

# america|letter

SPRING 2017 + ANNUAL REPORT | A BENEFIT OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE MUSEUM OF DANISH AMERICA

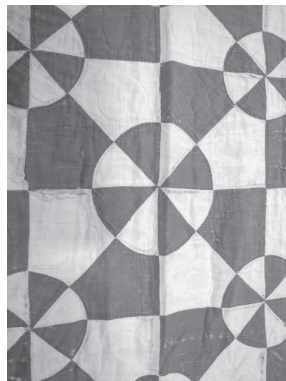


Washday at Oaks Indian Mission, Oklahoma, 1915

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A Serendipitous Discovery  
Danes Who Immigrated Twice

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"I helped Mrs. Nielsen every week with the washing on Mondays. They heated the water in a big black kettle out in the open. Beside the fire was a bench with a wash tub and board to rub the clothes on. Regardless of the weather, we did the washing outside." –Abelone Larsen. More on pages 12.

America Letter

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# director's corner

## **Hej alle sammen!**

Hi, everyone!

My first months at the museum have been a whirlwind. I've been getting to know the staff, the community in Elk Horn, and some of our local, national, and international constituents. I am overwhelmed in the best possible way and can't wait to see how 2017 unfolds!

When John Mark announced his retirement in the *America Letter* last spring, he described the steep learning curve he faced coming on board at the museum, and he expected his successor to be in a similar position. While I can confirm there is a lot to take in, I have the advantage of John Mark, who has provided guidance and mentorship, and the museum staff, who advise and inspire me on a daily basis. John Mark will be a very tough act to follow, but having the bar set so high is a welcome and exciting challenge.

The museum's mission is to "Celebrate Danish roots and American dreams." Celebration can take many forms, from merrymaking festivities to memorials honoring loved ones. I'd like to share some of the happenings I will be celebrating in the coming year.

Here in Elk Horn we are awaiting spring, when the Jens Jensen Prairie Landscape Park will come to life once again. As the weather warms, we will be developing our reconstructed prairie even further, moving it one step closer to the vision of an original prairie—like the one the early pioneers would have seen—right in our own backyard.

A series of historical documentaries on early Danish immigrants to the U.S. is scheduled to air on Danish Broadcasting Corporation (DR) in the fall, and we have been happy to assist in both the fundraising and research that had to take place prior to production. In addition to the full documentaries, the museum is set to receive a series of shorter films that we will incorporate into our core exhibit. Filming will start this spring, so stay tuned for more on all that later this year.

It is my great privilege and pleasure to travel and celebrate Danish-American culture with various groups around the country. I look forward to joining the Rebild National Park Society in St. Thomas, VI from March 29-April 5 for the centennial celebration of the Virgin Islands' transfer from Denmark to the U.S. I will also be attending the Danebod Folk Meeting in Tyler,

MN August 16-18. Another important set of dates to save is October 5-7, as the Danish American Heritage Society will host their 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary conference, "Danish American Fusion: A Blending of Cultures," in Schaumburg, IL. The museum will be present, and this event is a *must* for anyone interested in the relationship between Danish and Danish-American culture.

I eagerly anticipate our annual volunteer banquet on May 1, when we celebrate all those good people who help out at the museum and the Genealogy Center. I am so grateful for all of you who volunteer your time with us! Aside from all the help you provide, you brighten our days and make an already enjoyable and fulfilling job even more pleasant.

Another very special group we have at the museum is the interns from Denmark. Aside from the hard work they do and the skills they bring to the table, having a continual influx of young students brings a breath of fresh air into our building. I strongly encourage you to read the story of Muriel Bacon's wedding dress on pages 16-19. Talk about a serendipitous moment that is worth celebrating!



By  
Rasmus  
Thøgersen



As I write this, staff are tearing down our core exhibit, and, after we have finalized it, the redesigned exhibit will open in late April. Whether you are a regular in Elk Horn or are one of our many supporters who haven't visited yet, here is the perfect excuse to make the trip and celebrate with us. We can't wait to see you!

Loyal readers will also know that we are currently going through the American Alliance of Museums' accreditation process. My first official duty as the incoming executive director was to sit in on the accreditation interview in November. Our registrar, Angela Stanford, has spearheaded the effort, and her attention to detail and meticulous preparation shone through the whole way. It was a pleasure for me to observe and ask questions while the reviewers did their assessment. Aside from being yet another feather in our cap, accreditation will open doors for us in terms of grant writing and partnerships with other museums. The review committee can either approve, request changes to, or outright deny our application. We will learn the outcome of this evaluation in late February – past the deadline for this Director's Corner. Luckily, my job is to believe 100% in the team we have and what they can accomplish. I am confident that we will be accredited without any requests for changes. **If I am wrong, I will eat a dozen æbleskiver at the 2017 Tivoli Fest in Elk Horn.** That is a promise.

On a personal note, I want to share with you that I will soon begin the process of becoming a U.S. citizen. I have been a permanent resident for nearly three years. As some of you might be aware, Denmark began allowing dual citizenship on September 1, 2015, allowing me to become a U.S. citizen without giving up my Danish citizenship. Holding two passports will be one of the important milestones in my life. As I prepare for this occasion, I have begun to reflect on what exactly it means to be Danish-American in 2017.

Immigration from Denmark to the U.S. is a lot less permanent than it used to be. A lot of the Danes that make it over here now are on short-term contracts and will consider themselves to be expats, rather than immigrants. Some of them might settle here, and some will move on as their contracts are completed and new opportunities arise elsewhere. Some Danes, like me, have made the U.S. their home, yet are still able to return to Denmark to see family and old friends regularly, if not as frequently as desired. Then there are those who are second, third, fourth-generation Danish Americans who hold strong to their heritage, continuing to shape the traditions of our community.

And how will the Danish-American tradition evolve over the coming years? The world-famous Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard writes: *Livet maa forstaaes baglænds. Men derover glemmer man den anden Sætning, at det maa leves forlænds.*

The rough translation is that “Life must be understood backwards, but it must be lived forwards.” Kierkegaard essentially states that life cannot be understood as it happens. This is why looking back and reflecting—on our own lives, and also on how our thread is woven into a larger tapestry—is so key to our experience as humans.

The progress of our collective story will always be best understood as we look back. So, how do we ensure we are able to reflect on and understand our story when we look back in 10 or 20 years? We need to collect, register, and preserve the records, artifacts, and stories of Danish Americans and make sure there is a permanent home for this unique heritage. This is what we do at the museum—and do extremely well, I might add. In addition to this, the museum creates exhibits and does outreach, participating in the ongoing conversation about Danish America.

The museum's ability to preserve our collective story into the future depends on the continued participation and support of our membership. There are many ways to provide support, now and into the future, one of which is by becoming a Heritage Builder through planned giving.

Heritage Builders are those individuals who have informed us that they have provided for the museum in their estates. I recently had the special pleasure of talking with many of our Heritage Builders. Our museum does rely on planned giving, and I wanted to connect with them and understand why they have chosen to support us in this way. Those conversations, quite frankly, validated everything we do here at the museum.

I am not at a point in my life where estate planning is a topic that comes up a lot in casual conversations with my friends, but, as more and more of them are becoming parents, I have detected a shift in how we talk about the future and the need to plan accordingly. Before Christmas, my wife, Jennifer, and I met with the museum's planned giving consultant, Paul Johnson. I wanted to become a Heritage Builder myself, partially because it

seemed appropriate, and partially to better understand what I am asking of you. Meeting with Paul, what struck me was how relatively simple the process could be. I encourage those of you who, much like me, never gave it much thought, to consider planned giving to help preserve our stories far into the future.

**Alt godt,  
Rasmus**

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Peter Soegaard Hansen

### **WHY "AMERICA LETTER?"**

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

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

# museum welcomes new interns

## PETER HANSEN

My name is Peter, and I am one of the interns at the Museum of Danish America. I grew up on Zealand, close to the city Hilleroed, as well as in Jutland, close to Esbjerg. I have a Bachelor's degree in English with a minor in Cultural Communication, as well as a Master's degree in English from the University of Copenhagen. I have lived in Copenhagen for most of my adult life, but moved to Odense after finishing my Master's degree. This means that I have lived on both Zealand, Jutland and Funen.

I have previously done an internship at The Danish Poster Museum, a part of The Old Town Museum (*Den Gamle By*), a national open-air museum of urban history and culture in Aarhus. I therefore have a background from both the world

of museums, as well as the English language.

I have always wanted to try to live and work in America, which is why I chose to apply for an internship at the museum. I cannot wait to travel around Iowa and see the countryside, as well as to see more of your country in general. I am looking forward to an interesting few months in Elk Horn, as well as working at the museum. I hope to learn a lot about American culture and have some interesting experiences while I am here. A big thanks to the museum and the Scan Design Foundation by Inger & Jens Bruun for making this possible!

## MARTIN ARMBRUST

My name is Martin, and I am 26 years old. I have a Master's degree in history and a two-year minor's degree in history. While in Elk Horn, I will be working with

Kara at the Genealogy Center, mainly focusing on research and cataloging. I will also assist with transliteration of Gothic Danish texts.

My background is primarily within teaching and didactics, but last fall I spent three months working full-time at my hometown museum. Hopefully, that will be helpful as I go about my work here.

I always wanted to visit the U.S., but I also hoped I could come for more than a tourist trip. To me, Elk Horn is a perfect place to get introduced to American culture while expanding on my academic skills.

It has been a dream for me to work or study abroad at least for a time, and I happen to know two of the previous interns. They spoke so warmly of Elk Horn and the people here that I decided to apply for the internship.

In the course of the following months, I hope to learn a lot of new things, gain a new perspective on the skills I already have, and get to know some nice people. The combination of doing museum work and living in a place like Elk Horn seems like a good opportunity to develop academically in a nice, social environment. I look forward to the next couple of months.

## BLOG

Check [danishmuseuminterns.tumblr.com](http://danishmuseuminterns.tumblr.com) weekly for updates on their activities!



Peter Hansen, left, and Martin Armbrust

# board of directors meet in yorba linda

**FEBRUARY 17-19**

The museum's board of directors meets three times each year. The annual meeting is always held in October in Elk Horn. February and June meetings are held in cities across the country where there is a strong Danish connection, e.g. Chicago, Houston, Croton-on Hudson, and, for this most recent meeting, Yorba Linda, CA.

Meetings were held at the Cultural Center of the Danish Lutheran Church, and we were delighted to participate in the Danish church service given by Pastor Anne-Grethe Krogh Nielsen. Church was followed by fellowship on the patio and a three-course Danish dinner prepared by Chef Max Christensen, pictured right.

We are always looking for potential board members – all ages, from all geographic locations, and walks of life –

willing to support the museum in a number of ways. Terms are for



three years, and you may serve two terms consecutively for a total of six. To find out more about how you may serve, perhaps not now but sometime in the future, please contact us.

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By  
Terri  
Johnson

**Outside of Church** Dagmar Muthamia, Tim Burchill, Dorothy Stadsvold Feisel, Bente Ellis, Garey Knudsen, Carol Svendsen, Linda Steffensen, Dennis Larson, Ole Sønnichsen, Beth Bro-Roof, Anders Sand, David Hendee, Karen Suchomel, Randy Ruggaard, Cindy Larsen Adams, Jerry Schrader, Ron Bro. Absent from photo: David Esbeck, Glenn Henriksen, Anna Thomsen Holliday, Marnie Jensen, Carolyn Larson, Craig Molgaard, Karen Nielsen, Carl Steffensen.

# our mission to the cherokee

## N.L. NIELSEN AND OAKS INDIAN MISSION



Among the many gravestones in the cemetery next to Elk Horn Lutheran Church is one that marks the graves of Niels Laurids Nielsen (1863-1941) and his wife, Jensine Christensen Nielsen (1860-1934). Few, if any, members of the congregation today remember the Nielsens. Nor are they aware of the dramatic role they and others played in the work of the United Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church (UEL) and its mission to the Cherokee Nation. This is the story of the Nielsens and the beginnings of the Oaks Indian Mission, a mission the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America continues today.

The story of what was to become Oaks Indian Mission begins 125 years ago in 1892. On April 1 of that year, a letter by Detlev Leerskov, a Danish immigrant who had married a Cherokee woman, appeared in *Kirkebladet* (The Church Newspaper). This was the newspaper of the Danish Lutheran church known as the “Blair Church,” since its headquarters, seminary (Trinity Theological Seminary), and academy (later Dana College) were located in Blair, NE.

Leerskov wrote that he had recently received a copy of *Kirkebladet* and that this was “the first Christian reading in the Danish language” that he had seen since immigrating to America ten years earlier. He was excited and hoped that the church would, as he wrote in words characteristic of the times, “help bring the glad tidings of the world’s savior to North America’s red men, the Indian.”

In response to Leerskov’s letter, Pastor Anders Rasmussen, co-editor of *Kirkebladet*, informed readers that the “Blair Church” already had a young immigrant who was preparing to become a missionary and who wanted to do mission work among Native Americans. This was Niels Laurids Nielsen, or N.L., as he came to be known.

N.L. was born, baptized, and confirmed in Vorgod parish in western Jutland on March 23, 1863. His father, a school teacher, died when he was three years old, leaving his mother to raise four small children. At the age of 15, shortly after his confirmation, N.L. was tending sheep out on the Danish heath. It was there, as he later wrote, that he received a call from God to, in the words of Genesis 12:1, “get thee out of thy country and kindred and from thy father’s house in to a land that I will show thee.” He understood this to mean that God wanted him to become a missionary.

At the age of 19 he left Vorgod, first finding work at a Moravian mission school in Christiansfeld and then enrolling in a school run by the Danish Mission Society in Copenhagen. In 1888 he was finally able to immigrate to the U.S., first to Menomonee, WI, where for two years he worked in a sawmill until he had saved enough money to attend Trinity Seminary in Blair.



By  
John Mark  
Nielsen

01. Gravesite The Nielsen’s gravesite in the Elk Horn Lutheran Church Cemetery.

That Nielsen chose to attend Trinity Seminary is not surprising, given his religious outlook. The theological teachings of the “Blair Church” were strongly influenced by the *Indre Mission* (Inner Mission), a pietistic movement in Denmark that stressed repentance, personal faith, and the need for breaking away from all that was worldly. Such pastimes as drinking, dancing, and card playing were forbidden. In dealing with others, the *Indre Mission* movement emphasized evangelism, charity, working with young people, and foreign mission work.

In June 1892, following the annual church convention, which that year was held in Council Bluffs, IA, N.L. departed for Indian Territory. (Oklahoma did not become a state until November 16, 1907.) His destination was Tahlequah, the capitol of the Cherokee Nation. Here he set about learning the Cherokee language, aided by the fact that there was already a written syllabary developed by the famous Cherokee, Sequoyah, and the New Testament had already been translated into the Cherokee language.

Some of the non-Native Americans said it was impossible to learn the language, but as N.L. wrote in a letter published in *Kirkebladet* (Church magazine) on September 1, 1892, “I gave myself nevertheless to the hope that if God had a call for me here, then he would also give me the grace to learn to speak with these Indian brothers about His love for poor sinners.” With the use of an interpreter, he began preaching to the Cherokee, although he did attempt to read the Bible and

to sing hymns in the Cherokee language. As he wrote in the same September 1 letter, “Their red faces brightened up when they marked that it was my intent to learn their language and live among them. They wanted me to hold school for their children, and I promised them, if it was God’s will, that I would begin in August.”

Initially, N.L. planned to return to Blair after the summer to complete his seminary training in preparation for ordination. However, members of the tribe petitioned church leaders to allow Nielsen to remain among them to continue teaching and preaching. The “Blair Church” granted this request, and so in September 1892, N.L. opened a school at Moodys, northeast of Tahlequah. Enrollment grew from eight children the first fall and soon reached 50 students. The school was supported by gifts

that came from congregations of the “Blair Church” in Nebraska, Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois.

The next year, Nielsen was joined by his new bride, Jensine Christensen, who had been attending Nørre Nisum Folk High School in Denmark. They were married in Blair on September 7, 1893, shortly after her arrival in the U.S., and immediately departed for Indian Territory so that N.L. could resume teaching. Through an arrangement with his seminary professors, he also continued his studies for ordination into the ministry; this occurred the next year on June 10, 1894. Nielsen believed that schools were important in laying the foundation for a church. To further this work, he established a number of preaching places in the surrounding area with schools for the children.



02. Rev. and Mrs. Nielsen’s school at Moodys. Photo contributed by the Danish American Archive & Library in Blair, NE.

Dramatic changes occurred in 1898 when the U.S. Congress passed the Curtis Act over the objections of the “Five Civilized Tribes,” which included the Cherokee. This was pushed by non-Native Americans who wanted to dissolve the treatise between the five tribes and the U.S. The result of the Curtis Act was that the federal government could determine tribal membership, tribal governments were disbanded, and communal land ownership was abolished. In all, the “Five Civilized Tribes” lost jurisdiction over 90 million acres of tribal land in what is today Oklahoma.

The changes brought about by the Curtis Act directly affected the Niensens, as well. One of the small communities where Nielsen had often preached was Oaks. It was near New Springplace, a mission established in 1842

by Moravian missionaries who had accompanied the Cherokee on the “Trail of Tears.” Due to changes in land ownership arising from the Curtis Act, Moravian Church leaders decided in 1902 to give up work in Indian Territory and invited the Niensens to take over the work.

