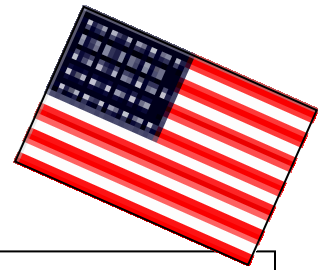


JOTTINGS



A publication of the Danish American Archive and Library

Jan. – May 2016

FROM THE DANA ROOM

DEVELOPMENTS AT DANA

By Ann Harms George

Midland Backs Out—“The wait is over,” the *Washington County Pilot-Tribune* announced this past March 22. “Nearly three years after Midland University signed a lease agreement with Krejci Development to acquire control of the former Dana College campus, the Fremont institution has announced it will not purchase the campus and plans to end its lease.”

The news was disappointing but expected. In the spring of 2013, Midland's then president, Dr. Ben Sasse, announced plans to acquire the Dana campus, citing Midland's growing enrollment as the reason to expand. He was confident he could raise the necessary funds, and helping the Fremont, Nebraska, school towards that goal, Krejci Development, an Omaha company, purchased the campus and leased it to Midland. (Fremont is 24 miles west of Blair. As Dana was, it's affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America [ELCA]).

But that fall, when Sasse resigned to campaign successfully for the U.S. Senate, many Dana alumni and Blair residents became concerned. Would Midland's successor share Sasse's vision?

The next year, on June 3, 2014, a devastating hailstorm damaged every building in Blair, including those on campus. Later, vandals broke into several campus buildings, breaking windows and damaging interiors. (They were caught and sentenced.)

Midland's news release, cited in the *Pilot-Tribune*, described several factors that contributed to its decision not to purchase the campus, among them a leveling off of the number of high school students planning to attend college, major upgrades on the Fremont campus, “significant costs” to maintain Dana's campus and “a complicated path to accreditation.” In the meantime, work continues on repairing hailstorm and vandalism damage. Nate Neufind, Midland's vice-president for communication, told the *Pilot-Tribune* that the Fremont school's investments at Dana have amounted to more than \$3.5 million in insurance and donations for campus operations. (To follow developments online, go to enterpriseub.com, the website of the *Washington County Pilot-Tribune* and *Enterprise*. There are frequent articles about the future of the campus, which continues to be owned by Krejci Development.)

Dana Lives On at the DAAL—What you'll notice first when you enter the Archive's Dana Collection Room are portraits of Trinity Seminary and Dana presidents that used to line the walls of the Presidents Room in the E.C. Hunt Campus Center. Next you'll notice file cabinets, shelves and boxes, and those contain photographs, programs, copies of Dana news releases and newspaper clippings covering events and people in the history of the seminary and college that those presidents presided over.

Open a cabinet drawer and you'll find folders kept by Dr. Paul Neve for every Choir tour he led. Open another and you'll find programs for many of the plays performed on campus and on tour. And open still another, and you'll find reports of Dana's wins and losses in football, basketball, baseball, volleyball and other sports. Open any drawer and you'll find photographs, programs and newspaper clippings relating to events in the college's 126 years.

The 14-page guide to organizing all of this includes general categories—among them, Physical Facility, Administration, Alumni, Academics, Campus Life and Religious Life. Subcategories range from the 1988 fire that destroyed Old Main, fundraising drives, dorm life,



All the Dana College presidents look on as Jens and Eileen Simons work on translations in the DAAL's Dana Room.



Argo Hall shows the typical campus-wide deterioration that has taken place since the campus was vacated six years ago.

(Continued, Page 6)

THE BIG BOOK RESCUE

By
Sandra Wigdahl, Editor

The DAAL to the rescue! On March 30, 2016, the DAAL realized a long-held wish to retrieve approximately 1,000 books from the C.A. Dana-LIFE Library on the defunct Dana College campus.

“These are books we regretfully left behind when we evacuated from Dana in 2010, because they didn’t belong to us—they were in the general library collection,” says DAAL Library Director Sharon Jensen. Since Sharon worked for many years at the Dana library as a cataloging librarian, she had first-hand knowledge of what was contained there.

“I knew there were groups of books that were written by Danish authors, were written in the Danish language, or had subjects relating to Denmark or Danish Americans. Obviously,

they are a perfect fit for the DAAL library,” she says.

