

*Rydhave*

*Front cover: Rydhave's distinct white walls have become a familiar landmark in Skovshoved, north of Copenhagen. Here is the east facade.*



*Rydhave is the home of the American Ambassador to Denmark. A suite of attractive reception rooms extend from the entrance hall where every visitor first sets foot.*

*Rydhave,* the residence of the United States' Ambassador to Denmark, stands out among the grand villas in the neighborhood of Skovshoved, a few miles north of Copenhagen along the scenic coastal road, Strandvejen. Perched high on a hill, overlooking the narrow strait Øresund, separating Denmark from Sweden, its stately white walls and steep slate roofs create a striking ensemble, further enhanced by the extensive grounds that frame the mansion.

Built in 1885 for E. Schnackenburg, a tile manufacturer, Rydhave was designed by Vilhelm Petersen (1851-1931), an architect with a preference for the late-romantic style whose works also include Skovsgaard, a manor house on the island of Langeland.



*The extensive gardens adjoining the mansion offer fine scenery all year round.*

Schnackenburg did not keep the house for long, and in 1900 it was purchased by the coal merchant Carl Drost, who sixteen years later sold it to Christian G. Han-

sen, the director of Denmark's leading grain company. Known affectionately as the "Patriarch," Hansen enlarged the house, embellished the gardens considerably and lived here with his family for more than twenty years.

Events took a more dramatic turn during World War II, when the property was bought by the German Foreign Ministry as a residence for Dr. Werner Best, the German High Commissioner in Nazi-occupied Denmark. His presence introduced a new regime at Rydhave, with heavily armed guards and busy military officers, such as Field Marshall Erwin Rommel who visited in December

1943. Concern for his own safety in the event of Allied air raids led Best to construct a new wing and bomb shelter, and today these features remain the only tangible trace of his unpopular residency.

After the war, with Best incarcerated and Rydhave confiscated by the Danish authorities, the newly arrived American Minister, Monett B. Davis, leased the house. He soon, however, succumbed to its real charm and began negotiations with the Danish Government to acquire it as an official residence. Eventually the sum of \$94,000 was agreed upon, but in effect the purchase price was defrayed by turning American war surplus materials, notably cloth, over



*America's first envoy to Denmark after World War II, Minister Monett B. Davis, leased Rydhave and soon began negotiations to make it his official residence. Here, Minister and Mrs. Davis (to the left) return from their first audience with King Christian X in 1945, accompanied by Chamberlain, Colonel C.C.B. Dreyer.*

to the Danish authorities. These were still days of scarcity and rationing.

Arriving a few years after Minister Davis, Ambassador Eugenie Anderson (1950-1953) was less taken with



*Ambassador Eugenie Anderson (seated in front with white daisy) with her family in the library at Rydhave. Ambassador Anderson was the first-ever woman Ambassador from the United States. A native of Minnesota, she admitted to being overwhelmed 'by the size and formality' of the forty-room residence where she lived from 1950 to 1953.*

Rydhave. "The size and formality of our new home is an obstacle to living in the informal style to which we are accustomed," she told the readers of Minneapolis Sunday Tribune in January 1950. "We hope within a few days, after our own household furnishings are unpacked to rearrange five or six rooms upstairs with our furniture, books and pictures," she added, noting somewhat wistfully that as an Ambassador "it is not always easy to maintain simplicity."

Although subsequent Ambassadors have brought some changes to Rydhave's outward appearance and indoor amenities, the most dramatic alteration was the decision of Ambassador Robert Coe (1953-1957) to paint white the hitherto red brickwork of the facade. Today it would be hard to imagine Rydhave differently, so firmly established has its white glint become to neighbors and visitors alike. However, Ambassador Coe did not limit himself solely to changing the looks of Rydhave. He also altered the house materially by renovating the guest wing, installing new bathrooms, enlarging the dining room, and moving the entrance to Skovshovedvej on the northern side of the building, where a parking lot could be landscaped. Basically, Rydhave has remained unchanged from that time.



