



Danish Junior College (Vejlefjordskolen), Daugård, Vejle, Denmark.

Tor Tjeransen/ADAMS.

# Vejlefjordskolen (Vejlefjord School, the Danish Junior College)

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## Early Beginnings

In 1890 M. M. Olsen and his wife were called home to Denmark, from the United States, and assigned to establish a school in Copenhagen, together with Carl Ottosen, who later established Skodsborg Sanatorium. Olsen and his wife were responsible for the care of the school, while Carl Ottosen was responsible for teaching.

In the next four years the school moved four times: to Sindshvilevej, Colbjornsgade, Ryesgade, and H. C. Andersensgade. Students came from all parts of Scandinavia. During this period members suggested they move the school out of the capital, buy some land, and build a school building to get more freedom in the way the school operated.

In 1893 the Scandinavian mission council in Stockholm granted approval for a new school. The school was ready for September 1, 1894, with a view over Kattegat. The land had been purchased at Frederikshavn from the farm, Frydenstrand, which had been owned by Carl Ottosen's father until his death in 1891, when it passed to Carl's brother. The building was three stories high and could hold 50 students as well as the principal and teachers. Subjects taught were Bible, the Nordic languages, maths, sciences, English, German, French, health, bookkeeping, stenography, music, cooking, sewing, and gardening. Initially, with low student numbers from the other Nordic countries, the financial situation was tight. The solution was to establish a sanatorium, under the leadership of Carl Ottosen, to provide students with a place to work. The financial depression in the area, however, ended the existence of the school.<sup>1</sup>

L. H. Christian and L. Muderspach established a school with 24 students in Copenhagen in 1903, hoping that this time a school would be more permanent. In the summer of 1904, the school moved to Sindal in Vendsyssel, on the Høgholt farm, owned by the leader of the conference, P. A. Hansen. In autumn 1904 the school moved to Frydenstrand where it remained until 1906.<sup>2</sup>

In 1908 it was suggested to move the school to Skodsborg Sanitarium, as there would be plenty of qualified teachers there. The total cost of building a school and a chapel at Skodsborg was not to exceed 65.000 krone. While the school was being built, they rented Villa Skodsborg, located on site. Thirty students attended. In November 1909 the new school building was ready for use. The school year operated from November to April, and the rest of the year the sanatorium rented the space. As the sanatorium grew and received more guests, it became difficult to use the room facilities for the school. In 1918 it was decided to sell the school building to Skodsborg Sanatorium and move the school to Nærum Sanatorium. On November 5, 1918, the new school opened, consisting of classrooms, a dining hall, a kitchen, student rooms, and a meeting room. The school year was extended from six to nine months and more subjects were added. A missionary class for married couples was also started.<sup>3</sup> Plans for a school just for youth were put in motion and men from the conference committee were sent to evaluate different sites.

One evening in June 1929 the conference committee stood on the slopes overlooking Vejle fjord, discussing the urgency of building a new school for the Adventist youth of Denmark. They had traveled all day to various places, looking for a place that would meet the requirements and ideals for Adventist education Ellen White had

outlined. Standing there overlooking Vejle fjord they decided it, an eighty-acre farm 20 kilometers from the city of Vejle, would be the right place.<sup>4</sup>

The total cost of purchasing the farm was 62.000 krone. Additional land was purchased to gain access and rights to the fjord, and roads had to be built. The total additional costs were estimated at 250,000 krone.<sup>5</sup>

The purpose of the school was to teach young people about God, to develop missionaries, to share salvation, to strengthen homes, and to bless the local congregations through the youth when they returned home.<sup>6</sup>

The building of roads, laying of pipes to drain the fields, building staff accommodation and classrooms, removing large stones from the fields, transporting gravel for the roads, planting of fruit trees, and construction of greenhouses took 2-3 years, and was still ongoing when the school officially opened in 1930.<sup>7</sup>

## The 1930s

In 1930 the school, which was named *Vejlefjord Højskole*, welcomed the first group of 78 students.<sup>8</sup> Initially the school offered a choice of four courses, and H. M. Johnson was principal. The subjects on offer were Bible, Danish, English, German, history, math, calculus, physics, geography, natural history, psychology, home nursing, church history, bookkeeping, sewing, and cooking.

