

17th Century Danish History

By Heather Nelsen Mullen

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1600's general: By far, farming and agriculture were the most major economic activities in Denmark in the 1600's. More than 75 % of the Danish people were farming peasants, cultivating the land on about 60,000 farms. They were subsistence farmers, scratching out enough for survival and not much more. Tools and farm implements were mostly made of wood, and they used hoes and spades for tilling. Half of the cropland stayed fallow each year. The main crops were oats, rye, barley, and legumes like peas. Southern Denmark was a major producer of cattle for export to Germany. Livestock was much smaller in the 17th century than it is today: the average Nordic hog was only about 100 pounds, compared with an average slaughter weight of around 250 pounds today.

Another 12-13% of the Danish population lived in urban areas; 1/3 of which lived in Copenhagen (about 30,000). The rest lived in market towns, which were all relatively small in size. Denmark's population in 1600 was around 700,000, and by 1700 it was about 800,000. To compare, France had 19 million inhabitants; Russia and Germany each had 15 million; Italy, Spain, Portugal had 12-13 million each; and the British Isles had 7 million.

The average diet in the 17th century consisted mainly of flat bread, dried/smoked/salted fish or meat, milk from cows, sheep, and goats, and lots of beer, albeit with a lighter alcohol content than modern times.

For the first half of the 17th century, the ruler of Denmark was King Christian IV, who reigned from 1588-1648. Overall, he was a popular king. Christian IV was thought of as being intelligent and cultured, and hard working with good intentions and aspirations. He was known as a guy with high goals, but who wasn't always effective in actually implementing them and making them happen.

Architecture was one of his strong suits. He ordered the building of fine palaces, churches and public buildings. One place was Rosenborg Palace in Copenhagen, a royal summer home. Another was the Rundetårn (Round Tower) in Copenhagen, built in 1637, as a staircase tower and astronomical observatory, platform, and university library. He also had the Børsen built, the Copenhagen Stock Exchange, to help assert Denmark's role in commerce and trade in Northern Europe.

At the beginning of the 17th century, Denmark was *the* predominant Nordic power, and Copenhagen was flourishing. Its naval fleet increased from 22 ships in 1596 to 60 in 1610, so in a matter of 14 years, it

almost tripled in size. During Christian IV's reign, he promoted skillful trades and craftsman, and opened fisheries in the Arctic Sea. Many skilled workers from Netherlands sought refuge from the Eighty Years' War (1568-1648) in Denmark, helping to modernize many aspects of society and establish trade relationships with the Netherlands. However, King Christian IV was young and arrogant, and as we will see, he often did not heed the warnings of his advisors in matters of war.... he really probably should have....there were lots of wars!! In fact, a main theme of 17th century Denmark was war with Sweden.

1611-13:

The Kalmar War of 1611-13 was one such example. Against the advice of his council, King Christian IV declared war on Sweden because he was getting nervous at the loss of Sound Toll revenue when Sweden began using alternative shipping routes that didn't go past Denmark. The Sound Toll was a fee all ships traveling the waters of the Øresund had to pay to Denmark for the use of their waterways. The Øresund led in and out of the Baltic Sea. In the 1500's and 1600's, the center of European shipping trade switched from the Mediterranean to the Baltic and English Channel. Access to Eastern European countries, which were now the "breadbasket" of Europe, was needed for grain. Western European countries like Netherlands and France simply could not produce enough grain to feed themselves. Ships paid dues at Helsingør, often 1-2% of the total ship's cargo value. This amounted to a tremendous source of revenue for Denmark for over 400 years, although most of this tax revenue went to fund the building of castles and fortresses for royalty, so the average peasant didn't reap many benefits.

To avoid paying tolls, Sweden began sending ships on alternative trade routes in Lapland. King Christian IV was angered because Lapland was traditionally considered Norwegian jurisdiction, and since Denmark controlled Norway at this time, he thought he was still entitled to toll fees. Denmark ultimately won this conflict, although not decisively. Denmark got Lapland routes returned to Norway and ransomed the town of Göteborg for 1 million riksdaler. Sweden however no longer had to pay any Sound tolls in Øresund.

