

# A Confusion of Castles

**Here's a New Jersey MacCastle Quiz — it precedes the MacMansions Quiz— a later architectural challenge. Where are two fast food restaurants that look like castles and where is the location of two residences modeled on a Danish castle?**

**Twelve minutes and 7.38 miles from White Castle's crenellated towers, a Rt. 22 Restaurant in Green Brook, is the location of what was Castle Elsinore. Modeled after Kronberg Castle, north of Copenhagen in Elsinore, the castle where Shakespeare's Hamlet takes place.**

**Six minutes and 3.07 miles from the Red Tower in Plainfield is the site of Villa Elsinore. This is how I began what was to be this issue's feature article. I had read about Castle Elsinore and researched it on-line. I was encouraged by a website "Castles of the United States," where I found this information:** The Moldenke castle in New Jersey was built by my husband's great-uncle (or perhaps great-great uncle). It was modeled closely on the Castle Elsinore in Denmark. It was indeed vandalized and burned, not moved to Lake Havasu (that was London Bridge).

## Back to my story

This story starts with a Lutheran minister from East Prussia, Reverend Edouard Friedrich Moldenke, who was sent as a missionary to Wisconsin and later became pastor of St. Peter's Lutheran Church in New York City. Reverend Moldenke bought some land and a farmhouse on Valley Road in Watchung, New Jersey to use as a camp for Sunday School children. He subsequently divided the property among his three sons — Charles, Alfred and Richard.

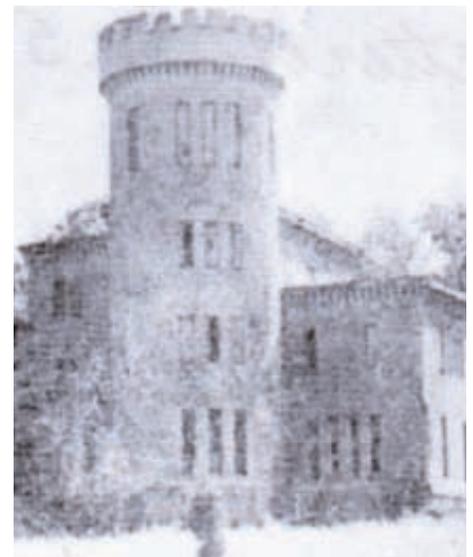
Dr. Richard George Gottlieb Moldenke, II (1864-1930) was a prominent metallurgist and iron engineer specializing in iron smelting. He purchased the property in 1871.

Dr. Charles Edward Moldenke was the son of Richard Moldenke, II. He was a famous Egyptologist. In 1935 he translated the hieroglyphics on Cleopatra's Needle, the obelisk behind the Metropolitan Museum in New York City. He had two children — two sons — one of whom was Harold Moldenke.

Harold Norman Moldenke (1909-1996) was a botanist whose career began at the New York Botanical



Kronberg Castle, Elsinore, Denmark  
Photo: Wendy Hansen Hudson



Elsinore Castle Watchung, NJ  
a.k.a. Moldenke Castle

Garden and whose contributions included publishing "Plants Strategic to the War Years" to "Plants of the Bible," written in collaboration with his wife, Alma Lance Ericson Moldenke. The book is still in print. After retirement he became the director of the Trailside Nature and Science center in Mountainside. He built the Villa in 1901.

Continued on page 2

**Smith's Market** still delivers

Let's not forget the services of a grocer who delivered to families in Perth Amboy neighborhoods. His successor and protégée still delivers.

Kevin Langan can obtain certain Danish food specialties if he knows you are interested. If you'd like to know more please e-mail DANE at [njdane@aol.com](mailto:njdane@aol.com). or call 732-287 6445

## Castles from page 1

Here's the description of the buildings said to have been reached by a series of tunnels.

### The Castle

561 Valley Road

Covering one-fourth of an acre, it was a 35 room fortress built to withstand siege with reinforced concrete walls and 10' high ceilings. It had secret passageways. The chandelier was made of eight Civil War muskets interspersed with bayonets. A cannon on the lower tower was a Civil War naval cannon used at the Battle of Vicksburg. The battlements were copied from Windsor Castle.

