

2008

The History of the Dania Lodges



John Johansen

Update

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The Danish Society Dania of California - Nevada

Danes from Denmark - - They came and they came, and all, men and women, came to this new land to start a new life. They emigrated from Denmark because they were ambitious and had a yearning for economic growth and the opportunity to improve their standard of living. True, they were faced with a new language and with different customs and habits; yet, they forged ahead because they had vision and determination. Still, they did not want to forget their native tongue, customs, and habits, and they wanted to help the other Danes just immigrating to America to become adjusted to their new life. So, the Danes met informally in both social and business activities. December 11, 1879, a group of Danish men in Oakland, California formed a Danish Society.

The purpose of this Danish Society was very simple. It was to preserve the Danish language and Danish customs, to provide sick and funeral benefits to the members and to assist members in getting employment.

Those circumstances encouraged the growth of the Danish Society when on January 21, 1882 a second society was established in San Francisco. Since there now were two lodges, and prospects for more, a Grand Lodge was created. Although each local lodge is separate and independent, the Grand Lodge provides for the general and uniform policy for all local lodges and the co-ordination for all statewide activities.

With this beginning, the Danish Society Dania of California and Nevada grew. Twenty-eight lodges were formed throughout California and Nevada.

After Dania's start in 1879 the ladies gradually began to form branches so they could work and attend their meetings simultaneously with their husbands. Their objective was to bring cheer and comfort to Danes in distress and thereby provide support to Society Dania. On April 22, 1914 they organized their own Grand Lodge Dannebrog, which eventually grew to 23 branches of which 12 are today in existence and active.

With this Dania and Dannebrog background we invite you who are Danish, of Danish descent, married to a Dane or just plain interested in our organization to join one of the oldest and most active Danish Societies in America. Through our social activities you can experience the customs, culture and the unique Character of Danes, who have had no small part in the development of our United States of America.

www.danishsociety.com

Current Lodges of Dania & Dannebrog

Thyra #3, Danmark #2, San Francisco

Luren #13, Hejmdal #4, Sacramento

Thora #11, Thor #5, Fresno

Dana #15, Freja #6, Salinas

Danebod #16, Dannevang #7, Livermore

Valborg #1, Thyra #9, Hayward

Sønderjylland #10, Petaluma

Ydun #10, Valhalla #11, Ferndale

Dannevirke #9, Valdemar #12, Reno

Bornholm #14, Modesto

Laura #8, Danneskjold #17, San Jose

Hejls Minde #23, Solvang

Valkyrien #23, Holger Danske #27, Santa Maria



History of Danmark #2

Danmark #2 was organized in January 1882 and has been going strong ever since. We meet on the second Wednesday evening of each month at the Odd Fellows Hall at 7th. and Market Streets with a cocktail hour starting at 7 PM. After a brief meeting we always have a social hour featuring good food with perhaps a beer and some Akvavit. We always have a good time.

We hold our meetings together with the ladies of Thyra # 3 of San Francisco. The meetings are conducted in English, but about half of our members are from Denmark so one can always hear Danish spoken. We are interested in new members and the cost of membership is surprisingly modest. The food and beverages at our meetings are always free.

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A Few Episodes from the Occupation, 1940-45

By Palle E. Thomsen, International Hotelier (Retired)
Member of Danmark#2 of Dania

In the fall of 1996, I visited Denmark to celebrate, together with my comrades, our 50th anniversary of our military service with Jydske Dragon Regiment, 2nd Eskadron. This reunion was for me a very emotional affair, and coming the long way from the United States, they honored me with the duty of carrying the old King Christian X Standard. The Colonel called my name and asked me to assist him in placing the wreath on the old soldier's grave. A great honor, indeed.

Well, I had been to Denmark several times as an International Board Member of the Rebild Society, Inc. As a member of the Soldiers Club of Northern California, I have participated in the Nordic Soldiers Convention of Norway, Sweden and Denmark every other year. Well, enough about that--my intention is to report about a few episodes during the Nazi-occupation of Denmark.

Together with several of my friends, I was invited to participate in the Freedoms Fighters Veterans meeting in Washington DC in 1995 -and this made me think back to the occupation.

On March 1, 1939, started my first job as a Piccolo (apprentice) at the Ritz Hotel in Aarhus. I was 14 years of age at that time. One of my many duties was to open the front door for arriving and departing guests.

Yes, now we move forward to an experience on the 9th of April 1940. A German officer arrived. I hesitated to open the door, but did so anyway. A young Danish officer was seated in the lobby, his name was Lykke-Hansen, he said to me loudly, "Palle, they are not guests of the hotel, and are not welcome here." The arriving officer, a colonel, faced Lykke-Hansen and gave honor--Lykke-Hansen did not return the greeting. The colonel was very upset, but Lykke-Hansen just leaned back in his chair and answered, "Ich bin nicht ein Officer in der Deutsche Wehrmacht." The situation was tense--fortunately nothing further happened.

The German officer then went to the front desk and asked for 50 guestrooms. Otte Ottesen, the front office manager told him, "Sorry, we are full." The colonel placed his handgun on the desk and said, "Fifty rooms immediately." Well, fifty rooms were emptied, and our dear guests had to get shelter elsewhere.

Among the German officers who occupied the hotel was Oberleutnant Lenz, a little, corpulent man with the temperament of a tyrant. Every morning when he left the hotel, he shouted a loud, "Gute Morgen---Heil Hitler." I opened the door for him and greeted him back with, "Gute Morgen Herr Oberleutnant." This happened every morning, and again at night, when he returned. The one morning he shouted at me,

completely hysterical, "If you cannot learn to say Hell Hitler, we have places for people like you!" Well, at that time I did not realize how serious this could be, but if Lykke-Hansen can stand up to them, so can I. (Lykke-Hansen was later tortured to death at Gestapo headquarters at Aarhus University).

Oberleutnant Lenz was later dispatched to the eastern front. He will return later as Hauptman Lenz. More about his return later on.

For a while, things were relatively quiet at the hotel. We had about 50 German officers and about the same number of our regular guests. A small group of so-called "Entrepreneurs" were to be watched, as most of them were collaborators.

Later, the era of civil defense started. The basement of the hotel was turned into a commando-central. Many Danes will recall the C'B' police in their blue uniforms? The leaders of the Commando-Central were: Captain S. A. Andersen-Læssø-Petersen and Engellbrecht Madsen. They were all active in the underground. Lieutenant Boas Almkilde was also among the staff. Later, I became ordonnans for Almkilde when I joined the Dragon Regiment. He was then Premier Lieutenant.

In the meantime, I was promoted to night clerk at 18 years of age. I was in charge of the hotel from midnight to eight o'clock in the morning. Then shared a room with the day-clerk on the fifth floor; it worked out O.K, as we were seldom there at the same time.

In the basement on the other side of the Commando-Central we had our big staff-room, where we ate our meals and spent our free time together. A great deal of fraternizing between the women personnel and the C'B' s, took place but that is another matter.

At the hotel among the Germans, we had a Major Wachenhagen. In civilian life he was an Hotelier and owned several hotels. I remember that clearly as he offered me a very highly paid position in one of his hotels in Germany. I know that many would have jumped at such an opportunity and that many did, in fact. "No, Sir, not me. Thank you!" He understood my reply to mean, "Another German soldier to the front-line."

The Major was very popular among the staff and ownership of the hotel, obviously because He was a colleague. He often had dinner with the owner and it became general knowledge That he was not a Nazi.

