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SPRING

# america letter



A benefit of  
membership in the  
Museum of Danish America



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**COVER**

*Sunset on Langeland Beach*

Roger Nielsen

Oil on board

“While on my trip to Denmark with my brother Irving, we took a ferry to the island of Langeland, where my mother’s mother was born. We found the farm, but were unable to locate any family gravesites or records, which had been lost in a church fire, and as is the practice in Denmark, when the family stops supporting the grave, the gravesite is given to someone else. In the evening, we walked the beach where I took the photo that inspired this painting.”

**To email a staff member**, use the format  
firstname.lastname@danishmuseum.org

**Object identification numbers** may be searched at  
<https://danishmuseum.pastperfectonline.com>

As you read this edition of the *America Letter*, whether by turning pages that you hold in your hands or scrolling on your digital device, you are visiting the Museum of Danish America without taking a single step toward Elk Horn, Iowa. In so many ways this magazine is a portable version of the museum –bringing history, culture, exhibitions, and genealogy directly to our members.

In the survey we sent to you in January, we asked you to tell us what you value most about the Museum of Danish America and, if you are a member, what you value most about your membership benefits. In response to the first question, our entire audience voiced their enthusiastic support for our museum's mission to preserve and share the history and culture of Danish immigrants and connections between Denmark and the United States. A full 98% of our audience rated our mission as “very important” or “somewhat important,” which greatly affirms our work and strengthens our sense of purpose.

Regarding membership benefits and what members enjoy most, you told us that this magazine is an important part of staying connected to the museum. Many of you, our members, have only visited the museum in person once or twice. In fact, 10% of our members have *never* visited in person at all! That means that it is vitally important that the museum comes to you – whether in the form of this magazine, through online programs, or through outreach to communities around the country.

Just as our museum has grown and evolved over nearly 40 years, this magazine has changed over the years to best reflect the museum's programs and

activities. We recently received a grant from the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs and the National Endowment for the Humanities to explore how this publication can continue to represent the best of our museum's mission, vision, and values. This grant will allow us to seek advice from museum publication experts, invite articles from a diverse range of scholars, and update the look of the whole publication. (Hooray for color photos!) Over the next few issues of the *America Letter*, you will notice changes in the content and the presentation that we hope will make for a more engaging experience for you, and a better way to hold a version of the museum in your hands.

We invite your feedback on these changes! What new elements do you enjoy? Are there changes that you feel are not successful? Do you have suggestions for future articles? You can expect to receive a short survey later this summer, or you are welcome to send your comments directly to me or to our Communications Specialist, Nicky Christensen.

In the meantime, enjoy the stories and perspectives contained in the pages of this *America Letter*.

Happy reading!




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**TOVA BRANDT, M.A.**  
*Executive Director*



**TEN-YEAR  
INTERNSHIP ALUMNUS**

I have so many good memories from my time in Elk Horn. What I miss the most are the people, my colleagues, my fellow interns, and people around town. All the nicest people I ever met.

Time has gone by, and things have happened. I finished my master's degree in history. However, getting a job in the museum world isn't easy in Denmark. So, I decided to educate myself further so I could become a teacher.

Today I am a math, science, and history teacher at Bjergby skole. And yes, all my kids are going to hear about a small town called Elk Horn and *ableskiver* with *medisterpølse*.

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**BY RENÉ RUGHOLM CHRISTIANSEN**

*Scan Design Foundation Intern,  
August 2011 - January 2012*

The Scan Design Foundation Danish Intern Exchange Program at the Museum of Danish America was established in 2008 to provide Danish graduate students in history, cultural studies, communications, museum programs, and library schools with a "hands-on" experience as part of their education. Danish interns typically maintain a position for a period of six months.

Interns are assigned to work with the museum department that best matches their academic background and future career goals; the most common areas for Danish interns to join are Exhibitions, Genealogy, and Communications. Based at the Museum of Danish America in Elk Horn, Iowa, each intern becomes a full-time member of the museum team and lives in the Elk Horn community. All interns begin with a four-week orientation to different aspects of the museum operation and the specific training for their assigned department. After that orientation period, interns work on independent projects that benefit both the interns' and the museum's goals. Interns also represent the museum at public events and outreach activities, often traveling to different regions of the United States on behalf of the museum.

**ANNUAL APPLICATION DEADLINES**  
April 30 and November 1

More information at [www.danishmuseum.org/visit/about/internships](http://www.danishmuseum.org/visit/about/internships)

# Roger Nielsen

celebrating  
my heritage

DANISH-AMERICAN ARTIST SERIES  
JUNE 25 - NOVEMBER 4, 2022



The artist at work. *Courtesy of Roger Nielsen.*

When Diya Nagaraj, the Curator at the Museum of Danish America, called and asked if I was interested in displaying my paintings in its galleries, I was flabbergasted with delight. It was an opportunity to not only display my talents as an artist, but to express my pride in my Danish heritage.

I grew up as a middle-class American, but also everything Danish. Our South Minneapolis house was filled with Danish art and artifacts. When my folks entertained, which they did often, they served primarily Danish cuisine on Royal Copenhagen porcelain with Georg Jensen silverware. Most of their friends were Danish; they were active in the Danish-American community and organizations. We attended the Danish American Lutheran Church, where I was baptized and confirmed. Consequently, a lot of my friends growing up were also of Danish descent.

I remember with fondness the wonderful Danish parties that my parents had or attended. They were joyful events, usually with bountiful food and libation. There was an abundance of toasts with aquavit and beer, which, of course, encouraged more toasts and much singing. Kringle and coffee were served at the end to allow time for the joy of the evening to mellow before heading home.

My dad's favorite singer was Lauritz Melchior, the Danish opera singer, who we watched frequently on TV. I can still hear, "If I could tell you of my devotion..." the theme song for that show, in my head as I write. Oh, we had our favorite Danish actors as well: one was Jean Hersholt, who was best known as Dr. Christian in the popular radio series (1937-1954) and several movies of the same name. Each year, a humanitarian award named for him is given out at the Academy Awards ceremony.

In those days we walked to school and came home for lunch. While we ate, my mother would read to

my brothers and me, usually about Danish subjects and quite often, Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales. We knew "The Emperor's New Clothes," "The Little Match Girl," and many others by heart. When the movie, *The Hans Christian Andersen Story*, starring Danny Kaye, a Danish actor, came out, I sat in the theater watching it with bursts of pride.

I was well-versed in Danish history and mythology. In school, when we were given an assignment, I usually chose a topic relating to Denmark, something I could talk about for hours without hesitation.

**"My dad would have preferred that I pursue one of the trades — not because he didn't admire my artistic abilities, but because he didn't realize that art could be a career."**

My father, one of 15 siblings born to an aristocratic, entrepreneurial farmer, came to America at the age of 16. With only a small footlocker filled with meager belongings, he started his journey in pursuit of the "American Dream." Times were tough at first, but the work ethic his father instilled in him allowed him to persevere. Though he was trained as a carpenter, he took any job that was available in order to survive and eventually succeed. He ended up in Minneapolis working at

his trade for his future father-in-law, also a Danish immigrant. That's how he met my mother, who became his best friend and helped him overcome a speech impediment and learn English, as she was bilingual.

My mother was the one who really nurtured my interest in art. As a child, I was always drawing. When I stayed at the home of friends or relatives, she would say, "If Roger gets restless or bored, just give him a pencil and paper, and he'll be happy."

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**OPPOSITE, top:** *My Paternal Grandparents*  
Oil on canvas, handcrafted frame

"My grandfather, Hans Nielsen, was what many refer to as a 'gentleman farmer.' His entrepreneurial nature brought him a fair amount of success. He moved his family several times, each time to bigger farm estates. I've been told that my grandfather once bought a royal carriage from King Frederick VIII when he ordered a new one. It must have been quite a spectacle to see the Nielsen entourage drive into Copenhagen for the theater or opera with the King's old carriage in the lead, being pulled by Hans's matching team with the other family carriages in tow. Unfortunately, through speculations that didn't pan out and the changing of the times, Hans lost it all and died penniless. After his death, my grandmother, Karen, came to America to see her sister, daughter and sons, who due to the Great Depression were living in poverty. It's surmised that, finding her family in those conditions, she died in the U.S. with a broken heart. Family members mustered up the funds to send her body back to Denmark to be buried next to her husband. If she had survived another decade or so, she would have witnessed several of her children become very successful and achieve the "American Dream."

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*merely*  
sentimental  
illustrations

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*Eli*

Oil and metal leaf on canvas,  
handcrafted frame

“My daughter, my baby, is now in her mid-50s and is as beautiful as she was as a child, only with much more character. In my eyes, her face reflects a life that has experienced a lot of strife, but has come through it successfully, with defiance and pride.”

*Celebrating My Danish Heritage*

Oil on birch plywood,  
handcrafted frame

“A self-portrait, floating on a Viking-themed background: celebrating Vikings as explorers, conquerors, and farmers; recognizing Denmark as the oldest monarchy with a long and colorful history, and the oldest flag in the world; and featuring simple cottages to magnificent castles.”



She encouraged me to take after-school and weekend art classes all through my teens. My dad would have preferred that I pursue one of the trades—not because he didn't admire my artistic abilities, but because he didn't realize that art could be a career. But Mom was fully supportive and constantly encouraged me. Even later, when I was living in art-student poverty while attending school in Chicago, she would send me small amounts of money with her weekly letters to help me survive and continue.

While on the subject of art school, I must admit that I was extremely fortunate to ever be accepted in such a prestigious school. The Art Institute of Chicago, at the time, was rated number two in the country after the Pratt Institute in New York City. My grades in high school were just barely acceptable for admittance, but my portfolio put me over the top. At that time, most of the instructors were nationally recognized artists, rather than people with teaching degrees, as schools are today. The emphasis was on draftsmanship and learning the basics in color and design, rather than what's considered "creativity" and pushing the limit on cutting-edge concepts, which probably explains why I consider myself more of a craftsman than a conceptual artist.

I think most classically trained artists, if they so desired, could produce successful abstract works, but, in my opinion, very few abstract or conceptual artists, who lack the basics, could produce "realism" with any success. As a case in point, I have a friend who teaches in a very respectable art school and produces very compelling abstracts, but doesn't have the ability to draw anything that resembles a chosen subject or object with accuracy or skill. It's interesting that this person critiques my art as "merely sentimental illustrations," which, to my way of thinking, sounds very complimentary and puts me in good company with previous masters, who, after all, were basically illustrators of their time. One of my favorite American artists, Winslow Homer, developed his "chops" as an illustrator for *Harper's Magazine*.

