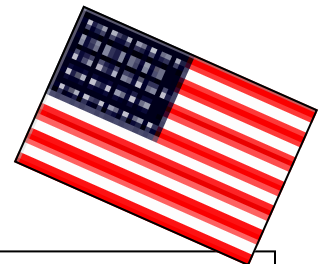


# JOTTINGS



A publication of the Danish American Archive and Library

May-Aug. 2019

## DANISH CHILDREN RETURN TO THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA

The DAAL's popular *Danish Children Growing Up American* traveling exhibit returns to the Dr. C.C. and Mabel Criss Library at the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) September 23 to November 1, 2019. "We are thrilled to again be working with the staff of Criss Library where it all began," says DAAL Executive Director Jill Hennick. "The original 2013 display was a huge success," she continued, "and we expect this event to be even better."

In August of 2011, the DAAL signed a community cooperation agreement with UNO. Together UNO and the DAAL combine the DAAL's wealth of resources with UNO's educational goals. The *Danish Children* exhibit was one of the first projects that emerged from this partnership, and appropriately occurs in the American city that according to the 2010 census report had the largest percentage of people of Danish descent. Two prominent local businessmen of Danish descent, Mogens Bay and Bruce Lauritzen, provided the major funding for the exhibit.

The display consists of twenty 4-foot by 8-foot panels printed on both sides containing roughly 50 photos of Danish immigrant children. Visitors can walk back through time to the late 19th or early 20th centuries as they view the photos of the children in all walks of life from infancy through school, play, religious training and sadly sometimes death. As visitors walk through the display, most pause to study the remarkable detail in these photos, enlarged to life sized or even greater.

The DAAL is working with the Washington County Historical Museum to bring in artifacts that will enhance the exhibit and tell their own story about life back in the day. The exhibit will be set up on the first, or lower level of the library, with convenient space for a related lecture by Danish historian Jan Pøhlmann Jessen.

In a fortunate coincidence, Jessen, an independent historian, is planning a short working trip to the this area and will be in Omaha October 14. He has agreed to present his lecture, "Denmark 1931-1932 and the Roots of Nazi Resistance," next to the display area on October 14. His talk, scheduled for 4 p.m., will focus on the fear of war and its consequences for Danish policy and society. A reception will follow the presentation, with the bonus that each attendee will receive a free copy of the book *War Games* by Torben Tvorup Christensen and Lucille Wilder about Denmark on the eve of the Nazi invasion in 1940.

The timing of the display works very well for two other groups as well. The Danish Sisterhood is holding their national convention in Omaha October 3-6, and the DAAL Fall Volunteer Week is scheduled for the week of October 7th through the 11th. We hope to welcome visitors to the exhibit from both of these groups during their time in the Omaha area. ■

Religious Life | *Det religiøse liv*



Ca. 1920's | *Albion-Mogensen Collection | USHSA*

Playtime | *Leg*



Early 1920's | *Walders-Johansen Collection | Solvang, California*  
*Acker-Johansen (brother) & Martin-Johansen (Walter) (sister)*



*Independent historian Jan Pøhlmann Jessen.*

# FROM THE DANA ROOM

## Dana's Linden Trees and the Cold War by Ann (Harms) George

*This article, now updated by the same writer, appeared in the Spring 2006 issue of the Dana Review, the alumni magazine.*



*Dana's own "Unter den Linden" surrounding the campus oval.*

Plans for a tree-planting in the spring of 1960 started simply enough, although there was an international component from the beginning. Three Lutheran synods with Danish, German, and Norwegian backgrounds would merge in April to form The American Lutheran Church.

Wanting to symbolize the merger of the Danish synod that founded and supported Dana College and Trinity Seminary with the German synod and to recognize the growing number of students of German descent, Norman C. Bansen, at that time associate professor of English and Danish, wrote to West Berlin Mayor Willy Brandt in March with a proposal. Bansen suggested that the city send linden trees to Dana for its own Unter den Linden.\* (With the division of Berlin at the end of World War II, Unter den Linden, the city's

famous boulevard, was now in East Berlin, in the shadow of the Brandenburg Gate.)