1610's-1620's:

We don't often think of it when we study Danish history, but the 1610's through the 1620's was a peak time for witch hunts in Denmark. Denmark was actually quite active in the witch-hunting scene. The first witch-trial in Scandinavia took place in Denmark in 1559, and the first witch burning that took place in Denmark was in 1571, also the first in Scandinavia. Logically it makes sense since that the fervor first spread to Denmark, which is physically attached to mainland Europe, where hysteria was rampant. Large-scale, broad witch-hunts did not develop in Denmark, more just particular individuals on trial. There were some protective legal restrictions in place, which helped stem bloodshed. After 1639, local courts were banned from giving a death sentence without the confirmation of a national high court, meaning a riled-up town couldn't just kill someone without a higher court ruling. Accusations and trials for witchcraft pretty much dried up after this law started. Another rule, after 1686, was that all capital (death) sentences handed down by a jury got an automatic appeal in county court, and no one was supposed to be interrogated before being sentenced. Basically this meant that someone couldn't be

tortured into ratting out other witches, thereby drying up the pool of suspects. Records are scarce, but there appears to have been about 2,000 trials and 1,350 executions between the 16th and 17th centuries in Denmark/Norway. 85% took place in rural areas, and 90 % of the victims were women, generally old and poor ones. The method of execution was being burnt alive. Most were charges were for *maleficia*: the accusation of causing illness or death on people or livestock. In coastal regions, interference with fishing success was another common charge. Other specific common accusations in Danish witch trials were causing: cattle death, spoiling milk, killing horses or sheep, ruining deer, and inflicting poverty...almost always having some economic or monetary cause. Accusations of devil worship were not as common in Denmark. When they did occur, they often accused the suspect of meeting the Devil in the church, or that the witch renounced Christianity by blowing through the keyhole of the church door. "Evidence" was often sought by using multiple pin pricks on the accused's skin to search for a "devil's mark"... a spot where one did not feel pain. Also common were flotation tests or the "ordeal of water." If you sunk and drown you were innocent and if you floated you were guilty, pretty much a no-win deal. In 1617, King Christian IV made a new law that both made the practice of sorcery or witchcraft a crime AND restricted the death penalty for witchcraft to only cases of satanic pact. In Jutland, half of all known witch trials took place in the decade after the 1617 law. King Christian IV was pretty freaked out by witches; he even thought a German witch had been hired to kill him with black magic. In the 1630's and 1640's, trials for witchcraft dramatically waned. None took place from 1652 until resurfacing again in 1683. The Regard Witch Trials, near Ebeltoft in Jylland in 1685-1686 caused renewed witch hysteria. The last government-sanctioned witch execution was in Falster in 1693 of Anne Palle. The last known *murder* of a witch was 1800. In total between both Denmark and Norway (part of Denmark then) 1,350 people were killed; a sad time indeed for the countless innocent lives lost, generally at the whim of some unfounded allegation perhaps started at some minor squabble between neighbors.

An interesting offshoot was the "cunning folk" or "kloge folk." These were Danes, both male and female, who were believed to have the ability to cure illness, remove curses, find lost things, and identify thieves and witches. Long before the time of modern medicine, the cunning folk used "folk magic" to help heal. Cunning folk were both feared and admired. They were seen as an asset to a community because other forms of medical care didn't exist yet. They generally avoided the penalties of witchcraft since they could be of personal benefit to the community; they were seen as people who used magic for good not evil. Remember, this was a time in history when superstitions ran high, so people put much faith in folk magic. But the church preached against them, seeing the cunning folk as threat to their power and the Lutheran doctrine. Cunning folk could still get fines or get exiled to another province, if they provoked the wrong people.

