

# Denmark Historical Society

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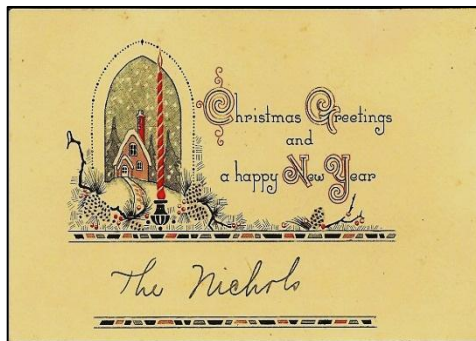
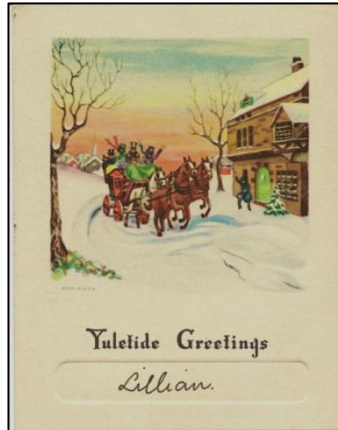


Volume 16—Number 4

December 2012

## Christmas in Denmark

Even in the midst of the longest, most widespread, and deepest depression of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (1930 to WW II), people who could, strived to retain family traditions—they still sent Christmas Cards to the people they loved. Depression-era Christmas cards were printed on rough, blotter-like paper. They were printed in postcard style. Lower printing and postage costs were an attractive alternative to the more expensive folded style Christmas cards. The cost of postage for a postcard stamp in 1930 was one cent. Lillian tells her family and friends, “We are all pretty good considering what we’ve had to go through this year and things don’t look any better for 1936, either. But I guess we will have to take it. All our friends are doing the same thing...” The Nichols wrote: “A depression card carrying a boom size Christmas wish. We have all worked so hard all fall we hope to relax and have a few pleasures next week.”



## Message From the President

As we enter the Christmas season, I would like to wish you all the very best of good health and warmth that the season brings. On the home front, the lower level of the library is nearing completion, if you haven't seen it yet you should definitely drop by. It will be totally completed, with lots of artifacts on display, by our open house in the spring. Also, the board has decided to suspend DHS meetings until March. With winter weather issues and so many of our active folks going to Florida, it seemed like a good idea. However, the collection is still available for research by appointment.

## Denmark Tourist Brochure

# DENMARK MAINE



★ A Place to Live  
Work or Play

This 1950s era Tourist Brochure extols the virtues of vacationing in, or living and working in Denmark. Its intrinsic beauty, the talent and work ethic of its workforce, the friendliness of its residents, and the many lake and mountain playgrounds remain unchanged. Denmark today offers the same opportunities that existed way back when. Way to go Denmark!

# Feature Article

## Christmas in Denmark

Several Denmark Residents have shared their childhood memories of Christmas in Denmark.



This 1913 Christmas Card was mailed to Mrs. Gladys Rankin, Denmark, Maine (no address # or street required then). It was postmarked in Portland, Maine on December 24<sup>th</sup> at 4:00PM. The message reads: "Dear Cousin, I received your card and was glad to hear from you. I hope you all will have a very Merry Xmas. L.V.S. with lots of love and kisses"



Daryl Kenison - My favorite Christmas memories involve the events just after the presents were handed out. The tree and presents were in the parlor (a room seldom used - the dining room was the room where everyone gathered), and the presents were handed out on Christmas eve. After the presents were opened and everyone had thanked everyone else for the lovely presents, a noticeable migration of the males to the dining room took place. In the dining room the elder males told spellbinding stories to the wee hours of the morning (at least I was told this since I was a goner early on and was put to bed). It's just my opinion, but storytelling has become a lost activity that was a great family recreation.



Dorothy Osgood Brooks - At the Osgood household on Christmas day the women would prepare a huge dinner. The men would eat in the dining room, with the children eating in the kitchen. After the men finished eating they would do the dishes while the women ate. After everything was cleaned up, we would all gather in the living room to open presents. My mother would have a chart she had made with each persons name on it. As a person received a gift, it was recorded on the list. We would all watch to see what that person received. Then on to the next gift. This took many hours as there were hundreds of gifts. Time for the pies, after the clean up of paper, etc.



My father liked to put humor into Christmas. I remember a couple of times in my teenage years. My father owned a chicken farm. Ground oyster shells were fed to the hens to make the egg shells strong. One Christmas he put a fur coat, for my mother, in one of the oyster shell bags and then slid it into another so both ends were closed. Another time he knelt down and gave her a diamond ring. He always said Christmas was for kids and he

was the biggest kid of all.



