

MoDA magazine

A BENEFIT FOR MEMBERS OF THE MUSEUM OF DANISH AMERICA



Congratulations, Elk Horn!

Minneapolis is a wonderful town, but you really had to root for Elk Horn.

Think of it: The site-selection committee for a national Danish-heritage museum had to choose

between the big city and the western Iowa village, and it had no trouble at

all. Elk Horn won, hands down. The committee was so enthusiastic that its members took the vote right on the spot when they came to see Elk Horn last weekend. None of this two-or-three-months-of-debate stuff.

It's a fine tribute to a little town whose people showed their spirit in 1976 by getting together

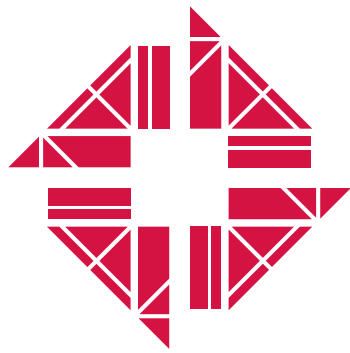
the money and volunteer work to import and reassemble an old Danish windmill. They put it back to work in Elk Horn, where it attracted more than 50,000 visitors in 1982. And Elk Horn has cultivated new fans each year with its charming Tivoli Fest.

We have an idea, though, that the clincher for the Danish-American Heritage Society was that the Elk Horn area claims to have a population that is 80 percent first-generation American Danes or descendants of Danes. Poor Minneapolis just couldn't compete: too many Swedes, Norwegians, Finns and other foreign types.

Congratulations, Elk Horn!

SINCE
1983





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COVER
The Museum of Danish America through the years.
 Inspired by pinboards and scrapbooking, this cover embraces the different aspects of MoDA, from the museum building to the Jens Jensen Prairie Landscape Park.



WELCOME TO MoDA MAGAZINE!

This is our new and improved membership magazine, previously called the *America Letter*. Thanks to feedback from you, our members, and consultation with publishing professionals, we are excited to implement this next evolution in our membership communications. As a member, you will receive this full-color publication twice a year.

Our membership magazine has always been a way to provide a tangible “piece of the museum” to our members across the United States and to our members around the world via online access. From the beginning, the *America Letter* provided news about museum exhibitions, programs, and people. Over time, feature articles presented more in-depth stories of Danish immigrant families and their experiences. Recently, our magazine has included articles by guest authors who explore various aspects of Danish culture, Danish-American history, and the ongoing influences between Denmark and the United States.

In this issue of *MoDA Magazine*, we look back 40 years to the people who first made this museum possible. Our Scan Design Intern from last fall, Anders Jørgensen, spent much of his time at the museum studying the institutional history and interviewing people who participated in the early founding. Anders brought his journalism training to this effort, as well as his experience in sharing travelogues from around the United States with our museum audience. It is so important that these first years of the museum’s history be documented, and it is perfectly fitting that we all enjoy those memories in the pages of this volume.

Ten years ago, we marked the 30th anniversary of our museum with a new name: Museum of Danish America. As we celebrate our 40th anniversary in 2023, we continue to interpret “Danish America” as an inclusive term that welcomes any connection to and interest in the Danish-American experience. Where the *America Letter* referred to written communication from Danish immigrants back to their families in Denmark, *MoDA Magazine* encompasses stories of all kinds through the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries.

MoDA Magazine will continue to bring you articles about the museum’s exhibitions, collections, genealogy, and the stories of Danish immigrants who traveled to the United States. We will continue to share news of upcoming events, opportunities to engage with the museum in person and online, and the people and communities who keep our museum going. We hope that you will continue to let us know what you enjoy, what you would like to see more of, and how we can serve you best.

With thanks for your ongoing support,



TOVA BRANDT, M.A.
Executive Director

The “cover” of the *America Letter* in August of 1999. Prior to the mid-2000s, the magazine lacked a distinctive cover.



Continued... »

DIRECTOR'S CORNER



The Spring 2008 edition of the America Letter was one of the museum's first magazines to have a front cover, and this edition paid homage to the museum's 25th anniversary.



Over the years, the America Letter and its cover have undergone many changes. This is the summer 2012 edition, and the cover depicts the Ansgar and Kristine Ravenholt family in West Denmark, Wisconsin on July 4, 1935.



This cover from the Spring 2014 issue is more closely aligned with the America Letter covers we've come to recognize over the past nine years. The cover is more professional and conveys the standards the museum has grown to uphold.

event calendar

LOCAL EVENTS

All are welcome to attend events hosted by the Museum of Danish America.

MAY 2023

- 7 VICTOR BORGE LEGACY AWARDS | ELK HORN, IA
- 26 & 27 TIVOLI FEST | ELK HORN & KIMBALLTON, IA

JUNE 2023

- 8-10 MUSEUM BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING | VIRTUAL
- 22-24 DANISH AMERICAN HERITAGE SOCIETY CONFERENCE | ELK HORN, IA
- 24 MODA'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION & SANKT HANS AFTEN ON THE MUSEUM GROUNDS | ELK HORN, IA (RSVP USING FORM BELOW)


OCTOBER 2023

- 19-21 MUSEUM BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING | ELK HORN, IA

NOVEMBER 2023

- 24 & 25 JULEFEST | ELK HORN & KIMBALLTON, IA





PLEASE JOIN US FOR MODA'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION DINNER

SATURDAY, JUNE 24, 2023 | 5:00 PM
ON THE EAST LAWN OF THE MUSEUM | \$40 PER PERSON

Please RSVP by sending this form and payment to:

The Museum of Danish America	OR Call the museum at 712.764.7001
2212 Washington Street	to make your reservation.
Elk Horn, IA 51531	Deadline to RSVP is Monday, June 5th

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone Number: _____ Check Enclosed: _____

Credit Card Number: _____

Expiration: _____ Security Code: _____

NOTE: The anniversary dinner is a fee separate from the DAHS conference registration. The dinner is open to museum members and non-members. Sankt Hans Aften (mid-summer festival) will be celebrated at the conclusion of the dinner and is free and open to the public.

NATIONAL EVENTS

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

APRIL 2023

- ◆ 20 DINNER - SWEDISH CULTURAL CENTER | SEATTLE, WA
- ◆ 30 RECEPTION - MILWAUKEE ART MUSEUM | MILWAUKEE, WI

MAY 2023

- ◆ 21 LUNCHEON - THE HOME OF MINDY BROWN & RICH INMAN | LITTLETON, CO

AUGUST 2023

- ◆ 2 DINNER - NORWAY HOUSE | MINNEAPOLIS, MN

SEPTEMBER 2023

- ◆ 20 RECEPTION - JOSLYN CASTLE | OMAHA, NE

OCTOBER 2023

- 1 DANISH SERVICE AND EVENING - THE DANISH LUTHERAN CHURCH | YORBA LINDA, CA

40 years of
celebrating
danish roots and
american dreams

the danish immigrant museum
– museum of danish america
1983–2023

ALL EVENTS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE. PLEASE CHECK THE MUSEUM'S WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS FOR UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION.

**THURSDAY, JUNE 22, 2023**

[Therkildsen Center, Harlan, Iowa](#)

Welcome reception, dinner, and keynote presentation by Morten Kabell, former Mayor of Copenhagen for Mobility, Climate, and Urban Development

FRIDAY, JUNE 23, 2023

[Elk Horn High School, Elk Horn, Iowa](#)

A full day of diverse perspectives on the themes of Ecologies and Ethnicity. Coffee, kringle, and a boxed lunch will all be provided at the high school.

Speakers include:

- Kevin Mason, European-style land use and ecological transformation in western Iowa
- Pete Bertelsen, prairie restoration in Nebraska and the Midwest
- Warren Watson, Elk Horn community history
- Virginia Small, Jens Jensen's legacy in landscape architecture
- Charly Frisk, documentarian exploring the global sharing of seeds with human migration
- Anders Bo Rasmussen, winner of the inaugural DAHS Book Prize
- Staff from Joslyn Castle, a historic house and garden in Omaha, Nebraska

FRIDAY EVENING

[Manning Hausbarn in Manning, Iowa](#)

Enjoy a tour of the 17th-century Hausbarn relocated from the Schleswig-Holstein area of Germany. When the Hausbarn was originally built, Schleswig and Holstein were duchies ruled by the king of Denmark. Other historic structures from the area are also preserved at the cultural site. An Iowa-style summer barbeque meal will be served, along with musical entertainment by Glenn Henriksen and a chance to sing along with Danish folk school favorites.

SATURDAY, JUNE 24, 2023

[Museum of Danish America, Elk Horn, Iowa](#)

A panel discussion in the morning will explore the legacy of Danish immigrant Jens Jensen, a pioneering landscape architect and early advocate for the conservation of natural spaces. The Jens Jensen Prairie Landscape Park will be the site for this conversation.

After lunch on the prairie, choose among a variety of activities at the museum and throughout the local community:

- Bedstemor's House (historic house built in 1908)
- Elk Horn Lutheran Church cemetery walk with Warren Watson
- "Nature-Culture / Natur-Kultur" exhibit open in the museum galleries
- Danish Windmill (relocated from Nørre Snede, Denmark, originally built in 1848)
- The museum's Genealogy & Education Center on Main Street
- Film screenings
- Little Mermaid Park in Kimballton
- Other options to be announced

SATURDAY EVENING

[40th Anniversary Celebration Dinner](#)

After the conference activities are concluded, all attendees are invited to purchase tickets for the Museum of Danish America's 40th Anniversary Celebration Dinner.

After dinner, Sankt Hans Aften (Danish-style Midsummer) activities will be free and open to the public.

- Live music
- Bonfire at sunset
- S'mores and snobrød at the Council Ring fire
- Galleries open for viewing
- Kubb, croquet, and lawn games

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION OPTIONS | Registration Deadline: May 31, 2023

FULL REGISTRATION FEE INCLUDES:

- Opening welcome, dinner, and keynote address
- Coffee breaks
- Friday lunch
- Friday evening dinner excursion to the Manning Hausbarn
- Saturday lunch
- All conference sessions on Friday and Saturday

FULL CONFERENCE REGISTRATION, Regular Rate:
\$175

SINGLE DAY REGISTRATION:
Thursday \$50
Friday \$100
Saturday \$75

40TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER on Saturday evening:
\$40

HOTEL INFO:

Conference rates have been secured at a number of hotels in the surrounding communities for rates between \$100 - \$150 per night. Please make hotel reservations by May 15 and mention the DAHS conference to receive the reduced rate.

Avoca: Cobblestone Inn & Suites (ask for Heather to receive conference rate)
712-307-6006
7013 N Chestnut Street
I-80, Exit 40
Approximately 25 miles west of the museum, North of I-80
<https://www.staycobblestone.com/ia/avoca/>

Atlantic: Rock Island Inn & Suites
712-243-1600
1702 SW 7th Street
Approximately 20 miles south of the museum
<https://www.atlanticrockislandinn.com/>

Audubon: Blue Grass Inn & Suites
712-563-2126
2073 Highway 71
Approximately 16 miles NE of the museum
<https://www.waspystruckstop.com/waspys-hotel/>

Manning: Cobblestone Inn & Suites
712-655-4000
120 Heritage Drive
Approximately 25 miles N/NE of the museum, off of Highway 141
<https://www.staycobblestone.com/ia/manning/>

TRANSPORTATION TIPS:

If you plan on flying to the conference, the nearest airports are Omaha and Des Moines. There is no regular public transportation to Elk Horn or between the different communities hosting the conference events. You may choose to rent a car or seek ridesharing opportunities with other conference attendees.



40 years of danish roots and american dreams

BY ANDERS TORNSØ JØRGENSEN
Scan Design Communications Intern

Anders Tornsø Jørgensen, a Danish Journalism student, interned at the museum in the fall of 2022. During his time here, he researched the history of the museum, met with those who helped found the museum, and compiled his findings in this article.

It has been 40 years since the Museum of Danish America's inception. It is a milestone.

The year was 1983. Ronald Reagan was the President of the United States, and the Cold War seemed as if it would never come to an end. The hottest single was "Every Breath You Take" by The Police, followed by Michael Jackson's "Billie Jean." It was before Facebook and the iPhone altered the fabric of society.

The United States has changed dramatically over these past 40

years, and so has the museum in Elk Horn, Iowa. The ambitions, the building, the exhibitions, and even the name have changed, as they have been updated to reflect the changing times. Yet, the celebration of Danish roots and American dreams has remained the core mission of this institution.

This article focuses on the history of the Museum of Danish America, how it came to be, and how it has evolved. There are excerpts from interviews with directors, board members, volunteers, and staff members.

These are the individuals who have made this institution into what it is today. This is a story of Danes, Americans, and Danish Americans and their hopes, dreams, failures, and battles as they came together to make the Museum of Danish America possible.

"It's important to make sure the world knows how it all happened."

- SIGNE BETSINGER,
THE MUSEUM'S FIRST BOARD PRESIDENT



≈Photo: Museum of Danish America.

AN IDEA IS BORN (1979-1980)

The story of the Museum of Danish America began with two college professors and a single question: Why wasn't there a museum dedicated to the history and legacy of Danish immigration to the United States?

In 1979, Norman Bansen and Richard Jorgensen, two faculty members of Dana College, began promoting the idea of a museum that would preserve, promote, and celebrate Danish Americans.

I visited Blair, Nebraska, the location of the now-closed Dana College, on my journey to discover the museum's history. It was at Dana College that the seed for a Danish-American museum was planted.

In the fall of 2022, I interviewed John Mark Nielsen, Executive Director Emeritus, he said, "In 1979, a scholar by the name of Dorothy Burton Skårdal, the author of *Divided Heart: Scandinavian Immigrant Experience Through Literary Sources*, came to Dana. She scolded Dana and those of us who were there for not doing anything with the archives. At that point, I knew nothing of the archive. After this, the college began to pay more attention to the archival materials in its possession. This also focused my attention; I went into the archive and began looking through the stacked boxes of documents. I was playing around with these materials when Norman Bansen approached me and said that I needed to be involved in establishing a Danish museum."

In 1979, Bansen and Jorgensen met with the Dana College Board of Regents and presented the idea for a museum focused on Danish immigrants and their

contributions to American society. Eventually, the board endorsed the professors' presentation.

While in Blair, I also spoke with Jorgensen, who had originally met Bansen as a sophomore at Dana College. He said, "Norman [Bansen] was a wonderful teacher and later a wonderful colleague. Talking with Norman was always more fun than correcting papers."

According to the numerous people I have spoken with, Norman Bansen was known for being an "ideas" person, filled with creativity and ambition. "Norman had wonderful ideas—he got the gas lamps, the linden trees (which came from Willy Brandt in West Germany), and even some Norwegian pines," Jorgensen said. During the interview, it was apparent that Jorgensen held Bansen in high regard.

In 1980, Dana Regents asked the Danish American Heritage Society (DAHS) to appoint an exploratory committee tasked with finding a suitable location. Arnold Bodtker, president of the DAHS, agreed and appointed a committee.

"There had been a committee appointed by the DAHS to work on identifying a community in which to locate a Danish-American museum. That committee was inspired by Norman Bansen and Richard Jorgensen. Bansen was my mentor when I was a student at Dana and my mentor when I returned to Dana in 1978 as a teacher," John Mark explained.

This marked the very beginning of decades of hard work by many Americans of Danish ancestry. They would pursue the dream of an institution that would tell the story of Danish immigrants in America until their dream came to fruition.

DAVID VERSUS GOLIATH (1980-1983)

The museum site committee included academics, business representatives, a Danish consul, and individuals from Danish-American organizations. The committee was headed by Signe Betsinger, a professor at the University of Minnesota. While Norman Bansen may have been the "Father of the Museum," Betsinger is regarded as the "Mother of the Museum." Without her dedication, there would not be a museum.

The committee met several times over the next few years and drafted a list of certain criteria for the museum's location. They wanted the museum to be located in a metropolitan area with public transportation. They also wanted the museum to be close to a Danish-American college and a large Danish community.

The towns of Elk Horn and Kimballton met some of these criteria; it was located midway between Omaha and Des Moines, which are two cities with large Danish-American populations and organizations. Furthermore, Elk Horn-Kimballton was halfway



⚡ The museum would be located between Des Moines and Omaha. The museum would also be located between both Dana College and Grand View University. Photo: Museum of Danish America.

between Dana College and Grand View College, which were the two colleges in the United States founded by Danish immigrants. Most importantly, Elk Horn and Kimballton represented the largest rural settlement of Danish Americans in the nation.

However, Minneapolis was also being considered for the museum's location. *The Des Moines Register* likened the battle between the towns of Elk Horn and Kimballton and Minneapolis to the battle of David and Goliath. At the time, the Danish Villages claimed that the towns' populations were 80% first-generation American Danes or the direct descendants of Danes. It appeared to be a battle between a metropolis of Scandinavian culture and Elk Horn and Kimballton, which in 1980 had a mere population of 1,108.

Finally, in February 1983, something happened that would seal the course of the museum's history.

COMING TOGETHER (1983)

Lisa Riggs, who would later join the museum board, was instrumental in garnering local support. After hearing about the possibility of a Danish museum in *Den Danske Pioneer*, the oldest Danish-language newspaper published in the United States, Lisa Riggs was certain Elk Horn—which had imported and reassembled a Danish windmill in the American Heartland—could win this battle.

"I walked up to one of Elk Horn's local realtors, Warren Jacobsen. He was a mover and a shaker and had been influential in getting the Danish Windmill to Elk Horn. In 1976, over 300 volunteers rebuilt it. The windmill, which was built in 1848, had not been working



⚡ Lisa Riggs posing in front of the Danish Windmill on Elk Horn's Main Street. Photo: Museum of Danish America.

for 20 years. Within a year, it was in working condition. It was a big accomplishment for Elk Horn and stands as a beautiful memorial to our Danish ancestors. Elk Horn—a rural community—had succeeded with this huge project. Tourism was a way of saving our small town from dying, and a national Danish museum would be a grand addition. Warren and I looked at each other and asked, "Why can't we go after it?" Lisa told me how she and Warren began gathering local support from the whole community, whether it was school students or nursing home residents. A letter campaign was waged, and the museum committee received more than 300 letters on behalf of the Danish Villages. "The letters said, 'If you're going to build a Danish museum, put it in Elk Horn, Iowa.' We took the committee by surprise, and they gave us a chance."