The UELC approved this move, and in 1903 the Niensens moved to Oaks. That same year Eben Ezer Lutheran Church was organized with 26 confirmed members; 52 students were enrolled in the mission school that had been moved from Moodys. Attendance at the school continued to grow, in part due to a reputation of providing quality education. Because of the growing enrollment, and also to provide care for Native American children in need, a children’s home was founded in 1915. The work prospered in large measure

due to N.L. and Jensine’s hard work and because congregations of the UELC across the country adopted the Oaks Indian Mission as a special mission meriting support.

By 1924 both the Niensens were in their early 60s; the years had taken their toll. Jensine’s health declined, and they felt they had to retire. N.L. accepted a call to Ebenezer Lutheran Church in rural Audubon, IA, and served the parish there until the spring of 1929, when they retired to Elk Horn. Following Jensine’s death in 1934, N.L. was despondent and requested another parish. Finally, in 1941, at the age of 78, he was called to serve a mission congregation of the UELC in St. John, New Brunswick, Canada. Only two months after his arrival, he died of pneumonia, and his body was returned to Elk Horn to be laid to rest beside his wife in the cemetery.



03. Flint Chapel, one of the many preaching places established by N.L. Nielsen. 04. Rev. N.L. Nielsen, Mrs. Nielsen, Julia Jensen, Nana Nielsen. Photos contributed by the Danish American Archive & Library in Blair, NE.

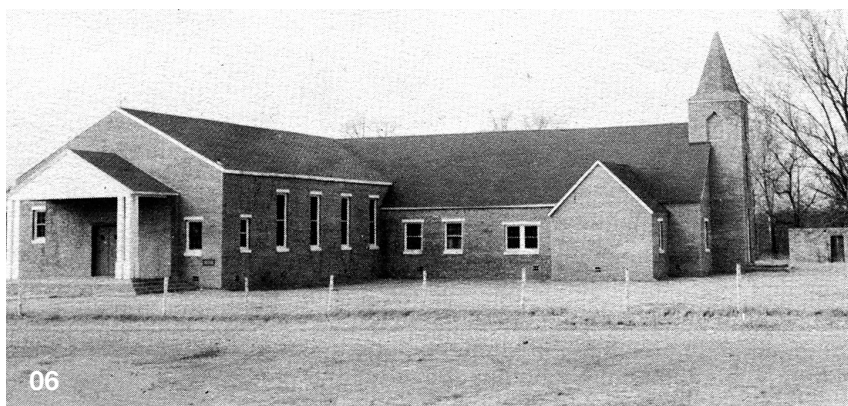
Niels Laurids and Jensine Nielsen had no children of their own. During their time at Oaks they were foster parents to several children. Among these was Florence Payne, who, after graduating from Dana College, returned to Oaks and served as a teacher until her marriage to Cal Lamont. Together they operated a general merchandise store and the Post Office in Oaks. However, the Oaks Indian Mission and the hundreds of children who have made it their home over the years are a living legacy to the work of this immigrant couple.

Despite the Nielsen's departure from Oaks in 1924, the school, church, and children's home thrived. That same year, Pastor

Christian Adolphus (C.A.) Vammen was called to serve the church at Oaks and to lead the mission. He, too, was a Danish immigrant, having arrived in the U.S. in 1909, and who also studied at Dana College and Trinity Seminary. Under his leadership the mission school and the public school were consolidated in 1932 as Oaks Indian Mission Public Schools. The church and the children's home also continued to thrive as separate institutions, although cooperating closely with the now-merged school.

Today the Oaks Indian Mission provides a safe and secure environment for up to 60 children,

ages 3-17. The campus, located adjacent to the Oaks Indian Mission Public School that mission children attend, covers over 100 acres. Prominent is Eben Ezer Lutheran Church, which continues to be the spiritual center for the community. Fourteen buildings (many of them modern, one story, and of red brick), sports fields, and a significant wooded area make up the rest of the campus. When school ends for the day, the voices of children at play sound across the campus, echoing the voices of generations of children who have made Oaks Indian Mission their home.



05. Part of the Oaks Mission School football team, 1936-1939. 06. Eben Ezer Church. Photos contributed by the Danish American Archive & Library in Blair, NE.

## NANA NIELSEN

Nana Nielsen arrived at the Oaks Mission School as a teacher in 1908, a year after Oklahoma became a state. Aside from several years when she cared for her ailing mother in Northfield, Minnesota and her retirement in Hastings, Nebraska, she spent much of her life at Oaks and is buried with others who served the mission in the cemetery there.

In 1908, when I received the call, I was told there would be 30 little Indians. Velma Lamont told me there were 80 on the roll... I probably averaged 50 – ages 5 to 17. Some had to sit three in those homemade seats and desks. All furniture was handmade, unpainted, including my desk. The first school was an old store building 70 feet by 30 feet, divided into one long room, a platform and sliding doors leading to a smaller room used for quilting by the ladies. The building was set upon a few large stones leaving clear sweep for the wind and room for pigs and dogs to fight and find shelter from the heat. The floor was worn with big cracks, so we didn't need a dust pan. We just picked up the paper and swept the dust through the cracks.

## ABELONE NIELSEN LARSEN

In 1911 Abelone Larsen was a student at a folk high school in Denmark when she met Pastor and Mrs. Nielsen who were touring Denmark, describing their work among the Cherokee. She had wanted to serve God by doing mission work and responded to the Nielsen's invitation to come to America, studying at Dana College and joining them at Oaks in 1915. Over a period of three years, Abelone served as house mother at the mission. She was there in the fall of 1918 when the Spanish Influenza epidemic struck the Oaks community.



Mrs. Nielsen and I started back to the sick family in hopes the doctor might catch up with us. We and the doctor got there about midnight. The baby was already born and dead by then, and the mother was dying. Despite the doctor's efforts to take care of her, she also died. I helped to wash her and dress her in her wedding dress and place the little baby in her arms. Then she and the baby were moved to another room where there was a broken window, so I had to watch that a cat would not get in there to them. I stayed with the sick family the rest of the night. Rev. Nielsen took care of the funeral the next day.

My next duty was at the home of the dead wife's parents as a night nurse. The father died only a few days later. But some of the children were getting better... I was there several nights, but then I also came down with the flu. The last night I was there I knew some of the children were getting hungry, so about 2:00 o'clock in the morning, I went out into the open chicken house and found a rooster. I killed and cleaned it and had it ready for breakfast the next morning. When I visited there many years later, one of the children asked if I was the one who had fixed chicken for breakfast.

Abelone survived her bout with the flu, returned to Dana College, and later married Dr. C.B. Larsen, long-time professor at Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Blair. (The above account is taken from "Some Reflections on My Life: An Account of Mission Work among the Cherokee by Mrs. C.B. (Abelone) Larsen." It appeared in *The Bridge* 18.1(1995), pages 32-46, the publication of the Danish American Heritage Society.)

# a student remembers

About 70 years ago, as a 4-5-year-old boy, my first memories of community are of gathering in my deep-in-the-woods, northeastern Oklahoma village called Bull Hollow. These clear, visual mind imprints include sitting with other kids around a warm woodstove, using the light of the coal-oil lamps to cut and arrange colorful fabric figures on our flannel boards. We then had to tell a story with a lesson; for example, of Noah's ark - some children being reminded by our Danish teacher, "Don't forget the beautiful rainbow."

After a bible study we were helped to get a drink from a high hanging water bucket using a real gourd dipper. Then the real treat: fantastic-tasting Danish cookies or rolls, always plentiful. In this same community gathering place, there were worship services, Wednesday matins, daily Vacation Bible Schools, monthly Saturday singings, church festivals, the sending and welcoming of soldiers, and birthday parties. With all the music, sometimes we kids would take turns hand-pushing the organ pedals to help relieve the tiring organist!

This humble community gathering place was called the Bull Hollow Danish Lutheran Chapel, a wilderness Cherokee sanctuary built in 1929 with funds gifted by members of Emmaus Lutheran church in Racine, WI.

Now seven decades later, I stay very grateful for all those grace-gifted, faith-building experiences. Clearly the Holy Spirit entrusted, and dwelt in, those Danish missionaries to continue Christ's good news to the Cherokee Bull Hollow settlement, and in a connected, harmonious, lasting relationship that brought to light the love of God to all its people.

Has my memory dimmed my faith journey path? These faith mustard seeds, sown by those committed Danish missionaries to my great-grandparents sprouted in my grandparents, parents, children, grandchildren, and to three great-grandchildren whose God/Danish mission legacy thrives as members of Our Savior's Lutheran Church in South Dakota!

I won't say thank you for God's mission spirit manifested in Danish missionaries, I simply say, "*Mange tak, mange tusind tak*, you good and faithful servants; don't forget the beautiful rainbow!"

## CELEBRATION AND TOUR

A celebration marking the 125th anniversary of the Danish presence at Oaks is being planned by the Mission Children's Alumni Association on June 16-18, 2017. The Association invites all, but especially those of Danish heritage, to participate. Events will include traditional Cherokee foods, storytelling, and singing, as well as a visit to the Cherokee Heritage Center in nearby Tahlequah. For information regarding this event, please contact [johnmark.nielsen@danishmuseum.org](mailto:johnmark.nielsen@danishmuseum.org).



By  
Sol Bird  
Mockicin

Sol Bird grew up with Danish missionaries at the Oaks Indian Mission in the 40s and 50s. He graduated from Dana College in '64 and is a retired Lutheran pastor. He is currently on the board of the Oaks Indian Mission.

# from the elim children's home

Within the collection of the Museum of Danish America are several pieces relating to children. Dolls and stuffed animals, games, and toy farm wagons join the kid-sized clothing and baby blankets, cribs and highchairs, and books. A lot of the children represented by these pieces had typical upbringings – parents to care for them and homes to live in with the rest of their family members. Others, though, were orphans.

It was not unusual for some families to send children away in response to dire financial situations. These children were sometimes placed with extended family members, sent to work on farms or as housekeepers, or were cared for in orphanages. Many churches and other social groups took on these children as part of their mission work. One such group was the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Society.

In the late 1800s the society selected an area for an orphanage on the west side of Elk Horn, just next door to where our museum is now located. A large, two-story house was constructed, and in 1890 the Elim Children's Home opened its doors. The property had cattle and other animals as well as a large garden. The children helped with these, in addition to their chores around the house. They were immersed in the greater community's activities, attending the local school and joining area churches, including Elk Horn Lutheran. Many former residents of the home recall their years there with fondness, even organizing a number of reunions over the years.



01



02



By  
Angela  
Stanford

**01. Plate** commemorating the 80th anniversary of Elk Horn Lutheran Church, with whom many of the Elim children became involved. *1993.120.001.* **02. Painting** by **Pauline Olesen**, a former child resident of the Elim Children's Home. The artist created many images of the home; this one belonged to Helen Andersen, also a former resident. *2016.042.001.*

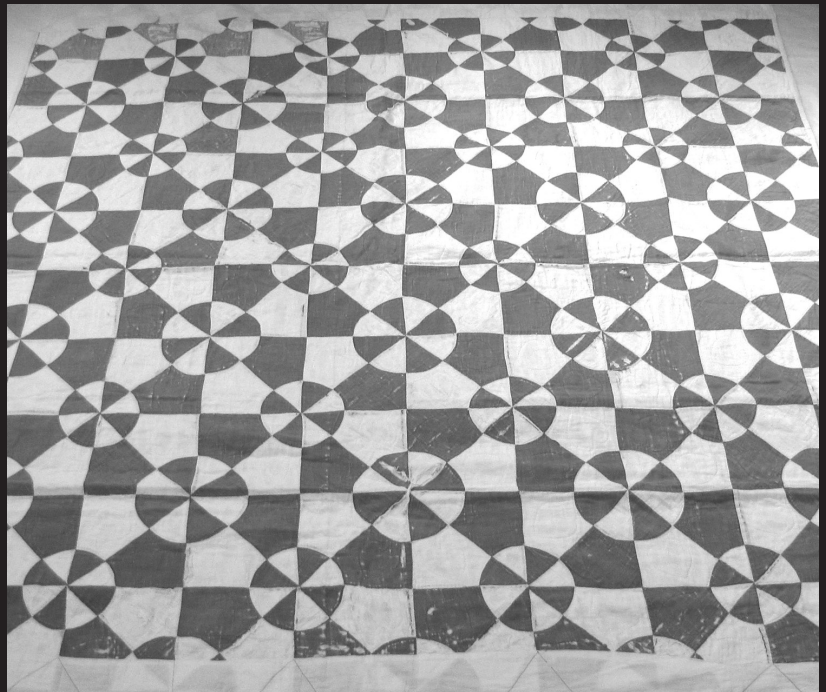
In September 1961, after serving nearly 300 children over more than 70 years, the home closed, and the property was sold to a private resident who then lived there for almost two decades. Sadly, a major fire destroyed the house in July 1980.

In 2015 the museum purchased the former Elim property from the Elk Horn Baptist Church. At this time, plans are still being considered for development of these five acres, but the stone pillars that once greeted children and visitors to the home continue to serve as reminders of this long-standing and committed community effort to help children in need.



03

**In the early 1920s quilts were made and sold as fundraising projects at Oaks Indian Mission in Oaks, OK. This red and white quilt was one of those money-makers and measures 68” wide by 81” long. Please enjoy the feature article in this *America Letter* to learn more about Oaks Indian Mission. 1993.187.001.**



**03. Small spoon** dating from 1935 representing the Elk Horn Lutheran Church, referred to hereon as the “Danish Lutheran Church.” These were sold as fundraisers for the church. 1994.331.001.

# it's a small world

This past November I was looking through some photos and postcards in the museum's collection. There were several, so I went through each photo and postcard very quickly. Out of the blue, a photo of a farm caught my eye. We have *many* images of farms, but this one made me stop and take the time to examine it. But why did this specific photo make me stop? In the western part of my home region of *Sønderjylland* (Southern Jutland), the farms have a distinct style, and that's what I recognized.

I continued to look through the group of photos in which I had found this farm until I came to an image of a man. I was pretty sure I hadn't seen him before, but the back side of the photo had his name written: Andreas Linnet.

Many people in Denmark have similar surnames (Just think of all the -sens!), but Linnet is not one of those common names. I once had a girlfriend, Sille, with exactly that surname, and I was pretty sure that her grandfather was called Andreas—traditionally

just called "Dres" in our region. This was getting really interesting! Were these photos of Grandpa Dres in his young days? The next picture was of his sons and wife, and, lo and behold, there was my former girlfriend's father, Henrik Linnet.

I contacted Henrik right away, and he asked me, "Where the h@#! did you get these photos from?" I thought that was a fair question, so I started investigating.



By  
Vincent  
Henriksen,  
Danish Intern

01. Farm A photo of a farm in Southern Jutland, Denmark. 02. Andreas Linnet

The records showed that the photos had been donated to the museum by a Muriel Bacon of nearby Kimballton/Harlan, IA in 1994, 1997, and 2002. I asked our former executive director John Mark Nielsen if he knew anything about it. He couldn't tell me how the photos had wound up in the U.S., but he said he knew Muriel well. So, we gave her a call.

Muriel told us that Andreas Linnet had visited Kimballton with a Danish gymnastics team in the late 1940s. Together with two other gymnasts, he stayed at her house, and he told her that he was going to get married to his sweetheart, Mille, soon. Times were tough in Denmark after the

Second World War, and Muriel decided to help the couple by giving them her wedding dress that she had worn for her own marriage ceremony to Ove Muller in 1939.

Following that visit Muriel and Andreas stayed in touch and sent each other photos of their families—that's how the photos of the Linnet Family came to the U.S! I couldn't wait to tell Henrik this, so I sent him some more scanned photos and told him the story I had just heard.

His response was jaw-dropping: a video of his wife, Ulla, holding the exact same wedding dress that Muriel had given his parents seven decades earlier.



**03. Linnet family** Andreas and Mille Linnet with sons Andreas, Henrik, Morten, and Oskar in 1982. Henrik is pictured far right. **04. Kimballton wedding** Ove & Muriel (Thomsen) Muller, 1939. **05. Denmark wedding** Mille & Andreas Linnet, 1947. *1997.110.012*

I asked Henrik if they were willing to donate the dress to the museum, and they generously agreed. After being in Denmark for 70 years, the dress was on its way home!

The parcel arrived to the museum on January 13, and I was eager to unpack it. The Linnet Family had warned me that it wasn't in great shape, but, to my surprise, it looked amazing. They probably looked at it as a dress to be worn, while I saw it as a museum piece—hence the different views of its condition.

Exactly one week later I went to Muriel's home in Harlan, together with John Mark and the new executive director, Rasmus Thøgersen. The Linnet Family had sent the dress in an empty

chocolate box, and that was how I presented it to Muriel. Although not edible, the dress brought much more joy than chocolates ever could.

Even though Muriel had recently attained the beautiful age of 98 years, she remembered *everything* and told us all about the dress and the Danish gymnasts of 1947. The story of her wedding dress had come full circle, and we celebrated it with kringle and coffee—we are Danes, after all!

Muriel Bacon's gorgeous, international wedding dress is now a part of the permanent collection of the Museum of Danish America. It will be preserved for posterity along with its fantastic story of Danish-American relations and human generosity.



06. Ulla holds the dress at their home in Denmark, December 2016. 07. Reunited Vincent reunites Muriel with her wedding dress at her home in Harlan, IA on January 20, 2017.



