



Danish American
Archive & Library

Summer – 2026

Jottings
NEWSLETTER

THE BIRTHPLACE OF TRINITY SEMINARY AND DANA COLLEGE

The Story Behind St. Johannes Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church and Cemetery at Argo, Nebraska

by Gene Nelsen

In the second half of the nineteenth century, Denmark was overcrowded with tenant farmers who had little or no chance of owning their own land. Many Danes left their homeland with the hope of acquiring cheap or free land in America. Several of these individuals and their families settled in and around the small village of Argo in Burt County, Nebraska.



A Christmas gathering of the congregation at St. Johannes in December of 1908.

There were no Danish Lutheran churches nearby, so many chose to worship with the Norwegians at Elim

Lutheran Church (intersection of County Roads 23 and D). The Danes continued to attend Elim until they decided to form their own congregation in 1875. They called their new church “St. Johannes.” It was located at the settlement of Admah in northwest Washington County.

This new church continued for several years before a struggle arose between two factions. The division was centered on the role of Scripture in the life and confessions of the church. This split was inherited from the mother church in Denmark. The more “pietistic” group came out of the Inner Mission movement in the Danish church, which insisted that the Bible was the revealed Word of God and the sole authority. In America they were often known as the “Holy Danes.” The more liberal group of believers followed the teachings of N. F. S. Grundtvig. These “Grundtvigians” held that Scripture was

one authority, another being the Apostles Creed. Because their Biblical interpretations were not so strict, they came to be called the “Happy Danes.” Six members of the former group left the Admah church in 1879 to form their own congregation. They built their church, with its surrounding cemetery, three and a half miles east of Elim Lutheran Church in Burt County. The new church was built on about one acre of ground, which Lars Andersen sold them for the price of one dollar. The building was dedicated in 1883 and would bear the same name as their former church, “St. Johannes.”

In September of 1884 nine pastors from nineteen congregations (formerly affiliated with the Norwegian-Danish Conference) met at St. Johannes (Argo) to form a new Danish Lutheran synod. They also authorized the creation of a school to train Danish Lutheran pastors, who were desperately needed to serve the growing number of congregations in the States. Thus Trinity Seminary was born and began immediately with four students in the home of Rev. A. M. Andersen in Blair. The house is still standing at 2104 Park Street. In 1886 a new school building, “Old Main,” opened and offered classes for seminarians and other students. In 1903 the academy and undergraduate classes were designated “Dana College.”

St. Johannes in Argo had its last service in 1910. The last known burial in the cemetery was



A lonely tombstone from the time when the cemetery had been nearly forgotten.

Continued on page 7...

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

What can we learn by glancing through archival documents?
Across time, the pleasures of summer have remained the same.



Picking Flowers: Anker and Marion Johnson, Solvang, California, c. 1919

The Walker-Johnson collection contains over 200 boxes of materials primarily concerning life on a California ranch in the 20th century.



Jill Hennick
Executive Director

Picnics: A student nurse lawn party in Viborg, Denmark, c. 1928

The Dagmar Petersen Vasby collection contains over forty boxes of materials on the life and career of a woman who served as a nurse and medical missionary in China and Liberia and as a wife and mother in Wisconsin.



Bible Camps: Camp Konaway, Yarmouth, Maine, 1933

This photo from the Helen Hansen Sorensen family file, is one example of the many items concerning Lutheran Bible camps at the DAAL.

County Fairs:
Ethel Metzler at the Washington County Fair in Arlington, Nebraska, c. 1947

This is part of the Sonderup family collection, which continues to grow with materials on rural and small town life in Nebraska.



Boat Rides: Members of the Neve family, Nojiri, Japan, 1951

The Lloyd and Muriel Neve collection of some twenty boxes contains materials covering all aspects of the life of this pastor's family.



Swimming: Dorothy Larsen and family in the pool at Fort Omaha, Nebraska, 1962

The Dorothy Larsen collection consists of ten boxes of materials, much of which focuses on her career as an officer in the United States Navy.

Thank you for helping us preserve materials documenting the daily lives of Danish Americans.
Enjoy the rest of the summer!



