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THE BRIDGE is a semi-annual publication of the Danish American Heritage Society. The Bridge contains articles, book reviews, and review essays dealing with all aspects of the Danish experience in North America.

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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 the Danish experience in North America. 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issues of The Bridge have also contained Danish-American memoirs, essays, short stories, collections of letters, and historical documents.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.

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Editorial Statement

2014 marks the anniversary of turning points in several different wars—the beginning of the end of the Napoleonic wars in 1814, Denmark’s defeat in the Second Schleswig War of 1864, General Sherman’s capture of Atlanta during the third year of the American Civil War in 1864, and the outbreak of World War One in 1914. Each of these wars affected Danes and Danish Americans in profound and yet quite different ways, which prompted us to make this issue of The Bridge a commemorative war-themed special issue.

The Napoleonic Wars resulted in Denmark’s state bankruptcy in 1813 and loss of Norway in 1814, heralding the transformation of the once-mighty Danish Empire into a smaller, more homogenous nation state over the next half-century. Many 19th century Danes sought a peaceful and prosperous life in the newly-established United States of America, only to find themselves called upon to take up arms in the American Civil War. As Anders B. Rasmussen documents in the first essay in this volume, Danish American men’s decision to fight for their new country was a decision fraught with symbolic significance, moral meaning, and great personal costs. While these wars changed the world in highly visible ways by toppling national governments and redrawing national borders, they also resulted in many changes in the lives of ordinary citizens, as Sofie Krøgh Nielsen discusses in the second article. In the third article in this volume, Julie K. Allen explores the history and consequences of the 1864 war for both Denmark and Germany, while the fourth article consists of several essays by the celebrated Danish writer and human rights advocate Georg Brandes defending Denmark’s neutrality during World War I.

This issue also includes review of several books with thematic connections to the theme of war: Inge Wiehl’s Heartstrings, Nathaniel Hong’s Occupied, Marianne Stølen’s Den Røde, and Mads Daubjerg’s Borders of Belonging. We hope you’ll find each of these accounts of Denmark and Danes in times of war as fascinating as we do.
Contributors to this Issue

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Julie K. Allen is Associate Professor of Scandinavian Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, as well as an affiliate faculty member in German, Religious Studies, and Material Cultures. She is the author of Icons of Danish Modernity: Georg Brandes & Asta Nielsen (University of Washington Press, 2012) and has recently completed a book about the impact of religious freedom on Danish cultural identity in the late nineteenth century. She is also the director of the UW-Madison ScanDesign Fellowship program.

The prominent Danish literary critic and essayist Georg Brandes (1842-1927) first published his essays about World War I as a series of individual articles in various Danish and French newspapers, which were then collated into a volume with the title Verdenskrigen in 1916, which was translated into English by Catherine D. Groth and published by Macmillan in 1917.

Jim Leary is a professor in the Department of Scandinavian Studies, as well as in the Department of Comparative Literature and Folklore Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is a co-founder and director of the Center for the Study of Upper Midwestern Cultures. He co-edits Journal of American Folklore with Tom DuBois, and also co-edits (with Joe Salmons) a series for the University of Wisconsin Press on Languages and Folklore of the Upper Midwest. A fellow of the American Folklore Society, he was the recipient of the
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“I long to hear from you”:
The Hardship of Civil War Soldiering on
Danish Immigrant Families
by Anders Bo Rasmussen

[A] number of Danish men (…) participated in the bloody Civil War in this
country from 1861 to 1865 (…) future historical inquiry into this area will
have ample occasion to go back to the right sources and will undoubtedly
procure a considerable material about those of our countrymen who fought
the long and stubborn fight (…) [It] will be of great interest to our people’s
history in America! —P.S. Vig Danske i Amerika, 1907.¹

In 1917 the Danish American minister and immigrant historian
Peter Sørensen Vig published Danske i krig i og for Amerika (Danes
Fighting in and for America). Vig had taken it upon himself to take a
deeper look into the Danish Civil War experience, at a time when
Norwegian American immigrants had already published several
books about their war service. Vig, however, discovered that the
information available was not quite as substantial as he had assumed
when writing Danske i Amerika (Danes in America) back in 1907, nor
was it “compiled in one place.” Vig’s Danske i Kamp i og for Amerika
nevertheless unearthed countless valuable anecdotes, often based on
aging survivors’ recollections, that seemed to confirm that Danes with
their proud Viking past were still a “warlike people.”² Yet, only in few
rare instances did Vig seemingly come across contemporary primary
sources – such as letters, diaries, newspaper accounts etc. – that could
support (or undermine) his account of Danish immigrants’ motivation
for, and actions during, Civil War service in America. Since letters were
“not exactly numerous,” Vig ended up with a fairly idyllic account of
Danish Civil War soldiers’ experience. When possible, however, Vig
incorporated lengthy quotes, for example from Jens Andersen writing
about “screches of bullets and the screams of the wounded,” and
thereby supported a narrative of Danes not shirking from their duty
in their adopted country.

Consciously, or unconsciously, Vig also omitted material essential
to understanding the Danish Civil War experience. In Vig’s Danske
i Amerika, Ferdinand Winsløw, who was among the first Danish
immigrants to arrive in America during the 1850’s is mentioned briefly as an co-organizer of a Danish settlement in Virginia, but Winsløw, who served as an officer in the Civil War, is left completely out of Danske i krig i og for Amerika. Winsløw, however, was a prominent figure in the Scandinavian immigrant community before, during, and after the Civil War but as President of the Scandinavian Bank in Chicago he stole money from his fellow immigrants and thereby ran the bank into the ground in 1872.3 Such an account of a morally corrupt Danish Civil War officer did not likely fit the story that Vig tried to tell, but Winsløw’s more than 100 letters are an indispensable source for anyone who tries to piece together a story about Danish immigrants in the most significant conflict on American soil. The few other Danish American letters, diaries, and newspaper accounts that do survive are often penned by soldiers with family, and thereby serve as a unique lens into the immigrants’ perceptions of family and fatherhood during the Civil War. James McPherson’s award-winning For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War introduces a conceptual framework focused on soldiers’ motivation for military service that also guides the following study. McPherson distinguishes between initial motivation (why did men enlist), sustaining motivation (what kept them in the army), and combat motivation (what made them face extreme danger?) but acknowledges that these categories are all interrelated.4 McPherson’s thoughts on motivation are tied to “convictions of duty, honor, patriotism, and ideology,”5 but also economic incentive. Focusing specifically on duty, morality, and economy, this article consequently answers the question: How did Danish immigrant servicemen understand and reconcile their duties as soldiers and fathers/family men during the American Civil War between 1861 and 1865?

Fatherhood

Fatherhood in the Civil War era, according to historian James Marten, was defined as “a paternal, even patriarchal, insistence on providing wide-ranging guidance and instruction,” reflecting an attempt to reconcile physical absence from the family with a belief in a higher national duty. Marten’s study of “Fatherhood in the Confederacy: Southern Soldiers and their Children” was published in 1997 and has subsequently served as inspiration to several scholars
of Civil War social history. Among the scholars who have built on Marten’s foundation is John Riley, who, in an as yet unpublished Ph.D. dissertation on fatherhood in the Civil War, seeks to “uncover how Victorian family men understood the relationship between the public duties of military service and their social obligations to materially provide for their dependents.” Presenting his initial findings at a conference in the fall of 2013, Riley argued that “one of the primary responsibilities for American fathers was to secure their dependents financially.” Riley places greater emphasis than Marten does on “financial obligations” rather than notions of duty. The reason for this is primarily found in his focus on enlisted men as opposed to officers. Riley designed his study to include perspectives of less affluent soldiers, who are somewhat absent in Marten’s earlier study on the topic. According to Riley, officers “had the material means to fulfill their fiscal responsibilities while also serving the state,” and could thereby place greater emphasis on their public duty than enlisted men.

Both Riley and Marten focus primarily on rural life in America, stressing the centrality of fatherhood in the family even during physical absence. As Marten notes, “especially among working-class Americans and residents of rural areas of the South as well as the North, fathers were deeply involved in many facets of their children’s lives.” Though Marten builds in part on E. Anthony Rotundo’s understanding of fatherhood, he places Civil War era fathers more centrally in the realm of family decision making.

In “American Fatherhood: A Historical Perspective” (1985), Rotundo argued that the middle-class mother became “the core of the family in the nineteenth century,” and “molded a boy’s character,” especially because the “middle-class fathers were away from the house far too often to participate effectively in the everyday give-and-take that bred feelings of deep intimacy between parent and child.” Rotundo’s urban based study, however, does not seem to fit the self-image of many Civil War soldiers in an era where approximately 20 million out of 23.5 million Americans in 1850 found employment in rural areas. As Marten points out, Civil War soldiers in the 1860s expected themselves, and were expected by others, to remain their families’ providers even when away on service to their country. This double sense of duty exposed the soldiers who were also fathers to a unique challenge compared to their single comrades-in-arms.
Marten and Riley’s conclusions therefore serve as the basis of the current study and their findings are supported by Stephen M. Frank who argues that an important part of Civil War fatherhood was “rendering aid and comfort” to wives and children, even when away. There was thus both a material and an emotional component of Civil War soldiering which increased the burden on fathers away for military service. As Frank notes, “duty toward their children contributed importantly to most of these men’s sense of identity. And while fathers were clearly identified as the economic specialists in their households, men (...) had dual commitments as providers and nurturers.”

Since middle-class Victorian fathers, according to Frank, served as “authority figures who established family morality and culture,” they attempted to influence family decisions even hundreds or thousands of miles away from home. Correspondence during the Civil War because of forced separation and potential death therefore help highlight “familial relationships” between husbands and wives, fathers and children as well as brothers and sisters.

Method

In Danske i Kamp i og for Amerika, P. S. Vig estimates that between 1000 and 1500 Danish-born soldiers served in the Civil War, primarily on the Union side. Danish Civil War soldiers only amount to a fraction of the Union army’s approximately 2 million soldiers, but neither they nor other immigrant groups have thus far received the scholarly attention usually paid to all other aspects of the Civil War. Despite 24 percent of the Union Army’s service members being foreign-born there is, according to Susannah Ural, “no comprehensive study of immigrants and nonwhites in the North and South” during the Civil War.

James McPherson in For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War, notes that young, unmarried men made up the majority of the Confederate and Union armies and therefore in theory could devote themselves exclusively to duty and service for the greater good, but somewhere between one in three and one in four soldiers - 700,000 to 800,000 out of approximately 3 million soldiers - were married with the responsibility of being the primary breadwinner in the family. McPherson, however, admits that the immigrant experience is “substantially underrepresented” in his study as just 9
percent of the letters analyzed are authored by immigrants. Only one Scandinavian soldier, the Norwegian American colonel Hans Heg, appears in McPherson’s study. Moreover, as Susannah Ural has argued, applying “motivations of white native-born soldiers to all soldiers in the conflict” would be a mistake since every ethnic group “had a unique set of shared loyalties to their past and their present that influenced their response to the war.” Therefore taking Vig’s advice and digging deep into the material on Danish Civil War soldiers can supplement the wealth of studies already carried out based on Anglo-Americans’ Civil War experience. Additionally, Stephen Frank notes that the meaning of fatherhood “varied with socioeconomic class” as well as age. Consequently, studying Danish soldiers from different backgrounds and with different levels of income may reveal a more nuanced understanding of fatherhood.

The empirical foundation for this article is confined to a handful of Danish soldiers who left primary source material, such as letters, diaries, or memoirs behind. Additionally, newspaper articles are occasionally incorporated, though the name of the correspondent was rarely mentioned in Danish or Scandinavian American newspaper articles from the 1860s. Fritz Rasmussen’s more than 400 letters and diaries that are housed in the Wisconsin Historical Society, Ferdinand Winsløw’s 118 letters at the University of Iowa, Theodore Hansen’s 7 letters at the National Archives in Washington D.C., and Christian Christensen’s more sporadic Civil War writings found at the Huntington Library in San Marino, California, as well as in a privately owned collection in Seattle, form the foundation of this study. These sources are supplemented by Theodore Blegen’s edited volume on The Civil War Letters of Hans Christian Heg as well as transcriptions of Wilhelm Wermuth’s 8 letters located at the Royal Library, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, in Copenhagen.

In essence, this is a study of two urban middle class volunteers (Ferdinand Winsløw and Christian Christensen) juxtaposed with two reluctant rural Civil War soldiers represented by Fritz Rasmussen and Theodore Hansen. What sets these four main subjects apart from many of their fellow Civil War soldiers is the fact that they all had family responsibilities when they went to war, which probably also explains why their letters survive to this day. Theodore Hansen, the only unmarried man in the group, wrote home to his mother and step-family in Wisconsin.
The above-mentioned difference between volunteers and reluctant soldiers has been highlighted by James McPherson in *For Cause and Comrades*. McPherson points out that officers and upper middle class volunteers, who – in their own eyes at least – enlisted because of “duty, honor, and patriotism,” looked down on the soldiers who had been drafted or enlisted for money. “Perhaps these comments should be discounted because of class or ethnic bias,” writes McPherson, “[but] it is true that a disproportionate number of conscripts, substitutes, and (in the Union army) bounty men came from the ranks of small farmers and unskilled laborers.”23 Soldiers with families thus faced competing claims on their sense of masculinity, since on the one hand military service was seen as a test of manhood on the other hand manhood was also defined as being able to care for one’s family. In the following, it will be highlighted how these parallel notions of manhood existed among Danish immigrants and argued that the belief in Civil War service as a higher national duty was juxtaposed with, and often viewed as secondary to, practical concerns, among the Danish immigrants with dependents.24

**Duty and Family**

Weary from countless hours of hard farm work and years of home front trouble, Fritz Rasmussen sat down on the evening of October 25th 1864 to pen a diary entry that captured his mood: “Perhaps I may soon come to write with the sword or bayonet, making gory figures. Thou Lord and Ruler of us miserable beings, have mercy upon us and save us from the Evils to come.”25 The reason for Rasmussen’s pessimism was the dreaded prospect of military service. The 31 year-old immigrant had been drafted and was about to leave his wife and three daughters in the relative wilderness of Brown County, Wisconsin. Rasmussen, like many of his fellow countrymen from New Denmark, had little interest in fighting the American Civil War but by 1864 it was clear that most of the settlements’ immigrants no longer had a choice. On a clear and cold January 17th, 1865, Rasmussen marched, along with many drafted men in the 14th Wisconsin Infantry Regiment, to Madison’s train station and was sent south to participate in the Union army’s campaign against Mobile, Alabama. Rasmussen would have to do his duty to save his newly adopted nation, though in his mind duty to family held greater sway.
Four years earlier, however, the enthusiasm for war had been palpable across the north and no sooner had Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor been attacked on April 12, 1861 than the Scandinavian Association in New York called a meeting. Christian Christensen, who at the age of 29 was approximately three years older than the average Civil War soldier at enlistment, later wrote, “Company I of 1st New York Volunteers was formed in the Scandinavian Association of New York, of which I was then (in the spring of 1861) president.” According to renowned Danish journalist Henrik Cavling, the Danish immigrants in New York were “carried along by the general enthusiasm for war,” an enthusiasm that Walt Whitman described as the “volcanic upheaval of the nation, after that firing on the flag at Charleston.”

Closely associated with the feeling of general enthusiasm were notions of honor and duty. As McPherson has demonstrated, honor and duty were powerful motivating forces in 1861 and 1862, but for family men like Christensen, they also presented a challenge:

Married soldiers confronted a dilemma caused by competing ideals of manhood and honor. In one direction lay their responsibilities as husbands, fathers, and breadwinners for dependents to whom they had made a sacred pledge to cherish and support. In the other direction lay their duty as able-bodied citizens to defend their country. To evade either obligation would dishonor their manhood.

This dilemma went to the core of the Danish American Civil War experience as it can be derived from the letters and diaries left behind, but in 1861 and 1862, according to McPherson, “the manly call of duty to country seemed more urgent.” Yet, for Danish immigrant soldiers
– at least the ones that left written traces of their existence - the choice to go to war seems to have been more complicated.

In the case of Christian Christensen, the account of him enlisting because he was carried along by “general enthusiasm for war” may reflect how he preferred his war service to be remembered but it is challenged by other accounts. Henrik Cavling’s journalistic story of Christensen’s enlistment is based on an interview with Christensen, whom he met in New York in the early 1890’s, but according to a contemporary account penned by Christensen’s brother-in-law Ferdinand Winsløw, Christensen – who was elected first lieutenant in the Scandinavian company at a salary of at least $105.50 a month—went to war partly for economic reasons.31 “Christensen had to admit of all the debts that bothered him,” wrote Winsløw to his wife Wilhemina in October 1861. This assessment was backed up many years later by the colorful Norwegian Civil War veteran Ole Balling. Balling, a good friend of Christensen, served as the Scandinavian Company’s first captain in 1861. When he published his memoirs in 1905, he claimed to remember that Christensen had confided in him almost 50 years earlier that, “My house went bankrupt yesterday, I am in dire straits and I do not know what I tomorrow shall give my family to live off of.”32

Balling’s reference to Christensen’s “house” probably had to do with the Danish immigrant’s position at a brokerage firm run by John P. Nazro and Marshall Pepoon on 82 Wall Street. According to Christensen’s papers at the Huntington, he worked for Pepoon, Nazro & Co. until the Civil War’s outbreak in April of 1861 but never again afterwards. Based on Winsløw’s letter to Wilhemina, Pepoon and Nazro may have been in financial trouble, or perhaps just disinclined to help their former colleague.33

Papoon [sic] and Nazro promised Christensen to pay Emmy $100 a month during his absence, but cheats and rascals as they are, they have never paid the first copper yet, although Blem [Peter Blem, Christensen and Winsløw’s brother-in-law] has done all he could to shame them into doing what they promised. So Christensen has nothing to live on but his salary of $136.50 per month, which is not much as he uses a good deal himself.34
Christensen therefore seems to have enlisted as much for practical reasons as due to “general enthusiasm for war,” and the same could be said of his brother-in-law. Though Ferdinand Winsløw also belonged to the group of early volunteers, he informed his wife on September 5th, 1861 that he had been “ordered on duty,” in Dubuque Iowa, where he was to serve as quartermaster for the 9th Iowa Infantry Regiment. Winsløw, however, made it clear in a letter from September 22nd, 1861, that he had volunteered to avoid being drafted later and having to “go with very bad grace,” thereby alluding to the importance of honor but also admitting that he did not volunteer out of patriotic zeal.

Consequently, time away from the family quickly started to take its toll on Winsløw, as he did not neglect to mention in a letter from Missouri on March 7, 1862, “Dearest wife, Life is as usual busy but monotonous. It is every day the same botherations and trouble and activity, and then when evening comes surrounded by all the comforts of a home mocking me with yours and the children’s absence…. ‘Tis hard.”

