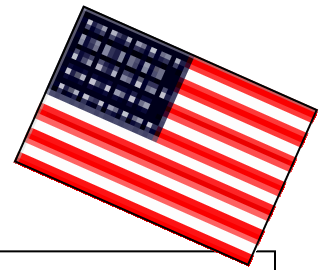


# JOTTINGS



A publication of the Danish American Archive and Library      Sept.—Dec. 2014

## 2014: THE YEAR THAT WAS

2014 was a momentous year for the Danish American Archive and Library. We not only made decisions about finding a permanent home for the Archive, but also about our day-to-day operations, our relationships with other institutions, fundraising initiatives and outreach to the Danish American community at large.

**Permanent Home.** Probably the biggest issue we took on in 2014 was finding a permanent home for the DAAL. Although the DAAL has done remarkably well operating independently since leaving the safety net of Dana College in 2010, we know this success can't continue long term without developing closer ties with another organization. After considering the options available to us, the Board of Directors decided to accept the offer from the City of Blair and the Blair Public Library to become a part of the library's planned building project. Although this would not provide us with continuing support from the city, the mortgage payments on the proposed 40-year loan would be substantially less than our current the lease payments. Negotiations with the city are continuing in efforts to produce a firm agreement that is acceptable and possible for all parties concerned.

**Day-to-Day Operations.** Until now, Executive Director Jill Hennick has been the only paid staff member at the DAAL. Everything else that happened resulted from the efforts of volunteers. During 2014, we were able to include in the budget funds to hire two part-time staff members—Library Assistant Michael Hennick and Financial Assistant Kate Garrett. Michael's main focus has been on assisting Library Director Sharon Jensen with the tremendous job of sorting and cataloging the roughly 12,000 books in the collection. But more than that, at his own initiative, Michael has sorted and made right aspects of the Archive that have been overlooked since we were still at Dana College. He has made a huge difference to the overall operation of the DAAL. Kate Garrett started as a summer volunteer while she was still in high school and so impressed us with her efficiency and work ethic that we hired her as an accounting intern the summer of 2013 and as an accounting assistant last summer. Kate is now a freshman at The Ohio State University, but came in to work when she was home for Christmas break, and we hope to have her back this summer as well.

**Relationships with Other Institutions.** Because the community cooperation agreement with the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) has been so successful, we have pursued similar agreements with other institutions with compatible missions. In 2013 we signed a similar agreement with Grand View University in Des Moines, Iowa, the sole remaining U.S. college founded by Danish immigrants, and with the Museum of Danish America (MoDA) located in Elk Horn, Iowa. The DAAL's relationship with UNO continues with student interns who provide invaluable service by cataloging previously untouched collections. The DAAL and MoDA jointly contracted with Paul Johnson as a planned giving consultant. In this capacity, Paul contacts donors of both the DAAL and MoDA to advise them on how to set up estate gifts.

**Fundraising.** Three fundraising projects are underway at the DAAL. First, our usual end-of-year appeal resulted in an unprecedented response. We are so grateful to all of you who have supported us with your contributions for so long. Second, Paul Johnson is making contacts regarding planned giving. It is our hope that these estate gifts will help build up an endowment fund that will support the DAAL in the future. The third fundraising project will be a capital campaign to raise funds for the possible new building. As an autonomous archive, we have to depend on charitable contributions, so these fundraising efforts are necessary for us to continue to thrive.

**Outreach to the Danish American Community.** We have redesigned the DAAL website to make it more user friendly and to include more information. It features better links to the digital archive, and we are constantly expanding the material accessible from it. Currently we are working on uploading scanned materials from the Dana Room, and those will be available soon. Another outreach tool for us continues to be the *Danish Children Growing Up American* exhibit. It is currently on display at MoDA until the end of June. From there it will travel to the Denver, Colorado, public library in October and will be on display there until the end of



December. This means attendees of the Danish Sisterhood national convention will have the opportunity to stop in and see it. In addition, we now host three volunteer weeks each year, organize a "Kringling Mingle" event for the annual Dana College homecoming, and both President Gary Madsen and Board Member Tim Jensen have addressed civic groups and other organizations regarding the DAAL.

