

The Granly News

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



Anna Larsen Memoir, Part II

Editor: Part two of the Anna Larsen memoir continued from previous issue. Part one ended with the Larsens living in Marquette, Nebraska, but ready to check out the new Danish colony in Mississippi. The memoir was donated to the Granly history collection by Anna's youngest daughter, Betty Larsen Engdorff. Betty says they transcribed her mother's words, exactly as written, only offering occasional comments which are enclosed in brackets.

We had heard about a place in south Mississippi near the Gulf of Mexico where the climate was warmer, especially in the winters, and people could work outside all the year around. We decided to go down there and see for us self what it was like.

My husband bought an old truck and worked it over, and he build seats along the sides in the back and a top. We covered almost like the old covered wagons we read about. The man that came to America with my husband, his wife and in-laws and another couple came along.

Before we started out each family gave \$20 and we pooled it in a box to use for food and other necessities along the way. We left in August 1934. We had a small camping stove and a box for ice to keep butter, meat and other food in. We bought a hunk of ice every day. We ate sandwiches at noon and each night when we stopped to camp, we prepared a hot meal. It was a long slow trip, but we finally came to our destination. I had looked forward to see the big ocean again, and was so disappointed when we

got to Pascagoula, and we were told "this is the Gulf". I had expected to see white topped waves come rolling in on the beach like I remembered from Denmark, but it was water anyway. We camped outside and in an old pavilion near the water, but none of [us] slept much for mosquitos were bad. The wind had blown a lot of them in from small island a short distance from land.

The next day we started out to find the place where several Danish families had settled. We could hardly stand the heat. We had come at the hottest month of the year. They all bid us welcome and we stayed several days to talk to people and look around. The men seemed to think we would be able to make a living down here, so it was decided that we go back home, sell out all we didn't want or rather could not take with us. All the girls had been left home alone, and with the help of 2 neighbor boys, had taken care of the stock and themself.

We moved in October the same year. It was so hard to break up. We had lived and had our home around Marquette for more than 20 years, and we had to leave the 2 oldest girls behind. Johanna had been married 1 year and had her first child, and Ella was just married in September. And what also made it hard was the fact that in 3 months' time, I expected our 7th girl.

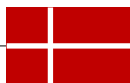
The old truck was loaded with all we could take along of furniture, farm tools and other things needed. It was packed way out over the hood. Too much weight as we later found out. We were 2 cars behind the truck. A younger man came along to help

my husband drive. We were 7 grown-ups and 4 children. The first day we didn't get any farther then to Salina Kan-



A *Mississippi Press* article from 1987 describes the Larsen journey to Granly. In the article Else Larsen, just 13 at the time, says it took days because the old and overloaded truck broke down often. "We also got lost several times because Dora and I were so busy looking at sites we forgot to read the map."

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Future Events

Granly Christmas
December 26, 2024 at 6pm

2025 Annual Meeting
October 25, 2025 at 9am

2025 Annual Workday
October 24, 2025

Visit Our Facebook Page at:

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

Share your Family Photos and Memories with us to be
posted online and in the Newsletter.

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Anna Larsen Memoir cont.

sas. Just outside of town we had the first breakdown of the truck. It had to be towed in to a garage, and the next morning the whole load had to be unloaded and repack and reloaded. Several pieces of farm machinery had to be left there behind the cabin we slept in the night before.

The roads were bad. No paved roads to speak of. Mostly gravel and very coarse gravel for many miles and in and out with big curves. We were 10 days on the road, and almost every day something went wrong. One day alone it cost us \$80 for repairs. The last bad break came when [we] had almost reached Bay St. Louis Miss. All of a sudden, the old truck didn't want to move any farther. Then we sat right in the middle of a busy highway. Couldn't even get it off to the side of it. One of the other people in one of the cars, had to drive ahead into the town, and find a garage, and somebody to come out and pull the truck in. We got away from there the next day and in the afternoon finally reached our destination.

One family and the ladies parents moved into a fairly new chicken house. We moved into a small wooden house with no ceiling, 2 small rooms. At least we had a roof over our heads. We were lucky at that. We just barely managed to get all our belongings unloaded before it started to rain, and it poured down all day. We felt we had it quite nice there. We had just enough money to buy a jersey milk cow. We were used to make everything ourselves, and a cow meant milk, butter, cream, and home-made cheese.

Now the men were going to look for some work, but soon found out that it was one of the things that was very scarce down here then. My husband could find no carpenter work except helping some of the other Danish families to build some small homes. They had bought a few acres each from a land company for \$3 an acre, and was using what little money they had from selling their former homes. Most of them had been workers in Chicago, Detroit, Minnesota and other larger towns, making a living as carpenters, bricklayers and the like. And depression too had driven them down here.

"We moved into a small wooden house with no ceiling, 2 small rooms. At least we had a roof over our heads ... We had just enough money to buy a jersey milk cow. We were used to make everything ourselves, and a cow meant milk, butter, cream, and home-made cheese."

My husband got \$2 for a full day's work. All they could afford to pay, and to us it was some help. Those people hoped to raise a crop to sell next spring, especially sweet potatoes, but there was one important thing they had not been told about before coming, and that was how poor and infertile the ground was. It had to have fertilizer 2 times per crop to make it grow. And to top it all, when time came that they had something to sell, they discovered there was no market at all. Most of them had started a nice flock of chickens and a few cows. My husband got the job by then, to gather all the produce from the different families, and take it down to Moss Point and Pascagoula to sell. It was 25 miles each way, and the road only dirt, and so muddy when it rained usually took a whole day.

One family had started to take eggs, butter and fryers to Mobile every weekend and peddling it to different restaurants and hotels. It was only a short time before those people got recognition for the good clean and tasty food they were selling, and from then on they had a sure sale for their produce every week.

Betty was born January 26th, 1935. I stayed with another Danish family near Lucedale Mississippi to be nearer to a doctor. It was 25 miles from the small colony of Danes. I was there a month. When I got back home, my husband and the other children had moved on a small farm near Hurley. The oldest girl, Astrid, was at that time 17 years old. What a

help she was to us all. She had cleaned and put up everything to order, put up curtains. She took care of the smaller sisters, baked bread, and cooked. She had made it real cozy for me to come home to.

