SPRING
2025

MoDA magazine

A BENEFIT FOR MEMBERS OF THE MUSEUM OF DANISH AMERICA



04 **Calendar** | Events

06 **Exhibitions** | *Danish Ceramics: Beyond Blue and White*

14 **Guest Author** | Palshus: Mid-20th Century Danish Stoneware by Per and Annelise Linnemann-Schmidt

26 **Exhibitions** | Danish Ceramics Bonus Stories — the Local and the Global

32 **Collections** | Danish Ceramics at Home

37 **Exhibitions** | *Dwight Lamb: Music of Two Continents*

41 **Guest Author** | Reflections on my Friendship with Dwight "Red" Lamb

45 **Exhibitions** | *Greenland: Shared History, Evolving Future*

49 **Calendar** | Exhibitions

50 **Foundation Support** | Jens & Inger Bruun Scan Design Foundation

58 **Education & Outreach** | Unpacking the Past, One Trunk at a Time

64 **Staff** | Introductions & Farewells

66 **Thanks** | Supporters & Friends

71 **Recipe** | Dansk Bøf Med Løg

COVER

The cover of this edition of *MoDA Magazine* features one of our new acquisitions of Danish ceramic art. This piece, made by Bodil Manz—widely regarded as one of Denmark's greatest living ceramicists—features a blue-and-white pattern, colors used for over 250 years in Danish ceramics. Its paper-thin design questions the boundary between a useful pot and a beautiful piece of art.
***Rain*. Bodil Manz, 2018.** Gift of the New Carlsberg Foundation, 2024.005.004.

WELCOME TO OUR CERAMICS ISSUE OF *MoDA MAGAZINE!*

For the last few years, the Museum of Danish America has focused on growing our permanent collection of Danish ceramics. This was one of the featured projects during our 40th Anniversary Campaign, which supported the reorganization of our Visual Storage and the creation of our current exhibition *Danish Ceramics: Beyond Blue and White*. In the past couple of years, our ceramics collection has grown to include significant examples of mid-century stoneware, porcelain figurines, and contemporary artists.

Though these are significant new acquisitions, the presence of ceramics in our museum collection is not new. Since the museum first started cataloging artifacts forty years ago, ceramics have often been pieces that represent Danish-American history and culture. Many of the most familiar pieces—annual Christmas plates, Blue Lace table settings, and the Seagull pattern—have been delighting museum visitors for decades. Our collection has included treasured ceramics souvenirs from trips to Denmark, pieces given as wedding presents, and commemorative plates for events both in Denmark and Danish America.

The focus on growing our ceramics collection is a new emphasis, not a change in mission. We still seek to represent artifacts of all kinds that tell the stories of Danish-American individuals, families, and communities. In addition, we seek to share a broader story of Danish art, design, and innovation that has impacted the United States and global cultures.

We aim to present a comprehensive understanding of the role that Danish ceramics have played in representing Denmark to the world. In the same time period that Danish immigrant families could acquire an annual Christmas plate or a treasured blue-and-white coffeepot, unique ceramic artworks were distributed through the elite display rooms of Tiffany & Co., and Danish porcelain manufacturers were earning top prizes in international venues.

We look forward to sharing stories of Danish ceramic art with you in our galleries, through online videos and website resources, and in the pages of this magazine.



Owl figurine, Royal Copenhagen, 1898-1923, Gift of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, 2024.019.021.
Split Pitcher, Saxbo, 1964, Museum Purchase, 2023.014.001.
Sort objekt med hvide prikker/Black object with white dots, Lone Skov Madsen, 2019, Gift of the New Carlsberg Foundation, 2024.005.003.



TOVA BRANDT, M.A.
Executive Director

museum of danish america

event calendar

MUSEUM OF DANISH AMERICA EVENTS

AUGUST 2025

- **8** Storytime in the Prairie
- **12** SPARK! | Birds of America
- **19** Kaffe og Kringle with Mads Madsen Henriksen
- **21** Brown Bag Lunch | Birding with Scott Buchanan

SEPTEMBER 2025

- **9** SPARK! | Back to School
- **13** Concert with Anita Lerche | Des Moines, IA
- **18** Brown Bag Lunch | The Danish Windmill's Danish History, 1846-1975 with Shaun Sayres

OCTOBER 2025

- **14** SPARK! | Álfablót
- **16** Brown Bag Lunch | Beyond the Veil: Victorian Funeral Practices with Anna Thomas
- **16-18** Museum Board of Directors Meeting

NOVEMBER 2025

- **11** SPARK! | Honoring Our Military
- **20** Brown Bag Lunch | *My Seven Mothers* with Pernille Ipsen
- **20** Pernille Ipsen Book Tour Event
- **28 & 29** Julefest | Elk Horn & Kimballton, IA

DECEMBER 2025

- **9** SPARK! | Holiday Hygge
- **18** Brown Bag Lunch | Holiday Hygge

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.

DANISH CERAMICS
BEYOND BLUE AND WHITE

BY ADAM BIERSTEDT
Albert Ravenholt Curator of Danish-American Culture

Blue-and-white porcelain is an iconic part of Danish design. Christmas plates, in particular, grace the walls of many Danish-American community centers—including ours! MoDA has gathered a near-complete collection of Christmas plates over the years, representing dozens of families' connection to Danish ceramics. Charming as they are, though, these blue-and-white pieces represent only a small fraction of what Danish ceramics studios excelled at. Our new special exhibition, *Danish Ceramics: Beyond Blue and White*, dives into the rest of it.

Denmark has been making extraordinary pottery since the Mesolithic period, some six thousand years ago. However, the exhibit's story begins in 1775, with the opening of Royal Copenhagen. The oldest pieces in the gallery date to this time period and explore how Royal Copenhagen became enmeshed with European elite culture. Borrowing freely from both Danish and international artists, Royal Copenhagen thrived under a royal monopoly for generations. This time period produced the Blue Mussel pattern, which is still produced today, and the Flora Danica service, widely regarded as one of the treasures of the Danish royal family.

While Royal Copenhagen thrived in its early years, economic downturns in the 1800s led to a period of challenges. Most historians have described this as a period of stagnation for the industry, with few innovative designs emerging. This isn't quite fair—Royal Copenhagen certainly struggled, but its decline opened the door for new studios to enter the market. One of these, Bing & Grøndahl, would become Royal Copenhagen's primary rival.



This beautiful plate, featuring a honeysuckle, is a replica of one of the original Flora Danica pieces. The color and gilding are exceptional examples of early porcelain design. Flora Danica Porcelain Plate. Royal Copenhagen; Johann Christoph Bayer, 1790. Gift of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, 2024.019.006.

ART NOUVEAU

Bing & Grøndahl was established in 1853, but it would take thirty years and a new artistic movement to catapult the studio into the limelight. In the 1880s, both Royal Copenhagen and Bing & Grøndahl hired new artistic directors, Arnold Krog and Pietro Krohn. Both men were young and ambitious; both were keenly aware of art trends around Europe. In France, a bold, naturalistic style was taking the country by storm. This "Art Nouveau" proved globally influential and highly adaptive to ceramic design.

In Danish ceramics, the Art Nouveau movement between 1884 and 1925 laid the foundation for much of what Danish Americans associate with Danish ceramics. The first animal figurines were created by Royal Copenhagen by 1886, and Bing & Grøndahl created the first Christmas plate in 1895. Even pieces like the "Seagull" service, at one time the single most popular series of porcelain dinnerware in Denmark, were created in 1895 by Fanny Garde, one of Pietro Krohn's designers. The brilliant blues, greens, pinks, and whites we associate with "porcelain" are all products of the innovation and technical prowess of this period. It paid off; Danish ceramics studios won award after award at international competitions, and American businessman Louis Tiffany, of Tiffany & Co., was a personal fan of Royal Copenhagen's work.

The greatest accomplishment of that period, in my opinion, lies beyond the reach of the largest studios. The Art Nouveau movement saw other studios come to prominence. Kähler Keramik and Hjörth Terrakottafabrik, among others, became hubs of community and creativity. These communities helped train many talented artists, preparing the stage for a new era of Danish ceramics.



This fish, designed by Arnold Krog and Carl Liisberg, is the first animal figurine Royal Copenhagen ever issued. Cod Fish Figurine. Royal Copenhagen; Arnold Krog & Carl Frederick Liisberg, 1896. Gift of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, 2024.019.005. Designed by Krog and Liisberg, this piece was painted by Oluf Jensen.



Designed in 1911 by Gerhard Henning, this piece is a technical marvel. The exotic, Persian-inspired scenes on the piece reflect the often-troubling stereotypes European artists had about the Middle East. *The Princess and the Pea.* Royal Copenhagen; Gerhard Henning, 1918. Gift of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, 2024.019.008a-b. Designed in 1911, our example was produced in 1918.



Fanny Garde, the designer of the "Seagull" service, was one of only a few female designers to be recognized during this period. She was renowned for her exceptionally vivid depictions of flowers and animals. Seagull Serving Bowl & Lid. Bing & Grøndahl; Fanny Garde, 1895. Gift of Alice Dorothea Jensen in memory of Mr. & Mrs. Arthur Jensen of West Branch, Iowa, 1993.142.052a-b. Designed in 1895, our example was produced in the 1950s.

You may notice that there are sometimes two names and/or dates in our object captions. Many of the pieces featured here, though not all, were historically mass-produced for many decades. As a result, the original designer may not have been involved in the production of our examples. The first name and date, therefore, reflect the original designer's work; the second name and date identify who made the example in our collection and when it was produced.

MODERNISM

The first echoes of a new era began in the 1910s, as Art Nouveau fell out of popularity in Europe. Artists like Hans Hjörth and Patrick Nordström began popularizing stoneware ceramics. Over the 1910s and 1920s, they slowly became more popular, and more and more artists began exploring single-color glazes and new, minimalist shapes. By 1930, the rise of studios like Saxbo ensured that stoneware would dominate the Danish ceramics scene.

Nowhere is this more evident than the work of Axel Salto. Salto (1889-1961) began working in ceramics in the 1920s, and over his forty-year career, he became a master of the medium. He created budding, biomorphic shapes, designed so that the liquid glaze would pool in the crevices of the vessel. Each piece became unique, and his designs are now regarded as the finest examples of the period.

Success after success led to a very popular market for Danish stoneware, both in Denmark and around the world. Stoneware was less pretentious than porcelain, making it a sensible choice for cups, water pitchers, and ashtrays. These regular wares were both functional and gorgeous, and more and more studios entered the market, such as Palshus.

Part of their success came from freelance designers. Many artists in this period, like Frode Bahnsen or Jais Nielsen, worked on commission for larger workshops. As they moved around from studio to studio, they became friends with many other designers—these artists shared ideas and influences, resulting in some stylistic similarities. They were still competitors, but dinner parties and exhibitions hosted by these artists allowed the whole industry to thrive.



Salto viewed the unity of material and shape to be critical to artistic production. Vase in Ribbed Style. Royal Copenhagen; Axel Salto, 1965. American Swedish Institute, 2019.03.27.



Jais Nielsen worked for many different studios over his career and produced similar mythological and Biblical designs for many of them. Stoneware Vase. Royal Copenhagen; Jais Nielsen, 1928. Museum Purchase, 2023.019.015. Designed in 1937, the example in the museum's collection was produced in 1962.



Palshus was known for the refinement of their designs. Their cobalt blue glazes on rustic clay bodies are particularly striking. You can learn more about Palshus on page 14. Stoneware Platter. Palshus; Per Linnemann-Schmidt, 1960. Museum Purchase, 2024.004.042.

ENDINGS AND BEGINNINGS: CONTEMPORARY CERAMICS

Over the course of the 1970s, changing public tastes in the international market, combined with the death and retirement of many important designers, caused the studio structure of the previous decades to collapse. Artists primarily began working under their own name, either solo or in very small teams. Royal Copenhagen and Bing & Grøndahl merged in 1984, and by 1993, most industrial workshops had closed, unable to compete against a global market.

The end of the industrial workshop did not mark the end of Danish ceramics as an artform. The final section of the exhibit showcases contemporary Danish ceramic production. These pieces speak across time to earlier eras; many of the same interests in form, glaze, and material are visible, though they have been taken to the extreme. The paper-thin porcelain of Bodil Manz explores how light affects color, while the craggy, rough sculpture by Jørgen Haugen Sørensen reaches at the very core of how humans and clay interact to create meaning. Such variety fully dismantles a divide between a utility piece and an art piece, leaving an endless array of possibilities open for future production.



Bjørn Wiinblad. Image courtesy of *The Gilded Owl.*

BJØRN WIINBLAD

While Bjørn Wiinblad's style is unique, in some ways, he perfectly reflects the culture of Danish ceramic production in the 1900s. Wiinblad began working with ceramics with pieces designed for the workshop Nymølle in 1946. He quickly began to view ceramics as one of his primary creative mediums and won awards through the 1950s for ceramic production. As his popularity grew, so did his ceramic production, and he purchased the facilities for Palshus and Nymølle in the 1970s. He produced a dinner set for the Shah of Iran in 1971, celebrating the 2500th anniversary of the Persian Empire. To this day, his team of painters continue to reproduce his ceramic designs.

Beginning his career at the height of modern ceramics, Wiinblad also quickly became a central figure in the ceramics community in Denmark. As a young man, he developed a friendship with Jais Nielsen, attending dinner parties at the older man's house. Later, Wiinblad became the host for many events, inviting artists like Alev Siesbye to his parties. Wiinblad, like many of his contemporaries, was interested in history; he collected Chinese and Mesoamerican ceramic art, which he drew from for his own work.



Sandra DaVolio has worked in Denmark since 1974. Her work explores the limits of porcelain as a material, relying on its natural color to create beauty. White Frills. Sandra DaVolio, 2007. Birmingham Museum of Art, Gift of Colonel David Perry Montague and Clemmer Montague, 2021.119.



This piece intentionally uses grey glaze to replicate the greyish color of impure porcelain. Arnold Krog, the artistic director of Royal Copenhagen, started the experiment after rediscovering some old pieces. Porcelain Vase. Royal Copenhagen; Oluf Jensen, 1917. Museum Purchase, 2024.016. 001.



This cream jug was made in the 1790s and is one of the oldest pieces in the collection. The coloration is due to iron deposits in the porcelain clay. Cream Pitcher. Royal Copenhagen, 1775. Gift of Agneta C. Heldt, 1994.1970.001. This pitcher was designed in 1775 and painted by Hans Jacob Hansen in the 1790s.

CONCLUSION

Danish Ceramics: Beyond Blue and White is an exploration of both artistic prowess and cultural tradition. The exhibition asks visitors to explore what makes Danish ceramic art uniquely Danish. Visitors are repeatedly confronted by non-Danish symbols, particularly from China, Japan, and Persia. Some pieces were designed by non-Danes living in Denmark, or by Danes living around the world. Even Royal Copenhagen's production now is largely based in Thailand, disrupting any material connection between designer, molder, and painter.

Despite these challenges, I think there is a meaningful tradition to speak of! Across centuries, certain shared ideas emerge. A cream jug from the 1790s has a greyish body, a quirk of impure porcelain clay. Nearby, a vase from 1917 intentionally replicates that greyish color as an artistic statement, while it also appears in Sandra DaVolio's "White Frills" from 2006. Together, the pieces tell a story of how Danish artists worked together, handing down ideas generation to generation. The "Danishness" of Danish ceramics is found in the communities of potters and artists who make them, and that chain of connection remains unbroken.