We are very proud of the progress we have made in the last four and a half years, and thanks to your help and support, we are stronger than ever. ■

# FROM THE DANA ROOM

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE DANA FOLK DANCERS

by  
Ann Harms George



*The Dana Folk Dancers performing on campus in 1959. Their costumes, by students Sandra Thomsen and Donna Byriel and members of the college's Home Economics Club, were based on Danish regional dress; Danish-American residents of the Good Shepherd Home in Blair crocheted the trim for the caps and aprons.*

For more than 40 years, the Dana Folk Dancers, accompanied by a student accordionist, entertained audiences with lively Danish peasant, ballroom, and game dances, such as the "Finger Polka," "Shoemaker" and "Oxen" dances, "The Dancing Cavalier," "The Crested Hen" and "Little Man in a Fix." In their Danish folk costumes, the Dancers – who were not necessarily of Danish descent – were colorful as well as lively.

Sandra Thomsen, a Dana junior

who started the group in late 1957, had danced with the Danish Folk Dancers of Omaha. She was treasurer of the Dana Chapter of The American Scandinavian Foundation, which initially sponsored the group – its president was Prof. Norman C. Bansen.

The student-directed Dana Folk Dancers became a popular group, and within two years they'd performed, for example, for high school audiences and at Omaha's

Joslyn Art Museum, the Officers Club at Offutt Air Force Base and the national convention of the Danish Sisterhood of America.

They became even more widely known after a feature article titled "Square Dance a la Denmark: Dana Students Entertain in Colorful Costumes," appeared in the April 27, 1958, Sunday magazine of the "Omaha World-Herald." Director Thomsen and assistant director Larry Jorgensen in their costumes are pictured on the full-color cover.

When Dana celebrated its 75th anniversary the next year, the Dancers performed at the intermission of an Omaha Symphony Pops Concert at that city's then Peony Park and for campus visitor Carlo Christensen, Cultural Attaché of the Danish Embassy in Washington, D.C. In a subsequent letter to Dana President C.C. Madsen, he wrote, "One of the most beautiful experiences I have had during my stay in the United States was seeing the performance of the folk dancers of Dana College."

Over the coming decades the Dancers performed at local events, including Homecoming, Blair's Danish Days, and Dana's Sights and Sounds of Christmas. They also received invitations to perform, and so they traveled, in 1973, for example, to dance at the Milwaukee Folk Festival, sponsored by the International Institute of Milwaukee, and in Denver, Colorado, at a "Salute to Danes," sponsored by a local department store. Closer to home, in 1976 they danced in Omaha at a Lutheran Medical Center benefit ball, where actress Celeste Holm also appeared. And on campus that year, **(Cont. Page 3)**



## Dana Dancers (Cont.)



*The Dancers entertaining at Danish Days in downtown Blair in the late 1970s. Their costumes were created by a Dancer's mother, who patterned them after dolls dressed in the costumes of the Danish provinces.*

they danced for Victor Borge before his first Dana benefit performance.

Then in 1977, for the inauguration of President Jimmy Carter, seventeen Dancers, together with Phil Pagel, Director of Public Relations, went to Washington, D.C., as guests of Elmer Carlsen of Audubon, Iowa, where they performed twice nightly at Carlsen's "Farmers for Carter" parties. (The Duke Ellington and Tommy Dorsey orchestras played at these events.) While in Washington they also attended the inauguration, danced at the traditional Nebraska Congressional delegation's weekly breakfast, were photographed on the Capitol steps with Congressman John Cavanaugh of Nebraska and were guests at an informal reception at the Danish Embassy. They also appeared briefly on national television during NBC's "Today" show's coverage of inaugural events.

Another – and longer – TV appearance came in 1982, when they performed on Nebraska Educational Television, in the second part of a three-part series called "Hand-Me-Downs," hosted by author and folklorist Roger Welsch, a former Dana faculty member.