Lisa Riggs, Warren Jacobsen, and two high school students met with the committee: "We all spoke from our hearts. We just kept saying that public transportation wasn't an issue, as we were located by the busiest interstate [U.S. Interstate 80], and we were between Grand View College and Dana College—two Danish Lutheran colleges. We

also argued that a museum would get lost in a metropolis—here it would be a focal point instead of one museum out of many museums," Lisa Riggs explained. Eventually, the committee was persuaded to consider the towns of Elk Horn and Kimballton.

On a cold February night in 1983, 400-500 people showed up at Elk Horn's high school gym hall to persuade the committee: "It was sixteen below zero. I thought that it was so cold—the weather meant that we were probably not going to have a good turnout," Signe Betsinger recalled. However, much to her surprise, the cars kept rolling in, the parking lot was filled, and the chairs in the gym were quickly claimed. In fact, they had to put extra chairs behind the lectern in order to make room for everyone in attendance.

The Better Elk Horn club provided Danish-style open-faced sandwiches, *smørrebrød*, and Danish pastries, and statewide support was gathered. Governor Terry Branstad, a representative from the state tourist office, and community members were on board and ready to campaign for Elk Horn and Kimballton to be considered for the site of the museum.

“That night, the committee applauded our enthusiasm but told us that the committee owed Minneapolis a chance. We all went home that evening feeling a little defeated, but we knew we had all given it our best effort,” Lisa Riggs said.

John Mark, who was a member of the DAHS site committee, attended the committee’s regular meeting the following morning. He said, “The morning following the community meeting, we met at the Wise Owl Motel. The committee was so impressed with the community’s enthusiasm but also the fact that the newly elected governor had come out. We truly felt that this was the right place for the museum because of the State of Iowa’s tremendous support, the people in the community, and their interest in preserving their heritage.”

The energy and enthusiasm of the Danish-Americans in the tri-county area of Audubon, Shelby, and Cass and the potential support of communities such as Blair, Omaha, and Des Moines made the decision crystal-clear—the Elk Horn and Kimballton area was going to be the location. Ultimately, the committee chose the communities of Elk Horn-Kimballton in a unanimous vote. John Mark Nielsen continued, “Norman Bansen and I drove into Elk Horn afterward. Somehow the word had gotten out that the committee had recommended Elk Horn and Kimballton for the

museum’s location. I remember walking into the Danish Windmill in Elk Horn and meeting up with Lisa Riggs. We hugged one another.”

Signe Betsinger remembered that day in much the same way: “The community just exploded. People were honking their horns and cheering. The front page of *The Des Moines Register* read ‘Sorry, Minneapolis—Elk Horn wins. Poor Minneapolis just couldn’t compete: too many Swedes, Norwegians, and Finns.’ That is the very, very beginning.”

When asked if Elk Horn was the right location, John Mark thought that the enthusiasm of the Elk Horn and Kimballton community—which continues to be the largest rural community of Danish-Americans—is still strong and the reason the museum keeps going. “It’s just great every year when visitors come back from all over the country, and they talk about their roots in the area. Many still have fond memories and can remember where their great-grandparents and grandparents lived. In the end, I think it was the right location.”

ONTO THE IMPOSSIBLE (1983-1987)

Following this decision, a board of directors was created, and The Danish Immigrant Museum, as it was originally named, had to be incorporated. Incorporation was necessary in order for the committee to obtain non-

profit status. As a non-profit organization, donations to the museum could become tax deductible. This is how Dennis Larson, the museum’s pro bono attorney since 1983, became involved.

“In 1983, I received a phone call from this man in Denver, Colorado. He was a personal attorney for Hans T. Nielsen, and Nielsen was on the committee to form the museum. Besides being a very nice man, Nielsen was also the Danish consul in the Colorado area. He contacted me through his attorney to enlist my help in forming a corporation. I ended up drafting the articles of incorporation, and the corporation was formed in 1983.”

Interestingly enough, the location of the museum has a very unique relation to Dennis Larson’s heritage: “About seven miles west of the museum is the location of my family farm. I am steeped in the area. Also, the windmill—it’s not a part of the museum, but it’s a part of me. Before my grandfather immigrated to the United States, he worked for a farmer in Jutland in a town called Gedved. The nearest windmill to grind flour was the windmill of Nørre Snede. It was seven miles away—just like my family farm and the museum—and my grandfather would deliver grain to that mill. This mill was the very same mill that was dismantled and raised again in Elk Horn. When I climbed those steps at the mill in Elk Horn, I was actually climbing the same steps that my grandfather climbed back in Denmark.”

Eventually, the committee had to decide where to place the museum. Site selection for the new museum was high on the agenda following the February 1983 decision. There were a number of locations under consideration: some on Elk Horn’s

Main Street, some in Kimballton, and some between Elk Horn and Kimballton.

“I think that there was also an idea that we already had money and that we were ready to buy the property and get moving; however, we didn’t have any funds at that point. Bertha Andersen, a member of the Elk Horn Lutheran Church, suggested that the church should give ten acres to the museum as a gift,” John Mark Nielsen explained.

The generosity of the Elk Horn Lutheran Church made it possible for the museum to be built on Washington Street in Elk Horn. Surrounded by southwest Iowa’s rolling hills, the site looked as if it could be in Denmark.

When the committee saw the rolling hills of the beautiful church land, they too were reminded of Denmark. John Mark recollected, “As we walked out onto the site, we realized that this was reminiscent of the way the immigrants would have found the prairie. This sight must have been both exciting and daunting to newly arrived immigrants from Denmark. It seemed like a perfect spot for The Danish Immigrant Museum.” They concurred—this



⌘ **Left to right:** Signing the land deed in 1983. Before the museum’s building was opened in 1994, various buildings in Elk Horn housed museum activities. **Photos:** *Museum of Danish America.*

was where the museum needed to be built. There was a sense of vastness and space—a place for making this dream a reality.

IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY WILL COME (1988-1990)

With blue skies and rolling green hills, it was a beautiful day to break ground in a ceremony that took place on Labor Day in 1988. A horse and plow were used to break ground. “To see those horses cultivating the ground with a plow—that was so Danish!” Signe Betsinger recalled. From his lectern, Governor Terry Branstad declared that “this [was] the Danish capital of America.”

⌘ **A crowd gathered to watch Governor Terry Branstad break ground with horses and a plow. Photo:** *Museum of Danish America.*



⌘ **The future site of the Danish Immigrant Museum. Photo:** *Museum of Danish America.*



⌘ **Newly elected governor Terry Branstad and Signe Betsinger, chairperson of the museum site committee, are seen conversing in Elk Horn.** Governor Robert D. Ray had also written letters of support to the committee. According to Signe Betsinger, the governor brought his wife and his children along, and they stayed for the evening, mingled with the crowd, and enjoyed the smørrebrød that the Better Elk Horn Club had made. **Photo:** *Tribune Photo*



DANISH IMMIGRANT MUSEUM

⚡ The architect's original plan for the museum was very ambitious—the museum was meant to be comprised of four buildings. Photo: Museum of Danish America.

however, they knew a tremendous challenge lay ahead.

“There was no museum! People in Elk Horn were really beginning to doubt whether or not the museum was going to happen. Some people said we just needed to get something built fast, but we had these amazing architectural plans from Astle Ericson & Associates, an Omaha and Salt Lake City architectural firm. They had developed a beautiful concept,” John Mark Nielsen remembered.

A Dane would end up saving the day. Danish-born Norman Riis, president of Story Construction Company of Ames, Iowa and the chair of the building committee, would suggest something

unconventional at a Portland board meeting in 1990.

Riis suggested that the Story Construction Company build the museum. He even chose to step down from the committee and museum board in order for the museum to come to fruition.

When interviewed over the phone, Riis likened the Museum of Danish America to *The Field of Dreams*: “There was a baseball field in Dyersville in eastern Iowa where they said, ‘If you build it, they will come.’ That rings true in a number of situations, especially where there is a dream and a group of people who get behind the dream and make it a reality. Once you start moving forward, people can see the results and that attracts fundraising, which makes the dream possible,” Norman Riis said.

I met Norman Riis when he visited the museum in September 2022. When touring the museum, he could still pinpoint small details and intricate features of the building. Whenever he is in Iowa, he always makes sure to visit the museum: “It feels like stepping into a home. I can’t say that when I visit other buildings I helped

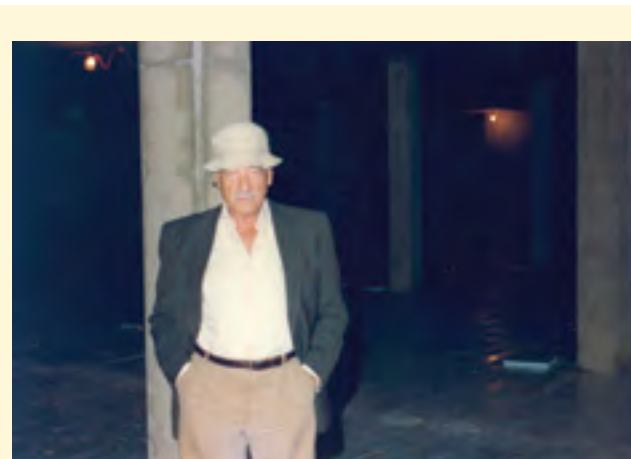
⚡ June Sampson accessioning artifacts. Photo: Museum of Danish America.



create. When we drive around, I often see buildings I have built, but the museum—that’s truly something special.”

Norman Riis was a friend of Jim Iversen, a former board president, and Charles “Chuck” Frederiksen, an influential board member. It was through this friendship that Norman Riis first became a board member. He knew them from Ames, Iowa, and had been working with Charles Frederiksen to build residence halls for Iowa State University. Frederiksen would serve as president of the Board of Directors from 1991-1995 and 1997-1999.

According to Norman Riis, he “approached Jim and Chuck and said, ‘If we are going to pull this off, we need to figure out a way



⚡ Famous Danish-American comedian Victor Borge was a tremendous supporter of the museum. He is pictured visiting the museum during its construction. He later donated his piano which is still displayed at the museum. ⚡ Photos: Museum of Danish America.



⚡ Construction begins on the lower level of the museum. Photo: Museum of Danish America.

to do it.’ I mentioned this hybrid approach. In most construction jobs, you need to have funding before you start. I sold Iversen and the board on the idea, and we moved forward with this approach that is called Construction Management Agency. Agency, in this context, [means] that we are an agent for the owner which requires open books and transparency; the owner knows everything we know: how the bids are coming in, how the money is being spent, and so on.”

“We divided the job into three parts: the foundations, the superstructure, and the interior finish. There was no way you could guarantee that once the foundations were built you had any funding to continue with the next part. Well, the board had enough money to do the first part, and, hopefully, that would help with donations once we got started building. That’s exactly what happened. My thoughts were that it was amazingly scary. I’m not a gambler, but without people stepping in, including the bank, it would never have succeeded,” said Riis.

With an agreement between Story Construction Company and the

board, construction began in 1990.

A DANISH MUSEUM CALLS FOR DANISH TRADITIONS (1990-1993)

When building a museum dedicated to the Danish-American immigrant experience, a few Danish customs should be included. One such custom, *rejsegilde*, was carried out in 1991.

“We made a big deal out of Danish customs, incorporating them into the building process. The museum still celebrates a lot of Danish customs. I remember *rejsegilde* from Denmark. When the highest point of a site is constructed, they would place a *rejsekrans*, the traditional Danish construction wreath, at the highest point, and everybody involved in the construction would get together and have speeches and celebrate the fact that they were moving forward,” said Norman Riis.

Jim Iversen, who had taken over the role as president of the board after Signe Betsinger, was also present at the *rejsegilde*. “According to Danish tradition, the developer must hold a feast for his craftsmen



⚡ Celebrating *rejsegilde* where the *rejsekrans* is raised to the top of the building. In this case, it was raised to the top of the elevator shaft. Photos: Provided by Jim Iversen, Museum of Danish America.

when the highest point of the building is erected. In the topping-out ceremony, everyone who helps to build the house participates. It rained during this ceremony, so we had to rush into Elk Horn to get shelter. However, after the rain, a few of us went over to the construction site and did the raising of the *rejsekrans*. The elevator tower was where the *rejsekrans* came up because it was the highest point of the building. There were no spectators, so I was the only one who took pictures of the event.”

MoDA

The bad weather would continue throughout the building process, but it didn't halt construction.

"We had a bad winter when we did the concrete foundations—that was a tough winter. We would watch the workers battle the wind, the rain, and the snow. However, in the end, it was well built as you can tell—it's still standing. I always said, 'It has to be quality. It has to be Danish,'" said Norman Riis.

Norman Riis only had good things to say about the people involved: "The superintendent was a young man named Dan Ward, who lived in Atlantic, so he was close by. He came from a construction family up in Sioux City, and he did an amazing job. All the other workers made it possible. We had some good subcontractors. We made sure the heating guy was local and competent, and the same went for the electrician, and so on and so forth. They were carefully selected and qualified people. We stayed in touch with them. Sometimes they had to wait to get paid, and they did."

A TIME TO CELEBRATE (1993-1994)

In 1993, the building was finished—exactly 10 years after the founding of The Danish Immigrant Museum. The museum required a decade of dedication, but it was finally complete. It took another year to install the first permanent exhibit, *Across Oceans, Across Time*. The grand opening ceremony was conducted in June 1994. Danish Ambassador Peter Dyvig, who brought official greetings from Queen Margrethe



⚡ Speeches being given at the museum's grand opening. Photo: Museum of Danish America.

II as Protector of the Museum, was a guest speaker at the ceremony, as was Governor Terry Branstad. With 1,500 people in attendance, the celebration was a tremendous success.



⚡ Signe Betsinger, president of the museum site committee, was charged with finding a location for the museum. Years later, she served as the museum's first board president. She is pictured here with her mother at the museum's grand opening in 1994. Photo: Museum of Danish America.

When asked about the museum's opening, my interview subjects had this to say:

"It was a proud moment. There were tears and feelings of personal satisfaction and pride. It was a great effort made by the whole community."

Just being a small part of this magnificent history will always be something special for me."

— LISA RIGGS.

"We got her done against all the odds which makes me proud. At the grand opening, I was the Master of Ceremonies. My son, Phil, is an excellent trumpet player and played both national anthems. We had several speakers, and I took a picture that day that I completely forgot about. [The picture] is so poignant. It shows Signe Betsinger and her mother standing in front of this brand-new museum—the "Mother" and the "Grandmother" of the museum."

— JIM IVERSEN.

"People in Elk Horn-Kimballton feel like the museum is theirs, and their dedication was truly incredible to witness. They worked hard, and they were amazing people doing incredible things."

— RICK BURNS, FORMER DIRECTOR OF THE MUSEUM

With the museum open, visitors from across the country and around the world could visit and learn more about the stories and the lives of Danish Americans.

After its opening, the museum began to evolve and expand. Danish traditions, theater and musical performances, genealogy research, and internships became vital characteristics of the museum. All the while, the collection of unique objects and artifacts continued to grow.

DANISH TRADITIONS LIVE ON (1997)

Danish traditions continue to be practiced by the Elk Horn and Kimballton communities. One of the longest-surviving traditions is *Sankt Hans Aften*. Annette Andersen is a first-generation American and long-time volunteer who was married to former interim director, Andy Andersen. Every year, she participates in the museum's *Sankt Hans Aften*, a Danish-style midsummer celebration.

"Andy and I started *Sankt Hans Aften* the year we came to the museum. As a child, my family and I also celebrated *Sankt Hans*—actually right here in my home in

Kimballton where I live today. My mother and father always told me that *Sankt Hans* was an important celebration, but it was also a great chance to sing. We implemented the same tradition at the museum in 1997. We had a lot of group singing with good American songs and a few Danish ones," Annette said.

"My favorite thing about *Sankt Hans* is just the fact that we all get together and enjoy the evening. As the sun starts to set, we come to my absolute favorite part where we light that fire so we can send the witch to Bloksbjerg. I've been in charge of making the witch since the start of *Sankt Hans* at the museum. I can't get anybody else to do it."

Before Christianity came to Denmark, Scandinavians celebrated the longest day as a supernatural struggle between light and dark, hot and cold. Since the feast day of Saint John the Baptist occurred on June 24—near the date of the annual summer solstice—the Christian Church emphasized this celebration in Scandinavia. Nowadays, it is a very good excuse to stay up late, have fun, and light bonfires.

This year, our Danish-style midsummer celebration will be the culmination of a three-day conference with the Danish American Heritage Society—it will also be a celebration of the museum's 40th anniversary. Remember to save the date: June 24, 2023.

EXPANDING GENEALOGY (2003)

A focus of the museum has always been its genealogy research. Prior to the Family History and Genealogy Center's opening in 2003, genealogy research was conducted in the loft of the museum. However, with the loft already earmarked for exhibitions and office spaces, genealogy did not have the space it required.

Dennis Andersen, a former board member who was born and raised in Elk Horn, established the concept of the Genealogy Center on Main Street. "In 2000, I was in the process of renovating this building with the intention of attracting new businesses and tourism to Elk Horn. At the same time, I happened to get involved with the museum. The museum had a pressing need for more physical space due to the



⚡ Annette Andersen has been tasked with creating the witch for the museum's annual Danish-style midsummer celebration, *Sankt Hans Aften*. Annette is also in charge of decorating our Christmas tree during Julefest. Photos: Museum of Danish America.



⌘ The museum's first permanent exhibit, *Across Oceans, Across Time*. Photos: *Museum of Danish America*.

growing popularity of genealogy so I redirected my efforts. I decided to offer the use of the space to the museum. In addition to meeting their needs with free space, the agreement was set up in such a way as to generate thousands of dollars in employer matching funds. This project created a lot of interest and generated substantial additional donations that went towards staffing and furnishings. The project gave me the opportunity to use my architectural experience to match the design to the museum's post and beam construction. The building was recently donated to the museum, giving me additional satisfaction." With further generous donations from the Esbeck family, the building was outfitted and became the Family History and Genealogy Center.

The Center acts as the museum's research library and houses one of the largest collections of materials on Danish immigrants in the United States, including many rare and unique items. The Center also supports museum exhibitions and collections and is open to the public for research. Since 1996, the Center has assisted many individuals in finding links to their Danish immigrant past and has located lost relatives for both Danish and American genealogists. Recently, the Center has expanded and is now referred to as the Genealogy & Education

Center. It has its own thoughtfully curated exhibit, and, with a Youth and Community Educator on staff, the Center is now involved with outreach and cultural and educational programming for all ages.

