

JOTTINGS

A publication of the Danish American Archive and Library

May -Aug. 2020

THE DAAL 10 YEARS LATER



Out of the Dana library.

On Friday, July 9, 2010, the staff and volunteers at the DAAL received the stunning news that we had exactly two and a half days to pack up all materials, books, equipment and furniture and get everything out of the Dana College library or risk having it locked in when the campus permanently closed. We had no choice but to roll up our sleeves and get to work.

The Move—First, we found climate controlled storage for all of our precious documents, books and photos. The owners of a local paper warehouse, Professional Forms, offered us climate controlled storage space at a discount. Next was the daunting task of packing up the hundreds of boxes of documents and photos as well as thousands of books and transporting them across town to the

warehouse. As soon as word about the closing of the college and the DAAL's having to move spread, more than 70 people poured in to help, bringing trucks, trailers and any other kind of vehicle in which to haul everything to its new homes.

- All materials and books were stored on pallets at Professional Forms.
- Furniture and equipment, including computers, desks, bookshelves, tables and chairs, dishes and other artifacts and equipment were stored in private homes or private buildings.

After the Move—Rebuilding began almost immediately with volunteers meeting weekly with Dr. John W. Nielsen and Jill Hennick at First Lutheran Church in Blair. Most important was deciding how to rebuild our endowment and operating funds totaling more than \$300,000 that were lost when Dana College went bankrupt. The generous response by our supporters to a fundraising letter written by Dr. Nielsen jumpstarted the gradual rebuilding of what was lost.

Being separated from Dana College, it was essential that we deal with the legal issues related to being independent. To help with this, we created a steering committee, which later became our first Board of Directors. Blair attorney Rachel Truhlsen worked pro bono to assist us in becoming an independent 501c3 Nebraska corporation



Surviving and thriving.

All the time this was going on, we were searching for a new home for the archive. We located our current space at 1738 Washington Street and leased it from Eriksen Construction, who finished the inside according to our space needs.

We moved into the building on October 1, 2010.

Since then we have continued to grow, adding to our collections and finishing the year with a budget surplus each year since 2010. We installed our sign to the front of the building, and solar curtains to protect our materials. We updated and expanded our IT capabilities and hardware and improved work spaces with new tables and chairs.

We purchased our building in July of 2015 and paid off a five-year mortgage by November of 2017.

Since our relocation we have expanded our reach into both the local community and nationwide with our Danish Children Growing Up American photo exhibit, our intern program, and our archive methods workshop. We have continued our relationship with Dana College alumni by hosting the Kringle & Mingle event for their homecoming each year. (Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, neither the homecoming nor the Kringle & Mingle will happen this year.) In addition, we have worked with the

Blair Public Library and the Washington County Historical Museum in neighboring Ft. Calhoun. Finally, we have established formal cooperation agreements with five different universities, and we participate in the board-level Cooperative Strategic Planning Committee with the Danish American Heritage Society, the Museum of Danish America and the Danish Archives at Grand View University.

Into the Future—In spite of the COVID-19 pandemic and being closed to the public since last March, the DAAL is still thriving. Executive Director Jill Hennick and Library Assistant Michael Hennick keep things going in person, several volunteers work on projects from home, and our wonderfully loyal supporters have continued to contribute funds and materials. So how are we doing? Ten years after the greatest crisis in our history, the DAAL is strong, striving and thriving. Given what we accomplished in ten years, who knows what progress the next ten years will bring! ■



Into climate controlled storage.

FROM THE DANA ROOM

On Naming the College . . .

By Ann (Harms) George

This article is based on one in the Fall 2008 Dana Review by the same writer.

Newcomers to the Dana campus soon learned that “Dana,” the poetic name for Denmark, is pronounced “Dan-na,” not “Day-na.”

There's a story, recounted by William E. Christensen in *Saga of the Tower*, his history of the first 75 years of Trinity Seminary and Dana College, that the Rev. A.M. Andersen, a Danish immigrant and, in 1884, Trinity's founder and first president, “was always annoyed with people who mispronounced the name. . . . 'I know, because I named it,'” he'd say.*

But both Christensen, in his history, and Peter L. Petersen, in his centennial history, *A Place Called Dana*, found that there were other contenders as well.

Trinity Seminary had offered pre-seminary classes since 1886, but college classes only began in 1899 when the coeducational Elk Horn College, in Elk Horn, Iowa (also founded by Danish immigrants), was moved to Blair. The 1900-01 college and seminary catalog explains that this move followed a decision made at an annual convention several years earlier, when members of the United Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church in America voted “to unite its two official schools—the College founded in 1878 in Elk Horn, Iowa, and Trinity Seminary. . . at Blair, Nebraska.”