Jill Hennick, Executive Director
1738 Washington Street, Blair, Nebraska 68008
Telephone: (402) 426-7910
E-mail: info@danishamericanarchive.com
Hours: 8am-3 pm, Monday-Friday
A 501(c)(3) corporation funded by free-will donations

From The Dana Room

The Dana Farm

by Karen (Nelson) Hansen

"Dana needs a farm," announced Dana College President Erland Nelson to the 1935 convention of the UDEL (United Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church). The Great Depression was changing basic aspects of life in many ways. President Nelson suggested a farm could provide employment for students and supplement the dining room of the college with meat, produce and dairy products. With the approval of the convention delegates, a 103-acre farm, just south and east of the campus, was purchased in October of 1935 with a \$10,000 loan from the Endowment Fund. Nelson declared, "We are going to put the culture in agriculture." The transaction was completed on March 1, 1936, and Dana now had a farm, complete with a large barn, two silos and four other buildings, including a house, which was occupied at various times by members of the faculty.



Valuable gifts of farm machinery were donated to the project when local companies were presented with Nelson's plans. Later a deal was struck with the Oliver Company to provide free use of farm equipment. L.K. Johansen, a graduate of the UNL College of Agriculture, was hired to manage the farm and teach newly added classes in agronomy and animal husbandry. In a special July 4th edition in 1937, the *Omaha World Herald* announced, "Dana College Runs a Farm . . . Successfully." At that time, sixteen students were employed on the farm with a livestock inventory of 10 Holstein cows, 450 laying hens, and a "sizeable herd of hogs."

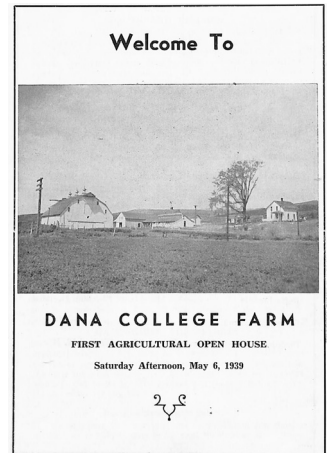
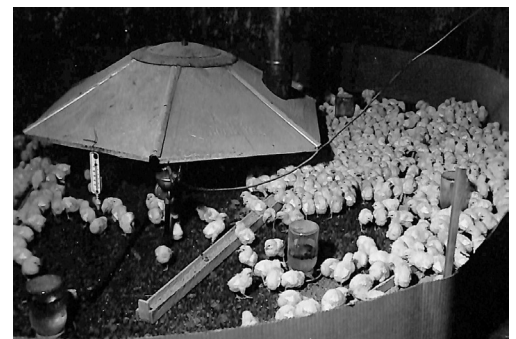


Later twelve large turkeys were also listed. Fields were planted with barley, rye, corn and alfalfa. Johansen predicted

that, within about a year, most of the food needed for the dining hall would be provided by the farm. Courses in feeds and feeding as well as forage crops and foraging were added the next semester. A dairy herdsman was hired to oversee the regulated care of dairy production. The land was improved, as noted in the April 26, 1940 *Hermes* as contour and strip crop methods were used to stop gully erosion.

Low student enrollment in the early '40s and the end of the equipment deal with Oliver brought financial challenges that caused the college to drop agricultural courses from the curriculum. A manager hired in 1940 resigned three years later. Dana was no longer able to maintain the farm. The livestock and remaining equipment were sold, and the land was rented out. These steps brought in \$4,000, which was a partial repayment of the 1935 loan from the Endowment Fund. The farmland, plus a five-acre strip west of the campus, was sold for \$10,700. In a little more than five years, the Dana Farm was done. Later in the 1959 and 1960 campus expansion, the Dana Farm land was repurchased and is now the site of Mickelsen Hall.

With the closing of the college in 2010, and Lutheran Family Services now using Mickelsen Hall for a variety of housing units, we see yet another chapter opening in the long history of Dana College. Adding a farm and agricultural classes to the curriculum, which already included education, music, theology, physical education, psychology, history, languages and more, displayed, once again, Dana's commitment to providing a broad, well-rounded education. ■



AROUND THE ARCHIVE

Twelve members of the Norden Club of Lincoln, Nebraska visited the DAAL in April. Founded in 1947, the club's membership represents all five nations of Scandinavia. After coffee and kringle, Dr. John Mark Nielsen gave a presentation on the work and history of the Danish American Archive and Library. Following a light lunch at the DAAL, Dr. Nielsen took the club members on an informative tour of the former Dana College campus. The Norden Club has also donated many books to our library.