That year was a hard one for us. We worked so hard, worked the ground, and made a living. We had contracted 3 acres of black-eyed peas to a canning factory in Lucedale. When we got the order to deliver so-and-so many sacks of the peas, we had to be out in the field in that hot sunshine to pick them, whether or not they were able or not. Both my husband and Astrid got sick and had to stay in bed. We didn't know what ailed them until a neighbor happened to stop in. He told us it looked like malaria, and advised us to get some quinine. They got better, but for years it kept coming back. Else too had it, and every spring they had to take

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Anna Larsen Memoir cont.

medicine to control it.

We had 2 old mules to work with. It was OK 'till one of them died, then the one left had to pull the whole load alone.

All the children from all the Danish families had gotten acquainted with each other, and they walked many miles to visit each other. They were so much out in the fresh air and all the walking had helped Else to get well and gain strength. She was just getting over a bad ear infection and other ailments when we left Nebr.

We lived on this farm only a year. My husband finally had found some carpenter work in Moss Point. We moved into a small rented house. Work was still slow. My husband's wish was to be his own boss. There wasn't a man down here that could do the kinds of work as he could. People soon saw that, and often they would ask him to figure out and make a plan for some remodeling and to find out from the lumberyard how much the cost would be. After all that, we surely thought he was to do the job. After waiting for quite a while, my husband would happen to pass by the place and then find out they had hired some others to do the work. Some that had no training at all. That kind of work that wouldn't last. That was so discouraging.

No matter how much he wanted to be on his own, he finally had to ask for a job with a contractor. Didn't take him long to find out what Rasmus could do. He was good at reading blueprint and very good at arithmetic. His work never had to be done over, and his good work helped to bring in more and more contracts for the boss. He said to me later "I soon found out that if I gave Mr. Larsen a piece of paper with some figures on it, he would take it and start making figures of his own" and I told him "you just go and do as you think best".

Conditions in the south were still poor compared to the northern states. They were so far behind with so much. Most of the simple homes here consisted of 4 bare walls to

a room. No closets, no kitchen cabinets or such. Rasmus started to change that by suggesting when they got a contract, that they make and added those things. Also, he made some beautiful frames around the fireplaces. He polished the wood to a shine and every grain stood out. He hoped they would use a varnish to finish with. Instead, most of the time it got smeared over with paint. Soon, when some new home was going up, or some remodeling, the ladies in the neighborhood would come to see what they were doing and often would say "I want something like that made in my house". By and by it paid off and they

had more work all the time. It wasn't easy for Rasmus to get to work. He often had to walk for miles with his heavy toolbag on his back. But finally he found an old Chevrolet to buy. It sure made it a lot easier.

Back in Nebraska, they had several dry and dusty years. Still no work and no crops. The farmers were losing their farms one after the other. They had to sell the livestock. There was no hay, corn or alfalfa to feed with. Trees were dying. Some had help from the government to buy feed.

The man, Henry Warncke, that had been working with the 3 carpenters back in Nebr. Was still back there. No work at all, and getting to the bottom of money. After Rasmus had gotten work for the contractor here, we wrote to him [Henry] to come down here also. As we were sure there would also be a job for him. He could do a little of everything. He came in 1938 and went to work for the same man, and has stayed here ever since.

That same year we had our silver wedding up in the Dane's community house. We had such a nice day, and we had so many greeting from the old neighbors and friends up in Nebraska.

Industry and business had now started to pick up in the south. They already had the paper mill, and some fisheries. Also a small privately owned railroad was beginning to pay off. During the depression both it and the paper

"All the children from all the Danish families had gotten acquainted with each other, and they walked many miles to visit each other. They were so much out in the fresh air and all the walking had helped Else to get well and gain strength."



Else Larsen with Granly friend Esther Larsen



mill had come to a stop. The people that used to work there, helped each other in every way they could. For instance, the one that had a cow shared the milk with a neighbor with children, and so on with other things.

A new woolen mill was built for making sweaters. Many of the older people was against it. They thought it would bring to many bad things along, but it really was a beginning for more work and better living for many people. Most women had work there. One woman said to my daughter, also working there, that for the first time she could buy better food and now her children had a real bed to sleep in.

Astrid did not go to high school. She was 17 years old when we came to the south and a very good worker and cook. Not making her start high school in Nebraska so she could finish here was a big mistake. Here no one hired a white girl, and if they did, she was treated like they were used to do the colored ones. She could have filled a job very well at the papermill, but just because she did not have the diploma, they would not hire her. If they would have given her a trial, I am sure they could use her, but we were strangers and had no one to stand behind us. When the woolen mill started working, she was with the first ones that started to work there. She likes her work. The wages were not very good, but it was money she herself had earned. She always wistled at her work.

Soon as she came home from work and had something to eat, she would sit down with a pencil and paper and started to draw. She was real good at it and she had started a correspondence course in drawing. She received good points on all the papers she sent in and she could maybe have had a future in that line.

She couldn't stand the heat and the malaria, and the hard jobs she had before was beginning to sap her strength. She had so much pain in her side but every time we took her to an old doctor here, he called it neuralgia, and gave her medicine for that. She got very sick, and this doctor

called in another doctor to help him diagnose. What they found out we were never told. Even after we asked the doctor and told him that there had been tuberculosis in her fathers family. Doctor brought her to the hospital and her lungs were drained for fluid and finally she was x-rayed. Even then we were told nothing and two months after that, he allowed her to go back to her work at the woolen mill

where the air was full of tiny bits of material. She would come home and would sit and pick tiny bits out of the skin on her arms. How much more hadn't gone down into her lungs and lodged there?

By that time, two new and younger doctors had come and started in Pascagoula together. Both Astrid and Else went down there for examinations. Both had to have their tonsils taken out. One doctor was a medical doctor, the other a head specialist. The medical doctor asked Astrid if she would come in to his office when the other had finished his examination. He listened to her chest and said he detected a rattle in there. A health clinic had just opened up in town and the doctor made an appointment for both girls for x-rays. This was in the fall of 1940. In the middle of the summer we had moved in to another house we had bought. It was in such a poor conditions, but we started to clean up and make it fit to live in right away.

