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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 the news of Danish organizations and activities in the US 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issues of The Bridge have also contained Danish-American memoirs, essays, short stories, collections of letters, and historical documents.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 Danish or English. Please submit electronic versions of the article, endnotes, and illustrations in separate files in MS Word or a comparable format, preferable 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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Arnold N. Bodtker—one of the founding fathers of the Danish American Heritage Society and The Bridge—wrote his autobiography. These remembrances have never yet been published and it is a privilege for us to be able to share the first four chapters with our readers. It is a comprehensive story about a young boy’s childhood and adolescence in a Danish community in rural surroundings. Arnold was born in 1904 and he grew up in a large family which also included his uncle and one of his grandmothers. Life was not always easy for the family who lost their two eldest children; Kjerstine died at the age of 9 and Christian died at the age of five impaired by meningitis. The readers get an interesting insight in life on a farm in the early 1900s from a boy’s perspective. Furthermore we are introduced to fascinating memories about Arnold’s experience at Grade School as well as the High School and to his recollections of social life at the Danish community and its interaction with other groups of immigrants. The remembrances are introduced by Egon Bodtker and Gerald Rasmussen. The Danish colony Danebod in Tyler—the famous Danish settlement in southwest Minnesota—can celebrate its 125th anniversary this year. It is therefore very appropriate for us to present the article about Eventyrmanden (the storyteller). His name was Christian Hansen, and he was one of the pioneers of Danebod, and a devoted storyteller, well-known by all in the community, children as well as grown-ups. The article is written by the grandson, Erik S. Hansen, who tells us the story of his grandfather’s life which is intertwined with the history of Danebod. Also Hansen presents some of his grandfather’s enjoyable stories that justify why he was called eventyrmanden. Furthermore Hansen tells about the tradition of Danish folk tales, many of which were collected by the teacher and folklorist Evald Tang Kristensen. As we wanted to bring the two articles together in this issue of remembrances, there has been no room for any book reviews this time. We hope for forgiveness for this editorial decision. Finally we bring a couple of pages with news from The Danish Emigration Archives by Torben Tvorup Christensen. A project of
digitizing the archival holdings has been launched and from July 2012 a great deal of the material—letters, manuscripts, photos films etc. will be available for researchers on the internet.
Contributors to This Issue

Egon Bodtker is the present president of the Danish American Heritage Society and former editor of The Bridge and his co-writer Gerald Rasmussen is a former president and a longtime boardmember of the DAHS.

Erik S. Hansen has recently retired from his position as Dean of Work at Sterling College in Vermont. Although retired Hansen still does college field programs abroad with students. Hansen is a frequent contributor to Church and Life.

Torben Tvorup Christensen was the first recipient of the DAHS’s Edith and Arnold N. Bodtker Grant for Research or Internship. Christensen was awarded a Master’s Degree from the University of Aalborg in 2003. From 2011 he has worked at The Danish Emigration Archives in Aalborg as a project manager.
# Table of Contents

**ARTICLES**

- Egon Bodtker and Gerald Rasmussen…………………………………….. 11
  *Introduction*

- Arnold N. Bodtker………………………………………………………….. 12
  *Remembrances.*
  *Early Years by the River: Growing Up in the Junction City Danish Community, 1904-23*

- Erik S. Hansen……………………………………………………………….. 76
  *Christian Hansen Eventyrmanden – The Fairy Tale Man and the Jutland Storyteller Tradition*

- Torben Tvorup Christensen………………………………………………… 99
  *News from The Danish Emigration Archives*
Introduction
by
Egon Bodtker and Gerald Rasmussen

This article contains the first four chapters of Arnold Bodtker’s autobiography. When preparing the autobiography for publication we decided that these chapters offered a significant piece of local history which deserved to be printed independently of the complete work. It tells a “coming of age” story that is an insightful and valuable contribution to the understanding of rural life in general, and Junction City, Oregon, in particular, from Arnold’s birth in 1904 until his high school graduation in 1923.

Arnold possessed a curious and perceptive mind as well as an excellent memory. He wrote, not just to tell us the story, but also to teach us about the past.

This story is not just about Arnold, though to be sure, he is at the center of it. He also writes about the life around him and informs us about the farming practices and the social life of his parents and other immigrants from Denmark with whom they almost exclusively socialized. He writes about the interaction between the Danish immigrant colony-folk and the mostly non-Danish residents of Junction City and the surrounding area. We perceive assimilation taking place through Arnold’s observations. We also enjoy, vicariously, the events he remembers which helped him grow and mature, as he participated in activities offered by the school and community life in town.

These four chapters are tightly contained within the short time span of Arnold’s childhood and youth. Geographically, the entire story takes place within the corridor between his parent’s farm and two miles straight west to Junction City.

It was not Arnold’s intention to publish these chapters as a separate article. Consequently, he did not write a conclusion. We will not presume to write it for him.
Remembrances

Early Years by the River: Growing Up in the Junction City Danish Community, 1904-23

by

Arnold N. Bodtker

Chapter I: Early Days

I was born December 5, 1904, in Junction City, Oregon, on the farm, which later will be referred to as the "lower place." Quite often my father called it "Sibirien." (This is the Danish word for Siberia.) My memories from that place, where I lived my first five years, are spotty now, but nevertheless vivid

My parents, Hans Peter Nielsen Bodtker, and Susanne Cathrine (Jacobsen) Bodtker, were Danish immigrants. They had been farming at Maple Park, just south of Chicago, Illinois. They had heard that the prospects for farming, dairying in particular, were much better around Coos Bay, Oregon, than in the Midwest. So early in 1902 they sold their operation, and with their daughter Kjerstine, and a few personal belongings, set out by train for Oregon. It was a weeklong trip. Toward the end of the journey, the train stopped at Junction City for fuel, water, and switching to a train to Coquille near the coast. It was quite a long wait, and an occasion for "a little looking around." Their attention was directed to a notice in the depot that a Danish colony was in the making here. The project was under the leadership of A.C. Nielsen, a realtor. They found out that he was negotiating for an option to purchase a block of 1600 acres, just east of town, which would then be sub-divided into smaller tracts of twenty to eighty acres for sale to Danish immigrants.

My folks were interested since they had no firm assurance that a desirable farm would be available in the Coos Bay area. A decision had to be made promptly, before the train pulled out. In conferring with Nielsen, my father learned that he could not make a firm commitment regarding any of the proposed tracts since his option
had not been completed. However, he found out that an adjacent parcel of land belonging to a family by the name of Cook was for sale. It seemed to be a promising tract, 160 acres, though much of it was occupied by the Willamette River and its meander, but it also had fine river bottom soils. A deal was made as my father demonstrated a trait that would come to the fore now and then throughout his life—taking chances and acting promptly. It became the farm on which I was born and would spend my first five years. The experiences here would shape the family indelibly. (A.C. Nielsen finally obtained the option and many Danish immigrants came to settle here in the next twenty years, making it the colony he hoped for.)

Hans P.N. Bodtker, Arnold’s father

As my mind wanders back to those early years by the river, I try to visualize the family unit of which I was a part. I am forced to
conclude that it must have been a bit rugged for my folks, although I was almost oblivious to that part of it. When they acquired the place in 1902, there was a small four-room cabin on the land and a couple of sheds located not far apart on a gravelly ridge, where they were relatively safe from the winter high waters. My earliest recollections of the family unit include—in addition to my father and mother—a sister, Kjerstine, and brothers, Christian and Joen. Also living with us was my grandmother (called Bedstemor) Cathrine Jacobsen, and my uncle (called Morbror) Andreas Jacobsen. I don’t know when my grandmother and uncle came to live with us, but I can’t remember them not being there. Bedstemor lived in the house with us, and Andreas slept in a shack under a large maple tree a short distance south of our house, but he boarded with the family.

The land my folks acquired had recently been logged over for the Douglas and grand firs, leaving most of it covered with stumps and debris from the logging. I remember my father saying that when they moved to this place he could walk across the land without touching the ground, so thickly covered was most of it with logging debris and stumps. This presented a formidable task, which was tackled at once in order to get some ground ready for planting when spring came.

Soon the cabin was remodeled and an addition was built, adding two bedrooms and a living room. There was a porch the length of the new addition. There was a lean-to shed at the entrance of the old part, used for firewood, storage, and the cream separator.

There was a large shed to the north of the house that became the barn. Even with a lot of fixing it was unsatisfactory, and a new barn was needed. My father had a complete set of carpentry tools and was skilled in their use, which was fortunate, so he did most of this remodeling himself. After the new barn was built, I thought it was an enormous structure. It housed the horses and hogs and had a cement floor and stanchions for the cows. There was a storage place in the center for potatoes and a hay mow overhead. I remember that its completion was celebrated with a barn warming picnic with neighbors and friends.

The ever-present Willamette River colored our family life in many ways. It abounded with fish which pleased my mother (a
native of the Faroe Islands), and provided relaxation now and then for my father. The river area attracted game: water fowl (ducks, geese, and, occasionally, cranes) and also upland game (grouse, native pheasants and rabbits), all of which provided a welcome variety to the family diet. I remember my mother sometimes saying that it would taste good to have a little game. Then my father would take his shotgun with him to where he was going, an enjoyable chore for him always was to bring home something for the table.

![Susane Jacobsen, Arnold’s mother](image)

Each year there were floods. When the river rose to its peak, which might occur two or three times a year, there was extra work to do. The buildings themselves were situated on knolls, with raised foundations, so that water could not enter, but often there would be water between the buildings, requiring rubber boots. Preparations were always made for these occasions. Fences were put down or moved so as not to restrict the water flow, livestock
were put on the high ground, boats were caulked, etc. My father became a good boatman, fortunately for the rest of us. I presume that my uncle Andreas was also quite adept with a boat. One time the water became so high that the outhouse was separated from the dwelling, and my father had to carry the smaller and helpless ones back and forth.

Shortly after arriving in Junction City, my father wrote to his next younger brother, Peter, who also had been farming near Chicago. I think it had been agreed that he would tell of the opportunities for farming in Oregon, the result being that Peter and his family came to Junction City later and acquired a farm nearby. Peter married Marie, an older sister of my mother. With this family, their children, grandmother, and Uncle Andreas we were a close-knit family group.

Another younger brother, Jørgen, had also immigrated to the USA in the 1890s. He went to Alaska to seek his fortune, perhaps as a part of the Klondike Gold Rush. While there he became ill with a fever and came to Seattle where he died. Whether any of his brothers, Hans and Peter, saw him before he died is not known. He was buried in the Danish Cemetery west of Junction City, but it is not known if funeral services were held for him in Junction City. There are two letters extant, noting that he had contact with his brothers. He was born in 1870 and died in 1907. He never married.

The river, especially at high water stage, brought anxious times. One time when the river was rising, Andreas decided to visit the Peter Bodtkers. The regular crossing of the slough between our place and the road to the rest of the neighborhood was flooded, so he took a boat and crossed near the Hentze place, where he docked the boat and proceeded on foot for his visit. He was gone longer than expected, so Bedstemor walked up to where Andreas had crossed to await his return. Here she saw a capsized boat downstream from the crossing. She became frantic and ran back to the house and told my mother what she had found. They both rushed around to find my father to tell him of the mishap. This was before the telephone. I was tagging along during the excitement. There was wailing by my grandmother and mother, with my father trying to calm things. As luck would have it, Andreas soon showed up on the other side. What had happened was that after he had
crossed the stream, he had docked the boat without securely tying it to a tree. After he had left for the visit the rising water had swept the boat away and against a floating log where it overturned. I don't know the words exchanged, but they were rather loud. However, for me, it was an exciting episode.

Andreas Jacobsen, Arnold’s uncle

There was a grim side to the presence of the river, especially for my mother. It was her constant worry that with the swift and deep water so near, one of us; either my brother Joen or I might fall in and drown.

The river at flood stage kept everyone alert and often in its meandering would endanger fences, livestock, and buildings. In
those days the river was used to float logs downstream to saw-mills. Men, often with horses, would work to keep the logs from lodging on gravel bars. I recall that one stormy night when everyone was in bed my folks were awakened by the call of a person in distress. My father and my uncle went to the rescue of a logger who was marooned on some logs in the river. It took a boat, but soon the grateful fellow was in the house, and my mother and grandmother were giving him coffee and food, while his clothes were drying.

The Spaulding Logging Company was in charge of floating the logs downstream to the mill. There were times when a couple of loggers with a team of large Clydesdale horses would stop over at our place—I believe it was prearranged—to rest and feed their horses and get food for themselves. I was impressed by the size of the horses with their huge hairy legs. My mother had a hen with a brood of variegated colored chicks, and they would roam around to pick up morsels of grain dropped on the ground as the horses ate. All of them were crushed by the feet of these large lumbering beasts. She cried at the loss. Even so, I believe the loggers were welcomed because it provided some ready cash.

I don't know what money resources my folks had when they arrived. I recall hearing that $800 was at their command, which might be considered a tidy sum in those days. Anyway, my father bought a span of mules, a wagon, plow, and harrow, and some cows and heifers. He regretted the purchase of the mules, which he said had their own ideas as to when it was time to start or stop. He soon got a team of horses more tractable and versatile than the mules. My father was now 37 years old and my mother 26, but I have the impression that the outlook to them was bright. Land was being cleared, livestock acquired, crops planted. Everything must have required hard manual labor. I noted how strong my father was and how that strength was often tested. Though he had horses there was much chopping, lifting and lugging by hand. Especially, I remember my father carrying a big sack of potatoes (100 pounds, I guess) from the field to the barn, a task that had to be repeated many times. The potatoes had been hand planted in soil where the logging debris, and perhaps stumps, had been removed. Before and after all this field work there were the tasks associated with livestock—feeding, stalling, milking, disposing of manure, and cleaning, egg gathering,
milk separating, and "you name it." In the beginning my mother helped both in the field and with the livestock chores. Later on, she was unable to do this, but my uncle helped, though he had a poultry enterprise needing his attention. One time there was a hired man, George Klinge, a teen-ager, who helped with the planting and harvesting.

The spendable income came from butterfat, eggs, an occasional veal, mohair, potatoes, and dry beans. Sometimes there would be a little cash from cottonwood sold and delivered to the excelsior mill in Junction City. The cottonwood trees (referred to as balsam and pronounced "bam"), many of which grew along the meander of the river, were felled, peeled, split and cut in cordwood lengths (eight feet), and stacked to dry for a season. Sometimes my father would find time to prepare the wood and sometimes there would be a woodchopper around who specialized in this kind of work who would be hired. With the delivery of the wood to the mill, my father developed a routine that could be accommodated with the farm chores. He would load the wagon, which generally held a cord (4x4x8) in the evening, and then in the morning haul it to the mill, a distance of two miles. The round trip, including loading and unloading, took most of the day. I don't know what the returns were for this commodity, but it was a welcome addition to the otherwise sparse income.

My father had Angora goats, mostly because they were good at killing and controlling brush, besides being sheared for the mohair, and the kids were considered fine food. I was afraid of them. I recall the time I accompanied my uncle, Andreas, to check on the goats and bring them salt. We had to ford a slough, which was a thrill. When we got to the goat pasture my uncle put me on a tree stump and told me to wait while he went to place the salt. A couple of those horned and long-whiskered creatures stood on their hind legs and gave me a close-up look. I yelled for help and my uncle came to rescue me.

Another interesting scene with these goats was when Billy Michael came to shear them. He was a large man and wore a big greasy apron when he sheared. Sitting on a bench, my father and uncle would bring the goats to him, he would grab the goat and place it on its back in his lap, and with hand shears, handled with
great dexterity, and he soon rid the goat of its mohair. My mother complained a little about this operation because Billy was actually soaked in the grease from the mohair, and after he had been in the house to eat he left almost a pool, my mother said, of oil which was tough to remove. (Billy Michael lived a long time in the area of Lancaster where Diana grew up. She remembers him from her childhood when he was still shearing sheep, and maybe goats if any were around.)

Cathrine Winther Jacobsen, Arnold’s maternal Grandmother

There was considerable variety in the farming operation showing that my folks were innovators of a kind. They planted an interesting orchard of about two acres, which was somewhat of a
wonder for many years. The orchard contained a variety of trees and bushes: 1) Royal Ann, Bing, and Lambert cherries, 2) Gravenstein, Winter Banana, Bismarck, Glory Monday, and Baldwin apples, 3) Crawford peaches, 4) Bartlett pears, 5) quince, 6) green and purple grapes, 7) red and yellow raspberries, 8) red and yellow currants, 9) Mammoth blackberries, and 10) a berry that resembled the later Loganberry that was called Phenomenal. They subscribed to a farm paper The Rural New Yorker, an unusual paper in the community. Evidence is that their interests in plants and animals prompted them to try new things.

My uncle Andreas started a chicken enterprise soon after he and Bedstemor came to live with us, the proverbial sailor retiring from the sea. Andreas had indeed sailed the seas and sometimes told of the far-off places he had been. I recall that in the shed where he slept there was an egg incubator where he hatched the chicks that were brooded in a nearby shed. Chicken sheds were built close to the river on a gravel bar, that was thought (mistakenly it turned out) safe from flooding.

Tragedy struck the family early. Kjerstine and Christian became ill with a disease referred to as meningitis, as I recall. It left them badly impaired. Kjerstine had a crippled spine, could not use her lower limbs, and had other physical problems. Christian became blind and found it difficult to talk. What a grief and worry it must have been for my parents, and a heavy burden, especially for my mother. Then there was my brother and me to look after, and I don't think we were ever neglected.

I don't know when this affliction occurred, but I believe it was after Joen was born in June, 1906. It was fortunate that Bedstemor and Andreas were around. I was aware that some things were not as they should be: that my older brother and sister were not normal, that there were frequent visits by a doctor who came in a horse and buggy, and that often there was a strange lady helping around the house. When I reflect on my parents' lives during those years, I marvel at their stamina and bravery in the face of adversity, and that they still were able to provide a stimulating environment in which to grow up.

I don't remember playing with Christian, perhaps because he could not function very well outside, but I remember that he was
hyper-active at times. Sometimes he was given paper, which he
would tear to pieces as sort of a relief. One of our nearest neighbors
was Chris Andersen, who played a flute, visited often and always
brought his flute, which, when he played it, had a quieting influence
on Christian. I think that Chris Andersen came often because he
understood what this meant to Christian and for the family. I have a
kind of lingering remembrance that in an effort to do something
about Christian's condition, Morbror (Uncle) Andreas took him to
San Francisco to see a specialist, but to no avail. I have not been able
to find any evidence to support this memory, except that Joen also
recalls this. I remember Christian died when he was five years old.
Joen and I did not attend the funeral. Mrs. Hentze (Arine), our
neighbor, stayed with us and our cousins, and we played games and
had a good time.

I have remembrances, sketchy, and sometimes vague, from those
first five years on the "lower place" that make themselves known in a
sort of reverie in my later years. We had a dog called Sport, mixed
Airedale and bulldog, a relentless hunter and a good companion to
all in the family. One time he chased a raccoon onto a tree stump,
and didn't have sense enough to leave it alone. As a consequence, he
was being torn mercilessly by the raccoon. Had my father not come
with his gun and killed the raccoon, I fear Sport would have been
torn up beyond repair. Another time Sport engaged the angora buck
near the river bank and was repeatedly thrown into the river and
finally, exhausted, gave up. But we loved him, and several years
later when he became old and helpless my father prevailed on a
couple of young men, Andy Mosegaard and Walter Petersen, to
shoot and bury him. My father did not have the heart to do it.