A sense of duty was, however, expressed by Scandinavian community leaders in Wisconsin at least publicly. Danish immigrant chaplain Claus Clausen, according to a newspaper article in the Scandinavian newspaper Emigranten on November 16th, 1861 considered Civil War service “a calling that it would be his duty to receive, if it could be worked out with his congregations.” Clausen thereby also implied, and his subsequent actions revealed, that he was at least as committed to his civilian congregations as he was to military service. Clausen did, however, become the so-called Scandinavian Regiment’s chaplain and even had the honor of seeing Company K named “Clausen’s Guards.” Thus Clausen became a volunteer in late 1861 and part of the first wave of soldiers fighting in the Civil War. In Wisconsin, a significant part of this first wave of Scandinavian volunteers was organized into the 15th Wisconsin Regiment, commanded by Colonel Hans Heg. Heg, who publicly organized the Scandinavian Regiment in Wisconsin for love of government, asked in Emigranten, “Should we Scandinavians sit still and watch our American, German and English-born fellow citizens fight for us?” Yet, in private correspondence and conversations, Heg also frequently alluded to his political ambition as a powerful motivating force. Less enthusiastic Danish immigrant soldiers such as Theodore Hansen and Fritz Rasmussen, however, enlisted more because of societal pressure...
than honor or martial enthusiasm. Both Hansen and Rasmussennen were listed on Wisconsin’s fifth congressional district’s draft rolls in the summer of 1863 and the seemingly imminent call to war prompted Hansen to enlist on November 12, 1863.\textsuperscript{38} Thus there is an important temporal divide and perhaps also class divide between volunteers and conscripts. Theodore Hansen and Fritz Rasmussennen were relatively poor farmers who had emigrated from the small island of Langeland to the forests of Wisconsin, while Winsløw and Christensen were merchants from Copenhagen who had both initially emigrated to Brooklyn where they worked in banking.

Regardless of background, however, all the Danish immigrants studied here experienced the strain of separation. Letters from home helped ease the anxiety, but emotional connections were also strained when expected correspondence did not arrive regularly, for different reasons.\textsuperscript{39} “No news was not good news,” as John Riley has noted, and fathers with young children, like Ferdinand Winsløw, almost considered letter writing to be his wife’s “duty.” On November 23, 1861, Winsløw wrote, “[W]hen I come out tonight I expect to find a lot of letters waiting for me as yet I have received none from you since I parted” and Hans Heg, on several occasions, echoed the Danish officer. “The Regiment got a big mail delivery on Monday, but not any letter
for me from you. I was disappointed,” Heg wrote in a typical letter to Gunild in July 1862.40 On the other hand, Winsløw also expressed significant relief when he did receive letters from home.

The expectation of regular correspondence went both ways, as Winsløw found out in November 1861. Wilhemina had apparently complained about Winsløw’s lack of letter writing and her letter prompted the following response:

Dearest wife, I do not think I am writing more letters to Stephens than to you. Sometimes I have to send him a short answer to some business inquiries of his, and I then answer very shortly, having no time and feeling, no disposition to go into further communications. You know, a man cannot always sit down and dash off a pleasant or entertaining letter at will--the humor must be somewhat adapted to the task before you.41

The Scandinavian immigrant soldiers’ letters utilized here reveal repeated affectionate references to family, and it is obvious that letters from home played a big part in sustaining these soldiers in the field. While in the army, the Danish soldiers—even if somewhat reluctantly—had to put duty to country over duty to family, but as we shall see, the Danish soldiers tried to offer moral guidance and material help even while away.42

**Morality**

Numerous are the stories of Bibles stopping Civil War bullets, writes James McPherson, and adds “Civil War armies were, arguably, the most religious in American history.” Yet, even before they marched onto the battlefield, Danish American soldiers were influenced by religion and, in a polarized political climate, at times equated religion with politics.43 On a rainy Sunday morning, December 14, 1856, Ferdinand Winsløw made his way through the wind of an approaching hurricane in weather where hats, according to the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, “flew about in profusion,” and “a hooped lady,” allegedly (though the reporter could not vouch for it), “went up like a balloon.”44 The reason that Winsløw made his way through the storm was his affiliation with Plymouth Church and its prominent preacher Henry Ward Beecher. Beecher was an influential abolitionist voice in the years leading up
to the Civil War, and Winsløw was so impressed that he decided to share Beecher’s viewpoints with his fellow Scandinavian immigrants. In early 1857 an article called “Henry Ward Beechers Prædikener Om Negerne i Amerika” (Henry Ward Beecher’s Sermons on the Negroes in America) appeared in the Wisconsin magazine *Kirkelig Maanedstidende* (*Church Monthly*), calling Beecher a “giant of truth in these uncertain times.”

Beecher’s church seems to have played a central part in the spiritual lives of the Danish immigrants living in Brooklyn. Plymouth Church was a place that Danish immigrants frequented, and also a place where they brought visitors before and after the Civil War. In his 1872 book *Hinsides Atlanterhavet* (*On the Other Side of the Atlantic Ocean*), the travel writer Robert Watt described visiting the church with a “countryman” who “for many years had had his best Sunday pleasure by listening to Beecher.” The countryman mentioned may have been Christian Christensen, who is listed as a member of Plymouth Church as far back as 1857 and, after an interlude, rejoined the church in the postwar years. But also Ferdinand Winsløw’s brother, Wilhelm, fondly remembered visiting Plymouth Church.

In the beginning of 1857 my younger brother Ferdinand invited me to come and stay with him in the United States. A year and a half was spent on that visit, which proved of great importance to me in more than one respect. I shall here only mention that I became highly influenced by the preaching and theological views of Henry Ward Beecher.

From his pulpit in Brooklyn prior to the Civil War, Beecher condemned slavery, held slave auctions designed to grant slaves their freedom, and collected money for arms shipments to “bleeding Kansas.” Beecher was a vocal opponent of slavery and just as vocal in his support of the Union. “Probably no man in the country is more generally known, or regarded with a more personal affection and enthusiasm,” declared *Harper’s Weekly* in 1858 and the Danish immigrants in Beecher’s congregation agreed.

Winsløw’s and Christensen’s views on slavery, as shaped by Beecher, may even have been more radical than the viewpoints of their countrymen out west. Despite his public opposition to slavery in 1861, Claus Clausen “did not support the radical abolitionism” and hoped that slavery would die out on its own. This position closely mirrored
the Republican Party’s platform leading up to the presidential election, and seemingly also Fritz Rasmussen’s, as the Danish immigrant voted “for Abraham Lincoln” in the presidential election of 1860. Though Rasmussen made numerous references to religion in his diary, he still did not tie his vote for Lincoln directly to his Christian beliefs. To Winslow, however, it was almost impossible to separate religion from politics as he made clear in the fall of 1856. The “good political cause,” in this case the abolition of slavery, was inseparable from notions of “eternal truth,” remarked Winslow and added it was everyone’s duty to fight for “liberty and freedom among all people…. Without the light of religion, politics is like a plant without sun.” Both Winslow and Christensen described Beecher as helping to shape their opposition to slavery and instilling a sense of religious morality.

When the Civil War broke out in 1861, the Danish immigrants brought their religiosity to the battlefield, but apparently more to sustain them in times of peril than as direct motivation for fighting. According to his letters home, Winslow had great difficulty finding time for church matters even on Sundays. On Sunday March 2, 1862 he wrote Wilhemina, “I am exceedingly busy from morn till eve. Never leave the office till 9 or 10 in the eve.” Most of Winslow’s references to religion were therefore brief and basic, as exemplified by his habit of ending his letters with “God bless you, dearest wife!” On July 22, 1863 Winslow wrote, “Thank God for all the comfort and happiness we have enjoyed thus far.” These universal religious references became more frequent in the fall of 1863, as Wilhemina was pregnant and Winslow supported her from afar with comments like “God bless you, dear wife. I feel sure the girl will be there before this letter arrives.”

There is thus little explicit evidence that religion guided the soldiers’ actions during the Civil War, but the Scandinavian Regiment’s chaplain Claus Clausen did report some success in altering behavior through religion. Clausen received his commission on December 11, 1861 and arrived at Camp Randall outside Madison before New Year’s Eve where he encountered irreverent soldiers, who generally had “poor morale” but at least nowhere exhibited outright “ungodly behavior.” Clausen wrote to Emigranten in early 1862 to encourage the newspapers’ Scandinavian readers to send “wholesome, devotional books […] such books that a Christian father would give his child to read, none other.”
When the Scandinavian regiment arrived on the front lines on the Mississippi river, Clausen experienced a marked increase in religious interest among his soldiers as fear of death became a greater part of daily life. According to McPherson, Clausen’s experience of increased religiosity in the field was connected to a generation of soldiers who increasingly rejected predestination and believed that “they could improve the chances of God’s protection” through “faith and prayer.” Accordingly, Clausen found his “best field of work,” at the field hospital where he was welcomed by soldiers “who eagerly listened, when I explained God’s word for them.” When Clausen offered his resignation in the fall of 1862 due to poor health and a wish to return to his congregations in Iowa, he left a void according to a newspaper account in Emigranten on December 8, 1862:

Our well regarded chaplain reverend Clausen is leaving us tomorrow. ... As the reverend’s congregations in Iowa etc. are naturally suffering by his absence, he has submitted his request for resignation, which has today been granted. Through his quiet, candid work among us he has certainly created much good and it is with sadness that we see him go.

Clausen seems to have been the only Danish immigrant soldier of the four studied here who made religion an explicit guiding principle of his behavior. Soldiers like Winslow, Christensen, Hansen, and Rasmussen all referenced religion without, however, seeming to be wholly guided by it.

Christensen did, however, try to guide his children in the direction of religion through one of the few “letters” to his family that
still survives. Christensen translated Charles Dickens’ *A Child’s Dream of a Star* into Danish and dedicated his “work” lovingly to his wife and children with a handwriting that indicates a deliberate thoughtful work. The very first passage of Dickens’ work speaks to the importance of religion with the eponymous child wondering, with his sister, “at the goodness and the power of God, who made the lovely world.”

Theodore Hansen and Fritz Rasmussen also noted the importance of religion in letters home. In early 1864, Theodore Hansen, for example, assured his family that he was in good Christian company:

> It is my wish to God constantly that I may come home again even if it was only 8 days that I could be with my friends then I would be willing to die if that was God’s will. We are four here in our tent. They are very good men, they don’t curse and they have all read good books which we read to pass the time it is a great pleasure to be here and in the company of such folks instead of being among the ones who curse and act indecently, those abound let me tell you.

For Fritz Rasmussen, God was ever present in his diary, as evidenced by an entry from November 29, 1864, a few weeks before he was ordered to Camp Randall in Wisconsin’s capital, Madison: “And now maybe my plowing is over, both this year and forever. I now daily await the order to march ‘to war.’ But so be God’s will. Amen!"

Rasmussen’s religiosity becomes even more pronounced when the bullets started flying, with references like “Lord protect a poor sinner like me” abounding in the diary pages. Like Winsløw and Christensen, the farmer from New Denmark felt some connection between Christianity and anti-slavery sentiments, as evidenced by a diary entry written in Alabama on July 23, 1865:

> I say, glorious, glorious that slavery is abolished […] I went to church this afternoon in a great negro church, as it is called here, and precious and loved relatives and friends, the feelings I there experienced are impossible for me to describe. The sun is setting and, in God’s name, I will therefore stop with prayer Oh Lord and hope that you will preserve me to yet many times more wield the pen. Amen!
Danish soldiers’ religious views partly shaped their opposition to slavery before the war, especially in the Scandinavian Brooklyn enclave, but when the bullets started flying or disease raged, it seems apparent from the Danish soldiers’ writings to family that religion was more often used to sustain and comfort them than as an outright guide for actual behavior.

**Economy**

“Correspondence between soldiers and their families suggests that wartime absences prompted more intense relationships among family members,” notes James Marten.63 This relationship was both material and emotional. Not only were Civil War soldiers expected to provide economically for their families, but they also perceived themselves as playing an important role in providing guidance for their family while away.

This dual responsibility is apparent in several letters sent by Danish soldiers from the field. In the fall of 1861, Ferdinand Winsløw several times attempted to arrange a visit from his wife Wilhemina to the camp where he was stationed, but apparently did not succeed, as he begins his letter from September 15, 1861 with the words, “I long very much to hear something from you and the children.” Winsløw adds that he hopes the family had received his letter from Friday “with the 35 dollars,” before expressing hope that he would soon be able to get furlough and ending his letter with “kiss my little angels and tell them to be good and obedient to their mother, so that she can tell me so many good things about all the comfort and pleasure they are to her. Your loving husband Ferdinand I hope you will make Keyes fix the cistern and cellar door—he is sure soon to call for his rent.”64 The letter is in many ways typical of how Winsløw corresponded with his wife in the early part of the war. By sending money home, Winsløw retained his role as provider, while his comments about what needed to be done around the house, as well as directing his children to “be good and obedient to their mother,” reflected a sense of being the primary decision maker despite being away on army duty. Winsløw’s sentiments about controlling his household’s economic affairs were echoed by Hans Heg, the Norwegian colonel of the 15th Wisconsin Regiment, when he wrote home to his wife Gunild on March 7th, 1862, “I shall send you what money I can save, and tell you what to do
with it.” But even as the Scandinavian soldiers tried to direct affairs at home, they also had to admit that there was a limit to the effectiveness of decision-making from afar. Thus, Heg wrote to Gunild two days after his March 7th letter with the following advice “You must learn to do business now, while I am away.”65

Perhaps most telling about the Scandinavian soldiers’ sense of responsibility to their families is the fact that Claus Clausen was specifically tasked with transporting $8000 of soldiers’ pay back to Wisconsin, which in part prompted Heg to write Gunild on August 27, 1862, “I am glad you are lending out your money. I hope you will have a chance to lend what Clauson took with him for you too. I rather guess – the Soldiers widows [sic] up in Wisconsin are the richest people there is there now – from what I have seen sent home to them.”66 Wilhelm Wermuth, who enlisted in the 1st New York Regiment under Christian Christensen, sent money all the way to Denmark while offering moral guidance to his younger siblings. In an undated letter, likely from the fall of 1861, Wermuth praises his brother and sister for being “studious” and writing “beautifully” before adding, “I know that you are good to mother and help with all that you can and never act against her, if you do and I hear about it, I will never write you again, but I am sure you are good to her, and when I come home some time, I will bring you a beautiful present.”67 To his mother who had notified him that she had been sick, Wermuth on September 24, 1861 wrote, “Make sure you get well before I return some day. Dear mother, I hereby send you 15 American Dollars, it will be approximately 25 Danish Rigsdaler, that I hope will arrive rightly to you.”68

Theodore Hansen also did what he could to help his family while serving in the 22nd Wisconsin Regiment in 1864, under the command of General William Sherman, moving towards Atlanta. Hansen frequently wrote to his family about sending money home, and told his younger siblings, 12 year-old Rasmus and 10-year old Boline to work hard on reading and writing when not taking care of the animals on the farm.69 Moreover, Hansen hoped to send money home; on July 16th 1864 Hansen wrote from Georgia, “If I should be paid... I will maybe send them 10 or 20 dollars in a letter,” and added “Father, be careful and do not overload the colts early on because then they will not pull anything, and if I may give you my opinion, then do not lend them to anyone.” 70 Hansen also directed this advice to his mother,
explaining that “it would not be easy to buy a good horse again,” because of the war.71 Hansen never did make it back to the farm in New Denmark, however. Just a few days after sending his letter filled with advice, he was wounded at the Battle of Peach Tree Creek and died the following month in a military hospital. Consequently, Hansen’s letters are now found among his mother’s pension application in the National Archives, where her ultimately unsuccessful request for financial support after Theodore’s death is stored.

As we have seen, from the beginning of the war, Christensen earned more than 100 dollars per month and received a raise to 169 dollars monthly in October 1862 when he was promoted to Major. As the war progressed, Christensen continued to rise through the ranks and attained the rank of Lieutenant Colonel before being appointed Brigadier General by brevet in 1865. Brigadier Generals were paid 315 dollars per month, and since Christensen directly referenced his family responsibility in his application for honorable discharge in 1865, it is likely that he helped support his family throughout the war, though no documents providing direct evidence seem to still exist.72

On May 30, 1865, Christensen wrote, “With the exception of 17 days leave of absence and 3 days of sickness, I have been constantly on duty since the 23rd of April 1861 and […] the care of my large family, make it proper, now that the war is brought to a successful close, that I should ask for permission to return to my former pursuits.”73

During his military service, however, Christensen continued to make decisions for his family in Brooklyn. In a letter to his wife in October 1861, Winsløw noted that Christensen had declined to let his wife move even though she, according to Winsløw, was living “all alone with hardly any neighbors.” Winsløw and Christensen’s brother-in-law, Peter Blem, had written to Christensen about a cheaper house in his vicinity, and Christensen’s wife was willing, “but no, Christensen wanted her to stay merely because he is so fond of the idea that he shall come back just there and find them all in the old place.”74

Thus Danish soldiers throughout the Civil War proved their emphasis on supporting their family materially and emotionally. Fritz Rasmussen tried to avoid the war in order to take care of his family and only left for the front when the government forced him. Winsløw, Wermuth, and Christensen all volunteered but kept sending money and moral guidance to their families while away. Theodore Hansen also sent money to his family and encouraged his younger siblings to
take good care of the farm animals while studying hard. As Marten has noted, Civil War era children thus “gleaned important lessons about life and death from the notes and letters and epistles written with pencil nubs and dull pens on scrap paper while their lonely authors rested after dusty marches, tedious picket duty, or numbing combat.”

Conclusion

The Danish soldiers studied here volunteered for Civil War service out of a combination of economic and political self-interest, sense of duty, and societal pressure, particularly after the draft was instituted. In the years leading up to the Civil War, numerous Danish immigrants in Brooklyn were influenced by abolitionist preacher Henry Ward Beecher, and these abolitionist viewpoints were shared with Scandinavians out west to a certain extent. Although Clausen and Rasmussen seem to have been less radical abolitionists than Winslow and Christensen, they did believe that slavery was wrong and Rasmussen supported this belief by a vote for Lincoln in the 1860 election. Throughout the Civil War, Scandinavian immigrant soldiers supported their families economically with the money they earned in the army and often offered advice for their families on the home front. Thereby Danish Civil War soldiers studied here, at least in their mind, fulfilled their duties as soldiers, fathers, and family men.

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—. “October 24 1861 Newtown: Christensen’s House.” “Ferdinand Sophus Winslow letters, September 1861-February 1862.” Special Collections Department, University of Iowa, 1861.

