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The Bridge and the Newsletter are semi-annual publications of the Society. Manuscripts dealing with the Danish immigrant experience in North America are invited. Address submissions to Peter L. Petersen, Editor of The Bridge, 1407 Twenty-Sixth Street, Canyon, TX 79015. E-mail repete71@hotmail.com

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Ames, Iowa (ISSN 0741-1200)
Editorial Statement

All three of the articles in this issue of The Bridge deal directly or indirectly with Danish migration to Canada. It is easy for many of us to assume that when Danes emigrated to North America they came exclusively to the United States, but clearly this is an assumption that ignores reality. Last summer I had the privilege of participating in the “24th Danish Canadian Conference” sponsored by the Federation of Danish Associations of Canada and held at Dana College and The Danish Immigrant Museum. It was a unique opportunity to compare and contrast the Danish experience in Canada and the United States. I hope the readers of this issue will take advantage of this opportunity to reflect on the Danish immigrant experience in both nations.

In the first article, Niels Peter Stilling explains why some Danes chose to leave Søllerød parish, just north of Copenhagen, and move to North America. He describes how personal contacts with earlier immigrants were often crucial in the decision to emigrate.

Erik John Nielsen Lang investigates the role of S. S. Heller in the establishment of the first and only organized migration of Danes to Canada in the 19th century and the subsequent creation of the settlement known as New Denmark in the Province of New Brunswick.

In the final article, Rolf Buschardt Christensen traces the struggles of Abraham Van Buskirk, a United Empire loyalist of Danish descent during the American Revolutionary War and one of the nearly 50,000 individuals who left the Thirteen Colonies to settle in what was to become Canada.

Once more we are fortunate to have several book reviews to publish. We express our appreciation to the publishers who provide us with review copies and also to the friends of the DAHS for accepting review assignments.
Contributors to This Issue

Niels Peter Stilling earned his Ph. D. at the University of Copenhagen. He served as a researcher for European University Institute, Florence, Italy, and as Chief Archivist at the Historical Archives of the Municipality of Søllerød. He became Director of the Søllerød Museum in 1988. He has written several works on Danish emigration, including *A New Life: Danish emigration to North America as described by emigrants themselves in letters 1882-1946*, which he co-authored with Anne Lisbeth Olsen in 1994.

Erik John Nielsen Lang’s interest in studying the history of New Denmark was piqued in part by his Danish heritage. His grandfather, Johan Kjeld Nielsen, emigrated to New Brunswick from Aalborg in 1927. Erik holds two undergraduate degrees from Saint Thomas University in Fredericton and his graduate work includes a M.A. in Migration History from Carleton University in Ottawa. Currently he is working on a M. Ed. in Counseling Psychology at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton.

Rolf Buschardt Christensen was born in Copenhagen and came to Canada when he was ten years old. He has a B.A. in history from the University of British Columbia and a M.A. in international affairs from Carleton University. He is Press and Information Officer for the European Union Delegation in Canada’s capital and is President of the Federation of Danish Associations in Canada. He recently received “An Award of Commendation” from the Concordia Historical Institute for his article, “The Establishment of Danish Lutheran Churches in Canada,” which appeared *The Bridge*, Vol. 27, No. 1-2 (2004).

Birgette Christianson is a native of Copenhagen, Denmark, but grew up bilingually in Santa Rosa, California from the age of three. She retired in 2004 as Director of Development at Luther College after seventeen years and is currently a fund-raising consultant to Vesterheim, the Norwegian-American Museum.

John R. Christianson is Research Professor of History at Luther College, Decorah, Iowa, and past editor of *The Bridge*. He has written or edited nine books, including a biography of the Danish
astronomer, Tycho Brahe. The recipient of a grant from the National Bank of Denmark, he spent the last academic year in Copenhagen continuing his research on Brahe.

Mikael Hansen is a computer programmer at the University of California, Berkeley. He was born in Denmark and emigrated to the Midwest before moving to California. He finds the university library and interlibrary resources valuable when modern-day technology is not enough and his interest in the Danish-American experience knocks on the door.

Birgit Flemming Larsen was born and educated in Denmark, receiving a degree in English from the Aalborg Business School. In 2003 she retired as Archivist at The Danish Emigration Archives in Aalborg, a position she had held since 1987. She has written several articles about Danish emigration and immigration in English and Danish and was the editor of the publications issued by the Archives in Aalborg. She was the coordinator of the Marcus Lee Hansen Immigration Conference in Aalborg in 1992, and currently is the president of the Society for Danish Genealogy and Biography.

Peter L. Petersen is emeritus professor of history at West Texas A&M University and editor of The Bridge.
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Nineteenth-Century Emigration from Søllerød, A Rural Township in North Zealand (Sjælland)

by Niels Peter Stilling

Translated from the Danish and edited by J. R. Christianson

Introduction

In 1985, Erik Helmer Pedersen wrote that “the history of Danish emigration to America can be seen, in very broad terms, as the story of how a small part of the population tore itself away from the national community in order to build a new existence in foreign lands. Those who write the history of the emigrants must, on the one hand, see them as a minority in relation to the Danish whole, and, on the other hand, must reconstruct that little part of the history of American immigration which concerns the Danes.”

This article attempts to do just that for emigration from the township of Søllerød, north of Copenhagen. The aim is to reveal the process and causes of emigration from a single local area and determine the types of people who became emigrants.

North Zealand

In the nineteenth century, North Zealand (Sjælland) was not a unified region. Industrial development had begun early in the east and south, and Elsinore (Helsingør) was still Denmark’s third-largest city at mid-century. Prosperous outer suburbs of Copenhagen stretched along the coast of the Sound (Øresund) but gave way to vast inland forests surrounding Frederiksborg Castle in the town of Hillerød. Southwest of the forests was a region of traditional agriculture dominated by large family farms, and along Roskilde Fjord were the new industrial towns of Frederikssund and Frederiksværk. The region as a whole profited tremendously from being close to Copenhagen’s growing market for meat and dairy
products, while at the same time industry in the rapidly growing towns of North Zealand benefited from the urban infrastructure and insatiable market of the capital. Horns Herred on the western side of Roskilde Fjord was different: it was a rolling countryside of large estates scattered among farms and smaller rural crofts, with fewer opportunities and a greater distance to the nearest town. The railroad did not come to this area until 1928, and it shut down only eight years later.4

Søllerød Township in the northern tip of Copenhagen Amt, between Furesøen Lake and the Sound, included the communities of Søllerød, Holte, Øverød, Gammel Holte, Nærum, Trørød, Vedbæk, and Skodsborg.

The migration from rural North Zealand was colossal towards the end of the nineteenth century. Copenhagen was the great magnet that drew people away. For a North Zealander, the trip back home was not long if things did not work out as planned in the city. Frederiksborg Amt had the lowest rate of rural population growth in nineteenth century Denmark, and the stagnation was almost total in the last four decades of the century. The population went from 67,860 inhabitants in 1860 to only 68,269 in 1901.5 With a few exceptions, conditions were not much different in rural Copenhagen Amt. All the growth in the region was concentrated primarily in a series of new settlements that developed around rural railway stations.6

In terms of percentages, emigration overseas from North Zealand ranked among the lowest in Denmark. Most Danish emigration came from peripheral areas like the islands of Bornholm, Lolland, Falster, and Møn, and the far northwestern parts of Jutland in Vendsyssel and Thy.7 The picture is not entirely clear-cut, however. Declining population growth was found throughout rural Denmark, and there is no reason to assume that the factors which pushed people to leave varied considerably from one area to the next. In broad terms, emigration to North America was part of a tremendous movement of people during the second half of the nineteenth century, which also included explosive urban growth and waves of migration from rural areas into cities. Industrialization and the
modernization of agriculture were fundamental factors in the equation.

What we want to examine here is why some people chose to head for distant locations, far across the sea, while the majority of Danes simply chose to change their rural address for one in the city.

**Emigration from Søllerød Township**

The sources indicate that 161 individuals emigrated from Søllerød Township in the years 1869-1899. This represented about 5.2% of the 1890 population, which was a high rate for emigration from North Zealand. Only ten of the sixty townships in Frederiksborg Amt produced a higher percentage of emigrants, and eight of those ten were located in remote Horns Herred, while another was Tibirke, an area of very poor soil. Surprisingly, the prosperous area of Hørsholm was the tenth: the eighty-six emigrants from Hørsholm represented 6.9% of the township’s total 1890 population.⁸ Geographically and structurally, Hørsholm was very similar to Søllerød.

Development came to these townships in waves. From the eighteenth century onwards, wealthy city patricians had built country estates in the inland areas of both Søllerød and Hørsholm, while the coastal areas and the valley of the Mølleåen stream experienced early industrialization at the same time. In the late nineteenth century, the remaining family farms in the area were transformed, bringing a sharp decline in rural employment. By the year 1900, a third wave of development saw the rise of suburban areas and modern industrial complexes no longer dependent upon the waterpower of the Mølleåen. This third wave also saw a modernization of the regional infrastructure in both Søllerød and Hørsholm. Gradually, the old farming population was replaced by new groups who moved in. Emigration from Søllerød needs to be seen as part of this demographic transformation caused by fundamental social and economic changes during the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁹
Table One: Søllerød Population Trends and Migration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Population Growth</th>
<th>Excess Births over Deaths</th>
<th>Net Migration</th>
<th>Net Migration in %</th>
<th>Overseas Migration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>3,119</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870-80</td>
<td></td>
<td>-97</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>-435</td>
<td>-14.0%</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>3,022</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880-90</td>
<td></td>
<td>+100</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>-243</td>
<td>-8.0%</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>3,122</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890-1901</td>
<td></td>
<td>+711</td>
<td>464</td>
<td>+247</td>
<td>+7.9%</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>3,833</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table One shows that the early part of the emigration era 1870-1900 was characterized by economic stagnation, which gradually gave way to growth towards the end of the period. Søllerød Township experienced heavy emigration during the stagnant 1870’s. At least 435 individuals left the township, and overseas emigration reached its peak during this decade. The 1880’s was a decade of transition. Overseas emigration began to fall off, but an average of five emigrants still left every year. By the 1890’s, the picture changes. Significant population growth occurred as a result of in-migration and declining overseas emigration.

Urbanization began to dominate Søllerød Township by the turn of the century. The prosperous rural farming population of the early nineteenth century had gradually disappeared. The old farming families, who always married within their own group and only within the township, lost their monopoly on power—and on land. The first modern subdivision of land took place in Vedbæk around 1880. It was a sign of changing times, followed from the mid-1890’s by widespread subdivision in the western part of the township. The town of Holte was created in what had formerly been a sparsely inhabited area when land belonging to Ny Holte Inn and the manor of Dronninggaard was subdivided. The development of new residential areas brought an influx of construction workers and homeowners into the area, followed by shops and services. In this
way, the old rural township was transformed into a suburb of Copenhagen around the turn of the century.

Of Søllerød’s 161 emigrants in the period 1869-1899, some seventy-seven individuals, or 48%, came from the agricultural population. Fifty-five individuals, or 34%, were artisans or laborers, and twenty-nine, or 18%, fell into the broad category of “other.” Most of the farming population emigrated during the first half of the period, while the artisans and laborers were spread more evenly over the thirty-year period, with 1873 as the peak year.11

Identification of individual emigrants in the Søllerød census records shows that the great majority of the rural emigrants, around 80%, were agricultural day laborers, servants, hired hands, or industrial workers from the factories along the Mølleåen and in Skodsborg, as well as a few skilled artisans. Some of the remaining 20% cannot be identified, and the rest were a mixed group: two or three farmers and farmers’ sons, plus a couple of fortune hunters from the landed aristocracy. These latter groups came primarily from around the village of Søllerød. Economic factors drove much of the emigration, but it is a striking fact that individuals from the more prosperous levels of the population were over-represented in the emigration from Søllerød Township when compared to Danish emigration in general. A couple of bankrupt speculators and one or two large landlords emigrated from Søllerød, but so did a few industrialists, school teachers, and well-educated individuals. Throughout the whole period 1869-1899, a total of ninety-eight men and sixty-three women emigrated from the township. The early years were completely dominated by male emigrants who either traveled alone or in groups. The few women who left in the 1870’s either traveled with a family group or followed a husband or fiancée who had emigrated earlier.

Scholars often speak of three types of emigration: family emigration, consisting of parents and children with other relatives; group emigration, consisting of two or more individuals heading for a common destination; and individual emigration, where a person traveled alone.12 The sources do not always permit clear distinctions, but they do show some clear tendencies in the emigration from Søllerød. During the first decade of this study, 1869-79, when eighty-
three individuals are known to have emigrated, one-half (forty-two) were part of a family emigration, while twenty emigrated in groups, and twenty-one as individuals. In time, the picture changed. During the 1880’s, family emigrants fell to one-third (fifteen out of fifty), while the other two categories were roughly equal. In the 1890’s, however, only one family (four persons) emigrated as a family group, while twenty-two out of twenty-eight traveled as individuals.\textsuperscript{13}

Men generally appear to have been the decision-makers in family emigration, while women often suffered the consequences. The dream of owning “a place of our own” attracted many Danish crofters and day laborers to America, but old friends and relatives were left behind in the home village, and the cultural loss of living in a lonely house on the prairie was frequently greater for the woman than for the man in the family.

\textit{Table Two: Home Areas of Emigrants from Søllerød Parish}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>1869-79</th>
<th>1880-89</th>
<th>1890-99</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skodsborg-Mølleåen</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vedbæk-Trørød</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nærum-Gammel Holte</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Søllerød-Øverød-Holte</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\textbf{Total}</td>
<td>\textbf{83}</td>
<td>\textbf{50}</td>
<td>\textbf{28}</td>
<td>\textbf{161}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table Two shows that two areas in Søllerød Township were especially hard-hit by "emigration fever." One was the old industrial strip along the stream of Mølleåen that flows into the Sound near Skodsborg, and the other consisted of the two large, centrally located villages of Nærum and Gammel Holte. There was only limited emigration from other areas, including the farming village of Øverød, the village of Søllerød, and the booming settlements along the King’s Highway (Kongevejen) that would eventually grow into the new town of Holte. There was also surprisingly little emigration from the village of Trørød and the fishing settlement of Vedbæk in the northeastern corner of the township. Earlier, however, Vedbæk had been the source of the earliest wave of overseas emigration from Søllerød Township.
Technological innovation brought to Vedbæk by immigrants was what touched off this first wave of Søllerød emigration. During the 1840’s, a number of Swedish fishermen, mainly from the island of Hven, moved into Vedbæk and settled there. Instead of using the traditional dragnets (vod), the newcomers staked out large fish traps called pound nets (bundgarn) to take herring and cod more efficiently. These innovative newcomers began to replace a large part of the original population in a highly mobile coastal environment, and some of the old Vedbæk inhabitants left for overseas. They were among the very first emigrants from the Søllerød area. However, this movement had already begun to ebb when the Copenhagen police began to maintain a register of emigrants in 1868. Consequently, we have only anecdotal knowledge about a few individuals among these early Vedbæk emigrants.

When emigration is concentrated in certain localities, as it was in Søllerød Township, the reason was generally because an “emigration tradition” came to be established in those places. Such a tradition was based on personal connections, either by means of correspondence or through direct contact with a returning emigrant. In Søllerød, as in many other places throughout Denmark, personal contacts helped to influence the choice between going to Copenhagen or to America, and in this way, such contacts became a driving force in mass emigration. On another level, families whose livelihoods were threatened by the modernization of Danish agriculture and the great transformations taking place in North Zealand during the second half of the nineteenth century were often among the first to leave.

“The Very First One,” Christian Lars Nielsen

Christian Lars Nielsen, son of the blacksmith in Vedbæk, personified the myth of America. In 1838, fifteen years of age, he signed on in Elsinore as a crew member on a German schooner. After sailing for a couple of years between European ports, he crossed the Atlantic on a fully laden brig. Four years after he had left home, his family finally received a sign of life in the form of a letter dated April 8, 1842 and written in the New England whaling port of
New Bedford, Massachusetts. In a few brief lines, Lars summed up his four years before the mast and reported that he was staying in the home of a Danish man, Nickels Nickelsen, from Svendborg, who had lived in America for over twenty years. However, Lars did not intend to stay on land:

I have now signed on a ship registered here, the Midas, which will soon be rigged and ready to sail around the Cape of Good Hope for some whale fishing. We expect to be away for three years, perhaps a few months less. There is another Danish man aboard, Hans Nielsen of Svendborg.18

Lars and the Svendborg folks were typical representative of the earliest Danish immigration to North America. In his book, Drømmen Om Amerika (The Dream of America), Erik Helmer Pedersen characterized the pathfinders as follows:

For as long as Danish sailors and foreign traders have found work in America, there have been Danes who went ashore over there. Scattered around America is fading testimony to Danes who made a living in those parts, long before the century of mass migration.19

Lars’ story is worth telling, and he found his own occasion to tell it when he turned up in his native village in a broad-brimmed hat, puffing on a big cigar, during the 1880’s, not long before his death in 1893. The New Bedford whaler eventually made her way up the west coast of the Americas. Off the California coast, the largely Asian crew mutinied. Only Lars and the captain managed to escape, and in 1847, Lars landed in San Francisco Bay. It was on the eve of the discovery of gold in California and therefore a good year to go ashore in that very spot. The Gold Rush of 1848 made Lars prosperous, not as a miner but as a marine provisioner and, later, as owner of ships that carried freight and passengers across the bay from San Francisco to Stockton. Lars reinvested all his earnings in land and ships. Eventually, as owner of The Oregon Coal and Navigation Company and a fleet of iron steamships, “Captain Nelson” became one of the early California millionaires. He died at the age of seventy in 1893 after his exhausting trip to his native Denmark.
Christian Lars Nielsen’s story, as it was told by the family in Vedbæk and Skodsborg and to the newspaper, Kjøbenhavns Amts Avis (Copenhagen Amt News), is inspiring and in the main also true. A success story like his was testimony to the unlimited possibilities of America, and it was one that could inspire many another young lad from the Vedbæk coast to try his luck across the Atlantic. By the time the scattered emigration of the early nineteenth century gave way to mass emigration after 1850, however, the opportunities awaiting immigrants in North America were not quite what they had been earlier.