I recall when the telephone was installed, and that George Klinge,
the hired man, made the first call to one of the Petersen girls, and
that what he was saying embarrassed my mother. George was 16
years old then. The telephone, a wonderful thing, let my mother
have frequent visits with her sister, Marie Bodtker. This was a
pleasure, especially during the times when we were marooned by
high water.

It was on this place I saw my first car—a red roadster came down
the road to the house. It was Dr. Hicks, who came to help with a
boy who had drowned in the swimming hole at the southwest
corner of our place. I later learned from Andy Mosegaard that he and Bue Hentze had run all the way to town to report the accident. It was before we had the phone installed. But it was the car that impressed me.

I recall the birthday party for my sister, Kjerstine, when many other children came, all older than I, and they played games and were served "chokolade." Kjerstine, of course, could not play and romp with the others. I remember that among those who came were a boy, Aage Gribskov, and my cousins, Anders, Ove, and Kristine.

One day my father had two visitors, Mads Jensen and Chris White, and they wandered across the field to the river, talking and laughing. My mother told me to run down to where they were and tell them that coffee was ready. When I found them they were sitting on the river bank, laughing, talking, eating pickled herring, and drinking out of a bottle. I was told to run along and tell my mother that they would be there soon.

Chess was a game that my father now and then played with his brother Peter. One rainy afternoon Peter had walked down to visit, and the chess board came out. After an hour or so the game terminated with my father scoring a check-mate, and Peter abruptly got up and left without saying a word. My mother said, "Hans, call him back—the coffee is ready." My father's response, knowing his brother, was in substance to forget it, because nothing would bring him back. My father taught me and my brothers at an early age how to play chess, a pastime we were to enjoy over the years.

Shortly after I retired and Edith and I moved to Junction City, I was told that Greg Hentze, son of Merle and Alice, had found a battered cup, made of some kind of aluminum alloy, bearing an inscription relating to my family. Greg liked to wander through the woods of the adjacent Hentze and Bodtker river places and came upon this find and thought that maybe I would be interested and could identify it. The inscription read on one side "Kjerstine Bodtker" and on the other side "Lewis and Clark," which stirred a latent memory of having heard that Morbror (uncle) Andreas had visited the Lewis and Clark Exposition in 1905, at which time he had secured this memento for my sister Kjerstine.
Chapter 2: Grade School Days

School
Then suddenly we were on the new place—away from the river. Oddly enough, I don't remember much about the moving process. It was in the summer of 1910. I vaguely remember our mother pushing the carriage with Kjerstine, walking with Joen and me past Hentze's and across the fields to the Jens Petersen house where we stopped for a rest. From here on we walked on the road (Pacific Highway) to our new home. Our father was busy with horses and wagon transporting all of the household goods that would be needed immediately. The livestock were, no doubt, driven. Bedstemor (grandmother) remained with Andreas who had to take care of his poultry enterprise.

The time was near when I was to go to school. When the river was at flood stage, or just normally high during the school year, it presented a problem, or at least a nuisance. It would require that someone took me across a stream and back, five days each week, to the road to Junction City where the school was located. To meet this situation my folks bought a farm (forty-five acres), half a mile nearer the school, with a large house, barn and other out-buildings, and a
large hop dryer in the center of the farm. This move was a great relief for my mother, who worried about the safety of Joen and me when we lived so close to the river.

It was soon after we moved that I had a broken right arm. My cousin Ove was visiting, and maybe some of his siblings. We were playing a game conceived by Ove. I played the part of a horse being driven for some purpose that now I can't recall. It required that I would have a rope tied to one leg. Ove would have the other end of the rope, and would signal by jerks on the rope, indicating directions I should take. It worked to Ove's satisfaction, but one of the jerks threw me off balance and I fell, striking my right elbow on a rock. Something popped and I felt a terrible pain which I let be known. Joen ran to the house for help and Ove ran for cover. My mother called the doctor, who fortunately was in his office. Shortly, Peter Bodtker drove by with team and wagon and noticing the commotion stopped by to help my mother with me. I think my father was down on the "lower place." Soon Dr. Parks came in his one-horse buggy. The elbow was pretty well mangled, and it took some time to set it and make a cast to protect it. In the meantime Ove showed up, but was not punished, only scolded for running away. During the healing process Dr. Parks came periodically and removed the cast and massaged the elbow. It finally was healed, but I have a deformed elbow, hardly noticeable now, but which gave me some discomfort for many years.

I did not go to school until after the first of the year (1911), because there was a hard and fast rule that a child had to be six years old before starting school, and I wouldn't be six until December 5, 1910. There was a provision for situations like mine, allowing mid-year entrance.

During my grade school days there were big changes at home. My sister Kjerstine died at age nine. She never recovered from her illness so that she could walk. My brother and I paid little attention to her, being generally occupied with other things, but she paid a lot of attention to us, it seemed. I remember her best sitting by the window in the house, watching us play. When the weather was good she be in a carriage outside. Often I was told to wheel her places where she wanted to go, but was warned to be careful not to tip the buggy. Even so, once I conceived the idea to tie a rope to the
carriage and with the help of my brother pulling to give her the thrill of a fast ride. This ended in disaster, tipping the buggy and tossing her out. For this we paid the penalty. I also remember her being aware of what my brother and I were up to, and advising mother when we were out of order. She died in 1910. There was extreme sadness around, but very little was said that I can recall.

A couple of years later I remember a still-born sister. I don't recall that Joen and I knew that a child was expected, but one day when we returned from school my father let us see her before burial. There was sadness at supper that night. I think that a sister had been hoped for.

Another brother was added to the family and was named Folmer. He was born May 13, 1914, in the Harrisburg General Hospital under the direction of Dr. Dale. He got a lot of attention, it seemed, and later was in the way a lot of the time. However, he was to make a great deal of difference in the way the family operated, no doubt good for all of us, keeping us from getting into a rut.

I had never spoken a word of English before I entered school. All communication at home was in Danish. However, I had older cousins in school that would be helpful, it was thought. It was arranged that my oldest cousin Kristine would introduce me to the teacher and explain my language handicap, and help me the first few days to "learn the ropes." I also had two older cousins, Anders and Ove, who seemed to enjoy the embarrassment I experienced with my language handicap. I would ask them (in Danish) for advice in certain situations, to which they would respond in a whisper, "Keep still, you will get in trouble talking Danish." My language problems were soon overcome, though I had a few speech problems at first in school. For example, the "the" sound was hard to master for a while, and phrasing my English in the Danish way lingered on for some time. However, by the next fall when I was in first grade, B section, I was in a play portraying the first Thanksgiving in the Plymouth colony, having the part of Governor Bradford.

I was extremely proud of this performance because my mother walked all the way to the school to see me perform. This was a rather unusual thing for Danish mothers to do, but then she was
different. My mother had spent several years in Scotland and was fluent in English.

I believe that I did fairly well in school, but when in the second grade I brought home a report card that gave me good points in all subjects, it was not so good in deportment. This was a concern to my mother, and caused her to make another trek to the school to confer with the teacher regarding my behavior. The teacher told her that I was not mischievous, but that I didn’t always pay attention to what the teacher was telling the children. I seemed to be daydreaming. My mother responded that this was the way I was at home, but she would talk to me about it. She was pleased that
otherwise I was not a problem. I think it took some gumption to walk that long distance to the school to show her concern and love.

The grade school was an interesting institution in those days, quite different from today. The building was a three-story, or more correctly, perhaps, a two-story building was an above ground basement. The basement housed a large furnace, with storage space for the wood to fire the furnace which heated water for the steam radiators in the classrooms. The boys’ toilets were in the south side. This basement also housed a wood-working shop, used by both the high school and grade school manual training classes. The north side had facilities for the girls. Upstairs, the first floor was occupied by the first four grades, each grade separate with its own cloakroom. The next four grades were similarly arranged on the second floor.

When the bell rang for school to start, all pupils were assembled, by grades, on the large cement area before the front entrance. The teacher for each grade saw to it that her pupils were lined up in accordance with a pre-determined pattern to fit the seating arrangement. One pupil, generally from one of the upper grades, had the assignment of beating time on an iron triangle. This was considered a prestige job. With the triangle beating and the teachers intoning, "left, right, left," we marched up the high stairs to the first floor, with stairs on the right and left to the second floor. The first grades marched in first and then the upper grades. Within each classroom there was also a prescribed order for seating. This procedure was also repeated after lunch. There were short recesses, but I don’t recall how they were managed or how dismissal and re-entry was handled. I presume that here, as well, there must have been a prescribed order.

When I was in grade school, Maude Hayes was the first grade teacher and Mabel Hayes the second grade teacher. These sisters had the two grades for many years and became an institution in themselves. Mary Pitney, who lived to be more than 100 years old, was my third grade teacher. The Holcomb sisters, Ivy in the fourth and Fern in the fifth grades, were stern and didn’t tolerate any "monkey-business." Each grade had an A and a B section, which allowed for students beginning at mid-year, as I did, but it also provided for having slow learners together. This was discontinued when those presently in the sixth grade finished the eighth grade.
The play grounds were arranged so that the girls had the north side and the boys the south side. Once a week, at the noon period, with strict supervision by a couple of teachers, boys and girls were permitted to play games together.

A pleasant remembrance was the janitor. His last name was Miller. I don't recall his first name, but behind his back he was called "Hawk Shaw." I think this was because he was known to report misdeeds to the teacher. However, most of the time he was liked. Now and then when he passed through the rooms checking on the functioning of the radiators and inquiring of the teachers if anything was needed, he could be prevailed on to sing. This had to have the approval of the teacher, but was easily obtained, because he was as popular with her as the pupils. He would sing mostly ditties. One was "The cotton boll weevil on a sweet potato vine." He was funny and had a good voice.

The children from out of town brought their lunches, and these were generally eaten outside when it wasn't raining. When it rained or the weather was otherwise inclement, lunches could be eaten in the basement, as well as in the classrooms. There was space on the school grounds to play football and baseball. Before I left there were basketball backboards installed. The basketball used had heavy and protruding seams to be better able to stand the rough grounds. These grounds were a busy place during the noon hour and free periods. They were very muddy at times, though sawdust was used to absorb some of the moisture. I don't know what the girls did in their play time, but the boys played marbles and a game that could be dangerous, called "duck on a rock." It was played with a large rock at a distance of fifteen to twenty feet from a "lag-line" where players were lined up, each with a rock in hand. One of the players was "it." That is, his rock was mounted on the center rock. The other players would throw their rocks in an effort to knock "its" rock off the center rock. It was up to each player to redeem his rock, amid all the flying rocks, and return to the "lag-line" as quickly as possible. If "it" could replace his rock and tag someone before he returned to the "lag-line" he would be the "it." Understand?

Occasionally there would be a tug-of-war, with two leaders chosen, who would then alternate in choosing their teams. In this
sport it was an advantage to select those of the heaviest weight for the team. There might be ten on a side, with the rest of us "rooting" spectators.

Town children used the playgrounds after school was out. Those of us, who lived out of town, for the most part, had to get going since it took some time to walk home, and for those of us from farms there were chores awaiting us.

Despite the seemingly strict regulations, school was liked by most of us, I think. Departure from regulations could be uncomfortable, but tolerable. There was not a principal when I was in grade school, only a superintendent for both grade and high schools. I recall a time when I and three or four others were sent to see the superintendent, Mr. Beals, whose office was in the high school. A window had been broken in the basement by scuffling during the lunch hour while some of us were sitting on the basement window ledge eating our lunches. Apparently the teachers were not able to determine the proper punishment for this misdemeanor. I remember when we came into the office of Mr. Beals that there was, prominently displayed, a menacing looking piece of rope. The questioning which took place was to find out which one of us was the main culprit, or whether we all were equally at fault. As the questioning proceeded it seemed to indicate that Peter Toftdahl, the oldest of us, had started the scuffle, to which everyone but Peter agreed. The verdict was that Peter should stay and that the rest of us were excused. To this day I think it was a raw deal for Peter. I sort of think that the others agreed, but we were a cowardly lot to let Peter get the lacing by himself. Maybe, if we had stuck together, Mr. Beals would have been more understanding. I learned that day that there are some things one can't do over.

At one time during those years a system of credits was set up by which pupils were asked to fill out a form indicating the useful and "meritorious?" duties and chores we performed when we were not in school—ranging all the way from keeping clean to helping our parents. My mother thought it was all right and diligently helped to fill out the form, but my father thought it was a lot of nonsense. I believe my father's viewpoint was more widely shared, since this business was soon discontinued.
It must have been in 1916, in the sixth grade that the pupils were to vote for president. I don't recall the candidates now, but the part of this exercise that I remember was that one vote was cast for the Socialist candidate by Robert Johnston. I must have voted for the Democratic candidate, since I presumed that was the way my father voted. At home while we were eating supper I told my father about this, pointing out how odd it was that Robert voted Socialist. To my astonishment my father responded by saying that there was at least one smart kid in the class. That was the first time I became aware that my father had ideas and beliefs that often were at odds with those of the main stream.

After I had been in school long enough so that reading came easy for me, I discovered that upstairs in the loft part there was a whole row of books by Horatio Alger, and some others, that I began to read. My father soon found out that I would be reading while on the job, so to speak. He frowned on this reading business and disallowed it when I was doing assigned chores. One of the jobs Joen and I had on weekends and in the summer was to herd the cows along the road. The roadsides generally became over grown with grass, which it was a shame to waste, so why not let the cows chew if off. With this job it was possible to take a book along, which could be read while the cows were grazing. Of course, it had to be hidden at times so that when my father noted that the cows had strayed a bit, he wouldn't find out that reading sometimes led to neglect. Because the book was a deception there were times when it had to be abandoned. The rains came and the grazing ceased and someone else found the sodden book.

The Alger books had such titles as *Up and Onward, Luck and Pluck*, and *Struggling Upward*. B.M. Bowers wrote *Chip of the Flying U*. All the way through grade school and beginning high school I remember such books as *Shepherd of the Hills* and *The Winning of Barbara Worth* by Harold Bell Wright, *Little Shepherd of Kingdom Come* and *The Trail of the Lonesome Pine* by John William Fox, *Riders of the Purple Sage* by Zane Grey, and *A Girl of the Limber lost* by Gene Stratton Porter.

World War I had started before I finished grade school. While in the seventh or eighth grades (or both), we were asked to sell War Savings Stamps. I was very anxious to do my part, and did sell a
few to some of the neighbors who did not have children in school, but my father was not sympathetic to the idea, though he didn’t forbid the activity. I learned that my father was a pacifist (though that term was unknown to me then) and believed that war was evil and useless. I did not then understand why he was so different from most people who were really out to get the "Hun." Again, I was to find out that my father often thought differently from what other people thought, or at least said. Despite this characteristic I knew he had the respect of all who knew him. I also remember that I thought I had made a great sacrifice to the war effort by donating the first big book I ever owned to the drive for reading material for our soldiers. It was *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens. A noble gift, I thought.

Grade school was quite uneventful—no experience or incidents that seemed to shape my life. Life at home was far more significant. A recollection of those school days was of the great spread in the ages of the pupils from the first grade through the eighth, due to slow learning by some pupils or absenteeism. As I grew older I discovered how little bearing this had on their futures. As adulthood proceeds there is a leveling that erases the differences in ages. Walking to and from school was an interesting time. We lived

*Joen, Folmer and Arnold, late 1920s*
one-and-a-half miles from the school, which allowed for much camaraderie, though now and then spoiled by fights and teasing. What's left? Boy-girl relationships seemed important to some, but to me it was very fleeting. In the eighth grade there was a girl I liked a lot, but apparently she never knew it.

A significant part of our growing up was the walk to school in the morning and back home in late afternoon. Walking to school in the morning was a mere routine, since we had to be there by a precise time. Sometimes the walk was pretty tough for the younger ones. I remember the Ravn kids, Marie and Hans, who had the farthest to walk, and therefore had to start earlier. Sometimes Hans would falter and complain. Several times Ejnar Hentze, a high school student, would carry Hans short distances so he could keep up.

Even with the coming of the auto, it was never used to transport kids to school. That would have been considered a bit frivolous and unnecessary. The high school was attended by students from outlying districts, and the car came into use for transportation. Before that, I presume transportation was by horse and/or buggy. Going home from school was somewhat of a lark, time to loiter and perhaps play a game or marbles. I don't know what the girls did. I do remember that the older girls would not take any nonsense from the younger boys. There would be some teasing, but rarely any fighting. Those of us living farther out found the bridge over the lake interesting. There was quite a large area under the east end of the bridge that we found had a lot of uses. Sometimes clothing that did not conform to school styles could be adjusted or changed from that which met home requirements.

We couldn't dally too long, for some of us had chores awaiting us at home. For Joen and me, there was a snack awaiting us, often cold pancakes left over from breakfast, to which we would add some jam and take off for our assignments.

School and chores at home were not all there was to life for a couple of boys like Joen and me. There was the Danish community of which the whole family was a part. There was also the broader community of Junction City, in total much larger than the Danish part both in area and population. The Danish part was somewhat self-centered because of church, lodges, and language. Much of the social life was within this frame although there were a few Danish
families who found association with the non-Danes was most satisfying. They were mostly those who lived in town. However, there were special occasions, such as Christmas parties and picnics, when all Danes regardless of special affiliations joined for fun and relaxation.

We belonged to the Danish Lutheran Church where we were baptized and confirmed. As children, our mother led us in bedtime prayers, and she always saw to it that we attended Sunday School. My father seemed to be neutral in this matter. We would walk to town, accompanied by our cousins, the Ravn children and the Gribskov children, often accompanied by Mrs. Jim Petersen, who was a Sunday School teacher. None of the Julius Wilde children, our closest neighbors, went to Sunday School, nor did their parents attend church, and I don’t recall that this was ever talked about. The J.P. Jensen’s were Methodist, and I don’t know if the children attended their Sunday School.

I was confirmed March 28, 1920 in a class of six, of which I am the only survivor. For two or three months prior to confirmation we were required to receive instruction from the pastor. At this time the instruction was in Danish. It was referred to as "gaa til præst" (literal translation "go to the preacher"). I suppose that the main text used was the Bible, but I particularly remember the small green book entitled "Dr. Martin Luther's lille katekismus" that contained the Ten Commandments with their explanation and deductions. Luther's picture was on the cover. There was a church service the Thursday evening before the Sunday that the confirmation took place. At this service the family and close relatives were present and communion took place. I mention this event because I indicate elsewhere in this Remembrance that my grandmother professed to be a Unitarian, and my father was not a devoted churchgoer. I could never tell in this church community that they were looked at askance.

Each year there was a Christmas party in the Danish Hall, sponsored by the church, with the Danish Brotherhood and Sisterhood participating. In the center of the hall stood a large decorated tree with candle lights. There were a couple of men with poles to douse the burned-down candles and sparks in the tree. Everyone marched around the tree singing the old song "Nu har vi Jul igen" ("Now We Have Christmas Again") as well as other songs,
and there would be a short message from the minister. Following this each child would get an orange and a small bag of candy. The grown-ups would be served coffee and Christmas cookies. Many of the Danes, who were seldom seen at the church or even the lodges, came for this event. It was quite an undertaking for many to attend in the days before the automobile was common. I remember a cold and snowy Christmas when we drove to town in our spring wagon. When we got to town, and because of the weather, the team was put in Smith’s livery stable at the corner of Greenwood and 7th, where the post office is now. It likely took the evening from 6 pm to midnight before we were home again.