Dennis Andersen continues to contribute to the museum in more ways than one. "I find that the museum can provide a lot of opportunities for members, especially board members, to get involved in one or more functions that currently exist within the museum operations. For example, the museum has the Jens Jensen Prairie Landscape Park, archives collections and management, genealogy, development, facilities management, educational programs, programs reaching out to national audiences, and additional opportunities. Finding an area to concentrate that meets your specific interest can provide a sense of fulfillment." Dennis is currently sponsoring the museum's Brown Bag Lunch series, the continuous acquisitions of fine art by Danish American artists, and other annual programs as they materialize.

A NEW NAME (2013)

Times had changed since the founding of The Danish Immigrant Museum. Fewer members, visitors, and volunteers identified themselves as Danish

immigrants; more people were one, two, or three generations removed from their immigrant ancestors. In October 2013, the museum officially adopted the name Museum of Danish America. This name change symbolized growth and expansion, as well as reflecting a changing demographic and nation.

While the name may have changed, the logo has remained the same since the museum's founding. It was designed by Helen Stub who served on the museum's board. Within the logo, the outline of the building can be seen.

ACROSS THE NATION: TRAVELING EXHIBITIONS (2013)

During John Mark Nielsen's time as a director, traveling exhibitions became a trademark of the Museum of Danish America, and these exhibits are something the museum continues to cherish.

According to John Mark, traveling exhibits are "something [the museum has] to do. If we can't bring the public to Elk Horn, then we have to take our exhibitions to the people. One of the ways to do that is through traveling exhibitions. We began with *Danish Design*, and since then, we've done a number of exhibitions that have traveled across the United States.

Traveling exhibits are a way to raise awareness for our museum in various communities."

Recent traveling exhibitions include *Papirklip: A Global and Timeless Art* and *New Nordic Cuisine*. Both exhibits have been very popular and have put the Museum of Danish America on the map.

One traveling exhibit holds a very special place in Annette Andersen's heart: "*Papirklip* has been my lifesaver. A number of years ago, I stumbled upon the Germans from Pennsylvania who had a long tradition of *papirklip*. I began to read some books and pamphlets about it, and it caught my attention. Not long after that, I had my first chance to go to Denmark where I learned about Danish patterns. I fell in love with the patterns. Since then, I have just loved *papirklip*. I have taught it to kids, adults, and even the elderly at the retirement home."

In partnership with the museum, Annette and her family sponsored the traveling exhibition: "It was very special when the museum made the *Papirklip* exhibition. My work was even featured in it. It was a traveling exhibition which was wonderful because it was accessible to far more people."

FOCUSING ON THE FUTURE (2023)

Fundraising has always been a central part of making the museum a reality. At a base level, the museum raises money to fund its day-to-day operations, but it also raises money so it can remain a national center for the Danish-American community.

"One day, three ladies came to visit us and learn about what we were doing, and they each gave one dollar. So, that was the

beginning of the museum—three dollars. Well, we didn't have much support in the beginning. We paid for everything ourselves. Every person on the committee paid for his or her own travel and lodging expenses. We had no funding whatsoever," Signe Betsinger remembered.

Rick Burns, a former director of the museum, is credited with helping ensure the future of the museum by spearheading an effort to create an endowment fund.

"The future of a museum is based on whether you have enough money. We were very focused on paying the bills each month, which meant that we had no money left for savings when the month was over. This is where the endowment fund comes in. A gentleman came to the museum one day with \$100,000 dollars, and asked 'What can you do with that, Rick?'"

Rick Burns had been thinking of creating an endowment fund for a long time, so he decided to present the idea to the gentleman: "He found the idea interesting, and the \$100,000 dollars became the beginning of the Holger Danske Endowment Fund. It was named after the legendary Danish hero Holger Danske who, according to the myth, will rise up and save the nation when or if Denmark should ever find itself in its greatest peril. It was the same idea with the endowment fund, as donations to the museum were very dependent on the economy. A bad economy means there will be fewer donations, whereas a good economy provides a better environment for donations. Thus, running a museum is very dependent upon bigger structural trends in society. For example, during the Great Recession, the endowment fund rose to the occasion and was a lifesaver for the museum."

Shortly thereafter, another person left the museum a million dollars when they passed away. The money was earmarked for the endowment fund.

"You need to show success in order to continue to have success. When we suddenly had an endowment fund worth over a million dollars, we could advertise and encourage people to be a part of it."

An endowment fund is not the only thing that ensures the museum's longevity. During John Mark Nielsen's time as a director, "assuring the museum's financial viability was always foremost in [his] mind. This meant [constantly] reaching out, telling donors 'Here's our need,' doing the annual summer and end-of-year appeals, and doing a lot of traveling because our members are scattered across the country."

Other gifts to the museum came through bequests, which is when an individual leaves an amount of their estate to an institution.

"We had some very generous bequests. One of these was Wayne Alwill, a bachelor farmer, who left his estate to three Iowa museums. Luckily, we were one of these. He left over a million dollars to each of these institutions, and it came right at the time of the 2008 financial crisis. It enabled us to invest in our endowment but also assured us that we had appropriate cash flow. We did not have to terminate any staff during the financial crisis. The combination of fundraising, bequests, and a staff that was sensitive and able to adjust to uncertain cash flow allowed us to improve programming and grow the museum. This enabled us to accomplish so much for the Museum of Danish America," John Mark said.

**DANISH DREAMING
(JUNE 24, 2023)**

Where will we be when the museum celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2033?

Over the past 40 years, many of the procedures of the museum have been modernized, but the museum still champions the same mission—we still preserve and promote this Danish dream.

To this day, Signe Betsinger remembers when she saw the museum for the first time: “I’ll never forget when I drove on that east-west road above the museum. I turned in, and there it was. It was such a thrill.”

In many ways, I felt the same way when I arrived on a hot June day at the very beginning of my internship. I believe this is how many of our guests feel when they see the building.

During my time here, I learned that a museum like this is based on the dedication of a group of passionate people who share a dream. While some may have had doubts about that dream’s success, they kept going. I have come to understand that it also takes a village; volunteers are the backbone of institutions like the Museum of Danish America, and donors and their goodwill are essential for museum operation—especially in a country like the United States where the government does not support institutions as they do in Denmark. It requires a lot of dedication.

It has been quite interesting to research, interview, and travel around Danish America. It has been moving to visit the places where it happened and to talk with people who made it happen—people whose names you have seen on documents and files in the basement.

It makes me proud as a Dane with a deep fascination for the United States to know that a place like this exists on the prairie of southwest Iowa.

I wish the greatest museum in the universe a very happy birthday! May the next 40 years be golden and bright.

“The museum is much more than a building with exhibitions and artifacts inside. The museum is about the spirit of Danish America and those who worked to preserve it.” – RICK BURNS

≈ A recent photo of the museum. Photo: Museum of Danish America.



SINCE
1983

40 years of celebrating danish roots and american dreams

1983 – The Danish Immigrant Museum is incorporated in the State of Iowa

1985 – Artifact collections begin

1988 – Groundbreaking for the museum building

1990 – Bedstemor’s House given to the museum

1994 – Museum building opens to the public

2000 – Jens Dixen cabin moves from North Dakota to museum grounds

2003 – Family History & Genealogy Center opens on Main Street, later renamed the Genealogy & Education Center

2012 – Jens Jensen Prairie Landscape Park planted

2013 – “Museum of Danish America” adopted as a new name

2014 – Christensen Curatorial Center opens

2017 – Accredited by the American Alliance of Museums

2023 – Museum’s 40th anniversary



- 1 - Victor Borge visits the museum’s construction site
- 2 - A collection of artifacts in Visual Storage
- 3 - Ambassador and Mrs. (Karen) Peter Dyvig’s Arrival for the Grand Opening Pictured from left to right with their hosts Lowell and Marilyn Kramme and daughter Maria along with Jørgen Grunnet, Minister Counselor at the Danish Embassy
- 4 - Volunteer Neoma Steen examining an artifact in the collection
- 5 - Volunteers fill flower beds in front of the museum building in the mid-1990s

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS

building a Collection

BY JULIA JESSEN

Registrar

The first object accessioned into the permanent collection of the Museum of Danish America is a book entitled *The Danish Texans* by John L. Davis (Fig. 1). It's an unassuming volume, just 122 pages and about 7 inches wide and 9 inches tall. The book may not seem particularly important, but it marked the start of a collection that would grow to number over 45,000 items, including object, archival, and library collections. As the museum celebrates its 40th anniversary, it's only appropriate to take a look back at some of the earliest objects and stories that started the museum's collection.

When Cynthia Forde-Beatty donated *The Danish Texans* in 1985, the museum's first director, June Sampson, wrote to thank her for her donation saying, "I hope that you noticed that your gift was the first accession into the museum's collection—the first one processed to become a part of our educational collection. It is a good

beginning for us, I think!" June recognized the significance of this first donation, but Cynthia probably didn't think much of it at the time. Today, she doesn't really remember giving *The Danish Texans* to the museum, but she does remember the incredible process of watching an ambitious idea become a reality. "It was so interesting to me when we first heard the idea [of a Danish museum in Elk Horn]," she said. "There was such excitement!"

As an Elk Horn resident, Cynthia was a huge supporter of the museum from the beginning, and she continued to support the museum even after her move to Texas in 1981 by serving on the museum's newly formed national advisory council. Cynthia kept up on all Elk Horn news through tapes sent to her by her friend, Ardis Overgaard Petersen. In the tapes, Ardis would describe each new happening. Even with these regular updates, Cynthia remembers her surprise on returning home and experiencing the new developments, "How wonderful it was to go home to Elk Horn and discover it took a whole day of sightseeing! It was just an incredible joy to see those dreams realized."

ICONS OF DANISH AMERICA

As donations continued to be received and processed in that first year of collecting and accessioning, multiple objects often thought of as emblematic of Danish America arrived. These donations started areas of the collection in which MoDA continues to be particularly strong.

One such area includes the first trunk in the museum's collection (Fig. 2). This trunk was donated by Laura Steffensen, and it belonged to her in-laws, Mr. and Mrs. Jens Steffensen, and their family. It came with them on their journey to America in

1914 until they settled in Audubon, Iowa. In a letter Laura wrote in 1984 when she was offering the

trunk to the museum, she expressed that she was "Happy to have something to give to the museum."

Another object often associated with Danish Americans is the *aebleskiver* pan. The first *aebleskiver* pan in our collection came from Agnes Johnson (Fig. 3). It belonged to her grandmother, Johanne Maren Hansen, and was used on a wood-burning stove. Johanne was a widow. Her husband's cousin convinced her that she should immigrate for her children's future, so in 1901, she came to the U.S. with six children ranging in age from 5 to 20.

The museum's collection of Royal Copenhagen and other Danish ceramics continues to grow, but the very first piece in the collection is a small square dish featuring an image of Frederiksborg Castle (Fig. 4). It was donated by Oscar Petersen and his wife, and it was used in their home in Chicago. After Oscar immigrated, he worked on farms in the Walnut, Iowa area and learned English and accounting. Oscar would go on to work for Green Bay Lumber, the dry goods store, and the Exchange State Bank in Walnut. During World War II, Oscar joined the army and received his citizenship. After he returned,

he went to work for Price Waterhouse in Chicago where he would go on to meet his wife who worked as a nurse. The couple returned to Walnut after retiring.

Another important area of our collection is textiles and folk costumes. The first folk costume in our collection was donated by Alan Nagel (Fig. 5). It belonged to a close family friend, Mathilde Rasmussen, who cared for Alan and his sister when they were children. Mathilde was widowed at 21 and immigrated in 1904 or 1905. Alan and his family wanted to honor Mathilde by donating her folk costume to the museum. Alan said, "We thought there was no better thing to do with it. It was our great good fortune that there was a museum in the state to ask."

These are only a few of the large number of donations that came in during the museum's first year of collecting. These and other objects signified the start of a museum collection that would go on to represent MoDA's mission of exploring the Danish-American experience, the historic and modern influences of Denmark on the United States, and the continuing story of how a nation of immigrants shape American identity. Today, when Cynthia Forde-Beatty considers how much the museum has grown, she thinks back to those earliest days of the museum. "I'm really proud of Elk Horn and the people who bought into this idea and volunteered their time and enthusiasm," she said. "I still feel wonderful happiness when I get to visit Elk Horn. At the museum, you have this great gift for Iowa and Danish descendants all over."



Fig. 3

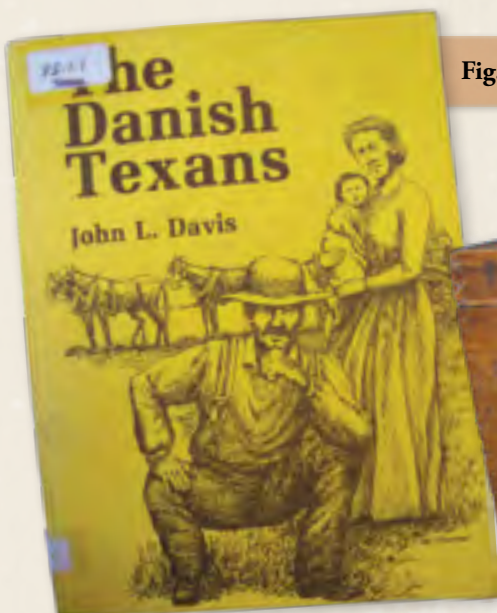


Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 4



Fig. 5

Fig. 1: Book, 1979, Gift of Cynthia Forde-Beatty, 1985.001.001
 Fig. 2: Trunk, Gift of Mrs. Laura Steffensen, 1985.016.001
 Fig. 3: Aebleskiver pan, Gift of Mrs. Agnes Johnson, 1985.055.001
 Fig. 4: Dish, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Petersen, 1985.086.001
 Fig. 5: Folk Costume, Gift of Alan F. Nagel in Memory of Mathilde Rasmussen, 1985.082.001

NATURE / CULTURE

NATUR • KULTUR

BY DIYA NAGARAJ
*Albert Ravenholt Curator of
 Danish-American Culture*

Every day, we create and shape our relationship with the environment through the decisions we make, whether consciously or subconsciously. From the food we eat to the transportation we choose to the energy that powers our buildings, humans have been changing the environment they inhabit for millennia. Today, much of the public discussion is around the idea of sustainability and climate change, and Denmark has positioned and promoted itself as a leader in the field.

Here, in the United States, the relationship between Danish and Danish-American culture and the environment is also evident, from the growth of Danish urban planning models applied to American contexts to the role of Danish Americans within the dairying industry in the United States.

The exhibit will focus on four main themes: The Urban Environment, The Natural World, Energy, and Farm to Fork. Within each section, stories, both historical and contemporary, will be explored. The stories feature case studies of individuals, cities, and businesses working on exciting projects that rewrite the way people see and interact with the environment.

In the Urban Environment, visitors are encouraged to reflect upon cities as catalysts for experimentation and change. Combining form, functionality, and focusing on the human experience with growing awareness about environmental impacts, many Danish buildings and cities have adapted to changing weather patterns and reduced their environmental footprint in ways that are effective in mitigating environmental impacts while simultaneously enhancing user experience. Partnering with many US cities and private entities, Danish firms are bringing that same sense to the

An installation of Vestas turbines in South Plains, Texas. Courtesy of Vestas Wind Systems A/S.

American context, creating important and interesting projects that address the needs of 21st-century cities. New architectural materials are being explored, drawing inspiration from the buildings of bygone centuries. Denmark is ranked amongst the best, if not the best, countries for bicycling; this exhibit will invite people to reflect upon how that came to be, how bicycling intersects with ideas on Danish design, and how American cities are also shifting ideas around transportation.

The Natural World reflects upon the historical ideas of nature, such as Lutheran pastor and hymn writer N.F.S. Grundtvig's use of animals in his sermons, as well as more contemporary debates around the idea of "wilderness." With limited "wilderness" areas in Denmark, for many Danes, the perception of nature is sometimes different from that in America where large parts of the country have been preserved to keep them as "wild" as possible. In an attempt to bring back natural processes and support native species, Denmark has some areas that are part of "rewilding" projects. This offers an interesting contrast in perspectives and understandings when compared to the United States. Did you know that Danes



EXHIBITIONS

An Exmoor pony that is part of Rewilding Mols, a project to reintroduce large herbivores in hopes of improving species diversity and creating more "natural" habitats.



Cows "dancing" on Økodag, a day where the grass-fed cows are released onto the pasture after spending winter indoors.

and Danish-Americans were an important part of protecting what is now Indiana Dunes National Park?

It is difficult to discuss Denmark and the environment without thinking of wind turbines. Vestas is one of the best-known companies and one of the top manufacturers of the turbines found in America. However, the story of the Danish wind industry begins much earlier than the last fifty years. In Iowa, wind turbines are scattered across the landscape and generate enough electricity to cater to the needs of the equivalent of 2.5 million homes. The exhibit will explore what prompted the development of, and focus on, wind energy in particular, but it also examines how other systems such as biomass and district heating have been a part of the Danish energy transition. Both countries are signatories to the Paris Agreement and are currently working together to share best practices, explore new technologies, and create a more carbon-neutral energy grid.

From the rise of New Nordic Cuisine to the role that Danish-Americans played in the development of American agriculture in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, food and food production is an important facet of exploration in understanding historical and contemporary relationships to the environment. Both Denmark and the United States have significant agrarian

pasts and presents, making it an important aspect of cultural identity for many people. Danish immigrants and their descendants played a critical role in the development of the American agricultural system by sharing knowledge of cooperatives and technology that had made Danish agriculture successful in the late 19th century. The first dairy cooperative in the United States was founded by Danish Americans; dairy cooperatives remain present in the United States today with Organic Valley remaining one of the most visible examples.

These stories and more will be explored as part of *Nature-Culture / Natur-Kultur*, which will open on June 22, 2023.

The opening of the exhibit coincides with the Danish American Heritage Society's "Ecologies and Ethnicity" conference, taking place in Elk Horn from June 22 – 24, as well as the museum's 40th anniversary celebration on June 24th. For more information about these events, you can check out <https://www.danishmuseum.org/visit/events>.