Twenty-two volunteers worked on Dana College projects during Dana Volunteer Days in June. They helped caption and separate by decade the many unidentified Dana photos at the DAAL. Pictured from left to right: Fran Andersen, Nathan Kramer, Eileen Simonsen, Betsy Andersen, Iris Doolittle, and Sandy Sonderup.

Featured Danish American Commemorative Wall Panel

<https://danishamericanarchive.com/danish-american-commemorative-wall-gallery/>

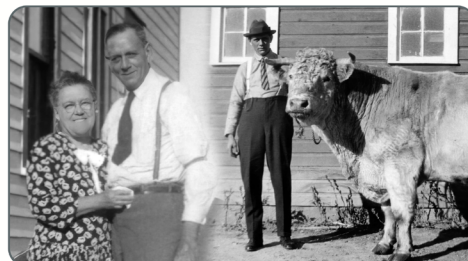
The Commemorative Wall at the DAAL was created to honor and remember Danish American individuals, families and institutions.

The Wall continues to grow. A limited number of panels are still available.

To see all of the panels, you have two options. The first is to stop by and view the exhibit in person. The second is to visit the Commemorative Wall Gallery on our website. ■



Anna, Hans, Lucie, Maria, Adele



Anna & Ole

Ole & Major

Nona Alfreda Olsen (1911-2002)

Father: Ole Peter Olsen (1886-1971)
Grandparents: Jens Jakob Olsen (1861-1941)
& Maren Dusine Jacobsen (1864-1942)

Mother: Anna Kristine Andersen (1887-1974)
Grandparents: Hans Andersen (1864-1944)
& Maria Mommine Nielsen (1868-1903)

Jens Jakob Olsen immigrated to the United States in 1882; and Maren Dusine Jacobsen arrived in 1879. They were both from different parts of Jutland. JJ and "Sine" were married in Nebraska in 1884 and their oldest son, Ole Peter, was born in 1886. The family moved to Montana in 1908.

Hans Andersen's family immigrated to the United States from northern Schleswig in 1881. Maria M. Nielsen came to the United States with her family in 1883; they were from south Schleswig. The entire Duchy of Schleswig was controlled by Germany at that time. Hans and Maria were married in 1886, with Maria dying in 1903 after the birth of their first son, Andrew, who was raised by relatives. Hans then moved to Montana with his daughters. Anna, the oldest at sixteen, cared for her younger sisters. Hans was one of those who read sermons at Ebenezer Lutheran Church when no pastor was available.

Ole Olsen and Anna Andersen were married in 1910. Nona was born the next year on the family homestead. She had two younger siblings, Mildred and Arden.

The Olsens lived less than a mile south of the Bentsens, whose son Charles would become Nona's husband.

John 15:16 — Go and bear fruit

FINANCIAL REPORT – March-June 2026

VOLUNTEERS: 1,809 hours by 40 volunteers from Arkansas, Colorado, Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska and New York
VISITORS: 65 visitors from Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska and Wisconsin.
RESEARCHERS: 76 researchers from California, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Washington, Wisconsin, Australia, Denmark, Israel and email/phone/Facebook.

Acquisitions

MATERIALS

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.

Robert Albers (Roseville, MN)
 Bill & Betsy Anderson (Blair, NE)
 Vaughn Christensen (Blair, NE)
 Clare Cowing (Blair, NE)
 Elverhoj Museum of History and Art (Solvang, CA)
 Anne Eppley (Omaha, NE)
 Julianne Ferry (Harlan, IA)
 Chris Gehringer (Omaha, NE)
 Scott Grace (Elkader, IA)
 Scott & Angie Halstead (Omaha, NE)
 Roger Hanson (Roseville, MN)
 James Jacobsen (Des Moines, IA)
 Erik Jensen (Omaha, NE)
 Jane Jensen (Plainview, NE)
 Julie Johnson (Columbus, OH)
 Rich & Pat Jorgensen (Blair, NE)
 Richard & Delores Jorgensen (Poy Sippi, WI)
 Kathy Knutson (New Brighton, MN)
 Nathan Kramer (Omaha, NE)
 Andrea Madsen (Elk River, MN)
 Richard Madsen (Blair, NE)
 Liv Paulson Norderhaug (Chanhassen, MN)
 Eleanor Schou (Albert Lea, MN)
 Eileen Simonsen (Oakdale, MN)
 Sandy Sonderup (Blair, NE)
 Martha Stone (Providence, RI)
 Donna Toebben (Blair, NE)
 Debi Verlaney, family of Paul & Ingrid Nyholm (Bellevue, NE)
 Kathleen Karlsen Wakefield (Oak Creek, WI)

