

FALL
2024

MoDA magazine

A BENEFIT FOR MEMBERS OF THE MUSEUM OF DANISH AMERICA





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COVER

Jesper Møller Sørensen, Ambassador of Denmark to the United States, greeting Nancy Sand, a long-time member and volunteer who has recently been appointed to serve on the museum's Board of Directors. Additional information regarding the Ambassador's visit can be found on page 48.

DEAR MoDA FRIENDS,

Throughout our museum's history, there have been individuals who have made significant contributions to its success. From the vision of the founding board members to the generosity of current donors, our museum has been shaped by and thrived thanks to the commitment of many pivotal supporters.

I cannot attempt a comprehensive list of those pivotal supporters in a limited space, but I would like to highlight two individuals who were early backers of the museum, who were able to watch

it grow and reach its 40-year anniversary, and who just passed away in the last several months.

Bruce Lauritzen (1943–2024) was the fifth-generation leader of First National Bank of Omaha and served as the Honorary Royal Danish Consul for Nebraska. First National Bank, established in 1857, is the largest privately held bank holding company in the United States and includes Shelby County State Bank and Landmands Bank, which serve the Danish Villages of Elk Horn and Kimballton.

In June 1983, the Danish American Heritage Society Museum Committee, of which I was a member along with others, including a representative from both Elk Horn and Kimballton, met to formally establish the Danish Immigrant Museum. These constituting members toured six proposed sites in and between the two communities that were being offered for purchase. Meetings took place at the Elk Horn City Hall, and it was there that board members first met Bruce Lauritzen. In addition to his responsibilities with First National Bank of Omaha and the Lauritzen Corporation, he served as President and Chairman of the Board of Landmands Bank of Audubon, a bank under the umbrella of the Lauritzen Corporation. In his presentation, he made clear that Landmands Bank looked forward to assisting the newly created Board of Directors to realize its dreams.

Shelby County State Bank, located in Harlan, Iowa, provided the initial loans and banking services after the Elk Horn Lutheran Church donated ten acres of land. The bank continued its support throughout the design and construction phases from 1984 until the museum opened in 1994. This relationship changed in the late 1990s when the Lauritzen Corporation purchased Shelby County State Bank.

While Bruce and his wife, Kimball, were museum members and donors from its founding in 1983, they now became more directly involved. They, through the Lauritzen Corporation, agreed to gift the quarterly payments on the \$1.6 million

dollars that remained on the construction loan. The debt was finally retired in early autumn of 2008, twenty-five years and one month after the museum was incorporated. This generosity provided a firm and secure financial foundation, enabling museum staff to focus on fundraising to underwrite operational and programming costs.

In 2012, Bruce stepped forward again. The Board and staff were planning an expansion of our climate-controlled artifact storage facilities. We were committed to having all the money this undertaking required, two million dollars for construction and one million more for our endowment to cover the ongoing operational costs of the expanded facility. When I shared with him our 2011–2012 financials and that we had already raised over one million dollars towards this goal, Bruce again opened doors, and we received major gifts from foundations and individuals allowing us to reach our goal. Bruce was such a generous friend.



JOHN MARK NIELSEN, Ph.D.
Executive Director Emeritus

When I first met Bruce Lauritzen, I had just stepped into the role of Executive Director for the museum. My predecessors had established a regular routine of visiting Bruce at the top of the First National Tower in Omaha, and I knew that they had usually brought a copy of the museum's financial statements to share with him. I followed that established pattern, and I will always remember Bruce Lauritzen reacting like a kid in a candy store when presented with financial statements. His eyes lit up, he turned straight to the balance sheet, and he was always enthusiastic over the numerical proof of the museum's financial health.

Bruce was enthusiastic about more than financial data, though. At a later visit, I sat with him and shared our museum's new goal to grow our collection of Danish ceramics. Bruce understood the potential for attracting a new audience of people interested in ceramics and decorative arts, and he made a financial pledge on the spot. His start-up pledge laid the groundwork for new acquisitions and a major exhibition due to open this November, *Danish Ceramics: Beyond Blue and White*.

Another impactful individual in the museum's history was Christian Castenskiold (1926–2024). Christian was born into the highest level of Danish society, the son of Princess Dagmar and grandson of King Frederik XIII. He is the only member of the Danish royal family to become an American citizen, arriving in the United States in 1951 and serving in the United States Army. He became a leader of the Danish immigrant community in southern California and in the international business community. When our museum was first being organized, Chris Castenskiold and Victor Borge both appeared on an early promotional video encouraging membership and support.

Among museum staff members, Christian Castenskiold is remembered as one of the most delightful people to speak with on the phone. He greeted everyone with genuine pleasure and expressions of appreciation—even a simple conversation could brighten your day. He always wished to send our whole staff team his “warmest regards.”



Bruce Lauritzen (1943–2024) left a tremendous legacy as a banking leader and as a compassionate man who was deeply committed to his community. Image courtesy of First National Bank of Omaha.



Christian Castenskiold (1926–2024) was a gracious man and a dear friend. Image courtesy of the Danish Lutheran Church and Cultural Center.



1.



2.

Originally hung at Amalienborg Palace, these portraits were later acquired by the Castenskiold family and kept in their private homes. The portrait of King Frederik VIII of Denmark was painted by Otto Bache in 1909, while the painting of King Christian IX, likely created by August Schiøtt, is dated 1868. 1. Gift of Christian Castenskiold, 2017.049.001. 2. Gift of Christian Castenskiold, 2017.049.002.

I had the pleasure of visiting Christian in California early this year. At the age of 98, his eyesight was failing, but his memories were vivid. He remembered birthday parties, meeting his wife Cecily for the first time, and spending summers on the Danish shore. His stories were typical family stories of aunts, uncles, and cousins—it just so happens that two of his uncles were kings of Denmark and Norway. Several years ago, he donated two portraits of his grandfather and great-grandfather, Frederik VIII and Christian IX, to the museum's permanent collection.

During our visit, Chris often said, “Everyone has a story.” I believe that he felt this truth deeply and expressed it through his appreciation and respect for everyone with whom he interacted. I think it is part of why he supported our museum, an institution dedicated to preserving and sharing the stories of Danish immigrants from all backgrounds and stories of Danish Americans who bridge two nations and two cultures.

Though neither Bruce Lauritzen nor Chris Castenskiold took a formal role in the leadership or governing board of the museum, they were supportive observers who stepped in to match their unique contributions to the museum's changing needs. We honor their memory.



TOVA BRANDT, M.A.
Executive Director

MUSEUM OF DANISH AMERICA EVENTS

NOVEMBER 2024

- 14 Brown Bag Lunch | Pioneering 20th Century Stoneware: The Story of Nathalie Krebs and Saxbo with Kevin Henry
- 15 Members Only Exhibit Opening for *Danish Ceramics: Beyond Blue and White*
- 16 Public Exhibit Opening for *Danish Ceramics: Beyond Blue and White*
- 29 & 30 Julefest | Elk Horn & Kimballton

DECEMBER 2024

- 12 Brown Bag Lunch

FEBRUARY 2025

- 13-15 Museum Board of Directors Meeting | Washington, D.C.

APRIL 2025

- 27 Victor Borge Legacy Award Recital

MAY 2025

- 23 & 24 Tivoli Fest | Elk Horn & Kimballton

Individuals with disabilities are encouraged to attend events hosted by the Museum of Danish America. If you are an individual with a disability who requires accommodation, please email info@danishmuseum.org.

ALL EVENTS AND PROGRAMS ARE HELD AT THE MUSEUM UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. ALL EVENTS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE. PLEASE CHECK THE MUSEUM'S WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS FOR UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION.

PER ARNOLDI | ADVERTISING ART

Per Arnoldi is one of Denmark's most recognizable contemporary artists. Self-taught, he has been a graphic designer, sculptor, teacher, and advocate for over 60 years. While he has worked in sculpture, relief, and drawing, his best-known pieces are his poster series. Inspired by generations of poster designers like A.M. Cassandre and Ib Andersen, Arnoldi has produced hundreds of poster designs over his career. From orchestras to jazz clubs to train companies and climate advocacy, Arnoldi's work supports his own interests and advocacy work in spectacular ways.

Artistically, Arnoldi's works tend to appear very similar. His posters are frequently based around a very small handful of colors: black, white, red, yellow, orange, and three shades of blue. In spite of his limited palette, he can create scenes that evoke clear depth and action. For the most part, these scenes are built around a single, central symbol. One of his most iconic and imitated examples is his "Mondrian Chair." Referencing the Dutch modernist Piet Mondrian, this chair is constructed from a white, yellow, blue, and red rectangle. Nevertheless, it

BY ADAM BIERSTEDT

*Albert Ravenholt Curator of
Danish-American Culture*

Per Arnoldi | Advertising Art showcases 15 posters by the Danish designer Per Arnoldi. His advertising posters are masterpieces of minimalist design, but they also reflect the values, goals, and methods of the entities Arnoldi is advertising. From Dizzy Gillespie to the Paralympics, see how art is often carefully designed to move us. *Per Arnoldi | Advertising Art* will be on view October 30, 2024–March 31, 2025.

Sponsored by The Danish Home, Croton-on-Hudson, NY.

is so evocative as a chair that, tilted at a 45-degree angle, it can communicate the highest standards of balance and quality, used to great effect in a poster for the Danish Furnituremakers' Quality Control Guild.

The symbology depends a lot on what Arnoldi is making art for. As previously mentioned, he is ultimately making advertisements for the causes he works with. His 1992 poster for Alp Action Geneva, for instance, supported its "One Company, One Project" program, which allowed rich philanthropists to completely sponsor and receive credit for small-scale conservation projects in the Swiss Alps. Instead of a large, abstract conservation goal, these small projects would accumulate into large-scale environmental protection. The poster shows a fingerprint over the mountain—a person's unique signature—leaving a mark on the landscape. There is some ambiguity—does this reference the harm that people are doing, which needs to be mended, or the solution—one unique person leaving their distinctive, protective mark on the landscape? In either case, the link between symbol and meaning is clear.

This is hardly new—graphic designers have understood the power of a limited color palette and clear symbols since at least the 1920s. Even the colors of choice are familiar—Ib Andersen worked in almost the exact same colors as Arnoldi does. However, those posters are far busier than Arnoldi's work. Where a chair in one of Ib Andersen's posters might be part of a 3-D architectural scene, in Arnoldi's work it is pulled down to its bare essence. Arnoldi's graphic design is, in short, a generational update to some of the most iconic graphic designs of the Modernist period; the grandeur and futurism of Art Deco has been updated to contemporary, almost playful, minimalism.

Per Arnoldi was, in 2011, briefly the chairman for the Danish Arts Council. His inaugural speech, however, proved to be

deeply controversial; in it, he argued that art should not provoke debate: "Art should not save the world or stop the pollution... If you must talk about message, it must emanate from the work itself, not added as something extra. If you want to debate, one can write a feature article." This is, in a word, strange, especially for someone as keenly aware of the nature of his own work as Arnoldi is. Arnoldi clearly does not think that art is purely aesthetic and meaningless, given that his posters are often selling something. Instead, his rejection of art that "debates" is that which is gratuitous or shocking and that discourages attempts to identify specific ideas within the whole. Instead, Arnoldi seems to argue there must be a clear link between the piece itself, and what it is "about." Form and function must, at least tenuously, approach unity.

Arnoldi's speech may have gone too far; artistic spaces should accommodate negative reactions! However, it is understandable—if the goal of art is to persuade, it should avoid alienating the audience to the point of disengagement. Arnoldi may have been speaking from experience. His Alp Action posters had fairly limited impact among his target audience, and he produced fewer posters on explicitly activist causes in the following years. His recent art's focus on themes such as immigration and global warming suggests that this disillusionment may have diminished.

Arnoldi's warning is pertinent, though—the value of Arnoldi's work lies in its minimalism. The message that "emanates from the work itself" is exposed for all to see. Since there is so little happening, every decision bares meaning, telling us something about the cause that it advertises. Whether it's the allure of a celebrity, the memory of heroic actions, or a warning about a social crisis on the horizon, Arnoldi's art is never "just" a poster.



Per Arnoldi. "Save the Alps" 1994. Gift of the Danish Home for the Aged, 2021.030.027.



Per Arnoldi. "Danish Furnituremakers' Quality Control, 1959–1984" 1984. Gift of the Danish Home for the Aged, 2021.030.024.



This poster by Ib Andersen shows that while Arnoldi and Andersen employed similar color palettes, their designs differed significantly; Andersen embraced a grandiose style, whereas Arnoldi concentrated on a contemporary minimalism. Ib Andersen. "Bygge og Bolig" [Buildings and Homes] 1929. Gift of George R. Kravis II, Cooper-Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum.