Twice a week my shifts started at 6:00p.m. On one such an evening, the Major had dinner with the owner and his family. The restaurant was mostly full of German officers. It was at this time they were often singing, "Wir Fahren Gegen England" I was just thinking how my long shift was so boring, and wishing that something might happen. I then had an outrageous idea, but did I dare? Well, if I kept it to myself, why not! We had a switchboard that I also operated. I pretended getting a call from London for the Major. I went into the restaurant and called as loud as I could, "London calling Major Wachenhagen" He got up and went to the lobby "Open the door to box No 1 for the Major", I shouted to the Piccolo. The Major said, "Hello Hello Niemand da, keine Antwort Was ist los?" I said, "Ich glaube nicht, vielleicht ruffen Sie zuruch" In the restaurant it was all pandemonium. Every German stood up and shouted, "Hell Hitler", and to my surprise, even the Major had his arm high. Well, the idea was to make these officers think that the Germans had landed in England! And a call to the Major was not too far off. Being a hotelier, he mostly had friends all over the world. I

I kept my cool. The general impression was that some Dane in the City had pulled a joke on the Germans. Yes, my friends, now the cat is out of the bag. And in the meantime I used the commotion to "organize" a handgun from the checkroom.

Now it's an evening in the fall of 1944, the doorbell rings and into the lobby comes a little, thin Officer. He had a voucher from the Kommandantur for a room. His name was LENZ, yes, now Hauptman Lenz. He looked at me questionably, "Mein Freund,kennst du mlch nicht?" Frankly, I did not "Mein Freund"? Yes, now the pipe had a different sound. "Hitler ist kaput, Deutschland ist kaput" Tears ran down his skinny cheeks "Wilst du ein Bier haben"? He asked me "No, thank you, I am on duty" His temperament and behavior was completely changed Ack, ja, high to fly, far to fall.

More activity, more bombardment, more sabotage and more Schallburgtage (named for a German officer, Schallburg, who retaliated against Danish sabotage by attacking legitimate Danish businesses) on the daily agenda.

One night, a fully dressed officer came up from the commando-central, fully dressed, yes, in a Frikorps Danmark uniform, that is, the Danish Nazi unit. I was shocked His name was Janke. I called him all the names I could think of for a traitor. My friend who was with him said to me "Palle, Janke is not a traitor, the Bolsheviks took over his family's farm in Eastern Europe". I am sure that Janke's motive was to defend his family's honor. Did he survive? I don't know

The situation in 1944 became more and more tense, the Police are rounded up and transported to concentration camps . Now there was no time for fun. It became very serious. One evening, very late, the side-door flew open, and into the lobby stormed a young man "They are after me," he shouted" "Run upstairs", I told him. Seconds later two German soldiers followed "He ran out the back door", I said. I heard several rifle shots, and finally they returned "No luck," they said. The young man came quietly downstairs. We each took a deep breath. He went under the name "Maleren" (the Painter)

After the occupation, when I was Front Office Manager at the Palads Hotel in Esbjerg, four Happy fellows came in from the Bar. One looked at me and said," It was you" And to his pals, "That's the guy I told you about from the Ritz in Aarhus" At that moment, I was very busy checking in a group from England. Too bad, I would have liked to chat a little

It was actually my plan to stay with this fine Hotel, but it wasn't to be. One night late, two men with the shade of their hats bent in the back arrived. Yes, it was the same two from the Ritz. I hurried up to my room and packed my clothes, The Gestapo was not to get me. I told Sonja, who was in charge of operation of the hotel, that I had family problems, and that had to leave immediately. It wasn't entirely true, but not too far off. I was told that Mathisen was fishing for salmon and could not be contacted. So, I did not make it my career at the Hotel Randers. I had come far, however.

I had a few hotel positions in Jylland and Copenhagen. After a marriage that was bound to end in divorce in 1951, I decided to immigrate.

I married my best friend, Inge, in 1953, and we immigrated in October 1953. We arrived in Canada. My two daughters from my previous marriage arrived shortly after. We came to California in 1955. We now have six daughters, all College graduates, 10 grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren.

All our children have been with us to Denmark several times, also on their own. We have now lived in California 48 years and we are enjoying our autumn years. I retired from the hotel business in 1993. We have stayed active in Danish-American activities, and we are active members in several local organizations including the Rebild Society, Society Dania, Society Dannebrog, the Danish-American Chamber of Commerce, and the Danish Soldiers' Club:

History of Hejmdal #4

The Dania lodge Hejmdal #23 was founded December 1, 1888. Unfortunately the first records no longer exist, so the first entry we have is January 7, 1894 from minutes of a meeting.

August 1894 Hejmdal #4 started their library. There are no records of which kind of books they offered, although it had to be a majority of English written books. From August 1894 to July 1895 the records show 119 books out, 112 books received and \$0.20 in late fees.

The library is an initiative that has not been seen in any other lodge, so it is remarkable that Hejmdal was able to pull this project off. Through all of the records there are referrals to the library. It is even more remarkable as we in the year 2000, 106 years later are trying to establish a library on the Dania web site.

An interesting passage from a meeting July 22, 1895 reads: " letters from the three first lodges Odin #1, 2 & 3 offering two tickets for any member that wanted to join their picnic in San Francisco". This is interesting, as no Odin lodge exist to day, but Hejmdal #4 still exist.

From the June 22 meeting 1896 we read: "Under general discussion somebody brought up a request for help to a fellow Dane whose family was sick and under very poor condition". Obviously this poor Dane was not member of Dania, so the general coconscious was that " Dania takes care of their own". The report does not mention what further happened to the poor family, but we can all imagine. It was tough times, and we have to understand, that the Danes that organized themselves within a Dania lodge, and paid their dues, was taken care of, but the ones that decided not to join, was left out in the outmost meaning of the word out.

Meeting place from the beginning had been "Red Man's Hall", but from December 1, 1900 all meetings was moved to "Dania Hall Forrester Building"

Meeting place was again changed February 1916 to "Dania Hall K.P. Building". The next change came January 14 1927 to "Dania Hall Eagles Building". There are no other entries indicating any further changes in meeting place until the current one "The Lutheran church of the Cross"

Still in February 1916 Hejmdal #4 proposed to the Grand Lodge a common sick benefit program in order to help the poor lodges, that could not afford to pay. This proposal was very ambitious and noble, but unfortunately later in the year postponed indefinitely. This proposal was also made with future vision. Had it passed, we may still have kept some lodges active.

The March 16 1916 convention in Ferndale must have been an experience because it is listed in the Hejmdal books, that a round trip to Ferndale from any train station in California or Nevada would cost \$11.40. It would take a couple of days so it was recommended to bring food and various beverages. That must have been a terrific trip. I wonder what there was left to discuss, when they arrived to the convention. Remember everybody also had to spend a couple of days returning. Some times you almost wish we could revive these times.

Later the same year we find that member James Lycke asked the lodge for a \$100 loan, but the loan was not granted since James could not present collateral. This shows again that Dania had a very tight and stringent money policy.

The ladies lodge " Enighedden" is mentioned first time January 1918.

One member was transferred June 30, 1927 from a now defunct lodge " Dybøl #21, Newman"

The 40th. Anniversary of Hejmdal #4 was celebrated Dec 1. 1928. Besides having a good party, it is listed that the lodge spend \$10.25 on invitations to other lodges.

On December 28, 1928 Valdemar # 12 Reno asked Hejmdal #4 for a loan of \$8000 in order to pay off their building. The request was filed, but no mention if the loan was granted. I doubt it because the total assets of Hejmdal at that point in time were \$4000. Almost all invested in funds & stocks.

One important thing to note is, that by the end of 1928 the English language was now official for all installations. The minutes of the meetings continued to be in Danish until 1937.

On September 26. 1930 the following note is in the minutes:

"The following gentlemen was accepted as members in Hejmdal #4

H.H. Andersen

M.P. Dalgaard

N.G. Dalgaard

M.J. Nielsen"

Norman Dalgaard became Vice President in 1937, later moved on to President and Grand President (1991). Today Norman Dalgaard is Secretary and President in Hejmdal #4. Norman has held both offices for many years, and has so far been an active member in 70 years. Both are quite impressive accomplishments

In 1988 Hejmdal #4 celebrated their 100-year birthday. Unfortunately we do not have details from this celebration, but if it has been like the other parties I have described earlier, they have had a lot of fun.

