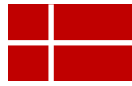


Spring 2021

The Granly News

A Publication of the Danish Historical Foundation, Inc., Hurley, Mississippi



Granly History

The following history is a collection of memories and early records from the founding of Granly. Most of the narrative is from the research and writing of Ida Larsen. Ida grew up at Granly and after attending the 1987 reunion, was inspired to record the colony's history. She corresponded with several friends, including former Grandview College classmate Elin Holst Stub, daughter of founder Alma Holst, from whom she gathered valuable memories and records from the birth of the colony.

Sadly, Ida passed away in 1997 before she could complete her work. The narrative below uses excerpts from her writings with an occasional editorial aside to provide additional information and context. This retelling is dedicated to her memory.

The Granly Story

By Ida Larsen

The Granly community house was built in 1936.

In 1986, descendants began a furious and years-long effort to restore, not just the building and site, but also the community and culture that surround it.

Why? This is the story I want to tell. How this came about.

The historian Charles Beard said all recorded history is essentially an "act of faith". Putting together this history, I agree—for this account of how the community Granly came about is only a reflection of what I saw or heard or read, and, overall, believe.

I see three sets of visionaries. The 1986 landmark event I trace directly to their dreams.

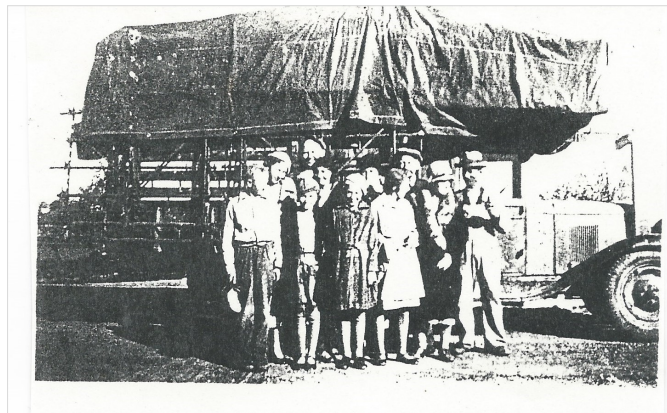
The first visionaries in this saga: those who got the idea of starting another community in the land for peo-

ple of Danish descent. This happened in the late 1920s. They formed a company, bought several acres in the southeast corner of the State of Mississippi, and advertised parcels for sale—specifically for Danish-Americans to build a "Danish colony".

Next, the second set of visionaries: those who bought the land and moved there. In 1930, this began. They came, mostly from the upper Midwest—having said farewell to familiar worlds, they packed their belongings and, with their children made the long trek to this "new" place. For survival, they had to get to work right away: building houses to live in and tilling the soil and planting food for themselves and produce to sell for cash.

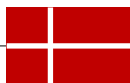
Then came a third group of visionaries. In the 1980s they brought their dream to life. Just a handful of talented workers, all descendants of the original pioneers, they did not stop their efforts until they had placed the community, Granly, firmly in the history of our land. They persisted in the restoration of the community house and grounds as a permanent memorial to the founders under the guidance of the Luther Church of America. And with the creation of the Granly Danish Historical Foundation, ownership of this 5-acre parcel was formally handed over. Incorporation papers were signed on 12 June 1986.

In the spring of 1987 they were ready to celebrate. They sent invitations out to all of us—the descendants of those who started it all. For four days we gathered in the *forsamlingshus* (Danish for community house) and remem-



As families moved to Granly, loaded with belongings, they sometimes commemorated the life-changing event with a photo. A handwritten note with this one stated: "HEADING TO GRANLY, MS ~ RASMUS LARSEN, HANS PELLE, NELS NELSON ~ Morning of October 12, 1934, 6am in Hamilton County, halfway between Marquette and Kronborg, Nebraska.

Continued on page 3 ...