Petersen notes that the college, however, lacked a name, and what to name it became an agenda item at the synod's annual conventions in the early years of the 20th century. Names

used successively over the next few years in the academic catalogs illustrate this indecision: “Blair College and Theological Seminary,” “Blair College and Trinity Theological Seminary,” and “Trinity College and Theological Seminary.” A map of Blair from this period that's online reflects this indecision by simply identifying the campus as “Danish College.”

Then in 1903, the synod's convention settled on “Dana College and Trinity Seminary.”

Christensen writes that “it is fairly certain” that this name was first agreed upon at a college and seminary board meeting. The name was then presented for approval at the convention by Trinity's president, the Rev. P.S. Vig. (This was the second of four times Vig served as president of the seminary; he also taught seminary and college classes, with two brief interruptions, to 1928.)

But who suggested the name?

Andersen, Trinity's president from 1884-89 and a faculty member then and later, from 1895-97, was a member of the college and seminary's three-member board from 1902-09.** Was he, as he said, the first to suggest the name?

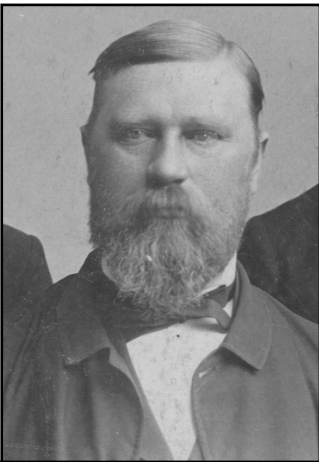
Or was it Prof. C.X. Hansen, who is also mentioned by Christensen and Petersen as a possibility? Hansen enrolled at

Trinity as a student in 1886, the year the building that would eventually be known as “Old Main” was dedicated. By 1903, he was already into what would become a 46-year career of service to the college as a faculty member and its president three times.

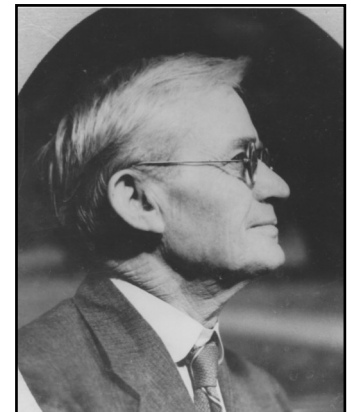
There's another possibility: Christensen notes that “some are inclined to think that C.X. Hansen and Kristian Anker jointly deserve the credit.” Pastor Anker, who, in Iowa, had been Elk Horn College's third president, in 1903 was president, in Blair, of the as-yet unnamed college and a college and seminary faculty member.



Rev. A.M. Andersen



Rev. P.S. Vig



Prof. C.X. Hansen

(Continued next page.)

On Naming the College (Cont.)

So who named the college? Participants in the board meeting who agreed to present “Dana College and Trinity Seminary” for approval at the 1903 convention would have included Andersen as a board member, Anker as college president, and Vig as seminary president. Did the name occur to one of them at the meeting? Or was it proposed in the course of an earlier informal campus discussion in which Hansen might have participated, and Andersen, Anker, or Vig subsequently brought it to the board meeting?

Petersen and Christensen agree that there's little evidence to prove that any one person can be credited.

Christensen concludes that “there were probably several who thought of the name of Dana, since it was the most appropriate and logical name for the school.” And Petersen notes that many Danish-Americans knew that “Dana” was the poetic name for Denmark. “Perhaps,” he writes, “as William E. Christensen has observed, it is 'just as well that no one individual can be credited with naming the college, and that instead several persons had a hand in it.'”

*In later decades newcomers had another opportunity for confusion. “Dana” is also a part of the names of two campus buildings, the science hall and the library. If they said “Dan-na,” in referring to either one, they were told, “No, it's “Day-na” – for Charles A. Dana, who made challenge gifts to small colleges through his Dana Foundation.