In addition, a series of virtual and in-person programs will be offered to explore different themes and topics in greater depth—keep an eye out on Facebook and our website for more information!

Interested in bringing these stories to your community? Traveling banners as well as virtual/in-person presentations will be available! Email diya.nagaraj@danishmuseum.org for more information.

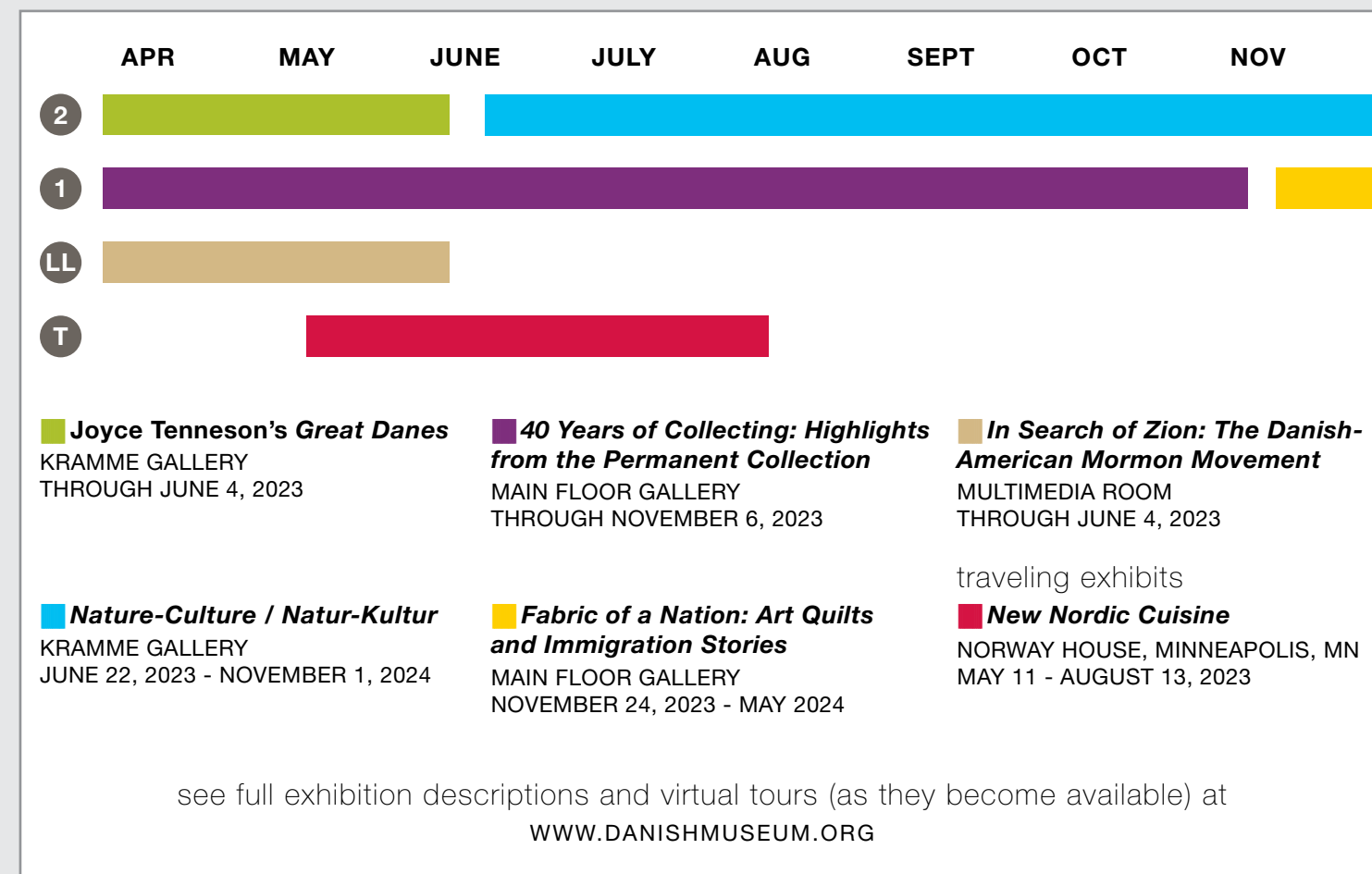
Generous support for this exhibit is provided by Humanities Iowa, the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs, Marnie Jensen & Kenny Bogus, Roy & Patricia Hougen, and Anna Thomsen Holliday.

Pigs at Troldgaarden, an organic farm in Denmark.



exhibitions

2023 - 2024



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the wall that Talks

SPRING 2023
DANISH IMMIGRANT
WALL OF HONOR

Christian K. Nelson | Column 28 | Row 19 | Year 1893 | Laguna Hills, CA

Danish Immigrant, C.K. Nelson, Invents the Eskimo Pie

Danish immigrant and inventor of the Eskimo Pie, Christian K. Nelson, is registered on the Wall of Honor, and his special story is recorded at the museum. From his birth in Denmark to the happy combination of chocolate and ice cream at his shop in Onawa, Iowa, to his successful collaboration with Russell C. Stover and Reynolds Metals, Nelson's inventive achievements are recognized at the museum. In 1992, a niece placed her uncle, Christian K. Nelson, on the museum's Wall of Honor.

Christian Kent Nelson was born in Grumstrup, Denmark in 1893 and immigrated to the United States with his family when he was a mere six weeks old. They settled first in Illinois before moving to Wisconsin. Eventually, the family settled in Iowa.

Christian grew up in Moorhead, Iowa, where his father, Peter D. Nelson, started a creamery business. The entire family helped, and the business prospered.

In 1916, Christian graduated with a teacher's certificate from the University of Nebraska and joined the Army two years later. After his discharge, Nelson settled in Onawa, Iowa, where he worked as a science teacher and ran a small ice cream shop. While he was a teacher, Christian would open the shop before school, close during classes, and reopen when school was out.

The story goes that the idea for Eskimo Pie began when a young boy walked into Nelson's ice cream



Christian Kent Nelson, Inventor of the Eskimo Pie. Portrait from 1922.

shop and couldn't make up his mind between ice cream or a chocolate bar. When Nelson asked why he didn't just buy both, the boy replied, "Sure I know I want 'em both, but I only got a nickel." The comment got Nelson thinking, "I wonder if it would be possible to freeze a coating of chocolate around a slice of ice cream?" Inspired, Nelson set to work and ultimately created a product that launched the ice cream bar industry.

COMBINING HOT AND COLD

Nelson experimented tirelessly with different methods of sticking melted chocolate to frozen

BY SHELLI LARSON
Development Associate

ice cream. After numerous failed attempts, this young Dane found success by dipping ice cream bricks into a chocolate and cocoa butter mixture heated to 90° and freezing it immediately in a large wooden bucket full of ice and salt with an empty drum in the center (it was similar to the home ice cream freezers so common in that day, without the crank). The chocolate solidified instantly and stuck to the ice cream. Success! Nelson named the bar the I-Scream-Bar, and it sold well in his store. It was the fall of 1920.

The I-Scream-Bar was a success in Onawa, but would it retain its popularity when distributed to a different, larger audience? An opportunity was presented at a local fireman's event late in the spring of 1921. Nelson made 500 ice cream bars and took them to the event. Word of the candy-coated ice cream treat spread, and it quickly sold out. Nelson was sure that he had created something bound to have universal appeal—if he could secure financial backing, find companies to manufacture it, and partner with someone who had marketing experience to help him promote his product.

RUSSELL STOVER

Nelson set out to find the capital to perfect his sweet treat. He went from town to town and was met with constant rebuffs. "Cover ice cream with hot chocolate? Ridiculous!" Finally, in July 1921, while consulting a patent lawyer in Omaha, Nebraska, Nelson met Russell Stover who was connected with the Graham Ice Cream Company. Nelson, 28, explained his creation to Stover, 33. Stover was enthralled with the idea, and the two men immediately drew up a simple partnership agreement to produce and market the product, which they named "Eskimo Pie."

A MILLION PIES A DAY

The men contracted with the Hutchison Ice Cream Company of Des Moines, Iowa to manufacture the ice cream treat. The factory could not keep up with demand, and the partners licensed the formula to 1,500 manufacturers all over the country in exchange for royalties per dozen sold. In April 1922, the *New York Times* stated that the partners had received \$30,000 a week in royalties in the first year. By the spring of 1922, a million Eskimo Pies were being sold every day.

Magazine and newspaper articles of the time say that the Eskimo Pie gained national fame overnight.

Sioux City Journal, 13 Apr 1922

"Probably no innovation of recent years designed to meet the cravings of a sweet tooth has met with such instantaneous success in New York, Chicago, and other cities."

PROBLEMS ARISE WITH THE PIES

The craze for Eskimo Pie was so intense that competing manufacturers soon came up with similar—but slightly different—processes for making frozen ice cream pies. Infringements on the patent that Nelson obtained on January 24, 1922, were so common that fighting them drained the company's resources. At one point, Nelson and Stover were paying \$4,000 per day in legal fees to defend the patent, a battle which they ultimately lost.

By the end of 1922, Nelson's invention was clouded in uncertainty. Nelson and Stover were having trouble making money; they encountered problems when collecting royalties from the many licensees and were drained of their money by salesmen's commissions, demonstrators' salaries, and lawyers' fees. In 1923, Russell Stover sold his share of the company for \$25,000 and moved to Denver, Colorado to start the candy company that bears his name.

REYNOLDS METALS

In 1924, Nelson sold the company to R.S. Reynolds of the United States Foil Company who made the foil wrappers for Eskimo Pies. Eskimo Pie became a subsidiary of the United States Foil Company, which later became Reynolds Metals Company.

Nelson retired to California when he was still a young man in his thirties. By 1935, Nelson grew bored of retirement and rejoined Eskimo Pie where he continued to develop new ice cream products and ways to store and deliver them. He stayed on for many years as an executive before finally retiring in 1961.

Nelson married Myrtle Rhodes in 1926, and the couple settled in California. The Nelsons had no children.

The company Nelson founded, Eskimo Pie Corp., sold \$61 million worth of dessert treats in 1991, the year before his death.

Nelson died in Orange County, California in 1992 at the age of 98.

The Eskimo Pie Corporation was made independent of Reynolds in 1992 and was sold to CoolBrands International the same year Nelson

Nelson and Stover kicked off their venture with an extensive advertising campaign.

died. In 2007, CoolBrands sold Eskimo Pie to Nestlé Dreyer's Grand Ice Cream. In 2021, The Nestlé-owned company overhauled its brand name and logo, renaming the chocolate-covered vanilla ice cream bar Edy's Pie.

As "Eskimo Pie" is a brand name, it is used in this article. However, it is important to acknowledge that the word "Eskimo" has a racist history and is no longer used to refer to the indigenous people of Arctic regions. It was imposed by non-indigenous people on the native peoples of Alaska, Greenland, Siberia, and northern Canada. The indigenous people of these areas are known as the Inuit, Yup'ik, and Aleut peoples, each with their own distinct traditions, histories, and languages.

DES MOINES REGISTER—OVER 110,000 PAID CIRCULATION. M-11. FREE VET BONUS AS ISSUE IN PRIMARY. Beverage May Run on Relief Aid Plan. BY MARK WILLIAMS. Washington, Dec. 1.—(Special)

YEA BO I should say we do have ESKIMO PIES Not only in Vanilla, Chocolate and Strawberry flavor, but in combinations of all flavors. ESKIMO PIE is a chocolate covered, tin foil wrapped Ice Cream bar that can be eaten like a chocolate candy bar. Handled at Our DAIRY STORE and by our dealers REICHARDT'S WHETSTONE'S RACINE'S THE ACADEMY 10 Cents Buy Sidwell's Products for Quality SIDWELL'S The Home of Pasteurized Dairy Products

Coming Soon You've Never Heard of It Eskimo Pie Ridgway Electric Freeport, Ill. THIS SALE WILL END SATURDAY AT 10 P. M. F. A. SCHULZ & COMPANY Phone Main 791 22 West Galena St.

ESKIMO PIE What Is It? It Is Ice Cream in a New Form The process of making and the name are controlled by the Russell Stover Co., of Chicago. Eskimo Pie was first introduced a few weeks ago in Des Moines, Ia., and has spread like wild fire over the entire country. Such enthusiasm over a new confection has never been known before. We have taken out a license from the Russell-Stover Co., for the manufacture and sale of Eskimo Pie and expect to start manufacturing in our own plant from Oak Brand Ice Cream within the next few days. In the meantime we will supply our trade with Eskimo Pie made in Dubuque, Ia. Freeport Dairy & Produce Co.

ESKIMO PIE TRADE MARK REGISTERED A NATIONALLY KNOWN PRODUCT Now here and there and everywhere, You'll find this new confection From Frosty-land, a dainty rare, A frozen pie perfection. 10c A new joy for a nation! If they were "hot cakes" they couldn't go faster—throughout all America. A million and more a day are being sold to those who love good ice cream and luscious chocolate, made into a tempting chocolate bar and delivered to you in a sanitary protective wrapper of pure tin foil. Sold wherever ice cream is sold. Russell Stover Company Mellers Building Chicago

Sixty Days Old—and a giant. Ice cream makers everywhere throughout America are now manufacturing and selling Eskimo Pie under process and product patents, allowed and pending. The following foremost ice cream manufacturers are the DES MOINES licensees of the Russell Stover Company. Dealers everywhere can now order Eskimo Pies from their regular ice cream source of supply. Throughout Iowa the following manufacturers will supply them: Furnas Ice Cream Co. Hutchinson's Purity Ice Cream Co.

- 1. Iowa City Press Citizen | Iowa City, Iowa • 3 Nov 1921 Yea Bo, I should say we do have ESKIMO PIES
2. The Muscatine Journal | Muscatine, Iowa • 2 Dec 1921 Eskimo Pie? Ain't It a Grand and Oh a Glorious Taste
3. Muncie Evening Press | Muncie, Indiana • 7 Dec 1921 Coming Soon, You've Never Heard of It, Eskimo Pie
4. Freeport Journal Standard | Freeport, Illinois • 12 Dec 1921 Eskimo Pie, What Is It? It Is Ice Cream in a New Form
5. The Des Moines Register | Des Moines, Iowa • 8 Jan 1922 Eskimo Pie, A Nationally Known Product

remembering

Ramona Luella Esbeck

BY AMELIA JUHL
Communications Specialist

“Future researchers will, no doubt, be recording family history on tape recorders and computer microfilm. The important thing is that it is done.”

– RAMONA ESBECK

Ramona Luella Esbeck was born on October 7, 1912, to William and Sena (Hansen) Esbeck on a farm east of Elk Horn, Iowa in Audubon County. She was the eldest daughter and the second of seven children. Ramona was baptized on November 24, 1912, and confirmed in her faith in 1927 at the Elk Horn Lutheran Church in Elk Horn, Iowa where she remained a member until her passing.



Cheese Apple Crisp

- 6 medium apples (2 pounds)
- 1/4 cup water
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice
- 1 1/2 cups sugar or 2 cups syrup
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 cup flour
- 1/3 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup butter
- 3/8 pound (about 1 1/2 cups) grated mild cheese

Peel, quarter, core, and slice apples. Arrange slices in a shallow greased baking dish. Add water and lemon juice. Mix sugar, cinnamon, flour, and salt. Work in butter to form a crumbly mixture. Grate cheese. Add to topping mixture and stir lightly. Spread mixture over apples and bake in moderate oven at 350 degrees until apples are tender and crust is crisp (about 30-35 minutes). Serve with a sauce or garnish with whipped cream and 1/2 of a maraschino cherry.

“The apple crisp is unusual in that it has a cheese flavor given by the addition of a grated mild cheese. It is topped with lemon sauce.”*

* Lemon Sauce
Recipe on page 34

IOWA STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH—DIVISION OF VITAL STATISTICS
BIRTH CERTIFICATE

(Explanation)
In past years many birth records were not filed at the time of birth as provided by statute, due to the neglect of those charged with the duty of filing said record. This affidavit is provided to take care of such cases and may be executed by the attending physician, midwife, parent, nearest relative or other person having full knowledge of the facts of this birth. NOT ACCEPTABLE IF SIGNED BY THE PARTY FOR WHOM IT IS MADE.

AFFIDAVIT
I, Wm. Esbeck, being duly sworn, depose and say that I am 59 years of age; that I have known the person named herein for life years; that I reside at Esbe in the COUNTY OF Audubon, STATE OF IOWA; that the answers given to the following questions are true and correct as I verily believe.

FULL NAME OF CHILD Ramona Luella Esbeck
PLACE OF BIRTH: STATE OF IOWA, COUNTY OF Audubon CITY OF _____
TOWNSHIP OF Oakfield STREET _____

Sex of Child	Twin, triplet, or other	Number in order of birth	Legitimate	Date of birth
<u>Female</u>			<u>YES</u>	<u>Oct. 7 1912</u> Month Day Year

Name of physician, midwife, or other person attending at this birth Dr. W. R. Koob

FATHER		MOTHER	
Full Name <u>Wm. Esbeck</u>	Full Maiden Name <u>Sena Hansen</u>	Birthplace <u>Oakfield Sup, Audubon Co, Ia</u>	Birthplace <u>Oakfield Sup, Audubon Co, Ia</u>
State or Country <u>Iowa</u>	State or Country <u>Iowa</u>	Color <u>White</u>	Color <u>White</u>
Age at time of this birth <u>26</u> Years	Age at time of this birth <u>24</u> Years	Occupation at time of this birth <u>Farmer</u>	Occupation at time of this birth <u>Housewife</u>

That the basis of my knowledge for answers given above is as follows _____

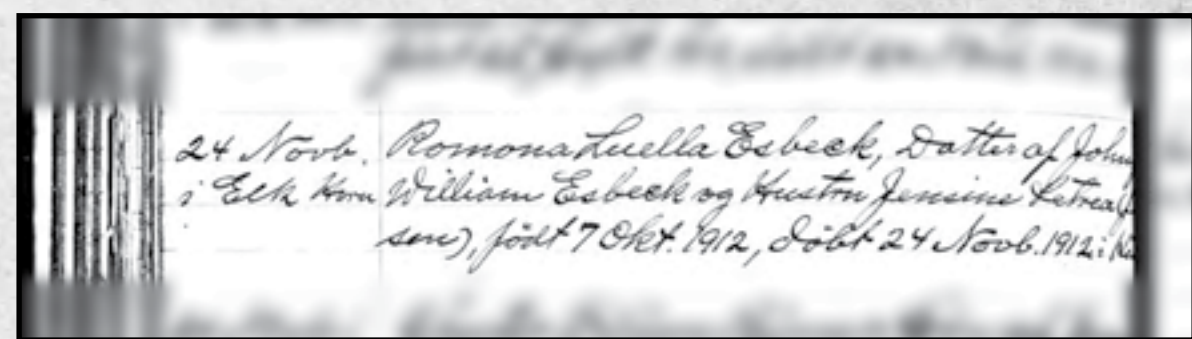
(Sign Here) Wm Esbeck Name Wm Esbeck Relationship Father
STATE OF IOWA COUNTY, SS. Audubon

On this 2 day of June, 1945, before me signed Wm. Esbeck and makes oath that the information given in this instrument subscribed by him is true and correct as he verily believes.

