

Danes of Brooklyn

Calendar / Atterdag*

November 18 and 19

Jul Marked / Two days of shopping for Danish holiday treasures

Nissestrom at the Danish Home
855 New Durham Road, Edison

December 3

Festival of Trees / Trim the Tree

Hungarian Cultural Center

New Brunswick

December 4

Festival of Trees / Open House

December 10 2:30 - 6 pm

Julefest / Danish Home

* Atterdag, another day was a favorite saying of
Waldemar III, King of Denmark 1340 to 1375

Denmark Native Found Home in Perth Amboy

John Otto Prang Pedersen Exhibit at Danish Home

The work of John Otto Prang Pedersen is the subject of a new exhibit in the east wing of the Danish Home. It was organized by Jack Kjersgaard and Agnes Jespersen Hagsmueller with the generous contributions of Mr. Pedersen's works from the collections of Joy and Joe Billich and Carl B.S. Pedersen (no relation), Eric and Doris Brown, Barbara Winchel, Kenneth Nielsen, George Jacobsen and Jack Kjersgaard. Jack was a personal friend of the artist and remembers him well.

The artist is talented and mysterious. He was born in Varde, Denmark. When he was twelve he reportedly won a contest sponsored by a brewery—a pen and ink drawing of two elephants carrying a keg of beer. “From the time I was very, very young I wanted to come to America,” he said.

And in 1958 he did. When he arrived he had to economically support himself—a familiar task begun with his early life in Denmark where he traded his drawings for bread and apples.

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Danes first came to “New Amsterdam” New York in 1663 and established a Danish-Norwegian Church. Its first pastor was Christian Pedersen Abel from Aalborg, Denmark.

New York was a bustling seaport with docks on both the Hudson and East Rivers. The city was a major center for commerce and trade. Many Danes immigrated to New York. A good majority of them were headed west with the enticement of free land. However a great many remained on the East Coast. Their livelihoods were ship carpenters, riggers, and tradesmen. New York, with its port and growing city, was just the place for these Danes to find employment.

In the 1870's and upwards there was a large number of Darriving in New York. Among them was Rasmus Andersen (1848-1930). It was said as he entered the NY harbor, he envisioned this to be a wonderful place to start a ministry. He made his way to Waupaca, Wisconsin where he was ordained a minister in 1872. While in Waupaca, he along with three other Danish ministers,

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Agnes Jespersen-Hagsmueller at the second seminar that she offered at SCANFEST

SCANFEST

On a chilly Sunday September 3rd DANE participated in SCANFEST at VASA Park, Budd Lake, New Jersey. Our booth was visited with interest by many who were happy to see a Danish representation. We were ringed by vendors selling Scandinavian food, jewelry, textiles, flags, toys, holiday decorations, books and music.

Agnes Jespersen-Hagsmueller conducted two seminars, one in the morning and one in the afternoon highlighting genealogy and immigration. This was another opportunity for DANE to let people know of our mission and of our purpose.

founded the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church. In 1878 Andersen made his way back East and established a Danish Seamen Mission in New York City. In 1883 he organized the Vor Frelzers Kirke in Brooklyn NY. Our Saviors Danish Ev. Lutheran Church was located at 193-195 9th St. Brooklyn. Another Dane, Jacob Riis (1849-1914), the noted reporter and photographer, purchased the lamp oil for the first service at the church. Riis gave money to help with church expenses.

Our Saviors and Salaam Danish Lutheran Churches were havens for the newly arrived Danish immigrants. As they settled into their new homes and employment, a large Danish community began to grow in Brooklyn. Besides their church affiliations, Danes established clubs and meeting places where they could mingle and enjoy good times with fellow countrymen. One such place was the Danish Athlete Club that met at Prospect Hall, 263 Prospect Ave. It was there that young boys and men would gather for sports events in wrestling, gymnastics and tug-of-wars. The women had meeting groups there as well. It was a festive place to have traditional Danish celebrations. The Athlete Club was relocated to 735 65th St. Brooklyn and is still in existence.

As the Danish community grew so did the businesses. There were butchers, bakeries, retail shops, shoemakers, woodworking and carpentry shops, tin-smiths, and in early times livery stables with blacksmiths. There was a need for services as well. One could find Danish doctors, dentists, funeral directors, banking institutions and the like. Svend Jespersen came from Copenhagen in 1892, settled in Brooklyn with his family, and sold insurance to his fellow Danes. His brother, Jens Peder Jespersen, arrived earlier in 1888 and worked as a carpenter.