Astrid got to feel much worse and had to go to bed. One morning about 6 o'clock I was the only one up yet. I saw his car and felt sure it

was us he had come to see. He said "sit down Mrs. Larsen" and asked "where is Astrid?" I said she was in bed and tried to get up the day before but couldn't. He said "No, the bed is the only thing for her."

I asked him "what is it doctor?" and he said "It is tuberculosis, and she must stay in bed. You will be the only one to care for her. You must try to see to it that she gets all the best nourishing food she can eat. She can have visi-



Sisters Dora and Else Larsen

"When the woolen mill started working, [Astrid] was with the first ones that started to work there. She likes her work. The wages were not very good, but it was money she herself had earned."

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Anna Larsen Memoir cont.

tors as long as nothing is touched that she has used, but keep Betty from the room as much as possible." Betty was 7 years old by then, and was always close to Astrid. It was hard but we did all that was possible. We asked the doctors "how bad is it? Can't she have a chance to get well in the sanitarium?" The answer was that she might have a 50-50 chance if you can make her eat and gain weight. She is better off here at home where she will get the loving care you can give her.

I did all that was possible. We have always had good food, but now I did everything to make something different and appetizing every day, but she just could not eat much. She was always the first and the last for attention day and night.

Now it was the summer of 1941 and Dora was graduating from high school. Two weeks before that she had to have her tonsils out. After graduation she had gotten a job here in town but only 2 weeks later she had to have an appendectomy. The doctor that was looking after Astrid had been keeping an eye on the other girls too. He suggested to Dora she should come to his office for an x-ray, and she did.

The day the report on that came back, he called my husband and Dora to his office and when they came back home, I was sitting out on the front porch. Dora came running in and threw herself down in front of me sobbing "Oh mom, I got it too. What am I going to do?" The doctor came to talk to us and said he would do all he could to get her up to the sanitarium. She can be cured he said, but you are going to lose one of the girls. How terribly hard to keep a smiling face and encourage Astrid to keep up hope, knowing there wasn't something else [to do].

What made it all so hard was that Dagny was a retarded child. She had been hurt at birth and when she was only 10 days old, she had 2 short convulsions. From then on we noticed that she did not develop like a normal child. She did not learn to walk alone until she was 3 years old. She was always hanging over on one side like she could not control herself, and also half of her face. We asked several doctors, but no one could do anything then. As she grew older she got some awful periodic headaches, and she

could be quite undependable. She got worse all the time, and we finally had to send her to an institution. I just couldn't handle her myself, with all the sickness besides.

The day she was brought up there, I came along, and it is one of the darkest days in my life. No one that hasn't tried it don't know how it feels to push one of our own children out from home. I never saw her again. She died one year later, but she had learned enough in school so she could write small notes home.

"Astrid grew steadily worse ... So many of the Danes both young and old, came to visit her when they could ... Everyone that come here to see her goes away with something she gives them. She learned to forget herself to help others."

It was getting near Christmas again. Astrid grew steadily worse. During all the time she had been in bed, she had been so patient. So many of the Danes both young and old, came to visit her when they could. One of them said to me one day "where does Astrid get all the wisdom she has, as young as she is?" Everyone that come here to see her goes away with something she gives them. She learned to forget herself to help others.

She knew she was going to die. One day she found a few lines in the newspaper, telling about a new medicine called "streptomixin". She cut it out and saved it. She said maybe some other people can be helped by this. As sick as she was, still she thought about others. She had Else help her pick out a Christmas gift for all of us, and for the little children in the colony, she had her buy candy to put in the bags for the Community Christmas Tree. Astrid died two weeks before Christmas 1941 after been in bed a whole year. It was a sad Christmas for us all, with Dora in sanitarium, and Dagny getting slowly more uncontrollable. It was on February 14, 1942 we drove her away. She was happy to leave as she thought she was going to a school for girls, but the nearer we got to there, the more afraid she got. She took my hand and said "Mom, what will they do to me there?" I could only tell her they would be good to her and help her. She wanted me to come up and visit her, but doctors advised me not to. Two friends did see her at different times, and they said she was happy. She died March 12, 1943. It came so sudden we never got up there.

It was hard telling Dora when Astrid had died. We drove up to see her when possible, but it was 200 miles each way and my husband had to work every day, so it had to be a Sunday. How I dreaded to get up there to tell her



that Dagny also had passed away. First the nurses wouldn't let me see Astrid, as the doctor was not in then. I told them they need not worry, I knew her better than they.

We needn't have worried...someone up above had taken the shock away. When I came into her room and stood by the bed, she said "you need not tell me Mom, Dagny is dead. I was told last night." I myself had been given a similar warning the night my mother died. I saw her as if she was there herself. There is more between Heaven and Earth than we can understand, and I firmly believe someone above is looking after us.

New sorrows was soon to come soon. My husband could hardly keep him self going anymore. He knew now he had tuberculosis himself. X-rays showed he had it for 20 years. He was failing fast. He died in June 1943, only 3 months after Dagny. I had lost 3 loved ones in 1-½ years. How much can a human being take. It was not easy to be left with one child 8 years old to be responsible for, but thank God for my other girls. They have been such a great help to me, and the other man from Nebraska had stayed on with us, and been a help to us all.

We were not completely alone, and he didn't have any other home or relations in America. We have him to thank for a lot. Little by little the house was fixed up. It had needed a real going over.

Ella and Hank had lived out in California a few years. We were still in the middle of World War 2, and there was a chance that Hank would be drafted, so they sold what they had out there and came home a short time before her father died. The big shipyard in Pascagoula was by then working full force, and Hank went to work there. He proved to be very good and needed at the job he had there. The company had him deferred several times. We and his family were glad he could stay with us. He worked there the last 2 years the war lasted.