Over the years the membership flourished. Unfortunately the only ledger book found is from 1914 and it reconciles a membership of 141. To day the current membership unfortunately is only 10. We hope that the new directions and the Internet Dania site can bolster the membership once more and keep Hejmdal #4 active. With 112 years of age it is our second oldest lodge, so we all have an obligation to keep Hejmdal #4 as an active Dania Lodge.

History of Thor #5

Come to Fresno the raisin capital of the world and the most wealthy agricultural county in the nation. In so far crop production is concerned.

We have two strong organizations Thor #5 and Thora #11. As the names indicate Thor is the men's lodge and Thora is the women's lodge. Thor is started in 1891 and Thora in 1915. Combined it is 192 years of Danish history, culture and support of Danish emigrants in the United States of America.

We would love to see you in Fresno and even more joining our lodge activities. You will meet a lot of nice people and enjoy our member programs.

Danish Creamery

Art Jensen is the originator of this piece of interesting history from Fresno. It is about the well-known Danish Creamery.

A few Danish immigrants involved with dairying started the Creamery in 1895.

The plant commenced making butter from milk supplied by several Danish immigrant dairymen. The byproducts were food for Livestock.

This plant operated well for over hundred years, but merged recently with the San Joaquin Dairymen in Los Banos and the California Milk Producers in Los Angeles. The new organization's name is

California Dairies, Inc.

The Fresno plant employs approximately 120 people. The plant manufacture the well-known brand butter "**DANISH CREAMERY ASSOCIATION**," powdered skim milk and ice cream concentrate which is all distributed throughout the United States.

Even though business practices have changed a lot over the past one hundred years, it is nice to see that the Danish name still is associated with high quality products

History of Freja # 6.

Many Danish emigrants came to California in the late 1800's; they were mostly farmers lured by the big opportunities this great state had to offer.

In those days Salinas was only a small hamlet in the northern part of Monterey County. Salinas Valley with its cool temperatures, and , inexpensive farmland with rich soil, drew many Danes to choose Salinas as their future home.

Between 1863 and 1875 came the Iversens, Lauritzens, Hansens and later on the Abeloes, Rohdes, Rasmussens and Lunds

Being in a foreign country and not wanting to loose touch with Denmark, and their fellow countrymen, a large group met in the backroom of E.P. Svending's Valhalla Saloon next to the old Wells Fargo Bank. The desire to join Dania was strong. On the 23rd day of January, 1892, 27 persons paid their \$2.50 per year dues and a membership was formed. On January 30, 1892 there were 52 Charter Members and the Charter for Freja was issued.

Grand President James Madison and Grand Secretary I.C. Hansen came from San Francisco by train to install the first officers of Freja. The first officers were E.P. Svending, President; Jacob Jepsen, Vice President; O. Benedictsens Secretary; J.H. Iversen, Treasurer; F.J. Frese Marshal; Hans Christensen Custodian and J.P. Svending, John Boysen and W. Warhlich Sick and Visiting Committee. The 52 Charter Members had their installation followed by a banquet at the Salinas Hotel..

Fourteen month later, the current name was adopted Freja-No.6 of Dania.

Sick benefits were established for the members so they would have some income in case of illness, In 1893 funeral benefits were started. Originally the funeral benefits were \$45.00. This was increased to \$75.00 during the following. year.

In August 1916 Skamlingsbanken No. 20 decided to join Freja. Its 28 members became part of Freja No. 6.

On August 11, 1934, when the membership of Freja exceeded 200 members, the Past Presidents' Club was established, with Mr. L.L. Koue as its first President. Its purpose was to create social affairs, and a better union between the lodge and the families of the members. On October 11, 1958 it died a "starving death".

Freja No. 6 Was interested in the activities of other Community groups. In 1901 Freja Participated in the 4th of July Parade, sponsored by the Salinas Elks. That year, and again in 1905, Freja lent money to the Danish Church, the predecessor of St. Ansgars Lutheran Church. In 1909 it was repaid in full with 4 per cent interest. In 1906 Freja gave \$100.00 to a relief fund in San Francisco to help the survivors of the earthquake. In 1942 a donation was given to the Mercy Ship committee so that it could be sent to the Philippine Islands. In 1944 a donation was given the Danish Relief Committee. In 1965 money was sent to the Ferndale lodge to help the flood victims in the area.

Members of Freja have been elected to positions in the Grand Lodge of Dania. Dens Land, Peter Juhl (both deceased) Svend Christian and Jan Alton Walker have all become Grand Presidents of Dania. Andy Sorensen and Otto Meyer have been elected to the position of Grand Trustee of Dania,

During the history of Freja, numerous social events have taken place: In 1901 the Christmas Party was held at the Armory Hal. The lodge meeting started at 8:30 PM, the dance started at 9:00 and the banquet was at midnight. Thereafter the dance continued until the wee hours of the morning.

Christmas parties, especially for the children of the members were, and are still held every year. Further there were dances, barbeques, especially at Miller's Lodge in Arroyo Seco, card parties, potlucks and regular dinners and slides and movie shows. Joint meetings and picnics ' were held with other lodges of Dania, such as the picnics with the Watsonville lodge at Mount Madonna and Freja's own picnics at Paradise Springs

One of the purposes for the formation of Dania and Freja was to preserve the Danish heritage that the Danes brought to Salinas. With the addition, of the second, third and fourth generations changes had to be made. The minutes of Freja meetings were written in Danish. As time went on, the lodge became more Americanized and on February 22, 1941 the minutes of the lodge were changed from Danish to English.

The heritage of Denmark was being preserved. The lodge assisted all Danes in their adjustment to their new life styles in Salinas. Furthermore, the lodge assisted their members in obtaining employment, so they could be productive citizens in their new country. The Danes had a great number of skills, which Salinas and the surrounding area could use.

In 1897 Dania held its convention in Salinas, hosted by Freja No. 6. In 1910 Freja hosted still another convention of Dania, but it did not stop there, additional conventions were held in Salinas in 1928, 1947, 1973 and 1979.

As reflected in the minutes of Freja, the 1910 convention was lively. The membership of the lodge met at the I.O.O.F. Hall and then marched down Main Street to the Southern Pacific Train Station to meet the Grand Officers and delegates as they arrived. A picnic was held with Skamlingsbanken No.20 Chualar, near the Salinas River just outside Chualar. The train left at 9:30 AM for Chualar and returned to Saunas at 6:00 PM. A good time was had by all, and on the way back a race was held to see, who could be the first to arrive in Salinas - Those by train or those by auto. Finally the Grand Banquet was held and it was a Gala event. The high price of \$1.50 per plate was charged.

Freja No.6 met at various locations in Salinas. Originally it was at Valhalla Saloon; In 1905 it was at the Druids Hall; in 1910 the meetings were held at the I.O.O.F. Hall. By 1944 Freja was meeting at the Forrester's Hall and in 1946 went back to the I.O.O.F. Hall, where it has been meeting ever since.

The Conventions which were held in Salinas in 1947 was at the Santa Lucia Inn. The Conventions held in 1973 and 1979 were at the Town House in Salinas, located on the same site as the old Santa Lucia Inn, which by then had moved across the street.

The installations of officers and the anniversary celebrations of Freja were held in various places in Salinas. The first installation was held at the Salinas Hotel. In 1942 the anniversary party was held at, the Cominos Hotel. The 70th anniversary was held at the Frontier Town Inn. The 75th anniversary was held at the American Legion Hall on West Laurel Dr. in Salinas. Installation activities were also held at Spreckels Veterans Memorial Hall and at the Elks Lodge in Salinas.

The Danes were among some of Salinas earliest settlers and although it is getting harder and harder to distinguish them because of their integration into the American culture, they are very, evident in the Salinas of today.

Researched, Translated and written by Svend Christian Niels Jessen Jan Alton Walker

Skamlingsbanken #20 OF DANIA.

