



2003

Editorial Statement

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Recommended Citation

(2003) "Editorial Statement," *The Bridge*: Vol. 26 : No. 2 , Article 3.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/thebridge/vol26/iss2/3>

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Editorial Statement

In this issue five authors examine various stages in the immigrant experience. In the initial article, Jette Mackintosh describes the debate about emigration found in the pages of five Danish agricultural journals in the late nineteenth century. Why did so many rural Danes choose to emigrate and what was the reaction of agricultural spokesmen to this exodus?

The next step in this relocation process was the transatlantic crossing and Harry R. Skallerup identifies the first scheduled steamship departures from Copenhagen to New York, then narrows his focus to one of these American ships, and finally concentrates on a single family among its passengers.

Poor immigrant boys who became wealthy in America are more frequently found in folklore than in American history, but as Thorvald Hansen reminds us in his account of Karl Mathiasen and the New Jersey terra cotta industry, some poor boys from Denmark did strike it rich in America.

Wherever Danes settled in numbers, institutions such as churches, schools, and newspapers soon appeared. Karsten Kjer Michaelsen traces the short but lively history of *Stjernen* (The Star), a weekly paper published in Dannebrog, Nebraska, and proudly described by its editor as "the leading Scandinavia newspaper west of Omaha."

Finally we publish a translation of a short story written by the late Johannes V. Knudsen in 1955. Read this Christmas parable and see if you agree with translator and editor James Iversen's interpretation of it.

Books continue to be published on both sides of the Atlantic about Danish emigration. Two recent works written in Danish, one a novel and the other a historical study, are reviewed in this issue.

Contributors to This Issue

Jette Mackintosh received a Ph. D. in history from the University of Copenhagen in 1991 and currently is an Associate Research Lecturer. She has published widely on the topic of Danish settlers in the American Midwest, including articles in *Agricultural History*, the *Journal of American Ethnic History*, and the *Journal of Geographical History*. Her book, *Danskere i midtvesten: Elk Horn-Kimballton bosættelsen 1870-1925*, was published in 1993, while her most recent book, *Øst—Vest, Hjemme bedst?*, is reviewed in this issue of *The Bridge*.

Harry R. Skallerup grew up in Chicago's old Danish Community and is a retired director of the Florida Atlantic Universities libraries and former Associate Librarian of the U.S. Naval Academy. As a seaman he sailed on the high seas and Great Lakes, and with the U.S. Coast Guard and Military Sealift Command. He is the author of *Books Afloat & Ashore*, a history of books, libraries and reading among early seafarers, and is a member of the Steamship Historical Society of America

Thorvald Hansen retired as Professor of History and Director of the Danish Immigrant Archive—Grand View College. A frequent contributor to *The Bridge*, he is editor of *Church and Life*. He compiled *The Danish Immigrant Archival Listing*, published by Grand View College in 1988.

Karsten Kjer Michaelsen is curator of archaeology at the Odense City Museums. He holds degrees in archaeology and mass communications from Aarhus University. He has also studied at Kearney State University in Nebraska. His research on Danish settlements in the Midwest led to the major exhibition, *Danskerene på prærien* (Danes on the Prairie) at the Odense City Museums in 1996, as well as three books on the subject.

The late Johannes V. Knudsen (1902-1982), a leader of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church, served as president of Grand View College from 1942 to 1951. For more information about his life and writings, see *The Bridge*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (1989). The entire issue is devoted to Knudsen and his career as pastor, educator, and author.

James Iversen is Professor Emeritus of Aerospace Engineering at Iowa State University and President of the Board of Directors of the Danish American Heritage Society. In 2000 he translated *Dannebrog on the American Prairie* by Torben Grøngaard Jeppesen.

Borge M. Christensen is a retired business executive residing in Tucson and a member of the Board of Directors of the Danish American Historical Society. With his wife, Lotte, he co-authored *Our Last Frontiers: A World Cruise Diary* (2000).

Kristian Hvidt served from 1964 until his retirement in 1999 as librarian and then protocol secretary of Folketinget, the Danish Parliament. His 1972 doctoral dissertation, which appeared in English in 1975 under the title of *Flight to America: The Social Background of 300,000 Danish Emigrants*, was the first book to apply computerized data analysis to Scandinavian emigration history and remains essential reading. He is the author of many other works on Danish history and emigration, including *Danes Go West* (1976), *The Westward Journey* (1982), and a 1990 article in *The Bridge*.

Torben Tvorup Christensen was the first recipient of the DAHS Edith and Arnold N. Bodtke Grant for Research or Internship. He used the grant to support his research in several collections at the Danish Immigrant Archive-Dana College. After returning to Denmark, he wrote a thesis based on this research and was awarded a Master's Degree from the University of Aalborg earlier this year.