** Per Christensen's list of board members from 1902-59 in *Saga of the Tower*. ■

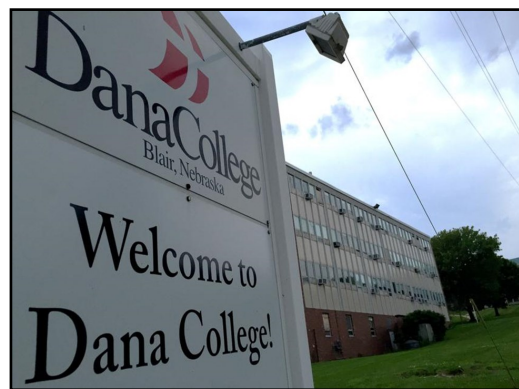
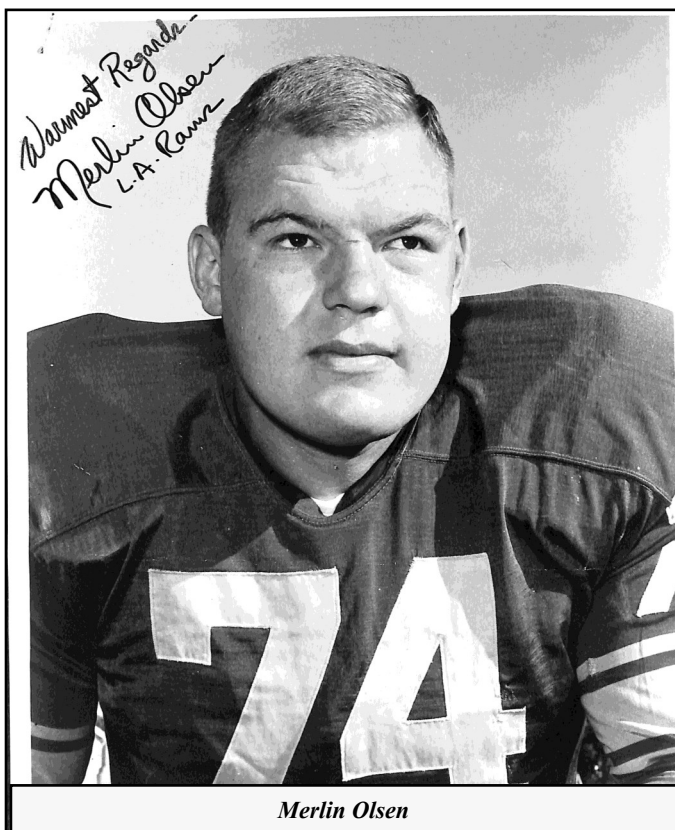


Photo by Enterprise Publishing

IN THE STACKS

Dear Dane: May I Have Your Photograph?

By Michael Hennick, Library Assistant



In the 1960's Frederick J. Miller of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, decided to create a file of photographs of Americans of Danish descent. Whenever he came across a name that was or could be Danish he sent a request, usually via their employer, for a photograph and whatever information they cared to add. Eventually he began sending the materials to Dana College in Blair, Nebraska, believing that an institution of Danish heritage would be the best place to house such a photograph collection. For each picture he sent to the school he received an official thank you from President C. C. Madsen (1956-1971) or later President E. R. Mezoff (1971-1978). Most of the photos are publicity shots, and they are often autographed and accompanied by a brief note or letter. Politicians, athletes, businessmen, clergymen, and academics are all represented.

Don H. Carlsen, Member of Congress, 1st District, California, sent Miller an 8x10 black and white photo and a reply on his Congressional stationery in 1965 stating, “I am about one-half German and one-half Danish. My family was from Schleswig-Holstein....” Arthur G. Hansen, President of Purdue University, sent Miller an 8x10 black and white shot and a reply on the University's letterhead declaring, “I have received your letter of January 30 (1973), and am most flattered that you wish to include my picture in the collection of Americans of Danish ancestry.” In 1969 Lt. Gov. Roger W. Jepsen of Iowa sent a 4x5 black and white photo and a note on his office's

letterhead stating, “Yes, I am of Danish descent and was born and raised in Cedar Falls, Iowa.” Another 4x5 black and white (1964) photo came from Ralph E. Knudsen of Berkeley Baptist Divinity School. He writes, “I am of Danish descent. My father and mother came from Denmark shortly after they were married.” Evan M. Nelsen worked for the Boeing Corporation in Seattle for 36 years and retired as treasurer of the company. Writing back to Miller in 1964 he says, “You are correct in your assumption that I am of Danish ancestry. My wife and I took my father back to Denmark to celebrate his 90th birthday in 1961.”

(Cont. Page 6)

VOLUNTEERS: 595 hours by 15 volunteers from Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota and Nebraska.

VISITORS: 13 visitors from California (Zoom tour), Illinois (Zoom tour), Iowa and Nebraska.