Chualar is a small town just a few miles south of Salinas. Years ago most of those who lived there were Danish, and Chualar at that time was known as "little Copenhagen",

In 1897 Dania held the convention in Salinas. Many Danes in Chualar felt that they should belong to Dania so after the business meetings at Convention were taken care of, the Grand President, Grand Officers and delegates went down to Chualar and started a new lodge. It was given the name Skamlingsbanken #20.

Years went by, and in 1901, the local blacksmith Carl Rasmussen became Grand President of Dania.

In 1910 Dania again held Convention in Salinas, and Skamlingsbanken decided to give Freja #6 a hand. They invited everybody to come down for a barbeque on "The Day of Rest". The Mayor of Monterey donated a steer and all the lamb they wanted. The picnic was held near the bank of the Salinas River and everything was free and plentiful.

When evening came, and the last beer was gone, they thought it would be nice ,to visit little Chualar on the way home and enjoy just one more glass of beer in the two Danish restaurants of which the town boasted. After an hour, when the train to Salinas could wait no longer, they left with "three 'Hip-Hip Hurrah' and then the long one". Chualar was left dry as a bone.

The road, now highway 101, runs parallel with the railroad' track from Chualar to Salinas. On the way home there was a race between the modern new automobiles and the special train, draped with Dannebrog and the Stars and Stripes, The Mayor of Monterey had a Dannebrog flying from his car in the race.

As cars became more common and distances shorten the remaining 28 members of Skamlingsbanken decided to join up with Freja #6 in August 1916.

Skamlingsbanken went down in history as a brave little lodge that knew how to treat everyone to a good time.

Translation from Carl Plow's Dania by Svend Christian

OCCUPATION OF DANMARK BY GERMANY DURING WW2

Contributed by Niels R. Jessen, member of Freja #6, Salinas

I was born on a farm near Kolding in Jylland in January 1925. When the Germans marched across the border and occupied Denmark in May 1940, I was 15 years old and working on various farms around Kolding. I was one year out of formal schooling and I just wanted to be a farmer. The Germans shut down all of the Danish Military except the King's Guard in Copenhagen.

We saw the Germans, at times in formation, several hundreds, but mostly just a few, and generally in the towns. In the winter of 1944-5, they took over the loft of my father's barn, where it was warm over the cows. There many young German soldiers staying there for weeks at a time, many of them shell-shocked and recovering. They kept to themselves and so did we. For instance, they never got into the milk cans by the stairs to the loft as they would have gotten into trouble from their officers.

Fortunately, we were not on the border and there was little chance for anyone to be involved in the Danish Resistance. In any event, we worked long hours, at 6 AM, we were feeding the horses and cleaning the stall, a half hour for breakfast, then in the fields until noon. There was a half-hour for lunch and the day ended at 5 or 5:30 PM, depending on the season. We had every other Sunday off. Working on farms sometimes you were treated as one of the family but on larger farms the hired help ate alone and that often was not always too great.

Early on, we were subjected to rationing of sugar, coffee, butter, and many other items like bicycle tires, gasoline, most clothing, rubber boots, and all imported items. Sugar and butter were produced in Denmark but mostly shipped to Germany. However, living on a farm and producing our own products, had many benefits. We never went hungry.

There were many who disappeared, mostly as the occupation began and mostly to neutral Sweden. The preferred means of escape was on a fishing boat. Local operations such as police and the hospitals were taken over by the Germans but carried on to some extent. One needed a special permit to travel on trains and buses due to the fuel shortages. By 1942, tractors and buses began running on gases produced by wood chips burned in barrels about the size of a 40-gallon drum. After about 1 hour of preheating, a small fan ducted the gases to the engine. I drove a Fordson tractor powered in this manner in 1944.

There were family gatherings and often Saturday night dances in the towns. Life went on as usual but a bit subdued.

As we got into 1944, we saw large numbers of US planes flying in formation, loaded with bombs for Germany. But on the return flights, each aircraft was on its own, many of them with smoking engines, and some never made it back to England.

It was indeed a happy day for the Danes on May 5, 1945, when the Germans finally crossed back over the border into Germany. Admittedly, they did not have much to return to in Germany but they were gone from Denmark.

In the Spring of 1950, there were advertisements for farmers in Canada. You had to pay your own fare but there was a guarantee of \$50/month; my sponsor was the Canadian Pacific Railroad. I left Denmark in early May with \$50 in my pocket for a stormy, eight-day ocean voyage to New York. As I arrived late, my destination changed from Winnipeg to Ardath, Sask., to work for a farmer with 4 or 5 old skinny cows and a section of land. The trip from New York took five and a half days. I learned quite a bit of English there, enough to get along. In December, I went to work on the construction of power lines to the oil fields in Alberta and later in Calgary. When I emigrated to the US in 1952, I was able to sponsor myself. I went to Salinas to visit my stepmother's brother, Peter Juhl, and I have been there ever since.

Niels Jessen

Member of Freja #6

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History of the Livermore Lodges

Dannevang No.7

Dannevang was organized July 23, 1892, with thirty-four members. Mr. Andrew Simonsen was elected as the first President. Dania has held its convention in Livermore first in 1902, and again in 1921, 1961, and in 1990. Livermore as host will open Dania's convention in April 2001 at the Nugget Hotel in Reno.

Dannevang has had five Grand Presidents – Mr. Carl Holm in 1908, Mr. Iver Frydendahl in 1934, Mr. Conrad Moldt in 1961, Mr. Arthur Reinstein in 1989, and Mr. Allen Thomsen in 1996.

Danebod No.16

Danebod was organized October 19, 1905 with Mrs. Laura Hansen as the first President. It was not until July 17, 1920 that Danebod joined the Grand Lodge of Dannebrog. Danebod has had six members become Grand President – Mrs. Johanne Frydendahl in 1931, Mrs. Maren Moldt in 1961, Mrs. Elva Hansen in 1971, Mrs. Ruth Thomsen in 1981, Mrs. Diane Reinstein in 1989, and Mrs. Dee Matusiewicz in 2000.

The Livermore Valley

The home of Dannevang No. 7 and Danebod No. 16, the Amador-Livermore-San Ramon Valley, was once an inland sea. Through geologic ages it was drained and became the home of native Americans from the Coastanonan and Miwuk tribes. The first Europeans to see the area were a Captain Fages and Father Crespi, who traveled through the west end of the valley in 1772, observing good pasture, and abundance of water, friendly natives, and a good site for a mission.

The valley was claimed for Carlos III of Spain, and in 1779 became the principal cattle pasture for Mission San Jose de Guadalupe, located in what is now Fremont. Alta California became a Mexican territory in 1835, and its mission was secularized and its property open to civilian settlement. Land grants were given to four families: Rancho el Valle de San Jose to the Bernals, Rancho San Ramon to Amador, Rancho Las Positas to Livermore, and Rancho Santa Rita to Pacheco.

The cattle industry flourished, and in 1848 the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ceded Alta California to the United States. The ensuing years saw thousands of people flock to California in search of gold, and subsequently California's statehood in 1850. Settlers began claiming land in the valley and under the new pre-emption law were allowed to take Spanish- owned lands with proof of a reasonable amount of improvements made. It wasn't until the 1870's that settlers from the Danish provinces began to take up land and become permanent residents. Most were farmers, and their families remain in the valley to this day.

Today, the valley is a growing technology and business center, headquarters to such companies as AT&T, PeopleSoft, Clorox, Triad, and Pacific Bell. The Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory is operated by

the University of California for the Department of Energy, and is a world leader in such fields as laser technology, magnetic and inertial fusion energy, and genetic engineering. The hills on the eastern side of the Valley are home to some very large wind farms, with some of the windmill companies owned or managed by Danish or Swedish firms. Though the valley is no longer the slow paced rural community of yesteryear, and gone are some of the old landmarks like the Hansen and Orloff Dairies, much of the charm and scenery remains. The contributions of the Danes over the years can be seen through the many ranches and farms, and of course, Dania Hall.