To a large extent, my father was more right than I realized. Once done with school and a short stint in the Navy Reserves, I found myself back in Minneapolis with a wife and a baby on the way. The possibilities of making it as an artist with my new responsibilities looked pretty slim. Rather than go in the direction of my father in the building trades, I went to work for a family friend (another Dane), who was expanding his picture framing business and needed help. It was an apprenticeship that served

me well. I helped him launch what is now a Warren Buffet-owned company, and he taught me a trade at which I became quite good and allowed me to enhance world-class paintings with my frames.

I eventually launched my own company, Master Framers, that became nationally known for designing and manufacturing fine, handcrafted, and gilded frames for museums and high-end collectors. This gave me a certain amount of "expert" status which allowed me to share my techniques with my peers by giving seminars and workshops at national trade shows and conventions.

I'm extremely grateful for the work ethic that my father drilled into my brothers and me, as his father did to him. "Work is a Blessing" became a credo that we all lived by. Those of my father's siblings who came to the U.S. have all achieved the "American Dream" through hard work and dedication. My parents were successful building contractors and several of his brothers became wealthy restaurateurs. The next generation has built on that. I have a brother who has been very successful in business, and his sons are taking it to another level. Another brother was a musician with records on the charts, and so it goes. All from the "Work is a Blessing" credo drilled into us so long ago.








During my middle decades, making art took a back seat to raising a family and building a business. I had a tiny studio and occasionally made a painting, but the studio was primarily for doing art restoration—something I still do part-time. It wasn't until I retired that I could rekindle my original dream of creating art.


*Celebrating My Heritage* is really a collection of paintings illustrating the pride and love I have for my relatives, both past and present. Viewers will see a variety of family portraits referenced from old, faded pictures, as well as from life and current photos. I have scenes of my father's birth farm and landscapes from photos I've taken on my trips to Denmark. I've also paid tribute to the Skagen Painters and the Golden Age of Danish Painting.


My style of painting varies from loose and sketchy to more refined and detailed. I approach each painting as a new challenge, and I continue to grow with each venture.


I invite readers to view the exhibition *Celebrating My Heritage* from June 25 through November 4 and look forward to your feedback. ■


# exhibitions<sup>22</sup>


	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV
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1								
LL								

 **The Danish Pioneer Newspaper**  
KRAMME GALLERY  
THROUGH APRIL 25


 **Papirklip: A Global and Timeless Art**  
MAIN FLOOR GALLERY  
THROUGH MAY 30  
Sponsored by the Overgaard Family


 **In Search of Zion: The Danish-American Mormon Movement**  
MULTIMEDIA ROOM  
THROUGH 2022

 **Tattoo: Identity through Ink**  
KRAMME GALLERY  
MAY 26 - SEP 5  
Sponsored by Humanities Iowa

 **Roger Nielsen's Celebrating my Heritage**  
MAIN FLOOR GALLERY  
JUN 25 - NOV 6

**OUTDOOR EXHIBIT**  
 SQUARE STORIES  
 ALL SUMMER

 **Joyce Tenneson's Great Danes**  
KRAMME GALLERY  
SEP 23 - MAY 2023

 **40 Years of Collecting**  
MAIN FLOOR GALLERY  
NOVEMBER 25 - MAY 7

See full exhibition descriptions and virtual tours (as they become available) at [www.danishmuseum.org](http://www.danishmuseum.org).

CALENDAR

**Did you know?** We offer many exhibitions in a "banner version" which may be displayed at non-museum venues, such as in libraries, schools, or meeting spaces. Contact us for rental information.

# EXHIBITIONS TOUR

**Papirklip: A Global and Timeless Art**  
NORWAY HOUSE  
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA  
JUNE 9 - AUGUST 14



**Art Nouveau Innovation: Danish Porcelain from an American Collection**  
DUBUQUE MUSEUM OF ART  
DUBUQUE, IOWA  
THROUGH JUNE 5



**New Nordic Cuisine**  
SWEDISH AMERICAN MUSEUM  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS  
THROUGH JUNE 5  
[www.youtube.com/nordiccuisine](http://www.youtube.com/nordiccuisine)

# in search of **Zion**

**BY SARAH OLIVIA SCOTT NIELSEN**

*Scan Design Foundation Intern*

## **The Danish-American Mormon Movement**

Between 1850 and 1920, around 350,000 Danes immigrated to America to start a new life. The first great wave of Danish migration was led by Mormon converts. The Mormon movement played a significant role in shaping Danish-American history.

## **Religion in 19th Century Denmark**

Denmark adopted a new constitution in 1849. In this document, religious freedom was mandated for the first time. However, many followers of new religious movements were harassed by the Danish population. Practicing other religions was considered a threat to the Danish Lutheran Church, which resulted in a religious crisis in Denmark.

These conditions set the stage for a mass emigration from Denmark. Due to persecution in their home country, many Danes who were members of religious minorities and new religious movements fled to America.

In America, people had freedom to choose which religion to practice, which encouraged immigration from religious groups across the globe. To a large extent these new religious movements formed a significant part of early Danish-American society. Mormonism was one of them.

Around 1850, these Mormon converts primarily comprised the first wave of Danish migration to America.

## **What is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints?**

The Mormon Church was founded in 1830 in New York State by the American-born Joseph Smith (1805-1844). The official name of the church is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, but they are better known as the Mormon Church or LDS. Today, there are approximately 16 million members of the Mormon Church, most of whom are American. The Mormon Church's teachings do, in many ways, resemble traditional Christian theology, and many people see the Mormon Church as an alternative version of Christianity.

**Widtsoe, Utah. Mormon  
[i.e. Mormon] woman,  
native of Denmark,  
receiving her first old age  
assistance check**

Dorothea Lange, 1936  
*Collection of the Library of  
Congress*

## CAN I USE THE TERM “MORMON?”

The followers of the Church refer to themselves as “Church of Latter-Day Saints” (or LDS) but are often referred to as “Mormons” by those outside the Church. The term “Mormon” started as an insult in the 1800s, and the leader of the Church issued a statement to “Stop saying Mormon!”

However, the term “Mormon” was gradually accepted by the Church and the community. For the exhibition and this article, the word “Mormon” will be used for clarity and consistency.

### The Book of Mormon

In Joseph Smith’s account of events, he had a vision in 1827 in which an angel, Moroni, appeared and presented him with two, gold plaques inscribed with a cryptic text. He describes using two stones with special powers to read the inscription and translate it to English. According to Smith, the text was revealed to be wisdom from God. Based on this, the Mormon Church’s holiest text was created: *The Book of Mormon*.

*The Book of Mormon* is, in many ways, similar to the *Bible* in terms of literary style, size, structure, format, and narrative. In it, the book argues that the accounts in the New Testament and the Old Testament were both misunderstood and misinterpreted and it further describes how these holy texts should be understood.

### Mormon Movement in Denmark

In 1845, Peter O. Hansen (1818-1895), a Danish Mormon missionary, translated the *Book of Mormon* into Danish, marking the first non-English version

of the holy text. The Danish translation of the *Book of Mormon* greatly accelerated the spread of the religion in Denmark. A major tenet of the Mormon church is missionary work, and despite opposition in Denmark, their missionaries succeeded in converting a large number of citizens. Between 1850 and 1920, nearly everyone in Denmark encountered Mormonism, directly or indirectly.

In the 1850s, Denmark saw heightened persecution of Mormons. For this reason, many wished to emigrate from Denmark. Danish-American, Mormon missionaries promised them freedom of religion in America, with the opportunity to follow their own beliefs without harassment. Thus, the persecution of religious minorities in Denmark led to the first wave of Danish immigration to America.

### From Denmark to America

The first large group of Danish Mormons immigrated in 1852 alongside the Mormon missionary, Peter O. Hansen. They were primarily poor citizens from the Danish cities of Aalborg, Aarhus, and Copenhagen who chose to take the long and troublesome journey across the Atlantic.

The Mormon’s Perpetual Emigration Fund, founded in 1850, covered all travel expenses for Danes who wanted to immigrate to the U.S. In return, the immigrants were expected to pay the money back through labor in their new country, an attractive proposition for many Danes in the 19th century.

By 1870, 7,480 Danish Mormons had immigrated to America. About 17,000 Danish converts would make the journey across the Atlantic between 1850 and the early 1900s.

### The Journey to Zion

Thousands of Danish Mormons immigrated to the U.S. to make the pilgrimage along the Mormon Trail to find Zion, the kingdom of God. In addition to avoiding persecution in Denmark, the new “gathering” order played a major role in convincing Danish Mormons to emigrate.

The “gathering” tenet of the Mormon Church said that all the holy people of God should gather in the new Zion, on the American continent. Mormon theology said that the end was near, hence the use of “Latter-Day Saints.” According to Joseph Smith’s prophecy, God willed that the world should perish, but the people of God who gathered in Zion would be redeemed. The Utah desert, namely Salt Lake City, was chosen as the location of Zion due to its relative isolation, allowing Mormons to freely practice their faith.

The approximately 1,300-mile journey from Illinois to Utah, known as the Mormon Trail, was harsh and tough. Mormon missionaries tried to glorify the journey, but many deemed it a disappointment due to the difficult conditions. Despite that, most Mormon immigrants were pleased with their decision to travel to Utah, as it meant they could live free of anti-Mormon harassment.

### From ‘Danish Mormons’ to ‘Danish-American Mormons’

To the Mormons, it was necessary to break free from the country that had rejected and neglected them for years. The break was a new beginning for them, now seeing an opportunity to live the life they wanted in a country that was not actively marginalizing them.

The majority of Danish-American Mormons made the decision to stop actively speaking Danish and adopt English, considered by the Mormon Church to be the preferred language of God. Therefore, the Danish language died out among Mormons in Utah. This later created significant challenges with their missionary work, as missionaries had to relearn Danish when they went to Denmark. This hindered mission work and, as a result, slowed the conversion of additional Danes to the Mormon Church.

The Mormons adjusted to their new life in America like many other settlers across the country. However, they never forgot their history of travelling across the Atlantic and walking 1,300 miles across rugged terrain to get to their new home.

### Danish-American Mormons Today

The geographic location of Zion seemed to lessen in significance over time, as the Mormons realized that the end of the world would not occur as soon as previously thought.