USERS: 60 users from Arizona, California, Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, Wisconsin, Argentina, Canada, Denmark, England and unspecified in email.

VISTIOR AND VOLUNTEER NUMBERS ARE DOWN DUE TO COVID-19.

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.

Lois Andersen (Sierra Vista, AZ)
 Allan & Fran Anderson (Omaha, NE)
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FINANCIAL REPORT

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 Niel Henriksen (online)
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 Jim & Sue Olsen (Blair, NE)
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 Dorthea Jensen
 Christie Jensen Gehringer (Omaha, NE)
 Earl S. Jensen
 Christie Jensen Gehringer (Omaha, NE)
 Bob Krogh
 Fran Anderson (Omaha, NE)
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 Arvid Sandvik
 Arvin Hernes (Blair, NE)
 Arlene Rudolph Youmans
 Erna Berthelsen (Albert Lea, MN)
Honoraria:
 Myrvin Christopherson
 Arvin Hernes (Blair, NE)
 Bernard Falksen's 100th birthday
 Eleanor Schou & Family (Albert Lea, MN)
 Tim & Sharon Jensen's 50th Anniversary
 Phil & Florence Larsen (Blair, NE)
 Joan Krogh
 Phil & Florence Larsen (Blair, NE)
 Phil & Florence Larsen's 69th Anniversary
 Keith & Lori Larsen (Blair, NE)
 Lorene Larsen (Omaha, NE)
 Diane & Gary Madsen (Omaha, NE)
 John W. Nielsen's 95th birthday
 Erna Berthelsen (Albert Lea, MN)
 Myrv Christopherson (Decorah, IA)
 Julie Johnson (Columbus, OH)
 Sandy Sonderup (Blair, NE)
 Laura & Tom Papas
 Liv Paulsen Norderhaug (Chanhassen, MN)
 Agnes Larsen Paulsen's 99th birthday
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 Chris Gehringer (Omaha, NE)
 Kristie Hansen-Mendez (Chicago, IL)
 Shirley Iversen (Rochester, NY)
 Pat & Ivan Paulsen (Walker, MN)
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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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 Susan Allen (Missouri Valley, IA)
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FINANCIAL REPORT

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Endowment:

OSCAR & DODY JOHNSON FUND

Julie Johnson (Columbus, OH) In memory of Dody
Carol Svendsen (Denver, CO) In memory of Dody

GENERAL ENDOWMENT

Myrv Christopherson in memory of Anne Christopherson

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Lee Anne Lack (Montrose, MN)
Jerry & Shirley Lincoln (Lincoln, CA)
Norman Madsen (Monroe, IA)
James Ruden (Littleton, CO)

50/100 Club:

Members of the 50/100 Club pledge to give at least \$50 per month toward our annual operating budget. Our goal is to have at least 100 donors give in this way. Members sustain the DAAL by giving a minimum of \$600 per year. Those at the Founder's Level give at least \$2,000 per year. All members of the 50/100 Club receive one donation acknowledgement for tax purposes in January reflecting a yearly total of all their donations. These donations are part of the General Fund.

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Sandra Wunder (Eaton, CO)

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.

Erna Berthelsen
Judy Brehm
Myrv & Anne* Christopherson
Bernhard* & Marilyn* Erling
Kathryn (Olsen) & Milbern Goetz
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John W. & Elizabeth Nielsen
LeVern* & Marilyn* Nielsen
W. Clayton Nielsen
Larry & Palma Plume
Joan Sorensen ■

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

I discovered this wonderful photo in the five-box Gerald Jacobsen family collection. For me the “We don’t have a pony, but we do have a goat” attitude symbolizes the same strengths of ingenuity, thrift and humor that the DAAL has used to make it to our 10th anniversary.

Ingenuity, creativity

Through the years, our individual economic situations change. COVID-19 has affected some of us worse than others. Those who are able to give are being generous, knowing they are helping out those who can’t this year. The most unique gift we received this year was a parcel of land, our first gift of this kind.



(Cont. Page 6)

Executive Director's Report (Cont.)

People continue to give us direct contributions from their IRAs, even though they aren't required to take a minimum distribution this year. Others are taking advantage of their corporation's matching fund programs, Amazon Smile, Thrivent Choice, and other insurance company matches.

Provisions of the CARES Act can encourage donations before the end of the year as well. For example, the universal charitable deduction of up to \$300 which can be claimed even without itemizing deductions on your tax return, and the increased cap of 100% of Adjusted Gross Income for itemized charitable deductions.