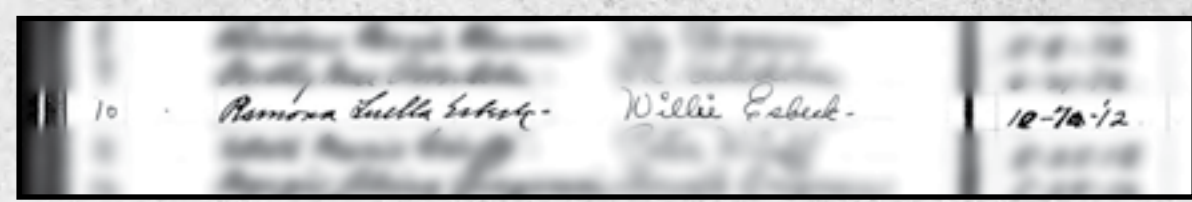
Clerk Dist. John A. Jones Notary Public in and for Audubon County, State of Iowa

My commission expires _____ Do not write below these lines

Signature _____ Iowa County Registrar
OR Signature J. Chambliss (State Registrar) JUN 8 1945
Signature Yates Dinning M.D. JUN 8 1945



A record of Ramona's baptism in 1912. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Archives; Elk Grove Village, Illinois; Congregational Records



A record detailing Ramona's confirmation in 1927. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Archives; Elk Grove Village, Illinois; Congregational Records

Ramona attended a one-room rural school in Oakfield Township, Audubon County. Danish was the language spoken at home, and the family traits of industriousness, diligence, optimism, and far-sightedness were impressed upon Ramona and her siblings at an early age.



Ramona's high school graduation photo. Photo courtesy of Exira-Elk Horn-Kimballton High School.

Growing up, Ramona was also a 4-H Club member. When she was 11, Ramona wrote of her life and her family's ambitious showings at the county fair to a newspaper columnist named Uncle Howard: "I live on a farm six miles west of Exira. I go to school. I have a little more than a mile to walk. I am in the sixth grade and am 11 years old. I am interested in club work. I fed two purebred Hereford heifers and showed them at Elk Horn and Audubon fairs last year. I am feeding a baby beef this year. His name is Dandy Domino. We have about 60 calves for the show at Elk Horn district fair." Uncle Howard asked Ramona to "write later and tell [the newspaper] about selling [her] baby beef." Ramona's father, William, may have piqued her interest in 4-H and livestock as he helped organize 4-H clubs in Audubon County and was interested in the development of better-quality livestock, livestock management, and feeding practices.

Ramona was a 4-H Club member for ten years; one year, she was chosen as Audubon County's 4-H Club Health Champion and represented the county at the Iowa State Fair. In 1928, she served as President of the Audubon County 4-H Girl's Club. She learned from the experience, and it's evident she cherished 4-H and the lessons it instilled.

As the eldest daughter, Ramona was a big help to her mother. Every morning before she left for high school, she made all the beds and dry-mopped the floors in all the rooms. In 1930, Ramona graduated from Elk Horn

High School, and in 1931, Ramona attempted to win a car by selling the most subscriptions to the local newspaper, *The Elk Horn-Kimballton Review*. She soon discovered that introducing herself as the granddaughter of Lars N. Esbeck contributed to her ability to produce a sale. Due to the community's favorable recollections of her grandfather and her tireless campaigning, Ramona won the competition and the car.

After completing a year of teacher training in Shenandoah, Iowa, Ramona taught at a one-room rural school in Oakfield Township for six years, much like the one she attended as a child. In 1937, Ramona served as President of the Audubon County Rural Teacher's Association.

While attending Iowa State Teacher's College in Cedar Falls, Iowa, now the University of Northern Iowa, Ramona was one of three senior girls in Iowa state colleges to be awarded the Imogen B. Emery scholarship. In 1941, Ramona received her Bachelor of Arts in Home Economics. Ramona taught Home Economics for two years in Walnut, Iowa before teaching in Atlantic, Iowa for four years.

Following her teaching career, she worked as a home service representative of the Gas Service Company in Kansas City, Missouri for one and a half years.

When Ramona's mother, Sena, was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, Ramona routinely drove from Ames to Elk Horn to care for her mother. The family faced many trials and tribulations, but they always came together to care for one another.

In 1948, Ramona joined the Iowa State Extension Service and taught for eight years as the home economist for Black Hawk County. While serving as the home economist, Ramona gave educational speeches on various subjects; she described proper diets for polio patients, shared her favorite nutritious recipes,



HONORS EXTENDED — These extension workers were honored at Iowa State College Thursday with citations for outstanding achievement in the extension field. Left to right are Ramona Esbeck, Ames, former Black Hawk County extension home economist; R. Pearl Kelsey, Hampton, representing the entire Franklin County extension staff; Grace Bacon, Cedar Rapids; Paul Barger, Waterloo; and Thomas A. Robb, Washington.

Ramona, left, being honored for outstanding achievement in the extension field in 1955. The Waterloo-Cedar Falls Courier · 1956

discussed how to make better choices as a consumer, and talked about what one should eat to live. It is said that Ramona regularly exhorted the benefits of drinking a glass of milk per day and extolled the virtues of exercise and disciplined eating.

Joining the state staff was a wonderful opportunity. In 1955, she received Iowa State Extension Services Outstanding Achievement Award, and in 1956, she became the State 4-H Program Leader. Janet Martin, a former colleague of Ramona, "was a young 4-H staff member when [she] worked with Ramona in the Waterloo area. [Janet] was part of a group of young staff who had lots of creative and crazy ideas; [Ramona] was patient, listened, and had a good sense of humor. She was always immaculately dressed. Ramona was an excellent programmer and helped us

learn those skills. She was a talented and impressive woman and leader." Ramona was also known to be well-organized, friendly, a pleasure to work with, and a true professional. She helped those she worked with be better staff and, more importantly, better people.

In 1960, Ramona received her master's degree from Iowa State University. She retired from Iowa State Extension Services after 29 years.

Upon retiring, Ramona moved into a townhome with a basement where she set up a workshop for her rose maling. Although Ramona was proud to be 100% Danish, she had an interest in all things Scandinavian. Rose maling is primarily a Norwegian folk art, but it is also common in Sweden. In addition to being a member of the Elk Horn Lutheran Church, Ramona was also



While serving as Black Hawk County extension's home economist, Ramona often shared her favorite recipes. Several recipes are highlighted in this article. The Waterloo-Cedar Falls Courier · 1955.

Lemon Sauce

- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon corn starch
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 cup boiling water
- salt
- 1 tablespoon grated lemon rind

Mix sugar and cornstarch. Add the boiling water and a pinch of salt. Boil until thick and clear. Continue cooking over hot water for 20 minutes. Remove from stove. Add butter, lemon juice, and the lemon rind. A bit of nutmeg may be added if desired.



a member of the Bethesda Lutheran Church in Ames which has a large Norwegian membership. The church held Scandinavian days where lots of artists displayed their work. This is where Ramona's family believes she was first introduced to the art of rosemaling. She registered for and attended classes in Ames and Decorah as she perfected



A rosemaling plate Ramona painted in 1981. Decorative Plate, Gift of David Esbeck, UER.2022.002.001. Photo: Museum of Danish America

her skill. Although it's not known how many pieces of rosemaling art she produced, it's likely she produced more than 100. These pieces were graciously gifted to her family and friends, and one decorative plate is kept in the museum's collection.

In addition to rosemaling, Ramona loved to travel. She would often regale her family with stories and photos from her latest trip to Spain or cruise in the Caribbean. She was an excellent cook and baker who always brought amazing cookies to family gatherings. She was also known to attend dances with a longtime friend.

Ramona moved into Northcrest, a retirement community, in 1983, and she was an active participant in programs and activities. She was known to take significant walks every day, and she was also an avid bridge player who would extend the invitation to play to new Northcrest residents upon their arrival. Craig Esbeck's favorite moments with his aunt Ramona "were around a kitchen table playing hearts or dominoes. She was a fierce competitor, but at the same time her sense of humor and fun blossomed during these games."

Throughout her life, Ramona received many awards and was a member of several clubs and institutions. She was a member of Theta Theta Epsilon and served as the club's President in 1940; she was an active member of the Ames Women's Club since 1975 and held many leadership positions. She was a member of the National Retired Federal Employees and Epsilon Sigma Phi. Ramona received the Iowa Centenarian Award from the Iowa Department of Aging in 2012, and in 2019, Ramona received a Membership Award for 75 years of membership with the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences.

In 2013, Ramona was honored with a brick on the Plaza of Heroines at Iowa State University (ISU) by Norma Hensley. Norma was a 4-H Club leader who remembered Ramona from her county visits early in her career. When Norma began her ISU career in 1960, Ramona was there. When Norma visited

Northcrest for a tour as she prepared to move, Ramona was there. Ramona became Norma's "close apartment neighbor and dear friend." In fact, Norma became one of Ramona's many bridge protégés and was filled with "admiration, wonderment, and thanksgiving that this dear lady kept coming into [her] life." To Norma and many others, Ramona was a constant and steady presence.

As the Esbeck family expanded, the family gathered for reunions. Following one of these early reunions, Ramona enlisted the help of her niece, Kay Esbeck North, and they began to write and compile the Esbeck Genealogy Book. She treasured her family and worked diligently to preserve their history for future generations—the overwhelming love she felt for her family is conveyed on every carefully curated page. In this book, Ramona spoke of her interest in genealogy, "One broadens their appreciation of America and its pioneers and feels a new relationship with one's ancestors and relatives living today." A copy of the Esbeck Genealogy Book is kept at the museum's Genealogy & Education Center.

Ramona's interest in the Esbeck family's history led Dennis Andersen and Kay Esbeck to facilitate the move of the Family History and Genealogy Center in 2003. At the time, genealogy was located in the museum's loft and was in dire need of more space. Thus, genealogy moved from the museum to the current location on Main Street. Dennis Andersen provided a building that met

the museum's needs, and Kay Esbeck convinced Carl and David Esbeck to contribute money from their parents' estate to outfit the building.

Although it's unclear whether her great love of her Danish ancestry or her keen interest in genealogy led her to become a member of the museum, Ramona became a member nonetheless. She was a long-time member and the museum's oldest member at 109 years old. Ramona's very first monetary gift to the museum was made on October 8, 1985—it was a memorial gift.

Over the course of her life, Ramona became

a Lifetime Legacy Giving member, and in notifying the museum and providing signed documentation stating she would provide for the museum in her estate, Ramona became a Heritage Builder. It was her desire that the proceeds of her planned gift be designated to an endowment fund as a well-managed endowment provides long-term stability, fiscal responsibility, and financial viability. Upon her passing, countless memorials were received by the Genealogy & Education Center in her name. Her interest in the museum and its longevity can be surmised in this quote, "I wished now that I had asked [my grandmother, Anna Botilda Wolf Hansen,] what it was like growing up in Denmark; getting ready to come to America; making the trip across; and starting life

in Iowa. I'll never know what she would have responded, but The Danish Immigrant Museum underway in Elk Horn may provide some answers."

Ramona passed away on Thursday, November 4, 2021, in Ames, Iowa. She was 109 years old. She was a beloved educator, boss, teacher, friend, big sister, and aunt. She never shied away from offering advice or reminding others to shine their shoes. Her niece, Caroline Wehde, remembered Ramona as "always cheerful and positive. She was truly remarkable, and I'm honored to have been blessed by her." Ramona touched innumerable lives throughout her long, fulfilling life.

"I'm happy to think that she is now reunited with so many family and friends that she hasn't seen in such a long time."

— CRAIG ESBECK



A formal portrait of Ramona provided by Ramona's niece, Marilee Wehde.

Chicken (Meat or Fish) Salad

- 3 cups cooked chicken, cubed
- 6 hard-cooked eggs, sliced
- 1 cup diced celery
- 1/2 cup sweet pickles, chopped
- 1/3 cup cream, whipped
- 1 cup mayonnaise or boiled dressing
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

Marinate chicken (meat or fish). Mix together the salad dressing and whipped cream. Toss the other ingredients together. Combine with the dressing and serve on lettuce.

From Æ to Å

—Danish for Beginners

BY EMMELIE KRAG ADOLFSEN
Scan Design Communications Intern

Hej, jeg hedder
Emmelie!

Det danske sprog can be very difficult to learn. At the museum, we are often asked by those who want to learn a bit of Danish to film videos of Danish lessons, pronunciations, and phrases. With the museum's anniversary approaching, it is the perfect opportunity to learn some fun phrases you can use in the upcoming months.

I am by no means a Danish teacher, but here are some tips and rules of thumb that can be useful if you want to start learning Danish—even if it is just a few fun phrases!

Æ, Ø, Å

These are some of the tricky letters that are not native to the English language. As a rule of thumb, Æ sounds like the “e” in “net,” Ø sounds like “ea” in “early,” and Å is similar to the “o” in “grow.” However, do not be too surprised if it sometimes sounds different.

“H” and “d” are other letters that can seem unmanageable when learning Danish. Sometimes they should be pronounced, and sometimes they are silent. Using the speaker feature on Google Translate can help determine this if you have yet to grasp the grammar behind it!

DANISH PHRASES

In the spirit of our upcoming anniversary, I have chosen some festive phrases that I think are fun (and useful, of course). On our YouTube channel, you can find a video of me pronouncing the following sentences, so you can have a go at them yourself!

- **Hvordan har du det?** – How are you?
This is one of the tricky ones where you only pronounce the “v” in *hv*.
- **Jeg har det godt, hvad med dig?** – I’m good, how are you?
- **Hej, jeg hedder Emmelie!** – Hi, my name is Emmelie!
Hej and *hi* are pronounced very similarly. When pronouncing the “d,” it can be helpful to stick out your tongue a tiny bit—it is okay if it looks a little silly at first!
- **Ha’ en god sommer!** – Have a great summer!
- **Tillykke med jubilæet / tillykke med fødselsdagen!**
– Happy anniversary! Happy Birthday!
- **Jeg er ved at lære dansk!** – I’m learning Danish!
- **Jeg elsker kaffe og kringle!** – I love coffee and kringle!
You can use “*Jeg elsker*” as a base for most *I love*-sentences. If you want to add a verb, as in “I love to dance,” you should add “at.” *Jeg elsker at danse!*

These are just a few sentences that you can practice for our anniversary and other fun moments in life.

HERE ARE SOME OF MY TOP TIPS WHEN LEARNING ANOTHER LANGUAGE:

Be consistent

If you want to learn more than a few phrases, learning another language is all about consistency. It requires both time and dedication to understand grammar, pronunciation, and context. Using a language-learning app can help you be consistent, and you should practice a little bit every day. There are several free apps that offer Danish courses that are good for beginners.

Expose yourself to the language

If you want to learn another language, it can be useful to expose yourself to said language. If you already know some Danish, I can recommend listening to Danish podcasts about topics that interest you. If you want to stay updated about current themes and news, I recommend Genstart by DR, and if you like to listen to stories about history, I can recommend Vanvittig Verdenhistorie. Both are available on Spotify.

If you are new to Danish, I would recommend listening to Danish music and singers. This will make you more familiar with pronunciations, and it is also just very enjoyable.

You can also watch a Danish TV show or movie. When watching a foreign movie, I always recommend watching it in the original language and adding subtitles instead of dubbing. This will also get you used to pronunciations and give you an insight into Danish culture and history. TV series like *The Bridge* or *The Seaside Hotel* are available on several American streaming services.

Listening to Danish will also help you get past merely understanding words—you will also be able to understand context and phrases that do not exist in the English language. I often say that to fully understand a language, you need to understand humor and pop-culture phenomena, so staying up to date on TV shows and news can be very helpful.

Have fun

If you don’t want to feel like you’re back at school, remember that learning a language CAN be fun, even when trying to be consistent. Set goals for yourself—you want to be able to introduce yourself in Danish, you want to be able to order a coffee or give a compliment, and you want to practice for five minutes every day. Every goal counts and practicing for a few minutes is better than not practicing at all.

Learn together

Learning another language with a friend, a loved one, or even an online community can be very helpful. Learning with someone else can serve as a source of motivation, and you’ll benefit from getting to hear other people speak. In addition to reading and writing, you must practice saying words and sentences, even if it seems intimidating. What might sound great in your mind may need to be practiced out loud, and Danish is definitely one of those languages where pronunciation is tricky!

Jeg er ved at
lære dansk!

Learn Danish with me?

Ja!

Nej!

Måske!