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NOTES

1 Peter Sørensen Vig, *Danske i Amerika [Danes in America]*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Minneapolis og Chicago: C. Rasmussen Company, 1907), 354. My translation. The author wishes to thank the Danish American Heritage Society for support which on several occasions has made visits to central Danish American Civil War archives possible. Also thank you to Dr. Julie K. Allen from the Department of Scandinavian Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison for insightful comments.

2 *Danske i Krig i Og for Amerika [Danes Fighting in and for America]* (Omaha: Axel H. Andersen, 1917), 13-19 and 204-205.


5 Ibid, 131.


7 John Patrick Riley, “‘This Is the Last Time I Shall Ever Leave My Family’: The Burdens of Soldiering on Union and Confederate Fathers” (Paper presented at the UM Conference on the Civil War, *This Terrible War*, Oxford, Mississippi, October 3-5, 2013).


11 Ibid. 23. See also Marten, “Fatherhood in the Confederacy: Southern Soldiers and Their Children,” 272.


13 McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades - Why Men Fought in the Civil War,*
134.

14 Ibid, ix.
15 Ural, 5.
16 Ural, 2.
17 Frank, 23.

18 Fritz W. Rasmussen, “Record of Skandinavians, Who Have Been Settled and Lived in the Town of New Denmark, Brown Co, Wis. - From the Commencement of Settlement of the Town,” Fritz William Rasmussen Papers, “Diaries, 1857-1876;” “Account Books, 1856-1909;” “Record of Skandinavians Who Have Been Settled and Lived in the Town of New Denmark, Brown county, Wisconsin, Box 8, Wisconsin Historical Society. Fritz Rasmussen was born on May 5, 1833, and married Sidsel July 11, 1857. By the time Fritz Rasmussen left for war in late 1864, the couple had three daughters, Anne Marie, age six; Jensine, age four; born the day before Abraham Lincoln’s election in 1860 - and Augusta, age one.

19 Ferdinand Sophus Winslow, “October 24 1861 Newtown: Christensen’s House,” “Ferdinand Sophus Winslow letters, September 1861-February 1862,” Special Collections Department, University of Iowa. Ferdinand Winslow, born May 26, 1829, married Wilhemina Schiøtt in Brooklyn, and was a father of three little children – all younger than five (Herman, Francis, and Sophia) - when he went to war with an Iowa regiment in the fall of 1861.

20 Maren Rasmussen, “Rejection of Pension Claim,” “Pension Records, Mother’s Pension Application 258.778,” National Archives. Theodore Hansen was born out of wedlock to Maren Rasmussen who married Hansen’s stepfather Mads C. Rasmussen in Denmark in 1847. The couple came to Wisconsin in 1857 two years after Theodore Hansen. Hansen was unmarried and had two step-siblings Boline, 10 years old by 1864, and Rasmus, 12 years old by 1864.

21 Christian Thomsen Christensen, “New Orleans, La. May 30th 1865,” papers of Christian T. Christensen, Christensen (Christian Thomsen) Collection, 1862-1876, Box 1, Huntington Library. Christian Christensen was born January 26, 1832 and arrived in America at the age of 18. Christensen was married to Emmy Schiøtt in 1853 and had at least three children, among others Ophelia and Dagmar, when he went to war in April 1861. Christensen was related to Ferdinand Winslow through the Schiøtt sisters.

22 Wilhelm Wermuth, “Newport News Den 13. Oct 1861 Kære Moder Og Sødskende,” “Håndskriftsafdelingen, Ny Kongelig Samling 2719, II. Folio, Karl Larsen’s Collection, Unused material, Wilhelm Adolf Leopold Wermuth, USA. (Soldat, guldgraver, mine-ejer),” Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen. Wilhelm Wermuth, born September 3, 1836, emigrated to the United States at the age of 24, unmarried and trained as a carpenter. Wermuth left his mother and his siblings in Denmark, but wrote about
having them join him in America. Wermuth joined the Scandinavian company raised in New York on May 8, 1861.

23 McPherson, 8-9.

24 For lack of enlistment enthusiasm, see Vig’s list of New Denmark’s Civil War veterans in Danske i Amerika. Only one Danish immigrant soldier from New Denmark volunteered for Civil War service in 1861 while seven of the 16 volunteers listed did not enter the service until 1864 or after. Additionally, eight others were forced into service through the draft.


27 Henrik Cavling, Fra Amerika, Vol. 2. (København: Gyldendalske Boghandels Forlag, 1897), 106.


29 McPherson, 134.

30 Ibid. McPherson’s argument is backed up by Marten who writes “In the minds of southern men, the war had made being a good and loyal soldier one of the duties of being a good father,” in Marten, 279.

31 Henrik Cavling, Det Danske Vestindien [The Danish West Indies] (Copenhagen: Det Reitzelske Forlag, 1894), 148. See also Winsløw, “October 24 1861 Newtown: Christensen’s House.”

32 Balling, 67.


34 Winsløw, “October 24 1861 Newtown: Christensen’s House.”

35 “Springfield. Friday March 7, 1862,” “Ferdinand Sophus Winslow letters, February-September 1862,” Special Collections Department, University of Iowa.

37 Hans C. Heg, “Til Skandinaverne i Wisconsin” [To the Scandinavians in Wisconsin], Emigranten, November 16, 1861.

38 R. C. Johnsen, “New Denmark 3/8 Ad 1882 [March 8th],” “Civil War Mother’s Pension, Application 258.778,” National Archives. Johnsen, who in the above documents seems to hold a grudge against Hansen’s parents, claims that Theodore Hansen enlisted to avoid his step-father being drafted while P.S. Vig claims that Hansen volunteered. Vig, Danske i Krig i Og for Amerika [Danes Fighting in and for America], 266.

39 McPherson, 132-3. McPherson notes that, “soldiers chided loved ones for laziness and selfishness when they did not write often enough.” See also Christian Ditlev Koch, “Kirkebye July 4 1854,” Christian D. Koch and Family Papers, Mss. 202, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, Box 1, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Though he was not in military service, the Danish sailor Christian Koch expressed feelings common to Civil War soldiers during separation from family, when he in 1854 wrote his wife in Mississippi from Denmark. “[Y]our letter is overdue and I cannot think of anything else but you and the children; I have got it in my head that you are sick or dead, and can’t get it out again. It almost makes me half crazy.” Two days later, however, Koch received a letter from his wife reassuring him that she was “tolerably well.”

40 Ferdinand Sophus Winsløw, “St. Louis. Saturday November 23 1861,” “Ferdinand Sophus Winslow letters, September 1861-February 1862,” Special Collections Department, University of Iowa. See also “St. Louis. 30 April 1862 Dearest Wife,” “Ferdinand Sophus Winslow letters, February-September 1862,” Special Collections Department, University of Iowa. “When I reach Rolla tomorrow night I expect to find several letters from you and Stephens. It works excellent now when you enclose my letter in one to Small. Now good bye; my love to all. Your loving husband Ferdinand.” See also Blegen, The Civil War Letters of Colonel Hans Christian Heg, 113.

41 Ferdinand Sophus Winsløw, “Pacific, Mo. November 26 1861,” “Ferdinand Sophus Winslow letters, September 1861-February 1862,” Special Collections Department, University of Iowa.

42 “Camp Union. 22 September 1861,” “Ferdinand Sophus Winslow letters, September 1861-February 1862,” Special Collections, University of Iowa. “[Dearest wife], I have received your 2 dear letters […] and am glad to know that you are well and getting along as best you can.”

43 McPherson, 63.


52 Ferdinand Sophus Winslow, “Springfield Mo. Sunday 2 March 1862,” “Ferdinand Sophus Winslow letters, February-September 1862,” Special Collections Department, University of Iowa. 1862. See also “Rolla Sunday April 26th 1862,” “Ferdinand Sophus Winslow letters, February-September 1862, Special Collections Department, University of Iowa. “Now good bye, dearest wife. It is a good thing I am so busy, or else it would be so much harder to miss you and the children for such a miserable long time.” Also “Camp Cross Timbers Mo. April 4 1862,” “Ferdinand Sophus Winslow letters, February-September 1862,” Special Collections Department, University of Iowa. “I hope to God we will now give the final blow to rebeldom west of the Mississippi. God bless you and the dear children.”


55 McPherson, 67.

56 Buslett, 199.

57 “Fra Det Skandinav. Regiment” [From the Scandinavian Regiment], *Emigranten*, December 8, 1862.

58 Christian Thomsen Christensen, “Den Lille Drengs Drøm Om En Stjerne” [A Child’s Dream of a Star], Søyre Private Collection, 1864. The work is dedicated with the words, “Min Hustru og mine Børn tilegnes kjærligst denne lille oversættelse.”


64 Ferdinand Sophus Winsløw, “Dubuque. Sunday 15 September 1861,” Ferdinand Sophus Winslow letters, September 1861-February 1862,” Special Collections Department, University of Iowa.

65 Blegen, 58-61.

66 Ibid., 106 and 128.


68 “Newport News 24 Sept 1861,” “Håndskriftsafdelingen, Ny Kongelig Samling 2719, II. Folio, Karl Larsen’s Collection, Unused material, Wilhelm Adolf Leopold Wermuth, USA. (Soldat, guldgraver, mine-ejer),” Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen.

69 Theodore Hansen, “Casheville Georgia, Mai 22th 1846,” “Civil War
Mother’s Pension, Application 258778,” National Archives.

70 “Georgia Juli 16th 1864,” “Civil War Mother’s Pension, Application 258778,” National Archives.


74 Ferdinand Sophus Winsløw, “New York Monday Octb 28 1861,” “Ferdinand Sophus Winslow letters, September 1861-February 1862,” Special Collections Department, University of Iowa.

Daily Life in Denmark in the 19th Century
by Sofie Krøgh Nielsen

The 19th century entailed a lot of change in Denmark. For instance, industrialization broke through and changed the landscape, society, and conditions of life; the 1849 Constitution abolished absolute monarchy so that the political scene was changed. The 19th century was also the century where nationalism started to blossom and the idea of one nation with one people and one language developed. Moreover, Denmark was reduced from a great power to a small state with the loss of Norway in 1814 and the duchies of Slesvig, Holstein, and Lauenburg in 1864. Finally, it was also a century of emigration, especially to the U.S. All these changes affected daily life in Denmark in the 19th century. The aim of this article is to give an idea of the kind of life Danish immigrants left when they came to the U.S., by exploring themes such as urbanization, employment and basis for living, social services, food, political rights, women’s rights, and the lives of children in 19th century Danish society.

From the Country to the City

In the 19th century, Copenhagen was, as today, the biggest city in Denmark, but it had only approximately 130,000 citizens around 1850. At that time, there were 72 market towns in Denmark, but only five of them had more than 5,000 citizens and most had fewer than 2,000. Today, more than 80% of inhabitants of Denmark live in cities. In 1840, around 80% of people in Denmark lived in the countryside and, until 1870, 75% of the Danish population still lived in the country. In 1916, by contrast, more than half of the population lived in cities, station towns, or suburbs.

The growth of towns was, of course, connected with the growth of the population. Until 1800, the population in Denmark was less than 1 million. In 1840, the population had grown to around 1.3 million and in 1916, the number was almost 3 million. In the same period, Copenhagen grew five times larger, to a population of 600,000 citizens. Many the market towns had a similar or even higher growth rate.

Unlike today, the growth of the Danish population had nothing to do with people immigrating to Denmark; even though 50,000-
75,000 people from Slesvig, Sweden, and Poland came to Denmark in this period, around 300,000 Danes also emigrated from Denmark, generally to the U.S. Nor does it have to do with how many children were born, as the birthrate stayed almost the same throughout the 19th century. The growth in the population was due primarily to a decrease in the mortality rate, especially among infants. As a result of the improved prospects for the survival of children, life expectancy rose across the board; a boy born in the 1840s could expect to live for 40.9 years while a girl was expected to live 43.5 years. Just before World War I, a newborn boy could expect to live 56.2 years and a newborn girl 59.2 years.

Several factors played a role in the lower mortality rate. For instance, people started to eat more nutritious food, especially potatoes. In order to combat cholera epidemics in the 1850s, water supplies and urban sewer systems were improved, leading to better health services and more hygienic living conditions. Increased knowledge about bacteria and the extension of hospital services to the entire country also helped people live longer.

Greater numbers of surviving children in the countryside was also a factor that influenced the flow of immigration to the U.S. Since only one son could inherit the family farm, it seemed attractive to younger sons to travel to the U.S. and acquire their own farm. Therefore, in order to save up money to emigrate, many young people moved from the country to the nearest market town for employment.

**Employment and Basis for living**

The greater part of the population in 19th century Denmark were farmers. Until the beginning of the 1880s, more than half of the population worked in farming, but this number started to fall notably with the spread of industrialization and the rise of cities. However, even in 1911, almost 40% of the population worked the land.

Since Denmark was dependent on farming, it is not surprising that so many Danes worked in the agricultural industry. The development of the Danish farming industry in the 19th century brought about, among other things, improvement of the land, new crops, orientation on livestock production and the foundation of co-operative dairies and slaughterhouses. These changes meant that, around WWI, one third of what was produced in the fields sufficed to feed the growing
number of people in Denmark. The rest of Denmark's agricultural production was exported, especially to England. Farming was the greatest source of income for the country and provided the economic foundation for importing raw materials and other goods needed for different occupational sectors. Many of the products supplied by the farming industry were the basis for urban employment in breweries and distilleries, grain mills, and sugar factories. Moreover, the crops and products needed to be transported from the country to the city, which created jobs in the trade and transportation industry. Although Denmark could still be characterized as an agricultural country throughout the 19th century, modernization and urbanization were slowly but surely changing both the Danish landscape and the Danish way of life.

In the cities, craftsmanship and industry dominated the economy. Traditionally, the role of the market town had been to meet needs for commodities and services. In the 1840s, 25% of the Danish population found their living in the craft and industry sector, while in 1911, the number had grown to around 30%. However, in the cities, the number was of course much higher—on average, around 50% of people in a market town worked in a craft workshop or factory.

Until the first democratic Danish Constitution was adopted in 1849, the market towns had a monopoly on crafts and engaging in trade. Only a few trades, such as blacksmithing, were officially allowed in rural areas. In reality, however, a lot of illegal business went on. The Constitution prioritized freedom of trade; the first step was abolishing the import tax on bringing goods and commodities into town to sell, which happened in 1851. This meant that, little by little, the toll booths and the fences that surrounded market towns were torn down, as they no longer had a purpose. The next step came in 1857, when an ordinance mandating craft freedom was passed. Under this law, the guilds lost their rights to regulate production, prices, and entry into skilled trades. As a result, skilled craftsmen lost the social security and the professional self-assurance that the mandatory membership in the guilds had provided.

To give the workers time to prepare for the changes brought about by the democratization of craft guilds, it was decided that the law would not be put in effect until 1862. However, the masters and the skilled craftsmen spent the time trying to have the law changed and were therefore not prepared when it did come into effect. This
resulted in a lack of alternative effective organizations to look out for workers’ interests over the next decade.

Merchants were not as affected by the guild ordinances as other trades since they were still protected by a zone around the town with a radius of 6.5 miles where they possessed exclusive trading rights. They had to accept that some trade and business with staple goods was going on in the country, but it was not until the 1880s, when the founding of the co-operative movement enabled people to engage in trade freely, that the merchants started to experience decline in their number and income.

In general, the cities did manage to create a means of existence for the thousands of people who came to town from a life without prospects in the country, in search of new opportunities. The growing population created a greater demand for food, clothing, and housing, which consequentially resulted in a larger domestic market. However, the growing division of labor between urban and rural areas was the most important reason for the growing urbanization. The farming became more specialized and focused on specific products. This development prompted peasants to give up a self-sufficient economy and instead buy ready-made household products such as clothes and beer, as well as ready-made means of production, like building materials and tools.

Deserving or Undeserving Needy

As mentioned, when the guild ordinance became effective in 1862, the craftsmen lost many of the rights they previously had enjoyed through the guilds. However, in most crafts the guilds continued as associations—often with different social security arrangements, for example health care and poor relief. However, membership was now voluntary and many chose to save the membership fee. In addition, since the guilds no longer regulated the numbers of workers, many trade groups had difficulty maintaining wage levels due to an increased labor force.

The working classes in general were noticeably disadvantaged by these changes; it was now not just work-shy and lazy people who were affected. Many people willing to and capable of working could not, by their own means, survive even short periods of unemployment or sickness. Both the upper and lower classes agreed that something
needed to be done. The genuinely deserving had to be helped so that they could avoid getting the public poor relief, which entailed a loss of civil rights. The political environment at the time was dominated by fiscal conservatism, so direct economic aid was out of the question. Instead, the upper classes felt that enlightenment was the best solution, for which reason they encouraged practical enlightenment through financial education and general enlightenment through public lectures and lending libraries. They also introduced co-operative housing, so that an economic surplus would benefit the inhabitants of a building instead of enriching a slum landlord.

However, Th. Sørensen’s statistics about the standard of living around the 1880s revealed that this was not nearly enough. Even with full year-round employment, it was not possible for a normal unskilled family, either in a town or the country, to save up more than a few percent of their wages for old age or periods of unemployment or illness. 70-75% of a family’s income was used for food while 15% was used for housing and heat.12 With the decline in the real wage, the proportion of income spent on food fell too, especially in the towns, but in 1909, many of the farmworkers still used more than 60% on food.13 This meant that the economic liberals accepted the concept of “self-help” as the appropriate basis for social legislation regarding Sygekasser (illness benefits) in 1892 and Arbejdsløshedskasser (unemployment benefits) in 1907. Under this system, the state provided support for people with no means, but only those who had been responsible enough to pay into a collective social security arrangement.

Elder care was addressed in an 1891 law that granted all Danes over the age of 60 the right to a public old age pension on condition that their needs were not self-inflicted, that they had not been sentenced for any dishonorable deeds, or they had not received poor relief during the last 10 years. The size of the pension was determined by local authorities, who were not interested in giving out too much even though half of it was funded by the state. Despite this, it was a remarkable law for the time and Denmark was the first country in the world to give all citizens the right to old age pension. However, the public old age pension still entailed the loss of social status and some civil rights.14 The intention of the law was to associate public relief with unpleasant consequences, so that people would choose to avoid it if at all possible. The idea was that the genuinely deserving
could be cared for with help from private philanthropic associations or the so-called *frie hjælpekasser* (free relief funds), which since 1956 had drawn on a mix of private and municipal funding. However, this was not enough to cover what was needed, with the result that only the “undeserving needy”—and as few of them as possible—actually received public old age pensions in the early decades of the twentieth century.

