

The Petersen Brothers from left to right Leland, Ross and Robert

Compton's Cowboys

Majestic Theater to Grand Ole Opry

Does the number PA 4-0507 ring a bell? That number must have gotten busy signals as calls came in for the three young boys who formed a local trio also known as Compton's Cowboys. In addition to the nine brothers and sisters headed by Meyer Peterson and Anna Hansen Peterson the family shared the home 398 Neville Street with an aunt. Meyer was an elder in the Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church in Perth Amboy.

This was back in the Thirties, pre-Depression, 1934' times of rodeos, cowboys and western music, entertainment and church choirs. It was the time of Radio City Music Hall, Madison Square Garden, political campaigning before TV and websites and telephone operators and "party-line numbers, of course.

Bob Thompson, long-time member of that church and his sister, Katherine remember the Compton boys singing at their church. Bob mused, "I always wondered what happened to them." The "them" Bob referred to were Leland, Ross and Robert. The trio occasionally became a quartet when sister Ida sang with them.

Calendar

Jul Fest

Sunday Dec 19, 2010
2-5 PM at the Danish Home, 855 New Durham Rd. Edison, NJ 08817

Children's Fastelavn

Sunday Feb 27, 2011
2-5 PM at the Danish Home, 855 New Durham Rd. Edison, NJ 08817

Some programs for 2011:

Celebrating 4th of July at Rebild in Denmark

The Danish Monarchy Part 2
How the Danes play-- Lego Land and more

Dates for programs will be announced in 2011.

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"He played it like it was a classical instrument," remembers Robin. "He played harmonica until the day he died."

Robin Emerson

Note at top left someone added a reference to Tennessee Ernie Ford.

Robert, Ross and Leland from left to right

Compton's Cowboys

Thanks to Robin Emerson who donated family photographs to DANE's Archives and has shared her family stories, we now know what came next for the brothers. Robin's father was Robert, the youngest member of the group. Robert played guitar, mandolin and the harmonica. "He played it like it was a classical instrument," remembers Robin. "He played harmonica until the day he died."

Leland played the banjo. Ross played guitar. They strummed and sang their way to national attention by performing at the Majestic Theatre's Talent Show in Perth Amboy in 1934.

It was there they attracted the attention of James A. Compton, active in politics. Compton's son went to school Robert Petersen. Compton went to Meyer and Anna Petersen, the boys' parents and asked permission to have the boys travel the country on a whistle-stop tour with him.

"They toured for quite some time," remembers Robin. While on the road they sang at the Grand Ole Opry. They performed at Radio City Music Hall which had just opened on December 27, 1932 and were part of the show at a rodeo at Madison Square Garden. There they played for nineteen days.

Robin tells us when they came home they never performed together again. Robert, Robin's father and his brothers went to fight in WWII.

The Petersen Family

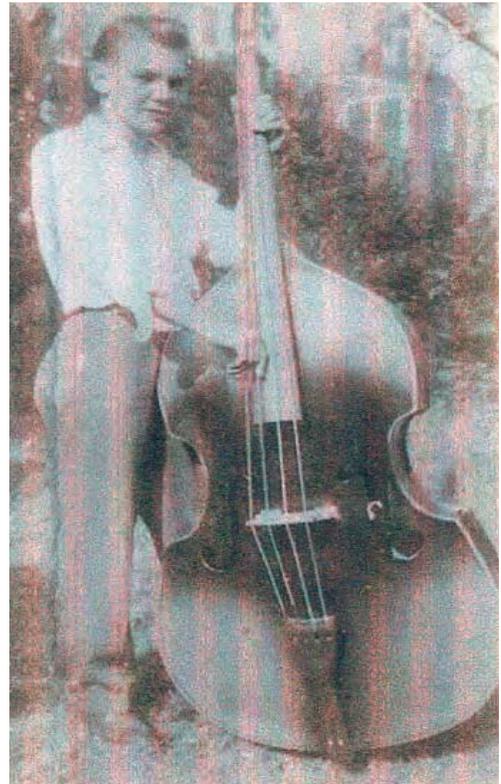


Sister Ida sang with the boys on occasion.

**The youngest Petersen Brother
Amore Petersen**

Armore Petersen did not perform with his older brothers. He was a fine musician who played with many orchestras.

Amore was also a featherweight boxer.



Mange Tak

Thank you for your donations

Christian Madsen

Irene Miller

Susan Siggelakis



Meyers Petersen was an elder in the Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church. He is the third person in the second row from the top. **Bob Thompson** believes it is his sister, **Katherine** in the same row to the far right.

