California Calling
– Denmark and the 1915 Panama Pacific International Exposition

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This article tells the story of Denmark’s participation in the Panama Pacific International Exposition which took place in San Francisco in 1915. In the international perspective world exhibitions as a subject has attracted a lot of attention from historians, but in Denmark the interest has been rather limited. Very little has been written about the Danish participation in the world exhibitions of the 20th century. This article examines the Danish participation in San Francisco in 1915, its origin and execution. Special attention is directed to the cooperation of private and public actors in creating a Danish representation, but also to the Danish emigrants in California who collected enough money to raise a Danish pavilion as a gift to the Danish state. This initiative attracted a lot of attention in Denmark and was part of the reason that the country was represented at the PPIE at all, while parts of the Danish business community were very sceptical towards the project. In this fashion the Danish reaction resembled that towards many of previous world exhibitions, where Denmark met the invitations with hesitation and scepticism, yet often ended up participating anyway.

1. Introduction

At EXPO 2010 in Shanghai, Denmark was represented by a pavilion which had a bicycle track running across its roof, with a statue of H. C. Anderson’s Little Mermaid as its centrepiece. This might seem somewhat peculiar, but there is a long tradition behind the expressions of national imagery found in exhibition-pavilions. Almost a century ago, Denmark participated in the Panama Pacific International Exposition (PPIE) in San Francisco, 20th of Feb. to 4th of Dec. 1915. On that occasion it was not the fairy-tales of H. C. Anderson or public bikes that distinguished the pavilion, but furniture, porcelain and fake rune-stones. At the time it was the largest and most expensive national pavilion that Denmark had ever created. It is an interesting case, because the pavilion's very existence was instigated by Danish emigrants living in California, not by any Danish authority. In Denmark the matter was met with the same doubt and hesitation that had been typical of earlier Danish involvements in world exhibitions. The possibility of withdrawing from parts of the event came up during planning, and the financing was a constant issue as the budget approved for the participation was too small. It is likely that there would have been no official Danish participation, had it not been for the migrant community in California. It is likely that there would have been no official Danish participation, had it not been for the migrant community in California.

This article records the history of Denmark’s participation in the 1915 PPIE. Special emphasis is given to the Danish Diaspora in California and its influence on the decision to make an official representation. In this context official representation is understood as participation sanctioned and actively supported by the Danish state. The study will concentrate on the period 1911-1915 when the participation was planned and executed, but it will also consider the aftermath. After introducing the main sources and the existing literature and research on the field of world exhibitions, the
subject is treated in three parts. The first part will look at the initial stage, and the decision to accept the invitation. The second part will then turn towards the planning and execution of the Danish contributions to the exhibition, while the third part will consider some outcomes and press coverage.3

2. Sources, Literature, and Current Research on World Exhibitions

Before turning to the source material of the article it will be necessary with a short introduction of the organisational structure that created it: Throughout the 19th century exhibition committees were established in Denmark on an ad hoc basis. These committees represented a varying degree of cooperation between state departments and private actors, and the financing too rested on a varying degree of public and private funding. The most significant private actor was the Danish Chamber of Manufacturers in Copenhagen (the Chamber of Manufactures), which was a business organisation established in 1838 to improve and promote Danish industry through educational schemes, lectures, and exhibitions.4 It was represented in the most ad hoc committees, and it organised participation when government interest was wholly or partly absent, which was the case in 1867, 1876 and 1889.5 Around the turn of the century the annual number of international exhibitions of all kinds increased dramatically, creating an international call for regulation. One of the results was the establishment of a Federation International des Expositions in Brussels 1908. This in turn led to the creation of a Committee on Foreign Exhibitions in Denmark in 1909,6 which institutionalised the relationship between public and private (the Exhibition-Committee). The members were representatives from selected ministries, the Chamber of Manufacturers, and other professional organisations. From then on, all foreign invitations were forwarded for consideration, and possible execution, by this standing committee. It also organised the Danish participation in PPIE 1915.

The Chamber of Manufacturers’ secretary and facilities were at the Exhibition-Committee’s disposal, and their archives were integrated. It is the main source for this paper. The Chamber of Manufacturers’ archive contains most of the correspondence between the committee and private companies, ministries, exhibitions authorities etc. It also contains documents and correspondence forwarded from third party. A significant disadvantage is the complete lack of protocols from the meetings of the Exhibition-Committee, which means that there is no direct access to its negotiations and discussions. The analysis is supplemented with other archive-material and newspapers, most notably from the archive of the Danish consulate in San Francisco, but also from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Trade and the personal archive of Alexander Foss (chairman of the Chamber of Manufacturers). The practical limits of this project do not allow for a thorough press-survey, but the archives of the Exhibition Committee and Ministry of Foreign Affairs hold many relevant clips from contemporary newspapers, Danish as well as foreign. It is reasonable to assume that they give a fair representation of these papers’ content, as the clips were collected for practical purposes rather than sentimental. The selection consists of conservative and liberal newspapers which reflect the political orientations of civil servants and the business community. In addition, a short survey of a left-wing paper (Social-Demokraten of Copenhagen) has been conducted to check if its attitude towards PPIE was any different.