And over the years, Dancers who sang in the Dana College Choir often packed their costumes and performed during Choir tours in this country and in Denmark and Germany.

On campus, they refreshed their repertoire whenever members of touring Danish gymnastics teams that also featured folk dancing volunteered to critique their performance and teach them new dances.

By the late 1980s, however, student interest in the group waned, and the Folk Dancers are last pictured in the 1988 "Danian," the college yearbook.

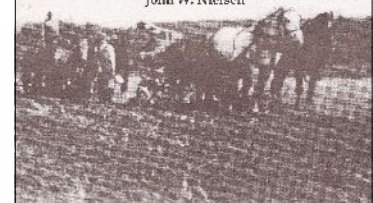
But there was to be one more performance. For the 2001 Homecoming, Cheryl (Paulsen) Nielsen, a Dancer who graduated in 1968, organized a Dana Folk Dancers reunion, and former Dancers representing all four decades returned to dance once more.

(Sources for this article include newspaper clippings and photographs in the Archive's Dana Collection; alumni publications -- the earlier "Alumnus," which was followed by the "Dana Review"; student publications -- the "Danian" (yearbook) and the "Hermes" (campus newspaper); and the two histories of Dana College and Trinity Seminary -- the 1959 "Saga of the Tower" by Wm. E. Christensen, and the 1986 "A Place Called Dana" by Peter L. Petersen.) ■

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Translated by  
Nina Fogskow  
Edited by  
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**VISITORS:** 89 visitors from California, Colorado, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Wisconsin, Denmark and England.

**USERS:** 32 users from Arizona, California, Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Nebraska, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Washington, Wisconsin, Denmark and England.

## ACQUISITIONS

The following are the donations of materials we have received from September through December. The Archive could not continue to document the history of Danish Americans without these wonderful materials including complete family collections, photos, books, periodicals, music and obituaries.

### Materials

Don Andersen (Omaha, NE)  
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 Larrie Stone (Blair, NE)  
 Paul & Lil Strand on 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary  
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**Honoraria are part of the General Fund.**

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 Family  
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 Jim Godson  
 Herbert & Carol Jorgensen (Green Lake, WI)  
 The Jessen & Hanson families and their  
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 Hazel & Earl Nelson  
 John W. & Elizabeth Nielsen (Blair, NE)  
 John W. & Elizabeth Nielsen & family for support of  
 Archive over many years  
 Verlan & Helga Hanson (Blair, NE)

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\*The Green Kitty Cat Fund of InFaith Community Foundation was established in memory of Rev. C. I. "Jerry" Lund by Maryann Lund and family.

## General Fund:

**All donations are placed in the General Fund unless otherwise specified. Those who give through the 50/100 Club are listed in each issue of Jottings.**

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in honor of Edith Bertelsen's 100<sup>th</sup>

in memory of Edith (Mrs. Chris) Bertelsen

in memory of Oscar Johnson

in memory of Al Jorgensen

in honor of John & Liz Nielsen

in thanks to volunteers, past and present

Marion Svendsen (Cedar Falls, IA)

## 50/100 Club:

**The name of the 50/100 Club was inspired by the idea that if 100 members gave \$50 per month, most of our operating expenses would be met. Members sustain DAAL by giving a minimum of \$600 per year (given monthly, quarterly, or yearly according to the donor's preference). Those at the Founder's Level give at least \$2,000 per year. An added benefit of being part of the 50/100 club is receiving one donation acknowledgement for tax purposes in January reflecting a yearly total of all donations, rather than getting a separate acknowledgment for each financial contribution. These donations are part of the General Fund.**

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### Legacy Builders:

These donors have named DAAL in their

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## ANNUAL REPORT 2014

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Myrv & Anne Christopherson, Decorah, IA  
The Green Kitty Cat Fund of InFaith Community  
Foundation established in memory of Rev. C. I.  
"Jerry" Lund by Maryann Lund and family,  
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Robert Olsen, Houston, TX  
Duane & Anna Pedersen, Ames, NE  
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Starla Sweda, Selma, TX  
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Lee Indahl, Burke, SD  
Ronald & Susan Jansen, Wautoma, WI  
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## FINANCIAL SUMMARY



Jill Hennick

The Archive was truly blessed by your donations in 2014! We finished the year with a surplus of more than \$48,000, which allows us to increase our operating budget for 2015. Many of our donors have directed their Thrivent Choice Dollars to the Archive. In 2014 donations from this program totaled \$8,426. Our endowment has grown to more than \$72,000 and that, along with Paul Johnson's efforts for planned giving, bodes well for our future.

Tusind tak to all our loyal supporters for making this positive report possible!



## THE LLOYD AND MURIEL NEVE COLLECTION

By  
**Timothy A. Jensen Ph.D.**



*Missionaries, educators and world travelers, Lloyd and Muriel Neve.*

The Lloyd and Muriel Neve Collection, like several others at the Danish American Archive and Library, is primarily a collection of letters. Yet this collection stands out for the extraordinary depth and variety of its correspondence.

Lloyd and Muriel came from different, yet complementary, backgrounds. Lloyd was a pastor's son, born in 1923 in the small, rural community of Beresford, South Dakota, and raised in a devout, highly intellectual, Danish Lutheran family. Muriel was born in 1924 in San Jose, California, and adopted into a Methodist family in Oakland. She, like Lloyd, pursued both undergraduate and graduate studies in religion. In the late 1940's their paths crossed in Japan, where they had become Christian missionaries. They soon married and began what became a four decade joint missionary career.

Their six children were all born during this period. Although they "retired" from Japan to Blair, Nebraska in 1988, the pace of their lives did not slacken. Muriel won awards for her flower garden, and for many years they devoted the winter months to volunteering for Bread for the World in Washington, D.C. Between and between, they traveled extensively, living and working in both Latin American and African countries

Through these years and beyond they maintained a prolific and insightful correspondence, first with friends and supporters in Japan and the States, and later with their six energetic and articulate children. During their frequent travels they kept detailed and insightful diaries, which now serve as fascinating

supplements to their correspondence.

Their letters and narratives reveal Christian concerns, a wide range of intellectual interests, an extensive network of friends, relatives, and supporters, and intense intra-familial relationships. To read their letters is to learn not only about life in Japan, but about everything from American football and politics, to music, jewelry making, genetics, cooking, human emotions, and books recently read. The letters of some of their children reveal in vivid detail the joys and the difficulties, the rivalries and the friendships, of life as graduate students in American universities.

Rounding out this extraordinary collection are books that Lloyd has written, information on other missionaries, and many photographs. Now in their 90's, they continue to live at Johansen Manor in Blair. ■

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### INTRODUCING PAUL JOHNSON THE DAAL'S PLANNED GIVING CONSULTANT

Last November, the DAAL and the Museum of Danish America (MoDA) entered into a contract with Paul Johnson of Fremont, Nebraska, to work with both organizations as a part-time planned giving consultant. Paul is a Certified Financial Planning® practitioner with deep roots in several Danish American organizations and a former board member of the DAAL.

In this new role, Paul will be calling on our donors to see if they have, or would like to include the DAAL as a beneficiary of their estate. For those interested, Paul can work with them and their current advisors to help customize a planned gift that accomplishes their personal, family, and charitable objectives. The DAAL is providing this service to its donors free of charge in gratitude for the generous support they've received over the years.

Even though Paul professes to be a lousy fund-raiser, he says it's easy for him to visit with others about charitable estate gifts because "you can't take it with you!" Since future generations will likely be more and more ethnically diverse, it's important for today's donors to consider planned estate gifts that will help leave the DAAL on solid financial ground for many years to come. ■



*Paul Johnson, Planned Giving Consultant for the DAAL and MoDA.*





### Would you like to help?

Please cut out this card and send it in with your tax-deductible contribution.