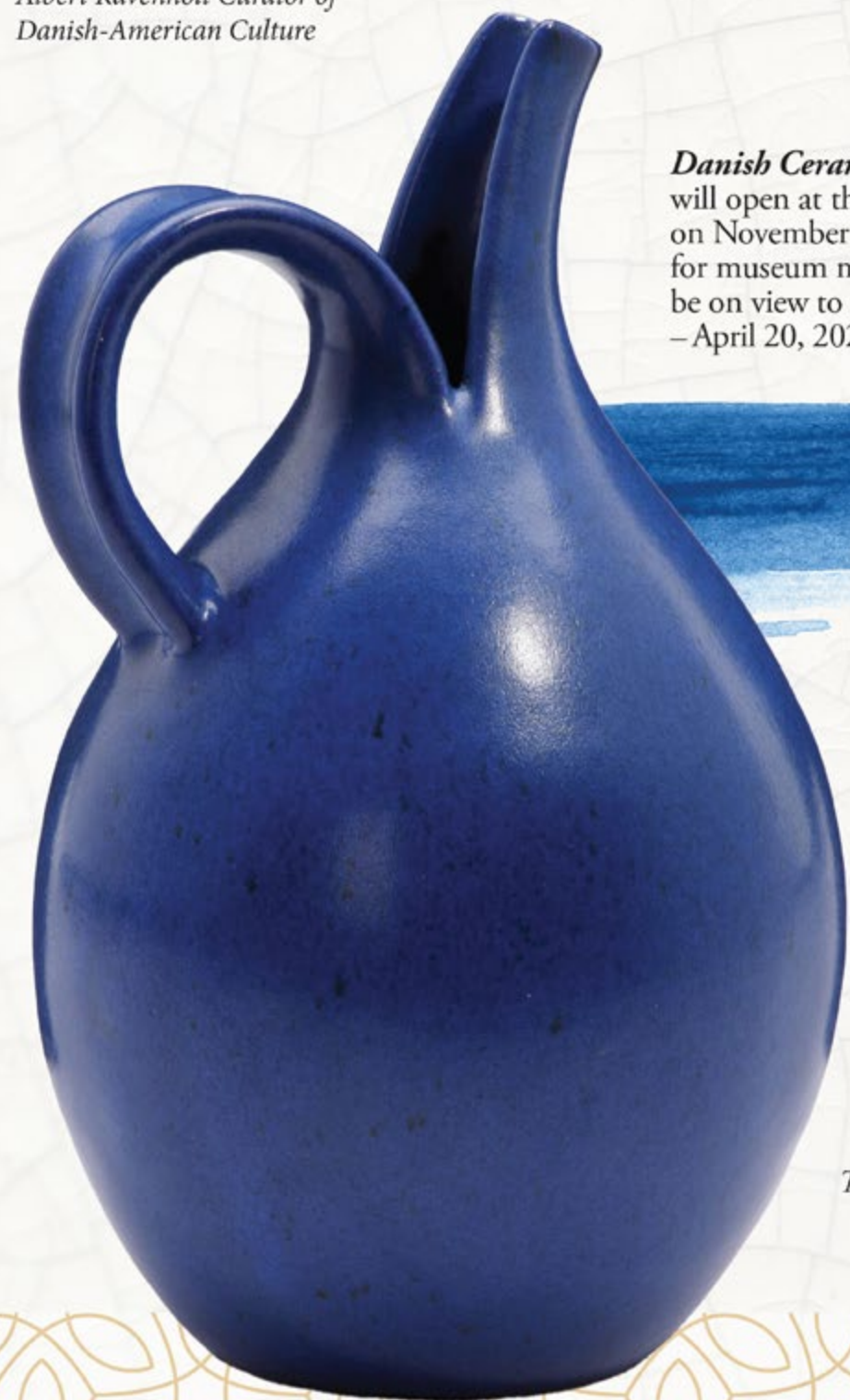
DANISH CERAMICS

BEYOND BLUE AND WHITE

BY ADAM BIERSTEDT

Albert Ravenholt Curator of Danish-American Culture

Danish Ceramics: Beyond Blue and White will open at the Museum of Danish America on November 15th with a private reception for museum members. This exhibition will be on view to the public November 16, 2024 – April 20, 2026.



The spring 2025 edition of MoDA Magazine will be dedicated to a more comprehensive presentation of this exhibition.



The Museum of Danish America has had an ongoing interest in ceramics, predating my time on staff. As part of last year's 40th anniversary campaign, we established a dedicated Danish Ceramics fund to further develop the museum's collection. Now, a year and a half later, we are preparing to unveil the first exhibit funded by this initiative.

Danish Ceramics: Beyond Blue and White will be the first comprehensive retrospective of Danish ceramic art at MoDA, showcasing works from the founding of Royal Copenhagen in 1775 to the present, including pieces created as recently as 2019. The exhibit features over 80 items, encompassing more than just traditional Christmas plates and figurines; it includes numerous never-before-seen pieces in a variety of colors and glazes.

While numbers and dates provide context, they do not fully convey the significance of the exhibit. The pieces on display are exceptional, showcasing a level of sophistication that is evident from the oldest to the newest works. This quality has captivated many admirers over the years, from historical figures like Lord Horatio Nelson and Louis Tiffany to contemporary collectors. As I have prepared for the exhibit and unpacked new arrivals, I have been continually enchanted by the pieces, and I hope you will be too.



EXHIBITIONS | DANISH CERAMICS: BEYOND BLUE AND WHITE

The Bang Family Legacy:

Three Generations Shaping Danish Modern Design in Art, Glass, and Ceramics

BY DELANEY SCHURER

Former Registrar



Christian Bang, an artist celebrated for both his portraiture and altarpieces.

The Bang family stands as a notable pillar in Danish Modern design, with their influence spanning three generations in art, ceramics, and glassworks. The family's patriarch, Christian Bang, was a distinguished painter and drawer renowned for his portraiture and altarpieces, with several portraits exhibited at numerous museums and shows. His artistic legacy was furthered through his mentorship of Danish royalty, including Princess Marie of Orléans and her children, as well as Crown Prince Frederik and Prince Knud.

THE SECOND GENERATION: ARTISTRY IN GLASS AND SCULPTURE

Christian's sons, Arne and Jacob E. Bang, followed in their father's artistic footsteps but ventured into different mediums.

Jacob E. Bang (1899–1965) initially studied architecture before transitioning to glass design. His involvement in designing the Danish Pavilion for The International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts of 1925 in Paris marked the beginning of his influential career in glassmaking. His work at the exhibition attracted the attention of Holmegaard, a Danish glass factory originally founded in 1825. Unfortunately, much of Holmegaard's early work was thought to be derivative and inconsequential. However, in 1928, Jacob E. Bang took a position as Holmegaard's first designer. Despite the financial struggles Holmegaard was experiencing at the time, Jacob E. Bang's innovative designs brought significant acclaim and helped elevate the brand both domestically and internationally.

Arne Bang, one of the most important figures in 20th century Danish design.



Jacob E. Bang, a trained architect who served as Holmegaard's first designer.

His belief in the balance between practicality and aesthetic beauty was instrumental in his success. In the late 1920s and 1930s, he produced several of Holmegaard's longest-selling series, including Rosenborg, Gissfeldt, and Stjerneborg, all of which continued to be produced until the 1960s and 1970s.

After leaving Holmegaard in 1941, Jacob E. Bang returned to his original vocation, that of an architect. Later, he became a chief designer for the ceramics workshop Nymølle, where he designed stoneware bearing his signature. There, he attracted

and collaborated with other talented artists such as Bjørn Wiinblad and Axel Brül.

Arne Bang (1901–1983) began his artistic journey at 16 as an apprentice to sculptor Niels Hansen before studying at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in 1920. Initially a painter, Arne shifted focus to sculpture, with his notable thesis project, *A Fallen Warrior*, establishing his reputation. Arne Bang accompanied his brother to Paris to help construct the Danish Pavilion under Kay Fisker in 1925 and briefly collaborated with Carl Halier to produce stoneware, known as the "Triangle



Famous for his portraits, this Christian Bang painting depicts a woman sitting on a terrace before the Italian landscape. *Kvinde i rød kjole siddende på en terrasse i et italiensk landskab, 1909.*



Christian Bang's *Stilleben med blomster, 1917*. All photographs and illustrations of paintings are made available through Wikipedia Commons.



Besøgende i Thorveldsens atelier by Christian Bang, 1899.



Christian Bang's *Sommerscene med bornene fra familien Holck, 1924.*

Studio.” Carl, a student of Patrick Nordstrom and a signing artist at Royal Copenhagen, left a large artistic impact on Arne Bang. Joining his brother Jacob at Holmegaard in the stoneware department in 1929, Arne found himself heavily influenced by his brother’s philosophy of melding practicality, beauty, and accessibility. It is at Holmegaard that Arne Bang was able to hone his style, culminating in the creation of the ribbed stoneware for which he is most famous. By the late 1930s, he began working independently, producing under his own signature, a stylized “AB.” In 1953, Arne established his own workshop in the village of Fensmark, where he continued to

produce stoneware until 1965 when his son, Jacob Bang, took over. He continued to remain actively involved in art as he created many public works and taught at Holmegaard Glasværk’s Technical School.

THE THIRD GENERATION: INNOVATION AND CONTINUED EXCELLENCE

In 1950, Jacob Bang (1932–2011) began working alongside his father, Arne Bang, at the age of 18. The two worked well together and collaborated easily, occasionally disregarding whose signature was on the bottom of the stoneware. During the

1950s, to gain further experience, he spent time with Bjørn Wiinblad and worked as a designer at Hegnetslund Lervarefabrik. Jacob continued working with his father, taking over the workshop from 1965 to 1981, while also broadening his work to include relief sculptures. After leaving his father’s workshop, he established his own studio, Hestestalden, in Copenhagen, where he further dedicated himself to sculpture.

Michael Bang (1942–2013), son of Jacob E. Bang, continued the family tradition. After working at Bjørn Wiinblad’s workshop, the Royal Copenhagen Porcelain Factory, and Ekenäs Glasbruk AB in Sweden, he joined Holmegaard’s glass department, just as his father had. Here, he developed the iconic Palet series of storage containers, one of Holmegaard’s iconic product lines, and the Fontaine glassware set. Known for

its advanced craftsmanship, the Fontaine glassware set has a distinctive air bubble that displays some of Holmegaard’s most advanced glasswork artistry. Michael’s contributions further solidified the Bang family’s impact on Danish Modern design.

The Bang family’s enduring legacy is a testament to their profound influence on Danish art and design, with each generation building upon the achievements of the previous one, shaping the aesthetic and practical aspects of modern ceramics and glassworks.

Henry, Kevin, *The History of Arne Bang’s Work in Stoneware*, unpublished monograph, 2017.
 “Jacob E. Bang.” *FJØRN Scandinavian*.
 Jordan, Deirdre. “Michael Bang.” *The Makers Guild*, The Makers Guild, 1 Oct. 2020.



Arne Bang’s life-size sculpture, *A Fallen Warrior*.



A brown glazed jug by Arne Bang which reads “C.L.O.C. CACAO.” Museum Purchase, 2024.006.005.



Glass bowls and spice jars from Michael Bang’s Palet series.



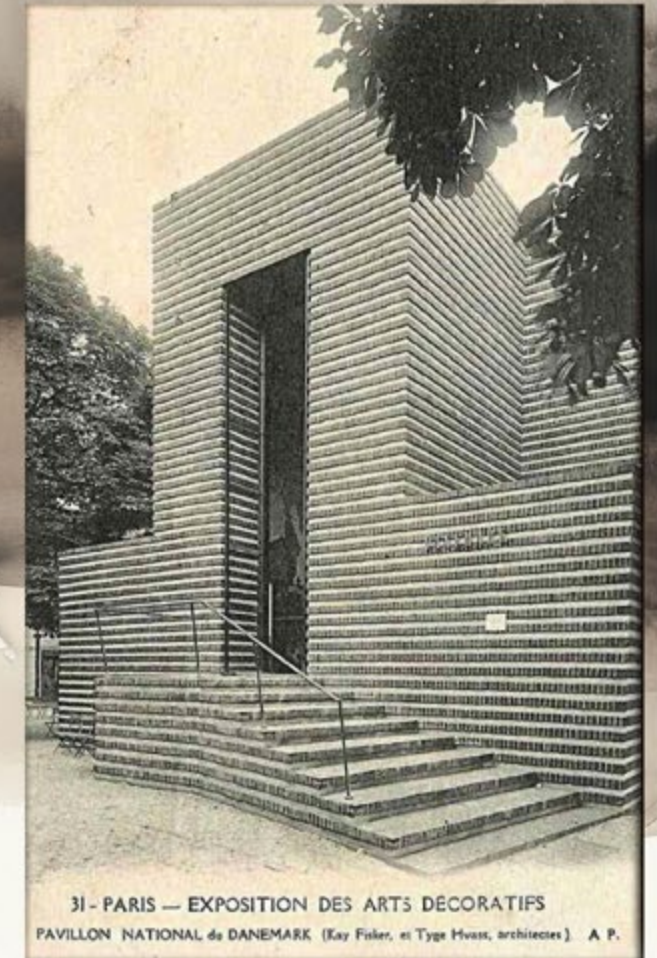
A stoneware pot of medium height with ribbed exterior and a rust-colored glaze made by Arne Bang. This ribbed stoneware is instantly recognizable as Arne Bang’s and represents an evolution from his earlier, more organic style. Museum Purchase, 2023.019.010.



A glass with the distinctive air bubble from Michael Bang’s Fontaine set.



A glass bowl made from two distinct glass layers succinctly articulates Michael Bang’s level of craftsmanship. Gift of William Derrenbacher, 2024.002.033.