My oldest daughter Johanna, still living in Nebraska, came home with her small boy 2 weeks before her father died. It had been 8 years since we had seen each other, and she had never seen her younger sister Betty. Yes, during the

years of our own sorrows and troubles, the thoughts of the war had been pushed in the background or our minds, but now we got more conscious about it when we heard day after day about the terrible things that happened in Europe, and seeing all the young people leaving for war after the awful day when Pearl Harbor had been attacked. One of the darkest days for all us Danes in America was the day when the radio announced that the German army had over-

run and occupied our little homeland. They had sneaked in, and trampled all over in a short time. Only those people that had left their homeland could know and understand our feelings. And it goes for all the other people living here, who's home country was run over by Hitler and his hoard. For 5 long years they at home and we here didn't hear anything about each other or know if all were still alive. About the end of the war we finally received a red cross letter from the family telling us they were all alive and OK. We could write an answer on the other side of the letter, but only use 25 words. But how to tell in 25 words what had

happened here and why; somehow I did and they received it.

One of the best things that President Roosevelt got started before he died, was the social security. My husband was lucky to be in under that for 5 years. Without those monthly checks both Betty and I received till she was 18 years old, I don't see how I could have gotten along. The girls that were working was always willing to help out as much as they could.

For Dora, things was slowly getting better. She was in bed a whole year. She wanted to be well, and she obeyed all the regulations in sanitarium. We tried to come up to visit as often as we could. The work had to be tended to. It was 200 miles each way, and we could have only 2 hours with Dora when she was finally allowed to get up. It was only 5 minutes the first day. Each day the time was doubled till she could be up 1 hour. When she was finally well enough for part-time work, they give her a job at the sanitarium telephone central. After 2 years, she got a job in Jackson

"My husband could hardly keep him self going anymore. He knew now he had tuberculosis himself. X-rays showed he had it for 20 years. He was failing fast. He died in June 1943, only 3 months after Dagny. I had lost 3 loved ones in 1½ years. How much can a human being take."



Anna Larsen Memoir cont.

MS, near enough to the sanitarium, certain days a week. Doctors from there came to Jackson to give the patients the neurratorial treatment they had to have at regular times a week. And when she was finally allowed to come home for a visit, it was only for a couple of days. She had to go back for her treatment. It took 6 long years before she could come home and stay home.

Dora, Else and Betty had work nearby so they could live at home. Today, Dora is completely well and happy. She is married and has 2 little boys and a fine husband. Ella and Hank had lived with us down south for 2 years. Shortly after the war ended, they went back to Nebraska with their 2 boys to live. Betty and I went along for a visit there the first time in 10 years. Betty saw the place we used to live and where her other sisters had been born.

Some good peaceful years followed the war, and our own hard and troubled years. As soon as we were allowed to do so, I, like so many other people, had sent many packages home to the family in Denmark. Both clothes and food and other things that it was impossible for them to get there. We also had been rationed on many things, but their need was much greater after being occupied for 5 long years. The land had been stripped of everything.

My husband had belonged to a Danish Brotherhood, and when he died, I got \$1000 insurance paid to me. My family in Denmark wanted me to come home for a visit, and if I could make it there, they would take over and pay all expenses. So I used the necessary amount to make the trip from the small insurance I had received. I had always longed to get home and see my sister and brothers. Both my father and mother had died.

It had been 36 years since I came to America when I finally saw my old country again in 1948. I was with another Danish lady that had lived among the Danes here for a while. She and her husband had moved to Tacoma Washington by then.

Many of my family met me at the boat in Copenhagen. We had corresponded regularly in all these years, except the 5 years [during the war] we could not. We had exchanged pictures a lot and because of that, I was able to recognize almost all of them, including the young people. My youngest brother was only 13 years old when I left home.

I had such a lovely visit at home for 3 months with my 3 brothers and my sister and their families. I never saw my sister again. She died a couple of years later.

So much had happened over there. The land had gotten poor. The had stripped for everything. The stores were empty. Food was strictly rationed and so was electricity,

and many other things.

Among those felt most was wood and coal. Lots of people froze in the winters. Either it wasn't there to buy, or they did not have the money for it.

I visited the memorial cemetery in Copenhagen where all the young men lay buried that had died for Denmark. All the posts were still standing there where the Germans had tied the prisoners and shot them. The inscriptions on these graves are something we can never forget after reading them. Many more then it was believed over here, lost their lives trying to protect the country the day of the invasion. Later too.

"I visited the memorial cemetery in Copenhagen where all the young men lay buried that had died for Denmark. All the posts were still standing there where the Germans had tied the prisoners and shot them. The inscriptions on these graves are something we can never forget"

- Anna from return to Denmark 1948

The underground and sabotage.

It was all so fresh in the minds of the people, yet, when I was home in 1948, so many things they could tell about the courage and sacrifice of people. In every small village there was a small square with a heavy chain around and a flagpole in the middle and on it a plaque with the names of all that had given their life for his country in Copenhagen. We could all of a sudden find a corner or a place against a wall where either a wreath or sprig of fresh flowers had been placed. Someone had been shot at the exact spot. Every year when May 4th comes, people place burning candles in the windows as a symbol of freedom; the day the lights came on again.

Else was in Denmark in 1949. It was a wonderful trip for her. She talked the language real well and felt right at



home among the family. The Danish people did not very much like to be included in the Marshall help. They did not want to be under any obligation to any other country, but finally did join that. It did prove to be a great help. To get my little homeland back on it's own again. The Danes love order and cleanliness. Even as short a time after the war ended in 1948, very little trace of ruin could be found there.

Denmark was also a member of the Atlantic pact [NATO] that President Roosevelt signed in Yalta. So many new weapons and other things in electronics and science came up, and these countries working together for peace, had started to send service [men] over here to be taught about those. Keesler Air Force Base was the one that the Danish government sent their men to. We lived only 30 miles from the base, and in the years when America took part in the War, our girls acted as hostesses at the U.S.O. They would send [a] bus from Keesler on Saturday night with chaperones, to pick up the girls in Moss Point to take them to a dance at the base, and it was understood the girls came back home the same way.

