

The Voice



Sharing the story of historic Danevang -- past, present, and future.

WINTER / SPRING 2024

I don't know about you, but I'm still in shock that the year is 2024. Another year has quickly passed. Can I really be this old? Speaking of passing time, do you know that our Danish Heritage Preservation Society reaches its 30th birthday this year. I am thankful for those that had the vision and put forth the effort to capture and preserve the memories that made Danevang a special place for so many.

In 2023, we hosted several lunch tours which is a wonderful way to share the Danevang story. Our guests always enjoy the museum exhibits and walking through the Pioneer House – walking back in time. We always get rave reviews about the lunch we serve and how we serve it. We have a tried-and-true menu that our visitors love and it is prepared and served by faithful volunteers who genuinely love sharing our own stories about our connections to Danevang. I tell our guests that I'm always willing to volunteer for these lunch tours because I get to eat the leftovers.

In 2023, we hosted a group of people attending the Re-bild annual convention in Houston (reported in a previous newsletter) as well as hosted the 2nd Danevang Harvest Festival. We had beautiful weather for the Harvest Festival and a good-sized crowd (but not as well attended as the previous year). Those that came seemed to enjoy the live music, the Scandinavian Dancers of Houston and the lunch, of course. The silent auction featured some popular items, and we were pleased with the generous support provided by those donating auction items and bidding on them.

Honestly, I have no idea what 2024 has in store for us. I do know that I will enjoy continuing to serve side-by-side with some very dedicated fellow Board of Directors members and non-Board volunteers who make this a fun endeavor. I hope you will make plans to visit us at the Museum and come to one of the exciting events we're planning for 2024.

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President's Report **Michael Hansen**



**The Danish Heritage Preservation Society
and the
Danish Heritage Museum of Danevang
Expresses Its Appreciation to
Our Treasured Sponsors
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Danevang Harvest Festival 2023



(top left & right) *The Scandinavian Dancers from Houston are always crowd pleasers in Danevang, and Harvest Festival attendees had the chance to learn some of the dancers' fancy moves. (photos by Peter C. Jensen)*
(middle photos ... left) *The silent auction offered 30+ donated items and raised more than \$1,800 to support the Museum. (PCJ photo) **Jimmy Barger** and (middle) **Kenneth Christensen** & Museum Director **Suzan Berndt** were among the many kitchen volunteers. (right) **Pam** & **Paul Pope** took a break from their volunteering efforts to enjoy the music of **The Critters** band.*



(bottom left) *Two men named **PAUL JENSEN** got acquainted at the Harvest Festival... both have Danevang roots but are not related. (PCJ photo)*

Pioneer House Shows Life in 1898 Danevang

Can you imagine what it was like to live in Danevang, Texas, in 1898? Step into the Pioneer House adjacent to the Museum, and you'll be transported back to that era.

The house — built from plans ordered for \$5 from the Sears-Roebuck catalog — was donated to the Museum in 1993 by the H.D.



Madsen interests and moved here from its original location less than a mile away. The first owners of the house were *Hans Peter* and *Maren Jorgensen Jensen*. Both were born in Denmark but married in Iowa,

coming to Danevang in 1898.

The walls and ceilings are bead-board paneling while interior portions are single thickness boards grooved on both sides. The structure is unusual in that exterior uninsulated walls were installed all the way to the roof before the second floor and interior partitions were added. The lumber supplier sent the wrong material for the exterior sheathing, so the same 1-1/8-inch material used for the flooring was also used for the exterior. This sturdy construction helped the house survive major hurricanes in 1900, 1909, 1939, 1945, and 1963.

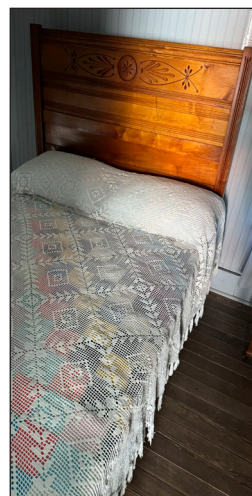
The DHPS spent two years renovating the house; in 1999, it was repainted inside and out. The Society has outfitted it with furniture and artifacts typically found in Danevang homes before World War I, and the house has been climate-controlled to protect the artifacts ... and the visitors!