Christmas Eve was celebrated at our house with a nice supper; generally roast goose, mashed potatoes and gravy with stuffing and a vegetable, which was preceded by rice cooked in milk. The dessert came later. Sometimes Andreas and Bedstemor were present, but at times they were with the Peter Bodtker family. Peter Mosegaard, who became a widower early, generally came for this occasion. After the meal the food was put away, dishes washed, and we would go into the living room where there was a decorated tree, with candle lights and presents lying underneath. In our family Joen and I (later Folmer), with the help and supervision of my mother, decorated the tree and arranged the presents. Not being a family adept at singing, the "Nu her vi Jul igen" was short, and presents were passed around. Then followed coffee and cookies for the grown-ups, while we played with our presents and partook of the cookies. My father and Mosegaard likely each had a cigar.

It wasn't very difficult to get a Christmas tree since there were large groves of fir trees nearby, but I recall one year when the process was eventful. It was decided that we would get the trees from Anders (Andrew) Jacobsen (then single) who lived north of Lancaster and on whose farm there was a fir grove. He was a friend of the Bodtkers and offered to let us cut our own trees. My cousins Anders and Ove, together with Joen and me, drove there with Ove driving his father's team and wagon with a large hay rack. It was a three to four mile distance, and we felt quite proud waving to people as we drove by and coming back with the sizable trees.

As I remember we all went to church on Christmas day. The rest of the day was a time of leisure for the grown-ups and play for the
children. However, there was the livestock, so the chores had to be tended to as always. During the Christmas season, including New Year, there was much visiting.

The 23rd of December (lille Juleaften—the little Christmas Eve) was Julius Wilde's birthday, and it was customary that we visited to celebrate. This meant a supper consisting of sampling of the good things that had been made from a hog butchering which always occurred just prior to this occasion. The Wilde’s were a large family, and this was always a lively party. Each year at this time there was a dinner with the Peter Bodtker family, and, of course, including Andreas and Bedstemor. The location for the affair alternated by year and generally took place on the day after Christmas, which the Danes refer to as Anden Juledag (second Christmas day).

During this season Severin Jensen’s century plant bloomed—the exact date apparently could be determined a few days before, and we were invited and expected to come and visit that evening for coffee and sweets, cookies, etc. The darn thing would not bloom until midnight. It was a great night for playing cards and games, but also somewhat of a drag to wait so long for the main event. I do not recall how thrilling this event was to the grown-ups. My father thought that it was dumb to do this every year, but the Severin Jensen family was close and well-liked neighbors. They were also a unique family in many ways, all with an artistic bent revealed in the home.

There were four daughters, Sophie, Dora, Nora, and Susie, and one son, Hansen, who was retarded. The father, Severin, did handsome wood carving. I remember the stool carved from a large maple burl. I think the mother was artistic as well. Sophie painted, as did Nora, and Sophie’s paintings, most of which were of farmsteads and houses in the surrounding area, are still around. Unfortunately, there has been no effort to locate or inventory her paintings, and I have not found any in the city or in county historical museums. I hope that efforts to locate and catalog as many of Sophie's paintings as possible will be made. I have a painting of my grandmother's home in the Faroe Islands that Sophie made from an old black and white photo, with my aunt describing the colors as she remembered them. Only Nora had children—a son, now deceased and a daughter who is still living. Susie married
a widower, Daugherty, who had two daughters, Margaret and Mildred. Susie, with her step daughters, frequently visited with the Severing Jensen’s. Later when the marriage was terminated, the girls stayed with their stepmother and came to live with the Jensen’s. Susie’s employment often was away from Junction City so the Jensen’s, in practice, became the parents of the girls.

Margaret and Mildred grew up in Junction City, learned the Danish language and attended the Junction City schools. After she was grown, Margaret married Anders (Andrew or Andy) Bodtker. Dora married Nils Damsgaard, a Danish immigrant. Both lived in Junction City the rest of their lives. Nora married Otis Pitney, from an old Junction City family. Otis was killed in a deer hunting accident, leaving Nora with the two children to bring up. Hansen, who was quite retarded, grew up at home, and was seldom seen in town. Those of us in the neighborhood saw him frequently. Each day he came to get the mail at the corner of Love Lake Road and Dane Lane. He was noted for his physical strength. I noticed this mostly at threshing time when he would handle large sacks of grain with ease. On occasion obstacles would be placed in such a way that it would test his strength, but it never strained him. I recall an incident that my father recounted about Severin Jensen. It happened that he was selected for jury duty, which required residing in a hotel in Eugene for an extended period. This was in the days before the auto. He pled with the judge that he be excused, citing that he could hardly leave the farm to his wife and daughters and Hansen without his direction. The judge denied his plea. When he returned home after an extended stay in Eugene he told my father that the worst thing about his absence was that everything was in better shape than when he was home. My father liked to tell this as a reminder that people should not get the idea that they are indispensable.

Birthdays are occasions for families to get together. These gatherings were generally segregated, the women gathering in the afternoons for coffee and visiting, the men in the evenings for card playing with refreshments, and the children in the afternoon for games, with an interlude for chocolate and cake. There were all kinds of variations with this, particularly with the children’s celebrations because of the age differences.
Shortly after we moved from the "lower place" I remember one night after we had been in bed, Joen and I were awakened. My father carrying Joen, with me tagging behind, and my mother went out in the yard away from the house to view Haley's comet streaking, it seemed, across the sky. This was in 1910.

Each year a May Festival was held in Junction City. I think it was a weekend occasion, Friday and Saturday. It had a carnival atmosphere, with visiting performers of various kinds, carried out on Front Street and two or three blocks on Main (6th) Street. Across the tracks east and to the north in the city park was a bandstand where local musicians performed. Here families brought picnic lunches. Ice cream and "pop" could be purchased. My father and mother enjoyed this event, and we all pitched in with chores at home so that the maximum time could be spent at the Festival. A special feature of the Festival was the Water Fight on Front Street between two teams using the fire hoses and pumps. The captains of the two teams were generally Ole Petersen and Sandy Petersen. The hilarious battle would last until one side succumbed, fifteen or twenty minutes at the most.

Each summer for a few years a Chautauqua came to town, arranged for by civic leaders. It would stay the better part of a week. We always attended some of the sessions, which took place in the afternoons and evenings, all under a big tent, and included musicals, plays and lectures. At one afternoon session William Jennings Bryan, the several times Democratic candidate for president spoke. He was famous then for his "Cross of Gold Speech" made at a national Democratic Convention in which he said that mankind shall not be crucified on a cross of gold. He was introduced by Carl Blirup, a Dane, merchant, civic leader, and reputed chairman of the local Republican Party. It seemed that everybody came to hear him; at least the tent was filled to overflowing, with many sitting on the outside. Old timers showed up. Even Milt Uttinger who lived in our old house on the "lower place" came all dressed up in suit, shirt, and tie, which we didn't believe he owned. Bryan was a huge man, in both girth and height, towering above Blirup who was a sizable person. Bryan had a large pitcher of water and glass before him on a table from which he often quaffed as he spoke. Apparently he was witty and oratorical,
receiving much applause during and following his speech. At the time I knew nothing about Bryan's fame.

Years later we participated in an event similar to the Chautauqua taking place in the autumn and spring called the Lyceum Series. The programs took place in the Methodist Church, I think because it had the largest seating capacity in the city. A funny incident occurred at one of the performances, of which my father was the center piece. On this evening after we had arrived in town my father said for the rest of us to go on into the church and find a place to sit and that he was going down to the B&M for some tobacco and a cigar. When we reached the Methodist Church we were told that the Lyceum program would be in the Christian Church, a block and a half away. Returning from his errand my father went into the Methodist Church. He didn't know about the change of location for the Lyceum program. Someone was talking about a subject that seemed strange to him. Finally, there was a pause and people were asked to come forward and share something with the speaker. Since he didn't respond he was approached and asked if he wouldn't like to participate. It suddenly dawned on him that something about this situation was weird and he left. It so happened that the Methodists were having a revival meeting, making it necessary to schedule the Lyceum program in the Christian Church. What happened after he made this discovery escapes me. However, knowing that conferring with God in this fashion was scorned by my father, I suppose he was a little embarrassed by the incident, but he laughed when he told about it.

Now and then there would be some low-brow entertainment called a Medicine Show at the local theater. This show featured magicians, strong men, and people with special talents such as ventriloquism. The medicine part came from the times when a salve (for sale) was demonstrated as curing all pain, the spokesman applying some to his skin and inserting a pin, without showing discomfort. Also at the theater a traveling group would put on a play, generally a farce.

Each year there was a Pumpkin Show, held in a pavilion by the same name. This pavilion was also used as a roller skating rink, and the high school used it for basketball practice and games. It was a quite large, one-story structure located at the northeast corner of
Front and Seventh Streets. The show was held for three or four days in September before school started. Its primary purpose was to show farm produce (excluding livestock, I think) for which first, second, and third place prizes were offered. The name of the show came from the spirited contest as to who could grow the largest pumpkin, although grains, seeds and vegetables were also shown. Home-processed produce was also shown: canned fruit and vegetables, jams and jellies, bread and pastries, handicrafts, and the arts were also featured. The show had a broad participation from the community. My mother worked hard at producing jellies and pastries, and my father gathered sheaves of grain and corn. There was also a baby show, in which prizes were offered for the best-looking baby, a contest which was abandoned after one try because no one had the temerity to serve as judge after the first year. At the first showing Chris Andersen, a well-known bachelor, agreed to be the judge! He did the best he could, little realizing what a "nest of hornets" he aroused, and concluded that there was no way that this could be avoided. The Fair Board agreed and the event was not repeated. The Pumpkin Show was one of the better community events in Junction City, and I don't recall when it was discontinued, but when the Pavilion burned down in 1922 opportunity to continue such a show was not in the cards.

Chapter 3: At Home on the Farm

Now the farm operation was gradually being expanded, and Joen and I would begin to take part. As we were growing up we would have assignments to fit our abilities. Crop land had been increased by forty acres. There was a larger barn and a roomier house, with an upstairs. There was a woodshed, large enough to house the cream separator, milk cans and pails, laundry tubs, etc. There was a fairly large chicken house to the north. In the middle of the place stood a large hop dryer which was used for storage. For one or two years it was used to dry and store corn. Hops had been grown on this and neighboring farms a few years earlier, as evidenced by this dryer and hop vines in the fence rows, and occasionally in the fields.

The expansion included more dairy livestock, with a hog enterprise added. More equipment such as farm machinery and
wagons were acquired. All this was "up the alley" as far as my father was concerned. He was adventuresome by nature and was challenged by the possibilities ahead. I think my mother took this in stride, despite her many health problems, accentuated with the hopeless illnesses of Kjerstine and Christian. It was to be a pain she would bear the rest of her life, but still she was caught up with the newness of things.

Dairying became a major enterprise, with hogs a close second. On the lower place, potatoes were grown. Later other row crops as well would be grown there in rotation with hay and grain crops. Farming was still done for many years with horses as the power source (we now had three). Tractors were fifteen to twenty years ahead. A silo was erected to provide an added source of winter feed for the dairy. Note the large framed photo, taken in 1912, showing the buildings, which, with the exception of the silo, were on the place when it was acquired. The chicken house, missed by the photographer, was to the left, north of the residence and woodshed.

**Cropping.** A three year crop rotation was generally followed: first year—row crops (corn or potatoes); second year—grain (barley, oats or wheat); third year—hay (red clover or oats and vetch, or, later, alfalfa). No commercial fertilizer was used, only manure—truly organic farming. An exception was gypsum (land plaster), applied for its sulphur content (the calcium in the gypsum would offset the acidity that the sulphur might bring) to legume crops (clover, vetch and alfalfa). Farming in those days was really labor intensive.

**Haying (alfalfa, red clover or common vetch, and oats).** First, the crop was mowed. After drying for a few days it was raked into windrows and allowed to dry further. The mower and rake were horse drawn, the rake being either dump or side-delivery. The side-delivery rake was mostly used when the hay would be baled, which was seldom done in this area. Ours was a dump rake. It was a bit tricky to operate and could give you cracked shins. Next the hay was made into cocks for further curing and drying, all of which was done by hand. The cocks wee seven to eight feet in diameter, cone-shaped and five to six feet tall. The cocks have to be spaced so that a hay wagon could be driven between them. If you took pride in your work (and who didn’t?),
the cocks were lined up in straight rows, both ways across the field. Barring rain, not so infrequent in this area, after a week or two in the cocks, the hay was ready for the barn. If rain occurred in this stage of the process the operation had to be done over after turning the windrows or tearing the cocks apart.

Getting the hay into the barn was a major operation that, at a minimum, took two or three men, a team of horses, and a wagon with a hay rack. Sometimes this could be a special wagon, but often it was a regular farm wagon fitted with racks for different uses. It required a person to pitch the hay onto the wagon in such a way that the person on the wagon could pick it up and place it so that it could be picked up by the special fork-lift used for unloading.

(Before proceeding further, a few notes about hand forks would seem to be in order. The number of tines on a fork indicates its use—three-tined is a bundle fork, four-tined is a hay fork, five-tined widely spaced is a straw or barley fork, and five or six-tined closely spaced is a manure fork.)

The hay was then hauled to the barn, the front end of which had a large opening at the top, or peak. Here the special fork-lift was inserted into the hay, and set for lifting by the person on the wagon who knew how the hay was placed. In the meantime the team had been unhooked from the wagon and taken to the rear of the barn, hooked to a rope from a pulley at the base of the barn which in turn ran up to another pulley at the peak that connected with a steel track extending all the way along the ridge to the front of the barn. When the special fork-lift had been secured in the hay, a signal was given to the driver to start the team pulling on the rope which lifted the fork-load of hay to the peak and on and along the track to where it was to be dumped. Another signal was then given to the driver to stop so that the hay could be dumped where desired, a place determined by the person in the mow, also noted by signal. The dumping was generally done with a jerk of a lighter rope attached to the fork-lift, releasing the hay. When it worked as intended, four fork-loads did the trick. The person or persons in the mow arranged the hay so that it could be removed easily. Even so, as it settled it often got packed so tight that it took cutting with a hay knife to remove it for feeding.
It soon became apparent that neighbors helping each other made the haying operation more efficient. The contributions of neighbors were not always equal because the size of the operation varied from farm to farm, as did the resources. Although there was no formal accounting, there was an understanding between neighbors as to how the work would be shared, and a settling of accounts at the end of the season. I was never aware of any problems arising because of this informal arrangement. What I was aware of was the camaraderie that existed among neighbors at these times, in which the entire family participated. The noon meal was almost a feast, and the rest periods with coffee and snacks served were relaxing, and fun for the children—a reward for hard, dusty, and sweaty work. All this meant hard work in the house with the main reward being words of praise for the culinary expertise of the cooks.

**Grain Harvesting.** When the grain had ripened sufficiently, so that it wouldn't shatter with handling, it was cut and bound into bundles with a binder. This machine must have been a real boon, replacing the irksome job of hand or machine cutting and then, with twine, binding the grain. The binder was not a flawless machine. Now and then it would throw out an unbound bundle, which would require hand binding, using grain straw if twine was not handy, which it mostly wasn't. Anyway, the binder worked as it was supposed to, most of the time, that is if it were properly adjusted as to the tension of the twine, etc. There were experts, so-called, in the neighborhood that could make these adjustments. Julius Wilde, our neighbor, was such a person. It took a driver and three horses to operate the binder.

The bundles then had to be assembled and arranged in shocks, with the grain heads up, sometimes in round shocks—a score of bundles to a shock. Other times the bundles were arranged in longer shocks, with pairs of bundles placed lengthwise—two dozen, or so, to the shock. The latter was my father's preference. Here, as with the hay cocks, the shocks were spaced and arranged to allow driving between them with bundle wagons. Shocking grain, which was mostly done by hand, could be a most disagreeable job, especially with barley and its beards.

After curing in the shock for a couple of weeks or longer, it was ready for threshing, an operation which took a large crew. First, a
person in the field pitched the bundles onto the wagon, where another person, generally the driver, would arrange the bundles so that they could be removed readily. A bundle fork (three-tine) was used. Then the load of bundles was hauled to the grain separator, generally located at the farmstead, for threshing. The separator was a rather intricate machine through which the whole grain (straw and heads) would be forced between a revolving iron drum of teeth called concaves and a stationary row of concaves. This would tear the straw to pieces, releasing the grain kernels to fall on shaking screens removing the chaff. At the same time the straw was carried to the rear of the machine on walkers, so-called, where it would be pitched into a stack. To appreciate the process and the amount of hand labor involved, let me take you back to the wagonload of grain bundles by the separator. The team had been quieted and hopefully accepted the noise and shaking machinery. By the end of the threshing season most of the horses became used to the operation. There was a separator tender, whose job was to see that the machinery was working as it should, and who always carried an oil can for obvious reasons. The separator was powered by an engine, either gas or steam, by a belt from a distance of 50 to 100 feet. If it were a gas engine one person could operate it, but if it were steam it took an extra person and a team of horses to haul water.

The bundles of grain were unloaded onto a platform at the front of the separator in front of two men, a band cutter and a feeder. The band cutter cut the twine and pushed the bundle to the feeder that shoved it, heads first, between the two concaves that tore the heads and straw apart so that the kernels could fall on screens and be freed from the chaff. The speed at which the wagon was unloaded was dependent on how fast the separator could take the grain. The threshed grain came out of a spout on the side of the separator, where it ran into sacks, which were sewed and piled. This took two persons—either two sack sewers or a sack jigger and a sack sewer. Jigging was the toughest job, but the sack sewing was considered a skilled job (better paid, of course). The sack sewer would carry and put the sacks in an orderly pile that could be covered until the grain was hauled away. Sometimes the job of jigger was replaced by having two sack sewers, each doing his own jigging. The grain still had to be hauled into storage, which took horse and man power.
Threshing was a dusty job and the worst part was the removal and stacking of the straw. Later there were innovations that eliminated some disagreeable jobs and sped up the process. The separator was equipped with a set of revolving knives ahead of the concave, and it became possible to unload directly into the separator, eliminating the jobs of band cutter and feeder. Also, the separator was equipped with a blower which did away with the need for removing the straw by hand. The blower, being maneuverable, enabled the building of a stack that could withstand the rains, common in this area.

In the first years, owners of threshing machinery came into the neighborhood and did the threshing, with the farmers furnishing the labor, except for the power and machinery tenders. Soon a community Threshing Outfit was formed and the necessary equipment was purchased and a crew hired. In the area east of Junction City this association was known as the Danish Threshing Outfit. The crew consisted almost entirely of association members and their sons. Later still (perhaps 1920) the threshing association decided to make another change in the operation. They acquired a cook wagon (or cook shack) which was designed to prepare and serve three meals each day to the crew, doing away with the custom of eating at the homes where the operation was in process at the time. The old custom was becoming quite burdensome for some families. It was customary that the place where the threshing was taking place would provide the noon meal for a dozen or so dirty and hungry men. This sometimes would result in a farm with a small job, with a few hours of time, having to provide the meal, and, of course, facilities for washing hands and faces. It was decided that this was an unfair way of paying for the costs associated with threshing. The innovation of a cook wagon turned out to be most welcome, especially for the younger and unmarried swains of the community. Now most took a sleeping roll with them, and all ate three meals away from home. It was long hours, breakfast at 6 a.m., dinner at noon, supper at 6 p.m., for six days a week but never so long that young people couldn't find time for games and pranks. There were provisions for hand and face washing. The cook wagon was designed so that there was a bench on each side for six or seven persons. The center of the wagon had a cook stove, wood-heated, at the front end and the remainder used for serving dishes, etc. Each
meal, particularly at noon, was a feast, because there was an understanding that only a person reputed to be a good cook could have this job. Generally the cook was a woman, with her husband being the roustabout. The most popular couple in this job was the P.H. Petersen’s. In addition to a well-prepared main course, Mrs. Petersen made tasty meals and especially delicious pies. I particularly recall the banana and coconut cream pies. One year my brother Joen was the cook, as well as his own roustabout. I doubt that he received extra pay because of this.