31 - PARIS — EXPOSITION DES ARTS DÉCORATIFS
 PAVILLON NATIONAL de DANEMARK (Kay Fisker, et Tyge Hvass, architectes) A. P.

The Danish Pavilion at The International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts of 1925 upon which both Jacob E. Bang and Arne Bang worked.

COLLECTIONS

PRESERVING HERITAGE IN THE DIGITAL AGE:

Digitization Efforts at the Museum of Danish America

BY ADDISON MARSENGILL
Digital Archives Intern

In an era when technology permeates every aspect of our lives, the preservation of cultural heritage is no exception. The Museum of Danish America (MoDA) has embarked on a significant project to digitize the collections and archives of the Danish Sisterhood of America.

In 2016, the Danish Sisterhood of America donated its archives to MoDA, marking the largest documentary collection the

museum has ever received. This collection encompasses a century of the sororal organization's history, genealogical information about its members, and *The Danish Sisterhood News*, which has been published since 1947. Identified as essential for digital preservation, these invaluable newsletters, ledgers, photos, and documents are being converted into digital forms, but why is digitization so crucial? What drives museums worldwide to

invest in such endeavors?

Digitization democratizes access to historical materials. Physical archives, often

A scrapbook for Denmark Lodge #17 of Oakland, California, made by Olga Marie Johansen, President of Denmark Lodge #17 in 1932 and President of the General Committee of California in 1942. This scrapbook contains materials and information from 1968 to 1991. Gift of the Supreme Lodge of the Danish Sisterhood of America in memory of multiple lodges of the DSS, 2016-210.017.002.

confined to locked vaults and dusty shelves, limit who can benefit from their wealth of knowledge. By digitizing

The general committee of the Danish Sisterhood of California at the Sisterhood's 25th Annual Convention in Oakland, California, held August 26-28 in 1948. Gift of Chris Larsen, 1989.106.015.



A photograph of those who gathered for the Danish Sisterhood of America's 11th National Convention, held in Racine, Wisconsin, from September 30 to October 5, 1940. Gift of the Supreme Lodge of the Danish Sisterhood of America in memory of multiple lodges of the DSS, 2016-210.NAT.578.

collections, MoDA can share the rich history of the Danish Sisterhood of America with a wider audience. Researchers, students, and enthusiasts no longer need to travel to the museum; they can explore these resources from the comfort of their homes. This expanded access helps foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of Danish-American heritage.

While handling physical archives and leafing through the weathered pages of decades-old ledgers provides a profound, tactile connection to the past, and each faded ink blot and worn edge tells a story of lives lived and memories made, physical documents are

This photo is from a collection of photos from Thyra Lodge #22 of Muskegon, Michigan, that were taken from 1900 to 1969. In this photo, Danish Sisterhood members are gathered at the home of Carrie Nielsen for a card party. Gift of the Supreme Lodge of the Danish Sisterhood of America in memory of multiple lodges of the DSS, 2016-210.022.014.

susceptible to the ravages of time. Paper can degrade, photographs can fade, and ledgers can become brittle. Natural disasters, accidents, and improper handling can further threaten their integrity. Digitization offers a form of insurance against these risks. Rather than letting precious records of meetings held, decisions made, and everyday triumphs and struggles documented with painstaking care be lost to time, we digitize them. High-

resolution digital copies serve as backups, ensuring that even if the original items are damaged or lost, their content remains preserved. This digital preservation is vital for maintaining the continuity of cultural narratives. This digital preservation makes the past vividly present and profoundly real, guaranteeing that the rich, lived history contained within these objects endures.

Additionally, digital archives are not just replicas of physical collections; they can be enhanced with metadata, or descriptive information about the object, search functions, and cross-referencing capabilities, allowing guests to quickly locate relevant documents, cross-compare data, and uncover connections that might be overlooked in a physical archive. This efficiency accelerates the pace of research and opens new avenues for scholarly inquiry.

Digitized collections can be integrated into educational programs, exhibitions, and virtual tours. For the Danish Sisterhood of America, this



The Danish Sisterhood of America at the Del Webb Towne House during their convention on October 1, 1964. Gift of Donald and Norma Miller, 1998.111.001.



ORIGIN OF DANISH HISTORY OF AMERICA AND HISTORY OF CHRISTINE LODGE # 1 NEGAUNEE MICHIGAN

Compiled by Millicent Jensen, Marquette, Mich
Copied by Historian Jenny E. Jensen

Danish Sisterhood--just a little two word phrase, but what a myriad of thoughts come flooding into ones consciousness, as one reflects on the people and the concepts it suggests!

Our story takes place in the year 1883, the setting is Negaunee, Michigan and the main character is Christine Hemmingsen.

Before we get into the story itself, lets prologue it with some background information on Denmark, from where the Hemmingsen's migrated, and the culture they and other Danes brought with them from the "Old World" to the "New World".

In her book "Of Danish Ways", Margaret Nielsen describes Denmark as a "little country with a big spirit--smiling Denmark--home of the Danes--a happy people in a delightful country. The Danes, --whose ingredients for living are food, song, humor and sociability;--whose ways of friendliness, helpfulness, and hospitality are their weapons for peace.--who have neither too much or too little;--who are proud of their country and their heritage of beauty and social concerns;--who are hardy, literate, broadminded, and enterprising."



The Supreme Board of the Danish Sisterhood of America circa 1960. Gift of Donald and Norma Miller, 1998.111.004.

Compiled by Millicent Jensen and copied by Historian Jenny E. Jensen, this manuscript contains the lodge history of Christine Lodge #1 of Negaunee, Michigan. Gift of the Supreme Lodge of the Danish Sisterhood of America in memory of multiple lodges of the DSS, 2016-210.001.001.



A collection of portraits circa 1896, likely depicting the national officers of the Danish Sisterhood of America. Gift of the Supreme Lodge of the Danish Sisterhood of America in memory of multiple lodges of the DSS, 2016-210.NAT.590.



ARCHIVES



The National Convention of the Danish Sisterhood and Brotherhood in Des Moines, Iowa, held September 24-26, 1987. Gift of the Danish Brotherhood in America, 1994.203.315.

means their history can be showcased in interactive ways, engaging younger generations and the broader community. Educational institutions can incorporate these resources into their curricula, helping students connect with their heritage and understand its relevance to contemporary issues.

Museums and cultural institutions around the world recognize the transformative potential of digitization. The British Museum, the Smithsonian Institution, and the Louvre have all undertaken extensive digitization projects. These efforts are part of a broader movement to embrace digital technologies in preserving and promoting cultural heritage. By digitizing their collections, these institutions ensure their treasures are not only

preserved but also accessible to a wider audience.

Digitization offers significant advantages to the Danish Sisterhood of America by keeping its old records safe and easy to find. This helps preserve the group's history for future generations to enjoy. It also simplifies the process of searching through the archive, making it quick and easy to find specific documents. This is beneficial not only for members wanting to learn about the past but

also for scholars studying Danish-American culture.

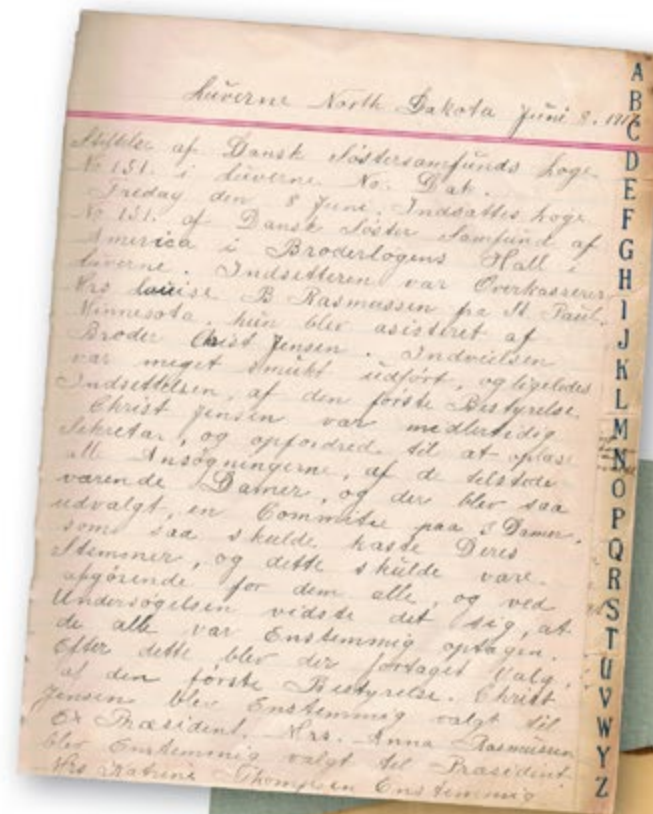
Furthermore, documenting the lives of women, particularly within organizations like the Danish Sisterhood of America, is essential for preserving their unique contributions and experiences. These records provide invaluable insights into the roles and achievements of women who have shaped their communities and histories. By capturing detailed

accounts of their lives, from personal milestones to collective activities, we ensure that their stories are not lost to time. Without such records, the rich tapestry of women's history would be incomplete, diminishing our ability to fully grasp the impact of their work and the broader socio-cultural evolution they influenced.

Turning these documents into digital files supports MoDA's mission of exploring how Denmark has influenced the U.S., both in the past and today, and how immigrants have shaped American life.

The digitization project has significantly contributed to the preservation and accessibility of the historical records of the Danish Sisterhood of America. While there are

For example, the sharing of recipes and the fostering of community are crucial aspects of preserving cultural heritage, as they reflect the everyday lives and traditions that bind individuals together. Recipes, passed down through generations, serve as a tangible connection to cultural practices and familial bonds, while communal activities strengthen social ties and provide a sense of belonging. By digitizing and making these recipes and records widely available, we ensure that the essence of community and the rich culinary traditions of our past continue to be celebrated and appreciated long into the future.



Top: A ledger from the Danish Sisterhood Lodge #151 in LuVerne, North Dakota. The first entry is from June 8, 1917, and the final entry is dated December 3, 1936. Through the Danish Sisterhood Digital Archives Project, this ledger will be scanned in its entirety and uploaded to the museum's Danish American Digital Library. Gift of Red River Danes, 2008.035.010.

Bottom: A charter certificate issued on December 26, 1896, from the Supreme Lodge of The Danish Sisterhood in North-America to Enighed Lodge #38 of Boston, Massachusetts. Gift of the Supreme Lodge of the Danish Sisterhood of America in memory of multiple lodges of the DSS, 2016-210.038.001.



The contents of this scrapbook detail the Danish Sisterhood of America Junior American Danish Auxiliary (JADA) and includes materials from 1966 to 1974. This is a photo of the original JADAs of Santa Barbara, California, in 1966. Gift of Chris Larsen, 1989.106.021.



still tasks to complete, such as finishing the ledger digitization and ensuring long-term preservation, the project presents numerous opportunities for education, promotion, and community engagement.

The mission of the Danish Sisterhood of America is to strengthen, maintain, and preserve the Danish heritage and traditions for future generations. In this endeavor, the Museum of Danish America reaffirms its commitment to sharing the rich heritage of the Danish-American experience with its visitors, members, researchers, and the broader community and supports the Danish Sisterhood of America in the continued fulfillment of its mission. By embracing digitization, MoDA ensures that the stories, achievements, and heritage of Danish Americans continue to inspire and educate future generations. This project not only safeguards history but also makes it vibrant and accessible in the digital age.

Published in May 1975, this edition of the *Danish Sisterhood News* features details on how Dike Lodge #176 honored Sister Alma Larsen for her 50 years of membership, the 85th anniversary dinner-dance of Freden Lodge #12, and the passing of Anna Petersen, the oldest member of Olga Lodge #11, who had been a member for 70 years. Through the Danish Sisterhood Digital Archives Project, every edition of the newsletter has been digitized and uploaded to the Danish American Digital Library. *Danish Sisterhood News*, May 1975.



Ingeborg (née Andersen) Nielsen was born on August 7, 1886, in Hjelmager, Aarhus, Denmark. She was an active member of the Danish Sisterhood in Omaha and served as secretary for 25 years. She is pictured here wearing a costume patterned after Dannebrog and holding a Danish Sisterhood of America banner that also imitates the Danish flag. Gift of Ken and Margaret Wandel, 1990.069.012.

exhibitions

2024 - 2026

	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	
2	[Blue bar]		[Gold bar]						
1	[Yellow bar]		[Red bar]			[Grey bar]			
LL	[Green bar]		[Grey bar]						

Nature-Culture / Natur-Kultur
KRAMME GALLERY
JUNE 22, 2023 - NOVEMBER 4, 2024

Nature-Culture / Natur-Kultur
MULTIMEDIA ROOM
JUNE 22, 2023 - MARCH 10, 2025

Dwight Lamb: Music of Two Continents
MULTIMEDIA ROOM
MARCH 17, 2025 - DECEMBER 1, 2025

The Art of the Danish Book
MAIN FLOOR GALLERY
AUGUST 15, 2025 - FEBRUARY 17, 2026

Per Arnoldi | Advertising Art
MAIN FLOOR GALLERY
OCTOBER 30, 2024 - MARCH 31, 2025

Danish Ceramics: Beyond Blue and White
KRAMME GALLERY
NOVEMBER 16, 2024 - APRIL 20, 2026

Lay off(f) the Land: Nordic Narratives
MAIN FLOOR GALLERY
APRIL 11, 2025 - AUGUST 1, 2025

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Danish Sisterhood of America:

Past, Present, and Future

BY THE DANISH SISTERHOOD OF AMERICA BOARD
Guest Authors

HISTORY

The Dansk Søstersamfund was founded in 1883 by a group of Danish immigrants in Negaunee, Michigan. Eleven women formed this network to support one another, much like the Danish Brotherhood in America, with a funeral benefit, sick pay, and a flower fund. Although Christine Hemmingsen passed away only two years after the group's inception, she is regarded as the "mother" of the organization we now know as the Danish Sisterhood of America. While the organization was initially established by women, it was primarily led by their husbands, who were members of the Danish Brotherhood.