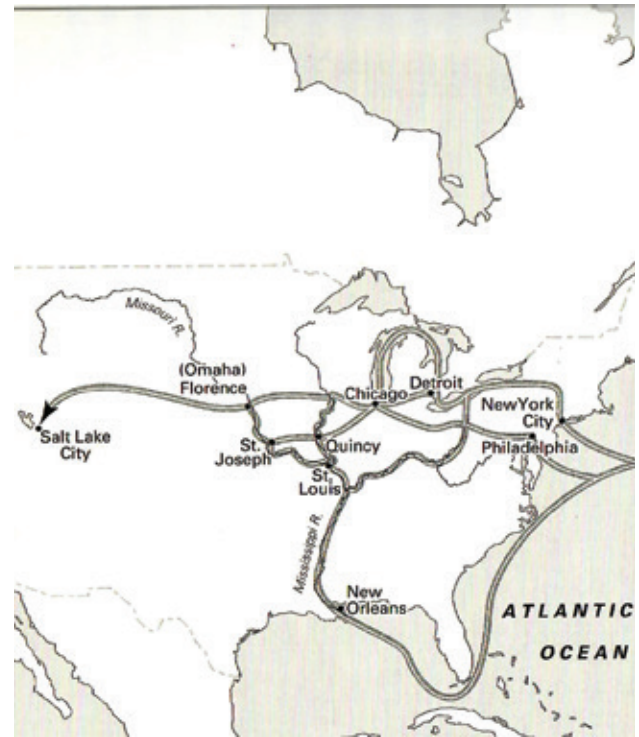
From the 1890s onward, the most important version of Zion was the one that existed in the believers' hearts and not the geographical location in Salt Lake City, Utah. Therefore, Mormon communities spread across the country.

However, many Danish-American Mormons continued to remain in Utah and, in 1980, census

data showed that approximately 138,000 Utahans had one or more Danish ancestor. Town names today still reflect the Danish-American Mormon story – for example, Elsinore, Utah bears the name of a town in Denmark (Helsingør) best known for Hamlet's castle.

Salt Lake continues to hold significance for the religion, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints is headquartered there. Even though the Church today exists in more than 160 countries, Utah still has the highest population of Mormons in the world, with around 2 million followers within the state.

Z



Map of the primary routes from Denmark to America, (1852-1869), map created by William Mulder, *Homeward to Zion: The Mormon Migration from Scandinavia*.

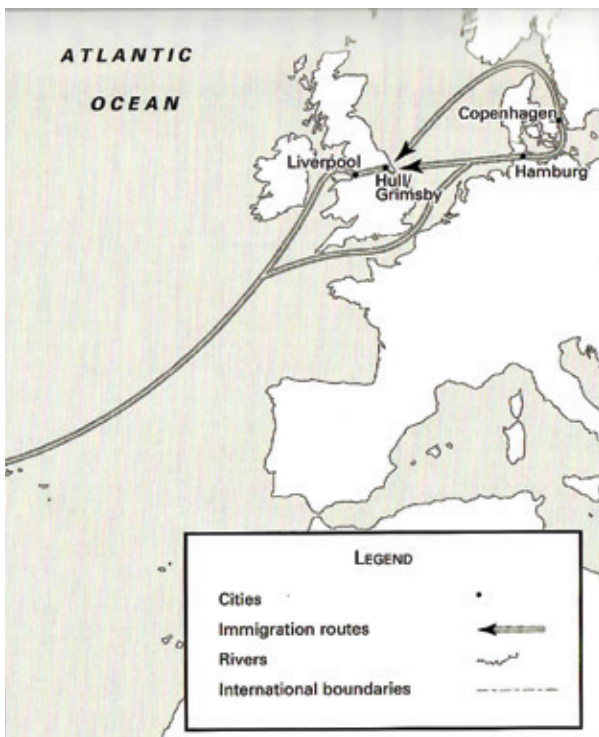


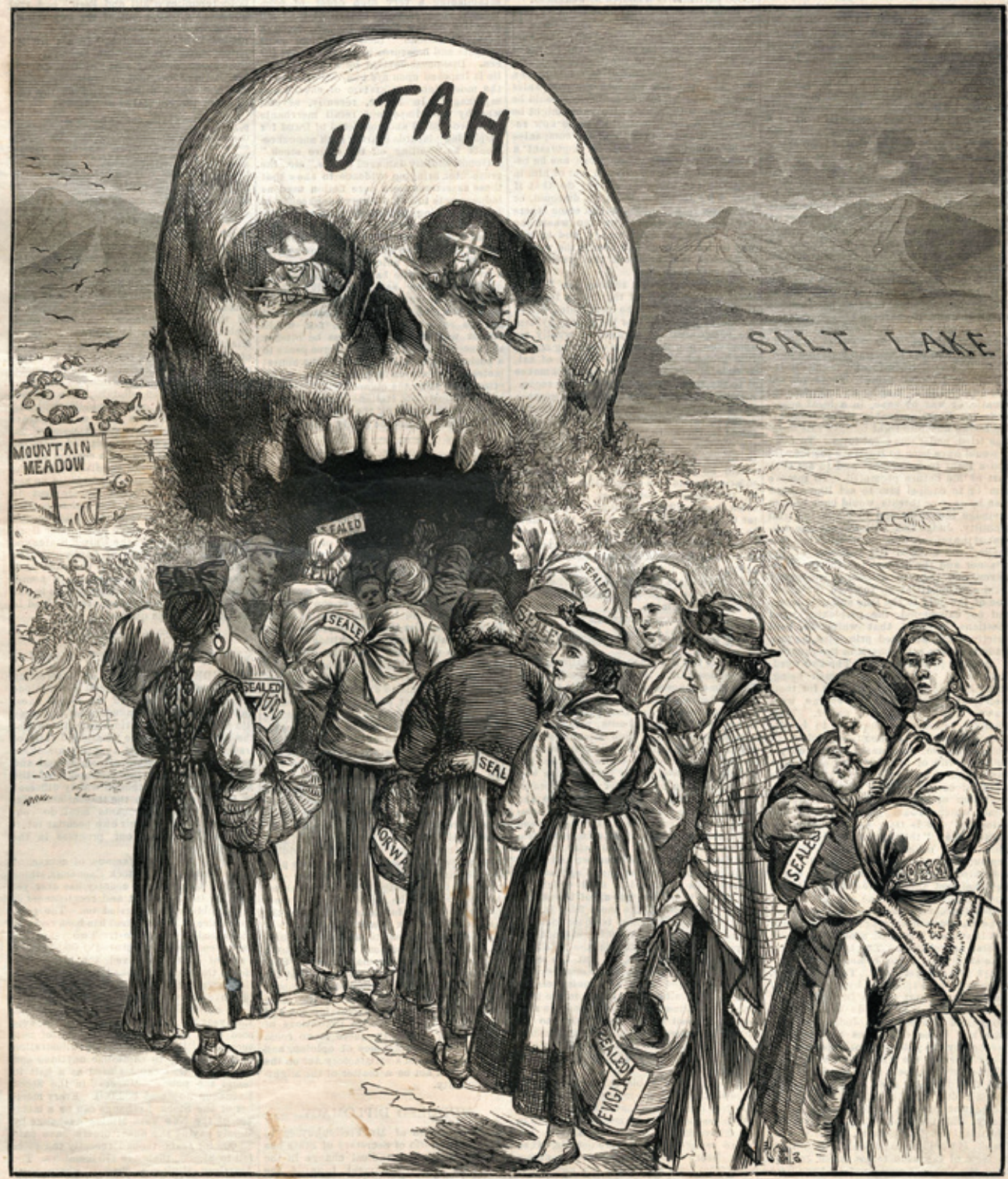
*“I expect of you  
and my siblings to  
come up here to  
drink from the pure  
spring, and learn  
wisdom through  
the servants of God,  
who stand here to  
guide his people.”*

**Transcription of a Letter from  
Laura Amalia Knudsen, 1855**  
*The Royal Danish Library*

Laura Amalia Knudsen was born in Højerup, Denmark, but grew up in Aalbæk near Frederikshavn. She converted to Mormonism and chose to immigrate to Utah, leaving behind her father, mother, and siblings in Denmark. Her letter to her family in 1855 asks her family to “come home to Zion.”

Many of Laura’s letters have a strong missionary feel and illustrate the wish of Danish-American Mormons to see all their people gather in Zion.

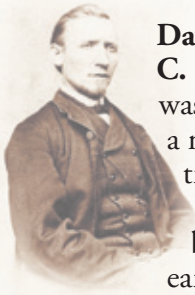




***The Cave of Despair***

Published in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, February 4, 1882  
 Collection of the Granger Collection

This illustration was published in an American newspaper. It shows several women labeled “sealed” (a reference to the idea that their fate was sealed) walking into a skull labeled “Utah”. It is supposed to show the danger of travelling to Utah, with skeletons on the left highlighting the risks. Although Danish Mormons assumed they left behind a hostile atmosphere by coming to America, they faced anti-Mormon sentiment in America, too, as illustrated by this publication. An article in this issue also celebrated anti-polygamy legislation as the first “remedy for the evil of Mormonism,” and the image of women lined up while armed men sit in the eyes of the skull reflect the view of Mormons as religious extremists.



**Danish-born artist**

**C. C. A. Christensen (1831-1912)**

was baptized into the Mormon faith in 1850 and served as a missionary in Denmark and Norway for several years. He travelled to Utah in 1857 along the Mormon Trail to be a part of building Zion. He also produced the largest body of religious paintings in early Utah, mostly reflecting early Mormon history.



***Handcart Pioneers***

C. C. A. Christensen, 1900

*Collection of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, LDS 55-1*

*Handcart Pioneers* was painted in 1900. The handcart experience was one of Christensen’s favorite themes. He and his wife, Elise Scheel, honeymooned by pulling a handcart across the American plains in 1857; he even wrote both prose and poetry about it. In this oil painting, he features many elements drawn from personal observations, including gathering buffalo chips and making a fire, a mother nursing her infant, and a man removing his shoes and stockings before fording a stream. The painting is one of the most recognizable paintings depicting the Church’s history.

Below, ***Crossing the Mississippi on the Ice***, circa 1878. *Collection of Brigham Young University Museum of Art.*



**MEET SARAH**

I am very excited to be joining the staff at the Museum of Danish America as the new exhibitions intern. I come from Aarhus, Denmark, and I am a Master’s degree student in Religious Studies at The University of Southern Denmark. I have a Bachelor’s degree in Religious Studies with a minor in Globalization and Cultural Identity from 2020.

My internship was postponed a couple of months due to the Covid-19 pandemic, but I was finally able to travel to Elk Horn and start my internship program on January 10, 2022. I will stay at the museum until the beginning of April.

My main project is to make an exhibit on religion among Danish Americans, with special focus on the Mormon Movement. I have no doubt that the skills and experiences that I will gain during this internship will be applicable to my future career, that I strive and hope for will be in the museums field. I have already learned incredibly much and I am really excited for all of the upcoming projects in which I will participating. I am sure that this internship will be an experience for a lifetime. I will always appreciate the opportunity of working at the museum and with the MoDA team.