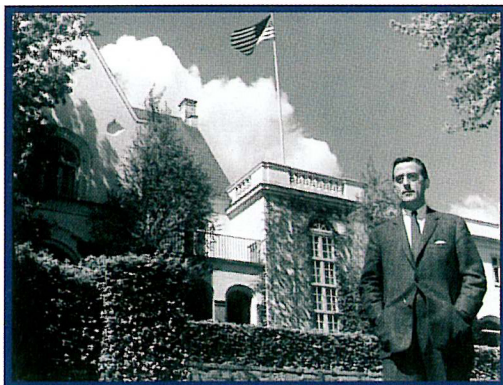
*In addition to his official duties, Ambassador Robert Coe was an accomplished artist who twice exhibited at Charlottenborg, the Danish Royal Academy of the Arts. It was during his residency 1953-1957 that the decision was made to paint Rydhave white, thereby changing the appearance of the red-brick house dramatically.*

Since the days of Minister Davis, nineteen Ambassadors have resided at Rydhave and countless guests and visitors have enjoyed the hospitality of the United States on these premises.

The annual Fourth of July picnic on the immaculate lawns continues as a highly coveted event

among the Embassy's many friends and contacts. Inside the house, guests are greeted by a series of large, elegant reception rooms, comfortably furnished and adorned with numerous examples of American artwork — creating the perfect environment in which to consider the New World point of view.

Many guests are second-generation visitors, who first saw Rydhave through a child's eyes, when accompanying their parents for one of the more informal events. This adds a very special dimension to



*Kennedy-appointee William McCormick Blair, Jr. served as U.S. Ambassador to Denmark from 1961 to 1964, a time that included such dramatic events as the Cuban Missile Crisis. Always a popular figure, Ambassador Blair delighted the Danes by bringing his American fiancée to Denmark and marrying her in a local church.*



almost any function at the house and helps everybody to feel at home. In that sense Rydhave is not just an official residence but also a reference point where private memories and public lives come effortlessly together.

Over the years, each Ambassador has brought his or her own life style, notions of comfort and privacy to the residence. In this they have reflected the tastes and appearances of the last five decades of Danish-American friendship. Since August 2001, Rydhave has been home to Ambassador and Mrs. Stuart A. Bernstein.



*Ambassador and Mrs. Bernstein have brought part of their personal art collection to the residence. They are seated beneath a painting by the early twentieth century American artist Rosamond L. Smith.*

# *American Chiefs of Mission at Rydhave*

The U.S. Ambassador, or Chief of Mission, is the highest-ranking American official in Denmark. The position's full title includes "Extraordinary," signifying the bearer is the personal representative of the President, and "Plenipotentiary," denoting the Ambassador's full powers to negotiate.

Minister Monett B. Davis (1945)  
Ambassador Josiah Marvel, Jr. (1946-1949)  
Ambassador Eugenie Anderson (1950-1953)  
Ambassador Robert Coe (1953-1957)  
Ambassador Val Peterson (1957-1960)  
Ambassador William McCormick Blair, Jr. (1961-1964)  
Ambassador Katherine E. White (1964-1968)  
Ambassador Angier Biddle Duke (1968-1969)  
Ambassador Guilford Dudley, Jr. (1969-1971)  
Ambassador Fred J. Russel (1971-1972)  
Ambassador Philip K. Growe (1973-1975)  
Ambassador John G. Dean (1975-1978)  
Ambassador Warren D. Manshel (1978-1981)  
Ambassador John L. Loeb, Jr. (1981-1983)  
Ambassador Terence A. Todman (1983-1989)  
Ambassador Keith L. Brown (1989-1992)  
Ambassador Richard B. Stone (1992-1993)  
Ambassador Edward E. Elson (1993-1998)  
Ambassador Richard N. Swett (1998-2001)  
Ambassador Stuart A. Bernstein (2001-)

Black and white photos courtesy of the Royal Danish Library  
Color photos by John Jedbo  
Text by Andreas Rude

Published by the Public Affairs Section,  
Embassy of the United States of America, Copenhagen 2001

Produced by Regional Program Office, Vienna



*Rydhavé has been the official residence of the U.S. Chiefs of Mission since 1945,  
but the name goes back to the first owners of the house in 1885.*