We are using creativity not only in donations, but also in serving the public. Research via computer and telephone rather than in person is the norm, as well as curbside pickups and drop offs. We are also in the midst of our first completely on-line practicum. Watch for next winter's newsletter where we will tell you about this student's project.

Thrift—making use of what we have. Anyone who has ever worked at the DAAL knows how careful we have always been about spending, and our thrift has paid off. *After 10 years, we have built back into our endowment fund the entire amount we lost when Dana College closed.* People are taking advantage of their

extra time at home during this pandemic to go through their family papers, adding to our collection, and occasionally duplicating what we already have. Eliminating redundancy has allowed us to reuse acid-free boxes and envelopes giving us a savings on office supplies during the past two years. We have also reduced our inventory of Lur Publications books by 129 through the sale in the last Jottings. (See the ad on Page 7 and do your Christmas shopping early!)



**Executive Director
Jill Hennick**

Enjoying the small things in life with subtle humor infuses enjoyment into the situation whether one is in Grandpa's goat cart with a cousin or spending time with fellow DAAL volunteers. For example, when we first moved into our building, the late Bob Krogh would come in with his yard stick and uniformly align all the boxes on the archive side of the building before any big events. One time, this entailed moving the 38 boxes of the Rev. Richard and Lois Andersen collection. The next time Bob his brother-in-law Richard, he said, "you sure preached some 'weighty' sermons!"

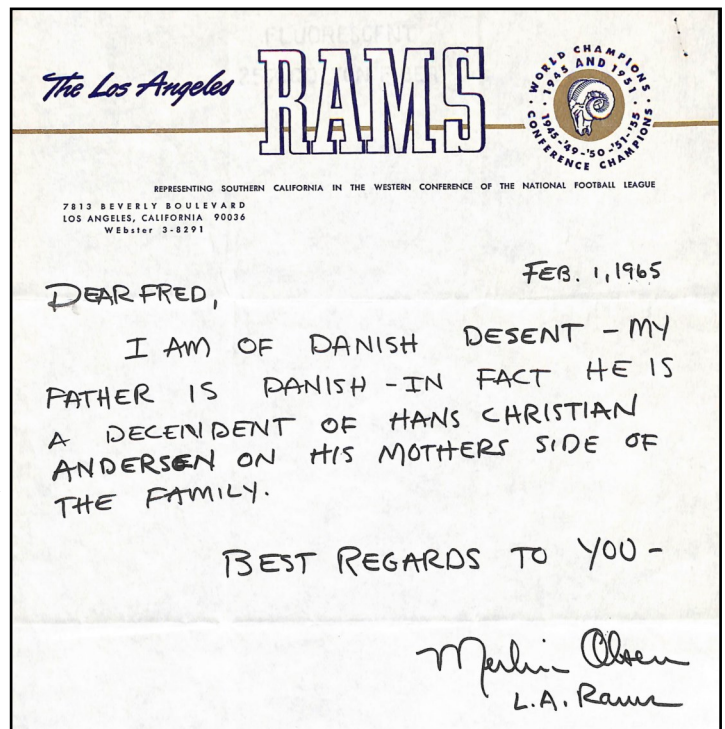
Ingenuity, thrift and humor are the same qualities that served our immigrant ancestors as they started life in a new country. They are the same strengths that will carry us through all of the highs and lows that come our way. Thank you for joining us and strengthening us on our ten-year ride. ■

**"We never met a document
we didn't like."**

In the Stacks (Cont.)

Many professional athletes, such as Gary Larsen, answered Miller's request. He was a defensive tackle for the Minnesota Vikings from 1965-1974. In an undated handwritten reply he writes: "I am sorry that I haven't answered your letter sooner but this is a very busy time of the year for us. In answer to your letter and question, my paternal Grandfather was full blooded Dane and came here from Denmark when he was 11." Far more well-known is Merlin Olsen who played as a defensive tackle for the Los Angeles Rams from 1962-1976. He went on to be a sportscaster and a TV actor. He sent Miller an 8x10 black and white autographed photo and a note on Rams letterhead in 1965: "I am of Danish descent – my father is Danish – in fact he is a descendent of Hans Christian Andersen on his Mother's side of the family."

The Frederick J. Miller Collection contains more than eighty photographs of Americans of Danish descent acquired during the 1960s and 1970s. This is a most interesting holding at the DAAL in that it is primarily pictorial. Photographs put real faces on our fellow Danes and help to make them live in our history. ■



Would you like to help?

Please cut out this card and send it in with your charitable contribution.