Granly Officials

PRESIDENT

Lee Sheperd
315 West Orange Ave.
Foley, Alabama, 36535
leeshepherd379@yahoo.com
Grandson of Ejner & Marie Mortensen
Son of Lee & Rita Mortensen Shepherd

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1712 Cherebusco St.
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228-623-1861
Grandson of Hans & Herdis Nygaard
Son of Else Nygaard Martin

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4496 Sardis Church Rd
Buford, GA 30519-410
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Son-in-law of Davis Mortensen, the
Son of Ejner & Marie

SECRETARY

Lynda Roberts Woods
224 W Camphor Ave.
Foley, Alabama 36535
lindarwood@yahoo.com
Granddaughter of Carl & Astrid Brinkman
Daughter of Margaret Brinkman

Important Granly Dates

Granly Annual Workdays

October 14-16, 2021
(bring your Danish work ethic)

Granly Christmas Gathering

December 26, 2021
(bring your friends, your relatives, your
favorite dish and your dancing shoes)

Visit Our Facebook Page at:

<https://www.facebook.com/GranlyDanish/>

Share your Family Photos and Memories with us to
be posted on our Granly Facebook Page and in the
Newsletter.

Send to Else Martin,
elsejensinemartin@gmail.com



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We want to hear from you!

Please send your old (and new) family photos, current
news and your comments and suggestions to the editor.
We want to see photos from all Granly descendants –
trips to Denmark, Reunions, Holiday traditions, recipes,
etc.

Newsletter Publishing Dates & Deadlines:

<i>Issue:</i>	Autumn 2021
<i>Deadline:</i>	Sept 1, 2021
<i>Mailed:</i>	Mid-Sept 2021



The Granly Story cont.

bered and remembered! Many came—from Oregon, Texas, Indiana, Illinois, Oklahoma, Florida, California and Mississippi. All this hosted by this small group, the caretakers of this rich chapter in our history and the history of our land.

Those First Granly Visionaries

Their names are engraved in the marble stone on the grounds marking the entrance to the Forsamlingshus grounds: Hans and Johanne Madsen and daughter, Alma M. Holst.

What do we know about these people—these three who first got the idea of a new community? They are no longer here to tell us how they came by this notion and how they planned and took action.

Their writings have survived them—mostly Alma's. We have one letter from Hans.

Their skills, their businesses—banking and real estate development, writing, newspaper publishing—these were all admirably suited to the task of selling a select and widely distributed population on the wisdom of buying land and moving to that land and, there, pioneering a new community.

We know this about them:

Hans Madsen, was a Cedar Falls, Iowa banker and realtor.

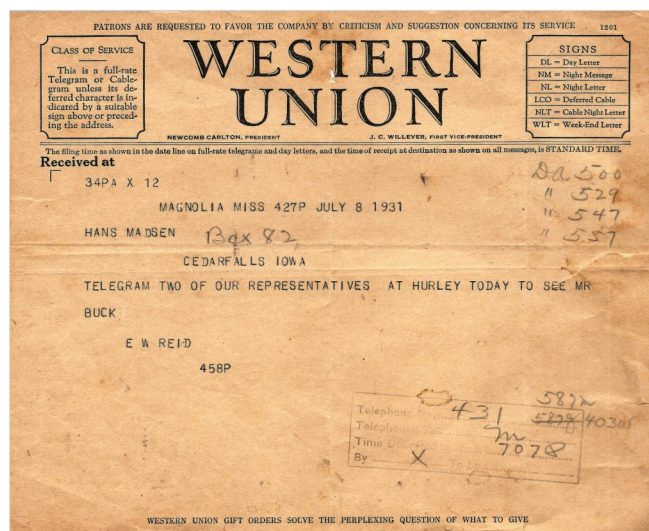
Alma Holst, a writer and community activist, grew up in a small Danish-American community in Iowa. She married Aksel B. Holst of Cedar Falls, one of the publishers of the Danish-American newspaper, *Dannevirke*.

Alma Holst and Hans Madsen formed a land development firm, and bought several of acres in Jackson County, Mississippi. This is the late 1920s. Alma, born in 1889 was in her late thirties.

[Madsen and Holst traveled to Mississippi around 1929 and toured the lands owned by the Lampton Realty Company from Magnolia, Mississippi which is located the southwest part of the State. There are no official records of how these realtors from Iowa and Mississippi came to meet, but we can speculate that Madsen

and Holst, on the lookout for large swaths of farmland suitable for a colony, must have heard about the land through an advertisement—perhaps in a newspaper or promotional mailing.