The Edgy Farmer’s Son, Niels Peter Hansen

Danish farmers seldom sought their fortunes in America. It took a lot before a member of the land-owning class decided to leave. The prospects for an emigrant were simply too uncertain to offer them much incentive. In the 1850’s and 1860’s, however, there were a number of younger sons from farming families who faced the prospect of downward social mobility and could only see a future as small-holding tenant crofters if they stayed home in Denmark, so they decided to try their luck on the virgin American prairies instead. As time passed and homestead land dwindled, the possibilities for acquiring farmland were not much better in the USA than in Denmark. To those who were edgy and restless, however, the situation naturally looked different than it did to others.

Niels Peter Hansen was the only son of Hans Pedersen, who owned the farm of Skovly in Øverød. He belonged to an old family with many relatives in the village. His father died in 1842, when Niels Peter was only thirteen years of age. His widowed mother, Birthe Rasmusdatter, carried on with the farm in the clear expectation that Niels Peter would take it over when he came of age. It turned out, however, that he was completely unfit to manage or even work on a farm. In no time at all, he ran through most of his inheritance on good times in Copenhagen and works of art to hang on the walls of the farmhouse in Øverød. Of course, that could not go on forever. In 1860, Birthe Rasmusdatter put the farm on the market, moved in with her sister on a neighboring farm, and sent Niels Peter off to America with some of the money from the sale of
Skovly. He did not emigrate to a farm on the lone prairie, but to the city of New York, where he paid for the sins of his youth in the loneliness of a city he detested:

There is a devilish hubbub and fuss here. A New York street on a busy day, like one of the days before Christmas, is like the hottest Hades. There is no room at all on the crowded streetcars and elevated railroad. In the stores and on the street people scream and shout and make a racket like they were crazy. In order to see something, a person must make a little trip to America. Everyone here, from the millionaire to the beggar, will do anything for money, and of the two, I think the millionaire is the biggest thief.… 21

Niels Peter Hansen’s last letter home was written in New York on December 7, 1898 to a relative in Øverød. His last words were these:

If I can, and I am still alive, I will come home for a visit in the summer or the fall. If only I knew whether I will die after having seen my old home and paid a visit of three or four weeks, yes, then you can be sure I would soon visit you, as then my only wish would come true, to rest beside my old parents. It is possible they will see me. No one knows—if it is God’s will, it will happen. 22

Homesickness and bitter loneliness were heavy burdens for many emigrants—and probably especially those who did not leave home entirely willingly.

Escaping War—The Brothers Andersen from Nærum

As we have seen earlier, Nærum was one of the villages in Søllerød that sent out a significant number of emigrants to North America. Precisely when this movement started is difficult to determine. However, a couple of significant events took place in the year 1863.

The first was that Johan Jensen assumed the position as teacher in Nærum’s one-room school. Until that time, he had taught in the factory school at Skodsborg Clothing Factory, but even earlier, during the 1850’s, he and his wife had lived in America for four or five years. Their eldest son was born in the USA. Here was a man...
who could tell from first-hand experience about the opportunities in America, and in 1863, he took his place behind the teacher’s podium in the little thatched school in Nærum. The pupils loved him because he told such good stories and was full of information from far and near. The parish pastor, however, who supervised the school, commented on what he saw as a lack of discipline: “the children do more or less as they like….Schoolmaster Jensen is too good-natured;” he is patient, friendly, and also, “a bit sluggish.”

Schoolmaster Jensen’s classroom was part of the environment that helped to create an emigration tradition.

The same year that Johan Jensen came to teach in Nærum, a second event occurred: two brothers, Jens and Frederik Andersen, emigrated from the village. Whether they talked with the teacher before they left is not known. They were sons of a master tailor, Anders Jensen, and his Swedish-born wife, Estrid Sjødahl. Estrid was born on the estate of Gyllebo Manor in Skåne as the “illegitimate” daughter of Lena Sjödahl, and—less officially—the noble lord of the manor, Major Holger Otto Rosenkrantz. She was put up for adoption and ended in Copenhagen, where she was married in February of 1825 to Anders Jensen of Nærum, a journeyman tailor at the time. On July 7 of that same year, their first daughter was born. The next year, a son followed, and so it went, like clockwork: first four girls, and then boys again, five boys and another girl, twelve children in all, every one of them born in Nærum and baptized in Søllerød Church. The last one was born in 1843.

As the five boys approached adulthood, four of them learned the trade of tailoring, including Jens, born 1837, and Frederik from 1841. Of course, the whole flock of brothers could hardly work in their father’s little tailor shop. In fact, the eldest son, Carl, was the one who took it over in 1860. The next-oldest brother, Johannes, became a blacksmith in Vedbæk, while the youngest, Wilhelm, worked as a tailor in Copenhagen but eventually came home to Nærum to rebuild the reputation of the family shop after Carl ran it into the ground.

It was obvious that the two middle brothers had to seek their fortunes someplace else. Why it turned out to be America instead of
Copenhagen, however, was due to a combination of circumstances that came together in the year 1863. We can only guess at Johan Jensen’s role and the possibility of an even earlier tradition of emigration from Nærum. More specific is the evidence that connects the brothers to the Mormon migration and to the desire to escape conscription for the second Schleswig-Holstein War of 1864.

Frederik’s farewell letter to his sister and brother-in-law in Rådvad is preserved. It was written in Copenhagen on April 11, 1863 and begins with the following bold remarks:

You will probably be surprised to receive a letter from me. I am now traveling to America. It is high time, if I am to avoid going to Slesvig. It is sad to leave one’s native land, but the horrors of war are much worse, and I shall surely find something to eat wherever in the world I go. I wanted to come to you, but there is not time for that, and my finances won’t stretch that far, either. If was hard to say goodbye at home, but once I got through the portal [to Dyrehaven, the Deer Park, just south of Nærum], my heart began to ease, and with new courage in my breast and fresh straw in the wooden shoes, things went well enough...

Frederik was eager to come to a land, “where no shadows rest over them and our Lord’s peace and blessing dwells.” This last comment seems a bit strange at a time when the Civil War was raging in the USA. It has to be understood in the context of the fact that the ultimate destination for Mormon emigrants was Utah, far from the battlefields of the war. Frederik concluded his letter by complaining that, when the two of them left, one of their brothers would undoubtedly be bumped to the top of the list of draftees in Nærum.

It turned out that the brothers were not the only ones from Nærum who chose to travel with the Latter-Day Saints. On April 20, 1863, the two brothers and some four hundred other Mormon “converts” departed Copenhagen by steamship to Kiel, continued by train to Hamburg, steamship again to Grimsby, and train again to Liverpool. They sailed from Liverpool on a trans-Atlantic steamer on May 9 and arrived in New York on June 13, 1863. Brother Jens traveled on with the Mormons to their Zion in the state of Utah.
Frederik, on the other hand, dropped out and chose to remain in New York. A few years later, he turned up in the large Danish community in Omaha, where he connected with other Nærum folks and soon found employment in the vast railroad workshops of the Union Pacific line. The Danish tailor had become an American machinist.

A letter from the early 1870’s to his brother, Johannes, started out with a discussion of their sister’s son, Jens Peter Johansen, who had worked in Johannes’ blacksmith shop in Vedbæk but “wanted to see a bit of the world.” Frederik advised them to let the lad make his own choice. “He is unmarried and has only himself to provide for, and if he is willing to work, as we others have always had to do, then he will probably be able to get along, wherever he goes. I spoke with the foreman in the blacksmith shop at the factory, and he said, ‘Let him come.’” Frederik went on to tell about two Danish blacksmiths in Omaha who had their own shop and good incomes, “and a good blacksmith can always find a place among the immigrants.” The letter concludes with the news that Frederik is in the process of building a house of his own on the edge of town. It is not hard to imagine that this letter from the Far West made quite an impression in the Vedbæk blacksmith’s shop. In the meantime, however, Jens Peter found work at home in Denmark as a machinist at a tile works along the Sound coast. Frederik’s attempt to pull a member of the family to Omaha was in vain.

In Frederik’s surviving letters from the 1870’s and 1880’s to “Brother Johannes” in Vedbæk, there is clear evidence that he was assimilating into America. Frederik’s middle name was Carl, and he started to call himself Charles Andersen. He had a strong interest in politics, but his religious feelings gave way to something like a socialist attitude. is comments on the swelling tide of immigration are numerous. In 1880, he reported that Omaha was growing rapidly—people were coming “in huge piles”—and every new “lane” was immediately filled with new houses. In an 1881 letter, he reported, “Immigration here is around 4,000 every day, and most of them are farmers, so all the free land will soon be taken.” The following year, he commented on a letter from his brother, Jens, in Salt Lake City: “He never writes anything about religion to me, so
I’m afraid that’s blown over. He has probably come to the conclusion that, if we want to have something to eat, we had better get it for ourselves, that it doesn’t pay to wait either for God or the Devil...“

Frederik married a Danish girl named Sine. They had four children, of whom the youngest, a daughter, died in 1883, only fourteen months old. His wife was broken-hearted, Frederik reported, but then added that we are not here on earth to stay forever, “nor can we expect that we will fly off to Heaven in a fiery chariot and all that holy rubbish. We still have three of them, and they are strong and healthy children, two boys and a girl.”

The last known letter from Frederik was dated September 28, 1888. He had the last word in the ongoing debate over emigration with his brother back home:

You write that there is still food to be found in Denmark, I should hope so, but I should not want to pay for it with work, for in that case it is easier to get where I am now; here we live in a land of freedom, where nobles and bishops are non-existent, but the banner of freedom waves, and freedom is priceless.25

Brother Johannes in Vedbæk died in 1889, and a few years later, Frederik’s contact with his native land came to an end. He never returned to Denmark. In his letters, he often said that he would like to see Nærum again, but he never did anything about it. He was tied down by fear of losing his job if he took a long trip home to Europe, and he never traveled farther from Omaha than a few short fishing trips with his children.

His big brother, Jens—or James, as he soon came to be called in America—stuck to his trade as a tailor, and he also remained a Mormon in Salt Lake City. In 1867, he married an American woman named Rachel Gee, whose parents had come to Utah with Brigham Young. She bore him three children, and died in 1874, only twenty-five years of age. Jens/James remarried in 1876 to an English immigrant named Eliza Clissold, born 1858 in Warwick near Birmingham. They had eight children. Jens died in 1902, only two years after finally visiting his native land in 1900.
His letters home are not great epics, and he barely got a passing grade in Søllerød school, back in 1851. Still, Jens Andersen is a splendid example of how clearly and sensibly many Danish immigrants could express themselves in those days when most of them came out of the public schools. Regarding emigration, Jens made his opinion quite clear in a letter written on October 15, 1877:

Although I love Denmark more than any other country, I would not exchange it for the glorious land of America as the ordinary class of people here are better off in every way, and, to be brief, I can say of the Americans that they are good people. Nevertheless, I would not advise anyone to leave the land of their birth, as many suffer from homesickness.26

After the teacher, Johan Jensen, had touched off a stream of emigration from Nærum in the late 1870’s, Jens had the following comment in a letter of November 23, 1879: “It pleases me to hear that some residents of Nærum wanted to emigrate to America.” Later, he wrote about a discussion with his brother in Vedbæk regarding a
possible trip home. From Salt Lake City, he wrote on April 18, 1886, “I had considered taking a trip over to you this summer, but my wife has talked me into waiting a few years. She is afraid of the big pond, and it makes good sense to let women have their own way a bit. You remember from years gone by that I have always been on their side.”

The brothers in Nærum soon learned to get along with things as they were away from home. That they ended their days in America and not Copenhagen was due to a combination of religion and warfare. Both came to live in cities overseas and apparently settled in quickly, Frederik in a Danish immigrant environment in Omaha, and James in the Mormon melting pot in Utah. Both were representatives of the rapid assimilation that characterized the vanguard of emigrants.

**New Denmark**

New Denmark in eastern Canada is one of the largest Danish settlements in North America. The area still bears the mark of the descendants of Danish immigrants who settled in this hilly, heavily forested region of New Brunswick in the 1870’s. The colonization of New Denmark might be described as the first “official” emigration from Denmark. It began in the year 1872, when the Canadian government, inspired by the American Homestead Act of 1862, passed the Free Grants Act. Like the Homestead law, the Free Grants Act required settlers to occupy, cultivate, and build on their claim for a certain number of years before they received title to it. The Canadian government wanted to promote the kind of development that was occurring south of the border, and they sought robust Scandinavian immigrants for the difficult work of clearing the forest and hauling stones in order to cultivate the land. A certain Captain S. S. Heller was sent to Denmark in the spring of 1872 to recruit settlers.

As the Canadian immigrant agent, he ran advertisements in a Copenhagen newspaper, *Dagtelegrafen*, beginning on May 5, 1872. The bold headline read, “TO AMERICA. NEW DANISH COLONY IN THE STATE OF NEW BRUNSWICK.” The text of the advertisement talked about America; in one place, it named “the English government,” but it never used the word, Canada. The
omission appears to have been deliberate. The offer, on the other hand, was quite tempting: 100 acres of free land on arrival to every male person. Two acres would be cleared at the government’s expense, and separate apartments in “emigrant houses” would be provided for the newly arrived. Later, these buildings could be used as churches, schools, and the like. In addition, the state guaranteed work at “full wages for at least two years,” and when an immigrant had resided in the country for three years, he would receive title to his land, after which he could sell, “if he desires to return to his home.” Moreover, “the government covers all expenses in America,” and the emigrant only needs to pay for steamship transportation by way of England at a cost of sixty-six rigsdaler, one mark, and eight shillings from Copenhagen, meals included. On departure at the end of May, Captain Heller would accompany the emigrants during the entire journey.

In a short time, a party of some thirty persons was assembled. Almost all were described as farmers in the Copenhagen register of emigrants. Most were from Zealand, but there were also a number of “farmers” from Copenhagen! This shows how imprecise the police register could be, since the reference was probably to Copenhagen Amt, which included both the city and extensive rural areas. Among those “from Copenhagen” was a farmer named Hans Peter Petersen, age twenty-six, with his wife, Hertha, age twenty-seven, and daughter, Emilie, age two. Hans Peter became a leading pioneer in New Denmark. He was seems to have been born at Roskilde Inn in Høje Taastrup Township, as son of the innkeeper, Peter Petersen, and his wife, Lovise Nielsdatter, who came from Hørsholm. Hans Peter Petersen’s original connection to the Søllerød area is not entirely clear, but later, he was in contact with the teacher, Johan Jensen, in Nærum. Country inns and rural schools were among the places where ordinary people learned about the wide world outside of their own parish.

When Captain Heller and the immigrants arrived in the Canadian port of St. John, they were met by a representative of the local government, who was somewhat surprised to discover that only around thirty people had come from Denmark. The captain soon had other things to think about, for when they sailed up the St. John
River for 130 miles and disembarked at the designated place near Salmon River, they discovered that none of the government’s promises had been kept. The Immigrant House was not finished, land had not been cleared, and the guaranteed work turned out to consist of seasonal road construction in the vicinity of the colony. The immigrants were put up in a common room in the half-finished Immigrant House, where they slept on straw mats. Potatoes were planted in the less than one acre that had been cleared, and then the people set to work clearing brush, trees, and stones.  

Captain Heller was back in Denmark in the autumn of 1872 with a recommendation entitled “A letter from Hellerup, Victoria County, New Brunswick, Canada,” signed by all fourteen of the colony’s adult male settlers. Heading the list of signatories was H. P. Petersen of Copenhagen, and farther down was Fr. Chr. Jensen from Luserød in Birkerød Township, next door to Søllerød. 

A fresh group of settlers, including around twenty men, was recruited by Captain Heller, and they sailed from Copenhagen on November 7, 1872. Among them was a carpenter named Niels Jensen, forty-one years of age, who left his wife and daughter in a humble cottage on the edge of Jægersborg woods in Skodsborg. He was a brother of Fr. Chr. Jensen, and his experience as a carpenter would come in handy in the uncharted forests of Canada. 

During Captain Heller’s absence, Hans Peter Petersen took over leadership of the colony, which was renamed New Denmark in the spring of 1873. By then, Heller was in Denmark for the third time, and this time, he was successful. He made two trips back with over one hundred Danish emigrants. Among the eighty Danish emigrants who sailed for New Brunswick on April 2, 1873 were three heads of families from Søllerød Township: Carl Frederik Brinkman, age forty-one; Daniel Petersen, twenty-four, both from Skodsborg, and Hans Peter Nielsen, age twenty, from Vedbæk. Brinkman was a mason by trade, married, with three half-grown children. Daniel was a son of the hedgekeeper from the forest warden’s house in the Deer Park (Dyrehaven). Hans Peter was a day laborer. Only Daniel had been born in Søllerød Township, while Brinkman had lived in several places and was married to a woman from Holstein.
From Skodsborg, rumors of opportunities in Canada spread to the other "workers' villages" in Søllerød Township. On May 1, 1873, still another group set sail for New Brunswick. This time, a number of poor laborers from Gammel Holte were among those who had been tempted to leave. They were listed as "farmers" in the Copenhagen police register, but the census records of 1870 reveal them as Niels Andersen, age thirty-seven, a married lodger; Jens Christiansen, twenty-seven, an unmarried day laborer, and Niels Johansen, twenty-nine, also a day laborer, with his wife, Line, twenty-seven.

Once the party arrived in New Denmark, it was obvious that women were in short supply, but the next departures to St. John and New Denmark were predominantly women. In the autumn of 1873, Niels Jensen’s wife, Ellen, age forty-seven, and their fourteen-year-old daughter, Christine, sailed on September 17th. They traveled together with Brinkman’s thirty-seven-year-old wife, Kathrine, and the four Brinkman children, Henrik, Johannes, Axel, and Amanda, aged eighteen, eleven, six, and three. Flora Theresa Sophie Andersen, twenty-four, an unmarried seamstress, and Kirstine Olsen, twenty-five, a maidservant, both also from Skodsborg, were in the party as well. The next year, Kirstine married Henrik Brinkman in New Denmark.