Today there is not much left of the original Brooklyn Danish community.

Second generation Danes married other nationalities and left the area. But there are still remnants of Danish “roots”. The Danish Sømankirke, originally founded by Rev. Rasmus Andersen, is located at 102 Willow St. in the Brooklyn Heights district. It was moved there in 1957 when Our Saviors congregation merged with another Brooklyn church. Services at the church are held in Danish every Sunday. An important part of the Church’s work is to visit with Danish seamen aboard almost 300 ships that arrived in New York each year. In 2004 almost 3,700 people attended church services.

AMH

DANE will be researching “The Danes of Brooklyn”. The Archive will welcome any information, photos and histories of Danish families who settled in Brooklyn NY. Please call 1-866-855-3263 and tell us about your own personal and family remembrances of Brooklyn. Or you can write to us at DANE 855 New Durham Rd. Edison NJ 08817

Mange Tak/Thank You

We appreciate your support

- Betty and Tom Ward
- Elsie Christensen
- Vibeke Aegesen
- Helen Knudsen
- Eleanore Patterson
- Rosalie Zakutansky
- Katherine M. Hansen
- Marian S. Myer
- Joseph and Barbara Hines
- Kevin R. Jespersen
- Sven and Kirsten Juul
- Margaret Wien
- Doris J. Lund
- Leila Larsen Klein
- Charles A. Doehlert
- Elaine Sabo
- Minnie S. Richards
- Ian Durand and April Cormacie
- Erik Hemmingsen
- Peter J. Reilly

Here’s a Timely Letter Øst via E-mail?

Hi Wendy,

I am on the mailing list for the Danish newsletter and wanted to thank you for all of your work ,as well as the work of the other contributors.I know it take s some time to put together newsletters, not to mention all the other things the-organization does.

In the latest issue,I saw the note asking for contributions to keep the newsletter going .I am happy to make a contribution ,but wondered if it might be possible to distribute the newsletter digitally--as in a PDF sent via email. I t would save the organization quite a bit of money. For those who can’t receive it digitally, they could still get it through regular mail. Just a thought.

Thank you for your help in preserving our Danish heritage!

Kristin

Would you like to receive flst electronically? We have had several requests fo r our newsletter to be distributed digitally. If you do please notify our pre s i d e n t ,Wendy Hudson at HYPERLINK mail to:whudson@netlabs.net

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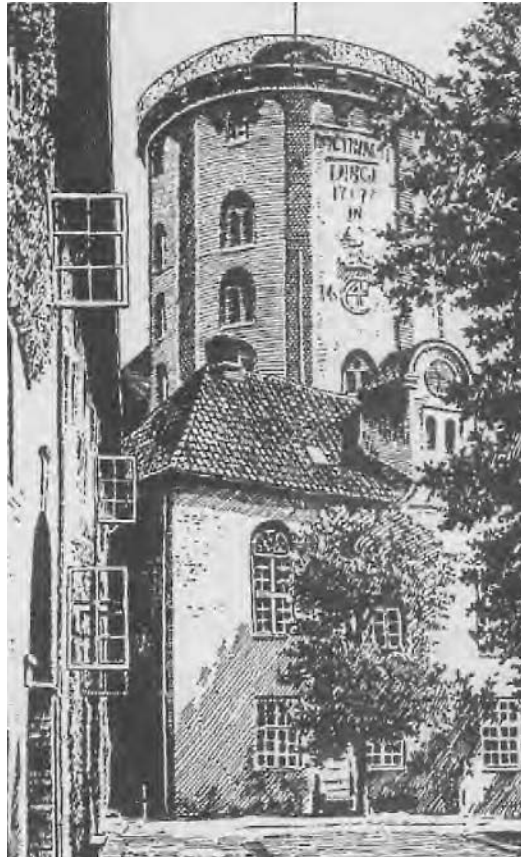
PEDERSEN EXHIBIT from page 1

He found work in various trades. He was a cabinet maker, a boat builder, furniture builder and porcelain painter.