The eventual relationship between the two entities is also not certain. Madsen and Holst may have purchased much of the land for resale to colonists, but records of the time also indicate that there must have been an ongoing agreement between the realtors. A deed from May 18, 1931, describes Rev. Knudsen's purchase of 20 acres in northeast Jackson County directly from Lampton Company. Also, a Western Union telegram from July 8, 1931 shows coordination between Hans Madsen and E.W. Reid, Secretary of the Lampton Company. Ed.]



“TELEGRAM TWO OF OUR REPRESENTATIVES TODAY AT HURLEY TO SEE MR BUCK”. The meaning of the telegram is not clear, but it does at least show an ongoing relationship between Hans Madsen, the Lampton Company and Axel Buck, then the President of the Granly, Mississippi Investment Association as the colony began to grow. The telegram was provided by Alice Fremlin (Buck) from her father's records.

With these facts, and a scrutinate gleaning of their writings, I speculate. Speculate—to put together this scenario on how Granly came about.

But first, two further “givens”. These people knew:

- 1) Danish culture—their inheritance;
- 2) The current, grim U.S. economic scene—their daily reality.

Their eyes had seen the effects of both—as children in their native communities and, now, as writers, travelers, and newspaper professionals, what was happening to people on the farms and in the towns and cities across the land.

I suggest that their vision of the “good community” got clearer and stronger as the depression got worse. This “good

Continued on page 4 ...



The Granly Story cont.

community” they saw patterned on the cooperative and life-long learning tenets of the Danish Folk School movement of their heritage.

And, at some time, they must have decided they would do all they could to keep such a community going.

What could they do? First, locate suitable land and buy it. Then, advertise this land for sale and begin selling it.

A huge project, all this. And, here, many gaps exist in the historical record.

We don’t know how they came to select Jackson County, Mississippi as “the land”. We suggest, since getting away from cold and snowy winters was a major sales pitch, that the south and southeast and southwest must have been areas they looked into. Of these three areas, the Gulf Coast was closest to the Iowa they knew and where so many of their target population lived.

We do know: they secured the land and people were buying—mostly 40 acre parcels.

From the 1930 Alma Holst newsletter (GRANLY POSTEN, my translation from Danish):

“GRANLY, MISSISSIPPI INVESTMENT ASSOCIATION is incorporated under Mississippi state law with the following officers: Axel R. Buck, President; Axel C. Pedersen, Secretary; and Alma M. Holst Cedar Falls, Cashier. The two AXELS will both, with their families, be living in GRANLY this autumn.”

Now further documentation. Down the years, it is the voice of Alma Holst we hear—eloquent spokesperson for this vision. These documents have been made available to us through the generosity of her daughter, Elin Holst Stub of Philadelphia—from her unpublished manuscript collection.

(From GRANLY POSTEN, 9 December 1930):

“GRANLY colony is the child of my heart (*mit hjertebarn*). When I was first South about a year ago, I became so absorbed in thinking of the colony that I scarcely slept the

GRANLY colony is the child of my heart (*mit hjertebarn*). When I was first South about a year ago, I became so absorbed in thinking of the colony that I scarcely slept the nights I was there.

Alma Holst, December 1930

nights I was there. And before I left, I envisioned: a large colony flourishing, an older-people’s home built, a children’s home built, and much more. I assumed it would be a fine place for both the old and the young. There would be a school. But first and foremost, there would be opportunities for working people to flourish, progress. It would be a place where people could live ‘*et jevnt og virksomt liv paa jord*’, where people could make a good living with ease—without

enduring the anxiety/stress so many in the Midwest have lived with these recent years.”

And reflecting her devotion to the place they had selected and her role in their ambitious project, another glimpse of her remarkable vision: “It is said that Mississippi is the land of the possible. I think this is true. And I would like to be of help in realizing these possibilities.”

These possibilities are set forth in exuberant detail in an elaborate 48-page promotional. I surmise that Holst, Madsen and friends were handed a copy during one of their exploratory visits.

Else Nygaard Martin, of Granly, handed us ours. Recently retired as Jackson County librarian, she continues her voluntary role as historian of that Gulf Coast area. And she was a primary actor in the preservation of the Forsamlingshus as a historical monument and that first grand 1987 reunion.

About this publication, she says: “... published circa 1919 and reprinted several times after by the Pascagoula Chronicle, Pascagoula, Miss., and issued by the Pascagoula Business League and the Progressive League of Moss Point, for the purpose of ‘selling’ Jackson County to ‘those residing in less favored and advantageous portions of the United States’, and to advance economic growth and development.