Helen Kenison - I remember going with my sister and brother to a Xmas party at the Grange Hall (later called the Community House). While we were gone, Santa always came and put presents under our tree. What a pleasant surprise that was.



*The painted curtain drop in the Grange Hall was copied from an old photo of the old Moose Pond Dam. The Grange was a center for family social life in Denmark.*

### Calendar of Events

➤ Although we will not be holding regular meetings during the winter, our collection is available for research by appointment. You may call the library (452-2200) and they will relay your request, or email your request to us at [denmarkhistoricalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:denmarkhistoricalsociety@gmail.com).

## Denmark Doings The Topless Men of Denmark - 2004



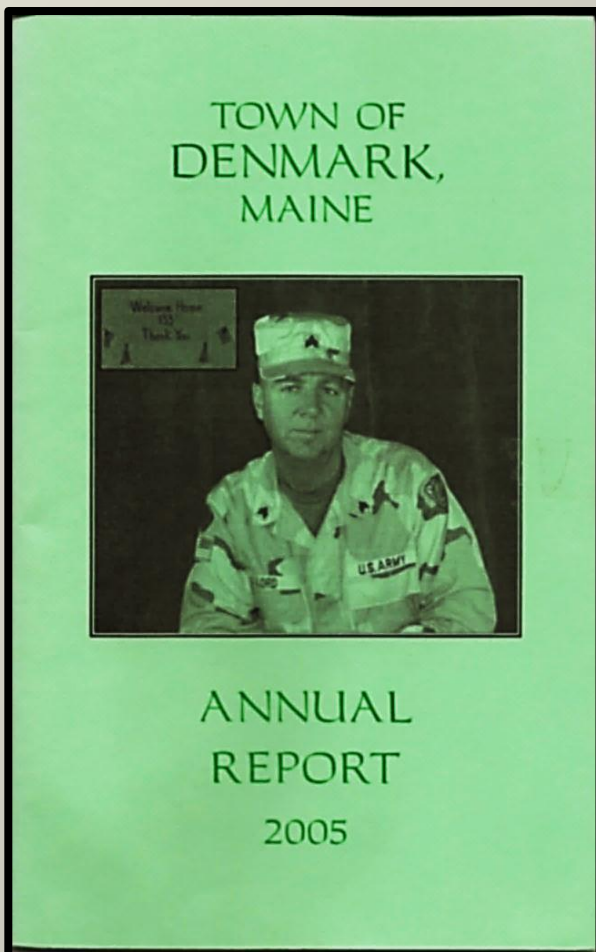
Friends of Gene Lord gathered at the home of Jim Stacey to show their support prior to Gene's deployment to Iraq in 2004. Gene's reserve unit was activated in response to the War on Terrorism. The men celebrated their solidarity by shaving their heads. And, as you can see, had a great party in the process.

The Historical Society has a copy of the 2004 calendar the men developed from the occasion. If you would like a copy of your favorite "topless" man, give us a call. We can provide you with this group photo, and a close-up of those men who posed to mark the various months of the year.

At Gene's homecoming, another party was held in his honor at the Fire House. Gene was given an escort from South Paris to Denmark. Fire trucks met Gene and his escort at the town line where they proceeded to the monument where a large group of townsfolk were there to greet him, they then proceeded to the party at the Fire house. However, no new heads were shaved.

The Lord family is well known in Denmark History and in this regard Gene is a "Lord" doubled. Gene is a "Lord" in his own right—not originally related to the Denmark Lords. However, he is married to Kathy Richardson, daughter of Betty Bucknell Lord—sister to Percy Lord—who is part of the Denmark Lords. Thank goodness for ancestry.com and good local recollections.

The Town of Denmark dedicated its 2005 annual report to Gene in appreciation for his service to his Country, and for his service to the Town of Denmark.



## Business in Denmark: Then and Now

These Denmark business advertisements are printed on the back on an undated map. Some of these establishments are still part of the Denmark business community, others have been renamed, and still others are no longer with us. Several hints as to the date this flyer was printed are the telephone number prefix (GLendale, instead of 45), Hancock Pond Road south of the blinking light on Route 117 is called Sebago Road, and Camp Winona still has a Denmark telephone number. Can you help us date this flyer and shed light (and pictures) on any of the businesses?

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# Denmark Through The Years

## Denmark Congregational Church



We have expanded our “Denmark Through The Years” feature and eliminated the 200, 150, etc. years ago sections for this newsletter. In keeping with the Christmas season, we are bringing you a brief history of the Denmark Congregational Church. The official date of founding was in 1829, just 22 years shy of Denmark’s township incorporation date of 1807. Sprinkled throughout its 183-year history are so many church events that were important in making Denmark the wonderful community that it is, we thought it appropriate to highlight them—regardless of the year in which they occurred.