Else had met a Swede there at a dance and one Saturday night, the last in October 1950, he said to her, "by the way, there has arrived 3 Danish soldiers here I would like to have you meet." That was the first of many more to come. She invited them to dinner here the next day and in the afternoon we all went up to the Dane's Community house. They were celebrating 20 years since they had settled down south. That day, those boys heard told the history of the Danes there, and it had never been a dance on roses for any of them. The boys told us they [that] all over in Denmark they had the wrong impression of life over here. They thought most people had plenty.

Shortly after those 3 officers, a group of young soldiers, 20 in all, came. They were stationed at Keesler for 9 months. Some of them got so homesick. The youngest was only 17 years old and had never been away from home.

After they started to come here on weekends, they soon got used to all the new.

For 10 years there wasn't a Sunday that someone wasn't here, usually 6-8-10, for Sunday dinner. At the time all my 3 girls was at home and they were such a big help in every way. Many times we went up to the Danish Community House. We would have suppers or dinners together with all the other Danes. We would bring our record-players along and after dishes were done and tables moved aside, we would all dance till midnight. The boys still had a long way to Keesler from Moss Point.

One of the first years after the Danish soldier boys had started to come to Keesler, we had planned Thanksgiving Dinner at the Community House, together with all the other Danish families. We bought 5 turkeys. We all had a certain thing on the menu to make at home and bring along. Five families each baked a turkey and made a batch of gravy. Some made mashed potatoes. Others brought butter bread, peas, salad, and so on. We had everything belonging to a real Thanksgiving dinner.

There were 32 from Keesler. Some Norwegians was in the group. We fed 103 people including the children. We had such a wonderful day. Some of the boys helped to clear the tables and do the dishes. All the others and some of the Danes, took the bus

and went for a ride also to visit a sick lady that had been in bed for years. All of them were back in time for afternoon coffee. Later the Danish menfolk went home to do their



Danish and American flags adorn the forsamlingshus for a dinner for the Danish airmen from Keesler circa 1952.



"Many times we [the Larsens and the Danish airmen stationed at Keesler AFB] went up to the Danish Community House. We would have suppers or dinners together with all the other Danes. We would bring our record-players along and after dishes were done and tables moved aside, we would all dance till midnight."

Continued on page 10 ...



Anna Larsen Memoir cont.

chores. Meanwhile we fixed left-overs from dinner, sat the tables and made coffee and cold drinks. When they all came back they brought home-made liver cheese, butter cream, rye bread and so on. We served the food cafeteria style. There was plenty for all. After again we had it all cleared away and all the tables folded and put aside, we got the record player started and we danced till about midnight. We all had a wonderful day.

All these boys were happy to have found people of their own nationality that could talk their language. Sometimes they came along to church up there. A Danish Pastor would be there to serve the community.

As the groups went back home and others came, it was so nice to get all the news from Denmark. All my girls could speak Danish. Betty still was going to high school. Else & Dora was working. Yes, all the young fellers came to be my boys in the best sense of the word. My home was their home. Here they could feel free to come at any time, and here they could talk their problems over with each other, and sometimes with me. One of them decided to call me "Lillemor", and it stuck. From then on, they never called me anything else. Being with them and having them here so much, had added so many new interests to my life, and helped [me] to forget some of the hard years before.

My girls has been thankful that we had taught them the Danish language so they could talk to the boys both in Danish and English, and they found out too, that they needed improvement in Danish.

We had 5 young men here for 10 days during Christmas 1952. Some of the others was invited among the Danes. Some of them hadn't spent a Christmas in their homes for years. A few had been invited home with some of their American friends at the base, and a few others was trying to see more of America by hitch hiking. A few had the luck to get a place on an airplane, and that way had

"Here [the Danish airmen] could feel free to come at any time, and here they could talk their problems over with each other, and sometimes with me. One of them decided to call me "Lillemor", and it stuck. From then on, they never called me anything else. Being with them and having them here so much, had added so many new interests to my life, and helped [me] to forget some of the hard years before.

been in a few more states and towns.

Betty and Sven-Erik, one of the 5 spending Christmas here in 1952, had taken a shine to each other. They were so sure it had to those two or nobody else. It was very hard on both when he had to leave again with his group after 9 months here. They didn't see each other again until 14 months later, but they did not forget each other.

Shortly after Sven-Erik went home, their instructor in Denmark that helped pick out most of the service men that got sent over to Keesler for training was sent to Kees-

ler himself to take a course. His name was Harold Kilde. The very first day he arrived, some of the boys was coming over that night, and he came along with them. How they talked that evening. It seems my kitchen was a popular place to be in. So often they found out [much] there. And Kilde and the boys had so much to tell each other that night. I finally had to ask them to go in to the living room so I could make them some coffee, and asked him to take off his coat. He had forgotten.

Kilde was a very nice person. All the boys liked him. Most of them did not know each other from home, but after coming here a while, also some officers, they soon got to know each other and some good lasting friendships came out of that.

After a while Kilde started saying it would be nice if they could get me to come to Denmark for a visit,

but I could not afford another trip myself. It was in 1953. Kilde went back to Denmark in September 1953. By then he had talked to the boys at Keesler, and after he got home, he contacted most of the others that had been here to get as many as could or cared to, to contribute to a trip for me over there. It was supposed to be their Christmas surprise, but it did come a little later.

Sven-Erik [and Betty] had been writing to each other and he wanted her to come to Denmark in 1954, and they be married over there. Shortly before his contract as a serviceman was up, then he could come to America with her



as an emigrant by him marrying an American citizen. The Danish embassy could clear him and he being allowed to leave the country after 3 months, instead of being at the bottom of a long waiting list.

I could not see her go alone on such a long trip, so we had gotten passage on a boat for April 1954. By then I had received the letter from Kilde and the list of names of the boys that was in on the surprise. They had paid for the entire trip from my door to New York and over the Atlantic and back, so when Betty and I came out to the Pier, I was handed a check of \$438 dollars. Everything had been taken care of.