Both the Alma Holst newsletter and this Jackson County publication paint a similarly rosy picture of this Gulf Coast land.

The recommended income industries range from truck-farming to fruit and orchards to poultry-egg and dairy-milk production.

The big draw: “The climate is delightful, the water is good, the soil is easy to work ... writes Hans Madsen. And



The Granly Story cont.

in the area ... one sees large pecan orchards and orange and ... tung nut, yes, only a few plants there are that will not grow here—I can think of none.”

He continues: “I do not think it takes big capital to start here, because it will not take long until one can begin to sell some of one’s products and live on them at the beginning. Yesterday we went to Lucedale (10 miles north) to price lumber to compare with Chicago prices. Found prices 30% to 35% less. And since building techniques are much simpler here than in the cold-winter North, it will be much cheaper to build here.”

In response to costs-of-building questions, A. Holst writes: “a small house (floor-plan drawing included, 4 rooms + porch) can be built for \$300, with unfinished interior walls, but a double chimney for kitchen stove and heater ... \$100 will cover the cost of out-buildings for cattle and chickens. ... Wood for stoves can be gotten from the land. It will not cost much for a family to live till the first harvest. ... If the family moves in the fall, there is time for planting soy beans (a cash crop) in January.”

And Hans Madsen writes: “We agreed to set land prices at: \$15-\$20-\$25 per acre. But those who buy before New Year 1931 will pay \$15 to \$17.50 to \$20 per acre.”

From the 1930 newsletter: “Should there be some who want to take advantage of the lower land prices but who cannot visit by New Year 1931 ... they can buy and then exchange for another location they decide they prefer when they get there. The land with the best location will be bought first. All the land is approximately the same quality.”

How successful was the Holst/Madsen team in selling this acreage? I have not tried to run down the land-sales records. We do know the names of the families that moved there during the 1930s and we can estimate the

average acres sold, plus whatever was set-aside for community use (at least 5 acres we know). Regardless of the exact size, we do know that the community-growing/building all happened within a decade: from 1930 to 1940. [*Granly resident Dagmar Pedersen, in a 1938 article for a Works Progress Administration project, identified 23 families in the colony and 8 other families living in surrounding communities. Ed.*]

I daydream: it’s Festival Time during Granly’s heyday in the 1930’s. Alma Holst is our special guest, come to see her dream alive, to celebrate and be celebrated.

This never happened. She was killed in a freak automobile-train accident on January 25, 1931.

But we do know what she, and her parents, set in motion: a movement of people to a “new” place, there to build a community based on a lively and unique mix of elements of Danish and U.S. cultures and adapted to this particular SE Mississippi scene.

The place—what kind of “new world” had they come to?

It had a lonely look. Barren, no hills—but not just flat, as was the prairie land from which some had come. Slightly rolling, moundy terrain. And in all directions, alone-standing tall, skinny pine trees—the long-needle variety—scattered about. Not close together, but still the dominant tree. An occasional cypress swamp—set apart, like an island. And, further off the red clay highway, some thickets. If you get into them, the thickets, you’d find a creek and palmettos and sandy soil and lots of

briars. Then, way back, a big live-oak tree, old and damp and weathered, with grey moss on its lower limbs and grey-green lichens and some vines—grape, I think—with thick tendrils and well-attached for climbing and swinging in.

And then came the new houses. And the fences—where there had been no fences before.

The new houses and some of the farm buildings got painted white. And they stood out, exposed, high above their new plantings just beginning to stick up above the

Alma Holst died tragically in January 1931, just as her dream of the Granly colony was coming to life. The article below, from *Dannevirke* her family’s Danish-American newspaper, describes the accident. Translation by Ellen Thain.

The Accident

When Mrs. A. B. Holst on Saturday afternoon was on the road in her car with a family, Mr. Frank Dillage, a farmer residing 6 miles east of Waterloo, and his wife together with a relative of hers, Mrs. O. J. Sumpter here from the city, out in order to see about a property, came to 2nd St. and Iowa St., where the Chicago Rock Island Line’s track crosses these streets, there came at the same time the southbound 4:45 Passenger train on the aforementioned track, and in order to avoid a collision with the train, it seems, as far as one can tell from some people’s statements, that Mrs. Holst tried to turn the car to the side, but did not manage to avoid hitting the locomotive. Others on the other hand maintain that the car was in the middle of the track when it was rammed by the train.



ground and show from a distance.