## FOR OTHERS TO ADMIRE

**D**orothy North never met her grandmother, Farinette Aurora Constanca Jensen Nielsen Ogaard, but she grew to know Farinette through stories told by her mother, Edith, photos that documented their family (Fig. 1), and the objects Farinette created by hand (Fig. 2 and Fig. 3). Though Farinette died 27 years before Dorothy was born, her grandmother maintained a strong presence in her life.

Farinette was born in Ordrup, Denmark in 1868. She married Hans Nielsen Ogaard, a Danish army officer, in 1891, and together they had five children while still living in Denmark: Nancy, Hugo, Sylvia, Henry, and Harry. Their move to the United States in 1906 was prompted by their conversion to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Farinette was the first to become interested in the church, and other members of her family soon followed. It was a regular occurrence for Mormon missionaries to visit their home on Saturday nights.

The family's conversion was not without controversy, and the criticism from those around them caused Hans to resign from his army position and the family to move to Copenhagen. In the city, Hans began to compile genealogical records for himself and Farinette. Genealogy is important in the LDS church for baptisms by proxy (or baptisms of the dead). Hans's interest in genealogy continued into his later life when he became a professional genealogist.

When they immigrated, the family settled in Brigham City, Utah, a small farming community which multiple Mormon missionaries they had met in Denmark called home (Fig. 4). Dorothy's mother, Edith, was born there in 1911 (Fig. 5). It is clear that Edith adored her mother, who passed away when she was only 11. In an autograph book belonging to Farinette where friends and family wrote well-wishes before their emigration, there are also messages written by her children, likely after Farinette's death (Fig. 6). Edith wrote, "All that I am and ever will be, I owe to my Angel Mother," and "What thing can equal the love of a mother." Edith seemed to think it was important to share stories and memories of Farinette with her own daughter.

There are a few of these stories that stand out for Dorothy and helped inform how she thought of her grandmother. Although drinking coffee is prohibited by the LDS Church, Farinette insisted on continuing to enjoy her cups of black coffee, a rebellious tradition continued by Edith. Dorothy was also told that her grandfather refused to allow Farinette to bring her cast iron æbleskiver pan with them when they immigrated. Imagine his surprise when æbleskiver appeared on the table in Brigham City, and he learned that Farinette hid the pan in the bottom of his suitcase, which he had carried for the entire journey from Denmark to Utah (Fig. 7).

Although photographs and anecdotes helped form a picture of Farinette in Dorothy's mind, it was Farinette's needlework, a sampler from her youth and a cutwork pillow cover made for Edith, that put the woman in focus for her granddaughter. Dorothy explained,

“I will never know my grandmother in the same way my friends knew theirs. I will never know the color of her eyes. I will never be reminded of her by the scent of a bar of soap or a flower. I will never recall the touch of her hand. But I have tangible evidence of both the strength and delicacy of her hand. Her handwork reveals patience and discipline. She surely was a caring woman who paid attention to detail. And it pleases me to think that my own lifelong interest in needlework would have met with her approval and joy.”

Dorothy inherited these pieces from her mother, who kept them carefully preserved and tucked away, possibly painful reminders of her loss. Dorothy wanted to take a different approach and donated the needlework, photographs, and other archival materials to the Museum of Danish America so that others might see these heirlooms and experience these stories. She said, “. . . Now I want to uncover these objects—the remnants of a life not known, but not forgotten, either—for others to admire.”

**BY JULIA JESSEN**  
*Registrar*

*Special thanks to Dorothy North for providing stories, beautiful quotes, and generously donating the photographs and objects featured in this article.*

**Figure 1.** Ogaard family photograph, Brigham City, Utah, ca. 1916. Farinette is seated at the front with Edith on her right. *Gift of Dorothy North, 2021-014.001*



**Figure 3.** Pillow cover, no date. *Gift of Dorothy North, 2021.026.002*

3

2

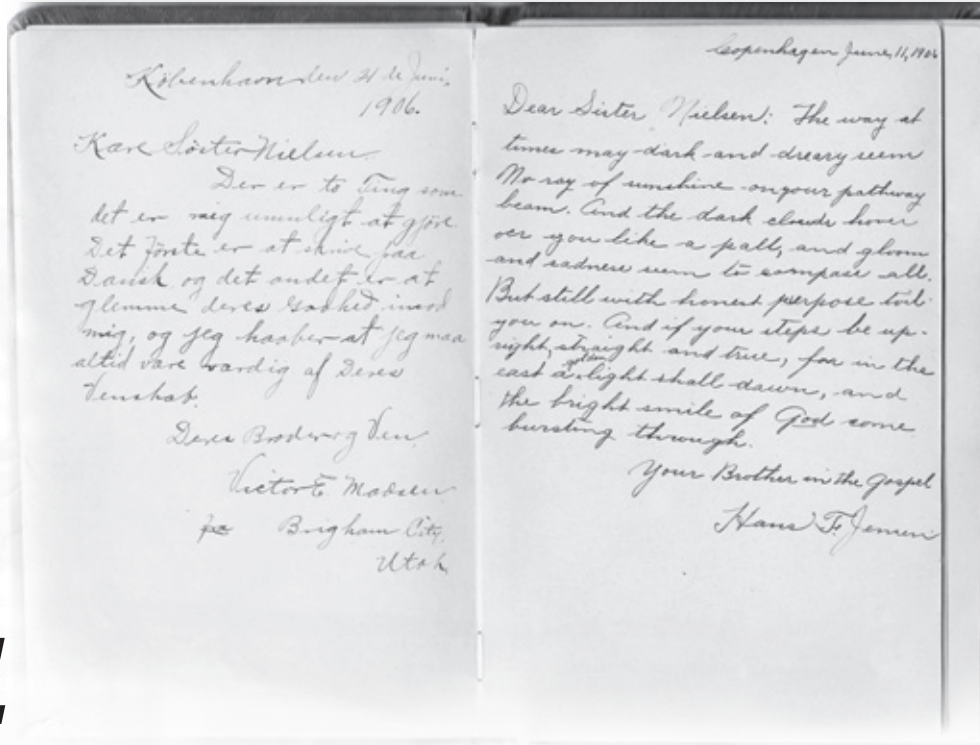
**Figure 2.** Sampler, 1882. *Gift of Dorothy North, 2021.026.001.*



FOR OTHERS TO ADMIRE

**Figure 4.** Autograph book, most entries dated 1906. Multiple Mormon missionaries to Denmark left messages in Farinette's autograph book, often including their home city. The entry on the left lists the writer's city as Brigham City, Utah. *Gift of Dorothy North, 2021-017.001.*

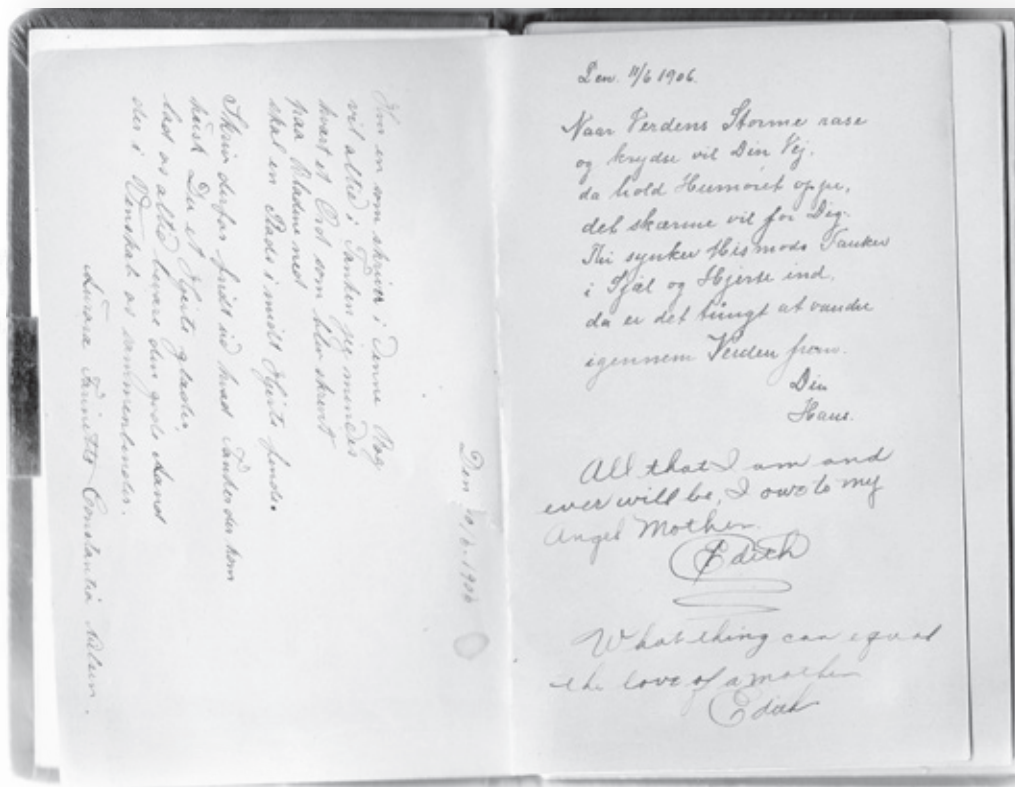
4



**Figure 5.** Photograph of Edith Viola Helena Ogaard (Anderson), Brigham City, Utah, ca. 1911. *Gift of Dorothy North, 2021-014.006.*

5





**Figure 6.** Autograph book, most entries dated 1906. Edith's messages for her mother are on the lower half of the right page. Gift of Dorothy North, 2021-017.001.

6

COLLECTION CONNECTION



**Figure 7.** Photograph of Farinette and Hans, Brigham City, Utah, no date. Gift of Dorothy North, 2021-014.004.

7

An aerial satellite view of a coastal town and reef system. The town is built on a peninsula and includes residential buildings, a school, and a church. A prominent road runs along the coast. The reef system is visible as a shallow, light blue area extending into the deep blue ocean. The text 'ESTATE LITTLE PRINCESS' is overlaid on the reef area.

ESTATE  
LITTLE  
PRINCESS

2017 NOAA NGS Emergency Response Imagery:  
Hurricane Irma, National Geodetic Survey  
<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/inport/item/52284>.

