Development Office Space
Visual Artifact Storage
Front Entry Plaza
Main Floor Art Gallery
Genealogy Center Lobby Gallery
Model A Garage & Exhibit
Main Vault
South Vault
Fine Art Storage

JENS JENSEN PRAIRIE LANDSCAPE PARK

East Council Ring
Museum Terrace
Interpretive Sign
Tree (Bronze plaque)
Tree (Stake)

ENDOWED POSITIONS

Executive Director
Curator of Collections/Registrar
Museum Educator
Librarian
Research/Translation Manager
Jens Jensen Prairie Landscape Park Caretaker

By Deb Christensen Larsen

Named Gifts Achieved To see a list of those who are currently honored with a plaque or signage at the museum and Genealogy Center, visit www.danishmuseum.org/get-involved/recognition/naming-opportunities

memorials

JUNE 21 – SEPTEMBER 19, 2016

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

Jens & Christine Agesen
Richard Andersen
Robert W. Brown
Nadine Campbell
Jens T. Carstensen
Mary Ann Christensen
Thomine Christensen
Glen Clemsen
Hans & Mathilde Farstruup
A.N. & Florence Fogdall
Edith Forsch, mother of Ann Timmons
Bent Hansen
Carma Hansen
Dallas & Margery Hansen
Verity "Dew" Hansen, Cedar Falls, IA
Donna Jensen
Charles Christian Johnson
Leona Johnson
William B. Larsen
Robert 'Bob' Madsen
Gordy Martinson
Clark G. Mathisen
H. C. Mathison
Elsie Rasmussen McNabb
Fred & Maren Nielsen
Elinor Olsen
Ole & Marie Olsen
Herbert & Mabel Petersen
Howard Petersen
Marjorie Petersen
Anna Rasmusson
Kaj & Astrid Roge
Thomas D. Routhe
Opal Jean Schultz
Halvor Strandskov
Agnes Jorgensen Zimmerline

new additions to the wall of honor

JUNE 21 – SEPTEMBER 19, 2016

The Danish Immigrant Wall of Honor provides families and friends with a means of preserving the memory of those who emigrated from Denmark to America. Over 4,500 immigrants are currently recognized on the Wall. Their stories and the stories of their families contribute to the growing repository of family histories at the museum's Genealogy Center. You can find a list of the immigrants on the Wall of Honor at **danishmuseum.org**.

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

JES JAKOBSEN ANDERSEN & CATHARINE BOYSEN ANDERSEN (1880) Ringsted, Iowa – Dr. Paul Henriksen, Pipestone, MN

ALMA HANSEN (1904) Blair, Nebraska – Milton Jorgensen, Winchester, KS

END OF YEAR GIFTS

For recognition purposes, donations must be received at the museum on or before December 30, 2016, to be included in the 2016 Annual Report.

Note the date of your membership expiration above your address on the mailing label.

new members

JUNE 21 – SEPTEMBER 19, 2016

The Museum of Danish America is pleased to identify the following 38 individual memberships and 1 organization as its newest members:

Anni Callaghan, New Port Richey, FL
Joan Cavin, Eugene, OR
James & Darla Colvard, Chetek, WI
Joe & Seena Drapala, Minden, NV
Vanessa Timberlake & Dick Flebbe, Omaha, NE
Gerald Fowler, Salem, OR
Donald & Holly Gautier, Palo Alto, CA
James & Mary Alice Gilson, West Des Moines, IA
Chris & Trish Gowland, Alexandria, VA
John & Diane Hansen, Spring Lake, MI
James Schulthess & Rebecca Haugo, Hancock, WI
Kathy Hauschildt, Greenfield, IA
John Hester, Hackettstown, NJ
Susanne Hohlen, Monticello, MN
Lesa Jacobsen, Woodbury, MN
Jolene Johnson, Ames, IA
Anne Kimbol, Austin, TX
Adrian King, San Francisco, CA
Michael & Melissa Kruse, Kansas City, MO
Tim & Jamie Kuiken, Fairfield, IA
Terri Larson, Brooklyn Park, MN
Kirk Marcussen, Aberdeen, MS
Mick Marsh, Parker, CO
Richard Mathews, Roosevelt, UT
Jordan Murphy & Kara McKeever, Elk Horn, IA
Greg Mortenson, Bozeman, MT
Ron Nielsen, San Jose, CA
Jennifer Paulsen, Ladson, SC
Todd Petersen, Volo, IL
Gene Peterson, Watertown, SD
Helen Phillips, Altoona, IA
Amel Rahba, Copenhagen, Denmark
John & Cindy Sowl, Omaha, NE
Robert & Michelle Thomsen, Los Alamos, NM
Joseph & Audrey Uker, La Crosse, WI
Vasa Order of America - Omaha Lodge #330, Omaha, NE
Kent & Kristen Walker, Glendale, CA
Glen and Jewel Weien, San Diego, CA
Patricia Wobschall, Phoenix, AZ