The last departure in the pioneer phase was on March 19, 1874. This time, it was Niels Andersen who sent for his wife, and Marie Christine Andersen followed her husband to Canada by way of England and Portland, Maine. The emigration records listed her as a crofter’s wife from Søllerød Township, thirty-one years of age, with three small children: Lars Peter, three; Anna, two; and Karen, two.

There must have been a lot of talk about America in Skodsborg in the year 1873. The emigrants from Holte and Skodsborg were hearty souls, like the other New Denmark pioneers. They were not adventurers, but hard-working people with the goal of becoming farmers with land of their own instead of Danish laborers dependent on others. A back-breaking battle with dense forests awaited them, and their success was not by any means unlimited. Many gave up and moved to the USA, including the carpenter, Niels Jensen, and his family. Among those we have followed, only Hans Peter Petersen and the Brinkman family held out and ended as some of the
colony’s larger landowners. Descendants of the Brinkmans still live in New Denmark.  

**Restless Fortune Hunters**

The first phase of Danish mass emigration culminated in 1872-73, and emigration to New Denmark followed the general trend. The mid-1870’s were marked by international economic recession, which was reflected in declining emigration. Very few dared to jump into an uncertain future in a foreign land without any safety net.

The pioneers were succeeded by fortune hunters and risk-takers who sought out more distant places like South Africa and New Zealand. Among the very few who emigrated from Søllerød Township in this period were the Nærum blacksmith, Anders Eiberg, and his wife, Ane Helene, who left for New Zealand in October of 1874. They were followed in 1876 by a twenty-six-year-old mill manager from Strandmøllen in Skodsborg, Axel Holger Dege, who was born in Germany. That same year, the Søllerød baker, Ole Jensen, emigrated to Cape Town.

There was even a titled nobleman among the fortune hunters. On June 22, 1874, the forty-six-year-old Count Oscar Peter August Moltke left for Canada. He was described as a “landed gentleman” (proprietær) at the time of his departure, and he had lived in luxury at Frydenlund Palace near Vedbæk, but only as a tenant. The count had been tempted to emigrate by the promise of vast tracts of land available to a man with money who settled among the Danes in Canada. He emigrated with his young wife, Marie Moltke, born in 1849, and their three children, Frederik Christian, aged four; Harald Viggo, two; and Amalie Andrea, one. It soon turned out, however, that New Denmark was no place for them, and the family moved to South Carolina, where the surroundings were more suitable to a noble family. Count Moltke died in 1882. Soon after, his widow returned home to Denmark. The wanderlust of the younger son, Harald Viggo Moltke, may have been stimulated by the trip to America, for he became well-known for his participation in the famous Greenland expedition of 1902-04 with Mylius Erichsen and Knud Rasmussen.
The Jensen Family from Nærum

Danish emigration began to rise again towards the end of the 1870's and reached its absolute peak in 1882 with over 10,000 emigrants. By now, Schoolmaster Jensen in Nærum and his wife, Camilla Lund, had relatives in New Denmark, including Hans Peter Petersen, who had become one of the leading figures in the colony. The Jensens knew America because they had lived there in the 1850’s. Now, their four sons were on the verge of adulthood, and there was no doubt in their minds about where the future lay. For a long time, the good-natured school teacher had put up with an arrogant, disagreeable pastor and all the prosperous farmers of the township, who held all the wealth and good positions in the township. Clearly, Søllerød Township did not hold much promise...
for the ambitious sons of a poor school teacher. Henry, Anton, Sophus, and Johan all decided in turn to leave for America.  

On June 12, 1878, the two oldest sons departed for St. John, New Brunswick. Henry, who had been born in America, was nineteen, and Anton was eighteen. During the next year, Anton must have written home about their successes in the new world, because almost exactly one year later, on June 19, 1879, seventeen-year-old Sophus set sail, accompanied by his father, schoolmaster Johan Jensen of Nærum, age forty-eight, who crossed the Atlantic one more time in order to visit his sons in New Brunswick. By 1879, the two oldest brothers had already become owners of allotments far out on the fringe of the colony: allotments 320, 321, and 322 of 100 acres each, all of them along Blue Bell Road. The bachelor brothers were living in their own little wooden house, high up and with a splendid view.  

Schoolmaster Jensen returned home confident that they had made the right decision. Anton accompanied him, because something important was missing in their little wooden home. The Danish census of February, 1880, listed him as a “farmer from Canada,” living temporarily with his parents. By then, he had become engaged to Camilla Lorentsen from Nærum.  

Camilla’s father, Hans Godtfred Lorentsen, had served in the Second Schleswig-Holstein War and died as a German prisoner-of-war, thirty-one years of age, at Augustenborg Castle on April 30, 1864, “after having endured the perils of the winter campaign.” Earlier, he had learned the trade of butcher in his father’s shop in Vedbæk and had opened a shop of his own in Nærum. He and Thora, who were married in 1859, had three small daughters when he was called into service. After his death, the widow closed the butcher shop and turned the building into a preschool. Together, she and Schoolmaster Jensen took charge of educating the many children who were growing up in Nærum during those years. Camilla was born in 1863 as the youngest of the daughters, so she was too young to remember her father. When she became engaged to Anton Jensen in 1880, she was eighteen and assisting her mother in the preschool.  

Anton returned to Canada in the spring of 1880, and Camilla followed him a year later, traveling with a large party of emigrants.
from Søllerød Township that sailed on May 25, 1881. Among them was her future mother-in-law, Camilla Lund, the wife of Schoolmaster Jensen, who wanted to visit her children and other relatives in New Denmark. Others in the party of twelve were these:

Jens Bernhardt Andersen, age eighteen, clerk, from Holte
Carl Andreas Hallung, age twenty-one, studying agriculture, from Holte
Carl Johan Heden, age eleven, and Oskar Heden, age nine, from Holte
Maren Svensson, age eighteen, servant, from Skodsborg (born in Sweden)
Maren Christine Mikkelsen, age thirty-six, servant, from Wesselsminde manor
Andrea Petersen, age twenty-one, servant, from Nærum (sister of Hans Peter Petersen)
Niels Jensen, age thirty-three, from Søllerød, widower with three children: Anton Jensen, age eleven; Carl Jensen, age seven; and Axel Jensen, age three

Anton and Camilla were married in New Denmark in 1881, and Anton’s mother attended the wedding. Andrea Petersen was reunited with her brother, Hans Peter, now a successful landowner, Justice of the Peace, and Land Commissioner in New Denmark.

The story of the schoolmaster’s family might have ended here, but back in Nærum, there was little brother Johan Carl Jensen and step-son Frederik Lund. Johan was trained as a gardener in Søllerød but said farewell to his native township when he purchased a ticket to Portland, Maine, at the age of nineteen on March 15, 1883. After a short stay with Anton in New Denmark, he followed in the footsteps of his oldest brother, Henry, who had abandoned pioneering in Canadian wilderness for city life in Boston. Johan Carl became John Charles and married a Scot, Sarah McCrum. Denmark was soon forgotten.

Frederik Lund was younger than the brothers but shared their dream. He had barely turned sixteen when he bought his ticket to the USA on April 17, 1889. The emigrant register listed him as a laborer and gave his destination as Boston. There, he was undoubtedly met by his step-brothers, Henry and Johan. Another brother, Sophus Jensen, also left Canada in the 1880’s for a career as a businessman in the bustling city of Chicago. Of all the brothers,
only Anton remained in the New Denmark colony. He and Camilla raised their five children there and gradually improved their standing until Anton, in the early 1890's, took over from his relative, Hans Peter Petersen, as the leading figure in the New Denmark colony.

**Hans Peter Petersen, Entrepreneur and Jailbird**

The background to Hans Peter’s fall was quite dramatic. He was no ordinary farmer, but rather, he was the best-educated person in the New Denmark settlement. Early photographs show him as a foppish young student, and he and Hertha, shortly before their departure, appeared as a well-dressed young couple; Hans Peter beamed with confidence, while she looked somewhat skeptical about the prospects of pioneering. He studied English on the ocean voyage, and in the course of their first years in New Denmark, he managed to build up a solid agricultural enterprise and construct a splendid new house. In their very first year of 1874, he cleared ten of his 100 acres, which only one other immigrants managed to do. By 1879, he had 280 acres, which made him the largest landowner in the colony by far. His buildings were assessed at $1,000 and his land at $640. The next largest building assessments were $450 and $400, while most ran around $150. The same pattern appeared in land assessments, where the next-largest were in the range of $300-350, while most barely reached $200.

H. P. was an able man. He was the first in the colony to gain full title to his land, on March 10, 1877. This allowed him to mortgage it to raise capital for other investments, and he was soon involved in a series of deals that appeared to make him even more prosperous. He was respected as the model pioneer, one who got things moving and took the initiative to establish a number of community organizations. He also held various offices, served as assessor, Justice of the Peace, and postmaster, and was a leader in the schools and Danish church of the colony.

Everything went well until 1891, when H. P. Petersen was elected Victoria County Councilor for New Denmark. Then his political enemies began to launch attacks on him in the newspapers. They exposed exorbitant loans against his New Denmark property, even
embezzlement and fraud in carrying out his public duties. In 1893, Petersen was sentenced to three years in Andover Prison. However, he soon managed to break out. The *Daily Sun* reported on August 14, 1893, “The now-famous embezzler made a hole in the wall of his cell last night and slipped over to the other side,” while the local *Carleton Sentinel* on August 19, 1893 report that H. P. Petersen escaped “through a hole bored through the wall from the outside. Two conspirators, brothers-in-law to the prisoner, are suspected to have aided his escape.” One of them was Knud Hansen, a son of the Inner Mission pastor in New Denmark, who was married to H. P.’s sister, Andrea. The other was not a brother-in-law but H. P.’s son-in-law, Carl Lund, married to his eldest daughter, Emilie. Carl Lund is an example of the many connections between Danes who emigrated to North America: he was a relative of Schoolmaster Jensen in Nærum, a cousin of Anton Jensen, and a brother of Frederik Lund in Boston.

Hans Peter Petersen did manage to escape to “the other side,” that is, he slipped across the border to the USA. He died in Maine in the year 1900, and his grave is in Pine Grove cemetery in Falmouth, where he lies alongside his wife, Hertha, who died in 1913. He is remembered as an able, inventive man, courageous and enterprising, who “found himself in the little group that came first” to the endless forests, “adjusted to the primitive conditions, and stayed. He could much more easily have made a better career in the West or in a city… As things turned out, one can imagine that he may have left Denmark as well because he had to.”

**Carl Julius Leffland, Bankrupt Lumber Merchant**

Another one who had to leave was the lumber merchant and land speculator, Carl Julius Leffland. He was born in Birkerød around 1855 and in the early 1870’s began working as a carpenter on a large building site in Skodsborg, where a contractor from Holstein, Johan Adolf Struck, was putting up the immense hotel complex that became the renowned Hotel Skodsborg Søbad. In 1878, Leffland married Emilie Struck, daughter of the wealthy hotel owner, and they built a large home in a new development in Vedbæk. Golden days followed as a contractor for much of the new housing that was
going up along the Vedbæk coast. Easy money flowed in through the middle of the 1880’s, when Vedbæk became a summer colony for artists. Vedbæk Inn was converted into a beach hotel, and big spenders showed up when the poet, Holger Drachmann (1846-1908), held his notorious “gargling cognac” parties.

Unfortunately, Leffland overestimated the possibilities and built beyond his means. He slipped out the back door in 1887 and departed with haste for America without leaving any trace in the police register of emigrants. His father-in-law, Struck, must have been upset when he had to buy both the lumber yard and the large house, but he could afford it. Presumably, he was also the one who paid the following year, when Emilie on October 31, 1888, followed her husband to America with their four daughters, aged three to eight. The record shows that their one-way ticket was purchased in Denmark. The later fate of the Leffland family is unknown.

Schoolmaster Jensen’s Travels in America

By June 21, 1894, summer vacation had begun in Danish schools and Schoolmaster Johan Jensen, now around sixty-three years of age, was free to travel. He sailed for America on that day, accompanied by his son, Sophus, his daughter-in-law, Mine (both of them forty-two), and their two children, Sigfred, nine, and Lovise, four-and-a-half. The initial destination was Boston, but the old teacher planned to do some extensive traveling.

Nearly two months later, in a letter written from Chicago on 14 August 1894 to Gardener Olsen in Nærum, Johan Jensen reported with enthusiasm and humor that he had been spending his time visiting old friends and relatives from Nærum:

Each of the countrymen I visit wants to look his best for me, and I must admit that the homes of most of them I have visited are better than expected: It is common with carpets in two or three of the rooms, there are two or three rocking chairs as well as other armchairs, etc. Yes, I do not think you have a nicer home. Of course, the men must work hard, but you hear no complaints about the hard work, and no one wishes he were back in the old country (for the sake of the children, of course). Together with my family (Sophus, his wife, and two children), I have been in
the company of Emil Eiberg, Olaf Otto, Dr. Mathiesen’s brother, and my nephew Georg Lund, and we have had a good time with songs and music. Eibergs and Mathiesen have a piano, and only moderate drinking is common. I have now visited Johan, Henry and Sophus and have been surprised by their lovely homes. When I come home, I can tell you everything. My daughters-in-law are sweet and could not be better if they were my own daughters. The worst will be leaving them [my grandchildren]: I have seen and been delighted by five handsome boys and two girls. I often have tears of joy in my eyes, and I am almost afraid of having to say a last farewell to each of my married children and their families. On Monday the twenty-first, I hope to travel, with God’s help, from Chicago to Canada. Chicago is a tremendous city… It is expensive to travel by railroad in America because you have to go for thousands of English miles, but I hope that the elderberries will be ripe and can be sold when I return, so that my fortune can be restored. I am not so worried about pickpockets as I used to be, because my wallet is pretty thin.40

Johan Jensen’s travels among his fellow Danes in North America witnessed to the large emigration from his home area of Nærum, an emigration for which he was at least partly responsible. He stayed in America less than a year and was home in time to participate in the ninetieth birthday celebration on May 4, 1895 of Nærum’s famous summer resident, the composer, J. P. E. Hartmann.41 Jensen continued to teach until 1901 and died in Nærum in 1909 at the age of seventy-nine. He was buried in Søllerød churchyard. By then, every single one of his descendants was in the New World.

**New Denmark for Better or Worse**

New Denmark developed with amazing speed into a well-organized pioneer community with a school, church, and agricultural society. The agricultural society was founded as early as 1875 on the initiative of H. P. Petersen. The first Danish Lutheran clergyman, Niels Mikkelsen Hansen, arrived the same year. He adhered to Vilhelm Beck’s Inner Mission and had emigrated with his wife and eight children as part of a large group from the Tissø area
in western Zealand. Another member of that party described him as “a man who proclaims the ancient Lutheran faith with earnest power, so we hope that the prevailing paganism will soon pass.”

Worship services were held in the Immigrant House at New Denmark, which also served as the community schoolhouse, with Pastor Hansen as the teacher. The cornerstone of a regular church was laid in 1877, but the building was not consecrated until the summer of 1884.

The last chapter on New Denmark and emigration from Søllerød was written by Thora Lorentsen. Her daughter, Camilla, and husband, Anton Jensen, had built a solid home on Blue Bell Road in New Denmark, and now Camilla was expecting her seventh child. Meanwhile, Grandmother Thora was all alone in her preschool back in Nærum. In the spring of 1894, Anton traveled to Denmark in order to bring her to Canada. She was fifty-eight years of age. They sailed from Copenhagen on April 12, 1894, a couple of months before her neighbor, Schoolmaster Jensen, departed for his American travels.

Thora Lorentsen did not have the Johan Jensen’s optimism, and the last years of her life in Canada were sad. Maybe she would have been happier among fellow Danes in a city like Chicago, but she landed in an isolated pioneer community, far from home and her old friends. English was foreign to her, and she spent her days caring for children. There were no neighbor women to drink coffee and chat with, and life became a living torment for the old preschool teacher who was used to earning her own keep. Her daughter and son-in-law, Anton and Camilla, had given their farm the name of Skovlykke (Forest Happiness), but for Thora, it turned out to be Skovulykke (Forest Unhappiness).

Six letters from her hand are preserved, written between 1894, the year of her arrival, and 1897, the year before she died. They were written to Anna Olsen, the gardener’s daughter and a dear old neighbor who lived by the idyllic village pond in Nærum. Thora wrote very little about life on Blue Bell Road and mostly about her longing for home.

The very first letter, written soon after Thora arrived in New Denmark, set the tone. A letter from Anna awaited her when she
arrived, wishing her well in her new home. Thora’s reply, dated May 7, 1894, tells mainly about the journey by way of Hull and Liverpool. They had pretty smooth sailing, and problems first arose when they came to the railroad and had to pay overweight dues at both train changes. It turned out that Thora had brought along her whole dinner and coffee service, though she noted that “no more than one of the small plates was broken, which was quite fortunate, considering that I brought so many delicate things.” She told Anna that she had also written to another neighbor and said that she would not repeat herself because they could exchange news from the two letters when they met for coffee on Wednesday. Her letter to Anna concludes,

It is, of course, too early to say exactly how I feel about being here. It seems as though people are very nice. They are, in any case, very glad to have Anton [her son-in-law] home again. They had raised flags many places, and in the evening three or four families came to greet us; but of course it can never be Nærum.45

Thora’s next letter was dated September 17, 1894 and was addressed to Anna and her sister, Bodil. Thora answered their questions about the children, the pastor, and how often she used her coffee service. She said that she used it when the pastor visited, but not for every visitor, because then it would have to be polished too often. She also told about the visit of her daughter’s father-in-law, Schoolmaster Jensen, who stayed with Anton and his family for three weeks and went on to visit Portland, Boston, and New York before sailing for home on October 12. Finally, she answered their questions about the countryside and the maple forests in the autumn:

It is a magnificent sight, the very darkest bright red, paler red, yellow, and green all mixed together. It would be just the thing for an artist. Then there are mountains and valleys here as fare as the eye can see. The houses each sit on their own piece of land on both sides of the road from here to Grand Falls, thirteen English miles from us. [Despite all the beauty, however, Thora thought mostly of her friends back home and of their visits,] and the tears often press from my eyes. Homesickness is a nasty
guest. I never thought I would come to long so much for my old home. Greet all my old friends from me, but you need not tell them I am so childish as to be homesick.46

Thora’s letter to Anna on August 7, 1895 describes her lonely existence, caring for the children in an otherwise empty house. She asks eagerly for the news from Nærum and expresses her joy in reading reports and newspaper clippings about the Hartmann celebration in May. Thora also reported that Pastor Hansen had left the colony, and that Anton had purchased his farm.

