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THE BRIDGE and the NEWSLETTER are semi-annual publications of the Danish American Heritage Society. The Newsletter contains items of current interest, including occasional essays, book notes, and news of Danish organizations and activities in the United States and Canada. The Bridge contains articles, book reviews, and review essays dealing with all aspects of the Danish experience in North America.

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THE BRIDGE

The Bridge: Journal of the Danish American Heritage Society appears twice a year and contains scholarly articles and book reviews dealing with all aspects of the Danish experience in North America. Past issues of The Bridge have also contained Danish-American memoirs, essays, short stories, collections of letters, and historical documents. Book reviews and review essays in The Bridge deal with Danish life and history and the broader Scandinavian experience in North America as well as the Danish-American experience. The Bridge occasionally reprints previously published material.

Manuscripts submitted to The Bridge should conform to the Chicago Manual of Style. Manuscripts may be submitted in either English or Danish but will be published in English. Please submit electronic versions of the article, endnotes, and illustrations in separate files in MS Word or a comparable format, preferably on a disk or CD. Include a brief, 50-100 word author’s biography suitable for the journal’s “Contributors to This Issue” section.

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Editorial Statement

New editors are taking over The Bridge with this issue. Peter L. Petersen has retired after editing the journal from 2003 until the spring issue of this year, and a new team of editors is taking over. Birgit Flemming Larsen assumed the role of Co-Editor with the spring issue, and John Robert Christianson joins her with this issue.

Neither of them are unfamiliar to readers of The Bridge. Birgit Flemming Larsen, together with our former newsletter editor, Linda M. Chimenti, took on the immense task of editing the proceedings of the conference on “Danish Culture, Past and Present: The Last Two Hundred Years,” held in Des Moines in 2005 and sponsored by the Danish American Heritage Society. This volume of nearly 400 pages went out to DAHS members as volume 29, number 2 of The Bridge in 2006. Some readers will also remember Birgit Flemming Larsen from her years at Udvandrerarkivet, Danish Emigration Archives in Aalborg. She still lives in Aalborg, although she is a frequent traveler to the USA and serves as a member of the Board of Directors of DAHS. Her extensive contacts in Denmark have been invaluable to the Society and should help to maintain the high level of contributions to The Bridge by Danish authors.

John Robert Christianson is also a member of the Board of Directors of DAHS. He served as editor of The Bridge from 1999 until the end of 2002. He has frequently contributed articles and book reviews to The Bridge and hopes to continue doing so as Co-Editor.

Our thanks go to Peter L. Petersen for his masterful editing of The Bridge during the last six years. He built on a solid foundation laid by the late Arnold N. Bodtker and Egon Bodtker as previous editors. He will continue to serve as Assistant Editor and will help, among many other contributions, to assure a steady flow of informative book reviews and review essays.
Contributors to This Issue

Pia Viscor lives in a 240-year-old house in Jystrup, Denmark, where she has been chair of the Local Historical Society for Jystrup and Valsølille. She is a biologist, museum educator, and free-lance nature guide and historical tour guide. This entire issue of The Bridge is devoted to her innovative research on the role of religion in forming links between early immigrants from Denmark to America.

Supported in part by a grant from the Bodtker Fund of the Danish American Heritage Society, Pia Viscor has visited Racine and other parts of Danish America to pursue her research on emigration from the four Sjælland parishes of Jystrup, Valsølille, Haraldsted, and Allindemagle. She would like to hear from people whose ancestors came from those parishes.

You can reach her by e-mail at <pia.viscor@jystrup-net.dk>. To order her books and learn more about her and her projects, visit her website at <http://www.viscor.net/index.html>.
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Danish Immigration to Racine County, Wisconsin
A Case Study of the Pull Effect in Nineteenth-Century Migration

by Pia Viscor

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

The year 1971 marked a turning point in Danish migration history with the appearance of Kristian Hvidt’s monumental study of emigration registers maintained by the Copenhagen police. Four years later, the book appeared in an abridged English edition as Flight to America: The Social Background of 300,000 Danish Emigrants (New York: Academic Press, 1975).

In 1868, a Danish law was passed to protect emigrants on the trans-Atlantic journey, because earlier experience revealed that many problems could arise regarding security, health, and comfort. This animated the authorities to establish means of official oversight. The police were ordered to maintain a record of the name, age, occupation, last place of residence, and destination of all Danish emigrants. These records formed the basis for Hvidt’s detailed analysis and description of the structure and extent of Danish emigration in the years 1868-1914.

Another turning point in Danish migration history came in the year 2005, when Torben Grøngaard Jeppesen published, Danske i USA 1850-2000 (Danes in the USA 1850-2000) (Odense: Odense Bys Museer, 2005), based on data compiled in U.S. censuses. Every tenth year, beginning in 1790, the U.S. federal census of the entire population has been compiled, but the recording of national origins did not begin until the census of 1850. From that date onwards, it is possible to determine how many Danish immigrants lived in the USA, where they resided, what occupations they pursued, and so on. Jeppesen followed them from the beginning of Danish immigration until the year 2000.

\* An expanded version of this essay was published as Pia Viscor, De drog til Racine: Den danske indvandring til Racine County, Wisconsin, USA—et detaljstudie af pull-effekten som den udfoldede sig i 1800-tallet (Copenhagen: Books on Demand GmbH, 2007). ISBN 978-87-7691-218-5. The price is 79 DDK. See the review below.
These two outstanding studies mean that we now have a splendid overview of Danish-American emigration and immigration on the macro level.

Hvidt showed in his book that Danish emigrants were under the influence of a number of economic and other macro factors that shaped the desire of emigrants to leave, but that the final decision to do so was formed just as much by personal circumstances.

Now that the main lines have been laid out with striking clarity, it is possible to turn to analysis in greater depth, taking personal, individual factors into consideration. What motivated a given individual to emigrate, and what factors came into play when that individual overcame doubts and fears and actually did leave? In this context, the phenomenon of “migration chains” generally played a central role. Many Danish emigrants appear to have been “pulled” to cross the Atlantic by family members, acquaintances, or like-minded individuals who had emigrated earlier. If it will ever be possible to show that these migration chains had a widespread influence on Danish trans-Atlantic migration to America, however, more historical analysis will have to be done on the micro-level.

By its very nature, chain migration exerts its strongest pull upon people in the same region from which the earlier emigrants came. This means that the geographical origin of Danish settlers is one indication of the effect of chain migration in the formation of a given American settlement. It also means that the earliest settlers in a given location can play a decisive role in determining the course and structure of later migration to the area. Danish mass migration started in the late 1860’s. Although migration before this date was very small in comparison to the migration of later decades, that early trickle of immigrants was of fundamental importance in establishing patterns for the later mass migration of the 1880’s and beyond, when the great bulk of Danish emigrants took leave of their native land.

The aim of this study is to examine Danish immigration to Racine County in southeastern Wisconsin, with special attention to the role of the earliest Danish settlers in the later history of Danish immigration to the area, and the effect of chain migration throughout the whole period. Racine County was chosen because, very early, it became a major destination for Danish immigrants. By 1850, Racine already had the largest number of Danish immigrants of any rural Wisconsin county, and by 1860, Racine County ranked first in the state in terms of Danish-born residents. If the vanguard of migration set the pattern for those who followed, then an analysis of immigration to Racine might also lead to a better understanding of Danish immigration to Wisconsin and the whole Middle West.

Against the background of the two broad studies of Danish emigration and immigration mentioned above, this detailed local
study provides a more precise picture of the connection between emigration from Denmark and the choice of a place of settlement in the USA, as well as the reasons for that choice. This microhistorical data connects Danish migration to a specific place in America with the overall structure and course of Danish mass migration. Thus, information about the lives of individual immigrants comes to play a significant part in building an argument regarding the role of the earliest settlers as a “pull” factor. The laborious process of assembling that information is rewarded by providing a deeper and broader understanding of the fundamental mechanisms of Danish emigration and immigration history.

Racine County, Wisconsin

Danish Emigration to Racine Before 1870

The Overall Pattern of Emigration

There is no single quantitative source of information on emigration from Denmark previous to the Copenhagen police protocols established by the Emigration Law of 1868. Church records, military conscription rolls, and other sources contain scattered references to Danes who emigrated, but these sources do not provide a clear overview of the total Danish emigration previous to the year 1868.

As early as 1820, immigrants entering America were registered upon arrival. This registry provides information on the number of
Danes entering the U. S. each year, but the location of their former homes in Denmark and their destinations in America are not indicated. From 1850 onwards, the U. S. census data indicates how many Danish-born individuals lived in America, and where they resided. An increasingly large percentage of them was found in Wisconsin (Table 1), and especially in Racine, which managed to attract nearly one-quarter of all native Danes living in Wisconsin. There was no discernible economic reason for this, but rather, the pattern seems to have been influenced by special factors beyond the general forces that shaped Danish immigration to America.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Danish-born in US census</th>
<th>Danish-born in Wisconsin census</th>
<th>Danish-born in Racine Co.</th>
<th>% of all US Danish-born in Wisconsin</th>
<th>% of all US Danish-born in Racine Co.</th>
<th>% of all Wisconsin Danish-born in Racine Co.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>1,962</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>26.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>9,956</td>
<td>1,150</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>30,104</td>
<td>5,212</td>
<td>1,274</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>24.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Danish-born population in U. S. census of 1850, 1860, and 1870, with the percentile distribution of Danish-born in Racine with respect to all Danish-born in Wisconsin and the USA.

If the attractive power of Racine County lay first and foremost in the city of Racine, this should be reflected in the urban-rural distribution of Danish settlement. Twenty-five of the thirty-eight Danish-born settlers in Racine County in 1850 lived in the city of Racine, although two of these had occupations related to agriculture. By 1860, however, only twenty-nine of 164 Danes in the county lived in the city of Racine, which means that 80% lived in rural areas. Ten years later in 1870, only 60% lived outside the city. By 1880, however, this figure has risen to around 70%. Not until 1900 did the Danish-born population of Racine County become predominantly urban, with only 25% remaining in rural areas.

This means that the earliest Danes in Racine County settled primarily in the city, but that the pattern changed around 1860. Not until the end of the nineteenth century did the development of the city of Racine become a major attractive factor in Danish immigration. Throughout the whole intervening period, opportunities in rural areas were the primary factor in pulling Danish immigrants to the county. This may be reflected in the geographical origins of Danish immigrants of the era, whom we would expect to originate primarily in rural areas of Denmark.
Promoters of Emigration

Before mass emigration took hold in Denmark towards the end of the 1860’s, some 30,000 Danes had already chosen to leave their homeland to seek new challenges in America. A number of individuals had already begun to agitate for emigration as a solution to the dim hopes for the future that faced many in Denmark. Undoubtedly, two promoters of Wisconsin in particular, Laurits Jacob Fribert and Rasmus Sørensen, were responsible for the high profile that the state had in the early emigration debate in Denmark. An emigration agent named Mogens Abraham Sommer also played a big part in promoting early Danish emigration.

Laurits Jacob Fribert

The Copenhagen lawyer and publisher, Laurits Jacob Fribert, emigrated in 1843. He settled on Pine Lake, west of Milwaukee, purchased 180 acres of land, built a log cabin, and began his life as an American farmer.

Soon after arriving in America, Fribert established contact with Christian Ludvig Christensen, who lived on the island of Lolland in Denmark. They wrote enthusiastically to each other, and this correspondence, together with his own experiences as an American farmer, inspired Fribert to publish a handbook for Danish emigrants in the year 1847. It described the whole process in detail, from the departure and trans-Atlantic journey to getting established in the USA, and it was aimed primarily at the rural population. Farmers were encouraged to emigrate by the “tremendous low price and fertility of the land,” among other factors.

Fribert’s book also touched on the religious aspect of the emigration debate. There is a great need for clergy among the many Danes in America, he said, and only one Dane is currently enrolled in the American theological seminary in Nashotah, Waukesha County, Wisconsin. This was Martin Sørensen, a son of the promoter of emigration, Rasmus Sørensen. Fribert also mentioned Pastor Claus Laurits Clausen of Racine in very positive tones.

Many Danes apparently read Fribert’s handbook with great interest. It appealed to farmers and others in rural areas, to those who wanted to make a future for themselves as pastors in the Lutheran church in America, and also to those who were involved with the new, frequently scorned and persecuted religious movements that were breaking out in some parts of Denmark.

L. J. Fribert was not the only Dane with a solid middle-class background who was affected by the “America fever” that raged in those years. In his book, he was careful to name three other immigrants from the “better classes.” All of them lived in Racine: Peter Johan Mourier, the son of a wealthy landowner; the prosperous Peter Christian Lütken, and the portrait artist, Theodore Lund. Fribert did not want his readers to get the impression that
emigration was only for the disadvantaged elements of Danish society.

Rasmus Sørensen

Rasmus Sørensen was a peasant lad who had enrolled in the school for teachers at Vesterborg on Lolland in 1816. The curriculum was designed to awaken a desire to learn and to be independent, but it also drilled into the students that modesty was a virtue. Future teachers were to be aware of their humble position in the local community and never forget that a trained schoolmaster was far below a university-educated pastor, so he should expect to share the frugal lifestyle of ordinary folks.

Rasmus Sørensen completed the entire course in only one year but was quite upset when he did not graduate with honors. Modesty was certainly not one of his virtues. He was extremely egotistical, but he was also pensive, critical, and thorough. In addition, he was a gifted orator and had the strength of his convictions. This combination of talents made him an effective leader but also aroused opposition to him.

While he was in his very first position as a teacher in Aarhus, Rasmus Sørensen began to read the writings of the Danish theologian, N. F. S. Grundtvig, and gradually came to consider himself a true follower of Grundtvig. As a result, he began to be more sympathetic towards the clusters of lay folk influenced by religious revival movements, who congregated in more or less organized groups in many places throughout Denmark.

In 1821, Rasmus Sørensen moved back to the island of Lolland, where there was a strong reform movement aimed at improving conditions for ordinary working people. Education was a path to improvement for those who suffered the greatest disadvantages. This meant that the schoolmaster played a key role in plans for social improvement, and this accorded well with Rasmus Sørensen’s self-image.

After six years on Lolland, Rasmus Sørensen in 1827 took a position as teacher at Venslev in southwestern Sjælland, not far from the castle of Holsteinborg, seat of Count Frederik Adolph Holstein, who had a strong interest in and sympathy for the new religious revivals. The count’s own view of Christianity was strongly influenced by pietism, and he was deeply involved in efforts to improve the lives of ordinary people. Rasmus Sørensen’s involvement in the political and religious issues of the day flourished in this setting. He became a spokesman for the so-called degnekristne (schoolmaster Christians), who met strong opposition from the authorities, as did other religious revivals.

Rasmus Sørensen became involved in religious revivals and got to know a great many of the revivalists. He traveled throughout Denmark and met with representatives of the revival movements,
establishing close contacts with them. He supported many of the
groups that turned their backs on the Lutheran state church,
including some who became Baptists. Among others, as early as
1832, he established a long and enduring friendship with P. C.
Mønster, the father of the Baptist church in Denmark. They fought
for the same religious views for many years, but their ideological
paths parted when Rasmus Sørensen became more political in his
approach, while Mønster continued to devote himself entirely to his
religious work.

Rasmus Sørensen’s social and political awareness continued to
mature as he became more deeply involved in religious revivals, and
more and more of his energy was devoted to arguing for social
improvements for those who were the worst off. In the interest of
greater religious and social freedom, he argued for improvements in
the school system and abolition of the law binding all parishioners to
their local parish church.

His years in Venslev allowed Rasmus Sørensen to weave all the
threads of his life together into one strong cord that eventually led
both him and many others to cross the Atlantic. America became his
image of a place where ordinary people could make a reality of their
dreams for social improvement and freedom of religion. His
enthusiasm for America became boundless. In 1847, he published a
little book with a long title, which was a paean of praise to America:
*Om de udvandrede Nordmænds Tilstand i Nordamerika, og hvorfor det
vilde være gavnligt, om ene del danske Bønder og Haandværkere
udvandrede ligeledes, og bosatte sig sammesteds* (On the Condition of
Norwegian Emigrants in North America, and Why it Would Be
Advantageous if a Number of Danish Farmers and Artisans Also
Emigrated and Settled in the Same Place). Emigration was
presented as the solution to problems facing many Danes.

He began to consider emigration himself. In 1848, he decided to
do it, and he assembled a party of fifty Danes who were willing to
accompany him. They came mainly from Langeland and western
Sjælland and were people with whom he had made contact through
his work as a lay preacher and political agitator. As they were about
to leave from the port of Hamburg, a great wave of revolutions
began to sweep across Europe. Copenhagen was among the capitals
that were affected, and when Rasmus Sørensen saw that absolute
monarchy was about to give way to constitutional democracy in
Denmark, he simply could not pull himself away. He rushed off to
Copenhagen and threw himself into the course of events, while his
son was left with the task of leading the party of emigrants. Three
years would pass before Rasmus Sørensen and the rest of his family
finally packed their steamer trunks and emigrated to the Wisconsin
he had praised so highly.
In the years after immigrating, Rasmus Sørensen published regular reports in Denmark about his journey, his arrival, and his experiences in the new environment.

Rasmus Sørensen’s religious and political work in Denmark had an influence on many people throughout the country, especially in western Sjælland and on Langeland. He woke people up, so that they became critical of existing society, and he showed them the path to social and religious freedom, which he saw in emigration. Many followed his advice, and there is no doubt that Rasmus Sørensen was a very strong motivating factor for early Danish emigration.

Promoters of Danish Emigration to America

Rasmus Sørensen (1799-1865)  M. A. Sommer (1829-1901)

Mogens Abraham Sommer

Lay preacher, political agitator, friend and defender of the poor, homoeopathic physician sometimes called a quack, emigration agent, restless fanatic, disturber of the public peace—these are labels that have been applied to Mogens Abraham Sommer at one time or another. He was the one who, in a sense, picked up the work of agitating for political reform, religious freedom, and emigration when Rasmus Sørensen was gone from the scene in Denmark.

Mogens Abraham Sommer’s very birth produced a religious dilemma. His father, Abraham Sommer, had been at sea for several years when he settled in Ribe and fell in love with a widow who had seven children. They wanted to marry, but their marriage was prevented for several years by the fact that the local clergyman demanded evidence that the former seaman did not already have a legal wife in some distant part of the world. The result was that Mogens Abraham Sommer came into the world in 1829 as an illegitimate child, and the stigma haunted him for the rest of his life. As an adult, he became a fierce opponent of the established Danish state church and the tyranny of the clergy.
In the middle of the 1850’s, his religious and political fanaticism began to grow. He became an itinerant lay preacher and political agitator. He expressed his strong opinions in ways that led to many arrests and prison sentences, but this only served to sharpen his fanaticism and attitude of martyrdom.

Sommer worked mainly in Jutland and Copenhagen, and his religious path brought him into contact with many different religious movements and sects. Among others, he had close relations with a sect called the “Holy Brethren,” which was centered on the town of Fredericia. He also had ties to individuals in Baptist circles, both in Jutland and in America.

Emigration was at the heart of his vision for social improvement and religious liberation. He crossed the Atlantic himself for the first time in 1861. He spent only a brief time in America, spending most of it to distribute religious pamphlets among Civil War soldiers.

In 1864, Sommer established an emigration agency in Copenhagen. He recruited customers by means of numerous meetings in Copenhagen and Jutland. At the same time, he began to write and to publish works on emigration as well as religious tracts. On his meetings throughout the country, Kristian Hvidt remarked that Sommer “equally served God, his political career, book sales, and his business as an emigration agent.”

Mogens Abraham Sommer crossed the Atlantic more than twenty times in the course of his lifetime. He escorted some of his customers on the way to their new life in America, and in 1866, he accompanied 166 emigrants from Aarhus, of whom forty traveled directly to Racine.

Immigration to Racine
This section searches the secondary literature and primary sources to determine how many Danes were in Racine at a given point in time previous to 1870. The focus will be on identifying the very first Danes who came there during the 1840’s. An attempt will be made to describe, if possible, every single individual among the early immigrants in terms of their influence upon later immigration to the area.

The First Danes in Racine
John Bangs
John Bangs is generally considered to be the first Dane to arrive in Racine. He was not born in Copenhagen, as most sources say. This misunderstanding arose because he apparently emigrated from the Danish capital. John Bangs actually came from northern Jutland and was born in 1812 in Dronninglund Parish, Hjørring Amt. He was the son of a farming couple, Mikkel Jørgensen Bang and Anne Margrethe Larsdatter, and he was baptized with the name of Johan Schuchardt Mikkelsen.
There is no clear indication of precisely when John Bangs, as he called himself in America, departed from his native land, but most sources point to 1839 or 1840 and indicate that he settled in Racine after a short stay in New York.