The process of retrieving the books came about when I contacted developer and owner of the campus Frank Krejci to get permission to remove the books. He readily agreed, but requested that we work through Midland University located in Fremont, Nebraska, who at the time still had a lease agreement for the Dana campus in effect. (Midland has since allowed the lease to lapse.) Mr. Krejci also required that the DAAL list and place a value on the books.

After a preliminary visit to the library to assess the condition of the books and to pinpoint which books we wanted, Sharon and I, and four other volunteers—Marty Koefoed, Tim Jensen, LeRoy Wigdahl and Andrew Nielsen—entered the cold, dark building to begin boxing and removing the books. Being in the

building after almost six years was a surreal experience. Everything looked like it was frozen in time with very little evidence of the massive exodus of July 2010. The musty, moldy smell was a change, however, as a result of hail damage that occurred in 2014 and which was just then being repaired. Water had seeped in and contaminated some of the books with mold.

The building was cold and dark because all power, which came from a campus-wide source, had been cut off. This was probably not a bad thing, because even before the DAAL left, lights on the lower level would sometimes spark when we turned them on. We got to work with flashlights assessing which books were free from mold, and which we had to leave behind. The last thing we wanted to do was contaminate the books and materials in the DAAL. It took roughly five hours standing on freezing concrete floors to pull the uncontaminated books off the shelves, box them up and bring them back to the DAAL. Even then, Tim and Sharon Jensen had to go through and get rid of any moldy books we had brought by mistake.

To get a value for the books, we were fortunate to find Stan Lassegard, owner of Table of Contents, an online used and out-of-print bookseller. Stan is a Dana College alum and has been most gracious in evaluating all the books so we have a total to give to Mr. Krejci. This relationship has the further benefit that Stan will store and sell for us many duplicate books that we don’t have the room to keep.

All in all getting the books was a satisfying experience, but no sooner had we gotten them into the DAAL than Sharon began naming more books she would like to get. So I guess stay tuned for further developments. ■



More than 1,000 books retrieved from the Dana College library are currently awaiting transport to temporary storage until we can make space for them on the shelves.

AN INTRODUCTION TO ARCHIVES:

Discovering the Stories Hidden in Those Gray Boxes

By **Dr. Timothy A. Jensen**
Board Member

The Danish American Archive and Library has a subtitle: “Center for Research and Education.” Research has long been central to the DAAL, regularly bringing journalists, scholars, curious visitors, and other assorted researchers to our doors. Education has received less emphasis, although we have given presentations for groups as varied as genealogical societies and high school business students.

This past March we took a major step toward enriching the DAAL’s educational offerings. Professor Teresa Houser of Midland University in Fremont, Nebraska, had been casting about for ways of introducing her history majors to primary sources and to the possibilities of original research, when she discovered that the DAAL not only has the rich diversity of documents she was seeking, but also the staff and volunteers who can introduce her students to these materials and to ways of working with them.

In the next few weeks, through an exchange of e-mails with Teresa and meetings with Archive staff and volunteers, a plan for an “Introduction to Archives” workshop emerged. Sharon Jensen, former Dana College archivist and now DAAL’s Library Director, and I, as a retired college professor, agreed to teach the course. The plan looked good on paper and, most happily, it looked good to Midland students, too.

As Professor Houser and eleven of her upper division students settled in, Sharon and I gave a PowerPoint presentation on the history of the DAAL. We looked at its beginnings on the Dana College campus and the gradual expansion of its vision from collecting college and church records to documenting the experiences of all Danish Americans. We also looked at major themes in Danish immigration

and considered why Danes have been able to assimilate with exceptional speed and agility.

After looking at the broad outline of the DAAL’s history it was time to move. So, we did a walking tour of both DAAL wings—the array of books and periodicals in the library section and the rows of acid-free boxes on the archival side. We looked at how uniform coding practices make it possible to locate, say, a single letter or photo, amidst what can seem the indifferent uniformity of the acid-free boxes. We considered, too, how the efforts at consistency must be balanced with the pronounced variety of archival collections—from Danish Brotherhood membership books to oversized baptismal certificates, from a single collection containing 15,000 letters to another consisting of a solitary sheet of paper.



Three Midland University history students work on the first step in the research process—finding a document location online.