in honor

JUNE 21 – SEPTEMBER 19, 2016

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

Education
Chelsea Jacobsen
Jan Jensen
Marnie Jensen's 40th birthday
Astrid Kaalund-Joergensen's presentation
Astrid Kaalund-Joergensen's translation work
Michele McNabb's hard work and dedication to MoDA's Genealogy Center
Michele McNabb's retirement
Merete Nieto's birthday
Poul and Benedikte Olesen

Gift Memberships make great (easy) gifts! Contact us to give a full year of benefits to someone you love or even just like.

thank you, organizations

JUNE 21 – SEPTEMBER 19, 2016

These 86 organizations have contributed memberships or gifts-in-kind of $100 or more or have received complimentary memberships in recognition of exemplary service to the museum. We acknowledge their generosity in each edition of the *America Letter* during their membership.

A & A Framing (Annette Andersen), Kimballton, IA
Andersen Windows (Sarah Andersen), Bayport, MN
Arcus AS (Christer Andre Olsen, Business Area Manager), Hagan, Norway
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
The Cabin at Old Irving (Harry Nyholm & Maria Nyholm), Chicago, IL
Carroll Control Systems, Inc. (Todd Wanninger), Carroll, IA
Cedar Valley Danes, Cedar Falls, IA area
Christopher Ranch LLC (Donald & Karen Christopher), Gilroy, CA
Copenhagen Imports (Jorgen Hansen), Phoenix, AZ
Country Landscapes, Inc. (Rhett Faaborg), Ames, IA
Danebod Lutheran Church, Tyler, MN
Dania Society of Chicago, Chicago, IL area
Danish American Athletic Club, Chicago, IL area
The Danish American Archive and Library, Blair, NE
Danish American Club in Orange County, Huntington Beach, CA area
Danish American Club of Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI area
Danish Archive North East, Edison, NJ
Danish Brotherhood, Heartland District Lodges, Iowa-Minnesota & surrounding states
Danish Brotherhood, Pacific Northwest Lodges, Washington area
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #1, Omaha, NE area
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #14, Kenosha, WI area
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #15, Des Moines, IA area
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #16, Minden, NE area
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #29, Seattle, WA area
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #35, Homewood, IL area
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #56, Lenexa, KS area
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #84
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #268, Junction City, OR area
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #283, Dagmar, MT area
Danish Brotherhood Centennial Lodge #348, Eugene, OR area
Danish Club of Tucson, Tucson, AZ area
Danish Cultural Center of Greenville, Greenville, MI
The Danish Home, Chicago, IL
Danish Home for the Aged, Croton-On-Hudson, NY
Danish Mutual Insurance Association, Elk Horn, IA
Danish Sisterhood Dagmar Lodge #4, Chicago, IL area
Danish Sisterhood Ellen Lodge #21, Denver, CO area
Danish Sisterhood Lodge #102, Des Moines, IA area
Danish Sisterhood Lodges, Heartland District, Iowa-Minnesota & surrounding states
Den Danske Pioneer (Elsa Steffensen & Linda Steffensen), Hoffman Estates, IL
Elk Horn Lutheran Church, Elk Horn, IA
Elk Horn-Kimballton Optimist Club, Elk Horn & Kimballton, IA area
Elverhoj Museum of History and Art, Solvang, CA
Exira-Elk Horn-Kimballton Community School District, Elk Horn, IA area
Faith, Family, Freedom Foundation (Kenneth & Marlene Larsen), Calistoga, CA
Fajen Construction (Larry Fajen), Elk Horn, IA
Friends of Scandinavia, Raleigh, NC
Hacways (Helene & Nanna Christensen), Hals, Denmark
Hansen Interiors (Torben & Bridget Ovesen), Mount Pleasant, WI
Harlan Newspapers (Steve Mores & Alan Mores), Harlan, IA
Henningsen Construction, Inc., Atlantic, IA
House of Denmark, San Diego, CA
Independent Order of Svithiod, Verdandi Lodge #3, Chicago, IL area
Keast Auto Center, Harlan, IA
Kirsten's Danish Bakery (Paul & Kirsten Andersen Jepsen), Burr Ridge, IL