History of the Hayward Lodges

Thyra :

On February 11, 1893, Grand President Halvor Jaobsen instituted Thyra as the ninth branch of Dania with 33 charter members.

The name Thyra was chosen because many of our charter members emigrated here from the region of Denmark

where in 500 AD Queen Thyra Dannebod created the Dannevirke ramparts as a defense against hostile neighboring countries to the south.

Thyra became the first Dania branch to own their own building when in 1905 they purchased a surplus, school building

and had it moved to a previously acquired lot between "B" and "C" Streets on what is known these days as Foothill Boulevard

The widening and relocation of Foothill Boulevard necessitated the demolition of the building in 1952.

The remaining property was leased for a parking lot; but in 1958, the site was sold since its location and size was not suitable for the lodge to build another meeting hall. Blums Candies now occupies the site, and Thyra rents from the Hill and Valley Women's Club, which happened to be one of their tenants in the old days.

During its existence, Thyra has had nine of its members elected to the Grand Presidency of the Grand Lodge

Dania: Johannes Sandholt (1900), Hans Sorensen (1909), Hans Vejby (1919), Hans C. Jorgensen (1951), Peter Brix (1968), Niels W. Hansen (1980), Stuart O. Mahler, (1982), Fred Mahler (1988), Gregory Gleeson (1992), and Alan Filiu (1994).

-Three of Thyra's members, Eric Hoyer, Niels W. Hansen, and Lynn Troxal have served as Grand Trustees.

Valborg

On Saturday evening, December 16, 1893, a group of Danish women and men met in the Odd Fellows Hall in Hayward for the purpose of organizing the *Danish Ladies Society of Hayward*, dedicated to aiding needy people of Danish origins. The names of 23 women and 23 men are on the original charter.

Mrs. H. P. Jessen, who is credited with the idea, became the Society's first president.

On March 17, 1900, the Society's name was changed to *Danish Ladies Society, Valborg*.

At organizational meetings held in Hayward in 1914 and in San Francisco in 1915, 12 existing *Danish Ladies Societies* in California united as the *Danish Ladies Society Dannebrog* and were accepted as auxiliary lodges of the Grand Lodge Dania.

Valborg, being the largest and oldest of the 12 Societies with 178 members, became known as '*Valborg #1 of Dannebrog*' of California and Nevada.

Mrs. Ernestine Christensen of Hayward, who had presided over the organizational meetings became the first Grand Vice President of the Grand Lodge Dannebrog that year, and went on to become Grand

President in 1917. Mary Brix was Grand President in 1968, Signe Ann McNeil in 1982, Ceil Mahler in 1987, and Susan Gauthier in 1992, and Mary Esther Filiu in 1995
Five of Valborg's members, Minnie Jorgensen, Eva Heiser, Deborah Mahler, Linda Cumming, and Pat Brouillette have served as Grand Trustees.

History of Sønderjylland #10

Sonderjylland #10 was organized on April 15, 1893, in Petaluma, California.

On February 19, 1992, 14 ladies were initiated as members of Danish Society DANIA of California and Nevada, Sonderjylland branch #10

It was the first branch of DANIA to have joint meetings, men and woman.

Sonderjylland #10 meets once a month and usually on the second Saturday at 11.30AM.

Our meetings are held at beautiful Kastania Park in Petaluma. (Off 101).

We begin with a social hour, followed by a short meeting and then to the serious part of eating.

We always have a delicious lunch, occasionally served with beer and snaps depending on the menu. Coffee and desserts are always plentiful.

What keeps us going is the great Park, happy people and our fantastic comradeship.

History of Valhalla No. 11

Friday, June 2, 1893 was a big day for the Danes in Humboldt County. On that day Valhalla received its charter as a branch of Dania. 28 Danish men, 18 of them born in Slesvig and 10 in Denmark, had decided that it will be a good thing to have a branch of Dania in Ferndale. The Grand President was to come to Ferndale June 2nd to install the new branch, but a few days before Mr. Sophus Hartwick, editor of "Bien" arrived in Ferndale, together with M.P. Meng who was trying to get more Danes to join the lodge, which resulted in 47 charter members of Valhalla.

June 1st. the Grand President, Mr. Halvor Jacobsen, arrived in Ferndale and the next night at the Y.M.I. Hall (located where the post office is now), he initiated the new branch. After the meeting a fine banquet was enjoyed at the American Hotel. It was 3 o'clock before it was over.

The new officers were President N.P. Hansen, Vice President M.P. Meng Finance Secretary N.P. Petersen, Recording Secretary Johannes Hansen, Treasurer Nis C. Nissen, Marshal Soren Petersen, Vice Marshal J.P. Jensen, Trustees M.P. Petersen, E.P. Nissen, Mads Madsen, Auditors Chris Terkelsen and J.M. Jespersen.

In 1887 There were 14 creameries in the valley, it is no wonder the Danish Immigrants flocked to the Ferndale area. Ferndale became known as little Denmark and later as the cream city. Aage Jensen started the Central Creamery which went on to become the Golden State, the biggest creamery in the state.

In 1900 Valhalla is host to Dania's convention in Femdale. At that time the only way people were able to travel to Humboldt was by boat. After the boat with the delegates had left San Francisco, they hit bad weather and several of the delegates got seasick. A committee of three members from Helga #3 was formed with Past Grand President Halvor Jacobsen as foreman. Its duty was to find a quick cure for seasickness. They went from cabin to cabin with a piece of fat pork on a string and told the sick people to swallow that fat pork and they will then pull it up fast, and this was the cure. If the cure worked for some, we don't know, but two members from Hayward, Past President John Sandholdt and his friend a butcher, Morris Rasmussen, told the other delegates they were never going to sail anymore. But after a week in Humboldt they got back on the boat and nobody got sick this time.

In 1904 F. W. Andreasen, a member from Valhalla, was elected Grand President of Dania. This year Valhalla members voted to pay the sick committee ferry money when they have to cross the river to visit sick members.

In 1914 Valhalla has another member elected Grand President of Dania. Martin Eriksen was elected to this high office at the convention. 1916 is the second time that Valhalla is host to Dania's convention. About 200 visitors arrived in Fernbridge on a special train from San Francisco. They were met by their hosts with a big orchestra, and taken to Ferndale by automobile where they spent a wonderful week and Dania had one of their best conventions.

June 7, 1918 Valhalla celebrated its 25 anniversary with a small party in the K.P. Hall in Ferndale. An invitation was sent to Grand Officers, the editor of "Bien" and a few other good friends of Valhalla. The reason for the small party was on account of the war.

1922 a good Danish man from Valhalla, John Christensen was elected the thirty-second Grand President of Dania at the convention in Oakland. That year Valhalla hit its peak in membership with 175.

In the fall of 1929 Valhalla left the K.P. Hall after almost 30 years. The lodge moved into the Danish Hall where it is now.

June 2, 1933 we find 150 members and guests attending Valhalla' 40 anniversary with a big dinner in the Danish Hall. Of the twelve charter members still alive, we find the following attending as honored guests: Hans Christensen, C.P. Hansen, John Holst, J.L. Jensen, Andrew Meng, M.P. Petersen, Jens Sontum, and Jacob Jacobsen. The other four not able to attend: Fred Brodersen, John Hansen, Chris Hansen, and Jack Petersen.

After the dinner, the members of Dania and Dannebrog had their meetings and installation and then they danced to Cow Time, a mixed quartet, who entertained with Danish songs. Rudolph Jacobsen sang after the dinner.

June 4, 1943 it is 50 years since Valhalla got its charter, and as honored guests we find the three living charter members, Chris Hansen, Andrew Men& and Jens Sontum, present and they get decorated with Dania's 50 year emblem at the coffee hour. On account of the war the lodge did not have any dinner. A telegram from Halvor Jacobsen in New York was received. He was the one who installed the branch 50 years ago. None of the Grand Officers were present at the Jubilee.