In her next letter, written on April 8, 1896, Thora reported on the colony’s new pastor:

You can be sure he can preach in a way I have not heard since I was home, and his voice resounds in the church when he speaks and sings. I was in church on Good Friday, Easter Sunday, and Easter Monday. Now I can go to church every Sunday, as it is only a ten-minute walk up there. It has been bad enough to walk up there a couple of times because of all the snow, but I have managed to climb the hill; I have fallen a couple of times, but I have always gotten up again.47

She went on to report that Anton was the pastor’s assistant, and that the pastor and Anton held a Sunday School for the children in the colony. The name of the new pastor was Karl (Charles) Eiler Maimann. He was born 1861 in Elsinore (Helsingør) and worked as a blacksmith before emigrating to North America in the early 1880’s. He entered the seminary of the Danish Church in West Denmark, Wisconsin, around 1890 and was ordained when he was called to New Denmark in 1896.48

Thora’s next letter to Anna was dated “Nærum, 9 August 1896.” She reported that she only had three children to take care of at the moment, because the oldest three were helping to stack hay. With everybody gone from the house, Thora felt completely abandoned. So, it was good to have a photograph of her old home, and her thoughts wandered back to old friends and neighbors living by the village pond.

The last letter from Thora to Anna was written in New Denmark on February 7, 1897. Most of it was about Pastor Maimann, who was
not quite so popular any longer. He had offended almost everybody in the colony by talking about drinking, godlessness, and the terrible Danish preachers in Copenhagen.

What concern is that of ours over here? We cannot improve conditions back home, and here people are not really so bad, but he has also gone so far that most stay from the church.49

A long report followed on the misdeeds of the pastor, then jumped to the usual questions about news from home, and concluded:

You wrote that I must have been thinking a lot about Nærum since by accident I wrote Nærum above my last letter. You can be sure that I long for and think of Nærum, so much that my heart is breaking. I wish to God that I had stayed at home. I had never thought I would suffer so much from homesickness.50

These were Thora’s last words to Anna. She died of tuberculosis on August 12, 1898 and was buried in St. Ansgar Cemetery in New Denmark, far from her beloved Nærum. Pastor Maimann conducted her funeral. He was not dismissed from the pastorate until January of 1900. The Lord truly moves in mysterious ways.

“The Black Sheep”—Christian Ask

Back in Søllerød, the urbanization of the whole area north of Copenhagen proved to be a goldmine for developers around the turn of the twentieth century. The Ibsen brothers were leading “farm butchers” in the townships of Gentofte, Gladsaxe, Lyngby, and Søllerød, and they knew the art of keeping their paths clean in the most literal sense. They made a fortune from plotting subdivisions, laying out sewer and water systems, and building streets in what had once been traditional Danish farmland.51 In the wake of the Ibsen brothers came an army of speculators who were not always quite so refined in their methods.

Christian Ask, for example, was an attorney in Lyngby in the gay ‘nineties. Everything he earned by selling building lots in Sorgenfri and around the lake of Furesøen went up in smoke at the racetrack in Klampenborg. Eventually, his wife left him, and one June day in 1901, Ask himself thought it wise to skip out, leaving behind a debt
of 170,000 kroner. His name does not appear in the official register of emigrants, but it does crop up in quite a few police records. One of them noted that Lyngby’s bicycle-riding officer questioned the maidservant at the Ask villa, who revealed that the attorney’s last words, before taking the 6:10 a.m. train from Lyngby Station on June 20, 1901, were, “See you later” (Farvel saa længe). A directory of Danish attorneys simply notes under his name: “left Denmark around 1900. Later fate unknown.” However, his letters from America allow us to follow his path. He escaped a Danish prison sentence for fraud and misappropriation of funds but had to pay for it with twenty years of hard work as a farm laborer in the Midwest before he finally recovered something approaching his former social and economic position. In his letters home, Ask reported that he was trying to live

as an upright, hard-working person, and where I have worked in Minneapolis, Chicago, and Dakota, I have gotten top recommendations for industry and good conduct, but the wages of a working man are small, and clothing and everything else is so expensive, especially if circumstances force one to travel around. So I have never gotten farther than the fate of a worker or servant. If I were twenty years old and had the strength to work as hard as others who are brought up for it, I would have a better chance. I am not weak or sick, but my muscles were not developed when I was young, and as a result, hard work is twice as hard for me now.

Even though Christian Ask was not brought up for hard work, he seemed to do all right. In the years around World War I, he managed to acquire a fortune. Recisely how he did so is unknown. His few surviving letters are not very informative on that point. But Ask, who now went by the name of Steen, was able to pay off an old debt to the family. A month after the stock market crash on Wall Street, he wrote from Chicago on November 23, 1929, and now he spoke like a confident, optimistic American businessman:

We have all lost a bit of money, and business is not very good, but as always happens in this country, when the storm is over
and the sun begins to shine once more, we start a new life, work harder and longer, and over time win back what has been lost.55

In his last letters home in 1938 and 1940, Christian Ask described his large villa in a park-like setting, reminiscent of Sorgenfri Palace back home, with fine furniture and servants, “A Negro and his wife. They cook and clean and wash.” At his death in 1940 at the age of sixty-nine, Ask left a fortune of $93,594, which was divided equally between his secretary and his family in Denmark. He was an example of the American myth become reality.

Cornelius Captyn, Swindler and Township Council Chairman
A fugitive from Søllerød gets the last word. Cornelius Captyn had a lumberyard in Vedbæk and was deeply involved, for better or worse, in the process of urbanization in Søllerød Township.

A long line of farmers had served as chairman of Søllerød Township Council from the time it was established in 1842 until 1900, but the line came to an end at the turn of the century, when the first person without any connection to agriculture took over. That person was Cornelius Captyn, who had moved into the township in 1880 when the first large subdivisions were being laid out. In 1888, he bought the largest lumberyard in Vedbæk, together with the loading pier on the Sound that was connected with it. The seller was J. A. Struck, so this was the very same lumberyard where C. J. Liffland had gone bankrupt before he fled to America.

Captyn entered into his position as township council chairman—effectively, the mayor of the community—with whatever experience he had gained, not as a farmer, but as a speculator and building contractor. To a man like him, the possibilities seemed unlimited. No sooner had he taken over than he launched a series of public building projects. The three old village schools with their thatched roofs were replaced with three red brick schoolhouses in 1901-03. The first school to be replaced was the one in Nærum in 1901, when Johan Jensen left. In 1904, the community opened the doors of its first town hall built of solid bricks.56

Cornelius Captyn had put his mark on Søllerød by the time he and his wife celebrated their silver wedding anniversary in 1905 amidst grandeur and great public recognition. However, that was the end of
the ball, or perhaps the start of a new dance. Around the beginning of 1906, Captyn followed in the tradition of Carl Julius Leffland and absconded, taking along even more than his predecessor. Captyn “emigrated” with the entire treasury of Søllerød under one arm and a pretty young singer on the other. When the council convened for its first meeting of the year in January of 1906, the vice-chairman announced, in the words of the official minutes, “that because the former chairman of the township council, lumber dealer Cornelius Captyn of Vedbæk, has absconded with most of the cash in the community till, he may be regarded as having resigned from the council.”

Naturally, the fifty-year-old Captyn and twenty-seven-year-old variety hall singer, Johanne Clausen, do not appear in the police register of emigrants. Nevertheless, Danish police were able to track them down in Montevideo, Uruguay, and later arrested Captyn in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The pair was brought back to Denmark for trial. In their own unique way, they brought to an end the history of nineteenth-century emigration from Søllerød Township.

Conclusion

Family ties and traditions weave together in a study of the process of emigration from a rural Danish township. America letters from the emigrants do not tell the whole truth, but they do present a private, psychological snapshot of the fates that took shape in the restless, modern America of the nineteenth century.

Erik Helmer Pedersen noted in Drømmen om Amerika (The Dream of America) that the various phases of emigration history related to various types of emigrants. This essay has shown that the generalization applies well to Søllerød. It all began in that township with some robust pioneers, a seaman from Vedbæk and an artisan’s sons from Nærum, single young men who for various reasons landed in America. Robust and brave as well were the families of workers from Skodsborg and Holte who helped to establish the first Danish colony in Canada during the initial phase of mass migration. During the next phase, around 1880, came restless, dissatisfied individuals who wanted to get away from a rural township that provided no opportunities. Among them were the talented sons of
the teacher in Nærum, most of whom ended up in American cities, though the most highly educated of them, Anton Jensen, settled in New Denmark. Last of all came some swindlers and confidence men from a Søllerød Township that was rapidly losing its rural character. Perhaps this picture is oversimplified, but it does sketch out some of the main lines of development. Of course, Thora Lorentsen was no swindler, but rather, a lost soul in an alien world, far away from her beloved Nærum.

There is a world of difference between Schoolmaster Jensen’s optimistic view of life among emigrants from Nærum and Thora Lorentsen’s dark view of life in the forests of the New World. Schoolmaster Jensen reported on progress and prosperity through hard work. Thora told of loneliness and longing for home. Of course, Jensen was heading back to Denmark, but still, his experience among family and old friends in America was truly one of success stories. The difference between him and Thora was a question of individual psychology: they saw the world with different eyes. There were certainly many emigrants who would have said with Thora, “it will never be like Denmark.” There is always a price to pay in packing up and leaving familiar surroundings. Danish immigrants often longed for the familiar ways of the home parish, for family members left behind, and for the social security of life back home when moved to the hectic melting pot of America.

1 The original version of this article appeared as “… Men Nærum bliver det naturligvis aldrig’: Opbrud og udvandring fra et nordsjællandsk landsogn i 1800-tallet,” in Landbrug, lokalhistorie og langt fra Danmark: Festskrift til Erik Helmer Pedersen i anledning af hans 70 års fødselsdag lørdag den 6. juli 2002, ed. Dan H. Andersen, Claus Bjørn, Tormod Hessel og Jette Mackintosh (Odense: Knud Gr@phic Consult, 2002), 151-185.
2 Erik Helmer Pedersen, Drømmen om Amerika (Copenhagen: Politikens Danmarkshistorie, 1985), 22.
3 Editor’s note: sections of the original article dealing with sources and in more detail with individual emigrants have been omitted. Niels Peter Stilling’s research is based partly on the emigrant register maintained by the police in Copenhagen, partly on census lists and ministerial records from Søllerød Parish, and partly on letters written by a number of emigrants from the area. This material was collected in connection with an international
conference on emigration history held at Gammel Holtegård on 6-9 September 1983. The proceedings of that conference were published under the title, *From Scandinavia to America* (Odense: Odense University Press, 1987), and Stilling’s contribution was entitled, “Søllerød in World History—or a Case-Study on the Emigration from Søllerød Parish, North Zealand, c. 1860-1900,” beginning on page 81. The originals or copies of letters cited are in Byhistorisk Arkiv, Søllerød Museum.

4 Aage Aagesen, *Geografiske studier over jernbanerne i Danmark* (Copenhagen 1949), 71.


6 See Niels Peter Stilling, *De nye byer* (Copenhagen 1987), 31 et seq.

7 Kr. Hvidt, *Flugten til Amerika, eller drivkrafter i masseudvandringen fra Danmark 1868-1914* (Copenhagen 1971), 95 et seq.


11 Stilling 1987, 86.

12 Hvidt 1971, 192 et seq.

13 Stilling 1987, 87.

14 Editor’s note: More than two dozen kinds of fish are found in the Sound off Vedbæk, including flounder (*skrubbe*), plaice (*rødspætte*), gar (*hornfisk*), mackerel (*makrel*), various sharks (*hajer*), and rays (*rokker*), but the main commercial species are herring (*sild*) and cod (*torsk*).


Stilling and Olsen 1994, 134.


Stilling and Olsen 1994, 183.

Stilling and Olsen 1994, 186.

*Dagtelegrafen*, 5, 9, 13, 17, 19 and 27 May 1872.

Palle Bo Bojesen, *New Denmark, New Brunswick, Canada: Udviklingen i en dansk udvandrerkoloni 1872-1914* (Aarhus: Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 1992), is the main source on the colony. Thomas Olsen Løkken, *Danmark i Amerika* (Copenhagen 1950), gives a fascinating description of the colony as “potato paradise.”

Bojesen 1992, 103, 124, 236 et seq.


*Dansk biografisk leksikon*, 3rd edition, 10: 30-31.

Erik Helmer Pedersen, “Udvandring fra de danske landdistrikter,” *1066* 1975, 4: 18, noted that “an inferiority complex towards young people from the farm-owning class” was a significant push factor in emigration.

Bojesen 1992, 176.

Bojesen 1992, 80, 58.

See the statistics in Bojesen 1992, 55.

Bojesen 1992, 93.

Bojesen 1992, 84 et seq.


Bojesen 1992, 147.
44 Byhistorisk Arkiv, Søllerød Museum, Thora Lorentzens samling 1983/101. Selections from the letters were printed in Stilling and Olsen 1994. See also Bojesen 1992, 176 et seq.
45 Stilling and Olsen 1994, 78.
46 Stilling and Olsen 1994, 78.
47 Stilling and Olsen 1994, 167.
49 Stilling and Olsen 1994, 168.
50 Stilling and Olsen 1994, 198.
59 Helmer Pedersen 1985, 161 et seq.
Captain S. S. Heller and the First Organized Danish Migration to Canada

by Erik John Nielsen Lang

The first, largest, and only organized migration of Danish settlers to Canada in the 19th century was directed to the settlement of New Denmark in the Canadian province of New Brunswick. The active recruitment of Danish migrants was a shift of focus for the provincial government, which had before relied almost exclusively on British settlers. Established in 1872, New Denmark’s location placed it amongst the traditional ethnic groups of Victoria County: French-Canadian, English, Scottish, and Irish. Danes would not have chosen to migrate to the province at all had it not been for a Danish emigration promoter whose life, motivations, and intentions have remained understudied.

The main stimulus for the Danish migration to New Brunswick resulted from a proposal put forth in 1871 by Captain Søren Severin Heller and George Stymest to the provincial government.

In Stymest’s case, after the contract was signed with the government, he seems to have disappeared altogether. We could surmise that he was a citizen of New Brunswick, as Stymest remains a prominent name in the Miramichi area in eastern New Brunswick. No further mention is made of him and no indications are given as to his identity or motivations. Stymest’s main role may have been to give some legitimacy to Heller’s venture by submitting proposals in association with a local businessman. After signing the contract, Captain Heller took command of the migration scheme.

Captain Heller also proves a mystery. Although he called himself “Captain,” it is unclear whether he was an actual ship’s captain or a former member of the military. According to Danish census records,1 Heller was born in Copenhagen in 1839. His father was a cannonier in the Danish army and the family had resided in Copenhagen since at least the late 18th century. The origin of the family name Heller does not appear to be Danish but German. It could very well be that Heller’s grandfather was a member of the German privileged class.
when he migrated to Copenhagen in the late 1700s. The records do not reveal any information regarding Heller’s marital status.

In his thesis “New Denmark: An Ethnic Community in Canada,” Roseville Burgoyne stated that Heller was the “Captain of the trans-Atlantic ship bringing the immigrants.” This seems unlikely. It appears he was a Danish return-migrant who became interested in immigration to Canada. In a search of the Copenhagen Police Records, which recorded every emigrant contract after 1868, only two migrants with the last name Heller are found. We can be fairly sure that both entries represent Captain Heller, as the first and second initials match his distinctive name, Søren Severin, and in both instances the occupation is listed as Captain. If we believe these two entries to represent Captain Heller’s movements, they indicate that Heller traveled to North America in 1869 and again in 1874. The ages contain an error, as during a five-year period, he is recorded as having aged eleven years, but such inaccuracies are common and have not prevented the identification of other migrants.

In both 1869 and 1874, Heller’s destination was New York City. We can hypothesize that Heller, upon arriving in New York City in 1869, began to see opportunities to make money through migration to North America. His travels might have brought him north to Maine, where he perhaps heard of the success of New Sweden. He then met up with George Stymest, and the two made their proposal to the Province in late 1871.

In their proposal, Heller and Stymest promised to deliver 500 Scandinavian settlers over a two-year period, two-fifths males eighteen-years old and above. The proposal also stipulated:

1st. Each male Immigrant over 18 years to have 100 acres of land, with good accessible roads. A chopping of two acres to be made on each lot of 100 acres. A suitable temporary building or buildings to be provided for the reception of the Immigrants a short distance of their lots. The Immigrants shall be employed to do the aforesaid chopping. The temporary building to be reserved for school or other public purposes of the settlement. On three years actual residence a grant to issue to each male settling as above.
2nd. That the able-bodied males over eighteen years of age will receive employment on the Railways, or at other works, at the rate of, or not less than one dollar per day for a period not exceeding two years

3rd. Any grants of land which the New Brunswick Railway Company agrees to make to labourers in the employment of said Company, according to the terms of Communication from the said Company to the Government, dated the 7th December, A. D. 1871 will be guaranteed by the Government.

Heller and Stymest were apparently well informed as to the intended location of the New Brunswick Railway Company’s line along the St. John River valley, and expected the Danes to supply some of the labor required for its completion. It is not certain whether Heller and Stymest or the province chose the settlement location.