John Bangs was an enterprising person. In Racine City, he bought land, subdivided it into building lots, and started a construction firm.

In the course of the 1840’s, his twin brother, Alexander, two younger brothers, Niels Steenild (born 7 November 1815) and Lars Jørgen (born 9 June 1817), and a sister, Octavia (born 8 April 1819), also came to America and settled in Racine. John Bangs put them up at first, and the brothers all worked as carpenters. Later, two of the brothers established homes of their own. Lars stayed in town, while Niels bought a farm in Raymond Township.

In 1851, John Bangs became the first Dane elected to the Racine city council. He was also an officer and Sunday School teacher at the Scandinavian Lutheran church. In 1852, he married Margaret N. Handley, who was born in America, and they eventually had four children.

The financial crisis of 1857 wiped John Bangs out, and he lost all his property in Racine. The family moved to Holland, Michigan, where he became involved in harbor construction. John Bangs died in 1861, only forty-nine years of age.

In 1860, Niels Bangs was the only member of the family still residing in Racine County. He was farming in Raymond Township, but he later sold his farm and moved to Milwaukee, where he died in 1886.

In addition to the pull he exerted on his own family to come to Racine, John Bangs also influenced the portrait artist, Theodore Lund, to settle there. Moreover, his prominent position in Racine
during the early 1850’s could very well have attracted other Danish immigrants to the city, giving him an even larger role in chain migration than can be documented from the surviving sources.

_Claus Laurits Clausen_

C. L. Clausen seems to have been the next Dane, after John Bangs, to come to Racine. He was born on 3 November 1820 in Tranderup on the island of Ærø and grew up there. He father had a country inn and was also a farmer. As a child, Clausen was very weak and often suffered cramps, but he was a bright pupil in school. Therefore, the family wanted him to study law, despite the fact that his own dream was to be a sailor.

_Early Danish Settlers in Racine County, Wisconsin_

He did not dare to disobey his father, so he went off to Nørre Broby on the island of Fyn, where he served as an apprentice clerk in the office of Lundegaard estate. The estate managers had no children of their own and took the young man into their home as if he were their son. He accompanied them on visits and to parties of the local elite. Here, he learned to drink and play cards, and he soon lost what was for him a great fortune, more than he could ever hope to repay, at the card table. In agony, he turned to a young friend who was caught up in the new religious revival movements. Clausen’s friends among the revivalists helped him to settle his debt. He was also influenced spiritually by this new circle of friends. Clausen felt that he could no longer continue the life of drinking and card-playing on the estate, but he was afraid to go home and confess all to his parents. He decided to make a reality of his childhood dream and signed on as a merchant seaman. But life before the mast was too hard for him. His cramps returned, and in 1837, he was put to land in Drammen, Norway, sick and worn out. Here, he also found help among religious revivalists, and he now definitely broke with the established Lutheran state church of Denmark.

Back in Denmark, he came under the strong influence of a lay preacher, Peder Larsen Skræppenborg, who took him in as tutor to
his children. Clausen even began to question the validity of infant baptism. Despite the opposition of his father, he began to address religious gatherings as a lay preacher.

During these years, he also studied to be a teacher, and in 1840, he took a teaching position in Simmersbølle on the island of Langeland. By now, he was deeply involved in the religious revivals that were sweeping the whole country, and the Baptist congregation in Simmersbølle exerted a strong influence on him. He wanted to accept adult baptism, but at the last moment, he was “saved” by friends in a Lutheran revival movement.

In 1841, Clausen traveled to Christiania (now Oslo), where he had contacts among Norwegian Lutheran revivalists. They hoped to send him as a missionary to Africa, but another possibility arose during the discussion of practical matters regarding Africa. He was offered a job as teacher in the Norwegian settlement at Muskego in Racine County. Clausen took this proposal as a call and accepted it.

Just before his departure in 1843, he and his fiancée, Martha F. Rasmussen, were married. Together, they arrived in Muskego on 8 August 1843. Soon after arrival, Clausen began to hold Sunday services and, after a few months, he was ordained as a pastor in the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America.

Clausen only stayed in Muskego a few years. In 1846, he moved to a new call in the Norwegian Lutheran church on Rock Prairie in Rock County, Wisconsin. Later, he led a party of settlers from Rock Prairie to St. Ansgar in northern Iowa and lived several other places in America. He died in 1892 in the state of Washington.

C. L. Clausen did not see the promotion of Danish immigration as part of his mission, but he did participate vigorously in certain aspects of the general discussion of emigration in Denmark. Much of the literature of that era saw America through rose-colored glasses and did not always give a true picture of the hardships involved in immigrant life. Rasmus Sørensen’s 1847 publication fell into this category, and it was too much for Clausen. He and his wife had seen with their own eyes the suffering and misery among Norwegian immigrants, and he could not let Rasmus Sørensen’s descriptions of a paradise go unchallenged. Clausen reacted promptly by writing a letter to his family, and they sent it to a newspaper,  

FYENS STIFTS AVIS, where it was published. This letter presented a more nuanced picture of conditions in Wisconsin, and this more realistic view of immigrant life may have encouraged a different type of immigrant than those who fell for Rasmus Sørensen’s propaganda. Clausen is generally considered to have exerted an influence upon emigration from Ærø, southern Fyn, and Langeland. He and his wife sent home many letters to family and friends, and these letters had an influence upon the numerous people who read them. Clausen’s close ties to various religious
revival movements may have stimulated religiously motivated emigration from those parts of Denmark.\textsuperscript{19}

\textit{Theodore Lund}

Theodore Lund was born on 26 July 1810, in the town of Nykøbing on Falster as the son of a senior clergyman in the Lutheran Church of Denmark.\textsuperscript{20} He was baptized with the name of Harald Emil Theodore Lund. In the years 1831-34, he was a student at the Royal Academy of Art (Kunstakademiet) in Copenhagen.

Around 1835 or 1836, he emigrated to the USA. He spent the first years of his new existence in New York, where he lived as a painter of miniature portraits. He moved mainly in American art circles during these years, but after his marriage in 1839 to a Norwegian woman, he began to gravitate towards the Scandinavian community in New York.

In New York, Theodore Lund became acquainted with John Bangs, who had returned from a journey to Wisconsin. Bangs spoke of Racine in laudatory tones, and Lund decided to move there. He gave Bangs all of his savings and asked him to buy ten acres of land for him. Lund thought that he could live on a little plot of land and the income produced by his painting. Instead, Bangs purchased 160 acres of land and handed it over to Lund for $500. In 1843, the family moved to Racine, where Lund, without really wanting to, became a farmer.\textsuperscript{21}

Lund did not stay for long at the farm, but his wife and children lived there while he traveled around in order to paint. He frequently stayed in Milwaukee until 1848 and had a permanent address in Chicago in the mid-1850’s and then in Columbus, Ohio, in the 1860’s. The census records from 1850 to 1870 indicate that Lund was the most prosperous of all Danes in Racine, but his financial situation became more precarious during the course of the 1870’s, when portrait photography made its entry. The farm was sold, and the family’s declining income from Lund’s painting was supplemented by whatever they could grub out from a smaller piece of land.

Lund’s wife died in 1880. Three years later, he returned to Denmark to collect a rather large inheritance. In Denmark, he continued to paint but had to supplement his income by teaching and working as a gardener. In 1890, he returned to Racine, where he remained until his death in 1895.

Theodore Lund was a pastor’s son, and he did not reject his background in America but remained a very religious person. He was married in First Moravian Church in New York and became a member of First Presbyterian Church after settling in Racine. In 1850, he left this church to join a church in Raymond Township. Which church is uncertain, but apparently, the family became members of the American Baptist church in Thompsonville.\textsuperscript{22}
It appears that Lund established close ties to the Danish Baptists in Raymond Township. Because Lund himself did not have any background in farming or agricultural education, he depended on hired labor. Many of the farmhands and milkmaids who worked for him had roots in central Sjælland and ties to the Danish Baptist congregation in Raymond. Lund may have recruited workers from Denmark through the networks of the Danish Baptists.

An Immigrant Party of 1844

On 19 June 1844, the sailing ship, Superb, docked in New York. On board were seven Danes, four of whom traveled on to Racine: Peter Johan Mourier, Peter Christian Lütken with his wife, Johanne Susanne de Fine Olivarius, and Ancher Storm.

P. J. Mourier was born on 6 May 1812 and grew up on the estate of Hindemae on the island of Fyn. When he was eleven years old, the family took a wealthy, recently orphaned girl into the household. She was Johanne Susanne de Fine Olivarius, born 3 December 1820 in Nyborg. When Mourier’s father sold the estate and moved to Copenhagen in 1839, the two young people apparently went along with the rest of the household. In 1844, Johanne was married in Frederiksborg Church to P. C. Lütken (born 16 November 1812 in the town of Kolding in Jutland), “landowner and citizen in the state of Wisconsin in the United States of America.” Soon after their marriage, the newlyweds set off across the Atlantic, accompanied by her foster brother, P. J. Mourier.

The wedding record indicates that Lütken had already been in Wisconsin previous to the marriage, where he had presumably made arrangements to purchase the farm that he acquired shortly after their arrival in Racine. The 142-acre farm was in Thompsonville, Raymond Township, and was rather large by the standards of the area, so he must have had some money from Denmark. By 1850, Lütken was the richest Dane in Racine County and owned property evaluated at $4,500.

Lütken farmed for a number of years but must also have been involved in other enterprises. In 1850, he was listed as an innkeeper, and during the 1850’s, he started a leatherwear factory in partnership with a Dane named Henry Heidenheim, who had settled in Racine in 1854. Lütken also had a large general store with customers who came from miles around because it was the only store in Thompsonville. There was also a post office at the store.

In 1857, Lutkin, as his name was now spelled, was elected assemblyman and took his seat in the Wisconsin state legislature. He was presumably the first Dane to hold state office in the U. S.

The family later moved to Chicago, where both Lütken and his wife died within the same week in May of 1874.
Lütken drew upon his experiences as a farmer in Racine County to write an article that appeared in a prominent Danish journal in 1848. He summarized farming conditions in Wisconsin in a businesslike and knowledgeable manner, including everything from geography, climate, and social conditions to more practical matters like the trans-Atlantic journey to America, the price of land, crops, and marketing. For farmers throughout Denmark, Lütken’s article added a new dimension to the emigration debate.

Although Lütken disavowed any intention to encourage emigration, he could not resist writing at the conclusion of his article, “Before concluding this report, we can only add that we, for our part, find ourselves satisfied with conditions here. Regardless of how things might change in the future, it remains true and will always be a fact that the soil here rewards its faithful cultivator, and that one in all essentials enjoys the full fruit of one’s labor; for the taxes are not burdensome, and if a man owns his land without indebtedness, then no one on earth can be more independent and free than he.”

The Lütken family’s traveling companion, P. J. Mourier, was apparently not nearly so well-heeled when he came to Racine. He lived with Lütken and his wife for the first few years, and it was not until 1848 that he was able to invest in his own farm. He purchased eighty acres of land, but his time as an independent farmer was short, because he died at the age of forty-one in 1853.

The fourth member of the immigrant party of 1844, Ancher Storm (born 1827), was a pastor’s son from Nørre Nissum in western Jutland. He settled in the city of Racine, where he found work as a laborer. He eventually moved away from the area, and his later fate is unknown.

Andreas Christensen

In 1847, Andreas Christensen arrived in Racine with his wife and their six children. He was a native of Copenhagen and a trained watchmaker. His wife, Hanne Bothilde Jessen, came from the town of Ribe in western Jutland. They had married at the beginning of the 1830’s and moved to Næstved after the birth of their children.

The Christensen family landed in New York on 25 May 1847 and went right on to Racine. Shortly after their arrival, Andreas Christensen died, but Hanne Bothilde and the children remained in the city. Apparently, they brought enough money to live on, because she was simply named as a widow in the censuses of 1850 and 1860 without any indication of employment. A daughter, Emilie Christensen, married a Norwegian, Ole Heg, who had immigrated in 1840. She died a few years after their marriage, in 1856, and five years later, the widower married her sister, Nanna. Ole Heg enlisted in the Union army and served as a quartermaster until January, 1862. After his return, the family decided to move to
McMinnville, Tennessee, and her mother also moved there. Hanne Bothilde Jessen died in 1872.

**An Immigrant Party of 1848**

In 1848, Rasmus Sørensen’s son took over as leader of a party of some fifty emigrants, mainly from Langeland and western Sjælland. The group assembled in Hamburg, where a sailing ship of the Sloman company had been contracted to bring them safely across the Atlantic. However, this ship only had room for half the party, so the remainder had to wait until the next ship departure. The first group left on 20 March aboard the *Lessing*, while the others followed on 11 April aboard the *Perseverance*.

The *Perseverance* made a faster crossing and docked in New York on 30 May, while the passengers on the *Lessing* did not set foot on American soil until 3 June. When the group was finally reunited, they could begin the remaining part of their journey. They sailed up the Hudson River by steamship to Albany and Troy, then took the Erie Canal to Buffalo, and sailed the rest of the way to Milwaukee on the Great Lakes.

In Milwaukee, the group became acquainted with the portrait artist, Theodore Lund, and he presumably influenced the eighteen members of the party who split off and headed for Racine, while the others went on to their destinations. The party of eighteen that traveled to Racine consisted of three single young men and three families: Peder Rasmussen, Frederik Lerche, Peder Erdman Jensen, his half-sister and half-brother with their families (the Hans Hansen and Jacob Christian Jensen families), and the Schritzmeier family.

Peder Rasmussen was from Lolland. The 1850 census listed him as a laborer residing in Racine City and married to a woman who was born in Denmark. Whether she came to America with the same party is unknown. Peder Rasmussen stayed in Racine for three years, then moved to Neenah, Wisconsin, where he burned lime to make cement. Later, he moved to Winchester, Wisconsin, to farm.

Frederik Lerche was the son of a schoolmaster in Haldagerlille in western Sjælland. He stayed a short time in Racine and turned up in Outagamie, Greenville County, Wisconsin, in 1860. Frederik later married a daughter of Jens Andersen, who had immigrated with his family in 1848.

The Schritzmeier family from Maribo Amt consisted of Peder Frederik Pedersen Schritzmeier (born 16 May 1806 in Fuglse), his wife, Anne Kathrine Johannesdatter (born 1812 in Skørringe), and their four children, all born in Thorslunde: Hanne Ulwig (born 1836), Marie (born 7 May 1838), Johannes (born 16 June 1842), and Grethe (born 28 August 1845). Johannes served in the Union Army during the Civil War and lost his life in April of 1863. He is buried in Nashville National Cemetery in Madison. The rest of the family settled in Raymond Township, where their life as farmers began. In
1859, the parents were baptized into the Danish Baptist congregation in Raymond, and later, several of the children followed their example.

Emigration from Maribo Amt on the island of Lolland was both very early and comparatively large in Danish terms. Helmer Pedersen’s story about the Stokkemarke innkeeper who touched off emigration from the whole island of Lolland could probably be transferred to the Schritzmeier family with respect to Racine. The Schritzmeiers were respected, and they drew other family members to Racine or other places in Wisconsin.

Hans Hansen (born 1818 in Hemmeshøj) and his wife, Bodil Marie Sørensdatter (born 27 December 1811 in Pedersborg), had moved to Haraldsted Parish in the center of Sjælland a few years before emigrating from there with her three children from an earlier marriage: Ane Louise Amalie Pedersen (born 1 January 1837 in Kirkerup), Niels Jacob Pedersen (born 30 December 1839 in Kirkerup), and Peder Pedersen (born 23 February 1842 in Kirkerup). In 1850, the family resided in Racine, where Hansen was a laborer. In 1854, he signed a declaration of intent to become an American citizen, which was necessary in order to purchase land. By 1860, they had moved away, but their destination is unknown.

When the Hansen family had decided to emigrate, they persuaded Bodil Marie’s half-brothers to accompany them. Jacob Christian Jensen (born 15 March 1818 in Pedersborg) was a tailor in Ringsted at the time, and his family consisted of his wife, Karen Sophie Olsdatter (born 1819 in Pedersborg), their daughter, Olivia (born 1842 in Pedersborg), and son, Carl (born 1845 in Pedersborg). The other brother was Peder Erdman Jensen (born 27 August 1822 in Pedersborg). Soon after they came to Racine, the tailor and his family returned to Milwaukee, but Jacob Christian Jensen was already dead by 1850, when the widow and her children still lived in the city. The later history of the family is unknown beyond the fact that Carl eventually moved to Michigan. Likewise, the later life of Peder Erdman Jensen, who had left Racine by 1850, is unknown.

The Holy Brethren of 1848

In Denmark, Hans Hansen and his wife had been deeply involved in the sect called “The Holy Brethren,” an offshoot of the Baptist congregation established in western Sjælland in 1842. Hans Hansen and his three brothers-in-law from Pedersborg were among the Baptist congregation’s charter members. Four years later, however, the congregation was visited by two Swedes who had been influenced by the charismatic prophet, Erik Jansson. The preaching of these “Janssonists” led to a schism in the Baptist congregation and the establishment in August, 1846, of a congregation of Holy Brethren. The point of dissention between the Baptists and Holy

25
Brethren was the Janssonist doctrine of “freedom from sin,” which the Baptists could not accept.

Hans Hansen, now living in the village of Skee in Haraldsted Parish, went over to the Holy Brethren, and so did his three brothers-in-law. Hansen and one of the brothers-in-law, Niels Sørensen, were elected leaders (forstandere) of the congregation and immediately set out to win followers, fighting at the same time for acceptance by the authorities and frequently making highly provocative demands. They refused to send their children to school, as Danish law required, and they rejected church marriage.

When the battles with the authorities became too difficult, some of the Holy Brethren began to consider emigration to America. This idea probably came from Erik Jansson, but Rasmus Sørensen’s close ties to various sectarian groups in western Sjælland may also have had some influence on them. Six of the Holy Brethren wrote to the Royal Chancery in 1847 and requested a passport to leave Denmark. Their letter quoted the Bible and stated that they felt “forced to leave the realm and flee to a place where we can worship God according to His word and will.” The Chancery replied that passports could not be issued immediately, because several of the Holy Brethren were involved in ongoing litigation. The Brethren now wrote directly to the king, requesting permission to leave Denmark as soon as possible and even asking the king to provide financial assistance for the journey. The Chancery tabled the request and instructed the men to apply to their local draft board and seek exemption from military conscription before resubmitting their petition.

Apparently, only one of the petitioners, Hans Hansen himself, together with his wife’s sons, applied for exemption from conscription. In 1848, the male members of the family, who were eligible for conscription, received permission to emigrate from the War Ministry.

Two years before they emigrated, Hans Hansen and family moved to Haraldsted Parish, where they lived on a large farm owned by a very active Baptist family. When they left for America in 1848, they became the first known emigrants from that part of Denmark. Before his departure for America, Hans Hansen took back some of his more provocative statements and became more or less reconciled with the Baptists, with whom he had broken earlier. Presumably, he stayed in touch with the Baptists in Haraldsted after coming to Racine. The fact that he was in Racine explains why the first Baptist emigrants came there as well.

All told, these earliest Danish immigrants to Racine added up to thirty-eight individuals. Eight of them left Racine before 1850, and one died. The other twenty-nine can be found in the U. S. Census of 1850 among the thirty-eight Danes living there at that time. This
means that an additional nine unidentified Danes arrived during the 1840’s, giving a total immigration to Racine of forty-seven Danes previous to 1850. Of these, we know for certain that Lund emigrated in the mid-1830’s, while John Bangs left Denmark in 1839 or 1840, and another thirty-six individuals are known definitely to have departed during the 1840’s. The other nine in the 1850 census probably also left Denmark during the decade of the 1840’s.

American statistics of immigration indicate that a total of 539 Danes came to the USA during the 1840’s. If these figures are accurate, the forty-five Danes who settled in Racine comprised no less than 8.3% of the total Danish immigration to America during the decade of the 1840’s.

**Danish Immigration to Racine in the 1850’s**

The Danish population of Racine County increased fourfold between 1850 and 1860 (Table 1), from thirty-eight to 164 individuals. Of those listed in the 1850 census, sixteen can be positively identified in the 1860 census, which means that the remaining 148 must have arrived during the decade 1851-60.

Larsen and Jacobsen named twenty-three individuals who settled in Racine during the 1850’s. Most of them came from Maribo Amt, and many were “pulled” to Racine by the influence of the Schritzmeyer family.

Some seventy-four Danish men signed declarations of intent in Racine County previous to 1850. The 1860 census listed twenty-two Danish farmers in the county. Of these, seventeen owned their farms and must therefore have signed declarations of intent. Three of these seventeen had arrived in Racine County in the 1840’s and acquired land before 1850, which leaves fourteen who must have arrived and purchased land during the 1850’s. The other sixty apparently left Racine County before 1860 and moved to other localities, probably in most cases to acquire farmland. Thus some sixty men and their families lived in Racine County for a period of time during the decade 1851-60 and then moved on.