Conserving, Educating, and Showcasing

AT THE GENEALOGY
& EDUCATION CENTER

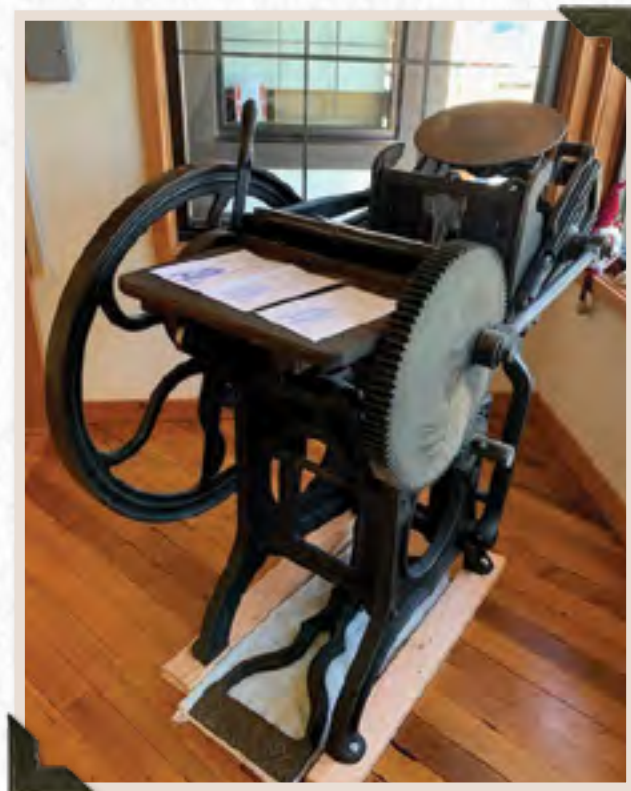
BY ALISSA LACANNE

Youth & Community Educator

In 1999, the Museum of Danish America was gifted an early 20th-century Chandler and Price letterpress that was formerly used in the local newspaper office, the *Elk Horn-Kimballton Review*. The newspaper's owner called it the "jobber" and used it to print things such as the Elk Horn community calendar. The letterpress was recently moved out of museum storage and put on display at the Genealogy and Education Center with the intent to conserve, educate, and showcase letterpress printing machinery and equipment and keep the knowledge and skills of letterpress printing alive for present and future generations.

Letterpress printing is a technique of relief printing that produces many copies by repeated direct impression of an inked, raised surface against individual sheets of paper. Originally, wooden or metal types were used and put into the "bed" or "chase" of a press. To create an impression on the paper, these types were inked and pressed against the paper to transfer the ink from the type. Modern letterpress printing uses plates made of polymer which allows designs to be created on a computer. Within the last few decades, letterpress printing has been making a comeback in greeting cards, wedding invitations, and other stationery products due to the unique look of modern letterpress printing.

To help sustain this artistic tradition here, the museum recently received a Folk Arts Learning Grant through the Iowa



Chandler and Price Letterpress, Gift of Jeannette Wilkerson, UER.1999.011.188

Department of Cultural Affairs. This grant requires the letterpress and workshops be led by a Master Artist, and the museum is fortunate to have an employee from Moglea, a Des Moines-based design and letterpress studio, here in Elk Horn. Jody LaCanne is Moglea's Lead Pressman, and he played a vital part in moving the press to the Genealogy and Education Center (that's an entirely separate article as the press weighs 1,000 pounds!). In addition to restoring the press back to working order, he has also assisted with the purchasing of inks, paper, and other supplies needed to provide hands-on workshops and programming.

In February 2023, the Elk Horn community hosted a Hygge Event, and 10 local businesses participated. The Genealogy and Education Center participated by hosting a letterpress demonstration and creating make-and-take Valentine's Day cards. We were thrilled with the turnout and the interest generated in the letterpress and how it operates.

A demo-and-souvenir activity is planned for the annual Tivoli Fest celebration on Memorial Weekend and the museum's 40th anniversary celebration in June. The possibilities of using the letterpress for many special activities and programs are endless, and it is rare to find this type of artistic tradition being shared and passed down in a rural community such as ours. With the letterpress being featured in the front of the exhibit space, this also creates many opportunities for demonstrations and classes for all ages.

When the letterpress was moved to the Center's exhibit space, we thought it was

A folk dancing costume on display at the Genealogy & Education Center. It is a copy of costumes worn at festivals on the small island near Fyn in the mid-19th century.

Danish Folk Dancing Costume, Gift of Clarice Christensen, UER.2010.002.001



A make-and-take Valentine's Day card printed for the February 2023 Hygge Event. The card was inspired by vintage Valentine's Day cards.

an opportune time to refresh the entire collection. All the artifacts now on display are used for education, including a high wheel bicycle, a Danish folk dancing costume, a hand crank telephone, and calling cards. We invite you to visit and see all the exciting changes being made to the Genealogy and Education Center. Stay tuned for new programming and events!

The high wheel bicycle belonged to the donor's father, Niels A. Lodahl. Born in Hørup, Denmark, Lodahl immigrated to the U.S. in 1927. He worked as a farmer and rural mail carrier and was known to ride the bike around the farm for fun.

High Wheel Bicycle, Gift of Vera Nyby (Lodahl), UER.2006.007.001



THE MAKING OF A MARTYR:

How a Dane Became a Hungarian Hero

BY AMANDA SKELLENGER

Genealogy Librarian & Curriculum Specialist

When you are combing through newspaper archives searching for information on family members or doing research for a specific topic, it can be easy to get distracted by other articles you come across. I must admit it does happen to me more than it probably should. In the case of one article, once it caught my eye, I couldn't help but be absorbed by the topic.

I think what initially caught my eye when scanning through articles was one titled "Bang-Jensen: Murder By Any Name." First, there was the Danish name, Jensen, and then murder? How very intriguing. Quickly scanning through the article, mentions of a body found in New York City, Soviet agents, conflict with the UN Secretary-General, and defectors facing Soviet firing squads had me quickly returning to the beginning of the story. This was my introduction to Danish Diplomat Povl Bang-Jensen and his role in the Hungarian Revolution of 1956.

Prior to my discovery in the Newspapers.com archives, I had no knowledge of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, the UN's investigation, and the impressive determination, moral character, and sheer bravery of Povl Bang-Jensen when he took a stand against the Soviet Union.

To understand why Povl Bang-Jensen's actions were important and heroic to the Hungarians, I had to understand the situation. This led me to research how it all began.

STALIN, THE COMMUNIST PARTY, AND THE WARSAW PACT

It started with Joseph Stalin—the leader of the Communist Soviet Union during and after WWII. After WWII, Hungary fell under Soviet subjugation and came under Stalin's Communist rule and his puppet government. Prior to the war, Hungary was a free democracy with multiple political parties. Following the war, political opposition to the Communist Party was consistently oppressed, oftentimes violently, and life in Hungary was very difficult.

Changes started to emerge with the death of Joseph Stalin in 1953. In the years that followed, dissension arose within the International Communist Party, resulting in the formation of several divisions within the ranks. Nikita Khrushchev eventually emerged as a leader against the old Soviet ways and called for the de-Stalinization of the party.

Hoping to secure his favor while also maintaining Communist control of the people of Hungary, Khrushchev helped establish reformist Imre Nagy as Prime Minister, replacing Stalinist Mátyás Rákosi. Life for the Hungarians had been rough under Rákosi's leadership—the economy crashed, schools were strict and state-owned, and any opposition was cruelly dealt with.



Daily News New York, New York • Friday, December 13, 1957

In spite of Rákosi's ousting, Moscow had taken measures to bind Hungary and six other satellite states of the Eastern Bloc more firmly to its rule with the creation of the Warsaw Pact on May 14, 1955. Not only was the Warsaw Pact a response to the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), but it was also a way to strengthen the Soviet military command over the countries through an "alliance."

YOU SAY YOU WANT A REVOLUTION?

Although the Warsaw Pact said the countries would adhere "to the principle of respect for the independence and sovereignty of the others and non-interference in their internal affairs," as seen in Article 8, the Soviet Union struggled to let go of what they considered theirs.

Shortly after the Warsaw Pact was signed, Austria created the Austrian State Treaty, declared itself a neutral country, and demilitarized itself. In June 1956, Poland revolted. This was met with violence and many protesters were killed, but eventually, the Soviets conceded and in early October, agreed to the Polish reformers' demands. Seeing the success that Austria and Poland had, Hungarians sought the same for themselves.

In February 1956, Khrushchev gave a speech called "On the Personality Cult and its Consequences," which criticized the Communist practices of Stalin's regime and the leaders that still held true to the Stalinist ways. Khrushchev's speech resonated with the deeply oppressed population of Hungary, and murmurs of rebellion started to grow louder in the air, especially among the intellectuals and students. They wanted an end to the constant Soviet terror, an end to heavily institutionalized life, and an end to living in severe oppression. Hungarians also wanted out of the Warsaw Pact. With the success of Poland's uprising, protests calling for major reform soon broke out across Hungary on October 23, 1956.

The students stood up first. They called for change and created a list of demands they wanted to see carried out within the national party. By mid-morning, nearly 20,000 Hungarians had gathered in Budapest at the statue of Hungarian hero Józef Bem. Communist symbols were torn down, and Stalin's statues and monuments in the city were toppled. By evening, a crowd of over 200,000 people had gathered.

The Hungarian government asked for assistance from the Soviet government to calm the protesters, and they received it. The resistance fought back and was able to overtake the Parliament building and reinstate Imre Nagy as Prime Minister, as Nagy had been ousted a year earlier by Rákosi's deception. In cities and villages across Hungary, resistance movements were successful in taking control of their local governments and enacting reform. During this time, the resistance was not met with much struggle from the Soviets, and a ceasefire was declared on October 28.

With the loss of influence in Poland and Austria, Hungary had become strategically important for the Soviet Union. Although



A Hungarian flag with the Soviet crest cut out. 1956.
Fortepan / Peter, Isaac



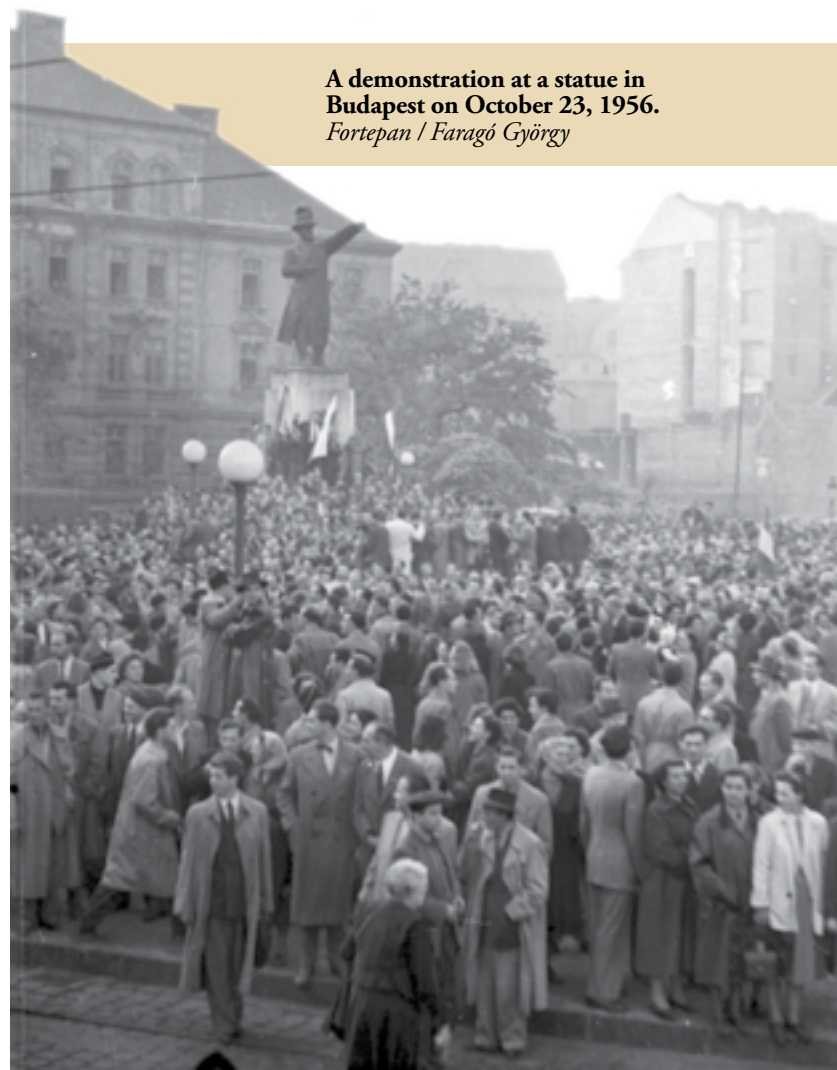
The dismembered head of a Stalin statue in Budapest. 1956.
Fortepan / Hofbauer Róbert

Khrushchev was in favor of a more “liberal” Communist Party, he was having issues holding it together. He thought the issues with Hungary might make the West perceive Moscow as weak if they didn’t deal with Hungarians and their insolence. He also thought Soviet influence over the satellite states might wane if there was a failure to respond with force. Khrushchev felt Moscow had to protect the Soviet Union’s reputation, and he ordered the Hungarian resistance be put to an end. Thus, military intervention began.

On November 1, 1956, Soviet troops entered Hungarian territory. With this breach of Hungary’s territorial integrity, Nagy notified the Soviet Ambassador in Budapest that Moscow was in violation of the Warsaw Pact, and if the

tanks and troops did not withdraw, Hungary would end the alliance. The Soviets explained their larger military presence by saying they were only there to protect the Russian civilians living in Hungary and that they were just going to replace the personnel that was already stationed there. This is a typical Russian tactic still used today, as seen recently in eastern Ukraine. In response, Hungarian neutrality and its immediate withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact was announced on November 1st.

Although Hungary was in continuous talks with the Soviets as they tried to negotiate the withdrawal of the larger military presence, the troops kept advancing and placing themselves at rail centers, airports, bridges, and in other strategic spots within the area. Finally, by 4:25 am on November 3rd, the Soviet tanks and troops in Budapest fired the first shots. Tanks, infantrymen, mortar shells, and more were unleashed upon the city. The Soviets shot at targets and buildings at will, not being able to tell which were military or civilian. This lasted until November 10th, when it finally ended with thousands of Hungarians injured and over 2500 dead.



A demonstration at a statue in Budapest on October 23, 1956.
Fortepan / Faragó György



On October 23, 1956, Prime Minister Imre Nagy speaks to the revolutionary crowd. Deputy Prime Minister Ferenc Erdei is on the right. 1956. *Fortepan / Franz Fink*

Hungarian Uprising and the role the Soviet Union played in it. A five-nation committee, or Commission of Inquiry, in the UN General Assembly was created in January 1957, and Denmark delegated member Alsing Andersen as their representative. The committee itself chose Andersen to serve as its Chairman, and the UN Secretary-General named Danish diplomat Povl Bang-Jensen its Deputy Secretary. It was the first committee of its kind created in the UN.

POVL BANG-JENSEN

Povl Bang-Jensen was born on April 6, 1909, in Frederiksberg, Copenhagen, Denmark to parents Jens Carl Jensen and Frida Emde. His father worked in the insurance industry, and his mother was a housewife.

Bang-Jensen studied politics and law. By his late 20s, he was already a District Court Prosecutor. In 1938, Bang-Jensen decided to spend a year studying American law and set sail for Chicago from Gothenburg, Sweden on January 7, 1939. By April 1940, he was in Washington D.C. working as an attaché of the Danish Legation. He was in D.C. when the Germans invaded and took control of Denmark. This came as a shock to the Dane as just a year before Germany and Denmark had made a formal agreement not to engage each other in war. Denmark had no military to speak of when the Nazis broke the agreement, only a small force of lightly armed men, and they were no match against the German forces.

On March 29, 1943, Povl Bang-Jensen married Helen Jean Nolan in Staunton, VA. Helen was a 28-year-old writer from Port Jervis, NY. Helen was notable in her own right—she was president of the International Student House, a newspaper correspondent,



Dag Hammarskjöld, UN Secretary-General in late 1950s



A disabled Soviet tank in Budapest. Hungarian Revolution 1956. *Fortepan / Nagy Gyula*



Destroyed buildings in Budapest. 1956. *Fortepan / Berkó Pál*

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

After the Soviets put an end to the Hungarian Revolution, thousands fled to other countries. Nearly 1400 Hungarians fled to Denmark, where they were happily welcomed.

At the United Nations in New York City, the UN General Assembly called for the United Nations Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, a diplomat from Sweden, to investigate the

[In Washington, D. C., Povl Bang-Jensen, Danish legation attache, recalled that a year ago Germany and Denmark made an agreement not to attack each other, then added:

["This invasion of my country, apparently without warning or ultimatum of any kind, is a terrible shock. I can see no strategic value to Germany in this action. I believe Germany's leaders simply decided they had better do something."]

Newspapers.com: The Des Moines Register, 09 Apr 1940, Tue -Page 13

and received recognition from the King of Denmark for the work she did during WWII. The couple lived and worked in the Washington D.C. and New York City areas where they raised their five children.

As the years went on, Bang-Jensen's career eventually evolved; he became a senior political adviser at the United Nations Secretariat and then Deputy Director of the committee investigating the Soviet Union and Hungarian Uprising.

After the investigation's findings of wrongdoing by the Soviet Union and the Soviet-backed Hungarian government, nothing really changed in Hungary.

That's not to say the UN General Assembly didn't denounce the actions of the Soviet Union. They did. Resolutions suggested by the report were passed. These resolutions condemned the Soviet's actions and ordered the troops out of Hungary. The UN called for fair and democratic elections. Strong words were said, but nothing was enforced.

As it is now, it was then. Moscow has never liked to acknowledge or accept blame. When a world "superpower" like the Soviet Union is overstepping and infringing on the rights of the citizens of another smaller nation, the UN has an issue to address. The Soviet Union was a large issue—WWII had ended a little over 10 years prior, and the world was leery of getting into a new conflict and possible nuclear war with the Soviets. The UN wanted to try and keep the peace, especially amongst member nations, so it wasn't as forceful in dealing with the Hungarian issue as it should have been.

When the work of the Committee ended, the Soviet Union demanded the list of witnesses that were interviewed. Povl Bang-Jensen, who had the responsibility of protecting the anonymity of over 80 Hungarian refugees that had come forward to testify, refused to divulge the identities of the witnesses. By coming forward, the Hungarians had placed their unconditional trust in Bang-Jensen, and he wasn't going to violate it. He knew disclosing their identities would likely result in retaliation

against them and their families in Hungary. As Bang-Jensen was the only person who knew the names of the diplomats, soldiers, journalists, and regular Hungarian citizens that stepped forward to offer witness testimony against the Soviet Union, it caused problems for him at the UN.

THE INVESTIGATION

The focus of the five-nation committee was to provide the members of the UN General Assembly "with the fullest and best available information regarding the situation created by the intervention of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, through its use of armed force and other means, in the internal affairs of Hungary, as well as regarding developments relating to the recommendations of the Assembly on this subject."