Halsey R. Petersen

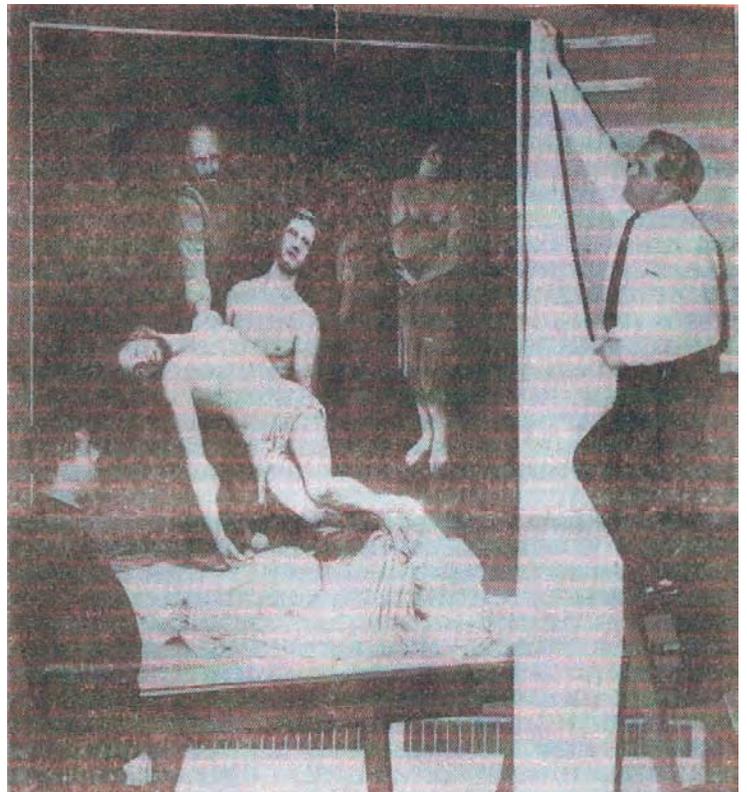
Here's another example of the Petersen family's talent. Halsey R. Petersen was the son of Meyer and Anna Petersen. He was born in Perth Amboy in 1927 and went to Perth Amboy schools graduating from Perth Amboy High School in 1944.

As his older brothers, he showed talent at an early age and began painting when he was nine. He studied at the Newark School of Fine and Industrial Arts and worked under the guidance of Paul Daubner, a noted Hungarian muralist.

One of his studios was on Watson Avenue in Perth Amboy. He also taught painting at the YMCA and YMHA and the Perth Amboy Art Guild. Perhaps you remember Dr. Frank C. Henry, Jr. and Dr. George Hilker. These two physicians were students at Halsey Petersen's studio in Metuchen.

Another memorable Halsey Petersen painting is of the ferry slip, a vivid and colorfully representation of the lower-Smith Street location.

Halsey Petersen donated a painting to the Grace Lutheran Church. "The Sacrifice" also named "It is Finished – Now the Cross is Yours" was painted in memory of his father, mother and brother, Amor. According to an article in the Perth Amboy Evening News, "It was meant to be a comfort to those who have lost loved ones and remain to continue the work of Christian ideals."



REMEMBERING EINER SORENSEN

Our Danish mason builder of dreams

Joan Seguine-LeVine, Agnes Jespersen-Hagmueller, Carl B.S. Pedersen, Jack Kjersgaard

The first time we met Einer was at the Harvest Festival at the Danish Home. It was ten years ago. Agnes Jespersen-Hagmueller and Joan had been meeting at the Barnes & Noble and other public places carrying our growing load of files. We were just getting to know the depth of Perth Amboy's Danish community and were hoping many projects; a book for example, would emerge from our research. It was a slow pace separated as we were by many hours of drive time and Agnes' full-time job. Then we met Einer.

He was president of the Home at that time. We asked if we could discuss an idea and very graciously he sat down with us in the kitchen of the Home and listened.

What resulted was a space in one of the unused resident's rooms. Carl, Agnes and Joan each bought a desk, and two bookcases. We scrounged filing cabinets, chairs and lamps. We had a workspace.

Fred Strandskov was one neighbor, Leroy Sorenson was on the other side and Violet was across the hall. A Polish couple lived upstairs as caretakers.

Leroy moved. Fred moved. Violet moved and eventually the Polish couple went back to Poland. Then Einer moved. That one room quickly expanded.

The wall went down in Leroy's room, and it grew into a large meeting room/exhibit area. Fred's room became a reference room with microfilm reader/printer donated by the Plainfield Public Library.

Violet's room became an office space and Gift Shop. Joan's workspace moved next to the Gift Shop

On the other side of the building, two rooms in the West Wing developed into a Library and office. Jack Kjersgaard bought a desk, a lamp and bookcases. He obtained a computer.

It was in these work spaces that all the paperwork for establishing DANE as a non-profit 501(c) (3) corporation was accomplished, all the photographs and crumbling files, books, letters that came in were stored. We had a telephone, a fax, a copy machine, curtains, and a bathroom. DANE had a home.