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

Knudsen Old Timers, Yorba Linda, CA area
La Charlotte – Caniglia Pastries, Jeremy & Jacqueline Caniglia, Omaha, NE
Landmands Bank (Rod Rowland, President) Audubon, IA
Leman USA (Steen Sanderhoff), Sturtevant, WI
Main Street Café (Sune & Barbara Frederiksen), Berea, KY
Marne Elk Horn Telephone Co., Elk Horn, IA
Nelsen and Nelsen, Attorneys at Law, Cozad, NE
O & H Danish Bakery (Eric Olesen), Racine, WI
Old Ballard Liquor Co. (Lexi), Seattle, WA
Olsen, Muhlbauer & Co., L.L.P., Carroll, IA
Outlook Study Club, Elk Horn, IA area
Petersen Family Foundation, Inc. (H. Rand & Mary Louise Petersen), Harlan, IA
Proongily (Cynthia McKeen), St. Paul, MN
The Rasmussen Group, Inc., Des Moines, IA
Rebild National Park Society, Southern California Chapter, Los Angeles, CA area
Red River Danes, Fargo, ND area
Ringsted Danish American Fellowship, Ringsted, IA area
Royal Danish Embassy, Washington, DC
scan | design foundation by Inger & Jens Bruun, Seattle, WA
Scandinavian Heritage Foundation, Portland, OR
Shelby County Historical Society & Museum, Harlan, IA
Shelby County State Bank, Harlan and Elk Horn, IA
Symra Literary Society, Decorah, IA
The Village Café (James Uren), Elk Horn, IA
TK Petersen (Thorvald K. Petersen) Santa Monica, CA
Vasa Order of America, Omaha Lodge #330, Omaha, NE
Winding Pathways (Richard & Marion Patterson), Cedar Rapids, IA

jens jensen heritage path

JUNE 21 – SEPTEMBER 19, 2016

We are excited to once again make the Jens Jensen heritage Path a place to celebrate an occasion or achievement, recognize an individual or organization, or honor the memory of a loved one. Twice a year the pavers will be engraved and placed within the Flag Plaza – October and May.

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

Arne Brinkland, Orange, CA
Michael & BebeAnna Buck, Eau Claire, WI
Danish American Club of Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI area
June Faaborg, Johnston, IA
Kathy Hauschildt, Greenfield, IA
Phyllis Petersen Hoegh, Elk Horn, IA, and sisters
Hal & Consul Anna D. S. Thomsen Holliday, Houston, TX
Mark & Pamela Jensen, Council Bluffs, IA
Charles & Barbara Johnson, Las Vegas, NV
James & Beverly Keltner, New Auburn, WI
William & Martha Miller, Bloomington, IL
Gordon Nielsen, Tulsa, OK
Peter Nielsen, Naples, FL
Randall & Margaret Ruggaard, Hudson, OH
The Dallas H. & Margery Hansen Family, Elk Horn, IA
Carl & Frances Steffensen, Houston, TX
Linda Steffensen, Hoffman Estates, IL
Donna Christensen-Thomas, Papillion, NE

Order forms for engraved pavers can be printed from http://bit.ly/JJHPPavers

jens jensen prairie landscape park advisory committee

SEPTEMBER 29-30 MEETING

The park's advisory committee met at the Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge east of Des Moines on Thursday, September 29. Tova, Angela, Tim, Jenny, John Mark, and I traveled from the museum to join Jens Jensen, Christa Orum-Keller and Peter Orum traveling from Wisconsin and Illinois. Rick Hager of the refuge staff met us at the Prairie Learning Center for a tour of the facility and the surrounding 11,200 acres of restored prairie.

The Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge is one of the largest tallgrass prairie reconstruction projects in the world. The committee was looking for insights on how to manage and maintain the 35-acre prairie restoration project at the Museum of Danish America. Restoration work at Neal Smith has been ongoing for 20 years, and, while the prairie is flourishing, the staff has experienced many of the same challenges the museum has in the four years since the Jens Jensen project began. Much of what the committee and staff have learned over the past year, since the committee was formed, focuses on how to control invasive species in the landscape, which is a continuing battle in a prairie restoration.