A check for \$ _____ is enclosed. (Please make payable to the Danish American Archive and Library.)
Or to pay by credit card:

_____ Mastercard _____ Visa _____ Discover _____ Am Ex for \$ _____

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Please consider the DAAL for matching fund programs and for estate gifts.

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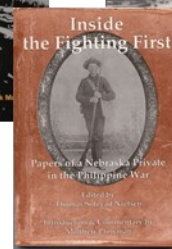
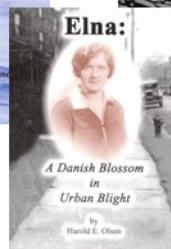
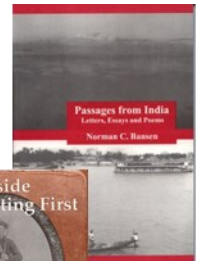
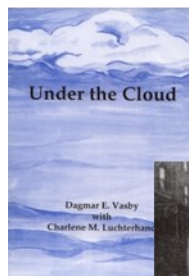
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Thank you for your ongoing support of the Danish American Archive and Library

EARLY CHRISTMAS SALE!

Last issue's COVID-19 sale was so popular, we have decided to extend it in time for your early Christmas shopping. From now until the end of the year, Lur books are on sale for just \$1.00 each. Lur books were written by and about Danish Americans whose fascinating experiences are still relevant today. Here is a list of the books that are still available. Some titles sold out during the COVID sale, so supplies are limited.

A Frame But No Picture
Danish American Lutheranism (1860-1908)
Danes in America: Kansas-Nebraska
Elna
Embracing Two Worlds
Inside the Fighting First
Our Last Frontiers
P.S. Petersen's Memoirs
Passages from India
Pauline and Panno
Plough to the Setting Sun
Tante Johanne
Under the Cloud
War Games



You can order your Lur books by email at info@danishamericanarchive.com or by calling 402-426-7910.

Book Prices: \$1.00 each
Shipping and Handling (USA): \$4.00 for the first book. \$1.00 for each additional book.
7% tax for Nebraska residents.

Save the postage—curbside delivery available.



AROUND THE ARCHIVE

- **ANNUAL MEETING**—In a normal year, all of you would receive a postcard telling the date and time of the annual meeting. This year, because of COVID-19 restrictions, we sent out ballots to just the voting members. Voting members are those who have donated time, materials or money since January 1 of the prior year. If we receive 80% of the ballots, that will count as the vote for the two board members up for reelection, Palma Plume and Linda Steffensen. If we don't receive 80%, we are required to hold the meeting in person. Space is limited, so we will have to limit attendance to only people who have been named proxies by other voting members. Jill will contact those people if the meeting is necessary.
- **VOLUNTEER WEEKS**—The DAAL Board of Directors currently is discussing how to safely re-open to outside visitors and volunteers. As part of that discussion, we need to know when our out-of-town volunteers will feel safe traveling to Blair and staying in a hotel to participate in a volunteer week. Our normal fall volunteer week was cancelled because of the pandemic, so please let us know if you would feel safe to visit us next spring. We miss you and hope it will be soon.
- **PROPERTY FOR SALE**—One of our generous supporters recently donated to the DAAL a treed corner lot in Looking Glass Hills, conveniently located just off Hwy 133 between Omaha and Blair. This lot would be ideal for anyone looking to build a cozy starter or retirement home and is available at a very reasonable price. It's near a county maintained road and in the Blair school district. For more information, please call Dave Jensen, NP Dodge Real Estate, 402-427-3852, DaveJensen@npdodge.com.
- **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR EMERITUS JOHN W. NIELSEN** turned 95 on June 29th. We always call him our founder, but with typical Danish modesty, he says he merely built on what others started. Regardless, he is certainly the father of the modern DAAL. He has seen us through many changes, such as changing our name from the Danish Immigrant Archive to the Danish American Archive and Library in order to more accurately reflect our true nature. He led us through the painful process of evacuation from the Dana College library and into our current building. As he gradually withdrew from his administrative role, he continued to come in as a volunteer. He has always served as our encyclopedia whenever we needed information about a person, family or location. We are so grateful for his many years of service.
- **HOLIDAY ROAD**—After the restrictions are lifted, take your first drive over to the Danish American Archive and Library to travel the United States through vintage postcards from the Earl & Dorthea Jensen and Paul Nyholm collections. There are also state highway maps from the 1940s-1960s and accounts of Danes traveling in America. This exhibit will remain on display throughout and after our re-opening, so members of the public get a chance to view it. ■