

WCC Temporary Exhibit: Anni's Story

The Fulton Windmill Cultural Center's June exhibit will focus on Denmark through "Anni's Story." The Hans Larsen family of four left Denmark in 1953 to relocate in Fulton, Illinois. Anni was 9 years old and her immigrant experience will be told through a temporary display at the Center, June 2-30.

In the early 1950's, Anni Larsen loved her Danish childhood with school friends, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and neighborhood chums. Their rented apartment in Copenhagen was beautiful in Anni's eyes. However, her parents were ready to chase the American dream of owning a car and their own house. Ellen Larsen's second cousin, Gudrun Heldt, lived in Fulton, Illinois, with her husband, Christian. They offered to sponsor the cousins for a new life in America. Jobs were abundant and within one week, Ellen was working at the Garment Factory in Clinton and Hans was at Agrico in Fulton. Speaking no English, Anni became a 4th grader and her 14 year old brother, Poul, went to 8th grade.

This WCC immigrant display will show examples of Anni's life both in Denmark and in the U.S. and detail the lifelong challenges for her which are common with many immigrants. Anni will be at the Windmill Cultural Center on June 6 from 1- 3 to talk with visitors.

Anni married Larry Johnson and they live in Fulton. In 1995, Anni spent a semester at a folk school in Denmark as she reconnected to the language and customs of her birth country. Anni and her 14 year old granddaughter will spend three weeks in Denmark this summer.

The Windmill Cultural Center is open seven days a week with no admission charge.