Just a few months after Heller and Stymest made their proposal, on April 11, 1872 the government passed the Free Grants Act, closely mirroring Heller’s contract and the United States Homestead Act. The Free Grants Act guaranteed single male immigrants over eighteen-years of age 100 acres of land and married men with at least two children under eighteen years 200 acres. Immigrants were responsible for improving their lands in the three-year period. They were required to begin chopping trees, clearing the land, and improving their land within one month of arrival. Within the first year they were required to have a house of not less than “sixteen feet by twenty” built and three acres under cultivation. At the end of the three years it was required that they have at least ten acres under cultivation.

As the ink was drying on the contract, Heller was off to Copenhagen to begin his recruitment efforts. He focused on the area he knew best, the Danish capital of Copenhagen, which because of its location at the opening of the Baltic was the main port of departure for Danes, Norwegians, Swedes, and Finns. Attempting a migration as large as 500 people was a bold venture. Heller must have believed he would be able to deliver the contracted number of Danes. He needed help, but where did he get it?
One possible contact might have been Henry Hertz, the Canadian government emigrant agent sent to Scandinavia in 1872. Hertz routinely spoke with average Scandinavians, remained in close contact with agents from the Allan Steamship Line, advertised in the most prominent of the Scandinavian newspapers, and distributed New Brunswick Surveyor General Stevenson’s pamphlets across Scandinavia. It is possible that Heller met with Hertz and that Hertz recommended a meeting with Wilken Horneman, the Canadian-owned Allan Shipping Line’s Chief Agent in Copenhagen.

According to Palle Bo Bojesen, Heller contacted Horneman in 1872, presumably to inform him of his venture and to ask for his assistance in rounding up migrants. It is not known whether Heller and Horneman had met previously or what may have been the nature of their working relationship. Most likely Heller advocated the mutually beneficial nature of his contract, offering to the Allan Line the opportunity to transport the 500 Danish settlers in exchange for Horneman’s help through his extensive connections in Denmark’s emigration industry.

Heller’s advertisement and recruitment efforts in Copenhagen were made difficult because many Danish farm laborers, who would have been prime emigration candidates, had already entered into contracts for summer work and were unavailable. Despite this, his promises of land, work, wages, and one of the cheapest passage rates to North America available drew in a number of families and single men.

The first group of Heller’s Danish migrants left Copenhagen on May 31, 1872. This group’s exact size is in dispute, but sources place the total between twenty-seven and thirty people, composed of approximately six families, and seven single men. According to A History of New Denmark, after leaving Copenhagen, the migrants touched at Hamburg, Hull, Liverpool, and Halifax before landing in Saint John. The migrants changed ships at different points along the journey. The ships prior to Liverpool are unknown, but from this city Heller and his Danes sailed aboard the steamer Caspian to Halifax, and on to Saint John aboard the Empress. The group arrived in the capital city of Fredericton on June 17th.
The numerous stops and ship changes were characteristic of migration voyages from northern Europe. Most of New Denmark’s Danes would travel to North America via such indirect routes. According to historian Nick Evans, the location of Hull and Liverpool as a “gateway from northern Europe,” the two ports’ modern landing facilities, and the development of “highly competitive and efficient shipping services” by British steamship owners were key to their importance as the cornerstone of the indirect route.13

Heller, along with Benjamin Stevenson, Surveyor General of New Brunswick, accompanied the group of Danes aboard the steamer “City of Fredericton” up the St. John River to their destination. According to Stevenson, when the Danes landed at the mouth of the Salmon River they gave a cheery “hurray” as the steamer put off.14 Next came a three-kilometer trek up a steep path to the settlement. When he saw the unprepared state of the temporary building to
house the emigrants, Stevenson was worried that dissatisfaction would be expressed, writing, “It was not in the state of preparation I had contracted for, and I felt at first uneasy.” But his worries proved unfounded as “by eight o’clock all were comfortably cared for and went to bed contented, though tired, having had little sleep on board the steamer the night before.”

Prior to his arrival onsite, however, Stevenson had expressed little concern about the facilities awaiting the immigrant party. In a letter dated May 31, 1872, the same day that the first group of Danes left Copenhagen, he had written to those preparing the temporary buildings, informing them that they did not have to work too quickly, stating, “I am in a position to say that there is not occasion for great haste.” Stevenson also made apparent that finances were tight and that he did not wish to spend an exorbitant amount on the construction.

Heller, Stevenson, and Beckwith remained with the group for the first few days as the Danes began to clear the land and plant potatoes, but soon Stevenson and Beckwith returned to Fredericton, and Heller returned to Denmark to organize another group of migrants. According to A History of New Denmark, Heller did personally guide another group consisting of four or five migrant families that summer and he returned again with another in spring 1873. His 1873 group of around 80 Danes arrived too early and the St. John River was still frozen over with ice. Under Stevenson’s orders, the party was retained in the city “until the season should be more advanced, the snow gone, and the building [in New Denmark] completed.” Forced to remain in the city for almost a month, Heller’s Danes were housed in military barracks and the men received jobs at the St. John Water Works.

In 1873 the Danes relieved the government of its employment guarantees. Road-building and railway construction in Victoria County had not occurred at the pace that the government had estimated and the Danes were suffering financially from lack of work. The province decided to buy its way out of the problem. Stevenson met with Heller upon his arrival in 1873 and asked him to “bring the matter before his immigrants and urge it upon their favourable consideration and adoption.” When the matter was
concluded successfully, Stevenson noted his relief as the government had been:

relieved of their guarantee for work for two years, they [the Danes] accepting each 100 acres under the Free Grants Act, 1872, with $110 for house building and four acres chopping on lots located to married persons having two or more children; $60 for house building and two acres chopping on lots located to married persons having less than two children, and $40 for house building and two acres to single men. All parties assented to this arrangement.21

The new agreement in place, Heller returned to Denmark to continue his recruitment efforts.

Heller fell out of grace with the Province over his failure to fulfill his contract. New Denmark’s population in 1873 was 111, not even close to the 500 migrants contracted for. From here, Heller essentially drops from the scene. As alluded to earlier, he traveled to New York City a second time in 1874, perhaps to make a new start, or perhaps to attempt another migration venture. The Copenhagen Police Records do not note his travels between 1869 and 1874 because as a main organizer of the New Denmark settlement, he would have been considered an emigrant agent and his journey was not seen as emigration but as part of his contracted duties.

**The Origin and Composition of Heller’s Migrants**

In 1868, the Copenhagen Police began to record all contracts between migrants and agents. Emigrants were required to provide personal information including their ages, occupations, county of last residence, and destinations. These records provide insight into the background of each migrant. In Kristian Hvidt’s book *Flight to America*, the general trends in 19th century Danish emigration were uncovered using these records. Using the Copenhagen Police Records,22 New Denmark’s Danish migrants can be traced and compared with the more general Danish trends.

The recruitment work of Heller in the first two years would be very important to the success of his venture. His contract with the province required him to secure farmers and farming families and at least forty percent of his settlers were to be men eighteen-years of
age or older. By the end of 1872, however, Surveyor General Stevenson requested that Heller recruit fewer single males, who were tending not to remain in New Denmark as settlers. Heller was told that in 1873, he was to concentrate his efforts on securing farming families.23

How well did Heller do in his selections? Did he recruit the people the province wanted? The Copenhagen Police Records were searched to uncover information regarding Heller’s migrants. It was possible to locate forty-five people from Heller’s 1872 campaign and an additional thirty from 1873. Captain Heller’s first party left May 31, 1872 and while secondary sources note that the group comprised between twenty-seven and thirty people, only twenty-four were located in the Copenhagen Police Records. If a few migrants did not list the proper destination, they would not appear with the group and the discrepancy could easily be explained. Given the fact that it was Heller who as the emigrant agent reviewed each migration contract, however, this seems unlikely. The Copenhagen Police Record data noted that the first party consisted of ten single men over eighteen-years old and of four families with fourteen total members. In all, there were fourteen men both married and single over eighteen years, which translated to sixty percent of the total. As seen in Table One below, all males with occupations were farmers.

Table One: Composition of Heller’s First Party

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Name</th>
<th>Given Name</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Last Resident County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Toft</td>
<td>Anders</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Slesvig</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>Wife</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Lars</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sisse Marie</td>
<td>Wife</td>
<td>41</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ane</td>
<td>Child</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ellen</td>
<td>Child</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Hansine</td>
<td>Child</td>
<td>9 months</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Carlsen</td>
<td>Anders</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Praestø</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marie</td>
<td>Wife</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>Child</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unnamed</td>
<td>Child</td>
<td>4 months</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andreasen</td>
<td>Wilhelm</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Praestø</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Name</td>
<td>Given Name</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Last Resident County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>Wife</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unnamed</td>
<td>Child</td>
<td>11 months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winning</td>
<td>S. H.</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Hjørring</td>
</tr>
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<td>Smidt</td>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>29</td>
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<td>Farmer</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Copenhagen</td>
</tr>
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<td>Frederik</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>41</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ibsen</td>
<td>Jergen</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>Hummel</td>
<td>L.W.</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Copenhagen</td>
</tr>
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<td>Hess</td>
<td>M. Petersen</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Copenhagen</td>
</tr>
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<td>Frausing</td>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Viborg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christensen</td>
<td>Jens</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Aalborg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andersen</td>
<td>Mads</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Ringkøbing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Heller and his second party, according to the Police Records, left Copenhagen on November 7, 1872. This date must be an error. While the registration date is listed as the 7th day of the 11th month, this is not possible as it was too late in the season. If the St. John River was ice covered, which can occur in late November or early December, the immigrants could not have made the long journey to New Denmark. It is much more likely that the actual date is July 11. After accompanying his first party, it would have been at least late June before he could have arrived back in Denmark. His second party was small, containing just two families with eleven total members and two single males, for a total of thirteen people. Of this group, four were males over eighteen-years, accounting for just over thirty percent. More detailed information regarding this party’s migrants is listed in Table Two. Unlike the first party, where farmers dominated, they made up only fifty percent of the occupations.
As earlier mentioned, by late 1872 the province had decided to focus its efforts on attracting Danish farming families instead of single males. In late 1873, Heller presented to the New Brunswick government a partial listing of the migrants he sent to the province that year. Did these immigrants reflect the government’s new priorities? From this list of thirty-five names it was possible to locate thirty in the Copenhagen Police Records. Among the group were many single males. Of the thirty-five people, sixteen were single males, two were single females, and the remaining seventeen were found among five families, two headed by married women traveling without their husbands. Table Three below provides further details. Those married or single over eighteen years old made up fifty-five percent of the total.

Table Two: Composition of Heller’s Second Party

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Name</th>
<th>Given Name</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Last Resident County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nilsson</td>
<td>Jens</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Sverig</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ingri</td>
<td>Wife</td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elsa</td>
<td>Child</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lund</td>
<td>Jorgen</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Randers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mariane</td>
<td>Wife</td>
<td>44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marie</td>
<td>Child</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mine</td>
<td>Child</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Søren</td>
<td>Child</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carl</td>
<td>Child</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ellen</td>
<td>Child</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Johanne</td>
<td>Child</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jensen</td>
<td>Niels</td>
<td>Carpenter</td>
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<td>Copenhagen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christoffersen</td>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>Cigarmaker</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Sorø</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


As earlier mentioned, by late 1872 the province had decided to focus its efforts on attracting Danish farming families instead of single males. In late 1873, Heller presented to the New Brunswick government a partial listing of the migrants he sent to the province that year. Did these immigrants reflect the government’s new priorities? From this list of thirty-five names it was possible to locate thirty in the Copenhagen Police Records. Among the group were many single males. Of the thirty-five people, sixteen were single males, two were single females, and the remaining seventeen were found among five families, two headed by married women traveling without their husbands. Table Three below provides further details. Those married or single over eighteen years old made up fifty-five percent of the total.

Table Three: Composition of Heller’s 1873 Migrants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Name</th>
<th>Given Name</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Last Resident County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reinke</td>
<td>Frederik</td>
<td>Baker</td>
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<td>Copenhagen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ida</td>
<td>Wife</td>
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<td>Jorgensen</td>
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<td>No data</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Karen</td>
<td>Wife</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hans</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Valdemar</td>
<td>Child</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christensen</td>
<td>Anders</td>
<td>Unskilled labourer</td>
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<td>Aarhus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mette</td>
<td>Wife</td>
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<td>27</td>
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<td>Brinkman</td>
<td>Kathrine</td>
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<td>Copenhagen</td>
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<td>Henrik</td>
<td>Child</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Johannes</td>
<td>Child</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Axel</td>
<td>Child</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Amanda</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Christine</td>
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<td>Lars</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Frederiksborg</td>
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<td>Petersen</td>
<td>Rasmus</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
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<td>Andersen</td>
<td>Johan</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Willman</td>
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<td>Sorø</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Anders</td>
<td>Shopkeeper</td>
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<td>Ole</td>
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<td>Herman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jorgensen</td>
<td>Niels</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


PANB, Letter Book of Benjamin Stevenson, 4 November 1872.

Figure One below highlights the counties of origin of the seventy-two migrants noted in the Tables above. We can see that the majority of Heller’s migrants came from counties on the island of Zealand, producing fifty-five percent of the total. And as Heller’s recruitment focused on Copenhagen, this is no surprise. When those from nearby Randers are added to the total, two-thirds of Heller’s migrants can be seen as coming from areas close to Copenhagen.
Figure One: Origins of Heller’s 1872 and 1873 Migrants

Map from Family and Church History Department, Research Outline: Denmark, (Salt Lake City: Family History Library, 2001)
It does seem that Heller was at least providing the province with the percentage of adult males initially requested. The other requirement, that the Danes be farmers, was also being satisfied. Heller was failing, however, to provide the number of settlers contracted for. And providing the settlers was only half of the battle. It is important to gauge what happened to his migrants once they arrived in New Brunswick. How many of his migrants remained in New Denmark, how many left, how long did they stay, and how many used the passage as an opportunity to get to North America and did not attempt settlement in New Denmark? Because of inadequate records in New Brunswick and the highly mobile population, it is difficult to arrive at concrete figures for each of these questions. We know that some of the Danes remained in New Denmark, but also that many of them left after a few days or after years of settlement. There were core groups of families that remained, but when the 1881 census was taken, far less than half of Heller’s migrants were still there. Given the fact that some of Heller’s migrants did not appear in New Denmark’s census, we have to assume that there were some who arrived in Saint John only to move directly to points in the United States. One such example is the

Located in the northwestern part of New Brunswick, New Denmark is not far from the border with Maine.
Toft family (see Table One). From Slesvig, the Tofts were amongst Heller’s first party, but they did not settle in New Denmark but in far away Shelby County, Iowa. Though the Tofts represent only one family, there is no evidence that the other Slesvig or Swedish immigrants ever reached New Denmark.

Did Heller Mislead his Danish Migrants?

The first few years of life in New Denmark saw a large out migration from the settlement. In an attempt to explain this out migration, many in government, especially the Surveyor General, blamed Heller. They questioned his tactics in Copenhagen and the information he gave to the prospective settlers.

Disappointment in Heller’s recruitment was first stated privately in a letter from Stevenson in November 1872. In the letter, Stevenson stressed to Heller that he must clarify his strategy and ensure that he explains the actual conditions in New Brunswick, as the first settlers were not well equipped for the task because they were told conditions were more advanced. The most dangerous assumption of the previous settlers was that farming could begin soon after debarkation.

Stevenson wanted Heller to ensure that migrants knew that the chopping of trees was not the only step required before farming could commence. He reminded Heller about the wording of the Free Grants Act, principally that the settlers were responsible for clearing their own land and were required to build their own homes during the summer after their arrival. These issues Stevenson wanted explained, as the government wanted self-sufficient settlers. He finished the letter with the request that Heller bring more families in 1873, noting that single men did not tend to stay. Most importantly, it appears from Stevenson’s letter that Heller had intentions of becoming a resident of New Denmark, as Stevenson told him that as he had requested, a chopping of four acres had been made for him beside the emigrant house.

According to Bojesen, the reason the first migrants were available to depart from Denmark so late in the season as May 31, 1872 was that they were on some type of “stand-by” list. Heller’s offer of a cheap passage, free land, and guarantees of paid work were enough
to convince this first group to follow Heller to New Brunswick, especially if we assume that the Danes were short on cash and desperate to leave. Questions continue to linger regarding Heller’s description of living conditions in New Brunswick. Whether it was made evident or not that farming could not begin before thick forests were cut, piled, and burned is unclear. There are, however, indications that Heller did not fully inform the Danes, causing great discouragement to some upon arrival.

Surveyor General Stevenson chastised Heller in 1873 for the careless way he selected his migrants. Stevenson acknowledged the hard times experienced and the large numbers who chose to leave New Denmark. The source of these problems he blamed on the “non-selection of Immigrants” in Denmark. In a letter to Heller he stated, “I cannot however omit to state my conviction that the settlers most likely to be successful are practical farmers with families and the selection made by you was not chiefly of their class.”

According to Stevenson, the settlers recruited by Heller had not been made fully aware of the agricultural opportunities and the pioneer conditions in the settlement, meaning that only farmers and farm laborers were required. With few exceptions, Stevenson noted, only those who were practicing farmers in their homeland and those with families remained long enough to become settlers. Those who were single or did not possess the necessary agricultural skills did not stay. Off the record, Stevenson acknowledged that over 50 percent of Heller’s migrants had left for the United States. In official government documents, however, Stevenson reported a much more muted out migration from New Denmark, most likely so as to not embarrass the government or himself. In his 1873 report, for example, he stated, “some of these colonists had left for the United States, chiefly the unmarried men.

What Legacy did Heller leave?

It is clear that most settlers who arrived in 1872 and remained in New Brunswick had a good opinion of Heller and his efforts. To help him in his recruitment efforts during the next season, and perhaps at the same time representing a show of admiration, the
first Danes gave Heller a letter signed by the members of the community extolling his virtues and the quality of life in “Hellerup,” the first name given to the settlement. Stevenson first suggested the new settlement’s name, in part as a reference to a town near Copenhagen but also in homage to Captain Heller. The settlers agreed.

