

# THE DANISH SOCIETY FOR THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE: 100 YEARS OF SERVICE (1917-2017)

## Authors

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### 1874: Lecturers about the History of Medicine

In 1874, Julius Petersen (1840-1912), who was a general practitioner, began to give lectures about the **History of Medicine** at the University of Copenhagen, and in 1876 he released the book *Hovedmomenter i den medicinske Lægekunsts historiske Udvikling*. This book and Petersen's later works portrayed the interplay between leading figures and ideas in Danish and European medicine, especially from the 16th into the 19th century. The book was translated into German.

### 1893: Professor in the History of Medicine

In 1893, he became the very first **Professor of History of Medicine** at the University of Copenhagen. Petersen expressed the hope that his writings on the History of Medicine would help ordinary doctors to search for improvement in the (clinical) practice of medicine. On his 70th birthday eight of his disciples composed a *Festschrift*.

### 1907: Exhibition of Medical Artefacts

In 1907, at the 50 year anniversary event of the the Danish Medical Union, an **exhibition of medical artefacts** was arranged. Carl Julius Salomonsen, Denmark's first bacteriologist, and two of Julius Petersen's disciples were the promoters. They asked members of the medical and related professions to donate artefacts.

After the exhibition, the objects were stored in Salomonsen's Institute of Bacteriology. This was the beginning of the Medical History Museum of the University of Copenhagen (now: Medical Museion), which after many troubles got its present domicile in the old Academy of Surgery in 1946.

### 1917: The Danish Society for the History of Medicine

1917 marked a milestone in the Nordic **History of Medicine**. Sweden has had its Society for quite some time already, while Denmark, Norway, and Finland all formed similar societies this very year.

On Monday 22 October 1917 at 8 PM, DMHS arranged its first meeting on the Medical Society's premises (the Student Association's building). Prof. dr. phil. in archaeology Christian Blinkenberg gave an initial presentation on *Helenekilde in the light of changing times*, and Prof. dr. med. in pathology Carl Julius Salomonsen reported on *A typhoid card*.

The latter mentioned was – together with Thorvald Madsen – one of the initiators of the creation of Statens Serum Institut (SSI). All interested (with accompanying ladies) were welcomed.

On 10 December 1917, the second meeting was held. Prof. and ear specialist Holger Mygind lectured on the “Pompeian Private House Hygiene”. The gathering also included a general meeting, followed by the very first DMHS executive board meeting. V. Maar, H. Ræder, Prof. Salomonsen, and JW Johnsson participated.

Accordingly, Carl Julius Salomonsen, who turned 70 on 6 December 1917, was praised and celebrated as Chairman in a Danish Medical Journal editorial.

Pharmacist Christian Dannesboe-Andersen (1876-1957, employed at Gam-meltorv Pharmacy in Copenhagen), Kristian Carøe (1851-1921, school physi-cian), John William Johnsson (1868-1929, general practitioner), Vilhelm Maar (1871-1940, physiologist and internal physician, professor of history of med-icine in 1916), and Hans Ræder (1869-1959, classical scholar, dr. phil.) were the founding fathers of **The Danish Society for the History of Medicine** with Professor Carl Julius Salomonsen as Chairman. Its objective was to gather all those interested in the historical aspects of medicine and related sciences, and its raison d'être was to serve as an organisational vehicle for a variety of medi-cal-related topics and studies, and to offer a practical platform for sharing and dissemination of knowledge.

Intermittently, close connections have existed between DMHS, Medical Museion and the Professor of History of Medicine.