In 1951 Valhalla joined the other Scandinavian Lodges in the County for a midsummer picnic and dance. The Scandinavian Festival was formed, with Valhalla sponsoring dance teams through the years we are celebrating our 50" year in 2000 and there are still 3 Danish teams. The instructors are Lorana Sweet, Mercedes Chrispin, and Connie Hag Quist, Erla Chance was an instructor for many years. Throughout the years many Valhalla members have been presidents of the Festival Association: Paul Chance, Curtis Larsen, Henry Christensen, Fred Elliott, Mel Lundberg, Francis Sweet, Don Christensen, Christian Nielsen, and Jorgen Von Frausing Borch.

1954 is the real big year for Valhalla. That year Dania has its convention in Ferndale and Clement and Mary Miller from Valhalla and Ydun are elected Grand President of Dania and Dannebrog.

The men have their meeting at the Danish Hall and the ladies have theirs in the Memorial Building, and all the social doings were at the fairgrounds.

About 460 attended the banquet at the Exposition Building at Humboldt County Fairgrounds on Friday night, and more attended the Grand Ball on Saturday night.

Our honored guest at the banquet was Danish Consul General Paul Ryder and wife.

1980 Valhalla hosted Dania's 100th Convention. This was to have been Clarence Hansen's year as Grand President. Clarence passed away as Grand Vice President and Francis Sweet as appointed to fill the term. Niels Walter Hansen of Hayward was elected and served a second term and was Grand President, with Naomi Pries Hansen of Dannebrog at the convention in Eureka. The convention took recess to watch the Rhododendron Parade as it passed the Eureka Inn.

1992 saw the lodges shrinking in size, so through a constitution change Valhalla accepted their first lady members: Lorana Sweet, Agnes Anderson, Clara Sherrill, and Melba Henricksen.

September 4-6, 1993 Valhalla celebrates its 100" year anniversary party at the Scotia Inn. Special guests are Danish Consul General Paul Bach and wife.

What a party, it helped make-up for all the small anniversary parties held during the world war years. Saturday night banquet, and the dance. Sunday ball game between Ferndale and Thyra #9 of Hayward, Hayward being the winner. A picnic followed and installation of officers, this was the first for outdoor installations. Monday morning a farewell Æbleskiver, sausage and Akvavit breakfast was held at the Danish Hall in Ferndale.

1997 saw Ferndale hosting another convention. Meetings were held in the hall, with the banquets and dances held in the Ferndale Firemens Hall. Consul Paul Bach sent us a letter wishing us luck and explaining a prior commitment.

Niels Sovndal translated the first 50 years of this history so it is in appreciation of Niels that we dedicate this history in memory of a truly great Dane Niels Sovndal.

History of Bornholm #14

Yes, in Modesto, California, on January 28, 1895, the latest local lodge of Dania California and Nevada was born.

We still have most of the Secretary's Minutes of the meetings and the Treasure's Reports. It is sometimes fascinating reading to go through these books. In what follows, some of the more captivating things will be covered.

In those days, local lodges of Dania were founded purely to provide various benefits for members and their families, who were all Danish, emigrants. Sick benefits, unemployment benefits and funeral help were some of the more significant programs. Back then, Dania did what companies, insurance companies and governments do today. It was an enormous task Dania set out to accomplish. Dania did not possess an abundance of funds. Members sponsoring and helping each other achieved everything Dania accomplished. This point becomes clearer once one learns that the Modesto Dania Lodge was founded with ten members, of which six were lodge-officers. To start the Lodge, everybody agreed to pay an initial \$2.50 fee. A total of \$25 was what they had to work with in the beginning. A monthly member fee of \$1.00 was then asked from members.

In the first meeting, the name Bornholm #14 was selected and agreed upon. Why? All of the founders and early members were either born or had direct contact to this Danish Island named Bornholm. To digress for a moment, Bornholm is a rocky island twelve hours boat ride from mainland Denmark in the middle of the Baltic Sea. Not only had Bornholm been torn between Denmark and Sweden throughout its history. Both during the Second World War and the Cold War, Russia focused its attention on this island for its strategic value in having nuclear warheads there. The main industry on this island is fishing. A specialty and delicacy from Bornholm is Smoked Herring. The island is 225 square miles and the population is approximately 50,000. Today, Bornholm is an exclusive vacation spot only 50-minute flight time from Copenhagen.

First, two monthly meetings were set, but soon that number changed to one monthly meeting (as is still the case today). At the second meeting, on February 24, 1895, three new members were accepted. Since Bornholm was a benefit paying organization, all new members had to go through a health check-up before being accepted. The first sick benefit is recorded in June of 1898. The amount covered three weeks pay of \$8.50.

The first social event was a dance in March of 1895. The treasurer's book makes a note of the Lodge's first income—outside member fees—of \$0.65.

On September 22, the minutes of the meeting states that the Treasurer was late to the meeting and was fined \$0.25, which he later appealed to the Grand Lodge. In the same meeting the Treasurer was fined \$1.00 for poor performance. This shows the dedication and discipline expected of an officer of

Bornholm #14. Non-officers were held to a high standard, as well. Some, due to various reasons, were excluded from the club: one member in 1896, two in 1897, and two more in 1899. This happened to be five of the original-founding members. Clearly, the meetings were held and conducted in a strict and formal atmosphere.

Though high standards of members have always been required, the strictness and formality *did* change. For example, the official minutes of the meeting held February 1, 1903 state: "Mr. John Christensen, from Helga #2, functioned as Grand Marshal. He emphasized with his loud voice and enormous body to the new officers (especially the tailor), that they better once and for all have a decent behavior." The recording secretary noted, "This happens very seldom, so it needs to be recorded." And, on December 16 same year, the records show, that the members voted to made all gambling at meetings prohibited.

Anyway, it looks like they all had a lot of fun, while at the same time providing a much-needed service to members and their families.

The Modesto Bornholm Lodge prospered over time. We had three Grand Presidents between 1895 and 1919. In 1924, we moved into our own building. The initiation party for the new hall gave Bornholm #14 an income of \$402.91. The new building "Dania Hall", the growing assets, and new members all added to a lively and attractive lodge, where people met and had a lot of fun.

Over the years the social events increased in numbers and intensity.

In 1939 Crown Prince Frederik and Princess Ingrid visited our Dania Hall for a short reception. They were in route to Yosemite.

In 1989, the building was sold. That signaled a new era, where social gatherings are the main activity. Today, this is still mostly the case. However, a new focus is aimed at contributing to our local society by sponsoring several local good causes. Amongst other things, Bornholm #14 helps underprivileged children receive much-needed clothing during a yearly Christmas shopping day, helps children learn to read with a school reading program, helps abused women get a second chance at life, and helps other people who have otherwise faced difficulty in their lives.

Our meetings are still held in the spirit of the founders—formal, but in a modern style. The membership is now expanded to include everyone: People of Danish heritage, people married into a Danish heritage or people simply with an interest in Danish culture and history.

From 1970 to 2002, Bornholm #14 supplied six Grand Presidents to the Grand Lodge. All six are still very active members.

If you come to one of our meetings (and you are always very welcomed), you will find a vibrant group of people here in Modesto that love life and understand how to enjoy it.

History of Danneskjold #17

We are the Silicon Valley Lodges of Dania/Dannebrog better known as:

Danneskjold #17 for the men and Laura #8 for the women.

We have merged our two branches and meet together.

Danneskjold #17 is 100 years old and Laura #8 is 94 years old.

We were here well before any of the so called silicon companies. We thank them however for the High Tech. knowledge that let us put together this web page.

We welcome visitors and new members, and if you would like more information please email us at bedstemor2004@sbcglobal.net

MY WWII EXPERIENCES

The personal story of Charles Allman, Member of Danneskjold #17 of Society Dania

Soon after my 18th birthday, I volunteered for the U.S. Marine Corps. This was in January of 1943.