Einer gave us a start. He gave us a home. He was a friend who shared our belief that preserving and honoring the Danish community was important, meaningful work.

Maybe it was because he was a mason and looked at what we were trying to do with DANE as the footings of a new structure.



Norris Ross Hoist

History, Ourstory, Mystory

Norris Ross Hoist is a remarkable man. He is a history weaver creating a multi-hued tapestry illustrating the history of the Danish Virgin Islands. On Sunday, November 21st he and his “learned assistant,” Maya kept the attention of a large audience at DANE’s Genealogy meeting.

History

He told us three stories. Norris merged strands from the accounts of Pythagoras, Columbus, and Aristophanes to show the thinking about the earth from early times. Dating from 10,000 BCE, Norris described the indigenous people, the prevailing belief that the earth was flat, and detailed the voyages of Columbus with the controversy over his discovery and the Vikings.

Ourstory

In the second story Norris supplied us with what was going on in Denmark by outlining a brief history of the Vikings from 793-1000 AD, the Danish Monarchy and how a sea captain, Captain Smidt interested Jensen Slaglese in coming to the Islands in the first attempt at colonization.

He referred to the Eight Articles of Agreement between Denmark and England and the formation of the Danish West India Co. As economic conditions worsened in the Islands, the deficit had to be met by the Danish state.

The United States wanted to take over the Danish West Indies, but there was a strong nationalistic sentiment in Denmark. However, with the opening of the Panama Canal, WWI in 1914, conditions worsened, agriculture was in crisis. Finally with the payment of \$25 million in gold in 1916, The Islands were transferred from Denmark to the United States, 31st March, 1917. Norris pointed out that Danes have left their stamp in the sugar mills, and old street names.

Norris Ross Hoist

Left with
Daughter, Maya
Right with
Family Pictures



Norris Ross Hoist

Danish West Indian Islands

Mystory

The third story was a personal introduction to Norris Ross Hoist, born 8 January, 1946 in Bronx, Hoist, the family name, derived from the Danish “Høist” meaning Fall or Harvest .

He has two brothers, Julian and Frederick. His educational history is impressive beginning with PS 63, PS 22 in the Bronx and includes the Air Force, Chase Manhattan Bank, flight training and the City College of Engineering.

When Norris’s father died, Norris began to realize he knew nothing about the Danish West Indies and the Danish Virgin Islands not to mention his family. Using resources of the National Archives and the Church of the Latter Day Saints, he was able to construct his family genealogy. His DNA revealed European heritages from Spain, Germany and the Netherlands. The “tapestry” Norris put together for us combined posters of his confirmed ancestors, poster of unconfirmed ancestors, stories of family members and family pictures.

There were photographs of his father, daughter, brother and cousin. One family member starred in the movie, Lifeboat and Cry the Beloved Country. Dr. David Canegata, a family member was killed on January 20, 2007 in Baghdad and is buried in the Arlington National Cemetery.

Family is precious to Norris who brought his “learned assistant,” Maya, his 11 year old daughter. Maya is a fourth grade student, who has received “Student of the Month,” for the past three months in he school. “Passing on genealogical history is a great inheritance to them,” he said. He encouraged individuals to donate their family history to the Library of Congress.



Hoist Family Pictures

Norris Hoist with his genealogical chart in the background





Fred Andersen A model Dane

At the October 17th Genealogy meeting, Fred Andersen, a regular at our meetings, brought his newly completed model of the "Danmark" . It took Fred over 150 hours of work to build the model ship. Imagine the patience and care this project took. It is wonderful.

THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER

It has been a busy time at DANE!

This past summer, while visiting Alpine Cemetery in Perth Amboy for my father's cousin's funeral, I decided to take some pictures of the Danish-related headstones. I seem to have gotten carried away and I took over 500 photos so far. I love digital photography!

I only did three small sections of Alpine. I was surprised at how many Danish-related people are buried there. My guess is that when this project is done, there may be a few thousand pictures of headstones from Alpine. It will really add to our information on many families. On another trip, I also took pictures in Hillside Cemetery in Metuchen.

We then looked at how to make these photos available to a wider audience. We decided to put the photos on the web site "Find a Grave" - <http://www.findagrave.com/>

It is a wonderful free site that is allowing the information from many headstones to be preserved and shared. Our Alpine and Hillside pictures are there and in some cases, we were able to add some additional information. If you get the chance, please check out the site. Also, if you want a picture of a particular headstone, then let us know and we will try to find it.

We are getting ready for the Christmas season at DANE – Jul Marked, our holiday sale is on December 4 and the Jul Fest is on December 19.

It is also the time of our annual fund raising at DANE. We hope that you will consider helping us by contributing. Donations are the main source of our funds which support the phone, computer, postage, office supplies, and events that keeps us going. Any donation amount is greatly appreciated and will be put to good use.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Wendy