What defines a world exhibition and what separates them from other exhibitions? The world exhibition is not an isolated phenomenon, but part of an entire culture of exhibitions that took form during the course of the 19th century, with exhibitions conducted on all levels from local to international. Definition is only made harder by the fact that an international treaty did not exist until 1928.7 Besides official approval from the government of the host nations, there are two traits that can be said to characterise the events recognised as world exhibitions: An international dimension and an element of universalism.8 Almost any general account of the great world
exhibitions takes its point of departure with *The Great Exhibition of the Works of All Nations* in London 1851. Industrial exhibitions had already occurred in both France and the United Kingdom, but this was the first exhibition with a large international dimension, creating a precedent for such events.⁹

While it almost goes without saying that a world exhibition requires international participation, the second trait is less obvious, but still important. Exhibitions such as the 1913 building exhibition in Leipzig or the 1914 urban exhibition in Lyon both had an international dimension,¹⁰ but they were specialised, not universal. In this connection the Paris 1867 exhibition is particularly important because many of the limitations of the early world exhibitions were completely exceeded. It was a truly universal exhibition that included displays of art, agriculture, livestock and ‘... improvements of the peoples’ physical and moral conditions’.¹¹ It also introduced a new phenomenon: the national pavilions, which today remain a main feature of EXPOS.¹² The world exhibition became a medium for both national competition and showcasing of human progress in almost any field. Denmark was represented at the world exhibitions in London 1851 and 1862, Paris 1855, 1867, 1878, 1889 and 1900, Vienna 1873, Philadelphia 1876, Chicago 1893, St. Louis 1904, San Francisco 1915 and Brussels 1910, but many more were held.¹³

Literature on the world exhibitions is as old as the exhibitions themselves, but world exhibitions as a field of study did not arise until the 1980s. A significant book is John Allwood’s ‘The Great Exhibitions’ from 1977, a comprehensive account of many large exhibitions from 1851 to 1974 that helped spark interest in the subject.¹⁴ The number of publications on the subject then rose at an explosive rate through the 1980s and 1990s, and is still significant.¹⁵ The world expositions have been approached from a multitude of disciplines and the historical research into the exhibitions and their impact upon society has pointed in many directions. Initially the scholarly literature was concerned with the world exhibitions role in introducing and spreading technology, but also with their part in the creation of a capitalist consumer-culture.¹⁶ Several scholars have worked with the world exhibitions as vehicles of imperialism and racism around the turn of the 19th century, arguing that the exhibitions were used to legitimise colonial policies, and promote ideas of white supremacy.¹⁷ Among these scholars is Robert W. Rydell, who focuses specifically on international- and national exhibitions held in the United States.¹⁸ Nationalism and representations of the nation is also an important theme. The national pavilions mentioned above underline how world exhibitions became a place for national representations, however hosting a world exhibition can also be an act of national representation in itself. It has, for example, been considered how diplomatically isolated countries, such as 19th century France, hosted world exhibitions in attempt to create more favourable national images.¹⁹ Most recently Alexander Geppert has applied a transnational approach to the field. Using five world exhibitions held in London, Paris and Berlin across a period of 35 years, he investigates world exhibitions as interconnected knots in a wide spanning web, one which exhibited and effected urban modernity in the early 20th century.²⁰

Although it was home to a Scandinavian exhibition in 1888, Denmark never hosted a world exhibition; however it did participate in many of them. Most of the existing research has been done by one historian, Margit Mogensen, who during the 1990s published a number of articles on various aspects of the world exhibitions reflecting general trends of the literature from a Danish point of view.²¹ The centrepiece of her scholarship was ‘Eventyrets tid’ (the Time of Fairytales) from 1993. It is a comprehensive account covering Danish participation in the period 1851-1900. It gives special attention to art-historical aspects, but otherwise treats the subject detailed in terms of politics, technology, and economy. Another contribution is Bjarne Stoklund’s comparison of Danish and Finnish national representation in the 19th century, which draws on Mogensen work.²² The most recent contribution is a comprehensive catalogue of the Danish Art and Design Museum’s collection of items purchased or exhibited in Paris 1900.²³
The literature has generally rested with the world exhibitions of the 19th century, while those of the interwar period began to attract attention during the 1990s. This move never happened in the Danish literature which is almost completely limited to 1851-1900. Vagn Dybdahl has written about Danish industry’s involvement in the large exhibitions from 1889 to 1914, where he touches on Denmark’s participation in the Brussels 1910 exhibition. The private participation in St. Louis 1904 has so far been virtually unexplored. Margit Mogensen desired to cover a longer time span in her 1993 account, but did not have the necessary space, and the attention has been limited since her last article on the subject from 2000. So far nothing has been written on the 1915 PPIE, except for contemporary accounts.

3. Denmark and the 1915 Panama Pacific International Exposition

The idea to celebrate the opening of the Panama Canal with a world exhibition in San Francisco was hatched in 1904, but was postponed as the canal construction was prolonged. In the meantime the city was devastated by the 1906 earthquake, and the proposed exposition became a manifestation of the city’s rebuilding and its expectations to a prosperous future promised by the canal. But the city had to compete with San Diego and New Orleans before the US congress finally voted in favour of San Francisco in 1911. Before that happened, and long before invitations went out, the first steps towards Danish representation were taken among the Danish emigrants that had settled in California. In December 1909 the Danish-American newspaper in California, Bien, suggested that Danes in America should make a contribution to the old country by funding a Denmark-Building at the expected world exhibition. While gaining popular support in California the idea was first reported to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ by the Danish consul in San Francisco in 1911, in his annual review. From here it found its way into the Danish newspapers in March that same year.

The official invitation from the United States to Denmark was received in February 1912. It was sent on to the Ministry of Trade, which forwarded it to the Exhibition-Committee and other ministries for consideration. The committee made a positive recommendation in April and early in January the Ministry of Trade recommended participation to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Exhibition-Committee had made its recommendation dependent on a public grant, and this was written into the Ministry’s reply to the PPIE exhibition authority on the 5th of Jan. 1913. It is important to note that it was not up to the committee to decide whether Denmark should go: that decision rested with the ministries. But there can be no doubt that the opinion of the committee was very influential. First of all because it managed the contact with private companies whose endorsements were important if there was to be something to exhibit besides the proposed Denmark-Building. Secondly, the permanent secretaries from the ministries of Trade, Public Works and the Interior were members of the Exhibition-Committee.