After training at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego, California, I volunteered for the Marine paratroops and went to the training school at Camp Gillespie, located at what is now Gillespie Field, the small airport at El Cajon, California.

After becoming a qualified parachutist, I was assigned to the Marines 1st Parachute Regiment which was based in New Caledonia, a French island about 850 miles northeast of Sidney, Australia. Upon arrival in New Caledonia in June 1943, I was assigned to the 2nd Parachute Battalion. After a couple of months training in jungle warfare, the 2nd Parachute Battalion was shipped to the British Solomon Islands. We landed on Guadalcanal in late August 1943. From here our battalion was loaded onto 3 destroyers and an LST, and transported to Vella La Vella in the Northern Solomon Islands. Shortly after the LST was beached, it was dive-bombed by the Japanese and most of our supplies were lost. Our first casualties, 14 men, occurred in that bombing.

Our parachute regiment was to be used in the Bougainville campaign. Our 2nd Battalion was to make a landing on Choiseul, an island about 50 miles southeast of Bougainville. This was a feint to draw attention away from Bougainville and to draw potential reinforcements to Choiseul where they could be isolated from the main target area. Our battalion was landed at midnight, October 27th, from three destroyers. The landing was at an undefended beach at Vosa village. We went up the side of a mountain and set up a hidden base from which to raid Japanese strong points. The U.S. Command announced that a force of 20,000 marines had landed. Actually our battalion was a force of a little over 700. Our raiding of several Japanese strong points, then withdrawing, quickly told the Japanese that we were only a small force and they started to converge on our base of operations. The invasion of Bougainville had been underway for several days so we were withdrawn from Choiseul. The 3rd Marine Division, the 1st and 3rd Parachute Battalion, and a Marine Raider Battalion invaded Bougainville on November 1st. By the end of 1943, it was decided to disband the Marine Paratroops since they were too small a unit for the future campaigns contemplated in the Pacific Operations. We were returned to the United States to be the cadre around which the new 5th Marine Division would be formed.

After a 30 day leave, we were reassembled at Camp Pendelton, and assigned to the various units making up the 5th Marine Division comprised of the 26th, 27th, and 28th Marines. My unit was F Co., 2nd Battalion, 27th Marines. After training for a few months, the Division was transported to the Big Island, Hawaii, up on the flank of Mauna Kea on the Parker Ranch lands at Kamuela, Hawaii. Here, we continued our training for some particular target. In January 1945 we boarded transports and left for the invasion of

that target; we were informed after we got underway that it was Iwo Jima. We had never heard of the place, but over the next few weeks we studied maps and models of the island and its emplacements, arms, and an estimated 13,000 enemy soldiers—turned out to be closer to 22,000. At Saipan, those of us that were in the first 5 assault waves were transferred to the LST's that held the amphibious tractors we would ride in to the beach. On the 14th of February, our fleet of ships headed out for Iwo Jima. On the 16th we started listening to the bombardment by the 54th Task Force that had started taking Iwo Jima apart—so we thought. This went on daily right up to our landing at 9 AM on February 19th.

Very early on the morning of the 19th of February, our LST went dead in the water; we had arrived at Iwo Jima. The LST's were about 3 miles out from the landing beaches. It was still dark. At 4:30 AM, we had a substantial breakfast. Afterwards, we put on our combat gear, went down inside the LST to the tank deck, and loaded into our assigned amphibious tanks. There were about 15 men in each amphibious tank. The doors of the LST opened, the ramp went down, and our amphibious tanks (LVT—landing vehicle tracked) started moving out and down the ramp. As an LVT nosed into the water, the operator would gun the motor and spin the tracks. This would bring the nose of the tank up so it could ride out onto the ocean—otherwise the LVT went right on down to the bottom of the sea. Also, if the motor coughed instead of catching when it was revved up it would sink. The troops in the LVT's kept their equipment loose and ready to throw off in case the motor didn't rev up so they could swim to safety. Each regular LVT had a 30-caliber and a 50-caliber machine gun mounted in the forward area of the uncovered troop compartment. These were for antiaircraft protection. There was a steel shield for the protection of the gunner. I had been trained to handle the 50-caliber machine gun so I rode in to the beach with a full view of our situation; another man was handling the 30-caliber machine gun. The rest of the men were to keep their heads down. The LVT's circled around and then moved out to their line of departure. In the first wave were the armored LVT's which held no troops. They were armed with 75-mm howitzers. They were loaded with canister shot. A 75-mm canister round contained 1000-quarter inch diameter, hollow steel balls. These are fired up and down the beach just before the first troops land. This was to take out any enemy troops that were above ground. A great theory, but in practice useless in this instance since the LVT's couldn't get up over the wave parapets due to the loose volcanic sand. The next four waves were assault troops. Our first and second rifle platoons were in the second wave. I was in the third rifle platoon and we were in the third wave along with our machine gun platoon. At about 8:30 AM the assault waves were started in toward the beaches at 5 minute intervals. The first wave hit the beach at 9 AM. The battle was a continuous frontal assault for the next thirty days.

On the way in to the beach, I could see what looked like a curtain of mist somewhat obscuring the view. As we were getting closer, I realized what appeared to be a curtain was the result of many projectiles striking the water and we would have to go through this maelstrom. My squad leader, Judson Bay, said, "Hey! Allman, why are you looking so green?" At that time, with an earsplitting crack, a large caliber shell skimmed over our LVT striking the water a few feet away sending up a geyser of water that showered down on us. Judson kidded no more. Shortly, we were disembarking at the beach. After I leapt from the LVT, the vehicle started back to the ship and it began moving over one of our men who had fallen down. I saw the track was pushing him into the sand and at that time it turned toward the ocean grinding him further into the sand. After the LVT moved on, he jumped up and moved right on. This type of LVT weighed 28 tons. A few days later this marine came to me and said, "Chuck, my chest hurts something awful." I said, "Take your blouse off and let's see if anything shows." His chest was pushed in on one side and bulged out on the other. I told him to go to the battalion aid station and if

they questioned what had happened, to contact me since I had witnessed the accident. At 28 years of age, he was one of the oldest men in our platoon. I do not remember his name.

My job at the beachhead was to make sure all of the men in our platoon got moving inland from the beach area. This was not a big problem with all the fire coming down on us; no one wanted to be on that beach. I started moving my fire team up through the loose volcanic sand. We ran ankle deep in that sand. Shell craters were just dents. The explosions would blow a hole, but the sand slid back into the crater. As I dove through the air to one of the shell holes I felt a tug on my pack. That afternoon when I took the pack off, I found a piece or pieces of shrapnel had shred the back flap. As we were coming up off the beach, the Japanese had lowered their antiaircraft guns and were giving us overhead fire. Along with the enemy's artillery and mortar fire and our naval fire going overhead and exploding inland, the din was far greater than any war movie I have ever seen.

We cut nearly across the narrow part of the island and then turned north where we ran into some emplacements. These were knocked out -- mostly by the bombardment. I came upon my friend Chuck Clow attempting to get a wounded Japanese soldier to surrender. Chuck would say the Japanese phrase we had been taught for surrender. The enemy soldier would shake his head and motion for Chuck to come closer. This charade went on for a few minutes until the soldier got tired of the game; he then popped a grenade and held it to his chest dying in the explosion. The *bushido* code had claimed another victim. Chuck Clow was killed in the late afternoon by an artillery shell or mortar shell that exploded next to him as he was kneeling down.