**Baptists**

Until the Danish Constitution of 1849 established complete freedom of religion, the history of Baptists in Denmark was marked by persecution. This persecution took place at all levels, from the highest Danish authorities down to next-door neighbors. Laws and regulations denied Baptists the unhampered practice of their religion, while their neighbors mistrusted and shunned them. Even after freedom of religion became the law of the land and Baptists obtained the full legal right to practice their religion as they saw fit, they still felt that they were not welcome or well-liked in many places.
Lars Henriksen (born 1824), farmer in Skee Tastrup, Haraldsted Parish, Sjælland. In 1846, he and Claus Christensen went together to Ishøj to be baptized. That was the start of a large Baptist concentration in their home area, where Lars Henriksen was leader of the Vandløse Baptist congregation from its founding in 1857.

Conditions in Denmark gave many Danes a push to emigrate, and these same conditions naturally had their effect on Baptists, who had the additional incentive of leaving behind Danish persecution and mistrust. One source put it this way: "These brothers and sisters found the oppressive conditions in Denmark to be intolerable—on the one hand, persecution or at the very least religious intolerance, and on the other hand, for most of them, poverty. America, on the other hand, was a land where they could worship God according to their own convictions, and there was the promise of much better economic conditions than in Denmark."^{41}

The Danish Baptist dream of America began to take shape as early as the 1840’s. Danish Baptists had close ties to the American Baptist church, and visits by American Baptists kept the dream alive. Still, a number of years passed before the first Danish Baptists decided to leave.

The Danish Baptist emigration finally took off in 1853.^{43} A group of ten “sisters and brothers” from the Vandløse Baptist congregation in western Sjælland arrived in Racine County.^{44} Closer investigations reveals that this group actually consisted of ten adults and nine children. In addition, three more adults arrived from Denmark who are not named in the sources, probably because they left the Racine area soon after for Waushara, Wisconsin.^{45} These three were Claus Christensen, his fiancée, Anne Marie Sørensen, and her sister. Claus Christensen and another young man from Haraldsted named Lars Henriksen had been the first two Baptist converts from that parish. Their conversion attracted a great deal of
attention in the area, and in the following years, a number of others from the parish followed their example. Within a short time, the core of what became Vandløse Baptist congregation consisted of converts living in Haraldsted Parish.

The leader of the first party of Baptist emigrants from Denmark was F. O. Nilsson. He had been exiled from his native Sweden and then, after a few years in Copenhagen, expelled from Denmark. Possibly inspired by Rasmus Sørensen’s departure in 1852, he decided to leave for America and brought with him a group of Baptists from western Sjælland.46 Their destination may have been determined by the fact that the Hansen family was in Racine, since all of them, including Claus Christensen, had known the Hansens in Denmark. In 1854, another three Baptist families from western Sjælland, totaling fourteen persons in all, arrived in Racine.47 In two years, some thirty-six Danish Baptist immigrants had arrived in Racine, and all of them had roots in the Vandløse congregation of western Sjælland, where the Hans Hansen family had lived before their emigration. By 1860, of these eight families and three single adults, only three families consisting of fourteen persons remained in Racine.

The first Danish Baptist congregation in America was established in 1856. It was in Raymond Township, Racine County, and was named Raymond Baptist Church. The driving force in its establishment was this group of Baptists who had come from the Vandløse congregation in Denmark. Thoughout the 1850’s, the membership of the congregation grew, partly through adult baptism of Danes residing in Racine County, and partly through immigration of Danish Baptists. The precise number of immigrant Baptists cannot be determined, because the records of Raymond Baptist Church before 1864 did not record detailed information about new members.
Immigrants Come and Go

Many more Danes came to Racine County during the 1850’s than the increase of 147 between the census of 1850 and 1860. The sixty men alone who signed declarations of intent in those years might have represented several times that number if all of them were heads of families. A conservative estimate of 300 would mean that the immigration to Racine would comprise 8% of the 3,749 Danes who were recorded as immigrating to the USA during the 1850’s.

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Table 2. Birthplaces of natives of Denmark in Racine County in the 1850 and 1860 U. S. censuses.

A picture of Racine as a jumping-off point for Danish immigration is starting to appear. Up to 1860, many more Danes than the statistics indicate came to Racine and stayed there for a relatively short number of years before moving on to other places in America.

Emigrant Origins

Of the 164 Danish-born individuals in the 1860 census for Racine County, seventy-eight, or nearly half, can be traced back to Denmark in various sources. These seventy-eight individuals may serve as a typical cross-section of Danes in Racine County in 1860. Nearly 80% of them came either from Maribo Amt, comprising the islands of Lolland and Falster, or from Sorø Amt in southwestern Sjælland, with roughly the same number from each area (Table 2). The remainder came from places scattered throughout Denmark.
This 1860 pattern has to be seen in conjunction with the origin of the earliest immigrants, shown in the figures for 1850. Danes who came to Racine County during the 1840’s apparently attracted later immigrants from their home areas and thus came to play a role in the pull of later Danish immigration to the area. Migration traditions from Sorø and Maribo Amts (Map 1) to Racine County, on the other hand, were not established until the 1850’s.
Danish Immigration to Racine County in the 1860’s

Danes immigrated to Racine City and Racine County in ever larger numbers during the 1860’s. The census of 1870 revealed 1,274 Danish-born persons in the county, or an increase of 1,110 relative to 1860. The figures speak for themselves, but a number of other sources can fill out the picture with detailed information about Danish immigration in that Civil War decade.

Larsen and Jacobsen discuss more than 200 individuals who came to Racine during that decade. The list includes many young men who fought in the Civil War and never came back. Others lived in Racine for a number of years and then moved on. The list consists almost exclusively of men. Many of them must have been accompanied by families, which means that those 200 men probably represent two or three times as many immigrants.

Nøkkentvedt examines Danes who signed a declaration of intent in Racine County during the decade 1861-70. Seventy-four Danish-born men were owners of farms in the county by 1870, while 397 had taken out their first papers and signed a declaration of intent during the decade ending in that year. This means that more than 300 Danish immigrant men and their families lived for a time in the county during the years 1861-70 and then moved on, primarily to seek land in other places. Again, these 300 men with their families might well represent some two or three times as many individuals.

Danish Baptist Immigration to Racine County

In 1864, a second Danish Baptist congregation was organized in Racine County. This one was located in Racine City and was called First Scandinavian Baptist Church in the hope that it could attract members from other Scandinavian groups, though this never happened. At the time of its organization, the core of the congregation consisted of a group of Baptists from northern Jutland.

Thus, there were two Baptist congregations in Racine County from 1864 on. The community of Danish Baptists was well-established, and it welcomed itinerant Danish Baptists with open arms. For a number of years, the home of the Baptist, Mogens Christiansen, was the “first stop for many Danish immigrants. Often, the house was full of newcomers.” Danish Baptists who were considering emigration could be confident that they would be met on the other side of the Atlantic by a network of like-minded friends who would receive them hospitably.

Baptists in Denmark were actually encouraged to leave their native land by their compatriots in America. Many followed this advice and left in the hope of finding a better life and the opportunity to practice their religion in freedom, but other motives also came into play. Those who took the step of resigning from the Danish state church were people for whom religious life was important. They acted according to their conscience, even though
their actions might arouse resentment among those around them. A number of Baptist converts also felt that they wanted to share their new faith with others, and they began to proclaim their religious message as lay missionaries. Within a year of arriving in America in 1853, the Swedish immigrant, F. O. Nilsson, wrote to Baptists in Denmark that “the need for workers in the Harvest of the Lord” in America “was greater than one can grasp, back home in Denmark. It would be good if hundreds could come here to proclaim the Word of God.” This appeal to those who felt themselves called to serve as missionaries must have cast their dreams of America in a new, more visionary light.

Early Danish Baptist Leaders in Racine County

Eight years later, another request came to the Baptists in Denmark. The leader of Raymond Baptist Church, Lars Jørgensen, wrote to them in 1862. After a long summary of the congregation’s history and current status, he went on to write about the “material situation” of its members. “The land is rich to overflowing in all things, and all that is needed to maintain life is very inexpensive. And so, we cannot thank the Lord enough that we have come here,” pointing out that they live “many hundreds of miles distant from the scene of the horrible [Civil] War.” He added that “The government is also very good, and one of the newest laws provides a gift of 160 acres of land for every man who will travel out and settle on it, which law will be used by a large number of the brethren in the congregation.”

This invitation was easy to understand. It described the stability of a congregation that could offer a solid religious base for immigrants. Moreover, the letter almost guaranteed a higher material standard of living than in Denmark. Many who read this “advertisement”—especially young people—undoubtedly took the
information about the “material situation” as the gospel truth, and this undoubtedly also helped to strengthen their dreams of emigration.

In February of 1866, P. H. Dam, the head of First Scandinavian Baptist Church, wrote in Mogens Abraham Sommers’ periodical, *Emigranten*, about the situation of Danish immigrants in America. Dam mentioned the separation of church and state, the unlimited individual freedom, the fact that no work was considered unworthy of respect, good laws and security, as well as the universal right of all males to vote. These points were well chosen to appeal to Danes who longed for social justice and had a critical view of the Danish state church as well as Danish justice and law. In other words, they appealed to ordinary people of that era, and especially to those who participated in the religious revivals. As a result, Sommer was able to report in April of 1866 that “a number of people have reported recently that they intend to travel to Racine in Wisconsin.” Therefore, he issued an invitation to a meeting where those who were planning to emigrate could sign up. He managed to assemble some 250 emigrants, mainly from northern Jutland, who left by way of the ports of Copenhagen, Aalborg, and Aarhus. Sommer himself became leader of a “caravan” of 111 adults, forty-five children between one and twelve years of age, and ten infants under one year. Forty of them were Baptist men with wives and children who went directly to Racine.

Sommer described the whole journey in an article in *Emigranten* later that year. He explained that the whole group consisted of Baptists who had been encouraged to emigrate by a Baptist “priest” in Racine. In the article, he wrote, “This little town is only a place for rich folks to live; it is certainly no place to find work, according to
everything people who know it tell me, but that is usually the case when a clergyman of any creed whatsoever writes to his countrymen to come there: it is always like a con man looking for customers, and in that way, Baptists were lured to Racine.”

First Scandinavian Baptist Church in Racine (established 1864) later built this new church on State Street and took the name of State Street Baptist Church

The records of both Raymond Baptist Church and First Scandinavian Baptist Church show that Danish Baptists often came in groups, which indicates that they had traveled together from Denmark. The largest group was thirty-one Danish Baptist adults who reported their arrival to Raymond Baptist Church and were enrolled in the congregation in November of 1862. Three of them came from northern Jutland, one from Copenhagen, and the rest from western Sjælland. A number of them arrived as families with children, so the whole party numbered even more.

This group may have been one of the first to receive assistance along the way from the German Baptists in Hamburg, who had offered in 1861 to help Danish Baptists who traveled by way of their city. They could provide lodging and necessities for the journey and could assist the emigrants in purchasing good, inexpensive ship tickets. The Hamburg congregation continued to assist Danish Baptist emigrants for a number of years.

*Emigration Traditions of the Baptists*

During the 1860’s, some 324 members of Danish Baptist congregations emigrated. In the next decade, the number was down to 224, but it rose once more to 320 in the 1880’s. Another 105 Baptists emigrated in the years 1891-96, and then Danish Baptist emigration faded away. America was suffering from hard times following the Panic of 1893, and Baptist historians explained that, in the course of time, conditions had “changed considerably; in Denmark, both the material and religious situation is now much better, whereas America, especially in material terms, has less to
offer now than previously. Therefore, emigration has also declined in recent years.\textsuperscript{59}

The oldest Danish Baptist congregations, especially those in western Sjælland and northern Jutland, contributed the largest contingents to the Danish Baptist emigration, while those congregations established after 1866 had virtually no emigration. This shows that Danish Baptist emigration was based on early formation of migration traditions in the oldest congregations.

Membership lists and other records from the Danish Baptist congregations in Racine and Raymond fill some of the gaps in the records of Baptist congregations in Denmark. In the records of Raymond Baptist Church, some 117 persons can be identified who came to the congregation directly from Denmark in the period 1861-70. For eighty-seven of them, the Danish congregation they came from was recorded. Likewise, First Scandinavian Baptist Church in Racine maintained membership lists and other records that indicate which congregations many of their new members had belonged to in Denmark. In the period from the establishment of the congregation in 1864 until 1870, seventy-eight new members were enrolled from Denmark, and the former congregation was recorded for seventy of them.

Most of these new arrivals had roots in Sorø Amt in western Sjælland or in northern Jutland (Figure 1). Raymond Baptist Church attracted mainly people from Sjælland (black columns), while those from northern Jutland joined the congregation in Racine City (white columns). This picture is in accord with the whole history of these two congregations. Raymond Baptist Church was established mainly by Baptists from Vandløse Congregation in Sorø Amt, while the Danish Baptist congregation in Racine City was established by immigrants who were primarily from northern Jutland.

The emigration of Baptists from central Sjælland started in 1853, but the foundation of a migration tradition was laid as early as 1848, when, as previously mentioned, Hans Hansen and his family left Denmark and settled in Racine. After Raymond Baptist Church was established in 1856, emigration fever spread among the Baptists of central Sjælland, and most of them took Raymond Township as their destination. Then, when First Scandinavian Baptist Church was established in 1864, a migration tradition was established between Racine and the Baptists in northern Jutland.\textsuperscript{60} Presumably, the Baptists in northern Jutland were aware of the establishment of a Danish Baptist congregation in Raymond Township, but other factors needed to come into play before emigration set in from that area.
Personal connections between the Danish congregations in central Sjælland and northern Jutland also played a part. For example, Peder Sørensen was from Haraldsted Parish in central Sjælland and lived there, but he was baptized in 1860 in the Aalborg Baptist congregation in northern Jutland. He represented a personal tie between Baptists in these two, widely separated regions of Denmark, and he may have contributed to the start of a migration tradition of Baptists from northern Jutland.

**Racine as Bridgehead to America**

Mogens Abraham Sommer later received letters from the immigrants he had escorted to Racine in 1866. These letters informed him that only forty-five individuals out of the forty Baptist families he brought to Racine were still there one year after arrival. Other members of the two Danish Baptist congregations in Racine also left the area. Membership lists for Raymond Baptist Church reveal that nineteen of the forty-one who became members before 1866 departed after an unknown period of time. A more detailed membership list for the years 1866-70 shows that forty-two out of eighty-two who joined in that period departed again. For the whole period 1856-70, fifty-one out of 123 persons who transferred into the Raymond congregation from other Danish or American Baptist churches left after staying for an indeterminate length of time. The tendency was clear: Danish immigrants came to Racine and vicinity for a short period of time and then to moved on. Nearly 40% of Danish Baptist immigrants left the area after staying for less than six years.
The picture of Racine as a bridgehead to America can also be shown by comparing evidence in the emigration registers maintained by Danish authorities with information taken from the U. S. census reports. The Danish registration of emigrants began in 1868. Between that year and the spring of 1870, they show that some 265 individuals gave Racine as their destination. Of these, only a quarter can be identified with certainty in the 1870 census for Racine County, which was recorded in the month of July. If the others actually did come to Racine, they had already moved on, less than two years after leaving their native land.

American statistics record that 17,885 Danes immigrated during the 1860's. If Racine County continued to attract around 8% of the total Danish emigration, as in the 1850's, this would mean that around 1,400 persons came to the Racine area during the 1860's. The U. S. census indicates that the Danish population of the county grew by some 1,100 during the period 1860-70. When the large migration by stages through the county to other destinations is taken into consideration, the total Danish immigration into Racine County must have been much larger than 1,400 during the decade.

**Danish Origins of the Immigrants**

It has been possible to determine the place of birth of around a quarter of the Danish natives in Racine County in 1870. The 290 natives of Denmark who form the basis for Figure 2 are taken to be a representative cross-section of Danes in the county in that year.65

- Immigrants from Sorø and Maribo Amts continue to dominate, but a significant number from northern Jutland, especially Hjørring Amt, had arrived during the course of the 1860’s. This must be seen in the context of the migration traditions among Danish Baptists discussed above. Baptists from west-central Sjælland and northern Jutland continued to attract other Baptists, other relatives, and acquaintances to Racine County, and this chain migration puts a strong stamp on the overall picture of Danish immigration to the area.

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**Figure 2. Birthplace by Amts of 290 out of 1,274 native of Denmark in the U. S. Census of 1870 for Racine County.**

Immigrants from Sorø and Maribo Amts continue to dominate, but a significant number from northern Jutland, especially Hjørring Amt, had arrived during the course of the 1860’s. This must be seen in the context of the migration traditions among Danish Baptists discussed above. Baptists from west-central Sjælland and northern Jutland continued to attract other Baptists, other relatives, and acquaintances to Racine County, and this chain migration puts a strong stamp on the overall picture of Danish immigration to the area.
Danish Immigration to Racine After 1870

The official registration of Danish emigrants, mentioned at the beginning of this article, started in the year 1868. One of the entry spaces in the registers was for the destination given by each individual emigrant. On the basis of these entries, it is possible to learn how many Danes gave Racine as their destination in every year after 1868.

The Overall Pattern of Emigration

In the forty years 1868-1908, the emigration registers contain a total of 211,456 persons with permanent Danish residence who emigrated from Denmark. The emigration registers also contain several thousand Swedish emigrants and others who were not Danish nationals. They also contain Danes who gave America as their last place of residence and were returning after a visit to their native land. None of these groups are included in Figure 3, which shows the pattern of emigration 1868-1908 for first-time emigrants with the USA as their destination.

Danish emigration during this period occurred in four waves: 1868-77, 1878-85, 1886-97, and 1898-1908. There is a general upward trend from wave to wave. The emigration registers record the initial destination of each emigrant. Many gave New York as their destination. This was where the European emigrant ships docked, and most of those who put down New York did so because they had a ticket to New York and planned to arrange their further travel once they arrived, or because it had been arranged for them by friends or relatives. Excluding New York, the main destination of Danish immigration throughout the period of mass migration was the states of Minnesota and Wisconsin, though Nebraska and the Dakotas became increasingly important with the passage of time.

In the whole period 1868-1908, a total of 13,647 or 6.5% of all Danish emigrants gave some location in Wisconsin as their initial destination. Of these, a total of 4,772 gave Racine as their destination. This represents some 2% of the total Danish emigration in the forty years of mass migration, and 35% of the total Danish emigration to Wisconsin.

The course of Danish emigration to Racine (Figure 4) follows the same pattern as overall Danish emigration and shows the same four great waves. The tendency from wave to wave does not show the same upward movement, however, but was more or less level. In other words, Racine continued to exert a strong pull on Danish emigrants, even as the overall pattern of Danish immigration continued to move westwards, but at the same time, the percentage of Danish emigrants giving Racine as their destination gradually declined. In the first wave, about 4% said they were heading for
Racine, but the percentage fell in the next wave and stabilized around 1885 at some 1.5-2% of the total Danish emigration. This development was a direct continuation of the earlier immigration, when Racine was able to attract some 8% of the total Danish immigration to America.\textsuperscript{68}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure3.png}
\caption{Number of Danish emigrants with the USA as destination 1868-1908.}
\end{figure}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure4.png}
\caption{Number of Danish emigrants with Racine as destination 1868-1908.}
\end{figure}

\textbf{Last Place of Residence}

The total Danish emigration after 1868 was skewed with respect to the last place of residence before emigration. These places were not distributed evenly across Denmark, and there was a general tendency for the pattern to move from east to west during the period of mass emigration.\textsuperscript{69} Figure 5A shows the percentile distribution of the last place of residence of Danish emigrants for a five-year period early in the era of mass Atlantic migration (1868-73), and Figure 5B from towards the end (1893-97).\textsuperscript{70}
In both of these periods, the white columns show that the percentage of emigration from Copenhagen was the greatest. Otherwise, Amts in the eastern part of Denmark (Frederiksborg, Soro, Holbæk, Præstø, Maribo) were clearly dominant in the early period. In Jutland, the main areas of emigration were around Aarhus, Vejle, and in the north (Aalborg and Hjørring Amts). Towards the end of the period of mass oceanic migration, the percentages from the Danish islands fell sharply, while those from Jutland soared and saw a more even distribution.

Emigrants who gave Wisconsin as their destination presented quite another pattern, as shown by the gray columns. In both periods, emigration from Copenhagen to Wisconsin lagged far behind the national average. In the early period 1868-73, however, emigration to Wisconsin from the islands east of the Great Belt (Frederiksborg, Soro, and Holbæk Amts on Sjælland, Præstø Amt on southeastern Sjælland and Mon, Maribo Amt on Lolland-Falster) led
the national averages, especially from Maribo and Præstø Amts. Taken together, Odense (northern Fyn) and Svendborg (southern Fyn, Langeland, Ærø) Amts also surpassed the national percentiles for those regions. From northern Jutland, the early emigration to Wisconsin drew a much larger percentage from Hjørring Amt than Aalborg Amt, though the two were nearly equal in terms of the total Danish emigration of those years.

