

Sometimes a cigar is more than a cigar

I guess if I had a nickel for everybody who cussed me, I'd be the richest man in the world today. Soren Sorensen Adams



Are you coming down with something? It's winter. The last thing you want to hear is a sneeze. Cover your mouth.

Unbelievably, more than one hundred years ago, someone thought sneezing was funny — and he was Danish — from Perth Amboy — and one of his relatives, Einer Sorensen is a DANE board member.

Soren Sorensen Adams — SS Adams — began his successful company with a sneeze — a cachoo actually. Cachoo Sneezing Powder was a product he dreamed up when he was a salesman for a Pennsylvania dye company. One of their products — a coal-tar derivative powder was problematical. It made people sneeze—hence hard to sell. The company extracted the sneezing part from the formula and stored it in barrels. Who knew it was to become a barrel of laughs?

Sam Adams did. He experimented with it, putting it through hotel keyholes, in a café where musicians were crooning and at a trapshooting contest styming his competitors. It must have been hilarious in 1905 to see people sneeze because Adams' friends insisted on having containers of it.

Obviously, there was a way to make some money as Adams foresaw.

His father, a wooden shoemaker, came to Perth Amboy from Åarhus in 1869 when Sam was two years old. Even at an early age, Sam was a joker who liked putting salt in the sugar bowl and pulling chairs out when people tried to sit down.

When he was 12 he worked as an apprentice for the *Middlesex Democrat*, a weekly newspaper in Plainfield, New Jersey. His was a career path for the books — exploding books — another of his inventions.

He learned to play pool and earned money from it. He was a professional trapshooter and entered contests throughout the country, selling picture frames when he was not competing. When working as a hotel manager in York, Pennsylvania became unsatisfying, he sold his half interest to a partner for \$1500. and started the Cachoo Sneezing Powder Company in Plainfield, New Jersey returning to the scene of the grime.

Cachoo developed into a full-blown company, became SS Adams and marketed its sneeze powder in a bottle for one dollar. A Philadelphia retailer bought thousands of bottles; Cachoo made \$15,000 in its first year. Its success being noting to be sneezed at stimulated competition.

Continued on page 2

Schedule of Events 2009

- January** 10th Board Meeting
18th Genealogy Group 2:00 – 5:00
Ship Danmark and visit to Åarhus
- February** 15th Genealogy Group 2:00 – 5:00
Childrens' Fastelavn
- March** 14th Board Meeting 10:00 a.m.
15th Genealogy Group 2:00 – 5:00
Danes saving the Jews
- April** 19th Genealogy Group 2:00 – 5:00
Pastry Making
- May** 17th Genealogy Group 2:00 – 5:00
The Danish Monarchy
- June** 13th Annual Board Meeting 10:00a.m.
Genealogy Group 2:00 – 5:00
Victor Borge at 100
- Sept** 6th DANE at SCANFEST
Vasa Park, Budd Lake, NJ
20th Genealogy Group 2:00 – 5:00
Program To Be Announced
- Oct** 10th Board Meeting 10:00 a.m.
Genealogy Group 2:00 – 5:00
Program To Be Announced
- Nov** Genealogy Group 2:00 – 5:00
To Be Announced
- Dec** 5th Jul Marked 10:00 – 4:00
6th DANE at Festival of Trees,
Hungarian Cultural Center
New Brunswick, NJ
20th Jul Fest 2:00 – 5:00

All events will be held at the Danish Home
855 New Durham Road, Edison, NJ 08817
unless otherwise noted.

Fastelavn

February 15th
2-5 pm
Candy, costumes,
cats for children
of all ages

Sometimes a Cigar continued
Pirates, knowing a good sneeze when they heard one developed sneezealike products and under-sold the dollar bottle.

Humor at the turn of the century was not to be sniffed at and Adams recognized that other people as well liked to play tricks on one another. +

He came up with the exploding Bingo Shooting Device, a small metal box that holds a mousetrap device that sets off a percussion cap. He placed this gadget under a plate or in a deck of cards, a magazine, books with risqué titles, a cigar box. This was truly hilarious.



Novelties, apparently were easily mimicked. The Snake Jam Jar a.k.a. Peanut Brittle Jar, Cold Cream Jar plus compacts, jewel boxes and other containers had a 30-inch muslin “snake” jumping out at innocent consumers. These snake products were also easily pirated.

Remember the telegram? This was before email. The Racket Wireless Message was a realistic paper telegram in an envelope. When opened the envelope startled its recipient with a rattling whirling scaring him senseless. Mr. Adams made a lot of money with this novelty

Then it came — a tension-breaking tumbler — the Dribble Glass. Four holes cleverly



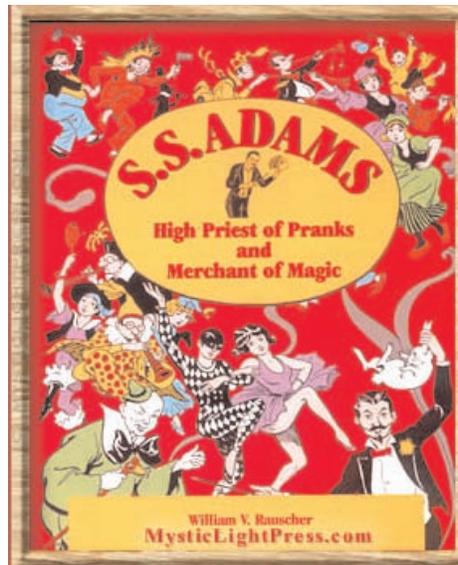
concealed around the glass's top drooled its liquid contents down shirt fronts. This was used apparently very successfully at controversial political meetings. The Dribble Glass took the starch right out of any stuffed shirt.