Soon after Bansen sent his letter, according to a note titled "How It Happened. . ." in the program for the tree-planting, ". . . word was received that 24 Linden trees [*Tilia cordata* or littleleaf linden] were being sent to the College 'as a greeting from West Berlin and a symbol of the friendship existing between Germany and the United States.'"

With this news, college administrators announced that the tree-planting would take place on May 22 and that Dana's Unter den Linden would border a large segment of the future Campus Oval, from Old Main to beyond Mickelsen Hall, then under construction.

In early May the U.S. Air Force flew the trees to Washington, D.C., and then to Offutt Air Force Base near Omaha. Offutt personnel delivered them to Dana. The May 5 issue of *The Hermes*, the campus newspaper, in reporting the expected delivery of the trees within a few days, noted that the Pentagon had become involved in planning the ceremony.

That month Cold War tensions escalated when, on May 1, the U.S.S.R. shot down an American U-2 spy plane and captured its pilot, Gary Powers. Then on May 16 Soviet furor over the spy plane caused the Paris Summit Conference between President Eisenhower and Soviet Premier Khrushchev to collapse.

In recounting the tree-planting and these events in his centennial history of Dana College and Trinity Seminary, *A Place Called Dana*, Peter L. Petersen writes, ". . . what started as a plan to commemorate quietly the merger of the three church bodies by planting on campus some trees native to Germany soon mushroomed

**(Continued Page 3)**

## From the Dana Room (Cont.)

into an international event publicized worldwide via the United States Information Agency, Radio Free Europe, and the Voice of America. . . . Suddenly the gift of two dozen trees from the mayor of West Berlin to a small liberal arts college in Nebraska took on a new meaning.”

As a consequence of this Cold War chill, it’s probably seldom that trees have been planted with so much ceremony. The Offutt band played as the crowd, estimated at 1,000, gathered that Sunday afternoon southeast of Old Main. Phil Pagel, director of public relations, was master of ceremonies. Two groups from Offutt opened the program, with a color guard presenting the flags of the U.S., Germany, Denmark, and the United Nations, and the band playing the national anthems of the three countries. The Rev. Raymond Meyer, representing the Central District of the new synod, The American Lutheran Church, gave the invocation, and Dana’s president, Dr. C.C. Madsen, gave the welcome.

Carl von Mutius of the West German Embassy in Washington, D.C., brought greetings and read a cablegram (the text is in the June 1960 alumni quarterly) from Mayor Brandt, in which Brandt said, “The Berliners will always be grateful for the tremendous help and protection the American people have granted to the city of Berlin.”

There were additional greetings from Frederik Behr of the U.S. State Department, Brig. General James Knapp of the Strategic Air Command at Offutt, U.S. Senator Roman Hruska of Nebraska, and Mayor Don Schettler of Blair. Colonel Robert Hemphill, a Dana alumnus and the official Air Force escort from the Pentagon, was one of eight additional platform guests.

The Dana Choir, under the direction of Dr. Paul Neve ’41, sang Neve’s composition, “Peace,” which he had earlier set to the poem “Peace” by Henry Vaughan, a 17<sup>th</sup> century English poet.

U.S. Senator Carl Curtis of Nebraska gave the main address (his text is also in the June 1960 alumni quarterly). “The unity of our meeting today,” he said, “gathering to our midst friends from abroad . . . so pointedly reminds us that men of good will . . . have, throughout all history, faced the future with confidence.” Then two of the lindens were planted by Professor Bansen, von Mutius, President Madsen, Behr, and Senators Hruska and Curtis. The crowd dispersed after singing “Hail Dana.”

Within a few days hundreds of newspapers in this country and Europe, including those in Berlin, carried articles about the ceremony, and a recording of the program was broadcast over 247 Radio Free Europe stations.