During the early years an orchard, greenhouses, and a garden were established in order to help the school become as self-sufficient as possible.<sup>9</sup> The fees were 80 krone for eight months, which included board and lodging, lighting, heating, and a weekly bath. Non-boarders could pay a tuition fee of 25 krone for 8 months. The registration fee was 5 krone, library fee 2krone, and the lab fee was 2 krone.<sup>10</sup>

When it started the school was not permitted to hold exams. Because of this, students had travel by steamboat or train from Vejle to Copenhagen to take their exams. It was eight years before exams were allowed to be conducted at Vejlefjord.<sup>11</sup>

In 1932 the school staff were the principal, one Bible and history teacher, one mathematics and science teacher, language teachers, one student church-school teacher, and a school nurse. There was also a matron, a cook, a farm manager, and a gardener.<sup>12</sup>

The school was comprised of the main building, boys building, and staff quarters. The girls' accommodation was on the second floor of the main building. Classrooms were on the first floor of the main building, with the kitchen and dining hall on the ground floor. On the top floor was an ironing area, later converted into rooms. The chapel was also in the main building.<sup>13</sup> A gym was built in 1935.<sup>14</sup>

The school had three houses for teachers, one large shop building, three greenhouses, and various farm buildings. The farm buildings were three old thatched roof buildings and a new horse barn. Those buildings housed the horses, cows, and chickens for the farm. The cows' milk was delivered by the school and sold to

Mogelkjer Dairy, while the horses were presented at shows around the country. 300 fruit trees had been planted and a large market gardening project begun as part of the setting up of the school.

In 1932 the garden yielded a gross income of 5000 krone, while the total running costs of the school was 15000 krone.<sup>15</sup> The intention of having a farm and greenhouses was to offer students a place to work while they were doing their studies. For students unable to pay the fees, the school offered the opportunity of work and study alternate years. In 1932 forty students had entered colporteur work, and 27 students worked for the school during the summer holidays.<sup>16</sup>

A four-year course was offered which corresponded to high school education. Students were encouraged to continue studying an additional year, with special emphasis on pastoral training, language, music, and commercial subjects.<sup>17</sup>

The creation of a summer program helped to provide the school with an income during the summer months. In 1931 it had 29 paying guests, providing the school with an income of 2600 krone.<sup>18</sup>

In 1938, with war looming in Europe, Principal H. M. Johnson and his family decided to go back to the United States, and P. A. Christiansen was appointed principal.<sup>19</sup>

## The 1940s

In 1940 the fees for one school year were 680 krone. Student materials could be bought from the school at extra cost. It was expected that all students would work two hours a day as part of their payment of fees.<sup>20</sup>

After Denmark was occupied by the Germans in April 1940, the German occupying forces showed an interest in using the school, due to its strategic position by the fjord and its protected location. However, because there was only a mud road, which challenged easy access, the idea was abandoned.

On July 4, 1943 the school hosted a summer camp program. In April 1945 the Germans re-considered requisitioning Vejlefjord to house 800 German refugees. However, due to the inadequate water supply, they abandoned the idea.<sup>21</sup>

In 1947 a new house for the staff, containing four flats, was ready to be used.<sup>22</sup> Eight student rooms were built in the empty loft of the main building in 1949, enabling the school to accommodate the increasing number of students.<sup>23</sup>

The farm barn was struck by lightning in 1948 and started to burn. Thanks to quick action, the barn and the cows and bull inside were saved.<sup>24</sup>

## The 1950s

In the 1950s the school changed its name from *Vejlefjord Højskole* to *Vejlefjord Realskole*. Only a few years later, the name was changed again to *Vejlefjord Højere Skole*. A two-year secretarial course was introduced in September 1951 for those who had completed secondary education. The subjects on the course were Danish and English commercial correspondence, Danish and English shorthand typing, bookkeeping, and Bible.<sup>25</sup> In the same year, the growing of 3000 tomato plants in the greenhouse was replaced by growing 4000 cabbage plants.