**Hakkebøf, Frikadeller and Leverpostej – Food in the 19th Century**

Food is another area in Danish daily life that changed a lot during the 19th century. In this period, as for centuries prior, Danish food consisted almost exclusively of products that could be grown or produced in Denmark. In the first half of the century, hot meals were prepared over a fireplace in the kitchen. Meat or fish made up an important part of a hot meal, either boiled in a pot or fried in a pan on the fireplace, while bigger pieces of meat were roasted on a spit. However, it was rare that meat and fish were fresh – this was only the case during the butchering season. The refrigerator and freezer had not been invented yet, so meat and fish had to be preserved in other ways, such as salting and smoking. Therefore, salted herring, smoked ham, and salted or smoked pork were common foods.

Mincemeat was regarded as particularly fine food because it required good cuts of fresh meat that were chopped by hand with a knife. However, this changed with the invention of the meat grinder in the second half of the 19th century, which meant that lower quality meat could be used and processed very rapidly. *Hakkebøf*, ground beef patties, and *frikadeller*, a Danish version of fried meatballs, became everyday foods and are still common dishes in Denmark today.

Vegetables and fruit were served as a garnish for meat and fish. It was common to have a vegetable garden, even in town, if one’s property had room for it. Otherwise, fruit and vegetables could be purchased from the market in the town square. People generally grew carrots, peas, beans, sea kale, asparagus, winged peas, salsify, caraway, herbs, and different varieties of apples and berries.

People ate fresh fruit and vegetables when they were in season, but like meat and fish, they also had to be preserved so people could get the vitamins they needed during the winter. Common forms of preserved vegetables included dried peas, pickled beetroots and dried
apples. In the second half of the 19th century, potatoes also became common as garnish for meat and fish – until then, they had mostly been used as food for animals. As means of transportation improved during the second half of the 19th century, the selection of fruit and vegetables also became broader. Similarly, dairy products and fresh meat became more accessible and affordable when co-operative dairies and slaughterhouses were established, beginning in the 1880s.

Bread has always been a staple of the Danish diet, along with cakes and cookies for special occasions. Until the middle of the 19th century, however, it was not permitted to have an oven in a house in town because the big stone ovens typical of the time were poorly insulated and a fire could suddenly run out of control. Therefore, the baker was the only one in town who had an oven. However, this did not mean that desserts were not produced in private households. Cakes like sneboller (snow balls), sprutbakkels (squirted rolls) and hjulkager (wheel cakes) were boiled in a big pot of lard and sprinkled with cinnamon and sugar. Likewise, Christmas klejner (much like crullers), which are still made today, were boiled in a pot of vegetable oil or lard. Moreover, pancakes and æbleskiver (a kind of pancake ball made in a special pan and well-loved in Danish-American communities today) could be baked in hot irons over fire.

When the cast iron stove with a built-in oven was invented in the second half of the 19th century, Danes were quick to adopt it and adapt their traditional recipes, as well as invent new ones. It quickly became common to have a cast iron stove instead of a fireplace. Having the oven built into the stove meant that the fire was enclosed and thus less of a hazard. If you cooked on the stove while baking, it became cheaper to bake, since most of the heat for baking was already generated while cooking. Many of the most popular Christmas cookies in Denmark today, including vaniljekranse (sweet cookies flavored with vanilla, popular in the U.S. as Danish butter cookies) and jødekager (a kind of cookie sprinkled with cinnamon and sugar), were actually invented toward the end of the 19th century following the invention of the cast iron stove. Besides a lot of new cake and cookie recipes, many other dishes that are still part of Danish cuisine originated in this period, such as flæskesteg med sprød svær (pork roast with crisp rinds) and leverpostej, which is a kind of paté made of pork liver and baked in the oven.
Other foods from the end of the 19th century include *smørrebrød* (open-faced-sandwiches), which is rye bread covered with a range of toppings, such as sliced cold meat or eggs and decorated very elaborately, and *konditorkager*, fancy bakery cakes that often contained marzipan and whipped cream. Both *smørrebrød* and *konditorkager* were phenomena that began in Copenhagen and spread to the rest of the country during the 20th century.

**A New Democracy**

On June 5, 1849, the first democratic constitution of Denmark was signed and absolute monarchy was replaced with a constitutional monarchy. In Denmark today, a person must be 18 years old, have Danish citizenship, habitual residence in Denmark, and not be under guardianship in order to vote in political elections. In 1849, the rules were quite different; to vote you had to be male, of an unblemished reputation, have citizenship, be over 30 years old, be head of your own household, and have lived in the district for at least one year. If you had received public assistance, it had to have been repaid or canceled, and you must own your own house.

Popularly speaking, it was “the seven F’s” who could not vote, as all the old Danish words for the people who were not allowed to vote started with the letter F: *fruentimmere* (women), *folkehold* (servants), *fattige* (poor people), *fremmede* (foreigners), *fallenter* (bankrupts), *fjolser* (fools), and *forbrydere* (criminals).

This meant that it was actually only 15% of the population who could vote, but that was still very democratic for the time. However, when the Constitution was revised in 1866, voting rights became even more limited. This revision included many conservative elements of the *Novemberforfatningen* (“the November Constitution”) of 1863, which had been an attempt to make a mutual constitution for Denmark and Slesvig but contributed directly to the outbreak of the Second Slesvig war in 1864. One provision gave the 1,000 richest men in the country two votes each for the Landsting, which led to a long political fight. It was not until 1915 that the Danish system gave all adults the right to participate in the election of the country’s political leaders.
Women’s Rights

As was common elsewhere in Europe at the time, women had no political rights in 19th-century Denmark, nor many options for paid employment. The mid-19th century Biedermeier literary and artistic movement focused on the family and the home, reinforcing the idea that the home was the woman’s domain, in which she should care for and raise children. Since the perception was that women had no business participating in politics, the 1849 Constitution did not assign any political rights to women.

However, some women objected. It is said that the fight for women’s political rights in Denmark started in 1850 with the author Mathilde Fibiger, who worked as a governess at the time, with the publication of her novel Clara Raphael. Published anonymously, the novel dealt with women’s emancipation. When Fibiger’s authorship was discovered, her reputation was ruined. She continued to fight for women’s rights, but she felt like an outcast from society because so many people objected to her opinions. Nevertheless, she put women’s rights on the agenda and founded Dansk Kvindesamfund (the Danish Women’s Society) together with Frederik Bajer, a member of the Folketing. Mathilde Fibiger died of typhoid fever in 1872, but in the late 1880s, Bajer proposed giving women the right to vote in local elections. The proposition was passed in the Folketing several times, but the more conservative Landsting continued to reject female suffrage. Women were finally granted the right to vote in local elections in 1908 and national elections in 1915. When it did finally happen, it was also celebrated: on June 5th, 1915, 10,000-12,000 women gathered in the square in front of Amalienborg Palace to mark the fact that they were finally included in Danish democracy.

Children’s Rights

Growing up in 19th century Denmark was also very different from today. Children from less wealthy families had to help out wherever they could, for example stacking firewood, carrying water, washing clothes, and cooking. In rural areas, it was common for a child to go out and serve as a maid or a farm hand, often from the age of 7 or 8. With new factories emerging in the towns, it also became common for children to work in them. However, a law from 1873 forbade children under the age of 10 from working in factories.
Even though children were an important source of labor for their families, they were also expected to go to school. In 1814, the government passed the first national education act, which enforced compulsory school attendance for every child in Denmark. The school was state-funded and the children went there for seven years, from around the age of seven until confirmation in church at age 14. In the country, the children went to school every other day so that they would still have time to help out with the chores at home. Teaching methods included learning by heart, examinations, and older students teaching younger students. Discipline was strict, often involving harsh physical punishment.

On one hand, children were taught subjects with practical application, like arithmetic, reading, and writing, which until 1875 had to be learned both in Latin and Gothic letters. On the other hand, they were taught subjects which focused on individual personal development, like religion and history. From the 1840s and onwards, the history that was taught reflected the nationalistic sentiments that were prevalent in Denmark at the time, due in large part to the conflicts over Slesvig and Holstein from 1848-1852 and in 1864. The emphasis was therefore on the long history of the Danish people. Denmark’s defeat in the war of 1864 had a profound impact on Danish self-awareness. At the same time as Denmark was re-invented politically, Danishness was presented as something very special and different from Germanness.

In conclusion, daily life in Denmark at the beginning of the 20th century was much different than it had been in the early 19th century. The land had changed – it had new borders and many new cities. The population had more than doubled, new job opportunities emerged, and a new political system had given the people a voice. The conditions of life in general improved and different social services created more social security. The 19th century was truly a century that changed the way Danes lived their lives and laid the foundation of Danish culture and society today.

**Bibliography**


NOTES

1 Helge Paludan et al., Danmarks historie – i grundtræk (Aarhus: Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 2002), 265.

2 Today the term market town is just a historical term, but in the 19th century if a town was to be called a market town, it must have a population density higher than the area around the town, the settlement must be permanent, there must be an economic specialization with weight on trade and workmanship and it must be a legal separate area with its own administration and special rights. The main differences between a market town and a village were therefore first and foremost the two last-mentioned factors: the economic specialization regarding trade and craft, and being a legal separate area.

3 Thomas Block Ravn, Den Gamle By (Odder, Denmark: Narayana Press, 2002), 52.

4 The numbers are for the kingdom of Denmark and do not include duchies or colonies. Paludan, Danmarks historie, 267.

5 Ibid., 267.

6 Ibid., 275.

7 Ibid., 268.

8 Ibid., 268-269.

9 Ibid., 269.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid., 276.
12 Ibid., 280.
13 Ibid., 276.
14 If the public old age pension was received as aid for medicine or a disability, these civil rights were not lost.
17 Landstinget and Folketinget together made up Rigsdagen, or the Parliament in English, which was the legislative power. In general the Landsting was more conservative-minded than the Folketing and consisted of more wealthy men.
Remembering the Schleswig War of 1864:
A Turning Point in German and Danish National Identity

by Julie K. Allen

Every country tells itself stories about its origins and the moments that define its history. Many of these stories are connected to wars, for example the tale of how George Washington and his troops crossed the frozen Delaware river to surprise the British and turn the tide of the Revolutionary War, or the way the American public rallied after the attack on Pearl Harbor to retool the American economy and support American troops in the fight against fascism. Not surprisingly, the stories we tell about our own country are most often ones about wars from which we emerge victorious, rather than those that reveal a society in disarray or economically devastated.

2014 marks the anniversary of several globally significant conflicts: two hundred years ago, on April 11, 1814, the French emperor Napoleon Bonaparte abdicated and was exiled to the island of Elba, bringing more than a decade of war across Europe to an end (albeit a temporary one, as it turned out); one hundred years ago, on June 28, 1914, Austrian archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated in Sarajevo, which set in motion one of the largest and deadliest conflicts in human history, known at the time simply as the Great War, though we now, with the dubious benefit of hindsight, tend to call it the First World War. These wars changed the face of Europe, not least by changing territorial borders—Napoleon abolished the Holy Roman Empire and streamlined the confusing jumble of German principalities and kingdoms into a federation of states that would choose, little more than half a century later, to create modern Germany; World War I dealt a fatal blow to the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires, which had been tottering for more than a century, and turned not only Austria, Hungary, and Turkey, but also the Balkans, Greece, and most of the peoples of southeastern Europe loose to determine their own fate, for good or ill.

2014 also marks the sesquicentennial of a war that, although it hardly registered on the world’s radar at the time and is included, if at all, only as a footnote in European history books, proved hugely
influential for both Germany and Denmark, in terms of each country’s political trajectory and its citizens’ national identity. The war in question is generally called, by historians at least, the Second Schleswig War, in acknowledgment of the fact that Germany and Denmark had fought over the same territory in 1848, during the First Schleswig War (known in Danish as the “Three Years’ War”—Tredieårskrigen). Danes, however, generally refer to the Second Schleswig War simply as “1864.” Relative to the other, massive wars just mentioned, the Dano-German war of 1864 involved a relatively small loss of life and a single border revision, but the fact that it had a disproportionate influence on both the victor and the vanquished is reflected in the way the story of 1864 is told in each country.

At this point, a brief historical overview of the causes of the war might be helpful. British Prime Minister Lord Palmerston is often quoted as having said, “The Schleswig-Holstein question is so complicated, only three men in Europe have ever understood it. One was Prince Albert, who is dead. The second was a German professor who became mad. I am the third and I have forgotten all about it.” All the same, let’s try to get our bearings before we turn to the consequences of the war of 1864. The provinces of Schleswig and Holstein are located at the base of the Jutland peninsula, forming a fairly narrow neck of land that joins modern Germany to modern Denmark. The area has been inhabited by Germanic tribes—Angles, Jutes, Saxons, Frisians, and Danes—for thousands of years. Good soil, good fishing, and easy access to trade routes made this a desirable area, and different tribes frequently struggled for control during the Dark Ages and early Middle Ages. Beginning in around the 8th century and over the next several centuries, Danish chieftains built a series of defensive earthworks, called Dannevirke, across the narrowest part of the peninsula to defend the trade route connecting the Baltic and North Seas, and established the village of Hedeby (Haithabu) at the mouth of the Schlei river. Over the years, different armies, led by the Holy Roman Emperor, Swedish chieftains, and rival Danish kings, conducted raids, imported colonists, and manipulated the borders, but eventually, around the 12th century, two fiefdoms emerged—Holstein in the south, controlled by the Holy Roman Empire, and Schleswig in the north, controlled by the Danish nobility.

The fighting continued in the 13th century, rife with treachery and secret negotiations. At one point, the German Duke Henry I of
Schwerin kidnapped the Danish king Valdemar II and his eldest son and held them hostage for three years, demanding that they surrender the lands they had conquered in Holstein. After the Danish army was defeated in the field, Valdemar gave his oath to surrender the lands, but as soon as he was released, he obtained the pope’s absolution for an oath given under duress and returned to the field of battle. After some initial successes in battle, Valdemar had to concede defeat and surrender permanently the duchy of Holstein, but he secured the duchy of Schleswig for his son Abel. Granted to the house of Schauenburg, Holstein was divided into several smaller countships. The kings of Denmark, the Dukes of Schleswig, and the Counts of the various parts of Holstein spent the entire 14th century squabbling over the rights to the territories, but control over Schleswig and most of Holstein was finally merged in 1386 in the hands of Gerhard IV, who swore allegiance to Queen Margaret of Denmark and her heirs.

That didn’t stop the fighting, which went on after Gerhard’s death in 1403 through much of the 15th century, until the last of the Schauenburg line, a man named Adolphus, managed to get himself invested as both Count of Holstein (by inheritance) and Duke of Schleswig (as a bribe from the Danish king Christopher) in 1439 and his nephew Christian elected as king of Denmark in 1448. When Adolphus died, King Christian I inherited his uncle’s titles to Schleswig and Holstein, but he issued the Treaty of Ribe in 1460 to reassure the German nobles in his new duchies that he would not make them entirely Danish, promising that the duchies, which were economically very interdependent, would remain “ewich tosamende ungedelt” [forever undivided] and legally independent of the Danish kingdom. This rather odd solution made Christian his own vassal, but it satisfied the Holy Roman Emperor and the German nobility of the region, bringing peace to the area for the next four hundred years. The German-speaking nobility of Schleswig-Holstein were numerous and well-educated, which made them an ideal source of bureaucrats to run the Danish court and contributed to the Germanization of both Schleswig and Copenhagen society in the 16th to 18th centuries.

By the 19th century, this hybrid culture provoked criticism from both German and Danish nationalists. Nationalism had been on the rise across Europe since the American and French revolutions, fed by both Enlightenment philosophy and Romantic literature. In Denmark, the so-called “German Feud,” a year-long debate in the
Danish newspapers in the 1770s, was sparked by the publication of Jens Baggesen’s play Holger Danske [“Holger the Dane”] in German; the ill-fated love affair between the Danish queen Caroline Mathilde and her husband’s German doctor Johan Struensee earlier in the decade didn’t make Germans any more popular in Denmark. One result of this debate was that Danish became the official language of the Danish army and government, as well as the official language of communication between Copenhagen and Schleswig-Holstein. Meanwhile, Napoleon’s reorganization of the German kingdoms contributed, after his final defeat, to the establishment of a German Confederation in 1815, of which Holstein was a member, but Schleswig was not.

When pro-democracy revolutions broke out across Europe in February and March 1848, Danish national liberals pushed through their demands for a constitution that incorporated Schleswig into the Danish kingdom. In response, Schleswig and Holstein set up a provisional government and demanded the right to be separated from Denmark and incorporated into the German Confederation as a single independent state. Prussia, anxious to quell its own rebellion, provided troops in support of the Schleswig-Holsteiners and thus began the First Schleswig War. The Danish army won some battles and lost others, but was ultimately able to claim victory in the war thanks to the intervention of the British and Russians, who forced Prussia to agree to the restoration of a pre-war status in the London Protocol of 1852, leaving the thorny questions of nationalism and political unification unresolved. Just as Schleswig and Holstein had to promise not to join a German union, Denmark had to promise not to try to divide the duchies and incorporate Schleswig into Denmark.

The Danish empire had been in decline for centuries prior to the First Schleswig War, having suffered major blows with the loss of its nominal control over Sweden in 1523, legal possession of Skåne, Blekinge, and Hälland in 1658, Norway in 1814, and Tranquebar in 1845. Victory over Schleswig-Holstein, even one achieved and enforced by outside agents, gave Denmark an inflated sense of its own military might and political clout. During the decade and a half after the first Schleswig war, Denmark celebrated its triumph with songs and statues, parades and paintings, as well as an aggressive campaign to make Schleswig and Holstein more Danish by enforcing the use of Danish in schools, churches, and government, which had
the opposite effect of antagonizing the German nationalists in the duchies even further and triggering a wave of emigration from the area. When King Frederick VII died in 1863 and his cousin became Christian IX, many Danish national liberals, whose rallying cry was “Denmark to the Eider,” the name of the river that runs between Schleswig and Holstein, adopted a new constitution in November 1863 that separated Schleswig from Holstein and incorporated it into the Danish kingdom, which was precisely what they had promised not to do as a condition of ending the First Schleswig War.

Here’s where things get really interesting. Why would Denmark violate the terms of the London Protocol, knowing that such an action would provoke a war with the numerically far superior and technologically much more advanced German Confederation to the south? Why did Germany accept such an obviously foolhardy provocation? Why didn’t England or Russia or France or even Sweden for that matter intervene to stop this war and preserve the balance of power in continental Europe? Why didn’t all involved parties take a rational look at the situation and just divide Schleswig and Holstein on a line between the majority Danish and majority German populations of the region and save thousands of lives?