At some point, however, opinion of Heller must have soured because while the settlement was called Hellerup in government documents for the first few years after its creation, it was referred to as “New Denmark” as early as January 1873. The change of name could have resulted from a backlash against Heller. By the end of 1872 the settlers had time to assess the promises made to them and the realities of settlement life in New Brunswick.

Heller was to be involved in organizing a second Danish settlement, once New Denmark’s settlers had been secured. Stevenson’s report for 1873 indicates that The Free Grants Act settlement of Balmoral, close to Campbellton in northeastern New Brunswick, was to become the second Danish settlement in the province. In the report he noted that:

as under his contract, part of the Danish immigration was intended for the North Shore, he was instructed that any immigrants brought by him to the country by the middle of September of this year must be for the settlement at Balmoral, in the county of Restigouche, at which place preparations similar to those at Hellerup had been fully made for their reception, and that after that date the contract with him would be at an end.

There seemed to be confusion regarding the second settlement. The New Brunswick Reporter wrote in June 1872 that a second group of Scandinavians were leaving for New Brunswick and noted “Should these last arrive they will be located on the Balmoral Block, Restigouche.” Despite the Government’s original intentions, the second group of Danes migrated to New Denmark and Balmoral did not become a Danish settlement, most likely because levels of Danish immigration to New Brunswick were not considered high enough and New Denmark was not the early success the government had hoped it would be.
There are also indications that Heller’s popularity began to wane as a result of a power struggle within the community. Stevenson’s report for 1873 contains references to a “bad feeling” that had arisen between the government appointed Commissioner for New Denmark, Hans Peter Petersen, and Heller. According to the report, some of New Denmark’s settlers were not satisfied with Petersen’s work and might have appealed to Heller for help, resulting in an unhappy relationship between the two most prominent men in the settlement.35

Heller accompanied his third group of Danes to New Denmark in early 1873. He assisted in the distribution of the lots and negotiated a road-building contract with a Danish settler. Heller then returned to Copenhagen to continue his duties as the settlement’s emigrant agent. This point marked the end of the working relationship that had existed between him and the provincial government. At the end of that summer Heller sent a number of letters to the province asking for money owed him for his work. Despite his failure to secure anything close to the 500 settlers named in his contract, he reminded the government of their agreement and asked for $350.00 as his commission for the thirty-five Danes he claimed to have sent out that summer.36 In another letter to Stevenson, Heller gave the names of those he had sent during the summer season and asked that payment be sent to him. In closing his letter, Heller stated that if he was appointed agent for 1874 he was “prepared to give satisfaction to the government,” which must be a reference to his failure thus far to produce the contracted number of settlers.37

Stevenson’s response sounded the end of Heller’s association with New Denmark. In a letter written on November 15, 1873, Heller was informed that the government did not “wish any further effort to be made by you in the winter next [towards increasing] Danish Immigration.”38 He was told that he would not receive payment for the Danish migrants who had arrived after his return to Copenhagen in 1873. By the end of 1873, by which time Heller was contracted to have brought 500 settlers, some 299 Danes39 had entered New Brunswick’s ports, and fewer than half can be directly attributed to Heller. It could be that the government was already seeing the effects of chain migration into New Denmark and felt the services of
Heller were too expensive, considering that those who had already settled could pull additional friends and family members to New Denmark with no commission paid to the agent.

In a curious turn of events, Heller’s name reappears in provincial documents as late as 1876. In a breakdown of monies spent supporting New Denmark, $330 was noted as paid to “H. H. Heller.” While the initials are incorrect, this is understandable when a careful examination is made of his signature below.

Heller’s first two initials “S. S.” can be mistaken for “H’s.” A government clerk unaware of the Danish migration scheme could easily have misread this. The money paid is noted merely as the balance of the account. If the government decided finally to pay Heller, it is still uncertain why they did so, especially when in real terms Heller had not completed his end of the contract.

In conclusion, New Denmark essentially began with a proposal by Captain Heller and George Stymes, two men whose motivations and personal histories are for the most part unknown. Most intriguing is Captain Heller, who bore the brunt of responsibility for the organization and recruitment of the Danish migrants. Questions linger regarding his motivations and where he ended up after 1873, but we do have a clearer idea of his early life, his advertisement and recruitment strategies in Copenhagen, how his migrants perceived him, and his soured relationship with the province. What were the Danish origins and composition of Heller’s migrants? It was shown that in 1872 and 1873 Heller recruited a large number of single males, that his migrants were geographically from areas close to Copenhagen, that occupationally they were overwhelmingly farmers or farm laborers, and that the majority were over the age of eighteen.
In late 1872, the province changed its strategy and requested that Heller concentrate his efforts for the next year on attracting more families and fewer single males because the single males tended to not make permanent settlers. Heller was unable, however, to change the demographic profile of his parties and the number of single men immigrating continued to surpass that of families. Many members of his parties left the settlement early on, or never proceeded there after arriving at Saint John. Of the thirty-five migrants from Heller’s 1873 list, only five left some record of their presence in the settlement.

1 Danish census records are available online at “http://ddd.dda.dk/asp/soeg_uk_udvidet.asp.”
3 The Danish Emigration Archives website allows for online searching of the Copenhagen Police Records, “www.emiarch.dk/home.php3.”
12 The New Denmark Women’s Institute, A History of New Denmark, (Compiled in 1959 by the New Denmark Women’s Institute, and edited as a Centennial Project, June 19, 1967), p. 12.

15 Ibid. p. 28.

16 Provincial Archives of New Brunswick (PANB), Letter Book of Benjamin Stevenson, 31 May 1872.

17 The New Denmark Women’s Institute, p. 10.


21 Ibid., pp. 19-20.

22 Access to the Copenhagen Police Records is found at the Danish Emigration Archives website at “www.emiarch.dk/home.php3?l=en.”

23 PANB, Letter Book of Benjamin Stevenson, November 4, 1872.

24 1880 United States Census, available online at “www.familysearch.org.”


26 Ibid.


28 PANB, Crown Land Office Letterbook, Stevenson to Heller, November 15, 1873.

29 Ibid.


32 Bojesen reported that “New Denmark” first appeared on a marriage certificate. A search of provincial records could not locate the document, and since the information was taken from the English summary, it is not referenced by Bojesen.


34 *The New Brunswick Reporter*, June 12, 1872, p. 2, col. 5.


36 PANB, Crown Land Office Letterbook, Heller to Provincial Secretary, September 19, 1873.

37 Ibid.

38 PANB, Crown Land Office Letterbook, Stevenson to Heller, Nov. 15, 1873.

39 Figure taken from Saint John and Miramichi Emigrant Agent’s Annual Reports for 1872 and 1873.

Abraham Van Buskirk: United Empire Loyalist opposed to the American War for Independence1

by Rolf Buschardt Christensen

In 1983 when Canada celebrated the 200th anniversary of the arrival of the Loyalists—the refugees from the American Revolution—the Canadian media reported that among the Loyalists was Abraham Van Buskirk, who was of Danish origin. That’s all the media said about him; the point being that not all Loyalists were of English background. Here’s his story—and the historical background, which shaped his life.

There was civil war: What side should he join?

When the War of Independence broke out in the English colonies in North America in 1775, Dr. Abraham Van Buskirk of Teaneck, New Jersey, had to decide whether to support the British Loyalists or join the rebels. The Loyalists wanted to remain loyal to Great Britain while the rebels wanted to separate from the “mother country” and establish an independent republic.

The Loyalists, colonists who would not break their allegiance to the Crown, stood for the unity of the Empire, as opposed to its disruption, for monarchy instead of republicanism and for constitutional government as against rebellion. However, a vocal and determined minority with its Association Test and Committees of Safety soon subjected the Loyalists to indignities, imprisonment, confiscation of property and death.

The Thirteen Colonies rebelled because of a series of measures by the British government between 1763 and 1774, such as the Sugar Act, the Stamp Act and the Tea Act. The measures concerned primarily the introduction of taxes, in order to provide for the defence of the colonies. With Britain’s conquest of New France, and heavily in debt, Britain had to resort to various measures to raise money. The cost of winning the war against France had been high; so high that Britain thought the colonies in America should help pay for the cost of the war as well as for the colonies’ defences.
With Britain’s acquisition of New France in 1763, the American colonists were freed from the threat posed by the French and the Indians. There were, nevertheless, strong and vocal anti-monarchist agitators anxious to make the most of the no-taxation-without-representation issue.

The Quebec Act of 1774 had restored to Quebec the old western empire of New France, including the vast triangle of territory south of the Great Lakes between the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers.

Britain had not foreseen that the Quebec Act would help drive the Thirteen Colonies to open revolt. The Quebec Act of 1774 restored the kind of regime Quebec’s clergy and seigneurs desired, restoring the Catholic faith, the French language and French civil law. The American rebels regarded the Quebec Act as the most intolerable of the “Intolerable Acts”, since it cut off the Ohio Valley—and thus barred further westward expansion by giving the vast and fertile Ohio Valley to Catholic Quebec.

Despite the unrest and agitation for independence, the situation in the English colonies was not intolerable. Many colonists undoubtedly agreed when the rebels spoke against the raising of taxes and when the agitators professed to be seeking only parliamentary representation, and not independence from Britain.

Moreover, many, if not most, well-established colonists, without strong political convictions, would have been happy to stay neutral. However, they feared losing their property, their worldly goods and even their lives. Consequently, they took the Association Test and declared for the rebels.

The country is divided—Families are split

The War of Independence was a civil war, which pitted loyal colonists against patriotic Americans. Whereas the later Civil War between the States was between North and South, the War of Independence set up neighbour against neighbour and brother against brother.

In this first American civil war, more than fifty provincial military corps of loyal colonialists opposed the rebellion and independence. Loyalist corps were raised in all the colonies from Georgia to Massachusetts. They fought with the British throughout the war.
These Loyalist corps fought in the skirmishes and battles around New York City, in New England and in the southern colonies, until hostilities more or less ended with the American siege of Yorktown in October 1781.

Throughout the war new recruits would replace losses. Towards the end of the war, however, many of the recruits tended to be deserters from General George Washington’s Continental Army rather than pure Loyalists. This led to a situation where men who had possibly fought against each other were now serving side by side in a common cause. Serving as a soldier in one army, after being in the enemy army, had its share of problems.

Van Buskirk raises a battalion of New Jersey Volunteers

Dr. Abraham Van Buskirk had sympathized with the rebel cause early on. He had therefore been elected as a moderate to the county committee and the provincial congress in New Jersey. As a man of principle, he broke with the Patriots over the question of outright independence for Britain’s colonies, refusing to swear an oath renouncing his loyalty to the Crown. Abraham Van Buskirk subsequently resigned from New Jersey’s provincial congress.

Abraham Van Buskirk and Cortlandt Skinner, who had been an attorney general under the Crown, developed an extensive intelligence network throughout New Jersey, which provided them and the British with valuable information.

Like many others, Abraham Van Buskirk had served in his native Bergen County militia. With the help of many other Bergen County Loyalists, who had served in the militia, Abraham Van Buskirk secretly raised a regiment, which would rise when the British forces entered New Jersey. This regiment rose in November 1776, after Britain's Lord Cornwallis chased the Continental Army out of New Jersey. The regiment was one of the six battalions of the New Jersey Volunteers, under the command of Brigadier General Cortlandt Skinner. Lieutenant Colonel Abraham Van Buskirk's unit was named the 4th Battalion.

The officers and men of the New Jersey Volunteers came from New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania. In terms of numbers the
New Jersey Volunteers was the largest of all the Loyalist regiments and it gave a good account of itself during the war.

The men serving in Van Buskirk’s 4th Battalion came from all walks of life, all ethnic groups and all social classes. The typical officer was a farmer gentleman settled on several hundred acres of land, while the rank and file were usually farmers, mechanics, tradesmen or labourers. Dr. Van Buskirk was different in this respect, as he did not own large land holdings.

Loyalty to the British Crown was strongest in New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, which had substantial German and Dutch populations. On the other hand, many of the agitators were of English background.

Abraham Van Buskirk was a Lutheran and he had become a leader among the German Lutheran community. Many of his first recruits were German Lutherans. Abraham Van Buskirk himself was of Dutch background, and could trace his family tree back to the early Dutch colony of New Netherland. However, his paternal grandfather was Danish.

**Founding of New Amsterdam**

New York and New Jersey had started as one Dutch colony. New Amsterdam was the name of the settlement founded on the island of Manhattan by the Dutch West India Company in 1624. The Dutch had explored the area around present day New York as early as 1609. Several expeditions followed and in 1614 the Dutch established a permanent presence in the New Netherland colony. In 1624 the first group of families arrived to operate the trading posts, established to buy beaver pelts from the native Indians, these pelts being in great demand in Europe. Relations with the Indians were generally good, but between 1643 and 1655 there were some periodic skirmishes between the Indians and the Dutch.

Other European powers were also establishing colonies in the area. To the north of New Netherland was New England and to the south New Sweden. In response to the constant threat of attack from other colonial powers the Dutch built Fort Amsterdam on the southern tip of Manhattan. In 1653 New Amsterdam was incorporated as a city. The citizens of New Amsterdam consisted not
only of Dutchmen, but settlers from present day Belgium and Germany, as well as some from Scandinavia.

Due to the military threat posed by the Swedes, the Dutch in New Amsterdam had to deal with New Sweden to the south, at the mouth of the mighty Delaware River. After taking turns at conquering each other’s forts along the Delaware River, the Dutch finally conquered and took over New Sweden in 1655.

The English colonists to the north were also a threat to New Netherland. However, in 1664 English troops, under the command of the Duke of York, the later King James II of Great Britain attacked the Dutch colony. Being outmanoeuvred the Dutch surrendered. The Duke renamed the Dutch colony New York. During the Third Anglo-Dutch War in 1673-74 New York and New Jersey briefly came under Dutch rule again. However, by the 1774 Treaty of Westminster the Dutch had to return these colonies to England.

Abraham Van Buskirk’s grandmother: Jannetje Jans

Christian Barentsen and his wife, Jannetje Jans, immigrated to New Amsterdam with their young son in early 1651. Christian Barentsen, from Hoorn in North Holland, had been born in 1625. Jannetje Jans from Utrecht had been born in about 1630. In 1647, at the age of about 17, Jannetje married Christian Barentsen in a Dutch Reformed Church service in Amsterdam. Their first son, Barent Christiansen, was born in Holland just prior to their departure for New Amsterdam.

Christian Barentsen was a house carpenter by trade. In New Amsterdam he came to own several properties in the vicinity of Broadway and Wall Streets. He also served as a referee when there were disputes about property. In October 1655 he contributed towards the strengthening of the city wall of New Amsterdam. One of the palisades ran along what is now Wall Street.

In 1654 the Swedes attacked and took control of a Dutch fort along the Delaware River and started to remove some of the Dutch colonists from New Sweden. The following year the Dutch retaliated. Christian Barentsen was part of the Dutch force sent out from New Amsterdam on September 5, 1655, against the Swedes on
the Delaware River. With the defeat of the Swedes, New Sweden was incorporated into New Netherland.

In January 1656, on his return to New Amsterdam from the campaign against New Sweden, Christian Barentsen was appointed a fire warden. Probably as a result of his trip to the Delaware River, Christian Barentsen obtained a grant of land on the south side of Nonesuch Creek, a tributary of the Christina River, near the present site of Wilmington, Delaware. Here he began building a tide water mill in 1656, as the area around Nonesuch Creek is a tidally influenced wetlands area.

In August 1657, the director general of New Netherland, Peter Stuyvesant, granted him a lot in New Amsterdam by the Land Gate (now at Broadway and Wall Streets) for a house and garden. He also owned several other properties in the neighbourhood, some of which covered a part of the present New York City Trinity Churchyard.

The new Dutch colonists along the Delaware River built houses and planted crops. However, exceptionally heavy rains came and their harvest was ruined. Food soon became scarce and expensive. Moreover, an epidemic fever broke out. Many children died, as well as the settlement’s surgeon. Most of the colonists had difficulty coping with a climate to which they were not accustomed. While the disease was raging, the ship “Mill”, after a disastrous voyage, arrived from Holland, bringing many new immigrants, including children from the Orphan House in Amsterdam.

Christian Barentsen, who was working on his tide water mill, was contaminated by the fever and died at Nonesuch Creek on July 26, 1658, before the mill was completed. He left a young wife and three young children. After he was buried, his widow and children returned to New Amsterdam. She eventually sold the Delaware property.

Jannetje Jans was not called Mrs. Jannetje Barentsen. Many colonists followed the old Dutch custom of using the father’s given name as a surname. The three children of Christian and Jannetje were named Barent Christiansen, Cornelius Christiansen and Johannes Christiansen. The old patronymic system was still observed by many of the Dutch and Scandinavian families in New
Amsterdam, so the children's surnames were variations of their father's first name, adding an s or sen.

In New Amsterdam, however, Christian Barentsen had started calling himself Christian Barentsen Van Horn, as he was from Hoorn in North Holland. The children all added Van Horn to their name and Van Horn became their permanent family name. Both US President Martin Van Buren and President Theodore Roosevelt can trace their heritage back to this Van Horn family.

Abraham Van Buskirk’s grandfather: Lourens Andriessen
In July 1658 the Orphans Master at New Amsterdam sent Lourens Andriessen to the Delaware River, to assist the widow of Christian Barentsen Van Horn; her husband, as mentioned, having died as a result of the epidemic. Lourens helped Jannetje and they soon fell in love. Four and a half months later, on December 12, 1658, Lourens and Jannetje married at the Dutch Reformed Church on Staten Island in New Amsterdam.

Jannetje’s two husbands, Christian Barentsen and Lourens Andriessen, had known each other, as they had both signed a couple of petitions to allow Lutherans to call a pastor. It is therefore likely that Lourens and Jannetje had also met each other before the death of Christian. Lourens was Lutheran. Jannetje had been Dutch Reformed. Only after the British conquest were the colonists free to be known as Lutherans, call a pastor and build a Lutheran Church.