3.1. A Gift for the Old Country

Following the proposal in 1909, a Danish Building and Exhibition Committee (The Building-Committee) was formed by leading people among the Danish Diaspora in California with the purpose of raising 50,000 US dollars to pay for the construction and maintaining of a Danish pavilion at the PPIE. The ownership would be granted to the Danish government, which in return should pay for the buildings decoration and furnishing. Why this effort in the name of Denmark? A qualified answer is that many of the proponents of the initiative belonged to the emigration waves from the 1870s or later. These people still thought of themselves as Danes in America, rather than Americans. Several of the Building-Committee members had previously been active in organising a
Danish-American celebration of the birth of H. C. Anderson, and other such manifestations of their national background. Two things can be inferred from the article in *Bien*, Dec. 17th 1912: First of all, it expresses dissatisfaction that Denmark had not been officially represented at the world exhibition in St. Louis 1904. Second of all, it expresses a want to have Denmark represented in San Francisco, and that the proposed gift could be a way to make it happen:

Furthermore we will assume that, when we erect the building and give it the name of our fatherland – when we give Denmark a more beautiful and impressive gift – and at the same time a more useful gift – than [Danish] countrymen abroad so far has thought or dreamt of, let alone given, then Denmark will not omit to show up with an exhibition, proving its rank among the world’s great nations.

This seal with the motif of an imaginary Denmark-Building was created by the Building-Committee in California, and was sold among Danish-Americans to raise funds for the project. DNA, 0002: 69-F-6a.

While the project did receive some support from pockets of Danish emigrants across the USA, there can be no doubt that the California-Danes were the driving force. The final report of the Building-Committee from 1916 reveals that of the total 43,248.62 US dollars collected by various means, 29,684.20 US dollars came from California. According to the US 1910 census the three Pacific-coast states held 13.9% of all Danish born immigrants. The twelve mid-west states held 59.0% in 1910 and contributed 6,559.49 US dollars, while the nine north-eastern states held 15.5% and contributed 3,535.19 US dollars. It is logical that those living far away were less interested in an event they might not be able to participate in, and generally the Denmark-Building was a Californian effort, rather than a countrywide effort. Danish consuls across the USA tried to rally support for the cause, but often found it difficult. For instance, in June 1913 the consul in Chicago noted that in his part of the country the Denmark-Building was largely considered a local Californian project, and that most Danes there simply did not care. On top of that there are also traces of an internal prejudice between the Danish Diasporas. In the summer of 1913 the Danish paper *Den Danske Pioneer* (Omaha, Nebraska), suggested to have the Royal Danish Lifeguard send over for the PPIE, but the proposal was completely ridiculed in the Danish New York paper *Nordlyset*, which also mocked the California-Danes, referring sarcastically to them as ‘... gold diggers and sea lion killers and orange farmers ...’.

In spite of the California-Dane’s good intentions there is no guarantee that their gift actually had any influence. However, Danish enthusiasm for the project was so varying that there might not
have been any participation without it. The Exhibition-Committee, whose point of view dominated the answer to the US invitation, seems to have been in doubt even after making its recommendation. The archive of the Exhibition-Committee holds the draft for a letter written in response to the Building-Committee in late May 1912. The letter, which was never sent, literally says that the letter should not expect any significant Danish exhibition, and that it was possible the only Danish representation in San Francisco would be the Denmark-Building itself. Yet, the draft still speaks in favour of a Denmark-Building, although no support was promised.

The lack of protocols from the Exhibition-Committee’s meetings makes it hard to interpret its decisions, but according to the impression of the Danish consul in San Francisco, Johannes E. Bøggild, the committee members were constantly disagreeing. He also notes that the decision process was slowed down by the scepticism of the representatives of the Ministries of Trade and the Interior. They feared that Denmark could become obliged to pay for the Denmark-building if the Danish-Americans did not gather enough money. One member that is likely to have supported it was Benny Dessau, director of Tuborg breweries. He had been a member of the Exhibition-Committee for several years, and was actively involved in Danish participation in international exhibitions until his death in 1937. Among the other committee members, at least one is likely to have opposed the idea: The Chamber of Manufacturers’ chairman Alexander Foss, co-owner of the engineering company F. L. Smith & Co. As a representative of Danish manufactures he considered the universal exhibitions to be a waste of the industry’s time and resources, from which it gained little in return. He spoke out against them in 1902, and later opposed the idea to host a national exhibition in Copenhagen in 1913. He also deliberately limited F. L. Smith & Co.’s participation in Rio de Janeiro 1922, even though the company had great interests in Brazil.