A complete and comprehensive answer to all of these questions would take days to give. Thousands of pages have been written to do just that, but the short answer is that the world was different in 1864 than it had been in 1848 and although Germany knew it and was eager, under the leadership of Bismarck, to pursue her destiny, Denmark was blind to the changes that had taken place since 1848 and unwilling to accept the vastly diminished prestige and power allotted to her in the new world order of the late nineteenth century. For devotees of all things Danish and the descendant of Danish immigrants, it is painful to admit but nonetheless undeniable that Denmark invited Germany to war in 1864, in the depths of winter, without adequate preparation, based on a delusional sense of security derived from an outdated view of Europe’s political balance. Even worse, whenever the Prussians, the Austrians, or the British tried to propose a ceasefire or a compromise, the Danish government refused, insisting on Denmark’s right to be completely and utterly decimated on the battlefield and humiliated in the eyes of the world.

So what was so different about the world in 1864 compared to 1848? For one thing, although Great Britain still wanted to maintain a
balance of power on the European continent and protect their access to the Baltic, their royal family was closely allied with Germany, through Queen Victoria’s daughter Vicky’s marriage to Crown Prince Frederick Wilhelm of Prussia in 1858.

For another, Prussia’s new minister president Otto von Bismarck, facing domestic legislative opposition and in danger of losing King Wilhelm’s confidence, desperately needed to prove the viability of his vision of an enlarged Germany. Thus he had everything to gain by waging a successful war against Denmark and very little to lose, for which reason he led Denmark to believe that he would not react to a violation of the London Protocol, while making full-scale preparations for war.

Third, France under Napoleon III was preoccupied with building a Catholic empire in Latin America, while Russia had largely turned away from continental European politics after being defeated by England and France in the disastrous Crimean War in 1853-56, but felt a debt of gratitude to Prussia for assisting with quelling a Polish rebellion earlier in 1863.

Fourth, Danish politicians, including the new king, Christian IX, were without exception ardently nationalistic and determined to claim Schleswig despite the near certainty of provoking a war by doing so. They were, however, so divided over the question of pursuing a “Denmark to the Eider” (including Schleswig but not Holstein) or trying to maintain the Helstat, or unified state, that included both Schleswig and Holstein, that the only person willing to serve as prime minister was Bishop D. G. Monrad, who suffered from debilitating manic-depressive disorder and had no realistic sense of conditions at the front, despite the fact that his own son Viggo was serving on the front lines. To make matters even worse, the Danish Minister of Defense, Carl Christian Lundbye, had no field experience, whereas the strategist for the German troops, General Helmuth von Moltke, had been trained in the Danish army before seeking faster advancement with the Prussians, with the result that he could predict exactly what the hidebound Danish generals were likely to do.

For a detailed, balanced, vivid account of the road to war and the progression of the fighting, Danish speakers should read Tom Buk-Swienty’s two documentary accounts: Slagtebænk Dybbøl [“The Butcher’s Bench of Dybbøl”; 2009] and Dommedag Als [“Judgement Day on Als”; 2010], which have unfortunately not yet been translated into
English. For our purposes, a much-abbreviated account will have to suffice. In short, Denmark adopted the November constitution, Prussia declared war, and both armies met at the old, symbolically important Dannevirke fortifications in January 1864. After a long, cold standoff that lasted about a month, during which time many Danish soldiers slept unprotected on the frozen ground, Denmark’s army, led by the eccentric but skilled and pragmatic General de Meza, finally retreated to Dybbøl on February 5, 1864. The Danish army, which was underequipped and vastly outnumbered, had been relying on the strength of the Danish navy, including the proud ironclad *Rolf Krake*, to deter the Prussians, but the exceptionally cold winter meant that naval vessels couldn’t navigate the frozen waters. Impatient for a victory, the Prussian army was preparing to flank the Danish position by crossing the frozen Schlei river the same night as de Meza ordered the masterfully organized retreat from Dannevirke that frustrated the German offensive and preserved the lives of Danish soldiers. De Meza was fired and put on trial for his tactically successful but politically unpopular decision, leaving control of the army in the hands of the timid General Gerlach.

Six weeks later, on April 18, 1864, after weeks of devastating artillery bombardments that destroyed the already inadequate fortifications at Dybbøl to the point that the Danish troops had taken to sleeping in holes far behind the walls and the German soldiers were camped directly beneath the walls, the Prussian and Austrian armies attacked. Fully aware of the inadequacy of his forces both in numbers and equipment as well of as the impending attack, General Gerlach begged for permission to retreat but his request was denied by the Minister of Defense in Copenhagen. Prime Minister Monrad
reportedly ordered that the Danish army not give an inch, cost what it may.

That cost proved to be staggering. Outmaneuvered, outnumbered, and outgunned, the Danish trenches were overrun and conquered in a matter of minutes, though the fighting continued for four hours. Danish historiography has tended to concentrate on the undeniable heroism of the Danish soldiers, particularly those in the 8th Brigade who counterattacked when all seemed lost and protected the remainder of the army’s retreat over pontoon bridges to Sønderborg. Nevertheless, Denmark’s defeat at the Battle of Dybbøl took a human toll of more than 2000 dead and wounded Danish soldiers—approximately 10% of the entire Danish army at the time. It also dealt the final blow to Denmark’s fantasies of being a great power, though it took the horrors of the subsequent defeat at Als on June 29 for that message to sink in among the politicians, journalists, and cultural elites in Copenhagen.

During the peace negotiations that were held in London between the battles of Dybbøl and Als, Prussian chancellor Otto von Bismarck offered to give the Danes the northern part of Schleswig, with its majority Danish population, but the intransigence of the Danish
government emasculated the Danish negotiators, who were unable to accept such favorable terms. In a final, desperate attempt to save the Helstat, King Christian repeatedly petitioned Bismarck, both through his cousin, the King of Belgium, and through diplomatic channels, to allow Denmark to retain Schleswig and Holstein on condition of joining the German Confederation and becoming part of the larger German Empire. Bismarck was not interested in acquiring a large, restive minority population on his northern border and rebuffed King Christian’s overtures. Instead, he gave in to Danish insistence that the ceasefire be allowed to lapse, presided over the absolute annihilation of the remnants of the Danish army on Als, occupied the entirety of Jutland, and finally claimed Schleswig and Holstein in their entirety, which had made up two-fifths of Denmark’s territory and one-third of its population. (Incidentally, Bismarck profited personally from this victory—he was named Duke of Lauenburg, a small duchy that Denmark had acquired in 1814 as compensation for the loss of Norway). The survival of Denmark itself seemed precarious and although it did survive, the Denmark that emerged from 1864 was a very different place, in terms of its political course and national identity.

The Schleswig War of 1864 was thus instrumental in Denmark’s geopolitical diminution and the subsequent construction of a new, more pragmatic, homogenous, inwardly focused Danish cultural and political identity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but that is not generally the story that has been told in Denmark about the significance of this war for Danish history and national identity. Instead, the Schleswig war of 1864 has often been situated within a romanticized narrative of Danish heroism against overwhelming odds in the face of a much larger, better-equipped opponent that was determined to crush its weaker rival. The historical record makes it clear, however, that Denmark’s military defeat was largely self-inflicted—the Danish government provoked the war and refused to accept the untenable nature of their situation until all hope of compromise was lost—, but few Danish politicians were ever willing to publicly take responsibility for the misjudgments that led so inexorably to catastrophe. Instead, even before the battle of Als sealed the country’s fate, they began to spin the story of the events to shift the blame from the Danish government and Danish army’s incompetent, overly-confident, willfully blind leaders to the evil
aggressor Germany. German nationalism in the nineteenth century, paired with the subsequent Prussian defeats of Austria (1866) and France (1870) and the grotesque excesses of German fascism in the twentieth gave this version of the story the appearance of plausibility for more than a century.

Despite the fact that Prussia and Austria won the war, Dybbøl has played a relatively minor role in Germany’s cultural memory, not least because of the much more traumatic legacies of the two world wars in the twentieth century that have had such a transformative effect on German national identity. Prior to the 1920 plebiscite that returned northern Schleswig to Denmark (which was celebrated at Dybbøl), the battlefield remained under German control. It functioned primarily as a memorial landscape for those Prussian and Austrian soldiers who died there, as well as the Danes, for the German army was magnanimous in victory. German monuments mark the graves of individual Danish and German officers, as well as the mass graves of hundreds of Danish soldiers. Two German monuments were built there—the first, erected in 1872, was a 22-meter tall column next to the windmill on the hill, while the other was a slightly smaller neo-Gothic obelisk at Arnkil, to commemorate the Prussian conquest of the island of Als.

Though nowhere near as large as the Siegesäule [Victory Column] in Berlin, which was also originally commissioned for the same purpose, these German monuments remind us that Dybbøl is important as the site of the birth of the Second German Reich (the first one being the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation). The monuments at Düppel (as the area is known in German) proved to be a popular tourist attraction for Germans, both while the area was under German rule and during
the German occupation of Denmark from 1940-45. From a German perspective, the Prussian victory in the Second Schleswig War was the first crucial step on the path to German unification in 1871, with Prussia at its head. Bismarck’s sympathies were never with the Schleswig-Holsteiners who sought independence from Denmark, but always with the Prussian state’s leading role in Germany and Europe. In addition to a ducal title, the victory gave Bismarck enormous personal prestige and political capital that he would later wield to great effect. German school textbooks used to teach the motto, “Without Dybbøl, no Königgratz, without Königgratz, no Sedan, without Sedan, no German Empire.” Because it was just the first step in that process, however, the war of 1864 has received relatively little attention in German literature, film, and popular culture.

By contrast, the narrative about an important but inevitable German victory that the monument conveys has not gone unchallenged in Denmark. The German monuments were destroyed in 1945, most likely by the Danish resistance, but the iconic Danish windmill atop Dybbøl hill, which was destroyed during the 1848 war and again in 1864, dominates the landscape, surrounded by hundreds of memorial stones for fallen Danish officers. The windmill’s resilience confirms that the battlefield at Dybbøl has become sacred ground in Denmark’s collective memory, not only as the site where the multinational Danish empire gave its last gasp but also as the place where a new Denmark was born, out of the heroic though tragic self-sacrifice of the old.

Since the area was returned to Danish control in a League of Nations-administered plebiscite in 1920, April 18 has been commemorated each year with a wreath-laying ceremony conducted by the Danish military. The ceremony used to be an exclusively Danish affair, “focusing on issues of (Danish) bravery, sacrifice and determination against all odds,” but German soldiers have been invited to participate since 2001, although until 2010 they were not allowed to bear arms or the German flag during the ceremony, among other restrictions. In 2014, to commemorate the sesquicentennial of the battle, the newspaper Jyllands Posten’s website posted a daily countdown to Dybbøl, which included daily updates from the battlefield, while the website 1864live.dk, hosted by Aarhus University, provided “live” coverage of the war, albeit with a 150 year lag-time.

On April 18, 2014 the Danish flag [Dannebrog] flew at half-mast on government buildings and fifteen thousand people, Danes, Germans,
and even some Swedes, converged on Dybbøl for the wreath-laying ceremony, a full program of concerts and speeches by Queen Margrete and Prime Minister Helle Thorning-Schmidt (whose great-grandfather fought in the war in 1864), among others, as well as exhibitions, excursions, and, of course, coffee and cake. Local police chief Erik Lindholdt observed, “In contrast to 150 years ago, we won today. On the whole, everything came off without any difficulties.” Meanwhile, Tom Buk-Swienty’s books have been adapted into a miniseries and feature film titled simply 1864 (2014), which premiered in October 2014, on the sesquicentennial of Denmark’s official surrender of Schleswig and Holstein in the Treaty of Vienna.

These varied commemorative efforts reveal that as the chronological distance from the events of 1864 has increased, the task of remembering it and passing down the story, not just of what happened, but why and what it meant for Denmark, is an ongoing task. Dozens of veterans of the war recorded their experiences in letters, memoirs, and novels in the late 19th century, but national narratives require continuous retelling, as the enduring popularity of films such as Pearl Harbor, Saving Private Ryan, and Band of Brothers illustrate with regard to preserving and disseminating the American view of World War II. As Tom Buk-Swienty demonstrates in his excellent volume, 1864 i Billeder (“1848 in Images”), the Second Schleswig war inspired millions of words and hundreds of images, all of which have contributed to making Dybbøl an emotionally-laden space in Danish cultural consciousness, from Otto Bache’s depiction of King Christian IX’s nocturnal visit to the trenches of Dybbøl on March 22 to photographs of Danish soldiers standing guard over barren, snow-covered fields, as well as a wide array of German photographs, sketches, and paintings. The Realist Danish painter Vilhelm Rosenstand (1838-1915), who served as a lieutenant during the war in 1864, produced images of the battleground that have become iconic. Unlike photographs of the landscape which capture primarily the physical devastation of materiel and terrain, Rosenstand concentrates on situating Danish soldiers within the landscape and underscoring the connection between the men, their plight, and the place in which they find themselves.

In one famous image of the Danish troops lying in their snow-filled trenches, Rosenstand depicts himself in the center of the painting, bandaging a wounded hand. With only one other exception, all of the
other soldiers in the frame are intent on the task of shooting at the
(presumably) oncoming troops, carefully prepping the front-loading
rifles that would prove to be such a fateful disadvantage to the Danish
army compared to the Germans’ rear-loading muskets. This image
shows the Danish army to advantage, despite the hardships of the
weather and the fatal hubris of Denmark’s government leaders back
in Copenhagen, who refused to allow General Gerlach to evacuate
the troops despite overwhelming Prussian numerical and equipment
superiority.

By contrast, Jørgen Sonne’s depiction (below) of the trenches at
Dybbøl is more realistic, showing exhausted soldiers in inadequate
uniforms huddled around the body of a fallen officer, draped in
shawls for warmth and taking heavy grenade fire. Nevertheless, the
caricatured puppet of a Prussian soldier stuck into the ground just
beyond the trenches suggests that the soldiers are not cowed by their
desperate situation.

![Image of Dybbøl trenches]

_Jørgen Valentin Sonne, “The Battle of Dybbøl” (1871)_

One of the most famous and beloved images of Dybbøl is
Rosenstand’s painting of “The Eighth Brigade’s Attack on Dybbøl,
April 18, 1864,” which hangs in the Danish National Historical
Museum in Frederiksborg Castle. Despite the fact that Dybbøl was
an unmitigated disaster for the Danish army, Rosenstand depicts the
heroic counterattack of the Danish army’s 8th Brigade after Prussian
troops had already captured and cleared the Danish trenches. Despite
being hopelessly outnumbered and nearly certain to be defeated,
the men’s eyes shine with an enthusiasm that could be either read as patriotism or battleground insanity as they charge into a battle from which only half of them would return. In comparison, Simon Simonsen’s painting of the 22nd Regiment on its way from Sønderborg to Dybbøl on the evening of April 17, as yet unknowing that the entire regiment would be destroyed the next day, is haunted by carts full of wounded soldiers returning from the front, whose wounds foreshadow the devastation in store for the men of the 22nd.

Although Rosenstand’s paintings are powerful and have been widely reproduced, they did not reach as wide an audience and thus have as far-reaching an impact in time and space as Herman Bang’s 1889 novel *Tine*, which brings the events of Dybbøl into the homes of ordinary Danes and sends this image out into the world, through reprints and translations, as well as Knud Leif Thomsen’s film version from 1964. Bang prefaces the novel with a dedication to his mother, noting that the war drove his family out of their home on Als, “vort tabte Hjem” [our lost home]. His childhood memories of the war involve Danish civilians fleeing their homes and “Lyden, Tempoet, Skrækken i de Alarmsignaler, der kaldte Tropperne til Flugt fra Horsens” [the sound, the tempo, the fear in the alarms that called the troops to flee from Horsens]. Although he had planned to write an entirely different novel, it was the mental image of his “lost and ravaged home” that he had not seen for 25 years, accompanied by the sound of “alarms and fleeing footsteps” that determined the course of the novel.

Although *Tine* was not written as a direct political allegory, the idea of Dybbøl, as both a physical space and the heart of Denmark’s self-conception, underpins the entire novel. Although Tine herself never sets foot in the trenches, her thoughts are there constantly, with the man she loves, Skovridderen Berg. She can hear the Prussian cannon firing on the Danish position and can only imagine the havoc they are wreaking on the men in the trenches. Soldiers boast of the 500 or 700 grenades they endured, but when Tine’s parents climb a hill to look out over the battlefield, they see the chaos concealed by the soldiers’ bravado:

The flood of smoke lay like a monstrous blanket, pierced by sparks from the cannon, over the countryside. In front of it stood, rising from the base of the land, mighty pillars of
black ash, wreathed in flames, rising like massive columns toward heaven—houses and towns burning to the ground.

Tine’s father points out each pillar of smoke and calls it by the name of the place it has consumed: “Det er Ransgaarder. Det er Staugaarde. Det er Dybbøl.” As the novel progresses, the landscape fills with columns of wounded soldiers returning from the trenches and hordes of refugees fleeing burning farms and the ruins of Sønderborg. It is in the shadow of the flames and smoke from the burning of Sønderborg that Tine and Berg succumb to their passion for each other, driven by the fear of death and the desire to spite it to throw aside their mutual respect for Berg’s wife, far away in Copenhagen, who, like Denmark’s leaders, knows so little of conditions on the front. But their relationship is doomed, like the Danish defense of Dybbøl, and collapses when Berg is wounded in the retreat and no longer remembers who Tine is. Like Denmark itself, they survive the battle but lose the war.

At the end of the novel, Tine sees all of the familiar places she has always known, even the home in which she has grown up, with a stranger’s eyes. They no longer belong to her. The narrator notes, “She knew each spot and each spot had been decimated. She had no thoughts—they were likely already dead... All she knew was that it must be over now.” Even as she walks into the water to drown herself, she struggles with the desire to survive, to fulfill her responsibilities to her family, but she continues into the pond. As the Bishop stands over her corpse, he murmurs, “God forgive us all—God forgive us all.” Despite her mother’s fears that Tine will be denied a Christian burial as a suicide, the Bishop seems willing to overlook the circumstances of her death, commenting, as he leaves the schoolhouse, “Behold, we are only thy servants—help us to understand thy will.” In the last line of the novel, another character repeats the Bishop’s final statement, allowing it to stand as a kind of motto for Denmark’s future in the wake of the events of 1864, which can be read as Denmark’s own self-inflicted death, but out of which a new Denmark would be born.

One final example of how the story of 1864 has been told in Denmark is a Danish silent film made in 1910 called *En rekrut fra 64* [“A Recruit from 1864”]. Although the director is not credited in the film, production records confirm that it was directed by Urban Gad, who would become world-famous just a few months later for the first film he made with Asta Nielsen, a film called *Afgrunden* [“The
Abyss”] that became an international sensation and launched both of their spectacular film careers. There was a minor controversy during the filming of A Recruit, when the author of a book by the same name, Lieutenant P.F. Rist, published an editorial complaining that the film used the same title but had no connection to his first-hand account of the war. Instead of a gritty view from the trenches, this film, like Herman Bang’s novel and the miniseries “1864,” intertwines the war with a love story that enables viewers to make an emotional investment in the characters in the film. A Recruit focuses on a young Danish soldier named Felix who falls in love with the daughter of a farmer on Als whose house has been commandeered as troop headquarters and a field hospital. When Felix is captured by the Germans, he is brought to the same farmhouse, now occupied by German troops. The farmer’s daughter helps him to escape, but is fatally shot in the process.