Six of the Jensen children were raised in the Pioneer House — Jorgen, Lena, Elizabeth, Viggo Pete, Harold, and Ted. Their father was a farmer, a harness maker, and became the community's mailman, driving his buggy every day in all types of weather from Danevang to El Campo and back. Hans died in 1931 and Maren in 1943 (both are buried in the Danevang Lutheran Cemetery). Daughter Elizabeth



and her husband Viggo Juhl lived in the house until 1949; grandson Leonard and Helena Lauritsen from 1951-53; granddaughter Pearl Juhl McGee and her husband Jack from 53-59; son Viggo P. and Marie Jensen from 59-60; Wesley and Darleen Juhl Miksik from 1960-74, and Luci and Juana Espitia from 1974-1980.

The Pioneer House presents the Society with continuing maintenance challenges and expenses (foundation problems, rotting window frames), but it provides a priceless glimpse into Danevang's history.



Hans Peter & Maren Jensen (left column) built the house in 1898 from plans ordered from the Sears catalog. The kitchen has a "pass-through" to the dining room and a wood-burning stove. One enters through the living area. Furniture in one of the two upstairs bedroom is original to the house.

Denmark Welcomes New King and Queen

For the first time in 52 years, Denmark has new royalty. Queen Margrethe II announced in her New Year's speech that she would abdicate her throne because of age (83) and health. On January 14, 2024, she signed documents making her eldest son King Frederik X and his wife Mary the Queen Consort.

The Danish monarchy, like the British, holds a primarily ceremonial role under a parliamentary government. Queen Margrethe, who was the longest-serving monarch in Europe, is an artist whose illustrations for a *Lord of the Rings* book were published under a pseudonym. More recently, she served as costume and production designer for a Netflix adaptation of a fairytale ("Ehrengard: The Art of Seduction"). She earned a diploma in pre-historic archaeology at the University of Cambridge and has studied at Aarhus University, the Sorbonne, and the London School of Economics. Her mother was a member of the Swedish royal family.

The Danish Prime Minister called Margrethe "the epitome of Denmark ... who has articulated the words and emotions that define us as a people and as a nation."

Frederik (55) and Mary (51) have four children — Prince Christian (18), Princess Isabella (16), and 13-year-old twins, Princess Josephine and Prince Vincent.



left to right: Princess Isabella, Prince Christian, King Frederik X, Queen Mary, Princess Isabella, and Prince Vincent. Photo by W. Rattay/Reuters, The New York Times, 1/14/24.

King Frederik earned a master's degree in political science from Denmark's Aarhus University and spent a year studying at Harvard University. He served in all three branches of the Danish military, and is known for his interest in scientific research, climate change, sustainability, and sports (marathon running, sailing, skiing).

Queen Mary, born to Scottish parents employed in universities in Australia, studied at the University of Tasmania, graduating with a combined Bachelor of Commerce and Bachelor of Laws. She later attended a graduate program in advertising and direct marketing. She and Frederik met in Sydney during the 2000 Summer Olympics. She shares many of her husband's interests, is an accomplished equestrian, is notably fashionable, and has been an outspoken supporter of women's and children's rights.

(taken from stories published in The New York Times and Wikipedia)



Queen Margrethe II abdicated after serving for 52 years, naming her eldest son Frederik as King. Photo by M.C. Rasmussen, The New York Times, 1/14/24.

Christmas at the Danevang Lutheran Church

Several DHPS members enjoyed Christmas festivities at the Danevang Lutheran Church, helping to decorate and later dance around the Christmas tree. DHPS President *Michael Hansen* was an indispensable helper to Santa Claus as Santa listened to the Christmas wishes of the children there. Board members *Pam Pope* and *Cynthia Priesmeyer* and their families were also part of the fun.



Terry Priesmeyer introduced his granddaughter Ivy to Santa Claus. Ivy's big sister Stella Priesmeyer was happy to share her list with St. Nick. Traditional Danish Christmas fare was served, including Kransekage (wreath cake) and a plate of Pebernødder (pepper nut cookies).