### The Villa

601 Valley Road

The Villa built about 1706 and added on during the 1800s was the home of Charles Moldenke, the Egyptologist. He had a printing press here and a bindery. His son, Harold, the horticulturist lived here.

### The Danish Castle

Kronberg Castle was originally built in 1420 to collect taxes and fees from ships wanting to sail through Øresund. In 1574-85, it was replaced by a renaissance style building which is there today. Sweden was for centuries Denmark's enemy, so the Castle was heavily fortified, with every possible weapon. In its day it was the most powerful fortress in the Nordic countries. Kronberg Castle is located in Elsinore north of Copenhagen where Denmark is closest to Sweden.

Wendy Hansen Hudson and her husband traveled to Denmark last summer and visited the Castle. I asked her to send me some photographs. I sent her one of the Moldenke Castle. She replied, "Interesting. but this does not look anything like Kronborg to me!"

I pointed out the tower and the fortress aspect and thought, 'not modeled, but perhaps inspired is a better word.'



### The Castle Confusion

After a substantial amount of research, in the back of my mind I was still plagued with a question — 'What attracted a horticulturist and a metallurgist to Denmark's castle? What was the connection?'

But I had I begun to savor the find. 'Another treasure, a pocket of history in New Jersey,' I thought. I found a statement that said the Watchung Public Library had the best collection of information about Moldenke Castle.

I called. The librarians and staff were immensely helpful. Not only did they have a file of clippings, they were willing to fax them to me, followed by a back-up copy in the mail.

In the packet of information from the Watchung Library came the answer. Richard's mother was of the Baronial House of von Manteuffel whose ancestors fought in the Third Crusade under Emperor Frederick Barbarossa. She was being prepared to be a Lady-in-Waiting to the Queen of Prussia when she married a Lutheran minister. Instead of a life in the Prussian Court, she went to a Wisconsin log cabin as a missionary's wife. Dr. Richard Moldenke was born there. His mother's name was Elsinore.

On October 26, 1969 Castle Elsinore was destroyed by fire just hours before the wreckers were due. After the fire, the remains were demolished. Four homes were built in the "Castle Tract." This neighborhood is on Sherwood and Elsinore Drives in Watchung.

JSL

### Mange Tak / Thank You

We appreciate your support

Novartis  
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## DANE at Work

Øst's Spring and Summer 2006 issue introduced a new column — "Do You Know Where This Is?" — intended to visually and historically challenge those with Perth Amboy recollections.

The answer was a residence at 339 Elm Street with a terra cotta panel "MH" colorfully decorating the upper story. The home was built by M.E. Hansen for Martin Hansen

At about the same time, Agnes Hagmueller and Wendy Hansen Hudson had been in touch with Bonnie Hansen Ruekgauer searching for her genealogical information. The residence at 339 Elm Street was her family's home. DANE was also able to send her a recent picture. The house is still there and being maintained very well.

As a result of searching newspaper files, we have recovered a story from the Perth Amboy *Republican* of August 9, 1895. Note: The numbering system for Perth Amboy's streets changed in 1908.

DANE found Martin Hansen's ad which appeared in the Perth Amboy *Evening News* of 1904 displaying Mr. Hansen's house moving and other construction services.

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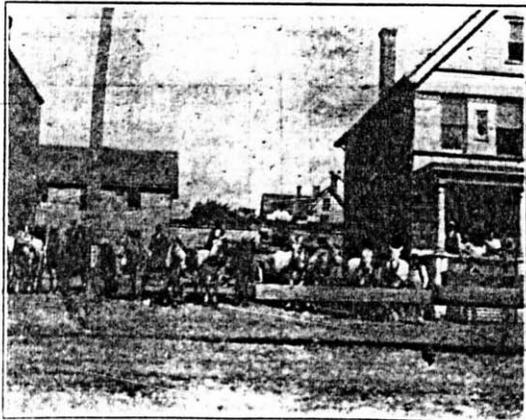
Essentially Visual, Newton LeVine