Between the private and public representatives of the Exhibition-Committee, the Danish consulate in San Francisco also deserves an introduction in its own right. Two men held the position of consul during these years: Johannes E. Bøggild (1911-1914) and Otto Wadsted (1914-1917). Bøggild is especially interesting because he made a journey to Denmark from December 1912 to March 1913, where he monitored the Danish authorities and business community’s stand on the project and his letters are a valuable source. The consulate in San Francisco became an intermediary between the Building-Committee and the Exhibition-Committee from the beginning in 1911. In July 1913, the Exhibition-Committee’s executive was transformed into The Commissariat for Denmark’s Participation in the World Exhibition in San Francisco in 1915 (the Exhibition-Commissariat), and the Danish consul was appointed its representative in San Francisco. This was considered a great misfortune by Bøggild, who according to himself had a ‘... personal antipathy against all “exhibition-matters”’. Ironically, consul Bøggild himself had been one of the most eager proponents of Danish participation in PPIE, and had even accepted honorary membership of the Building-Committee. While he saw no practical value for Denmark at the world exhibition, he still believed that the country should participate for the sake of its own self-respect, and because of the Danish-American gift. Bøggild was furthermore convinced that Danish companies had great opportunities awaiting them in California. To him the exhibition was merely a way of attracting their attention. In June 1912 he even went as far as encouraging Andreas Richelieu (member of the boards of Burmeister & Wain, East-Asiatic Company and the Royal Porcelain Factory etc.) to seek the position of commissariat-chairman, should Denmark choose to participate in PPIE. While Richelieu declined the suggestion it does explain why Bøggild supported participation in an event he did not care for.
Besides building national pavilions, countries taking part in an international exhibition presented their industrial, agricultural, artistic and intellectual qualities in the exhibition’s main halls. But in Denmark the interest in doing so had been in steady decline. In Chicago 1893 there were a mix of 349 companies, institutions and individuals taking part in the Danish exhibition, there were 189 in Paris 1900, 25 in St. Louis 1904, 37 in Brussels 1910 and 27 in San Francisco 1915. Additional companies lent furniture and other items for the Denmark-Building in 1915, but they had their cost covered by public grant, while the regular exhibitors had to pay themselves. There were several reasons for the declining interest, one being that private companies had come to doubt if there was any real benefit from the often expensive effort. This is also known as Exhibition fatigue, and it has been a common argument within the exhibition literature that people around the turn of the 19th century generally became tired of exhibitions. This has recently been challenged by Alexander Geppert who argues that such complaints were as old as the exhibition medium itself, and that the world exhibitions held around 1900 were larger and more numerous, than at any time before. There is no space for a full consideration of this discussion here, but at least in Denmark around 1915 there are signs of fatigue within the business community as positive responses to the Exhibitions-Committee’s invitation were few. Among the many companies who refused to participate was ‘Frederikshavn’s Iron-Foundry and Machine-Company’ who in December 1912 stated in their reply: ‘Moreover we have, like probably a lot of Danish manufactures, a decisive “exhibition-fatigue”, which is why we limit our participation in exhibitions to the least possible’.

World exhibitions taking place in the USA was met with particularly mixed feelings in Denmark. The agricultural sector often took part in European world exhibitions but refused to participate in the USA. Danish farmers were still weary of demonstrating their techniques openly among the American competitors, whose grain export had caused a crisis for Danish agriculture in the 1870s. It was also less attractive for many manufactures because the high tariffs introduced in the USA from 1890 made it hard to establish an export of goods. The large number of participants in Chicago 1893 must partly be ascribed to the public grant of 250,000 DKK that covered most of their expenses. 74 exhibitors had initially signed up for St. Louis 1904, but the majority of them were artists, and official participation was cancelled by the Chamber of Manufacturers because the...
Ministry of the Interior would not recommend a public grant higher than 100,000 DKK. For the participation in PPIE in 1915 65,000 DKK were approved by parliament, but they were entirely reserved for administrative expenses and the Denmark-Building’s decoration.

The Danish companies who did have an interest in exhibiting in the USA mostly belonged to the realm of art manufacture, and made goods which was easier to sell directly at an exhibition, such as fine porcelain, faience, jewellery and silverwares. When negotiations for an official Danish participation in St. Louis 1904 fell apart, a small group of these companies hired a private agent to organise their own private participation. Most prominent among them were the Faience Factory Aluminia/the Royal Porcelain Factory (today Royal Copenhagen), who had managed to establish a market for itself in the USA. In 1912 the Director of Aluminia, Frederik Dalgas, made contact with the chairman of the Exhibition-Committee on behalf of a group of 15 companies who wanted to participate in the PPIE. It was in early February, before the US invitation, and they agreed that Dalgas could go ahead and prepare a private participation. Other companies were not invited to sign up until December 18. 1912, so it was Dalgas’s group that was referred to when the Exhibition-Committee on the same date informed the Ministry of Trade that there would be exhibitors enough for a decent participation. However, the influence of Frederik Dalgas and his companions should not be overestimated. There can be no doubt that they were interested in participating in the PPIE, but their participation did not depend on public funds and they were never promised any. As stated above, they would have gone to San Francisco anyway.

Large parts of the Danish business community were sceptical or disinterested in the PPIE, and those who were interested had proved willing to participate on their own. The Exhibition-Committee was in doubt and perhaps disagreeing on the matter, but did not reject the Danish-American gift. At the same time the Danish parliament seems to have been in favour of participating. In 1892 the request for 250,000 DKK had caused an intense debate in the lower house of parliament (Folketinget), with the parties internally divided on the issue. In 1909 a sceptical parliament approved 30,000 DKK of the 40,000 DKK requested for Brussels 1910. But then in April 1913 the parliament’s financial committee recommended the request for 65,000 DKK, which was then accepted without any spoken protest. Only one critique was raised in the assembly. It was voiced by the financial committee’s chairman because the Exhibition-Committee had stated that they had tried to keep the estimated cost as low as possible. Rather, the financial committee would have preferred to approve a more realistic and thus larger budget. This comment is interesting because consul Bøggild in the winter 1912-1913 met with the ministers of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and with parliamentarians from the governing party (Venstre). He noted that they all seemed very interested, and he had the impression that parliament gladly would have granted a much larger sum, if only it had been asked for it.

The size of the budget granted by the parliament’s lower house does not seem to reflect the attitude or feelings that the assembly had towards a Danish participation in San Francisco. Instead it reflects the Exhibition-Committee’s low expectations to the amount of money that parliament would grant. But they underestimated the political will. Why did the issue get such great political support? Why did the Exhibition-Committee recommend participation? Consul Bøggild believed that a recommendation was made simply because there was an exhibition at all, and it is true that Danish authorities often had been doubtful towards world exhibitions in the 19th century, but then approved participation anyway. This time there was a difference: The proposal from the California-Danes. Turning down a gift can be hard, but this was a gift from Danish born people who claimed to act for the sake of their old country’s honour. In 1892 it had been argued in parliament that Denmark should participate in Chicago 1893, out of consideration for the Danes living in the USA. This time the old countrymen came knocking on the door themselves. Furthermore it seems that the Danish case is not unique. In November 1912 a Danish diplomat in Stockholm estimated
that Swedish participation in the PPIE mostly was a result of consideration for the ‘Swedish-Americans’,\textsuperscript{73} and later in 1914, Norwegian emigrants in California proposed to aid Norway’s representation by collecting money for it.\textsuperscript{74}

