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Past issues of *The Bridge* can be viewed online at <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/thebridge>

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Books for review in *The Bridge* should be sent directly to our associate editor, Julianne Haahr, 278G Memorial Library, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 728 State Street, Madison, WI 53706, jehaahr@uwalumni.com

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Submission Guidelines for The Bridge

The Bridge: Journal of the Danish American Heritage Society appears twice a year and contains articles and book reviews dealing with all aspects of Danish and Danish American culture, literature, and history, particularly the Danish experience in North America. Manuscripts can be more scholarly or more popular in style, but all articles should demonstrate critical reflection and responsible scholarly practice.

Past issues of *The Bridge* have also contained Danish American memoirs, essays, short stories, collections of letters, and historical documents. Book reviews and review essays in *The Bridge* deal with Danish life and history and the broader Scandinavian experience in North America as well as the Danish American experience. *The Bridge* occasionally reprints previously published material.

Manuscript submissions should conform to the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Please submit an electronic version of the manuscript file via the "Submit Article" link located in the left margin of the web page: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/thebridge>, or as an attachment via email in MS Word or Open Office, with illustrations in a separate file, to Julie K. Allen, editor of *The Bridge*, at julie_allen@byu.edu. It is the author's responsibility to obtain permission to publish any illustrations included in an article. Please include a brief, fifty-to one-hundred-word author's biography suitable for the journal's "Contributors to This Issue" section.

All manuscripts are reviewed by the editor in consultation with the associate editor. However, there is an option to have manuscripts peer-reviewed. Authors who want to have their articles subject to double-blind peer review should indicate this at the time of submission. Accepted peer-reviewed articles will be identified as such in the published issue of *The Bridge* in which they appear.

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Editorial Statement

One of the most persistent questions in discussions of national identity, of what it means to be American or Danish or both, for example, is what culture actually encompasses. In its most common usage, culture seems to mean “how we do things” in a certain place or group, but while the way we do things changes according to weather, technology, politics, and pandemics, to name just a few, normative ideas of culture as defining features of our identities as individuals and members of specific groups have remarkable durability. In his essay collection *År to & tre* (Years two and three, 1999), the Danish writer Carsten Jensen muses, “Culture has become synonymous with identity. ... Just as Hof beer is always *our* beer, we say *our* culture, since culture is always about collective identity, about the symbols in which we recognize and rediscover ourselves, a beautiful, solid ground under our feet amidst a fluid world that threatens to pull us along out into namelessness” (103). Invested with such solemn significance as a fixed point in the whirlwind of life, certain ideas, practices, behaviors, objects, linguistic patterns, and other elements marked as “culture” get preserved and passed on, but also transformed as they move from person to person across time and space.

From a Danish immigration history perspective, the question of cultural identity leads down many different roads. The basic question is deceptively simple: how do Danes who leave Denmark and their descendants, or immigrants to Denmark and their descendants, define and express Danishness? The particular answers depend, of course, on when they lived, where exactly they came from and where they settled, how they traveled, whom they married, and other variables. Each of us can point to particular heirloom objects, food dishes, turns of phrase, institutions, or individuals that seem to exemplify what being Danish means, but it can be hard to agree which are most normative and whether or not they should be. In order to bring together a wide array of approaches to this topic, DAHS will be hosting its next international conference in Seattle, Washington in May 2021, with a theme of “Traditions and Transitions: Ways of Being Danish.” We hope to have many of you join us there to hear about the ideas,

artifacts, songs, stories, images, and other elements that have shaped and continue to define Danish and Danish American cultural identity.

In this issue of *The Bridge*, we get the chance to jumpstart our investigation of Danishness by looking at the question from many different angles. To get us started, the Danish American poet Finn Bille reflects on the ships that hang in so many Danish and Danish American churches. Accompanied by a few of the beautiful photos by Kris-ter Strandskov that appeared in *The Bridge* 40:1 (2017), Bille's poem is intended as a counterpoint to an uncritically nostalgic celebration of all things Danish, reminding us that Danish history is not just a peaceful landscape of windmills and daisies, but also a Hieronymous Bosch-like tumult of war, enslavement, and exploitation. The next two articles explore how Danish Americans negotiated the physical, social, and intellectual distance to their homeland brought about by emigration. Karoline Kühl considers the extent to which retaining the use of Danish language has shaped Danish Americans' sense of identity, while Ryan Gesme explores Danish Americans' reactions to the 1920 plebiscites that united most of northern Slesvig with the Danish state.

In our third article, Christyl Burnett tells the fascinating history of the growth of Circle Pines Center out of the Danish folk school movement, showing how ideas and institutions as solidly Danish as Grundtvigian self-improvement through continuing education and enrichment have transformed themselves in an American context. The fourth article in this issue is an essay by Chantal Powell about her experiences as an intern at the Danish American Archive and Library in Blair, Nebraska, which reminds us how many treasures of knowledge may be hiding in our own attics, basements, and relatives. Finally, we conclude with J. R. Christianson's thought-provoking review of a new book about that pillar of Danish economic, political, and culinary identity, the Danish dairy industry.

Two of the articles in this issue were made possible by Bodtker grant-funded research. If you enjoyed them and would like to see more new research into Danish American history and culture, please consider donating to the Bodtker fund.