The committee also toured the seed collection and preservation facilities at Neal Smith Prairie. Seed collecting is an exciting new aspect of prairie learning and was practiced by the committee on Friday, September 30 when the group returned to Elk Horn to assess the Jens Jensen Prairie. The afternoon was spent gathering grass seeds on the green roof. That store of seeds will be added to the collection done by local high school agriculture students for re-seeding on the grounds.

By Dawn Nielsen, Park Advisory Committee Member

Photos of the prairie, taken by Dawn Nielsen throughout the year. See more on our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/danishmuseum.

danish christmas eve dessert

In Denmark and most of the Nordic and European countries, Christmas is celebrated on Christmas Eve instead of Christmas Day, as it is in the US. Typically, after attending (or not attending) an afternoon Christmas service, Danes get together with family to have a nice dinner of either roasted pork with crackling (*flæskesteg*) or duck (*andesteg*), brown sauce (*brun sovs*), boiled glazed potatoes (*brunede kartofler*), sweet-sour red cabbage (*rødkål*), and for dessert – *risalamande*.

The word *risalamande* comes from the French word *riz à l'amande*, which, directly translated, means rice with almonds. It is the most traditional dessert and is typically only eaten at Christmastime. Commonly, a large batch of rice porridge (*risengrød*) is made for dinner on *lillejuleaften* (Little Christmas Eve, i.e. December 23), and a portion is kept to make *risalamande*.

The eating of *risalamande* also serves as a game. A whole blanched almond is left in the dessert, and whoever finds it in their bowl wins a small prize, traditionally a marzipan pig. Part of the game involves the finder concealing their discovery as long as possible so that the rest of the company is forced to eat the entire dish of *risalamande*, even after they have already devoured a large dinner.

Following dessert, everyone joins hands and dances around the tree while singing hymns and carols. Then gifts are unwrapped one at a time. After the last present is unwrapped, cookies, fruit, candy, and coffee are enjoyed before company departs into the night.

By Nicky Christensen

Photo by Tora Effersoe of the Danish blog "Cute Carbs," www.cutecarbs.com.

risalamande **DANISH RICE DESSERT FOR CHRISTMAS**

Serves 4

Ingredients:

Risengrød (Rice porridge)
1 cup short-grain white rice, such as Arborio
½ cup water
4 ¼ cups milk
Pinch of salt

Risalamande
1 portion rice pudding
6 oz blanched almonds, finely chopped
2 cups heavy cream
3 tbsp sugar
Seeds from 1 vanilla pod, or 1 tbsp vanilla extract

Cherry sauce topping
1 ½ cups frozen pitted sweet cherries
½ cup water
½ tbsp lemon juice
3 tbsp sugar
1 tbsp cornstarch
½ tsp vanilla extract

Instructions:

1. In a saucepan add the rice and water. Boil for 2 minutes.

2. Add the milk and return to boiling, stirring constantly.

3. Turn to low heat, cover, and cook for 35 minutes, stirring often to prevent rice from browning.

4. Set aside or refrigerate to cool.

5. Mix the cooled *risengrød* with the almonds in a bowl.

6. With a whisk or hand mixer, beat the cream, sugar, and vanilla until soft peaks form.

7. Gently mix the whipped cream with the rice and almond mixture and set aside.

8. Bring the cherries, water, lemon juice, and sugar to a boil over medium heat.

9. In a separate bowl, mix the cornstarch with 2 tbsp water to make a slurry, then add to the cherries.

10. When sauce starts to thicken, remove from heat and stir in vanilla extract. *Optional:* add rum or brandy.

11. Top rice dish with warm cherry sauce and serve.

museum of
danish america

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02

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INSIDE GREETING

Glædelig Jul
og Godt Nytår

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1. Museum of Danish America's Annual Christmas Card 2016 Bedstemor's House, Cards, #5166, $11.00/pkg of 10; Individual Card, #5050, $2.00 **2. Museum of Danish America's Annual Keepsake Ornament 2016** Ornament, porcelain, #5051, $16.00. **Order early – quantities are limited. Orders to 800.759.9192 or www.danishmuseum.org/shop**

Meet new Design Store Manager Kelly Doonan on page 7!