3.2. Denmark in San Francisco

The Danish participation in San Francisco was divided in two tiers: An exhibition of manufactured goods and handworks in the main exhibition, and a national pavilion, the Denmark-Building. The latter was placed at a central entrance to the pavilion area, where 20 other countries and 28 US states had their buildings.\textsuperscript{75} The main exhibitions were divided between eleven major halls with different themes such as art, agriculture or manufacture. The Danish participation was confined to a section in the Palace of Varied Industries, and was a mix of porcelain, faience, jewellery, silverware, as well as works of bookbinding, broidery and photography. Contributions from Aluminia and its associates took up most of the space. A few other exhibitors signed up, but the Exhibition-Committee selectively picked those which could be fitted among the porcelain. A table-factory was rejected on the reason that they belonged in the Palace of Manufactures where Denmark did not have a section, while two shipping companies each had a scale-model ship on display, although they technically belonged in the Palace of Transportation.\textsuperscript{76} The only Danish contribution outside the Palace of Varied Industries was three miniature paintings in the Palace of Fine Arts. Official art exhibitions had been part of Danish representations from Paris 1878 to Paris 1900, but this time the budget was too tight and the Ministry of Church- and Education would not sponsor it.\textsuperscript{77}
The practical work of setting up the Danish exhibition in San Francisco, and the necessary negotiations with the exhibition authorities was conducted by the private companies’ agent, William Arup, and the Danish consuls. This organising process that Bøggild and his successor consul Otto Wadsted became heavily involved in was long and often characterised by friction, because the Exhibition-Commissariat was trying to get what the PPIE authorities would not give. One quarrel was over the space in the Palace of Varied Industries that the Commissariat tried to get for the Danish section. William Arup had got a promise on a good spot in March 1912, but nothing further could be done about it until the invitation had been accepted and the commissariat appointed. In the meantime the exhibition halls had been severely overbooked. Countries like France and Japan had to settle for half of the 70,000 square feet they each had reserved, and a small participant like Denmark found it hard to get through with a modest demand of an undivided 6,000 square feet. A section of almost that size was finally agreed upon in October 1914, but only after a long tiresome struggle, during which Johannes Bøggild in secrecy had threatened to cancel Danish participation in the PPIE.

A second significant quarrel was about the 25% sales tax that the PPIE authorities demanded on all direct sales from at the exhibition. This ended in a scandal on the 24th of April 1915, when the authorities temporarily closed the Danish section, with attention from the local press. The quarrel had developed because an official of the PPIE, Frederick J. V. Skiff, had promised Frederik Dalgas that Aluminia and its associates could get the same terms as they had in St. Louis 1904. The controversy stemmed from different interpretations of what these terms had included. Frederik Dalgas and William Arup, who had organised the private participation in St. Louis 1904, maintained that it had included exemption from any sales tax, but the PPIE authorities would not accept it. A conversation with Skiff reported by Otto Wadsted to the Exhibition-Commissariat revealed that the foreign exhibitioners officially should have paid a sales tax in 1904, but had
collectively refused to do so, thus rendering the St. Louis authorities unable to enforce it. Such collective will was not present among the foreign exhibitors in San Francisco 1915, because few were as dependent on direct sale as the Danish exhibitors. The PPIE authorities for their part were not inclined to give concessions which could result in similar demands from other exhibitors.

Aluminia and associates kept their position and threatened to withdraw from participation, claiming that the sales tax would reduce profits, and thus incentives for many of the exhibitors. But Frederick Skiff had been heavily involved in St. Louis 1904, and knew the past situation all too well. He also made it clear that he and the exhibition did not care whether Denmark would participate or not. A breakthrough came with the outbreak of the First World War. It affected the PPIE authorities who worried that most of the European participants would resign, and in September 1914 they agreed to lower the tax to 12.5% for Danish exhibitors. However, the attitude of the authorities did not change that much. Frederick Skiff had also withdrawn a demand to have an attendant cashier inspect the sales in the Danish section at the exhibitors’ expense, but on the 24th of April 1915 both demands were reintroduced. William Arup, refused and the Danish section was closed for two days until the parties reached an agreement. The Danish exhibitors made a onetime payment of 3,000 US dollars, in return for getting rid of both sales tax and cashier. The exhibition authorities made further attempts at enforcing their demands, but got nowhere, and the controversy died down during the summer without an official solution.