A manager was engaged who hired the crew, and who, with the Board, decided on the wages to be paid and how the charges would be determined for threshing. Prior to this new arrangement the power for the threshing was provided by a gasoline engine, and James (Jimmy) Jensen was in charge. Now a steam engine was purchased and George Klinge was the engineer and the manager. It was fired with wood and required an assistant who was the water hauler and wood splitter. George would sound a blast at 5:30 a.m., at noon, and close of day at 6 p.m. Blasts would also be sounded before leaving a place and again upon arrival at the new site. To recap: the crew consisted of the manager who operated the steam engine, a water man with his team to haul the water and split the wood for the steamer, a separator tender, two sack sewers, six bundle haulers with wagon and team, and two field pitchers, making a crew of eleven. Accompanying the work schedule was a fine spirit of camaraderie, so that most of the crew looked forward to the threshing season. I believe that the Danish Threshing Outfit was a successful and satisfying endeavor, with not many rough spots, as long as it lasted.

**Potato Growing and Harvesting.** At the beginning, the seed potatoes were cut into sections, showing one or two eyes per section. In the first years the procedure was as follows: a plow (horse-drawn) furrow was made first and the potato sections were placed on the face of the turned soil, spaced to give the coming potato hill adequate room to develop (a foot apart). Two, sometimes three, more furrows wee plowed, providing for another row with enough space between rows to allow for cultivation (30 or 36 inches). Succeeding rows were planted in the same way. During the growing season there was cultivating and weeding; my father preferred that the weeding be
done by hand. His theory was that the hoeing disturbed the spreading of the developing potatoes. In the fall, when the vines were dead and the skins set on the potatoes, the digging was done. This was, at first, a hand operation, with a person using a special potato fork, sometimes with another person sacking them, but often the person digging the potatoes also would sack them. The sacked potatoes were then hauled to the storage place, where they were dumped. On the lower place there was storage in the barn in the middle of the hay mow. On the new place a ground level cellar was constructed, with a straw roof and sides of cornstalks. Later there was sorting for size and defects, done in the winter months and/or when there was a market. An anticipated market often didn’t show, a real hazard to such a perishable crop, and re-sorting had to be done.

Later came the potato planter, pulled by a team of horses and operated by two persons. The planter had a bin for holding the potato sections, in front of which sat the driver who was responsible for keeping the rows straight for cultivation. There was a sort of turn table below and behind the bin with slots into which the potato sections toppled. Behind the turntable was a seat for a person who would see that each slot had a potato section. When the potatoes were ready for harvest then the potato digger came, a horse drawn machine. It had a blade in front shaped like a shovel, but wider, and a lever for lowering and raising the blade. The blade was ahead of a chain elevator the same width as the blade over which the dug potatoes would be jostled free of soil and vines and laid out in the neat rows. Soon after, a crew of potato pickers would come and put them in sacks.

**Corn Silage.** Corn was a major crop on many farms, including ours, grown mostly for silage. The difficulty with growing corn for grain was its late ripening, and without drying facilities the grain could not be readied for storage. We were fortunate in having the old hop dryer which lent itself to drying corn, but even so it was not practical because of the rains that often came preventing the corn from ripening. There was one two-row corn planter in the neighborhood, but soon a few more. They required skilled driving so that the rows would be straight for cultivating, a frequent operation during the growing season. In the fall after grain
harvesting and the corn ears were well filled, they would be cut and hauled to the barn where they were chopped and blown into the silo. Except for the chopping and blowing, it was a labor-intensive task.

The corn was cut by hand and stacked in bundles so that it could be picked up and thrown on a wagon in an arrangement that would lend to efficient unloading. The bundle wagon would be used again, but the driver would load and arrange the corn, not as with grain, as here it could be done better from the ground. Unloading required feeding it, tassel end first, into the chopper, which was powered by an engine through a belt, much as in the grain threshing operation. The chopper also drove a fan, powerful enough to blow the chopped material through a pipe, 30 feet or more up and into the silo. There were generally two men in the silo spreading, packing, and stomping the choppings. The choppings would go through a heat (almost cooking) in the silo, a process which in a few months would be completed. The result was silage, a food relished by cattle, in our case dairy animals. If the corn had become dryer than desired, water would have to be added during the chopping. A disagreeable part of this operation was overcome with the advent of the corn binder. The silo filling operation, like haying, was made more efficient by the farmers helping each other.

**Kale.** This crop went by the name of thousand-headed kale or big-leafed kale, and was grown on a small acreage close to the barn for easy access for winter feeding. It was a heavy producer and the ground was heavily manured before planting. This crop, too, required a lot of hand labor, much of which was supplied by my brother and me when we came of age. The kale plants were grown from seed that was sown in a small concentrated area, and had to be reset in a larger field laid out in rows. The process for resetting was as follows: my father would make an incision in the ground with a shovel, and brother and I, taking turns, would place a plant in each incision; then my father would, with his foot, tamp the soil around the plant. A tough job we thought, but not any harder than the weed hoeing that followed throughout the season. In the fall and winter the kale was cut and carried or hauled to the barn and fed to the cows. The chickens were also given some kale.

**Other Tasks and Operations.** There was an endless variety of other activities throughout the year that occupied the family and
sometimes hired help. In the spring there was the plowing and seed bed preparation before the planting of crops. Before tractors, which did not become common until the mid-twenties and early thirties, the plowing was done with a walking plow, pulled by two or three horses, depending on the width of the plowshare, fourteen or sixteen inches. Our neighbor, Julius Wilde, had a riding plow, called a sulky, which required a three-horse team.

Then came the harrow, horse-drawn, behind which the driver walked; occasionally he rode by standing on the harrow (considered risky and frowned on by my father), if there was enough horse power. There were two types of harrow, spike- and spring-tooth, the spring-tooth being more a cultivating tool and the spike-tooth best for seed bed preparation.

Some farmers had a so-called stone boat used to firm the ground before seeding. We had a “tromle”, a Danish term which could be called a roller, for breaking up clods and firming the seed bed. It was made from a fir log about three-and-a-half feet in diameter and about twelve feet long. A frame was built for it by a local blacksmith and it had features enabling it to be pulled by horses. It was ideal for firming the seed bed. It could be ridden, and it was a delight for my brother and me to ride on it with my father, but only one at a time. My father used it often to firm the ground after the grain came up whenever the seed bed had been loosened by freezing or other weather conditions. It was the only one of its kind in the area, and sometimes was borrowed by neighbors.

There were the chores relating to the feeding of the livestock and poultry and the cleaning of the barn and pens, requiring the use of special tools and wheelbarrows. There was the hauling and spreading of manure, all done by hand, with a team pulling the wagon. Eventually my father and two neighbors purchased a manure spreader, horse-drawn. A marvelous invention I thought, though it still had to be hand loaded. The manure was spread on fields before plowing, preferably. So much for the activities in the field and with the livestock.

When the better designed equipment came on the market it was generally too costly for one farmer to buy it, so much of it was purchased jointly by two or more farmers. One farmer would have the responsibility for maintenance, storage, etc. This arrangement,
as with the mutual assistance with haying and harvesting, was informal and settlement of costs and services was made in the autumn after crops had been harvested, with a cup of coffee, maybe a cigar, and handshake.

**Water** Supply water for household and livestock was an item of major importance requiring a fair amount of labor. In this area water was obtained from a “driven” well, a two-inch galvanized pipe tapered at the bottom end with holes punched at one-inch spacings for about one foot above the taper, in three-or four-foot sections, with the last section threaded at the top for attaching a hand pitcher pump. It was a two-man job from here on with one holding the pipe and one driving with a sledge hammer, having a piece of soft wood on top of the pipe so as not to ruin the threads. Generally usable water in sufficient amount could be reached with twelve to sixteen feet of pipe. Sometimes more than one attempt had to be made before success. Generally there were separate wells for household and livestock. It was a hand pumping job, and time consuming with a large livestock enterprise such as ours. You see hand pumps of this type, mostly displayed at fairs or museums. Sometimes it could be difficult to get it primed and to hold its prime, which meant there should be some water around to meet this eventuality, otherwise it meant a long walk to a water supply. Of course there had to be water to get the first prime. Although it was a simple operation, it required some expertise now and then. As soon as we were old enough to have the strength for the task, my brother and I found this a particularly onerous job. An incident with this task, often repeated and particularly galling, occurred when we were pumping water for the cows into a large tank. The tank was generally empty when we were called on to pump. As fast as we pumped the water the cows would drink it up, causing us to feel that there was no end to the job. So we would chase the cows away with rocks and sticks, letting the tank fill before allowing the return of the cows. My father objected to this procedure, but when he was not around we followed it. He didn't appreciate our system, we thought, because he did not have to do the pumping.

My father was an inveterate hog raiser, always managing to have some hogs on the place. At times this enterprise would take on
extensive proportions. I remember a dozen or more brood sows and a boar at one time, with six to eight piglets to a litter. It took a lot of feed, mostly grain, much of which we grew. All the extra space on the farm was put into use. We purchased a discarded churn from the creamery, which was used to store buttermilk purchased at a low cost. The buttermilk was added to the chopped grain so as to soften it for better utilization by the hogs. At one time a metal tank was constructed into which culled potatoes and chopped grain and either buttermilk or water was added. This tank was suspended in a frame permitting us to make a fire underneath so the contents would be cooked, also to improve utilization by the hogs. My father constructed hog feeders so that he or his helpers walked above the hogs to feed them. Being around hogs under this system meant accommodation to a lot of squealing, as well as a smelly atmosphere. Operators and observers of so-called modern hog parlors might note my father’s system as its forerunner. My father’s hog enterprise was all hand operated and hard work, but I think he found it satisfying.

The marketing of hogs in the early days, before trucks, seems in retrospect almost unbelievable. Sam Flint was the hog buyer, although he might also have dealt in cattle. Sam Flint would come and help decide the time for marketing. The hogs had to be delivered to the stock yards in Junction City, which were located north of the Southern Pacific depot and east of the railroad tracks, between 8th and 10th streets. The drive would be along what is now called Dane Lane. The hogs were driven to the yards, a slow and tedious job. Generally two or more farmers would market at the same time. The hogs would be started on their way at daybreak for those farthest from town. This drive would have to proceed slowly because the animals were fat, as they should be, and short of breath. If it was a warm day there would be a “hog wallow” prepared on the way, to cool the animals a bit. Sam Flint had a dog, well trained to help guide the hogs. Hogs were added to the drive as we went along. The goad was to get the hogs to yard as before noon as possible.

Sam Flint was an interesting and, in some ways, a very special person. I base this on my father's evaluation. He considered Sam Flint a trustworthy man and his friend. When he took delivery of
hogs he would generally pay cash, with the understanding that should the market be better than anticipated he would receive an upward adjustment. This often happened, because Sam was a prudent operator. Sam always went to Portland with his livestock. An extra car was added to the train for this kind of accommodation. One time after returning from Portland, Sam reported to my father that the market disappointed him and he lost some money and would my father make an adjustment, which he did readily.

There was a sad ending to Sam Flint. He never returned from the last load of livestock he took to Portland. Nothing was ever heard as to what may have happened to him. If any of his family knew anything about what may have happened, it was never disclosed.

**Household Activities.** Of equal if not more importance were the activities relating to the household with which my brother and I were expected to help. They were many and varied. This was in addition to helping with the milking and taking care of the chickens, caring for the garden, and the picking of berries and fruit. In our home there were no girls and my mother was often handicapped with illness. At these times there was sometimes an extra person referred to as a hired girl. There were two I especially remember, Marie Petersen (later Marie Reerslev) and Esther Bertelsen. Sometimes my cousin Kristine came to help. However, there was an understanding that my brother and I were to help with house work, an assignment we accepted as being as natural as were other chores and tasks. I don't recall that we ever felt it was demeaning, and I don't recall that any of our friends or playmates commented about it. My father had a rule, a good one I later came to believe, for happy family living: no one rests until everyone rests, or at least has the opportunity to rest. Anyway, I believe that this way of going about the tasks that needed doing was accepted as normal. Also, it was understood that meals would be on time, which meant that outside chores and work be adjusted accordingly. This would make it easier, and also fairer, for my mother, father reasoned, and correctly as it turned out in practice.

**The House.** It was more commodious than the one on the "lower place" having an upstairs, though mostly unfinished. There were three rooms on the first floor: kitchen, living room (parlor), and a bedroom. There was also an entrance-way which housed a pump
and sink, used for washing dishes, kitchen utensils, and dairy implements—also used for face and hand washing. A pantry was located at the further end of this area. Upon entering there was a bin for wood storage and space for hanging clothes, footwear, and a myriad of household things. The living room (parlor) had a handsome heating stove, dining table, sofa, and chairs. There was a cupboard and a sewing machine (foot-pedaled), family pictures on the walls, and a front door with a window surrounded by small colored glass panes. The parlor was used only for special occasions and when we had company. Sometimes in the winter months it was used in the evenings for relaxation. The kitchen was the work place where the cooking and baking was done, family meals served, and where on Saturday nights bathing was done. The bedroom, occupied by my father and mother, had large cupboards for clothes and household storage. It contained a large double bed and often a smaller bed used when one of us was ill or needed special attention. As noted the upstairs was unfinished, except for one room which was occupied by the hired help. My brother and I slept in the unfinished part which was quite large. When there was no hired help we would occupy the finished room.

There was a front porch and a large crawl space, two to three feet high. I believe this was necessary because of occasional high waters. Just across from the back door was the woodshed, in the front part of which was a closed space to provide room for the cream separator and other dairy utensils. Part of this space was devoted to the clothes washing machine and accompanying tubs.

**Saturday night bathing.** It was several years before there was some remodeling to provide indoor plumbing with bathtub and toilet. For years this weekly cleansing was on Saturday night. Water had been heated on the kitchen stove, which also had a reservoir at one end to provide hot water. First washed meant first to bed, about which my brother and I quarreled. Oddly, perhaps, it was favored to be number two. Our father and mother followed, with a new batch of water I presume. But we were upstairs in bed. This also meant a complete change of clothes so that we were in good shape for Sunday.

**Washing Clothes.** This was a major task, especially considering that there was the water to pump and carry, no electricity to power
the washing machine, and that farming operations were good at soiling clothes. As noted, the washing machine stood in the wood shed, a cramped space, during the rainy season, otherwise outside on a wooden platform. Other washing equipment consisted of a large copper- bottom boiler plus a couple of galvanized tubs with the washing machine, and all requiring water to be pumped and carried. Washing clothes was a ritual, seldom varied, that had to be followed. Certain clothes had to be boiled in suds before being put in the washing machine. The washing machine part was the most disagreeable, we thought, because we often had to help with washing (always when we were not in school). There were various types of hand powered washing machines. Ours was the one that required turning the tub a half circle against paddles that went the opposite way. When my brother or I were on duty for each load there was a prescribed time for the washing, understandably. Sometimes it would be ten minutes for a load, other times fifteen minutes. Despite our complaints of weariness there was seldom any deviation from these standards. Remember, the washing machine was hand powered. Our mother was the sole judge as to the length of time, and there was a clock which we, too, could read. After "turning" the machine in which the clothes were washed for the prescribed time, we stopped and were ready to depart for more interesting things, but mother would always make an inspection and often to our dismay prescribe a little more washing. In this situation we would try to get her to prescribe the minutes of additional "turning" wanted. It always seemed that this extra "turning" was a whim, and that some bargaining was warranted, though I think that mother always won in the bargaining. Following the washing there was the rinsing, which required lots of water, and here more hand-pumping came in. Some of the rinse water had bluing in it from a bottle labeled "indigo." The overalls required special treatment being saturated with manure, milk, and other dirt. The already-used sudsy washing water was used to scour off the worst dirt, with a broom, from the overalls before putting them through the washing process.

Wash day generally was every Monday when my mother had this task alone, with some help from my father or the hired man, especially with the water pumping and carrying. As noted
elsewhere, there were times when the hired girl helped or took over. The spent wash water was poured around the hollyhocks or around the garden plants. It was a way of saving on labor. It was apparent to everyone driving by as clothes were hung on lines for drying in the breeze, hoping that there would not be too much dust in the air. In this community there was the rainy season that made drying an extra concern, with clothes having to be taken down and hung up again to get them dried-sometimes taking them into the house to dry on racks.

**Miscellaneous Chores.** Six months, more or less, of the year there was need for lamps and lanterns. A job upon returning from school was the cleaning of lanterns, checking the wicks, and filling them with kerosene. I guess my mother took care of the house lamps in the same way. Doing chores by lantern light could be hazardous and rules were strict as to how and where lanterns could be hung or placed. We had heard of how the tipping of a lantern had started the famous Chicago fire.

On Saturdays and when school was out there were special chores. It was assumed, apparently, that when we were old enough to go to school we were also old enough to have some responsibilities at home. To mention a few: there was feeding the calves, which included teaching the new calves to drink—and could be a messy job and taxing to one’s patience. You put your fingers in the calf’s mouth and shoved its head into a bucket of milk and had the calf suck on your fingers, hoping that soon it would start drinking. If one was not on the alert, and braced, the calf would butt as though it was nursing its mother and the milk would be everywhere except in the calf’s belly. Years later some smart person devised a bucket with a rubber-like teat on one side, which simplified this task.

Poultry was not a major enterprise during these years; chickens were raised to provide eggs and meat. In the main egg-laying season there would be extra eggs to take to the store in exchange for groceries. However there were the chickens to feed and the eggs to gather. With chickens there were situations requiring special attention. My mother ran the chicken enterprise and from her we got our instructions. Almost every year my mother would get a dozen or two of eggs from a special breed of chicken that was
supposed to be either better egg producers or larger for meat. Sometimes Joen and I would get to help with the selection. I recall one year we each chose a setting of Minorcas—Joen the black and me the white. Minorcas were larger, it was said, than the common brown or white Leghorns. One year my mother chose a setting of gray Wayandottes, a handsome bird and meaty. Once my brother and I ordered some Bantam eggs, the chicks from which turned out to be an annoyance for the other chickens. My father didn't concern himself with this project and only smiled at our efforts. These eggs were ordered to come at a time when it was most likely that "brooding hens" were available. If we didn't have the brooding hens when the eggs arrived, there would likely be one in the neighborhood we could borrow. Our neighbor, Anna Wilde, often exchanged "brooding hens" with my mother.

I trust that you know about brooding hens, but just in case not, I'll explain a bit. It is the nature of chickens, as in all birds, to lay eggs for progeny. Laying eggs for people was not the chicken's idea. Though chickens are grown to produce eggs for human consumption, they still behave now and then as though they are following nature's decree. A hen will seek a place to lay twelve to fifteen eggs, and then sit on them until the eggs hatch, bringing forth the small chicks.