DANISH IMMIGRATION

Danish immigrants came to America for many different reasons—some came to escape war, some to worship in the Mormon faith, some came because of the lure of prosperity in an expansive country where land was given or sold cheaply. Denmark was a small country, where there were few opportunities to prosper. When Danes immigrated to America, many chose to



Photograph from the Danish Sisterhood Lodge #156 banquet in June 1958 in Plentywood, Montana. Gift of Charlotte Peebles, 2016-184.003.

This silver heart fraternal symbol was associated with Danish Sisterhood Lodge #108 of Exira, Iowa. Gift of Laura Miller, 1995.257.034.



settle in communities where they felt a connection to the homeland they left behind and with those of a similar background, language, traditions, and culture. Although the organization started as a way to help women's families with funeral expenses and sickness, the Danish Sisterhood accepted men of the Brotherhood as social members.

The Danes worked hard and were always willing to assist others in need. While the men and children engaged with the community and adapted to a new language and way of life, the women were left to tend to the home. Many became lonely, and the support and companionship of other Danish women helped alleviate this feeling. The concept of the Danish Sisterhood was integral in helping women to adjust to a new life while maintaining ties to their homeland and preserving their heritage. Within six years of the establishment of the first Danish Sisterhood, five additional lodges were formed, though it was not until 1890

that women were permitted to hold an office on the board of the Danish Sisterhood of Amerika, as it was called at that time. The first two women were installed as trustees at the Second National Convention in 1890 in Chicago, Illinois.

VALUES AND MISSION

Although many things have changed within our country and our lives, the Danish Sisterhood maintains the principles set forth by our first Sisters. The concept of support for those in need and the knowledge of the heritage and traditions of "Old Denmark" is demonstrated through our mission and beliefs. As part of our initiation, we ask new members to promise to treat other members as their sisters and brothers, visit sick or needy sisters, and help with a sister's funeral if needed.

We have established an Emergency Relief Fund within our National Sisterhood, and we are committed to our mission of providing support. By financially supporting those that have experienced damage from forest fires, flooding, and other natural disasters, we are actively fulfilling our mission. Financial support is readily available upon request when need is demonstrated and an application is completed.

CULTURAL TRADITIONS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Today, the Sisterhood strives to preserve our heritage and traditions by sharing and exploring knowledge of Danish customs from the past.

Membership to the Danish Sisterhood is not limited to individuals of Danish descent; we welcome anyone who has a genuine interest in learning about Denmark and its heritage and culture. At Lodge meetings, we explore Danish cuisine by sharing recipes through cookbooks, demonstrations, and teaching sessions. We also celebrate our love of singing by encouraging members to learn the "old songs" of Denmark, including hymns and fun songs. Music is often a joyful part of gatherings among Danes. Preserving Danish traditions is an important aspect of the Danish Sisterhood. As an organization,



Susan Hoppough, National Trustee for the Danish Sisterhood of America and member of the Danish Sisterhood Dorthea Lodge #65 of Greenville, Michigan, posing with smørrebrød during a gathering.



The 100th California District Convention of the Danish Brotherhood and Sisterhood in June 2022 in Solvang, California.



Members of Danish Sisterhood Lodge #15 of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, gathered to celebrate their 131st birthday in September 2022.



This sororal pin was found in the home of Jean McKee; his mother, Helga Jacobsen McKee, was one of the last surviving members of Danish Sisterhood Lodge #151 of LuVerne, North Dakota. Gift of Red River Danes, 2008.035.015.

we enjoy sharing customs such as dancing around the Christmas tree, hitting the cat out of the barrel for Fastelavn, burning the witch on Sankt Hans or Midsummer Eve, and hosting smorgasbord dinners, Kolde Bord, and Julefrokost.

One of the most important elements of Danish culture that the Sisterhood tries to impart is the "Danish Spirit." The "Danish Spirit" is one of determination, bravery, the desire to do the right thing, acceptance and tolerance of others, and a willingness to help. This spirit embodies hygge, lykke, and friendship. In this hectic and whirling world that we find ourselves in, we try to share this "Danish Spirit" through activities in our Lodge and community. We hold regular fundraisers to help those in need, donate to Food Banks and women's groups, serve at funerals, visit hospitalized or sick members, provide scholarships to post high school education in trade programs or college, and help children attend Danish language camp by awarding need-based grants. By demonstrating the "Danish Spirit," we teach the next generation the lessons of our ancestors. You can embrace joy, love, compassion, acceptance, and tolerance, even during challenging times.

Another way the Sisterhood promotes awareness of their heritage is by organizing a tour of Denmark every two years. This tour is guided by someone well-versed in Danish culture and heritage. Participants gain experiences that deepen their understanding of both contemporary Denmark and its historical roots.

At present, the Sisterhood is helping the Museum of Danish America preserve our Danish Sisterhood history by supporting the Sisterhood Digital Archive Project. Funded by individuals and lodges of the Danish Sisterhood, this initiative has allowed the museum to digitize Lodge minutes and



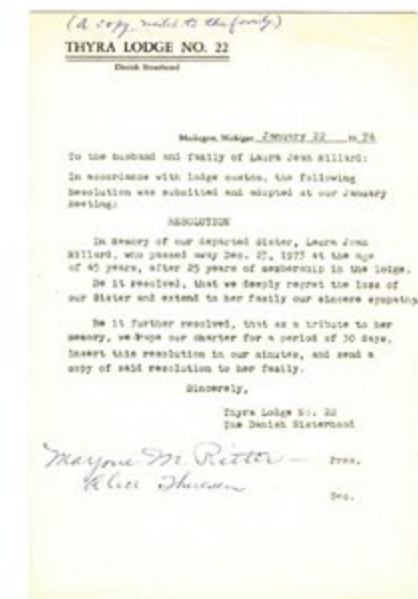
This quilt, titled "Hearts left in San Francisco," was created as a fundraiser and raffled off at the 25th annual Danish Sisterhood Convention in San Francisco, California, in October of 2011. Requests were sent to all of the Sisterhood lodges across the U.S. to create a unique quilt block that represented their Lodge. Instructions on size, color, and theme were included. 35 lodges and 93 people worked to piece this quilt together. Gift of Bente Sivertsen in memory of Bjørn A. & Agnes J. Sivertsen and Bettie Bates, 2012.007.001.



Charlotte Caroline H. Steiner, Fanny Hansen, and Lillian Gertrude DuPrey's medical forms and membership applications for admittance to Thyra Lodge #22. Gift of the Supreme Lodge of the Danish Sisterhood of America in memory of multiple lodges of the DSS, 2016-210.022.005.



In this Danish Sisterhood of America newsletter from March 1, 1939, Supreme Secretary Anna Eddy asks the Sisters if they know the whereabouts of Miss Karen Margaret Jensen, who had purchased an insurance policy which had reached its maturity. This newsletter speaks to the Sisterhood's commitment to providing financial support and looking after one another. Gift of Robert M. Karstensen, 1994.024.002.



In this form, Thyra Lodge #22 of Muskegon, Michigan, expresses their condolences over the passing of a Sister. Gift of the Supreme Lodge of the Danish Sisterhood of America in memory of multiple lodges of the DSS, 2016-210.022.005.

A two-sided song card used by Danish Sisterhood Lodge #151 of LuVerne, North Dakota. Gift of Red River Dances, 2008.035.005.

treasurer ledgers into an online database. This valuable resource will be accessible to anyone with a computer, providing opportunities for research and a deeper understanding of the Danish Sisterhood.

DANISH SISTERHOOD MEMBERSHIP

So, the question arises: Why would someone want to become a Sisterhood member? Life moves quickly—we need to pause and reflect on how we connect with one another. It's important to understand the origins of our support for others and the richness of our culture. The Danish Sisterhood aims to pass on this "Danish Spirit" to our children and grandchildren, giving them the chance for thoughtful reflection and meaningful life choices. The Danish Sisterhood is a welcoming space where you can learn about all things Danish and feel accepted simply for your interest in Denmark. Local Lodge meetings take place every month, providing an opportunity to connect with others who share your background or interests. Additionally, there are annual or biannual District Meetings, where you can meet fellow members from your region. Building friendships with individuals from other lodges allows you to discover what they are doing in their communities and learn from one another.

Every four years, a National Convention is held, where you can become acquainted with Danish Sisterhood members from across the country. This enables you to develop friendships and to learn from Danish Sisterhood members from around the United States and Canada. Our next National Convention will be in the Chicago area in 2027. All are welcome to join us.

Anyone who wishes to connect and find community, who shares a deep love for Denmark and its traditions, is always welcome at the Danish Sisterhood of America.



Sisters pose in the red brick tower above Denmark's famous Himmelbjerget, one of the highest natural points in Denmark.



Two Sisters pose for a photo in Den Gamle By, an old town open-air museum in Aarhus, during one of the Sisterhood's trips to Denmark.



The Danish Sisterhood of America Board 2024.

Visit our website to learn more, contact us, or become a member: <https://www.danishsisterhood.org/request-information>.

LEGOs, Vikings, Ceramics, & a Sense of Adventure: Summer Programming at MoDA

BY ALISSA LACANNE
Former Youth & Community Educator



EDUCATION & OUTREACH

Summer beckons us to relax, have fun, seek adventure, and explore new experiences.

How lucky we were to experience all the above at MoDA's programs and events this past year. If you were unable to join us, settle in for a quick summary.

Gathered around a LEGOLAND-inspired board game, campers play with their Minifigures and draw cards.

LEGOs

We dove into June with a LEGOs & Bots Camp held in collaboration with Shelby County Iowa State University Extension & Outreach. This camp, fully booked with a waiting list, was the most popular kids' camp this summer and featured a morning session led by Shelby County Youth Coordinator Jennifer Selner. Using LEGO Education SPIKE, a kit that combines colorful LEGO elements, easy-to-use hardware, and an intuitive coding experience, kindergartners through third graders problem-solved, programmed, and built various parts of an amusement park, all with programmable moving parts.

After completing these challenges and showcasing their creations, the kids (and staff!) were ready for lunch. What better treat than waffles shaped like building bricks? How convenient that the Design Store sells the waffle iron in which to make them! We all had fun stacking and eating our "bricks" with lots of toppings while watching *The LEGO Story* and learning the history behind Ole Kirk Christiansen's toy company in Denmark. Following a brief break outdoors, we returned inside to rotate through stations for the rest of the afternoon with a highlight being a LEGOLAND-inspired board game made by Summer Programming Intern Maggie Buman. The kids also designed their own Minifigures and would have been content to play in the museum's LEGO area for hours—long after their caregivers arrived to pick them up.

Paulette Hansen, an Elk Horn Public Library volunteer, reads stories from *Little House on the Prairie* to children during Storytime in the Prairie.



Two LEGOs & Bots attendees utilize a LEGO Education SPIKE kit to build and program an amusement park ride.

The following day, MoDA partnered with the Elk Horn Public Library for Storytime in the Prairie, a monthly summer program that commemorated the 50th anniversary of the TV show *Little House on the Prairie*. We gathered around the librarian under the Jens Jensen pergola to listen to stories from *Little House on the Prairie*. Following the story, the children completed an accompanying activity such as making their own butter, crafting bookmarks using dried

flowers gathered from the prairie, and gluing together paper quilt squares. One camper who had attended both the LEGOs & Bots Camp and Storytime in the Prairie back-to-back asked me,

"So, what are we doing tomorrow?"

I suppose he had become accustomed to coming to the museum every day that week! It was fun to hear that he was hoping to come back for yet another day!



Amelia Ritter-Schulze talks animatedly during a performance of *The Emperor's New Clothes*.

Warren Veath finds himself unimpressed by the women vying for his hand during a performance of *The Princess and the Pea*.