The picture changed in the years 1893-97. Emigration to Wisconsin from east of the Great Belt fell off sharply, while it rose from Fyn-Langeland-Ærø and all of Jutland except Hjørring Amt. Except for the weak flow of emigrants from Copenhagen, the pattern of Danish emigration to Wisconsin showed the same shift from east to west that was evident in Danish emigration as a whole.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Danish-born Racine Co. residents in US census</th>
<th>Danish emigrants with Racine as destination</th>
<th>Expected number of Danish-born Racine Co. residents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>1,274</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870-1879</td>
<td></td>
<td>951</td>
<td>2,225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>1,705</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880-1899</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,571</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>3,467</td>
<td></td>
<td>4,276</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Number of Danish-born residents of Racine County in U. S. censuses of 1870, 1880, and 1900, compared with Danish emigrants who gave Racine as their destination in the intervening years, compared with the number of Danish-born residents expected to be in Racine County if the Danish emigrants reached and settled in their destination.

The black columns showing emigration to Racine, however, depart in striking ways from the larger patterns of Danish emigration to Wisconsin and the USA. In the early period 1868-73, emigration to Racine did follow the pattern of originating east of the Great Belt but drew overwhelming percentages from Sorø (central and southwestern Sjælland) and Maribo (Lolland-Falster) Amts, while the percentage from Præstø Amt was only half that for Wisconsin, though closer to that of Denmark as a whole. The emigration to Racine also changed in time, and the distribution of emigrants from east of the Great Belt gradually moved towards the national average, while emigration from Fyn-Langeland-Ærø and Jutland rose to around twice the national average. The Jutland emigration took on a more even distribution with time, but northern Jutland, especially Hjørring Amt, continued to play a dominant role.

Thus the overall picture of emigration to Racine after 1870 did not follow the same patterns as Danish emigration in general, or even those that prevailed in the emigration to Wisconsin as a whole,
despite the fact that the emigration to Racine comprised 35% of the Wisconsin emigration. In the early phases of mass migration, the most striking feature was the very large emigration to Racine from Hjørring Amt, but the strength of emigration from Sorø and Maribo Amts was also striking. The basic structure of Danish emigration to Racine after 1870 was clearly a continuation of patterns from earlier decades. Some of the first Danish immigrants to Racine came from Sorø and Maribo Amts, and later, they also started to come from northern Jutland. The main lines of Danish immigration to Racine throughout the period of mass trans-Atlantic migration are clearly connected and go back to the very first days of Danish settlement in the area. This is clearly the result of chain migration linked to some of the original Danish settlers in the area, which formed migration traditions that led to Racine City and the surrounding area from Sorø, Maribo, and Hjørring Amts in Denmark.

Racine as Bridgehead to America after 1870

Comparison of the Danish emigration registers with the number of Danish natives in the U. S. census returns allows analysis of Racine County’s role as a bridgehead for Danish migration by stages to other parts of America. If all the emigrants who gave Racine as their destination had actually settled there permanently, the expected Danish-born population would have been far greater than the U. S. censuses of 1880 and 1900 show. At least 20% of the expected Danish-born population was missing (Table 3). Mortality cannot explain such a large gap, so there must have been a large Danish movement away from the Racine area during the last three decades of the nineteenth century. This follows the same pattern as earlier, when Danish immigrants also used Racine as a major bridgehead to other parts of America.

Summary

Danish Immigration to Racine—Pattern, Migration Traditions, Chain Migration, and Migration by Stages.

The very first Danes who came to Racine were all individuals who arrived with high social status as sons of clergymen, wealthy estate owners, or artists, and this gave them a certain status within the local community as well. As a result, the early Danish community gathered around these individuals and settled near them. In 1850, twenty-three of the forty-six Danes in the county lived in Racine City, where John Bangs was established. The others were in northeastern Racine County, where Mourier and the Lütken and Lund families lived.

The Danish community continued to cluster during the 1850’s, but now, most of them settled in rural areas, especially in Raymond Township, where over half of the 164 Danish natives lived in 1860. This is also explained by the pull-factor exerted by earlier
immigrants. The Baptists from western Sjælland and the Schritzmeier family from Lolland had all settled there. They pulled other Baptist friends, relatives, and correspondents to Racine County, and many of them settled close to their old connections.

When the first Danish Baptist congregation in America was established in Raymond Township in 1856, its members served as the American pole of a migration tradition linked to the Baptists in western and central Sjælland. During the 1860's, this link widened to Baptist congregations in northern Jutland. These Baptist migration traditions spread through circles of friends and relatives, bringing many people from Sorø Amt and northern Jutland to Racine county during the 1860's. The large migration stream from Maribo Amt during the 1850's and 1860's was another migration tradition that went back to the arrival of a single family, the Schritzmeiers, in Racine County in 1848. These patterns of chain migration from Maribo and Sorø Amts and northern Jutland persisted throughout the whole period of mass transoceanic migration. It turns out that the very first Danish immigrants to settle in Racine County set the pattern for the whole subsequent immigration to that place.

Various scholars have described examples of chain migration, but the role of this pattern in the broader picture of Danish mass migration has not yet been established. The description of early Danish immigration to Racine County and the role of the first settlers as a pull factor in later immigration was dependent upon descriptions of the lives of individual immigrants. Without these biographical descriptions, it would not have been possible to achieve the nuanced picture that this article presents of the mechanisms behind Danish immigration to the county.

The article has shown that the great majority of Danish immigrants to Racine County came from rural areas in Denmark. This harmonizes with the fact that Danish settlers in the area, right up to the turn of the twentieth century, preferred to settle in the rural parts of the county. The general impression that Danish immigration as a whole was aimed at acquiring land for farming also applies to Racine County.

During the decades of the 1850's and 1860's, Danish immigration to Racine County comprised around 8% of the total Danish immigration to America. This figure fell to around 4% in the early 1870's and then gradually slipped until it settled around 1.5-2% in the later phases of mass immigration. In absolute numbers, however, Racine County continued to attract a steady, more or less constant stream of Danish immigrants to the end of the century. The Danish minority in the county continued to grow. By 1920, Racine City could claim to be "the most Danish city outside Denmark" with a Danish minority of 13.7%.
Large numbers of Danes immigrated to Racine County in the course of time, but not all of them settled there. Those who did settle there continued to attract friends and relatives from Denmark, but many new arrivals simply used the county as a way-station on the road to someplace else. Danish immigrants found a secure harbor in Racine County when they arrived from across the Atlantic, and then, after a time, they went on to new destinations. Many worked for a few years to save money and learn something about the new land before they headed off to another new life in some other part of America. The migration through Racine County after 1870 represented a minimum of around 2% of the total Danish immigration, because this figure omits many Danish emigrants who listed New York as their destination, even though they may actually have been bound for Racine.

The pull factor of Danes already settled in Racine County, the formation of migration traditions, the large number of Danish emigrants who gave Racine as their destination, and the role that Racine County played as a bridgehead for Danish immigration to America, all need to be seen as parts of a larger whole. Danish immigrants managed during the second half of the nineteenth century to manifest themselves in Racine and Racine County, both socially and economically, as an established ethnic minority with values, norms, organizations, churches, and communities of their own. Therefore, Racine was a safe and reliable destination for Danish immigrants who lacked language skills and travel experience. Migration traditions grew as more and more Danes left their native land in order to travel to family and friends awaiting their arrival in the new land. This meant that they often had a place to live and a job waiting for them. As they grew more familiar with conditions in America, their experience in Racine County formed the basis that allowed many of them to go on to seek new opportunities in other parts of America. The large stream of Danish immigration that took Racine County as its initial goal on the way to a new life needs to be seen in the context of the many Danes already living there. They were the pull factor that made Racine a goal for Danish immigrants, right up to the end of the era of mass migration, and the large migration stream into a relatively small community explains why it was necessary for many to move on, when they had acquired the skills and information necessary to do so.

This study contributes to an understanding of Danish-American immigration history by describing the course of chain migration to a specific American settlement, and by clarifying the factors that gave this migration its specific characteristics. Moreover, it also points towards the conclusion that Danish immigration to Racine County had its roots in a religiously motivated emigration of Baptists from Denmark. The fact that Danish Baptists played a significant role in
Danish emigration history has never previously been demonstrated, and it is a subject that demands more research.

**The Baptist Role in Danish-American Settlement**

In the literature on Danish mass migration, religious groups are generally not given much attention, except for the Mormons. Between the two of them, Hvidt and Helmer Pedersen together devoted a total of only four pages to the Baptist migration. Their main emphasis was upon individual Baptist emigrants, and neither of them discussed any consequences that might have resulted from this religiously motivated emigration.

There were nine Danish Baptist congregations in America in 1870. Two were in Racine County, three others lay to the north in Waushara, Winnebago, and Brown Counties, Wisconsin, one was in Chicago, and there were congregations in Freeborn and Brown Counties, Minnesota, as well as one on the western frontier in Shelby County, Iowa. Danish immigrants clustered together in the years before 1870. Not only did most of them settle in a handful of states, but even within those states, they were concentrated in specific counties. The location of the largest Danish-American settlements in 1870 shows a remarkable correspondence, in many cases, with the location of Danish Baptist congregations. In 1870, some 53% of all Danes in Wisconsin lived in the four counties that had Danish Baptist congregations; in Minnesota, the figure for two counties was 28%. These figures seem to indicate that the early emigration of Baptists, the founding of Danish Baptist congregations in America, and the movement outwards from older congregations to establish new daughter congregations farther north and west had a much greater importance in the total picture of Danish migration history than has previously been realized.

Figure 6 shows the number of Danish immigrants in the counties where Danish Baptist congregations had been established by 1870, together with the number in neighboring counties. In 1870, Racine County had a much larger Danish community than the total of adjacent counties. In the years 1850-70, the Danish community in Racine County also had a much higher growth rate than those in adjacent counties. The same was true of every county where the early Danish Baptist congregations were located.

However, not all of the counties with a Danish Baptist congregation had the same high growth rate. The number and growth rate of Danes in Waushara and Brown Counties, Wisconsin, for example, and also in Brown County, Minnesota, lagged far behind the other Danish Baptist counties. The explanation lies in the histories of the individual Danish Baptist congregations. In 1856, Raymond Baptist Church was founded as the first Danish Baptist congregation in America, and most of its members resided in Raymond Township. Because it was the only Danish Baptist
congregation in the county, it attracted members from other townships and from Racine City. Out of a total of 164 natives of Denmark living in Racine County in 1860, ninety resided in Raymond Township. Of these, a good 60%, or around one-third of all Danes in the county, were connected to the Danish Baptist church. This shows beyond all doubt that Baptists were a significant factor in the Danish-American community of Racine County around 1860.

The congregation in Raymond was well-established and functioned as a mother church for most of the later early Danish Baptist congregations. Through mission work and the founding of daughter settlements, the Raymond congregation and the later one in Racine City helped to establish eight more Danish Baptist congregations in America during the 1850’s and 1860’s.

The first Danish Baptist congregation in Waushara County, Wisconsin, was founded in 1858. The core of original members was Baptists who came from Racine County. Internal conflict eventually led to the founding of two more congregations. None of them was
able to survive, however, and the remnant of Danish Baptists in the county merged in 1900 with the American Baptist church.

Danish settlement in Brown County, Wisconsin, went all the way back to the 1840’s and included some members of the immigrant party of 1848 described above. They began to gather for worship, and their views gradually moved in the direction of the Baptists. In 1859, Lars Jørgensen, the leader of the Raymond congregation, helped them to establish a Baptist congregation. It never grew large, and there were also problems with Adventists, who “stole” several members of the congregation. In 1862, several members moved to Iowa, where they formed the core of the congregation established in Shelby County in 1870. The remaining members in Brown County moved in 1863 with their leader, P. A. Dam, to Racine, where they played a leading role in establishing First Scandinavian Baptist Church the following year.

While he was living in Brown County, P. H. Dam often went on mission journeys and preached in various places, including Neenah in Winnebago County, where there was a little cluster of Danish Baptists. He remained in contact with them after moving to Racine. In 1865, the Neenah group joined the Racine congregation as a mission station. This grew, two years later, into an independent Danish Baptist congregation. It never became large, and internal dissent also arose here, so that the congregation never functioned very well and eventually faded away.

The founders of the Danish Baptist congregation in Chicago in 1864 came to the city from Racine. Likewise, the first congregation in Minnesota was founded in 1863 by a group of young Baptists who wanted to leave Racine County and start a new life farther west. J. S. Lunn wrote in his story of the founding of the Danish Baptist congregation in Clarks Grove, Freeborn County, Minnesota, “It is well known that when young people begin their journey through life together, the question is where we will decide to live. So it was in Raymond, Wisconsin, where a young couple who had entered into matrimony in the autumn of 1861, and one other family . . . looked around for a future home.” Lars Jørgensen, the leader of Raymond Baptist Church, took up the challenge and decided to help them find a place along the unsettled frontier, where families from his congregation could form a new settlement. The plans began to take form in 1861 but did not become a reality until two years later. Covered wagons were filled with household possessions and farming equipment, oxen were harnessed, and the journey began. Their intention was to head so far west that they could settle on unclaimed land, but when they reached Freeborn County after a journey of a couple of weeks, they were exhausted, and they began to fear an Indian attack in those restless months following the Dakota War of 1862 in Minnesota. The countryside was beautiful in Freeborn County,
and the soil was extremely fertile. They decided to remain. They purchased 160 acre farmsteads, and some of them began to build small huts to have a roof over their heads. Soon afterwards, they organized their congregation. It grew to be a large, well organized congregation that put its stamp upon the emerging local community of Clarks Grove.

Three years later, in 1867, a second Danish Baptist congregation was organized in Minnesota. Another group from Raymond Baptist Church had headed west in the year before. When they reached Clarks Grove, the men dropped off their families and kept moving west. In Brown County, they found the spot where they wanted to settle. The brought their families there and began the life of pioneering on the prairie. In 1867, new settlers arrived from Raymond and Clarks Grove, and their Danish Baptist congregation was founded. Its history, however, did not prove to be long, because a number of the members left to join the Adventists.

In counties where Danish Baptist churches were established, comparison of the congregation’s history with the number and growth rates of the Danish population indicates that the attraction of Danish settlers is proportional to the ability of the Baptists to establish a well organized congregation. Those counties with prospering congregations attracted the most settlers. However, even in the counties where the Danish Baptist congregations did not flourish, the early activities of the Baptists resulted in more significant Danish minorities and greater ethnic community growth than in neighboring counties.

The histories of individual congregations support the hypothesis that Baptists played a significant role in the settlement of Danes in areas of the United States that had not previously had any Danes. In 1860, there were only two Danes in Freeborn County, Minnesota. After the Baptists arrived in 1862 and started their congregation in 1863, the number of Danes in the county soared. By 1870, there were 414 natives of Denmark residing there. The same pattern applies to Shelby County, Iowa, where there was only one single Dane in 1860. By 1870, when a Danish Baptist congregation was organized in the county, the number of Danes had risen to 193, and ten years later, to 890.

The early settlement of Danish Baptists in Racine County was important in the whole later history of immigration to the area. The Baptists found a place for themselves there, and the subsequent migration tradition of Baptists from Sorø Amt and northern Jutland influenced the whole pattern of Danish immigration to the county.

Itinerant preaching and mission activity, together with soaring immigration to Racine County that limited opportunities there, formed the basis for massive chain migration that passed through the county and on to establish numerous, substantial daughter colonies. This case study has shown that the early immigration of
Baptists to Racine County had consequences, not only for southeastern Wisconsin, but for the establishment of pioneer Danish Baptist congregations in other parts of Wisconsin, as well as Minnesota and Iowa. This dynamic process played a key role in the pattern of Danish settlement throughout the upper Middle West.

In the light of this study, the role of Danish Baptist immigration to America needs to be accorded a larger place in the overall history of Danish mass migration.

2 The American immigration registry simply lists many immigrants as coming from the country their ship came from. Because many Danish emigrants departed from Hamburg, many were registered as Germans. The same applies to passenger lists, which frequently misrepresent the nationality of Danes arriving in America.
5 On the early history of the Pine Lake Scandinavian settlement in Waukesha County, see Torben Grøngaard Jeppesen, Dannebrog på den amerikanske prærie (Odense: Odense Bys Museer, 2000), 41-50.
6 Christian Ludvig Christensen owned a country inn at Stokkemarke on Lolland. According to Helmer Pedersen, Drømmer om Amerika, 56-58, he was the one who launched the early emigration from that part of Denmark. Christensen was involved in politics and worked for social reforms to alleviate living conditions and future prospects for crofters and farm laborers on Lolland. He was quite prosperous but saw emigration as a solution for the less fortunate. In 1846, he decided to emigrate himself in the belief that America also offered better opportunities to people of his class.
7 Laurits Jacob Friibert, Haandbog for Emigranter til Amerikas Vest med Anvisning for Overrejsen samt Beskrivelse af Livet og Agerdyrkningsmaaden nærmest i Visconsin (Handbook for Emigrants to America’s West, with Instructions for the Journey and a Description of Life and Methods of Cultivation, especially in Wisconsin) (Christiania [now Oslo]: Johan Dahl, 1847).
8 During the first half of the nineteenth century, a number of religious revivals flared up in various parts of Denmark. The common element was opposition to the established Lutheran state church, but the content varied tremendously, from the personal visions and opinions of itinerant lay preachers to much more structured movements with clearly articulated religious views.

Where no other source is cited, information regarding family ties between immigrants is taken from Danish parish records and census returns, American census schedules, and the websites, <www.familysearch.com> and <www.ancestry.com>.

All of them were born in Dronninglund Parish, Hjørring Amt.

C. L. Clausen, "Beretning om de norske Nybyggeres Tilstand i Wisconsin," *Fyens Stifts Avis* 1847, no. 266-267. Danish Baptist emigration might be described as “religiously motivated” rather than “religiously conditioned.” Religion motivated their emigration because many Baptists were regarded with skepticism and distrust in their local communities in Denmark, both before and after the introduction of freedom of religion with the Danish Constitution of 1849. This bias of other Danes towards them gave Danish Baptists an additional reason, beyond those of most Danish emigrants, to leave for America, which they regarded as a place where they could practice their religion freely and without criticism from their neighbors. Mormon emigration from Denmark, on the other hand, was religiously conditioned, because Mormons saw a certain part of the United States as God’s chosen land of Zion, and immigration to Zion became a virtual condition of salvation in their view.

Personal communications from Robert Aronson and Jan Boysen. Lund’s children were known to have been members of the American Baptist church.

Personal communication from Robert Aronson.

Her parents were Andreas de Fine Olivarius and his wife, Elisa Caroline Charr.

L. H. Larsen & Peter Jacobsen, “Danske pionérier i Racine, Wis.,” in Vig, Danske i Amerika, 2: 147.

G. J. Ellis, unpublished memoir, 1920. Personal communication from Jan Boysen.


The U. S. Census of 1870 showed Anker Storm, age 42, living in Cook County, Illinois. (JRC)

Ole Heg was a brother of Colonel Hans Christian Heg, whose bronze statue stands on the grounds of the State Capitol in Madison, see Theodore C. Blegen, The Civil War Letters of Colonel Hans Christian Heg (Northfield MN: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1936), 57, note 11.

Vig, Danske i Amerika, 259-60.

Vig,Danske i Amerika, 275.

His parents and four of his siblings immigrated during the 1850’s and settled in New Denmark, Brown County, Wisconsin. His father was in his late fifties and could not endure the hard work of clearing forested land, so the family moved to Neenah to find a less strenuous occupation. See Vig, Danske i Amerika, 273.

Vig, Danske i Amerika, 274.

Helmer Pedersen, Drømmen om Amerika , 56-58.

Vig,Danske i Amerika, 288. Larsen & Jacobsen, “Danske pionérier i Racine, Wis.,” 152.

Immigrants of the mid-nineteenth century often worked for a few years in order to save the money, then signed a declaration of intent when they were ready to buy land. See Grøngaard Jeppesen, Dannebrog på den amerikanske prærie , 100-13.

Erik Jansson was a lay preacher who traveled throughout Sweden, preaching the doctrine of “freedom from sin,” by which he meant that a true believer could no longer commit a sin. He attracted many followers but often ran afoul of the Swedish authorities. This led him to consider emigration, and he finally left for America in 1846, accompanied by 800 of his followers, who established the “Janssonist” community of Bishop Hill in Henry County, Illinois. See Paul Elmen, Wheat Flour Messiah: Eric Jansson of Bishop Hill (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press for the Swedish Pioneer Historical Society, 1976). On “The Holy Brethren,” see F. Elle Jensen, “De hellige brødre,” Kirkehistoriske Samlinger 6th series, 6 (1948-50): 415-43.