In 1952 the school experienced a large influx of students from Norway because the Norwegian school at Onsrud had closed. More space was needed to house the many students, and a new building for female students was constructed.<sup>26</sup>

In 1953 the school offered a three-year or a five-year secondary school education. The secondary school comprised the second, third, and fourth form. After two years, the students would sit their *mellemskole* (middle school) exam, and after the third year they would sit their *realeksamen* (real life) exam.<sup>27</sup> The requirement for students to do two hours of daily work continued.<sup>28</sup>

By this time the school had 23 employees: the principal, eleven teachers, one matron, one farm manager, two gardeners, one technical manager, one cook, two kitchen helpers, one treasurer, one bookkeeper, and other helpers in various departments.<sup>29</sup> Older students lead a devotional service in the mornings, while the teachers did the same in the evenings. Every Tuesday morning, the boys had worship alone in the chapel, discussing issues facing young men. The girls on those mornings gathered in prayer groups. On Wednesday evenings this plan was reversed.<sup>30</sup> On Friday evenings the devotional usually closed with a testimony.

In November 1954 the girls accommodation building was officially opened. The building contained student rooms, a living room, and a flat.<sup>31</sup>

Between 1955 and 1956 the school fee was 180 krone per month. In addition to this cost, the library fee was 10 krone, lab fee 10 krone, use of the washing machines 3 krone per month, and use of the piano and organ 2 krone per month. Music and singing lesson fees were set by agreement, while a single room cost an extra fee of 20 krone. In addition schoolbooks, gym clothes, and shoes had to be bought. All accommodation rooms had running water, beds, a mattress, chairs, a wardrobe, a table, and a small bookcase.<sup>32</sup>

In 1958 a new Adventist high school, Tyrifjord Høyere Skole, officially opened in Norway, ending the influx of Norwegian students to Vejlefjord.<sup>33</sup>

## The 1960s

In the 1960s the school launched its first official logo, which was placed at the front entrance of the school. The logo became known as heart, hand, and head.<sup>34</sup> The General Conference recognized the school as a junior college in 1961.<sup>35</sup> The first streetlights were installed on the school grounds in 1964 to increase the safety of the students and staff.<sup>36</sup>

A new school building was put into use in 1966,<sup>37</sup> and in 1968 the car parking spaces and part of the road to the school was tarmacked.<sup>38</sup>

## The 1970s

On October 25, 1972, a fire broke out in the boys' building. 41 boys had to be evacuated and temporarily rehoused with friends and neighbors in the area.<sup>39</sup> Ideas were put into motion in 1972 to establish a gymnasium. Gymnasium in Denmark is a three-year education program that follows after finishing secondary school. Graduation from Gymnasium is required for University entrance.<sup>40</sup> Money was collected from Adventist members, and an application was made for a government loan. It was decided to include a swimming pool in the new building and new teachers were employed. The existing school building was linked with the new gymnasium building. The new building opened September 24, 1973, at a cost of 4 million krone.<sup>41</sup> 27 students started at the gymnasium and were in one of two groups, mathematical or linguistic. Gymnasium, primary, and secondary school students made for a combined total of 147 students on site.<sup>42</sup>

Until 1973 Vejlebjerg had been a privately-owned school. This changed at the annual meeting of the West Nordic Union Conference on March 19, 1972. From then on the school was no longer privately owned and had to rent its buildings. The school board was also restructured, with four members chosen by the Adventist church and six members chosen by parents.<sup>43</sup>

In 1973 the position of a "school home leader" was established, with daily responsibility for supervising the boarding department of the school. The school and the boarding department held weekly meetings about common issues.<sup>44</sup>

Boarding students were required to do seven hours of practical work a week. Time for homework was between 18:00 and 20:00. Students in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grades were required to do their homework in the reading room every second week.<sup>45</sup>

In the 1970s the school started sending out student missionaries to other countries. Later the school accepted student missionaries from elsewhere to come and work at the school.