From a genealogical perspective, the use of, and belief in, cunning folk, the fear of witches, or the fear of being accused, would have been a very real part of your ancestors' lives in the 17th century. Even if you haven't found names that far back, if you know the town or area, you could try to find specific witch trial stories from that area. Or if you don't know the town that far back, even adding a general section on this topic to your writings is sure to pique the curiosity of your family....even the most jaded kids 😊

For those who are interested, the 1943 film 'Vredens Dag' ('Day of Wrath') by Carl Dreyer reportedly paints a fairly accurate picture of how witches were executed in the 1600s. It was itself an adaptation of

Norwegian playwright Hans Wiers-Jenssen's 1909 drama 'Anne Pedersdotter', the story of a witch's trial, which has an air of sexual intrigue and covert affairs. You can watch it for free on YouTube.

While a war on witches was raging in Denmark, so too were political wars ranging involving Denmark and Europe as a whole.

From 1618- 1648 the Thirty Years' War raged as numerous wars throughout Central Europe, one of the longest in the history of Europe, with over 8 million casualties! It began as a war between different Protestant and Catholic states, but over time became more generalized political fighting. Since religion was essentially inseparable from state, religion played a more overreaching part of people's lives then than it does for many nowadays. So basically every person in Europe had an opinion as to which side they wanted to win this war...your ancestors would have been no exception.

1625-1629:

Against the advice of his council, King Christian IV brought Denmark into the fray with fighting in the Low Saxon War or Kejserkrigen, "the Emperor's War." Christian IV, was Lutheran and also the Duke of Holstein, which bordered the predominantly Catholic region of the German empire. The Low Saxon War was Christian IV's attempt to be a "protector of German Protestantism" by opposing the Catholic German Emperor Ferdinand II. Christian IV was very intolerant of Catholicism. Christian IV was technically fighting this war as the Duke of Holstein and not as the King of Denmark-Norway. This technicality was probably meaningless to the average Dane, since it dragged all of Denmark into the chaos of the Thirty Years' War anyway.

Land battles at this time were siege-based. Armies moved very slowly, the linear formation of battles began being implemented and the use of gunpowder weapons increased. At sea, battles were more blockade-based, focused on stopping shipping and supply transport in harbors rather than grand naval battles with booming cannons out to sea.

1626:

On August 17, 1626, the Battle at Lutter am Bärenberg, south of Hanover Germany took place. Denmark's failure here led to the Catholic occupation of Jutland. Jutland was pillaged by enemy forces. Houses were ransacked, livestock taken, property destroyed. Jutlanders were said to have suffered greatly. Could your ancestor have been directly affected? The King himself was wounded in battle and barely escaped. Though it was their goal, the Germans were unable take Copenhagen. It became clear to Germany that the cost-benefit ratio to keep fighting was too high. Germany worried that they might risk losing military gains if Sweden and Denmark decided to "kiss and make up" in order to fight their mutual enemy the Catholics. Peace talks started.