This film is innovative in the way it tells the story of 1864 for a number of reasons. It is one of the very first cinematic depictions of war ever made. Although it is not, of course, a documentary, since movies weren’t invented until approximately three decades after the war, the film strives to replicate scenes of the war as realistically as possible. The actual battleground was still under German control at the time the film was made, so they filmed it in northern Zealand instead of Southern Jutland, but the producers hired an entire regiment of the Danish army to play the soldiers in the film, with the exception of Felix, who was played by the heartthrob Carlo Wieth. They reconstructed the trenches at Dybbøl for the film, only to blow them up with real gunpowder.

More important for our purposes, however, is the fact that the film’s narrative arc parallels the emotional journey that the Danish people underwent during the war. The film opens with a brief skirmish between the Danes and the Prussians for which Felix volunteers. Although neither side wins a clear victory, Felix returns from the encounter exhilarated, reflecting the general public’s enthusiasm about the war effort in the early months of 1864. When Felix’s regiment is posted to Dybbøl
shortly thereafter, the soldiers are greeted with cheers and flowers, while the farmer on Als welcomes them like dear friends. As the Prussian bombardment of the Danish trenches wears on, however, the soldiers return wounded and filthy to the farmhouse and the human cost of the war reveals itself to be steeper than expected. It is during Felix’s own convalescence from a wound to his arm that the farmer’s daughter falls in love with him.

The war goes badly for the Danes, however, as historical veracity dictates it must, and eventually the regiment, which Felix has since rejoined, is overrun by Prussian troops, first when Dybbøl falls and then when the Prussians take Als, including the farmhouse. Felix is sent off with a request for assistance from the Danish higher command, but is intercepted by the Prussians and locked up in the farmer’s barn, while the German officers play cards and enjoy their victory. For Felix as for Denmark, defeat seems inevitable. Yet there is a final ray of hope. The farmer’s daughter sneaks into the barn, frees Felix, and guides him to a small boat. She is shot in the chest by pursuing German soldiers and dies, but Felix manages to escape. At the end of the film, after the peace treaty has been signed, Felix, now dressed fashionably in a frock coat and top hat, returns to visit her grave and vows, “If only I could avenge her!”

Although both the film and Bang’s novel end with the death of a young girl, who could be regarded as representative of Danish culture in Schleswig-Holstein, the two texts tell the story of the significance of this loss quite differently. While Bang’s novel ends with the pastor admonishing the Danes to accept God’s judgment and seek to do his will, the film hints at the desire for vengeance. Like the paintings discussed above, these two texts illustrate the two competing narratives about the war’s significance for Danish identity: the first narrative accepts the finality of Denmark’s defeat, the tragedy of the senseless death and destruction incurred by the war, and endorses the possibility of constructing a new Danish identity as a self-effacing, chastened people; the other narrative concentrates on the injustice of Denmark’s defeat, the heroism of its defenders, and raises the possibility, however faint, that one day the tables will be turned. Only time will tell which story will prevail.
NOTES

1 This article is based closely on remarks presented at the Museum of Danish America, the German-American Hausbarn, and Grand View University in May 2014.


Excerpts from *The World at War*  
by Georg Brandes


“Neutrality. An Open Letter to Georges Clemenceau”  
(February 28, 1915).

Dear Friend:

Your remark about the Danes, that they are a *nation without pride*, has made bad blood in this country and has wounded me personally. A writer of your rank should refrain from derogatory expressions about a whole nation, especially since such generalisations never hit the truth, no more than one strikes a butterfly with a club. You doubtless remember Renan’s words on the subject.

You attack Denmark’s neutrality in the bitterest and most offensive terms. You ascribe it—since the country cannot have forgotten the mutilation Germany submitted it to—to fear and cupidity. I, who, if I may say so, cannot be well suspected of any desire to enrich myself by it, would consider Denmark’s participation in the war as madness. Through your paper, which I read, I know you feel that Denmark ought to declare war on Germany. As long as there is a grain of sense left in a Danish government, this will not happen.

No Dane who lived through 1864 could ever forget that Denmark then lost two-fifths of its territory; nor that Prussia and Austria stripped us not only of the territory which, from a national if not from a political point of view, they may have had some right to, but in North Schleswig annexed territory absolutely Danish in language, character, and feeling. We have not forgotten, either, that the promise of 1866, by which the Danes of North Schleswig were to be given the opportunity of becoming Danish again, was never kept. And we have (with deeper interest and a more quickened feeling than the French) witnessed the German régime’s increasing and incessant persecution of Danish language and spirit in North Schleswig.

Nevertheless, some of us still retain a fragment of political insight, and they would regard a Danish declaration of war on Germany as sheer madness. The war of 1864 was not declared by Denmark; it was
accepted because Denmark’s naïve and misplaced confidence in an
English promise to the effect that Denmark in case of war would not
stand alone.

If proof of modern statesmen’s political negligence and lack of
foresight is desired, the attitude of France and England during the
war of 1864 is a fertile study. France, then dominated by Napoleon III,
believed she was pursuing a wise policy in supporting Prussia, hoping
naively that Bismarck might sometime do her a good turn therefor;
and England, without the slightest protest, allowed Prussia to acquire
the port of Kiel. If to-day Denmark has neither a fleet capable of
offensive action nor a boundary which can be defended, this is due to
England’s and France’s attitude in 1864. If attacked, Denmark would
of course be obliged to defend herself as best she can. But she is quite
unable to take the offensive.

The few Danes who have tried to enrich themselves during the
war without regard to the country’s weal or its repute abroad have
been punished officially by the law and unofficially by public opinion.
They do not deserve the slightest notice, and the Danish people should
not be blamed for their unscrupulousness.

Dear Friend! Your articles against Denmark have, it seems to me,
sometimes had a personal sting. Once you said it was characteristic
that I had not spoken of the war in a private letter to you. You spoke of
this publicly, designated me clearly even though you did not mention
my name. I received numerous letters from France. If I wrote you
briefly it was simply in order to save your time and mine. In your
article: ‘Reflections on Neutrals,’ there is also a passage which many
think refers to me. It speaks of one of the ‘most celebrated thinkers’
in that Scandinavian country which has suffered most from German
brutality. A Russian journalist repeated to you certain remarks which
the thinker in question is supposed to have made about Germany,
Belgium, and Denmark, and you take the thinker to task these second-
hand, verbal remarks.

Would that you could read Danish and not always be obliged to
rely on second-hand judgments! Besieged as I have been since the
beginning of the war by foreign and also Russian journalists, I have
had but one thought, and that was to keep away from them. Even as
influential a writer as Novoje Vremja’s correspondent has knocked at
my door in vain. I have never said a word of what the Danish thinker
in your article is supposed to have said, and I feel sure that no other
thinker, answering to the description, would ever have expressed himself as affirmed by you.

The warm friendship which has bound us for many years, and which, from my side, has never been broken, makes me wish to answer you briefly and clearly, as one would answer a friend and a man who hates futilities and circumlocutions. I know your love of truth and your highmindedness. If you have expressed yourself inconsiderately about Denmark, it is simply because you do not know our language and are not familiar with our conditions.

In old friendship, G.B.

“Reply to Georges Clemenceau” (March, 1915)

When the war broke out Denmark declared herself neutral, and a proclamation from the King, calling upon the population to refrain from any demonstration which would increase the difficulties of the Danish government, was posted on the street corners. If this request was addressed to the average citizen and the nameless Danes in Europe and America, it had special reference to the few who are generally known and who in the eyes of the foreigner are looked upon as representing the people. Not for an instant did I doubt that I, personally, must obey the command.

Added to this was a factor which I referred to in a private letter to you, but without such details as one would give when writing for publication. You did not quite grasp the sense of it. Allow me here to remark incidentally that according to my lights and also according to English customs, it is not good form to lay before the public any part of private letters written in entire confidence and trust. I do not owe the public an explanation for the reasons I have for my reserved position.

You seem to imply that it was of importance to me to have my brother [Edvard Brandes] retain his ministerial portfolio. Personally I have not the slightest interest in whether my brother remains cabinet minister or not. He has been minister before, and he may become one again later. What had importance in my eyes, however, was not to create difficulties for the Danish Government (i.e., for the moment Denmark). The most trifling act could do so, and create confusion
abroad. And this might happen very easily as my brother and I have the same name. It might be thought that I was speaking for my brother, or that he shared my views.

When you say that a minister’s portfolio in Denmark is of little consequence compared with Louvain, Dinant, Reims, I most heartily agree with you, and your suggestion would have struck home if by protesting I could have prevented the destruction of these cities or a renewal of the bombardments. Of course the German actions were outrageous; but if I were to protest against every injustice that I witness I should never do anything else. That I am no timorous or prudent person, afraid of raising my voice when I believe my words can be of assistance or prevent injustice or cruelty, I have proved a hundred times over; and if you knew my writings as I know yours, you would not accuse me of the one thing which does not apply to me. A single example: As a friend of humanity, you protested against the massacres of the Armenians by the Turks and the Kurds. You protested in print and in France. I, however, protested as a speaker in 1913 in Berlin and in German, when the German Government was the ally and defender of Turkey.

Regarding Denmark and Schleswig, I have expressed my opinions so frequently (they may be found in my collected works), that I cannot very well be accused of trying to get away from what I have said.

Neither have I ever retracted a single word of what I may have said to you at our annual meetings in Karlsbad, as you seem to infer. Allow me, however, to remark that we last met there in 1909. At that time the European situation, such as it is to-day, could scarcely be imagined, let alone discussed.

My open letter to you dwelt on one point only. You had called the Danes “a nation without pride”—an insulting word which you now try to gloss over but which was the cause of my protest. Imagine any one calling the French such a thing! Your articles contained a few other disparaging remarks about the Danes. It was impossible for me to consider a phrase such as: ils se terrent dans leur trou (they hide in their holes), except as a hint that Denmark ought to declare war. You made it seem as if the Danes lacked moral courage in not declaring war on Germany. And you repeatedly dwelt on the pitiable figure the Danes would cut at the peace negotiations when they would ask the Allies for the restitution of the Duchies (Holstein, Schleswig, Lauenburg).
This remark alone shows that you have no idea of Danish conditions. No Danish person with any political insight entertains such a wish or would make such a demand. Denmark does not wish to acquire a population which would be annexed under protest only, and which would become Danish only by force since its majority is German speaking and German spirited. What the Danes have demanded since 1864 is the restitution of the Danish-speaking and Danish-thinking population of Schleswig. But we would gain nothing by the restitution of even this province if we were to obtain it by humiliating Germany. For the simple reason that Germany would then seize the first and best occasion to avenge herself and deprive us of it. This Denmark could not prevent. The possession of Danish Schleswig can be secured only by peaceful negotiations with Germany.

It must also be admitted that one must possess an object before being able to dispose of it. So far Germany rules in North Schleswig—not the Allies. Imagination runs riot in belligerent countries. French and German papers refer to what they intend to do quite as if they had already obtained that which they hope for. The belligerents are all optimists. But the spectator may look upon the struggle in a more doubtful light, especially as events seem to confirm his pessimism. I, for my part, am not sanguine. I do not for a moment imagine that this is to be the last war or even a decisive one.

Your letter ends—in a not quite friendly way—by putting me through a cross examination. I am not fond of inquisitions, even when clothed in civil forms, and I scarcely ever reply to the questions which European papers often address to me.

The purpose of your cross examination seems to be to reveal my underhandedness to the French people, and your questions remind me of the saying that a wise man can ask more questions than seven ordinary mortals can answer.

There are very few problems in the world which can be answered by an absolute "yes" or "no," unless one is allowed to state the questions oneself; for the way the problem is set, determines the answer.

I have expressed my sympathy for France so many thousand times, both in words and in writing, that not a clear-minded person can doubt it. My sympathy for Belgium's frightful and undeserved fate does not spring from the fact that as the inhabitant of a small, neutral country, I regret that neutrality, even guaranteed, cannot be
assured, but from the fact that I have a beating heart. My entire moral
makeup makes me want Belgium and France freed from the enemy.

Since you insist, I must admit, however, that upon this occasion,
as otherwise in life, I do not give myself over to longings nor to
prayers to higher powers. I examine conditions and try to understand
them. When you ask me who is in the right, you simplify matters so
that I cannot follow you. I wish, for instance, the French all luck and
success; but I would consider it a great blow to civilization if Russia
were to stand with the palms of victory in her hands. It would mean
strengthening reaction in Russia and would fill with despair any lover
of liberty for peoples or individuals.

To you the whole problem seems simple and clear. Right, truth,
liberty on one side; injustice, oppression, barbarism on the other. If
I have disappointed you so keenly, it is, perhaps, because unlike the
schoolmaster in Renan’s *Caliban*, my name is not “Simplicon.”

The appalling part of a war like this is that it kills all love of truth.
France and England are obliged to gloss over the Russian Government’s
ignominious dealings in Finland, its treatment of Poland, which it
promised to reunite, and where it begins by announcing that Galicia
is not Polish but old Russian territory, while it tears down Ruthenian
signs in Lemberg and puts Russian ones on their place. In the same
way Germany explains away the atrocities committed by German
troops. Bedier’s pamphlet on the atrocities is treated as a philological
essay; the inaccuracies of the translation are discussed while the
accusations regarding the atrocities are ignored.

All belligerent nations appear to be in good faith. Not one doubts
for an instant that its cause is the just one and deserving of victory.
All hope for victory and are confident of winning. Perhaps even the
governments are in good faith, to a certain extent.

I for my part look upon the increasing national hatred that is
splitting Europe as a sign of an immense reaction. You want me to
look forward to the Allies’ victory. The problem is too complex. I
could, as I say, not rejoice at Russia’s victory and still less at Japan’s.
Not that I have any prejudices or any feeling against Japan. I admire
the great qualities of the Japanese, whose form of religion, to begin
with, is much superior to that of Europeans. But the Japanese, who
are racially kin to the Chinese, will probably as a result of such victory
eventually dominate the white race, after having wrenched away all
its Asiatic colonies. And as Japan’s culture is not founded on Greece
and Rome like ours but is different and foreign to ours, I would consider such an issue intensely tragic.

You will cry: “And you would expect good results from an Austro-German victory!” Not for a moment. The organisation of which Germans are so proud has been obtained by crushing individualism, which is essential and precious to me, and their unity has been obtained by oppressing the Danes and the French who are now obliged to fight and bleed for a state to which they belong against their will. The Prussian Government has shown that nothing is to be hoped from it. The Reichstag during a recent session refused to amend the exceptional laws governing annexed territory just as it refused to amend the medieval electoral laws of the Prussian Diet.

But what if neither side were to win a decisive victory? Suppose that all these horrors lead to nothing but a partie remise as every indication seems to show?

In regard to England I look upon her in the same light as one of Great Britain’s ablest men, E.D. Morel, very popular in France, where I have heard him speak. He has a French mother and an English father and is therefore half French. Be it said to his honour that he lost his seat in Parliament because at a time when no one cares for anything but flattery, he dared speak the truth, and stated that certain high officials had not told Parliament the truth regarding the origin of the war, for which every country blames its opponent.

I should like to bring this discussion between two men equally intent on seeking truth, back to one fundamental question.

In my opinion, statesmen are not inspired by ethical considerations but by political expediency. Even if they speak in the name of morality and assure us that they are fighting to further ethical issues their object is not moral but political advantage. In fact, I am inclined to think that as the world is constituted to-day, it is their duty to be inspired by political and not ethical motives.

When France conquers Morocco the object is not moral but political. When England and Russia divide Persia between them, their object is not moral—the action itself is, indeed, highly immoral. I look upon the German invasion of Belgium in the same way—as an outrageous injustice—a political expedient. The two are often synonymous. As this move had been long foreseen, however, and discussed in the military periodicals of many nations, foreseen even by a layman like myself (who spoke of it in lectures in February,
1914), one is less surprised that it occurred than that France had not prepared the slightest defence. The English recently presented King Albert with a beautiful book, to which prominent English authors and many foreigners contributed. Would rather they had prevented the fall of Antwerp!

You, my dear Clemenceau, have turned this quite objective discussion into such a personal issue that I feel obliged to add a few words as to my personal feelings.

I am indebted to Germany because, when forty years ago, I was obliged to leave my country for five years' exile, she welcomed me with the greatest hospitality and never let me feel I was a stranger. German opinion turned against me only when I protested regarding Schleswig. Since then it has been rather unfavourable to me.

I am still more indebted to England, where I have been received as in no other country, and where I have been met with the greatest kindness and cordiality. I could not forget or go back on England without being guilty of the vilest ingratitude.

I am most of all indebted to France, however. For my whole education is French. Although I have sought and culled knowledge in many places, everywhere I could, the form in which it has been absorbed, my intellectual processes, that is, my entire mentality, I owe to France. In no country have I lived as willingly. I do not lack feeling, as you infer that I do, nor is it true, as you advance, that I do not care what happens to France. My entire sympathy is with her. I believe you are the only one of my French friends who has ever doubted it.

But I wish to state that I have a very high regard for the writer’s calling. If he is not truth’s ordained priest he is only fit to be thrown on the scrap heap. The writer dare not, in order to ingratiate himself with a people or class, even with his own people, go back on his ideals, no matter how unpopular they may be, nor let down on them, nor pretend that he sees them realized where they may be only hazily guessed. It is not the writer’s duty to speak at all times in order to remain in the public eye. It is not his business to applaud, protest, condole, when he knows his words have neither weight nor influence.

He must remain silent where silence is golden. And if he speaks, he must look truth in the face, —that same truth which is smothered by stupidity in times of peace, and drowned by the thunder of cannon in times of war.
“Will this be the last war?” (August, 1915)

The three Scandinavian countries are forcibly neutral. Any participation in the war would jeopardize their national existence, and no compensation could be offered for such a risk. But they do not look upon the war from the same angle.

Norway, because of her old relations and sympathies with England and France, is most drawn to the Allies. Yet a few Norwegian intellectuals, whose books are published in Germany, have placed themselves passionately on Germany’s side.

As Sweden fears Russia—with reason, for Russia abolished the Finnish constitution and flooded Sweden with Russian spies—the Swedish upper classes are pro-German to a certain extent.