The other Holy Brethren petitioners did not emigrate but moved in the late 1840’s to the town of Fredericia in Jutland, where various religious
sects were tolerated. There they came in contact with Mogens Abraham Sommer, who accepted the doctrine of “freedom from sin” at first but later rejected it, see Larsen, Uroøkkern Mogens Abraham Sommer, 89. Hans Hansen and his family were the only documented Danish Holy Brethren who emigrated to America, though many Swedish Janssonists did so.

39 Larsen & Jacobsen, “Danske pionerer i Racine, Wis.,” 147-49. Larsen and Jacobsen were well-known local historians in Racine. Over the course of many years, they compiled information that went back to the very first Danish immigrants to arrive in the area. This material formed the basis of their 1916 contribution on Danes in Racine in the second volume of Vig’s large compendium on Danes in America.

40 Christian D. Nokkentved, Danes, Denmark and Racine, 1837-1924: A Study of Danish and Overseas Migration. (Doctor of Philosophy Dissertation, University of Illinois at Chicago, 1984), 82-84. Nokkentved registered all declarations of intent signed by Danish men in Racine before 1870.


43 Bent Hylleberg, Forstørs breve (Brande DK: Føltveds Forlag, 1984). In his 1853 letters, Andreas Peter Forster mentioned many times that specific members of the Vandløse congregation had emigrated.

44 Nels Sørensen Lawdahl, De danske baptisters historie (Morgan Park IL: Forfatterens Forlag, 1909), 19.

45 Pia Viscor, From Midtsjælland to Mid West, in preparation.


47 August Broholm wrote in Evangelisten 1906, no. 4, that twenty-nine members of the Vandløse Baptist congregation emigrated in 1853 and an additional eleven followed in 1854. How many of these chose Racine as their first destination is unknown, but the probability is quite high that many of them did.

48 These sources include manuscript Danish ministerial and conscription records, Danish and American census returns, ship passenger lists, the records of Raymond Baptist Church, printed sources like Larsen & Jacobsen, “Danske pionerer i Racine, Wis.,” and Lawdahl, De danske baptisters historie, as well as the online genealogical sources, <www.ancestry.com> and <www.familysearch.com>. The seventy-eight who can be identified represent primarily family groups or individuals who do not have common names, whereas single individuals with common Danish names have been nearly impossible to identify with any confidence.

49 These seventy-eight persons comprise 65% of Danish families and 5% of single individuals. Lacking evidence to the contrary, I assume that the remaining families and the many unidentified single persons had similar geographical origins.

50 Larsen & Jacobsen, “Danske pionerer i Racine, Wis.,” 149-69.

51 Larsen & Jacobsen “Danske pionerer i Racine, Wis.,” 150. Mogens Christiansen became a member of Raymond Baptist Church in 1862.
was born in Glumsø and emigrated from Valsøll Parish, together with five of his children, his wife, and her child from an earlier marriage.

52 Hylleberg, P. C. Mønster, 76.
53 Lawdahl, De danske baptisters historie, 27.
54 The reality was not quite the same. Members of the Danish congregation in Raymond lived a very frugal life, despite what the letter said about the cheapness and abundance of everything. When they held their meetings, passersby could not see that the worshippers had come from far afield, because they did not own horses and buggies and came on foot. See Lawdahl, De danske baptisters historie, 32.
56 Hylleberg & Jørgensen, Et kirkesamfund bliver til, 76.
57 Hvidt, Flugten til Amerika, 281-282, quoted Captain Wilhelm Sommer, writing to the Danish Ministry of Justice in 1868, "Allow me in particular to point out the chairman of the Baptists, farmer Lars Henriksen in Skee Tostrup [Haraldsted Parish] near Ringsted, who for many years has sent his fellow believers [to America] through the Baptist preacher and innkeeper, Braun, in Hamburg."
58 Hansen & Olsen, De danske Baptisters Historie, 193-94, have statistics of emigration by members of Danish Baptist congregations 1861-96.
59 Hansen & Olsen, De danske Baptisters Historie, 186.
60 Hylleberg, Førsters breve. Andreas Peter Førster mentioned several times in his 1853 letters that members of the congregation in western Sjælland had emigrated, but he did not mention emigration of Baptists from northern Jutland until 1863.
61 Peder Sørensen, Nød og Hjælp (Copenhagen: Forfatterens Forlag, 1860). In this autobiography, Sørensen describes his religious search, which brought him far and wide and involved him in many Danish religious revivals before his conversion to the Baptist faith. Sørensen was among the founders of the Inner Mission movement and later joined a Free Lutheran congregation founded by the Norwegian clergyman, Gustav Adolf Lammers (Mogens Abraham Sommer was also a member), before deciding in 1860 to be baptized into the Baptist church. Previous to that, he had published a periodical, Sendebudet (The Messenger), to express his religious views. This led to an invitation to speak to the Baptist congregation in northern Jutland. He went there three times in the years 1856-59 and was eventually baptized there.
62 Peder Sørensen was a childhood friend of Claus Christensen, who emigrated in 1853 (see Hylleberg, Førsters breve). During the 1860's, many of Peder Sørensen’s relatives emigrated, and all of them settled in Racine County. He followed them in 1871 and settled in Racine, where he remained until his death in 1895. A person like Peder Sørensen, who used his pen prolifically, must have stayed in touch with relatives and friends like Claus Christensen in Racine, and therefore, he could very well have served as a personal link between the Baptist congregations in northern Jutland and western Sjælland, as well as between Danish Baptists on both sides of the ocean.
63 Mogens Abraham Sommer, "Efterretning fra America," Emigranten, February 1867.
The membership lists include only members of the congregation. It did not include children or spouses who were not Baptists. Therefore, these statistics actually cover many more people than the figures indicate.

Again in this census, those who could be identified were largely those who immigrated as families, but now, the number of identifiable individuals is large enough to be analyzed statistically. Cf. note 47 for the argument that these individuals comprise a representative cross-section of the Danish-born population of Racine County in 1870.

Because most research and writing on Danish emigration is based on the official emigration registers, the following analysis of Danish immigration to Racine will also begin in 1868.

Many emigrants gave a destination they never actually reached or a place where they did not intend to remain. Others took comfort in traveling initially to friends or relatives in America, instead of simply plunging into the unknown, though they did not plan to settle in the same location. Some simply gave their port of entry, such as New York, even if they intended to move on immediately. Therefore, the destinations listed in the emigration registers do not give a clear impression of where the emigrants intended to settle, and of course many of them had a very vague knowledge of American conditions when they departed.

However, this figure needs to be taken with a certain amount of skepticism, as indicated earlier.

Helmer Pedersen, Drømmen om Amerika, 12.

The place of birth has been the focus in determining the origins of Danish emigrants up to this point, but the emigration registers, which are the main source of data regarding Danish emigration after 1868, do not record places of birth. Most of the emigrants heading for Racine came from rural areas, but many of them migrated by stages, spending more or less time in a Danish city before taking the final step of emigration. This internal Danish migration from rural to urban areas generally took place within the same “Amt,” except that Copenhagen drew people from the whole country. Therefore, if Copenhagen is left out, Figure 6 can be compared on the Amt level with Table 2 and Figure 2, based on place of birth.

US Census Bureau, Danish Foreign Stock Population 1920, cities from 25,000 to 100,000.


Henning Bender, “Udvandringen fra Aalborg amt 1868-1903,” *Fra Himmerland og Kjær Herred*, 1996, 81-104, noted on 101 that religion may have played a role in the total emigration from northern Jutland, and that 52% of the emigrants from the area in those years gave as their destination Albert Lea, Freeborn County, Minnesota, the location of one of the largest Danish Baptist congregations.

The Danish congregation in Chicago has been omitted because the existence of that congregation did not appear to be a major factor in immigration to that city. For the same reason, Milwaukee County has been omitted from the list of counties bordering on Racine County.

Thomas P. Christensen, “De danske baptister i Clarks Grove, Freeborn County, Minnesota,” in Vig, *Danske i Amerika*, 271-86. Lawdahl, *De danske baptisters historie*, 146, goes on to give details of pioneer life in Clarks Grove and how the congregation was established.

I’m Going to America
Jens Christian Andersen’s Travel Diary
and Letters from Racine, Wisconsin, 1894-96
edited by Pia Viscor

Selected and translated from the Danish by J. R. Christianson∗

Editor’s Introduction. For several years, I have been working on a description and analysis of emigration from the extensive region that made up the large estate of Skjoldenæsholm in central Sjælland during the second half of the nineteenth century. Of all the many pictures, letters, and accounts that have passed through my hands, one collection in particular stands out: a travel diary and twenty-four letters written by a young man named Jens Christian Andersen, who emigrated in the year 1894.

Before he left home, the seventeen-year-old Christian, as he was called, promised to keep a travel diary and also to write and tell about his experiences. He kept his promise. On the journey from Copenhagen to Raymond, Racine County, Wisconsin, he wrote regularly about what he was experiencing. He sent home two travel diaries, of which the first, describing the journey at sea, has unfortunately been lost. Two surviving letters, however, compensate to some degree for the lost diary. His correspondence with his parents and siblings in Denmark began after his arrival in Racine County. Twenty-one of these letters survive, written in succession during the first nine months of his new existence. In addition, there is a letter that Christian wrote to his parents right before he left and another that he sent to his sister in the year 1907.

Christian’s letters, like so many other America letters, tell about all the new experiences in an immigrant’s life, problems with language and difficulties in finding work, the thoughts and feelings he had in the midst of so much that was foreign to him. In many ways, however, his travel diary and letters are different from the ordinary run of immigrant accounts. Their content in large measure grows out of Christian’s answers to questions asked by his family. Consequently, a different picture gradually crystallizes out of them, a picture of what ordinary people in Denmark thought or heard was different, unusual, or perhaps even wrong about conditions in America.

∗ The travel diary and America letters of Jens Christian Andersen have been published in the original Danish as Pia Viscor, Jeg rejser til America: En rejsedagbog og en samling udvandrerbreve fra Racine, Wisconsin, USA (Copenhagen: Books on Demand GmbH, 2007). ISBN 978-87-7691-217-8. The price is 119 DDK. See the review below.
Christian's replies to his family's questions are very long and detailed. He goes into the smallest details when he describes the society he was living in, and what he experienced there. As a result, the reader gets a finely nuanced picture of Racine County in the years 1894-95. Large and small, everything is described on the basis of how the society was organized and functioned, even down to how many young women had false teeth. These contemporary reports from an area where some 3,500 native Danes were living at that time makes a unique contribution to the description of immigrant life. The letters tell how the Danish minority associated with each other, helped each other, worked their farms, and much more.

Christian had attended a rural public school at home in Denmark. When he was confirmed, he received the highest mark of all pupils in his class. His letters also show that he was talented and able. He had a good command of the Danish language and did not make many spelling errors, though his punctuation tended to be minimal. His approach to his subject was what one might call journalistic. He was curious, questioning, and thorough in his collection of information. The maturity and clarity with which this young man expressed himself is impressive. His writing is so lively and interesting that the reader can almost hear him telling it. At one point, he even gives his formula for writing a letter: Write it down the way you would tell it to somebody sitting next to you.

Thanks to Inga Bødker, Herdis Nielson, and Ingrid Lund Frederiksen for allowing me to copy the travel diaries and letters, and for permitting me to publish them with my commentary. I also want to thank Ingrid Lund Frederiksen for cooperating with me to transcribe the documents and follow the tracks of Christian's path in America. Members of Christian's family in America have also provided assistance in following his path, for which I thank them. Thanks also to the many people who loaned pictures from their private collections. Benjamin Hansen has been very helpful in identifying many of the people mentioned in the letters. Finally, I want to thank my husband, Petr Viscor, for his support and patience, and cand. mag. Gerd Malling for a critical review of the manuscript and many constructive suggestions.

Pia Viscor

Christian saw the light of day on 18 July 1876. His childhood home was a cottage with a small plot of land (husmandssted) on the edge of the little village of Skee in Haraldsted Parish in the middle of the Danish island of Sjælland. Here, he grew up as the eldest of four siblings: Jens Christian, Anders Alfred (1880-99), Kirsten Christine (1884-1940), and Harald Julius (1888-1965).

At the age of seventeen, Christian went to work as a farmhand for Hans Martinsen in the nearby village of Vandløse. From there, he wrote to his parents, Hans Peder Andersen (1847-1923) and Maren Kirstine née Olsen (1854-1940). He enclosed a letter from a Dane named Hans Skov, who had written about the possibility of a position in America.
Dear Parents,

From these letters, you will see what I intend to become. Unfortunately, I have not yet achieved any result, but, as you will see from Hans Skov’s letter, there are good prospects that I will get a similar position if not precisely that one. I don’t know what you think of this decision, but that is why I ask that you reply as soon as possible [and tell me] whether you want to see me as a dairyman or as a farmhand here or in America. I will then act in accordance with your wishes. You might ask why I have made the decision to become a dairyman, because I have not talked much about that, but it is simply because I have never, as you know, been very interested in farming, and as a dairyman I can earn just as much as a farmhand and will be free of all the hard labor that comes with farming. Of course, a dairyman also has a job to do, but it’s only hard during the training period, and the [trained] dairyman has easy work and earns good money. Now, I don’t know what you think about it, but given the way things are right now in America, young as I am, I don’t think there are great prospects for advancement over there.¹

Hans Martinsen’s wife said to me the day I wrote to Skov that she had not been able to understand why I wouldn’t stay here, since I was not going to America after all. I replied that I don’t like farm work, and if I did, I would not have gone either. She answered, in that case, I could just as well have stayed here at least another year. “Yes, but then it would just have been the same again,” I said. And I will not stay here, either, if you do not like the idea of my becoming a dairyman. Then I will stick to the decision to go to America.

Best regards from your son, Christian Andersen.

Apparently, Christian was not able to get a position where he could learn to be a dairyman, or maybe his parents did not support his desire to be trained as a dairyman in Denmark. They hoped that Christian would want to take over their cottage and land some day. But, as Christian clearly said in his letter to his parents, he had no interest in a future as a farmer, and that alone must have turned his parents’ traditional world view on its head. That he was also considering emigration must have disturbed them even more.

Less than three months after Christian, in January of 1894, had raised the possibility of emigrating with his parents, the decision had been made. “I am going to America.” Christian signed a contract for a ticket with a local agent for the steamship company, Scandia Line. This seventeen-year-old farmhand loaned money from his father and ordered his ticket from Copenhagen to New York on 19 March 1894.

Apparently, he remained in his position in Vandløse until departure, because he is registered as emigrating from that place, and he put down Racine, Wisconsin, as his destination.² Two cousins in America were contacted to give him the confidence and
sense of security of having a safe haven on the other side of the Atlantic. Now, the great journey could begin.

His father accompanied him to Copenhagen, and Christian departed for New York on 21 March aboard the S/S Slavonia. He traveled alone, but not recklessly. His destination was Racine, Wisconsin, where his two “cousins,” Peter and Carl Jacobsen, were expecting him. They were not actually cousins. Christian’s maternal uncle, Jens Olsen, a hog buyer, had married Kirsten Nielsen in 1871. She was the widow of Jacob Nielsen and had three children from her first marriage, of whom two, Peter and Carl, were living in Racine in 1894. Several half-siblings of these brothers, who were the children of their father’s first marriage, also lived in Racine, including Ole Jacobsen, who will be mentioned in Christian’s letters.

![Christian’s maternal uncle, Jens Olsen, known as “Grisekongen” (The Hog King) for his success as a hog buyer, with his wife, Kirsten Nielsen, the mother of Peter Jacobsen and Carl Jacobsen in Racine County. They lived in the village of Allindelille in Haraldsted Parish, just down the road from Skee. The child is their foster daughter, Ane Marie Frederiksen.](image)

These Jacobsens were not the only people from Christian’s home area who were living in Racine in 1894. Christian’s native village of Skee and the region thereabouts, including the parishes of Haraldsted, Allindemagle, Jystup, and Valsølille, all belonged to the large estate of Skjoldenæsholm. Emigration from this region started in 1848 and, in the next half-century, some 487 people from that estate emigrated to America. Many of these emigrants took Racine County, Wisconsin, as their destination. When Christian set out for Racine County, around seventy people from his home area were already living there.
At the dockside in Copenhagen on 21 March 1894, a worried father stood and waved goodbye to his eldest son, who had made the big decision of his life at the age of seventeen and was setting out to realize his dreams in the vast, unknown land of America. “Write soon, Christian,” was the father’s last word to his son. The very next day, Christian wrote his first letter.

Kattegat, the 22nd March 1894

Dear Parents,

First of all, I want to thank you for everything I have gotten to take with me on the journey and assure you that I am pleased with what I received, both from home and from Father in Copenhagen.

The trip has gone well so far. There are lots of Swedes on this ship, but most of them are friendly people. One of them has a harmonica and played, up on deck, where they danced to the music. This Swede had already been in South America for some years, so he knows a lot of American dance tunes, but that doesn’t interest me. Not that I don’t feel well, because I’m in good health and enjoying myself.

Now it’s almost time to eat, so I have to write fast, but I hope you can still read it.

The Swedes are making a real racket down here. They sing and dance, but they have also had something to drink, so it’s not strange.

I was interrupted when I tried to write last evening. I had taken down a light and began to write. Then a Swedish crewman came by, grabbed the light, and hung it up again, saying a whole lot that I couldn’t understand, but I understood enough to know that I should have let it hang.

I have slept very well and did not get up before 6:30 and then got some stuff they call coffee.

We lie in Gothenburg Fjord now, and it is very beautiful. Now I have to end the letter, because the steamer from Gothenburg has just arrived at our ship, but I’ll write more details in my diary.

With much love from your son, Christian.

Christian wrote conscientiously in his travel diary on the voyage across the Atlantic and later sent it home to his family. Unfortunately, it has been lost, but he also told about the voyage in letters that give a good impression of his adventures at sea and all the annoyances that faced a traveler aboard the good ship Slavonia.
Atlantic Ocean, the 8th April 1894

Dear Parents,

I want to report that I am doing fine and all is well on board.

We have had some very severe weather for travel. It was worst from the 31st March to 2nd April, so it has taken longer than it was supposed to, but I understand that we will be in New York Monday night. We have 4,500 sea miles to go and sail 250 miles in twenty-four hours.

There was a real mess here (in the days when it was storming) when we were eating, because when the old tub heeled over on her side, pots, plates, knives, spoons, forks, potatoes, etc. came racing from one side and down to the other, where everything toppled over, and those who sat there got it slopped all over their clothes, so it looked bad. One day, a bucket of sweet soup tipped over and flew up the back of a poor sinner, and another day—I think it was the same evening—a waiter came with a tea kettle, but no sooner had he set it down and turned his back than the ship shook violently over on one side, and the tea kettle and hot tea took a little stroll along the floor. Yes, that’s the way it was. We got salt herring, and it was good, but we had to fix it ourselves if we wanted any. And the one who went around and served it was dressed more like a cowherd on a manor house than a waiter. He took the herring by the tail and threw it from one end of the table to the next, and it was fun to see how these dead fish could wiggle their tails down the table.
There have also been quite a few fights on board. It’s the Swedes who are so malicious. The other day, a Swede had gotten a bit drunk, and there was a man from Jutland who wouldn’t harm a cat. He had to suffer for that. He punched the Dane from Jutland in one eye and various other places. Then he went up on deck and tore the clothes of four Danes. They complained to the captain, but he is a German and he went crazy, stamped on the deck, and told the Danes to go away, and if they could not get along, then they had better keep out of the way of one another. That ended the audience. Of course, this made the Danes angry with the captain, especially since we knew that he had invited a Dane in for a cognac in his cabin and had gotten him to write a recommendation that he wanted all of us to sign. We immediately agreed that we would not sign, but instead, that we would make a list that most of the Danes have signed, which will be published in as many Danish papers as possible, and in that list, we will seriously advise our countrymen not to use the Scandia Line, because nothing is as it should be, at least not on board the Slavonia, especially when Swedes are allowed to bully Danes as much as they like, and when food is served, you almost have to fight for it, and the strongest come out on top, and therefore, none of us either can or will recommend this line.

The food is nothing to complain about. It is fresh and good, except for some soup we got the other day that, according to what the cook said, was made with rotten meat, but you could simply not eat it, because you could take all the butter and bread you wanted, but the voyage is described in more detail in my diary, which I can send you a copy of in a couple of weeks.

Now I have to stop for this time and hope that, when you receive this letter, you will already have gotten news of the Slavonia’s arrival.