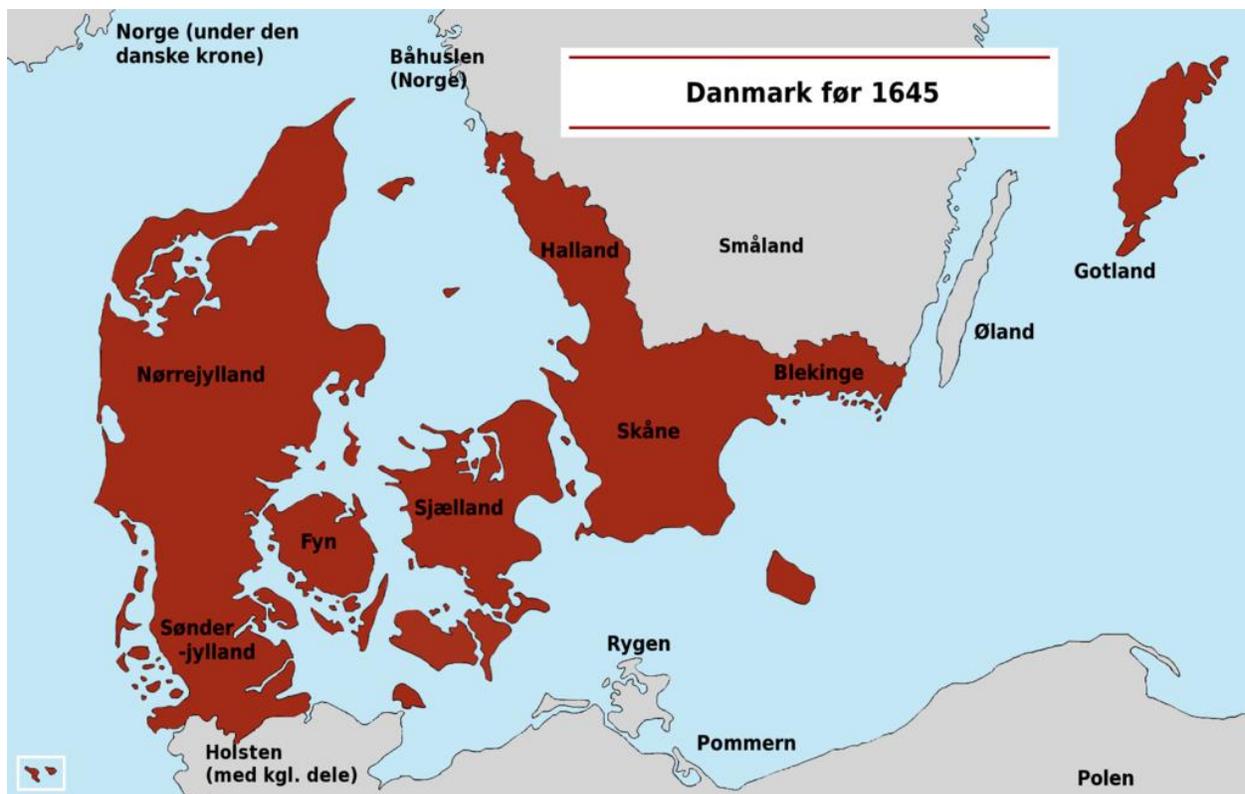
1629:

In 1629, the Treaty of Lübeck was signed. Denmark could keep control over Denmark and Norway, as well as Slesvig-Holstein, if the King would abandon support of Protestant German states and stay out of Germany's business.

1630's-1640's:

Throughout the 1630's and 1640's, the relationship between the Crown and the State Council became strained because King Christian IV never heeded the council's advice. The King was now widely criticized for everything wrong in Denmark: high taxes, inflation, social tensions, and the impending invasion from Sweden in 1643.

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1643-5:

Sweden simultaneously attacked Denmark on both north and south fronts. They attacked Jutland from the south and Skåne, the southern tip of the Swedish peninsula which was at the time owned by Denmark, from the north. This became known as Torstensson's War, or the Second Swedish War. Sweden wanted to stop King Christian IV's plotting to make Denmark a dominant force in the Baltic, which he was doing by making alliances with Russia, Poland, and others. Christian IV personally commanded the Danish naval fleet, and even lost an eye in battle, but Sweden won (with Dutch help). Denmark was forced to cede Halland, Jemtland, and Herjedalen in Norway and Gotland and Øsel in the Baltic. Think for a moment.....what if your ancestors' lived there? How would it feel to one day be Danish and another day be a Swede?

1646:

A genealogy blessing occurred in 1646: the clergy were now required to begin keeping records of religious life rituals like christening, confirmation, marriage, and burials. Granted these are likely illegible, sketchy and poorly organized, or possibly ravaged by time, but it was a start. Censuses weren't instituted for over 100 more years. Clergy played major role in poor relief, health care and education in Denmark, not only in 17th century but until WWII.