**08.** Muriel poses with her dress, flanked by Vincent and Rasmus. After Ove's death in 1967, Muriel married Max Bacon in 1974. **09.** Admire Muriel and John Mark admire the lace. **10.** Hostess Rasmus, Lori Christensen, Muriel, and Vincent are pictured enjoying kringle and coffee. Lori is a graphic designer with Harlan Newspapers, and, among other museum projects, has been skillfully handling the layout and printing of the *America Letter* for many years.

# danish roots, american dreams

## NEW CORE EXHIBITIONS OPEN THIS SPRING!

The museum team has been busy behind the scenes this winter, preparing a new core exhibition called “Danish Roots, American Dreams.” The new exhibition will welcome visitors, introduce them to Denmark and Danish America, and highlight stories of people and artifacts that contribute to Danish-American experience.

The museum has always presented the story of Danish immigration to the U.S., settlement into American lives, and ways that Danish Americans have maintained and expressed their heritage. But, every once in a while, we need to step back and ensure that *how* we tell that story is still relevant to our visitors today.

Thanks to a major gift from Humanities Iowa, the state-based affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, and matching gifts from private donors, the museum began redesigning and updating the core exhibitions last summer. We invited input from members, visitors, and community stakeholders. We involved scholars, teachers, and writers—both from the museum staff and from outside of the staff team. We hired the talents of graphic designers and exhibit developers. We even turned the lunchroom into a mock timeline, covering 140 centuries of Danish history!

Ultimately, we want our core exhibitions to welcome all visitors, no matter their background, and invite them to feel a connection with the stories and people they meet in our galleries.



By  
Tova  
Brandt

**01. Relocating** Building & Grounds Manager Tim Fredericksen “kneels at the altar” while moving this piece, carved by Danish immigrant Jes Smidt, to Visual Storage. *1994.009.002.*

Here is what you can expect to see the next time you visit:

### Welcome to Danish America

Explore stories, artifacts, immigrant voices, maps, and faces of Danish Americans from all corners of the U.S.

### Exploring the Collections

What happens when something is given to the museum collection? How does the museum care for so many different things? Learn more about the nuts and bolts of museum collections.

### Travel through Time

Journey through 14,000 years in 90 feet, noting milestones of Danish and U.S. history and important developments in the creation of Danish-American identity.

### Kid Zone

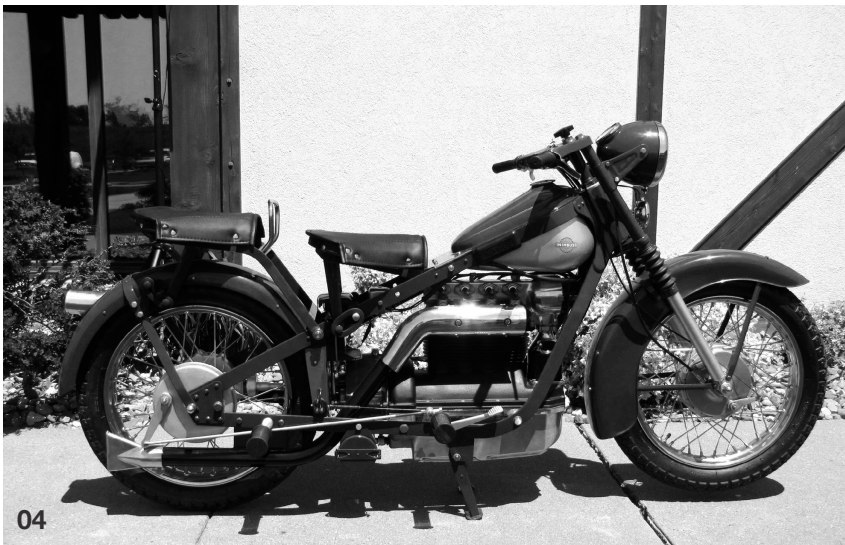
Welcome, families! Put on some "old-timey" clothes, look for toys from long ago, and see if you recognize your favorite Disney characters in the stories of Hans Christian Andersen.



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The installation of "Danish Roots, American Dreams" is supported by major gifts from the following:

Humanities Iowa  
Rosa Clemesen  
The John & Audrey Kofoed Family  
Niels & Kathleen Jensen  
Danish Sisterhood Lodge #15  
(Milwaukee, WI)



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**02. Secretary**, ca. mid-1800s. Made in Denmark, traveled to Japan, Cambodia, San Francisco, back to Denmark, then Washington state. *2014.038.001*. **03. Gas Lamp** This lamp and two complete ones with posts (now installed along the front entry of the museum) were created in 1857 as gas lamps and lit the streets of Copenhagen, Denmark. In 1959 the City of Copenhagen donated these three lamps to Dana College in Blair, NE to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the school. *2011.041.001*. **04. Motorcycle** Between 1919 and 1960, the most well-known motorcycle ever produced in Denmark was manufactured - the Nimbus. Gift of Peter & Irma Orum in memory of Stig P. Orum. *2010.014.001*.

# gallery exhibitions in 2017

***The Whimsical World of Bjørn Wiinblad***

On view through May 30

***Sport for Sports' Sake: Athletes and Ethnicity in Danish America***

Extended through September 4

***Nordic Light: Paintings by Hanne Støvring***

June 24 – October 31

***Denmark: America's Smallest and Biggest Ally***

September 30, 2017 – September 3, 2018

**EXHIBITIONS ON THE ROAD IN 2017**

***Skål! Scandinavian Spirits***

American Swedish Historical Museum, Philadelphia, PA  
January 28 – September 17

American Swedish Institute, Minneapolis, MN  
November 10, 2017 – January 8, 2018

***The Whimsical World of Bjørn Wiinblad***

Nordic Heritage Museum, Seattle, WA  
July 28 – November 5



01. The Whimsical World of Bjørn Wiinblad 02. Sport for Sports' Sake 03. Nordic Light

# events calendar

**VICTOR BORGE  
LEGACY AWARD  
PIANO RECITALS**

April 22 & 23, 2 pm

**BROWN BAG LUNCH  
SCULPTING AN ICON:  
CHRISTIAN PETERSEN  
AND THE FOUNTAIN OF  
THE FOUR SEASONS**

April 27, Noon-1 pm  
Danish immigrant Christian Petersen was often called upon to represent the indigenous people of Iowa in his art. Hear from Jerome Thompson, retired curator for the State of Iowa, about Petersen, his art, and these state-funded commissions and their significance historically and today.

**VOLUNTEER BANQUET**

May 1, 6 pm  
Cottonwood Barn

**BROWN BAG LUNCH  
SURPRISES IN FAMILY  
HISTORIES**

May 25, Noon-1 pm  
Come and hear the stories from families that Michele McNabb, retired Genealogy Center manager, has researched – stories usually only the families themselves get to hear!

**TIVOLI FEST**

May 26-28

**BOARD MEETING**

June 8-10  
Edison, NJ

**BROWN BAG LUNCH  
NORDIC LIGHT ON  
CANVAS**

June 22, Noon-1 pm  
Meet the museum's featured artist, Hanne Støvring, as her exhibition of painting opens. Her studio is on the island of Bornholm, but she currently lives and works in New York City.

**SANKT HANS AFTEN  
CELEBRATION**

June 24, 6-10 pm

**SAVE THE DATE:  
40TH ANNIVERSARY  
CONFERENCE OF THE  
DANISH AMERICAN  
HERITAGE SOCIETY**

October 5-7, 2017  
Schaumburg, IL

**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.

# in far away canada: danes who immigrated twice

Recently at the Genealogy Center we researched a family that, after emigrating from Denmark and settling in Elk Horn, picked up and moved to a small community in Alberta, Canada. Their decision was far from singular; around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century hundreds of land-seeking Danes from all over America looked to Alberta, where stretches of prairie had never been plowed. In perusing our library's holdings on these Alberta pioneers, we were struck by how many of the settlers had ties to the Elk Horn area—some had farmed here for many years, others had simply passed through; some had attended the folk school, or sent their children back to attend it. Many of the Alberta settlers had met and married their sweethearts in Elk Horn; some had buried family members here.

A hundred years ago, the Elk Horn area was the final destination for many immigrant Danes. For others in Elk Horn, the American Dream was still a thousand miles away. Here are a few of these pioneers' stories.

## HARMATTAN, AB

Mary Heilesen's family members were some of the earliest settlers in southern Shelby County, Iowa. Mary, born Mette Marie, was eight years old when her family emigrated from Aalborg in 1869. Her father farmed in Monroe Township, and Mary grew up to become a teacher and then a physician.<sup>1</sup> She attended the University of Michigan Medical School in the Department of Medicine and Surgery, and appears to have traveled from there to Harmattan, a tiny settlement in Mountain View County, Alberta, to practice medicine in the 1890s.

Mountain View's prairies were drawing a mix of eager pioneers from the United States toward the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century—Germans, Scandinavians, and Mennonites from Nebraska, Illinois, North Carolina, and Michigan.<sup>2</sup> While the best land had already been claimed further south under the Homestead Act decades earlier, land was still to be had in Alberta. Immigrant pioneers dreaming of owning farms hurried to acquire tracts, and no wonder:

*To the east of what is now Mountain View, the prairie wool grew thick and wild, enough to provide a cash crop and support the settlers through the first lean years; furthest west were the high timber stands, enough for a whole country full of log cabins; and in between was the willow brush, land that was easy enough to clear and seemingly safer from prairie fires than the open, almost bald expanses to the east. Everywhere were the flowers, the buttercups, the daisies, the fireweed, and the goldenrod as the seasons rolled around—the violets, the tiger lilies, and the bush rose, the wild, softly pink rose which came to symbolize Alberta.<sup>3</sup>*

Land i Canada.

Racine, Wis., i Juni.

Under Den for. danske ev.-luth. Kirkes Konvention i Elkhorn, Ia., for nylig blev der holdt et Møde af Folk, der var interesserede i Canada Land, og som bekluttede at foretage en Ekspedition derop, som skulde afgaa fra Elkhorn, Ia., den 17. August, fra St. Paul den 18. August og fra Portal, N. D., den 19. August i den Hensigt at inspicere et Stykke Land, der er kjendt under Navnet „Canadian Pacific Banens Irrigations Kvadrat“, som er beliggende Nyl for Calgary, Alberta, og som er holdt tilbage for et dansk Settlement.

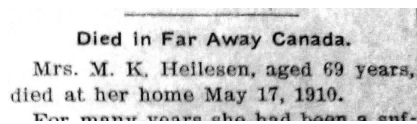
01



By  
Kara  
McKeever

01. From *Den Danske Pioneer*, July 15, 1909 An article in regard to a meeting held at the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church Convention in Elk Horn for people interested in land in Canada, and a planned excursion north to see the territory.

In 1899, Mary Heilesen received her license to practice medicine in Iowa and Nebraska, and she subsequently worked in Council Bluffs, Lincoln, and Elk Horn before again moving to Harmattan, this time with her parents and siblings in tow. In 1910 local papers reported the death of Mary's mother from Bright's disease. "Died in Far Away Canada," one paper announced. "This will be sad news for Elk Horn, as Mrs. Heilesen made her home here for several years."



**Died in Far Away Canada.**  
Mrs. M. K. Heilesen, aged 69 years,  
died at her home May 17, 1910.  
For many years she had been a suf-

Mary and some of her family returned to Elk Horn, but Mary's itinerant life eventually led her to California, where she died in 1920.

## STANDARD, AB

Not far to the southeast of Harmattan lay Standard, a town settled by a small group of Danes from Elk Horn. Jens Rasmussen was seven years old when he came to the U.S. with his parents in 1870 from Ærø. He married fellow immigrant Kristine Hansen and farmed in the Elk Horn area for many years. By 1908 Iowa land prices were high, and Jens's children were old enough to begin thinking of their own

futures. Jens visited the Danish colony of Dickson in Alberta after reading an article in *Danskeren* and was impressed. He made a second trip to Canada with two men from Elk Horn, Jens Myrthu and O. P. Larsen, and reserved 17,000 acres east of Calgary with the intention of forming a Danish colony. "Myrthu and I selected each a quarter section near the center of the reserved area—with the provision, however, that should we fail to interest our countrymen, we were to have our money back," he later recalled. "We had no desire to settle there alone."<sup>4</sup> He negotiated with the Canadian Pacific Railroad (C. P. R.) to have a railroad laid through the settlement by 1911.

Returning again to Elk Horn, Jens advertised the colonization plan and received an overwhelming response. He made another excursion with prospective land seekers, including Rev. J. J. Kildsig and two other men elected by the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church Synod as a "Colonization Committee." In the open prairie on the site of the future town of Standard, Pastor Kildsig addressed the group. On that trip, 5,000 acres were sold—a sign of future success that Jens worked hard to amplify in the following months:

*From that time on I led monthly excursions to Alberta. Each of these took two weeks of my time. The September and October excursions were rather large, and considerable acreage was sold. The November excursion was cancelled on account of corn shucking. In December and January a number of people made the trip with me, but none of them bought land at the time.*

*These many journeys were quite costly—almost \$100 each; and the expense had to be met out of my private means. But this sacrifice seemed to be required to carry the project through. To be sure, I had been promised \$1 per acre of all land sold; but that did not reach as far as I had expected. However, I have never regretted my sacrifice for the cause. Had I held back there would probably not have been a Danish colony at Standard.<sup>5</sup>*

In 1910 and 1911 settlers began moving in and breaking ground. Jens ordered a steam plow, which, he noted, "proved its worth."<sup>6</sup> A prairie fire swept through, and an early frost in late August ruined a crop, but the colony persevered. A coal mine was constructed. The railroad came, a church was founded, and a school was built where children were taught to read Danish in addition to religious instruction.



Jens and his wife actively contributed to the improvement of Standard and saw it evolve over the next three decades. They had their share of heartbreak: Of the nine children who accompanied Jens and Kristine to Canada, three died in their 30s and one at age 19 of diabetes and other illness. In 1929, as a reward for Jens's work for the C. P. R., Jens and Kristine were able to return to Denmark for the first time in 59 and 40 years, respectively, an experience they greatly enjoyed.

### DALUM, AB

Peter Ostergaard first heard about Dalum, Alberta, northeast of Calgary, at the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church Convention in Michigan in 1917: "A representative from the C.P.R. was allowed ten minutes time at the Convention in order to explain about the new settlement sponsored by the Danish Peoples Society (*Dansk Folkesamfund*).” He made the northwest journey to see the land, staying overnight in

a crowded cabin with some young Danish miners, as there were no other accommodations. By 1918 he and his family had sold their house in Detroit and loaded all their belongings on a freight car bound for Calgary. Peter went first to build "the shell of a house." Going to pick up his wife and sons, he recalled:

*At that time nobody ever thought of driving a car to Calgary, as there were no roads and the cars were not what they are today. So when the family arrived, I left the old Ford in Wayne and took the train to Calgary to meet them. We came back on the train the following night. The old road out of Wayne was very steep, and a Model T could never make it unless the gasoline tank was nearly full, as the gas was fed by gravity from the tank under the seat. There were no locks on a Ford at that time, and I found out too late that somebody had taken my car while I was in Calgary...used up most of the*

*gas and worn out the brakes. When we came to the foot of the hill, I told Marie that they had better play safe and walk up the first stretch, which was very steep. I did not get very far before the car stalled, and as there were no brakes, it rolled down backwards and over the bank to the right. I was lucky I did not tip over.*

*There we were, about eleven o'clock on a Saturday night, in a sleeping mining town with no accommodation for travelers. I went over to the shack mentioned before where some of the young men were staying, and I was lucky to find a man there with a team of horses and a democrat [wagon]... I talked him into taking us home, but it was a slow, cold ride as the driver let the horses walk all the way. When we finally arrived toward morning, Marie made her first coffee in the house which was to be our home for 43 years.<sup>7</sup>*



**02. Settlers arrive** Settlers from Iowa when they arrived in Gleichen (south of Standard) in 1911. Top row from left: O. P. Larsen, Jens Myrthu, Jens Rasmussen, and their families.

While Peter Ostergaard didn't come from Elk Horn, many of his neighbors did. A plat map of the "Danish Peoples Society Colony" shows a substantial number of farmers from Elk Horn and surrounding towns—Kimballton, Audubon, Irwin, Walnut—as well as Chicago, Solvang, Tyler, and Viborg. The Dalum community quickly established Bethlehem Lutheran Church and held regular winter meetings with speakers and songs to brighten the long evenings. They also began an annual "Folkefest," a two-day

summer festival with church services in the coulee behind the parsonage and plenty of refreshments, to which nearby Danish communities like Standard and Dickson were invited.

Like Elk Horn, these small, Alberta settlements have had to weather the many challenges that have faced rural communities in recent decades. But they began with the same immigrant work ethic and optimism, and found much to celebrate, with a rich cultural heritage that had much in common despite the distance.

Today technology can connect faraway places in various ways—though in our differences, we still find much to divide us. Genealogy can be a comfort: It's all about making connections, revising our understanding of "family," discovering our links to the past, and finding ties between people living hundreds, and even thousands, of miles apart.

