

Barre History Collection

**Danish Brotherhood in America,
Green Mountain Lodge #294
Records, 1912-1997
BHC 461**

Volume: 1 linear feet
Inclusive dates: 1912-1997
Records Types: Membership logs, meeting minutes, reports, financial records, programs, photos

Introduction

This collection contains official documents of the Danish Brotherhood in America, Green Mountain Lodge #294. Membership logs and financial records of the organization are included, along with meeting minutes, organization by-laws and rituals, and photographs. A set of 10 CDs is also included with the collection, containing scans of most of the material in the collection. The collection is part of the Barre History Collection. It is housed in 1 archival document box and consumes 1 linear foot of shelf space.

Institutional History

The Danish Brotherhood in America, Green Mountain Lodge #294, based in Barre, Vermont, was chartered on October 22, 1912. Thomas Mekkelsen (1871-1920), a Danish farmer in Barre, Vermont, first took interest in forming a local chapter, and contacted the Danish Brotherhood in Omaha, Nebraska. With the help of Niels Olsen (1872-1960), a Barre stoneworker, he completed the paperwork and formed the lodge. There were twenty charter members of the Lodge; most were farmers. Sixteen were from Barre, one was from Plainfield, and three were from Williamstown. Lodge 294 was the only Danish Brotherhood lodge in Vermont.

The Museum of Danish America provides the following history of the organization as a whole (<http://www.danishmuseum.org/explore/danish-american-culture/danish-brotherhood-sisterhood>):

The Danish Brotherhood (DB), originally Det danske Brodersamfund, was a national fraternal insurance association for Danish immigrant males. Formed in Omaha, Nebraska, in 1881, as an outgrowth of several Danish immigrant veterans' organizations, the organization was initially open to "honorable men, born of Danish parents or who were of Danish extraction." The first six lodges were chartered in July, 1882, and lodges were soon started in many communities where significant numbers of Danes had settled, providing a forum for nurturing Danish culture and language as well as providing financial assistance to members in case of death or illness.

Some 350 lodges were formed in the U.S.; as well as three in British Columbia, and one in Copenhagen, Denmark... After 1920, as Danish immigration lessened and the number of eligible males dwindled, lodges opened their membership to include both American-born daughters, and later, spouses and children of lodge members, gradually evolving into a social organization for the entire family.

Some lodges were disbanded after a few decades due to economic conditions or changes in the ethnic base of their communities. Remaining members were then transferred to nearby lodges or paid their insurance premiums directly to organization headquarters in Omaha (Lodge #600).

In August 1995 the insurance function of the DB in America was merged into Woodmen of the World and/or Assured Life Association. A number of DB lodges remain active today as organizations promoting pride in Danish origins and culture.

Scope and Content

The Danish Brotherhood in America, Green Mountain Lodge #294 is the subject of the collection. Official documents and materials generated over the history of the organization are included in the collection. The bulk of the material consists of secretary's minutes from organization meetings, and financial records. As well, some material relates to the social function of the organization. Dated items range from 1912 to 1997.

Inventory

I. Records

- BHC 461:01 Membership log with names of Charter Members, 1912-1967
- 02 Membership logs, 1980, 1984, 1987, 1988
- 03 Juvenile Membership Register, 1954-1988
- 04 Secretary's meeting minutes, record book 1, 1949-1952 (filed at back of box)
- 05 _____, record book 2, 1952-1960 (filed at back of box)
- 06 _____, record book 3, 1960-1968 (filed at back of box)
- 07 _____, 1980-1985
- 08 _____, and reports, 1962, 1985
- 09 _____, and reports, 1986-1989
- 10 Constitution in Danish, with signatures of members, 1954, 1963-1987
- 11 By-laws and rituals, English and Danish, including funeral rituals 1932, 1940, 1944, 1956
- 12 By-laws, English and Danish, 1967, 1983, 1987, 1991, 1996
- 13 _____, local, 1949, 1972, 1992
- 14 20th Convention & Refugee Concert, 1939
- 15 Programs from regional and national conventions, 1983, 1985, 1987
- 16 General Committee of the Eastern Lodges Year Book, 1982, 1984, 1987, 1988, 1991, 1995, 1996
- 17 Financial records, 1961, 1962, 1986-1991

- 18 _____, and check records, 1986-1988
- 19 Order book, 1964-1967
- 20 Guest book, 1978
- 21 Song books, Danish and English, 1939, 1957, n.d.
- 22 Photographs of Danish Brotherhood members and events, 1962, 1984, 1996, 1997
- 23 News clippings, 1964, 1967 (includes obituaries)
- 24 Written history, early years and the social functions of the Danish Brotherhood, n.d.
- 25 Marion Andersen will, 1980, 1981

II. Scans of Records (see inventory in Folder 00 and labels on discs)

- 26 Compact disc, 1
- 27 _____, 2
- 28 _____, 3
- 29 _____, 4
- 30 _____, 5
- 31 _____, 6
- 32 _____, 7
- 33 _____, 8
- 34 _____, 9
- 35 _____, 10

III. Oversized

New York Eastern Lodge Convention, oversize panoramic photograph, 1939 (Filed in BHC oversized photos, category 96e)

Nicholas Ligett
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DanishBrotherhood.docx