When we arrived in Copenhagen, Sven-Erik had gotten permission to come aboard ship. I knew some of the boys would meet us there, and [we] looked for them. There they were with big signs bidding me welcome home, and calling to me. Someone lifted me up on one of the lifeboats to see better, and they saw me. Then when we came inside the Duty Hall, the whole group had been allowed in there, and here they were all calling to me and wishing me welcome home. They had to wait outside until we had our baggage checked. If I remember right, there was 80 there, and I could remember them all by name. Can't do that anymore, so many more had been here during the years after that.

Sven-Erik's folks was there, and also several members of our family. We was driven to Engdorfs Apartment by taxi, and coming inside the entrance door, I remarked how quiet it is here. Then it all broke loose. All the boys, Kilde and several other officers, had come here so much, had been invited by Sven-Erik's parents Arthur Engdorf, to come to the apartment. And here they stood on every step up to the second floor, saying "welcome home Lillemor". I will never forget that night or day. We had so much to talk about. It was difficult for Mrs. Engdorf to find containers for all my flowers. I had 24 sprigs given to me.

The following day[s] were so filled with things to do and see. Betty and me, Sven-Erik, the Engdorfs, and sever-

al of the boys had been invited to the Carlsberg Brewery, a very well known place. First we were taken around to see it all. After that, we gathered around the beautifully sat dinner tables (Frokost as called over there). There was so many beautiful flowers on it. I was given a big beautiful bouquet of deep red carnations. The boys had already then consumed a good amount of beer. And to top it all off, we were served turtle soup. The waiters poured some kind of alcoholic drink in each dish and waited to be told when it was all they wanted. Some of the boys was so wrapped up in talk they forgot to pay attention, so a few of them had a little too much.

Afterward, we all sat in a smaller room to drink coffee and there again was "Likor" and cognac with coffee. Also, all the most delicious pastry we could eat. To top off the day, we all was to meet in the Tivoli Gardens that night, but a few had to be excused. They couldn't quite make it. We had a lot of fun in there. Even had a triple ride on the famous little red train. After seeing the open air theater, I was ready to call it a day.

Another day we were invited to Frokost with the boy's to Commander General Forsler, and his wife. We were a small group of the boys, Betty, and myself. After we had been at the table awhile, and had started to talk a little more freely, the General told me that he and his wife had been to America once and in the south, they had been through Biloxi. We seemed to get to more familiar ground after that. When we were ready to leave, the General's secretary gave me an

envelop full of clippings she had cut from newspapers, saying she thought I would like to have them.

I had a free ride to the west coast to the base closest to the German line. Karl Ohlsson, one of the first group of 20, and his wife, was living there. He was at the base Skrydstreep. Also, several other boys that had been here, Viggo Bredo and another, Gert Jacobsen and his fiancée, rented a car, and we drove up to Rabild, the place where

... continued on page 12



"Lillemor" [Little Mother], as she was affectionately named by her "boys", receiving a special honor from the Danish government on her 90th birthday in 1979 for her years of support of the Danish airmen stationed at Keesler Air Force base in Biloxi.



Anna Larsen Memoir cont.

Americans and Danes celebrated our 4th of July in the hills. About 40,000 to 50,000 people come there every year. We had so looked forward to be there, but for the 1st time in 42 years, it had to be called off. A thundershower came up and instead of going around with just a small shower, it got worse and rain just poured down. People had taken umbrellas and raincoats along. Also robes to sit on, and for a while, tried to cover up and stick it out, but all had to give up. We all got more or less wet. It took 2 hours to get away from the parking place, there was so many cars and busses there.

Karl Ohlsson and his wife drove me to the other bases farther north and I spent a few days with them at his wife



Anna Larsen on front steps of Moss Point home with visiting Granly friends.

Aases home. They were nice friendly people. I enjoyed it so much. I also visited at the homes of several more boys, and met their families.

Betty and Erik were married June 5 [1954] in the small round church in

Frederiksberg, near the home of [the] Engdorfs. It was a beautiful sunny day. Everybody was happy. The church was decorated so nice. Afterward we had dinner at a nice restaurant then later we went to Engdorfs apartment for coffee and cakes and a very nice evening there. Betty and Sven-Erik rented a small apartment near his base on the west coast and stayed there until he had finished his service. Because Betty could speak the language, she could go to the stores by herself and buy what she needed in the line of food or groceries to cook with.

I came back home the first part of September [1954] alone. It gave me a [sad] feeling to leave Betty behind over there, but they came in November that same year on a Hol-land boat.

My sister had died before I came back to Denmark, in '54. I missed her so much, and now 11 years later, only my youngest brother and I, the oldest, were living. The two other brothers are also passed away.

Betty and Erik stayed down in the south, and he is doing well. He is a well known TV man, has his own repair shop and sales business. They have 4 sweet children. Else and her family live next door to me, and there is 2 small boys to keep us all alert. Dora and hers live near Houston Texas, with 2 small boys. John is a chef at the airport. The 2 oldest still live in northern states. All are doing well.

I have the best son-in laws a mother could wish for. I never had a boy, but they and all my other "boys" have made up for that. I have lived a long life and seen many changes take place, especially here in the south. It has grown and developed so fast, and still is. My eventide is growing near, but I can still enjoy all the good things and my family and good friends. My biggest hope and wish for all of mine, that they can someday be able to say the same, and never forget to be thankful for all the blessings that has been given us.

I am leaving this as a memory to all my dear ones. Some day we will all see each other again in a better place.



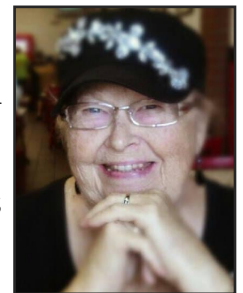
Obituaries

Margaret Brinkman Roberts

Margaret "Mia" Brinkman Roberts was born September 8, 1939 and went to Glory on October 30, 2024.

