

“Librarian’s Shelf” by Melodee Pedersen

Library Friends and Museum to Host World Traveler

Librarian’s Shelf. World traveler Jean Jaspersen-Naegele (170 countries and counting!), who fascinated us last year with her travelogue on Central Asia, is back to share her experiences in Denmark. This presentation will be May 2nd at 2:00 p.m. at the Platte County Historical Society Museum, and is co-sponsored by the museum and the Friends of the Columbus Public Library.

How many times have you been to Denmark, and when was your most recent trip?

I have been to Denmark a total of 7 times now, most recently just this past March.

For part of your presentation you will be talking about tracing your Danish roots-how far back have you been able to do that?

I have been able to locate ancestors of the four great grandparents, from my father’s side who came from Denmark, back to the mid 1700’s. I am not what one would consider a serious genealogist, it is one of many things I am interested in along with traveling. I have been just as interested in learning about the country Denmark itself and its people as my ancestors. In the beginning I also did some research in the Danish Immigrant Archives at Dana College in Blair.

What is it about the Danes you particularly enjoy? What makes Denmark different than the other Northern European countries?

I enjoy their easy going open style of relating, less formal than in Germany or other parts of Europe south of Denmark. They have an ironic, subtle sense of humor that is very unassuming but fun. The country of Denmark is different than those farther north because it is inhabited throughout, is made up of many islands not just one continuous mainland and is close to the sea everywhere. Norway and Sweden being closer to the Arctic Circle are very sparsely populated in the central and northern regions.

What are your favorite spots in Denmark and why?

I enjoy Copenhagen and all it has to offer on street and canal life, museums, art galleries and wonderfully maintained old buildings and castles, Roskilde with its famous cathedral and all the royal tombs and the very interesting Viking Ship Museum located on the sea coast. Lejre, a village southwest of Roskilde has Viking Ship grave sites and mounds. In Denmark it is against the law to dig up Viking graves without special permission so there are many mounds and stone graves untouched throughout Denmark. Jelling on Jutland with his huge burial mounds of the first "king and queen of Denmark" and the runic stone depicting the baptism of Christianity in Scandinavia is special for the significance of it, knowing that was so long ago. The rolling landscape and the houses with reed roofs found everywhere are blissfully beautiful.

What advice do you have for anyone considering a trip to Denmark?

Go! It is a very easy country to travel in. Many Danes speak fairly good English more than in many European countries. I always rent the car/van in Germany, 25% less than it is in Denmark. Denmark is very expensive compared to Sweden or Germany, both just "next door" so keep that in mind. May to mid September is the time

to travel and the tourist season. Be sure to go on the Canal Tour in Copenhagen to see the Little Mermaid and get an overview of the city. Buy yourself a good travel guide for independent travelers. We always use "the Lonely Planet" series with a separate guide for each particular country. Enjoy your stay!

Don't forget the "All the King's Men" book discussion today, April 25th at 2:00 p.m. at the library!