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TELEPHONE 177 W

# MARTIN HANSEN

## HOUSE MOVING



Grading, Digging Cellars and Sewers

All Kinds of General Contracting Work

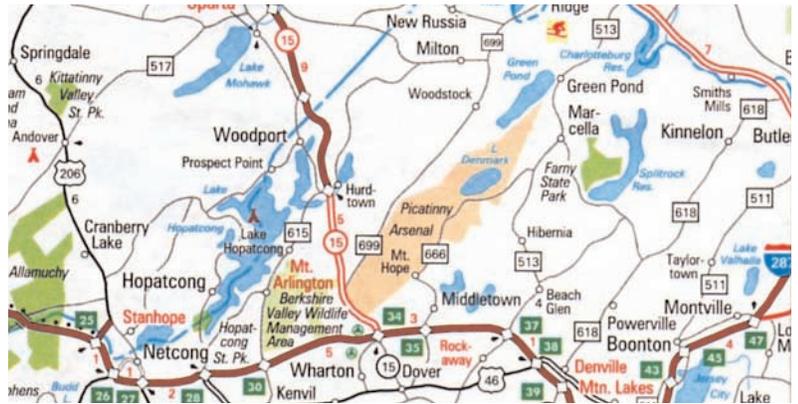
203 ELM ST., PERTH AMBOY, N. J.

### A Spark Started It; Kerosene Heaped.

Fire broke out shortly after 1 o'clock Friday at 203 Elm street, the residence of Martin Hansen. His wife had started a wood fire, when a spark fell into the wood box next to the stove and set the fine kindlings on fire. This communicating to a kerosene can standing near it, caused an explosion of the latter, and an alarm was sent in to put out the flames. The fire department responded with usual promptness and the fire was soon under control, causing no serious damage. Mrs. John Peterson, who assisted Mrs. Hansen in removing furniture, etc, fainted from fright, but soon rallied when placed in the open air and is now nearly fully recovered.

## New Jersey Places/The Denmark Mine

Close to NJ Rt. 15, northeast of the Picatinny Arsenal, is the Denmark Mine. In Rockaway Township, Morris County it is one-fourth of a mile from Lake Denmark. Three or four openings were made in search of iron ore. Although a quantity of ore was removed from some of the openings, the material contained quantities of pyrite and was never mined.



Lake Denmark and mine vicinity at center right of map

## First N.H.L Player from Denmark

Just in case you missed it, Frans Nielsen, member of The Islanders hockey team scored the winning goal in their game against the Montreal Canadiens. Frans Nielsen reportedly said, "I couldn't believe it when it went in. It'll be big in Denmark."

## On the other side of the ocean

Carl-Henning Pedersen died recently. He was a courageous painter, self-taught whose images were expressions of emotions of the mind. His work showed things not as they are — as the school of naturalistic painters did — but things from the worlds of fantasy and fairy-tale.

Those invisible worlds became visible with color. He used color and light as he developed techniques that evolved from early black and white bird paintings that he produced with his wife. Primitive art and the medieval murals in the churches of Sjaelland inspired him.

During the 1930s he founded a art movement — CoBra — Copenhagen, Brussels and Amsterdam — with a group of like-minded Danish artists.



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## ***The President's Letter***

Kære Alle, (Dear All),

There are a lot of exciting things happening at DANE these days!

We will be hosting a genealogy event for a group of Girl Scouts in March. Our goal is for them to have a fun day and maybe get interested in genealogy. After their visit to DANE, they will be going to Ellis Island to get a better understanding of immigration and family history.

My personal excitement is the St. Stephens church records from Perth Amboy, New Jersey. We just finished indexing all the marriages and baptisms between 1872 and 1948 (records between early 1883 and mid 1887 are missing). 899 marriages and 3095 births!

Going through the records has been so interesting and at times a bit surprising. Most of the baptisms are for children born in the local states of New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania, but there are also baptisms for children born in Nevada, Colorado, Texas, and states in the Midwest. We thought that there would be a number of baptisms of children born in Denmark, but that was not the case. It seems that the immigrants must have made sure they did the baptisms before they left Denmark. However, once in the US, these families sometimes seemed to wait a few years to get around to baptizing the children born here. I guess that habit was passed down in my Hansen family, because I was almost 5 years old when I was baptized!

Looking through the records makes us look forward to further research on some of the families. There seem to be a lot of stories buried in the records just waiting to be investigated more. The marriage that was listed as being done at "New York Harbor" just cries out to dig in to find out more about the story. The children that were baptized in the hospital make you wonder if they lived to adulthood.

These records and their buried stories will keep us busy for years!

Hilsen,  
Wendy