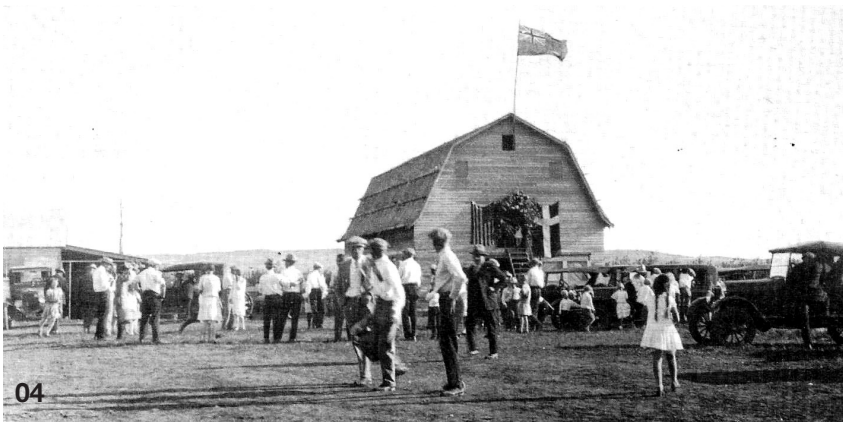
—Many thanks to Genealogy Center volunteer Suzanne Rasmussen for her research on Mary Heilesen.

### Danish Peoples Society Colony

Scale-

			G. Nielsen Mpls.-Minn	L. Larsen Kimballton Ia			S.C. Pederson.	
	35	36		31		32	33	
J. Jorgensen Chicago			C. Hartman Viborg S.D.	J. Carlsen Elkhorn Ia	N.C. Madson Elkhorn Ia	S.C. Pedersen Elkhorn Ia	Elkhorn Ia	P. Thuesen. Kimballton Ia
B. Jensen Chicago	C. Knebeck Chicago	A. Jorgesen Kimballton Ia	Hans C. Hansen Elkhorn Ia	M. Schulte Cedar Falls Ia	Chris Boe Walnut Ia	M.N. Nelson Tyler Minn	J. Jensen	100
26	25		30		29		28	100
M. Sorensen Chicago		C. Jorgesen Kimballton Ia	Jens Hass Chicago		100	A. Junker Engleale N.D.	C. Mullerop Irwin Ia	J. Mullerop Irwin Ia

03



04

<sup>1</sup>Edmund S. White, *Past and Present of Shelby County* (Indianapolis: B. F. Bowen & Co., 1915), 414. <sup>2</sup>Bodil J. Jensen, *Alberta's County of Mountain View*, (Mountain View County No. 17, 1983), 11. <sup>3</sup>Ibid. <sup>4</sup>Jens Rasmussen, *History of The Standard From Its Birth* (Standard, Alberta, 1943), 9. <sup>5</sup>Ibid., 10, 11. <sup>6</sup>Ibid., 12. <sup>7</sup>The History of Dalum (Drumheller: The Big Country News, 1968) 182.

**03. Map** Plat map from *Reflections*, a Dalum community history book published in 1990. **04. Celebration** A celebration at the Ostergaard barn, from *Reflections*, the Dalum community history book. The American and Danish flags are visible on the barn; the Canadian Red Ensign, a former flag of Canada, is flying.

# being a stubborn dane isn't all bad

I can't tell you how many times in my life I've heard someone referred to as a "stubborn Dane." (Truth be told, at times, I was the one being referenced!) We're much more likely to think of Danes as "stubborn" rather than "generous" or "progressive." *And yet*, I've known *many* generous and forward-thinking Danish Americans.

It's just not our calling card, I guess.

Here I want to highlight the numerous Danish Americans who have helped make the Museum of Danish America what it is today through their generous and thoughtful estate gifts. These Danes were stubborn in their conviction that MoDA continue to thrive for generations to come.

Consider this: Since 1989 over 25 percent of MoDA's support has come from estate gifts. When you consider that only 8 percent of Americans have planned such gifts, according to research referenced by Leave a Legacy®, this level of estate giving is truly amazing.

*Let's hear it for stubborn, generous, and progressive Danes!*

Notice, I didn't say "wealthy" Danes. While some estate gifts have exceeded \$1 million, others were under \$1,000. The average estate gift: \$95,325.06. *All* are important and greatly appreciated. And these bequests have not just come from Danish Americans in Iowa; they have come from 20 different states and Canada!

While MoDA has been blessed *so far* by such giving, we cannot assume this will continue indefinitely. Because I am the product of a "mixed marriage" (My mom married a Norwegian!), I am not as Danish as my mom, and my children are not as Danish as me. America continues to be a great melting pot, and future generations may not be willing to provide the same kind of support that MoDA's current members provide.

That's why it's important that MoDA grow its endowment, which is most easily accomplished through estate giving. Oftentimes it's as easy as updating a beneficiary form on an IRA or life insurance policy, and some types of estate gifts have certain tax benefits.

So, if you're a stubborn Dane who is also generous and progressive, please consult your financial/legal/tax advisors on how to best remember MoDA and your family through your estate. If you need help getting started, feel free to give me a call. Helping people include charitable giving in their estate plans gives me great satisfaction, and I welcome those requests!



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](http://www.danishmuseum.org/get-involved/recognition/naming-opportunities)

# memorials

**SEPTEMBER 20, 2016 – JANUARY 13, 2017**

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

Richard L. Andersen  
Dick Anderson, Kimballton, IA  
John Beck, my husband  
Lois Berg  
Harry H. Birkholm  
Barbara Birkholm Clay  
Lela Gwendolyn Block  
Jim & Odane Brittsan  
Robert Warren Brown  
Evelyn Bengard Christensen  
Mary Ann Christensen  
Lee Christiansen, Portland, OR  
Joann E. Clausen, my wife  
Glen Clemesen  
Ralph Doonan, my husband  
Ermelin Lenora Fallgatter  
Ermelin Simonsen Fallgatter  
Hans & Mathilde Farstrup  
Ole & LaVon Frolund  
Harvey H. Greve  
Curtis & Esther Haahr, Ringsted, IA  
Karen Wellejus Haigh  
Carl Chr. Hansen  
Cleo & Esther Hansen  
Mildred & Alfred Hansen  
Priscilla Hansen, Atlantic, IA  
Carl C. Hansen, my brother  
Clifford K. & A. Veola Hansen, my parents  
Marilyn Hanson, Cedar Falls, IA  
Marie-Louise Lind Harms  
Frank Heilesen  
Al Iversen  
Bernhardt & Stena Iverson

Arne C. Jensen  
Frederick Christian Jensen  
Irving & Elizabeth Jensen  
Ruth Jensen  
Maynard Jensen, Kimballton, IA  
Julius J. Jespersen  
Ludevikke Frederikke Leopoldena  
    Buck Jespersen, maternal  
    grandmother  
Charles Christian Johnson  
Duane Johnson  
Duane Johnson (Florida)  
Howard & Kaja Juel, my parents  
Karen M. Kadgihn  
Hans Kiehn  
Mogens Kiehn  
Lois Newgreen King, Seymour, WI  
Peter M. & Arlene Kroman  
Ed Larsen  
Edwar J. Larsen  
Kurt Klarskov Larsen  
Dorothea Laursen  
Chris & Harriet Laursen, Newell, IA  
John Leistad  
Robert (Bob) Madsen  
Harald & Margaret Madsen, Tyler,  
    MN  
Clark G. Mathisen  
Peter & Anna Miller, Dagmar, MT,  
    my parents  
Anna Nielsen  
Kristen Nielsen, Denmark  
Marilyn & LeVern Nielsen,  
    my parents  
Ray & Alice Noren  
Eric & Joan Norgaard

Oluf & Vera K. Olson, my parents  
Anna M. Pedersen, my wife  
Hans & Ivy Peitersen  
Rev. Adolph & Marie Petersen  
Harry & Frances Petersen,  
    my parents  
Carl Rasmussen  
Delbert Rasmussen  
Lawrence Rasmussen  
Lela Mae Mathisen Rasmussen  
Ruth Jensen Roberts, my wife  
Andrew Rosk Rosenkild  
Dr. Charles Dale Rosenquist,  
    my husband  
Leroy Arthur Sand, Kimballton, IA  
Leroy Sand, my husband  
Ruth (Toni) Sande, Adel, IA  
Albert Martin Jensen Schjodt,  
    my maternal grandfather  
Miriam Showalter, Minnetonka, MN  
Redge Sornson  
Harriet Spanel  
Halvor H. Strandskov  
Lars & Ane Marie Strandskov  
Lars & Marie Strandskov  
Herman Victor Strandskov,  
    my father  
Einer V. Thode  
Christopher Miltersen Thorup  
Svend Waendelin  
Aleen Weaver, Atlantic, IA  
Aleen Weaver's wonderful life  
    and legacy  
Walter Westergaard  
Charles W. & Norma J. Wilson



Compiled by  
Deb  
Christensen  
Larsen

# new additions to the wall of honor

**SEPTEMBER 20, 2016 – JANUARY 13, 2017**

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](http://danishmuseum.org).

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

**N. PETER EDSON & MARIANE THOMSEN EDSON** (1881 & 1887)  
Sacramento, Nebraska – Evelyn Ward, Greeley, CO

**JØRGEN & HANNE HENRIKSEN** (1881 & 1881)  
Ringsted, Iowa – Glenn Henriksen, Armstrong, IA

**STEEN A. METZ** (1962)  
Lincolnshire, Illinois – Steen A. & Eileen Metz, Sanibel, FL

**ARNE OLSEN, ELSEBETH OLSEN, KIRSTEN OLSEN** (1952, 1952, 1952)  
Fremont, California – Olsen Family Living Trust, Montara, CA

**NELS OLSON & CELIA SCHANTZ OLSON** (1869 & 1871)  
Fullerton, Nebraska – Evelyn Ward, Greeley, CO

**SIGFRED VOLMER OLSEN & JENNY OTTILIA PEDERSEN OLSEN** (1952 & 1952)  
Fremont, California – Kirsten Olsen Buehler, Elsebeth Olsen Gotham, Arne Olsen, all of Montara, CA; Peder & Doris Hoy, Modesto, CA

**MERETE VENDT-LARSEN** (1976)  
Ham Lake, Minnesota – Merete Duarte, Ham Lake, MN

# in honor

SEPTEMBER 20, 2016 – JANUARY 13, 2017

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

Rev. David K. Bonde  
Charles E. R. Boye  
Tova Brandt's *Skål* presentation in Decorah, IA  
My mom, Rosa Clemesen's commitment to volunteer at the museum and her 85th birthday in January 2017  
Re-design & updated core exhibit Being Danish! 100%  
Christine Thisted Haag's birthday

Appreciation of Danish interns  
Mads Henriksen and "Vinny" Henriksen  
Isabel Hoegh  
James D. Iversen  
Niels W. & Ingrid H. Jorgensen  
Sherry Knudsen, my wife  
Gloria & Bill Layton  
Michele McNabb  
The hard-working Museum Staff  
Museum's amazing Danish Interns  
The Museum's good work!  
Dawn & John Mark Nielsen  
John Mark Nielsen  
The good service of John Mark Nielsen  
Appreciation of all John Mark Nielsen's efforts

Dr. John Mark Nielsen, for his outstanding service to the Museum of Danish America  
John Mark Nielsen, sending congratulations and good wishes. Hope he continues to visit Danebod!  
John Mark Nielsen, who will be missed!  
Leroy Pedersen  
Helen Petersen, Atlantic, IA, longtime member and volunteer  
My 100th birthday, Marion Svendsen  
Marion Svendsen's 100th Birthday  
Rasmus Thøgersen

# new members

SEPTEMBER 20, 2016 – JANUARY 13, 2017

The Museum of Danish America is pleased to identify the following 74 individual memberships and one organization as its newest members:

John & Lemay Anderson, Linwood, NE  
Mark Andreasen, Gerald, MO  
Gary & Pam Bartachek, Belle Plaine, IA  
Carmen Becker, Cincinnati, OH  
Rich & Bonnie Bishop, Randalia, IA  
Lois Bolton, Boca Raton, FL  
Kirsten Buehler, Montara, CA  
Etta Christensen, Bennington, NE  
Michael & Emily Christensen, Harlan, IA  
Wanda Clark, Grand Rapids, MN  
The Danish Canadian National Museum, Spruce View, Alberta, Canada

Danish Sisterhood Lodge #185, Cleveland, OH  
Merete Duarte, Ham Lake, MN  
Gary Elmestad, St. Charles, MO  
Kenny & Linda Fobian, Iowa City, IA  
Lisa Frank, Elkhorn, NE  
John & Carolina Friedhoff, Miami, FL  
Scott & Barb Friedhoff, Wooster, OH  
Niels-Peter Gade, Århus, Midtjylland, Denmark  
Charles & Clytee Gold, Holladay, UT  
Kay Roberta Cameron & Dennis Gray, Murphy, NC  
Rich & Stella Greenhalgh, Bakersfield, CA  
Hanne Guerra, Fountain Valley, CA  
Christine Haag, Madison, WI  
Michael & Tammy Hansen, Des Moines, IA  
Linda Harrison, Sugar Land, TX

John & Barbara Havick, Stone Mountain, GA  
Erik Hedegaard, Missouri City, TX  
Craig Hendee, Estes Park, CO  
Laura Hendee, Washington, DC  
Susan Hendee, Highlands Ranch, CO  
Dana Hendee Bork, Saint Paul, MN  
John Hester, Hackettstown, NJ  
Brigham Hoegh, Atlantic, IA  
Chelsea Jacobsen, Davenport, IA  
Gloria Jensen, Omaha, NE  
Royce & Peg Johnson, Iowa City, IA  
Tom Johnson, Williamston, MI  
Brian & Jessica Jorgensen, Manhattan, KS  
Charles Jorgensen, Blair, NE  
Dave & Susan Kinsey, Ft. Myers, FL  
Hans Henrik & Pia Kjærgaard, Esbjerg, Denmark  
John & Cathie Lehman, Racine, WI

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**Membership** in the Museum of Danish America is a meaningful gift for any occasion. As a museum member, the recipient will enjoy year-round admission, the *America Letter* newsletter three times a year, a 10% discount in our Design Store, and reduced translation and research fees at our Genealogy Center.

Inge Larsen & Jesper Lorenzen,  
Copenhagen, Denmark  
Philip & Julie Lund, Happy Valley, OR  
Heidi Lung, Marion, IA  
Michael Martin, North Saint Paul, MN  
Cheryl Martinez, Colton, CA  
Barbara McCaughey, Palm Beach, FL  
Austin McKeever, Ames, IA  
Dana McKeever Kent,  
West Des Moines, IA  
Chris & Karen Mertes, Blacksburg, VA  
Ronald Boldt & Thomas Michels,  
New Richmond, WI  
Andrew Miller, Des Moines, IA

Nick Kofoed Mogensen,  
København S, Denmark  
Mitch Moon, Atlanta, GA  
Mitch Okeefe, Urbandale, IA  
Jack Ottosen, Morrison, IL  
Todd Petersen, Volo, IL  
James & Brenda Purdy, Hudson, WI  
Ann Rasmussen, Junction City, OR  
Elaine Rasmussen, Exira, IA  
Martha Resotko, Steuben, ME  
Cheryl Riley, Hiawatha, KS  
Bill & Lori Rothstein, Port  
Washington, NY  
Keith & Juliana Sandahl,  
Green Valley, AZ

Scandinavian Trade Association  
(Tom Mortenson),  
Detroit Lakes, MN  
Marin Sharpless, Oakland, CA  
Theresa Sorenson, Thornton, CO  
Elizabeth Steffensen,  
Hoffman Estates, IL  
Mark Svendsen, Philomath, OR  
Kathy Thomsen, Tracy, CA  
Margene Timm, Lincoln, NE  
Randy & Marilyn Vessey,  
Sunnyside, WA  
Steven Wit, Elkins Park, PA

# thank you, organizations

## SEPTEMBER 20, 2016 – JANUARY 13, 2017

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  
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 #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 #144,  
Dike, IA  
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #268,  
Junction City, OR area  
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #283,  
Dagmar, MT area  
Danish Brotherhood Centennial Lodge  
#348, Eugene, OR area  
The Danish Canadian National  
Museum, Spruce View,  
Alberta, Canada  
Danish Club of Tucson,  
Tucson, AZ area  
Danish Cultural Center of Greenville,  
Greenville, MI  
The Danish Home, Chicago, IL  
The Danish Home,  
Croton-On-Hudson, NY  
Danish Mutual Insurance Association,  
Elk Horn, IA  
Danish Sisterhood Dagmar Lodge #4,  
Chicago, IL area  
Danish Sisterhood Lodge #15,  
Burlington, WI area  
Danish Sisterhood Ellen Lodge #21,  
Denver, CO area  
Danish Sisterhood Lodge #102,  
Des Moines, IA area

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

Danish Sisterhood Lodge #176, Dike, IA area	Henningsen Construction, Inc., Atlantic, IA	The Rasmussen Group, Inc., Des Moines, IA
Danish Sisterhood Lodge #185, Cleveland, OH area	House of Denmark, San Diego, CA	Rebild National Park Society, Southern California Chapter, Los Angeles, CA area
Danish Sisterhood Lodges, Heartland District, Iowa-Minnesota & surrounding states	Independent Order of Svithiod, Verdandi Lodge #3, Chicago, IL area	Red River Danes, Fargo, ND area
Danish Sisterhood Lodges, Nebraska/ Colorado Districts, Lincoln, NE & Denver CO areas	Keast Auto Center, Harlan, IA	Ringsted Danish American Fellowship, Ringsted, IA area
Den Danske Pioneer (Elsa Steffensen & Linda Steffensen), Hoffman Estates, IL	Kirsten's Danish Bakery (Paul & Kirsten Andersen Jepsen), Burr Ridge, IL	Royal Danish Embassy, Washington, DC
Elk Horn Lutheran Church, Elk Horn, IA	Knudsen Old Timers, Yorba Linda, CA area	Scan Design Foundation by Inger & Jens Bruun, Seattle, WA
Elk Horn-Kimballton Optimist Club, Elk Horn & Kimballton, IA area	La Charlotte – Caniglia Pastries, Jeremy & Jacqueline Caniglia, Omaha, NE	Scandinavian Trade Association (Tom Mortenson), Detroit Lakes, MN
Elverhoj Museum of History and Art, Solvang, CA	Landmands Bank (Rod Rowland, President) Audubon, IA	Shelby County Historical Society & Museum, Harlan, IA
Exira-Elk Horn-Kimballton Community School District, Elk Horn, IA area	Leman USA, Sturtevant, WI	Shelby County State Bank, Harlan and Elk Horn, IA
Faith, Family, Freedom Foundation (Kenneth & Marlene Larsen), Calistoga, CA	Marne Elk Horn Telephone Co., Elk Horn, IA	Symra Literary Society, Decorah, IA
Fajen Construction (Larry Fajen), Elk Horn, IA	Nelsen and Nelsen, Attorneys at Law, Cozad, NE	The Village Café (James Uren), Elk Horn, IA
Friends of Scandinavia, Raleigh, NC	O & H Danish Bakery (Eric Olesen), Racine, WI	TK Petersen (Thorvald K. Petersen) Santa Monica, CA
Hacways (Helene & Nanna Christensen), Hals, Denmark	Olsen, Muhlbauer & Co., L.L.P., Carroll, IA	Vasa Order of America, Omaha Lodge #330, Omaha, NE
Hansen Interiors (Torben & Bridget Ovesen), Mount Pleasant, WI	Outlook Study Club, Elk Horn, IA area	Winding Pathways (Richard & Marion Patterson), Cedar Rapids, IA
Harlan Newspapers (Steve Mores & Alan Mores), Harlan, IA	Petersen Family Foundation, Inc. (H. Rand & Mary Louise Petersen), Harlan, IA	
	Proongjily (Cynthia McKeen), St. Paul, MN	

# jens jensen heritage path

**SEPTEMBER 20, 2016 – JANUARY 13, 2017**

The Jens Jensen Heritage Path is a place to celebrate an occasion or achievement, recognize an individual or organization, or honor the memory of a loved one. Twice a year the pavers will be engraved and placed within the Flag Plaza – October and May.