MEMORIALS

John & Myra Christensen
 Christensen Family Trust
 Joan Clements
 Myrv Christopherson (Decorah, IA)
 Dr. Herta Engelman
 Myrv Christopherson (Decorah, IA)
 Edith Fox, Dana College Librarian
 Bob & Darlene Rademacher (Lincoln, NE)
 Janet Francis
 Sieg & Brenda Krueger (Blair, NE)
 Aagot Hoidahl, Dana College Librarian
 Bob & Darlene Rademacher (Lincoln, NE)
 Dr. Clifford Hanson
 Myrv Christopherson (Decorah, IA)
 Richard Kleber
 JoAnn Kleber (Northfield, MN)
 Dr. C. C. Madsen
 Myrv Christopherson (Decorah, IA)
 David Rasmussen
 Sara Trueblood (Webster City, IA)
 Dr. Elmer Rasmussen
 Myrv Christopherson (Decorah, IA)

Dr. Paul Schneider, Dana Faculty
 Myrv Christopherson (Decorah, IA)
 Conrad "Connie" Sorensen
 Myrv Christopherson (Decorah, IA)
 A. J. Snowbeck
 Myrv Christopherson (Decorah, IA)

HONORARIA

Vaughn Christensen's 95th Birthday
 Michael & Jill Hennick (Blair, NE)
 Delores Jorgensen's 90th Birthday
 Michael & Jill Hennick (Blair, NE)
 Don Jorgensen's 90th Birthday
 Myrv Christopherson (Decorah, IA)
 Michael & Jill Hennick (Blair, NE)
 Prof. Sieg Krueger
 Myrv Christopherson (Decorah, IA)
 Hans K. Pedersen Family
 Caterpillar Foundation

ENDOWMENT FUND

Myrv Christopherson for the Myrv & Anne Christopherson Fund

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.

Susan Andersen (Cary, NC)
 Jean Barry (Kearney, NE)
 Gordon Batten (Camp Douglas, WI)
 Marcia Bergmeyer (Wilber, NE)
 Lisa Betts (Lincoln, NE)
 Deborah Biorn (Saint Cloud, MN)
 Charities Aid Foundation
 Civilingenior Borge Mandrup Christensen Fund of the Rochester Area Foundation
 Lisa Culbertson (Lincoln, NE)
 Danish Brotherhood Lodge #35 (Chicago, IL)
 Danish Sisterhood Lodge #15 (Milwaukee, WI)
 Danish Sisterhood, Pacific Northwest District (Seattle, WA)
 William E. & Rose Marie Davis Foundation (Bennington, NE)
 Julianne Ferry (Harlan, IA)
 Jane Geddes (Cheyenne, WY)
 Scott & Shelly Grorud (Hutchinson, MN)
 James Hansen (Charleston, WV)
 Stuart Hansen & Erica Eddy (Mount Pleasant, WI)
 Marilyn Hawes (Fort Calhoun, NE)
 Karen Hoyle (Laguna Niguel, CA)
 Lynda Jeppesen (Oak Park, IL)
 Rich & Pat Jorgensen (Blair, NE)
 Michael Lowe (Logan, IA)
 David & Cathy Mehrens (Joplin, MO)
 Stanley & Laura Nielsen (Monona, WI)
 Skip & Dorothy Pedersen (Omaha, NE)
 Ted Pedersen (Duluth, MN)
 Chuck & Linda Petersen (Hemingford, NE)
 Bill & Margaret Rodenburg (Centerville, OH)
 Bob & Judy Schmolli (Omaha, NE)
 Eleanor Schou (Albert Lea, MN)
 Anna Speiser (Emerson, NE)
 Karen Taylor (Springville, IA)