With much love from your son, Christian Andersen.

A postscript to the letter, written on 11 April, reads as follows:

Arrived happy and well in New York after the terrible weather and now lie at anchor in the Hudson River. This evening and every evening, of course, everything is splendidly lit up with electric lights. It’s like being in Tivoli in the summer, and there would be a wonderful view if it were not so foggy, and a strong snowstorm is also raging right now, but I cannot write more because I have run out of paper and the light is poor.

My diary, which I will send as soon as I can, will give a complete picture of the dangerous voyage, which I can truly say it has been.

Yours, Christian.

Christian’s travel diary indicates that he got together in New York with a group of others who were also heading for Chicago. Among them
was a man named Rasmussen, and they traveled together, all the way to Racine. Apparently, they left New York on a ship bound for Norfolk, Virginia, and then traveled by rail to Richmond on Sunday, 15 April 1894. The first part of the trip was described in the little diary, and when that volume was filled, Christian bought a new book and continued to write his exciting reports on the unfolding journey, starting in Norfolk.

The other book was too small, so I bought this one. I regret that I was not able to get the same kind of book as the other one, but it probably does not make any difference whether the book opens up this way or another way.

The other book ended when a Negro came to us and asked us to follow him. He then led us to the railway station, where we arrived in good time. We went in and had a cup of coffee in the restaurant, which cost twenty cents with bread. The train arrived at five o’clock, and we got on board after having waited a hour.

The passenger cars are very large. Eight wheels under each car, but ten wheels under the locomotive. The cars are furnished with two rows of seats divided by an aisle, a wood stove at each end, and a water closet in each car. The seats are upholstered in red plush, and two people can sit on each seat. As in the electric railway, there is a door at each end of the car. We drove out from Norfolk through great forests made up of some kind of evergreen and a few tall trees somewhat similar to elm trees at home. There was another kind of deciduous tree that was almost completely in leaf. Many fallen trees lay everywhere, and there was so much firewood lying about that you could not see the forest floor. The train drove with terrific speed. It was just about as bad as the one we took to the steamer [in Copenhagen], but we still felt ourselves to be more safe.

The farms we passed looked quite impoverished. The soil was not worth much, either, because most of it was very sandy. It looked like they cultivate a great deal of maize, because we saw large areas of dry cornstalks. They also raise some potatoes, as you could see some on the ground. The cows are like those in Denmark, but a bit smaller. They go free in fenced pastures. The fencing used here is what they call “rail fence.” I cannot explain how it is put up, but ask Søren Hansen’s Kristian and he can show you.” Many places, the land lay uncultivated over surprisingly large areas that looked as wild as the large forests.

Other places, there were former forests where you could see one tree stump after another and large burned areas where the tops had been burned off. The houses were built of wood, and most of them were in a villa style, but there were also some crude huts, probably inhabited by Negro families, because I saw Negro children or adult Negroes by virtually all of those huts. There are extraordinarily large numbers of Negroes in this state. You do not see very many whites.
There are a lot of stations. That may be because they drive so fast. The train only stops at the stations where there are passengers to come on board or depart. When there are passengers to board, they raise a green flag by the tracks, but if there aren’t any, they swing the flag out of the way, and the train drives right past the station.

At sunset, we came to Richmond through a long tunnel. As we approached the tunnel, all the lamps were lit and the windows were closed. On the other side of a bridge that passed over a valley was the station, where we halted for a moment and then drove a bit farther, where our car was put out on a sidetrack.

There, we were to spend the night. A Negro came in and asked whether we wanted anything in the wood stove, to which we answered yes. Then he put some ice in the drinking water and went his way, after having put fuel in the stove.

For most of us, our supply of bread was seriously diminished, so were needed to go into town to buy some. Nobody was very eager to go out, because when we were eating our supper, a couple of Negroes came into the car and sang a song in voices anything but pleasant. When they were through, they began to beg for handouts, but I thought that was going a bit too far, so I stood up, went to the door, opened it, and indicated by pointing that they should get out, which they did with apparent good grace, but no sooner were they outside than some thirty or forty Negroes who had gathered outside began a hue and cry to the high heaven, and a couple of stones were thrown at the car. Then I went out on the platform of the car, together with a couple of others who had been in America before, and as soon as they saw us, three or four of them came towards us in a manner that was anything but friendly. We stood quite still but put our hands inside our jackets, where we had the revolvers, and when they saw that, they took off in a hurry, and in no time the place was empty, and we went inside a while, so things could calm down. When we had sat for a time, we decided that the three of us would go into town to find out where there was a bakery. And we walked up and down several streets without finding any shops open. It was a Sunday, of course. We had to return without accomplishing our mission, and after we had sat and talked for a while, Rasmussen and I decided to go out and try another part of town to see if we might have better luck, and we had not gone very far before we saw a light shining through an open door, and inside the door was a counter on which there lay some loaves of bread. That made us feel better, and we went in. Then a Negro girl came out, and we asked about the bread, but she was really stupid. She could not understand us when we pointed at the bread and showed her some money, or at least she did not seem to understand. Then she got a Negro, but he was just as crazy. Neither of us could speak English, but by then, I knew what bread was called. What the
English word for “buy” was, though, neither of us could remember. Well, it didn’t help to stand there, but at least we now knew where bread could be bought, and we returned to the car with that good news and returned with a man who could speak English. We finally got some bread and returned to the car, where we made ourselves as comfortable as possible. We took turns sleeping and keeping watch until the next morning.

Christian had already traveled far, but he still had a long way to go. He had sailed from Copenhagen on 21 March 1894 aboard the S/S Slavonia. The ship had docked in New York on 11 April, somewhat delayed because of bad weather and fog. After a couple of days in New York, Christian had sailed to Norfolk, Virginia, where he arrived on Sunday, 15 April, and then went to Richmond by train, pulling into the station around sunset and spending the night in a railroad car parked on a sidetrack.

The journey by rail continued the next morning. After a change of trains, Christian and his friend, Rasmussen, arrived at 2:15 p.m. in Clifton Forge, West Virginia, and departed that same evening at nine o’clock for Cincinnati, Ohio, where they arrived some twelve hours later, on the morning of 17 April. In Cincinnati, they changed trains again and rode for eight hours to Chicago, where they ate supper and boarded a train for the last stretch of the journey to Racine. They arrived in Racine, shortly after ten o’clock in the evening, and found their way to the home of Rasmussen’s sister, where they chatted and drank coffee until one o’clock before turning in for the night. The next day, Christian soon discovered that he was no longer in a strange place, inhabited by hostile Swedes and Negroes, but that networks of Danish friends, relatives, and acquaintances in Racine made him feel quite at home.

Wednesday the 18th April [1894]

We slept in this morning and ate breakfast when we finally got up, and then I got ready to go where I was supposed to go, but the good wife said to me that the son of a merchant would be coming by, later in the morning, to take an order for some items, and that he lived in the direction I was to go. I could wait and ride all the way with him. He did also arrive a bit later, and I was able to ride with him. His parents were Danish, and he could speak Danish, so we soon had a good conversation going. He drove me around town and showed me all of the nicest places. Of course, there were not very many of them, and only one of the streets was paved. The others would soon have caused a Danish spring cart to tip over. American wagons are all very wide and have large wheels. The rear wheels are big, and none of them have wheels that turn under the wagon. Most of the buildings are wood, but there are also quite a few brick buildings. There are also electric streetcars, and one of them is
driven by Jens Petersen’s son, Søren, from Allindelille. He earned fifty dollars a month, which is a good wage.

When we had driven around for quite a while, he took me right to Lars Petersen’s door, where I got off and thanked him for the ride. I went in and met an old man. I asked him if this was where Lewis Peterson lived. Yes, it was. At that moment, a man of about fifty came in the door. I presented myself and told him who I was. Oh, so this is the newcomer. We sat and chatted about how things were in the old country and here. He told me, among other things, that the weaver Ane’s Marie had been here and asked about me and told him to come along with me to their place. We set out for their house and went past the place where Christian Petersen’s Lars lives. So, we went in and said hello to Lars, who is renting the whole second story of a house. We went up the stairs and knocked on the door. It was opened right away, and there I stood, in front of Kristine, Lars’s wife. “Goddag, Kristine,” I said. “Goddag,” she answered. “Do you recognize me?” “No.” “Is Lars home?” Yes, he was, but he was sleeping. “I don’t want to say who I am before I see whether he will recognize me.” So she went and called to Lars, who soon came in, and I stood up and said, “Goddag, Lars.” “Goddag, Christian!” “I bring greetings from your parents and siblings and others back home.” “Tak, skal du have,” he said. It did not take long to get a good conversation started, and there were many questions to answer, and as we sat and talked, his wife was making dinner, and we came in and had a good meal—home-made soup. The first meal prepared in the Danish way that I ate in America.

Lars’ home is very nice: carpeted throughout, long white curtains on the windows, pictures on the walls, furnished with rocking chairs, a chaiselongue, oval tables, chests of drawers, etc. All in all, it looks as if things are going very well for them. He has also earned ten dollars a week up till now, and this past week, he has earned an extra dollar and a half because he is working as night watchman in the coal yard. That was why he was home when I came by, because he has to sleep during the day.

From there, we took the streetcar out to Ane, who stood outside the door when I arrived. When she saw me, she said, “but that’s Christian,” and came to meet me. Then Marie came out, and as soon as we had all said hello, we went into the parlor, which looked very nice and neat. We sat and talked for a while, and they asked me to spend the night, which I did, but Lars Petersen went back home.

That evening, after Marie’s husband came home, we went over to visit Hans Nielsen’s Frederik from Allindelille, who lives nearby. He was not home, but his wife entertained us for a while, and we drank a cup of coffee before going home. She was born in America of Danish parents.

Hansine is working as a babysitter for a family near by, and Christian works for a farmer a ways from town.
On his first day in Racine, Christian had already met eight people he knew from Denmark. All of them lived quite close to each other. This clustering of old-world neighbors in the new world is an example of the community-building effect of what scholars call chain migration.

Thursday the 19th April [1894]

The weather is lovely today.

As soon as I had eaten breakfast, I went over to Rasmussen’s sister, where I had left my luggage, and Rasmussen helped me move it to Marie’s house.

After dinner, Marie went with me to Lars Petersen’s place. Then I went to the railway station to see whether my baggage had arrived, but it had not. Then I returned to Lars Petersen’s place. He has a livery stable. A man named Jens Frederiksen was there, who lives two-and-a-half or three miles from Peter’s place. I got to ride along with him.

When we got out in the country, I could see that it does not look so wild and barren as in Virginia but was mostly cultivated. The woodlands are oak, and there is a lot of forest. Nearly every farmer has some woodland on his farm. Every field is enclosed with a barbed wire fence to keep the cattle from roaming out. The roads were the worst of all. It was like driving across a plowed field. There were no ditches, but the roads are three or four rods wide (1 rod = 16½ feet), so they are certainly wide enough, but there is usually only one track, and if you get off it, the wagon bounces so much it almost throws you off.

The man I rode with seemed to be a nice man. He told me a lot about what it’s like to live here, and we were having a lively conversation when we came to the road where he turned off. He had shown me both Ole’s and Carl’s farms, which you could see from the road, but Peter’s farm was located a Danish mile [nearly five American miles] from the road we were on, so we could not see it. He told me how to get there, and I said goodbye to him and took off on foot in that direction until I came up a hill where I could look out over the countryside, but I still did not know where I should go. Then a man came by, and I asked him where Peter Jacobsen lived. “He lives over by that big barn you see there. That baby is his.” [The man was speaking Danish but used the American word for “barn” (en barn), which is similar to “baby” (et barn) in Danish]. I thanked him and kept going until I got there.

It was nearly evening and the sky was overcast when I knocked on Peter’s door, stepped inside, and greeted Margrethe, who had not changed much since the last time I saw her. One of the boys went to get Peter, and soon after, he came in. I could also recognize him, especially since I already knew who he was, but if I had met him on the street, I’m not sure I would have recognized him. He has grown
We had a good conversation after I had brought all my greetings from Denmark. Not long after, the door opened and in walked Carl. I recognized him right away, and he also recognized me. He has grown quite a bit since he left Denmark, and he has grown a little mustache, but I was still able to recognize him. We had a lively discussion. Naturally, there was a lot to ask about, and I also had quite a bit to tell.

So, I have reached my destination after four difficult weeks of travel, but I have also seen quite a bit on the journey and could give some good advice to anybody considering travelling with the Scandia Line.

First of all, I advise them not to sail with the Slavonia, because it is the worst ship in the line. Concerning the requisites of travel, you should bring a tin cup for drinking coffee and tea, and a tin plate for meals, but you don’t need to bring utensils like a knife, fork, and spoon. Everybody should also bring a couple of towels to use on the ship and train. A bar of soap, a comb, and mirror. A pair of low-topped boots would also be good to have, because there is often so much water on deck that it’s impossible to avoid getting all wet. It’s also wise to have two sets of clothes. That is, a second set besides the clothes you’re wearing. As for food, you can have as much butter, cheese, and sausage as you want, as long as you do not walk down the gangplank and leave the ship with a sausage in your hand. Don’t worry about customs officials, because they don’t check things very closely.

Now, I want to finish my diary, because I have reached my goal. Please excuse me for waiting so long, but I haven’t had the time to

a big beard, which he did not have, of course, when he was home. (Now he has shaved it off, so it’s easier to recognize him.)
finish it until now, and there may be some words that are hard to read.

North Cape, the 30\textsuperscript{th} June 1894.
Christian Andersen.

The last part of the diary shows that it was not finished until a good two months after the end of the journey. In the meantime, Christian had written a number of letters home. The first one was written only two days after his arrival in Racine County on 24 April 1894.

Thompsonville, the 24\textsuperscript{th} April 1894

Dear Parents,

Now I can tell a bit more. I have now reached my destination and have gotten a place with a farmer. It’s an Englishman and his wife and children, so I don’t hear anything else [except English] all day long. It’s an awful mess, because I can’t understand him, so we have to use gestures and finger language, which makes for a pretty slow conversation, but that’s that way you have to learn the language.

We have two horses, two colts, thirteen or fourteen cows, a bull, a whole flock of sheep and chickens, two turkeys, and a huge male turkey of 150\!\textsuperscript{acs}.

The horses and cows are real jades. They are only fed oats and hay. They get so much hay that they stand and tread on it, so you never see them standing on straw as at home. After the cows are milked in the morning, they are turned loose in the manure yard, where there is a haystack. There, they can amuse themselves until evening, when they come in and get their hay.

My room is not much, because it’s in the barn, a kind of outbuilding. It’s very cold here, because there are three windows and a door, and it is larger than any of your rooms. I have a good bed to sleep in and a chaiselongue to rest on before I go to bed, if I want to read a bit. Rug on the floor and wallpaper on the walls and a table and chair, but I will only be here until they are through with the house. They are in the process of remodelling. Then I’ll move inside to a warm room.

I’m not earning very much: 85 dollars = 336.25 kroner from yesterday until 1 December, so that’s not much, but the first year you cannot expect to earn very much either, and I’ve been hired in a way that allows me to leave and get ten dollars if I am not satisfied after a month, and if he is not satisfied with me, he can let me go and pay me ten dollars. I don’t know yet whether I will stay here. If I can find another job, I will take it, because this place is such a mess in the evening and the work is very hard during the day, but it might get better.

I arrived in Racine last Thursday at 10:30 p.m. . . . Towards the end of that first evening at Peter’s farm, Peter Hansen, who used to live out on the commons, arrived, but I could not remember him.
After they left, we went to bed, and the next morning, we went out to look at Peter’s livestock. He has a beautiful team of big, brown horses four or five years old and five cows, four good swine. They have lots of room in the new house, and I’ll send you a drawing of it soon, together with my travel diary, but I don’t have much time right now, so it will probably have to wait until Sunday.

Right after dinner, Peter and I drove to Thompsonville, some six English miles from Peter’s farm and ten miles from Racine, where I have been hired, as I said. But my luggage had not come, so I went back with him. That is, I went out to Carl’s, and he was going to Racine the next day, so I stayed there in order to ride along with him and buy some footwear.

Carl has a good home and keeps two horses. One is a filly about to foal, and the other is five years old. He has six cows and a number of swine. Anders Davidsen [Carl Jacobsen’s father-in-law] was out there in the evening. He lives next door, and we were invited to come there the next evening.

The next day, we drove to Racine, where I bought a pair of flexible boots and paid $1.50 for them. One place, when we walked past a clothing store, they shouted after us and said that we should buy a whole suit, which only cost $2.99, but we had no use for one. I did need a shirt, though, so we went in. I bought one for 55 cents and a pair of trousers for 78 cents, and we also bought a few pairs of cotton socks, which cost 5 cents. Then we drove home, where Carl’s friendly little wife was waiting for us with supper. Then we went to the home of the father-in-law, where we enjoyed a cup of hot chocolate, the first I have had in America. Then we went home and got a good night’s sleep. Then we drove down to Peter’s to get my trunk, which he had promised to pick up for me.

On the way to Peter’s, we passed a farm where a man was standing out in front. Carl said, “Did you recognize him?” “No.” It was Anders, who used to work for F. Hansen. As you know, he has a place in Racine, which they call a saloon here, and he has been a salonkipper. In a saloon, you can only sell alcoholic beverages, and they put out bread, butter, cheese, and various kinds of large sausages and meat, and you can eat as much as you want when you buy a beer. He couldn’t make a go of it, though, so he has gotten a farm now in order to feed himself, if he can.

Søren Eliasen’s daughter in Allindelille and her husband were visiting at Peter’s, but they and Carl’s left before evening, so Peter and I went to Søren Hansen’s Bodil with the clothing I had brought for them.14

Peter and his wife are so good to me, and I owe them a lot for what they have done and will do for me, and Carl and his wife, too. Peter and Carl had decided that, if I could not find a job, they would hire me instead, but now it looks like that won’t be necessary.
Dear Parents,

First, I want to thank you, both for the first letter, which I got from Peter in Thompsonville, and for The Plurality of Inhabited Worlds, which came a few days later in slightly damaged condition, and also for the last letter, which I received last evening, when Carl drove out to Peter's for me, and by which I see that you are all healthy and things are going well.16

Things are also going well for me, but I don’t have a job, as you, when you receive this letter, already know from the letter I wrote to Uncle [Jens Olsen], and because I don’t have much time, I won’t go into more detail here, except to say that I will easily get work when haying begins in a couple of weeks. There certainly is, as Father wondered, great unemployment in the big cities, and the big coal strike doesn’t make things any better. Things are so bad that many factories in the big cities have stopped because they don’t have coal, and as a result, huge numbers of people are coming out in the country. I should have come over here a month earlier, because then there were lots of good jobs available in this area, but I didn’t, but I’ll still find a job...

We only have three meals a day. That is, at Peter’s and Carl’s, they get a sandwich or bread and jam and a cup of coffee between breakfast and dinner. Many of the Danes also serve things like soup and warm custard.17 One day, when Carl and Agnes were in Racine and I was out at their place, Anders Davidsen came by and asked if I would like some chicken soup. Yes, I certainly would. Then I could come to their place for dinner, because they were having chicken soup. So, I walked over there, about one American mile, and ate some delicious chicken soup. One day, Peter’s wife cooked cabbage, and I also liked that. Otherwise, we eat mainly roast or pork loin and potatoes. Lard is not used, except at a few Danish places. We do not have beer unless we brew it ourselves, but there are not too many who do that, and you can’t get anything like Danish hvidøl, because they don’t have any malt.18 Carl’s wife brews some good beer, but not the Danish kind. But it quenches thirst better than the
water that seems to be used everywhere. There’s usually a water bottle on the table instead of a beer mug.

Now I have to stop, because it’s eleven o’clock and high time to go to bed. Alfred gets many thanks for his reports, which I find very amusing. Kristine’s handwriting is not so good, but I enjoy the contents, but will Alfred tell me a little bit next time about how the party went at Rasmus Hansen’s? Mother asked in her last letter how my food and money were holding up. The butter was almost gone on the ocean, but the store clerk had plenty, as well as a couple of good sausages, and we bought a few anchovies in New York. We bought bread wherever we stayed for a while.

Things were not so great with my trunk, for all the clothes were in a mess, and the top hat and those tall boots could not be saved. There was nothing left of the boots, and the hat was dented all over.

I have enough money.

Greet all my friends and acquaintances from me, and I also send my best greetings from your son Christian and Peter and his wife.

The following report was enclosed in the letter above.

First of all, I want to tell you how the farmer I’m living with cultivates the soil.