Lindens can live to be hundreds of years old, and perhaps several of those planted 59 years ago will someday be venerated for their longevity. ■



Opening ceremony for Dana's "Unter den Linden."

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*\*Trees representing Denmark and Norway were also planted on the campus. Five beech trees from Odense, where Hans Christian Andersen was born, were planted in 1955, the sesquicentennial of his birth. When the three synods merged, therefore, there were already trees on campus representing Denmark. (Prof. Bansen also obtained the beeches.) Evergreens were imported from Norway, but they didn't survive Nebraska's hot summers. Nebraska weather has been a challenge for the beeches, too. Several were replaced within a few years, and of the three that remained, one was downed by a windstorm. The remaining two stand on the south side of College Drive near the northeast corner of the Durham Center. And not all of the 24 lindens survived. Several arrived from Berlin in poor condition, and although they were replanted in a nursery, didn't recover. When the E.C. Hunt Campus Center was built, two were transplanted to the front of the "Mengers House" on College Drive – used at the time as a residence for women students – and one of those has survived. And another linden was damaged by the Old Main fire and had to be removed.*

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

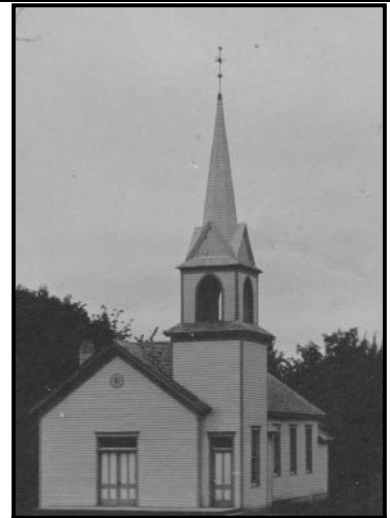
First Lutheran Church in Poy Sippi, Wisconsin, recently restored the original steeple of their church, which was constructed in 1902. It now stands as the centerpiece of a memorial to all who have been a part of the church. Commemorative bricks with the names of members and friends of the church surround the sidewalk. The names of the Danish pioneers who founded the church, originally named Danish Evangelical Lutheran Lazarus Church on December 20, 1874 are also commemorated.

The DAAL also honors Danish immigrants, their descendants and the institutions they founded. Our “bricks” are in the form of acid-free boxes. And, we are fortunate to be able to open them and immerse ourselves in the contents.

Some of our treasures related to this church are:

- *The Anders Jorgensen family. He was one of the founding members of the congregation and his son Sidney Jorgensen and grandson Jerome Godson became pastors.*
- *The Alfred and Anna Olsen family. They were parents of long-time First Lutheran organist Myrna Tostenson.*
- *Pastors who served the congregation from its founding through Rev. Norman Freund. We have sermons he preached while he was a pastor in Poy Sippi from 1962-1967.*
- *Dana College, which was a church college attended by more than 30 sons and daughters of the congregation, including Phil Pagel who subsequently worked at Dana for 40 years.*
- *First Lutheran Church materials including photos, copies of church records, clippings, booklets and programs.*

This is just a small fraction of the hundreds of boxes at the Archive. The wide variety of names and subject matter have one thing in common: they document the lives of Danish immigrants and their descendants. Will you help us continue to build our own memorial? Photos, diaries, letters, programs, booklets, reminiscences, certificates, business records, family trees, oral histories, and other documents all help to describe the experiences and contributions of Danish Americans. This memorial too, will rise “brick” by “brick.” ■



*Original Danish Evangelical Lutheran Lazarus Church.*



*Member memorial of First Lutheran Church in Poy Sippi, Wisconsin.*



*Executive Director  
Jill Hennick*

## **DAAL**

**Danish American  
Archive and Library**

**Dedication to our Ancestors,  
Appreciation of their Labors**



*The “bricks” of the DAAL.*

**VOLUNTEERS:** 1,926 hours by 33 volunteers from Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska and Ohio.

**VISITORS:** 180 visitors from Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, Minnesota, Nebraska, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, and Wisconsin.