This dependence on a "brooding hen" finally brought us an incubator, an apparatus designed to replace her. It was heated with kerosene by a lighted wick that could be adjusted to the desired temperature. Chicken eggs had to be turned by hand each day during the 21-day hatching period. The incubator was in the house, generally on the back porch so it could be under constant check. This called for a brooder, which was a cover hanging over a small oil heater that could be lowered or raised as needed to fit the size of the growing chicks. The brooder was located outside in a make-shift shed. With the brooding hen the temperature was maintained by her body, and she would do the turning. When the eggs were all hatched she would sally forth with her brood and proceed to help them feed. Of course the stately rooster had made sure that the eggs would be fertile. Speaking of roosters, they could always be heard mornings at our place and the nearby Wildes.
Although there was a chicken house with a fenced yard, a few chickens always managed to get through or over the fence. I remember one time when a hen had managed to make a nest underneath a floor in the barn and my mother wanted the eggs, which the hen was fiercely protecting. She wanted me to crawl under the floor, chase the hen off the nest and get the eggs, but the hen dashed at me with out-spread wing and a threatening beak, as I retreated. My mother said "Don't be such a coward, go back in there, chase her away and bring out the eggs. A small hen like that can't hurt a big boy like you." I went back in, though still apprehensive, feeling that the hen had me at a disadvantage. Eventually, with mother's coaxing and help we were able to get the hen out of the way and get the eggs, which were still usable. A chicken in this condition is called a "sitting hen," as referred to above. Since we always spoke Danish at home the hen was called a "skrukhøne" indicating the sounds the hen made. So much for chickens this time.

**Other Chores.** When we were strong enough to handle a pitch fork and shovel (age twelve or so) we were introduced to feeding the livestock and cleaning the barns. Then came the hand milking, a skill hard to master because it took a strong grip, but soon it became a regular task, morning and evening, since dairying had now became the major enterprise. By this time we were roused out of bed early in the morning to help with these tasks. Breakfast was at 7 and by 8 we were off to school. We were home from school between 4 and 5 pm. and resumed helping with the same tasks. Supper was at 6, after which the evening was ours until 8 when we were sent to bed.

**The New Barn.** Besides the coming of our new brother Folmer, the next most important event in the year 1914 was a new barn. It would be the largest barn in the community with many new features. My uncle Peter told my father that he must be a little "touched in the head" to undertake such a project. In Danish he said "Jeg tror du er toset," a thought that possibly others of his friends and neighbors had, but hesitated to voice. It was the first prominent expression of my father's venturesome character. There would be many more, but few as visible to others.
The barn, as constructed, was 70 feet long, 38 feet wide, 40 feet high at the center, and with a hip roof. It housed two 11-by-30-foot silos at one end, with a hay mow that could hold 100 tons of loose hay. It had a cement floor throughout and was equipped with metal stalls and stanchions and cement manger for 30 cows. The manure gutters were designed so that they could be flushed out with water into what we called a "liquid manure" tank. Drinking cups were installed in each stall. A few other details are interesting enough to give special mention, e.g., the girders holding up the hay mow were solid 14x10 Douglas fir timbers 38 feet long, which later had to be strengthened in the center (14 feet) with 2x12s on each side. The outside wall and much of the dimension lumber came from the old hop dryer, which was dismantled. The construction took weeks with carpenters working long days, bring their lunches, but having afternoon coffee served by my mother. It was all hard work, given to the making and pouring of the cement for forms and floors. The gravel and sand was hauled by horse and wagon, most of it coming from the Willamette River deposits at the lower place. I think the foundation was constructed and the fill hauled the year before. It is worthwhile to name the builders, who were Mads (Matt) Jensen, in charge of Jim Larsen, Anton Sorensen, and Nels Damsgaard. There were neighbors who came when extra help was needed, particularly with the cement work. I recall vividly the bustling that went on, and I was impressed with the construction of the roof, watching intently the shingling that took a dexterity and skill which amazed me. When the building was completed and before it was put to use there was a barn-warming dance on the hay mow floor. It was a bright summer night with friends and neighbors attending. I don't know who furnished the music, but likely it was Fred Rasmussen and Chris Andersen with violin and flute. I remember that it took some doing to get everyone up the ladder to the floor of the hay mow, especially the ladies, who wore long dresses. It was a "dress-up" affair. I know my father and mother were dressed in their best.

It was an imposing structure and costly. I heard that it cost $1400, a sizable sum in those days. This led to an expansion of the dairy herd. Several purebred Holstein cows with a sire were purchased, and soon after several Guernsey cows were added. So all the stalls, fifteen on a side, were filled. The old barn, which was adjacent,
would now house the young stock and the sire. One side of the old barn had four horse stalls, with space for straw that was used as bedding. It also had a limited space for hogs, now a shrinking enterprise. Soon my father was to take on a Federal Land Bank loan. Thinking back on that time and reflecting on what might, and should, have happened, it would have been nice if a new house could have been built. This was never to happen. First the farm enterprises had to be expanded.

Over the years there was a "hired man" with us whose service was mostly seasonal and other times when the workload began to crowd around the place. I want to recognize some of them. Kristian Mosegaard was probably the first. We all liked him. His folks were neighbors. He could do sleight of hand tricks at which my brother and I marveled. He was an amateur photographer, developing and printing his own photos. He had the finished bedroom upstairs where he slept and also could arrange for a "dark room" for photo developing. I have an interesting photo that he took of Joen and me. Sam Petersen stayed with us a few winters. He was called "little Sam" and suffered from asthma attacks. When well, he was the hired man, and especially liked to work with the horses. Almost every year he would go to Brush, Colorado to the Ben Ezra sanitarium to receive treatment for his asthma. When he returned from one of these trips the horses he drove would whinny loudly, remembering him as the easy going driver, my father said. He never bathed in the winter months, as to not bring on more attacks, he said. This disturbed my mother, understandably, who had to do his laundry. When the first warm days came he went down to the "lower place" where he would set a large tub, filled with water, on a scaffold to be warmed by the sun. Prior to this he purchased a new set of underwear, which he would don after a vigorous bath. The old underwear he burned.

Emil Andersen, foster son of Rasmus Andersen, a neighbor who had grown up in the community, worked for us one or two seasons. He later went to California where he worked for an oil company, and later married Dagny Wosgaard. Dagny was a schoolmate of Edith’s in Askov, Minnesota. This led, many years later, to a pleasant association with Dagny and Emil, visiting with them when we came
to Solvang to see Enok and Nanna Mortensen, who were also good friends.

Alfred Nielsen, son of "Kansas" Nielsen who lived northwest of Junction City. I think Alfred was with us for a couple of seasons. He later became a farmer in the area near his parents, so we saw him again frequently.

Severin Thorby, of Norwegian descent, was from Tacoma, Washington. He was a little older than Emil and Alfred. I remember him as a "snazzy" dresser, even in his work clothes. On Saturday, after work and supper, he would dress up and go to town, first to the barber shop for a shave and bath. For dress-up he wore peg-top trousers and Florsheim shoes with pointed toes, and he wore his hat at a "cocky" tilt. One Sunday morning, when Joen and I were dressed for Sunday School and ready to take off, Thorby adjusted our caps to the same tilt with which he wore his hat. Fortunately, or unfortunately, our mother discovered this change before we left and corrected the style adjustment. Thorby was a good worker, though a bit temperamental at times. He would swear at obstacles to his work, and my father would tell him that being ill-tempered when things didn’t go right was pointless, so relax. He often sang at his work, popular songs of the time, e.g., "Oh, What a Pal was Mary" and "Those Wild, Wild Women."

Also, there were day workers during the harvest season, mostly young people in the neighborhood, who stayed at home and had their noon meal with us. Among these were Andy Mosegaard, Carl and Walter Wilde, Andy Bodtker, Lester Nielsen, and Clarence Back.

Our place fronted on the Pacific Highway and because of that we had a variety of visitors. Frequently, a so-called hobo would stop by and ask for a hand out, sometimes for work and permission to sleep in the hay mow. There was one individual who stopped annually, and about the same time of the year. He was on his way to a harvest job north of here. He would arrive just in time for supper, for which he would thank my mother profusely, then ask if he might sleep in the hay mow. To indicate that he was trustworthy he would empty his pockets into a handkerchief, including his pipe, matches, and tobacco, and turn them over to my father. Then, with
his bedroll he was escorted to a place in the barn where he could sleep. He was up in the morning in time for breakfast, after which he took off down the road. As a sort of compliment he would say that he always remembered the good places. I think my folks always liked to see him.

There was the "German," as my father called him, who came by at the potato harvest season. He hand-dug the potatoes, carefully freeing the soil and laying them in neat rows, after which he would sack them. He was a fast worker. He was paid by the day. He ate his meals with us. I don't know where he slept, perhaps in the hay mow. After a couple of days of work he told my father that he wanted red meat for his dinner and not chicken. "I get all the chicken I want on the road, so when I work I would like to have beef or pork." Ordinarily, I believe my father would have told him to "skip it." However, he was so pleased with the man's work that he conceded to his wishes, which meant a trip to town for the meat.

Periodically scavengers of a sort would stop to see if we had any scrap metal, particularly copper boilers and kettles, and gunny sacks, etc. For this they would pay a little. There would be peddlers selling a variety of things, for which they would take things like old sacks and rags, if we were unwilling to buy. A time or two a caravan of gypsies would come by in horse driven wagons that looked like “prairie schooners.” My mother was apprehensive about them, understanding that they were known as thieves and on occasion would steal children.

.....After the advent of the Model T Ford, a variety and number of sales people would call. Once (and perhaps more often) in or following a rain storm, a man came walking carrying small boxes—his Ford back on the road a ways. They were the coil boxes that he wanted to have dried near the stove or in the oven. The rain storm had made them wet and the motor died. After thirty minutes or so in the oven, and over a cup of coffee while waiting, he thanked us and was off with the dried-out coils.

The fence row across from us had an old and decrepit rail fence. Brush—hazel bushes, hawthorne, wild roses, among other plants, covered the fence. It was a good place to play and for birds to have shelter. The land belonged to the Gribskovs. Just south was the Paulsen place. A wood extended across the center of this place, at
the edge of which was a little cabin in which Mrs. Paulsen, an elderly old Norwegian lady, lived. She was a good friend of my mother, and they found it easy to visit. Sometimes she would come for coffee. She was a small, very stooped person. One time Joen and I were sent to bring her something special my mother had made. We did not do this willingly, being a bit afraid of her. She came to the door and threw up her arms, and laughingly thanked us. We turned around and scurried on our way back. Glancing back as we scurried home, we saw her standing in the doorway laughing. I think we thought she was a witch.

The old Pacific highway proceeded north, and under the railroad trestle, to Lancaster and then to Harrisburg via a ferry across the Willamette River. In the early days the Junction City traffic to Harrisburg was by a road going east of Junction City, now known as Dane Lane and intersecting with the Pacific highway, now known as Love Lake Road. There was a time when this road had periods of busy use. Junction City was "dry," and Harrisburg was "wet." This was before World War I and Prohibition and automobiles were not common, but on certain days some Junction City-ites found it necessary to go to Harrisburg. The traffic from Junction City to the Pacific Highway, which cornered at our place, was visible from our land. I recall my father saying, with a grin, that on the return trip some found it difficult to make the turn from the Pacific Highway to the road to Junction City, and cars would now and then land in the ditch.

Dane Lane, Willamette Drive, and Hentze Lane (these names were given to these roads after World War II), were interesting thorough-fares. Seldom used by the Danes, before the auto, was the River Road to town. Most of the traffic to town from Hentze Lane, Willamette Drive and Love Lake Road merged on Dane Lane. Love Lake Road was part of the Pacific Highway earlier. On the way to Junction City by Dane Lane, a short distance from Love Lake Road one would cross a large wooden bridge over a body of water (in the early days it was referred to as the lake, by the Danes as lakeri). The name Love Lake Road and the designation of this body of water as Love Lake came later and properly so, since the whole area was part of the original Hugh Love land claim. It was a high bridge which,
except at flood time, had a lot of room at each end making a good stopping place on the way home from school. From here on it was an interesting road, lined on the north side much of the time with pie cherry trees of a very tart variety. On the south side there were a few locust trees towards the west end. Many years later locust trees were planted on the south side almost to Love Lake by Viggo Gribskov. There were narrow elevated wooden bridges on the north side or pedestrian use over the several waterways on the way to town. All the roads were graveled in the center. For meeting traffic it was necessary for one of the vehicles to take to side, not too difficult until the automobile.

I think that Peter Bodtker had the first car in the area, a 1914 Model T Ford. Soon J.P. Jensen and Julius Wilde followed. We did not have a car until 1916, when we bought a Chevrolet, with a very odd gear shift. By 1920 most every family had a car.

Mostly Danes lived in this area, as a result of A.C. Nielsens getting the option to purchase 1600 acres from G. Millett for the purpose of establishing a Danish colony. However, there were two non-Dane families in the area. Almost at the end of Willamette Drive lived the Bob Harper family on the place owned by his father, Mac Harper, from the River View area. Another family, the Pyles, had a place also on Willamette Drive, and they had a son, Frank, who went to school in town. Later the Stuckraths moved to this place.

**Friends, Neighbors, and Incidents from the Early Days.** When we lived on the lower place the Hentzes were our closest neighbors. They were immigrants from the Faroe Islands as were my mother and grandmother, and we saw a lot of each other. East from Hentzes, where Gordon Hentze now resides, was the home of Chris Sand and wife. Where the present Hentze Lane joins Love Lake Road was one of the oldest residences east of Junction City. Mads Jensen and family lived there, followed by a Larsen family from Texas, where the man of the house was referred to as "Texas Jack."

On the present Willamette Drive there was the Mosegaard place, later the Nels Mikkelsen home, now owned by a Japanese corporation. Adjacent and north was the J.P. (Kansas) Jensen place, both on the east side of the road. The Jensens were a large family—four boys: James (Jim), William (big Bill), Elmer, Benjamin (Ben), and
three girls: Marie, Anna, Emilia. Further north and on the same side was the Peter Bodtker home. On the corner of Dane Lane and Willamette Drive was the Carl and Agnes Johnsen home. Further north on the west side of Willamette was the Nels Ravn home. Before World War I the Ravns left to seek their fortune in Canada as did several others of the early Danish colonists. Where Willamette Drive turns east there was the Peter Voight home. They were also among the migrants to Canada. This became the Carl Petersen home. Recently this farm became a part of the large McFadden farm and the buildings removed. Further towards the river on the south side was the Harper home. Beyond this on the north side was a large tract with a barn owned by Peter Bodtker. It no longer exists, eroded away by the Willamette River, and now is just a part of the river's meander. At the conjunction of Dane Lane and Love Lake Road was the Julius Wilde home (the old Love and Millett home). North and on the east side of Love Lake Road was the Severin Jensen home. Further north was the McFadden place, and then, before the railroad trestle, the Thornton home. The west side of this road to Dane Lane was bordered by Love Lake. Between the junction of Dane Lane and Love Lake Road and the Hentze Lane junction there were two residences on the east side. The first was the Hans Bodtker home where I spent most of my childhood. Prior owners of this place were the Julius Nielsen and L.P. Johnsen families. L.P. Johnsen built the house and farm structures. Further on were the Jens Pedersens, a large family, all of whom were born in Denmark: Ole, Peter, Marie, Anna, Kristina, Sofie, and Hanna, all grown when they came to Junction City. On the west side the A.C. Nielsens, Jr., and Herman Markussens were built.

On Dane Lane from Love Lake Road to town there were the following homes: none to the east of Love Lake, west on the south side towards town: Anders Jensens (Gribskov), Andreasens, Rasmus Andersens, Myhres, Soren Jensens and A.C. Nielsens, Sr.

Most of the foregoing farms to which reference is made were part of the 1600 acres on which A.C. Nielsen, Sr., had acquired an option that enabled him to divide and sell to Danish colonists who were interested in the formation of a Danish colony. These were the people with whom we had the most contact in the early days, particularly before the auto came on the scene.

64
In my early childhood, I frequented the Wilde and A.C. Nielsen, Jr. homes the most, except for the Peter Bodtkers where there was daily and weekly contact.

There were some Danish immigrants who lived on the River Road to Junction City. On the east River Road before it turned toward town lived the George Johnson family. They had a daughter who helped my mother when there was family illness when we lived on the lower place. After a few years the Johnsons moved to Eddyville. Adjacent and towards the back of Johnsons lived John Frey who had two sons—Louis who became a professional boxer, and John who married Andrea Gregersen. They had a daughter, Marie, who was Folmer’s playmate. The parents separated. Chris Andersen lived on the west side of River Road. He was unmarried. He was a flutist and entertained frequently in the community. After the turn on River Road on the north side was the Fred Rasmussen home. Fred was a brother of Chris Andersen. Just how this name difference came about I never learned. Fred was also a musician. He played the violin. He and Chris often played together for dances—our barn-warming dance was one. The Rasmussens had a daughter Agnes about my age. Fred and Chris had a sister married to one of the Andersens in the Oakgrove community. Nearer town and on the south side of the road was the Hans Petersen home. Anton Sorensen lived across the road in a large, spacious, and somewhat imposing house. He was a carpenter and unmarried. It was said that he had built this fine house for a hopeful marriage with a young woman (whose identity is not revealed), but who shunned him. On the south side of the road and at the edge of Junction City lived Hans Wilde and family. A few years later two families bought, moved, and built on farms on the River Road east of Petersens: Carl Ruder and across the road Jacob Jaeger.

As the Junction City Danish community developed, other Danish immigrants settled south, west, and north of the city in a five-mile radius. The Danish church, Brotherhood and Sisterhood lodges, cooperatives and commerce brought them together, but quite a number of them were unattached to anything Danish. Still most of the latter were known as Danes, which served as a means for associating and visiting.
**Chapter 4: High School Days**

**High School.** My father was a little reluctant at first to let me go to high school, looking forward, perhaps, to having steady help with the farming. A compromise was reached. I could go to high school if I would spend mornings, evenings, and Saturdays helping with the dairying. To make this practical I was to get a new bicycle to enable me to get to and from school with more dispatch. My father was a man of his word and we went to the Sims bicycle shop in town, where I was outfitted with the very latest in bicycle design. At the time I was not aware of how this was going to "crimp" my high school activities. I would not be able to participate in sports and other after-school functions. However, a deal was a deal, and I don't recall that it resulted in any sort of trauma, only now and then a wistful feeling that it would have been nice if things could have been different. There was some redemption later, for by the start of my senior year, the dairy was discontinued, the cows sold, doing away with most of the burdensome chores, and thereby permitting me to participate in sports and other extracurricular activities.

That year I was on the football and baseball teams and in the dramatic club, participating in some productions. In high school I met students I had not known before who came from surrounding communities: Oak Grove, Riverview, Lone Pine, Lancaster, Noraton, Harmony, Liberty, Bear Creek, etc. There was a student body of about 70 students. There were four teachers, one who was superintendent of schools and one who was principal of the high school. Albert E. White was the Superintendent and taught history. He was a disciplinarian, of sorts, and as a consequence not overly popular. History was not exciting as taught by him. I did learn names and successions of the presidents and other things such as dates that lent themselves to memorizing. He also coached baseball. H.L. Robe, the principal, taught math (algebra and geometry) and a subject called general science, an extremely narrow introduction to chemistry and physics. Miss Carlson taught domestic science for the girls, though a few boys were also enrolled. She also taught typing. Mrs. (Beulah Stebno) Thornton taught English and French. It was a lean program that was offered, with the exception of the English and
French, taught by Mrs. Thornton. Fortunately, the leanness of the curriculum did not become apparent until I attended college.