Coming toward Granly, then, driving on the red, clay road, the white buildings polka-dotted the grey-green terrain for 5 miles on both sides.

And, later, there were new, metal mailboxes along the highway where the roads came down from each new place.

New sights! And when the fields got tilled and the plantings came up, grew—crops and orchards and around the houses, flowers and bushes and trees—the entire scene got flecked with new shapes and colors.

Then came the community house, the *forsamlingshus*. And you could see us—a new community on the land.

Next—The Builders

Who were they? All were of Danish descent. Most of the adults were born in Denmark. A few were first generation Americans, as were most of the children.

And farming they knew—both the men and the women having learned the myriad of intricacies of that industry on their family's farm in Denmark. Carpentry they knew, too.

Why? Why did they come? Fascinating—trying to tease out the answer to that question. It was not just that the Great Depression lay over all the land—causing people to dream of greener pastures.

In addition, I suggest, the grim economic scene got these people to look to their remembered strengths, and say: "Time I gave these a special try."

They recalled: 1) their Danish world—remembering the best of their culture; 2) the dreams of the "good life" they had had then—that propelled them or their parents across the ocean from Europe to America.

And these two strengths they combined to create their daring vision to start again, in a different place. They would build a Danish-American community, blending the best of both worlds.

Who lived there when we "newcomers" came from the

north? "Sparsely-populated" said official reports. Yes! Walking a familiar 5-mile stretch, we saw no houses except what we had built. They were there, the homes of native residents, but miles apart and hidden. Way off the highway, mostly, in a nest of "big, old" pecan trees, the wood buildings unpainted and weathered a silvery grey.

All European-descent Whites. The Native Americans had long since gone from this area. Blacks? They were there, too, but we couldn't see them. By whatever processes, they had been shoved "far back" from where we settled—or south along the river estuaries toward the Gulf Coast.

Some going back a hundred years, the names on the land were: Tanner, Coleman, Davis, Hamilton, Tilly, Ely, Holder, Hinton, Cunningham and Pierce.

And now came the new names: Jensen, Knudsen, Pedersen, Smidt, Larsen, Buck, Nygaard, Sorensen, Nielsen, Borgeesen, Outzen, Brinkman, Mortensen, Hedegaard, Christensen, Johansen, Pelle, Warnecke, Madsen, Lykke.

And the U.S. Postal Service delivered mail into the new mail boxes.

And the school bus stopped to pick up and let off the new kids—grades 1 through 6 to Hurley elementary, a couple of miles from the last "new" place and the others, older, to Wade, 7 miles west into the pine-tree and cypress-swamp barrens—on the red clay road.

Our native resident neighbors were descendants to these Whites. With their timber industry gone, how were they surviving? They had tried truck-farming, vegetables and fruits. Killing frosts had destroyed their

crops, and they had no more money to try again. When we came, the only profitable cash crop was bootleg whiskey. With subsistence farming, they were surviving.

A booklet was passed out to us in school. A U.S.



Pictured above with his family, Hurley resident J.B. Gibson was instrumental in helping early colonists get started. He owned the general store pictured above and allowed new arrivals to stay in the building next door until their new homes were completed. Photos provided by descendants J.B. Gibson.

Continued on page 11 ...

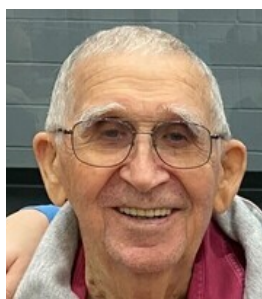


Obituaries

Norval L Harris

January 23, 1934 - January 14, 2021

Norval Lee Harris, 86, of Norwich, Kansas passed away and went to live with his Lord Thursday, January 14, 2021.



Norval was born January 23, 1934 in Haven, Kansas to McClellan and Ella (Prene) Harris. Growing up he was known as "Butch". He graduated from Haven High School, Emporia State Teachers College and received his Master's Degree from Pittsburg State University. He served in the Army for 2 years

from 1956-1958. He was employed as an Industrial Arts Teacher in South Haven, KS, Halstead, KS and finished his career as a teacher and Assistant Principal at Norwich High School for 26 years. He made an impact on many students during his teaching years. Friday nights he could be found in the stands cheering on the Norwich High School Eagles. He was an avid hunter and enjoyed raising foxhounds and woodworking. He was an active member of St Paul's Lutheran Church.