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

Rich Inman & Melinda Brown,  
Littleton, CO

Etta Christensen, Bennington, NE  
Andrew Miller, Des Moines, IA

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**Paver order forms** can be found at [www.danishmuseum.org/get-involved/recognition/commemorative-bricks](http://www.danishmuseum.org/get-involved/recognition/commemorative-bricks)

# a letter from the president

Once again I have had the honor and privilege of serving as the Museum of Danish America board president during 2016. I am pleased to inform you that 2016 has been a productive and rewarding year. It has also been a year of change and new challenges. Adjusting to these changes would not be possible without a strong, dedicated board and staff. I want to assure you that the Museum of Danish America is blessed with both.

## the challenge of change

### **JOHN MARK'S RETIREMENT AND A NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

One year ago I indicated in the 2015 updates that John Mark Nielsen, our executive director at that time, would be retiring in February of 2017. By the time you read this newsletter, John Mark will have retired. I also indicated in the 2015 report that a search committee had been formed and a search was being conducted. The search committee did a wonderful job of screening the applicants and coming up with a final hiring recommendation to the full MoDA board.

The search committee had 17 applicants from 9 different states and Denmark. The recommendation made to the full board was to hire Rasmus Thøgersen, a native of Denmark and current resident of Omaha, Nebraska. The MoDA board voted to approve hiring Rasmus in September 2016. The recommendation to hire Rasmus was made after interviews were conducted by the members of the search committee, by the MoDA staff, and in consultation with John Mark. Rasmus began his duties as executive director on December 1, 2016.

I mentioned earlier that the board and staff will face change and new challenges in 2016. Transitioning to a new executive director will be one of those first challenges. Transition is defined as, "passage from one state, stage, subject, or place to another." I think the transition to a new leader would be more challenging if we didn't have a strong, dedicated staff with years of experience. This factor alone will certainly provide operational insight for Rasmus. We also have a strong board that, I believe, will provide whatever support they can to make the transition a smooth one. John Mark will also have spent two months, December 2016 and January 2017, providing Rasmus with some very important transition time to begin "learning the ropes."

It is important for the museum membership to know that John Mark will also continue to serve the museum as a member of several committees. His continued involvement will certainly be a valuable resource, not only for the new executive director, but also for the MoDA board.



By  
Garey  
Knudsen



## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR EMERITUS

At our February board meeting in California, the executive committee presented the following resolution to the full board: In recognition of John Mark Nielsen's service over the past 33 years as a founding board member (1983-1991 and 2000-2003), member of Lifetime Legacy Giving, a Heritage Builder, and Executive Director from 2003-2017, the board of directors of the Museum of Danish America names him Executive Director Emeritus. Though the title is honorary, John Mark Nielsen will continue to serve in an advisory role to future museum executive directors, and when mutually agreed upon and at the direction of the museum's current executive director, he may represent the museum in furthering its organizational mission.

It is important to note that this title is an honor rarely given. It is given to someone who has served with distinction and has created a legacy that will last for years. The title is given to someone who has served in an important leadership role and continues to make significant contributions to the museum. And, it is given to someone whose contribution is one we hope others will aspire to.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR EVALUATION PROCESS

Within the last year, by a vote of the full MoDA board, a formal evaluation document and process has been put in place. This process and document was developed with input from John Mark. Therefore, going forward as a board, we will evaluate the performance of the executive director to ensure that the job is being done to our satisfaction. I think it is important to note that the MoDA staff will also be able to provide input into the evaluation process. I think this process will help Rasmus develop into a very effective executive director. Feedback on his job performance will certainly help him become a great executive director.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SELF EVALUATION

The MoDA board also approved a document called an Executive Director Self Evaluation. This document will be used by the new executive director to assess his own performance. This document will address performance issues related to the job requirements of the position. This document, along with the board evaluation, should assist the executive director in meeting the expectations of the job.

## NEW BOARD MEMBERS

The MoDA board is pleased to welcome four new members. The new members are as follows: Karen Nielsen from Overland Park, KS; Marnie Jensen from Nebraska City, NE; Anders Sand from Kansas City, MO; and Carol Svendsen from Denver, CO.

## RETIRING BOARD MEMBERS

I would like to thank the following board members for their years of service and their continued commitment to serve the Museum of Danish America. Those leaving the board are as follows: Brent Norlem from Monticello, MN; Mittie Ostergaard from Mission Viejo, CA; Peter Nielsen from Naples, FL; and Dan Warren from Fairmont, MN.

## ACCREDITATION

The staff of the museum, led by Angela Stanford, the museum's Curator of Collections and Registrar, spent hours completing a 400-plus-page application for accreditation through the American Alliance of Museums. The application, along with an onsite visit conducted on November 1-2, 2016, provided an in-depth, comprehensive review of the operation of the museum.

I, along with members of the MoDA board executive committee (Tim Burchill from Jamestown, ND, Karen Suchomel from West Branch, IA, and Carolyn Larson from St. Paul, MN), were afforded the opportunity to participate in an onsite review by a team of

reviewers from the American Alliance of Museums. The reviewers were very interested in how our board functions and our overall view of the museum in general.

If the museum is fortunate enough to receive the accreditation, it will be quite a feather in our hat. There are only about five percent of the museums in the U.S. that have achieved this accreditation status. I might add that when I left the museum on November 1, after going through an interview with the reviewers, I was very optimistic that we would receive the accreditation.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-2020**

At our February 2016 board meeting, the 2016-2020 strategic plan was approved. This plan will provide guidance for our current and future boards in achieving strategic goals designed to move the museum forward in its mission. Anyone interested in viewing a summary of the strategic plan can access the document at [danishmuseum.org](http://danishmuseum.org). You must click on the heading "Mission" and then scroll down to find the summary.

### **BOARD OFFICERS JOB DESCRIPTIONS**

The MoDA board also approved detailed job descriptions for the board officers. The detail laid out for each position will provide guidance for those board members who assume leadership roles on the board.

### **BOARD SELF EVALUATION**

The MoDA board approved a document to be used in a self-evaluation process. The questionnaire was distributed to each member of the full board. Each board member was asked to provide their individual assessment as to how they felt the board is, or is not, functioning. Tim Burchill, the current board Vice President, conducted the survey. I am happy to report that the results were very favorable. Various comments were as follows: "Positive about the way we function," "No hidden

agendas," "Positive motivations," "The board could use additional on-going education and what the role of the board member is," "Need to know what the trends are in other museums," "Confidence in museum leadership," and "Confident in the finances and the transparency of operations." The board self-evaluation was timely in that the accreditation evaluators, who visited the museum, asked if there was a process in place for board self-evaluation. We were happy to report that yes, indeed, we do have such a process.

### **PRIDE**

When members of the executive committee and staff conducted interviews for the executive director position, there was some time between interviews. I made use of this time by moving around the museum and visiting with tourists who stopped by for a visit. I had the opportunity to visit with people from Illinois, Minnesota, Indiana, South Dakota, and, of course, Iowa. Some of the comments made by the visitors were as follows: "Amazing! I had no idea!" "I visit many museums and am very critical of how museums present their mission; this one does an outstanding job!" "We have seen the sign on the interstate many times and finally decided to take the time to visit." "We are very impressed and glad we took the time." "What a physical structure, very impressive!" "Very well done!" "It was on our bucket list, glad we made the trip."

These comments certainly enhance a person's pride in the job that is being done to preserve Danish culture, history, and heritage. What we have today is a tribute to the hard work done by staff and MoDA boards.

### **HATS OFF TO JOHN MARK**

I want to congratulate John Mark for his years of dedicated service and wish him the best in retirement. He has done an exemplary job of leading the museum and setting it on a positive course for the future.

# board of directors

The 2016-2017 board of directors is a special group of men and women who have unselfishly dedicated themselves to the preservation of their Danish and Danish-American heritage and the mission of the museum. They join an elite group of individuals who, over the past 33 years, have worked to build and maintain a museum of which all Danes, Danish Americans, and the American public can be proud.

Participating at their own expense, the board members come together three times a year to share their skills and experience in providing oversight to the administration of the museum and to develop ideas and plans that will contribute to its continuing vitality. It is the practice of the board to meet each February and June in different locations around the

U.S. so that they may share and celebrate Danish heritage with those Danish Americans who may not otherwise be able to link directly with the museum. In 2016 the board held its February meeting in Las Vegas, NV, and its June meeting was held in Kansas City, MO with election of new board members. In October the board meeting was held in Elk Horn, IA. The museum's annual meeting was held in Elk Horn with new board members assuming their office; outgoing members present and participating.

Without the dedication, energy, and support of a strong, team-oriented board of directors, the museum staff would not be able to work effectively in managing the day-to-day operations of the Museum of Danish America.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS SERVING IN 2016

Cynthia Larsen Adams, *Littleton, CO*  
Ronald Bro, *Cedar Falls, IA*  
Beth Bro-Roof, *Cedar Rapids, IA*  
Tim Burchill, *Jamestown, ND*  
Bente Ellis, *San Jose, CA*  
David Esbeck, *San Diego, CA*  
Dorothy Stadsvold Feisel, *Chestertown, MD*  
David Hendee, *Omaha, NE*  
Glenn Henriksen, *Armstrong, IA*  
Hon. Consul Anna Thomsen Holliday, *Houston, TX*  
Marnie Jensen, *Nebraska City, NE*  
Garey Knudsen, *Hutchinson, MN*  
Carolyn Larson, *St. Paul, MN*  
Craig Molgaard, *Little Rock, AR*  
Dagmar Muthamia, *Long Beach, CA*  
Hon. Consul Karen Nielsen, *Overland Park, KS*  
Peter Nielsen, *Naples, FL*  
Brent Norlem, *Monticello, MN*  
Marian (Mittie) Ostergaard, *Mission Viejo, CA*  
Randy Ruggaard, *Hudson, OH*

Anders Sand, *Kansas City, MO*  
Jerry Schrader, *Elk Horn, IA*  
Ole Sønnichsen, *Bjert, Denmark*  
Carl Steffensen, *Houston, TX*  
Linda Steffensen, *Hoffman Estates, IL*  
Karen Suchomel, *West Branch, IA*  
Carol Svendsen, *Denver, CO*  
Dan Warren, *Fairmont, MN*

## EX-OFFICIO

Mark Frederiksen, *Peyton, CO*  
Vern Hunter, *Fargo, ND*  
Nils Jensen, *Portland, OR*  
Dennis Larson, *Decorah, IA*  
Kai E. Nyby, *Fountain Hills, AZ*  
Marc Petersen, *Omaha, NE*

John Mark Nielsen, *Blair, NE, Executive Director*  
Rasmus Thøgersen, *Omaha, NE, Executive Director*

# who we are

## MISSION STATEMENT

The Museum of Danish America celebrates Danish roots and American dreams.

## CORE VALUES

We are:

- ◆ **Inspirational:** We honor the vision, ambition and diligence of Danish-American achievers, and we seek to inspire future generations by telling their stories.
- ◆ **Deeply rooted:** We treasure our Danish heritage, and we are deeply committed to our local American communities.
- ◆ **Focused on the future:** We realize that to keep the past alive, we must always remain part of the future.

## VISION

- ◆ To be widely recognized as the world's leading compiler and communicator of the history and inspirational achievements of Danish Americans.
- ◆ To turn the museum and the villages of Elk Horn and Kimballton into one of Iowa's top destinations for tourists, educators and local family excursions - and to support other local communities featuring Danish-American history.
- ◆ To be widely recognized as a thought leader and trendsetter in the international museum industry, constantly featuring new and inspiring experiences for worldwide audiences through innovative exhibits, events, publications and online media tools.

# staff & interns

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

John Mark Nielsen, Ph.D.  
Rasmus Thøgersen, M.L.I.S.

## ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER

Terri Johnson

## ALBERT RAVENHOLT CURATOR OF DANISH-AMERICAN CULTURE

Tova Brandt, M.A.

## CURATOR OF COLLECTIONS & REGISTRAR

Angela Stanford, M.A.

## GENEALOGY CENTER MANAGER

Michele McNabb, M.A., M.L.I.S.  
Kara McKeever, M.F.A.

## DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

Deb Christensen Larsen

## COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

Nicky Christensen

## PLANNED GIVING CONSULTANT

Paul Johnson, CFP®, ChFC®, CASL

## ACCOUNTING MANAGER

Jennifer Winters

## BUILDING & GROUNDS MANAGER

Tim Fredericksen

## DESIGN STORE BUYER

Joni Soe-Butts

## DESIGN STORE MANAGER

Chelsea Jacobsen  
Kelly Doonan  
Nan Dreher

## ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Nan Dreher

## GENEALOGY & LIBRARY ASSISTANT

Wanda Sornson, M.S.

## WEEKEND STAFF

Terri Amaral  
Rochelle Bruns  
Beth Rasmussen  
Rodger Rasmussen

## BEDSTEMOR'S HOUSE STAFF

Rochelle Bruns  
Grace Greving  
Trudy Juelsgaard  
Doug Palmer

## DANISH INTERNS\*

Mads Madsen Henriksen, *University of Southern Denmark, Odense (Institutional Archive)*

Vincent Moroz Henriksen, *University of Southern Denmark, Odense (Exhibits)*

Astrid Kaalund-Jørgensen, *Roskilde University, Denmark (Exhibits)*

## AMERICAN INTERN

Jennifer Olsson, *Johns Hopkins University (Inventory Assistant)*

\*Danish internships are funded through a generous grant from the Scan Design Foundation by Inger and Jens Bruun, Seattle, WA

## a year of success

### HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- ◆ After year-long, nationwide searches, the museum welcomed Kara McKeever, who began her duties as Genealogy Center manager on June 27, and Rasmus Thøgersen, who assumed the position of executive director on December 1.
- ◆ Reached a population of over 250,000 through visits to the museum, traveling exhibits, social media, and programs and presentations around the country.
- ◆ Participation in numerous festivals and events, from the Orange County International Street Fair in California to workshops at the Danish Home at Croton-on-Hudson, NY, and “Danish Days” in Greenville, MI - the longest-running Danish-American festival in the U.S.
- ◆ Replaced the three original boilers (installed at the time of the museum’s construction in 1993) with high-efficiency boilers through a grant from MidAmerican Energy.

### EXHIBITS: The museum continued its active exhibits program in 2016.

- ◆ *The Whimsical World of Bjørn Wiinblad* – A retrospective exhibit organized by the Museum of Danish America in cooperation with Arken Museum of Art located in Ishøj, Denmark.
- ◆ *Sports for Sports’ Sake* – Our annual exhibit opened at the museum and will run through summer 2017.
- ◆ *Art by Gert Mathiesen* – An exhibit exploring the legacy of this contemporary Danish-born artist (1951-2013). This exhibit is now on view at Nordia House in Portland, OR.
- ◆ *Skåll! Scandinavian Spirits* – Organized by our museum, this exhibit also represents the first cooperative effort by all six of the major Scandinavian-American museums. This year it was at the Swedish American Museum in Chicago and Vesterheim, the Norwegian American Museum in Decorah, IA.
- ◆ *Home: Sculpture by Dennis Andersen*, an artist in Atlanta, GA, former board member and Elk Horn native.