1648:

In 1648, King Christian IV died and Frederik III is ascended the throne. For a time, it looked like the nobility council might try to take over power from the King, but Frederik III managed to use fractures in the council and his personal allies to keep crown control. However, the State Council made the most restrictive coronation charter ever for a Danish King before they would officially coronate Frederik III. They essentially made Frederik III agree to make himself dependent upon the council and established the council as the center of political power, or else they would not confirm his coronation. The Council was eager to establish their power as they feared growing peasant resentment over the peasant's unfair share of tax burdens would prompt a revolution and peasants would demand representation in political matters.

Frederik III was popular with the Danish people, a threatening combo for the nobles. Clergy in the Lutheran churches at the Sunday pulpit preached the sanctity of authority and respect for one's leaders. It was a boon for the King, as the Danish people saw him as representing the masses and the Council as representing the nobility.

1650's:

Overall, the 1650's was generally a time of economic stagnation and the culture could at its liveliest be described as blah and ho-hum.

1657-60:

Things spiced up a bit in 1657 with the start of the Karl Gustav Wars. Denmark erroneously thought that now would be a good time to regain prestige from previous war losses, since Sweden was distracted with conflicts in the eastern Baltic. Not so lucky...Sweden was at the top of their military game and

Denmark was woefully unprepared. Swedish forces attacked Jutland via Germany. It was an unusually cold winter and the ice of the Danish Belts froze so Swedish forces could literally walk across the ice between Jutland and Zealand in a move to capture Copenhagen. (Note on the Danish Belts: The Great Belt (*Storebælt*) is a strait between the islands of Zealand (*Sjælland*) and Funen (*Fyn*))

The Nobles failed to fight in this war, and the rural peasants weren't much interested in fighting for the privileges of the aristocracy, which led to disastrous results for Denmark.

Swedish troops laid siege outside of Copenhagen. On Feb 10-11, 1659, Copenhagen was attacked, but the initial attack failed. Copenhagen residents had to endure months of attacks by bombardment and blockage of supplies. Sweden hoped to "starve them out." Luckily, Denmark got support from the Dutch and Sweden failed to ever take Copenhagen. King Frederik III actually served side by side with citizens in the siege on Copenhagen; he personally took charge of Copenhagen's defense and gained a great respect for the citizens and how valiantly they fought. Many buildings in Copenhagen were burnt or destroyed, about 1/3 of provincial towns had significant destruction, and trade was halted. In South Jutland, as much as 10% of the farm land was laid to waste.

If you had ancestors living in Copenhagen at this time, you may want to explore further into the siege on Copenhagen, as it is quite an interesting topic.

Two factors finally brought this war to a close: King Karl Gustav X of Sweden died in 1660 and Western powers intervened in the conflict. Western Europe was OK with Sweden being dominant in the Baltic but they were not so hot on Sweden encroaching on mainland Europe like they would be if they took over Denmark. *This prevented a total collapse of Denmark as a sovereign nation. This importance of this cannot be overstated. European intervention saved Denmark and preserved its continuance as a country.* Denmark was forced to surrender Scania, the Norway provinces of Jämtland and Härjedalen, and also Bohuslän. Overall, Denmark lost about 1/3 of Denmark's total territory and population! However, Trøndelag in Norway and the island of Bornholm were returned to Denmark. Bornholm descendants: How do you think your ancestors felt about this?

Another tremendous blow to Denmark was that it lost its monopoly of the Øresund waters, breaking a 1,000 year old sovereignty of Danish control. The waters were now divided into Swedish and Danish halves. This was good for Europe, since they had an option to skirt around the Sound Tolls, but it was terrible for Danish tax revenue. Worst of all for the average Dane, the commoners had to foot the bill of the extra taxes needed to repair an economy in ruins and a collapsing government.