**USERS:** 83 users from Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Oregon, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Wisconsin, Canada, Denmark, South Korea and email.

## ACQUISITIONS

### Materials:

**The following are the donations of materials we have received from May through August. 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. We appreciate your financial donations to support the processing and storage of your materials.**

Susan J. Allen (Missouri Valley, IA)  
 Keld Alstrup (Manchester, VT)  
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 Phil & Florence Larsen's 68th wedding anniversary  
 From their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren  
 Roger & Marilyn (Ward) Nichols' 60th Anniversary  
 Richard & Delores Jorgensen (Poy Sippi, WI)  
 John W. Nielsen's 94th Birthday  
 David Nielsen (Winfield, KS)  
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### 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 Muriel Neve's 95th Birthday

In memory of Anne Christopherson

In honor of Dody Johnson

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**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 estates (\* indicates deceased). If you are not on this list but should be, please contact Jill Hennick at 402-426-7910.**

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George Madsen

Ronald D. Johnson\* and Bodil Strom Muller

John W. & Elizabeth Nielsen

LeVern\* & Marilyn\* Nielsen

W. Clayton Nielsen

Larry & Palma Plume

Joan Sorensen ■

## PHD CANDIDATE COMES TO THE DAAL *Ryan Gesme Finds a Wealth of Information for His Dissertation*

For the first week in August, researcher Ryan Gesme excavated the wealth of primary sources he found at the DAAL. Ryan is working on his Doctorate of History with a focus on the history of modern Europe out of the University of Tennessee-Knoxville. He is researching the Schlesweig-Holstein border conflict over nationalism, identity and language in the 19th and 20th centuries, and he plans to have his dissertation complete by 2022.

Ryan learned about the DAAL when a professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison found that he was researching the Danish-German border dispute. She encouraged him to apply for a Bodtker Grant. The Danish American Heritage Society offers these grants to qualified researchers for study in areas of common interest. Bodtker Grants provide stipends for students or graduates interested in exploring topics related to Danish history and heritage in North America. They are primarily intended for research and internship at the Danish American Archive and Library; the Danish Immigrant Archives at Grand View University in Des Moines, Iowa; or the Museum of Danish America in Elk Horn, Iowa.

Asked how useful he found the materials at the DAAL, he said, "My experience at the DAAL has been fantastic! I've had a very productive time here, and the material has opened up my research to additional areas." He went on to say that he loves the primary materials, but that the library section contains good secondary materials, as well. "Anyone doing Danish American research should consider coming to the DAAL," he said.

Ryan feels you can draw parallels between the Danish-German dispute to what is going on in the present. "Communities create a sense of belonging, and there are good books on the American border situation that apply to the Schlesweig-Holstein dispute."

From here Ryan plans continue his research at the Danish Immigrant Archives at Grand View University, then to Germany and Denmark for further research. ■