1829 – On July 5<sup>th</sup>, an Ecclesiastical Council met at the home of William Davis to consider the formation of a Congregational Church in Denmark. Church officials from surrounding towns officiated. After prayer and due deliberation eleven Denmark residents were organized into the Denmark Congregational Church of Christ.

1834 – Joshua Osgood constructed a small, plain “Chapel” on the site of the current church. The small Chapel is what is now the middle section of the current building. In the “Chapel” the pulpit was on the Route 117 end of the building. “The Little White Church on the Hill” began its journey as an enduring part of Denmark Village.

~ 1872 – The pews built with the Chapel were straight backed with doors and a ‘button’ to secure a family within the pew. The story goes that one Sunday, Mr. Joseph Bennett neglected to button his family pew, little Frank Bennett escaped the pew wearing his father’s silk top hat and wandered down the aisle, climbed to the pulpit, and took the seat next to Rev. Truman S. Perry. To his credit, Rev. Perry, as apparently did little Frank, remained silent and unsmiling for the remainder of the service.

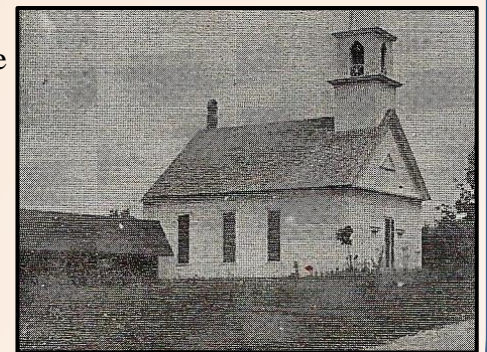


~1876 – About this time a disagreement arose between two Denmark families that required a number of meetings among the church peacemakers themselves, and with the dissenters individually. When negotiations failed, both men were suspended from the church as both were “out of the way.” Documents do not explain the nature of the feud or the two families involved. Does anyone know?

1879 – The Chapel was remodeled; a vestibule and Chancel were added, the pulpit moved to the back of the building, the pews were turned 180<sup>o</sup>, and a belfry was built. The members, then 33 strong, began to plan for a bell. And, the women of the church were given voting rights.

1899 – The October social at the parsonage was a complete success, there being 70 persons present and eight dollars was raised.

1901 – Mrs. Sargent, Superintendent of the Sunday School, led the children to make acquiring a bell for the new belfry, “its new century’s offering to God’s work in Denmark.” The bell was purchased and was dedicated on April 14, 1901. To raise money for the bell the children gathered coins from people throughout Denmark who were eager to help.



1902 – Horse sheds adjoining the church were built. While it seems harsh that horses had to wait 68 years to get out of the weather, it must be remembered that the church was not used during the winter months.

1904 – 74<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the church was celebrated. The Ladies Circle organized and conducted a baked bean supper. It was a very popular event and cost only ten cents per supper.

1907 – A new stove was purchased for the church, and it was voted to pay Mrs. Mae Ingalls, the organist, twenty-five cents for each Sabbath that she played.

# Denmark Through The Years (Continued)

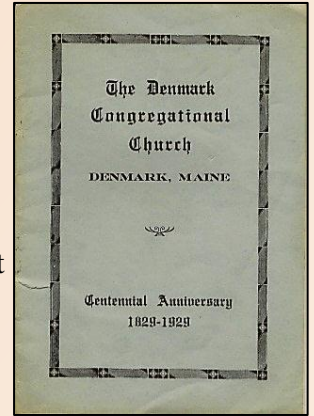


1927 – In an effort to procure William Wood, a Harvard student, six determined Denmark women drove a Model T in the rain to urge the church treasurer to underwrite Mr. Wood. Mr. Wood proved to be a boon for Denmark. His old Model T Ford could be seen everywhere in Denmark attending weenie roasts, bacon bats (does anyone know what a bacon bat is?), and attending to seniors.

1929 – The Denmark Congregation Church celebrates its centennial anniversary, and the horse sheds are torn down.

1950 – Redecorating included new wallpaper chosen by Mildred Crabbe (unused rolls of this wallpaper were discovered in 1970). Charles Holmes did the wallpapering for \$25. Choir benches were made by Arthur Rankin, and electrical lights were installed on the front of the church.

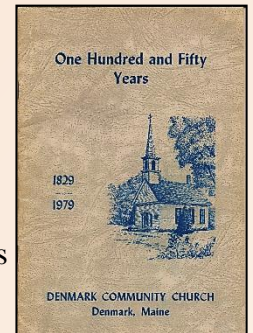
1953 – A furnace was installed in the church for the first time.