For centuries before the arrival of Europeans, Africans, and other non-Natives, the Virgin Islands were home to indigenous people. The Carib were the first indigenous people that Spanish explorers met on St. Croix in 1493. The Spanish noted that the island had 20 villages and about 1,200 residents. European encounters, disease, and forced labor greatly reduced the island's indigenous population. The indigenous population is believed to have been decimated during the 1500s; however, Europeans did not establish a permanent presence on St. Croix until the 1630s.

The island was formally claimed by the Spanish, but French, English, and Dutch settlers established plantations on the island during the 1600s. The first enslaved Africans also arrived on the island at this time (Hardy 2007; Wilson 2007).

The island of St. Croix was purchased by King Christian VI of Denmark in 1733. Under Danish rule, the plantation economy was based on enslaved African labor.

The Estate Little Princess was purchased by Frederik Moth in 1738 and, with Peter Heyliger, was established as a sugar plantation. Moth, who was born in Copenhagen, was the first governor of St. Croix (Wright, Lader and Chapman 1980). Moth had been named governor of the Danish West India-Guinea Company in 1733 and took advantage of his position to enter several economic ventures on the island. He is also credited with founding Christiansted in 1733.

The Moth-Heyliger partnership was profitable, and both became patriarchs of prominent families. Properties owned by Heyliger and his descendants appear in numerous probate and slave ownership records in the Danish West Indies beginning in the 1750s. Moth's son, also named Frederick, was governor of the Danish West Indies in the 1770s (Dookhan 1994). Their partnership at the Estate Little Princess was one of many economic ventures which were rooted in slavery and helped Danish investors and the Kingdom of Denmark become a wealthy polity.

These benefits continue to echo today.

# Collaborative Collaborative Archaeology

## in the Danish West Indies

**BY WILLIAM A. WHITE, III**  
*University of California, Berkeley*



CHRISTIANSTED  
ST. CROIX  
USVI

Each time the Society of Black Archaeologists opens its archaeological excavation season in the Caribbean archipelago of the United States Virgin Islands, it begins the same way: the archaeologists, student participants, and Black elders from the local community converge at the site to perform a ceremony to honor the ancestors. Everyone involved is invited to ask the ancestors to bless our work as we strive to acknowledge those who came before us—those who lived in the past so we may live in the present.

At the Estate Little Princess, a historic property on the island of St. Croix which was known as the Danish West Indies until 1917, this blessing is asked from the hundreds of enslaved Africans who once lived there, and also from

*We open the site  
with this ceremony  
to respect those who  
came before, and  
we ask for their help  
as we respectfully  
attempt to learn more  
about lives that were  
never added to history  
books.*

their descendants, who worked there as low-wage laborers until the 20th century. The archaeological work honors those of African descent who still live on St. Croix and the rest of the Virgin Islands.

Since 2017, the Society of Black Archaeologists has been directing a community-based archaeological project at the Estate Little Princess on the north shore of St. Croix. Located about 1.75 miles northwest of the town of Christiansted, the property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and is a 25-acre nature preserve administered by the Nature Conservancy.



Fragment of historical Afro-Caribbean ceramic recovered from Estate Little Princess in 2019. *Courtesy of the author.*

## **BLACK COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH THROUGH ARCHAEOLOGY**

Launched in 2012, the Society of Black Archaeologists is dedicated to the ethical investigation of the lives of African diasporic people around the world. The Society advocates for the preservation and ethical treatment of African diasporic archaeological sites and materials. Its members also conduct research that centers on African diasporic sites and are committed to community-based collaborative archaeology in its projects.

The work at the Estate Little Princess seeks to involve as many groups of African descendants as possible, including Black people on St. Croix (called Afro-Crucian) and African Americans living elsewhere in the United States. The archaeology contributes to ongoing heritage conservation efforts pioneered by Crucian scholars long before the Society of Black Archaeologists arrived. For example, Frandelle Gerard's organization Crucian Heritage and Nature Tours (CHANT) conducts Afro-Crucian history tours across the island that are designed to engage young Crucian people with important places and events in their traditional culture. These tours are open to the public, but extra attention is given to Afro-Crucian youth.

The collaboration on the island is also exemplified by a close relationship with ChenziRa Kahina-Davis and other scholars at the St. Croix campus of the University of the Virgin Islands, a land-grant, historically black college/university (HBCU) founded to provide for Black students on the islands. These

relationships are cultivated through trust and clear communication about the aims and results of the archaeology, in hopes that information can be shared between both the community and island residents. Collaboration has also helped connect the archaeologists, who are not Crucian, to Black residents who are interested in the kind of information that archaeology can provide.

The archaeological excavations at the Estate Little Princess center on the location of the village where enslaved Africans and, later, contract workers lived when the Estate was a sugar plantation. The project's goal is to recover information about the lives of enslaved Africans who lived on the plantation from 1733 until emancipation in 1848, as well as the lives of contract workers who operated the property until sugar production ended there in the early 20th century.

Excavations are conducted by undergraduate students who are part of an archaeological field school funded by the University of California's HBCU Initiative, a program which gives HBCU students opportunities to work with faculty at any of the 10 University of California campuses. The program is also designed to help recruit them to apply for graduate school at one of those campuses at the end of their summer research programs. They tour University of California campuses for a week before traveling to the Virgin Islands, where they get a crash course in historical artifact identification and analysis. Those who participate in the field school on St. Croix learn archaeological method and theory while in the field at the Estate Little Princess.

Since 2017, 12 undergraduates, 3 graduate students, and 29 local Afro-Crucian high school and middle school students have participated in excavations at the Estate Little Princess. Many of the college students have gone on to graduate school, with one program participant currently working towards their PhD at UCLA, specializing in historical archaeology. Several local public-school students have come back to the field for more than one summer.

## **MOVING FORWARD**

The fieldwork at the Estate Little Princess is still in progress. Preliminary results show enslaved Africans at this site purchased and used a wide range of ceramic vessels made in Europe, as well as Afro-Caribbean vessels made on nearby islands. A few people of African descent on St. Croix still use these Caribbean ceramics in Ital cooking. Ital developed from Rastafarian food traditions and emphasizes fresh, vegan dishes designed to increase "levity" (e.g. vibrant healthfulness).

In 2018 and 2019, a public archaeology day was held where community members could visit the excavations, see our finds, and ask questions about the site. Both events were well attended. Visitors brought inquiring minds and stories related to Black lives on plantations on the Virgin Islands. Archaeologists learned much about what this work meant to the local people, who are interested in sharing information and learning about what archaeology can add to their knowledge of the past.

*These relationships are cultivated through **trust and clear communication** about the aims and results of the archaeology, in hopes that information **can be shared** between both the community and island residents.*



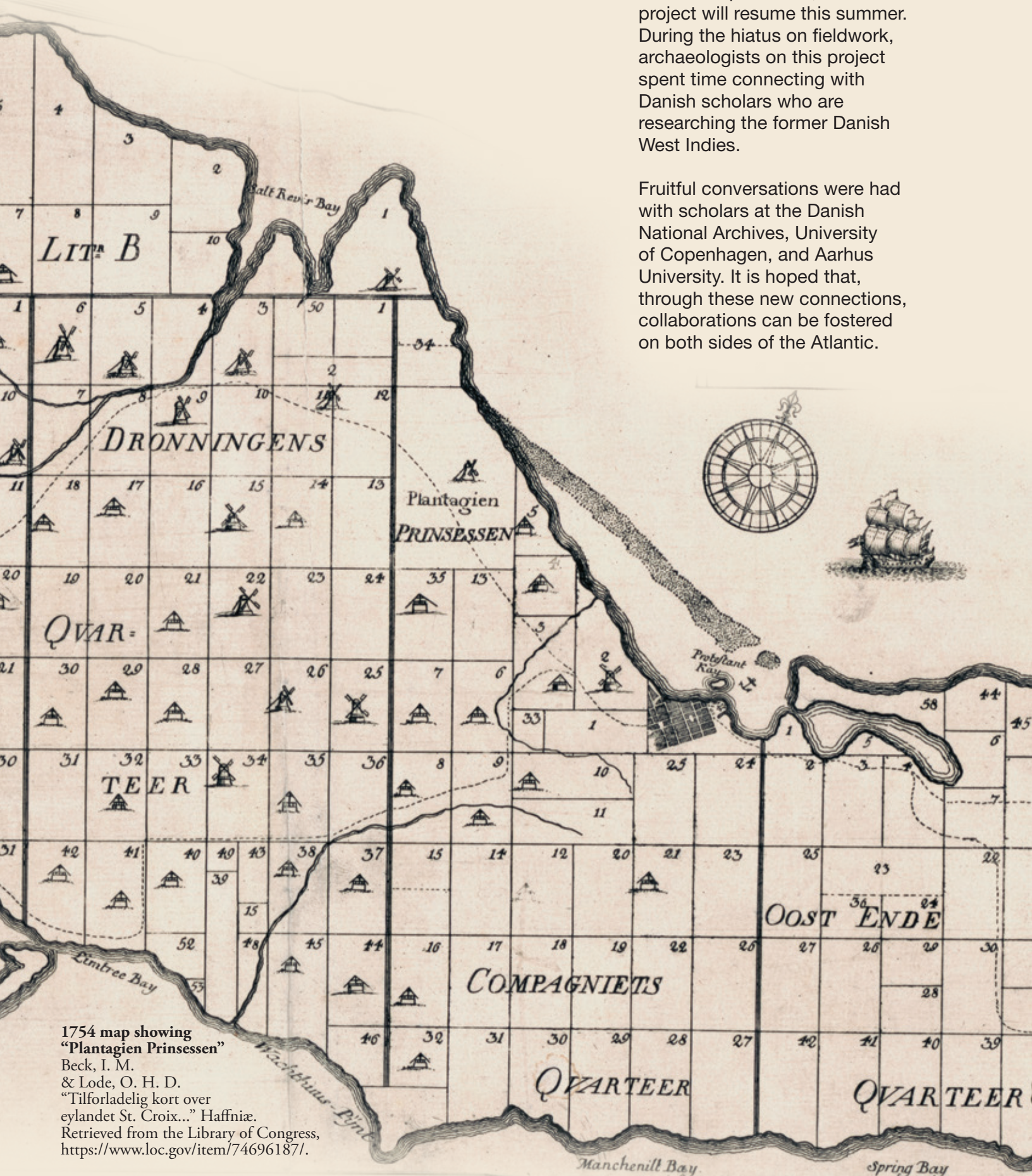
William White of University of California, Berkeley, points to clam shells in the pit. He is standing on what the archaeologists believe may be a floor. *Photo by Linda Morland.*



Alicia Olewale, assistant professor of anthropology at the University of Tulsa, studies a new piece of tile that was found on the grounds of Estate Little Princess as William White, left, and Jeffery Miller look on. *Photo by Linda Morland.*

While fieldwork was suspended in 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the project will resume this summer. During the hiatus on fieldwork, archaeologists on this project spent time connecting with Danish scholars who are researching the former Danish West Indies.