Along with the Danish section in the Palace of Varied Industry, the Exhibition-Commissariat and the consuls in San Francisco also had to attend to the matter of the Denmark-Building. This part of the organisation process was often characterised by impatience from the Building-Committee, who thought that the Danish authorities were acting too slow. As the building was to be an official Danish pavilion it was required that a representative of the Danish government selected a building site in San Francisco. This was not legally possible until Denmark officially accepted the invitation in January 1913. The Building-Committee was clearly disappointed when Sweden suddenly selected a plot for their pavilion in November 1912. When Denmark finally selected a site on the 15th of March 1913, as one of the last nations, it became a day of great celebration among the Danish emigrants, who let a Danish flag fall from an airplane onto the site, thereby re-enacting the legend of how the flag had fallen out of the sky during a battle in Estonia in the 11th century. However, the negotiation of a contract between the Building-Committee and Denmark was still to be settled and a compromise was not reached until November 1914, because they could not agree on who should be responsible for paying the architect. The Building-Committee never obtained the proposed 50,000 US dollars, but they collected enough to construct and maintain the building on a budget of 43,248 US dollars (approx. 166,000 DKK). The blueprints for the Denmark-Building were made by Danish architect Anton Rosen in agreement with the Building-Committee. He had initially imagined a building inspired by castle Kronberg at Elsinore, but much about the final building was determined by the regulations of the PPIE. At first sight the exhibition authorities simply rejected the plans because they did not harmonise with the other pavilions, and one official even indicated that the proposed building ‘... would not at all look good’. The colour of the building was to be kept in a specific shade of cream-yellow, although Denmark got permission to diverge a little. The height of the main tower was severely reduced because it was seen as a fire hazard to the nearby Palace of Fine Arts, and a bastion decorated with antique bronze-cannons had to be given up because it would have blocked the view to New Zealand’s pavilion. Instead the Danish distinctiveness was added by copies of the grand rune-stone of Jellinge, and a copy of the Lure Blowers statue from Copenhagen. On the interior the building was furnished as ‘... fine Danish living rooms, of the current time’, with porcelain and furniture lent from Danish companies and paintings from the National Museum of Art.
The California-Danes had their wish fulfilled. Denmark participated officially, although the Danish exhibition might not have been as large as they hoped for. A Denmark-Building was erected, although the Building-Committee was dissatisfied with some of its features. It only took a few drinks at a dinner hosted by consul Wadsted before they started criticising it.\textsuperscript{101} None the less, the Danish-American proposal had been carried out with King Christian X as its protector.\textsuperscript{102} During the exhibition the Denmark-Building was a centre point for several celebrations by Danish emigrants, most notably the Denmark-week. It started with a celebration of the Danish constitution day on the 5\textsuperscript{th} of June, which gathered an estimated 3,000 Danish-Americans in the PPIE’s official festival hall.\textsuperscript{103} This day was particularly special in 1915, because the Danish king signed a revised constitution granting universal suffrage, which only added to the celebrations and attracted attention from the local press.\textsuperscript{104}

3.3. Outcomes and Press Coverage

One of the aims for companies and artists that entered international exhibitions was to be awarded a prize by the official jury, who evaluated the items on display. Medals awarded were widely used to decorate labels or paper headings, but one of the criticisms raised against the world exhibitions in the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century, was that an inflation had happened, making the prizes less significant.
because most participants were awarded.\textsuperscript{105} In St. Louis 1904 and Brussels 1910 all Danish exhibitors as a minimum got an honourable mention (lowest award), while four grand prizes (highest award) were granted in St. Louis and ten in Brussels.\textsuperscript{106} This trend continued at the PPIE where all 27 exhibitors were awarded. Only two got an honourable mention and seven were awarded the grand prize, while no less than twelve received a gold medal.\textsuperscript{107} In spite of the contemporary critique, the competition was still considered important by many, as reflected in a letter from consul Otto Wadsted in December 1915. He reported that several of the Danish exhibitors had only been upgraded to a grand prize, because he had protested and made use of influential friends in the jury.\textsuperscript{108}

Other legacies from the Danish participation reflected the often hesitant attitude to the involvement. The Exhibition-Committee’s decisions in 1912 and 1913 had left them with a small budget that did not fit the project, and a primary objective through the entire process was to keep the cost down. No official account of the participation was published, no catalogue of Danish exhibits was printed, and a proposed book about Denmark for the Denmark-Building was also rejected.\textsuperscript{109} It had been common to finance study trips to the previous world exhibitions, or at least support them, but not this time.\textsuperscript{110} The two consuls did not receive any pay for the considerable amount of work they took upon them. Otto Wadsted had been thrown into the middle of it all, and he complained that he had no budget for all the social obligations that followed with the exhibitions. He received dozens of invitations for receptions and get-togethers from exhibitions officials and other nation’s commissioners, and it would eventually be expected that he hosted something in return, as he was the representative of Denmark. Wadsted then received a budget of 500 US dollars (approx. 1,920 DDK\textsuperscript{111}) while his Norwegian colleague had 15,000 DKK at his disposal.\textsuperscript{112}

Money is in fact the word that best describes the aftermath. While the Denmark building was being torn down, the Exhibition-Commissariat entered two new quarrels. The first was a compensation claim from a cabinetmaker that had lent furniture to the Denmark-Building. It had returned damaged by moisture and rough handling.\textsuperscript{113} The second was with the Building-Committee. Five Danish companies had paid 3,000 DKK each for a wall painting of their business in the Denmark-Building’s hall. There was a significant surplus of 9,000 DKK which the Exhibition-Commissariat had spent as part of their budget for the buildings decoration.\textsuperscript{114} This was contested by the Building-Committee who made claims to the sum.\textsuperscript{115} Unlike the deficit of the Exhibition-Commissariat’s budget, the Building-Committee had actually managed to get through the PPIE with a surplus of 5,000 US dollars which they intended to spend on a statute of H. C. Anderson for the Golden Gate park.\textsuperscript{116} They needed more money, but did not get any from the commissariat as their claim was rejected by the Ministry of Trade.\textsuperscript{117}

The plan to create a statue of H. C. Anderson fell apart due to a lack of funds,\textsuperscript{118} but the case is a good way to illustrate how the Denmark-Building project initiated several discussions between the Danish-American migrant communities. These took place in the Danish-American press where several non-Californian papers suggested better uses for the surplus sum.\textsuperscript{119} Den Danske Pioneer, a mid-west paper, was particularly vocal. Its editor demanded that the Building-Committee’s entire surplus should be used to fund a historical account of Danish migrants in the USA. The argument was that there had been contributions from most states, so all Danish-Americans had a stake in the money.\textsuperscript{120} However, Den Danske Pioneer stood alone when it almost went berserk, due to the Building-Committee’s members were officially knighted by the Danish royal court. Otto Wadsted had anticipated the trouble when he raised the question with the Danish authorities in 1914. A decision was delayed for so long that no decorations were awarded until the autumn of 1916, and the delay caused still more friction with the Building-Committee’s executive who expected such recognition.\textsuperscript{121} Den Danske Pioneer protested against the decoration of the California-Danes. It spoke ill of them and made personal attacks on the Danish envoy in Washington D. C., who had
made the official request. The paper’s argument was that royal decorations and titles did not belong in a democratic republic, but whether the editor actually believed in this mantra, or whether he simply was jealous, is a question blowing in the wind. In this case he seems to have stood quite alone while much of the Danish-American press took to defend the California-Danes. The Danish participation in the PPIE was also taken up by the Danish press every now and then, beginning in March 1911. There is generally not a lot to say about it as the coverage was predominantly positive, both towards the Danish-Americans and the Danish participation. The positive attitude did not change in the course of 1911-1915, but kept firm throughout. The following examples are mainly taken from newspaper clips found in the archives of the Chamber of Manufacturers:

**Nationaltidende:**
A beautiful gift from our emigrated countrymen.

**Børsen:**
Everywhere [in the USA] the Danes carry – literally spoken – stones for the proud monument for old Denmark, which in a few years, in the shape of a magnificent building, shall tower at the Pacific shore.

**Politiken:**
But in America we also have a different audience, which stands us closer. It is the thousands of emigrated countrymen, who at the exhibition first and foremost will seek the old country, whose honour is theirs.

**Berlinske Tidende:**
And by Danish attendance ... we have been able to prove, that Denmark continuously claims such a place among great Nations, that the pride and love which our migrated countrymen show towards their old country, is justified.

The picture is a little different when considering the left-wing paper, *Social-Demokraten* (Copenhagen), which provides the only one example of outspoken criticism in the press-material considered here. The PPIE authorities had forced architect Anton Rosen to remove a planned bastion from the final drawings for the Denmark-Building. He then proposed to place the cannons around the main flagpole instead, but abandoned them completely after a complaint in *Social-Demokraten* in April 1914. The paper represented a pacifistic wing in Danish politics and the journalist was outraged because of the symbolism that cannons would add to the pavilion (a view that to some extend was shared by the Danish-Americans in California). But this is an isolated example. Social-Demokraten’s basic attitude towards PPIE was not much different from those considered above, although it was less emotional: ‘All condition for creating something extraordinary is present, and it [the PPIE] will without doubts be the most beautiful exhibition so far,’ was the opinion in 1914. But then from February to December in 1915 when the PPIE actually took place, the topic is not even mentioned. The columns were dominated by the World War, constitutional changes, and social unrest in the Danish West-Indies. Not even a single picture of the Denmark-Building is found in 1915. However, the same is the case with the weekly magazine *Illustreret Tidende*, whose specialty was photo-reportage, so Social-Demokraten’s silence should not necessarily be taken as a political statement.

The attitude of the press is interesting, because it do not reflect the scepticism of the wider business community. It is not surprising, because world exhibitions were regarded as exciting and
entertaining events by the public, and the press was not involved in the financial decision making process that proved so difficult. Finally, it is not unthinkable that the positive public awareness made it harder for the Exhibition-Committee and the ministries to even consider declining the Danish-American gift, given the bad publicity it was likely to have provoked.

Danish Consul Otto Wadsted (far right) and US vice-president Thomas R. Marshall outside the Denmark-Building.

Following behind are the leading members of the Building-Committee. Notice the fake rune-stone in the background; it was a replica of the grand rune-stone of Jellinge, but carried an inscription that told the origin of the building. Another replica with the authentic rune inscription is hidden behind the guard in the front of the photograph. Photo: DNA, 2-1953: 46, D20

4. Conclusion

The first three national pavilions Denmark had at world exhibitions are very symbolic of the often doubtful character of these engagements. The first in Paris 1867 was nothing but a small cottage serving as office for the Danish representative. When a proper pavilion was made in Paris 1900 it was a last minute decision. For this reason, the building was not designed for the purpose, but just something that the architect pulled out of a drawer. And then, when a large and exquisitely equipped pavilion was made in San Francisco in 1915, both initiative and most of the money came from actors outside of Denmark. The Danish contributions in the main exhibition halls did not match the effort that was put into the building. Instead they reflected the general tendency of the past decade: Public opinion about the world exhibitions was still positive, but parts of the business community were becoming increasingly tired or disinterested in these projects. The few private companies that still thought it worthwhile were willing to make the effort themselves, and when the representation was made official, their problems became the responsibility of the Exhibition-Commissariat and the consuls in San Francisco. It is not only likely, but very probable, that the California-Danish proposal to build a Danish pavilion was the factor that rallied support and secured an official Danish participation in the PPIE.

Considering a few broader perspectives this is first of all an aspect of Danish history that was not significantly affected by the international chaos of the First World War. The war might have helped the Danish Exhibition-Commissariat’s negotiations with the PPIE authorities, but it did not interfere with the plans for the Denmark-Building, and a cancelation of official participation due to the war was never an issue. Secondly, this project does not have the means to determine whether the Danish participation had any long-term effect on the transatlantic relationship between Denmark and its emigrants. But both parties spoke about the PPIE participation in terms of concern for the
old country or the countrymen abroad, so it is worth considering. A suggestion with reservation is that the memory of the Denmark-Building was cherished by the generation of California-Danes who experienced it, but otherwise did much less for the general relationship than the annual Rebild-festival, which also had its origin in the first decade of the 20th century.

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Case files 1909-1972: No. 172.

Alexander Foss and first wife’s private archive (Archive No. 05409)
Correspondence and other cases, sorted: No.40.