It is a quite different challenge to be able to find a document and understand what it means. To bridge that gap Sharon and I had composed twenty-five questions, stimulating the students to open some of those faceless gray boxes and discover the treasures within. The scavenger hunt brought the students face-to-face with everything from citizenship papers to

homemade birthday cards, from obituaries to recipes. As soon as the questions were distributed, the students dashed off to find answers. It quickly became a contest to see which team could track down the most solutions.

All too soon the scavenger hunt came to an end. After some concluding questions and comments, it was time for the students to

head back to Fremont.

This Introduction to Archives course is one we want to make available to more college and possibly even high school students. If you or your group would be interested in scheduling a class, please contact the DAAL at 402-426-7910. The workshop includes both scavenger hunt and Danish pastry. ■



A break for coffee and kringle gives students a chance to get ready for the next phase of the workshop.

After exploring the DAAL’s nooks and crannies, it was time to sit again, this time to visit, drink coffee and tea and eat kringle. No visit to a Danish archive (and no volunteering activity) can be complete without a pause for pastry.

Conversations begun during the coffee break spilled over quickly to the next phase of the workshop—the scavenger hunt. It is one thing to learn about an archive in the abstract.

**THE DANISH CHILDREN
GROWING UP AMERICAN
EXHIBIT IS AVAILABLE!**



This popular photo exhibit can now come to you.

- ◆ Compelling larger than life-sized photographs showing Danish immigrant children from circa 1900
- ◆ 20 two-sided panels, each 4 feet wide and 8 feet tall
- ◆ Flexible set-up possibilities
- ◆ No charge other than insurance and shipping

The Danish Children exhibit is a big hit wherever it is displayed. From Omaha to Denver and beyond, people of all ethnic backgrounds come to view these wonderful photos of immigrant children in many stages of life.

To engage *Danish Children Growing Up American*, please call the DAAL at 402-426-7910 or email info@danishamericanarchive.com.

IN THE STACKS

EVER SHIFTING SHELVES

By

Michael L. Hennick, Library Assistant

After the DAAL purchased its current building last summer we knew that we would need to reorganize our materials to make better use of our space. Our first hope was to integrate a large number of archival boxes into the collection in their proper shelf location. These boxes had been shelved in an “overflow” area and were increasing in numbers as we received more and more items or expanded existing collections.

The Archive is categorized alphabetically with each separate collection having a code. For example DAS-999 is for the Danish American Heritage Society whose collection was begun in 1999. After the code the box number is written. The Society has ten boxes. A family box would be something like PAG-2003 and then the box number, in this case one through nine. PAG is Phil Pagel. There are more than 3,500 boxes in the archival collection at this time.



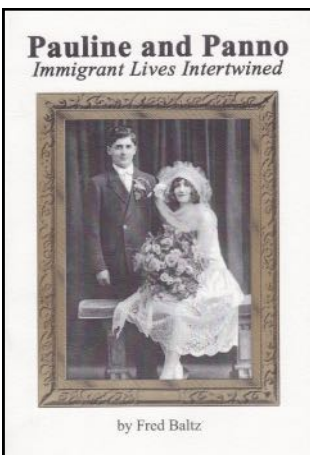
Because of the considerable weight of the boxes on each shelf, this winter we had the shelves braced, one to the other, with small beams connecting them at the top.

Michael Hennick had to move more than 3,500 boxes during the reorganization of the DAAL.

This made the shelves safer and more secure so we could begin our “shift.”

One must begin at the end and work backward incorporating the 250 new boxes into their designated place in the alphabet while moving the old boxes out of the way. This was a slow and physical process, because some boxes being full of papers are quite heavy. Shifting all 3,500 boxes took us a total of three weeks. But it was worth it, because this new and improved arrangement of the archive boxes is uniform and orderly and makes it much easier to find materials when they are located where they should be in the overall collection. Also each row now has its own overflow shelf to accommodate new or expanded collections.

Our goal at the DAAL is to preserve and organize our materials to make them accessible and valuable to current and future generations. We do this one box at a time. ■



SUMMER BOOK SPECIAL

Pauline and Panno: Immigrant Lives Intertwined tells the story of two immigrants—one Danish and the other Greek. Follow Pauline Schou and Peter Touzios as they marry and launch their life together facing the uncertainties and hardships of the 1930’s.