1962-63 timeframe – This Christmas card showing the Sunday School class was sent to friends and family by Eugenia Parker.

1971 – The church was raised and a room beneath it was excavated, the church was then lowered onto new concrete walls. The newly configured church stood two feet above its original level and the church had a new Sunday School space and general purpose room.

1979 – On July 5, the Church completed its 150<sup>th</sup> year in service to the Denmark Community. The Membership Roll from 1829 to 1979 lists 331 names. These names are a valuable source for people seeking information about family members who lived in Denmark.



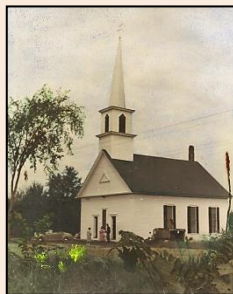
1986 – Then, Mildred Gorman (the same Mildred Crabbe who chose new wallpaper in 1950), bequeathed the church a gift of \$10,000. Mildred had long-time personal and family connections to Denmark and she loved the “Little White Church on the Hill.”



2011 – A Christmas Miracle for the Church occurred as the result of an unfortunate incident when someone broke into the church and stole the Mission Collection. A Collection the children of Denmark had begun in June to purchase an ark from the Heifer Project International. An ark provides animals for a family in need. The Portland Press Herald broadcast the theft far and wide; public response was overwhelming, soon the children had enough money to purchase three arks. Pastor John worked with the children to turn anger and disappointment into positive action with wonderful results.

(1988 Advertisement) SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10  
DENMARK COMMUNITY CHURCH CHRISTMAS FAIR AND LOBSTER ROLL LUNCHEON, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. Wreaths, Christmas ornaments, fancy cookies and handcrafted items.

2010 – History Under Development. This year the church held its 55<sup>th</sup> annual Christmas Bazaar. The Women’s Guild no longer serves a lobster roll luncheon, as this December 1, 1988 ad in the Advertiser-Democrat indicates. However, little else has changed. The Bazaar sets the mood for the Christmas season in Denmark with a “cookie walk” offering delicious cookies, fabulous homemade doughnuts, wonderful home crafts, great raffle items, and a delicious soup and sandwich luncheon to warm the soul.



Can you guess the date of this picture of the church by the make and year of the two cars also in the picture?

## The Lowell Diaries 1854 - 1907

The diaries of Theodore I. Lowell (Tiddley-I) provide a sweeping look into the day-to-day happenings in the town of Denmark. Tiddley-I was born on December 12, 1834 and died on January 21, 1910. He is buried in the Lowell Cemetery on Hio Ridge Road. In keeping with our Christmas theme, we present some of his more interesting December entries.

1855: *Received a Phrenological Examination* (By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century, Phrenology was widely accepted as a way to evaluate a person's character). Perhaps Tiddley was looking for the cause of a general malaise that affected his health for most of his life.

1861: *Wheeling yet [the condition of the road for wheeled vehicles] – We seldom have wheeling as late as this. It does not seem like winter to see the cattle in the pastures grazing and to see the wagons pass. Suppose I not hear the jingle of the bells as we usually do this season.*

1867: *Masonic Hall of oriental lodge dedicated. Got my horse Shod at Eben Blaisdell's.*

1872: *Have invitation to play at a dance at Alanson Emerson's tomorrow night.*

1877: *Went to Denmark Corner to a Christmas festival at Centennial Hall.*

1883: *Went down to the store to the trial of H.D. Moxcey, in complaint of C.E. Whidden – case settled and did not come to trial.*

1886: *Went to a sing at Frank Evans – Christmas entertainment at Hio.*

1887: *Rode over to Horace Gore's and bot a pig.*

1890: *Snow is piled nearly to the top of the doors.*

1893: *Henry Smith caught a heifer that has been running wild. Belongs to Leslie Sanborn.*

1898: *Palmer is putting in his ice. (on January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1899 he wrote, 24<sup>o</sup> below)*

1902: *Call from dry goods peddler. Made some cream tartar biscuit – the first I ever made – they were nice. Received Christmas presents from Sarah Pendexter and letter from Emma Gibbs with \$5.00 for present.*

1904: *Was up to Odd Fellows Hall to a meeting to see if Harrison will observe the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary.*

1906: *Cold, 14<sup>o</sup> below*

1907: *Tuesday – cold morning 8<sup>o</sup> above – walked up to Higgins this forenoon. A pleasant day.*



**CENTENNIAL BUILDING:** Located directly East of the Moose Pond Cafe, it was built in 1876 in celebration of the National Centennial. One of the many historical Denmark buildings in need of restoring and saving. Photo taken in 2012.



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