## The 1980s

In 1980 work commenced to build a church and two additional staff houses on the site. The budget for the church was 4 million krone, and donations were collected from Adventists around the country.<sup>46</sup> On Sabbath, February 14, 1981, the church was officially dedicated.<sup>47</sup>

In 1983 a new staff house and renovation of the existing staff houses were completed.<sup>48</sup> The same year the government passed a law permitting local radio stations. The school set up its own radio station, and in May 1983 the first program was broadcast, consisting of music and church information.<sup>49</sup>

In the autumn of 1983, at the annual council of the West Nordic Union, it was voted to change the school's name to *Vejlefjordskolen* (Vejlefjord School). This name was later approved by the Danish Educational ministry.<sup>50</sup>

The privately owned kindergarten, located on site, was taken over by the school in 1987.<sup>51</sup>

In 1988 the government's "gymnasium reform" meant that gymnasiums had to offer more subjects. Students had to have two or three subjects at high level, and the courses had to last two to three years and have a verbal and written aspect to them. Vejlefjord, being a small school, decided to offer the subjects already being taught while providing a limited number of subjects at a lower level which would be offered every second year. New subjects at the high level were biology and social sciences.

## The 1990s

The Historical Archive for the Seventh-day Adventist Church was officially located and opened at Vejlefjord in 1991.<sup>52</sup>

In 1995 David Dorland was appointed principal of Vejlefjord. Among the challenges he faced was a gymnasium on the brink of closure due to falling student numbers, as well as financial problems. Staff had to work more hours to balance the budget.

Between 1995 and 2001 Icelandic horses were bought to the school and the stables were improved.<sup>53</sup> Outdoor riding facilities were put in place. Another innovation was to allow students, for a fee, to bring their own horses to be stabled at the school. These measures helped to improve the school's economy, by attracting students who were interested in the riding opportunities. During the same period, an off-road motor cross circuit was built, and quad bikes were purchased. Kayaks were also attained, and water sports added to the school curriculum.

## 2000 to 2019

On April 8, 2001, Principal David Dorland died due to an illness, and the vice principal, Erling Andersen, took over the school until a new principal could be chosen. Later in 2001 Kay Flinker was appointed as the new principal of the school.

Between the years 2001 and 2009 the number of students rose from 290 to 370 across the three sections of primary, secondary, and gymnasium. The library was moved to the school hallways and the former library was made into a classroom. A new school kitchen was created as well as a new computer room. The boys building was refurbished with new windows. A staff house was converted into two classrooms. Chemistry and Biology were given shared facilities. A shared office was created for administration and management, and a new football field was created with lights and a surrounding fence. Another staff house was converted into student accommodation, and more student rooms were created in the boys' and the girls' buildings. The school building

was refurbished with new flooring and lightning, and the boys' building was also provided with a new cinema living room.

During the 2003-2004 term the school offered a health program, which consisted of health lectures, testing of heart function and cholesterol level, and testing of BMI and blood sugar. The kitchen reduced the fat and sugar content in their food, and students were offered individualized fitness and training programs.<sup>54</sup>

In 2005 an 8-million-krone sports hall was built.<sup>55</sup> At the same time new "gymnasium reforms" required subject courses to work more closely together so that specific subjects and levels connected into study directions. Collaboration with larger gymnasiums in the area enabled Vejleford to meet the reform requirements as more subjects could be offered. The school's Information Technology was also enhanced by the purchase of new laptops and interactive writing boards, and the teachers were given IT courses.<sup>56</sup>

In 2008 seven new classrooms, at the cost of 9 million krone, were created within the main building, and the gym was converted into a modern fitness center.<sup>57</sup> The kindergarten was provided with its own building, next to the new sports hall.<sup>58</sup>

The school established an annual theme week in 2010 focusing on the values of the school. At the same time an obligatory "induction course" for new staff was introduced at the beginning of the school year, where the school's values, history, and religious background were taught.

During the 2011 Christmas holidays, a water pipe burst in the main building, resulting in water damage on all three levels of the western part of the building.<sup>59</sup> Forty students had to be housed in temporary barracks behind the girls' building. The repairs and renovations to the main building cost 4 million krone, half of it covered by insurance, and took 6 months to complete. With the renovations the building had new modern rooms and furniture.