DANISH CERAMICS: BEYOND BLUE AND WHITE SUPPORTERS

Grant Funding Provided By:
State Historical Society of Iowa and the National Endowment for the Humanities
Iowa Arts Council and the Iowa Economic Development Authority
Queen Margrethe and Prins Henriks Fond

Other Financial Support Provided By:
Bill Derrenbacher
Charles-Henri Keller
Cindy Larsen Adams and Gary Adams
Daniel Jensen
David and Helen Esbeck
Dennis Andersen
Erik and Eva Andersen
Gerry Lauritzen
The John and Elizabeth Lauritzen Foundation
Jon Frega & Elly Jorgensen
Lissi Vange
Marnie Jensen & Kenny Bogus

Artifact Donors:
Bill Derrenbacher
Deidra Witschorke
The New Carlsberg Fond
The Smithsonian's National Museum of American History
The Linnemann-Schmidt Family
Annelise Linnemann-Schmidt
Bjørn Wiinblads Hus

Lending Partners:
The American Swedish Institute
The Birmingham Museum of Art
The Cincinnati Art Museum
Cooper-Hewitt, the Smithsonian Design Museum
Nancy Patterson Lamb
The Spencer Museum of Art

Acquisition Partners:
Kevin Henry
The Linnemann-Schmidt Family
Stan Tillotson
Wayne Marmorstein

Additional Thanks to:
Allan Andersen/The CLAY Museum Denmark
Bjørn Wiinblads Hus
Diya Nagaraj
Kevin Henry
The Linnemann-Schmidt Family
Stan Tillotson

As part of our ongoing Danish ceramics initiative, *the Museum of Danish America acquired a significant collection of materials by the Danish stoneware studio Palshus, marking a pivotal moment in the preservation of Danish ceramic heritage. Many of these pieces are now on public view for the first time in the exhibition "Danish Ceramics: Beyond Blue and White," offering visitors a rare opportunity to engage directly with Palshus' artistry. The studio's history offers insight into the culture behind Danish mid-century ceramics, and we are pleased to present its complete story for the first time. This acquisition was made possible through the generosity and dedication of Kevin Henry and the Linnemann-Schmidt family, whose commitment to honoring and extending the legacy of Palshus has brought new life to the workshop's story. Together with the Museum of Danish America, they are working to ensure that the innovative spirit and artistic contributions of Per and Annelise Linnemann-Schmidt are not only remembered but also newly recognized and celebrated by audiences today and for generations to come.*



Sculpture of Annelise Linnemann-Schmidt by Per Linnemann-Schmidt.
Image courtesy of the Linnemann-Schmidt family.

Palshus: Mid-20th Century Danish Stoneware by Per and Annelise Linnemann-Schmidt

BY KEVIN HENRY & HENRIK LINNEMANN-SCHMIDT

Palshus Stentøj, the stoneware workshop operated by Per and Annelise Linnemann-Schmidt for more than twenty years, took its name from the initials of its founders' names and the Danish word for "house." The studio specialized in stoneware from the 1940s until 1972 and was a passion project for the couple throughout their lives.



Per and Annelise Linneman-Schmidt in the Palshus Workshop. Image courtesy of the Linnemann-Schmidt family.

Family and Early Lives of Per and Annelise Linnemann-Schmidt

Per Linneman-Schmidt (1912-1999) was the son of Sofia (née Linnemann) and the Danish sculptor Willie Wulff (1881-1962). Sofia's marriage to Willie Wulff was short-lived, ending in divorce in the same year as Per's birth. In 1918, Per's mother married Henrik Baggesen Schmidt, who adopted Per, giving him the surname Linnemann-Schmidt. The couple had no children together, and Per was raised as the only child on "Fuglager" (Bird Acre), a farm purchased by Per's adoptive father.

Per was accepted for study at the Danish Royal Academy of Fine Arts in 1931, where he studied under Einar Utzon-Frank. His training as a sculptor gave him a keen eye for design, a sensibility he carried into his ceramic art.

Annelise Linnemann-Schmidt (1918-1969) was the daughter of Harald W. and Ellen Sprechler. Her father was the chief executive officer of the Danish insurance firm Hafnia, while her mother provided the initial impetus for what would eventually become Palshus Stentøj.

Per and Annelise met in England in 1937, where both were associated with the Oxford Movement, a religious and social movement that sought to revitalize the Christian faith, strengthen fellowship, and promote personal and social transformation through traditional principles.

They were engaged in 1938 and married and settled in Copenhagen on April 3, 1939, where Per Linnemann-Schmidt had his sculpture studio. During the ensuing war years, their three children were born: Ole Linnemann-Schmidt (1940-); Henrik Linnemann-Schmidt (1942-); and Thea Mottes (née Linnemann-Schmidt, 1943-).

The family was deeply affected by the Nazi occupation; Ole remembers going to the grocery store in Copenhagen with his mother and seeing Nazis in the street. In August 1944, looking to escape the city and cut expenses, Per bought a house in Sengeløse, where Palshus Stentøj was later established. They lived in Sengeløse until 1961, when they moved to the family farm, Fuglager, near the town of Sorø.

WHY "PALSHUS"?

Denmark was under Nazi German occupation until its liberation on May 5, 1945. One British naval officer, Commander Paddy Flint, had been a friend of Per and Annelise Linnemann-Schmidt prior to World War II. While in Denmark, Commander Paddy Flint visited his old friends in their new home in Sengeløse. Immediately upon seeing it, he dubbed the house **P**er and **A**nnelise **L**innemann-**S**chmidt's house ("**hus**"), or **Palshus**.



Henrik Linnemann-Schmidt in front of "Palshus" in August 2017. Image courtesy of the Linnemann-Schmidt family.

Palshus Stentøj Origin Story

The beginnings of Palshus Stentøj can be traced back to 1946, when Annelise's mother, Ellen Sprechler, asked if Per would make her a Christmas candlestick. Per produced the candlestick in the form of a Christmas rose. Seeing the candlestick's artistic elegance and practical function, Annelise proposed they sell them to support the family during the lean post-war years. She drove around the country visiting art and craft shops to promote and sell them in their tiny Austin 7. Remarkably, on her first trip, she sold nearly 12,000 candleholders.

Based on this initial success, Per and Annelise formally established Palshus Stentøj and set up their own workshop in Sengeløse across the street from their house.

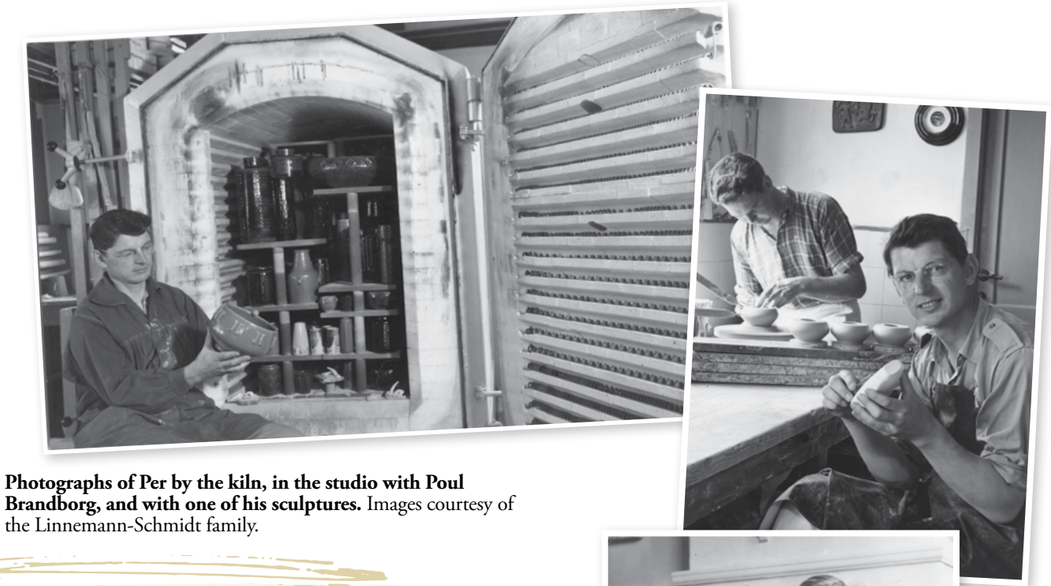


Teal: Museum Purchase, 2024.004.009.
White: Museum Purchase, 2024.004.007.
Blue: Museum Purchase, 2024.004.004.

An early Palshus mark as used on the first Christmas candlestick.



The Austin 7 was so small that the boys in Sengeløse called it "the matchbox." Image via Wikimedia Commons.



Photographs of Per by the kiln, in the studio with Poul Brandborg, and with one of his sculptures. Images courtesy of the Linnemann-Schmidt family.



The first workshop building was a surplus pre-fabricated structure that had been used by the Germans to house prisoners in an internment camp during World War II. Pictured circa 1948. Image courtesy of the Linnemann-Schmidt family.



Palshus Stentøj: 1949-1972

From its formal establishment in 1949 until Annelise Linnemann-Schmidt's death in a car accident in 1969, Palshus was a thriving enterprise and a genuine husband-wife partnership. Per guided the artistic direction of the company, while Annelise managed its business operations. Per designed and decorated most of Palshus' output through the 1950s and 1960s, and Palshus employed as many as 8-10 people during those years. Since Per Linnemann-Schmidt never mastered the art of throwing pottery at the wheel, several skilled craftsmen played important roles at Palshus and deserve recognition. They include Poul Brandborg (master thrower); Karl "Pottemager" Andersen (master thrower); and Carl Rud (casting master). In addition, as with many other Danish stoneware workshops, several "decorating girls" were employed at Palshus. One such painter is a young Norwegian artist, Reidun Brekke, who came to Denmark to live in Sengeløse and train at Palshus around 1950. Earthenware pieces designed and decorated by her bear her "R.B." signature.



Piece by Reidun Brekke. Museum Purchase, 2024.004.003.

Early Work and Artistic Collaborators

One of the early, important artistic contributors to Palshus was Jens H. Quistgaard (JHQ) (1919–2008). Jens was trained as a sculptor by his father, Harald Quistgaard (1887-1979), and was later educated in drawing and as a silversmith at the technical school in Copenhagen. He is best known internationally for his work beginning in 1954 as the Chief Designer of Dansk Designs. Much less well known is the design work Quistgaard did for Palshus in the early 1950s.

Quistgaard's design work for Palshus included a range of decorated ceramics and a popular teapot, with a unique design that Palshus marketed using the jingle: "I am a teapot, hard fired and strong. My spout doesn't drip. My sieve doesn't block, and the lid stays in its place."

Another Quistgaard designed product ensured financial stability



An early line of Palshus designed by Jens H. Quistgaard. Museum Purchases, 2024.004.023, 2024.004.025, 2024.004.025.



A Palshus teapot designed by JHQ, circa 1950. Image courtesy of Kevin Henry.



An iteration of a Palshus piece bearing Quistgaard's signature.

for Palshus. A skilled entrepreneur, Annelise recognized that Peter Heering, owner of the Cherry Heering liqueur brand and Per's cousin, needed promotional items for bars to help market his products. She approached him in the early 1950s and said: "Peter, you need an ashtray." He soon agreed and accepted a design offered by Palshus, thus initiating a standing monthly order that lasted over a decade. Palshus produced over 250,000 ashtrays for the company. These pieces provided a steady income that allowed Per Linnemann-Schmidt to produce the artistic but affordable stoneware for which Palshus is well-known today.



Cherry Heering Advertising Ashtray by Palshus. Image courtesy of Kevin Henry.



Frode Bahnsen teapot for Palshus. Museum Purchase, 2024.004.010a-b.

During this period, utilizing a similar palette of glazes, other artists designed stoneware vases and figures for Palshus. One such artist was Frode Bahnsen (1923-1983), who is best known for his long association with the Danish Royal Mint beginning in 1948.

During his sporadic association with Palshus, Frode Bahnsen designed many pieces bearing his signature, including vases, bowls, and a teapot.

Another designer associated with Palshus during this period was Kjeld Jordan, who is best known for the hare's fur animal figures he designed for the workshop. Particularly loved by Palshus collectors are his elegant, stylized elephant figurines.



Kjeld Jordan elephant figurine for Palshus. Museum Purchase, 2024.007.001.



Frode Bahnsen in his own studio, 1950s. Image courtesy of Steen Cherome Bahnsen.

One particularly intriguing connection was with Hugo de Soto (1928–2010), a Cuban-American artist living in Europe. Henrik Linnemann-Schmidt, the son of Per and Annelise, met Hugo by chance at a bus stop in Rome after a late night out with fellow students during a trip to Italy. Before leaving Rome, Henrik visited Hugo's studio and was impressed by his paintings, which he described to his mother upon returning to Denmark. Inspired by Hugo's work, the family helped organize a special exhibition for him at Gallery Moderne in Silkeborg, an important venue for Danish modern art. The exhibition was highly successful and marked the beginning of a long-lasting friendship and artistic collaboration between Hugo de Soto and the Linnemann-Schmidt family.

During his frequent visits to Denmark, Hugo designed stoneware figurines for Palshus and also designed tables topped in Palshus ceramic tiles, which were very popular in Denmark at the time. The many paintings by Hugo de Soto still in the family's possession serve as a testament to their enduring friendship.



Hugo de Soto sits atop a table decorated with Palshus ceramic tiles. To the right are examples of the stoneware figurines he created.

Palshus' Iconic Hare's Fur Stoneware

Among the lines for which Palshus is best-known today is an array of sleek, modern stoneware designs with matte "hare's fur" glaze. This line was designed primarily by Per Linnemann-Schmidt and embodies his design credo of "Never a slack line. Lines must be taut." These pieces normally bear an incised "P L-S" signature and the Palshus shop mark, which was used on most of the company's production after its early years. On some items in this line, an additional initial appears before "P L-S"—most commonly "A+P L-S"—signifying some input by Annelise Linnemann-Schmidt in the design.

In one exceptional case, some of the well-known "torpedo" vases in this line bear the signature "H+P L-S," indicating that this design was by Per Linnemann-Schmidt's son Henrik. One night in 1955 while sitting at home, Per Linnemann-Schmidt challenged his children to draw something. Henrik, aged 13, drew a vase shaped like a torpedo, which Per threw the following day. Henrik remembers being paid 5 Danish kroner for his design of this piece, which went on to become one of Palshus' best-sellers in this line of stoneware.



"Torpedo" vase by Henrik and Per Linnemann-Schmidt. Museum Purchase, 2024.004.021.



A selection of matte hare's fur pieces in a range of sizes, shapes, and the six standard glazes: Mediterranean (blue); Dove (light blue); Olive (dark green); Moss (light green); Nertz (caramel brown); and Ivory (creamy white). The pieces in this photo are sourced from the museum's collection.

Palshus' Chamotte Stoneware

In addition to its sleek line of matte hare's fur stoneware, Palshus also began producing a line of heavier, coarser chamotte stoneware in the 1950s. These pieces are signed in a similar fashion to those in the hare's fur line, with the incised Palshus shopmark and "PL-S" signature. Other leading Danish and Swedish stoneware producers introduced similar lines during the 1950s as part of a new wave of Scandinavian ceramic design.

As with pieces in the hare's fur line, Palshus' chamotte stoneware sometimes carries the "A+P L-S" signature. Indeed, Annelise's initials appear more regularly on this line of stoneware, suggesting her growing influence over time on Palshus' artistic style. As Annelise grew more confident in her abilities, Palshus appears to have relied less on external design, as no signatures of other artists have been identified to date in this line.

The most common glaze colors in this line are blues, greens, browns, and yellows in varying shades. The numbering of these pieces seems less consistent than that for the hare's fur line, warranting further investigation, especially in regard to dating. Research in the family collection found pieces with numbers ranging from the single digits, sometimes with a "C" prefix, to pieces with model numbers in the 200s, 300s, and 400s. Palshus chamotte pieces also sometimes carry a painted mark (e.g. B25) on the bottom, indicating the glaze used.

In addition to vases, bowls, and ashtrays in this line, Palshus produced a range of lamp bases for Le Klint.

WHAT IS CHAMOTTE?

The term chamotte refers to the incorporation of fired and crushed clay in the production, giving a rough surface texture to the finished product.



Palshus Chamotte stoneware with "A+P L-S" signature. Museum Purchase, 2024.004.041.



Palshus utilized finely crushed rejected stoneware for their chamotte.

Unique Works by Palshus

Per Linnemann-Schmidt also produced unique pieces for special exhibits and sale through Palshus' main commercial outlets. Unique items designed by Per Linnemann-Schmidt carry the incised Palshus shopmark, the "P L-S" signature, and are marked "unic." In addition, some unique pieces are dated. Research in the family collection turned up examples of unique pieces dated 1957, 1959, 1960, 1962, 1967, 1968, and 1970. Dates are more uncommon on serial production pieces, with examples found from both the workshop's earliest years (1949) and later production (1971).

There is also evidence of Annelise Linnemann-Schmidt's design of unique Palshus stoneware, likely late in the workshop's life. Unlike in most cases in the hare's fur and chamotte lines of production, where her signature appeared in conjunction with her husband, examples of unique stoneware pieces can be found that carry only Annelise's "A L-S" signature. Some late unique pieces still in family hands bear Annelise's signature and hint at how Palshus stoneware might have evolved had Annelise's life not been tragically cut short at 52.



Unique works produced by Palshus. Museum Purchases, 2024.004.042, 2024.004.022, 2024.004.051.



Unique "P L-S" figural vase, circa 1957. Image courtesy of Kevin Henry.