My high school days were happy, satisfying and often inspiring. Relationships with other students and teachers were pleasant. The inspiring times were due to one teacher (Mrs. Thornton) who opened up a new world for me, as she did for many others. She also coached and directed dramatics. She was an exceptionally fine teacher, demanding and inspiring. She introduced an atmosphere of formality into the classroom, addressing all students by their surnames, either Mr. or Miss, attributing adulthood to each. By this approach she could, and did, demand top performance. She did her part by being an inspiring teacher. In the years she taught here she left a legacy that held as long as there was anyone who could remember her. What was her legacy? It consisted of two parts. The first consisted of using the King’s English properly and effectively in speech and writing. The second introduced us to good literature so that we might learn to love and respect it. She was a spirited teacher impressing on us that learning was important. She made us feel that it was inexcusable to do anything less than one’s best. Many examples and incidents could be cited, demonstrating her devotion to teaching. To name a few: Transporting a group of students to the University of Oregon to see a production of “The Merchant of Venice” and reading and declaiming to the student body poetry, stories, and selections from great writers. She was versatile in her relationship to students, leading rallies at sporting events. She sponsored an oratorical contest for boys and a similar one for girls.

It was customary that when the noon hour was over all students would return to the assembly room, where there would be a short program, sometimes including singing, led by Principal Robe. Superintendent White was in a nearby office and rarely participated in the assembly. However, it was soon discovered that Mr. White was very proud of his native state, Illinois, and if "Illinois, My Illinois" was being sung he would dart out of his office and loudly join in the singing. Sometimes a visiting speaker would address the students. Mrs. Thornton was in charge of the program and often would perform in some way herself. She was an excellent reader and would read excerpts from well-known writers. I remember Jack London's Call of the Wild, Kipling’s "Gunga Din," "The Shooting of
Dan McGrew" by Robert Service, and other selections that had a dramatic flair. She was by far the most popular contributor to this assembly.

Mrs. Thornton thought the high school should have organized rallying for sporting events, and as another indication of her leadership qualities she appointed a couple of yell leaders. In a complete surprise Alice Madsen and I were chosen. Me, perhaps, because I was not participating in any of the sports. With her coaching we created a few yells, not too original, which we then had to practice. During the noon hour she would instruct Alice and me how to lead the rallying student spectators at the games. I was more than a little embarrassed with this assignment, but an assignment it was, with no excuses accepted. This was in the early twenties. Following her days in Junction City she taught, mostly drama, at the Normal College at Monmouth, and ending her teaching at Oregon State College in Corvallis.

My participation in sports was quite satisfying, though I didn't display talent that would mark me as someone to watch. Our football coach was Ed Bailey, a local attorney and a former star on the University of Oregon team, who was well liked by everyone. We had a successful season, and I played fullback. I thought it would be nice if my father would see me play, and I finally talked him into coming to see a Junction City game against Harrisburg. This was quite an accomplishment, since I don't recall ever seeing any (Danish) parents attend these events. It was a rainy day and the football field was a muddy place, with no sod or sawdust to absorb the wet. But no matter, the game went on and we beat Harrisburg twenty to nothing. Doing chores that night I learned a lesson, namely, "to let well enough alone." I had overlooked the fact that my father did not understand the finer points of this great American game. Since he made no reference to the game, and, especially since we won, and I had scored a couple of the touchdowns, I asked him what he thought of the game. His response was to the effect that he had never witnessed such an idiotic display of people wallowing in the mud chasing an odd-shaped ball. Of course, this was all said in colorful Danish.

Our baseball coach was Albert White, our superintendent and history teacher. He liked baseball and being from Illinois was an
ardent fan of the Chicago Cubs or White Sox (I don’t remember which one). Like his memory in history, he had the statistics of baseball on the tip of his tongue. I played in several positions, but mostly in the outfield. What I did not know at the time was that I was farsighted. In the game with Springfield I was being fooled by their pitcher, striking, and missing his “slider.” I was told to wait until I saw the ball break before striking, which I resolved to do the next time at bat. The pitcher threw a fast ball, and I waited for it to break—too long—and it hit me on the head, and down I went. I finished the season without anymore embarrassing incidents.

Junction City was a railroad stop where a variety of services were performed such as switching of cars, taking on water and a general all around checking of running gear. There was a resident crew stationed here to help with these services. Many of them boarded and roomed near the depot. They would hire high school students as part of a "wake-up" crew so that they could be ready at train time. One year my cousin Anders had one of these much coveted jobs. Section bridge and rail maintenance crews were also stationed here. Junction City was a so-called Railroad Town. Now and then important personages would be on the trains. Sometimes on special trains they would be in special cars. Albert White, our superintendent, was sensitive to these occasions and would recess the schools. I recall Teddy Roosevelt on one of these trains, and he stood in the end of an observation car waving to the crowd, and that Neil (Skinny) Flint managed to climb aboard and shake the great man's hand. Sometime later Woodrow Wilson’s train stopped. He was more sedate than Teddy.

I was a member of the Dramatic Club. Sam Lehman, a young assistant teller at the State Bank was the coach. He had studied dramatics at the University of Oregon and was acquainted with Mrs. Thornton. I enjoyed this activity.

A so-called "smoker," though there was no smoking in the sessions, was organized where boxing and wrestling were coached by Glen Strome, a young farmer and a graduate of Oregon Agricultural College. We met a few times during the winter of my senior year in an empty building on Sixth Street, later occupied by Mitchell’s Second Hand Store. I preferred wrestling, but at times would be a sparring partner for the boxers. I remember an incident
in particular when my friend Burton (Buck) Young, an aspiring heavy weight boxer, persuaded me to be his sparring partner, promising that he would not try to knock me out, but just wanted to practice his footwork. I would be classified as a light weight. After a few minutes of sparring, Buck forgot his promise and knocked me cold with a punch to the jaw, after which he helped revive me and apologized profusely. Glen Strome liked this smoker activity and was good at leading it.

I made several friends in high school. Among the boys there were Kenneth (Chick) Lee, Burton (Buck) Young, Gifford Cheshire, Loyal Stuckrath, Holger Rasmussen, Roscoe Hand, and Andrew Petersen, with whom I would continue to have pleasant association for many years. Roscoe Hand’s folks moved to Dillon, Montana, and he completed high school there, but he and I corresponded frequently for several years. Among the girls there were the Madsen sisters, Alice and Serena, Helena Wilde, Mildred Dinges, Anna Porter, the Hughes sisters, Mary Sanders, and my cousin, Helga Bodtker. In those days there were only a few boys who had cars at their disposal for after-school events, and for those of us who lived out in the country having dates meant long walks, miles in some instances. This may have slowed the dating, but didn’t eliminate it. Most of the students who came from outside of our school district, Oak Grove perhaps being the exception, came to high school in cars, generally one car from each area. Since I lived out in the country, coming to town at nightly affairs wasn’t very frequent. Even so there were occasional dates, mostly to athletic events and to the Saturday night dance.

It was about this time that I acquired the nickname Barney and for what reason I don’t recall. I formally abandoned it after my year at Grand View College in 1925-26. However, most of my contemporaries continued to address me as Barney.

We had acquired a car in 1916 and the first year we drove it 1,500 miles which my father thought was an extravagance. I soon learned to drive, so that I could take my mother to places that were not of interest to my father. Still there was conservative use of the car. At first, long distance driving consisted of driving to the cemetery on
Decoration Day. The biggest undertaking was to a Brotherhood picnic on Skinners Butte.

While I was in high school there had been some changes at home. First, the dairy enterprise was discontinued. There was an auction sale, at which all the livestock except for a couple of cows for family milk, and of course some hogs, were sold. The whole farm was planted to wheat, for which there was a big demand following World War I. At harvest all the wheat, in sacks, was stored in the dairy barn to be sold, my father said, when the price was right. This was a time when my father was lucky. The price was good. It may have been about three dollars a bushel. Shortly after the selling the bottom fell out of the market, the beginning of the skid in farm prices that culminated in the Great Depression. What to do now?

With his young friend George Klinge as partner, it was decided to try potatoes, the market for which seemed promising. A new variety, called White Rose, was getting a lot of attention, so my father decided to order enough seed potatoes of that variety to plant most of the farm. This took a considerable outlay of cash, but they were undaunted. George was an energetic person, who had always been a friend and helper from the days when we lived on the lower place, and he worked for us. The potatoes were planted, well cared for and they turned out to be a bumper crop. After digging they were stored in the big barn, after which they were sorted and binned by size. It was a neat looking lot of produce. The culls were sold for livestock feed, but during the fall and winter the customary potato buyers were not around. There was an over-production of potatoes and the buyers had purchased at bargain prices what they wanted at harvest time. In those days it took a continual sorting and removal of the spoiled ones. By spring deterioration had increased to the stage where there was no salvage. The crop was removed and hand shoveled into a manure spreader and from there spread in the field. My father commented that at least they got a little for the culls. This experience represents one of the perils of farming that to this day we have not come to grips with.

There was still the land and the hogs that would pay for the essentials. It was now decided to venture into a poultry enterprise. This would require special facilities, the most costly of which were some new buildings. A barn-like structure was built about in the
center of the farm, a distance from the dairy. This was near the location where the old hop dryer was located. It was large enough to accommodate 1,500 laying chickens and the necessary roosters. The building was two story, the upper part for feed and egg storage. The bottom had three areas for feeding, egg laying, and roosting. This was supposed to be "the state of the art" in poultry buildings. Near the main farmstead a brooder house was built. It, too, was the latest. It was sixteen feet by thirty-two feet with double walls, ceiling and floor, and with special arrangement for ventilation. I am not sure, but I think that the chicks came from Petaluma, California.

After gathering the eggs, they were sorted to remove the cracked ones, clean the soiled ones, and put them in crates—thirty dozen in each. Periodically the crates would be taken to town and loaded into a train car to be shipped to the Co-operative Egg Producers in Portland. The eggs with only a slight crack were sold to a the local bakery. That still left many to be used at home. Eggs were a part of the daily diet to the point of being tiresome. Anecdotes abound with this enterprise. On one of his deliveries to the depot my father turned too abruptly at a corner in town allowing a crate of eggs to be dislodged and falling on the street scattering eggs every which way, most of them breaking. There were residences close by and women came out to gather the eggs, some with dishes for the broken ones. It was a mess, and my father was so embarrassed by it all that after delivering the rest of the crates he just drove home and let the women scramble for what they could get. I wasn't there, but this is the way my father told it—laughing.

He also liked to tell about the crows that would gather around the chicken house to scavenge. He made a couple of trips (walking) daily, a fair distance, up there to do the work associated with the chickens. One day he brought his shot gun along, thinking that a shot or two would warn the crows that their presence was not appreciated. However, the crows did not come near that day, but they were back the next day when he didn't have the gun. So he thought he'd just leave the gun in the tall grass and pick it up when they came, but that didn't work either, because when he stopped to pick up the gun, the crows were long gone. Just to test how smart those birds were he replaced the shotgun with a long stick, but the
crows paid no attention when he stopped to pick up the stick. Smart birds!

In addition to high school related activities, there was a special social life for the young people of Junction City, those of Danish lineage in particular. The Danish Young People's Society, an arm of the Danish Lutheran Church, was a center for a variety of recreational activities. Participation included those of Danish lineage who were members of other churches or who did not adhere to any church. The membership was broad, from teen-agers to older unmarried men and women, and included young married couples. Officers were elected annually. Regular monthly meetings were held, generally with a pre-arranged program and followed by games, folk dancing, and refreshments. Picnics, outings, socials, even sometimes lectures and dramatic productions, were sponsored. The society's meetings and programs were occasions for dating. I think that Hans and Helga Rasmussen's romance started here. The romancing, at times, had its lighter aspects. There were basket socials, partly to raise money for the Society's activities, but also to have fun. The girls brought food baskets, which were auctioned. Naturally, in situations where a pair was going steady, it was desirous that the lady's basket go to her paramour. There were enough rapscallions at the party who would keep the bidding up in this situation, so that the suitor would pay more than the average to get it.

Functions of the Danish Young People's Society were occasions when I dated Serena Madsen. The Madsens were a unique family. The father, Thomas, had an erect stature, having served in the King's Guard in Denmark. His wife, Dorothea, was an alert lady with sparkling eyes. They had six children, five girls and one boy. Serena was the eldest. One time when I called at the Madsens to pick up Serena, her mother wanted to tell me about a book she had been reading. It was The Outline of History, by H.G. Wells. The book was awakening her to the wonders of our history. She told me about it with such enthusiasm that it stimulated my interest in history. Wells was an antidote to Albert White's approach, which consisted largely of a recitation of events and people to be memorized, rather than understood.
The Danish Young People's Society was an affiliate of the Danish Lutheran Church in America. It published a monthly periodical called *Ungdom (Youth)*. There were eight church districts in the country, the Pacific Northwest being the eighth. As with the church, the Danish Young People’s Society held annual district conventions. They were held alternately in Seattle, Tacoma, and Enumclaw, Washington and in Junction City, Oregon. When the conventions were held in Washington attendance from Junction City was modest because of the distance. Even so they were important to many. My brother, Joen, and I attended all of them for several years in the early twenties.

A so-called older brother situation arose one time when I took my mother and Joen to attend a function at the Danish Hall. I was driving our car. Serena was also in attendance, so I arranged to take her home, which was okay with my mother. After the affair we all got in the car and I headed for home with my mother and Joen, after which I would take Serena home. She lived south and west of town and we lived east of town in opposite directions. Joen protested vigorously without let-up, at the extra few miles this would take, when it obviously was more efficient to take Serena home first. I could have choked him. Fortunately, my mother made no comment so I proceeded as planned.

This Society, with the help and support of the church, sponsored gymnastics and folk dancing. Gymnastics was, for many years, under the leadership of Hans P. Reerslev who was trained in Denmark as an instructor of gymnastics. It took place in the parish hall which, through the effort of Reerslev, was especially equipped to meet his requirements. I don’t recall if gymnastics took place before Reerslev came (1910 or 1911), but I believe this activity was formalized when he provided the leadership. Classes were mostly for boys and men, although in the early years there were classes for girls and women, continuing into the mid-twenties. Gymnastic sessions were rigorous, but enjoyable, with classes once a week during the winter months, ending with an exhibition each spring. Reerslev lived southwest of town about two miles and drove to town in a buggy pulled by a white horse—really quite a dedication to a program in which he believed—to lead and teach these classes.
Folk dancing was under a varied leadership, now and then in organized formal groups, but generally in the form of games and dances, with most everyone participating, at all kinds of gatherings. Leaders in this activity that I recall were Clara Mogensen and Sigrid Larsen, both minister's wives.

by

Erik S. Hansen

Abstract:

Christian Hansen is a name known to many who are familiar with the original Danish colony of Danebod, in Tyler, in southwest Minnesota. Founded in 1886, the congregation now in 2011 celebrates its 125th anniversary year. *Eventyrmanden*—the Fairy Tale Man, as he was known, was associated with Danebod during the first fifty years of the settlement. Initially as one of the early pioneers, then in a continuing presence as a kind of “storyteller in residence” at the Danebod Folk School and Children’s School, Christian Hansen was often called on to entertain young and old alike with enchanting tales from lands far away. The story of his own life—though not so romantic, or dramatic, perhaps, as his tales—is still a notable saga of emigration and establishing a new life in a new land. It makes a memorable tale in itself, from his roots near the “mountains” of Mols in rural Jutland and his beloved if somewhat obtuse Molbo people, to his immigrant efforts working in the sawmills of Muskegon, Michigan, to hired man status on hardship farms out on the Minnesota prairie, all the while laboring to save enough money to make his own way as a farmer on his own land in his new country. Even his eventual arrival in Tyler is not without drama, driving a team of oxen through the spring flood-swollen surge of the meandering Cottonwood River to arrive at his choice of abode, the newly flourishing pioneer colony at Danebod.

If his story has merit, what then of his stories? Many remember him telling them—“Oh, yes, he was quite the entertainer,” one person recalled just this past year. But what were the stories he told? And where did they originate? Recently discovered handwritten, penciled manuscripts and notes left behind reveal interesting clues. While it would have been exciting to find a treasure trove of unpublished original tales, or better yet a whole new chapter of Molbo stories, it is nonetheless gratifying to learn that his storyteller
genius emerges from the long standing tradition of oral tales in northern Europe that is lock-step in league with well known names of the Romantic Age, names such as the Brothers Grimm in Germany or Asbjørnsen and Moe in Norway. This is the broad ground of shared folk tales that celebrated the lives of ordinary people. It displayed all sides of the human character, from foolish or greedy to wise and brave, and elevated even the least among us to positions equal with the affluent and noble. It provided a motivation and first cause in the evolution of common men and women and their building the basis of modern democracies. It is a tradition rich in images, laden with outlandish dreams that somehow usually are fulfilled, and laced with lessons of living simply and frugally. It is also a tradition that provided the mass entertainment of that day and age—its radio, cinema, television, even social media all rolled up in one, so to speak. How these stories found their way from the moorlands of Denmark to the prairies of North America is the story of the life and times of Christian Hansen, *Eventyrmanden*, The Fairy Tale Man.

As for the stories themselves, what do they reveal about us? And what do faraway characters, the kings and trolls and tramps and pretty princesses, have to do with life out on the prairie? In short, it can be said their plots reflect essential traits for immigrant survival. Above all, they value absolute aspiration and undying dedication. They reflect an attitude to life that perhaps can be summed up in a simple formula: *Dream large, live small, and never give up*. No wonder the magic boxes and princesses in castles had appeal for both Danish small holder farmers and immigrant pioneers alike. They are the magic words of release from poverty and misery, if the right price will be paid. At a sublime level these stories also are the talisman of the tired, the poor, the huddled masses yearning to breathe free. Thanks to the storytellers, they are not only our stories now. Even more simply put: they are our story.

I. His Story

*The diminutive man stood at the far end of a long row of soldiers. They were lined up according to height, from the tallest first down to the smallest. The line stretched for over a mile. He was at the small end, third from the last. It was summer, a hot day. The entire garrison was assembled*
for review. Wool uniforms, muskets, packs and bedrolls—all the military dress paraphernalia only intensified the heat and made it more oppressive.

The King seemed to take forever in reviewing his troops, guiding his horse slowly down the length of the line. It was not a good time for Denmark. The border war in Schleswig/Holstein had been lost just a few years before. Half the Jutland peninsula was ceded to Germany in reparation for the defeat. It was as if the King were now remembering every town and village and farm that was no longer Danish. As he moved down the long line, the soldiers snapped to attention. Frequently he stopped his horse in front of a particular man and asked where he was from. Or where his family lived. No longer could any one of them say they were from the part of Denmark that was now German.

“What we have outwardly lost must be inwardly gained,” it was said about the defeat. Those words became a rallying cry not only for the nation but also for the growing folk high school movement. Many of these men would become the first students of the Danish folk awakening and emancipation of the latter half of the 19th Century. Spiritual gain would make up for reduction in the physical size of Denmark. But return to economic stability would be harder to come by again. The war had depleted Danish coffers. Poor woodland and agricultural practices had transformed much of Jutland into a sandy wasteland. A post-war provisional minority government of landed gentry and businessmen was only grudgingly giving way to newfound democratic aspirations of small farmers and the working classes. Many of these same men would leave Denmark to seek their fortunes abroad.