Fruitful conversations were had with scholars at the Danish National Archives, University of Copenhagen, and Aarhus University. It is hoped that, through these new connections, collaborations can be fostered on both sides of the Atlantic.



1754 map showing "Plantagen Prinsessen"  
 Beck, I. M.  
 & Lode, O. H. D.  
 "Tilforladelig kort over eylandet St. Croix..." Haffnia.  
 Retrieved from the Library of Congress,  
<https://www.loc.gov/item/74696187/>.

Historians and scholars in Denmark have been engaged in writing a more holistic history of the role that the Danish West Indies played in Danish history, and archaeology has the potential to supplement the extensive archival research being conducted in Denmark.

The primary goal of the Society of Black Archaeologists's work on St. Croix is to continue to conduct inclusive, international research which provides opportunities for Black youth to engage with African Diaspora history by helping to create it.

We would like to continue to add archaeology to the existing toolkit of heritage conservation techniques already at work on St. Croix. This research also seeks to learn what is knowable about life on sugar plantations for enslaved Africans in the former Danish West Indies, so that we can better understand the mechanism that helped form the world in which we currently reside. We would also like to contribute to Black history in the Virgin Islands and share these results with Black communities elsewhere in the United States and Denmark.

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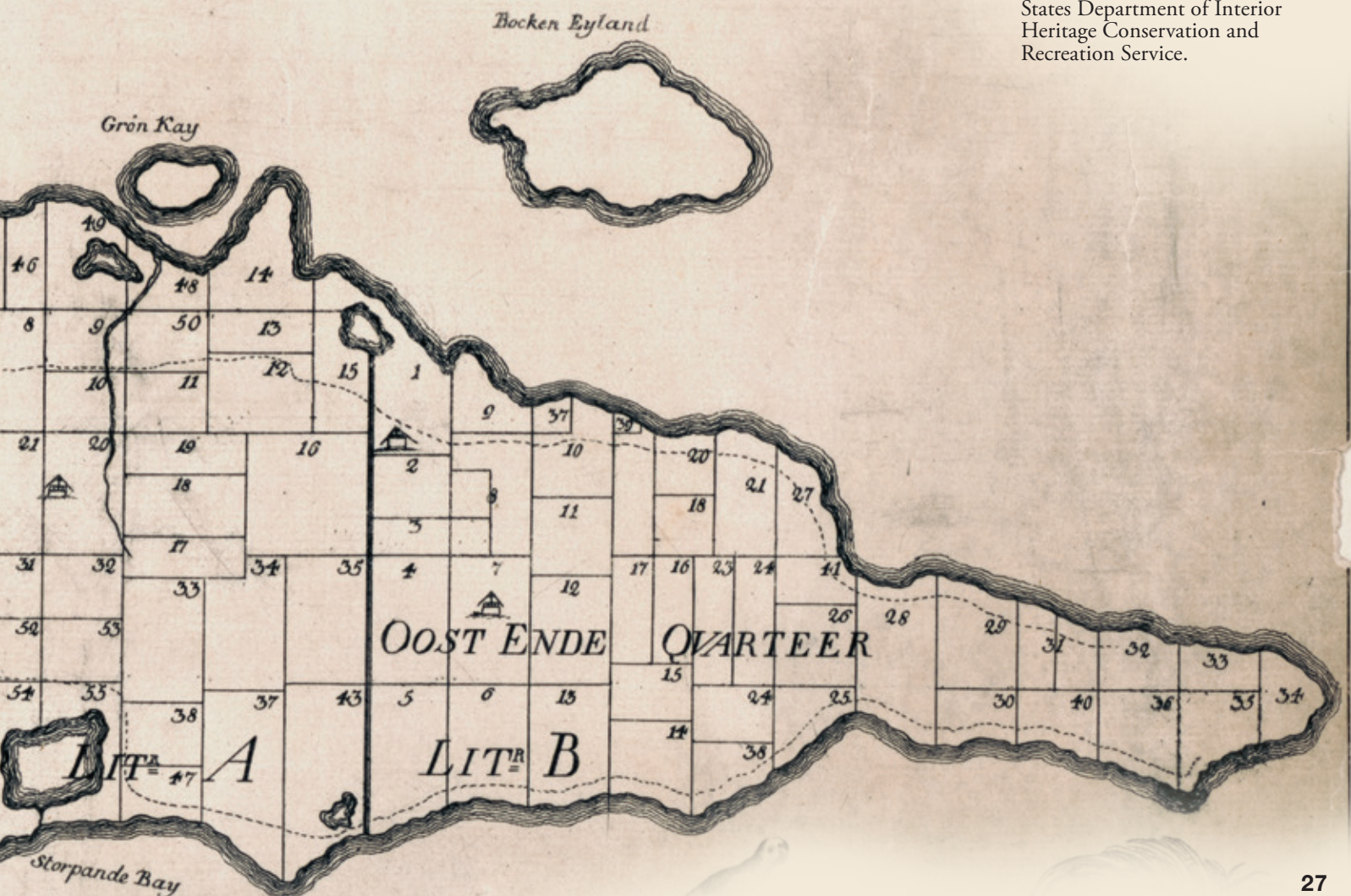
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Watch Professor White's March 2022 Brown Bag Lunch Series presentation on this topic at <https://youtu.be/nakXOgVZ-NE>



# HERE

## **PROGRAMMING FOR TATTOO: IDENTITY THROUGH INK**

**LIVE TATTOOING  
AT THE MUSEUM**  
TATTOO ORTIZ OF  
ROCKSTAR TATTOOS  
MAY 27+28

**LECTURE**  
DR. LARS KRUTAK  
JUNE 10, 6:30 PM

**LECTURE**  
DR. LINDSEY ROW-HEYVELD  
JULY 14, 6:30 PM

## **BROWN BAG LUNCH MONTHLY SERIES**

Join us at noon on these dates,  
and bring a lunch to enjoy  
during the presentations!

*Series sponsored by former board member  
Dennis Andersen, Atlanta, GA.*

**APRIL 21**  
150 YEARS OF THE DANISH  
PIONEER NEWSPAPER  
DR. JOHN MARK NIELSEN

**MAY 12**  
RACE, COLONIALISM, AND  
ART  
DR. MICHAEL HATT

**JUNE 23**  
GALLERY TALK  
ROGER NIELSEN

**JULY 14**  
BEOWULF  
DR. LINDSEY ROW-HEYVELD

**VICTOR BORGE  
LEGACY  
AWARD PIANO  
RECITAL**  
MAY 15, 2 PM

**TIVOLI FEST  
DANISH  
VILLAGES**  
MAY 27+28

**SANKT HANS  
AFTEN  
MIDSUMMER  
FESTIVAL**  
JUNE 25,  
5-10 PM

# THERE

## STAFF ON THE ROAD

One or more representatives from the Museum of Danish America plan to participate in the following events:

### APRIL

**27-30** REBILD ANNUAL CONFERENCE,  
CHICAGO, IL

### MAY

**8** DUBUQUE MUSEUM OF ART, DUBUQUE, IA  
**13** MIDWEST DISTRICT SISTERHOOD  
CONVENTION  
**14** SISTERHOOD LODGE #15  
**14-16** TATTOO CONVENTION, DES MOINES, IA  
**19-22** AMERICAN ALLIANCE OF MUSEUMS  
CONFERENCE, BOSTON, MA

### JUNE

**5** DANISH DAY, MINNEAPOLIS, MN  
**16-18** MODA BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
MEETING, RACINE, WI

### JULY

**14** DANISH SISTERHOOD VIRTUAL LODGE  
#300 PRESENTATION  
**20-21** ASSOCIATION OF MIDWEST MUSEUMS,  
MILWAUKEE, WI

### AUGUST

**17-21** DANEBOD FOLK MEETING, TYLER, MN

# EVENTS

CALENDAR



museum of  
danish america

# the importance of *folk*

BY AMANDA SKELLENGER

*Genealogy Center Manager*

Folk art is a traditional art that is part of every major culture in the world. It provides a reflection of the shared customs and beliefs of a community. Passed down through generations, folk art is a cultural dynamic in which everyone participates, despite socioeconomic class, religion, gender, race, sexuality, etc. Therefore it can be very important in genealogical research.

We all have folk art in our lives and traditions to which we contribute, but we may not always realize it. According to the Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe, NM, folk art, in part, can be more practical than ornamental and “may include intangible forms of expressive culture like dance, song, poetry, and foodways.” It is handmade and traditionally uses materials easily accessible from the surrounding environment. It connects the present to the past and helps preserve cultural identity.

Whether it’s through jewelry, crafts, songs, celebrations, or dance, or through functional items such as bowls, cloth, food, or tools, each culture has its own folk art and traditions. A researcher can learn a lot from the fabrics and tools used, symbols that are included in adornments, foods eaten and honored, and the words and reasonings for songs being sung.

## Clothing

Clothing plays an important role in society and culture. Not only does it provide a level of safety and security to the one wearing it, but it can also reflect one’s home, industry, beliefs, marital status, and position in society.

With folk clothing, the styles, colors, and materials of the clothing vary from country to country and region to region. Makers historically used the raw materials that were available to work with and with

Young girl,  
Blāvands Huk  
(Jutland)



Young girl from  
Ringkjøbing  
(Jutland)



Girl from  
Refsnæs  
(Zealand)



# arts in genealogical research

the consideration of the environmental elements to be endured. Clothing had other uses, as well. Different articles of clothing could represent different status or stages in life. For example, head coverings for women could show others whether she was married or single.

In Denmark, traditional women's outfits would consist of petticoats covered by a skirt, shirt, and apron. These items were made from homemade, hand-dyed fabrics. Scarves, bonnets, or other head coverings were generally used, and shoes of some type were also worn. These could be made of cloth, leather, a combination of the two, or be wooden.

Men's clothing also varied across regions, and, like the women's, had the same basic features. Items such as breeches, tunics, vests, jackets, and stockings were crafted from handmade fabrics and leather. Men

also wore hats and shoes, the materials of which depended on where they were from and in which industry they were involved.

Danish artist Frederik Christian Lund traveled around the country and created a series of sketches between 1848 and the early 1860s that showed peasants from all regions in their Sunday clothes. His collection of sketches is one of the best sources of information regarding the everyday clothing worn in the first half of the 1800s. The sketches show how useful and practical the peoples' garments were for the type of environment in which they lived and worked.