The attack ground on day after day in much the same way--purely a frontal assault. On February 23rd, one of our squad said, "turn around and look at Suribachi, its been taken." Sure enough, the Flag was flying on top. You could hear the horns on the ships blowing and the cheering of the troops nearby. We figured we had won the island, but it wasn't so. On the eleventh day, the 27th Marines were sent back near the base of Suribachi in Corps reserve to rest for a couple days. Our regiment had 40 percent casualties at that time. We thought we wouldn't be used any further. This turned out to be wishful thinking, we were given some replacements--all green troops fresh out of boot camp. Later that afternoon, we were told to move out and we were on our way back to the front lines. We were held up until late at night before going through one area because the Japanese were putting down very accurate and heavy mortar barrages whenever anyone tried to move through there in the daylight hours. We crossed over the third airfield to a position about 100 yards behind the front lines and we dug in for the night. When we dug in at this location, we found the ground was about 150 degrees and far too hot to lie down in our foxholes. Finally, we had the steam heated foxholes we had been kidding about whenever we were caught out in cold weather--turned out they were very uncomfortable. We had to break up ammunition crates to line the bottoms of our foxholes, certainly not very comfortable to lie down on. On the plus side we could bury our cans of C-rations and canteens for a few minutes and have a hot meal and coffee or bouillon soup.

While we were on our way to the front, a huge plane made a couple low passes over the island and then landed on Airfield No. 1. The Bomber landed at the southern end and went to the north end within a mile or so of the enemy positions. (Editor's note: This plane was piloted by Bob Morgan, later a Colonel and a noted author). The pilot spun it around and headed to the south end as the Japanese tried to hit it with a mortar barrage. A short time later it took off for its home base. This was the first of 2,251 B-29's to make an emergency landing on Iwo Jima. This occurred on D+13, which was March 4, 1945.

Fortunately, the Sea Bees and Marine Pioneer Battalions had been working on the runways as soon as the airfield was in our hands so it would be usable as soon as possible.

Our battalion took over a sector of the front early in the morning of D+15, March 6th. Our third platoon was down to 19 men. During the early afternoon, part of our platoon attacked a strong enemy position about 100 feet in front of our part of the line. At the end of the day there were 11 of us left in our platoon. Sgt. Bobbie Holmes and I were the only NCO's left. I was a corporal. Bobbie said to me, "Chuck, I'll handle the radio, you take the men." I split the group into two fire teams of five men each. I had PFC Ed Johnston, who I had been with in the 2nd Parachute Battalion take one of the teams and I took the other. The next morning, D+16, our Division was going to make an all out attack. At 7:30 AM, the attack started and about 9:30 AM, I was caught in a machine gun burst. I didn't know this until one of the men in our platoon caught up with me in the hospital at Pearl Harbor. He told me what had happened and that the marine beside me had been killed in the same burst. I was hit in several places and I had thought it must have been a shell bursting next to me. I was flown from Iwo to a hospital on Guam and a couple days later to Hospital No. 25 at Pearl Harbor. In late August, I was shipped on to Oak Knoll Naval Hospital in the Bay Area.

Our 3rd platoon of 46 men and later 8 replacements had only 2 men left at the end of the battle. The casualties in the rifle companies were horrific—30 percent killed and just under 80 percent overall casualties. The 5th Division issued 9,975 Purple Heart medals. The 3rd and 4th Divisions had similar figures. The Marines captured about 200 Japanese before they left the island. Approximately 800 enemy surrendered to the Army after the Marines left. I spent 8 months in hospitals and on limited duty. I was discharged from the Marine Corps on November 15, 1945. I would be 21 years old one month later. A month after that I married a Dane.

Awards: Asiatic-Pacific Theater with 3 battle stars, Presidential Unit Citation, Purple Heart for wounds received on March 7, 1945, American Theater, and the Victory medals.

History of Hejls Minde #23

Hejls Minde #23 of the Danish Society Dania had its beginning in Solvang on April 13, 1912. Solvang a small Danish community had been founded the year before in 1911 by a group of men with a vision of perpetuating the Danish Culture. Atterdag College was soon built, and Danish people coming from many parts of the United States and Denmark quickly populated the little community.

The Danish Society Dania of California and Nevada was started in Oakland, California the year 1879, and by the year 1912 there were many flourishing lodges of Dania, mostly in the Bay Area and central California.

H.P. Mathiesen, who at this time was the Grand President of the Dania Lodges, believed that the new town of Solvang would be a good place to start another lodge of Dania. He traveled to Solvang and met another Dania member, Hans Skytt, who was a member of Freja #6 of Salinas, but had recently moved to Solvang. These two men soon got together a group of 21 Danish men and on April 13, 1912 they became charter members of a new lodge Hejls Minde #23 of Dania.

Sophus Olsen was the first president of the newly formed lodge, and Hans Skytt became the first vice president. Other officers elected at the first meeting were Carl Rasmussen, Secretary; Wilhelm Olsen, Treasurer; John Ahrenkild, Marshal and Paul Mygind, Vice Marshal. Besides these officers charter

members included Peter Madsen, Erik Petersen, George Christensen, Peter Nielsen, Frederick Overgaard, Rasmus Mathiesen, Alfred Nielsen, Ludvig Hjertinge, Niels Petersen, Mads Frese, Jacob J. Lindegren, M.E. Lauritsen, Martin Madsen, Hans J. Rasmussen and John Petersen.

Shortly after it's beginning, members of the lodge constructed their own building. One of Solvang's first buildings Dania Hall was located at the Westerly end of Copenhagen Drive along Atterdag Road. Lodge members at a cost of \$1000 built it in 1913. Member Jacob Svendsen, who also made the concrete blocks for the structure, donated the land.

Money was now needed to help meet some of the expenses of a new building and to get the lodge going. Therefore beginning on January 1913, the members of Hejls Minde offered for sale 200 shares, valued at \$5 each, for a total of \$1000 of the capital stock of Dania. These shares were soon sold to the members, and it is interesting to note that three other lodges of Dania, Helga #3 of San Francisco, Denmark #2 of San Francisco and Sønderjylland #10 of Petaluma also helped out by buying shares.

Their immediate need for financing now taken care of, the members now searched for ways to bolster their treasury in order to meet their sick help obligations. They decided on having a turkey raffle each year just before Thanksgiving, and although the exact date is not known, it is believed to have begun about 1914. At the start they had live turkeys, geese and ducks for the winners of the bongo game, and each bird came in a burlap sack. The noise of all these birds always made this a lively occasion. They went on for many years until the time came, that very few knew how to take care of the live birds they had won, and frozen birds were then used. After 73 years our turkey raffle still takes place each year before Thanksgiving and the cost per bingo card is still 10 cents, as it was in 1914.

In recent years, the operations of the annual turkey raffle has been turned over to the ladies of Håbet #19 in order to help them financially in their lodge operation and various charities in our community.

By the year 1974 Solvang had grown tremendously and large and beautiful Danish styled shops, hotels, bakeries and eating-places now surrounded Dania Hall. Pressure was on for Dania Hall to get a face-lift and conform to the Danish style architecture, and taxes were getting higher than the lodge could afford, so a decision was made to sell. On March Of 1974 a transaction was completed and Dania Hal was sold. Hejls Minde now has a very comfortable meeting place in the Solvang Memorial Building.

In the year 1937 the wives of Dania men of Hejls Minde decided to join the Danish Ladies Society Dannebrog of Dania, and thus was formed Håbet #19. The two groups joined together in many activities during the year. At the time of this writing Håbet #19 will be celebrating a 50-year anniversary and Hejls Minde a 75-year anniversary.

Hejls Minde #23 and Håbet #19 have been hosts to five Dania conventions in Solvang. These were held on the years 1956, 1966, 1971, 1983 and 2000. From Hejls Minde there have also been four Grand Presidents of Dania. They are the late Grand President Anton Ibsen 1921-1922, Hans Skytt 1940-1941 and Henry Kari 1967-1968. The last member of Hejls Minde #23 to serve as Grand President of Dania was Holger Carstensen, who served in 1972-1973.

Håbet #19 also had a member who served as Grand President of the Ladies Society of Dannebrog. She was the late Kristine Jensen of Solvang and served during the year 1970-1971.

Hejls Minde is still a very active lodge with just under a hundred members. There are two meetings each month, which are very well attended. Hejls Minde #23 is the oldest organization in the city of Solvang, and has played a big part in maintaining tradition in our Danish community.