The fields are plowed in the fall and hibernate through the winter, as at home. When spring comes and people can get into the fields, they harrow the fields three or four times, and it’s hard work to walk behind the harrow in the deep soil. This man has an easier way to do it. Like many others, he has a machine somewhat similar to a ringroller, except that it’s not double and the rings are not thick but around a quarter-inch thick and sharp as knives. It is divided in two, so it can be adjusted to cast the earth together like a plow. Its shape is like this (upper drawing), but it can be adjusted like this (lower drawing), and in this position it casts the earth together while the other one just cuts. It’s so heavy it takes three horses to pull it if it’s to do any good. It is also used to cut up the turf on unplowed land and break up former woodland soil. That’s how the machine works, and of course there is a place to sit and drive.

Christian continued to describe various aspects of the American farming routine in considerable detail, including planting of small grains, maize, and potatoes. He also described the Danish-American way of slaughtering swine, because it was so different from the Danish method.
Raymond Center, the 8th July 1894

Dear Parents,

Now I can tell how a celebration, or picnic, as we call it, is held over here, because on last Wednesday, the 4th of July, it was, as you may know, 118 years since America tore itself loose from England and became independent, and this is the greatest holiday they have in America. On that day, factories stop, and all workers have a free day, which they use to go to celebrations, and there are lots of them all over the whole country, and how this is done in the country I will now tell.

When I was through with the barn work in the morning, I went to my room on the second floor (most houses are two stories high) and changed into my good clothes for the celebration, which was held in a woods belonging to a farmer who is a neighbor to the man where I work, so I did not have far to go.

At the place of celebration, a kind of platform had been put up, with an organ and a number of chairs placed on it, and a couple of tents had been erected, from which they could serve ice cream (it was the same as the vanilla ice cream we have at home) and "pop," a non-alcoholic beverage similar to Swedish soda. You could also get [root] beer, that is, a kind of hvidøl, which was pretty tasteless. Alcohol was not served, and there weren't really any people who were drunk. A long table was set, and those who wanted to could have dinner for fifty cents. The table was set with the finest food you can imagine, but I did not eat dinner there. They had also set up a number of benches where you could sit. Soon, one top buggy after another began to arrive, and both horses and buggy were splendidly decorated with flags. Here, you could see farm hands arrive with their own horse and top buggies (a carriage similar to a children's barouche).

It did not take long to fill the celebration grounds with carriages. Many of them were so covered with flags that you could hardly see the buggy. People got out and tied the horse to a tree. Soon after, a conductor stepped forward and bade us welcome, after which a number of ladies and gentlemen, who had gathered around the organ, which was played by a lady, sang a song, after which the pastor in Raymond Center stood up and prayed a prayer. Then there was another song, and a teacher stood up and read an agreement that was signed between England and America. Another song, and a man stood up and gave a speech that lasted several hours and was, according to what people said, the same one he had given for many years at the same time and place.

I did not stay to hear the end of the speech but rode with Carl and Agnes in their topbuggy to North Cape, about a mile and a half from Center, where there was also a picnic. I believe there were even more people than in Center, and also more entertainment. A
wheel of fortune was spinning and, if you were lucky, you could win a dollar for twenty-five cents. I tried a couple of times and lost. I had better luck at a table where a number of walking sticks were stuck down and, for five cents, you got four rings that you could throw from a certain distance and try to ring one of the sticks. If you could get a ring on one of the sticks, you won it. I threw sixteen times and hit twice, so I won two walking sticks. Another place, you could throw balls at some dolls a certain distance away, and if you hit one, you won a cigar. As in Center, you could also get ice cream, pop, beer, and *kandi*. The music here was somewhat better than in Center. It consisted of four Negroes from Milwaukee, who played bass, guitar, mandolin, and violin. In the evening, they were playing for a dance that was to be at Merchant Spillum’s in North Cape. There was also shooting with shotguns. They shot at a little disk that was thrown in the air by a machine behind an embankment, and the best marksman in the state of Wisconsin was here to shoot, and he could never shoot. Every time a disk was thrown up, he shattered it with his shot.

When we had greeted Peter and family and others we knew, we drove home to Carl’s, where we ate supper and did chores, and after that, we drove to Raymond Center to see the fireworks they were having. It was very beautiful to see, various rockets shot up, also balloons and various other things that are part of fireworks. There were great explosions and shooting, of course.

When we had watched enough of it, Carl and family drove home, and I stayed for a while and looked around until I ran across Peter with his wife and children, who had also come down to see the dramatic events. The two youngest children did not seem to pay any attention to the fireworks and noise this year. Last year, they didn’t like it, and Peter had to drive them right back home. When Peter left, I went home with the feeling that these American celebrations don’t measure up to the Danish with regard to amusements, and with the feeling that I had not really enjoyed myself in the least.

Now, I have described American celebrations as well as I can, but note that I only visited two places. It’s possible that things are different in other places.

I have gotten a new job, as you have probably seen in my letter to Uncle [Jens Olsen], at ten dollars a month until New Year’s. That’s not much, but it is more than I got in my previous job, where I was supposed to pay for my own washing, and this is also a good job, working for people who are good in every way, but the English language is not spoken here.

You have probably received my travel diary by now. Please tell me whether you had to pay any postage due, and if so, how much, because the post office was not certain, when I spoke with them, how much it would cost to send such books, but he thought that
seven cents would probably be enough. The flag that was wrapped around them was intended as a birthday gift to my brother, Alfred. I’m sorry that Kristine and Harald don’t get anything, but they can expect a box to arrive some day with a turtle or some of the red, blue, yellow, and particolor birds that there are many of here, and in return, Harald can probably catch some starlings, larks, nightingales, chaffinches, and don’t forget a cuckoo, because we don’t have any song birds over here. The ones that are here only give out some shrieks that are anything but pleasing.

With this letter, I’m sending a newspaper I subscribe to, so you can get a better insight into conditions over here.\textsuperscript{22} Some time ago, I wrote to Editor Glud and asked him whether we could have \textit{Venstres Folkeblad} sent over here.\textsuperscript{23} Peter, Carl, and I thought we would like to subscribe, but so far, we have not received a reply. If you are in Ringsted sometime soon, I would be pleased if you could go in and ask about it and write to tell me what he says.

I will conclude for this time, because it’s late, and I have to go to bed. Please give my regards to F. Madsen, Madam Læsøe, Peter Larsen’s Hans, and Inger, as well as any others of my acquaintances who would enjoy receiving a greeting from a friend in America.\textsuperscript{24}

In conclusion, much love to you, parents and siblings,
From your son and brother,
Christian Andersen.

Raymond Center, P. O. Box 67, Racine County Vis\{consin\}, Nord Amerika. . .

\textit{Many of Christian’s letters are preserved in their original envelopes. Examination of cancellations shows that the letters normally went from the Raymond post office to New York in two or three days, where they were stamped upon arrival and sent on to Denmark. They usually arrived in Ringsted around ten days later, where they were stamped again and delivered to the proper address in Skee. The whole process generally took less than two weeks. Sometimes, however, there were problems that were not always the fault of the postal service. Christian began the following letter with a couple of paragraphs about letters he hoped his parents had received and wondered whether the Ellis children spent the nickel he gave them instead of buying stamps for one missing letter.}

Raymond Center, the 17\textsuperscript{th} July 1894

Dear Parents!

. . . Now I assume that letter writing will be more steady, because I have gotten a more steady situation. The job I have gotten is as good as one can expect. Only the people are Danish, so I haven’t learned much of the language. My pay is sixty dollars [from now] until 1\textsuperscript{st} January, and if I want to, I can stay here all winter and go to school in return for helping with the chores. The rest of the time I have to my own disposition,
Threshing machines over here are not like the ones back home, except for the two that I read about in *Venstre Folkeblad*, which were exhibited at the farmers’ convention in Randers.

Last Thursday, I helped with the threshing at the farm of P. Hansen’s Knud from [Benløse] Fælled, who rents forty acres not far from here. He planted thirty acres of oats and harvested 1,140 bushels. Threshing is hard work if the wind is against you. When we were finished there, the tractor was hitched to the coal car, and behind that came the threshing machine, and then all hands climbed on board to drive over the stubble and pastures to another farm, where we threshed 364 bushels and still finished early. Now you will have to figure out how much that is in Danish measurements, because I don’t have any tables here.

The drought continues, and it’s terrible. But it’s not as bad here as it is in many other places. We have had 32° Reaumur in the shade and around 40° in the sun. You’ve never seen heat like that in “the old kontri,” as the English say. I don’t have time to write more this time and eagerly await a letter reporting that you have received my travel diary and the rest.

I am enclosing a photograph of Carl’s little Kerry, which I got in order to send it to you, and I also hope that I will soon receive your photographs.

I have not yet sent the money for the newspaper because I can’t get a money order here but will have to go to town for it, where I will soon be, and I’ll buy and send a money order that you can cash at Banken for Ringsted og Omegn (Ringsted and Vicinity Bank).

Friendly regards to you all from
Your son and brother,
Christian Andersen.

P. S. Please tell C. Petersen, to whom I promised to write, that I still have not had time but will write to him in the near future.

Likewise, in my next letter, I will described harvesting methods in more detail. C. A.

Wednesday forenoon

I’m home alone today, because Julius and Margrethe have driven to Racine, so I’ll add a little.

We are in the middle of harvest. Have harvested most of the hay, and much of the barley is cut, along with the rye and wheat, which was done with the binder. We have not had any rain the past three weeks, but burning heat such as you have never experienced at home. The corn, which is so tall in places that it can hide a man, is beginning to droop and wither from it.

If there is anything you want to know about economics or other conditions, just ask. I’ll explain what you ask about as well as I can.

In this letter, I don’t have time to write about conditions, but on Sunday, I’ll write something about dairying over here and send it off on Monday. One of these days, you’ll receive some catalogues for
various machinery with drawings of the machines, so you can understand our machinery in that way. The catalogues are mainly in English, but I will translate a bit of it and write the names of the machines in Danish.

Now, I must conclude by telling that my birthday was celebrated last Sunday at Carl’s, together with Agnes’s birthday and their second wedding anniversary, which was on the eleventh, that is, last Wednesday, but it was celebrated last Sunday. There were quite a few guests, and when they had all left, Carl hitched up the buggy, and he and Agnes drove me home, about an English mile and a quarter.

Greet my friends and acquaintances from me, and greetings to you, my parents, brothers, and sister, from me,

Christian Andersen

Raymond Center P. O. Box 67, Racine County Wis[consin], North Amerika.

N. B. Write soon and tell if you have received the diary, and if you had to pay any postage due, and how much. Christ

If we don’t get some rain soon, what had been a very promising harvest might be small enough. Alfred has not written anything about whether he started Confirmation lessons or not. I’ve just talked to Carl, who has just been here to the dairy with milk, and he asked me to send his regards to you and Uncle Jens.

Best regards, Christian Andersen

N. B. If you can, won’t you please send me Frederik Hansen’s Peter’s address. I think he’s near Vest Union Diongsen [Junction] but don’t have his address, and it wouldn’t help much to write there and ask for F. Hansen’s Peter. Have you received the letter where I tell about P. Hansen’s Anders from Fælleden? Jamie Christ Anderson is my English name.

Rather startlingly, Christian announced at the very end of this long letter that he had changed his name from Jens Christian Andersen to Jamie Christ Anderson.

Contrary to popular myth, name changes generally did not occur at Ellis Island: American immigration officials had no authority to change anybody’s name. The process of americanizing a foreign name was entirely voluntary and was usually done over time in the context of multicultural community values. It was really part of an ongoing process of changing self-identity. First of all, the immigrant discovered that his or her name, which had never been problematic in the past, presented some kind of a problem in America. Maybe it sounded strange or was difficult for Americans to understand or pronounce. Problems of this kind sometimes led immigrants to the conclusion that their names needed to be changed. Before that could be done, however, it was necessary to talk with people, Americans as well as Danish immigrants, browse in books of names, study the American media, and in other ways become familiar with the available
pool of American names and their implications in terms of status, acceptability, and similarity in sound or meaning to the immigrant’s original name. Generally, immigrants continued to use their original name when communicating in their own language and only used the new name when coming in contact with the wider American world. The choice of which name to use on legal documents might remain problematic: some felt constrained to use their original name, while others thought it best to use the new American version. Seldom, however, did the immigrants go through a formal legal process of changing their names.

Christian’s reference to other Danes by using name forms like “F. Hansen’s Peter” is indicative of the fact that naming patterns were changing in Denmark as well as America. For centuries, in rural Danish society, true patronyms had been the most common form of names. Frederik Hansen’s son, Peter, for example, would be Peter Frederiksen, and Frederik Hansen’s daughter would be Kirsten Frederiksdatter. This system of patronyms was incomprehensible to Anglo-Americans, however, who expected sons and daughters to have the same surname as their parents.

Moreover, changes in naming customs were being forced upon the Danish population by government action, creating a legacy of confusion that still existed at the time of immigration. As early as 1771, Danish law had mandated that all infants born in the Duchy of Slesvig be baptized with a hereditary surname as well as a given name. Nearly half a century later, a Danish law of 1828 required each child born in Denmark to be baptized with a surname as well as a given name or names. In the first generation after this Danish law went into effect, the old custom of patronyms continued, except that daughters were baptized with a name ending in –sen instead of –datter, in order to have the same last name as their brothers. In the next generation, however, all kinds of problems began to arise. Many people were poised to continue the practice of patronyms and baptize their children with a surname based on the father’s first name, but a law of 1856 mandated that the surnames given to children under the law of 1828 must remain in the next generation as hereditary family names.

To many Danes, this was a crazy idea. It did not make any sense, for example, to give Frederik Hansen’s son the name of Peter Hansen, because he was the son of Frederik, not the son of Hans. Calling him Peter Hansen would be misleading, because it would give a false impression of whose son he was. So, what should be his name? Some families solved the problem by using the true patronymic as a middle name, followed by the surname-patronymic, and had the child baptized Peder Frederiksen Hansen. In and around Skee, however, they found a simpler solution. In everyday conversation, they simply referred to him as Frederik Hansen’s Peter. That way, you got the full value of the patronymic because you knew whose son he was. Who cared if his legal name was Hans Peter Hansen? You didn’t need to use that legal name in everyday relations.

In America, however, a person needed a name that could be put on an envelope in order to receive a letter. It had to be a name that Americans
were familiar with, one they could understand and pronounce. It certainly
could not contain any odd letters like æ or ø. In short, American customs,
rather than American immigration officials, were what compelled many
Danish immigrants to change their names and give American-sounding
names, rather than Danish names, to their children. (Note by JRC)

Could Christian even remember the legal name of the person that
everybody in Skee referred to as Frederik Hansen’s Peter? In any case, he
had heard that Peter was living in West Union Junction (now Corliss in
Racine County), only a few miles away. Nevertheless, the easiest way for
him to get Peter’s address was to write home to Denmark and ask for it.

Many books have been written about the effects of “chain migration,”
when emigrants were “pulled” across the Atlantic by the influence of
friends and relatives who had emigrated earlier. Some studies of chain
migration have focused upon ties between emigrants from the same family,
who chose to leave at different times. Others have focused on emigration
from a specific locality over time. Christian’s letters show that immigrants
from his home area continued to keep in close touch with each other in
Racine County. The letters show, in other words, that chain migration had
the ability to maintain ties between two small but widely separated
communities on opposite sides of the Atlantic and to be the means for
reconstructing dense old-world networks of friendship and kinship in the
new world.

However, the example of Frederik Hansen’s Peter shows that not
everybody, even in the same general locality, kept in touch with old friends
and neighbors. Nobody Christian knew could provide Peter’s address,
although somebody must have heard that he lived in West Union Junction.
So, the easiest way to reconstruct Christian’s connection with Peter, even
though both of them lived in Racine County, was to send an inquiry home
to Denmark.

Raymond Center, the 22nd July 1894

Dear Parents,

In my last letter, I promised to write about dairying in my next
letter. First of all, I’ll tell a bit about the dairy in Thompsonville,
which is right by the farm of G. Ellis. Only the road separates them.
The dairymen are Danish and his wife Swedish, very nice people, and
at the time when I was working for Ellis, I was their guest nearly
every day, because both of them could tell a great deal about the
dairying business, and they gave me a pretty good insight into
American conditions.32 They had two dairies to manage. The wife
took care of the one in Thompsonville, where they lived, and the
man, one located about six English miles away. The wife won first
prize for butter at the Chicago World’s Fair and the husband second
prize, so I could not have found anyone better to give me
instruction.33
The dairy is almost the same as the proprietary dairies (fællesmejerierne) in Denmark, that is, it is run in the same way and is owned by a rich man who lives in Chicago.  

In the dairy is a milk separator (Swedish), which is driven by steam let in at the base, a steam engine (ten horsepower) that [also] drives the churn and pumps water.  The farmers themselves have to bring the milk to the “factory,” as it is called, because sometimes the roads cannot be driven by large vehicles, so nobody can take on the job of delivering milk, as at home [in Denmark].  The milk is paid for according to its butterfat content.  Delivery of the milk is not done as it is at home.  The can the milk is delivered in is not weighed, but the milk is poured into a tin tub that stands on the scale, and the milk weighed for each farmer runs out through a filter into a large container, from which the milk is pumped up into the separator and then runs through a pipe into a large container from which the farmer can take the [skim] milk.  The [skim] milk is not weighed as at home, and a farmer sometimes takes home much more [skim] milk than he has brought in, but it happens only seldom, because they can only fill their two or three cans, and many take back no milk, so there is plenty for everybody.

Adulteration of milk is quite widespread.  I recall an evening when I was down helping the dairyman with testing.  The milk is not tested at the separator, but they have a testing apparatus that can measure the butterfat content of six farmers’ milk in a couple of minutes.  We tested the milk from two farmers, and the highest percentage was 4.3, while the lowest was 2.1.  That is, there was one farmer who had a lower butterfat content in his milk.  The milk had been skimmed.  The dairyman said, “I have noticed that for some time, but now he’ll be paid for his milk according to its butterfat content.”  Then he wrote to the farm and informed him that he would not be paid for the previous month, and if he stopped adulterating the milk, he would not be reported this time.  The farmer had to take the consequences and miss out on his milk money.  Whether he left he cream in the milk thereafter or not, I do not know, because I have not talked with the dairyman since then, but I assume he did.

At the time when I was in Thompsonville, the price of butter was as low as it had been in the five years the dairyman had been there, only thirteen cents (48½ øre) for first-class butter, and many farmers had to sell their butter for ten cents (38½ øre), but now the price of butter has risen significantly.

Payment is by the month.  They are not paid in cash, but the dairyman writes a check on a bank in Racine in the name of each farmer, and it can be used just like cash.  You don’t have to accept a check for the face value, but if you know the person, it’s as good as cash.  Many false checks are in circulation, but because they only circulate two or three times [before they are cashed at the bank], a
crook is seldom able to pass one, especially because every person who pays with it has to sign his name on it.

Here in Raymond Center, we also have a dairy, which is managed by an unmarried Englishman. This dairy is like a cooperative dairy at home and is owned by the farmers, and all the profits go to them. The dairy is the same size as the one in Thompsonville, but it is growing so fast that I think it will soon have to add another separator. In general, dairying is growing rapidly around here. The milk is not as thin as it is there at home either.

Now I’ve given a brief overview of the dairying business over here, and if you want to know something else that I haven’t written about, just ask.

I want to add that the salary of a dairyman here is fifty dollars a month (187½ kroner per month), 600 dollars a year (2,235 kroner), besides the milk, cream, and butter that he can take for his own use, so it’s a pretty good salary.

You ask whether I have found the telescope to be useful, and my answer is that, if I had not had it, I would not have seen as much as I did on my journey, as you can see now from my travel diary.

I have not sold the horse cloths, because Peter wanted to buy both of them, and he said that it would be in his interest to give me as much as I paid for them, but I said that I did not want to sell them. “I’ll keep one of them myself, and the other one I’ll give to you.” He wanted to pay for it, but I wouldn’t accept any money, because Peter had gone out of his way for me in many ways. Of course, I was not there for more than around four days and did not work, but he has also driven me around on some pretty long trips to look for a job for me.

You also ask whether I learned an English during that month [with the Ellis family]. Considering the length of time and the fact that I was a newcomer, I learned quite a bit, and if I had stayed there all summer, I think that I would have learned enough to get along pretty well among the English. Now, on the other hand, I don’t learn much. Only hear English in the evening at the general store, the shoemaker’s shop, or the smithy, because, although all the proprietors are Danish, quite a few young people gather at those places in the evening, and it will undoubtedly come, especially when I go to school this winter.

Regarding my subscription to Venstres Folkeblad, I can understand that you did not fully approve of my application to Glud, or maybe you mean to Jens Olsen. I assume there must have been a small mistake when I wrote to Glud something like this: Dear Editor Glud, Permit me to inquire whether you send Venstres Folkeblad to subscribers in America. If you do, my aim is to subscribe to it, and I hereby request that you inform either my uncle, Merchant J. Olsen, Allindelille, or me of the price. My address is c/o Mr. P.
I mentioned Uncle’s name so that Glud could speak with him some day, when he was in Ringsted, and tell him the price, because if he had to write to me, I assumed he would not do it because it would cost him 20 øre, and there would also have to be a stamp if he wrote to you. Therefore, I thought that, when Uncle had learned the price, he could have written to us and told us how much it was.