The Danish National Business Archives (DNBA)
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Noter

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3 Two things should be noticed: Firstly, all translation of names and quotations from Danish into English are my own. Secondly, the phenomenon treated by this article is known under a multitude of names including universal exhibitions, world’s fairs, international exhibitions etc. Technically there might be some etymological differences between fair, exposition and exhibition, but in this case they are all concerned with much the same thing (Findling and Pelle: Dictionary of World’s Fairs, pp. XVIII-XIX). For simplicity’s sake they will mainly be referred to as world exhibitions (from Danish: verdensudstilling/German: weltausstellung).
4 Fink: Industrirådet, p. 184.
5 Mogensen: Efterretets Tid.
8 Findling and Pelle: Dictionary of World’s Fairs, p. 395; Geppert, Coffey and Lau: A Bibliography, p. 5.
10 Berg: Minder, pp. 98.
11 Jackson: Expo, pp. 68-70; Mogensen: Efterretets Tid, pp. 107-8.
12 Stoklund. Nationernes kulturelle arena, pp. 143-44.
16 Rydell: World of Fairs, p. 16.
17 Greenhalgh: Ephemeral vistas; Rydell: All the World’s a Fair.
18 Rydell, Findling, and Pelle: Fair America.
19 Kaiser: The Great Derby Race.
20 Geppert: Fleeting Cities.
21 Mogensen: Hækla og verdensudstillingen; Mogensen: Nordhoadstillingen i Paris 1900; Mogensen: Landbrugsteknologi og udstilling; Mogensen: Verdensudstillinger og reklame; Mogensen: Den danske pavillon 1900; Mogensen: Teknologi og verdensudstillinger.
22 Stoklund. Nationernes kulturelle arena.
25 Dybdahl: Dansk industri og de store udstillinger, p. 8. Note: Vagn Dybdahl’s article covers the time span 1889-1914, but does not contain any information on St. Louis 1904, except that there was a Danish participation based on private initiative.
26 Mogensen: Efterretets Tid, p. 19.
28 Lipsky: San Francisco’s Panama-Pacific, pp. 7-8.
30 DNBA, 06313: 635 Aa(u), No.278 and No. 543.
31 DNBA, 06313: 635 Aa(u), No.11056; DNBA, 06313: 571, 24.4.1912; DNA, 0002: 69-F-6a, 27.3.1912, 3.1.1913 and 7.1.1913. Note: Much of the source material for this article consists of correspondence. When a letter carries date of dispatch and of receipt, it is the dispatch date that is listed in the notes.
32 DNBA, 06313: 635 Aa(u), No.6640.
33 Danmarks-Bygningen 1915, pp. 9-13; DNBA, 06313: 635 Aa(u), No.6035a.
37 DNA, 2-1953: H9, 15.5.1913.
38 DNA, 2-1953: H17, 9.6.1913.
39 Den Danske Pioneer: “Giv os gaden!” 1.5.1913.
41 DNBA, 06313: 635 Aa(u), “Ikke afgaaet” (May 1912).
42 DNA, 2-1953: K2, 20.6.1913.
43 DNA, 2-1953: H8, 1.7.1913.
45 Andersen and Jacobsen: Foss, pp. 223-225.
46 Dybdahl: Dansk industri og de store udstillinger, p. 23.
47 DNA, 05409: 40, 14.1.1909 and 3.10.1924.
48 DNBA, 06313: 642 Aa(u), No.11729-11757.
49 DNA, 0002: 69-F-6a, 25.10.1911.
50 DNA, 2-1953: H20 (in box 49), 22.6.1912.
51 DNA, 2-1953: H1, 9.5.1912; DNA, 2-1953: H20 (in box 49), 22.6.1912 and 3.10.1912.
53 Dybdahl: Dansk industri og de store udstillinger, pp. 18-19.
55 DNA, 06313: 663 Aa(u), “Danmarks-Bygningens udstyr.”
57 DNBA, 06313: 666 Aa(u), 17.12.1912.
59 DNA, 06313: 613 Ae 1903, “Fortegnelse over deltagerne i Verdensudstillingen i St. Louis”.
60 DNBA, 06313: 613 Ae 1903, “Beretning om Danmarks deltagelse i Verdensudstillingen i St. Louis i 1904.”, 30.1.1903 and 4.2.1903.
61 Dalgas: Fajancefabrikken Aluminia, pp. 40-41, 50.
62 DNBA, 06313: 572 Aa(u), No.11589-12055 and No.12056; DNA, 2-1953: H8 (in box 49), “Fortegnelse over Udstillere, som vil kunne ventes at ville deltage i Verdensudstillingen i San Fransisco i 1915.”
63 DNBA, 06313: 635 Aa(u), No.2615.
65 Danmarks deltagelse i Verdensudstillingen i Bryssel 1910, pp. 11-12; Rigsdagstidende, folketinget, 1909-1910, sp.1112, 3431.
66 Rigsdagstidende, folketinget, 1912-1913, sp.1711-1712, 4663-4664.
69 Mogensen: Eventyrets Tid, pp. 316, 322-328.
70 Udenrigsministeriet: Meddelelser fra Udenrigsministeriet, pp. 604; DNBA, 06313: 635 Aa(u), No.6035a.
72 DNA, 0002: 69-F-6a, 11.11.1912.
76 Mogensen: Eventyrets Tid, pp. 195, 274, 302. DNBA, 06313: 663 Aa(u), No.3404.
77 DNBA, 06313: 666 Aa(u), No.11809a and No.14895.
78 DNBA, 06313: 642 Aa(u), “Mødet i Wiesbaden”; DNBA, 06313: 642 Aa(u), No.15479; DNBA, 06313: 666 Aa(u), No.10883.
80 DNBA, 06313: 666 Aa(u), 8.11.1913.
81 DNBA, 06313: 666 Aa(u), 16.5.1914.
82 DNBA, 06313: 666 Aa(u), No.10440.
83 Rydell: All the World's a Fair, p. 157.
DNA, 2-1953: H9, 11.5.1914 and a summary of a telephone conversation dated 8.5.1914.

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DNA, 0002: 69 F-6a, 25.10.1911, 11.11.1912 and 3.1.1913.

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DNA, 2-1953: D11, 11.11.1914.

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DNA, 2-1953: D3, “Telephone conversation with Mr. Connick”, dated 27.2.1914.

DNBA, 06313: 663 Aa(u), No.19464.

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