The investigation took several months to complete. The strongest evidence against the Soviets the committee could obtain was from the witnesses. Testimonies were first taken from prominent Hungarians like Imre Nagy, and in turn, they suggested others for interviewing. Hungarians also took it upon themselves to write to the committee to express an interest in sharing their experiences. The committee had to ensure the quality of testimony and were selective when choosing those they interviewed. In the end, over 100 witnesses were interviewed in New York, London, and several other European cities.



Daily News New York, New York . Friday, December 13, 1957

As deputy secretary of the UN Special Committee on Hungary, Povl Bang-Jensen was entrusted with the names of 81 Hungarian patriot-witnesses who testified anonymously to Soviet crimes in Hungary. He gave these witnesses his sacred personal word of honor that he never would reveal their names to anyone.

Booted UN Red Foe Missing, Feared Slain
By William Federici and Neal Patterson
Fear that Povl Bang-Jensen, anti-Communist Dane who was fired from an important UN post for refusing to surrender a confidential list of 81 Hungarian revolt witnesses, may have been kidnapped or murdered was voiced by friends last night.

Newspapers.com: The Cincinnati Enquirer, 28 Jan 1960, Thu -Page 19

Danish Paper Calls It Murder, Points to UN
Copenhagen, Nov. 26 (UPI).—The Danish newspaper information said today: "If Bang-Jensen is dead, this is murder, in whichever way it may have happened."

Daily News New York, New York . Friday, November 27, 1959

1957. In the meantime, on 18 October 1957, the Secretary-General asked the Chairman and Rapporteur of the Special Committee on Hungary to give their views on the attitude of the Applicant with respect to the custody of the documents in question. The Chairman replied, on 1 November, that "not only Bang-Jensen, but also I myself on behalf of the members of the Committee and of the Secretariat and the Staff as a whole have given 'firm commitments' that the names of those (anonymous) witnesses should remain secret." In his opinion, "all documents concerning the Hungary Committee ought to be placed in the custody of the United Nations" and he suggested that the list of witnesses should be burnt. The Rapporteur of the Special Committee replied, on 20 October, that the only way to protect the Applicant's "firm and official documents

Administrative Tribunal of the United Nations. Judgment No. 74. Case No. 80: Bang-Jensen. page 18 https://untreaty.un.org/UNAT/UNAT_Judgements/Judgements_E/UNAT_00074_E.pdf

The dismissal of Bang-Jensen was met with condemnation from many members, including some US delegates. There had been people who agreed with Bang-Jensen that the names needed to be kept confidential. Members called for action within the UN and International Court of Justice so Bang-Jensen could defend his actions and be vindicated against the charges laid against him.

Over the next months, Bang-Jensen was harassed, pressured, and had his professional career threatened if he did not turn over the names. Still, he did not falter. He had been so adamant to protect those witnesses and prevent them from being identified that he burned their files before anyone could confiscate them. This action, symbolically done on the roof of the UN building in New York City, was an example of Bang-Jensen's great moral character and fortitude and likely saved hundreds of Hungarian lives from brutal Soviet retribution and death.

Finally, in 1958, United Nations Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld dismissed Bang-Jensen from his position as a member of the United Nations Secretariat with a charge of insubordination.

In the following months, Bang-Jensen worked to overturn the charge and be reinstated. He had contacts within the UN and other agencies that were aiding his cause. In his work, it seems that he uncovered other information of a possible sensitive nature as reports say he began attempts to meet with Allen Dulles, an official at the CIA.

Povl Bang-Jensen went missing on November 26, 1959. Friends and family feared he could have been kidnapped or worse due to his defiance at the UN, as well as his work after he had been dismissed. Unfortunately, when he was finally located on November 26, 1959, he was discovered with a gunshot wound to his head. He was found in a park in Queens, NY with a suicide note in his pocket which led many to believe he killed himself. However, many question this assumption.

In the Senate Internal Security Sub-Committee Report of September 14, 1961, entitled "The Bang-Jensen Case," pages 61-2, the following appears "There has been a long list of suicides under highly questionable circumstances, involving Soviet defectors, prominent anti-Communist or anti-Stalinists, and people who might have had knowledge about which the Kremlin had reason to be sensitive. "Among these mysterious suicides in recent years have been Walter Krivitsky, Lawrence Duggan, Walter Marvin Smith, Louis Adamic, Morton E. Kent, Stepan Bandera, and Povl Bang-Jensen.

The Strange Case of "Col. Goleniewski" (Part II). <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP75-00149R000300130031-4.pdf>

According to some, it was reported that Bang-Jensen was set to receive physical evidence in late November that showed there were leaders

within the UN that were under Soviet influence. New meetings regarding the Hungarian Uprising were also set to start on November 26—the same day Bang-Jensen's body was found.

The ruling of his death as a suicide is questioned—he was shot in the right temple and held the gun in his right hand, but Bang-Jensen was left-handed. Prior to his death, he had also left notes saying he was in no way suicidal, ending his life was against his religious beliefs, and he was worried people were planning harm against him.

Bang-Jensen's death was investigated by several different agencies in the United States government. Both the CIA and the FBI investigated his death. According to a Senate Internal Security Sub-Committee Report in 1961, the CIA questioned the validity of his suicide and noted his death was similar to others that opposed the Soviet Union and Communism. It also came to light that Bang-Jensen knew the names of Soviet diplomats at the UN who were potential defectors and was trying to help them.

No one can know for sure who was responsible for the death of Bang-Jensen. The official investigation into his death was rushed and lacked the attention it deserved. After his body was cremated, his remains were flown to Denmark and buried in Frederiksberg, Copenhagen Kommune, Denmark.

In addition to his family, friends, and country, the Hungarians mourned Bang-Jensen too. In 1989, the Hungarians placed a memorial to honor Povl Bang-Jensen, their Danish national hero, next to other leaders of the Hungarian Revolution in Budapest's New Cemetery of Rákoskeresztúr.

Discovering the story of Povl Bang-Jensen while doing genealogical research was an unexpected gift. He is a man that must be remembered. He fought for freedom and democracy against oppression enforced by Nazism and Communism. He is a man that stood up for the Hungarian people and against the Soviet Union. His moral integrity and firm stance to protect

Hungarian witnesses during the investigation into the brutal Soviet intervention of the Hungarian Uprising of 1956 saved hundreds, if not thousands, of lives from Soviet violence and persecution. In 1957, Povl Bang-Jensen became a Danish martyr in Hungary—a beloved national hero. He was a man of his word and an example of someone in the UN who truly valued people's lives. He is an example of greatness. Sadly, it likely cost him his own life.



Csurla, CC BY-SA 3.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons

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DID YOU KNOW....

Genealogy is a great way to learn about little or unknown events in history! Newspaper archives like the Newspapers.com database, which is accessible at the GEC, are a great resource for discovering stories and events.

Preserving History

The Danish Sisterhood of America Archives

BY CHEYENNE JANSDATTER

Archives Manager & Outreach Associate



Silly hat contest at a Danish Sisterhood of America meeting.

THE BACKGROUND

In October 2016, the Danish Sisterhood of America (DSS) donated its collected archives to the Museum of Danish America. The DSS had put out a call to their lodges, both active and disbanded, to send in their lodge materials. They were collected by the National Historian and delivered by box truck to the museum by the National Board. To date, this is the largest documentary collection the museum has accepted.

At the time of receipt, the museum did not have an archivist on staff. In 2019, a successful grant was written to the State of Iowa Historic Resource Development Program to process the DSS collection. This was a matching grant, which means that the other half of the project costs

would need to come from another source. The museum put out the call for support from the Sisterhood, and they raised the matching funds that allowed this project to be completed.

Over a two-year period, thousands of documents, including photographs, ledgers, correspondence, member applications, and other materials were sorted, organized, and cataloged into the museum's digital catalog. Previously, these documents were hidden away in boxes, their contents lost to time. Now, there is an order to them, and items can be located. While it would've been impossible to

catalog each individual piece of paper in the allotted time, materials were sorted into folders and boxes and cataloged at that level.

Each folder is now searchable through View Our Collection online. While not every page has been scanned, samples from each file and ledger have been made available to give the researcher an example of its contents. If you need any direction on how to search our online database, there is a View Our Collections tutorial on our YouTube channel.

WHAT'S NEXT?

A collection gets handled the most when the collection is originally processed,

but continued care is required for each collection that comes to the museum. Such care might include exchanging old acid-free tissue paper for new, preserving a dress, processing an inventory of the collections to check on the "health" of our objects and how they are stored or cataloged, or creating a digital copy of the material to preserve it for the future.

The Danish Sisterhood of America collection has been identified by staff as a unique collection that should be preserved digitally. Since the complete collection is comprised of 67 bankers boxes and approximately 300 ledgers, it would be prohibitive to scan the ENTIRE collection. However, the fragile ledgers contain over 100 years of the history of this sororal



The organization process.

ARCHIVES



Danish Sisterhood of America National Convention held in St. Paul, Minnesota in 1916.

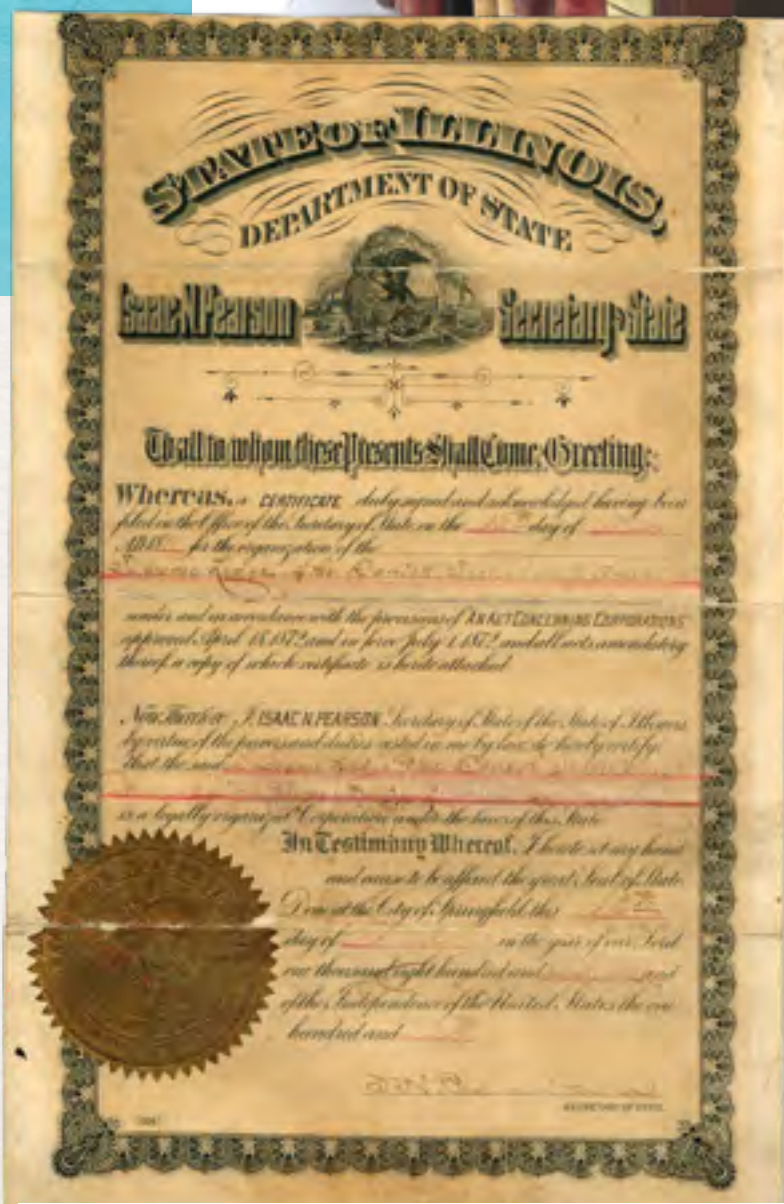
organization. Not only that, but they contain vital genealogical information about the organization's members, including where and when they were born, when they joined the DSS, and where they settled.

The Danish Sisterhood News, first published in 1947 and still produced today, has also been identified for digitization. After the ledgers, *The DSS News* has been the second most requested item by people researching the Sisterhood.

Once scanned, these materials will join the museum's online Danish Newspaper Collection. The donated ledgers and newsletters related to the Danish Sisterhood of America will be online and accessible to all interested parties. This collection has multiple audiences—the Sisterhood itself, those interested in immigration studies, women's studies, Danes interested in their family members, and more.

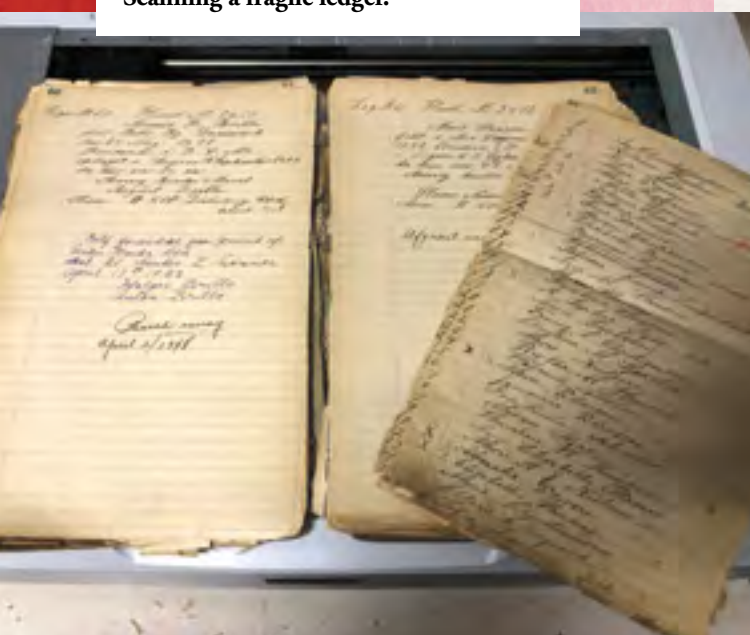
The Danish Sisterhood of America has been so supportive in ensuring their history is preserved within the museum's collection. We are partnering with the Sisterhood again to support this next phase, with the participation of the National Board of the Danish Sisterhood of America and four of the museum's current board members who are also DSS members. We encourage you to keep apprised of project happenings through *The Danish Sisterhood News*.

Various lodge ledgers on a shelf in the Museum of Danish America's Archives.



The Articles of Incorporation for the Supreme Lodge of the Danish Sisterhood of America signed in 1891 in the state of Illinois.

Scanning a fragile ledger.



staff introductions



EMMELIE
Scan Design Communications Intern

Hi! I'm Emmelie Krag Adolfsen, the current Communications Intern at the Museum of Danish America! I've been here since January, and I get to celebrate the museum's 40th anniversary in June before returning to Denmark.

Since I arrived, I've had really great opportunities to work with all sorts of communication: social media channels, print materials, video editing, and many other things. I am currently pursuing my MA in American Studies at the University of Southern Denmark, and I have a BA in International Business Communications with English and IT—so being an intern at

the museum is the best of both worlds as it gives me the opportunity to focus on the United States in a communicative context and setting. Also, working at a museum is something 9-year-old Emmelie would be very excited about!

I am passionate about the strategic elements behind communications: planning how and why we post what we post and how we keep a strong brand on a daily basis while creating content for an audience of all ages. It has been amazing to try out the different formats—from our biannual *MoDA Magazine* to TikTok. I am also working on a video project for our YouTube channel where I'll cook and bake all sorts of Danish cuisine.

Being a Dane in Danish America is something I find very interesting, and I love to see how traditions exist and evolve over time.

This internship is a unique opportunity to gain real-life experience and be a part of a museum and non-profit organization. I have really enjoyed life in Elk Horn and rural Iowa. I can't wait to experience a summer in the Midwest.



DELANEY
Curatorial Assistant

My name is Delaney Schurer, and I am the new Curatorial Assistant for the Museum of Danish America! I grew up in the suburbs of Green Bay, WI. While I may not be an avid Packers fan, I am a cheese fan.

I got my BA in History at Luther College in Decorah, IA, so small towns with a rich history of immigration are something I've grown accustomed to. I also got my MA in Public History, Heritage and Museum Studies at the University of Missouri-St. Louis.

I will be at the museum for two years and will be working on various projects. Currently, I am working on the Visual Storage area renovation. I am packing everything in Visual Storage and moving it to temporary locations. Once everything is relocated, the room will be painted, and shelves will be added and moved. After that, everything will be moved back in and reorganized, and additional interpretive displays will be added.

staff introductions



AMELIA

Communications Specialist

Hello! My name is Amelia Juhl. I'm the new Communications Specialist, and I'm absolutely thrilled to be at the museum and working with so many knowledgeable people! Among many other things, I run the museum's social media platforms, study engagement metrics, and create written materials. This position encompasses so much and truly allows me to continuously grow as a person and as a professional.

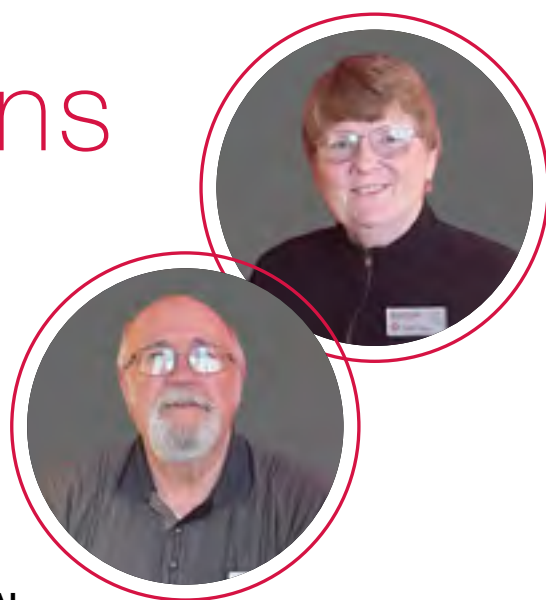
I grew up on a farm southeast of Irwin, Iowa. I graduated with High Distinction from the University of Iowa where I majored in English & Creative Writing: Publishing and minored in History and Spanish. In my spare time, I love to knit, read romance novels, and walk my family's dog, Sully.

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



A NOTE OF THANKS: Amanda Skellenger, the Genealogy Librarian & Curriculum Specialist, has worked at the Genealogy and Education Center for the past three years.

She developed deep relationships with volunteers and patrons, building a community for people interested in exploring their heritage. Bringing her educational background to the Center, she created programs for local schools as well as groups around the country. Her sense of humor and warmth with which she welcomed volunteers, visitors, and community members to the Genealogy and Education Center will be missed. Amanda left us to pursue new opportunities, and we wish her all the best at her new position.