Palshus's Development as a Business

The commercial success enjoyed by Palshus was primarily due to the efforts of Annelise Linnemann-Schmidt, who managed sales and organized special exhibitions. One of the most important outlets for the exhibition and sale of high-quality 20th century Danish craftsmanship was Den Permanente, or "The Permanent Exhibition of Danish Arts." Den Permanente, founded by famous designers, including Kaj Bojesen and Jacob Bang, functioned as a cooperative of its members. Pieces were chosen by members through a juried selection process, ensuring consistently high quality in the items displayed for local sale and for the export market. The exhibition was extremely prestigious and one of the most important outlets for Palshus and other Danish stoneware producers until its demise in the 1980s. It is thus a recognition of Palshus' reputation that Annelise was elected to the Board and the executive committee of Den Permanente.



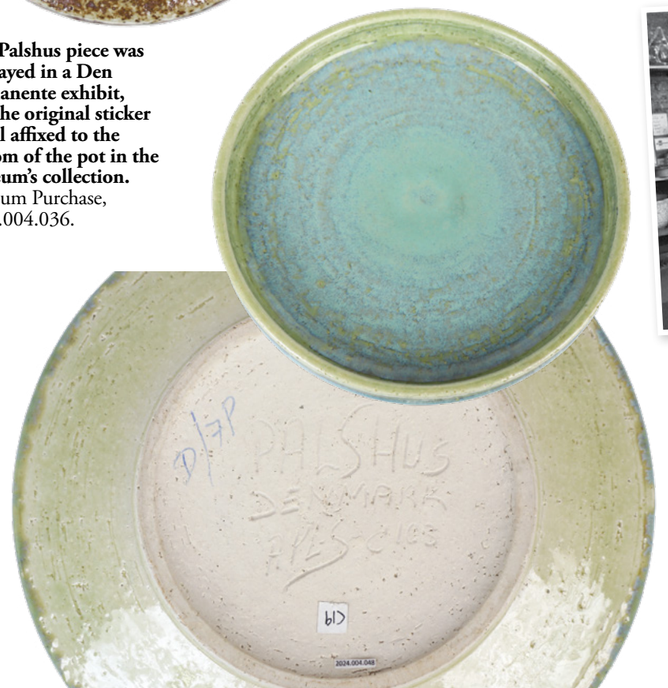
Den Permanente at its Vesterbrogade location in Copenhagen, circa 1972. Image courtesy of JC Raulston Arboretum archive.

The other important and prestigious outlet for Danish ceramic arts of the time was Illums Bolighus, founded in 1925 by Kaj Dessau. Working with his artistic consultant, Brita Drewsen, Dessau developed a new concept for the store: furnished interiors where furniture, textiles, ceramics, and other accessories were thoughtfully combined to interact as cohesive works of art. Along with Den Permanente, Illums Bolighus played an important role in elevating the status of Danish design through these artistic displays. It was thus a major breakthrough that Annelise Linnemann-Schmidt was able to organize a special exhibition of Palshus stoneware at Illums Bolighus in 1957. This exhibition attracted significant local media coverage and elevated Palshus's reputation as a producer of artistic stoneware.

Palshus stoneware was also sold in the American market as early as the 1950s. One important American promoter of Palshus was the founder of the Pottery Barn chain, Paul Secon. Henrik Linnemann-Schmidt remembers Secon's first visit to the family home in Sengeløse during the late 1950s. Secon, an accomplished musician, would awaken the family in the early morning to the sound of his flute.



This Palshus piece was displayed in a Den Permanente exhibit, and the original sticker is still affixed to the bottom of the pot in the museum's collection. Museum Purchase, 2024.004.036.



This platter bears the signature "A+P L-S." Museum Purchase, 2024.004.048.



Paul Secon in an early Pottery Barn store in New York City. Image courtesy of Kevin Henry.



Examples of stoneware produced by Palshus in its final years of operation. Museum Purchases, 2024.004.038, 2024.004.046, 2024.004.026, 2024.004.043.

The Closure of Palshus and Per Linnemann-Schmidt's Later Years

Palshus continued to design and produce stoneware through the 1960s until it ceased operations in 1972. The life of Palshus as a creative enterprise was tragically cut short by the untimely death of Annelise Linnemann-Schmidt on December 18, 1969, in a car accident that took place a week earlier. The accident occurred on the road between the workshop in Sengeløse, where Annelise had just finished packing the last shipments for the Christmas season, and their home at the farm near Sorø. Among the items she packed for shipping that week were hare's fur vases commissioned by the Copenhagen County Hospital (Københavns Amtssygehus) in Glostrup as Christmas gifts for the staff.

While Annelise's death did mark the beginning of the end of the Palshus workshop, Per Linnmemann-Schmidt continued to produce high-quality stoneware at least into 1971. During this time, he began considering the future of Palshus, including the potential sale of the workshop in Sengeløse. In 1971, the renowned Danish artist and ceramics designer Bjørn Wiinblad approached Per in search of workshop space. Per and his son Ole, who was now a practicing attorney, were invited to dinner at Wiinblad's "Blue House" to discuss a possible sale. It was agreed that Wiinblad's lawyer would follow up with Ole, which he did several weeks later. A contract was drafted, and Ole met with Wiinblad's lawyer multiple times to finalize the details. A second dinner at Wiinblad's home was held, after which the sale was completed in 1972, including the house, workshops, and all equipment. Wiinblad owned the workshop until 1983, when he sold it again. While the house survives to this day, the workshop was eventually torn down to make way for new housing.

Per Linnemann-Schmidt lived for another 30 years after Annelise's death, passing away in 1999. In the years that followed Palshus's closure, he managed the family farm, eventually handing over those responsibilities to his son Henrik. He also returned to his first artistic passion: sculpture, resuming his career as a portrait sculptor and remaining active in this work well into his later years. Several years after Annelise's passing, Per married Elna Odder, née Hansen. Following Per's death, Elna lived for nearly fifteen more years. Upon her passing, the family home was sold, and the remaining collection of Palshus pieces was carefully packed away.

With Per's passing and the eventual dispersal of the family's collection, a significant chapter in Danish ceramic history quietly came to a close. Yet the legacy of Palshus and the artistry of Per and Annelise Linnemann-Schmidt endures through the works they created and the influence they left on Danish design.

Palshus Stentøj stands as a significant chapter in the story of Danish mid-20th century design, embodying the innovation, artistry, and collaborative spirit that defined the era. Through the creative vision of Per and Annelise Linnemann-Schmidt, Palshus produced stoneware that blended refined aesthetics with modern forms, contributing to Denmark's global reputation for excellence in ceramics and design. The workshop's legacy lives on not only in the enduring beauty of its pieces but also in its influence on subsequent generations of artists and designers. As research continues and more of Palshus' story comes to light, its place within the broader context of Danish artistic heritage grows ever clearer, inviting new appreciation from collectors, scholars, and admirers around the world.



The Palshus family at the opening of *Danish Ceramics: Beyond Blue and White* on November 16, 2024.



Kevin Henry with Albert Ravenholt Curator of Danish-American Culture Adam Bierstedt at the opening of the museum's exhibition.



Danish Ceramics Bonus Stories

– the Local and the Global

BY ADAM BIERSTEDT
Albert Ravenholt Curator of Danish-American Culture

When creating exhibits at the museum, there are often interesting stories and connections that are not able to be explored fully within the gallery—either they cut too far across time, are too tangled a web to fully unwind in the space of a banner, or are questions that we simply do not know the answers to!

As our Danish ceramics project grows, several of these "extra" stories have emerged, revolving around pieces, styles, and influences. They cut across the full history of Danish ceramics, from the 18th century to the turn of the 21st. As they do, they tell us truths about how the industry engaged with the rest of the world.

A HISTORY MYSTERY

Two of the more baffling pieces in our ceramics collection are a pair of vases we acquired as part of a transfer from the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. They are technically well-made, with a beautifully modeled flower on the lid, vibrant yellow, dragon-shaped handles, and extremely well-painted farmyard scenes. They are, without a doubt, pieces created by Royal Copenhagen, and they appear to be very early examples of the company's work!

However, something is very strange about these pieces. The neon yellow is baffling enough; yellow is not a popular color for ceramic art, especially not Danish ceramic art. A few other problems appear under the microscope.



Vase. Royal Copenhagen, before 1823. Gift of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, 2024.019.009a-b.

When we compare this piece to other examples of very early Royal Copenhagen work, it appears completely different. The studio's work was much more restrained, focusing on simple colors, gilding, and the quality of the porcelain itself. This is so heavily decorated that it bears little similarity to the Flora Danica pieces, which date to the same period.

The materials do not quite make sense. Within the Smithsonian's catalog, these pieces were listed as "soft-paste porcelain." The differences between that and regular porcelain are too complex to get into, but in short—Royal Copenhagen never made soft-paste porcelain, and its predecessors stopped around 1770!

The yellow paint is crumbling in some places, and it stained the underlying clay. No other piece in the collection has this crumbling, and it should not be possible with most ways of painting ceramics.

We still do not know the answers to all of these problems, but returning to the Smithsonian's collections offers one possible answer. A pot produced by the German studio Meissen that the National Museum of American History owns shares many similarities—a molded flower on the lid, a yellow color, an ornate handle, and flowers painted within thick black lines. It is not a perfect match, but it is too similar to merely be a coincidence.



Small Pot and Cover. Meissen Manufactory, circa 1745. The Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, Hans C. Syz Collection.

As it turns out, Meissen was the first European studio to use this yellow, known as "fond jeune" in France. They developed it in the 1740s, and it remained in fairly limited use. The French studio Sevres developed their own variant around 1751, and it remained in sporadic use for the decades to come. Almost certainly, the yellow we see here is copying their work.

While accusing Royal Copenhagen of plagiarism might seem shocking, such behavior was the norm in the 1700s! The first porcelain maker in Denmark, Louis Fournier, was hired straight out of the Sevres factory around 1760, and Frantz Heinrich Müller worked for Meissen before being invited to Denmark. Many of his early employees were also German, and the iconic Danish *Blue Mussel* line was, in fact, adapted from a German pattern. There was no such thing as "copyright," and producing what you knew, regardless of the studio, was common.

There is one more wrinkle to the story that offers more clarity. In 1790, King Christian VII issued a ban on the import of all porcelain, except pieces imported from China through the Danish Asiatic Company, citing the success of Royal Copenhagen as proof that the Danish industry was sufficient to sustain local demand. At the time, French and German porcelain was still very in style among Danish nobility. It is therefore possible that these vases were created on commission, in an attempt to emulate this Southern style and enhance someone's particular collection.

We will never know whether these stories are true, unless an obscure document in the Royal Copenhagen archives one day sheds light on the matter, but from a pair of confusing pieces, there is a surprising amount to learn about how the early years of Danish porcelain production were affected by their competitors.

A QUESTION OF REPRESENTATION

Sometimes unexpected comparisons emerge when installing pieces in a gallery. Due to a coincidence of how *Danish Ceramics: Beyond Blue and White* is laid out, pieces produced almost a century apart are positioned next to each other, inviting comparison.

Two such pieces are Gerhard Henning's *The Princess and the Pea* (1911) and Alev Siesbye's *Bowl* (1989). At first glance, very little connects the two; one portrays a human figure while the other is an unadorned bowl, one is porcelain while the other is stoneware, one has dozens of colors while the other has just one. The two pieces are similar in one very important way—they both owe a great deal of influence to Middle Eastern culture. The details of that influence, however, are very instructive.

The Princess and the Pea is a technical marvel, and one of the most prestigious pieces of Danish ceramic art from this period. Portraying a scene from Hans Christian Andersen's story, the porcelain is decorated in dozens of colors and metallic tassels. Each copy takes months to produce and often breaks under the stress of repeated firings. At the time, artists recognized it as a masterpiece–*The Princess and the Pea* won a gold medal at the Paris Salon, the most prestigious art exhibition of its time, for achievement in ceramic arts.



***The Princess and the Pea.* Royal Copenhagen; Gerhard Henning. Designed 1911, produced 1918.** Gift of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, 2024.019.008a-b.

The longer you spend with *The Princess and the Pea*, the more troubling it becomes. The cushions are ornate, with human figures along the edges. These figures are often partially or totally nude, contorting into uncomfortable shapes. Their baggy trousers and pointed shoes are based on Turkish dress, revealing these as depictions of Middle Easterners.

This piece is based on the art movement known as "Orientalism." In general terms, Orientalism can be used to refer to any artwork that depicts a scene of Middle Eastern culture. However, as sociologist Edward Saïd explored, the Orientalist movement tended to focus on the more exotic aspects of Middle Eastern culture. In particular, artists focused on private spaces like the harem and public baths, defining the Middle East by the ways it was different from Europe.

Henning's sculpture is almost textbook Orientalism. The imagined scenes of warriors and naked women are being sat on by the demure, elaborately dressed European woman. This does not mean that Henning had any message in mind—he portrays scenes from Greek mythology in a very similar way! However, his lack of familiarity with the truth of Middle Eastern history is apparent, and *The Princess and the Pea* therefore shows what Danes imagined about faraway lands.



***The Harem Dancer.* Sandor Alexander Svoboda, before 1896.** Public Domain via Wikimedia Commons.

Alev Ebüziyye Siesbye's work stands in surprising contrast to Henning's. Siesbye is half-Turkish herself and grew up in Istanbul. Surrounded by the historical art and artwork of the region, she draws influence from historical Middle Eastern and Mediterranean artwork.

The piece in the exhibition shows two particular influences. The rich blue color is related to the ceramics of the Ottoman and Safavid Empires, which perfected a vibrant blue. The distinctive floating shape, where the bowl balances on an impossibly small foot, is derived from much more ancient material. Excavations around the biblical city of Nineveh unveiled a distinctive pottery style from around 4,000 years ago. Some of the pieces bear striking similarities in shape to Siesbye's work, connecting her work with the deep past.



***Bowl.* Alev Ebüzziya Siesbye, 1989.** Gift of the New Carlsberg Foundation, 2024.005.005.



Cup in Ninevite 5 Style, 2750-2500 BCE. British Museum, donation of Hormuzd Rassam.

Siesbye's work blends the real cultures of the region in ways that Henning's does not. Both artists blended Danish techniques with Middle Eastern subject matter, but the difference of results is stark. I find Siesbye's to be a much more interesting, absorbing piece than Henning's, and it emphasizes how genuine interest and study creates something very different than stereotypes do.



Iznik glazed pottery from the Ottoman Empire, circa 1490. Image courtesy of World Imaging via Wikimedia Commons.

CONCLUSION

These two stories are some of the many discoveries that fell outside of what I was able to address in *Danish Ceramics: Beyond Blue and White*. These artworks react to each other, showing the connections between generations of artists. What stories will show themselves to you as you explore the exhibit?



DANISH CERAMICS *at Home*

BY DAVID ANDERSON
Registrar

The Museum of Danish America has a remarkable collection of ceramics, encompassing works that span from a porcelain chocolate cup crafted by Royal Copenhagen in 1775 to ceramics produced in the mid-20th century.

Beyond works such as these, the collection also features unique and well-known stoneware designs, with pieces from studios like Palshus, a studio renowned for its production of practical yet beautifully glazed pieces. These works highlight the artistic excellence of Danish ceramics, and, in many ways, they exemplify the best of what the collection has to offer, yet the museum's collection also includes lesser-known and lower-quality pieces. This raises an interesting question: why does the museum preserve ceramics of seemingly modest quality when the collection boasts some of the finest examples in the museum industry?

Famous Plates

The answer to this question lies in the stories behind the ceramics. Museums today have shifted their focus from the object itself—such as a plate—to the narrative it carries. Who was the person, family, or community behind the plate? How did it come to be in their possession? Why is it part of the museum's collection? These are merely a few of the questions that we consider when accessioning artifacts, and they often explain why a museum might preserve an otherwise unassuming piece.

The sight of Royal Copenhagen Christmas plates or porcelain figurines in a Danish or Danish-American household is not an uncommon one. First released by Bing & Grøndahl in 1895, the iconic blue-and-white plate has become a beloved tradition, expanding from Christmas themes to designs for Mother's Day, special events and holidays, or to commemorate individuals or anniversaries, all in the same blue-and-white signature style popularized by Bing & Grøndahl and Royal Copenhagen. However, these are not the only plates adorning Danish and Danish-American homes.

Independent artists also used plates as a canvas for their artistic expressions. One such example is a plate designed by Bjørn Wiinblad, an artist renowned for his signature character designs and his use of vibrant colors, that was donated to the museum in 2018 by Christian Castenskiold. This plate was created to honor Kenneth Hansen for his efforts in promoting Danish tourism, illustrating how ceramics serve as art and as a celebration of people and events.

1.



2.



3.