A check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed. (Please make payable to the Danish American Archive and Library.)

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Thank you for your ongoing support of the Danish American Archive and Library

## DIGITAL ARCHIVE: A WORK IN PROGRESS

Providing researchers and scholars an easier way to access the extraordinary materials contained in the DAAL collections has long been one of our goals. And two years ago volunteer Matt Petersen of Des Moines, Iowa, began to make that goal a reality when he created the Digital Archive, which can be accessed from the DAAL website.

The first collection to appear in the Digital Archive was the P.S. Vig Family collection, a rich collection of letters, papers, clippings, documents, pictures, scrapbooks, notes, obituaries and family records for people who settled in or were buried in Washington County, Nebraska, from the mid-1800s into the 1970s.

Next came the P.C. Jensen collection--letters, sermons, memorabilia, and records of all UELC pastors kept by this former pastor and historian of the UELC, one of two Lutheran synods founded by early Danish Americans. Both of these collections provide a goldmine of information for genealogists and researchers. Back issues of *Jottings* were initially posted on the Digital Archive, but were moved to the recently redesigned main website.

**Opening page of the digital archive accessed from the DAAL website home page.**

Currently we are working on posting materials from our monumental Dana College collection. This collection requires hours of sorting and evaluating which documents will be most useful. Our thanks to volunteer Aaron Loyd for his dedication in scanning many of these materials. With Dana College files ranging from the 1800's to 2010 and containing everything from news releases to yearbooks to minutes of

Board of Regent meetings along with thousands of photographs, we would welcome more help with sifting through or scanning these materials. Some of this work can be done remotely and we can train you. So no matter where you live, if you have an interest in Dana College and feel you could contribute to this effort, please contact us at 402-426-7910 or [info@danishamericanarchive.com](mailto:info@danishamericanarchive.com).



1738 Washington Street  
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## AROUND THE ARCHIVE

- ◆ At the end of October, Danish photographer Benny Nybo visited the DAAL and presented us with his book, *North Atlantic Reflections*. In the book Nybo features breathtaking photos from Greenland, Iceland, the Faroe Islands and his home country of Denmark. The 273 pages of the book contain photos not only of nature, but also of the people of the area and the construction of North Atlantic House, an event center offering a range of activities focused on culture, education, food and community. *North Atlantic Reflections* is available through Google Books.
- ◆ The 2015 Spring Volunteer Week is scheduled for April 27 through May 1. This is the first of three volunteer weeks that are scheduled each year. The second takes place during the summer, and allows teachers and others who can't attend at other times to participate. The last one is in October and usually coincides with the Dana Alumni Homecoming events. These three weeks represent tremendous leaps forward in the routine sorting, cataloging and translating of materials, as well as data entry. But most enjoyable is the camaraderie and fellowship with others with common interests and histories.
- ◆ The DAAL has acquired a substantial collection of documents from the Scandinavian Seminar, located in Amherst, Massachusetts, a pioneer in offering nontraditional study-abroad programs for students of all ages who have a passion for learning and cultural exploration. The collection dates from the 1950's to 2001 and contains minutes from board of trustees' meetings, reports, correspondence, historical records and brochures, as well as a wealth of other materials. Volunteers are currently working on accessioning this collection so it can be digitized and made available to the public. You can read more about the Scandinavian Seminar at [www.scandinavianseminar.org](http://www.scandinavianseminar.org).
- ◆ On Saturday, October 4, the DAAL hosted another successful "Kringle Mingle" for Dana College alumni during their annual homecoming weekend. Approximately 50 alumni visited the DAAL to have coffee, kringle and homemade Danish cookies along with reconnecting with former classmates and friends. Our thanks to Barbara Garrett for organizing the event.
- ◆ Congratulations to Aaron Loyd upon earning his Master's Degree in library science at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Aaron has volunteered at the DAAL for more than four years at the same time he was taking classes and working part time for the Omaha Public Library.