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

## AROUND THE ARCHIVE

- ◆ Staff and volunteers at the DAAL were saddened to learn of the death of Anne Christopherson in July. While her husband, Dr. Myrvin Christopherson, was president of Dana College, Anne became an icon for planning and executing special events and visits on the campus. But her service wasn't limited to Dana College. While a resident of Blair, she served as a board member at Good Shepherd Lutheran Home and Memorial Community Hospital Foundation. She received the Blair Community Service Award, became a Dana College Honorary Alumna and received the Word Sender Award in support of the John Neihardt Foundation in Bancroft, Nebraska. Anne was a bright light wherever she went, and anyone who knew her will miss her.
- ◆ On Saturday, October 5th from 9 - 11 a.m., the DAAL again will host the annual Kringle & Mingle reception for Dana College alumni. Each year since the college closed in 2010, the energetic Alumni Association has held a Dana College Homecoming Weekend the first weekend in October, ensuring that the memory of Dana College never dims. The Kringle & Mingle provides an opportunity for alumni to meet up and visit in a friendly atmosphere—not to mention to have kringle and coffee as well.
- ◆ This summer we had two excellent interns from the University of Nebraska at Omaha. **Cassidy Kirkle**, completed one credit hour that she needed for her Bachelor of Arts in English. While here, Cassidy did some sorting and cataloging of the John Mark Nielsen collection and created a draft version of a book of Christmas cards with artwork and verse by Elizabeth and John W. Nielsen. Another English major, **Blair Camazzo**, worked on accessioning, sorting and documenting the Bee and Ben Krantz collection.
- ◆ This summer we were delighted to welcome an unusually high number of visitors who stopped in on their way through Nebraska. In fact we had more than twice the number of visitors compared to 2018. Some left materials with us, but everyone enriched us with stories of their backgrounds, experiences and ancestors.
- ◆ 2019 seems to be a momentous year for anniversaries. On display right now at the DAAL are photo exhibits marking the anniversaries of four different milestones:
  - The 50th anniversary of the first human beings to walk on the moon. Danish American Albert L. Larsen played a part in developing the navigation and guidance system for the expedition.
  - The 150th anniversary of the founding of the city of Blair. Danish American founded construction companies, Korshoj Construction Company and Larsen & Jipp Company, built many of the buildings in Blair as well as Dana College.
  - The 400th anniversary of the Jens Munk expedition from Denmark to Canada. The members of the expedition were the first Danes to set foot in North America.
  - The 800th anniversary of the creation of the Danish flag, called Dannebrog. Denmark is the oldest kingdom in Europe with the oldest flag.

A new exhibit highlighting Dana College music is going on display September 16th. ■



1738 Washington Street  
Blair, Nebraska 68008

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

## IN THE STACKS

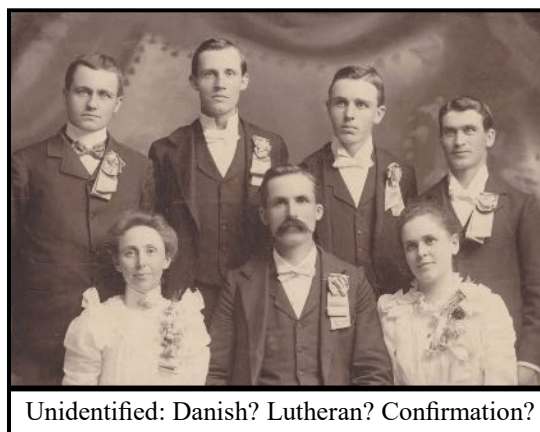
### Not UFOs -We Have UAOs

By Michael Hennick, Library Assistant

**Unidentified Archival Objects:** Every archive or museum has them—photographs, articles, notebooks, and various scraps of handwritten notes that are not marked or labeled in any fashion. In an archive you want everything to have its proper place so that it can be easily retrieved for the curious family member or the academic researcher. The unidentified item has no place aside from giving us a very general idea of its time period. It may be doomed to sit in a box for unnumbered years or be simply discarded as not meriting preservation. The DAAL has several boxes of photographs categorized as "to be identified" or "unidentified."

There was a time before the Archive left Dana College when many volunteers spent their time looking at countless unidentified photos that had accumulated at the school or in the old church synod. Many faces were remembered and many forgotten, but there were some successes. The properly labeled photographs entered a new life as part of boxed collections, family files or Dana folders. To this day the process of labeling photographs has never ended. Visitors to the DAAL often find themselves pointing out unknown people in family, church or school pictures. Without such help we might never have known the handsome young man was someone's cousin by the name of Jens Nielsen or that the venerable old lady is Grandma Jensen who lived in Clinton, Iowa.

Of course with the passage of time it becomes less and less likely that the older photos will ever be labeled. We hasten to do what we can and earnestly invite anyone who has or will donate materials to identify people as much as possible in the photographs. The most important lesson from this is that **everyone should label their photographs!** Don't let those old photo albums sit and wait for future generations who will stare at them helplessly—mark them now so that names and faces can come alive. ■



Unidentified: Danish? Lutheran? Confirmation?