1. This cup and saucer are among the oldest ceramic pieces from Royal Copenhagen in the museum collection. A piece like this would be reserved for high society and would be considered a luxury. Royal Copenhagen Chocolate Cup. Museum Purchase, 2023.013.001.

2. The first Christmas plate design was created in 1895 by Bing & Grøndahl, a competitor of Royal Copenhagen. For several years, their series of plates remained the only one in production until Royal Copenhagen eventually joined the market. Bing & Grøndahl Christmas Plate. Museum Purchase, 2011.040.002.

3. **This platter is one of many pieces by Bjørn Wiinblad in the collection. However, the unique thank-you note to Kenneth Hansen adds a personal touch, highlighting how Danes use ceramics as both art and a way to express gratitude.** Wiinblad Plate. Gift of Christian Castenskiold, 2018.027.002.

Low-fired pieces offer a smooth surface perfect for painting, allowing individuals to express their creativity freely and easily should they wish, and the durability and lightweight nature of these ceramics makes them easy and safe to ship. Both personalized and practical, these plates make ideal gifts or mementos. Take, for example, this simple plate that was hand painted and signed with the phrase "Hilsen fra Dybbøl," which translates to "Greetings from Dybbøl." More than just a decorative piece, it reflects the deep connection Bertha Andersen had with her Danish heritage. Born to Danish immigrant parents on August 16, 1911, in Oakfield Township, Audubon County, Iowa, Bertha was raised in a community that valued its heritage. Baptized at Oak Hill Lutheran Church and confirmed at Elk Horn Lutheran Church, Bertha attended Clay Township country school and graduated from Elk Horn High School in 1930. Earning her Bachelor of Science degree in elementary education from Dana College in Blair, Nebraska, she devoted her career to teaching in Elk Horn, Kimballton, and Walnut. Upon her retirement, she became the librarian of the Elk Horn Library and was active in bringing the Danish Windmill to Elk Horn, later helping to establish the Museum of Danish America.

Passionate about preserving and celebrating her heritage, she spent much of her time researching Danish ancestry, translating documents, and writing about Danish culture. She often traveled to Japan and Scandinavian countries, showing her slides to the community and writing extensively about her travels. Perhaps on one such journey, she purchased this plate, knowing it would be the perfect souvenir—a tangible connection to the traditions and history she treasured.



Greeting Plate. Gift of Bertha Andersen, 1985.089.002.



Ceramics with Stories

Ceramic figurines, present in nearly any household, come in a wide range of sizes and qualities, making them widely accessible across varying price points. Beyond their apparent aesthetic appeal, these pieces often carry personal histories. Among the museum's collection is a delicate porcelain figurine of two smooth-haired terriers, crafted by Royal Copenhagen. This cherished piece once belonged to Peter and Karen Hellman, Danish immigrants whose story is woven into its history.

These smooth-haired terriers are one example of the kinds of figurines that Danes would have collected from Royal Copenhagen or other studios. Most are of animals or people doing everyday tasks. Smooth-haired Terriers Figurine. Gift of Dick Hellman, 1993.202.003.

Peter was born on a farm north of Mern, Denmark, on September 15, 1888, while Karen was born on March 12, 1896, in Torslev Parish, Hjørring County, Denmark. After serving in the Danish Navy in 1911, Peter immigrated to the United States in 1914, eventually settling in Atlantic, Iowa, by 1918. He was drafted during World War I and, upon his return, founded the Atlantic Machine and Auto Company—a business he later passed down to his son Richard.

Karen arrived in the US on March 4, 1914, working as a housemaid in Atlantic. She met Peter shortly thereafter, and the two corresponded during his service. She and Peter married on March 6, 1920, and together they raised three children: Elaine, Harold, and Richard.

The smooth-haired terriers figurine, along with several other ceramic pieces, was generously donated to the museum alongside the Hellmans' story. Among the collection of their ceramics is a delicate blue vase, a figurine of a young girl reading, and another figurine of a girl fastening her shoes. These cherished pieces once decorated the home Peter and Karen thoughtfully built—small







Peter Hellman was called into service in the Danish Navy from April 11, 1911, to September 27, 1911. He was a trained mechanic and served as a gunner on the ship *HDMS Peder Skram*. Gift of Harold H. Hellman, 1996.007.003.

Peter Hellman and Karen Kirstine Fuglsang at the time of their wedding in 1920. Gift of Harold H. Hellman, 1996.007.001-002.

yet meaningful symbols of the life they shared. Ceramics endure the passage of time, preserving not only their form but also the memories, love, and history they hold.

Another piece with a storied past is linked to Victor Borge, one of the most famous Danes in the world, and Dana College in Blair, Nebraska. For the school's 100th anniversary in 1984, musician and entertainer Victor Borge was invited to participate in the celebrations and received a commemorative plate to mark the occasion. Though Borge has since passed and the college has closed its doors, the plate remains a reminder of their connection and the history they shared together.



Plates like this were used by individuals and organizations to celebrate events and special dates. Dana College Plate. Gift of the Danish Home for the Aged, 2021.030.044.

Ceramics on the Shelf

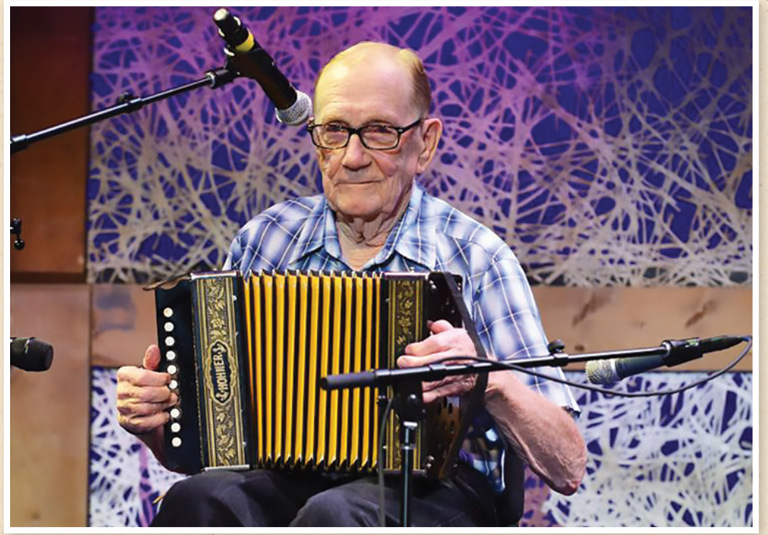
The Museum of Danish America's ceramic collection spans from exquisite showroom pieces to those painted by everyday people—each with its own history. Created by a range of artists and studios—each with their own distinct design sensibilities and artistic visions—these pieces reflect the breadth of Danish ceramic tradition. Some are fine porcelain works crafted by leading designers in the field; others are simple stoneware pieces intended for everyday use. Yet all share a common purpose: to tell the story of Danes and their deep connection to ceramics. Visitors are invited to explore these stories in Visual Storage or through rotating exhibitions at the museum, where every piece offers a window into the rich and enduring legacy of Danish craftsmanship.



Victor Borge performing at Dana College on October 17, 1976, when he was awarded an honorary Doctorate of Music. Gift of Deloris Ross, 1994.034.007.

Dwight Lamb
MUSIC OF TWO CONTINENTS

BY ADAM BIERSTEDT
Albert Ravenholt Curator of Danish-American Culture



Dwight performing in Washington, DC in 2017, when he was awarded the Bess Lomax Hawes Heritage Fellowship by the National Endowment for the Arts. Image courtesy of Tom Pich.

You would never know how famous Dwight Lamb (1934–2024) was by looking at him. An Iowa native who lived in Onawa for much of his life, he was a postal worker, veteran, and served as the town's mayor. He was also an exceptionally talented musician and a legendary figure within the world of folk music.

Dwight was born into an intensely musical Danish family. His great-grandfather, Kræn Jerup, was regarded as one of the greatest fiddlers in Northern Jutland in the late 1800s. Kræn's reputation was so enduring that one of his signature tunes is still known today as "Kræn's Polka!" Dwight's grandfather, Chris Jerup, immigrated from Snevre, Denmark, to the United States in 1893 and brought his accordion with him, while Dwight's father, Clarence Lamb, was another talented fiddler. Dwight's mother played the pump organ.

On view at the Museum of Danish America March 15 - December 31, 2025.

Sponsored by the American–Scandinavian Foundation.



As a result, Dwight grew up immersed in music from an early age, beginning lessons around age 12. On one hand, he learned very traditional Danish tunes passed down from his grandfather, Chris Jerup. On the other hand, he was steeped in the rich folk traditions of the Missouri River Valley through his father and radio broadcasts. In the 1940s, radio still had live music in-studio, and Dwight would write in to the Omaha radio to ask Bob Walters, their resident fiddler, to play specific tunes.

Clarence Lamb, Chris Jerup, and Dwight Lamb on the family farm.
Image courtesy of Bill Peterson.

Listen to Dwight performing "Kræn's Polka" in 2019. Video courtesy of the Sustaining Scandinavian Folk Arts in the Upper Midwest project at the University of Wisconsin–Madison's Center for the Study of Upper Midwestern Cultures.

What is Folk Music?

"Folk music" is a genre that covers a lot of ground. The term tends to conjure up old fiddle and banjo players and dance halls filled with line dancers. That s certainly part of folk music, but it is not all. In general terms, "folk" music is music created by and for common people. That is a very large umbrella—blues, Irish jigs, Bob Dylan, and even a song like "Happy Birthday" can all be considered "folk" music!

Scholars have identified several features that folk music tends to share:

- Anonymous/ancient composition
- Simple instrumentation, especially fiddle, banjo, and guitar
- Connection to social and labor movements
- Oral transmission
- Connection to ethnic/community heritage
- Non–commercial production and distribution

It is unlikely that any tradition will have all of these features at once. As a tool of entertainment, community, and activism, folk music is a living tradition that adapts to fit the community it is performed in! In that respect, it is not "simple" at all.

These days, folk music is strongly associated with cultural heritage groups, and institutions like the Smithsonian Institution's Folkways Recordings Archive often organize their collections based on the community of origin.



Kræn Jerup's home in Northern Denmark.
Image courtesy of Bill Peterson.



Dwight performing with his mother, Mary Lamb. Mary was a talented pump organ player. Image courtesy of Bill Peterson.

Listen to some Danish folk songs recorded by Dan Haugaard. Recordings Hosted by the Smithsonian Folkways Recordings Archive.

Dwight trained under Bob Walters in the 1950s, after the latter had retired from radio, and he bought a reel-to-reel recorder to help him learn tunes. Dwight's collection eventually expanded to hundreds of recordings of dozens of musicians, many of whom have no other surviving recordings. As he performed old-time tunes across the country, his reputation as a teacher and performer grew and grew.

Dwight entered the Danish folk music scene almost by accident. In 1999, he added some Danish accordion tunes to a CD he was releasing to add some variety. This CD made its way to Denmark, where musicians like Kristian Bugge and Mette Jensen Stærk realized that the tunes on the CD no longer existed in Denmark, and Dwight's version had remained unchanged for a century.

Dwight and Bill Peterson, his friend and collaborator, finally met Kristian and Mette in 2009. The group would go on to tour in Denmark six times over the next decade, often filling dance and recital halls. Dwight recalled that many Danes were initially skeptical of the authenticity of his material, but as soon as he started playing, people began to dance.

Dwight was recognized internationally for his impact. In 2015, he received the silver National Folk Musician Award from the Danish National Commission of Musicians, the highest honor awarded by the organization. In 2017, the National Endowment for the Arts awarded him a Bess Lomax Hawes Heritage Fellowship. He was described as a "source musician"–i.e. the oldest identifiable performer–for many tunes in the Missouri Valley old-time style. In addition, his work as a recorder and teacher for students across the Midwest helped define Missouri Valley folk music.



Dwight performing with Kristian Bugge and Mette Jensen Stærk. Image courtesy of Bill Peterson.

Dwight Lamb, who passed away on September 29, 2024, will be remembered for his decades of dedication to collecting, recording, preserving, and teaching music, as well as his profound contribution to preserving cultural heritage. With more than sixty years of commitment, Lamb mentored generations of regional and international musicians. Dwight's music and character were integral to the Danish-American community, and his performances were a staple at nearly every celebration. His band became synonymous with special occasions, making him a beloved figure whose impact on folk traditions in both Danish and Danish-American cultures cannot be overstated.

The Museum of Danish America is honored to present the exhibit *Dwight Lamb: Music of Two Continents*, which explores Dwight's enduring influence on Danish and Danish-American folk music. We celebrated his life and legacy with performances by his friends and students at Tivoli Fest and at our Sankt Hans Aften celebration in Elk Horn. Dwight will be dearly missed, but his music will live on, and we remain eternally grateful for the mark he left on our community and the world.



Do you know this tune?

Dwight Lamb knew this piece as "Pig in the Parlor." It was also a known tune in Denmark, under the name "Mallebrok." You may also know it as "Marlborough," "The Bear Went over the Mountain," or "He's a Jolly Good Fellow."

Reflections on my Friendship with Dwight "Red" Lamb

BY BILL PETERSON
Guest Author



BILL PETERSON has been passionate about all kinds of folk music since the early 1970s. He co-founded the Sioux River Folk Festival in Canton, South Dakota, which began in 1980 and continues to this day. In 2001, Bill was awarded a grant from the South Dakota Arts Council to study fiddle with renowned musician Dwight Lamb. Over the next 23 years, he studied, performed, and traveled extensively with Dwight. Together, they founded Missouri Valley Music and published a tune book featuring Danish dance melodies brought to Iowa in 1893 by Dwight's grandfather, Chris Jerup. In the past, Bill performed on fiddle and guitar with both the Sargent Creek Stringband and the Sioux Falls Cell Band. Today, he leads a music session every Tuesday night at the Wheel Public House in Canton.

Dwight "Red" Lamb was very proud of his Danish heritage. A descendant of Kræn Jerup —a renowned Jutland fiddler in the mid-1800s— and Kræn's son, Chris Jerup, Dwight preserved the dance tunes of his family. He spent many hours learning the accordion from his maternal grandfather, Chris, and they were the best of pals. Music was as natural as breathing in the Lamb household and was played nearly every night. Dwight's father, Clarence, was a fiddler and his mother, Mary, played the pump organ. The music was humble and down-to-earth. They played for their own enjoyment, and many times friends and neighbors would come to listen and dance.





Dwight played music because he loved the tunes; he once told me that preserving his grandfather's Danish tunes was the musical achievement he was most proud of. I loved playing the fiddle with him on these wonderful old tunes, and I cherish the memories of all the times we had together.

In 1999, Dwight was asked to record a CD of Midwestern fiddle tunes for Rounder Records, and he put a few Danish tunes on the CD. The CD made its way to Denmark and fell into the hands of some musicians in Denmark—it was a mystery to them how these Danish tunes were still being played in Iowa. Danish musicians Kristian Bugge and Mette Jensen Stærk traveled to America to perform at a Scandinavian music festival in Nisswa, Minnesota, where arrangements were made for them to meet Dwight. This marked the beginning of a magical relationship between Dwight, Mette, and Kristian, and the process of returning Dwight's grandfather's dance tunes to Denmark. To Mette and Kristian, Dwight was a treasure box—full of these lost tunes from Vendsyssel in Northern Jutland. Together, they embarked on six tours across Denmark, and Dwight could not have been happier.

I remember the first time he played his accordion for an audience in Denmark. I was in the audience and overhead two gentlemen saying, "Do you suppose the old man can play?" After just a few notes, there were smiles on their faces from ear to ear! I also witnessed tears rolling down the cheeks of folks at several concerts as Dwight began to play these wonderful old Danish melodies. He was a hero in Denmark, and his wish of saving his grandfather's tunes and bringing them home came true. I was happy and thankful to be a part of the experience.

Dwight was a kind, generous man, and family and friends were so important to him. I learned much more than music from him and am grateful that I was able to spend twenty-three years as his traveling companion and friend. Sometimes, we would take a drive through the hills around Moorehead, and he would show me where his grandfather farmed, where his father went to school, where certain fiddlers lived, and we would talk of life, music, and how lucky we were to have all this music to share with our friends! His life on earth ended on September 29, 2024, but he lives on with the musical legacy that he left behind.





Top: Dwight Lamb & Friends performing at the Museum of Danish America's 40th anniversary in 2023.