Nancy Thompson (Clive, IA)
 LeRoy Wigdahl (Omaha, NE)
 Paula Wolf (Elmhurst, IL)
 Kitty Wooley (Colorado Springs, CO)
Thrivent Choice/YourCause Gifts
 Lee & Norma Barney (Oregon City, OR)
 Thomas Bengtson (Rock Island, IL)
 Myrv Christopherson (Decorah, IA)
 Roger Clark (Franklin, WI)
 Susan Hettinger (Bennington, NE)
 Paul & Jayne Jensen (Cresco, IA)
 Allan Johnson (Mount Pleasant, WI)
 Kevin Knitt (Stevens Point, WI)
 Jeanette Larson (Pipestone, MN)
 Toni Lawson (Green Bay, WI)
 Bodil Muller (Beaverton, OR)
 Alice & Leon Neve (Saint Paul, MN)
 Skip Pedersen (Omaha, NE)
 Tyler Petersen (Omaha, NE)
 Matthew Plowman (Des Moines, IA)
 Jim Ruden (Littleton, CO)
 Sandy Sonderup (Blair, NE)
 Paul Sorensen (Dekalb, IL)
 Elsa Steffensen (Hoffman Estates, IL)
 Linda Steffensen (Hoffman Estates, IL)

50/100 CLUB

The 50/100 Club began in 2010. The name 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). An added benefit of being part of the 50/100 club is receiving one donation acknowledgment 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. (indicates deceased)*

Erna Berthelsen (Albert Lea, MN)
 Becky Bryant (East Dubuque, IL)
 Myrv & Anne* Christopherson (Decorah, IA)
 Arlene & Neil Grover (Zumbrota, MN)
 Roger Hanson (Roseville, MN)
 Michael & Jill Hennick (Blair, NE)
 Daniel L. Jensen (Columbus, OH)
 Dody Johnson* (in our hearts)
 Julianne Johnson & Judy Pollock* (Columbus, OH)
 Chuck & Joyce Jorgensen (Blair, NE)
 Gene* & Nancy Lindblad (Blair, NE)
 Barbara Meduna (Monument, CO)
 Ken & Judy Nelson (Baxter Springs, MO)
 Vordyn Nelson (Marshall, TX)
 John Mark & Dawn Nielsen (Blair, NE)
 Lisa Nielsen (Fairfield, PA)
 Jay Planalp (Loveland, CO)
 Palma & Larry Plume (Evergreen, CO)
 Scott & Colleen Rasmussen (Omaha, NE)
 Sandy Sonderup (Blair, NE)
 Carol Svendsen & Jay Mead (Denver, CO)
 Nick Temali (Mahtomedi, MN)

Ron & Vicki Vig (Holdrege, NE)
Deb Schou Wood (Bloomington, MN)

LEGACY BUILDERS

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

Erna Berthelsen
Judy Brehm
Borge M. Christensen*
Myrv & Anne* Christopherson
Bernhard* & Marilyn* Erling
Kathryn (Olsen) & Milbern Goetz
Lois Girtz Halley*
Frederick "Fritz" J. Hansen*
Roger J. Hanson
Michael and Jill Hennick
Russell P.* and Esther A. Jensen
Tim* & Sharon Jensen
Ada Jeppesen*
Lynda Jeppesen
Julianne Johnson and Judy Pollock*
Oscar* & Dody* Johnson
Paul & Liz Johnson
Alice M. Jorgensen*
Lorene Larsen
Phil* & Florence* Larsen
Carol Madsen Larson*
Gene* & Nancy Lindblad
Gary & Diane Madsen
George Madsen*
Ronald D. Johnson* and Bodil Strom Muller
Brian Nevermann
Howard Nicholson*
John W.* & Elizabeth* Nielsen
LeVern* & Marilyn* Nielsen
Lisa Nielsen
W. Clayton Nielsen*
Arthur* & Mary* Pedersen
Larry & Palma Plume
Joan Sorensen
Don * & Marjorie* Wahlgren
Deb Schou Wood ■

New in the Digital Archive

<http://aarchive.danishamericanarchive.net>

Under Dana College in the Archive section:

- The Sower - Dana's literary magazine
- Alumni magazines (various titles)
- The Dana Review

Under Periodicals in the Library section:

- Andersen's Year Books (Danish): 1919, 1921
- Danelags Julehilsen -bog -hefte (Danish): 1914, 1915, 1917, 1918, 1920, 1922
- American-Danish Almanac (Yearbook): 1932, 1933
- Misteltenen (Danish American Christmas magazine): 1913-1925
- Dansk Amerikansk Jul: 1954-1959
- Salomons Almanak (Den Forenede Staters Danske Almanak): 1914-1917 ■

Endowment Fund

The endowment fund is an investment in the future of the Archive. Some named funds have been established in memory of loved ones. Figures include realized earnings accumulated in each fund since the original donation. The figures are listed at historic cost and are rounded to the nearest \$500.