The King made his way slowly, painstakingly, down the long file. Finally, as he approached the shorter end of line, command was given to regroup each battalion at parade rest in formation before the King. “Dress right, Dress—March!” came the orders. As the turning lines of soldiers scrambled to keep up, those at the far end, the shortest men, had to be the most nimble on their short legs as rank and file swung round from the center. Conscript Christian Hansen, third from last, somehow slipped and stumbled just as the little man sensed the eyes of the King fall directly on him. His body lost balance in keeping up. His knees buckled under the weight of his pack. He toppled over on the ground onto his back. It was as if his flat military knapsack had been loaded with stones. He lay there, legs and arms akimbo, like a turtle flipped upside down on its shell. He couldn’t get up.
The King sat upright in his saddle and stared down at the helpless man now struggling and kicking before him. All marching had stopped. No one else dared move or make a sound. Nor did the horse move.

Finally the King said: “Would some kind soul please help that poor fellow back to his feet.”

And then he turned and rode away.

In June 2011, the Danebod congregation in Tyler, Minnesota, celebrates its 125th anniversary. Established in 1886, it’s one of the few remaining active sites in North America of the descendant Danish folk high school tradition. The founding story is well known through Enok Mortensen’s book, Seventy-five Years at Danebod, as well as the enhanced version published for the centenary in 1986, A Century at Danebod. The pioneer congregation functioned initially for two years out of private pioneer homes. Then (notably) first a folk high school (1888) was built, followed by the Stone Hall (1889) that also served as church and parish hall, then a parochial school (1892), and only lastly the historic cross church, korskirken, (1894). The current folk school building, or the College, as it’s often called, was built after the original school burned to the ground in 1917.

Danebod thus became and has remained an active focal point for the congregation for 125 years, supporting worship as well as providing a popular place for meetings and schooling for locals and visitors alike. What is less well known is that the site originally was chosen in response to a gathering of immigrant leaders who were concerned their Danish countrymen were arriving on the east coast of the United States, taking trains inland, and then getting trapped in large cities, without ever experiencing the fortunes of farming and rural life that had been familiar to so many of them back in Denmark. Therefore it befell immigrant entrepreneur and folk high school leader H.J. Pedersen to answer a call from the group in Tyler, and after exploring the area with fellow Danes, he founded Danebod in an effort to remain true to its namesake—from the title given to queen Tyra Danebod, known from history as one who would protect and save the Danes.

His prospects as a soldier were hardly promising. Pay was meager. Adding insult, while in service at the garrison at Hald near Viborg in
central Jutland, he contracted a skin disease that infected his scalp, and he lost his hair.

Equally sparse was the outlook back on the home farm in Attrup. His birthplace lay at the gateway to Mols, the noted Molbo hill country of the Jutland peninsula. Hard times had settled over Denmark. The household of six—a brother and two sisters along with the parents—eked a living out of a small free-holder farm with a few head of cattle. They made all their own clothing, sitting long into the evenings kitting garments by hand and telling stories of kings and princesses, beggars and tramps.

He had been born Hans Christian Hansen, but in his first year of school there were three boys in his class named Hans Christian. The teacher resolved the issue simply. “One of you will be Hans, one of you Christian, and the other Hans Christian.” The name stuck. Eventually the family farm went to a younger brother while Christian himself, the oldest, attended a nearby teacher’s college.

He went on to teach school various places in Jutland and on the island of Møn, across from the Swedish coast, until his career as a schoolmaster was interrupted by a foray abroad. He shipped out of Aarhus harbor on a cattle boat bound for Newcastle, England. He rode right down in the hold next to the animals being sent to the slaughterhouse and told of the braying chorus that entertained him for two days and three nights of the voyage. He stayed in Newcastle, on the River Tyne, learning the language for a few months and was sufficiently impressed by a new bridge, which had just been built, to note exact dimensions and detail in a journal from that time, a record that abruptly and mysteriously ends in mid-sentence. So, too, without further words, ended his stay in England.

H. J. Pedersen had come to Danebod with three, if not four, folk school experiences under his belt. The first was in Denmark at Ryslinge on Fyn, where he studied; the second, in America, in Michigan, where he founded Ashland Folk School; and finally an interim stay at the new folk school that previously had been started in Elk Horn, Iowa, before he returned to Ashland. Pedersen was a proponent of N.F.S. Grundtvig, whose teachings were garnering support and leading many away from more pious traditions of the church exemplified by contemporaries such as Søren Kierkegaard and Wilhelm Beck. Beck's Inner Mission movement was especially strong in Jutland. Like many around them, the Hansen family in
Attrup had been drawn to attend lectures by Beck. They would even walk some 30 miles inland in Jutland, crossing the Kolind Sound over the ice in winter or sailing in summer, just to hear Beck speak to his congregation. But Grundtvigians such as Pedersen offered enticing views that celebrated life on earth over preoccupation with sin and subsequent damnation or salvation.

In addition, while immigration to America often focuses on “pull” factors on this continent drawing aspiring pioneers to new, democratic vistas, often overlooked are “push” factors, in this case the political situation in Denmark. After the loss of the war with Germany, the monarchy was losing power. A provisional, minority government of landed gentry and new business owners had assumed power. A book on Kristian Østergaard—the noted Danish-American poet and writer who taught with Pedersen both at Ashland and Elk Horn (and who returned for a time to his homeland in an attempt to start a folk school of his own, before returning to the States and also ending up at Danebod in Tyler)—notes the folk high school “unfriendly” and stifling attitude of the right wing provisional government in Denmark at the time. In the mid 1880s the new leftist party of smallholder farmers had entered into a bitter rivalry against this ruling party led by bourgeois businessmen and the landed estate. Østergaard even wondered if civil war might break out in Denmark, as some local militias and rifle clubs had armed themselves to counter the national guard that had been assembled by the Danish conservatives. This government of the right did not favor the folk high school movement, even to the point of censuring teachers speaking out in favor of education for the lower classes. Østergaard’s own school in North Jutland was repeatedly denied support by this government in an ongoing verbal battle that would nearly break him, and a struggle that when finally given up for lost, resulted in the origination of his most famous poem and song still widely sung today: “That Cause Can Never Be Lost Or Stayed.”

His recorded story resumes when he arrives in middle America in 1885. A nephew from Denmark, who heard the story from his mother Marie, Christian’s sister, suggests his departure was also due in part to having less than perfect pitch for singing, a vital attribute, since school teachers
also were expected to be song leaders of the local church. But the salary of a teacher at best undoubtedly was scant, as well. And he had no money to start his own farm. Emigration offered a possible outlet, as it did for so many others who found themselves in hard circumstances or were just open to an adventure abroad. No one said inward gain couldn’t be enhanced by gaining outwardly again.

What ever the reason, he left Denmark in 1885, never to return. His love for his homeland remained, however, especially for his magical Mols—the infamous “drip under the nose” of the gnome-faced Jutland peninsula—and was passed down in family stories and in various writing of his own, including letters to and from family left behind in Denmark, as well as in his native storytelling ability that would revive and thrive in his new land. As was said of his venture to America: “He found there a place of being, abiding, becoming.” Or more succinctly, as in the original Danish: “Der fandt han sit blivende sted.”

When the newfound Danish congregation in Tyler called a pastor, H.J. Pedersen answered with enthusiasm, even though two others had first turned down the post. While Pedersen felt a sense of guilt at abandoning those he left behind in Michigan for a second time—he had also left them to go first to Elk Horn—he seemed to be a pioneering type, filled with startup energy, who couldn't resist a new challenge on the frontier.

Nor for that matter could he turn down a chance to make some money. He also had a keen eye for the business bottom line. When the prospect for folk schools in this country first was being discussed in the 1870s, and after some initial funding support of a folk high school in America had been garnered in Denmark, Pedersen suggested Danes already in this country could decide the future of a new school over here simply by “voting” with dollar bills. “Send in your ballots,” he enjoined them. “All they have to be is rectangular and bear the words: United States of America—One Dollar! The number of ballots will then determine the result, the more you send the better. All those opposed to the proposition can send in half dollars.”

One man who also had joined Pedersen in Ashland would follow him to Minnesota. This was the recent Danish immigrant from Mols who knew of Pedersen from Denmark and who had found a job in
the sawmills of Muskegon, where he worked for a dollar a day. In less than three years the new immigrant somehow saved $1000. Either he was a model of thrift or an outright glutton for privation . . . or a little of both . . . though he no doubt was aided in part by befriending Pedersen and taking occasional meals at Ashland Folk School in exchange for telling stories to the students.

Christian Hansen, often called Eventyrmanden, or The Fairy Tale Man, is a name known to most anyone associated with Danebod in its early pioneer years. His life in America spanned the full history of Danebod as an active folk high school, from his arrival in 1888 after the start of the colony, until his death in 1939, when the folk school ceased offering regular courses. His journey to Tyler, via Michigan and Chicago, is recorded in a written account from 1927: “When I came to Minnesota” (“Da jeg kom til Minnesota”), and is catalogued in the Grand View archive.

“It is now 40 years since I first celebrated Christmas in Minnesota, though not in Tyler but 14 miles east of here in Balaton, where I arrived in September 1887 by train from Chicago in the company of a group of Swedes who were going to look at land and possibly each buy a parcel near this settlement (Balaton) where some of their countrymen already had settled. The land for sale was owned for the most part by the railroad, which gave considerable reduction in the train ticket for those seeking land, and furthermore a free ticket back if they actually purchased property . . .

After two days driving far and wide, both north and south of the town, everyone in the group had found a piece of land and traveled back to Chicago while I alone stayed behind, with the intention of visiting the new Danish pioneer colony near Lake Benton, some twenty miles further west.”

Following the Homestead Act of 1862, federal land grants had allowed lands taken from the native inhabitants in favorable treaties (or usurped outright) to be placed in the public domain and offered for sale to immigrants and settlers. As often was the case, the newly acquired Indian land was deeded to railroad magnates as an incentive to build rail lines across the country, with a right to sell for profit every other section on either side of the line. Further inducement for promoting settlement followed in the so-called Timber Culture Act of 1873, which originated from the rather
mistaken scientific theory that trees brought rain . . . and thus planting trees would make the treeless prairie more habitable. The act allowed settlers extra acreage if they put 40 acres into timber, or so-called tree claims.

One such tree claim, and quarter section of land around it, was purchased by H.J. Pedersen as the site for the newly imagined fortress of Danish learning and worship out on the prairie. But it would be 8 months of a hard winter before Christian Hansen would join him there at the start of the enterprise. After the rail car full of Swedes initially had unloaded in Balaton and they proceeded by buggy out around Current Lake, and while one by one the Swedes had purchased property, the Dane found nothing to his liking, least of all the plot offered him, which included 40 acres under water in Current Lake itself. His sights were set further west.

He stayed the first winter instead working odd jobs, first as a hired plowman, then a stint on the railroad crew near Russell, where the Great Northern was extending its line. When the ground froze in November, halting construction, he got work as a farmhand for the winter.

“I’d heard that the Swedish land agent out by Current Lake wanted to hire a man for the winter. It was the last Sunday in November when I decided to walk out there on foot. Snow lay knee-deep, and it was past noon by the time I arrived. But unfortunately, no, he didn’t need anyone after all. But over there (he pointed) lives a man, it could be he’d hire someone, since he had a number of animals and they were an old couple.

That meant another 2-3 miles of walking, so it was nearly dark by the time I got there, and I met the man already doing the evening chores. He was in the process of gathering up bundles of hay in his arms from a hay stack outside and carrying them in to the cattle, which stood tied up in a row inside a kind of pole barn (without a haymow) that was common at the time. It meant carrying the hay in by hand.

Well, I met the man outside—also a Swede—No, he didn’t need a man either, but over a couple of miles to the east lives a ‘Yankee’ (the name used for people in the New England states), it wasn’t impossible that he had use for a man, and then he added that now it was so late, that you’ll never make it over there tonight. You can stay the night here and go over there in the morning. If you want, you can help me with the chores.
For that I was more than happy at the prospect of a much needed good night’s rest after the long day’s march. After finishing the chores we went into the house. It was very small and was divided in two rooms. The first room was slightly larger and served both as living room, dining room, and kitchen; behind this was a bedroom, just large enough to fit two beds with the headboards facing each other and a small walkway alongside. The family consisted of the husband and wife and a grown daughter, and to that now was added a completely strange man, and I wondered where they would find sleeping room for this unknown wandering beggar. But that caused no difficulty at all. On toward bedtime, mother and daughter slipped into the first bed, and after that the husband and stranger into the other, as if it were the most natural thing in the world. I admired this beautiful gesture of Swedish hospitality and have never forgotten it since.

During the night a strong wind picked up and blew in snow drifts so deep that in the morning the haystack first had to be cleared off so we could find some fodder for the cattle. It was biting cold, and the old man’s fingers stiffened and froze as he tried to dig into the hay and snow... Now forty years later I can still hear him say: “The devil ought to be a farmer in Minnesota.”

He stayed that winter working first for the neighbors pointed out by the elderly Swedish couple, a job that offered the best wage he could find—$25 for the entire winter!—though it was limited to lodging and only two meals a day in exchange for work from seven in the morning till seven at night. Furthermore, the woman of the house objected to smoking. When one evening he tried to light up his pipe in his room for a couple of puffs before bedtime, immediately the next morning she put up a sign in big letters, “No smoking allowed in this room.”

That was the “drop that caused the cup to overflow,” as he noted, and the very next Sunday, the last in November, he took the train west to Lake Benton, under the misconception that this was where the new Danish colony was located. He hoped to get a place for the winter with fellow Danes, but when he found out there were no Danes farming in Lake Benton, nor would anyone else local need a hired man, since there were no farms at all in the hills around the lake, he caught the eastbound train back to Balaton the same night and went straight out to the widow woman from Vermont who
previously had offered him a place for the winter, though at $5 less in salary for the winter. It was Sunday evening, he explained his predicament, and though she wouldn’t speak of worldly things on a Sunday, she did offer to let him stay the night, and the next morning they discussed the matter again and he took the job at the reduced salary of $20 for the winter, but this time including 3 meals a day and no objection to smoking inside the house.

In the spring he would buy two oxen, and with the money he’d saved from the saw mill in Muskegon still in his pocket, and a few dollars more added from the winter and additional work in Balaton, he headed west. As soon as the weather began to warm, he drove the team toward Tyler, twice crossing the swollen Cottonwood River, fording the flooded stream by swimming alongside the team.

He purchased 80 acres from Pedersen for $1000, who then took half of that and put it toward building the folk school. The first year in Tyler he lived upstairs in the initial building Pedersen had constructed for his family, a combination barn and house—a structure later converted into the old bus garage on the Danebod campus. The first folk school was built over the course of that summer. With his ox team he helped haul sand and rocks up from the lake for the foundation and materials for building, until the school was finished and classes started in the fall, when he taught various courses including English, Danish literature, and Swedish gymnastics . . . and he told his stories. A newsprint clipping found among family papers, from an article in Danish in an unnamed newspaper from some years later, carries a description of one traveler’s encounter with him at a meeting at Danebod:

The one who caught my greatest interest was storyteller Christian Hansen. He introduced himself by saying, “Jeg er eventyrmanden—I am the fairy tale man.” And if ever any one had a claim to that title, surely he does. I have nothing critical to say about him. He’s a genuine storyteller as in the old days. Where he learned his art I have no idea. It must be inborn. His secret is that he believes in his stories, because he knows they speak the truth. He tells them as if an older child is speaking to the child within each of us. He’s the best storyteller I’ve ever heard, and it’s surprising more use isn’t made of him. He should be asked to travel around the country and tell stories to young and old alike, from his boundless bag of tales.
I asked why he hadn’t told us any of his tales before, and he answered, “Because no one asked me to.” But on one of the last days of the meeting, we finally got to hear him entertain at a gathering at Strandskov’s house. Everyone enjoyed themselves. We others can tell stories that seem more or less alive, and explain them in a popular way or even a scientific one. But here the story was alive with light and action. Certainly over here among our people it was as if we got to hear the last voice of storytelling from the Middle Ages.”

In 1891 he married the daughter of another immigrant family also recently arrived from Jutland. It was the first wedding in the new Stone Hall, built just two years before. Until then there had been nothing but funerals—one of them for the stone mason Kristian Klink himself, who had supervised construction of the building. Enok Mortensen notes that in the year 1889 alone eleven people died, all under 32 years of age, of whom three were children and four young mothers who died in childbirth. It was often not an easy time, and a wedding would be a joyous event.

Newly arrived student, Dorthea Stevns, coming to Danebod in 1891 for the first summer course (she later would teach at the folk school herself) described her festive first day in Tyler: “There was a wedding the same day I came to Danebod. Fairy Tale man Kristen Hansen, who up to now had been teacher at the school, was being married to Frederikke Utoft . . . After the wedding we all followed the newlyweds to their home, which lay close by, and there the banquet tables were decorated with flags and flowers, and we were served with fried chicken and many other good things. Talks were given and many songs were sung, and even on his wedding day, Kristen Hansen had to tell a fairy tale.”

During his pioneer life on the property across from Danebod, he developed the farm first by plowing the virgin prairie with the ox team he'd driven across the snowmelt of the Cottonwood River. Oxen could exist on native tall grasses of the prairie. They then could be sold to the next set of pioneers going further west. After one growing season, grain could be harvested to feed work horses, which were easier to handle but could not live on the native prairie grasses alone. The fields of his farm would extend out to where Danebod cemetery was added. In the course of time he built three
houses on the property. He remarked—maybe with a Molbo’s sense for eternally optimistic prospects while accepting the ultimate failings of every human being—that everyone ought to get the chance in their lifetime to build three houses. By the third time the result finally approached what had been intended all along.

The new couple would raise five children (one other died in infancy) and made their home on the farm directly west across the road from Danebod. Theirs was a relatively short life together, however. Frederikke died in 1910 from kidney disease, possibly brought on by injuries suffered in a buggy accident, an incident that occurred on an outing to Indian Grove, west of town, when a team of horses bolted and she was thrown from the wagon. Both her ears were partially torn off in the fall and had to be stitched back on, and she also lost the baby she was carrying at the time. In her lingering illness, oldest daughter Sigrid helped look after the siblings Svend, Karen, Gudrun, and the youngest, Folmer.

After Rikke’s death, Christian Hansen served in various capacities in the congregation and community, before selling off the farm in 1916. He was town clerk for Hope Township and treasurer of the cooperative insurance company. All the while he continued telling his stories to children and adults alike, from Sunday school to young people’s meetings to the folk school, as well as in the children’s school—the Børneskole, the Danish parochial school that offered instruction in Danish up until 1939, and for which he kept the books. The year of his death in 1939 was also the year that Danebod ceased offering regular folk school courses and classes at the children’s school. His life in Tyler thus embraced the active duration of year round school activities in the pioneer colony. His last birthdays and declining health before his death elicited many greetings and get well wishes from the children of Danebod. They stand as a final tribute and record of his impact on daily life at Danebod.

Dear Christian Hansen,

Congratulations with your birthday. Are you doing well? I’m doing well. How old are you? I like going to school. I wanted to say thank you for all the stories you have told us. Will you please come over and tell us a fairy tale again, because I like them very much.
Dear Christian Hansen,

Congratulations on your birthday. Many thanks for the fairy tales you have told us. I have told your same stories to others. When I was in South Dakota, out with my cousins, I told the stories in English because they couldn’t understand Danish. They always wanted me to tell them even more stories.