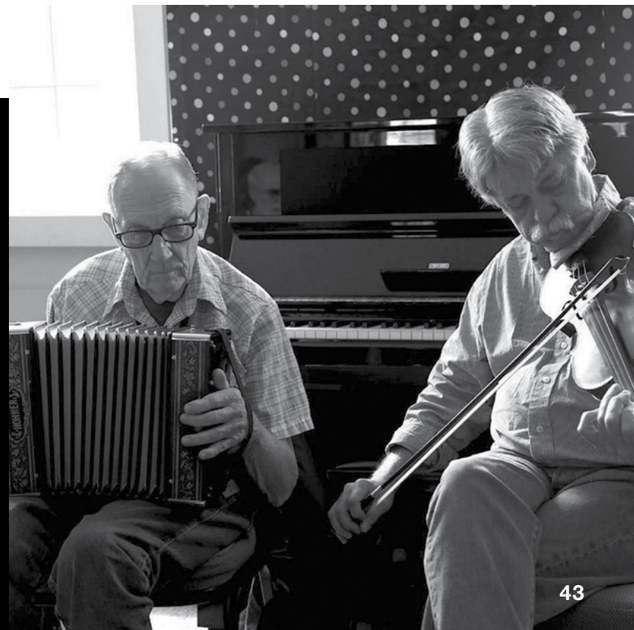
Middle: Dwight with his grandfather, Chris Jerup, and their accordions.

Bottom: Kristian Bugge, Bill Peterson, Dwight Lamb, Jamie Fox, and Mette Jensen Stærk perform while on tour in Denmark.

Images courtesy of Bill Peterson.

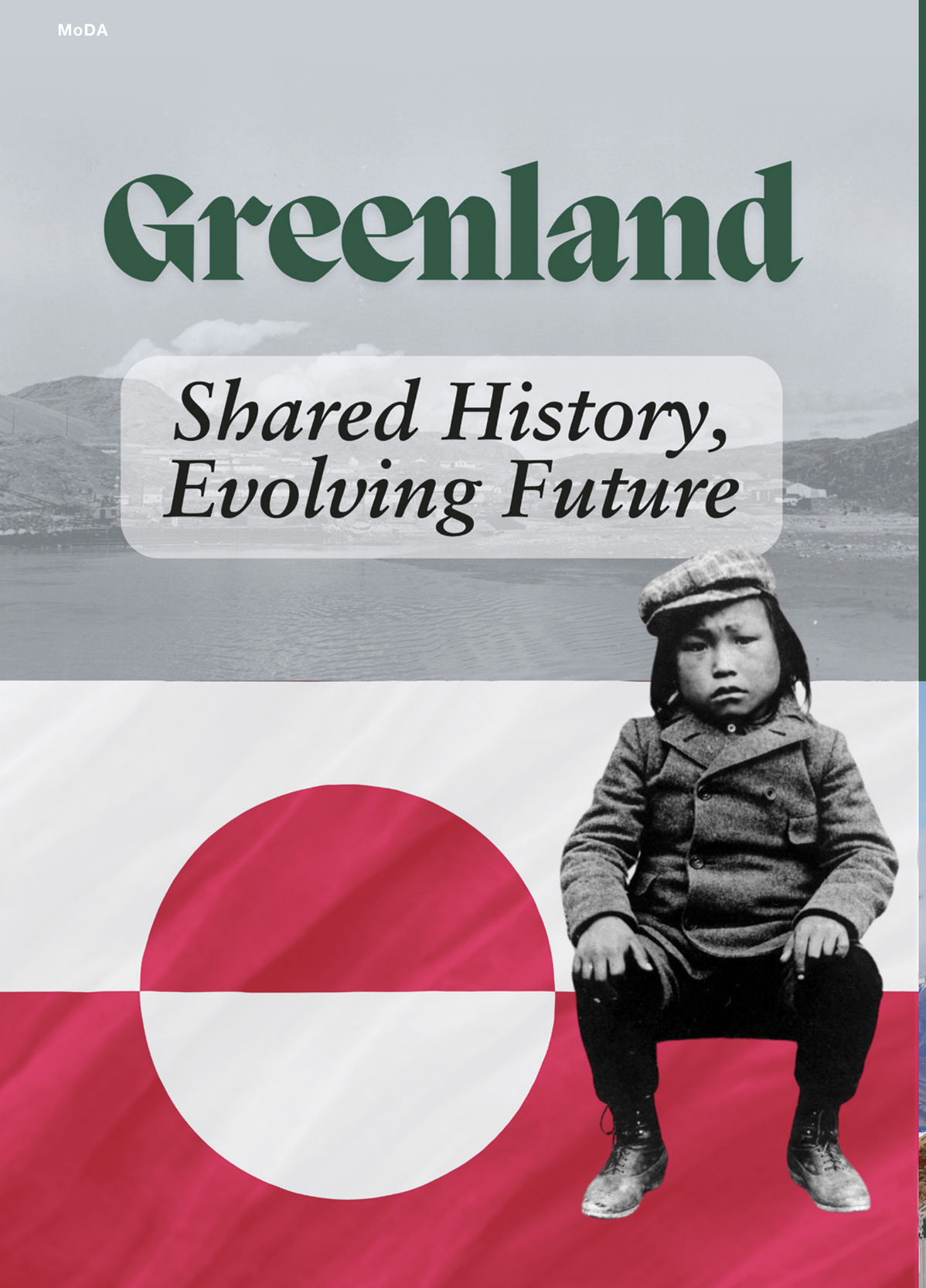






Greenland

Shared History, Evolving Future



BY ADAM BIERSTEDT
Albert Ravenholt Curator of Danish-American Culture

Why is it called “Greenland?”

According to folklore, it was the Viking leader Erik the Red who first named the island Greenland. He believed that people would be more likely to move to his new settlement there if it had a good name! He may not have been lying—archaeological work has revealed that the coast of Greenland used to be covered with birch trees, and it was much greener than it is today. Though the island was named by Vikings, the Norse settlements in Greenland were completely abandoned by the early 1400s. Danes did not live in Greenland for over 300 years!

Greenland, also called *Kalaallit Nunaat*, is the largest island in the world, though 80% of the island is covered in ice year-round, leaving only the coasts habitable. On these coasts, which teem with wildlife, a vibrant culture has emerged. Greenland is officially part of the Kingdom of Denmark, but it is governed by its own Parliament and has some degree of independence. For centuries, the island has faced constant pressure, as climate change, political dealings, and global technology affect the edge of the Arctic.

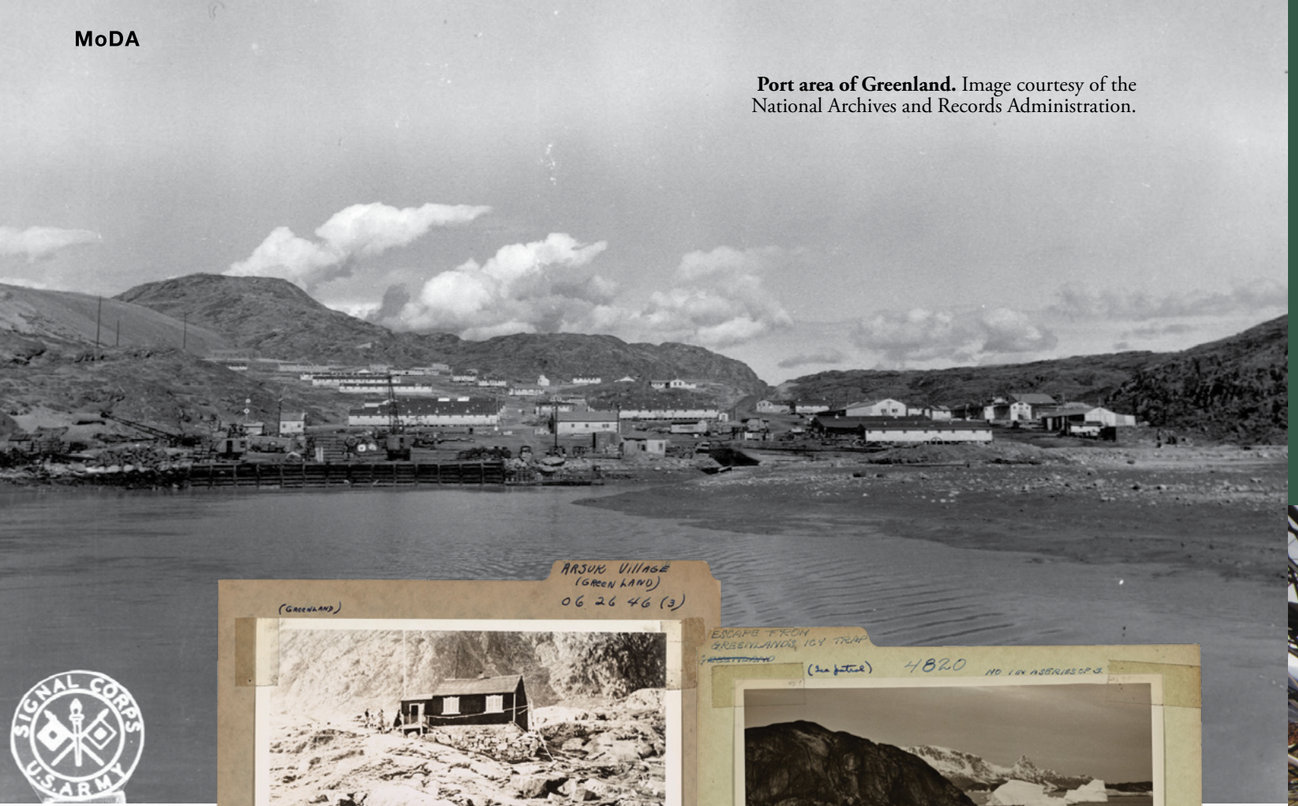
Greenland has been inhabited for millennia by various indigenous groups. The Saqqaq, Independence I, Dorset, and modern Inuit cultures have called the rich coastlines of Greenland their home.

While Danish claims to the island began in the Middle Ages, the country’s interest in Greenland really began in 1721, with the work of missionary Hans Egede. Egede is a controversial figure, but his missionary work led to the establishment of Godthåb, now Nuuk. He established his colony due to fears that Greenland had never heard of Lutheranism, and the religious outposts quickly moved to suppress indigenous belief systems.

Minik Wallace, an Inughuit child brought to the US in 1897, became a powerful symbol of cultural displacement and resilience. Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

Vibrant homes dot the rugged terrain of Greenland. Image courtesy of Getty Images.





Port area of Greenland. Image courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration.

Arsuk Village during the war. Image courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration.



The US Coast Guard on Ice Patrol during World War II. Image courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration.

Denmark presented itself as benevolent, but it was a brutal colonizer and maintained strict monopolies on fishing, whaling, and trade in Greenland until the 20th century. The situation changed in World War II, as Denmark came under Nazi occupation. The US military took over the island as a naval base, and the presence of American forces brought attention to the poor living conditions for the Kalaallit, or indigenous Greenlanders, while also introducing them to American consumer culture. Sears & Roebuck catalogs became quite popular for their cataloging of modern society!

After the war, Denmark moved to decolonize Greenland, incorporating it fully into the country. They also "modernized" Greenland through increased economic investment. Since the 1960s, successive protests by Greenlanders have resulted in increased political autonomy for the island. Most recently, a 2008 referendum established Greenland as an autonomous territory with self-governance and the democratic right to vote for full independence.

While modernization benefited Greenland in many ways, the transition to a more modern economy caused mass migration of Greenlanders to cities like Nuuk and drove indigenous cultural traditions to the brink of extinction.

Kalaallit Nunaat and the USA

The United States has been interested in Greenland for many years. The United States purchased Alaska in 1867, and in the same year, discussed a proposal to purchase Greenland and Iceland from Denmark. The initial survey emphasized Greenland's natural resources, disregarding indigenous inhabitants in favor of exploration. These plans never progressed, and in 1917, when the US acquired the Virgin Islands from Denmark, they enshrined Denmark's ownership of Greenland, though Greenland continued to be valuable to American interests. Arctic explorers regularly landed on Greenland's coasts, and in some cases brought Greenlanders to the US. In World War II, the US Navy and Coast Guard occupied the island, using it as a staging ground for operations against the Nazis. After the war, another attempt to purchase Greenland from Denmark failed. Instead, the US established the Thule Air Base—now the Pituffik Space Base—in northwestern Greenland.



Captured by Ken Bower in 2015 as part of his *American Flowers* series, these photographs document the site of Bluie East Two—a former US military airfield at Ikateq in eastern Greenland. Active from 1942 to 1947, the base has since become a source of environmental concern and political tension between the Danish and Greenlandic governments. Gift of Ken Bower, 2017.037.004 and 2017.037.007.





The Northern Lights above Nuuk. Image courtesy of Getty Images.

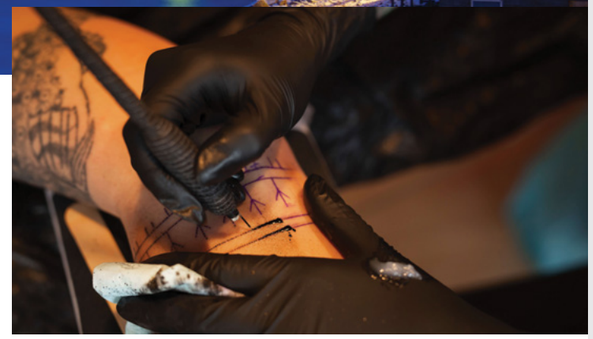
An Evolving Future

Modern Greenland is a country in transition. The modernization projects of the 20th century caused mass exodus to the cities, which are now centers of an ongoing indigenous revival.

Almost 90% of Greenland's population is Inuit, not Danish, and so Inuit traditions continue to play important roles for Greenlanders. Kayaks and dog sleds are still used for transport, especially outside of the major cities. Tattooing has gained significant traction over the past decade among Kalaallit Inuit, both in Greenland and among diaspora communities in Denmark. Based on historical evidence for tattooing as early as the 1400s, the patterns connect young people to their land and their past on Kalaallit Nunaat. Ullukinneq, the indigenous winter solstice celebration, has also been revived in recent years and is enjoyed by many Kalaallit.

Fishing is the dominant industry on the island, and it is still common to see kayaks alongside modern fishing trawlers. Climate change has reduced fish harvests, though, and traditional hunting practices remain precarious.

Tourism is the second largest industry on the island. Over 100,000 tourists, both Danish and American, visit the island each year. Most tourists visit the island for its stunning natural vistas and pristine seascapes. However, visitors can harm those same vistas by polluting, trampling vegetation, and increasing boat noise.



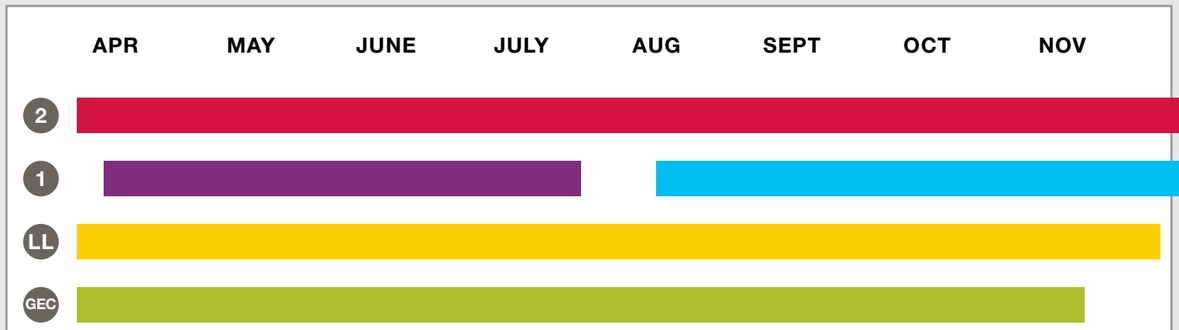
A Tunniit artist at work. Image courtesy of Aningaaq Rosing Carlsen.

Kalaallit Nunaat's future promises both hope and uncertainty. The island's melting glaciers contribute to rising sea levels, and changes to the oceans have led to the collapse of industrial fishing. However, ecotourism and activism have brought attention to the importance of conserving the local environment. At the same time, the ongoing indigenous revival movement on Kalaalit Nunaat has accelerated alongside a global reckoning with inequality. The Kalaallit overwhelmingly support independence from Denmark if it will not hurt their quality of life. While many logistical and cultural challenges remain, Greenlanders largely wish for self-determination to protect and preserve their own cultural traditions and meet the challenges of our connected world.