- ◆ *Happy Danes on the Plains* – An English version of an exhibit, created by Danish curator Henrik Bredmose Simonsen, exploring how Danish immigrant culture has been maintained over several generations.
- ◆ *Sisse Brimberg Photographs for National Geographic 1990 – 2002*
- ◆ Nine of the museum’s traveling exhibits were hosted by 18 different venues in 10 different states and reaching an audience of almost 25,000. Another 23,000 individuals attended programs sponsored by the museum in seven different states!

### COLLECTIONS: Among the many valuable artifact donations in 2016, the museum received the following:

- ◆ The entire collection of artifacts and archive of the Danish Sisterhood of America. The museum becomes the official repository for the continually-growing organization; donated by the Danish Sisterhood Society.
- ◆ Personal artifacts from the collection of Niels Skov, including artifacts used in the Danish Resistance during World War II; donated by Diane Skov.
- ◆ Andreas Marschall piano manufactured in Denmark circa 1835; donated by the estate of Gunnar and Else Sorensen.
- ◆ A large collection of one soldier’s uniforms, training manuals, personal effects, and even food items from World War II; donated by Carl Steffensen.
- ◆ Sports and band uniforms from the Elk Horn-Kimballton, Exira, and Harlan school districts in Iowa. Donated by the Exira-Elk Horn-Kimballton School District, Larry and Janis Fajen, Annette Andersen, Lynn Johnson, Virgil Christensen, and Deb Christensen Larsen.



By  
John Mark  
Nielsen

## GRANTS

- ◆ Charles W. and Norma J. Wilson Foundation
- ◆ Albert Victor Ravenholt Fund
- ◆ Eric and Joan Norgaard Charitable Trust
- ◆ Shelby County Community Foundation
- ◆ Iowa Arts Council
- ◆ Iowa Tourism
- ◆ Scan Design Foundation by Inger and Jens Bruun
- ◆ American Scandinavian Foundation
- ◆ A.P. Møller og Chastine McKinney-Møller Fondet

## exhibitions

Baseball uniforms, metal sculpture, huge painted canvases, and even jigsaw puzzles – all have been featured in the museum’s galleries this year. The changing exhibitions have featured “something for everyone,” from photography to contemporary art to sports – all with a Danish-American connection. At the same time our major exhibition *Skål! Scandinavian Spirits* continued its journey to partner institutions in Seattle, Chicago, and Decorah, IA. A new traveling exhibition, *The Whimsical World of Bjørn Wiinblad*, opened in Elk Horn and will begin a national tour in 2017.

Our menu of traveling displays\* continues to bring Danish-American stories to communities from coast to coast. In total, traveling exhibitions appeared in 18 different locations in 10 states, reaching an audience of over 30,000 people.

Whether you visit Elk Horn in person or not, we hope that all members can enjoy the museum’s exhibition program through gallery installations, traveling displays, virtual tours, or through the pages of this *America Letter*.

### ON-SITE GALLERY EXHIBITIONS IN 2016

*Home: Sculpture by Dennis Andersen*  
October 22, 2015 – May 8, 2016

*Happy Danes on the Plains*  
November 27, 2015 – April 10, 2016

*Sport for Sports’ Sake: Athletes and Ethnicity in Danish America*  
April 23, 2016 – September 4, 2017

## GRADUATE STUDENT INTERNS

In addition, the museum continues to benefit from the work of graduate student interns. Danish interns were again sponsored through a grant from the Scan Design Foundation by Inger and Jens Bruun of Seattle, WA.

*Brimberg Photographs for National Geographic (1990-2002)*  
May – December 2016

*Art by Gert Mathiesen*  
May 21 – October 31, 2016

*The Whimsical World of Bjørn Wiinblad*  
November 25, 2016 – May 30, 2017

### TRAVELING EXHIBITIONS IN 2016

*Church Basements and Children’s Homes*  
Nordia House, Portland, OR

*The Danish Pioneer*  
Western Historic Trails Center, Council Bluffs, IA

*Denmark October 1943*  
Nordic Heritage Museum, Seattle, WA

*Happy Danes on the Plains*  
Columbia Hall, Dannebrog, NE

*Exploring Danish Happiness*  
Danish Home, Croton-on-Hudson, NY  
Luck Historical Museum, Luck, WI  
Danish Cultural Center, Greenville, MI

*Jens Jensen: Celebrating the Native Prairie*  
Home & Garden Show, Harlan, IA  
Clay County Heritage, Spencer, IA  
Warren Cultural Center, Greenfield, IA



By  
Tova  
Brandt

\* Would you like to share one of these exhibits in your community? Contact us to learn more about hosting a museum display! ▶

## *Skål! Scandinavian Spirits*

Nordic Heritage Museum, Seattle, WA  
Swedish American Museum, Chicago, IL  
Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum, Decorah, IA  
Danish Brotherhood, Eugene, OR  
Scandinavian School of San Francisco, CA  
Scandinavian Midsummer Festival, Omaha, NE  
Danebod Folk School, Tyler, MN

## *Sport for Sports' Sake*

Sioux City Public Museum, Sioux City, IA  
Western Historic Trails Center, Council Bluffs, IA  
Danish American Center, Minneapolis, MN  
RAGBRAI Expo, Glenwood, IA

## *Victor Borge: A Smile is the Shortest Distance*

Danish Cultural Center, Greenville, MI

## collections

Of the almost 1,000 artifacts offered to the museum's curatorial collection this year, just over 330 were accepted. In addition to that number, we received an exceptionally large donation from the Danish Sisterhood of America, a collection that is currently being sorted and counted. As we have said in past years, and echo once again, the generosity of our donors is so gratifying and provides us with more stories to share with our audiences. Thank you to our members and donors for your continued and kind support.

### **ARTIFACT DONORS**

Annette Andersen, Kimballton, IA  
Dennis Andersen, Atlanta, GA  
Brian Burgess, Norwalk, CT  
Jim Christensen, Adel, IA  
Rolf Christensen, Getzville, NY  
Virgil Christensen, Harlan, IA  
Hans Clausen, West Hills, CA  
Rosa Clemens, Exira, IA  
Nellie Curran, Pittsburgh, PA  
Norman Danielsen, Randolph, KS  
Danish Cultural Center of Greenville, MI  
Danish Sisterhood in America, Santa Rosa, CA  
Danish Windmill Corporation, Elk Horn, IA  
Maryellen Dietz, Silverdale, WA  
Ann Drefke, Marcus, IA  
Barry Edmonds, East Hampton, CT  
Exira-Elk Horn-Kimballton Community School District,  
Elk Horn, IA  
Janis Fajen, Elk Horn, IA

Larry Fajen, Elk Horn, IA  
Nina Gower, Maxwell, IA  
Linda Grandage, Maryville, TN  
June Haas, Kimballton, IA  
Johanne Hansen, Des Moines, IA  
Linda Hansen, Audubon, IA  
Linda Hansen, Berryville, VA  
Lydia Hansen, Chicago, IL  
Meta Hansen, Seal Beach, CA  
Karen Hildmann, Streamwood, IL  
Lynn Johnson, Exira, IA  
Debra Christensen Larsen, Harlan, IA  
Carol Laursen, Crawfordsville, IN  
Jeanette Lillehoj, Kimballton, IA  
John Vogt Masengarb, West St. Paul, MN  
Michele McNabb, Atlantic, IA  
Kristie Hansen-Mendez, Chicago, IL  
John Mark Nielsen, Blair, NE  
Liv Norderhaug, Eden Prairie, MN  
Ginger Nuesser, Winter Haven, FL  
Clara Pedersen, Elk Horn, IA  
Randy Ruggaard, Hudson, OH  
Seward County Historical Society, Gohner, NE  
Diane Skov, Lacey, WA  
Estate of Gunnar and Else Sorensen, North Bend, WA  
Marie Louise Sorensen, DeKalb, IL  
Carl Steffensen, Houston, TX  
Heather Valdivia, Griswold, IA



By  
Angela  
Stanford

# genealogy center

The year 2016 saw a significant transition at the Genealogy Center with the retirement of librarian/manager Michele McNabb at the end of June. As her replacement, I've had substantial shoes to fill and a steep learning curve, but with the help and support of staff, volunteers, and Michele herself (now volunteering), we continued to make progress during an eventful year.

Staff and volunteers completed 33 translation projects and a record number of paid research projects (66), in addition to working with walk-in patrons and responding to phone and email queries. Volunteers also assisted by augmenting databases, digitizing church records, and creating indexes, among other projects—donating over 2,500 hours in 2016.

Our library and special collections grew by 380 new books, photographs, and other materials. Nearly 250 new immigrant files were created, and numerous others saw updates and additions. A number of new databases and indexes for Danish-American churches and communities were also added.

Our summer photo display, My Favorite Dane, inspired a number of interesting and poignant photos and stories of favorite Danish relatives, ancestors, or acquaintances. Our Julefest display featured the trendy theme of “hygge” for the holidays.

## **In 2016 we received and/or processed donations from the following individuals and institutions:**

Lemay Andersen, Linwood, NE  
Perry Ankersen, Green Bay, WI  
Dennis Barten, Kirkwood, MO  
Karen Friedmann Beall, Santa Fe, NM  
Bloomsbury Publishing, Inc., New York, NY  
Soren Borre, Flower Mound, TX  
Eileen Carlson, DeWitt, IA  
Linda Carlson, Leonardtown, MD  
Alice Carrigan, Ankeny, IA  
Cass County Genealogical Society, Atlantic, IA  
Rolf Christensen, Getzville, NY  
Elizabeth Christensen, Parkville, MO  
Ejnar G. Christiansen, Abita Springs, LA  
Bob Crane, Silver Springs, MD  
Danish Lutheran Church and Cultural Center, Yorba Linda, CA  
Seena Karen Rasmussen Drapala, Minden, NV  
Barry Edmonds, East Hampton, CT  
Patricia Erickson, Kearney, NE

David W. Esbeck, San Diego, CA  
Larry & Janis Fajen, Elk Horn, IA  
Gerald Fowler, Salem, OR  
Berniece Grewcock, Omaha, NE  
June Haas, Kimballton, IA  
Carl C. Hansen, Tequesta, FL  
Glen Haselbarth, Minden, NE  
John Havick, Stone Mountain, GA  
Karen Hildmann, Streamwood, IL  
James D. Iversen, Decorah, IA  
Lynn & Connie Johnson, Exira, IA  
William P. Jones, District Heights, MD  
Teresa King, Melbourne Beach, FL  
Lowell Kramme, Des Moines, IA  
Jean Krogh, Crestone, CO  
Jeanette Lillehoj, Kimballton, IA  
Julia McKeever, Defiance, IA  
Michele McNabb, Atlantic, IA  
Steen Metz, Lincolnshire, IL  
Diane Mitchell, Glen Arm, MD  
Nick Kofod Mogensen, Copenhagen, Denmark  
Egon & Laina Molbak, Bellevue, WA  
Peter Sand Myschetzky, Hellerup, Denmark  
Jack E. Nelson, Waxhaw, NC  
Roger Nelson, Kenosha, WI  
Beverly F. Nelson, Ankeny, IA  
Rev. Ronald A. Nielsen, White Bear Lake, MN  
Niels H. Nielsen, Allerød, Denmark  
Folmer & Vera Nyby, Michigan City, IN  
Lisa D. Petersen, Owings, MD  
Anna E. Porter, Beaverdam, VA  
Marilyn Olesen Railey, Lakewood, NM  
Kenneth Sand, Prairie du Chien, WI  
Richard Sand, Kansas City, MO  
Nancy Sand, Kimballton, IA  
Diane J. Skov, Lacey, WA  
Ole Sønnichsen, Bjert, Denmark  
Wanda Sornson, Elk Horn, IA  
Carl Steffensen, Houston, TX  
Leo & Gayle Stuart, Walnut, IA  
Donna Christensen Thomas, Papillion, NE  
Finn H. Thomsen, Aalborg, Denmark  
Marion Vierow, Saco, ME  
Charlene Villars, Minden, NE  
Carolyn Wittrup, Elk Horn, IA



By  
Kara  
McKeever

# volunteers

In 2016 volunteers at both the museum and Genealogy Center contributed a total of **3,177** hours, down only 29 hours from 2015. Though several volunteers no longer donate their time for a number of reasons – health, a move to a different community, or other commitments – I’m happy to report that we’ve added four new volunteers to the roster, including our former Genealogy Center Manager, Michele McNabb! Volunteers help with genealogy research, translations, assisting museum staff by greeting visitors at the front desk, helping at a number of museum events, data entry, mailings, and most recently, in the Jens Jensen Prairie Landscape Park. Staff could not do what we do on a daily basis without assistance from our devoted volunteers; every hour of time volunteers give is deeply appreciated. Mange tak!

The following are volunteers for whom we have **documented** hours in 2016:

## MUSEUM

Annette Andersen  
 Marilyn Andersen  
 Rosalie Andersen  
 Virgil & Joyce Christensen  
 Rosa Clemson  
 Peggy Hansen  
 Joy Heckman  
 Jeanette Lillehoj  
 Dawn Nielsen  
 Wava Petersen  
 Joanne Potts  
 Karen Rafferty  
 Elva Rasmussen  
 Howard Sorensen

## GENEALOGY

Bent Christensen  
 June Haas  
 Ralf & Inga Hoifeldt  
 Shannon Jensen  
 Connie Johnson  
 Jeanette Knudsen  
 Michele McNabb  
 Marlene Miller  
 Suzanne Rasmussen  
 Nancy Sand  
 Charlotte Sorensen  
 Karma Sorensen  
 Gayle Stuart  
 Donna Christensen Thomas  
 Carolyn Wittrup  
 Erik Høgsbro Østergaard

We also want to recognize members of the **Atlantic Chapter of the Friends** of The Danish Immigrant Museum who have been long-time supporters and donors. The organization provides us with a variety of cookies we serve to museum guests during our annual celebrations of Tivoli Fest, held the weekend preceding Memorial Day, and Julefest, held the weekend following Thanksgiving.

Its members include Norma Andersen, Ramona Andersen, Marty & Connie Boose, Janet Bornholdt, Calvin Christensen, Mary Ann Christensen, Jack & Eileen Denne, Clayton Ellingson, Dean & Verna Esbeck, Gene & Kathleen Eyberg, Ileen Furne, Marcella Gaines, Calvin & Phyllis Hoegh, Chet & Marj Holland, Doris Jensen, Merlin & Sonya Mikkelsen, Beverly Nelson, Delores Nelson, Bob & Frances Nelson, Helen Petersen, Darrell & Bertha Schroeter, and Nadine Williamson. Staff member Deb Christensen Larsen and board member Jerry Schrader are also members of the “Friends.”



By  
 Terri  
 Johnson

Condensed Financial Statements  
Years Ended August 31, 2016 and 2015

**Condensed Statement of Assets, Liabilities, and Net Assets - Modified Cash Basis**

	2016	2015
<b>Assets</b>		
Cash and Investments.....	4,466,888	4,215,242
Inventory .....	99,535	101,819
Property and Equipment (Net).....	4,715,828	4,774,678
<b>Total Assets .....</b>	<b><u>9,282,251</u></b>	<b><u>9,091,739</u></b>
<b>Liabilities and Net Assets</b>		
Accrued Payroll Taxes .....	424	13,415
Lines of Credit .....	263,000	178,500
<b>Total Liabilities .....</b>	<b><u>263,424</u></b>	<b><u>191,915</u></b>
<b>Net Assets .....</b>	<b><u>9,018,827</u></b>	<b><u>8,899,824</u></b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets .....</b>	<b><u>9,282,251</u></b>	<b><u>9,091,739</u></b>

**Condensed Statement of Revenue and Support, Expenses,  
and Changes in Net Assets - Modified Cash Basis for Years ended August 31,**

	2016	2015
<b>Support and Revenue</b>		
Contributions and Support.....	1,159,005	1,748,543
Admissions and Program Fees .....	18,169	18,678
Gift Shop Revenue (Net).....	51,211	47,476
Investment and Other Income.....	290,108	415,689
<b>Total Support and Revenue.....</b>	<b><u>1,518,493</u></b>	<b><u>2,230,386</u></b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Program Services .....	892,329	861,462
Supporting Activities .....	507,161	567,792
<b>Total Expenses .....</b>	<b><u>1,399,490</u></b>	<b><u>1,429,254</u></b>
<b>Change in Net Assets .....</b>	<b><u>119,003</u></b>	<b><u>801,132</u></b>
<b>Net Assets - Beginning of Year .....</b>	<b><u>8,899,824</u></b>	<b><u>8,098,692</u></b>
<b>Net Assets - End of Year .....</b>	<b><u>9,018,827</u></b>	<b><u>8,899,824</u></b>

## endowment

The Museum of Danish America's endowments provide the opportunity for members to perpetuate their contributions and, at the same time, help guarantee the museum's long-term financial viability. Current market value as of December 31, 2016 was \$4,703,630.97.

## bequests

In 2016 the museum received \$1,020,922.78 in bequests—\$805,539.41 (79%) has been invested in the museum's endowment funds, and the balance \$215,383.37 (21%) has been used or is being used for special projects and programming. The Museum of Danish America gratefully acknowledges the following estates, trusts, and individuals:

Rita Neergaard Hansen, Kenosha, WI  
Richard Hellman, Oceanside, CA  
Clark Mathisen, Omaha, NE  
Ruth Ostrom, Seven Hills, OH  
Dorothy Pedersen, Omaha, NE  
Harriet Albertsen Spanel,  
Bellingham, WA  
Charles W. & Norma J. Wilson  
Foundation Inc., Red Oak, IA

# merit of recognition

The Museum of Danish America permanently recognizes two groups of friends and members who have distinguished themselves through outstanding support, both while living and in their estate plans. These groups are known as **Lifetime Legacy Giving** and **Heritage Builders**. You will find the names of these elite individuals and organizations on the following pages.