I hope you have a good birthday.

Christian Hansen on his 81th birthday September 28, 1932

Dear Christian Hansen,

Congratulations for your birthday. Thanks for stories. I like stories so much. We play kitten ball during recess and that is fun.

Dear Christian Hansen,

How are you feeling? I am doing well. I hope you soon can get well. Because I miss your stories. But I wanted to say many thanks for those fairy tales you told me. I will never forget your wonderful stories.

Again now in 2011 we pause to remember the men and women who dedicated their lives to writing the early story of Danebod. It is
not the place or purpose here to discuss in detail all the factors involved in drawing Danish emigrants out of their homeland. Nor to know all the intricacies of the establishment of Danebod as a site where Danish traditions could be preserved. Still, mention should be made of the undercurrents contributing not just to the physical existence of these now historic folk school and church buildings, but more so to the spirit of the place. The story behind the stories. This includes an absolute dedication to ideas and the persistence to put them into practice. But it was an effort not without many an inner struggle to make it work. The early settlers needed a common purpose to buoy them up, even if what they often found was largely hardship and no small amount of conflict.

Against this background, men such as H.J. Pedersen and Kristian Østergaard loomed large. Both were inspired to leave Denmark and spread the folk school gospel in America. And both were or became pastors of the other gospels, as well. It's a time that can seem remarkable in the rosy glow of history, viewed in the dusk and soft setting sunlight of a distant western sky. But it's important to remember that it often also was a time of deep internal debate, first in leaving Denmark, next in meeting the challenges of the frontier, then living a life as true believers fighting for the educational, political, and religious faiths of their fathers and of themselves. If the political and economic situation pushing emigration from Denmark often was dire—as has been noted, they frequently left behind less than friendly circumstances—they also were walking into ongoing conflicts here. Or conflicts of their own making. The Danish American church schism of the early 1890s, for example, just as Danebod was taking root, divided Danes in America in a way that never had the same effect back in Denmark. The church split apart and has not come back together since. But families were also split over the issues of piety, temperance, religious rights. Maybe even individual identities were sundered.

These internal divisions no doubt also are reflected in the life of Christian Hansen. He had an inveterate aversion, as did many around him at Danebod, to any kind of specialness or adherence to secret societies. Nothing should be hidden. Membership was open to everyone—no special favors or secret handshakes. And yet he was an avowed teetotaler and proudly wore a temperance society
pin on his suit lapel. The fire and brimstone sermons of Wilhelm Beck that he heard as a child lingered long, perhaps, even as outwardly he rejected the pious reprobation of humankind as only fated and faulted sinners. If he was a man small in size, he was a big proponent of poetry and drama of history that fit well with Grundtvigian persuasions, or as the great man himself put it: “Human first, then Christian—Menneske først, kristen så.” And he added his human voice to the drama of the time through his storytelling, only smaller in scale maybe as in stature, say, to H.J. Pedersen’s bent for entrepreneurial daring and putting dreams into action, or as Østergaard lent his poetry and song to express the spirit of the age. “Shield what our hands have wrought.” Not for nothing do the three of them lie buried a few feet from each other just inside the main entrance to the cemetery at Danebod.

II. His Stories:
Tvillingbrødrene—The Twin Brothers

On a little farm out by the sea there lived an elderly couple. They had no children and worked their fingers to the bone just to make a living. The soil was bad and gave a poor harvest. They had to get most of their food from the ocean. Now there hadn’t been good fishing weather for over a year. But on the Sunday of Whitsuntide the weather turned fair. The husband decided to go out immediately, even though his wife said there would be no happiness to be found in fishing on such a high, holy day.

He caught nothing the whole day long and by evening was about to turn back home. Then he got a great big gruesome-looking fish on his hook. He’d never seen anything like it. He threw it back immediately into the water. But he caught it a second time and then a third time. He was about to throw the ugly fish back again for the third time.

Then the fish spoke. “Don’t despise me; I’m better than you think. Take me along home and you’ll get much out of me.”

“How is that?” the man said.

“Well, take heed of everything I tell you. Take me home. Cut me up. Throw my guts out with the garbage on the kitchen heap. But my bones you must hide. Bury my head under your doorstep. Give my backbone to your wife, but you yourself must not eat any of it. Then put the rest into a salt barrel and hide it until your sons are seven years old.”

“I have no sons.”
“You may be getting some in due time.”

Thus begins a handwritten set of narrative tales and notes found in an old cigar box left among his daughter Sigrid’s family artifacts. The box, long since emptied of its Henry George “Perfecto” cigars, is inscribed: **Bedstefars Eventyr—Fairy tales saved by Christian Hansen**. The penciled pages are in a tidy, oldfashioned, Danish script, paper clipped together by story, handwritten on aging, yellowing, paper tablet sheets—some 70 in all, back to back. They comprise the only known surviving texts of his stories.

.....Transcribing the meticulous though often hard to decipher script was a satisfying initiation into subsequent detective work prompted by the discovery of these manuscripts that had lain filed away for seventy-five years. For starters, the transcription process was aided by locating a comprehensive online Danish dictionary—**ODS, Ordbog for det Danske Sprog**—which catalogues the Danish language in use from 1700 to 1950. Definitions and etymologies for many archaic and military terms could be found there. But behind the discovery of this stash of manuscripts, and the transcription of text, a deeper question soon was exposed: Where did these stories originate?

Christian Hansen was known as a teller of tales, and in the family lore surrounding him, his storytelling abilities got frequent mention in conversations about Danebod. Just this year a woman who’d attended the women’s summer course in 1935 recalled: “O, yes, I remember him telling stories over at the folk school. He was quite the entertainer.” But little could she render of the actual content of the stories. Nor any favorite plots or action. Just that it was a memorable presentation, with the stories told in a darkened room, maybe, and audiences rapt and always eager for more. Even the young girl who claimed to retell the stories to her cousins in South Dakota (above) had no recollection later as to the nature of the stories themselves.

It was all a bit of a mystery. Since Bedstefar Hansen, as we knew of him, had died before I or any of my siblings were born, no one left in my immediate family had heard him tell his stories. A couple of older cousins, also grandchildren, could recall exotic tales but not much detail. Some stories seemed to be made up. Others maybe
were better known tales such as “Rumpelstiltzkin,” a Grimm classic, or some of Andersen's fairy tales. My father often recalled (this is corroborated in an article written for the magazine Julegranen in 1935, based on an interview by Johannes Knudsen) that in the Hansen home in Attrup, the family would sit in the evening and tell tales long into the night while knitting clothes. No doubt he remembered stories from that time. But to my knowledge did any one elaborate on the origin or content of the stories. Other than maybe to retell a Molbo story or two. Those were the tales relating the nonsensical (to some) endeavors of the ne'er-do-well Molbo people. Christian Hansen's father had been born in Ebeltoft, heart and center of Mols, the infamous drip under the Danish nissemand nose of Jutland. He was proud of the lineage. No doubt “Molbo historier—Molbo stories” were a part of the repertoire.

I do recall my father would tell one such story he'd heard from his father. This was the Molbo who worked on a farm and thus had to get up early every morning. The fellow didn't have a clock or watch, though, to help wake him. Each day he needed to be up at first light to do the chores. But without a time piece, how would he wake up on time?

That was no problem for the farmer who'd hired him, also a Molbo, who offered a simple solution. “When you take your trousers off at night,” he said, “you just hang them on the bed post. That way, in the morning, when the sun comes up over the horizon and the light strikes the seat of your pants, you'll know it's time to get up and do the chores.”

“But how will I know if it'll work and get me up on time?” the man asked.

“That's simple enough,” the Molbo farmer said. “If you ever come to doubt it and wake up during the middle of the night, just check to see if your pants are still hanging on the bedpost. If they are still there, then you know its working.”

Ønskedæsen—The Wishing Box

A poor man had a little place out in the woods. With his team of two red oxen he would plow during the summer and drive firewood home in the winter. He was married and had a little son who’s name was Hans. Then
they got three daughters all at the same time. Now he had to work both
night and day to make enough food for all their mouths.

One evening while he was out in the field an old man came up to him
and said that it was hard to see someone who had to work so hard both day
and night.

“Oh yes, it’s hard enough when you have so many mouths to feed.”

The old traveler offered to give him a little box that, when tapped with a
finger, and with a wish in mind, would make the wish come true. He then
wouldn’t have to work nearly so hard. All he had to do in return was give
him his three daughters when they grew to be three years old.

The poor man thought about it and wondered if he shouldn’t take
the exchange, since they could eventually get even more mouths to feed. So
he took the box, and the old traveler said he would come back and get the
daughters when they were three years old.

The man immediately wanted to try the box, so he tapped it on top, and
instantly a giant jumped out and said: “What is my Master’s wish?”

“Well, if I’m your Master,” the man said, “then my wish is that
tomorrow morning early a large estate will appear just two miles from
where we stand, and with a full compliment of house servants and farm
animals and all kinds of silver and gold and precious things.”

Transcribing the handwritten set of narratives and notes found in
the cigar box started a cycle of inquiry and discovery that led back to
Denmark via a network of internet searches and web sites. It is that
process of light detective work that makes modern day research a
task both of potential delight and even more probable diversion into
a maze of endless tangents. Easiest engine search words, of course,
were the titles to the stories. “Tvillingbrødrene” or “The Twin
Brothers,” for example. Set a search engine’s nose on that one and
everything from a play by the Greek playwright Plautus to the
Biblical tale of Jacob and Esau pops to the surface. A Brothers
Grimm story bears a look, as well, though the title is slightly
different, “The Two Brothers.” These two brothers are described in
identical terms: They are as like each other as drops of water. But
then the wrinkle: the story begins not with an old, childless couple
out by the sea, nor a grotesque fish on the line, nor fish guts hidden
under the kitchen midden. Yet the two boys’ destinies are similar.
A coincidence, perhaps? No one has a copyright on titles.
A closer inquiry, however, leads beyond the Grimm's tale to a similar tradition of collecting folk tales in Scandinavia. And suddenly things get interesting. Search the title in Danish, *Tvillingbrødrene*, and an almost identical tale appears. This is in the work of Svend Grundtvig, who was a son of the famous Danish Renaissance man and father, N.F.S. Grundtvig (and, incidentally, brother of another sibling, F. L. Grundtvig, who was a moving force in America behind the formation of the Danebod colony and even spoke at the dedication of the new congregation.)

The plot thickens, until it begins to coagulate entirely. Svend Grundtvig's work as a folklorist was aided greatly by a contemporary, one Evald Tang Kristensen, a Jutland school teacher. Grundtvig and Tang Kristensen, as with many proponents of romanticism, were enamored by the feats and culture of common people. The younger Grundtvig came by that notion naturally, of course, from his celebrated father, who lauded the study of Norse and Danish legends and myths as opposed to Greek or Roman, as well as the use of vernacular Danish over the Latin, German, and French, favored at court or in academic circles.

Both of these men were fascinated with native Danish traditions of oral folk tales. They initially collaborated on a joint project, collecting and collating as many versions of stories—sometimes a dozen or two of each story—as they could find. Tang Kristensen was the field man, so to speak, scouring the Danish countryside for original tales, which he then would send to Svend Grundtvig, who would sort through versions and settle on one for publication. His collected *Danske Folkeæventyr* is a seminal work and available online through the Danish folklore collection on the web: http://www.dafos.dk/grundtvig/eventyr/grundtvig1.cfm?vol=01

Just as the Grimm brothers earlier in Germany, and contemporaries Asbjørnsen and Moe in Norway, they were collecting and assembling the folk tale tradition of their people. Tang Kristensen was known to travel from farm house to farm house, stopping anywhere the light was on, in an effort to root out and record stories. He had a number of exceptional sources who provided him with many tales, often people of low education or even destitute residents of poor houses. But how they could they tell stories. This was the common entertainment currency of time. Just
as Hans Christian Andersen was creating tales that would become world famous, these modest storytellers had been entertaining generations by recounting equally fantastic deeds of commoners aspiring to manor houses or castles on the hill.

A word on Evald Tang Kristensen: He got his training at the very same teachers college, Lyngby, near Mols, that Christian Hansen later attended. And there is another striking coincidence, though there is no known evidence they knew, or knew of, each other—some of Tang Kristensen’s most prolific contacts were men who had been soldiers in the Danish army. Apparently it was commonplace soldiers would sit and tell stories as a way of entertaining themselves in the long evenings of military duty. Perhaps both instances were sources of the stories, teacher training as well as military training.

Whatever the origin, what is most striking is how similar, yet not exactly the same, are the handwritten versions of Christian Hansen’s saved fairy tales to those printed in Svend Grundtvig’s Danske Folkeæventyr—Danish Folktales. This was the final piece of evidence that places Christian Hansen squarely in the Jutland folktale tradition. As he sat down to handwrite his version of the collected tales, or to make notes to refresh his memory for an upcoming storytelling session, he put down a version of the stories that just as easily could have been copied down by Evald Tang Kristensen at a farm house stop in the little village of Attrup, had he happened to visit there when the future fairy tale man was learning the tales for himself as a child.

Every one of the cigar box stories is found in a Svend Grundtvig or Tang Kristensen version. The titles include: The Twin Brothers, The Wishing Box, The Most Obedient Wife, Maiden Lene, The Crow and the Stork, Fidiwav, The Gifts, The Green Knight. From the titles alone one can sense the underlying values and themes. And the tales themselves tell of people with fantastic and fabulous destinies, all evolving from the common people, often poor farmers, with chances of a life time put at their doorsteps. They take us far away to exotic worlds. They lend hope to the down trodden, provided the down trodden remain humble. And they lift us out of the everyday into the world of achievement and satisfaction. Even gratification. All
provided, of course, we are attentive, don't get too haughty, too self-indulgent.

It was a message that fit well with emergent lower classes in Denmark and American immigrants alike. Aspirations may be answered, even in this world of misery and woe. Twin brothers can go on to marry the princess and take possession of the castle, despite all manner of trouble and confusion on the way. In short, this world and its riches one day may all be ours.

Another of his stories, “Ønskedaasen,” the Magic Box, is equally instructive. It's the second of the more or less complete stories found in his dedicated handwritten texts. But it is almost verbatim another version of a tale of the same title collected by Kristensen and Svend Grundtvig, captured in the latter's Danske Folkeæventyr. A poor man is offered a magic box, if only he will give up his three daughters to get it. Great temptations. And great entertainment. Who can resist tapping the lid of the box to find out what pleasures might be ours. We are all gullible, yes, and must learn hard lessons resulting from hubris and greed.

That leaves us with a final question: what of the stories themselves, what do they reveal of us, or at least of the collection of young and old alike who once sat enraptured at Danebod listening to the little man up front telling what will become of a man who makes deals with fishes from the sea or one who is willing to give up his three daughters in exchange for a wishing box? What do these faraway characters, from kings to trolls and tramps and pretty princesses, have to do with life out on the prairie? And at the most basic level, what do the plots say about us, as descendents of this immigrant legacy?

Surely they reflect first no less than essential traits for immigrant survival. But beyond that, and above all, they value absolute aspiration and undying dedication. No wonder the magic boxes and princesses in far off castles had appeal for both Danish small holder farmers and immigrant pioneers alike. They are the magic words of release from poverty and misery, if the right price will be paid. At a sublime level, these stories are the watchwords, the talisman even, of the tired, the poor, the huddled masses yearning to breathe free. Thanks to the storyteller, they now are not only our stories. Even more simply put, they tell our story. They recount as much our own
evolving identity. And in that story is embedded from the long immigrant ordeal a basic value—so deeply ingrained, perhaps, that we hardly notice it or have forgotten it entirely—namely, an attitude to life that can be summed up in the simple motto: *Dream large, live small, and never give up.*

Perhaps the one hundred twenty five years from when the stories first were told at Danebod is not such a long time, after all. Nor is it as far removed as we might think from where we stand today.

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The Danish Emigration Archives - Denmark’s national collection of letters, documents, photographs, films, audio tapes and newspapers - tells fascinating stories about Danish emigration and contains important documentation and knowledge about migration and cultural encounters.

Time has come for this knowledge to be available to researchers all over the world. The Danish Emigration Archives has therefore launched a large scale project being the first Danish institution to digitize its entire collections. From July 2012 the archival collections will be searchable on the Internet. This will mean that everyone from his or her own living-room can find exactly those emigrant letters, autobiographies, photos etc. that will be of interest. The search result will appear in the format in which it was originally created.

This huge project would not be possible without external financial support, and the most important sponsors are Møller, Den Obelske Familiefond og Spar Nord Fonden.

Since the founding in 1932 the Danish Emigration Archives has intended to preserve the part of Danish history that document the endeavors of those who left the country in pursuit of a better life. Max Henius, the founder of the archives, quite early saw the potentials in establishing an archive for Danish emigrants. Henius himself had managed to establish a successful life as a businessman in Chicago. During the initial years the archives mainly focused on Danes who had immigrated to North America, and the institution was originally known as the Dan-America Archives. Later its name was changed to Danes Worldwide, as Max Henius also wanted to include material from Danes across the globe. In the 1990s the name of the institution was changed to The Danish Emigration Archives.

Prior to the opening in 1932 - at the Sohngaardsholm Manor which was the childhood home of Max Henius in Aalborg – he and a
handful of Danish Americans invested time and energy to collect letters, diaries, biographies and photos from those of their fellow Danes who lived in the U.S. Max Henius said in an interview in 1931 to the *Det Danske Ugeblad*, "Det er netop Dagliglivets Skæbner, der er af Værdi, naar de danskfødte Udvandreres Historie skrives." The story of everyday life of the ordinary emigrant is what will be of valuable interest when the history of the Danish born emigrant is going to be written."

This foresight of Max Henius is the main reason that The Danish Emigration Archives today can present a unique collection of Danish presence worldwide. A collection that spans from the 1880s to our time and offers many interesting insights: Here are personal letters and other material from famous actors from Jean Hersholt to Ingrid Bergman, from U.S. presidents and Danish Prime Ministers, from politicians, royalties and other cultural figures from Denmark and abroad.

But above all the archives preserve the material from the thousands of ordinary people whose everyday life as immigrants from Denmark can be researched. The many thousands of letters, diaries and manuscripts are fascinating to study, and so are the many photographs and films found in the collections.

The material tell touching, poignant and engrossing stories, because they give us a very valuable insight into what it means to leave your homeland, family and roots and come to an unknown place where you are thousands of miles away from your loved ones. Nevertheless many immigrants manage to establish a life that was better than what could be achieved in Denmark.

The road leading to a good life – with a job, one’s own property etc.–could be long and full of obstacles that included language difficulties, strange habits, different climate etc. depending on where the immigrant settled.

How should “Fatter” [Daddy] in 1925 explain to the family home in Denmark that “Mutter” [Mom] was working in a canning factory, because the family could not live of one salary alone? Or that it was the man of the house who was responsible for all duties including the wife’s, because she was in childbirth, and the nearest neighbor lived a couple of hours away on the Nebraskan prairie?
The collections of The Danish Emigration Archives bear testimony to an important chapter of Danish history, from which there is much to learn. The Danes have played their silent role in history. Through hard work and ingenuity they have contributed to the development of the United States, Canada, Australia and other countries – although on a small scale–by clearing the forests, cultivating the land, building the cities. The history of Danish emigration also offers interesting insights into the complex process of moving from one’s homeland to a new country and a new culture - an insight that may help us to shed new light on the challenges that exist in our own time.
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