On view at the Genealogy & Education Center from March 14 to November 14, 2025.

exhibitions

2025 - 2026



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

Lay of(f) the Land: Nordic Narratives
MAIN FLOOR GALLERY
APRIL 10, 2025 - JULY 31, 2025

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

Dwight Lamb: Music of Two Continents
MULTIMEDIA ROOM
MARCH 14, 2025 - DECEMBER 1, 2025

Greenland: Shared History, Evolving Future
GENEALOGY & EDUCATION CENTER
MARCH 14, 2025 - NOVEMBER 14, 2025

See full exhibition descriptions, online exhibitions, and virtual tours as they become available at
WWW.DANISHMUSEUM.ORG/EXHIBITIONS

ALSO ONLINE

SEARCH AN ONLINE LIBRARY
of Danish Sisterhood archives and Danish-American newspapers at box2.nmtvault.com/DanishIM

SEARCH ALL OF OUR COLLECTIONS AT
danishmuseum.pastperfectonline.com

WATCH FREE VIDEO PROGRAMS AT
www.facebook.com/danishmuseum
www.youtube.com/danishmuseum
www.youtube.com/nordiccuisine

INTERACT WITH THE MUSEUM ON
Instagram: @danishmuseum
TikTok: @themuseumofdanishamerica
Facebook: @MuseumofDanishAmerica
Pinterest: @danishmuseum

TALK GENEALOGY BY JOINING THE
Facebook Group "Genealogy @ Danish Museum"

SHOP OUR DESIGN STORE ANYTIME AT
shop.danishmuseum.org

SUBSCRIBE TO OUR MONTHLY E-NEWS
for all the latest programs and updates
www.danishmuseum.org/blog

MUSEUM OF DANISH AMERICA
Open Monday - Saturday
10 am - 4 pm
Sunday 1 - 4 pm
712.764.7001

GENEALOGY & EDUCATION CENTER
Open Wednesday - Friday
10 am - 4 pm
Schedule an appointment by calling
712.764.7008

JENS JENSEN PRAIRIE LANDSCAPE PARK
Open daily, sunrise to sunset

Jens & Inger Bruun

BY ROSEMARY JONES
with additional content from MoDA staff



Inger and Jens Bruun, Seattle, n.d. Image courtesy of Scan Design Foundation.

DANISH IMMIGRANT JENS BRUUN founded the Scan Design furniture store chain in the 1960s with his wife, Inger. They introduced countless Pacific Northwest families to mid-century modern ideals in chair design and more. These experiences inspired Jens to establish a foundation later in life to support Danish-American relations, scientific research, arts, and culture. The Scan Design Foundation continues the Bruuns' philanthropic work into the 21st century.



BUSINESS MENTOR

While Jens Bruun never achieved more than a grade school education, he often pointed to the number of young Danes that he helped start in business. One of his passions was helping them to overcome the challenges that he faced as the poor son of a farmer, as an immigrant, and as a fledgling business owner. This dedication to helping others formed the basis of the foundation that he started in the final months of his life.



Bruun family farm, Jutland, Denmark, n.d. Image courtesy of Scan Design Foundation.



Wedding photo, 1957. Image courtesy of Scan Design Foundation.

OPPORTUNITY IN NORTH AMERICA

Originally from Stenderup, Denmark, Jens was born on May 1, 1933. In 1940, Denmark was invaded by Germany, and the country remained under Nazi occupation until the end of the war. While the country avoided the devastation of other areas of Europe during the 1940s, the lagging economy in the 1950s left many looking for opportunities outside of the country. In 1957, Jens met Inger Berg (b. 1935) at a celebration for her parents' 25th wedding anniversary. They married in the same year and immigrated to Canada. For Jens' family, this would be at least the second time that a Bruun had tried to make his fortune in North America. Research has shown that his father, Jacob Petersen Bruun, tried farming in Iowa for a brief period in the 1930s. When a family member left Jacob farmland near Stenderup, he returned to Denmark. Apparently, Jens' desire to modernize their farm operations in the 1950s by purchasing a tractor led to arguments. Unable to share the farm in Stenderup comfortably, he and Inger left home to try life abroad.

In a 1975 interview with *Seattle Times* business columnist Boyd Burchard, Bruun said that he was inspired by his father's tales of life in 1920s America. "My dad could never talk about anywhere else. It smites you. All those stories from when you're a small boy up. And some of us have to take the adventure ourselves" ("Some Have to Take ...").

Jens and Inger left Denmark in 1957. They worked on three different farms in Alberta, Canada. Jens also found construction work in the winter. With $500 saved up, the couple bussed around Canada and the United States looking for a place to settle. During this trip, they met Seattle-based stone mason Erik Bartrand, a Danish-American citizen, who offered to sponsor them.

Bruun and his wife, Inger, founded Scan Design Furniture, which first brought mid-century modern Danish furniture to Bellevue, Washington, and expanded over the decades to include nine stores in Washington and Oregon, as well as an outpost in Hawaii. In 2002, Jens left his estate to the Scan Design by Inger & Jens Bruun Foundation, which has carried on the couple's earlier charitable work in advancing Danish-American relationships, funding scientific research, and supporting public art and culture projects.



Danish Show Opens Here Next Thursday

JENS BRUUN HOST FOR DESIGN SHOW
Aug. 8-21 event at Bellevue shop

Continued from Page B-1

Bruun said. "The better things are more sophisticated as you see in this Plexus group but they retain their timeless quality."

Light and elegant, built of wood and cane, Plexus is really a modular group with single seating units—armed or unarmed—going together to form a sofa; and tables which can be used alone or in groups.

The upholstered pieces are fabric or leather-covered and the wood parts rosewood, teak or oak. An example of furniture which satisfied the "functional, economic and attractive" requirement, Plexus is shipped knocked down and assembled here even though it is conspicuously "good design." This saves delivery costs, Bruun points out.

And because the polished brass screws and protective grommets which hold it together are conceived as part of the design and there for all to see—rather than being wood-plugged—the owner can knock it down again if the time comes for repacking for a move.

Plexus was designed by Illum Wikkelso for C. P. Christensen of Silkeborg, Denmark.

The coming exhibit will include work by the "great master" of Danish design, Arne Jacobsen, who will be represented by furniture like his famous stacking chairs which have sold all over the world. Some of the examples are items designed and first produced 25 years ago but which are still in production, others work by new and relatively young designers who are favorites with youthful design-conscious Danes.

Bruun, who isn't long back from a buying trip in Denmark, says he hates to recognize the fact in a way, but plastic and painted furniture may be on the way.

"But the Danes have a feel for good design and it will be good," he said.

Deliveries from Denmark (containerized by ship) used to take eight months, but more and more often the shipments arrive in as little as four months.

He said rosewood continues to match teak in popularity and pointed out a rosewood case which was a particularly good example of the Danish skill with wood — a tambour door which was absolutely smooth when closed.

Scan Design is located at 10515 NE 6th St.

***Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, August 2, 1974.** Image courtesy of *Seattle Post-Intelligencer.*

The Bruuns returned to Denmark for a time to help care for Jens' father, Jacob. Then they returned to Victoria, British Columbia, where they applied for immigration papers. By 1961, they were able to move to Seattle. Jens found work as a bricklayer for Bartrand and also worked for another Danish-American contractor, Tom Paulsen. Inger found jobs in Seattle, too. In later years, Jens would describe them as suddenly flush with cash and living the life that they had dreamed about in Denmark.

OPEN IN BELLEVUE

Financially sound, the Bruuns purchased their first house in the Green Lake neighborhood. Eventually, Jens found employment at a local furniture store owned by a Norwegian; according to Burchard's story, Jens was fired from the position for making a number of business suggestions that were not well received. However, this experience in the furniture industry spurred other ideas. The Bruuns took out a loan with the help of the Small Business Administration and opened their own furniture store in "a 20-by-50 former post office on Main Street" in Bellevue in 1964 ("Some Have to Take ...").

The Bruuns soon discovered that the burgeoning mid-century modern craze for well-crafted Scandinavian furniture aligned well with their ambitions. The couple focused on quality design and higher-end furniture for the Scan Design stores as they expanded.



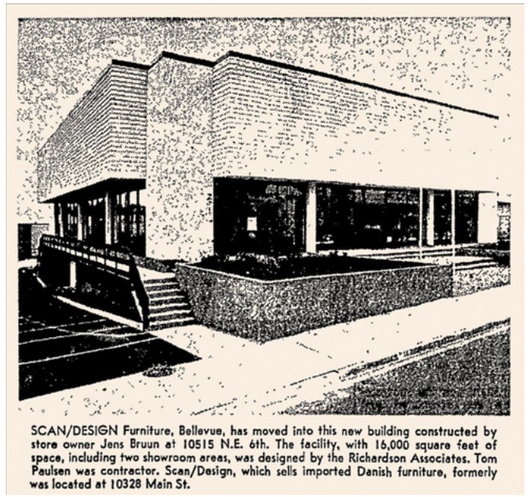
Scan Design, Bellevue, 1974. Image courtesy of Scan Design Foundation.



Jens Bruun in his Scan Design Furniture office, n.d. Image courtesy of Scan Design Foundation.



Scan Design Furniture, Lynnwood. Image courtesy of Scan Design Foundation.



SCAN/DESIGN Furniture, Bellevue, has moved into this new building constructed by store owner Jens Bruun at 10515 N.E. 6th. The facility, with 16,000 square feet of space, including two showroom areas, was designed by the Richardson Associates. Tom Paulsen was contractor. Scan/Design, which sells imported Danish furniture, formerly was located at 10328 Main St.

***Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, September 2, 1973.** Image courtesy of *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*.



D 4 The Seattle Times Tuesday, August 28, 1973

Functional Scandinavian

By GLADYS NELSON

Function is the father of the best designs, and it is rarely more evident than in furniture created in Denmark, Norway and other Scandinavian countries.

Shown here is a vignette to be seen at Scan-Design's new store at 10515 N. E. Sixth St. in Bellevue. The new store was designed to provide uncluttered architectural background — the most compatible background for this glowing furniture.

The store concept is a dream achieved for Mr. and Mrs. Jens Bruun who came to the Seattle area 14 years ago from their native Denmark with an authentic feeling for what Scandinavian design is all about.

In this vignette, the Danish table and chairs by designer Nils Nom of Denmark mix comfortably with the bar from the Bruksbo collection of Norway, and the luxurious all-wool white shag rug from Greece.

Oiled rosewood flashes natural red-to-brown-to-black colors in the meticulously handcrafted furniture. The furniture warranties have been certified by the governments of the prospective countries.

The chairs and table are manufactured by the J. L. Mollers, Hojbjerg, Denmark. Moller chairs have been incorporated in the collections of the Victoria & Albert Museum in London, and one has been shown at the International Exhibition, Modern Chairs 1918 to 1970 at Whitechapel Art Gallery, London.

The chairs shown are upholstered in a rosy shade of beige calf. White chrysanthemums are in a brown glass vase. A huge natural plant softens the room design.

When closed, the bar gives the appearance of a little chest.

***The Seattle Times*, August 28, 1973.** Image courtesy of *The Seattle Times*.

A *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* article on a Danish design exhibition in 2001 noted the furniture designers led the way in crafting comfortable and durable furniture in the 1950s and 1960s.

"Credit Denmark with changing the way we sit."

The body-friendly chairs its designers and craftspeople began designing and producing in the 1950s and 1960s have prompted people all over the world to linger at dining tables, sit up a little straighter in workplaces, and make public spaces like airports and lobbies more tolerable," noted writer Susan Phinney when reviewing the *Danes on the Move* exhibition held at Scan Design Furniture's Lynwood store in 2001 ("Hot Danish ...").

Sponsored by the Danish government, the traveling exhibit of chairs featured the latest generation of Danes who designed furniture, successors to the successful mid-twentieth century Scandinavian furniture designers. Interviewing Bruun for her article, Phinney called him one of the "pioneer furniture importers" of the region. Bruun said that "Americans who were in Europe during and after the war got to know and appreciate Danish craftsmanship" ("Hot Danish ..."). This receptive audience made chairs designed by Hans Wegner bestsellers at Scan Design stores for more than forty years.

A fan of new designers as well, Bruun touted the young *Danes on the Move* in 2001 for their innovations in creating high-tech chairs of leather and steel or twisting a single piece of wood to form both the front and back legs of a chair. His general manager, Ray Mahan, also related how Bruun had a refined sense of what people would like. "Jens definitely had an eye for beautiful furniture pieces," said Mahan after the *Danes on the Move* exhibition. Bruun's knowledge of furniture seems to have been completely self-taught. Another business partner, Ken Anderson, remembered his friend spending long hours at furniture fairs and touring factories overseas.

The headquarters of the chain remained in Bellevue throughout Bruun's life. In 1973, the company moved from 10328 Main Street to a much larger facility at 10515 NE Sixth Street. This new building had two showrooms, as well as offices, and was designed by Richardson Associates. The business expanded with several locations in Washington, Oregon, and Hawaii. Tom Paulsen of Clyde Hill, a fellow Dane and earlier employer of Jens, constructed several of the stores, including the Bellevue headquarters. This was part of a pattern of hiring local Scandinavians or bringing people from Denmark to work in the stores.

A PEOPLE PERSON

Scan Design Furniture's last CFO, Bob Thompson, and longtime friend and business partner Rob Harris both remember that Bruun liked to chat with customers,



Jens and Inger Bruun, Seattle, n.d. Image courtesy of Scan Design Foundation.

suppliers, and nearby business owners in Bellevue. He would hold informal meetings in the showroom, often wandering into the area displaying dining room sets, grabbing a chair, and encouraging discussions around the tables there. As the business grew, he and Inger worked on introducing Danish culture and Danes to the region in more ways than simply selling Scandinavian furniture. Inger was involved in the 1969 Danish Festival at the Seattle Center, sharing Danish recipes with a *Seattle Times* columnist and cooking breakfast treats to hand out to participants.

In 1971, the Bruuns welcomed the first Danish trainee into their home and business. Over the next three decades, the couple would provide 147 trainees with the opportunity to experience life in the United States while gaining valuable work experience at their store.

Their championing of Scandinavian design was often touted in local newspapers. In 1974, Jens received the Danish Enterprise Award at a dinner given by Consul General H. A. Djurhuus for "outstanding achievements in commercial relationships between Denmark and an overseas area." In the article by Boyd, Bruun credited Inger as his "partner" in the business and thus a co-recipient of the award ("Some Have to Take ...").

In a 1977 story about the visit of Danish designer Niels Otto Moller to the region, the host was noted to be Jens Bruun, who carried all seven versions of Moller's chairs in his company, including the famed Embassy Chair selected for use by the US Embassy in the Soviet Union and elsewhere. Two years later, the Bellevue headquarters would host the exhibition *Danish Design for American Homes*, co-sponsored by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

PROMOTING DANISH CULTURE

The Bruuns would continue to work with both local and Danish contacts to mount exhibits pertaining to Danish culture and history. When the Nordic Heritage Museum had the opportunity to bring *The Dream of America: The Immigrant Experience, 1840-1920* to Seattle from Denmark in 1985, the Bruuns provided financial support and more. The exhibition was originally designed for an open-air museum in Denmark, attracting more than a half million visitors. The Bruuns were cited by the museum's publications as a driving force behind bringing the project to the United States. Jens had his Scan Design team help install the 8,000-square-foot exhibition in the museum's original location at 3014 NW 67th Street in Seattle. The exhibition opened in June 1986 and depicted early Nordic immigration to America. Opening ceremonies included Eigil Jorgensen, the Danish ambassador to the United States; Seattle Mayor Charles Royer; Jean Gardner, wife of then governor Booth Gardner; and other local officials. It proved a hit as well in Seattle, attracting more than 20,000 visitors in the first six months.

Seattle was the only US city where *The Dream of America* was exhibited. After the exhibition closed in December, parts of it were incorporated into the museum's permanent exhibition with the "Old World" parts of the displays left on the first floor, and the individual treatment of Nordic ethnic groups moved to the top floor of the museum. Prior to closing their original location and moving to the building at 2655 NW Market Street, the museum remounted *The Dream of America* in 2014-2015, and a video tour of it during this period can be found online at nordicmuseum.org. For this, and continuing support of the eventual creation of the National Nordic Museum, the current museum's Nordic America gallery is named in honor of Jens and Inger Bruun.

PASSAGES

Inger Bruun passed away unexpectedly at home on June 5, 1987. Jens continued operating his businesses, expanding his garden at their home in Medina, and enjoying boating trips with friends, but business always came first, and he traveled extensively to find new furniture designs. Even in the last year of his life, he was scouting the furniture fair in Cologne, Germany. Bob Thompson noted that his boss would work a full day at the store, then go home to communicate with business partners and follow up on opportunities in Europe. Another friend remembered him sifting through furniture fairs from opening until past midnight every day.