You can order this great summer read for a total of \$8.00 including shipping and handling—a saving of \$6.00 over our regular price. To order your copy, simply call the DAAL at 402-426-7910 or email info@danishamericanarchive.com.

VOLUNTEERS: 1,600 hours by 42 volunteers from Colorado, Iowa, Minnesota and Nebraska.

VISITORS: 38 visitors from California, Colorado, Georgia, Hawaii, Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota, Nebraska, and Germany.

USERS: 31 users from Arkansas, California, Georgia, Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Wisconsin, Denmark. And Germany.

ACQUISITIONS

The following are the donations of materials we have received from January through April. 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:

Sybille Bartels (Blair, NE)
 Arlene Brandes (Bellevue, NE)
 John Braunhold (Chicago, IL)
 Connie Buller (Blair, NE)
 Cleo Christoffersen (Council Bluffs, IA)
 Sanne Christensen (Denmark)
 Catrine Giery (Myrtle Beach, SC)
 Helga & Verlan Hanson (Blair, NE)
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 Cynthia Jensen (Scottsdale, AZ)
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 John Wood (Oklahoma City, OK)

FINANCIAL REPORT

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 Solveig Sperati Korte (Vermillion, SD)
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 Phil & Florence Larsen (Blair, NE)
 John W. & Elizabeth Nielsen (Blair, NE)
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 Ruth Rasmussen (Omaha, NE)
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Honoraria:

Shirley Hansen's 95th birthday
 Phil & Florence Larsen (Blair, NE)
 Alvina Hjortsvang & her extraordinary life of learning & sharing
 Joyce Mynster (Council Bluffs, IA)
 Kathy Meldrum
 Laura Meldrum & David Shepard (Musella, GA)
 Donald Pedersen
 Audrey Pedersen (Pea Ridge, AR)
 Donald Pedersen – Valentine's Day
 Audrey Pedersen (Pea Ridge, AR)

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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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FINANCIAL REPORT (cont.)

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 acknowledgement of each financial contribution. These donations are part of the General Fund.

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Legacy Builders:

These donors have named DAAL in their estates (*indicates deceased). If you are not on this list but should be, please contact Jill Hennick at 402-426-7910 or Paul Johnson at 402-201-7024.

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George Madsen
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John W. & Elizabeth Nielsen
LeVern* & Marilyn* Nielsen
W. Clayton Nielsen
Larry & Palma Plume
Joan Sorensen ■

Dana at the DAAL (Cont.)

LARP (Liberal Arts Reading Program) and the Humanities course (including Parnassus), to Homecomings, Commencements, Sights and Sounds of Christmas, and visits by Lauritz Melchior, Victor Borge and Danish royalty.

Over the years members of the faculty and staff, alumni and family members have given us materials, and we welcome contributions that might seem insignificant to the giver but that are important to us. But the collection is far from complete. As might be expected, items from the late 19th century and early decades of the 20th are sparse. Also missing (except for clippings) are materials from the 1990s to 2010, when Dana closed. Was everything thrown away, or are there still materials in file cabinets across the campus?

Not everything related to Dana and Trinity history is in this room. Go into the main room of the Archive, and there you'll find complete—or almost complete—collections of college catalogs; the alumni newsletter/magazine, in recent decades called the *Dana Review*; the *Danian*, the college yearbook; the *Sower*, the annual literary magazine; and the *Hermes*, the campus newsletter.

Besides welcoming additions to the Dana Collection, we also welcome inquiries from alumni, their family members and friends—for that, after all, is its purpose. ■

AROUND THE ARCHIVE

- ◆ During volunteer week the first week of April, several friends and Dana College classmates came to the DAAL to work and socialize. The group included Eileen Simonsen, Fran Anderson, Sherry Forrest, Julie Rolfing, Nancy Anderson and Betsy Anderson. They are now making plans to gather again with an even bigger group at the DAAL's summer volunteer week scheduled for the last week in July.
- ◆ As part of her U.S. tour to promote her latest book, *The Killing Forest*, Danish crime fiction writer Sara Blaedel came to Criss Library at the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) for an event co-sponsored by the DAAL and UNO. The February 6 event included a talk, question and answer session and book signing by Blaedel for approximately 40 people. That evening several DAAL board members treated her to dinner at an iconic Omaha restaurant. From the reception she received, there is no doubt that Blaedel has gained many new fans in the Omaha and Blair areas.
- ◆ A side benefit of retrieving the books from the Dana College library was the acquisition of a striking portrait of N.C. Carlsen, president of the UELC from 1925 to 1950. The N.C. Carlsen collection at the DAAL contains 33 boxes of documents detailing the rich history of the UELC during his administration. ■



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.)