Norval is survived by his wife of 62 years Dallas (Mortensen) Harris, Norwich, KS, daughter Darla Hughes (Jerry Worden), Wichita, KS, son Kevin (Julie) Harris, Norwich, five grandchildren, Alyssa Hughes of Kansas City, MO, Trevor Hughes of Wichita, KS, Aubrie Harris of Andover, KS, McClellan Hughes and Brennah Hughes of Wichita, KS, brother Marvin Eugene (Agnes) Harris of Haven, KS and numerous other family members. He was preceded in death by his parents, brothers Clifford Harris, Merle Harris, Lloyd Harris, McClellan Harris, Jr. Robert Wayne Harris, sisters Emma Carmichael, Carmelita Wilson, Zelpha Koch, Frances Ewertz

and son-in-law Rodney Hughes.

A private family service will be held Monday, January 18, 2021 at 10:00 am at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Cheney, Kansas. The service will be live-streamed on Facebook Live for friends and family. Memorials may be made to Norwich EMS, Norwich, KS 67118 and St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 639 N Lincoln St, Cheney, KS 67025.

Alice Alfrida Fremlin

October 13, 1923 – November 23, 2019

Alice was born in Askov, Minnesota, to Ella and Axel Buck. Her family decided a few years later to move to Hurley, Mississippi, for warmer weather. She enjoyed spending time with her good friends and all the dogs on the farm. She graduated from Moss Point High School and went on to business school where she studied court reporting.

Alice decided to make a move to California, staying with her aunt, and working at Bell Telephone as a long-distance operator. World War II called for volunteers, and she enlisted in the Women Army Corps. She trained as a surgical tech caring for wounded soldiers who survived the Bataan Death March while stationed in Twentynine Palms, California.

While home on leave, she met her husband William Fremlin at Keesler AFB in Biloxi, Mississippi. They dated for a short time and married in Atwater, California, on June 27, 1950. The couple moved around with each new assignment welcoming sons Keith in California, Paul in Washington, and daughter Ruth in Massachusetts.

In 1960, the family packed up and moved to England for a 3-year assignment enjoying time with other Air Force families who became lifelong friends. Upon return-





ing to the United States, the family moved to Oklahoma, then Norwalk, Iowa, finally settling in Evansville, Indiana. After William's passing, Alice moved to Adel, Iowa, to be closer to family.

Alice took pride in caring for her home and family. She was a gifted artisan with any kind of knitting, crocheting, sewing, quilting, cooking, baking, and entertaining. Bill and Alice loved to travel after his retirement, spending time with the many friends they made along the way playing cards and dominos.

At one time Alice mailed over 600 Christmas cards to many friends and family, each with a handwritten letter. She was a lover of dogs and always saw the best in people. She lived a long fulfilling life and was always ready to give a big hug with a warm smile.

Those left to cherish her memory include children Keith (Val) Fremlin, Paul (Jayne) Fremlin, Ruth Webb, grandchildren Kevin Fremlin, Jessica (JJ) Reynolds, Elgin (Amy) Fremlin, Marc Fremlin, Ursula (Ethan) Federman, Shawn (Hannah) Webb, James Fremlin, great-grandchildren Lydia, Jordan, Charlotte, Sylvia, Farah, Emerson, Mason and Gavin. The family will celebrate Alice's life in a private service.

One of Alice's favorite charities was the Salvation Army. Please give generously to the bell ringers this season and say a prayer for Alice. She will be missed.

Edwin Ray Christensen

January 2, 1945 - January 9, 2019

Edwin Ray Christensen, 74, of Hurley, MS, passed away on January 9, 2019 in Hurley, MS. Edwin was born on January 2, 1945 in Pascagoula, MS to the late Aksel and Nellie Christensen. A lover of the simpler things in life, Eddie enjoyed gardening, antique cars, and visiting Amish communities throughout the US, but most importantly he enjoyed spending time with his children and grandchildren.