In addition to the styles of garments, in some cultures, the ornamentation could pinpoint smaller districts within regions of countries. Denmark lacks some of the symbology and regional motifs

or color themes that other cultures have. For example, in Ukraine, embroidery is an adornment added to many fabrics and clothing, with the embellishments being most prominent on shirts. *Vyshyvankas* are traditional shirts worn by Ukrainians. Each region produces a specific style of embroidery using traditional symbols, colors, and patterns created to offer blessings and protections to the wearer. Many



At left: Lund, Frederik Christian. *Danske National Dragter*. 3rd ed., Kolding Publisher, 1915.

## MoDA

who are knowledgeable in traditional Ukrainian embroidery can look at an old *vyshyvanka* and tell you where the embroidery style is commonly found.

In Scotland, the clan tartans, which are cloths created with a distinct plaid design, could distinguish to which family the wearer belonged. Tartans are very versatile fabrics and can be fashioned into several clothing items, including kilts for men and skirts and shawls for women.

Tartans were much more common in the Scottish Highlands than the lowlands and became a distinctive element of Highland clothing. Historically, the plaid designs didn't always belong to or represent a family clan. In fact, it wasn't until the early 1800s that the Highland clans began naming and claiming tartan plaids as their family clan tartans.

What can be confusing is that a clan may have more than one tartan. According to Scottish Tartans Museum and Heritage Center, "tartans can represent many different things. What makes a tartan 'official'

or 'authentic' is not age or antiquity, but whether it has the approval of the governing body of what that tartan represents. If a clan chief, or a state's legislature, or the CEO of a company says 'this is the official tartan,' it is so, whether the tartan is two or two hundred years old."

For example, one clan, Clan MacMillan, has three tartans associated with them: the Dress, the Hunting, and the Ancient – with color variations of their own. The rule is that the members of the clan, if wanting to wear the tartan for identifying purposes, can only wear one of the three official tartan plaids; others won't be recognized.

### Foodways and cuisine

Food is essential to life. Everyone needs it, and every culture has specific foods it eats, ways foods are prepared, and meanings behind food at celebrations or holidays. Food is important, because it is a way for people to connect to their community and to connect to their culture.

Traditional family foods and recipes can help identify which country your family may have come from. As many may know, if you grew up eating *frikadeller* (pan-fried meatballs), *smørrebrød* (open-faced sandwiches), and *ableskiver* (puffy fried pancake balls), your family could be from Denmark. If you enjoyed great-grandma's recipes of *borscht* (beetroot soup), *varenyky* (savory or sweet dumplings), or Christmas Eve *kutia* (sweet wheatberry pudding/porridge) when you were young, there's a good chance you might be Ukrainian.

Foods may also be used to pinpoint areas within countries. Well-known New England seafood dishes such as clam chowder and lobster rolls narrow down the region in America to the Northeastern coastal states. A newer practice, or perhaps stereotype, of using Ranch dressing as a condiment and putting it on all kinds of different foods is now known as a very Midwestern American habit. Cajun and Creole cuisines are specifically reflective of Louisiana, because both originated there. Then you have dishes which different cities are known for: baked beans (Boston), deep-dish pizza (Chicago), and BBQ (Kansas City).



The Tartans of Clan MacMillan,  
*images from Clan MacMillan International*

dress

hun  
ting

anc  
ient

All countries and cultures have food traditions that they are identified by and with. Some can fit into several countries' histories, and that can be taken into consideration when doing genealogical research. Foods obviously get adopted and consumed by other cultures through time, but it is the foods' traditions and history within the family that matters.

### Folklore

Folklore, which are legends or stories passed down through the generations, help share important events and people that are significant to the culture of the community or, in terms of genealogy, to a family's history. They provide names, locations, situations, and memories to a history that may have been forgotten and lost without the stories. These stories can be big or small.

My family has many examples of stories and legends. Some we have proven to be fact; others tend to be a bit heavier on the fiction but still have elements of important information. For example, I really don't think my great-grandfather was just so handsome that the ladies would throw flowers at his feet as he walked down the streets of California. We all know he was a bit of a storyteller, and, though he was handsome, he wasn't *that* handsome. While this story held quite the exaggeration, as silly as it was, it also told us that at one time, he was in California, which is true. His father moved from Iowa to California when my great-grandfather was young, taking his younger brother with him and leaving my great-grandfather behind. Around the age of 13, and I'm sure other times throughout his life, he rode the rails to California to see them. Eventually several of his other siblings moved out there as well, but he returned to Iowa to live.

Going back to the embroidery in Ukraine that I mentioned earlier, there is a legend on why the women of the Borshchiv area in the Galician region of western Ukraine near Poland used black as the dominant color in their shirts instead of the colorful threads that the rest of the country used. It's said that long ago, the Tatars would raid and attack villages in the area. During one of those attacks, they killed all the men in the villages around Borshchiv. To pay respect to their lost loved ones, the women swore to only use black threads for the next seven centuries as a symbol of mourning. The 1920s and 1930s were the final decades that the descendants of the surviving women created the shirts with black designs, as the seven centuries of mourning were over. Modern Borshchiv embroidery still uses black threads, but it is also a lot more colorful.

The importance of a legend such as this is that, even if all the details may not be true, the majority lies in fact. The story can be researched to be proven and therefore, it provides historical information about the region from where the family came. If you calculate when the Tatars came into Western Ukraine and controlled the area (around 1230s-1360s) to the end of the "seven centuries of mourning" that the legend states occurred, that aspect of the story fits with the end of mourning being in the 1920s and 1930s, too, but that's an element of history that may never be known for certain.

Overall, traditional folk art can be pretty and useful, but it's important to remember that it came from somewhere specific, and there was a purpose to its creation. If you pay attention and look closely, you may discover some interesting information and clues about your own family.



Images at left:  
Warsaw, Poland, 1925.  
National Digital Archive,  
Poland

## New Additions to the Wall of Honor

**NOVEMBER 17, 2021 – FEBRUARY 17, 2022**

The Danish Immigrant Wall of Honor provides families and friends with a means of preserving the memories of those who emigrated from Denmark to America. Over 4,600 immigrants are currently recognized on the Wall. Their stories and the stories of their families contribute to the growing repository of personal histories at the museum's Genealogy Center. You may find a list of the immigrants on the Wall of Honor at [www.danishmuseum.org](http://www.danishmuseum.org).

The information below includes the immigrant's name, year of immigration, location where he settled, and the name and city, state of the donor.

**CHRIS MARINUS CHRISTENSEN** (1915)  
Rushmore, Minnesota – LaDee Bicknese,  
Pittsburg, KS

**JENS PETER HANSEN** (1892) Chicago, Illinois –  
Mark Hansen & Christopher Hansen, Cass City,  
MI

**CHRIST JOHNSON** (1906) Harrisburg, COLO  
– the children of Christ Johnson, c/o Harry  
Johnson, Pasco, WA

**MARIE C. JOHNSON** (1918) Harrisburg, COLO  
– the children of Marie C. Johnson, c/o Harry  
Johnson, Pasco, WA

**CARL LUDVIG JORGENSEN** (1892) Fredsville,  
Iowa – Susan Green, Cedar Falls, IA

**KATRINA AAGAARD SORENSEN JORGENSEN**  
(1892) Fredsville, Iowa – Susan Green, Cedar  
Falls, IA

**KAJ LANGELUND OVERGAARD** (1975) Newell,  
Iowa – Nels Overgaard, Woodward, IA

**LIS LÆGDSMAND TRENT PEDERSEN** (1969) –  
Tina Trent, Gilbert, AZ

**JOHANNES (JENS) PETER SORENSEN** (1892)  
Fredsville, Iowa – Susan Green, Cedar Falls, IA

## Memorials

**NOVEMBER 17, 2021 – FEBRUARY 17, 2022**

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

Richard Lee Andersen  
Nancy Pedersen Armbrust  
Donald Dean Beasley  
Robert Henry Bergstrom  
John H. Besson  
Gyritha Jensen Blinkilde  
Richard Bonnesen  
the Parents of Ronald & Mary Bro  
Friends of Ellen Christensen  
Joyce Christensen, my wife  
Merrill & Getrude Christiansen  
Glen Clemsen  
Karin Christensen Damgaard  
Lola Danielsen  
Danish Home, Croton on Hudson, NY  
my grandparents (Elaine Jersild Dolgireff) - their  
graves are in the church yard  
Effie Mestad Enger - Mother  
Ramona Esbeck  
Ramona L. Esbeck  
Ramona Esbeck, a talented 4-H mentor for me  
Ramona Esbeck, Memories are the legacy of love  
Hans & Mathilde Farstrup  
Asaph Fogdall (1914-1984)  
Nels Peter Andreas Frandsen, grandfather of  
Raymond Frandsen who came to America in  
1890  
Marian Marie (Sorensen) Froker  
Kristy Brodersen Galt  
Evelyn "Evie" Gregersen, my wife  
Bent & Lydia Hansen, my parents  
Richard & Magda Hansen  
Annemarie Madsen Harbison  
Dennis Drew Harton  
Hans Christian Have  
Emery & Izy Hoegh  
Russell Hoegh  
Chester Holland  
Chester (Chet) Holland  
Chet Holland. loved by his family, friends and  
anyone who met him  
Inge R. Jacobson  
Paula Jakobsen  
Anton I. Jensen  
Arne & Irene Jensen  
Bertha Jensen  
Charles W. Jensen  
Jens P. & Johanne Jensen

Marlene Jensen  
 Paul & Grethe Jensen  
 Roland & Anitra Jensen  
 Soren 'Sam' Jensen  
 Merlin & Eva Jessen  
 John Jones  
 Iver Jorgensen  
 Iver (Whitey) Jorgensen  
 Rev. & Mrs. Soren & Marie Kaldahl - Harlan & Elk  
   Horn, Iowa  
 J. Torben Karlshoej  
 Aase Kiehn  
 Andy Kissel  
 Andy S. Kissel  
 Torben and Erik Klarlund  
 Richard Kramme, my husband  
 Marius & Gertrude Landbo  
 Kurt Klarskov Larsen  
 Theodor Larsen  
 Robert Laursen  
 Bent Lerno, my husband  
 Peter W. Lewis  
 Kathryn Knudsen Littlejohn  
 Milton & Margaret Lund  
 Ted & Maren Lund  
 Rabbi Bent Melchior  
 Mr. & Mrs. Louis Miller, my grandparents  
 Frank Mosdal, my husband  
 Dr. John W. Nielsen  
 LeVern & Marilyn Nielsen  
 J. Brent Norlem  
 Kay (Esbeck) North  
 Valborg Viola Olesen  
 Ole & Marie Olsen, my parents  
 Roger F. Olson  
 Paul Marinus Paulsen  
 Anna M. Pedersen  
 Leroy Pedersen  
 Niels M. Pedersen  
 Paul & Lily Pedersen  
 Loretta Petersen  
 Peter L. Petersen  
 Mabel & Herbert Petersen, Arlene's parents who  
   are 100% Danish  
 Harry & Frances Petersen, my parents  
 John & Marjorie Quist  
 Hans Christian "Chris" Rasmussen  
 Michael Rasmussen  
 Jens Risom  
 Andrew & Rosa Rosenkild  
 Albert Martin Jensen Schjodt  
 Betty J. Schukei  
 Eva Sindberg  
 Axel & Rose Skelbeck  
 Richard D. Sorensen, my husband