The third week of June marked the beginning of Theater Camp, where we collaborated with directors Brandon Baggett and Cody Parmley on a Hans Christian Andersen production for MoDA's annual Sankt Hans Aften event. We had a few returning cast members, and we welcomed more than a few new faces. As the Youth & Community Educator, this

was my favorite camp because it introduced younger children to theater when they may not otherwise have the opportunity, and it also gave them the skills to be brave and to learn to perform in front of an audience. By the end of the week, more reserved kids had gained the courage to step onto the stage and perform in front of a crowd of over 175 people. After taking our bows

that night, one of the new cast members ran behind the stage and exclaimed,

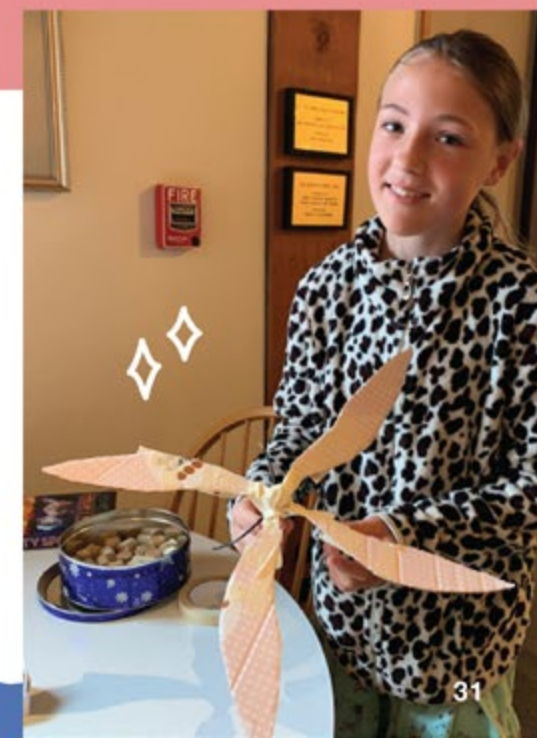
"We're doing this again next year, right?!"

It is such a joy to know this camp not only increased their confidence but also helped them discover something new that they were enthusiastic about.

June concluded with Windmill Camp, another collaboration with the Elk Horn Public Library and the Danish Windmill. Adam Bierstedt began the day by leading attendees in a tour of our *Nature-Culture / Natur-Kultur* exhibition, focusing particularly on the section dedicated to wind energy. For a snack, campers prepared "windmill" sandwiches, and they finished their morning at the museum by designing their own wind turbines. They created and

tested distinctive design elements as we measured each of their wind speeds, with the winning team reaching 40 millivolts. Then they were off to the library and windmill to learn more about the power of wind.

While attending Windmill Camp, kids were asked to craft their own wind turbines from a variety of materials including cardboard, tape, hot glue, popsicle sticks, corks, etc.





MoDA

Albert Ravenholt Curator of Danish-American Culture Adam Bierstedt leads a tour of *Nature – Culture / Natur – Kultur* during Windmill Camp.



At this point in the summer, we were ready to unwind at Yoga in the Prairie. Unfortunately, June's session was canceled due to rain, but we could not have asked for better weather in July and August. We found the perfect spot along the edge of the tall grass in the Jens Jensen Prairie Landscape Park. With a breeze and the sounds of nature all around us, instructor Katie Sandquist of Yoga to Love Our Bodies led attendees from age 22 to 82 in an hour-long session that prepared us all mentally and physically for the day ahead. Many attendees enthusiastically agreed that this program should be repeated next summer.



Yogis practice their Urdhva Hastasana during Yoga in the Prairie with Katie Sandquist.



One adventurous camper tries their hand at blacksmithing.



Vikings-in-training learn about Viking battle strategy by playing a simple game.



With a mallet and chisel in hand, a camper eagerly carves a rune into stone.



A group of campers gather around two Vikings to learn about the Elder Futhark alphabet and carve their own runes.

vikings

If you happened to be in town on July 19th, you may have encountered the Skjaldborg Vikings and a few Vikings-in-training. As part of our Viking Camp, we began our day at MoDA with a history lesson from Adam Bierstedt that included objects from the museum's collection. Afterward, we headed into the kitchen, where we all pitched in to make Viking stew, hand-shaped rolls, homemade butter, honey hazelnut cake, and kid-friendly mead. We certainly needed the nourishment for the day ahead! We crafted our own set of runes out of clay and walked to the Danish Windmill to meet the Skjaldborg Vikings. There, we broke into smaller groups and had a tour of VikingHjem. Our Vikings-in-training watched blacksmithing demonstrations, learned about Vikings' fishing and hunting equipment, cast their own coins, and engaged in games that taught strategy and combat techniques. Then it was time to battle the Vikings!



After studying Viking weaponry, battle strategy, and shield formations, Vikings-in-training engage in battle.

EDUCATION & OUTREACH

ceramics

We were more than happy to partner with Shaun Sayres from the Danish Windmill for one of our August events, the Danish Plates Community Mosaic Project. Over the years, individuals had donated blue and white Bing & Grøndahl plates to the Danish Windmill. Though many of these plates arrived intact, some were damaged in transit. The Danish Windmill had set these broken plates aside for over a decade, knowing they would eventually serve a purpose. Shaun generously donated many pieces to MoDA, and we were excited to repurpose them in a new way. It was an exceedingly popular event, and we now have 13 new steppingstones that will be added to the Christensen Curatorial Center's green roof among a variety of native plants.



Bruce and Calla Poldberg arrange ceramic pieces onto a steppingstone tile during the Danish Plates Community Mosaic Project.

Joy Larsen and her daughter Fiona Pratt traveled from Alabama to participate in the Danish Plates Community Mosaic Project. They are pictured here with their steppingstone made out of repurposed blue and white Bing & Grøndahl plates.



We are grateful to have offered so many different types of programs for varying ages over the past few summer months, and we would not have been able to do it without our sponsors, the Iowa West Foundation and former Museum of Danish America Board member Elly Jorgensen and Jon Frega of Prairie Village, Kansas.

Thank you to all who attended, and if you missed out, please check back to see what will be offered again next summer.



From Denmark to Harlem:

The Complex Heritage, Identity, & Literary Impact of Nella Larsen



BY ANNA REDSAND
Guest Author

When Nella Larsen was born in 1891 in Chicago, no one would have thought she was Danish or Danish American. They would have seen her as mulatto, the term used at the time for someone who was biracial. When I first heard about Nella Larsen in the early 1970s, I did not make the connection to her Danish heritage either. I knew her simply as an important author of the Harlem Renaissance, whose biracial status deeply influenced her two novels, *Quicksand* and *Passing*. If I had known “Nella” and “Larsen” to be Danish names, or if I had read *Quicksand* at the time, I may have known something of her Danish heritage. However, that would not have meant as much to me then as it does now, after having lived in Copenhagen and Elk Horn and being connected with the Museum of Danish America.



The paver placed in Nella Larsen's memory on the museum's Jens Jensen Heritage Path.



The words “Scandinavian” and “Danish” most often bring to mind tall, fair-skinned, light-haired, blue-eyed people. Denmark is referred to today as “historically homogeneous,” which was largely true until the mid-1980s when the steady arrival of immigrants from non-European Union (EU) countries began. Many of those people, and now their descendants, came from Middle Eastern countries, the Indian subcontinent, and African countries. This means that there are Danish citizens who do not fit the fair-skinned stereotype; as of 2023, six percent of Denmark’s population is from non-EU countries. In the early 20th century, when Nella Larsen spent several years in Denmark, she was perceived as exotic rather than as a Dane or Danish American. Today, the presence of non-EU immigrants in Denmark remains highly politicized, with the integration of non-white individuals into Danish society continuing to be both a social and political issue that has at times led to unrest and violence.

Despite changes in Danish demographics, the stereotype of fair-skinned individuals as the archetype of Danish Americans persists. I began to think it might be important to widen the perceptions of Danish Americans to include people of color like Larsen. Conversations with Tova Brandt, the museum’s executive director, and Diya Nagaraj, the former Albert Ravenholt Curator of Danish-American Culture at the museum, affirmed the value of broadening our perspectives. I made a Brown Bag Lunch presentation on Larsen in March 2024 and later gave a talk about her to the Danish Brotherhood Lodge #15 in Des Moines. With this article, I hope to reach a wider audience for Nella Larsen’s remarkable story. Much of our knowledge about her comes from her publications, especially *Quicksand*, which is highly autobiographical. The main character, Helga Crane, essentially serves as Nella’s alter ego.

At birth, Larsen was called Nellie Walker, since her father, a Black or mixed-race immigrant from the Danish West Indies, was named Peter Walker. Nella’s mother, Anna Hansen, emigrated to the U.S. from Denmark at the age of 17 in 1886. She was probably born in Schleswig and moved to Askov after the Danish-Prussian War. Peter Walker died before Nella Larsen could learn much about him, quite possibly before she was born. It is likely that Walker’s familiarity with the Danish language and culture facilitated his and Marie’s relationship. Nellie Walker’s name changed to Nella Larsen when Marie married Peter Larsen. Peter Larsen had emigrated from Denmark sometime in the late 1880s. The couple married in 1891 and had one child, Anna, Nella’s half-sister.

The color line in Chicago in the late 19th and early 20th century was stark. There was a push for segregation, which was often violent. This wasn’t the case everywhere in the U.S.; for example, New York City was more integrated and would have been a more comfortable place for a mixed-race family, particularly for Nella.

Peter Larsen was a streetcar driver, and Marie was a seamstress who worked from home. In the early years, when customers came for dressmaking, they probably saw Nella as Marie’s assistant, not as a family member, and the family allowed that perception to persist. Marie’s sewing business influenced Nella’s later interest in design, fashion, and color, which would manifest in her lush, descriptive writing style.

Nella first visited Denmark sometime before her eighth birthday with her mother and Anna. We don’t know how long they stayed, most likely in Askov, but it was long enough for Nella to have learned Danish and to remember the Danish children’s games she played while she was there. The only certain date comes from the SS Norge’s passenger list on the return trip to the U.S. in 1898.

While Marie and her daughters were gone, Peter Larsen undertook the family’s first attempt to protect themselves and Nella from the racism that made things difficult for the family. He moved their apartment to a more mixed area of Chicago where they would face less discrimination. Marie and Peter also realized that education would be important if Nella were to survive, and she was ultimately afforded more education than her sister, Anna, received.

After elementary school, Nella was recommended for promotion to Wendell Phillips High School, the oldest Black high school in Chicago, although it was mostly white at the time. At Wendell Phillips, the emphasis in English classes was on creative writing. Those classes became Nella’s only formal training in the kind of writing she would be known for—sumptuous descriptions, a strong storyline, and complex character development.

The family was upwardly mobile, and when Nella was 15, they moved to a more affluent part of Chicago—Englewood. Peter and Marie felt it would not be safe for the family or for Nella if she were to live with them there. Thus began Nella’s life as an outsider within her own family. In *Quicksand*, Larsen details her own familial estrangement through an incident of Helga Crane’s rejection—not from her immediate family but by an uncle’s new wife. The poignant scene ends with the aunt’s agitated statement: “And please remember, that my husband is not your uncle. No indeed! Why, that, that, would make me your aunt!” Helga runs away, “torn with mad fright.”

Still valuing education for Nella but sending her away to protect themselves, Nella was enrolled at Fisk University in Nashville. Fisk is a historically

Jubilee Hall at Fisk University. Completed in 1876, it is the oldest permanent building for the higher education of African Americans in the United States. Image courtesy of Fisk University.



Wendell Phillips High School, a significant educational center that became Chicago’s first predominantly African American high school in 1920. Image courtesy of the City of Chicago.

Black university, but even there, Nella was an outsider. Most students came from the South and brought with them Black family, community, and cultural connections. As the only person of color in her family, Nella had none of those and found it hard to fit in and make friends. Fisk had stringent rules about contact between the sexes and a strict dress code, emphasizing dull colors and allowing no jewelry. The English department focused on grammar and rhetoric, not the creative writing that had fostered Nella’s imagination. Greek mythology, however, was taught, and it would later find its way into her writing. Nella



didn't allow the dress code to stifle her sense of style and color, and a portrait from her time at Fisk shows her wearing a small, modest pendant. Overall, Nella hated Fisk and was asked to leave after a year, along with eight other women and three male students, which was probably a relief to her. The reason given for Nella's dismissal was her refusal to adhere to the university's dress code.

Despite her relief, where was this 17-year-old to go? Returning to the family home in Englewood was not an option; instead, she chose to visit Denmark again. Nella probably stayed with family in Askov, and on various future applications, she would list enrollment in the Grundtvig Folke Højskole from 1908-9 as part of her educational history. After a year, she returned to the U.S. for a visit and then went back to Denmark, to Copenhagen this time, where she stayed from 1909-1912.

The pages of *Quicksand* make it clear that Larsen was very familiar with Copenhagen. She describes such landmarks as the Danish Folk Museum, now part of the Danish National Museum; the fish market on Gammel Strand; the famous department store, Magasin du Nord; Café Vivili near Tivoli in the building that now houses the Hard Rock Café; and the changing of the guard at Amalienborg Palace. She writes of *smørrebrød* and of "how only coffee, no tea, is served" at an event referred to as "tea"—both recognizable as typical Danish food and drink. During her stay, Nella attended the University of Copenhagen in an open university program.



In Denmark, Nella was marginalized differently than in the U.S. She was seen as exotic, so her alter ego, Helga, felt she was seen as "a veritable savage," "as if she had horns or three legs." After experiencing a period of contentment in Copenhagen, Nella became restless, dissatisfied with her life in Denmark, just as she had been in the U.S. This restlessness, this inability to settle, would become characteristic of Larsen's life, which I believe is exemplified in the title *Quicksand*—a life of floundering, an inability to ever find her footing, to feel she truly belonged in either world.