Under the administration of the Dutch West India Company the Reformed Church was the established church in New Amsterdam. The policy of the company was to maintain the Reformed religion to the exclusion of all other churches. However, by 1643 both the Lutherans and the Anabaptists had formed congregations. In 1648 the Lutheran community in New Amsterdam appealed to the Consistory of Amsterdam for a Minister, but nothing was done for them. The request was repeated a couple of times.

In 1657 a Lutheran Minister arrived, Pastor Jannes Ernestus Gutwasser (Goetwater in Dutch). But he was ordered to return to Amsterdam. He succeeded in delaying his departure for nearly two years. In 1664, when the English captured the colony, the Lutherans succeeded in obtaining a charter with permission to call a Minister
and conduct services in accordance with the teachings of the Augsburg Confession.

Lourens Andriessen was born in Holstein in about 1625. Holstein was at that time a duchy under the Danish Crown. According to the German researcher Klaus Timm, there were primarily two reasons for emigrating from Schleswig-Holstein at that time. One, there was much poverty after the storm floods in 1634. As well, with the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) raging, which affected not only Germany, but also Denmark, it was a good time to leave for greener pastures.

In his book *De første danske i New York*, Carlo Christensen recounts the story of the first Danish settlers in New Amsterdam. Among the Danes in his book is our Lourens Andriessen, whose original Danish name most likely had been Laurits Andreasen.

Lourens Andriessen was trained as a turner in Denmark. He visited Amsterdam in 1654. With a Dutch apprentice he came to New Amsterdam in 1655. He lived near the bushes by the church on Manhattan. It is known that the first recorded use of the Van Buskirk name was on June 29, 1656, when a lot on Broad Street was purchased in the name of Lourens Andriessen Van Buskirk, which signified he was the Lourens Andriessen who lived by the bushes by the Church.

By marrying Jannetje, Lourens Andriessen received a fortune consisting of about one hundred and forty-four florins, as well as three small sons from her first marriage, aged from two to seven. Jannetje Jans' money from her first husband went into land purchases in New Jersey. While trained as a turner, Lourens increasingly became involved in buying and selling property.

Lourens first lived in lower Manhattan. Between 1660 and 1662 he moved across the Hudson River and bought land in New Jersey at Constables Hook, now part of Jersey City and later in Hackensack, Teaneck and the Upper Saddle River areas of Bergen County. The land he purchased had previously been granted to Claus Carstensen, who might also have come from Schleswig-Holstein. By 1660 colonists could settle on the other side of the Hudson River, as the area was now safe from Indians.

Lourens had four children with Jannetje, all boys. They were: Andries, Lourens, Pieter and Thomas. Lourens Andriessen is the
common ancestor of all the Van Buskirks, well known in the annals of New Jersey and New York history. More impressive, Jannetje Jans is the common ancestor of all the Van Horns as well as all the Van Buskirks.

**Thomas L. Van Buskirk**

The fourth son of Lourens Andriessen and Jannetje Jans was Major Thomas Lourens Van Buskirk, who was born in Bergen County in July 1668. He was a well-to-do farmer active in local politics. In a list of the members of the Hackensack Dutch Church his name appears with that of his wife as members prior to 1700. In about 1688 Thomas married Margrietje Van der Linde Brickers, who bore him many children, including Abraham. Thomas Van Buskirk probably was a resident of Hackensack, as that was where his fourth son was born, and was the home of the two succeeding generations. His brothers, Lourens and Andries, lived at Saddle River, Bergen County, while Pieter, the other brother, lived at Constapels Hoeck (Constable Hook).

**Abraham Van Buskirk**

Dr. Abraham Van Buskirk of Teaneck, Bergen County, New Jersey, was the son of Major Thomas Van Buskirk and Margrietje Van der Linde Brickers. He was born at Hackensack on May 25, 1700. Dr. Abraham Van Buskirk was a surgeon and sometime driver for his brother Lourens’ stagecoach operation. Abraham married Rachel Banta in 1727. Rachel had been born on April 24, 1704, as the daughter of Cornelius E. Banta and Magdaline Demarest.

**War breaks out: American Revolutionary Army attacks Quebec**

At the end of August 1775 an American Revolutionary Army started moving north to invade Quebec. The American Patriots had decided to invade Quebec in the hope of winning the colony for the revolutionary cause as well as to destroy the British forces as a military threat. The invasion of 1775 became the first manifestation of American continental imperialism, which later became known as "Manifest Destiny".
The American Revolutionary Army captured Montreal and pushed on down the St. Lawrence River to unite with the forces of American General Benedict Arnold. At Quebec City, however, the Revolutionary Army was beaten back and the American troops forced to withdraw.

The British strategy was to take New York and thus drive a wedge between New England and the colonies to the South. In order to crush the rebellion the British government sent General William Howe and his brother, Admiral Lord Richard Howe, with a large fleet and 34,000 British and German troops, from Nova Scotia to New York.

By the autumn of 1776 the situation was starting to look bleak for the Rebel cause. On August 22, 1776, Britain’s General William Howe, leading a force of 30,000 British, Hessian and Loyal American troops, mounted a massive invasion of Long Island. By August 27, the British had overwhelmed the Continental Army, winning a decisive victory. General George Washington withdrew his Continental Army from Brooklyn to Manhattan and then up the Croton River. On November 16, after heavy loses, the British took possession of New York City. Hundreds and later thousands of Loyalists flocked to the British side to seek protection and to offer their services to the Royal Army.

General George Washington, with his Continental Army, crossed into New Jersey, making his headquarters in Hackensack, the hometown of the Van Buskirk family. Naturally the British turned their sights on New Jersey and General Washington had to evacuate New Jersey, and cross the Delaware River into Pennsylvania. When leaving Hackensack, the American troops burned the bridge across the Hackensack River. In this way, New Jersey fell to the victorious British Army.

The Americans fought back. On August 22, 1777 American troops attacked the New Jersey Volunteers on Staten Island. The 1st and 2nd battalions were surprised and badly beaten, but the courageous conduct of the third and fourth battalions under respectively Lt. Col. Isaac Allen and Lt. Col. Van Buskirk saved the day; the Americans were driven back with considerable losses, and moreover, a large number of them were taken prisoner.
One event that hastened the reduction of the New Jersey Volunteers was a bout of smallpox that swept through Van Buskirk’s 4th battalion in February and March of 1778. General Skinner therefore decided on a plan to reduce the New Jersey Volunteers from six battalions to four.

Britain had no more daring soldiers than the New Jersey Volunteers and no better regimental officer than Lt. Col. Abraham Van Buskirk. The American patriots could not deny that the Loyalists were first-class fighters, whatever they might think of their sentiments.

Leading a small force of 120 men over the snow and ice in a secret foray on January 25, 1780, Lt. Col. Abraham Van Buskirk successfully raided Elizabethtown, New Jersey, where they surprised and captured nearly fifty Continental and militia officers and men, without loss of a single man. Van Buskirk’s men then proceeded to burn the local Court House and Presbyterian Meeting House, as the latter was "a hotbed of patriot sentiment."

Lt. Col. Van Buskirk’s new 3rd Battalion was a part of Brigadier General Benedict Arnold’s expedition against New London, Connecticut, which in September 1781 burned nearly all the town’s wharves and stores. General Benedict Arnold had gone over to the British side and it were British regulars who did most of the fighting. Detachments of the British Army landed on the New London and Groton sides of the Thames River. It did not look good for the American Patriots.

After the Patriots had displayed a white flag of surrender, they opened fire on the British troops. The British were enraged by this deceitful act and consequently stormed the fort, slaughtered every man in the garrison, and set fire to the village of New London. During the attack, Van Buskirk’s Third Battalion provided transportation as well as the logistical support for the main attacking force, which explains the relatively few casualties suffered by Van Buskirk’s battalion.

Members of Lt. Col. Van Buskirk’s battalion served in many raids into New Jersey from their camp on Staten Island, Paulus Hook and other locations as well as taking part in the major battles of Connecticut Farms, Springfield and Fort Griswold. Detachments of
the unit also served at the Siege of Charlestown, King’s Mountain as well as Eutaw Springs, South Carolina, in September 1781.

Yorktown

The combined French-American military victory at Yorktown sealed the fate of British colonial rule and dashed Loyalist hopes. After the defeat, the battalions of volunteers started to dwindle in size, no longer making up for their losses by new recruits. Desertion increased, and a decrease in discipline led to numerous crimes being committed by the soldiers. Several were sentenced to death, but pardoned on condition of serving seven years in the British Army in the West Indies.

During the summer of 1781 the New Jersey Volunteers were consolidated into three battalions from four by the disbandment of the Second Battalion. The remaining two years of the war were spent in garrison duty at various places around New York: Staten Island, Paulus Hook, Brooklyn, New York City, and finally New Town, Long Island.

Before the result of the crucial Siege of Yorktown was known—which came to determine the outcome of the War - Abraham Van Buskirk suffered a personal loss. His loving wife died. Rachel Banta Van Buskirk died at Lower Saddle River on October 3, 1781.

Peace Treaty creates two countries

The War of Independence, which lasted from 1775 to 1783 created not one country but two. Moreover, what was to become the country of Canada could have offered little resistance to the later expansion of the American Republic, without the infusion of well over 40,000 Loyalists.

Many Britons and Americans had assumed that Quebec and Nova Scotia, the two colonies in North America, which had not rebelled, might be ceded to the Americans at the peace negotiations. The necessity of compensation for the Loyalists, however, forced Britain to insist on retaining Quebec and Nova Scotia and, in effect, the continued political division of the North American continent. It would be much easier for Britain to compensate the Loyalists with vacant lands in Quebec and Nova Scotia than to provide monetary
compensation to them from its depleted treasury. This reality ultimately defined the political map of the continent, creating the countries of Canada and the United States of America.

**Treaty of Paris ends War and recognizes the USA**

In the preliminary peace settlement, reached in January 1783, the British recognized the independence of the Thirteen Colonies. The British wanted the Loyalists protected from persecution after the war, as English public opinion demanded justice for the Loyalists. American negotiator Benjamin Franklin informed his British counterparts, however, that the American Congress could offer no assurances that the property and possessions of the American Loyalists would be restored or respected.

News of the conditions of the preliminary peace settlement reached the New World by March 1783. Instead of easing tensions, however, the persecution of Loyalists and the confiscation of their property intensified. The colonial governments claimed they were under no obligation to protect the rights of Loyalists and made no effort to do so. Violence against the hated Tories, as the Loyalists were called, was widespread. Loyalists realized that they had little choice but to abandon their homes and seek refuge in Quebec or Nova Scotia, which were still under British sovereignty. The powerful Royal Navy had ensured Britain's control of Manhattan, Staten Island and Long Island throughout the war, and these island bastions shone like a beacon to the dispossessed refugees. Consequently, thousands of refugees poured into New York in the weeks that followed the news of peace. The British authorities were not, however, prepared for the evacuation of thirty-five thousand Loyalists from the Thirteen Colonies. In this chaotic situation, the garrison, including Van Buskirk's battalion, was busy preserving some semblance of law and order in the New York area.

In Paris on September 3, 1783, the British and the Americans finally signed the treaty that officially ended the War of Independence. Under the terms of the treaty, Britain recognized the independent nation of the United States of America. Britain agreed to remove all of her troops from the new nation. The treaty also established new borders for the United States, granting it all land
from the Great Lakes to Florida, and from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mississippi River. This immediately doubled the area of the Thirteen Colonies. The United States agreed to allow British troops still in America to leave and also agreed to pay all existing debts owed to Great Britain. The United States also agreed not to persecute Loyalists still in America and allow those who had left America to return.

The Evacuation of the Loyalists from New York City

At the end of the war Sir Guy Carleton was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the British forces, in which capacity he was responsible for the evacuation of the troops and Loyalist families still in New York City.

Many of the Loyalist soldiers faced a difficult choice as the days of British rule dwindled. They could either take their discharge at New York City and attempt to return to their homes, or they could let the British fulfill the terms of their enlistment and receive free grants of land in Nova Scotia or Quebec. Most men, and virtually all the officers, chose the latter. The Nova Scotia government agreed to grant the Loyalists free land around Port Roseway and the St. John River, if they promised to clear it.

In the autumn of 1782, about 35,000 Loyalist troops and civilian Loyalists had 'associated' into groups in New York. An association of about 400 families was formed for establishing a settlement at Port Roseway. This group became known as the Port Roseway Associates. In 1783, however, the Governor of Nova Scotia changed the name of Port Roseway to Shelburne, in honour of Lord Shelburne, a former Prime Minister of Britain, who had helped negotiate the peace treaty.

The British evacuated the first wave of Port Roseway Associated Loyalists from New York City on April 27, 1783, when a vast flotilla of transports, carrying 7,000 refugees to Nova Scotia, set sail. For many Loyalists, particularly the young, their preferred destination was Nova Scotia, a place not too far from their previous home, with a similar climate, where they could start a new life.

Lt. Col. Van Buskirk’s Third Battalion was one of the last units to leave New York City as it covered the exodus. Van Buskirk, along
with about 8,000 other refugees, sailed for Shelburne in a large flotilla in September 1783.

For well over a year, convoys had transported some 20,000 Loyalists to Canada, including about 3,500 Blacks. Although the American Revolution’s last major battle had taken place two years earlier, British troops did not withdraw from New York City, their last stronghold, until November 25, 1783, which became known as Evacuation Day.

**Shelburne**

The Loyalist officers had been voted half pay for life by the British Parliament, while all ranks received free grants of land, provisions, arms, clothing and accessories plus items of a civilian nature to begin their new lives in the wilderness. With not much land surveyed and tens of thousands of refugees to settle, many families passed their first winter in tents. The following spring and summer the land was surveyed and titles to land granted.

The disbanded soldiers at Shelburne were settled chiefly at the northern end of the town. Their lots were drawn by lottery in November, so that they were able to make preparation for the winter. By 1784, the population of Shelburne was estimated to have reached at least 10,000, larger than either Halifax or Montreal. They had come from New York with a desire to build a second New York.

Abraham Van Buskirk and his family spent part of the first winter living in the cellar of the home of Benjamin Marston. Mr. Marston was a former merchant and magistrate of Marblehead, Massachusetts, who had been hired to help lay out the township of Shelburne.

**Birchtown**

At Birchtown, ten kilometers from Shelburne, 1,500 free Blacks, most of them run-away slaves, who had been part of the migration to Nova Scotia, were building a town, named for the British commander of New York City.

Even before the outbreak of war, slavery and the large Black population in the Thirteen Colonies had complicated the political situation for both Patriots and Loyalists. Many leaders of the Patriot
cause, who so vigorously proclaimed liberty, the rights of man and representative government, were themselves slave-owners and defenders of a society built upon slave-holding. This had not gone unnoticed by the British.

**Shelburne riots**

Freedom from slavery was the incentive that drove the Blacks to the British side—and consequently to Nova Scotia, as Britain offered them a freedom that revolutionary America did not. However, the attitudes of the white Loyalists and the difficulties of making a living in Nova Scotia conspired against the ambitions of the Blacks of Shelburne.

In July 1784 a riot broke out in Shelburne. The riot was trigged by the fact that the Blacks were taking work away from the Loyalist soldiers. The unrest lasted for a month. The Black labourers in Shelburne were forced to retreat to Birchtown. An atmosphere of conflict, violence and the threat of anarchy permeated Shelburne. This was the case amid the daily struggle to survive. British troops were subsequently dispatched to Shelburne to restore law and order.

Once the Blacks had been driven out of Shelburne and back to Birchtown, the rioters turned their anger on Benjamin Marston, the royal surveyor, who had been authorized to allocate property to the Loyalists. The Port Roseway Association disagreed with Marston over who was to be admitted to the draw for lots of land. It was a fight over land, provisions and positions. Marston always felt that his authority had been checked by what he called the "cursed republican town-meeting spirit" among the refugees. On the other hand, the Loyalists accused him of favouritism and double-dealing in land distribution. Fearing for his life Marston finally fled to Halifax, where the government dismissed him as surveyor.

With a bleak or no future the Black community of Birchtown, an impoverished slum, existed only a few more years. Dire necessity and a determination to gain real freedom forced the Black Loyalists to protest, but there was hardly any response from the government of Nova Scotia.

A former plantation slave from North Carolina named Thomas Peters, who was a leader in the community, managed to travel to
Britain to present the grievances of the Blacks. In London his story brought a quick response. Peters returned to Nova Scotia with a promise of support for Black Loyalists who were willing to go to Sierra Leone. On January 15, 1792, with British help, 1,196 Black Loyalists sailed from Shelburne, heading for Sierra Leone in West Africa, where they founded Freetown.

Loyalists in Canada

It is impossible to know the exact number of Loyalists who left the United States due to the American Revolution. It is estimated that 100,000 American colonists, loyal to the Crown, were driven into exile by persecution, confiscation of their properties and threats upon their lives. During the hostilities and immediately after, most Loyalists left the colonies for Britain, Florida, Jamaica, the Bahamas, Nova Scotia and Quebec.

Over 40,000 Loyalists settled in what is now Canada. Well over 30,000 of the Loyalists settled in Nova Scotia (including New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island) and more than 10,000 in Quebec, including what is now the Province of Ontario.

Canada has been a beacon for many political refugees, of which the United Empire Loyalists were the first. The majority of Loyalists represented a mix of ethnic and religious backgrounds from Europe. The multi-culturalism and multi-ethnicity of the Loyalists has often been ignored, as they have been stereotyped as 'English' because of their spoken language and their support of the Crown. However, an inspection of the membership records of the Toronto Branch of the United Empire Loyalists revealed that where the national origin of a member's Loyalist ancestor could be ascertained, twenty-eight percent were originally from Germany, twenty-three percent from Scotland, eighteen percent from England, twelve percent from Ireland, eight percent from Holland, five percent from France, four percent from Wales, one percent from Switzerland and less than one percent from Denmark and Sweden. As well, it should be remembered that there were about 3,500 Blacks and around 2,000 Iroquois Indians among the Loyalists who chose Canada.
**Other Van Buskirks in Canada**

Abraham was not the only Van Buskirk who fled to Canada. There was also Lourens Van Buskirk (1728-1803), who was a great grandson of Lourens Andriessen.