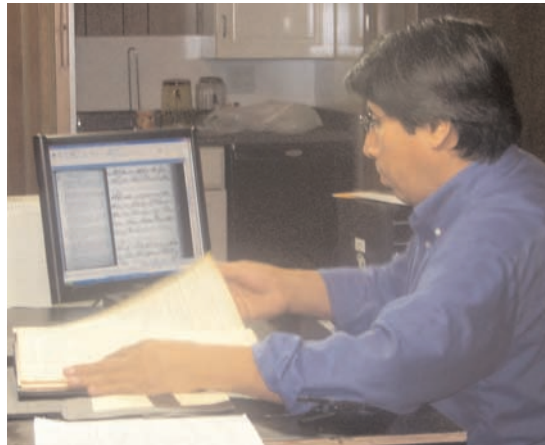
Recognition for his drawings came too. He had successes — he won first prize at the Festival of Arts, had a one-man show at the Menlo Park Mall. That show opened opportunities for more shows at the Whitney Museum, where the American ambassador to France saw his work and arranged for an exhibit in Paris.

His work was reputedly chosen by a major Danish porcelain manufacturer who chose two dozen of his drawings to reproduce on its plates. He had a commission from the Danish government to draw Denmark's buildings and landmarks.

John Otto Prang's whereabouts are unknown. What we know of him we know from his renderings of buildings and estates.



A John Otto Prang Pedersen drawing



Emigdio Fernandez scanning original St. Stephen Danish Lutheran Church records from Perth Amboy.

WHY MORMONS COMPLETE DIGITIZING PERTH AMBOY CHURCH RECORDS

Mormons operate the largest genealogical library in the world containing millions of volumes of birth, marriage, death, and other records. In addition, the Church obligates Latter-day Saints to stand as proxies for their deceased ancestors in sacred rites such as baptism and eternal marriage. Why is this effort so important to Mormons?

Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints research information about their ancestors because they believe they can offer important temple blessings to the deceased, binding the family together for eternity.



Joan Seguine-LeVine, Walter Jensen and Agnes Hagmueller at DANE's booth on Leif Erickson Day

Leif Erickson Day

The Vikings were there — with their re-created longboat driven from Pennsylvania. The Swedes introduced a lively outdoor game involving throwing wooden objects. Folk dancers in native garb gracefully and energetically had everyone's toes tapping. There was a wild boar roasting. Waffles and ice cream had a line of takers. Vendors sold gifts of all kinds.

This year members from The Society for Creative Anachronism, Inc., an international not-for-profit organization dedicated to researching and re-creating the arts and skills of pre-17th century Europe camped overnight in the park. Dressed in marital clothing, they demonstrated armored combat. Others explained basket-making, fiber arts, forging and re-created arts from the 900's to 1600.

DANE's booth was strategically placed at the very entrance so that everyone coming into the park passed by our displays. Storefronts and Smokestacks in its mini version was there, with genealogical information. Intricate paper cuttings from Denmark were sold. Most importantly, we told all our visitors of our work.



The President's Letter

K re Alle, (Dear All),

It has been an exciting genealogical time at DANE recently because we are getting access to a number of important New Jersey records. We purchased the microfilm of the records of Our Saviours Danish Lutheran Church originally in Perth Amboy. The information in these records is amazing.

We have been going through the Our Saviours microfilm for a number of weeks. There are many interesting stories of the Danish people that came to Perth Amboy and those that stayed there a while before moving on somewhere else. We were amazed that a large number of the early families moved on to Omaha, Nebraska! Other families went to Colorado, California, Wisconsin, and Connecticut.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has just completed digitizing the St. Stephen Danish Lutheran Church records (again originally from Perth Amboy). Four books were copied — 1872 through 1948 and the 100th Anniversary brochure. The brochure contains photos of the old church, new church, many of the pastors, group shots and a history of the church. We should have these records in about four to six weeks..

The technology of doing the filming was absolutely awesome. Emigdio Fernandez of LDS did the filming and it took just one day. Emigdio is from Peru and lives in Pennsylvania. When he finished St Stephen, he was off to Brooklyn. Two members of his team were filming at Brooklyn Court House. It is truly unbelievable what the Society has filmed and there is no charge for doing so

Finally, we got a grant to purchase 10 more rolls of New Jersey newspaper microfilms. These records continue to give us insights into the lives and stories of the Danes that came to, or came through, the northeast United States. They are saved for future generations. It is a wonderful journey of discovery!

Hilsen,
Wendy

Do You Know Where This Is?

Øst's Spring/Summer issue hurled a challenge. Readers were asked to identify a terra-cotta panel part of a building in Perth Amboy. We have a winner. Tom and Betty Ward correctly identified it as a panel of a home on 339 Elm Street in Perth Amboy. The home was built by M.E. Hanson for Martin Hanson. A Danish-American enamel pin was sent to the winners. Thank you for entering.