At the age of 21, Larsen returned to the U.S., but not to Chicago, as being in the same city as her family—without being able to live with them—would have been too painful. Three professions were open to educated Black women at the time—teaching, librarianship, and nursing. Nella chose nursing because, of the three, it did not require a high school diploma, which she did not have. She settled in New York City and studied at the Lincoln Hospital and Training School for Nurses, graduating in 1915 and passing her RN exam with honor. She spent the first five months after graduation working at the school, including a period as the assistant superintendent, a role in which the school recognized her outstanding capabilities.

Larsen was then hired as the head nurse and superintendent of the nurse training school at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. She expected that the school there would resemble the Grundtvig Folkeskole in Askov because both schools provided training based on community needs, focusing on



Lincoln Hospital and Home New York, 1920. Image courtesy of The New York Public Library.



The women's ward in the Lincoln Hospital and Home, 1914. Image courtesy of The New York Public Library.



The 1915 graduating class of Lincoln Hospital. Nella Larsen is seated in the front row, second from left. Image courtesy of The New York Public Library.

the trades, but she was quickly disillusioned. She discovered that in the South, nurses and especially Black nurses, were viewed as domestics, not as professionals. Moreover, as the State of Alabama increased standards for nursing education, Tuskegee found ways to circumvent these higher requirements, which could have elevated the standing of its nursing graduates. Nella found herself working a punishing 14 hours a day, seven days a week. She resigned at the end of a year, in October 1916. In *Quicksand*, Helga Crane expressed Nella's disappointment at Tuskegee: "I hate hypocrisy, I hate cruelty to students, and to teachers who can't fight back."

Larsen returned to the Bronx in New York City to work again as the assistant superintendent of the Lincoln Training School for Nurses. In 1918, she sat the civil service exam in order to become a public health nurse and passed with the second highest score of 89.2. With that, she could choose the borough where she would work, and she picked the Bronx. She worked for the Bureau of Preventable Diseases, investigating and educating about such communicable diseases as diphtheria,

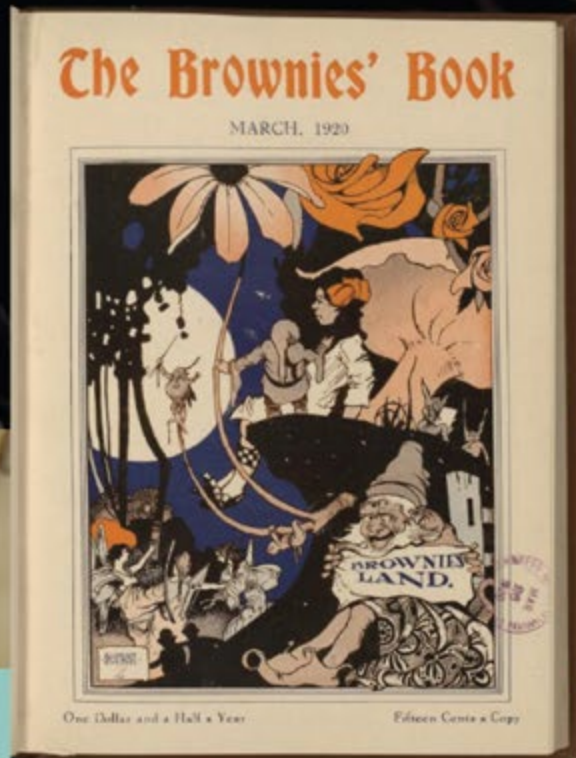
scarlet fever, tuberculosis, and venereal disease. She was heavily involved in preventive measures when the Spanish flu pandemic struck.

The following year, Nella Larsen married Elmer S. Imes, the second Black man to achieve a Ph.D. in physics. The couple shared an interest in music and an ironic wit. Imes had social connections in the upwardly mobile, intellectual Black community in Harlem, which would facilitate Nella's entry into the Harlem Renaissance. The Harlem Renaissance was the intellectual and cultural revival of African American music, dance, art, fashion, literature, theater, politics and scholarship, centered in Harlem in Manhattan in the 1920s and 30s.



Portrait of Nella's husband, Elmer S. Imes, working in a laboratory at Fisk University. Image courtesy of AIP Emilio Segre Visual Archives.





The Brownies' Book. Image courtesy of The Library of Congress.

In 1920, Nella enjoyed the milestone of her first two publications—Danish children's games and songs in *The Brownies' Book* magazine, founded by civil rights activist, sociologist, author, editor, and Harlem Renaissance luminary, W. E. B. DuBois. The magazine was intended to foster "universal love and brotherhood" among all children but especially to build racial pride among Black children. Larsen described the games and songs as ones she had learned as a child in Denmark. She became acquainted with other well-known Harlem Renaissance literary figures, including Langston Hughes and James Weldon Johnson.

Nella and Elmer moved to Harlem from the Bronx in 1921, and soon after the move, Nella began volunteering at the 135th Street Branch of the New York Public Library, eventually taking a 33% pay cut to leave her work as a public health nurse and become a junior library assistant. This change signified a move toward her interest in literature and the arts. In 1922, Larsen applied and was accepted as the first Black student in the New York Public Library School. To gain acceptance, she had to show that she had the equivalent of a high school diploma, for which she cited her years at Wendell Phillips High School, Fisk University, Grundtvig Folkeskole, the University



135th Street Library, March 20, 1928. Photo by Wurts Bros. Image courtesy of the Museum of the City of New York.

of Copenhagen, and Lincoln Training School for Nurses. She passed day-long entrance exams in history, current topics, general information, French literature, and German. She became the first Black woman to graduate from the New York Public Library School in 1923 and worked as a children's librarian in two New York Public Library branches.

In 1925, Nella supported her growing interest in writing for publication; she reduced her library job to part-time. She did what many would-be authors do and submitted short stories to magazines to help her build an author's platform. The characters in her stories were not racially identified and were presumed white, appearing in pulp magazines with a mainly white readership. Pulp magazines were not open to Black fiction, and she was always testing racial boundaries, as her two novels would demonstrate. This was also evident in her life, as she was drawn to more racially integrated groups in such places as Greenwich Village. She had learned that elite Black society, like white society, could also be



Adult Reference room on the ground floor, c. 1920s–30s. Image courtesy of the Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.

exclusionary—an experience reflected in Helga Crane's journey in *Quicksand*.

In that more mixed environment, Nella met Alfred A. Knopf, the white publisher and co-founder of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., a literary publishing house that remains prestigious to this day. Knopf published more African American authors than other houses of the time, and it published both of Larsen's novels—*Quicksand* in 1928 and *Passing* in 1929.

Although the word "quicksand" does not appear in the text of *Quicksand*, Helga Crane, like Nella Larsen, has great difficulty establishing solid footing. Nella and her alter ego navigate through various living quarters, cities, countries, and careers, both of them always trying to find their place, find belonging but never fully succeeding. Helga reflects on the poignancy of her struggle after her final return from Denmark:

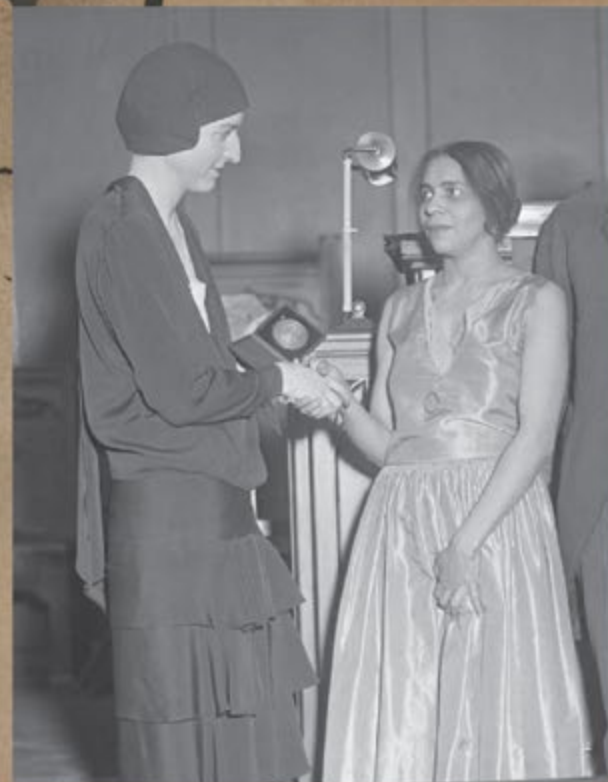
... the division of her life into two parts in two lands, into physical freedom in Europe and spiritual freedom in America, was unfortunate, inconvenient, expensive. ... mentally she caricatured herself moving shuttle-like from continent to continent. From the prejudiced restrictions of the New World to the easy formality of the Old, from the pale calm of Copenhagen to the colorful lure of Harlem.



Passing is far less autobiographical than *Quicksand*, but it also deals with the issue of belonging on neither side of the color line. The dilemma is told through the story of two women of color who are light enough to pass for white. One passes, and the other doesn't. As the story develops, it's clear that disaster will come to each, in different ways.

After the publication of *Passing*, Nella Larsen became the first Black writer to have a short story published in the prestigious magazine, *Forum*. However, she was accused of plagiarizing the story, which sparked a scandal within Black literary circles. Despite this humiliation, a short two months later, Larsen became the fourth Black recipient and the first Black woman to be awarded a literary Guggenheim Fellowship. She used the money to spend nearly a year living in Spain and France. She wrote a third novel while in Europe, but it was turned down by Knopf, which had previously planned to publish another book, should she write one.

In the meantime, her husband, Elmer Imes, had become the chair of the Physics Department at Fisk University. Reluctantly, Nella joined him there for a time, but the marriage had been troubled for some time, and they divorced in 1933. Nella returned to New York City, and after Imes' death in 1941, she returned to nursing. She never published again.



Nella is pictured receiving the Harmon Foundation Award for Distinguished Achievement, an accolade for African American artists, for her first book, *Quicksand*, in 1928. Image courtesy of the Bettman Archive.

Aside from her work as a nurse, Nella Larsen lived thereafter mostly as a recluse until her death in 1964 at the age of 72. The executor of her estate buried her without a headstone in one of the burial plots she owned in Brooklyn. When Nella's half-sister, Anna, learned she would inherit \$35,000 from Nella's estate, she said she hadn't known she had a half-sister. Even in death, Nella Larsen was rejected by what remained of her white family.

Larsen's work fell into obscurity until many forgotten works by female authors were republished in the 1970s, including *Quicksand*, *Passing*, and collections of her short stories. In May 2020, she was honored with a U.S. postage stamp, along with three other Harlem Renaissance voices. Nella Larsen's grave still does not bear a headstone, but a paver at the Museum of Danish America was dedicated in her memory in May 2024.



A still from the 2021 movie *Passing*, based on Nella's 1929 novel of the same name, starring Ruth Negga and Tessa Thompson.



One of four stamps issued for the 100th anniversary of the Harlem Renaissance. Designed by Gary Kelley. Image courtesy of the United States Postal Service.

ANNA REDSAND, PH.D., is the author of *To Drink from the Silver Cup*, *Viktor Frankl: A Life Worth Living*, and several published essays, articles, and stories. She is also a linguist and a Danish-to-English translator. She lives and writes in Elk Horn, Iowa.



Alice Marie Jorgensen

BY AMELIA JUHL
Communications Specialist

Alice Marie Jorgensen, the beloved daughter of Pastor Svend and Florence (née Brown) Jorgensen, was born in Detroit, Michigan, on February 3, 1927.

Alice worked as a Government and American History teacher at Lincoln and Ferndale High School from 1948-1995. Her 47-year teaching career was something she cherished—along with the many students who passed through her classroom. A student of Alice's, Lisa Wagner-Bale, never forgot "what a dynamic history teacher Mrs. Jorgensen was, with her enthusiastic depiction of historic persons to current politicians." It was often remarked that she was one of her students' favorite teachers. Decades after graduating, students would run into her only to discover that Alice remembered them, what classes they took and when, and where they sat.



Alice attending her first formal in 1941.





She was a devoted and brilliant teacher with “the biggest presence of any teacher in the school” according to Neil J. Lehto. She was known to stay in touch with her students and was a mentor and a dear friend to many. Karen Serilla knew Alice as the “brightest scholar in any group...[who] loved Ferndale, especially all the students who passed her way in and out of school.”

Notably, Alice taught James Blanchard, a former United States Representative and the 45th Governor of Michigan. He described her as “a wonderful teacher and friend to her many students. So many of us stayed in touch with her over the years. I loved taking government from her in 1960, and later she was excited about my career. She would send me letters of support and always had thoughts for my consideration... we discussed everything from world affairs to Ferndale schools. A flawless memory, she was as knowledgeable and up to date on politics and government as anyone I know! All of us who knew her feel privileged to have been part of her life.”

In 1995, during her final year of teaching at Ferndale, Alice was named *Newsweek’s* Outstanding Teacher of the Year—a much-deserved honor.



James Blanchard, a former student, invited Alice to attend one of his public forums, where he introduced her to his guest, President Bill Clinton.



Awarded Teacher of the Year in 1995, Alice was featured on the cover of *Newsweek*.