Chris & Robert Steffensen  
 Parents and grandparents of Arlene Stork  
 William & Karen Struckman  
 Ole Svenningsen  
 Neva M. Theede  
 Chris Thogersen  
 Jack Unkenholz, our grandson

## In Honor

**NOVEMBER 17, 2021 – FEBRUARY 17, 2022**

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

Milo & Mildred Andersen, my parents (Janet  
   Andersen Johnson)  
 Dana Topp Clausen  
 my Danish heritage for which I am most proud  
   (Robert Young & Andrea Jensen)  
 Stew & Lenore Hansen  
 Ellen Harboe  
 Phyllis Hoegh's birthday  
 Paul F. Jensen  
 Merlyn & Jeanette Knudsen's 45th anniversary  
 Michele McNabb  
 MoDA staff  
 my MoDA colleagues (Terri Johnson)

## Jens Jensen Heritage Path

**NOVEMBER 17, 2021 – FEBRUARY 17, 2022**

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

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

Byron & Denise Braasch, Gretna, NE  
 Carlo Christensen, Glendale, CA  
 Daniel & Paulette Dellovechio, Omaha, NE  
 Larry & Judith Kramer, Omaha, NE  
 Dave & Susie Melliger, Johnson Lake, NE  
 Stanley and Malia Schleifer, Omaha, NE  
 Kevin & Leslie Smith, Fremont, NE  
 Tom & Kathy Wheeler, Lincoln, NE

## New Members

**NOVEMBER 17, 2021 – FEBRUARY 17, 2022**

The Museum of Danish America is pleased to identify the following 56 individuals as its newest members:

Beverly L. Ales, Pleasanton, CA  
Ernest & Andrea Smidt-Merrill, Atlanta, GA  
Lowell & Karen Appleton, Sanborn, IA  
LaDee Bicknese, Pittsburg, KS  
Ruth Ann Bock, Hamlin, IA  
Jan Broers, Des Moines, IA  
Ken Bunger, Omaha, NE  
John Jensen Casalino, Portland, OR  
Richard Keith Christensen, Waukee, IA  
Brad & Carolyn Colbert, Encinitas, CA  
Martha Coletta, Clifton Park, NY  
Laurie L. Stahlnecker Davis, West Des Moines, IA  
Douglas & Tiffany Dawson, Eagle River, MI  
Judith Demo, Ludlow, MA  
Patrick & Linda Deren, Harlan, IA  
Kevin & Carla Devine, Bellevue, NE  
Bev Dirks, Grundy Center, IA  
Ann Johnson Doeden, Cedar Falls, IA  
Julie Fallow, Colorado Springs, CO  
Kevin & Brenda Graham, Ackworth, IA  
Kelly Green, Empire, LA  
Susan Weiss Green, Cedar Falls, IA  
Laura L. Hansen, McMinnville, OR  
Mark Hansen & Christopher Hansen,  
Cass City, MI  
Michael & Rachel Hansen, Milwaukee, WI  
Brian & Nadine Ingwers, Stuart, IA  
Christina Jensen, Ojai, CA  
Peter Jochimsen, University Place, WA  
Sarah Jane Johnson, Brooklyn, NY  
Adam & Ashley Kofoed, West Branch, IA  
Jason & Michelle Kofoed, Marion, IA  
Erica Lebens-Englund, Minneapolis, MN  
Nina J. Martinez, Fall River Mills, CA  
Eunice J. Mennenoh, Audubon, IA  
Albert & Jane Merrill, Greenwood, SC  
Mark Ottensmeyer & Margaret Merrill,  
Watertown, MA  
Eugene Nelson, Austin, MN  
Fred Nielsen, Omaha, NE  
Leslie Nussle, Cedar Rapids, IA  
Elly Olesen, The Villages, FL  
Nels Overgaard, Woodward, IA  
Tim Palmer, Jr., Harlan, IA  
Audrey Petersen, Cedar Falls, IA  
Edward & Cynthia Petersen, Sonoma, CA  
John & Angela Platt, Audubon, IA

John & Lynette Pohlman, Ames, IA  
Seth & Laura Poldberg, Polk City, IA  
Donna Puluka, Lambertville, NJ  
Layne & Peg Rasmussen, Johnston, IA  
Christine Lauridsen Sand, Ankeny, IA  
Betty Santiago, Sun City Center, FL  
William & Laurie Schmidt, Earlham, IA  
Dennis & Jane Smith, Ames, IA  
Robert Wesley, Columbia, MD  
Leonard & Andrea West, Centennial, CO  
Shelly Wright, New Paltz, NY

## Thank You, Organizations

**NOVEMBER 17, 2021 – FEBRUARY 17, 2022**

These 73 organizations have contributed memberships or gifts-in-kind of \$100 or greater or have received complimentary or reciprocal memberships in recognition of exemplary service to the museum. We acknowledge their generosity in each edition of the America Letter during their membership.

Aalborg and Linie Aquavits, Arcus AS,  
Hagan, Norway  
American Swedish Historical Museum,  
Philadelphia, PA  
Atlantic Friends of The Danish Immigrant  
Museum, Atlantic, IA  
Audubon Family Chiropractic (Douglas & Nichole  
Olsen), Audubon, IA  
Carroll Control Systems, Inc. (Todd & Jalyann  
Wanninger), Carroll, IA  
Country Landscapes, Inc. (Rhett Faaborg),  
Ames, IA  
Danes Hall of Waupaca, LLC, Waupaca, WI  
Dania Society of Chicago, Chicago, IL  
Danish American Athletic Club of 1922,  
Chicago, IL  
The Danish American Archive and Library,  
Blair, NE  
Danish Archive North East (DANE), Edison, NJ  
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #1, Omaha, NE  
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #14, Kenosha, WI  
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #15, Des Moines, IA  
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #16, Minden, NE  
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #35, Homewood, IL  
Danish Brotherhood Polarstjernen Lodge #283,  
Dagmar, MT  
Danish Brotherhood Lodges, Heartland District,  
Iowa-Minnesota  
Danish Brotherhood Centennial Lodge #348,  
Eugene, OR  
The Danish Canadian National Museum,  
Spruce View, Alberta, Canada

Danish Club of Tucson, Tucson, AZ  
 The Danish Home, Croton-On-Hudson, NY  
 The Danish Home Foundation, Chicago, IL  
 Danish Mutual Insurance Association,  
 Elk Horn, IA  
 Danish Sisterhood of America  
 Danish Sisterhood Dagmar Lodge #4,  
 Chicago, IL  
 Danish Sisterhood Dronning Margrethe  
 Lodge #15, Waukesha, WI  
 Danish Sisterhood Lodge #19,  
 Tacoma/Olympia, WA  
 Danish Sisterhood Ellen Lodge #21, Denver, CO  
 Danish Sisterhood Lodge #102, Des Moines, IA  
 Danish Sisterhood Lodge #168, Bakersfield, CA  
 Danish Sisterhood Flora Danica Lodge #177,  
 Solvang, CA  
 Den Danske Pioneer (Elsa Steffensen & Linda  
 Steffensen), Hoffman Estates, IL  
 Elk Horn Lutheran Church, Elk Horn, IA  
 Elk Horn-Kimballton Optimist Club, Elk Horn &  
 Kimballton, IA  
 Elverhoj Museum of History and Art, Solvang, CA  
 Faith, Family, Freedom Foundation (Kenneth &  
 Marlene Larsen), Harlan, IA  
 Federation of Danish Associations in Canada,  
 Gloucester, Canada  
 FNIC Group (Larry & Wendy Neppi), Elkhorn, NE  
 Fredsville Lutheran Church, Cedar Falls, IA  
 Grand View University, Des Moines, IA  
 Greater Omaha Genealogical Society,  
 Omaha, NE  
 Hacways (Helene & Nanna Christensen),  
 Hals, Denmark  
 Wayne Hansen Real Estate, LLC, Elk Horn, IA  
 Harlan Tribune Newspapers, Inc. (Joshua Byers,  
 Publisher), Harlan, IA  
 Henningsen Construction, Inc. (Brad Henningsen,  
 Vice President), Atlantic, IA  
 House of Denmark, San Diego, CA  
 Independent Order of Svithiod, Verdandi  
 Lodge #3, Chicago, IL  
 Kirsten's Danish Bakery (Kirsten & Paul Jepsen),  
 Hinsdale, IL  
 Knudsen Old Timers, Glendale, CA  
 Landmands Bank (Troy Wessel, President),  
 Audubon, IA  
 Main Street Market (Tracey Kenkel), Panama, IA  
 Marne Elk Horn, Elk Horn, IA  
 Midwest Groundcovers LLC (Craig Keller &  
 Christa Orum-Keller, Vice President), Illinois  
 Nazareth Evangelical Lutheran Church,  
 Cedar Falls, IA  
 Nelsen and Nelsen, Attorneys at Law, Cozad, NE  
 Northwest Danish Association, Seattle, WA

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 Esper A. Petersen Foundation, Grayslake, IL  
 Proongily (Cyndi McKeen), St. Paul, MN  
 The Rasmussen Group, Inc. (Sandra Rasmussen  
 and Kurt & Lynette Rasmussen), Des Moines, IA  
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 Harlan, IA  
 Shelby County State Bank, Harlan &  
 Elk Horn, IA  
 Symra Literary Society, Decorah, IA  
 Upward Mobility (Susan Vitek), Hinesburg, VT

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*So, what did you think of this edition? Were you missing anything? What else would you love to see in a magazine for MoDA members? We're all ears, and we will be testing a few new ideas in the next editions - stay tuned!*

[media@danishmuseum.org](mailto:media@danishmuseum.org)

# annual report



Read a letter from the president of the board of directors, departmental summaries, and a lot of other great information about the museum and its supporters!

View our 2021 Annual Report at  
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