Margaret was the fifth child of Astrid Laursen Brinkman and Carl Brinkman. She has joined her husband, Bob Roberts, brother, Lloyd Brinkman and sister, Jeanne Brinkman in Heaven. Mia is survived by her daughters and their families. Lynda and Terry Wood, grandson Trevor and Robyn and Jason Horne, grandson Harrison and grand-daughters Abby and Katie. Her siblings; Roy and Jean Brinkman, Glenn and Carolyn Brinkman, Harvey and Carol Brinkman and Carolyn and Wendell Gordon.

Margaret was raised in Harleston, MS with her seven siblings and numerous cousins, she spent her summer days jumping off the pier at The Old Spanish Fort or cooling off





in Dog River. In the early 1940's the Brinkman family moved to Pascagoula, where her father opened the first air-conditioned Jitney Jungle Super Market. After graduating from Pascagoula High School in 1957, she attended Secretarial School in Miami, FL. Margaret returned to Pascagoula to work at Ingalls Shipyard.

While working at Ingalls Margaret met a handsome young sailor named, Bob Roberts. She and Bob married in November 1961. They honeymooned in Biloxi, MS. Family legend says that there was a young Harvey stowed away in the trunk. After the wedding they moved to Virginia Beach, VA. Margaret quickly adapted to being a Navy wife. In 1964 the young couple welcomed the birth of Lynda. When Bob left the Navy, the family moved briefly back to Pascagoula before moving north to Park Ridge, IL. In 1973 Margaret had Robyn and her family was complete.

In 1974 Margaret was ready to be home again so the family moved back to Pascagoula. Margaret quickly became an active member of the community and The First United Methodist Church. In 1984 she opened Mr. Gatti's Pizza with her sister Carolyn. Her restaurant and employees were an extension of her home and family.

In 2002 Margaret and Bob left Pascagoula for the last time, as they relocated to Foley, AL to be close to Lynda and their first grandson, Trevor. In 2003, Margaret's prayers were answered when Robyn and grandson Harrison moved to Foley also.

Margaret was passionate about sharing the love of the Lord, always being a servant of God, spending hours in His word and praying, singing praise and worship and inviting others to God's love and mercy.

Davis Kilstofte Mortensen

Davis Kilstofte Mortensen, age 92, of Greensboro, GA, went to be with his Lord and Savior on July 6, 2024, welcomed to Heaven with "Well done, my good and faithful servant."

Davis was born in Charles City, Iowa, on April 25, 1932, son of the late Ejner Martinus and Marie Kilstofte Mortensen. He celebrated his first birthday as the family moved to Harleston, MS, and settled in the Danish-American community that would become Granly. The family moved to Moss Point, MS, in 1939, where he would grow



up and graduate from Moss Point High School in 1950. He proudly served on active duty in the United States Army from 1950 to 1952, and in the Mississippi National Guard from 1952 until an honorable discharge in 1955 at the rank of Sergeant First Class. He was a graduate of Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College and earned a bachelor's degree in industrial management from Mississippi State University in 1956. Davis was employed by Georgia-Pacific Corporation for 35 years, where he held various management positions and retired in 1996 as Executive Vice President for Building Products.

His greatest loves were his family and his church. On September 10, 1952, Davis married the former Anna Robling in Fort Sill, OK – his beloved wife of 61 years. Together, they raised three daughters and were founding members of Lake Oconee Lutheran Church. In 2023, Davis established the Bread of Life Ministry to help the church further serve his community.

Davis also enjoyed gardening, boating, travel, and sports. He loved to share his alma mater and his Danish heritage with others. MSU dedicated a School of Forestry classroom and a tract of timberland in Davis and Ann's names for their many years of support and dedication to the university's students. And his signature dish was aebleskiver. He was a Great Dane and a proud Bulldog.

Davis is preceded in death by his wife, Ann, his sister Joy Dreher Ask, and brothers-in-law John Dreher and Norval Lee Harris. He is survived by his daughters, Stephanie O'Brien (Mike), Beth Etheridge (Jimmy), and Ejna Mitchell (Keith), as well as his grandchildren, Hugh O'Brien, Jamee Smith (Phil), Drew Etheridge, Jake Mitchell, AnnaBeth Mitchell, and Katherine Mitchell. He is also survived by his sisters Dallas Harris and Rita Shepherd (Jerold) and many nieces and nephews.



Mortensen family gathering for memorial service for Davis.

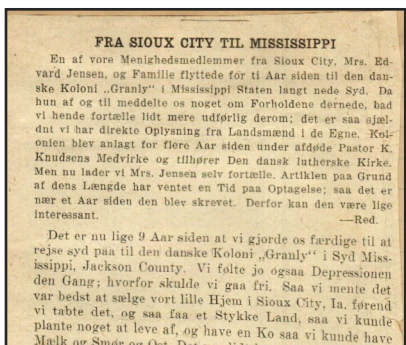


Jensen Family Records Donated

In August, Edward Abbott contributed a box of Jensen family photos and other records to the Granly History Collection. Ed asked that they be donated in the memory of his grandparents and mother — Edward and Petrea Jensen and Edna Viola Jensen Abbott.

The photos span from the family's roots in Skanderborg, Denmark to their days in Colorado, Iowa and eventually Granly. Ed and Petrea emigrated to America in 1910, first settling in Denver, then moving to Sioux City, Iowa.

Also included with the donation is a scrapbook kept



by Petrea that serves as a sort of a running time capsule — recording her writings and other memories starting in 1912 just two years after arriving in America to her last entry in 1963. The journal includes her poetry and several articles and letters written by her and published in *Lutherske Ugeblad*, a Lutheran weekly newspaper in Sioux City. A review of the articles reveals that Petrea was a regular contributor to the paper and would cut out her published works and paste them into her scrapbook.

Her writings often touched on religious themes as one would expect given the newspaper's purpose, but several also described life at Granly. An example of this is "Fra Sioux City Til Mississippi", a series of articles printed over



From the Jensen Collection. Ed Jensen as a young man from his days as a sailor in Denmark. The photo appears to have been taken at the Scandinavian Sailors' Home in London. Petrea and Edna in Sioux City in 1926. Petrea's article "Fra Sioux City Til Mississippi".

multiple issues in February 1944. It is an extensive recollection of the Jensen family's move to Granly in 1934 and life in the colony over the subsequent ten years.