While at his home in Aalborg, Denmark, Bruun was diagnosed with cancer and sought treatment in Denmark. At the time of his death on April 10, 2002, he was listed as the owner of the Scan Design furniture chain, a furniture manufacturing facility in Denmark, and having part interest in Pacific Market International of Seattle. He was buried in Øster Lindet Church Cemetery next to his father, Jacob Petersen Bruun (1903-1960), and his sister, Ingrid Marie Andersen Bruun (1935-2004).









With no children to inherit his estate, Bruun proposed the creation of a foundation to his friends just weeks before his death. The Scan Design by Inger & Jens Bruun Foundation came together very quickly, recalled Rob Harris, with a few international phone calls and visits. There was not much time to discuss goals with Bruun, whose health declined much faster than expected after his diagnosis. So, the founding board members, which included Harris and Thompson, as well as Mark Schleck and Tage Christiansen, sketched out a foundation that would, first and foremost, advance Danish-American relationships. After that, projects were reviewed on the basis of "Would Jens approve?" They also used both Jens' and Inger's names equally, mindful of the fact that Jens often said that he had only one wife and wanted her to be remembered as well.

The Bellevue headquarters was sold; developer Kemper Freeman paid $11 million for the land and building, and Scan Design moved north to a newly constructed building in Lynnwood. With this and other assets from the estate, Scan Design Foundation grew to $30 million. The sale of the Eugene, Oregon property also benefited the foundation and its mission in 2017. "Essentially we had $45 million to fund what Jens wanted," Thompson said. Early grants included scholarships to bring Danish students to the University of Washington and send American students to Denmark, an easy call back to the Bruuns' support of Danish trainees in early years of the business. This initiative became known as the Scan|Design Fellowship. It enabled more than 2,300 American and Danish students and interns to participate in programs at the University of Washington, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the University of Oregon, Portland State University, and Bellingham Technical College by the early 2020s. The foundation continues to advance Danish-American relations through the exchange of people, ideas, and cultural experiences—just as Jens and Inger Bruun would have wanted.

SCAN DESIGN AND MODA

Beginning in 2004, just two years after the passing of Jens Bruun, the Museum of Danish America welcomed its very first Danish intern. Thanks to the generous and sustained support of Scan Design Foundation, the museum has been able to offer internship positions every semester for over two decades.

This long-standing partnership has grown into a deeply valued relationship, with interns funded through the foundation forming cherished connections with museum staff, the local community, and the museum's visitors and members. Each intern comes to MoDA seeking a distinctive experience that combines life in a small American

town with immersion in the unique culture and heritage of the Danish-American community.

Interns bring remarkably diverse academic backgrounds, spanning fields such as history, American studies, religion, art, journalism, music, biology, and theater. Occasionally, non-traditional interns, who may not be current students, also join the program, adding new perspectives and experiences.

While many applicants share a general interest in museum work, they may not yet know the specific paths they wish to pursue. Fortunately, the museum's staff excels at recognizing each intern's talents and aligning them with meaningful projects. Though interns often assist the curator of exhibitions, their contributions extend into areas like genealogy research, communications, and outreach programs, making their time at MoDA both varied and impactful.

The influence of these internships on individuals' lives is best expressed in the words of the interns themselves. Anders Tornsø Jørgensen, an alumna of the program, reflected:

"Since learning of this internship, I had wished to come to Elk Horn and follow in the footsteps of the Danes who made it across the Atlantic. It was a pleasure to finally be here. I have experienced American culture in a way that is only possible when you live here. I have seen more of the United States than most people do in a lifetime and learned so much about this amazing country and its small pockets of Danish America.

Exchange stays and internships provide individuals with opportunities that impact a lifetime. The wonderful thing about cultural exchange is how it broadens your horizon, builds bridges, and inspires. I have been an intern at one of the most dedicated and generous institutions—an opportunity made possible through the support of the Scan Design Foundation. I consider myself a Midwesterner at heart and have developed friendships with people whom I would never have met back home."

Emmelie Krag Adolfsen, another former intern, shared:

"There are not enough words to describe how I feel right now. After six months here at the Museum of Danish America, my internship is over. This was the adventure of a lifetime and everything I could have ever dreamed of. To the Scan Design Foundation—thank you for making the Danish internship program possible. It is truly life changing."

Over the past twenty years, the Museum of Danish America has proudly hosted more than fifty interns through the Scan Design program, and we are excited to welcome two more interns for the upcoming fall semester. Mange tak, Scan Design, for helping us sustain this vibrant connection between Denmark and the United States and for enriching both the museum's work and our community's cultural life.













THIS ESSAY MADE POSSIBLE BY:
KING COUNTY

SOURCES:

Author Rosemary Jones interview with Rob Harris, June 2024, notes in possession of Rosemary Jones, Seattle; Author Rosemary Jones interview with Bob Thompson, June 2024, notes in possession of Rosemary Jones, Seattle; Boyd Burchard, "Some Have to Take the Adventure," *The Seattle Times*, February 11, 1975, p. A-18; Walt Evans, "Here's How to Foil Turkey Day Toil," *Ibid.*, November 22 1977, p. A-10; Judi Hunt, "Follow in Footsteps of Nordic Immigrants," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, June 4 1986, p. C-1; Erwin Laurence, "Business: Award Given," *The Seattle Times*, November 26, 1974, p. C-6; Jean Hudson Lunzer, "Meet the Maker of the Embassy Chair," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, August 2, 1974, p. B-3; Dorothy Neighbors, "Breakfast in Danish Home Offers Variety and Substance," *The Seattle Times*, July 11, 1969, p. 32; Gladys Nelson, "Functional Scandinavian," *Ibid.*, August 28, 1973, p. D-4; "Obituary: Jens Christen Bruun," *The Daily Herald*, April 17, 2002 (www.heraldnet.com); Susan Phinney, "Hot Danish – 'Danes On The Move' Exhibit Serves Up 17 Artful Ways To Park Your Buns," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, August 18, 2001, p. D-1; Eric Pihl, "Scan Design Foundation: A Decade of Support and A Lifetime of Impact," *Nordic Kultur*, 2021, p. 41; "People on the Move," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, September 2, 1973, p. A-15; Marius Bo Poulsen, "RESEARCH REPORT: 2023 Jacob Petersen Bruun 1903-1960," Museum of Danish America, 2023; "Scan Design Foundation Announces Leadership Transition," *The Danish Pioneer*, May 2020, p. 1; "What's New: Danish Designs, Italian Imports," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, November 19 1977, p. B-3.

Unpacking The Past, One Trunk at a Time

ANNA THOMAS
Youth and Community Educator



The trunk used to help students understand the Danish immigrant experience and several of the objects within it.

What is the traveling trunk program?

Between 1870 and 1930, more than 300,000 Danes immigrated to the United States, first on sailing ships and later on steamships. Upon arriving in America, many faced an even longer journey—sometimes hundreds of miles inland—before they settled and began to build their new life in a country foreign to them.

At the Museum of Danish America, we share these stories through our traveling trunk program—a hands-on educational experience designed to teach children and the community about immigration, the unique aspects of the Danish immigrant experience, and the reasons people left Denmark for the United States.

Why did Danes immigrate to America?

The trunk teaches students about why Danish immigrants chose to travel to America, and it answers this question by examining the push and pull factors present in both Denmark and America during this time. Many were pushed by difficult conditions at home—poverty, limited farmland, or political pressures. These are called push factors, the forces that compel people to leave. At the same time, others were drawn by the promise of a better life in America—pull factors like job opportunities, land, or joining family already settled in America. Together, these motivations shaped the journey of every immigrant, each one driven by necessity or hope.

All about trunks

What kind of materials were used for these trunks?

Immigrants often bought or built their own trunks and typically crafted them from sturdy woods like pine, poplar, or oak. Though their designs were often plain, they were built for durability. Iron fittings—used for handles, straps, locks, and hinges—added strength and security, ensuring the trunks could withstand the long and arduous journey. Leather and rope handles were common as they offered flexibility iron could not. Some immigrants decorated their trunks with paint or with their names and destinations.

Many people in Scandinavia in the 18th and 19th centuries would receive a trunk at their confirmation or marriage as a container to keep their personal possessions—like dowry and seasonal clothing. In a world in which very few people had private rooms and homes did not have closets, these wooden trunks served as each individual's personal closet. They were sometimes ornately decorated with paintings or carvings of motifs and initials, making them both functional and deeply personal. Over time, these trunks became treasured heirlooms, passed down through generations as symbols of family history and tradition. Many of these cherished pieces have found a home in the museum's permanent collection, which showcases a diverse array of trunks, each distinguished by its unique size, design, and details. This rich variety reflects the museum's dedication to preserving and honoring personal stories from all walks of life, ensuring that the legacy of these families continues to inspire and educate future generations.





This varnished wooden trunk is very similar in design to the trunk in our traveling trunk program. With eight black iron corner braces and hand-wrought iron and woodwork, this trunk was built in Hjørring, Denmark, in 1877 for Jane Hansen, who immigrated to Kenosha with her sister and nephew in the late 1870s. Painted on the lid in black is "Jane Hansen / Kenosha / Wis / Nortamerika." Gift of Susan Mortensen Penn, 1998.089.001.

What did they bring with them?

Most immigrants of the 19th century brought only what they could carry, typically packed into a single large wooden trunk. These trunks held only the essentials: clothing, basic cooking utensils, the tools of their trade, and perhaps a few keepsakes, though there was often little room for sentimentality.

If you had to leave your home behind forever, what would you bring? What would fit into just one trunk? The contents of these trunks speak volumes. They offer a deeply personal glimpse into the immigrant experience—into what people valued most when their lives were in a time of great transition. Each trunk was like a time capsule, capturing identity, culture, and hope for the future in just a few carefully chosen belongings.

To understand these journeys is to understand more than just the facts of migration; it's to feel the weight of decision, the courage of departure, and the quiet strength of those who hoped for something better across the ocean. Through their trunks, they left not just objects—but stories.

Contents of the traveling trunk:

Our traveling trunk program strives to be as authentic as possible; we use artifacts from the museum's educational collection to bring students a tactile, historically accurate experience. In using items from our educational collection, students are able to examine, touch, and interact with items in a way that they cannot with items from our permanent collection. The artifacts within the trunk also reflect what Danish immigrants packed when leaving their homeland, and each artifact contains a larger story about the daily life, values, and hopes immigrants carried across the sea. Each object serves as an insight into a different aspect of immigrant life—ranging from home life and work to religion, education, and personal identity.

Who benefits from the traveling trunk program?

The traveling trunk program was created specifically with students and educators in mind. Designed for portability and versatility, the trunk can be used in a classroom, library, or community center—truly anywhere learning happens.

Museum staff can use the program to bring history to life, moving far beyond textbooks to give students the opportunity to see and touch the past. Each object in the trunk encourages questions and reflection, helping students build critical thinking skills while developing historical empathy, which is the process of understanding people in the past by giving context to their actions. By exploring the experiences of Danish immigrants, students also gain insight into broader political, social, and economic themes of the 19th and early 20th centuries.

This program is flexible as lessons can be tailored to different age groups and learning levels, and the materials can be adapted to support specific learning goals or standards; the trunk can introduce a new topic, supplement an existing unit, or serve as an interactive assessment tool.

Through the museum's traveling trunk, students gain a tactile, hands-on experience to explore various aspects of what Danish immigrants experienced and the culture and traditions they carried with them. To give students necessary context, the trunk contains authentic artifacts, copies of primary sources, object-based information sheets, and discussion questions to guide them through this journey taken by hundreds of thousands of people so many years ago.

At its heart, the traveling trunk program invites students to become historians—to examine artifacts, ask questions, and discover the human stories behind each item.

The future of the traveling trunk program

Currently, the Museum of Danish America offers one topic in its traveling trunk program: the immigrant trunk. We have redesigned this trunk and how it is used in classrooms. While we continue to offer a binder-based guide for on-site programs, we have added a new object-based interaction guide. Each artifact has its own laminated card that includes a short description of the object on one side and thought-provoking questions or fun facts on the other.

This format gives teachers the flexibility to lead full-class discussions or set up learning stations where students rotate between objects. Whether used independently, in small groups, or with the help of a museum educator, these cards make the experience engaging and adaptable for different types of learners.

In the future, we hope to expand the program with new topics. Imagine a World War II trunk that explores Danish resistance and refugee stories or a trunk filled with Danish fairy tales and folk traditions that brings storytelling to life.

This program is far more than a box of objects. It is a means to connect young learners with lived experiences of the past—lived experiences perhaps you have heard from members of your own family.







Images of students from different schools engaging with the trunk program during their museum field trips.



If you are interested in supporting our traveling trunk program or would like to bring this program to a school in your community, please contact our Youth and Community Educator, Anna Thomas, at anna.thomas@danishmuseum.org.

Youth & Community Educator Anna Cheyenne Thomas pictured with the newly redesigned traveling trunk.

The trunk includes:

- wool coat and pants
- long sleeve shirt
- nightgown
- wooden clogs
- various tools including a hammer, screwdrivers, and pliers
- æbleskiver pan
- wooden spoons
- Bible
- songbook
- children's workbook
- immigration documents
- family photos



Durable, affordable, well-insulated, and a protective form of footwear, clogs were an incredibly practical form of footwear, especially for those in rural areas or of lower socioeconomic classes. They were often worn by manual laborers and agricultural workers. Gift of Catherine Thomas, UER.2011.002.001a-b.

Danish songbook. Gift of Hans Nielsen, UER.2014.011.001.
Danish Bible. Gift of Ramona Esbeck, UER.2014.012.001.
Children's workbook. Gift of Signore & Inga Larsen, UER.1999.004.002.



Photographs held deep significance for immigrants—they served as powerful links to their past, preserving cherished memories of loved ones and life in their homelands. In an unfamiliar land, these images became essential touchstones, helping families remember where they came from and maintain a sense of identity and connection across time and distance.



These tools are meant to represent the types of tools immigrants may have carried with them.
Hammer. Donor unknown, UER.2014.013.003.
Metal screwdriver. Gift of Jeannette Wilkersen, UER.1999.011.134.
Wood-handled screwdriver. Donor unknown, UER.2014.013.001.
Metal Pliers. Donor unknown, UER.2014.013.002.

This white, long-sleeved cotton shirt belonged to Emil Nielsen, a Danish immigrant born in 1874 in Tommerup, Denmark. Emil wore this shirt when operating his two-carriage horse drawn cab business in Denmark. When he immigrated with his wife, Margrethe, and their son, Arne, in 1913, this shirt was packed. The family settled in Exira, Iowa, where they farmed. Gift of Karen Byrne, UER.2002.129.001.



Men's coat. Gift of E.J and Alice Monhardt, UER.2014.016.001.





An æbleskiver pan like this is essential for replicating æbleskiver's distinctive shape, texture, and flavor. Due to its importance, many immigrants packed their own pans with them thereby preserving a Danish culinary tradition in America.
Æbleskiver pan. Gift of Edith Sprow, UER.2011.020.001.

staff introductions and farewells



ANNA CHEYENNE THOMAS
Youth & Community Educator

My name is Anna Thomas, and I am thrilled to introduce myself as the Youth and Community Educator. Originally a Seattle native, I moved to the Quad Cities for my education and earned a bachelor's degree in history and art history from St. Ambrose University and a master's degree in museum studies from Western Illinois University.

I'm deeply passionate about history and immersing myself in it. The Elk Horn community and the Museum of Danish America exemplify how history can be both preserved and experienced firsthand. My goal as Youth and Community Educator is to increase engagement by creating a diverse program schedule that includes both established favorites and exciting new initiatives.

Outside of work, I find joy in reading, painting, antique shopping, and spending time with family and friends. I am married to my husband, Heiko, and we are proud parents of a two-year-old daughter who teaches us to appreciate the wonder in everyday moments.



ERIC MORTENSEN
Genealogy Center Manager & Project Archivist

My name is Eric Mortensen, and I recently joined MoDA as the Genealogy Center Manager and Project Archivist. I grew up in rural Audubon and just recently moved back to the area after living in New York City for 27 years. I previously worked for the Juilliard School as a music librarian for 10 years and as a web developer for CNN in New York. My educational background includes a BA in Music and German from Simpson College in Indianola, Iowa, and an MS in Library and Information Science from Pratt Institute in New York.

I'm excited to start this new chapter in my life as a returnee to Iowa and a member of the MoDA team. Most of my ancestry is Danish, having emigrated from Denmark and settled in Audubon and Shelby counties in Iowa. The most recent immigrant in my family tree was my grandfather, who was born in Denmark and came to Iowa as a child with his parents and grandmother. The Danish-American experience is a big part of my heritage and something I'm proud to celebrate. Working at MoDA is an exciting opportunity for me to utilize my experience and skills as a librarian and apply them at the foremost Danish-American museum and cultural center in the United States.