Karen Blinkilde, a close friend and caretaker of Alice, says Alice had a strong connection to and “just loved her Danish heritage.” Alice’s father, Svend, was born in Ny Borre, Møn, Denmark, and immigrated to the United States in 1897 when his father, Jens, was called to serve the Kedron Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church in Grant, Michigan. Both Jens and Svend received the Order of the Knight of Dannebrog.

As a second-generation Danish American, Alice was very active within the Danish community, attending ladies’ groups and church. Alice was incredibly passionate about documenting Danish history and dedicated herself to serving as a historian for her church, actively participating on its heritage committee for many years. When St. Peter’s Danish Lutheran Church of Detroit and Gethsemane merged to form Cana Lutheran Church in 1980, Alice cataloged items from St. Peter’s and created a heritage booklet with page upon page of history and photographs from the church.



Alice pictured on the day of her confirmation, April 6, 1941.



Handwritten notes on lined paper, including a paperclip and a pencil. The text includes: "PIA POTHULM BROWN, 1870-1900", "CRATED AS MARIA PETERSEN", "ALICE'S CONFIRMATION ON APRIL 6, 1941", "HIS BIRTHDATE", "TO AVOID BEING FORCED TO SERVE IN THE GERMAN ARMY. HIS TRAINING", "EMIGRATED", "OF DENMARK'S", "TO SERVE".





Alice, third row, second from left, with other members of the S.W.I.N.G. Club.

Alice lived her life immersed in the Danish tradition. She attended Danish church, grew up listening to her father speak Danish, danced around the Christmas tree, attended *julefrokosts*, and ate Danish pastries, havarti sandwiches, and smørrebrød. Like many Danes, Alice's family collected blue and white Danish plates, many of which adorned the family's dining room walls. In many ways, Alice's life was centered around her Danish heritage and upbringing.

Alice played piano and belonged to the Singing Saints. She was an active reader and a fastidious historian. In fact, she had a great love for scrapbooking and always carried scissors on her person. In her family home, Alice kept an "archival room" in her basement and saved books, photo books, her father's sermons, and grade books from her 47-year teaching career. So, perhaps it comes as no surprise that she had a keen interest in the museum's collections and archives.

Prior to her passing, Alice sent lengthy documents meticulously detailing items she hoped to donate and their provenance. Alice was able to honor her family's Danish heritage by donating several items including a commemorative plate, a kneeling stool for pastors, and a sewing table and doll cradle made by her great uncle from Vejle.

Alice made her first monetary gift to the museum on October 1, 1989. Alice valued the Museum of Danish America's commitment to collecting and preserving artifacts, documents, and stories for current

and future education and scholarship and was a museum member for 29 years. Though becoming a Lifetime Legacy Giver may not have been something Alice actively strove to do, her decision to provide for the museum in her estate reflects her conscientiousness.

Alice built a community for herself—a community that cared for her in her later years. Karen stated Alice "really enjoyed her teacher friends, [who] still got together after all these years." She had a depth of knowledge and a great love for life. She was bright, kind, and outgoing. She had a profound love for animals and expressed great enthusiasm for the University of Michigan's football team.

Alice Marie Jorgensen passed away on November 6, 2023, in Royal Oak, Michigan, at the age of 96. She was buried next to her parents in Berkley, Michigan, in Roseland Park Cemetery.

When signing greeting cards or bidding farewell to friends, Alice often said, "Blest be the tie that binds." Blest be the ties that bind us to one another, to our heritage, and to this museum.



Images courtesy of Karen Blinkilde.



Pictured in the second row, on the right, Alice was involved in the "Singing Saints" and attended rehearsals every Friday.



UNCLE AND AUNT TINA (KATRIINA) HAD 4 CHILDREN: DAGMAR POTHOLM PETERSEN, AND SONS VALDEMAR POTHOLM AND HAROLD POTHOLM. M DIED IN 1935 AT AGE. HE IS BURIED AT CEDAR HILL CEMETARY.

Alice Marie Jorgensen
March 23, 2023



FALL 2024 AMBASSADOR VISIT



BY AMELIA JUHL
Communications Specialist

Jesper Møller Sørensen, Ambassador of Denmark to the United States, visited the Museum of Danish America on October 4, 2024, for a *kaffe og kringler* reception held in his honor. Ambassador Møller Sørensen toured the Danish Villages of Elk Horn and Kimballton, visiting the Danish Windmill, Hans Christian Andersen's The Little Mermaid & Sculpture Garden, and the museum's Genealogy & Education Center. Upon his arrival to the museum, he was given a behind-the-scenes tour of the museum's exhibitions and storage vaults by Executive Director Tova Brandt and the Albert Ravenholt Curator of Danish American Culture, Adam Bierstedt.

After enjoying *kaffe og kringler*, Møller Sørensen met with community members, business owners, museum members, and local politicians.

In his address, he highlighted the strong relationship between Denmark and the United States, particularly with Iowa, emphasizing their mutual sharing of agricultural and technological innovations.

The Ambassador remarked that the United States is Denmark's most vital ally, and the strength of this relationship underpins ongoing economic and commercial ties



The Ambassador standing before portraits of Victor Borge, Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II, and Queen Louise of Denmark and Norway in one of the museum's storage vaults.

between the two nations. Since diplomatic relations were established in 1801, Denmark and the United States have maintained the longest unbroken diplomatic relationship in the world.

Møller Sørensen said the relationship between Denmark and the United States is a "truly special one. We are looking to continue to build these bridges between companies, research institutions, capital investments, and between the people of our two countries."

The Museum of Danish America is grateful to have hosted Ambassador Møller Sørensen, and as a museum located in Elk Horn, Iowa, the largest rural settlement of Danes in the U.S., we can readily speak to the influence and contributions of Danish immigrants and Danish culture. Far beyond our small community, our state, our country, and our world have been and continue to be heavily impacted and influenced by Denmark and its citizens.



While touring the museum, Tova Brandt showed the Ambassador artifacts in the museum's collection.



The Ambassador meeting Rosa Clemens, who has been a volunteer at the museum for over 30 years.



EVENTS | FALL 2024 AMBASSADOR VISIT



Board President Toni Battaglia, Ambassador Møller Sørensen, and Executive Director Tova Brandt.

staff introductions and farewells



DAVID ANDERSON
Registrar

Hello, my name is David Anderson, and I am pleased to introduce myself as the Museum of Danish America's Registrar. I began working at the museum in June as a Collections Assistant Intern and was more than happy to accept a full-time position as the museum's Registrar in October.

Being at the Museum of Danish America is both a professional move to gain more experience and a personal journey of discovery. Danish history and culture were largely unknown to me before this role. Now, I have the opportunity to explore and experience the vibrant history of Denmark, learn about the stories of the people who came to America, and help share those stories with visitors by preserving both the narratives and the artifacts they brought with them.

I enjoy the outdoors, hiking, and discovering new places. I also like to dive into the ever-growing world of video games and paint tabletop figures for board games.



HENRY OLSON
Administrative and Visitor Services Manager

My name is Henry Olson, and I am very excited to introduce myself as the new Administrative and Visitor Services Manager. After graduating from the University of Iowa with a degree in English, I began working for the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City at the Omaha office, and then I transferred to the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco where I participated in and ultimately managed technology projects—each of them driving a significant amount of organizational change.

In 2023, I returned to Iowa and became involved in local farm-to-table initiatives. I just completed my master horticulturist certification. I also love theater.

Being a second-generation Norwegian American on my father's side, I have a keen interest in the immigrant experience and what we can learn from it. Being raised in Shelby County, I have also always been impressed by how strongly the Danish Villages support institutions like MoDA and the Danish Windmill. As the Visitor Services Manager, I hope to maintain that strong relationship with our local community while welcoming new visitors from all over the world and the World Wide Web.

notes of thanks:



CECILIE THUELUND
Scan Design Foundation Intern

My name is Cille, and I was a Scan Design Foundation Intern at the Museum of Danish America and the Genealogy & Education Center. I am from Fyn, the birthplace of Hans Christian Andersen, and I study at the University of Southern Denmark. I have a degree in Biology and am currently completing my bachelor's degree in American Studies.

Experiencing Danish-American culture and learning more about Danish immigration history during my internship was a dream come true for me. As an intern at the Museum of Danish America, I was able to immerse myself in the rich cultural heritage that this institution represents.

Over the course of my internship, I worked with love letters written by Danish immigrant and Civil War soldier Christian Peter Andersen to Miss Anne Jessen of Missouri. Written in "old" Danish from 1860–1865, I assisted in the translation of the letters and ensured the

original tone of the letter was preserved. Throughout the correspondence, C.P. Andersen was traveling from state to state as he fought for the Union Army—at one point fighting in The Siege of Vicksburg, referred to by Abraham Lincoln as "the key to the war." Following his final letter, dated January 29, 1865, Anne and Christian reunited and were wed within the year. Though translating these letters was a daunting task, it was a labor of love and one I greatly enjoyed.

Outside of work, I find joy in nature and traveling. I am a sporting enthusiast and was on the Australian Rules Football national team. I enjoy watching handball, American football, and basketball, and I traveled to Kansas City to watch the Chiefs play. I find myself deeply interested in American sporting culture and traditions.

I have lived on four continents, visited every continent save Antarctica, and have spent time over the course of a year living in a van called "fudde." With my background in biology, I've worked with marine mammals like humpback whales, dolphins, seals, and porpoises in Iceland, Australia, the Netherlands, and Denmark. I have even conducted population surveys of hippos in Africa. To better understand American culture, I traveled, experienced, and enjoyed as much as possible during my internship—a principle I embrace in my everyday life. Thank you for welcoming me with open arms!

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



TERRI JOHNSON

Administrative Manager

After twenty years of serving as the museum's Administrative Manager, Terri Johnson retired in August 2024.

We would like to express our deepest gratitude and appreciation for the extraordinary impact Terri has made during her time at MoDA. While we are excited for her and all that awaits, it is a bittersweet goodbye.

Terri's grace, poise, and conviviality have left an indelible mark on the museum and everyone she's worked with. She approached every challenge with a calm and collected demeanor, turning obstacles into opportunities and inspiring us to follow. Her ability to exude elegance while navigating complex situations has contributed to MoDA's success and created a positive and nurturing work environment many have come to cherish. She has enriched our workplace in ways that words cannot fully capture.

We hope retirement brings her the fulfillment and joy she so richly deserves. While we will miss Terri's presence dearly, we are also excited for her and the new experiences that await. Her contributions will be remembered fondly, and the impact she's made will continue to resonate with us for years to come. We hope this next journey will be as rewarding and successful as the one she has so gracefully completed with us.



MAGGIE BUMAN

Summer Programming Intern

Hi, my name is Maggie Buman, and I am from Harlan, Iowa! I worked as the Summer Programming Intern and assisted Alissa LaCanne with the museum's various camps and activities this past summer. I am currently entering my fourth year at Wartburg College in Waverly, Iowa, where I am double majoring in History and Education. In my spare time, I enjoy painting, origami, and writing, as well as hanging out with my cats and helping with the Harlan Community Theatre. I so enjoyed my time helping with museum programming and hope to enter the field of museum education after I graduate college.



GRACE CRUISE

Ronald D. and Mary L. Bro Prairie Intern

Hi, my name is Grace Cruise, and I am from Fremont, Nebraska. I was the Ronald D. and Mary L. Bro Prairie Intern this summer! I am going into my third year of college at Wayne State College in Wayne, Nebraska, where I am studying Plant Biology, Ecology, and Management. I am involved in many activities at Wayne State College, with my favorite being Women's Rugby. I loved managing the prairie and was pleased to observe how our efforts enhanced its biodiversity and overall health.



PARKER BROCK

Digital Archives Assistant Intern

Hello, my name is Parker Brock, and I worked as a Digital Archives Assistant Intern at the Museum of Danish America during the summer of 2024. I am from Atlantic, Iowa, and I bring with me a passion for preserving, learning about, and protecting our world's history.



ALISSA LACANNE

Youth & Community Educator

In August, we bid farewell to Alissa Lacanne, our remarkable Youth & Community Educator of two years. Alissa has been far more than just an educator; she's been a beacon of kindness, compassion, and dedication in our community.

During her time at MoDA, Alissa worked diligently to further the museum's programming, introducing SPARK! and countless youth and community programming opportunities. She oversaw Brown Bag Lunches, the Victor Borge Legacy Awards, and so much more and treated our wonderful Genealogy & Education Center volunteers with such care.

As we say goodbye, we celebrate the incredible legacy Alissa leaves behind—a legacy of love, learning, leadership, and the best summer camps. Thank you for everything, and we wish you all the best in your new journey as a K-6 art teacher!

As an intern, I've had the privilege of helping digitize the extensive collection of ledgers in our museum's archives. I recently graduated from Atlantic High School and am currently a freshman at Iowa Western Community College, majoring in history with hopes of specializing in military history.

I came to this museum not only to gain experience in history but also to explore different historical careers and determine what I want to do with my passion for history in the future.

In my spare time, I enjoy playing music and learning new songs. I also love raising livestock, such as goats, rabbits, and chickens, on my family's small farm as a hobby.



DELANEY SCHURER

Registrar

In August, Delaney Schurer, MoDA's Registrar, celebrated her final day at the museum! Delaney joined staff in January 2023 as a Curatorial Assistant and became our Registrar in June 2023.