1660:

Autumn of 1660 marked a monumental change in Denmark's governmental structure: it changed from an elective monarchy to hereditary monarchy. "Elective" is a bit of a deceiving term, it had meant elected by noble appointment, not the vote of the common folks. This marked the period of Absolutism,

whereby the all-powerful King had automatic hereditary inheritance to the throne. The King had absolute power with only 3 exceptions:

1. He could not dispose of Danish territories
2. He could not allow a reduction of his powers
3. He could not depart from Lutheran faith and doctrine

The King was now viewed as second only to God. The only one he had to answer to was God. His duty was to God and the Danish people. He was the “only legitimate interpreter and agent of the will of the people.” As an Absolute Monarch, the King could pick his own team of High Court advisors, which were still all wealthy landowners but not necessarily from noble classes. The Danish government was now set-up with specialist departments and ministers that gave advice to the King and translated his decisions into workable practices. This ministry still meets in the same Slotsholmen building in Copenhagen today as they did 300 years ago.

Average folk did not benefit one way or another from the change to an absolute monarchy, and many nobles lost standing. Nobles now had to pay taxes and compete with “commoners” for public office. To clarify, a “commoner” was NOT a peasant or lower member of the societal ladder. A commoner was a businessman or merchant, higher up than the majority of people in Danish society, not one of the ¾ of the population deemed peasants.

One might wonder what precipitated this change. The impetus for this change seems to have been how ineptly the nobility behaved during the recent wars. Faith in their leadership was tarnished and even the Crown began resenting how nobles didn't have to pay taxes. Less than 2,000 people out of the 800,000 people in Denmark were classified as nobility. Until end of 17th Century, 94 % of Denmark's agricultural land was owned by the Crown and the nobles, so that meant that less than ¼ of 1 % of the population owned 94% of the land! Talk about income inequality!! In fact, only 1 % of Danish land was owned by free holding peasants at this time. In centuries past, nobles were felt to have earned their tax-free privileges, since they had been “defenders of the realm,” like the knights in shining armor. However, by the 1600's, armored knights were completely out of date and the aristocracy had no real benefit to society to continue warranting such privileges.

To pay off national debt at this time, the Danish crown sold off ½ of its land to private owners. Almost half of Danish lands changed hands between 1660 and 1675. By 1700, Crown only controlled 1/3 of the land in Denmark, which greatly reduced the money the crown could make on crop sales. Some old aristocracy went bankrupt but others became owners of huge amounts of land. Often those who benefitted were Germans who had been previous members of the Danish crown. Danish farmland was now divided into 600 roughly equal-sized manor farms owned by landlords, with smaller equal-sized farms around them for the peasants/tenants to rent. Each tenant got strips of land, but in a patch-work assortment, so all peasants needed to farm communally.

This land redistribution ultimately put a squeeze on the landless peasants and ones that only owned small pieces of property. The population of Denmark was increasing and that meant smaller and smaller parcels of land to pass on to one's heirs. This created a "rural underclass" at poverty level with no land, barely eking out an existence working farm to farm as hired hands. Peasants rented land from landlord, who had full power to determine rent price, labor demands, and production techniques... creating essentially a serfdom and making one tied to their town. A peasant might have to give 200 days of service to the landlord per year, which didn't leave much time to farm your own land for your own food. Sometimes a peasant couldn't harvest his own crops because he had to harvest for the landlord; his own fields going to rot in the meantime. A peasant could be punished by the landlord if the landlord said he or she was "slow or lazy." As punishment, there were even dungeons or the "wooden horse." This was a sharp narrow plank with a tail and a horse's head. One had to sit across it for hours with weights tied to one's hands and feet. One could also be whipped. Widespread crop failures in 1661 and 1682 added to the misery.

Overall life was very hard for most folks, but a small middle class of merchants, entrepreneurs, shop keepers and artisans was emerging.

One area that did seem to be flourishing was Denmark's international trade in the East and West Indies. The Danish East India Company traded from 1616 to 1650, and the Second Danish East India Company from 1670-1729. The Guinea Company ran from 1671 to 1754. These routes primarily traded for spices. In 1658, Denmark acquired West African land like Ghana from Swedish war negotiations. In 1666, Denmark began to colonize St. Thomas in the Danish Virgin Islands, and later St. Croix and St. John. The Caribbean trade routes were horribly sinister. Goods from Denmark were traded for slaves in Africa which were in turn traded for sugar, tobacco, and cotton in the Caribbean. Shamefully, Denmark was responsible for the transport of 300,000 slaves until the Danish slave trade ended in 1803.