It is self-evident that Denmark must maintain an absolute neutrality. The distance between Kiel and Danish territory is covered in two hours, and we could have the German fleet outside of Copenhagen within two hours after a declaration of war. Denmark could not provoke a power like Germany without committing suicide. Half a century ago Denmark was assailed by the united forces of Austria and Germany, and resisted a whole year without the slightest assistance from any European Power. This example (quite superfluous, it is true) shows the incredible short-sightedness of English and French diplomats who, without protesting in any way, allowed Germany to acquire the port of Kiel and to annex two-fifths of Denmark’s territory. Since that time these provinces have been ruled as the Germans rule all conquered territories. Danish must not be spoken in churches or schools; Danish colours must not be displayed, not even in women’s clothes; expulsions and vexations are the order of the day. For years parents were deprived of their children if the little ones were brought up in the respect of Denmark and Danish traditions. The Reichstag has voted appropriations for buying up Danish land in Schleswig, and Polish land in Posen. Young Schleswigers are obliged to fight and bleed in the German ranks for a fatherland in which they are treated like outcasts.

For weighty reasons, therefore, Denmark cannot sympathise with Germany. Yet Germany’s organization inspires respect. If, beyond this, Danish intellectuals are not unreservedly for the Allies, the reason is simply that they cannot look upon the Allies as forming one solid block. In spite of all attempts to gloss over the differences in the
nations of the Entente, the neutral observer cannot regard them as imbued with identical ideals.

For it is absolutely impossible for a human being who knows something besides what he reads in the papers, or for any one who has travelled, studied or acquired some knowledge of European conditions, to sympathise with England, France, and Russia at the same time. The very things which inspire his feeling for England and France make him turn away from Russia—and vice versa. The reactionary and conservative elements throughout the world—those who hate democracy and worship autocracy, not enlightened autocracy, but the insidious, dark one—naturally hope for Russia's victory. On the other hand, all who value constitutional liberty, humane government and real enlightenment sympathise with France and England.

But only those who have been blinded by national fanaticism can sympathise with both the East and the West. The very elements for which Germany is hated are even more exaggerated in Russia—the East—while Germany, on the other hand, has many of the attributes which impel one to sympathise with the West—England and France.

Of course ignorance and falsehood have formed an alliance to explain away the Russia Government's most hideous crimes, just as Germany's violations of law and justice are painted as something absolutely unheard of, the like of which no civilised power has ever been guilty of. Such explanations impress only those who are as ignorant as new born babes (although it is not to be denied that the majority in most countries undoubtedly are in this state of semi-intentional ignorance). The sound sense of the masses and their intuitive conception of right have never been anything but a democratic legend.

For the masses believe, as a rule, every lie that is cleverly presented to them. They believe, as “eye witnesses” claim to have seen, a Russian army passing through England in September, 1914. They believe what a few Danes insist they saw, Belgian children in Copenhagen, with their hands cut off. Of course there were no such children in Copenhagen. The English minister, J.F. Matthews (Baptist Church, Sheffield), declared from the pulpit in March, 1915, that a Belgian girl whose nose had been cut off and whose body had been ripped open by the Germans, had now recovered and was living in Sheffield. The whole affair proved to be a flight of imagination, but it was given general credence.
The affair may be classes with the telegraphic report that Kaiser Wilhelm decorated the Almighty with the Iron Cross as reward for His invaluable assistance in Belgium, Northern France, and in East Prussia.

To a certain extent the European press is not entirely to blame. No one is allowed to speak the truth about the political situation.

The belligerents—none of them—allow truth to find expression. Every time Truth tries to rise out of her well, an ever-vigilant censor immediately ducks her head under water again. Truth is smothered as one smothers an unwelcome kitten. The object of the censorship is to prevent the publication of any material which might convey information to the enemy. But it has another mission: that of stifling criticism of the army or the Administration, no matter how justified they may be, and to present everything in a rosy light to the native reader.

Even in small neutral countries laws have been passed to prevent the publication of remarks which might imperil neutrality by offending a belligerent country.

The United States constituting a great power, beyond reach, and in no danger of attack, is the only country where a neutral writer can say what he believes to be true.

I witnessed the War of 1870-71. I was in France and Italy at the time and read the French papers carefully. They never spoke the truth, of course. The truth was too sad. One of the duties of the press was to infuse confidence into public opinion and to stimulate it during reverses. Finally, however, part of the truth leaked out, and the losses had to be admitted. But all the articles were characterised by one phrase, “At least we may be consoled by the thought that this is the last war.”

Since then there have been a dozen bloody wars, and now the worst of them all has lasted a year. And still the imbecile refrain rings in article after article, in all countries, “At least there is consolation in the thought that this will be the last war.”

That is to say, from next year on humanity will change its very nature. Its boundless stupidity will become reason; its unlimited ferocity will turn into gentle and peaceful good will.

The Germans deny the atrocities in Belgium; the Russians deny the atrocities in East Prussia; the Austrians deny the atrocities in Serbia.
Even if many reports of the atrocities may be imaginary or exaggerated—and this has been proved—there is enough left. And I, for my part, do not doubt the brutality of all sides. I know the Germans are civilised, the Russians good-natured, the Austrians smart. But war brutalises every one. If murder of the so-called enemy is made the order of the day and the destruction of his cities and fields a holy duty, then all the worst instincts are given free reign everywhere. From under the varnish of civilisation the cave man rushes forth, and his status is that of the Stone Age.

A pessimist once remarked that humanity is “a gang of brutes.” He was mistaken. Humanity is divided into a series of different gangs, all fighting each other, and each one trying to beat the others.

As this motive is never admitted, all nations purport to be fighting for ideals. Each of the warring parties is fighting for right, truth, order, or liberty. Even a despotic country like Russia is fighting for liberty, even for the liberty of Poland, which it has systematically and relentlessly crushed by means of the most ingenious tortures during the last half century.

In short, every state proclaims the high ideals it is fighting for. All without exception are fighting for their own defence—to protect right; their right.

Of course they do not feel impelled to make right prevail. My country, right or wrong! suffices. Each nation fights for itself. In these days when patriotism is praised as the highest virtue, the scorn of world citizenship is the object of deepest scorn.

In the lulls between wars, humanity imagines it is at peace at last and that no more wars will arise. Humanity does not want and does not dare to look truth in the eyes. If war breaks out, in spite of optimistic assertions, humanity reacts and cries that after this war justice and peace will reign. Every war is to be the last war.
Book Reviews


On Wednesday May 2nd, 2012 the Danish newspaper Politiken Weekly reported that the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) party would have to struggle to stay in power during an upcoming election to the Landtag in Kiel in Schleswig-Holstein on May 6, 2012. It was expected that the SSW [Sydslesvigs Vælger Forbund] would co-operate with the Social Democratic Party and the Green Party to form a new coalition government. In response to this threat, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and the CDU, to which party she belongs, warned against a “Danish coalition” taking power. The article in Politiken criticized this approach as “an apparent scare campaign not against a party but against a nationality … [Is that] compatible with the spirit of good neighborship?”

The border region between Denmark and Germany is considered a model for interregional cooperation today, but it has a much more tumultuous history, as the CDU’s comments suggest. Denmark lost two fifths of its territory and one third of its population to Prussia after the war of 1864. Being forced to fight for the German empire in World War I cost Sønderjylland [Slesvig] 6,000 men, 7,000 wounded, and created 1,500 war widows who had to raise 5,000 children without fathers. In 1920, a plebiscite restored the territory of northern Slesvig to Denmark, along with approximately 165,000 Danish speakers. Against the background of these facts and Angela Merkel’s puzzling remarks, Inga Wiehl’s book Heartstrings is very timely.

Published by Hamilton Books in 2011, Heartstrings relates the life story of the author’s maternal grandmother Abeline Kjær (1884-1963), set in the historical context of Slesvig between 1864 to 1920 up through the present. The book narrates all the nuances of life during occupation by Prussia and the oppressive conditions to which it subjected the people of Slesvig/Schleswig/Sønderjylland. Danish cultural developments of the era included Free Schools and churches and assembly houses [Forsamlingshuse]. Danish-minded communities created such social institutions to strengthen and keep alive the Danish language and culture—movements in which Wiehl's
grandmother took an active part. Abeline kept herself on an even keel through trying times when her husband was at war – until the day she was told he had been killed. At that point, she screamed and kept screaming until she realized that she was scaring her children. Once she stopped, she appears to have become a serene supporter of everyone around her for the rest of her life. She preserved the family farm and guided her family through her example. She comforted the families who lost fathers, sons, and brothers in WWI and she took care of her grandchildren while their parents were building their business. She belonged to the Free Church, which played a major role in keeping the Danish language in Slesvig alive after the annexation. As the author explains, she “had taken a national and political stand” (83) and her family followed her lead.

Abeline demonstrated great personal bravery once more when, in her late seventies, she cut her hair short, had her hair curled, and boarded an airplane to travel to Seattle to be a live-in babysitter for her great-granddaughter, while her granddaughter—the author—prepared for her Ph.D. exams. Having lived through a time of major changes, including the introduction of electricity and indoor plumbing, she now had the opportunity to try out another invention of her time—the airplane. When she travelled to the U.S. knowing little to no English, Abeline relived the linguistic duality she had experienced living in Southern Jutland. She had spent a good part of her life, from 1884-1920, as a Danish speaker in a German-dominated area where the southern Jutland dialect, Low German, and Frisian were part of the linguistic landscape. One more language did not overwhelm her confidence.

One of the book’s central themes is the issue of being caught between two cultures as a result of emigration, whether internal or external. Wiehl details the history of the people who felt compelled to leave southern Jutland because they did not want to live under the yoke of the German regime, particularly during the harsh administration of Ernst Matthias von Köller (1841-1928). The author explains:

The stay-at-home southern Jutlanders remained undivided by partial socialization in two cultures. Neither temptation nor threats made them embrace an unwanted belonging. They merely practiced those affiliations or compromises of a political and practical nature that their daily lives
demanded . . . they moved towards a future envisioned as a continuation of their past: as Danes in Denmark. (73)

The book also contains the narrative of the author’s own immigration to the U.S. and explores the emigrant’s motives for leaving home and roots, whether for political or personal reasons. The writer’s special and close relationship with her grandmother is transposed on to the relationship her grandmother had with her family, region, and above all, her language and culture—Danish. Wiehl’s book contains a mixture of letters that she imagines could have been written by her grandmother to a friend north of the 1864 border, interspersed with segments of personal narrative about her life with her grandmother as a child and her life in the U.S. Wiehl contextualizes her own experiences with comparisons to Vilhelm Moberg’s Emigrant trilogy and Sophus Winther’s novels about life among Danish immigrants on the prairie.

The book contains a good deal of historical fact and anthropological information, which make it an excellent companion to Herman Bang’s novel *Tine* or a history course covering the period from 1848 through either 1870 or 1920. It provides details about life and conditions in Southern Jutland and the coping mechanisms people had to develop in order to keep their Danish roots and allegiance to Denmark. They had to adhere to the rules and regulations imposed upon them by the Prussians, including total separation from relatives north of the border and the threat of losing of their farms due to the emigration of young men, headed either to Denmark or to the U.S.

The book is well researched, aside from a few minor factual errors and some elements of unnecessary and inconsistent formatting, such as the writing of the letter ‘ø’ in its phonetic form as ‘oe’. However, the author has attempted to cover too much ground—emigration from southern Jutland, immigration to the US in general, and the author’s own experiences as an emigrant and an immigrant. The book is, as mentioned above, built around a mixture of letters and vignettes with facts about life in southern Jutland and immigrants and their lives in the U.S. The author attempts to span two historical periods on different continents, which involves both voluntary immigration versus forced migration from Slesvig/Schleswig and internal migration. Another weakness in the book is the author’s practice of mentioning people’s names or places without sufficient identifying information. Köller, for
example, is mentioned on page 18, but his full name does not appear in full until page 20 and his date of birth and death are not mentioned. William Morris and Otto Eckman appear without dates on page 22, as does Grundtvig on page 28, to give just a few examples. Furthermore, the author assumes the reader's familiarity with certain topics that would not be common knowledge outside Danish circles, such as The Blue Songbook, which presumably refers to the Folk High School songbook. On page 73, the author mentions a phenomenon called a “decade birthday.” In Denmark and in Danish they are usually called “round birthdays.” On page 83, she makes the assumption that readers will be familiar with the Danish churches and their denominations in the US, but this needs to be explained in a note. Finally, the author mentions people, places, and works in the text but not in the bibliography. The book would be much stronger and vastly improved with a better bibliography and note system.

On the whole, the author very clearly and sensitively narrates the situation of Danish immigrants to the US and their attempts to hold on to their Danish language, culture, and family ties, as well as the challenges faced by the farming families in Slesvig who stayed on their land while simultaneously fighting to keep their Danish heritage alive till the expected unification with Denmark. The author is, in this reviewer’s mind, successful in her intent to describe Slesvig from 1864 till today. As she places her grandmother’s life into that context as well as into the context of her family, one is left with a clear picture of her grandmother’s attitudes and beliefs, her influence on the writer, and her involvement with other people. The anthropological information, especially at the beginning of the book, is also quite useful. We are reminded how housing, lavatory facilities, and family arrangements have changed and the impact the introduction of electricity had on people's lives. Ultimately, its combination of historical and anthropological information makes this personal narrative a valuable source for the period it covers.
The countryside around Dybbøl, in southern Jutland, just across the Alssund from Sønderborg, is deceptively peaceful. The green, rolling hills stretch smoothly across the horizon, until they are swallowed up in the shining, placid waters of Vemmingbund Bay. A classic wooden windmill stands atop a small hill, its sails turning lazily in the breeze. For the uninitiated, it might seem a bit odd that a row of wheeled cannons stand just a few feet from the windmill, until one learns that this bucolic paradise was the site of one of the bloodiest, costliest, and most devastating battles in Danish history. After a two-month siege involving thousands upon thousands of artillery shells, the Prussian and Austrian armies annihilated the Danish troops defending the fortifications surrounding the windmill in an early morning attack on April 18, 1864. With a full orchestra playing the newly-commissioned “Düppeler Marsch” as accompaniment, German troops conquered the fortifications at Dybbøl in slightly less than four hours, killing, wounding, or taking prisoner nearly 10% of the entire Danish army and bringing the country to its knees.

Appearing on the sesquicentennial of the Second Schleswig War, Mads Daubjerg's *Borders of Belonging* offers a timely reminder that although the cannons ceased firing long ago, the battleground of Dybbøl continues to function as a contested site of Danish nationalism, heritage, and identity. Drawing in particular on Michael Billig’s concept of “banal nationalism,” Daubjerg attempts to answers the question of “what happened here?” by analyzing how national identity is performed, destabilized, and/or reinforced through museum practice and experience tourism. In this well-researched and thought-provoking book, Daubjerg explores how the practice of “place-making,” which consists of investing physical sites with a sense of the past, social traditions, as well as collective and individual identities, functions at Dybbøl. Daubjerg describes this as:

A book about the role of museums and heritage in place-making processes, including—as part of that—the vexing issue of the fate of the nation as a collective imaginary and experienced entity in an era cross-cut with various and
variously-expressed agendas of national belonging and global awareness. It explores the institutional afterlife of the 1864 war and especially the ways in which contemporary visitors to two very different institutions in the Dybbøl vicinity literally make sense of the war heritage and its national connotations. (2)

His primary focus is the nature of the mediated experience available to visitors to the Dybbøl battlefield, through both the conventional collection-based museum located in Sønderborg Castle and the experientially-oriented Dybbøl Battlefield Center. Visitors to Dybbøl have the option of immersing themselves in an academic history of the war, its causes, and repercussions or of donning a Danish uniform and aiming a rifle out across the long-vanished German trenches.

In the central chapters of the book, Daubjerg evaluates why people go to museums at Dybbøl and what they make of the information they encounter there. He looks in detail how the castle museum and the battlefield center shape visitors’ perceptions, not only of Dybbøl as a place, but also of the narrative of Danish national identity that it represents. He examines both what the museums intend to convey—how they frame the narrative—and how visitors interpret what they see and experience. Citing Richard Handler and Eric Gable’s argument that “most research on museums has proceeded by ignoring much of what happens in them,” Daubjerg collected extensive data from visitors to both museums about their reaction to the narrative about Dybbøl that they encountered there. He conducted on-site interviews with dozens of Danish and German visitors, as well as analyzing data provided through the use of “video specs,” a set of plastic eyeglasses with a tiny built-in camera and microphone. Visitors wore the specs while touring the museums, which allowed the camera to record the routes taken through the exhibits, the objects looked at, the amount of time spent on each object, and conversations between the members of a group of visitors. This innovative technique gave Daubjerg access to the visitors’ reactions to the exhibits in real-time, without the time delay and unconscious redacting that affected the on-site interviews.

A book about other people visiting a museum may not sound terribly fascinating, but this book defies that negative expectation. It tells a fascinating, complex story about the interplay between curatorial intention and public perception, about “why and especially how the construction work of heritage sites, traditions, and institutions
... continue to make sense and yield meaning to people” (102). The combination of deftly applied theory and detailed observations of actual museum experiences, presented in the author’s fluid, accessible writing style, gives Daubjerg’s book a solid intellectual foundation and a refreshingly interactive feeling, almost as if the reader were also there in the museum or at least having an intimate conversation with the author. In chapters two and three, Daubjerg unpacks the ways in which people respond to specific objects in the Castle Museum, from historical paintings that romanticize the Danish army’s defeat to a 1:1000 scale landscape model of the battlefield created by the German government to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of Germany’s victory. He analyzes how the museum curators attempt to present a balanced history of both sides of the conflict, but are hampered by the lack of German pictorial representations of the battle, as well as by the fact that the setting of the museum is so “utterly and explicitly Danish.” He considers the tension between visitors’ belief in the objectivity of their own perceptions and their emotional connections with the historical narrative they encounter in the museum. He identifies the tendency of tourists to visit museums as a routine part of their holidays in Denmark rather than as a result of particular interest in the subject matter, which produces a sense of disinterest that often frustrates the historian’s attempt to extract meaning from the visitors’ museum experiences.

In chapters four and five, Daubjerg turns his attention to the Dybbøl Battlefield Center, which describes itself as a “knowledge-education activity center,” rather than a museum (104). This insistence on a “counter-museum self image” reflects a renewed interest in the experiential in the museum and tourism industries that calls to mind the open-air museums, such as Skansen in Stockholm and Den Gamle By (“The Old Town”) in Aarhus, that were founded around the turn of the twentieth century. Although the Battlefield Center merged with the Castle Museum in 2004, at least on an administrative level, it retains a very distinct sense of purpose and identity that is markedly different from its partner institution. Accordingly, many of the exhibits in the Battlefield Center are hands-on and physically interactive, designed to relieve the “public of their alleged subconscious, childhood-endorsed museum phobias or traumas” (106). In this anti-authoritarian counter-museum, Daubjerg explains, visitors are encouraged to climb the ramparts and help load the cannon, in short to participate in recreating
a “personified, experiential and postheroic” narrative (118), albeit in a highly structured, pre-ordered context. The center’s exhibits revolve around a “back-and-forth movement between distanced bird’s-eye viewing and more immersive and multisensory practices” (123) that allows visitors to feel simultaneously involved in the action and able to grasp its larger contours.