Then came the Bleeding Finger, a thimble-type bandage swathed device resembling a terrible wound and by 1946 more than 600 other products. Thirty-seven of these were patented.

The SS Adams Company moved to Neptune. Using mass production techniques his employees stamp out metal ink blots, and black widow spiders, put those exploding springs into cigars . The SS Adams catalog today still includes these items as well as the famous Joy Buzzer, Doggonit, the Razzberry Cushion, the Shooting Pen, the Snapping Gum, Sour Popcorn and the Squirting Camera and more. SS Adams also sells magic tricks and magic sets of many configurations.

William V. Rauscher who spoke at a recent Genealogy Group meeting about S.S. Adams and who presented a magic kit for DANE's archives has written a book about SS Adams.

Hard Bound, Full Color Cover, Over 150 Beautifully Printed Pages. Contact dvaver-sat@snet.net for ordering information. #



Acquisitions

Remember this sign?



The Archive continues its growth. Thanks to these additions from our friends.

- Lassen's Garage Sign Don & Irene Lassen
- Water colors of Danish Navy in the 1890s donated by Niels Malmquist
- Award Plaque to Ken Nielsen for his contributions to Danish organizations
- More dance costumes from Helen Kofod
- Books Brooklyn Brotherhood Lodge
- Books Viking Lodge in Pennsylvania

Mange Tak

During November and December DANE received monetary donations from more than 40 people. This generous outpouring was in response to a letter from Agnes and Board members stressing the urgency of DANE's financial circumstances. Thank you for all who responded so generously.

Burleigh and Joan Anderson
Joan Baldwin
Joy and Joseph Billich
Virginia Brodniak
Karen Eskesen
Debra DeFelice
Marna Feldt
Janice Fordice
Gordon Hipko
Bill and Wendy Hudson
George and Birgit Jacobsen
Kevin Jespersen
Oliver and Betty Jespersen
Irving Jensen
Egon and Marie Jorgensen
Sven Juul
Betty Kauffman
Julia and George Kelly
Stewart and Leila Klein
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Arthur Peterson
Helle Raheem
Anne Rodda
Barbara and Bernard Ruekgauer
Gladys M. Samsøe
Ruth Schumacher
Bob Thompson
Maren and Richard Toth
Victor and Dorothy Varanay
Judith M. Watkins
Mr. And Mrs. Carl Wilhjem

The Danish Sense of Humor

Do Danes have a super developed sense of humor? What is a sense of humor anyway? Does it emigrate to New Jersey? Why is it important? In a recent survey, the Danish people were found to be the happiest people in the world? Perhaps their sense of humor is part of why they do. An informal survey Executive Planet, a website preparing business travelers for Danish culture explains that the Danish sense of humor is more dry and reserved than the American sense of humor.

Another account states the Danes have to have a sense of humor because of their weather which is very wet. Their "capacity for laughter is inversely proportional to the amount of rain falling on the kingdom in any given year."

Being someone with a Danish sense of humor means being able to withstand comedy routines and having difficulty not laughing at nutritional information labels. This is intended to help you stop laughing at jokes that are really not that funny.

Does it emigrate to New Jersey? Analyzing what humor is, a critic observed that most American humor is about things that are not really funny and reprimands that we should stop laughing at silly Viking jokes because other cultures find the jokes of American stand-up comedians offensive.

What is a Danish joke? From a website Jalopink: *The Danes have a finely hewn sense of humor,*

based on strict literalism and self-deprecation. Here's an example, by way of Not Native Fruit.:

Little Peter's grandmother has cut her hair short. She asks him the question, 'How do I look?' 'Good!' says Peter. 'Now you don't look like an old woman anymore.' 'Well, what do I look like?' she asks in reply. 'Now you look like an old man,' replies little Peter.

A Danish version of Lego racers using the Danish word for "the end" is vulgar, not funny to us English-speaking Americans but comprehensible when the language difference is explained.

Victor Borge is beyond language differences. He exploits them. In a concert in Minneapolis he announces he will play a work by Mozart — Hans Christian Mozart. Most people, he said only saw Mozart from the waist up — on the tops of pianos and in store windows — he was a bust. Despite these physical disabilities, Mozart was said to have a happy marriage. Mrs. Mozart didn't. She went all the way to the floor. Then he prepared the audience for Mozart's Bagatelle in the key of C — except he couldn't find it. Walking across the stage, he accused the stage manager of not marking C. Then he understood why Americans were fond of saying "Long time no C."

Mark your calendars now. On June 27 DANE is having a Viictor Borge at 100 Celebration. We hope to C you there.

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øDanish Lego commercial uncensored and censored

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Øst of DANE

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Fastelavn

February 15th 2-5 pm

Candy, costumes, cats

for children of all ages

President's Letter

Hello!

We had a busy schedule the last several months with some very interesting genealogy meetings and a great Jul Fest. In these tough financial times, we are trying to reduce costs where we can. We recently spent some significant time verifying our mailing list and we really appreciate anyone willing to receive Øst in email. We continue to look at fund raising opportunities to get us through these tough times.

As we look toward Spring, we are all getting ready for our Fastelavn celebration on February 15. The celebration last year was a lot of fun (for all ages!). I expect that the celebration this year should be great! Other genealogy meetings this Spring will include: Danes Saving the Jews WWII, pastry making, the Danish Monarchy, and Victor Borge at 100. If you get the chance to join us, then that will be wonderful!

Our database of Danes in the North East United States just grew past 15,000 people! We continue to add records and

information. We have been able to help many people find their ancestors and relatives and that is a wonderful feeling to be able to be of help. The Danish Archives continues to add more vital records and census information on-line.

That has been a great help in adding to our information. If you can contribute your family

information to our files or if you need help with any of your Danish genealogy problems, then please get in touch.



Wendy