1665: Act of Succession: It decreed that the most important duty of the Danish King was to worship God according to the letter of the Bible and the Confessio Augustana of 1530 (a.k.a. the Augsburg Confession)—basically a statement of the principles of the Lutheran faith. It emphasized the King's duty to ensure that his subjects remain true to Lutheranism and protect them from heretics and blasphemers.

Kongelov: Royal Law or King's Law of 1665: Drafted by Peder Schumacher, a burgher politician, who was also known by the name Griffenfeld. The King's Law did away with The State Council, the Rigsraad. The affairs of state were now assigned to Ministerial Offices, also called Colleges, who were ruled over by King's ultimate say. Strangely, this law was not made public until 1709, after death of Frederik III. How could this be hidden? What was reaction when it became public? Or maybe the average Dane had so little power that it didn't even matter anyway?

Also at this time, Denmark divided itself into *amter* (counties), a term we genealogists are undoubtedly familiar with. Each *amter* was headed by a government-appointed official called an *amtmand*, usually a local noble, who oversaw local authority duties. Sheriffs (*fogder*) maintained the actual law and order;

magistrates (*sörensriver*) attended to judicial matters and local clergy were the “crown advocates” to promote the King and his values.

1668: Interesting side note: In 1668, a Danish tailor named Christen Simmensen of Elsinore became the first known example (world-wide) of a private individual letting off fireworks for New Year’s Eve. Local authorities weren’t happy. He had to endure torture on the wooden horse.

1670: King Frederik III died of pneumonia. For the first time, his son automatically inherited the throne without the approval of a noble council. His name was Christian V. Weirdly, Christian V had not been trained in ruling matters or national policy, so government affairs were effectively taken over by Peder Schumacher, the Count of Griffenfeld, Frederik III’s Secretary.

One of Christian V’s first orders was the creation of Nyhavn Canal in Copenhagen. It was dug from 1670-1673, mainly by Swedish prisoners of war. It connected the sea right into the heart of town, increasing trade and commerce activities and making it a center of social life. Taxes on landowners were decreased and trade and industry increased in Copenhagen.

Christian V also created the Order of Dannebrog, a hierarchy of rank and title to encourage people to work for the King and climb its social ladder. Griffenfeld created a national cavalry, for the first time there could be mounted peasants.

1675-1679: It seems Denmark got restless with peacetime, and in 1675, Christian V declared war on Sweden, starting the Scanian War (Skåne War) of 1675-1679. Christian V hoped to regain the province of Scania (Skåne) in southwest Sweden, which had been lost in a previous war. Christian V directly attacked Sweden and was aided by Dutch, as part of larger Dutch War involving France. In the bloody battle of Lund in 1676, 5,000 Danes and 3,000 Swedes died. Danish Ships almost destroyed Swedish navy, but ultimately Denmark was forced to give up on getting Scania back.

1680’s: Maritime trade around Copenhagen was doing well as Denmark entered the 1680’s, and King Christian V even allowed Jews and Calvinists to settle and hold jobs in Copenhagen and Fredericia, near the eastern edge of Jutland. However, the agriculture situation was going from bad to worse. Grain prices fell, crop rotation and other agriculture reforms were not being embraced, there was a shortage of labor, and landowners demanded an enormous amount of work and quick profits. Both the land and the workers were simply exhausted.

1683: Christian V’s *Danish Law*: The creation of a comprehensive legal code for all of Denmark and all its people. It created the first complete land registration, including soil quality, in order to make taxation “fairer.” If you had better land, then you paid more taxes. This tax reform wasn’t really from the goodness of the King’s heart however, he was looking for a way to increase tax revenue to help pay for debts from the Scanian War, not really to help ease hardship for the poor. Even if your ancestor did not own land, which most people did not, these laws would have had a direct impact on their lives: if their landlord had to pay more in taxes, guess who would have to work the land even harder? Yep, the peasants.