This highly subjective, democratic approach to Dybbøl allows the visitor to play a more active part in interpreting the historical narrative. It is not, however, without its critics. Daubjerg outlines some of the critiques of this approach to conveying history, including the charge that “living history” is necessarily artificial, as well as the concern that experiential tourism is too inherently playful for a topic as serious as war. The question of nationalism is also problematic in this context. Despite its claims to “disinterested rationality and factuality,” Daubjerg points out, the center was initially founded as a Danish-only monument to the 1864 war and its narrative (at the time of the author’s fieldwork in 2006) was “still characterized by a strong Danish bias … [and] an exclusively Danish perspective continued to dominate” (115). The author analyzes attempts by the center’s staff to counter this tendency in recent years by toning down national biases in their interpretative work, in part by offering privileging to “‘the ordinary’ as opposed to the spectacular and outstanding, coupled with a move away from heroic renderings of the Dybbøl battle” (115), for example through eyewitness accounts; in part by framing the historical narrative in terms of a more general discussion of “the horrors and costs of war” (117). At the same time, however, Dybbøl is, as a site, inescapably laden with national significance. Daubjerg explores the paradox of the tendency toward “‘civic cleansing’ of the centre’s ethnonational elements” and the persistence of the concept of the nation “in the very materiality and historicity of the site” (131).

Although the bulk of Daubjerg’s book focuses on specific curatorial strategies and visitor experiences at two particular institutions, the scope of his argument goes far beyond Dybbøl to explore the “making and remaking of national heritage” (180). In the introduction and first chapter of the book, he explores the significance of Dybbøl for both the political history of Denmark and its self-conception, an association that continues through the present. In chapter five and the conclusion, he casts an even wider net, relating his findings to questions of current Danish and international politics. The negotiations over the status and
significance of Dybbøl for Danish heritage and identity reflect a larger, global struggle to internationalize heritage and memory, as well as ongoing reinterpretations of what it means to be Danish and how the events at Dybbøl relate to that identity. Annual celebrations of Dybbøl Day on April 18 have become increasingly inclusive of German participants, while the rhetoric of the commemorative speeches and sermons tends to stress the “moral obligation of individuals and groups towards others, including those across borders” (160). This turn toward cosmopolitanism and transnationalism underpins proposed plans to build a Red Cross museum at Dybbøl, which would “brand Dybbøl as a ‘cradle of peace work’ and Denmark as ‘one of the world’s leading proponents of humanitarianism’” (160). This new interpretation of Dybbøl would be, as Daubjerg does not fail to spell out, “good for local business, and good for Danish interests abroad” (160).

Immigrants to America and their descendants have published hundreds of songbooks from the nineteenth century through the present. Produced by religious groups, educators, fraternal organizations, businesses, labor unions, poets, and touring musicians; consisting of Old World songs, New World compositions, and patriotic anthems from mainstream America; rendered in dialect, standard versions of a mother tongue, mixed language, broken English, and English translation; offering verses with or without musical notation; and printed in enduring illustrated hardback editions or more commonly as cheap ephemeral pocket-sized songsters, these abundant, significant documents have much to tell us about the cultural experiences of diverse Americans. Yet despite their ubiquity and importance, ethnic-American songbooks have neither been gathered systematically by libraries and archives, nor studied adequately by scholars.

Assessing the leading academic textbook surveys of American music, ethnomusicologist Anne K. Rasmussen lamented their overwhelming emphasis on Anglophone traditions, while having “nothing to do with ‘my’ people. ‘My’ people spoke Danish, Norwegian, and German.” More specifically, Rasmussen wondered why an American musical canon might exclude, for example, “the *Sangbog for det Danske Folk i Amerika* (Songbook for the Danish folk in America), a book containing 834 songs ‘for almost any occasion,’ a volume I found in my grandmother’s home in Hampton, Iowa” (Rasmussen 2004: 298). Hence Marianne Stølen’s well-written and superbly researched *The Story of Den Røde* will be valued by all who share Rasmussen’s sentiments.

Distinguished as the first monograph fully illuminating a European American ethnic group’s songbook, Stølen’s work joins Rochelle Wright and Robert L. Wright’s *Danish Emigrant Ballads and Songs* (1983) as only the second book devoted to the study of Danish American song. Stølen’s subject is the *Sangbog for det Danske Folk i Amerika*, popularly known because of its cover hue as *Den Røde* (The Red One), the very same volume cherished by Rasmussen’s grandmother,
Mary Hansine Hansen Rasmussen (1904-1999), who immigrated from Denmark with her family in 1910, and lived the rest of her life in an Iowa farming community. Compiled and edited by Frederik Lange Grundtvig, an immigrant Danish Lutheran minister based in Clinton, Iowa, *Sangbog for det Danske Folk i Amerika* was first published in Manistee, Michigan, in the late 1880s. Editions two through four were printed in Aarhus, Denmark (in 1891, 1910, and 1916), while the fifth, sixth, and seventh installments were published, respectively, in a trio of Midwestern Danish communities: Askov, Minnesota (1920), Cedar Falls, Iowa (1931), and Blair, Nebraska (1941).

A native of Denmark, Stølen was unfamiliar with Danish-American songbooks when, after earning a Master’s Degree from the University of Copenhagen, she began studying for a PhD in Scandinavian Studies at the University of Washington in the early 1980s. Participating in Seattle-area gatherings of “The Happy Singers”–a Danish-American group whose core members were Midwesterners and alumni of Grand View, a college founded by Danish Lutherans in Des Moines–she was surprised to discover their reliance on *Den Røde*. Gradually Stølen not only came to understand why this particular songbook meant so much to the Happy Singers and other Danish Americans, but also took on the daunting challenge of “writing the story of its long, eventful life” (7).

Stølen’s scope is at once tightly focused and commendably broad, as heralded by her book’s subtitle, “A Century of Identity Formation in Songbook Use.” Fourteen densely substantiated yet consistently readable chapters are arrayed in four sections, followed by a conclusion and two appendices. Section One–The Songbook’s Origin: The Old World–considers Denmark in the mid-nineteenth century when such interrelated forces as the rise of liberalism, the threat of Germanization, emigration to America, the development of cooperatives, the establishment of folk schools, and the emergence of poet-ministers collectively sparked the composition of new songs, many of them grafted onto earlier folk tunes. N.F.S. Grundtvig (1783-1872), the guiding spirit of Danish folk schools and the patriarch of “happy Danes” (as opposed to their “gloomy” pietistic counterparts), looms appropriately large, as does his still-influential songbook, *Folkehøjskolens Sangbog*.

Section Two, The New World, is by far Stølen’s longest, commencing with the establishment of Grundtvigian Lutheranism
in the United States, before focusing on Frederik Lange Grundtvig (1854-1903). The youngest child of N.F.S. Grundtvig, Frederik Lange emigrated in 1881, homesteading first in Shiocton, Wisconsin, before settling in Clinton, Iowa, where he was ordained in 1883. Committed to his father’s ideals, he co-founded the Dansk Folkesamfund (the Danish Folk Society) to sustain the Danish language and Old World folk school movement in America. Blessed with his elder’s literary skills, he also began compiling, editing, and composing songs that resulted in the publication of Den Røde by the decade’s end.

Deftly sketching Frederik Lange’s life, the sources for his songbook, and his tendency to freely adapt inherited compositions, Stølen provides numerous exemplary song texts in both the original Danish and through her own able English translations. She also identifies Frederik Lange’s critics, past and present, some claiming “he butchered his father’s songs,” others remedying the neglect of historiske Sange (historical songs) in Den Røde by publishing an alternative songbook, Den Dansk-amerikanske Højskolesangbog (1901), for use in folk school history classes. Additional chapters in the New World section delve into the small but significant presence of songs written by women, including feminists, in Den Røde; the contributions of Danish-American composers, especially Adam Dan (1848-1931), a poet-pastor whose songs combined patriotism and religious sentiments with longing for the Old Country; the inherited tunes and American-composed melodies to which songs were set; and the gradual presence of English translations and English-language songs in twentieth century editions.

The book’s third section, The Advent of a New Generation of Songbooks, examines a trio of Den Røde’s offshoots: Grundtvigian songbooks published between 1923 and 2005. Intended for young, bilingual, bi-cultural, mostly second generation Danish Americans, Sangheftet—a pocket songster published in Blair, Nebraska, in 1923—featured 129 Danish songs, followed by 32 in English. The 1941 publication of A World of Song, with its English language title and corresponding song texts, acknowledged “American-born descendants for whom English was the predominant language” (233). Produced under the auspices of the Danish American Young People’s League based at Grand View College in Des Moines, it included singable translations of Danish songs, most of them by S. D. Rodholm, whose artistry Stølen examines in detail. Notably A World of Song also
featured “Negro spirituals, sea chanteys, and similar American songs,” as well as “popular songs from other Nordic countries, Europe, and South America” (234). For the recently published *Sange for Dansker–Songs of Denmark: Songs to Live By* (2005, Joy Ibsen relied on active participants in the Danebod Folk Meeting in Tyler, Minnesota, to compile a list of favorites from *Den Røde* to present in Danish and English translation, along with guitar and piano arrangements and contemporary photographs of Danish life.

Stølen’s fourth section–A Century after the Birth of *Den Røde*–shifts from history to ethnography, as she offers vivid accounts and astute observations regarding late twentieth and early twenty-first century Danish American singing groups and events. Through her careful treatment we gain a clear understanding of the legacy of *Den Røde*, of the common patterns and unique variations of “Danish Song and Songbook Use” by particular participants in specific groups (Seattle’s “Happy Singers,” Tacoma’s “Danske Sangvenner”) and events: the 2007 Danish Cultural Congress, east of Portland, Oregon; the 2006 Danebod Fall Meeting, Tyler, Minnesota; and the 2007 Farstrup-Mortensen Lecture Series, Solvang, California.

The book’s Conclusion commendably eschews a redundant summary, venturing instead across the Atlantic to consider debates concerning the changing meaning of “national song” in an increasingly multi-cultural Denmark, and to situate the enduring yet altered songs of Danish Americans within that discussion. Here and throughout the book plentiful illustrations, many of them in color, provide an impressive complement to Stølen’s authoritative prose.

Danish American readers will appreciate this richly detailed study, bound up as it is with the full span of their ethnic group’s collective experience. And although *The Story of Den Røde*, with its understandably steadfast focus on a complex cultural document, neglects opportunities to relate the songbook to larger movements in American life (e.g. attempts by other immigrant groups to sustain their language, late nineteenth century “English-only” attacks on linguistic diversity, the effects of two world wars on ethnic-Americans, the emergence and enduring legacy of ethnic revitalization stimulated by the 1976 American bicentennial), Stølen nonetheless provides abundant grist for the comparative historian’s mill.

Researchers on ethnic-American song, however, may be frustrated, as I was, by the incomprehensible lack of an index, especially an index
of song titles. Happily the HathiTrust has made the 1891 edition accessible online: http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/012478702. Within a few hours of consulting the 834 song titles in the 1891 index, I was able to make discoveries strengthening Stølen’s argument about the influence of Den Røde, and suggesting possibilities for further investigation.

In the early decades of the twentieth century American companies sought new customers by commercially recording immigrant performers and marketing the resultant two-sided 78 rpm disks to ethnic communities. Only a handful of Danish Americans made such recordings, especially in comparison to their Nordic immigrant counterparts, yet among them were fifteen versions of songs found in Den Røde, all of them made between 1916-1924 in New York City for the Columbia, Edison, and Victor labels (Spottwood 1990: 255-2563). The artists and titles included: Per Bjørn (“Danmark, Dejligst Vang og Vange,” “Der Staær et Slot I Vesterled”); Paul Bjønskjold (“Den lille Ole med Parpylen,” “Den Gang Jeg Drog Afsted,” “Der var en svend med sin pigelil,” “Det er Saa Yndigt at Følges Ad,” “Herr Peder Kasted runer over spange,” “Kirkekløkke ej til hovestæder,” “Roseil og hendes moder,” “Vort modersmaal er dejligt”); Florence Bodino (“Der er et yndigt land”); Axel Jorgensen (“Der var en svend,” “Kirkekløkke”); Sigfried Phillip (“Kirkekløkke ej til hovestæder”); and Jacob Saxtorph-Mikkelsen (“Stille hjerte”). Worth seeking out in their own right, these selectively made recordings suggest the popularity of certain songs.

From the late 1920s through the early 1950s folklorists and kindred spirits likewise made field recordings in America’s hinterlands for what is now the American Folklife Center (AFC) at the Library of Congress. Of the 34,000 recordings listed in the AFC’s Traditional Music and Spoken Word Catalog (http://memory.loc.gov/diglib/ihas/html/afccards/afccards-home.html), fewer than 40 are Danish American, yet half of those are related to Grundtvigian “happy Danes” and their songbooks. In 1943 and again in 1945, for example, Marcus Bach of the University of Iowa’s School of Religion traveled to nearby Cedar Falls where he recorded the Bethlehem Lutheran Church congregation singing three prominent songs from Den Røde: “Den signede dag med fryd vi ser,” “Der er et yndigt land,” and “Laer mig, nattens stjerne.” Bach also recorded a prayer and an extended interview with the congregation’s Danish immigrant pastor, Ottar
Soje Jørgensen, who would later serve at St. Peder’s in Minneapolis and be honored with membership in the Order of Dannebrog.

In August 1946 Helene Stratman-Thomas of the University of Wisconsin similarly traveled to the northern Wisconsin farming community of West Denmark where Danish immigrants had established a short-lived folk school in 1884, along with a Grundtvigian Lutheran church that thrives to the present. Seeking Danish singers for the Library of Congress, she found both Sangbog for det Danske Folk i Amerika and Den dansk-amerikanske Højskolesangbog in active use, and recorded three songs from the family of Karen Margrethe “Kamma” Jørgensen Grumstrup, the daughter of a Danish immigrant pastor.

The foregoing instances of historic sound recordings not only offer additional evidence to what Stølen has revealed through print, manuscript, oral historical, and ethnographic sources, but they also testify to the ways in which a stellar work of scholarship can stimulate further inquiries. The Story of Den Røde is a landmark contribution to our understanding of New World Danes, as well as to the significance of immigrant songs and songbooks in American life.

Sources Cited:


The German invasion and occupation of Denmark differs from that of all other Nazi-occupied countries. It is truly an out-of-the-ordinary war-time occurrence for a number of reasons. Nathaniel Hong’s book *Occupied* tells us how and why.

Early Tuesday morning, April 9, 1940, German military units, encountering virtually no resistance, crossed the border into Denmark; while threatening German planes flew over the larger cities; and German ships docked at various Danish ports, unloading troops and material. The King immediately met with the heads of the government and military, but within hours the Danes capitulated. A *modus operandi* was subsequently arrived at between the Danes and Germans. As a result, life in Denmark for the average citizen could continue to a great extent as before, safe for the rationing of certain stables.

Denmark was the second nation to be invaded by Nazi Germany in the Second World War; but the nature of the invasion differed substantially from that of Poland in September 1939. The Germans knew that the Danes would seek accommodation, as they were in no shape to put up a fight, having practically disarmed. Not having resisted the German invasion therefore meant that Denmark was not considered an Allied nation.

Generally the Danes accepted the course taken by their government – as they convinced themselves that there was no other alternative. But this position gradually changed over time. First opponents had to fight the position of the Danish government ministers, who they saw as Nazi collaborators and henchmen. Then they had to harass the Germans.

After the German defeat at Stalingrad in early 1943, the Danish resistance movement grew, and sabotage in Denmark increased significantly, culminating with a general strike in August. The Danish government was not able to stop the growing sabotage nor was it able to get the Danes to return to work. The Danish authorities had lost control, as the people no longer listened to the government. The basis for the policy of cooperation between the Danes and Germans
disintegrated during August, due to the action of the strikers who were now in command. On August 29 the Germans gave the Danish government an ultimatum, which the government could not fulfil nor accept. Consequently the government resigned and the German authorities took control of Denmark.

The primary Danish objective during the war was survival. On April 9, 1940, and in the following period the Danes believed that survival was best secured by cooperating and negotiating with the Germans. By the end of August 1943, the Danes were convinced that the survival of Denmark was best assured by abandoning the policy of cooperation – which apparently the Germans too had abandoned, when they issued the non-negotiable ultimatum. The subsequent resignation of the Danish government marked a turning point and demonstrated to the world that Denmark no longer cared to officially associate itself with Nazi Germany. The situation continued to deteriorate, and before the end of the war Denmark was recognized as an Allied nation by the Soviet Union, Britain and the United States.

The book does a thorough job of covering the whole period and all aspects of the occupation, from government policies to the action on the streets. It might be seen as quibbling about minor matters to suggest Nathaniel Hong ought to have spent more time explaining the ideas and role of Foreign Minister Peter Munch, one of the most prominent and controversial figures in Danish politics in the 20th century, who was responsible for the disarmament of Denmark prior to the invasion. More focus could also have been devoted to Prime Minister Erik Scavenius, who was a leading proponent of the policy of negotiating and cooperating with the Occupying Power. Similarly additional space could have been devoted to Nils Svenningsen, the top civil servant in the Foreign Ministry, who played a key role after August 1943, as he had to deal with the Germans after the resignation of the government.

The book is filled with a host of pertinent photographs and explanatory sidebars. At the same time, a map of Denmark would have been helpful. Moreover, it would have been useful to include an index, which could easily have been added, and which would have enhanced the work as a reference book, in order to quickly look up Scavenius, Munch, or others.

Nathaniel Hong is a professor at Olympic College in Bremerton, Washington, where he teaches humanities and English. He is well
placed to write this book. He has lived in Denmark and has written *Sparks of Resistance*, a book about the illegal press in Denmark during the Second World War. He has also published an index of Søren Kierkegaard’s writings.

Numerous books about the occupation are published in Denmark each year. Sixty-five years after the liberation there is still a tremendous interest in this period of Danish history. Moreover, it is remarkable and commendable that this overview in English is published by Fridhedsmeets Venner Forlag, the publishing arm of the museum devoted primarily to the Resistance Movement and its part in the war.

If you are looking for a book in English which covers the Nazi occupation of Denmark during the Second World War, *Occupied* is the most recent, comprehensible and best overview on the market. It covers the five year period of the occupation year by year. The book is painstakingly researched, exciting, in addition to being well-written and therefore easy to read – and difficult to put down.

Most books dealing with the occupation focus on a particular theme or person, only rarely is it possible to find a book which provides a complete overview of the period. The publication of *Occupied* fills a need that has existed for a long time, that is, a comprehensive overview of the occupation of Denmark in English.
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