In 2012 a government inspection found that the dining hall's wooden walls contained too much mold. Renovations of the dining hall took place in the spring of 2013 and took three months to complete.<sup>60</sup> During the renovations a tent was set up and used as a temporary dining hall.

A government regulation introduced in 2013 required that teachers spend more time at the school doing their work. Offices and facilities had to be provided so teachers could do lesson preparation and marking work "in school." Vejleford sought to be flexible, allowing teachers to spend some hours each week working on site, in addition to their regular teaching hours.<sup>61</sup>

In 2015 the school decided to change from using their own water supply due to poor water quality. Pipes were laid to connect with the local water station in the village of Daugaard. Fiber internet was also introduced to increase internet speed, and more renovations included new windows, a new front entrance, and new furniture.

In 2016 it cost 1.364.343 krone to run the school.<sup>62</sup> At the end of 2017 it cost 1.251.796 krone, below the intended budget.<sup>63</sup>



On February 5, 2018, a new riding center opened.<sup>64</sup> Also in 2018, the Højere Forberedelses Eksamen (Higher Preparation Exam) was introduced, which included three subject packages: Horse and Nature, Health, and Between People. As part of the education, additional classes were offered in psychology and biology as well as riding classes and practical work.<sup>65</sup>

A new course, Global 10, was introduced in 2018, preparing for life after school.<sup>66</sup> It cost 3.8 million krone to run the school in 2018, exceeding the budget of 1.8 million krone, due to a fall in student numbers, and the lack of state funds to run the Højere Forberedelses Eksamen education. This situation added to an already existing deficit. The total deficit going into 2019 was 5.6 million krone.<sup>67</sup> As the state did not fund the Højere Forberedelses Eksamen program, it was not offered for the 2020/2021 school year.

In 2019, special assistance and help were offered for people with dyslexia;<sup>68</sup> A fitness center was open on site for two hours Monday to Thursday, with an instructor if needed. Indoor and outdoor football for boys and girls with a trainer, handball, badminton once a week, volleyball twice a week, basketball once or twice a week, gymnastics once a week, and water fitness in the school's swimming pool twice a week were offered. The school offered sailing, kayaking, canoeing, riding, music and choir, e-sports, and a skiing trip to Norway once a year.

In 2019 fish and poultry were added to the supper meal options, ending the school's long history of only serving vegetarian food. The change was introduced to accommodate the growing number of non-Adventist students and students with allergies.

## Historical Role of the School

In Denmark former students have become pastors or started working in other fields around the country, bringing their Adventist influence to their workplaces and colleagues. Several former students have worked at the General Conference headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland, and at local Adventist offices and division offices around the world. Others became teachers, and some principals, at Adventists schools. Many have gone into the caring professions as well as a wide range of other careers.

## Well Known Former Students

Dr. Jan Paulsen (TED president 1983-1995, General Conference vice president 1995-2000, General Conference president 2000-2010); Hugo W. Christiansen (division manager at the United States Library of Congress for 31 years); Viggo Norskov Olsen (principal at Newbold College 1960-1966, and principal at Loma Linda 1974-1990); Niels Erik Andreasen (president of Andrews University 1994-2016).

## List of Principals

M. M. Olsen, 1890-1898; Carl Ottosen, 1898-1903; L. Muderspach, 1903-1908; Erik Arnesen, 1908-1917; L. Muderspach, 1918-1920; Erik Arnesen, 1920-1925; P. A. Christiansen, 1925- 1930; H. M. Johnson, 1930-1938; P. A. Christiansen, 1938- 1947; K. A. Frederiksen, 1947-1948; C. A. Larsen, 1948-1952, Axel Varmer, 1952-1957; Hakon Mudderspach, 1957-1963; Borge Olsen, 1963-1966; Hans Jorgen Schantz, 1966-1971; Arne Wagenblast, 1972-1995; David Dorland, 1995-2001; Erling Andersen, 2001; Kay Flinker, 2001- 2009; Holger Daugaard, 2009-2019; Kay Flinker, 2019-present.

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