CJ Salomonsen



V Maar



K Carøe

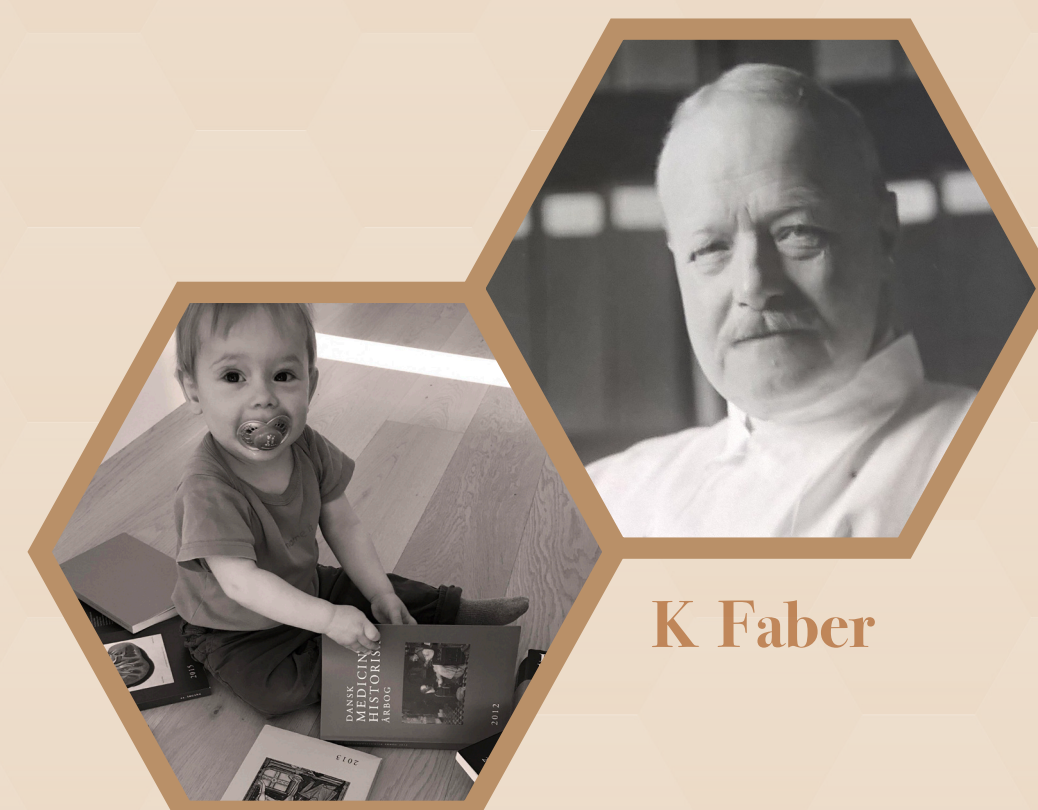
### Complete List of Chairmen

- Dec 1917 - Nov 1924: CJ Salomonsen
- Jan 1925 - Jan 1928: Bernhard Bang
- Jan 1928 - Jan 1933: Gordon Norrie
- Jan 1933 - Mar 1936: Knud Faber
- Mar 1936 - Jan 1945: Axel Hansen
- Feb 1945 - April 1950: Erik Warburg
- April 1950 - Jan 1963: Edv. Gotfredsen
- Jan 1963 - Jan 1965: Erik Warburg
- Jan 1965 - 1974: V. Møller-Christensen
- 1974 - 1978: Ole Secher
- 1978 - 1985: Mogens Thomsen
- 1985 - 1989: Jørgen Koch
- 1989 - 1994: Bengt Lindskog
- 1994 - 2000: Mogens Norn
- 2001 - 2004: Henrik R. Wulff
- 2005 - 2006: N. Rosdahl
- 2007 - 2012: Gert Almind
- 2013 - Present: Sven Erik Hansen

### A Selection of Outstanding DMHS Chairmen

Examples of some outstanding DMHS Chairmen or members of the Executive Board Committee:

- Knud Faber and Edvind Gotfredsen, who published general surveys of the History of Medicine in 1919 and 1964 respectively
- Vilhelm Maar, who edited some of Niels Steensen's works
- Vilhelm Møller-Christensen, who performed extensive archaeological investigations of skeletons from leper cemeteries.
- Henrik R. Wulff, who discussed medical decision making and medical language in books translated to several languages
- Egill Snorrason, who was the DMHS Secretary for many years and an eager medical history writer and communicator.



K Faber

Danish Medical  
History Yearbook

### National and Nordic Collaboration

DMHS wished to collaborate with similar Societies in the other Nordic countries from the very beginning. A Nordic Medical History Congress has been arranged every second year since 1967 – four times in Denmark. In May 2019, we will meet in Copenhagen once again.

In 1971-72, two sister-societies for the History of Medicine were founded in Denmark, for Funen and Jutland respectively. These Societies have ever since co-edited the Dansk Medicinhistorisk Årbog (Danish Medical History Year-book), indexed by Medline.

### Meetings and Excursions

Six lectures and excursions have been arranged almost every year consecutively since 1917. Medical Museion in Copenhagen has kindly provided DMHS with facilities and the Auditorium in the old Academy of Surgery for the lec-tures for many years.

DMHS has supported the edition of numerous books and publications financially, and assisted with distribution.