Ada Stokes Jeppesen Memorial Fund	\$133,500
Deloris Hansen Bengtson Memorial Fund	109,000
Oscar & Dody Johnson Memorial Fund	17,500
Bernhard & Marilyn Erling Memorial Fund	13,500
Rev. Aster & Ruth Neve Family Memorial Fund	11,000
Dagmar Vasby Memorial Fund	10,500
John T. & Virginia (Lippincott) Beck Memorial Fund	10,000
Martin & Else Andersen Memorial Fund	8,000
Rev. Sigurd D. & Dorothy M. Petersen Memorial Fund	6,500
Earl Jensen Family Memorial Fund	5,500
Myrvin & Anne Christopherson Fund	4,000
Maryann & Jerry Lund Memorial Fund	3,500
Agnete (Ahlefeldt-Laurvig) Temali Fund	<u>3,000</u>
Subtotal of named funds with balances over \$1,000	\$335,500
General Endowment Fund	<u>104,500</u>
Total Endowment Funds	\$440,000

Events and Notes

The DAAL will be closed for **Fall Break** from noon Friday, August 28th through Labor Day.

Starting in September, the **DAAL will open at 9 AM** rather than 8 AM. Our new hours will be Monday-Friday 9AM -3PM.

Fall Volunteer Week will be October 5-9, 2026. If you plan to join us, please let Jill know.

Kringle & Mingle will be held Saturday, October 17, 2026, 9:00-11:00 AM.

Special birthday wishes go out to **Agnes (Larsen) Paulsen** (photo) who turned 105 and Martin Kuhr who turned 100.

Record keeping: So many of us have dropped land lines or changed our email addresses. Please keep your contact information up-to-date (form on page 7). Email delivery of Jottings is available; if you would prefer that to a hard copy, please let Jill know. ■



Contact Information

Thank you for your interest in the Danish American Archive and Library. All subscribers receive three issues of the *Jottings* newsletter each year, and members enjoy reduced program service fees. The newsletter is mailed in April, August and December. Please keep your contact information current by means of this form.

OLD ADDRESS: ☐ see label on reverse, or

Names(s) _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

NEW ADDRESS

Name(s) _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

if not permanent: ___ Temporary from ___/___ (month/year) to ___/___ (month/year)

___ Seasonal (repeat annually) from ___ (month) to ___ (month)

Phone: _____ Email: _____ (☐ send Jottings via email)

Additional information: _____

St. Johannes Church (continued from page 1)

in 1915. The church building (in the southeast part of the cemetery) was sold and removed in 1917. The north end of the cemetery had been for the burial of church members. It has a total of thirteen blocks and is six blocks wide. The south end was mainly for the burial of non-members. There are other scattered burials for a total of sixty-some graves. On the northeast side had been the stable and a parking area for wagons and buggies. The woodshed and the outhouse were on the south side.

Directions to St. Johannes Cemetery

From Blair

Go north on Highway 75 to Herman; at the north end of town, turn left (west) at the Herman Community Church; continue on County Rd. 4 about 13 miles; at the old East Admah Cemetery (on the right) turn right onto County Rd. 5 and go north for 2 miles; turn left on County Rd. B; the cemetery is on the left in less than half a mile.

From Highway 77

Turn east onto County Rd. D (about 2 ½ miles south of Uehling) and continue east for 4 ½ miles (in one mile you will pass Elim Lutheran Church and cemetery); St. Johannes Cemetery will come up on your right. ■



A close-up of one of the Mogensen family stones; young Nellie was less than a year old.

Parting Shot

Traveling has always been a fun summer activity. This is one page of a photo album documenting Dorthy, Eddie and Earl's 1940 vacation trip from Kansas to the west coast and back, covering 5600 miles. Not only are the photos identified, but extra drawings and descriptions are included throughout, making it entertaining to read again and again. ■

From the Earl & Dorthea Jensen collection