One part of the Danish Law of 1683 that would have affected the average person was that Danes were free to deal with disputes without intervention from the state. The first book of Danish Law says: Danes had the right to voluntary agreement between two parties in dispute or through mediation with a third party. Verbal agreements were legally valid and binding. It gave the peasants freedom from the government nosing into the minutiae of their daily squabbling.

Art, science, and culture:

Having thoroughly investigated the political scene of 17th century Denmark, let's turn now to the arts, sciences, and cultural life. Art, literature, and music are easy: there wasn't much. There was little to no *original, native* Danish art or literature in the 1600's...anything of novel artistic note was imported from elsewhere in Europe. Danish publishing houses in Copenhagen basically only put out bland religious sermons and uncontroversial doctrines. In 1689, the first opera was performed in Copenhagen, named "Der vereinigte Götterstreit." Opera had been popular in the rest of Europe for some time already, but there was no real music scene in Denmark in the 17th century, except for folk songs. There was no stage theater scene either.

Two literary highlights of the time were:

Peder Syv (aka Peder Pedersen Syv or Siuf) published a collection of Danish proverbs and an anthology of 100 love ballad poems. These were compilations rather than original works, but he said they represented "the philosophy of the Danish people over many centuries." These can be found free online at Kindle, Google books, and the Gutenberg Project.

Anders Bording (1619-1677) was the first Danish journalist and writer of flowing verse. He published the first Danish newspaper, a monthly periodical named *Den Danske Mercurius*.

Science:

The arts were not Denmark's strong suit, but *science* in the 17th century had some Danish shining stars.

Ole Worm (1588-1654) was a Professor who published a collection of runic inscriptions called the *Monumenta Danica*.

View it at: <https://archive.org/details/danicorummonumen00worm> or on Google books at:

https://books.google.com/books/about/Danicorum_monumentorum_libri_sex_e_spiss.html?id=J5kjpgAACAAJ

Ole Worm also collected volumes of information, parish by parish, in Denmark and Norway that detailed ancient Viking monuments, rune-stones, and other historical data. He was also a physician, botanist, and antiquarian.

Ole Römer (1644-1710) Danish astronomer that argued that light had speed. He developed celestial maps, instruments, and a land survey of Denmark.

Thomas Bartholin (1616-1680) discovered the lymphatic system and the role of the liver.

Niels Steensen (Nicolaus Steno) (1638-86) proved that the heart is a muscle, and described the body's "glands." He was also the founder of geology and described geological strata and fossils.

End of 17th Century:

By the end of the 17th century, Denmark was reasonably well governed. Money, although less than in the past, was still coming in from Sound Toll, and income from crown lands, as well as the basic land tax, brought in revenue to the government. The army and navy got improvements and international trade was encouraged and growing. Copenhagen was the center of government and economic life. It is 65,000 residents strong by the turn of 18th century. Central squares, government buildings, castles, and harbors beautified the town, but overcrowding, poverty, filth, polluted water, and disease were still the reality for the average Copenhagener.

In 1699, King Christian V died, secondary to injuries from being trampled by a horse. His son Frederik IV came to power and reigned until 1730. The end of a century brought the beginning of a new reign.

Conclusion:

This was indeed a whirlwind of facts and events, but don't worry, they are all written down for you to refer back to at a later date. Of all the things I've talked about tonight, most importantly I hope you remember this one: Even if you haven't found the names of your Danish ancestors this far back, you can still bring the flavor of their lives and experiences alive for your family using history. Kids may not dig war battles and dates, but they might ponder what it would have felt like for Jutland family members to have had their homes ransacked during war, or to ponder the fear of being accused of witchcraft and how that relates to how quickly someone's image can be tarnished today with a baseless claim on social media. Perhaps they might draw parallels to income inequality their ancestors experienced to that of people around the world today, making that family member from 400 years ago a bit more relatable. Or maybe they will just be tickled to know that pigs weighed 150 lbs less than they do today 😊

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