## LIFETIME LEGACY GIVING

Five categories reflect all cumulative donations of \$25,000 and greater from individuals or their estates, foundations, trusts, and organizations. These names are inscribed on a large plaque at the museum's entrance.

**During the calendar year of 2016, the board of directors was pleased to add the names of**

Glen & Rosa Clemens, Exira, IA (*Bronze*)  
Carl & Frances Steffensen, Houston, TX (*Bronze*)

**And in addition, we acknowledge these donors having achieved a new level of lifetime giving:**

Charles W. & Norma J. Wilson Foundation, Inc.,  
Red Oak, IA (*Diamond*)  
Scan Design Foundation by Inger & Jens Bruun,  
Seattle, WA (*Gold*)

## DIAMOND \$1,000,000

Wayne Alwill Estate, Manning, IA  
Anonymous  
William & Berniece Grewcock, Omaha, NE  
Bruce R. Lauritzen Family, Omaha, NE  
Charles W. & Norma J. Wilson Foundation, Inc., Red Oak, IA

## PLATINUM \$500,000

Gunnar Horn, Omaha, NE  
Albert Victor Ravenholt Fund, Seattle, WA

## GOLD \$250,000

Anonymous  
Mervin Bro, Scottsdale, AZ  
Marianne K. Festersen Trust, Omaha, NE  
Peter Kiewit Foundation, Omaha, NE  
Roy J. & Rita Neergaard Hansen, Kenosha, WI  
Richard Hellman, Oceanside, CA  
Scan Design Foundation by Inger & Jens Bruun, Seattle, WA  
State of Iowa

## SILVER \$100,000

Dennis J. Andersen, Atlanta, GA  
Anonymous (2)  
Anton & Gunver M. Berg, Dekalb, IL  
Esther "E.J." Carlson Estate, Columbus, OH  
Carl Aage Christensen, Denver, CO  
Edna M. Christensen, Atlantic, IA  
Tom & Jan Christensen, Bettendorf, IA  
Elk Horn Lutheran Church, Elk Horn, IA  
Asta Forrest, Fountain Hills, AZ  
Charles & Joanne Frederiksen, Ames, IA  
Stewart & LeNore Hansen, West Des Moines, IA  
Roy & Patricia Hougen, Ames, IA  
Iowa West Foundation, Council Bluffs, IA  
James D. & Margery Iversen, Ames, IA  
Clyde & Emma Johnson, Omaha, NE  
Martha Jorgensen, Audubon, IA  
John & Audrey Kofoed, West Branch, IA  
Lowell & Marilyn Kramme, Des Moines, IA  
Reola Lerager, Wichita, KS  
Lutheran Brotherhood, Minneapolis, MN  
Herbert C. Madison, Washington, DC  
Adelaide M. Madsen Estate, Cedar Rapids, IA  
A.P. Møller and Chastine Mc-Kinney Møller Foundation,  
Copenhagen, Denmark  
Mark & Lori Nussle, Palos Park, IL  
Folmer & Vera Nyby, Michigan City, IN  
Poul Olesen & Benedikte Ehlers Olesen, Eugene, OR  
Olga S. Olsen Estate, Watertown, SD  
H. Rand & Mary Louise Petersen, Harlan, IA  
John I. Petersen Estate, Kimballton, IA  
Harriet Albertsen Spanel, Bellingham, WA  
E. Irene Starrett, Audubon, IA  
Chrystal Hemmingsen Willis Wagner Estate, Seattle, WA  
Wilber Williamson, Des Moines, IA



By  
Deb  
Christensen  
Larsen

**BRONZE \$25,000**

Aalborg & Linie Aquavits, Arcus A/S, Hagan, Norway  
Anonymous (2)  
Norman C. Bansen Estate, Blair, NE  
Mogens & Cindy Bay, Omaha, NE  
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## THE HERITAGE BUILDERS

Over the past 33 years, the Museum of Danish America has accomplished much because of special friends and members who have provided for the museum in their estate plans. With their permission while living or through the permission of their executors, the names of Heritage Builders are permanently inscribed on a plaque in the museum.

During 2016 six new Heritage Builders plaques were added to the recognition board; these are indicated in **bold**. Deceased individuals are marked with an asterisk (\*).

### **Anonymous (5) (1)**

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Constance Boggild\*, Delray Beach, FL

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Margaret Syring\*, St. Paul, MN

Nancy J. Walden, Omaha, NE

Sandra Wunder, Omaha, NE

\*Deceased

# special appeals

During the course of each year, the Museum of Danish America invites its supporters to make contributions to special appeals. The individuals, businesses, or foundations listed below contributed to these appeals in 2016 (and reflected in the Honor Roll of Contributors). *Donors to the Summer Appeal and End-of-Year Appeal are included in the Honor Roll of Contributors.*

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Charles W. & Norma J. Wilson Foundation, Inc., Red Oak, IA

## **CURATORIAL CENTER**

Irving & Elizabeth Jensen Foundation, Sioux City, IA

## **CURATORIAL DEPARTMENT**

Diane Skov, Lacey, WA

## **EXHIBITS**

### ***Danish Roots, American Dreams***

Rosa Clemens, Exira, IA  
Danish Sisterhood Lodge #15, Burlington, WI area  
Nils & Kathleen Jensen, Portland, OR  
Audrey Kofoed, West Branch, IA

## **ENDOWED CURATOR POSITION**

### ***(Albert Ravenholt Curator of Danish-American Culture)***

Albert Victor Ravenholt Fund, Seattle, WA

## **ENDOWMENT**

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Charles W. & Norma J. Wilson Foundation, Inc., Red Oak, IA

## **GENEALOGY CENTER**

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Hellerup, Denmark  
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Kenneth & Carolyn Sand, Prairie du Chien, WI

Nancy Sand, Kimballton, IA  
Amy, Darren & Emma Schwantes  
Diane Skov, Lacey, WA  
Leo & Gayle Stuart, Walnut, IA

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### **Building & Grounds Department – Sidewalk**

Shelby County Community Foundation, Omaha, NE

### **Curatorial Department**

#### ***Danish Roots, American Dreams***

Humanities Iowa, Iowa City, IA

#### ***Sport for Sports' Sake***

Humanities Iowa, Iowa City, IA

#### ***The Whimsical World of Bjørn Wiinblad***

Iowa Arts Council, Des Moines, IA

Albert V. Ravenholt Fund, Seattle, WA

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### **Danish Internships**

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## **JENS JENSEN PRAIRIE LANDSCAPE PARK**

### ***Purple Martin Birdhouses***

Rosa Clemesen, Exira, IA

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## **SPONSORSHIPS**

### ***Art by Gert Mathiesen exhibit – Coloring Sheets***

The Danish Home, Croton-on-Hudson, NY

### ***E-News***

Danish Sisterhood Lodge #15, Burlington, WI

Hon. Consul Steven Tuchman, Indianapolis, IN

### ***Brown Bag Lunch – Beverages***

Salem Lutheran Homes, Elk Horn, IA

### ***Hoover's Hometown Days***

Kofoed Family, West Branch, IA

### ***Sankt Hans Aften***

Danish Mutual Insurance Association, Elk Horn, IA

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Svend Larsen, Dagmar, MT

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### ***360° Cardboard Viewer***

Dennis Andersen, Atlanta GA

Marne Elk Horn Telephone Co., Elk Horn, IA

## **TRAVELING EXHIBITS:**

### ***Skåll! Scandinavian Spirits***

American Swedish Historical Foundation, Philadelphia, PA

### ***Sports for Sports' Sake***

Danish American Athletic Club, Roselle, IL area

### ***The Whimsical World of Bjørn Wiinblad exhibit***

The Danish Home, Croton-on-Hudson, NY



By  
Deb  
Christensen  
Larsen

# danish immigrant wall of honor

The purpose of the Museum of Danish America, among other things, is to tell the continuing story of the Danish immigrant experience and influence in America and the evolving story of Danish-American heritage. As a way of paying tribute, the Danish Immigrant Wall of Honor was established in 1992 listing the name of the immigrant, year of entering the U.S., and place of settlement. The immigrants' stories and family histories, if available, are part of the growing repository at the Museum of Danish America's Genealogy Center.

Listed here are the immigrants placed on the Wall in 2016 and their donors:

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

**LAURA JORGENSEN COMER** (1890) Dagmar, Montana – Amy Christensen, Billings, MT; Greg & Merna Rierson, Casper, WY

**N. PETER EDSON & MARIANE THOMSEN EDSON** (1881 & 1887) Sacramento, Nebraska – Evelyn Ward, Greeley, CO

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

**JØRGEN & HANNE HENRIKSEN** (1881 & 1881) Ringsted, Iowa – Glenn Henriksen, Armstrong, IA

**KIRSTEN MARIE OLESEN HØGILD** (1909) Westby, Montana – Gerda Christensen, Plentywood, MT

**STEEN A. METZ** (1962) Lincolnshire, Illinois – Steen A. & Eileen Metz, Sanibel, FL

**ARNE OLSEN, ELSEBETH OLSEN, KIRSTEN OLSEN** (1952, 1952, 1952) Fremont, California – Olsen Family Living Trust, Montara, CA

**NELS OLSON & CELIA SCHANTZ OLSON** (1869 & 1871) Fullerton, Nebraska – Evelyn Ward, Greeley, CO

**SIGFRED VOLMER OLSEN & JENNY OTTILIA PEDERSEN OLSEN** (1952 & 1952) Fremont, California – Kirsten Olsen Buehler, Elsebeth Olsen Gotham, Arne Olsen, all of Montara, CA; Peder & Doris Hoy, Modesto, CA

**NIELS AAGE SKOV** (1947) Lacey, Washington – Diane Skov, Lacey, WA

**MERETE VENDT-LARSEN** (1976) Ham Lake, Minnesota – Merete Duarte, Ham Lake, MN

**CARSTON PETER WINTHER** (1884) Harrison County, Iowa – Paul & Dianne Anderson, Seattle, WA

**JENSINE “SENA” KATHERINE WALSTED WINTHER** (1886) Harrison County, Iowa – Paul & Dianne Anderson, Seattle, WA

## memorials

The Museum of Danish America is the grateful recipient of gifts made in memory of deceased friends and relatives.

Jens & Christine Agesen  
Claude L. Andersen  
Richard Andersen  
Richard L. Andersen, my husband  
Dick Anderson, Kimballton, IA  
John T. Beck  
John Beck, my husband  
John Beier  
Lois Berg  
Harry H. Birkholm  
Lela Gwendolyn Block  
Sally Bodholdt  
Arvid Bollesen  
Charlie Brehm  
Jim & Odane Brittsan  
Johanna Bertelson Brown  
Robert Warren Brown  
Nadine Campbell  
Jens T. Carstensen  
Tove Carver  
Dale Christensen  
Evelyn Bengard Christensen  
Leonard Jersild Christensen  
Mary Ann Christensen  
Thomine Christensen  
Lee Christiansen, Portland, Oregon  
Joann E. Clausen, my wife  
Barbara Birkholm Clay  
Glen Clemens  
Ralph Doonan, my husband  
William Eiermann  
Ermelin Lenora Fallgatter  
Ermelin Simonsen Fallgatter  
Hans & Mathilde Farstrup  
A.N. & Florence Fogdall  
Edith Forsch, mother of Ann Timmons  
Phyllis M. Freeman  
Phyllis Maureen Gravengaard Freeman  
Karen J.V. Friedmann  
Ole & LaVon Frolund  
Ed Furne  
Dana Lee Garcia  
Parents of Tina Garner  
Harvey H. Greve  
Aage Grumstrup  
Curtis & Esther Haahr, Ringsted, IA

Tim Hagensen  
Karen Wellejus Haigh  
Bent Hansen  
Carl C. Hansen  
Carl C. Hansen, my brother  
Carma M. Hansen  
Cleo & Esther Hansen  
Dallas & Margery Hansen  
Emil Hansen  
Ethan L. Hansen  
Hans Jacob Hansen  
Mildred & Alfred Hansen  
Priscilla Hansen, Atlantic, IA  
Verity "Dew" Hansen, Cedar Falls, IA  
Clifford K. & A. Veola Hansen, my parents  
Marilyn Hanson, Cedar Falls, IA  
Ernst G. Harboe  
Marie-Louise Lind Harms  
Frank Heilesen  
Al Henningsen  
Verlee Poldberg Henningsen  
Norman Henriksen  
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Deppe & Anna D. Jensen  
Donna Jensen  
Elise Jensen  
Frederick Christian Jensen  
Irving & Elizabeth Jensen  
Ruth Jensen  
William R. Jensen  
Maynard Jensen, Kimballton, IA  
Bill Jensen, my husband  
Julius J. Jespersen  
Ludevikke Frederikke Leopoldena Buck Jespersen, my  
maternal grandmother  
Evelyn Margaret Johansen  
Charles Christian Johnson  
Duane Johnson  
Leona Johnson  
Duane Johnson of Florida  
Marilyn Jonos  
Niels & Ingrid Jorgensen  
Howard & Kaja Juel, my parents  
Karen M. Kadgihn  
Hans Kiehn

Mogens Kiehn  
Lois Newgreen King, Seymour, WI  
Peter M. & Arlene Kroman  
Ed Larsen  
Edwar J. Larsen  
Kurt Klarskov Larsen  
Paul Christian Larsen  
Paul M. & Johanne Larsen  
William B. Larsen  
Craig Lassen  
Dorothea Laursen  
Chris & Harriet Laursen, Newell, IA  
John Leistad  
Bent Lernø  
Ruth Farstrup Longman  
Robert Lorentzen  
Keith Lykke  
Dale Mackenzie  
Bob Madsen  
Paul O. Madsen  
Robert (Bob) Madsen  
Harald & Margaret Madsen, Tyler, MN  
Albert Martin Jensen Schjodt, my maternal grandfather  
Gordy Martinson  
Clark G. Mathisen  
H. C. Mathison  
Valborg Henriksen McKinzie  
Elsie Rasmussen McNabb  
Patricia Ann McNabb  
Soren Miller  
Peter & Anna Miller, Dagmar, MT, my parents  
Anna Nielsen  
Bill Nielsen  
Fred & Maren Nielsen  
Hans Thyge Nielsen  
Harlan Nielsen  
Verna Nielsen  
Kristen Nielsen of Denmark  
Marilyn & LeVern Nielsen, my parents  
Ray & Alice Noren  
Eric & Joan Norgaard  
Elinor Olsen  
Ole & Marie Olsen  
Steven Olsen  
Oluf & Vera K. Olson  
Anna M. & Niels M. Pedersen  
Flemming V. Pedersen  
Lilly Pedersen  
Tage Pedersen  
Henry & Johanne Pedersen, Danish Americans  
Anna M. Pedersen, my wife  
Hans & Ivy Peitersen  
Harry & Frances Petersen  
Herbert & Mabel Petersen

Marjorie Petersen  
Rev. Adolph & Marie Petersen  
Howard Petersen  
Norma I. Petersen, my late Danish spouse  
Harry & Frances Petersen, my parents  
Debra Pearson, my daughter  
Irene Queyrel  
Carl Rasmussen  
Delbert Rasmussen  
Lawrence Rasmussen  
Lela Mae Mathisen Rasmussen  
Anna Rasmusson  
Ann Mumm Render  
Lynn Richmond  
Ruth J. Roberts  
Ruth Jensen Roberts, my wife  
Kaj & Astrid Roge  
Andrew Rosk Rosenkild  
Andrew & Rosa Rosenkild  
Dr. Charles Dale Rosenquist, my husband  
Thomas D. Routhe  
Leroy Arthur Sand, Kimballton, IA  
Leroy Sand, my husband  
Ruth (Toni) Sande, Adel, IA  
Viola Sander  
Clara M. (Larsen) Schnell & her father, Marinus Larsen  
Opal Jean Schultz  
Miriam Showalter, Minnetonka, MN  
Niels Aage Skov  
Ann Larsen Slaight  
Gordon Sloth  
Mildred Sloth  
Erik Sorensen  
Kenneth Sorensen  
Redge Sornson  
Harriet Spanel  
Poul & Elie Steffensen  
Halvor H. Strandskov  
Lars & Ane Marie Strandskov  
Herman Victor Strandskov, my father  
Einer V. Thode  
Christopher Miltersen Thorup  
Esther Petersen Tripp  
Lorene Vorm  
Svend Waendelin  
Inge Heiberg Walliker  
Aleen Weaver, Atlantic, IA  
Aleen Weaver's wonderful life and legacy  
Olga Petersen Werner & Manuella Werner Wendel  
Gerda Henriksen Westenberger  
Walter Westergaard  
Charles W. & Norma J. Wilson  
Agnes Jorgensen Zimmerline



# in honor

The Museum of Danish America receives many contributions as gifts to honor beloved family members and friends on special occasions. In 2016 the following people were honored:

Rev. David K. Bonde  
Charles E. R. Boye  
Tova Brandt's *Skål* presentation in Decorah, IA  
Russell Christensen  
My mom, Rosa Clemens's commitment to volunteer at the museum and her 85th birthday in January 2017  
Education  
The Fugl Families  
Christine Thisted Haag's birthday  
Calle & Cecelia Hansen  
Appreciation of Danish interns Mads Henriksen and "Vinny" Henriksen  
Isabel Hoegh  
Betty W. Holland  
Dean Holland  
James D. Iversen  
Chelsea Jacobsen  
Jan Jensen  
Marnie Jensen's 40th birthday  
Ann Jespersen  
Delores Jespersen's 95 1/2 birthday  
Niels W. & Ingrid H. Jorgensen  
Astrid Kaalund-Joergensen  
Astrid Kaalund-Joergensen's presentation

Astrid Kaalund-Joergensen's translation work  
Sherry Knudsen, my wife  
Gloria & Bill Layton  
Michele McNabb's hard work and dedication to the museum's Genealogy Center  
Michele McNabb's retirement  
Alan L. Mores  
The hard-working museum staff  
Museum's amazing Danish Interns  
The museum's good work  
Dawn & John Mark Nielsen  
John Mark Nielsen  
Dr. John Mark Nielsen, for his outstanding service to the Museum of Danish America  
John Mark Nielsen, sending congratulations and good wishes. Hope he continues to visit Danebod in Tyler, MN  
John Mark Nielsen, who will be missed  
Appreciation of all John Mark Nielsen's efforts  
Merete Nieto's birthday  
Poul & Benedikte Olesen  
Leroy Pedersen  
Helen Petersen, Atlantic, IA – longtime museum member and volunteer  
Redesigned & updated core exhibit  
Lars & Ane Marie Strandskov Family  
My 100th birthday, Marion Svendsen  
Marion Svendsen's 100th Birthday  
Rasmus Thøgersen  
Aleen Weaver's 97th birthday

## matching gifts

The Museum of Danish America wishes to thank these members for initiating matching gifts from the following corporations and foundations:

### **Assured Life Association**

William & Marilyn Gift, Clive, IA  
Richard & Karen Nelson, Albert Lea, MN

### **The Boeing Company**

Dagmar Muthamia, Long Beach, CA  
Douglas Raichle, Lawrenceville, NJ

### **BP Foundation**

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### **Caterpillar Foundation**

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### **Dominion Foundation**

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Borge M. Christensen, Rochester, MN  
Peter Flinch, Alexandria, VA  
Martha Miller, Bloomington, IL

### **Thrivent Choice**

Todd & Tami Jacobsen, Kimballton, IA  
Terrence Jensen, Ames, IA  
Donna Puluka, Lambertville, NJ  
Paul & Marie Sørensen, DeKalb, IL

### **Thrivent Financial Foundation**

Paul & Elizabeth Johnson, Fremont, NE

### **Union Pacific Railroad Company**

Hillary Parker, Carter Lake, IA

## in-kind gifts


The following companies and individuals, through their gifts of goods and services, supported the Museum of Danish America in 2016:

*Den Danske Pioneer* (Elsa Steffensen & Linda Steffensen), Hoffman Estates, IL  
Chris Fredericksen, Elk Horn, IA  
Henningsen Construction, Inc. (Brad Henningsen), Atlantic, IA  
Leo Kirchhoff, Chico, CA  
Gary & Sherry Knudsen, Hutchinson, MN  
Deb Christensen Larsen, Harlan, IA

## new, complimentary, and gift memberships

Throughout 2016 the Museum of Danish America attained 225 new members, awarded complimentary memberships, or received contributions directed towards gift memberships for the following organizations or individuals:

Mary Ahrenholtz, Harlan, IA  
Norma Andersen, Atlantic, IA  
John & Lemay Anderson, Linwood, NE  
Russell & Rennae Anderson, Ceresco, NE  
Paul & Dianne Anderson, Seattle, WA  
Mark Andreasen, Gerald, MO  
Paul & Julie Angeles, Bloomington, MN  
Bradley Arakelian, Del Mar, CA  
Donna Archer, Altoona, IA  
Margaret Ashby, Plainfield, IL  
Gary & Pam Bartachek, Belle Plaine, IA  
Samuel & Beate Beaumont, Fredericksburg, TX  
Carmen Becker, Cincinnati, OH  
Ken & Jessica Birdsong, Oakland, IA  
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 Richard & Elizabeth Philipsen, Asheville, NC  
 Helen Phillips, Altoona, IA  
 Janis Camery & John Pientok, St. Francis, WI  
 Ronald Pigg, Omaha, NE  
 Beth Plahn, Garretson, SD  
 Richard & Irene Plotzker, Wilmington, DE  
 Cordell & Donna Poldberg, Pocahontas, IA  
 Anna Porter, Beaverdam, VA  
 Clayton & Janet Porter, Adel, IA  
 Helen Prall, Carlisle, IA  
 Robert & Loretta Prostine, Marion, IA  
 Phyllis Quarg, Lakeside, CA  
 John & Marjorie Quist, Omaha, NE  
 Susan Quist, Centennial, CO  
 James & Bonnie Raasch, Cedar Rapids, IA  
 Robert & Darlene Rademacher, Lincoln, NE  
 Amel Rahba, Copenhagen, Amager, Denmark  
 Ronald & Rosemary Raschke, Athens, GA  
 Dirk & Julie Rasmussen, Hamlin, IA  
 Doris Rasmussen, Harlan, IA  
 Elaine Rasmussen, Exira, IA  
 Ellen Rasmussen, Newell, IA  
 Erling & Ruth Rasmussen, Fairfield Bay, AR  
 Jeffrey Rasmussen, Racine, WI  
 Jennifer Rasmussen, Omaha, NE  
 Leroy Rasmussen, Omaha, NE  
 Michael & Suzanne Rasmussen, Kirkman, IA  
 Mark & Nancy Ratner, Glencoe, IL  
 William & Christine Rattenborg, Fort Collins, CO  
 Richard & Patricia Rausenberger, Clinton, IA  
 Raymond & Barbara Rehmeier, Henderson, NV  
 Barbara Rennert, Omaha, NE  
 Janette Richardson, Hastings, NE  
 Russell & Idella Richardson, Ames, IA  
 Sonja Richardson, Laguna Niguel, CA  
 Elaine Rietz, Brookings, SD  
 Cheryl Riley, Hiawatha, KS  
 Mark & Kim Ring, Council Bluffs, IA  
 Everett & Randee Rissler, Arvada, CO  
 Chris & Karen Robb, Lenexa, KS  
 David Roberts, Lubbock, TX  
 Eunice Rocca, Cedar Falls, IA  
 Vivian Rock, Spencer, IA  
 Susann Rogberg-Lavars, Corralitos, CA  
 Joanne Rogis, Clinton, IA  
 Richard & Sonja Rollins, Summerfield, FL  
 Anna Ronne, Salt Lake City, UT  
 William & Ann Roof, Avoca, IA  
 Beth Rosenquist, Omaha, NE  
 Douglas & Barbara Rossbach, Humboldt, IA  
 Esther Rossman, Coon Rapids, MN  
 Alan & Carolyn Rovner, Centennial, CO  
 John & Carol Rudisill, Des Moines, IA  
 Donna Ryterske, Lily Lake, IL  
 Esther Sand, Carroll, IA  
 Earl Sande, Adel, IA  
 Helen Sawtell, Omaha, NE  
 Constance Schneider, Lincoln, NE  
 Brian & Denise Schoening, Shelby, IA  
 Eldo & Dee Schornhorst, Iowa City, IA  
 Steven & Kathleen Schou, Minneapolis, MN  
 Janet Schroeder, Cedar Rapids, IA  
 Lori Schultz, Harlan, IA  
 Connie Scott, Sidney, IA  
 Joann Adsø Scott, North Hollywood, CA  
 Dix & Linda Scranton, Norfolk, NE  
 Patricia Severson, Clear Lake, IA  
 Marin Sharpless, Oakland, CA  
 Steven & Cynthia Shove, Gig Harbor, WA  
 Gary & Donna Simmer, Des Moines, IA  
 James & Jane Simon, Ames, IA  
 Yvonne Skouby, Columbia, MO  
 Arnold & Helen Skov, Alden, MN  
 Pamela Smilow, New York, NY  
 Charles & Debra Smith, Omaha, NE  
 Delmar Smith, St. Paul, MN  
 Edgar & Louella Smith, Moorhead, MN  
 J. Christina Smith, Malden, MA  
 Oliver & Martha Smith, San Bruno, CA  
 John & Gretchen Snyder, Clinton, IA  
 Theodora Sonntag, Pearl River, NY  
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 Jimmy & Esther Sorensen, Wood Dale, IL  
 Jorgen Sorensen, Eugene, OR  
 Kathryn Foyle & Thomas Sorensen, Milan, MI  
 Margaret Sorensen, Grand Island, NE  
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Tama Trewet-Sloop, Atlantic, IA  
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Kent & Kristen Walker, Glendale, CA  
Richard & Sandy Walling, Spring Branch, TX  
Stephen & Catherine Walling, Omaha, NE  
Peter Wallis, Kirkland, WA  
Henry & Mardell Walter, Elk Horn, IA  
Bonnie Warrington, Decorah, IA  
Donald & Peggy Watkins, Omaha, NE  
Aleen Weaver, Atlantic, IA  
Mary Lou Webber, Richmond, VA  
Glen and Jewel Weien, San Diego, CA  
Mark & Amy Werner, Pekin, IL  
Dick & Joan White, Lincoln, NE  
Rosalie Wiand, Pulaski, WI  
Rex & Hope Wilhelm, Stuart, IA  
Katherine Wilson, Wheeler, WI  
Jennifer Winters, Elk Horn, IA  
Steven Wit, Elkins Park, PA  
Randy Witte, Hiawatha, IA  
Patricia Wobschall, Phoenix, AZ  
Patti Wojahn, Las Cruces, NM  
Michael & Nancy Christensen Wright, San Carlos, CA  
Richard Wright, Atlantic, IA  
Preben & June Wulff, Linwood, NJ  
Nancy Yackle, Omaha, NE  
Alvie Young, Ames, IA  
Todd & Diane Zygmuntowicz, Troy, MI

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**Corrections** Every effort has been made to ensure that all information contained in the 2016 Annual Report is accurate. We respectfully regret and apologize for any omissions, misspellings, or misplacements. Please contact the Development Department with any questions or corrections.

# how-to

## DANISH GÆKKEBREV

A guide created by Danish interns Julie Andersen and Björg Rasmussen in 2011. Their original illustrations are featured here.

### WHAT IS A GÆKKEBREV?

In Denmark a *gækkebrev* is a “teaser letter” you send to someone you like – it could be your grandmother, a family member, or a friend.

You don’t put your name on the *gækkebrev*; the idea is that the one who gets your letter has to guess who sent it. To give the receiver a clue, you put your name on the *gækkebrev* in dots, one dot for each letter of your name. E.g., if your name is John, you would mark four dots: ••••

### THE RULES

If the receiver guesses you, you will owe the person an Easter egg. On the other hand, if they don’t guess correctly, they will owe *you* an Easter egg! They have three chances to guess right. *Tip*: Put the letter in an envelope and mail it. Remember not to write your own name and address on the envelope!

### THE MESSAGE

Here are some ideas for your secret message:

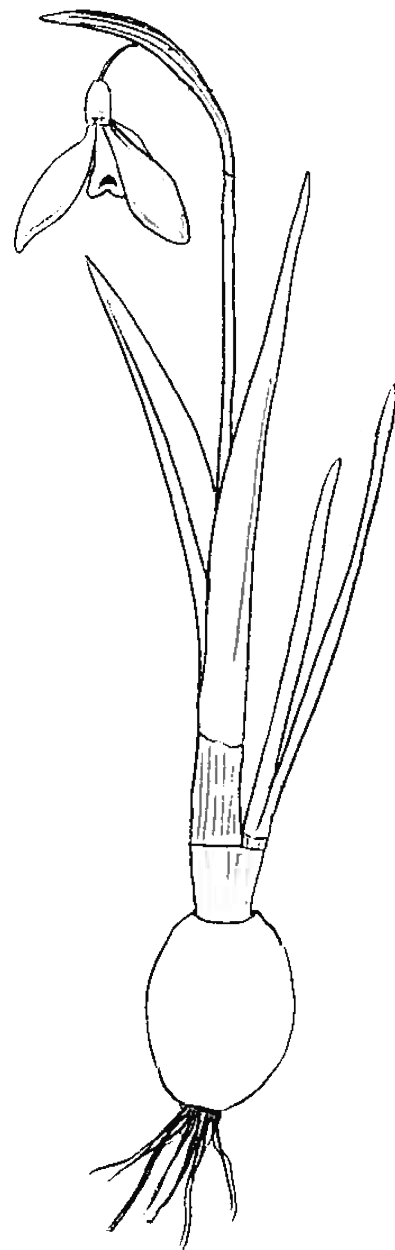
*En vintergæk, en sommernar,  
En fugl foruden vinger,  
En lille ven, som har dig kær,  
En kærlig hilsen bringer.*

A snowdrop\*, a summer jester,  
A bird without wings,  
A little friend, who’s fond of you,  
A loving greeting brings.

*Mit navn det står med prikker,  
Pas på det ikke stikker!*

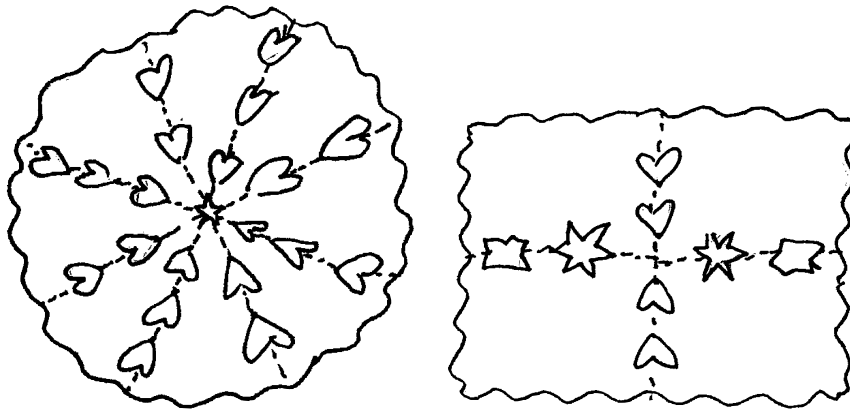
My name is written with spots,  
Take care they don’t become polka dots!

The more letters you send, the  
more Easter eggs you may win!

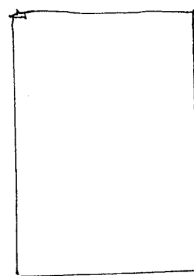


\*A kind of white flower (*Galanthus nivalis*) found in early spring; it can also be directly translated as “winter jester.”

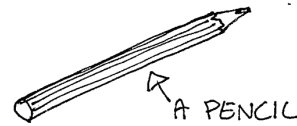
**Illustration credit**, this page: Dwergenpaartje.



HOW TO MAKE A "GÆKKEBREV":

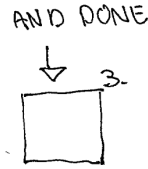
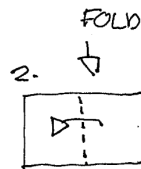
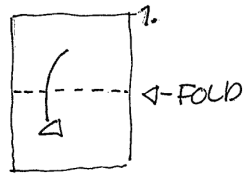


WHAT TO USE!  
 ← A PIECE OF PAPER

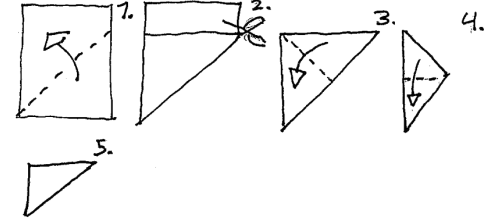


FOLD THE PAPER

1-WAY.



2-WAY.



CUT "GÆKKEBREV"



CUT THE EDGES THAT ARE FOLDED. EXPERIMENT WITH SHAPES AND WAYS TO CUT, AS LONG AS YOU STAY ON THE FOLDED EDGES. (LIKE CUTTING PAPER SNOWFLAKES)

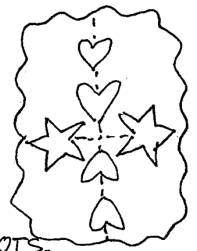
I.G. CUT A HEART



FINISH



NOW WRITE THE VERSE AND YOUR NAME IN DOTS.



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01



02

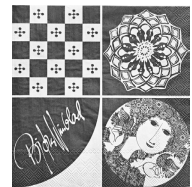
*Bjørn Wiinblad*



03



04



05



The new Bjørn Wiinblad collection by Rosendahl honors Wiinblad's authentic *joie de vivre* and fairytale universe with its rich spectrum of line and color. The artist bequeathed a comprehensive legacy of design to future generations, and this is now being re-interpreted in modern, functional design that appeals to both nostalgic collectors and new generations.

**01. Rosalinde Vase**, metallic silver, 10" tall. Porcelain. \$170. **02. Candlestick**, black, 6.5" tall. \$35. **03. Kitchen Towel**, available in blue, red, or dark grey. 100% cotton. \$14. **04. Dinner Napkins**, set of 20, available in blue, red, or dark grey. 3-layer unbleached paper. \$10. **05. Rosalinde Mug**, available in light blue, blue, black, green, or red. Porcelain, dishwasher safe. \$25. To order, call the Design Store at 800.759.9192. Members receive a 10% discount.