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## Editorial Statement

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## Editorial Statement

It makes me sad to announce that Egon Bodtker has stepped down as President of DAHS, as of January 2015. Egon, like his father before him, has been a larger-than-life force behind both DAHS and *The Bridge* for many years. In honor of the Bodtker family, who founded the DAHS in Oregon in 1977, and the many thousands of Danish Americans who settled west of the Rocky Mountains, both of the articles in this issue take up the theme of Danes in the West, albeit in very different contexts.

The first article, “We believe that God speaks Danish.’ Assimilation vs Identity in Sanpete County, Utah” examines how a large community of Danish American Mormons in the state that has the highest concentration of Danish Americans negotiated the assimilation pressures present in their new home to retain aspects of their Danish identity. Through extensive fieldwork among the descendants of these early Danish Mormons, Claus Elholm Andersen and Elizabeth Peterson illustrate both the challenging aspects of the Danish Mormons particular immigration situation and the ways in which their stories defy the widespread assumption that Danish Mormons abandoned their native tongue and culture.

The second article in this issue tells the story of two adventurous Danish Americans, brothers Svend and Folmer Hansen, from the important Danish American community in Tyler, Minnesota, home of the Danebod Folk High School. In 1923, Svend and Folmer headed out to California, where they became part of the vanguard of young people flocking to the west coast in search of work and warm weather that would become a flood by the end of the decade. Erik S. Hansen, Folmer’s son, and Rikke Utoft Hansen Olsen, Svend’s daughter, worked together to collect, transcribe, translate, and annotate their fathers’ story of leaving the safety and security of Tyler behind to encounter both ecstatic delights and horrifying obstacles as they traveled across the country, up and down the west coast, and finally home again. This article is much longer than our usual articles, but it contains valuable primary source material from Folmer’s taped memoirs, Svend and Folmer’s letters and postcards home to their widowed father, Christian, and many of Christian’s letters to them.

The book reviews contained in this issue are quite diverse in topic, but all of them are well worth reading. Jason Schroeder introduces us to



Tim Tangherlini's multimedia collection of Danish folktales, legends, and stories, while Hilary Virtanen evaluates a new comparative study of Danes and Icelanders in Michigan. Rachel Hunt Steenblik discusses Gordon Marino's new anthology of excerpts from the work of Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard. Jakob Holm's review of C. Claire Thomson's study of Thomas Vinterberg's seminal Danish dogme film *Festen (The Celebration)* considers both the film itself and Thomson's analysis of it.

In closing, I want to thank all of you, the readers of *The Bridge*, for your patience as Julianne Haahr and I have found our bearings as co-editors. I apologize for both the delays in publication (that we are working very hard to reduce) and the occasional editorial errors, particularly in contributor bios, that have managed to creep in. We welcome your feedback and appreciate your support.