Or to pay by credit card:

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

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR 'S REPORT



*Executive Director
Jill Hennick*

There's a change in the air. I don't know if you can feel it, but the DAAL is finally "coming into its own." We are gaining a strength and confidence we didn't

have before. Let's look at what has been changing and how that might apply to our future.

Last year when we bought our building, all the uncertainty of rent increases, potential moves and their associated costs went away. Of course, we do have new costs and responsibilities now, but they apply directly to the DAAL.

Safety and security were our focus in March and April:

- ◆ We hired a contractor to brace the shelves on the Archive side of the building so Library Assistant Michael Hennick could do the

reorganization of the boxes he talks about on Page 4.

- ◆ We had, ADT install a security system to provide the safest place possible for storing the valuable materials our donors have provided.
- ◆ We enhanced the security for our digital materials by getting a new host for our website and by migrating to a different kind of storage system for our shared files.
- ◆ We got our sprinkler system tested and scheduled other safety checks to ensure the physical security of our materials.

If you look at our sign or logo, you will notice our subtitle is, "Center for Research *and Education*." To address the education part of our vision the DAAL in February co-sponsored a talk by Danish author Sara Blaedel at the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO). On October 5-13, 2015, Nick Mogensen from Denmark visited the DAAL and used our materials for his master's thesis. We also emailed material to another researcher in Denmark to enable her to complete her doctorate work. Last December Tim and

Sharon Jensen hosted the Hannibal family from California and Nebraska who had an interest in the settlement of Dannebrog, Nebraska. This summer they plan to do a presentation for a family reunion.

But most significantly, last March, Tim and Sharon developed and conducted an "Introduction to the Archive" course for a Midland University history class. Eleven students attended the class, which ended with a scavenger hunt designed to provide them with practical, hands-on research experience. The course was very well received by both the students and their professor, and we are hoping both for repeat performances of the class and for history student interns from Midland University to add to the ones we have already hosted from UNO and the University of Nebraska at Kearney.

Can simply owning our building make such a big difference in our outlook? I think it can. We are looking to the future with a newfound confidence about what we can (and sometimes what we cannot) do, and we recognize the true value of who we are and what we have. ■



1738 Washington Street
Blair, Nebraska 68008

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

DO YOU VALUE THE DANISH AMERICAN ARCHIVE AND LIBRARY?

Are you over 70 1/2 years old? Do you have an IRA? If so, please read on.

On December 18th, 2015, the Protecting Americans from Tax Hikes (PATH) Act was signed into law. One of the provisions of this legislation made permanent the “charitable rollover.” ***This is great news for nonprofits such as the DAAL!*** Previously, this issue was taken up by Congress on a year-by-year basis which made distribution planning more complicated and uncertain.

What is a charitable rollover, you may ask. Well, a charitable rollover allows IRA owners over 70 1/2 (those who are subject to Required Minimum Distributions) the option to distribute part of their IRAs directly to charities tax-free. The amount of a charitable rollover could cover their RMD, it could be less, or it could be as much as \$100,000.

Be sure to visit with your tax advisor first before doing a charitable rollover.

For example, if you itemize your tax deductions, including charitable donations, you may not benefit from a direct charitable rollover. If you’re considering a larger distribution, you would want to discuss that with your financial advisor(s) first in order to avoid any unintended consequences.

Over the years, I’ve known many people who only take distributions from their IRAs because they’re required to do so. If you are someone fortunate enough not to need your Required Minimum Distributions, the charitable rollover may be an effective way to manage your taxable income while supporting the DAAL at the same time. ■



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Paul Johnson is a CFP® professional under contract with DAAL to assist its donors with planned giving. Supporters of the DAAL can contact him without charge or obligation at 402/201-7024 if they have any questions.