Edwin is survived by his loving wife of 30 years, Trudy Almond Christensen; children, Dr. Edwin Dale (Dr. Nikki) Christensen of Tuscaloosa, AL, Roy Phillip (Holly) Christen-

sen of Las Vegas, NV, Monica Christensen (Richard) Brown of Hurley, MS, and Joshua Almond Christensen of Brooklyn, NY; grandchildren, Ian, Luke, Sarah Beth, Rylee, Cloe, Eli, Rowdy, Colt, Adalyn, Kristopher, and Ruby Jane; great-grandson, Aksel; siblings, Christina



(Wayne) Burt, Cathy (Robert) Campbell, Dennis (Debbie) Christensen, Caroline Fowler, and Richard "Dickie" (Donna) Christensen; godchild, Jeb Stewart; along with numerous nieces, nephews, other family members, and friends.

The visitation for Edwin will be held on January 11, 2019 from 5:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. at St. Ann

Catholic Church in Hurley, MS. A Mass of Christian Burial will be held on January 12, 2019 at the church beginning at 11:00 a.m., with Father Ryan McCoy and Deacon Frank Martin officiating. Interment will follow at Serene Memorial Gardens with Tony Garriga, Bart Stewart, Hank Stewart, Kenny Dobe, Mike Bullock, and Paul Knapp serving as pallbearers.

Dr. Bren Adair Ortega-Murphy

Dr. Bren Adair Ortega-Murphy died on April 26th, 2021 as afternoon sunlight filled the room. It was a warm and fitting moment of passage, as Bren never curtained a window. She adored open half shutters, which allowed for direct communion with light and plants, birds and wonder. Her husband was present to read a final children's book and her two grown kids held her hand.

Bren was born November 27, 1949 in Beaumont, Texas and raised in Houston by her parents Edward Ortega Jr. and Esther Ortega née Larsen. She often reflected on her time at Mount Carmel Catholic School, where she shone as a debate champion and dedicated classmate.

Her incredible work on the forensics team led to a scholarship at Northwestern University where she eventually completed her undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral

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Obituaries cont.

degrees.

In June 2020, Bren retired from a cherished 36-year career at Loyola University Chicago, where she held a joint appointment in the School of Communication and Women Studies and Gender Studies. She taught numerous courses in both areas and in 1996 received the Sujack Award for teaching excellence. In her time at Loyola, she also served as the Chair of the Communication department, Associate Dean for the College of Arts and Sciences, Chair of Faculty Council and Director of Women's Studies.

With a focus on rhetoric and ethics, Bren championed children's literature, women religious, and service learning. A favorite assignment was to teach public speaking by requiring students to read children's books out loud to the whole class. She cried openly whenever anyone read *Pink and Say* by Patricia Polacco. For Bren, children's literature had a power beyond measure, allowing the reader to delight, to cry, to discern and, finally, to act in the name of all that is good. She advocated equally for celebrating Catholic women religious or, as many know them, Nuns. In 2011, Bren directed *A Question of Habit*, a documentary narrated by Susan Sarandon.

The film explored popular culture's fascination with all things "nun" and illuminated the history of women religious in the United States, from their life as battlefield medics in the Civil War, to their persistence as political activists fighting against capital punishment.

Outside of academia, Bren dedicated her life to friends and family through a constant stream of greeting cards, cookie packages and film suggestions. She was obsessed with cut flowers, lit candles, excellent butter, and supporting lonely-

looking farmers at the Evanston Farmers Market.

She could be found often at the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Lyric Opera, Steppenwolf Theatre, and the KidSeries at Lifeline Theatre. She was Catholic. She was a feminist. She was a wonder - and she had all the buttons, bumper stickers, and subscriptions to prove it.

This is all to say, she was a multiplicity and her communities are bereft at her passing.

Bren is survived by her husband Christopher Murphy, her children Connor Murphy (Seattle, WA) and Laurie Ortega-Murphy (Wells River, VT), as well as by her siblings Laurie Ortega (Portland, OR), Martin Ortega (Oklahoma City, OK), and Tom Ortega (Phoenix, AZ). In addition to these names are beloved nephews, nieces, in-laws, and friends who made-up her personal communion of earthly saints.