SANDY & AL

Administrative Assistants

Administrative Assistants Sandy and Al Ashcraft have been an integral part of the museum since 2022. In addition to greeting guests and working at the front desk, they help with different administrative tasks around the building. Lately, Al has been assisting Delaney, the Curatorial Assistant, with the organization of Visual Storage.

They love meeting guests from all over the United States and the world, and they enjoy being ambassadors for the museum and its mission. They are always more than willing to lend a hand to different departments.

Al and Sandy enjoy spending time with their many cats and practicing their hobbies, which include woodworking and jewelry-making. Sandy also enjoys playing her string instruments. They absolutely adore museums and enjoy reading and learning more about exhibited items.

Their presence, joyful demeanor, and helpfulness are valued by the staff.

New Additions to the Wall of Honor

OCTOBER 1, 2022 – FEBRUARY 28, 2023

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

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

JACOB CHRISTIAN BACK (1882)

Oakfield Township, IA – Joe & Rose Jean Hansen, Des Moines, IA

CARL HEMMING CHRISTENSEN (1887)

Albert Lea, MN – Jeanne Christensen, Greensburg, PA

EBBA ELISABETH (JENSEN) CHRISTENSEN (1903)

Albert Lea, MN – Jeanne Christensen, Greensburg, PA

HAROLD JULIUS CLAUSEN (1908)

Riceville, IA – Linda Bruns, Marion, IA

VALDEMAR HOIBERG (1905)

Askov, MN – Sandra Boeskov, Seattle, WA

JAMES MARTIN NELSON & JENSINE

ANDERSEN NELSON (1885 & 1884)

Hancock, MN – Amy Nelson, Washington, DC

SOFUS MARINUS NIELSEN (1921)

Milwaukee, WI – Niels Hedehus, Nørresundby, DK

KRISTEN MARIE PETERSDATTER SCHMIDT (1883)

Audubon Co., IA – Dennis Barten, Manning, IA

DORTHEA ANDREA TOFTDAHL (1916)

Riceville, IA – Linda Bruns, Marion, IA

NIS NISSEN WIND (1872)

San Francisco, CA – Patricia Bell and Deborah Waddell, Pahrump, NV



Birgit [Damgaard] Sabo emigrated in 1965 from Nyborg, Denmark and is recognized on the Wall of Honor. She is pictured on the day she became an American citizen in 1997.



Jens Jensen Heritage Path

OCTOBER 1, 2022 – FEBRUARY 28, 2023

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

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

John & Margie Bornhoft, Tyler, MN
Shelly & Reg Cox, Isanti, MN
Danish Sisterhood Lodge #3, Milan, IL
Barbara Kadlec, Battle Creek, IA
Brian Knudsen, Lakeville, MN
Deb Nielsen McCoy for Robert and MaryLou, Westminster, CO
Tonya Robson, Beaverton, OR
Tasha Unkenholz, Rapid City, SD



A collection of pavers on the Jens Jensen Heritage Path.

THANKS

New Members

OCTOBER 1, 2022 – FEBRUARY 28, 2023

The Museum of Danish America is pleased to identify the following 117 individuals as its newest members:

Cleo Andersen, Anacortes, WA
Karstin Andersen, Milwaukee, WI
Alan & Sandy Ashcraft, Hamlin, IA
Paula Stuebben & Tim Bach, Columbia, MO
Julie Barber, Portland, OR
Ashley & Tim Baruth, LaVista, NE
John & Nikki Bricker, Elk Horn, IA
Linda Bruns, Marion, IA
Marilyn Buckelew, Tucson, AZ
Robert & Carol Camp, Sandpoint, ID
Anthony Christensen, Bondurant, IA

MoDA

Bob Christensen, Sioux City, IA
Joshua Christensen, Omaha, NE
Amy Christiansen, Falcon Heights, MN
John Cripps, Marshall, IA
Ashwin & Linda Damodaran, Alpharetta, GA
Mala Damodaran-Born, Hagen,
Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany
Curt & Jennifer Darling, Urbandale, IA
Margery Jane Davis, Indianola, IA
Meredith & Warren DeCou, Hartford, SD
Susan Disalvo, West Chester, OH
Brian Dohe, Walla Walla, WA
Hisham & Michelle Elkhatib, Ames, IA
Carmen Fuchs, Oakland, CA
Jane Gibb, Fort Dodge, IA
Kevin & Christie Griffin, Harlan, IA
Mark & Patricia Hansen, Deford, MI
Ellen Harboe, Orcas Island, WA
Gaylen Hess, Phillipsburg, KS
Tanya Hoegh-Allan, Columbia, MD
Kathy Houck, Aurora, CO
Sandra Howard, Marshall, WI
Christina Hudson, Des Moines, IA
Marlene Hupp, Audubon, IA
Esther Jensen, Cheyenne, WY
Peter Jensen, Riverton, NJ
Steve Jensen, Cedar Falls, IA
Curtis Johnson, Springfield, MO
Roger Johnson, Loveland, CO
Scott Johnson, Tulsa, OK

Inger Nova Jorgensen, Ashland, OR
Eugene & Betty Juhl, Irwin, IA
Kenny & Cynthia Juhl, Irwin, IA
Janet Kahn, Gulf Breeze, FL
Klaus Langkilde, Martinez, CA
Pamela & Steve Lara, Highlands Ranch, CO
Amanda Lary, Des Moines, IA
Mark Littlejohn, Urbandale, IA
Cindy & Pete Luth, Ceresco, NE
Carl & Stephany Madsen, Phoenix, AZ
Kirsten Magrini, Bainbridge Island, WA
Ann Matthiesen & Bryan Goldman, Seattle, WA
Deb McCoy, Westminster, CO
Betsy Mease, Johnston, IA
Jerry & Susan Meyer, Pilger, NE
Dan Nelson, Fremont, NE
Cynthia Stotts & Peter Nielsen, Los Angeles, CA
Dain & LaJissa Niklasen, Kimballton, IA
John Norgaard, Minden, NE
Desiree & Andreas Ohrbeck, Bellevue, WA
Carl & Carol Olsen, Shafter, CA
Gladys Olsen, Mt Vernon, IA
Kristine Olson-Harmon, Harlan, IA
Justen Paulsen, Hutchinson, MN
Harlan & Marsha Petersen, Tyler, MN
Kristen Philippides, Lubec, ME
Karen Ries, Sioux Falls, SD
Katherine Rubio, Elk Horn, IA
Dale & Joy Schak, Tyler, MN
Jerry & Ruth Schmidt, Clive, IA
Merry & Don Simon, Henderson, NV
Janet & Jim Simonitch, Omaha, NE
Mary Stefansen, Eugene, OR
Melissa Christiansen Stoessel, St Paul, MN
Chuck Svendsen, Hampton, IA
Marlys & Mark Tamte, Minneapolis, MN
Donn & Pamela Todd, Howell, MI
Ron & Vicki Vig, Holdrege, NE
Tom Larsen & Victoria Wahl, Lovettsville, VA
Terry & Gerry Waitt, Pigeon, MI
Susan & Walter Waldrop, Bethesda, MD
Scott & Judith White, Springville, NY
Bonnie Yelverton, Falmouth, ME

Danish American Athletic Club of 1922, Chicago, IL
The Danish American Archive and Library, Blair, NE
Danish-American Heritage Society, Des Moines, IA
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #1, Omaha, NE
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #35, Homewood, IL
Danish Brotherhood Lodge #227, Detroit, MI
Danish Brotherhood Lodges, Heartland District,
Iowa & Minnesota
Danish Brotherhood Polarstjernen Lodge #283,
Dagmar, MT
The Danish Canadian National Museum, Spruce
View, Alberta, Canada
Danish Club of Tucson, Tucson, AZ
The Danish Home, Croton-On-Hudson, NY
The Danish Home Foundation, Chicago, IL
Danish Sisterhood of America
Danish Sisterhood Dagmar Lodge #4, Chicago, IL
Danish Sisterhood Dronning Margrethe Lodge #15,
Waukesha, WI
Danish Sisterhood Lodge #19, Tacoma/Olympia, WA
Danish Sisterhood Ellen Lodge #21, Denver, CO
Danish Sisterhood Flora Danica Lodge #177,
Solvang, CA
Danish Sisterhood Katherine Lodge #20,
Kenosha, WI
Danish Sisterhood Lodge #102, Des Moines, IA

Danish Sisterhood Lodge #168, Bakersfield, CA
Danish Sisterhood Hygge Lodge #188, Enumclaw, WA
Danish Sisterhood Heartland District, IA & MN
Elk Horn-Kimballton Optimist Club, Elk Horn &
Kimballton, IA
Elk Horn Lutheran Church, Elk Horn, IA
Elverhøj Museum of History and Art, Solvang, CA
Federation of Danish Associations in Canada,
Gloucester, Canada
Jewish American Society For Historic Preservation,
Boynton Beach, FL
Knudsen Old Timers, Glendale, CA
Northwest Danish Association, Seattle, WA
Outlook Study Club, Elk Horn, IA area
Rebild National Park Society, Southern California
Chapter, Los Angeles, CA area
Red River Danes, Fargo, ND area
Ringsted Danish American Fellowship, Ringsted, IA
Scan Design Foundation, Seattle, WA
Scandinavian Studies, University of Washington,
Seattle, WA
Shelby County Historical Society & Museum,
Harlan, IA
Symra Literary Society, Decorah, IA
Verdandi Lodge #3, Independent Order of Svithiod,
Chicago, IL



New
museum
members
Kenny &
Cindy Juhl.



Thank You, Charitable Organizations

OCTOBER 1, 2022 – FEBRUARY 28, 2023

These 43 'charitable' organizations have contributed memberships or have received complimentary or reciprocal memberships in recognition of exemplary service to the museum. We acknowledge their generosity in each edition of the MoDA Magazine during their membership.

American Swedish Historical Museum, Philadelphia, PA
Danebod Lutheran Church, Tyler, MN

Danes Hall of Waupaca, LLC, Waupaca, WI
Dania Society of Chicago, Chicago, IL

In Honor

OCTOBER 1, 2022 – FEBRUARY 28, 2023

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

Hans Callsen Sr. & Jr.
Linda Holz, National Trustee Danish Sisterhood of
America
Jim & Marge Iversen
Mary Patricia Jensen
The Knudsen Family, Pennsylvania
Lowell Kramme, for his service to the Museum
Toni McLeod
Toni McLeod
Toni McLeod, my niece (Anna Haverland)
MoDA Staff
Museum Staff
James D. Olsen
Bernhard Sindberg
Mary Steinberg, for her 90th birthday
Chai for Mary Steinberg
Grace & Jim Tomson



In honor of MoDA volunteers past and present who have done so much for the museum.



Memorials

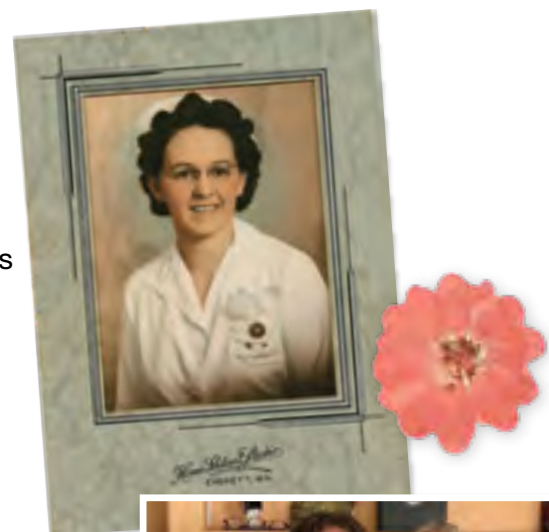
OCTOBER 1, 2022 –
FEBRUARY 28, 2023

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

Greta Algeo
 Martin & Else Andersen
 Rev. John & Ginny Beck
 Patricia Bell
 Jerry Bjelde, Red River Danes member
 Mildred (Pagaard) Blomquist
 Mary Bro
 Mary Louise Bro
 Mary Louise (Reed) Bro
 Mary Louise Reed Bro
 Thomas & Ellen Brown
 Jens Otto Christensen (1816-1869)
 Margaret Christensen
 Gabriel John Cymanski
 Edith & Anker Eastergard
 Edith & Anker Eastergard, my parents
 Chris & Thora Eriksen, my parents who emigrated 1903 & 1913
 Gordon Esbeck
 Hans & Mathilde Farstrup (1903)
 Mames R. Fisher, my husband
 Charles F. Frederiksen
 Karen Pedersen Gear
 Evelyn (Evie) Gregersen
 Bent & Lydia Hansen, my parents
 Cleo & Esther Hansen
 Hans & Genevieve Hoiberg
 Martin & Evelyn Holst
 Alice "Dybe" Jacobs
 Jens Jacobsen
 Jens Jacobsen, my grandfather
 Paula Jacobsen
 Inge R. Jacobson
 Elsie Jante, my mother
 Elsie Jante
 Anne Marie Jennings, Omaha, NE
 Al Jensen
 Glenn B. Jensen
 Glenn Jensen, my uncle
 Glenn Burdette Jensen
 Hans & Maren Jensen, my grandparents, who immigrated from Denmark to raise their large family in rural Cedar Falls, Iowa. They are on the honor wall.

Jens Aksel Jensen
 John Jensen, Red River Danes member
 Ken Jensen
 Marinus & Lena Jensen
 Paul Fritz Jensen
 Paul H. & Grethe H. Jensen
 Poul H. Jensen
 Russell P. Jensen
 Doris Johansen
 Evelyn Johnson
 Evelyn Johnson (1917-2022), Ruthton, MN
 Gertie Laursen Johnson Jordahl, grandmother
 Doris Siersbeck Kloth
 David J. Knutson
 Edward Larsen
 Helen & Paul Larsen
 Kurt Klarskov Larsen, my father
 Marius & Elise Larsen, my grandparents
 Paul M. & Johanna Larsen
 Chris A. Laursen
 Dorothy E. Lund
 Marvin & Lydia Madsen
 Carl A. Mehr
 Chris & Elsie Miller, great grandparents
 Franklin Mosdal
 Thyra Nagel
 Evald George Nielsen
 Faith Nielsen
 Hans T. Nielsen, in my thoughts
 Jim Nielsen
 Magnus & Cecelia Nielsen
 Marilyn & LeVern Nielsen, my parents
 J. Brent Norlem
 Valborg Olesen
 Norman Oleson
 Anton & Dorothea E. Olsen
 Ole & Marie Olsen
 Dorothy Paulsen, Red River Danes member
 Jane Paulsen, my wife
 Anna M. Pedersen
 David Pedersen
 Leroy Pedersen
 Paul & Lilly Pedersen
 Jens Holm Petersen, my grandfather, from Løgstør, Denmark. A farmer, father of 15, American Citizen, and Patriot.

Loretta Petersen
 Scott Pettit
 John & Marge Quist
 Kevin Rasmussen
 Mrs. Sandra Jensen Rasmussen, DOD 12-20-22
 Herbert & Sylvia Rattenborg
 Sonja A. (Strandskov) Richardson
 Leroy Sand
 Albert Martin Jensen Schjodt
 Bernhard Sindberg, for what he did in China in 1937-38
 Axel Skelbeck, Secretary Treasurer Emeritus of Danish Brotherhood
 Flemming Sørensen, Seattle, WA
 M. L. Sørensen
 Marie Louise Sørensen
 Poul & Elie Steffensen
 Richard Stilling
 Marion & Ethan Svendsen
 Nancy Ruth Sweat
 Pat Thisted
 Deborah Waddell
 Walter Westergaard
 Sharon Winchell
 Min bedsteforældre i G.L. Brovst, DK



In memory of Mae Elizabeth VanZwol Kruis (1921-2021).

varme hveder

MAKES 12 BUNS

4/5 cup of milk, room temperature
 8 grams of active dry yeast
 1 tablespoon granulated sugar
 2 medium size eggs

3 1/2 cups of flour
 1 teaspoon salt
 1 1/2 teaspoons cardamom
 1 stick of butter, room temperature

Let the yeast activate in the milk for a few minutes. Stir in the sugar and eggs. In another bowl, combine flour, cardamom, and salt. Add the cubed butter and mix until crumbles form. Add the wet ingredients and knead until you have a soft, even dough. It should be a bit sticky, too much flour will make it dry. This may take several minutes. Cover the dough and let it rise for 2 hours.

Cut the dough into 12 buns and shape them so they are nice and even. Place them on a baking sheet with half an inch of space between them. Let them rise again for 2 hours. Brush with an egg and bake at 350 for around 17 minutes. They should be golden-brown. You can eat them fresh from the oven or over the course of the next few days—cut them open and toast the inside. Add butter and enjoy!



VARME HVEDER is a cardamom bun that is eaten on Great Prayer Day, a Danish holiday celebrated on the 4th Friday after Easter. In the past, the buns would be purchased the day before Great Prayer Day as bakeries would close to observe the holiday.

On Great Prayer Day, people toast the buns and eat them with butter. They are soft on the inside and toasty on the outside.



YouTube tutorial on how to make varme hveder.



museum of
danish america

2212 WASHINGTON STREET
ELK HORN, IA 51531
@DANISHMUSEUM

01.



02.



03.



04.



Inspiration and Innovation for
Every Kitchen in the World

01. Ottoni Electric Water Kettle, #2028, \$100 - Made from shiny, durable stainless steel. Automatic shut-off when the kettle reaches boiling point. | **02. Bistro Electric Coffee Grinder**, Red #2078, Black #2023, \$42 - Neat, compact blade grinder that holds 60g of coffee beans. A transparent lid makes it easy to achieve the desired coarseness of your beans. | **03. Chambord French Press Coffee Maker**, 8 cups, 34 oz., #2009, \$62 - Made of non-stain, heat-resistant borosilicate glass. The frame and lid are made from durable stainless steel while the handle is made from polypropylene with a matte finish for a comfortable grip. Stainless steel plunger prevents ground beans from escaping when coffee is poured. | **04. Bistro Electric Water Kettle**, 34 oz., Red #2025, Black #2024, \$52 - Rapid-boil function for energy-saving efficiency. Manual on/off switch, power indicator light, and a steam sensor for automatic shut-off and added safety. **More choices in-store and online. Members receive 10% discount on store product.**