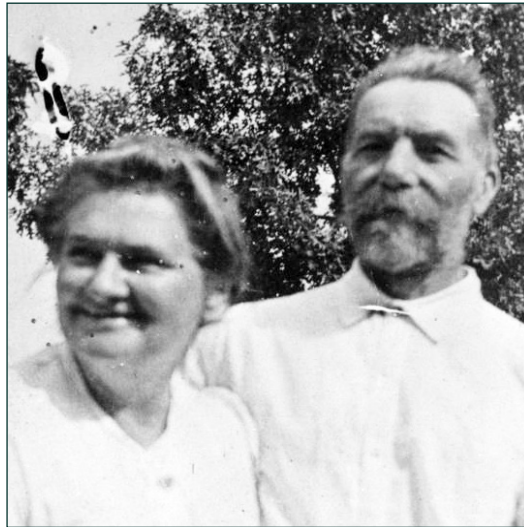
Photos by Cynthia Priesmeyer

Letters Home From Sine Nygaard, a Danevang Pioneer

*Jensine (Sine) Nygaard's letters narrating their lives in America were compiled by Hans Borge Nygaard and published by Funen Times Publishing in Odense, Denmark in 1948 as the book **Nygaard Slægten fra Ulbølle** (The Nygaard Family from Ulbølle) This translation was done by their great grandson Brian Martin. Hans Nygaard died in 1935 and Sine in 1948; both are buried in Danevang. Three of their descendants are on the Museum's board -- grandson Harold Christensen and great granddaughters Cynthia Thyssen Priesmeyer and Cheryl Donnally Lucas. This is the last installment of Sine's letters.*

It was in 1913 that we moved out there {Mississippi}. Anna was at Askov that winter, and in 1914 the First World War started. Hans (our son) volunteered, and after a time of training, he was sent to France. During that time, there was the influenza epidemic both in Europe and America, and Ida decided to become a nurse. She wanted to go to New Orleans, but the president of the Red Cross in Brookhaven said: "Why go to New Orleans? There are enough sick around here who need care!" She was immediately taken to a restaurant to get something to eat, and then they drove her to a family where everyone was sick. The wife died the next day. There were a couple of grown girls lying in the beds with all their clothes on. Ida bathed the sick and gave them clean clothes. Her food was brought to her and set off by the road because no one dared to enter the house. All the sick that Ida cared for there were healed; then she went to another family, and all the places where she went became healed; in the end, she got a slight attack herself, but was soon able to catch up again. The doctor said she was a born nurse.

However, we discovered that it was a bad exchange we had made when we left Danevang. The earth could give nothing without a lot of fertilizer. So when we had been there for five years, we went back to Danevang and leased a farm. It was early in the spring after the war ended in November 1918. Uffe and Helga stayed in Mississippi and have lived there ever since. Shortly before Uffe's death, I sold the place to them. Our friends in Danevang were happy that we were coming back, and so were we. Ida had gone to a big new hospital in New Orleans, and when Anna got a desire to become a nurse, she went there too. However, Ida became engaged to Carl Thyssen.



I started to teach Sunday School, and in the summer I held Danish Children's School with Pastor Rodholm and a couple of young girls. The next fall we leased a better farm and it went very well for us. However, Hans was now getting too old to work and was also very much hindered by the loss of his foot. When Pastor Rodholm traveled to Denmark, we got a new, young Priest by the name of Kyhl. Once when he visited

us, he said, "You are, in fact, a happy man Nygaard!" He could probably see we had a good time together. Even when we first had come to Ferndale, Mrs. Madsen told me: "I've never seen anyone love each other as much as you do." And as the years passed, our love for one another grew bigger and bigger. It is blessed to live with the one you love!

When Holger Begtrup visited the Colony, we spent an evening with him at Kyhl's. He asked Hans where he was from, and when he was told, he exclaimed, "But then you belong to one of our best families at home!" [Holger Begtrup was a Danish theologian, writer, and teacher.]

Hans and I were allowed to live together for almost 48 years. He was only ill for about 8 days when he died of pneumonia. He slept quietly, 83 years and 5 months old.

And now I wait to meet him

*Where heavenly delights like roses grow,
Where the Heartache as Sin is foreign.*

God praise that hope!

Sine Nygaard

Seeking Photos of Danevang Homesteads



This picture (unlabeled) is probably the home of **Hans O. & Martine Jensen** and might have fronted on CR 409 near CR 403. The Jensens came to Danevang in 1926; they later built a house fronting on Hwy. 71 which has now also been demolished. They were killed in an auto accident in 1956. Can anyone confirm this was the Jensen home? Please email kathi-jensen2@gmail.com.

If YOU have photos of old Danevang homesteads, the Society would like to have copies of them. Please call the Museum at **979-578-0808** (Tuesday-Friday, 1-4 p.m.) or email danishmuseum4@gmail.com.

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The Danish Heritage Preservation Society
P.O. Box 368
Danevang, Texas 77432

979-578-0808

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153 County Road 426, Danevang TX 77432

Museum Hours: Tuesday through Saturday, 1- 4 p.m.
Please call 979-578-0808 first to be sure we're open!
Closed Sundays, Mondays, and holidays

E-mail: *danishmuseum4@gmail.com*

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