The first shipment of newspapers from Glud arrived with your last letter. Give my regards to Uncle and thank him on my behalf and my cousin’s for putting up the money for the paper. When I wrote to him, I forgot to mention the newspapers, but now, we are actually receiving them, and because all three of us will subscribe to the paper, it will not cost each of us very much. One of the first days in the coming week, I’ll send the money to you and ask you, please, to repay Uncle for his expenses and subscribe to the paper for one year. The money will be sent as a Money Order, or else I will send a check on the bank in Ringsted. More about that in the next letter.

With this letter, I am enclosing the last two newspapers and a number of machinery catalogues, so you can see some of our farm machinery. The enclosed machine is a pulveriser [pulverizer], which I think I mentioned in earlier letters.

Tell me whether what was written about Lauritsen in the newspaper I sent home is true.

We are harvesting, and I can say that we’re about halfway through. A few small farmers have harvested hay, but on the larger farms, about half of it is still out, and now, both barley and oats, rye and wheat are ripe. The barley is cut most places, and stacked a few places. Most of the oats, however, is still standing. All signs point to a good harvest, but, as I wrote in my last letter, we need rain. If it doesn’t come soon, the corn won’t amount to anything.

I have learned to milk as well as any milkmaid back home, but at first, most of the milk went up my sleeves or into my pantlegs in a way that was completely incomprehensible to me.\(^{40}\)

Unemployment is great over here. In Racine, several factories are closed, and as a result, large number of workers go around without work, and what will happen to them over the winter? They will either become thieves and robbers, or else they will starve to death, because they have not earned anything this summer and will not have anything to live on during the winter.

The conclusion to this long letter is missing.

Christian continued to write faithfully to his parents for the rest of the year 1894 and into the new year, until he had written a total of twenty-two letters that have been preserved. All of them are printed in Pia Viscor’s.
Danish edition of the letters, though only a selection has been included here. The series concludes with this letter:

North Cape, the 21st January 1895

Dear Parents,

Received your letter of 26 December and 3 this month, for which I thank you. I see that you have received the presents that I sent with Peter. They were not expensive, and I bought them and sent them to bring you joy, and I see by your letter that this was successful, and that makes me glad.

You ask me whether there is anything I might want from home that Peter could bring over here. There is one thing; that fortune-telling and entertainment book that you remember I had, and if none of my siblings use Jensen’s or Eskesen’s song book, please send one of them—preferably the latter.

Otherwise, we have everything over here that you have at home, including spinning wheels and cards. Yes, it’s true that I don’t use either one, but if you want a twist of Danish chewing tobacco, you can get it from the shoemaker in Center, though I don’t use that, either, but honestly, you might ask Peter to remember to buy me a rubber shag tobacco pouch of the kind where the opening closes by itself. I’ll settle with him when he get back here.

You write that you have had a very mild winter. We’ve had the same until now, but today, we have a fierce snowstorm, and it’s bitter cold. Last night, we had a pretty big thunderstorm.

I haven’t seen any horses with the gait that Peter described, nor have any of the old farmers I’ve talked to seen it. I’m not saying that it doesn’t exist, but—.

I am still far from being English, and what I thought I knew more about was American politics, which Peter, as he said, “Didn’t want to bother with,” but which is of great interest to me, and therefore, I follow it as well as I am able to.

I don’t think I will study anything except farming for the next year or so.

I have been at Carl’s from the third or fourth until the fifteenth of this month but have now gotten a job with Jens Frederiksen, the man I drove with from Racine when I first arrived. He is the leading man among the Danes in this area, has been chairman of the church council, and will probably continue for another term. I’m to get five dollars a month. There’s not much to do except care for the livestock, which we do together, and help him load firewood, two loads a day, which he drives to North Cape. Today, we helped each other fire up stoven [the stove]. That’s not hard, either. He is very nice and talkative, so I also get some good insight into politics. He has a daughter who teaches me English evenings, so things are going very well. Last Saturday evening, we went to a big party at the home of J. Frederiksen’s brothers, who have a big farm together.
Carl and family were also there, and the guests were those we at home would call prominent folks, so I've been introduced into society here. It's not the custom to have large parties here, but some of the Danes have formed a group for that purpose and take turns hosting big parties in the winter. I attended one such party early in January at the home of Mr. Flinker, Carl's wife's uncle. That time, I brought my harmonica, and you should have seen how the old housewives could dance the old Danish tunes. The men played cards, while the young people played various games. It was loads of fun.

Now, I will stop for this time with best regards to you from your son, Christian Andersen, and Charley and P. Jacobsen.

Part of this letter is written with a gold pen. It's the best pen I've ever had in my hand and can last a lifetime.

Greet Peter and other acquaintances and ask him to report to me from New York as to the day he expects to come to Racine.

This ends the series of letters that Christian sent home to his parents and siblings during the first nine months of his stay in Racine County. He continued to write, but his later letters have not survived, except for one, dated 15 April 1896, in which he tells about spring work on the farm and comments on the durability of the clothing that his mother was still sending to him from Denmark.

Thereafter, the letters simply ceased. In 1899, Christian's brother, Alfred, emigrated to America. The family heard from them occasionally and knew that Christian's youngest daughter, Leona, was born in Salt Lake City in 1903. Four years later, in 1907, his sister, Kristine, wrote to an address in Salt Lake City, pleading for Christian to write, but her letter was returned because the address did not exist. She had not heard from Alfred, either, for more than three years.

When Christian's father died in 1923, his siblings in Denmark reported to the probate court that there were two sons in America, namely Christian and Alfred. The family said that Alfred was not married but had a store in Grant, Montana, and submitted a letter of 19 January 1918 in documentation. Regarding Christian, they could only submit two letters dated 1898, which indicated that he had moved to Idaho, was married, and owned a dairy. They also knew that he had two children. The probate court was unable to make contact with either brother, and so, the estate was divided among the widow and her three children in Denmark. When Christian's mother died in 1940, she left no estate, so the court made no attempt to locate her sons in America.

However, recent historical research has been more successful. We now know that Christian went to work in 1898 for a farmer named John Anderson in Yorkville, Racine County. This farmer's wife, Jennie, was the daughter of immigrants from Scotland, and she had a sister named Margaret May Vass in Mukwonago, Waukesha County, Wisconsin.
Margaret came to visit, and before long, she and Christian were engaged. He set out for Idaho to start a dairy but returned to marry Margaret on 13 June 1899 in Waukesha.

That same year, when Alfred emigrated to America, he indicated that he was heading for his brother in Soda Springs, Idaho. The U. S. census of 1900 showed that Alfred was living with Christian and Margaret in Georgetown, Idaho, not far from the larger town of Soda Springs. Christian was the only dairyman in the small community of 434 inhabitants, where he and Alfred were two of only twelve Danes in town. Later reports indicate that his intention was to concentrate on cheese production. The Bear Lake Valley was ranching country, however, not dairying country, and the dairy was not a success. After a few years, they gave up and moved to Salt Lake City, where Christian managed a small hotel. Alfred drifted off towards Montana, where he ran a trading post for a time, then worked as a farmhand and, later, in a garage. Apparently, he never married.

Christian and Margaret had two daughters. Bernice was born on 4 August 1900 in their apartment above the dairy they owned in Georgetown. Leona was born in Salt Lake City on 28 November 1903. By 1907, however, the marriage of their parents was on the rocks. Margaret’s father sent money so she and the girls could return to Wisconsin, but Christian took the money. The father sent more money, and this time, Margaret and the daughters left by train for her home. With the help of her family, Margaret raised the girls, and she lived in Mukwonago until her death in 1964.

Neither she nor the daughters ever had any further contact with Christian. Jens Christian Andersen, alias Jamie Christ Anderson, vanished from the historical record, into the dynamic and sometimes bitterly disappointing vastness of America.

1 America was falling into deep depression with bank failures and massive unemployment as a result of the Panic of 1893.
3 S/S Slavonia of Scandia Line was built in 1883, and carried twenty first-class and 550 third-class passengers, see <http://www.ellisisland.org>. The Scandia Line, a subsidiary of the Hamburg-America Line, advertised low fares from Scandinavia, see <http://www.norwayheritage.com/>, accessed 11 September 2008 (JRC). All notes are by Pia Viscor except those signed JRC.
4 The passenger list shows two Finns, a few Norwegians, and the rest more or less equally divided between Danes and Swedes.
5 Christian Hansen was born on 1 May 1861 in St. Bendt’s Landsogn, Ringsted, and emigrated in 1883 from Haraldsted but must have returned home by 1894.
6 Birthe Marie Nielsen (born 1864 in Haraldsted) had immigrated to Racine in 1890, and three years later, her mother, the weaver Ane Hansen (born
ca. 1837 in Soderup) came over to live with her, bringing her two foster children, aged eleven and fifteen.

7 Lars Peder Pedersen (born 1866 in Haraldsted) had immigrated to Racine in 1889 with his bride, Christine Marie Christensen (born 1870 in Thorby). After a short time in Racine, they moved to Spanish Forks, Utah, where her brother was mayor, but they did not like living in a Mormon community and the fact that her brother had several wives, so they returned to Racine and spent the rest of their days there.

8 Marie was married to Andrew / Anders Thomsen, who was born around 1869 in Denmark and immigrated in 1891. Lars Frederik Nielsen (born 1868 in Slots Bjergby Mark) emigrated in 1887 from Haraldsted, settled in Racine, and married Ellen, who was born in Indiana.

9 These were Ane Hansen’s foster children.

10 Jens / James Frederiksen was born in 1846 and was a Danish farmer in Raymond Township, married to a Dane.

11 Peter Jacobsen emigrated in 1880 and returned to Denmark in 1884 to get his fiancé, but Christian was only seven or eight at that time, so no wonder he did not recognize Peter ten years later.

12 Clearly, Christian had not yet mastered English weights and measures.

13 Jens Peter Hansen (born 1862 in Valselille) emigrated in 1883 and, when Christian met him, was married to Ane Marie Christiansen (born 1861 in Haraldsted). She had immigrated in 1884 and settled in Racine with her first husband and their son, but when her husband died, she became Jens Peter Hansen’s housekeeper in Raymond Township, and later, they were married.

14 Søren Hansen’s daughter, Bodil Marie Hansen (born 1863 in Benløse Fælled) emigrated in 1887 with her husband, Jens Nielsen (born 1863 in Allindemagle), and two children. They rented a farm in Raymond Township, and the family grew by another four children in the following years.

15 Griffith Ellis and his wife, Mary, were both born in Wisconsin of Welsh parents.

16 The Plurality of Inhabited Worlds (Beboede Verdener: Populaire astronomiske Betragtninger over Himmellegemernes Beboelighed) was an immensely popular work by the French astronomer, Camille Flammarion (1842-1925), first published in 1862 and later in many editions and languages. It linked belief in the transmigration of souls with extraterrestrial life forms (JRC).

17 Bøllemælk (warm custard) was made of warm milk flavored with cinnamon and grated lemon peel, thickened with egg yolks, and served warm over toast or dumplings (JRC).

18 Hvidøl (mørk hvidøl) was a dark, rather sweet, non-alcoholic beverage that was an everyday lunch drink with open-faced sandwiches (JRC).

19 In a postscript, Christian added, “That store clerk was born in Vendsyssel but has lived in Slesvig most of the time since he became a clerk.”

20 A ringroller (ringtromle) had a double series of overlapping wheels and was used to pack the top layer of soil after planting. The American implement Christian described is a disk harrow (JRC).

21 George Spillum was born 1840 in Norway, immigrated in 1858, and was married in America to a Swedish woman.
Many newspapers and magazines in Danish were available in Racine County, which makes it impossible to tell which one he sent. Later, he mentioned two popular Danish-Norwegian newspapers, *Skandinaven*, which was published in Chicago, and *Decorah-Posten* from Decorah, Iowa.

The Newspaper, *Venstres Folkeblad* (Venstre’s People’s Press) was affiliated with the Liberal (Venstre) political party and edited by H. Glud. (JRC)

Ferdinand Madsen’s son, Hans, later emigrated and settled in Racine. Madam Læsøe was Christian’s teacher, Johanne Camille Steen, who married a mill builder, C. C. S. Læsøe. Hans was probably Hans Christian Nielsen, born 1877 in Jystrup. Inger, who was named in several of the letters, was born 1870 in Skee as the daughter of a farmer, Peder Larsen, and later married a farmer in Kværkeby, Jacob Frederiksen (born 1869 in Kirke Fjenneslev).

It gets hot in Wisconsin in the summer, and Christian’s figure of 32º Reaumur equals 104º Fahrenheit, which is credible. However, 40º Reaumur equals 122º Fahrenheit, and that seems a bit too high, even for a Midwestern summer (JRC).

Carrie Jacobsen was born on 17 November 1893.

C. Petersen has not been identified.

Julius (born 1888) was the son of Peter and Margrethe Jacobsen.

Christian calls the wagon a *kalechevogn*, i. e., a barouche.

Ferdik Hansen and his wife, Kirsten Andersen, farmers in Skee, had a son named Hans Peter (born 1868), who emigrated in 1888 and settled in the city of Racine, where he became sewer foreman. He was married twice, both times with Danish women.

See the letter of 24 April 1894.

Their names were Martin and Mathilda Mortensen. For the memoirs of a Danish-American dairyman of this same era, who was trained at Iowa Agricultural College in Ames (now Iowa State University), see *The Bridge* 2002, 25/2: 93-98.

The Chicago Columbian Exposition of 1893 was often called the Chicago World’s Fair.

A Danish *fællesmejeri* of the late nineteenth century was generally owned by a single person, just as Christian describes it. Anybody, even small milk producers, could bring in milk. There were also cooperative dairies (*andelsmejerierne*) in Denmark, which were owned by the milk producers, and where each of them was obligated to deliver a certain quota of milk.

The continuous milk separator was a Danish invention. It was invented at Magleklde Maskinfabrik in Roskilde by L. C. Nielsen and others, who took out their first patent in 1878 and began to manufacture it. At the same time, engineers in other countries were working to develop other types of milk separators. In 1890, Alfa Laval in Sweden began to manufacture an improved model, invented in Germany by Clemens von Bechtolsheim, which used a stack of conical disks to separate cream from milk faster and more effectively. (JRC)

The separator removes the cream from the milk. The dairy retains the cream to make butter, and the farmer takes the skim milk home, where it went into feed for swine.

Checking accounts at banks were not used for everyday transactions in Denmark. Danes generally kept their money in postal savings accounts or
local savings and loan associations and withdrew cash to pay their bills.  
Danish banks of that era were commercial banks and were not involved 
in retail banking services.  Consequently, the use of checks was not 
familiar to most Danes, who had no experience with them.  (JRC)

Christian’s calculations are based on $1.00 = 3.75 kroner.

The 1900 census for Raymond Township showed 191 natives of Denmark 
in a total population of 1600.  All told, Danes and their families made up 
around thirty percent of the township’s population.  The natives of 
Denmark included a merchant, a shoemaker, and a blacksmith, 
Christian’s dairyman friend, a mason, a miller, four carpenters, eighty-
two farmers, fourteen farmhands, three landlords, two landladies, one 
maid servant, three capitalists, and a total of seventy-six married women, 
children, widows, and widowers without listed occupations.

Milking was women’s work in nineteenth-century Denmark and men’s 
work in the American Midwest.  (JRC)

Pia Viscor, Jeg rejser til Amerika: En rejsedagbog og en samling udvandrerbreve 
fra Racine, Wisconsin, USA (Copenhagen: Books on Demand GmbH, 2007). 
See the review below.

The fortune-telling book may have been Ellen Signekones Spaabog (Ellen the 
Fortune Teller’s Foretelling Book), a popular, sixteen-page pamphlet that 
went through many editions and explained how to foretell the future 
with cards and coffee grounds.  K. Jensen, Sangbog til Brug i Skoler, Hjem 
og ved Folkemøder (Song Book for School, Home, and Popular Meetings) 
got through many editions in the 1880’s.  Morten Eskesen, Lærken: 
Børnesangbog til Oplivelse i Hjem og Skole (The Lark: Children’s Song Book 
for Home and School), was published in Odense, 1878.

The normal gaits of a horse are walk, trot, and gallop.  Sometimes the 
canter is added as a fourth, while others consider it a form of the gallop. 
Some breeds have other natural gaits, such as the smooth tölt and rapid 
flugskeið of the Icelandic Horse, the “running walk” of the Tennessee 
Walking Horse, the “fox trot” of the Missouri Fox trotter, the lateral 
“rack” of the Five-Gaited American Saddlebred, and various forms of 
paso or pace of the Peruvian Paso.  Gaits all vary in the sequence of setting 
the hooves to the ground.  Some American horse breeders of the late 
nineteenth century cultivated unusual gaits, and Peter may have seen one 
that was not familiar to Christian and his informants.  (JRC)

Claus Flinker, a German, and his Danish-born wife, Carrie/Caroline, had 
a farm in Raymond Township.  They had married around 1871 but had 
no children.  She seems to have been related to Carl Jacobsen’s wife, 
Agnes, on her mother’s side.
REVIEWS


If you want a fuller version in the original Danish of the first article in this issue of *The Bridge*, then this slender volume is for you. It contains an expanded text with more illustrations, a bibliography, and an index. The book is in an attractive, softbound format.

This book is a pioneering study of Danish-American community building in the era of immigration. In an earlier study, published in *The Bridge* 2002, Volume 25, Number 2, pages 11-45, Viscor described the process of emigration from a cluster of communities on the Skjoldenæsholm estate in central Sjælland. She showed that conversion to the Baptist faith became a "push" factor that motivated Danes to emigrate and that "chain migration," established by correspondence and other contacts across the Atlantic, became the dynamic process of the movement from one continent to another.

In this book, Viscor focuses the other side of "chain migration," the "pull" factor that drew immigrants who knew each other to settle together in America. She shows how Danish Baptists from central Sjælland came together with other Danish immigrants in the Racine area to reconstruct a Danish-American community reflecting the Danish communities they had left behind.

Viscor documents the beginning of Danish settlement in the Racine area and follows the chain of connections between the early settlers, demonstrating how they attracted other Danes to come to Racine, and those in turn attracted still others.

This book also sketches out a broad overview of Danish immigration and explains the role that the Racine area played in Danish settlement throughout the upper Middle West.

By concentrating her research on the trans-Atlantic links that connected local communities in Denmark with a local community in America, Viscor helps the reader to understand another aspect of the background to Danish-American community building as it was presented in Torben Grøngaard Jeppesen’s splendid study of Dannebrog, Nebraska.

The book can be ordered from the author. See her website at <http://www.viscor.net/Pia%20Viscor%20publications.html>

J. R. Christianson
Nothing gets closer to the minds of our immigrant ancestors than the letters they wrote themselves in their own language to friends and relatives on both sides of the Atlantic. These letters expressed in their own words their concerns and experiences, the hopes and dreams that inspired them, and the hard realities of leaving home and finding a place in a new world.

You say you have no letters by your immigrant ancestors? Then you should turn to the letters of Jens Christian Andersen, who immigrated to Racine County, Wisconsin, in 1894. You will not be disappointed. This reviewer has read many letters by immigrants from Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and other lands, but few are as interesting, well-written, and observant as his.

Christian grew up as the son of husmænd, small-scale farmers, on the edge of the village of Skee in Haraldsted Parish in central Sjælland. Denmark had the best public education system in Europe, and Christian received excellent schooling through the eighth grade. Then, he followed the usual pattern of rural life and went to work as a farmhand. However, he soon formed the ambition of becoming a dairyman. This was a new occupation in rural Denmark, growing out of the invention of the milk separator. To become a dairyman seemed an impossible dream for a poor boy from a Danish croft. In America, however, freedom and opportunity were said to be on every hand, and Christian decided that America was the place for him. He would emigrate and become a dairyman in America.

Christian was only seventeen. He promised his parents that he would keep a diary and write home regularly to tell of his experiences, and he kept his promise. Some of his marvelous letters have been printed in translation in this issue of The Bridge, but those letters are only a sample of the treasures in this little book. It contains even more letters, together with many more illustrations, including maps, photographs of Christian’s boyhood home, and pictures of family members and other people mentioned in the letters. The book also includes background information on Christian’s family networks in Denmark and America. Extensive endnotes help to put the letters into context.

If you read Danish and are interested in the era of immigration that brought so many of our ancestors from Denmark to America, you will enjoy this book. It can be ordered from the author’s website at <http://www.viscor.net/Pia%20Viscor%20publications.html>.

J. R. Christianson
Danish American Heritage Society

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