I have had the privilege to travel a great deal over the years. Most of my international travel has been to Europe, primarily Germany and Denmark, but I've also visited far-away places such as Thailand, Singapore, and Argentina. I enjoy going for walks, hiking, and spending time in nature. I'm looking forward to planting a large garden this spring and growing lots of fresh fruits and vegetables on my family's acreage.

notes of thanks:



TIM FREDERICKSEN
Building & Grounds Manager

After thirty years of dedicated service to the museum, its buildings, its grounds, and most importantly, its people, Tim Fredericksen retired in January 2025.

Tim's journey with us began in 1994, when the museum first opened its doors. Starting as a part-time evening custodian, Tim brought his strong work ethic and genuine care to every task. When he retired from his role at the Elk Horn School, he seamlessly transitioned full-time to the museum, serving as the Building & Grounds Manager.

Throughout the years, Tim became much more than a colleague—he became a cornerstone of our museum family and a cherished member of the community. His impact reached far beyond the walls of the museum, touching the lives of every staff member, volunteer, and visitor. From greeting us each morning with a warm smile to ensuring every space was welcoming and well-maintained, Tim's presence was a vital part of the museum.

Tim's commitment went far beyond routine maintenance; he meticulously mowed the grounds, kept every corner spotless, and cared for the museum with a sense of pride and purpose that inspired us all. His work wasn't just about maintaining a building—it was about creating an inviting and beautiful space where history, culture, and community could flourish.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Tim for his decades of hard work, kindness, and unwavering dedication. His legacy of care continues to resonate throughout the museum, and his absence is deeply felt by all who had the privilege of working alongside him. We wish Tim nothing but happiness and fulfillment in this new chapter of his life, knowing that the mark he left on the museum will endure for years to come.

To email a staff member, please visit danishmuseum.org/contact/

New Members

SEPTEMBER 16, 2024 – FEBRUARY 28, 2025

The Museum of Danish America is pleased to identify the following **49** households as its newest members:

Theresa Nelson and David Alarie, Hartington, Ontario, Canada
Blake Anneberg, Denver, CO
Elaine Baughman, Kirkman, IA
Nisse Christopherson and Jacob Best, Des Moines, IA
Thomas and Jane Brown, Waterloo, IA
Janet Campanaro, Saint Paul, MN
Graham Christensen, Lyons, NE
Niels and Christiane Christiansen, Pasadena, CA
Jim Corbett, Sebastopol, CA
Lily H. Eckles, Woodburn, IA
Janna Ewert, Creswell, NC
Barbara and Dale Frazier, Harlan, IA
Sue Griswold, San Diego, CA
Blaine and Cathy Hansen, Atlantic, IA
Geri Hansen, Bethesda, MD
Ronald and Diane Harpster, Fremont, NE
Susan and Ben Haupts, Waukee, IA
Kirsten Jensen, Rockford, MN
Janet and Galan Johannsen, Harlan, IA
Beverly Johnston, Mesa, AZ
Rachel Jorgensen, Washington, DC
Alissa Krantz, Scottsdale, AZ
M. Christine Larsen, Walworth, WI
Marilyn Larsen, Solvang, CA
Clarkson D. and Emily Lauritzen, Omaha, NE
Karen L. Lister, Columbia, SC
Julie and PJ Meneough, Manilla, IA
Eric Meyer, Beverly Hills, CA
Philip and Pamela Miller, Sun City, AZ
Norman and Janet Moline, Rock Island, IL
Jennifer and Dennis Moore, Buckner, MO
Richard and Nadine Mortensen, Audubon, IA
Sherry Nelson and Leo Mayol, Chicago, IL
Jacob Nissen, Copenhagen, Denmark
Gary and Kathy Overfield, Fremont, NE
LeAnn Plinske, Baxter, MN
Lise Rasmussen, Rødovre, Hovedstaden, Denmark
Katrina Riggs, Littleton, CO
Donald Rossa, Milwaukee, WI
Kara Sagedal, Mesa, AZ
David and Martha Shannon, Hopkins, MN
Glenn Shannon, Wolfeboro, NH
Darlene Skow, Monument, CO
Anne Sørensen, Århus, Denmark
Mark Squire, St Louis Park, MN
Stephanie Thatcher, Salt Lake City, UT
Dani and Robert Thibodeaux, Detroit Lakes, MN
Roger Vaad, Council Bluffs, IA
Toni Wunder, Cedar Falls, IA



In addition to becoming a new member, Anne Sørensen of Århus, Denmark, also took a seat on the Board of Directors in October 2024.

Thank You, Organizations

SEPTEMBER 16, 2024 – FEBRUARY 28, 2025

These organizations have contributed to memberships or are reciprocal memberships during this period. We acknowledge their generosity in each edition of the *MoDA Magazine* during their annual membership.

Aalborg and Linie Aquavits, Arcus AS, Hagan, Norway
Allen County Public Library, Fort Wayne, IN
American Swedish Historical Foundation Inc., Philadelphia, PA
Atlantic Friends of The Danish Immigrant Museum, Atlantic, IA
Carroll Control Systems, Inc., Carroll, IA
Copenhagen European Kitchen & Bakery, Katy, TX
Country Landscapes, Ames, IA
Danebod Lutheran Church, Tyler, MN
Danish American Archive and Library, Blair, NE
Danish American Heritage Society, Elk Horn, IA
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #15, Des Moines, IA
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #29, Mercer Island, WA
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #35, Frankfort, IL
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #268, Junction City, OR
Danish Brotherhood Polarstjernen Lodge #283, Dagmar, MT
The Danish Canadian National Museum, Alberta, Canada
Danish Club of Tucson, Tucson, AZ
Danish Mutual Insurance Association, Elk Horn, IA
Danish Sisterhood Lodge #3, Davenport, IA
Danish Sisterhood Dagmar Lodge #4, Chicago, IL
Danish Sisterhood Lodge #6, Omaha, NE
Danish Sisterhood Freden Lodge #12, Moodus, CT
Danish Sisterhood Dronning Margrethe Lodge #15, Milwaukee, WI
Danish Sisterhood Ellen Lodge #21, Denver, CO
Danish Sisterhood Heartland District, Des Moines, IA
Danish Sisterhood Lodge #90, Ceresco, NE
Danish Sisterhood Lodge #102, Des Moines, IA
Danish Sisterhood Midwest District, Itasca, IL
Danish Sisterhood of America, USA
Danish Sisterhood Pacific Northwest District, Shoreline, WA
Elk Horn Lutheran Church, Elk Horn, IA
Elverhoj Museum of History and Art, Solvang, CA
Federation of Danish Associations in Canada, Gloucester, Canada
Hansen Interiors, Mount Pleasant, WI
Heartland District of the DBIA, Des Moines, IA
Henningsen Construction, Inc., Atlantic, IA
Kofoed Foundation, West Branch, IA
Landmands Bank & Crawford County Trust & Savings, Audubon, IA
Main Street Market, Panama, IA
Marne Elk Horn, Elk Horn, IA
Midwest Groundcovers LLC, Saint Charles, IL
Nebraska District Danish Sisterhood, Ceresco, NE
Northwest Danish Association, Seattle, WA
O&H Danish Bakery, Racine, WI
Proongily, Saint Paul, MN
Red River Danes, Fargo, ND
Ringsted Danish American Fellowship, Ringsted, IA
Royal Danish Guard Society, Chicago, IL
Scan Design Foundation, Seattle, WA
Shelby County Historical Society & Museum, Harlan, IA
Shelby County State Bank, Harlan and Elk Horn, IA
Swedish Club, Seattle, WA
Symra Literary Society, Decorah, IA
Verdandi Lodge #3, I.O.S., Chicago, IL



Members of Danish Sisterhood Dronning Margrethe Lodge #15 of Milwaukee enjoy a field trip to Door County, Wisconsin.

Jens Jensen Heritage Path

SEPTEMBER 16, 2024 – FEBRUARY 28, 2025

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—in May and October.

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

Tricia Anderson, Jeff Rudisill, Beth Volions, and Jon Rudisil, Waukee, IA
Amy E. Christensen, Billings, MT
Entire Hansen Familie and Linda Berge, Atlantic, IA
Marilynn Paulson, Minneapolis, MN
Greg Rierson, Casper, WY
Karen Sand and Linda Baker, Audubon, IA
Charles R. Smith, Kansas City, MO
Randall Sullivan, Loveland, CO
Charles and Ann-Marie Tsatsos, Waterloo, NE



David and Polly Hendee's daughters surprised them with a personalized paver to celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary.

In Honor

SEPTEMBER 16, 2024 – FEBRUARY 28, 2025

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

Kirsten Blem
Brian, Tonya and Tasha, our kids
Rosa Clemsen
Tim Fredericksen
Kirsten Gotzsche
Ellen Harboe
Ralf and Inga Hoifeldt
Aimee Ice, friend and amazing pottery artist
Jim and Marge Iversen
Ron Jensen's 80th birthday
Terri Johnson
Lowell Kramme
Lisa Kramme's 60th birthday
Michele McNabb's birthday
Fred, Tess and Richard Nelsen
Cheyenne Nordquist, "The road to a friend's house is never long"
Andrew and Rosa Rosenkild
Wanda Sornson



Jim and Marge Iversen, longtime members and supporters of the museum, are honored by their son.

New Additions to the Wall of Honor

SEPTEMBER 16, 2024 – FEBRUARY 28, 2025

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 & 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.

KIRSTEN MARIE GOTZSCHE & OTTO GOTZSCHE
(1953) (1953) Hoboken, NM
Donors: Susan and Peter Mitchell, Saint Paul, MN

LARS MATTHIESEN
(1979) Edmonds, WA
Donor: Lars Matthiesen, Edmonds, WA

ALLAN HARTMANN PETERSEN
(1996) Englewood, CO
Donors: Allan and Stephanie Petersen, Woodland Park, CO

JENS RISOM & IBEN HADERUP RISOM
(1939) (1939) New Canaan, CT
Donor: Helen Risom Bellushci, Palm Desert, CA

HANS SORENSEN
(1920) Exira, IA
Donor: Richard and Dee Sorensen, Irwin, IA

ANDRES PETER THOMSEN & MAREN (LARSEN) THOMSEN
(1911) (1912) Council Bluffs, IA
Donor: Lu Thompson, Council Bluffs, IA





Top: Allan Hartmann Petersen, shown competing at the 1998 World Footbag Championships in Montréal, is the founder of the Danish Footbag Association and a four-time all-around World Footbag Champion.

Bottom: Hans Sorensen immigrated to the United States in 1920 at the age of 18, later marrying Freda Petersen and establishing a farm east of Exira, Iowa.

Memorials

SEPTEMBER 16, 2024 – FEBRUARY 28, 2025

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

Oscar and Mary Aaroe, my parents
Ibb T. Baden Agvald
Martin and Else Andersen
Roger Andersen
Christian Arne
Egon Bodtker
Marge (Rasmussen) Carlson, our mother, who was proud of her all-Danish ancestry, to help ensure the Museum of Danish America continues to offer exhibits, genealogy resources, and information that help future generations connect with their Denmark and their Danish family history.

Paul M. Cash
Jorgen and Gerda Christensen
Lloyd Christensen and his sister Clarice Christensen
Clarice Christensen, my wife
Joyce Christensen, my wife
Hans Gilbert Clausen
Joann Elaine Clausen
Glen Clemsen
Else Damgaard, my cousin, and friend Mary Schilling
Cora Fagre and Richard Fagre
Hans and Mathilde Farstrup
Charles Frederiksen
Bob Hansen
Dallas and Margery Hansen
Reverend Edward and Shirley Hansen, my parents
Robert “Bob” Hansen
Wendell Hansen
The George Hoegh Family
Hans and Genevieve Hoiberg
Cnute and Lucille Holmes
Dick and Edna Jacobsen
Elsie Jante, my mother
Clinton and Lyria Jensen
Roland and Anitra Jensen
Leslie and Evelyn Johansen
John and Evelyn, my parents and my two brothers Ronald and Roger
Judith Marie Nyhur Johnson
Leonard Carstenson Johnson, born and raised in Elk Horn, IA
Phyllis Christina Jorgensen (Kimballton area)
Ronald and Diana Kay
Otto and Valborg Kiertzner
Richard S. Kleber



The J. Brent Norlem Memorial Fund, established by his family, supports educational activities at the museum’s Genealogy & Education Center.

Chris and Gladys Knudsen
John S. Kristensen
Kurt Klarskov Larsen
Carol Larsen, niece of Dean Larsen
Martin and Mava Laursen, my uncle and aunt
Paul D. Laursen
Robert Laursen
Bent Lernø
Kathryn Littlejohn
Eleanor Magnuson, very proud of her heritage
Juel and Martha Miller
Kris and Elsie Miller
Laina Molbak
Ted and Louise Molgaard, Audubon, IA
Karma Nelsen
Lars and Ane Nelson, my grandparents
Eric O. Nielsen
Marilyn Nielsen
Eric and Joan Norgaard
J. Brent Norlem
Mark Nussle
J. E. Nymann
Anna Marie Olson
Peter Ørum
Peter Orum, a green industry icon
Peter and Irma Ørum
Ann M. Pedersen
John Petersen from Irwin, IA
Scott Pettit
Clark Rasmussen
Jorgen Rasmussen
Mike Rasmussen
Sigrid Faaborg Riddle
Merna Rierson
Merna Christensen Rierson
Rev. Emil Sorensen Rosenberg, Danish Pastor 1912-1928 served in Cordova, NE, Elk Horn, IA, Fresno, CA, West Branch, IA & Racine, WI
Albert Martin Jensen Schjodt
LaVerne “Verne” R. Schweder, long-time member of Brotherhood Lodge #56
Alan D. Skouby (1937-2009)
Elfi Smith, a very active charter member of The Denver Danes
Paul V. Sorensen, Independence, MO
Chris Steffensen
Laura Steffensen
Erik Struckman
Patricia Thisted
Capt. Lars E. Toftemark, JAG
Robert Wallner
Ida Young, Seattle, Wash.

dansk bøf med løg

“GROUND BEEF STEAK WITH ONIONS”

MAKES EIGHT SERVINGS

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 pounds lean ground beef
- 5 tablespoons flour
- ¼ teaspoon Morton salt
- 1 teaspoon ground pepper
- 2 large onions, cut into halves and thinly sliced
- 6 tablespoons butter
- 2 cups milk
- ½ cup whipping cream

INSTRUCTIONS:

Shape the ground beef into eight patties and crosshatch the tops with a knife. Mix the flour with salt and pepper and coat the patties with the mixture. Sauté the onions in butter in a skillet until golden. Remove the onions. Add the remaining butter to the skillet and add the beef patties. Cook over medium heat for 3 to 4 minutes, turn the patties and cook for an additional 3 to 4 minutes. Turn again and cook until done to taste. Remove to serving plates.

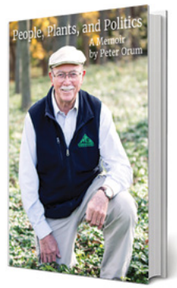
Stir the reserved flour mixture into the drippings in the skillet and cook for 1 to 2 minutes, stirring constantly. Add the milk. Simmer for 3 to 4 minutes, stirring constantly. Add the whipping cream and more salt and pepper if needed. Spoon the gravy over the beef patties and top with the onions. Serve with boiled potatoes and cucumber salad or pickled cucumbers.

Benedikte Ehlers

RECIPE

museum of
danish america
2212 WASHINGTON STREET
ELK HORN, IA 51531
@DANISHMUSEUM

01.



02.



03.



04.



05.



06.



07.



08.



---

01. ***People, Plants, and Politics,*** A Memoir by Peter Orum #1470, $36. **02. Koustrup & Co. Notecards, Wildflowers (Hedgerow)** #5504, $22. **03. Koustrup & Co. Tea Towel, Poppy** #5473, $22. **04. Koustrup & Co. Notecards, Spring Flowers (Forårsblomster)** #5832, $20. **05. Kitras Solar Light, Oceania** #5136, $60. **06. Kitras Garden Bell, Lemon** #5131, $56. **07. Kitras Tree of Enchantment, Positivity** #6124, $64. **08. Kitras Friendship Vase, Blue** #6140, $84. More to see online: shop.danishmuseum.org. Members receive a 10% discount. Visit in person or order by phone, 712.764.7001, weekdays 10 am - 4 pm.