During her time on staff, she was instrumental in the redesigning of Visual Storage. Lest we forget, she moved over 9,000 objects from Visual Storage into temporary storage and then back into Visual Storage in their new locations. Delaney also maintained our high standards for collections care, accessioned, cataloged, and deaccessioned items, assisted with exhibitions, and contributed to the growth of our Danish Ceramics collection as we prepared for our *Danish Ceramics: Beyond Blue and White* exhibition.

In September, Delaney began her job as a Digitization Archivist at the State Archives of North Carolina. While we are incredibly happy for her, we will miss her genuine care, steady support, niche playlists, baked goods, and her special smiles for the camera. Best of luck, Delaney! You will be missed.

New Additions to the Wall of Honor

MARCH 1 – SEPTEMBER 15, 2024

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 and Education Center. You may find a list of the immigrants on the Wall of Honor at www.danishmuseum.org.

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

CHRIS NELSON & JOHANNA MARIE

CHRISTENSEN (1902) (1903) Brayton, IA
 – Donors: Great Grandchildren: Steve R. Nelson, Marne, IA, Sandra K. Sothman, Atlantic, IA, and Shellie E. Anderson, St. Peters, MO

CHRISTIAN & ANE HANSEN (1881) (1881) River Falls, WI – Donors: Robert & Diane McEniry, Papillion, NE

ANNA MARIE DAHM JAKOBSEN HAVERLAND (1949) Wyndmere, No. Dak. – Donor: Anna Haverland, Walcott, ND

KARLO JØRGENSEN (1910) Jacksonville, Iowa – Donor: Erik P. Lillehoj, West Friendship, MD

HENNING LYLLOFF NIELSEN (1957) Chicago, Illinois – Donor: Karin Bowers, Tiffin, IA

NIELS CHRISTIAN NIELSEN SCHMIDT (1882) Audubon Co., IA – Donor: Dennis Barten, Manning, IA

MAREN JENSEN LUDVIG SCHMIDT (1888) Audubon Co., IA – Donor: Dennis Barten, Manning, IA

ELIAS PEDERSEN SMITH & ANNA CHRISTINA LUND (1880's) (1880's) Swan Lake, SD
 – Donors: Patsy & David Johnson, Fair Oaks, CA

New Members

MARCH 1 – SEPTEMBER 15, 2024

The Museum of Danish America is pleased to identify the following **53** households and **1** organization as its newest members:

Peter Snedevind Andersen, Holstebro, Denmark
 Sandy and Dan Auch, Sioux Falls, SD
 Alice Baughman, Denison, IA
 Susan and David Beckman, Burlington, IA
 Karen Bjerre Madsen, Holstebro, Denmark
 Jim and Marcia Borel, Naples, FL
 Vanessa Bornholdt, Shelby, IA
 Kathy and Glenn Brack, Toledo, WA
 Madeline Bro, Bellville, TX
 Corey and Shana Burres, Tumwater, WA
 Lisa Campbell, Fargo, ND
 Jeffery Christensen, Jefferson, IA
 Jillian Christensen, Washington, DC
 Rex M. Christensen, Clarksville, TN
 Diana and John Clark, Ankeny, IA
 Donna de Araujo-Spratt, Bakersfield, CA
 Lea and Tyler Drewsen-Distad, Coon Rapids, MN
 Laura A. Wideberg and Asmus Freytog, Seattle, WA
 Kellie and David Geater, Simpsonville, SC
 April Matson and John Gomes, Healdsburg, CA
 Bart Green, Valley Center, CA
 Joseph Grødahl, Bloomington, MN
 Lisa Hagemeyer, Harlan, IA
 Torben Gamdrup Hansen and Anni Schwartz Hansen, Odense, Denmark
 Barbara Hergert, Arlington Heights, IL
 Hans Peder Jensen, Herning, Denmark
 Thomas A. Jensen, Friendship, WI
 Frans Andersen and Mette Jeppesen, Odense, Denmark

Patsy and David Johnson, Fair Oaks, CA
 Carol Kattar, Omaha, NE
 Jannette Kidder, Exira, IA
 Jo Ann Skouby and Gary Kinsey, Cedar Hill, TX
 Jesper Bugge Kold, Faaborg, Denmark
 Paul and Jan Kramme, Des Moines, IA
 Paige Reitz and Scott Larsen, Santa Fe, NM
 Lasse and Stephanie Lund, Birkerød, Denmark
 Rachel and Darren Masters, Kiron, IA
 Pia and Michael McDonough, Burnsville, MN
 Jørgen Stampe Mikkelsen and Jytte Stampe Mikkelsen, Årslev, Denmark
 Delpha Musgrave, Des Moines, IA
 Lis Rosager Møldrup, Aarslev, Denmark
 Chris Nelsen, Fraser, CO
 Ann-Marie Nielsen, Cedar Falls, IA
 Rick Peterson, Porter, TX
 Kristin Reitz, Omaha, NE
 Donna Swank Rudiger, Poplar, MT
 Karen Sand, Audubon, IA
 Erika Schoene, West Seneca, NY
 Judy Grumstrup and Thomas Scott, Luck, WI
 Julie A. Seely, West Des Moines, IA
 Sandra K. Sothman, Atlantic, IA
 Swedish Club, Seattle, WA
 Shaun Thomas, Clive, IA
 Morten Witt, Odense, Denmark



Chris Nelson was born Christen Nielsen on February 24, 1879. In 1902, at the age of 23, Chris immigrated from Aalborg, Denmark, to Brayton, Iowa.



Proud of her Danish heritage, MoDA member Judith Green, center, gifted memberships to her children, Shelly Wright and Kelly Green.



The museum is pleased to welcome Klare Chapman as a new member in 2024. Klare is an active participant in the Elk Horn community and a global business leader.

THANKS

Jens Jensen Heritage Path

MARCH 1 – SEPTEMBER 15, 2024

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 are engraved and placed within the Flag Plaza: May and October.

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

- Niles and Vickie Andersen, Casselberry, FL
- Dana Hendee Bork, Saint Paul, MN, and Laura Hendee, Washington, DC
- Steve R. Nelson, Marne, IA, Sandra K. Sothman, Atlantic, IA, and Shellie E. Anderson, St. Peters, MO (Great Grandchildren of Laurence & Irene Nelson)
- Anna Redsand, Elk Horn, IA
- Karen Sand, Audubon, IA

While visiting the museum during Tivoli Fest, Henrik Jones Overgaard found something he does not often see—his name. Henrik stumbled upon a paver dedicated to a fellow Henrik—Henrik Holmskov, who was “a Danish gentleman and a gentle man.” We are ecstatic to have provided an opportunity to “introduce” these two gentle men to one another!



In Honor

MARCH 1 – SEPTEMBER 15, 2024

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

- Susan T. Brown
- Danish Sisterhood Lodges #15, #20 and DBIA Lodge #14
- DSS Dronning Margrethe Lodge #15, Milwaukee, WI
- Danish Sisterhood of America Katherine Lodge #20, Kenosha, WI
- Barbara Clausen Hallisey
- Ellen Harboe
- Marcia Jante
- Paul Fritz Jensen
- Terri Johnson, upon her retirement from the Museum of Danish America after 20 years of serving as Administrative Manager! Thanks to Terri! Terri Johnson holding it together for all these years
- Terri Johnson's service to the Museum of Danish America
- MoDA Staff
- Shirley Norlem's 85th birthday



Terri Johnson, the museum's Administrative Manager of 20 years, at her retirement party.

Thank You, Charitable Organizations

MARCH 1 – SEPTEMBER 15, 2024

These 'charitable' organizations have contributed memberships or have received complimentary or reciprocal memberships in recognition of exemplary service to the museum. We acknowledge their generosity in each edition of the *MoDA Magazine* during their annual membership.

- Allen County Public Library, Fort Wayne, IN
- American Swedish Historical Foundation Inc., Philadelphia, PA
- Atlantic Friends of The Danish Immigrant Museum, Atlantic, IA
- Copenhagen European Kitchen & Bakery, Katy, TX
- Danebod Lutheran Church, Tyler, MN
- Danish American Archive and Library, Blair, NE
- Danish American Heritage Society, Elk Horn, IA
- Danish Brotherhood in America
- Danish Brotherhood Lodge #15, West Des Moines, IA
- Danish Brotherhood Polarstjernen Lodge #283, Dagmar, MT
- The Danish Canadian National Museum, Alberta, Canada
- Danish Club of Tucson, Tucson, AZ
- Danish Sisterhood Dagmar Lodge #4, Chicago, IL
- Danish Sisterhood Dronning Margrethe Lodge #15, Milwaukee, WI
- Danish Sisterhood Ellen Lodge #21, Denver, CO
- Danish Sisterhood Freden Lodge #12, Moodus, CT
- Danish Sisterhood Lodge #102, Des Moines, IA
- Danish Sisterhood Lodge #3, Davenport, IA
- Danish Sisterhood Lodge #6, Omaha, NE
- Danish Sisterhood Lodge #90, Ceresco, NE
- Danish Sisterhood Midwest District, Itasca, IL
- Danish Sisterhood of America, USA
- Danish Sisterhood Pacific Northwest District, Shoreline, WA
- Elverhoj Museum of History and Art, Solvang, CA
- Federation of Danish Associations in Canada, Gloucester, Canada
- Heartland District of the DBIA, Clive, IA
- Kofoed Foundation, West Branch, IA
- Red River Danes, Fargo, ND
- Ringsted Danish American Fellowship, Ringsted, IA
- Scan Design Foundation, Seattle, WA
- Shelby County Historical Society & Museum, Harlan, IA
- Shelby County State Bank, Harlan & Elk Horn, IA
- The Swedish Club, Seattle, WA



The Swedish Club was founded in Seattle, Washington, in 1892 as a meeting space for Scandinavians.

Memorials

MARCH 1 – SEPTEMBER 15, 2024

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

Ibb T. Baden Agvald
 Oscar & Mary Aaroe
 Helen Sorensen Bergman
 Robert W. Brown
 Dale Christiansen
 Ove Carl Christiansen
 Ruth Crandall
 Marian Anderson Eckmann
 Hans & Mathilde Farstrup
 Charles Frederiksen
 Bent & Lydia Hansen
 Hans Christian Have
 Rodney Hoegh
 Anitra & Roland Jensen
 Arne & Irene Jensen
 Dan & Shirley Jensen
 Frode Jensen, MD
 Jenny Jensen
 LeRoy B. Jensen
 Paul & Grethe Jensen
 Rev. Russell P. Jensen
 Parents of Karen Karlsson
 Hans Chr. Kiehn
 Mogens Kiehn
 Otto & Valborg Kiertzner
 Anne-Lise Kramer
 Darrol Larsen
 Hans Peder Larsen
 Kurt Klarskov Larsen

James L. Madsen
 Eleanor Sand Magnuson
 Pastor Steve Martens
 Clark Mathisen
 Mr. & Mrs. Louis Miller and Mr. & Mrs. Chris Miller
 Ron Mortensen
 Karen Nielsen
 LeVern and Marilyn Nielsen
 Margaret 'Margie' Nelsen
 Faith Ellyn Nielsen
 Mark Nussle
 Mark S. Nussle
 Anton & Dorothea Olsen
 Karolyn Ortgies
 Russell G. Overgard
 Elnora Petersen
 Herbert C. & Mabel L. Petersen
 Keith Poldberg
 Andrew & Rosa Rosenkild
 Ragna Veilegaard Reid
 Anne Sidsel Moss Shelton
 Kay Helen Silet
 Eva Sindberg
 Dr. Marie Sorensen
 Mrs. Karen Struckman
 Chris Thogersen
 Lillie Sorensen Thompson
 Kresten Wolff Thomsen



Former board member Mark Nussle and wife, Lori, at the ribbon cutting of the museum's Jens Jensen Heritage Path in 2011.

drømmekage "DANISH DREAM CAKE BARS"

INGREDIENTS:

COOKIE CRUST

- ½ cup soft butter or margarine
- ½ cup brown sugar, firmly packed
- 1 cup sifted flour

FILLING

- 2 large eggs
- 1 cup brown sugar, firmly packed
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 3 tablespoons flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 3 ounces flaked coconut
- 1 cup coarsely chopped walnuts

INSTRUCTIONS:

Preheat oven to 350°. In a small bowl, cream butter and sugar with a wooden spoon until smooth. Work in the flour with your hands until the mixture is smooth. Pat into the bottom of a 9 x 13 pan and bake 10 minutes, 8 if using a glass pan, or until golden. Meanwhile, make the filling; in a small bowl, beat eggs until light (easiest with electric mixer). Gradually beat in sugar. Add vanilla, flour, salt, and baking powder, beating just until combined. Stir in coconut and walnuts. Spread evenly over cooled crust; bake 25 minutes, 20 if using glass, or until golden and firm to the touch. Cool slightly. Cut into bars while still warm.

Author Unknown | Askov Community Center. *Favorite Recipes*. Morris Press Cookbooks, 2004.



RECIPE

01.



Danish-American artist Cynthia McKeen created this unique snowman runner design by cutting shapes from folded paper, an art form known in Denmark as *papirklip*.



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INSIDE COVER

Glædelig Jul
og Godt Nytår

INSIDE GREETING

02.