Other interesting finds in the collection: An original version of Christian Petersen's poem that he recited at the colony's ten-year anniversary celebration in 1940 and a poem written by Petrea to honor Axel and Dagmar Pedersen at their 25th Anniversary celebration. We'll translate and reprint some of these items in future issues of *Granly News*.

Else Martin Honored

Else Martin received a lifetime achievement honor for her work preserving history including that of the Granly colony. The La Pointe-Krebs Foundation and Jackson County Genealogical Society presented Else with the honor at their annual gala in August. It was presented in recognition and appreciation of her "tireless work to preserve the past of Mississippi and particularly the Gulf Coast" through her volunteer roles as President of the Jackson County Genealogical Society, board member of the Jackson County Historical Society, president of the Federation of Mississippi Historical Societies, and as a Trustee and Founder of the Granly Danish Historical Foundation, ensuring that countless generations will know the rich history of our beloved Coast."



Granly USM Collaboration Continues

The **Granly-USM Collaboration** to preserve colony history continued with three new oral history interviews in October. Rita Shepherd and Gina Linton represented the Mortensen family in separate interviews and Else Martin sat down for a third interview this year.

We provided the USM team with contact information for other community members that expressed interest in this effort. Although in-person interviews are preferred, some have let us know that travel is not possible. In those cases we'll help coordinate remote interviews using Zoom or similar technology. Those are just now kicking off.

In December, a small group from Granly will visit USM to deliver funds to support the project and discuss next steps for digitizing colony records.



Granly 2024 Annual Meeting Minutes

.The Granly annual meeting was called to order by President Lee Shepherd at 9:00 am on October 26, 2024. There were 17 members in attendance.

The minutes were read by Gina Linton, substituting for Lynda Wood. They were approved as read.

President Lee Shepherd commended Barbara Nygaard for the yard maintenance and Crystal Goldman for the upkeep of the building’s interior.

Treasurer Kevin Martin gave the treasurer’s report, with one correction to include the amount donated to Lutheran World Relief which was approved at last year’s meeting. Larry Martin gave an update on the newsletter. He stated that he has received a story about Anna Larsen, which includes details about her move to Granly. Ed Abbot sent a collection of family photos and his grandmother’s journal, which will be included in future newsletters. Larry requested information about Davis Mortensen to be included in an upcoming newsletter.

Jerold Shepherd provided the report from the Trustees. The annual work day was held on October 25, 2024, and there were 9 members involved. Plumbing was replaced on more toilets, the pump house was insulated, the sprinkler system was installed, and the front bed was mulched. The hot water heater still needs to be replaced. Next year it is recommended that we pressure wash the buildings, power mulch the sides of the property as well as the trail. Lee Hedegaard is working on the cemetery markers to place at the corners of each plot.

New business included an update on our agreement with USM for the Granly archives. After discussion, it was moved and seconded to provide USM with \$5,000 to allow for additional help with digitizing the information. Several members have been interviewed and others were encouraged to participate.

New business also included a discussion about our donation to Lutheran World Relief.

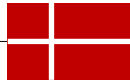
Jerold Shepherd reported that 93% of donations go to actual aid rather than administrative costs. Jerold also recommended that we donate \$100,000 from the foundation to Lutheran World Relief in memory of Davis Mortensen. It was seconded and the motion carried.

Jackson County Historical Association and Genealogy Society and LaPoint Krebs Museum Foundation recently recognized Else Martin with their Lifetime Achievement award. Our gratitude for Else’s work with Granly is appreciated.

Election of Officers took place. We thank Lee Shepherd for his service as president for the past two years, Keith Mitchell for his service as Vice President, and Lynda Wood for her service as secretary. For the upcoming term Jerold Shepherd will serve as President, Ejna Mitchell will server as Vice President, Gina Linton will serve as Secretary, and Kevin Martin will continue as Treasurer. Larry Martin will continue to serve by compiling and sending the newsletter. Trustees will now include Lee Shepherd, Keith Mitchell, Carmen Shepherd, Garry Linton and Katherine Mitchell.

Lee Shepherd announced that our next annual meeting will be on October 25, 2025 at 9:00 am. Our annual Danish Christmas celebration will be on December 26 at 6:00 pm. The meeting was adjourned in due form.

Granly Danish Historical Foundation	
Financial Report	
Current Status as of October 26, 2024 Board Meeting	
Checking Account Balance 30 September 2023 (last meeting)	\$ 31,030.53
Expenses:	
Utilities	\$ 1,594.07
Postage/Checks	\$ 377.00
Newsletter/Printing/Envelopes	\$ 1,127.78
Repairs	\$ 12,017.48
Insurance	\$ 866.58
Total Expenses	\$ 15,982.91
Receipts:	
Dues	\$ 940.00
Bank Interest	\$ 18.40
Contributions	\$ 200.00
Trust Fund Withdrawal	\$ 20,000.00
Total Receipts	\$ 21,158.40
Checking Account Balance 30 September 2024	\$ 36,206.02



You're invited!

GRANLY CHRISTMAS

December 26 at 6pm



Brune Kager

Brune Kager is a Danish brown cookie traditionally served during Christmas season.

Recipe by Herdis Nygaard

¼ cup butter or margarine	½ teaspoon salt
1 ½ cup dark corn syrup	1 T cinnamon
1 cup brown sugar	1 T ginger
Grated rind, 1 lemon	1 T crushed cardamom seeds
4 cups sifted flour	1 teaspoon soda
Split blanched almonds	

Heat butter, syrup & brown sugar, stirring until sugar is dissolved. Cool. Add lemon rind & sifted dry ingredients. Mix well. Chill 24 hours or longer.

Roll out paper thin. Cut with floured star or other cutter. Brush with water. Add split almond in center.

Bake 350 for 12 – 15 minutes.
Makes about 12 dozen. Can be frozen.

THE GRANLY NEWS
The Danish Historical Foundation, Inc.
C/O Larry Martin
1012 Breeden Place
Bay St. Louis, MS 39520