Danish Family Christmas

Aksel and Inger Pedersen family



First row: Lady Cate and Pippa Marie (Bob's granddaughters), Joanne Pedersen (Allen's wife). Second row: Bella Ward, Erica Pedersen Adams, and Anna Grace (Bob's daughter and other two granddaughters), Gloria Pedersen (Bob's wife), Casey and Brian Stone (Allen's daughter and son-in-law) Third row: Greg Adams and Dane Pedersen (Bob's son-in-law and son), Bob Pedersen, Allen Pedersen, Kurt Pedersen (Allen's son)



The Granly Story cont.

government pamphlet entitled “The South as the Nation’s Number One Economic Problem.” Put out by the Roosevelt Administration. I think it was 1937. So this is where we had moved—for better living.

We tried. Cotton, sugar cane, chickens—eggs, cows—milk, truck-farming (killer frost in May!), peaches, tung-oil nuts. Some ventures were cooperative. All much discussed, planned. All failed. We got WPA produce—I can still see the bottom of the sugar barrel, as I hung over the top edge and, reaching down, tried to scrape up the last few white granules.

Money did eventually come—from the U.S. government to this area. The first sign: the black-topping of our highway. Some of the men got jobs. Finally came World War II—jobs for all. Money for clothes, for house repairs, for dentist and doctor. And the young people began to disperse—the boys drafted or volunteered and the girls to city jobs or college. A new chapter in Granly community life. The “outside” world was capturing us.

But now: back to the “empty sugar-barrel days”. And before WPA monies came our way.

A dismal economic scene. Everyone got poorer with each successive year—during the 1930s and into the 1940s. Yet the community, Granly, got richer. How come? How did “the builders” create this “good life” in the midst of the grinding poverty of their daily life? How did they get beyond the survival-work? How did they manage to see beyond their own back yards? Where did they get the energy to build this “different” social and cultural world in this hostile environment?

That is what I want to now try to understand. So, here are some “glimpses” of that new “social and cultural” world, which I’m calling Granly, and the difficult environment it yet “grew” in.

(A non-footnote footnote: to let you know who’s telling all this. I was 11 years old when we moved—Mom and Daddy and six children from a small town in Central Minnesota to Mississippi in 1933. I was 17 when I left after high school, for a job “up North”. I returned to work, first in a newly-moved-from-New-England woolen mill in 1941; then in a WWII Created shipyard in 1942. In 1942, I left for university and work and, since, have returned only for visits. All “glimpses” are mine, from then.)

Gymnastics every Wednesday evening—in the *forsamlingshus*. Taught by Danish-trained Gunnar Knudsen. A maestro! Separate classes—first the girls, then the boys. “Ribs” had been built along one long wall—for head and

hand standing. And there were saw horses for flying over (properly!) and mattresses for tumbling. After which, Danish folk dancing.

And the monthly “Birthday Party” night for all, young and old in the *forsamlingshus*. Dancing! The music? Ernst and Hulda Borgesen had an accordion. Andrew Outzen, his mouth harp. I recall a violin, but don’t remember who played it. In addition, we all sang and clapped for the folk-dancing. Sometimes, we kids put on a gymnastics exhibition.

And always, refreshments—though hardly fancy fare: coffee and koolaid and “syrup” cake (from our ubiquitous cane sugar) and much whipped cream which transforms anything. Also Mrs. Smidt’s wienerbrod and Mrs. Borgensen’s prune cake.

In summertime, Danish school at the parsonage—Danish mythology and history taught in Danish by the wife of retired minister Knud Knudsen and Dagmar Pedersen.

And, several times a year, a “visiting” minister from the Danish Lutheran Synod to entertain and, if we were lucky, to be entertained by.

Then, highlight of the social year: *Julen id Forsamlingshuset*. Our community building polished and decorated with greens from the woods. I remember our making wreaths for all of the windows! A big *Jule Trae*. All of us there. Singing the Danish “*Jule sange*” and holding hands, young and old, dancing around the tree. Then the clean up, saying “*Glaedelig Jul*” and “*God Nat*” and the long walk home under starry skies.

So, the new community had taken root, in this different place.



The 1987 Granly Reunion inspired Ida Larsen to record the Granly story. This is the Larsen family photo from that trip, taken on the front steps of their old house in Harleston. From left Esther, Agnes, Ida, Verner, Karen and Anne Stine. Ellen (not pictured) was with family in Italy and missed the reunion.

THE GRANLY NEWS

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