Lourens Van Buskirk, who was born on April 20, 1728, in Hackensack, was a miller who had considerable property in the Morristown area at the outbreak of the War of Independence. He was a prominent Loyalist, who at one time had been placed in jail for his Loyalist beliefs. In 1777 he was commissioned as a captain in the King's Orange Rangers Regiment. The King's Orange Rangers were sent to Nova Scotia in 1778. His land and property was confiscated and advertised for sale in 1779. His family was forced to move to New York City until the British could evacuate them in 1783, when they left for Shelburne. He died in 1803 and was buried in Shelburne.

Lourens Van Buskirk was married to his cousin, Jannetje Van Buskirk, the daughter of Lt. Col. Abraham Van Buskirk. Lourens and Jannetje had been married on August 15, 1757, at Hackensack. Like her father, Jannetje was a Lutheran. She died at Shelburne in 1791.

Lourens and Jannetje had four sons, three of which served in the King's Orange Rangers. The fourth son died at sea as a privateer for the British.

**Jacob Van Buskirk**

Another Van Buskirk who settled in Canada was Jacob Van Buskirk (1749-1833), who was born in Loonenburg, New York, in 1749, as the son of Andries Thomasen Van Buskirk (a brother of Abraham Van Buskirk). Jacob was thus a nephew of the Lieutenant Colonel.

In Albany County, New York, Jacob Van Buskirk had been a thriving farmer, who owned 500 acres of land. Branded a Loyalist, Jacob was thrown in jail for more than a month because he refused to take an oath of allegiance to Congress.

On his release Jacob Van Buskirk joined Butler's Rangers, who fought the rebels in northern New York State. At the end of the hostilities, Jacob was discharged as a Corporal in Captain Andrew Bradt's company of Butler's Rangers. Many of Butler's Rangers
settled in Canada around the Niagara peninsula. Jacob Van Buskirk also settled there with his wife, Gertrude Schram. After some time, however, she wanted to go back home to New York. As a spy and courier with Butler’s Rangers, Jacob could not return to the United States. She left him, returning to New York with their three children.

To start yet again a new life and hoping to get a land grant, Jacob Van Buskirk went to Louisbourg, Nova Scotia, where he met James Townsend, a retired British soldier. Jacob Van Buskirk eventually married his daughter, Susannah Townsend.

In about 1789, Jacob and Susannah Van Buskirk and their young children moved to Prince Edward Island to farm. They lived in the New Glasgow area of Prince Edward Island and eventually had nine children. Jacob Van Buskirk passed away in 1833 and is buried in the New Glasgow Cemetery.

The Loyalists abandon Shelburne

Shelburne never developed into an energetic port and prosperous town. Basically Shelburne did not develop. Shelburne failed because the region around Shelburne was not fertile, the soil being ill suited for farming and grazing. The town had not attracted enough entrepreneurs to launch a viable and sustainable economy. Moreover, there was too little government support for infrastructure. In 1787 when the government stopped sending provisions to Shelburne, the town quickly began to empty. Houses were simply abandoned. Shelburne was shrinking fast and most of the Loyalists had left by 1787.

Thousands of Shelburne’s founders drifted away to other parts of the Canada. However, most of the Loyalists who left Shelburne actually returned to the United States.

Lt. Col. Abraham Van Buskirk was committed to the development of Shelburne. In 1784 he became Mayor of Shelburne. He was also the owner of a large 500-acre lot. Yet, he described himself as "reduced from affluence, to poverty and distress". At the same time, he had nothing back in New Jersey. In about 1778 Abraham Van Buskirk’s property in New Jersey had been confiscated and put up for public sale.
Eventually, Abraham Van Buskirk had to face reality. Shelburne was not going to develop. In fact, the situation in Shelburne was visibly deteriorating. What was he going to do? He finally decided to return home—to Bergen County in New Jersey. Once home, he drew up a will, which revealed he still possessed considerable wealth. On November 29, 1793, he died in Bergen County, his beloved home. He had lived a long life and he had fought for what he believed in. He was finally laid to rest, next to his wife, in the old Van Buskirk Burial Ground at Lower Saddle River.

1 A slightly different version of this article was published in Conference Book 2005, Blair, Nebraska and Elk Horn, Iowa, USA (Gloucester, Ontario, Federation of Danish Clubs of Canada, 2005), and is reprinted here with permission.
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Hans Christian Andersen’s stories have suffered more from mistranslation, adaptation and heavy-handed rewriting than those of almost any other author. Yet his brilliant characters and imagery have survived as favorites for readers around the world. It is fitting that Diana Crone Frank and Jeffrey Frank’s new translation was published just at the time of Andersen’s 200th birthday in 2005. Andersen’s complex and witty language, biting social satire, and inventive stories deserve to be read by grownups in a good translation, and the Franks have provided one.

The Franks are well prepared for the task. She is a native Danish speaker with a Ph.D. in linguistics. He is a journalist and novelist, a senior editor at The New Yorker who learned Danish as an adult. Not only do they know Danish, they write English well. Together they have produced an accurate and carefully annotated translation that captures the spirit of Andersen’s brilliant use of his mother tongue. The volume includes an interesting and well-researched introduction, “The Real H. C. Andersen,” contemporary photographs, and reproductions of the evocative original illustrations by Vilhelm Pedersen and Lorenz Frolich.

Andersen’s life is a fairytale in itself. Here was a poor shoemaker’s son, plagued with ambition and insecurity while obsessed with the need for attention, who become one of the great writers of the world, an international celebrity consorting with royalty and aristocracy and traveling extensively across Europe. The Franks provide an excellent summary of not only his life, but also of his literary contributions, which included best-selling novels, travel journals, poetry, and some of the most beloved Danish national songs.
The second half of the thirty-six page introduction focuses on his contacts with the English-speaking world, especially the United States. For Americans especially, it is interesting to read about his correspondence with American admirers and publishers in the new world. This focus may perhaps overemphasize the importance of these contacts for the cosmopolitan Andersen, who enjoyed attention and adulation from all of Europe. Perhaps a better title for the introduction would have been “H. C. Andersen and the United States.”

The Franks have selected twenty-two stories and present them in chronological order with excellent notes. They have captured many of the nuances of his Danish in fresh translations that give life to stories that are funny, tragic, and sometimes autobiographical and religious. Old favorites like The Little Match Girl and The Little Mermaid are included with less well-known stories such as The Happy Family. Readers will discover the depth of Andersen’s remarkable use of dark and medieval imagery in The Wild Swans, broad humor in Father’s Always Right, and the lyrical description of the Danish countryside in the first paragraph to The Ugly Duckling. The Shadow, written in Italy, is a strange and bitter portrait of a poet.

The format of this volume, available in both hardcover and paperback, is definitely for adults and students of Andersen, but selected stories could well be read aloud to children who would also enjoy the detailed 19th century drawings. The excellent bibliography will be helpful for anyone wishing to read more. Andersen is at the core of Danish culture and identity. Now Danish Americans who no longer read Danish have a door to their heritage in this excellent translation

Birgitte Christianson

Theodore Roosevelt once described Danish immigrant Jacob August Riis (1849-1914) as “the nearest thing to the ideal American.” Readers will find this biography of Riis hard to put down. As a reporter, Riis showed genuine concern for the poor immigrants in the overcrowded tenements in the city of New York City during the 1880’s and 1890’s. His reporting dramatized their plight and called for urban reform.

The focus of the book is naturally on Riis. There is no diversion into the overall Danish immigrant experience in America. The reader is given little perspective on the Scandinavian-American communities that Riis came to experience in Jamestown, Pennsylvania (pp. 115-118), Prospect Park, New York (p. 207), or in Pastor Rasmus Andersen’s Brooklyn congregation, later the Seamen’s Church (pp. 253-257). There is nothing dealing with the Danish-American press. Likewise, previous writing by and about Riis is not touched on, not even his own fictional works or Louise Ware’s 1938 biography, Jacob A. Riis, Police Reporter, Reformer, Useful Citizen. While the author points out several times that Riis loved Christmas, there is no mention of his writings, “Is There a Santa Claus?” (1904) and “Nibsy’s Christmas” (1893).

Jacob Riis was a Reform Republican and an ally of Theodore Roosevelt, but he did not care much for politics. He was a proper, nominally religious person of Scandinavian Lutheran upbringing, a churchgoer in America, and really a Victorian moralist. This may account for his lack of interest in venereal diseases, despite the fact that he dedicated his entire adult life to reporting on the severely overcrowded tenements of New York City.

Still, the biography describes accurately and in detail the slums that Riis endured night and day for many years. A delightful chapter is devoted to his photography. The book really shines in portraying his human side. As the author points out, in Mulberry Bend there lived poor immigrants and their little children, and Riis had been in the shoes of both.

The book is structured in two parts: Riis as a youngster in Ribe, and Riis as a reporter in New York. His childhood in Ribe, the years as a young immigrant in America, and especially his career as a
muckraker are given admirable attention, while the last chapter summarizes the period between the clearing of Mulberry Bend in 1897 and Riis’s death in 1914.

Jacob Riis was in firm command of the new land’s language, particularly in writing. He was, after all, the son of a teacher, and as a child, he had read James Fenimore Cooper in English. Later, he became a respected author of such substantial works as *How the Other Half Lives* (1890) and *The Making of an American* (autobiography, 1901).

The story of Jacob Riis is also a love story. He loved his Elisabeth, and she came to love him. Much of it had to do with social status: he wanted to prove that he was worthy of her, and he could never forget that, for her family, it was either him or them. When his social position was secured at last, it seemed easier.

*Den ideelle amerikaner* excels as a portrait of Jacob Riis. It is not a psychological analysis but extracts a basic understanding of his life as he saw it (and sometimes did not). Riis’s view of the New York tenements was greatly flavored by memories of the Ribe of his childhood. Once these memories had dissolved, the last shred of him as a Dane was gone too. He was then an American.

Mikael Hansen


The inspiration for this novel has come from the author’s own family relations to the Danish island of Fanø and especially the environment of Sønderho, one of the main towns of the island. Fanø is situated on the southern west coast of Jutland and has a very rich seamen’s tradition. The population of Fanø has always been dominated by the wealthy captains’ families who for centuries from their voyages to exotic places brought back home treasures of many kinds that never had been seen in Denmark.
The main character of the novel is Karen, the eldest daughter of the local miller. When we first meet Karen in 1874, she is sixteen years old. As it was usual at that time for young girls, Karen had left school after her confirmation and worked at home helping her mother with the daily chores. The mother was a captain’s daughter and had lost her father and her younger brother when she was only twelve. In the golden age of sail, seafaring could bring wealth and fortune to the families, but also and quite often loss of lives and broken dreams when ships were wrecked on foreign seas. The mother had married a miller from the mainland and was very opposed to the thought that any of her children should either go to sea or marry a seafarer.

The relationship between mother and daughter is not the best. Karen is a very independent young lady with dreams about having a future life very much different from that of her mother. She wants to see the world and live elsewhere than on the island of Fanø. Her boyfriend Peter has become a ship’s mate and has left Fanø onboard the ship *Marianne* for a period of about one year.

Many letters are sent back and forth between Fanø and the foreign harbors where Peter goes ashore. Karen has a very understanding father. He can see that his daughter cannot be satisfied by helping the mother with the tedious housework and he suggests that Karen should be his assistant and keep the records of his company. Also she begins to assist her grandmother who is a midwife. Later that year she spends some time in Ribe, a town in the mainland, helping one of her aunts. Here she meets many interesting people, and she hears about the Askov Folkschool, to which she is admitted for a three months program for girls during the summer. Back home in Sønderho, Karen awaits Peter’s return. In the meantime she gets a visit by a friend from Ribe and Askov who has come to ask her to marry him and come back to Askov with him to be part of the teaching family. But Peter is Karen’s true love. Onboard the ship *Marianne* is also the husband of one of Karen’s aunts, and Karen and the aunt leave for Rotterdam to meet their beloved ones. Here ends the story with the yes-party of the young couple.

Around Karen there is a whole gallery of family members and friends. The author has done admirable and thorough research and
gives the reader an insight into the lives of all these people—their daily problems and joys, their dreams and their secrets. Everything is very skillfully woven together into a tapestry of Danish life and traditions during the 1800s.

The book is a great pleasure to read and can be recommended to everybody with an interest in Danish culture and history. Furthermore the book is beautifully illustrated with the xylographs from a book about the lives of Danish farmers by Gunnar Knudsen and some very fine drawings by Jørgen Lind.

Birgit Flemming Larsen


You might consider this excellent immigrant novel to be at least half Danish because the heroine is Danish, and she is every reader’s favorite. You might think that all of Ragna Riis’s charm, beauty, and intelligence come from her Danish background; as a reviewer, I could not possibly say that, but read the book and decide for yourself. You will enjoy it.

Ragna Riis is a maid in a Minneapolis boarding house of the 1880’s, and she steals the heart of every young Scandinavian immigrant boarder. Ragna was raised by her mother, an immigrant from Langeland, after her Norwegian father died when she was young. All the boarders consider her Danish, but a Norwegian immigrant, Jonas Olsen, finally wins her hand.

Jonas is an up-and-coming young man with a sharp eye to America’s opportunities. As a greenhorn, he starts out on a Minneapolis sewer crew with a bunch of Swedes. Before you know it, he has advanced to clerk in a grocery store and then becomes a partner. His methods are not always above board, but *bisnes is bisnes* in booming America. Where there is boom, there is also bust, and by
the time he wins Ragna’s hand, Jonas’s grocery store has gone bankrupt.

Fortunately, Jonas invested in a quarter-section of Red River Valley land before the store went under. In part two of three, Jonas and Ragna start over as prairie farmers. Then a tornado takes their new home and wipes out their wheat crop, so they sell what’s left to a Yankee banker, Elihu Ward, who secretly wants their place as the site of a future town. After lots of twists and turns of the plot and plenty of shenanigans on both sides, Jonas and Ragna find themselves in possession of another piece of raw prairie, and it is here, not on the old place, that the railroad decides to build a station. Jonas, not Ward, plots out a new town, and Jonasville is born.

Part three deals with Jonas as the tycoon of Jonasville around 1910, locked in fierce rivalry with Elihu Ward’s town of Normanville to become the county seat and dominate local affairs. There are plenty of surprises along the way, and marvelous characters in Ragna, Jonas, their daughter, Signe Marie, the bashful young pastor who becomes her fiancé, the scheming meddler Napoleon Stomhoff, the genial O’Briens, the overbearing Elihu Ward, and many others.

This novel appeared in serial form in the years 1919-22 in the Norwegian-American newspaper, Decorah Posten, and was subsequently published as a trilogy in book form. It is admirably introduced and translated by Orm Øverland and appears in a handsome format and durable half-buckram binding. The story is fast-paced, the characterizations finely nuanced and full of human insight.

Unlike grim classics of Scandinavian immigrant life like Sophus K. Winther’s Take All to Nebraska or O. E. Rölvaag’s Giants in the Earth, this novel sparkles with humor, and it deals with immigrants who cope successfully (though not without difficulties) with American farming, small towns, and urban life. It describes a rich panorama of immigrant life, literature, and culture. This is a marvelous Scandinavian-American novel, well worth your time and money.

J. R. Christianson

In the early 1980s the State Historical Society of Wisconsin issued a series of article-length studies of the state’s various ethnic groups. Now, some twenty-five years later, the Wisconsin Historical Society Press has launched its “People of Wisconsin Series” by revising and enlarging some of the earlier accounts and adding new groups to its list of publications. The Press’s most recent catalog offers studies of Danes, Irish, Germans, Norwegians, Swedes, Swiss, Welsh, and Finns in Wisconsin.

Although Frederick Hale’s text on the Danes remains the same in both versions, there are significant changes between the two editions. The newer one has more than double the number of pages and photographs of its predecessor. It also has a map and index. But the most notable modification is the addition of twenty letters written by Andrew Frederickson, a Danish immigrant to Wisconsin, between 1847 and 1888. The letters were originally published in *A New Life: Danish Emigration to North America as Described by the Emigrants Themselves in Letters, 1842-1946,* written by Niels Peter Stilling [See Stilling’s article in this issue of *The Bridge*] and Anne Lisbeth Olsen and published in 1994. Frederickson settled in the Danish colony of New Denmark (now Denmark) in Wisconsin’s Brown County. His descriptive and, at times, poignant letters offer insight on how this particular Dane made a new life for himself and his family in a new world.

Hale offers a largely chronological narrative as he traces the presence of Danish immigrants and their descendents in Wisconsin. Among the early arrivals was Laurits Jacob Fribert who authored the first Danish immigrant book about the United States. Soon, Hale writes, one could detect in some southeastern counties the beginnings of a “loose ‘Danish belt’ that eventually extended from them and Chicago through Wisconsin, across Iowa and southern Minnesota, and into eastern Nebraska and South Dakota” (p. 6). Not all the Danes who came to Wisconsin were farmers, of course, and many settled in towns and cities such as Racine where they worked.
in the factories, especially those of farm equipment manufacturer J. I. Case.

The most interesting section of Hale’s book, at least to this reader, was his discussion of Danish efforts to preserve their culture in Wisconsin. He is especially good in explaining why the Danish Lutheran Churches had so little impact among many of the newly arrived. It is, however, no longer correct to say that “American Lutherans of Danish ancestry are still divided into two denominations” (p. 33). The creation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in 1988 brought the two Danish churches under the same synodical heading.

After finishing this concise work, few readers, I suspect, would quarrel with Hale’s conclusion: “While Wisconsin attracted more Danish newcomers than most other states, they never constituted more than about 1 percent of the state’s population. Nordic in appearance, moderate, geographically dispersed, and economically prosperous, most Danes soon became inconspicuous fibers in the social warp and woof of the Badger State” (p. 37). Nevertheless, for a period early in the history of Danish emigration to the United States, Wisconsin was a destination favored by many Danes. If one looks closely, traces of that legacy are still visible

Peter L. Petersen
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