Danish American Heritage Society  
925 NE 15th Street  
Salem, OR 97301  
Phone 503.588.1331

Executive Board  
Egon Bodtker, President  
Timothy Jensen, Vice President  
John Mark Nielsen, Secretary  
James M. Peterson, Treasurer  
Peter L. Petersen, Assistant Editor of The Bridge  
Signe Nielsen Betsinger, Editor of the Newsletter  
James Iversen  
Sheri Kleinwort Muller  
John W. Nielsen  
Joel Mortensen  
Robert Christiansen

Inquiries concerning membership in the Society and subscription to The Bridge should be sent to The Danish American Heritage Society, 925 NE 15th Street, Salem, OR 97301, e-mail: egonb@teleport.com

Inquiries concerning back issues of The Bridge should be sent to Sherri Muller, Grand View University Library, 1350 Morton Ave, Des Moines, IA 50136, e-mail: smuller@grandview.edu

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.

© 2012, Danish American Heritage Society  
Salem, Oregon (ISSN 0741-1200)
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issues of The Bridge have also contained Danish-American memoirs, essays, short stories, collections of letters, and historical documents.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.

Please address all manuscript submissions to the Editor or Assistant Editor:

Peter L. Petersen
Assistant Editor of The Bridge
1407 26th Street
Canyon, TX 79015-5535
e-mail: repete71@hotmail.com

Books for review in THE BRIDGE should be sent directly to our Book Review Editor, Julie K. Allen, Scandinavian Department, University of Wisconsin – Madison, WI 53706.
Editorial Statement

This issue of The Bridge is coming to you more than one year late. We have explanations for this, but we have no excuses. We apologize for our tardiness and really hope that it never happens again. The volume, number, and date (Volume 34, Number 2, 2011) appear on the spine as though everything is in order. We expect that this will help institutions and individuals keep their publications in proper order. But the admission of error is included here.

Also included in this issue is an errata page, which is related to the mislabeling of two photos and a mistranslation in the article “Remembrances” by Arnold Bodtker in Volume 34, Number 1. It is our hope that you will take this page and insert it in your copy of Volume 34, Number 1 or make the changes in your copy of that issue.

Henrik Bredmose Simonsen has previously written extensively on the split within Danish Lutheranism in America. In this article, Simonsen reviews his recent visits to places in the United States where the Grundtvigian philosophy of combining religion and social life, involving music, folk dancing, and gymnastics is still a part of the tradition among descendants of Danish immigrants.

This issue of The Bridge contains two articles by two individuals who have been recipients of the Danish American Heritage Society’s Edith and Arnold N. Bodtker Grants for Research and Internship. Both of these contributors are using some new and some established methods to investigate some of the history of the Danish American community. Pernille Buchholtz utilizes immigrant letters as a way to determine the degree of assimilation of these writers to family and friends in Denmark. Marianne Paasch studies the relationship of religion to the integration among Danish immigrants to the United States.

Some of the early Danish settlements in the United States disappeared fairly early. One of those was the “Little Copenhagen” settlement, which was centered around a country school located just one mile south of present day Story City, Iowa. Arlen Twedt was researching the Norwegian settlements in Central Iowa when he discovered the rural Danish settlement which was somewhat surrounded by Norwegians. His treatise covers an important part of the history of Central Iowa.

This issue concludes with a book review by frequent contributor Rolf Buschardt Christensen.

Four people have contributed in various ways to the editorial responsibilities of this issue of The Bridge. These are Birgit Flemming Larsen, Peter L. Petersen, Egon Bodtker, and Jim Iversen.
Contributors to This Issue

Henrik Bredmose Simonsen is a Danish historian and museologist. He has curated the exhibit “Grundtvig on the Prairie - Danish Immigrant Communities in America,” which will be on exhibit in 2013 at the Grundtvig Center at Aarhus University, and later at other museums in Denmark and the United States. He is the author of Kampen om Danskheden (The Fight for Danishness), Aarhus University Press, 1990, which is an unbiased account of the history of the two former Danish American Lutheran Synods—one headquartered at Grand View College in Des Moines, Iowa, and the other at Dana College in Blair, Nebraska.

Marianne Sletten Paasch received her Master of Arts in History from Aalborg University in 2011. Her thesis dealt with religion and integration among Danish Immigrants to the United States from 1848 to 1914. She served as an intern in the Family History and Genealogy Center at the Danish Immigrant Museum in Elk Horn, Iowa. Later she received the Bodtker grant from the Danish American Heritage Society and returned to the United States perform research for her thesis in 2009.

Pernille Buchholtz received her Master of Arts in History from the University of Copenhagen in 2011 and wrote her thesis on Danish immigration to the United States from 1860 to 1914. Her research involved studying the letters of immigrants to determine their degree of assimilation into US society. She received the Bodtker grant from the Danish American Heritage Society and conducted her research partly at the Danish Immigrant Museum in Elk Horn, Iowa, and partly at the Danish American Archive in Blair, Nebraska.

Arlen Twedt is a retired educator and local historian, living in Central Iowa. In 1995, he started the Central Iowa Norwegian Project in an effort to preserve the settlement history of Norwegian immigrants in Story, Polk, and Hamilton Counties. In the performance of this project, he discovered the Little Copenhagen settlement of Danish immigrants in Story County. His article in this issue of The Bridge is about the information on the Danish immigrants which he has collected.

Rolf Buschardt Christensen is a native of Copenhagen, Denmark, and is Press and International Relations Officer for the European Commission to Canada. He is a co-founder of the Federation of Danish Associations in Canada, and a long-time president of that organization. He holds the Master of Arts in International Affairs from Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada.
Table of Contents

ARTICLES

Henrik Bredmose Simonsen ................................................................. 9

Grundtvigian Danish-Americans – a Story of Preservation
and Renewal of Cultural and Religious Traditions

Marianne Sletten Paasch ................................................................. 37

Religion and Integration – Among the Danish Immigrants
in the US 1848-1914

Pernille Buchholtz ........................................................................... 51

Danish Emigration – Using Private Letters as a Source
Two Examples

Arlen Twedt ................................................................................. 64

The Copenhagen Settlement near Story City, Iowa

BOOK REVIEW

Mark Ryan ...................................................................................... 141

The Hornet’s Sting, reviewed by Rolf Buschardt Christensen

Errata - Volume 34, Number 1 ......................................................... 146
Grundtvigian Danish-Americans – a story of preservation and renewal of cultural and religious traditions

by

Henrik Bredmose Simonsen

A grant from the Grundtvig Centre at Aarhus University enabled me in 2010 to visit several small towns in the American Midwest, where Grundtvigian institutions and traditions have played and still play a role. The trip was part of the research project “Integration, Identity and Narrative among Grundtvigian Danish-Americans,” which Skanderborg Museum launched in 2009.

During the trip I had the opportunity to interview a number of people in the Grundtvigian environment in the United States and record hours of video films. The collected material will be included in a travelling exhibition on the Grundtvigian environment in the U.S., which opens in the spring 2013 at Skanderborg Museum. The exhibition will later be shown at five other museums in Denmark.

The Grundtvigian Danish-Americans today

The history of the Grundtvigian environment in the United States is an interesting but little known story. It’s about Danish immigrants and their descendants in America who have tried to maintain and develop a social life, traditions and values that originally were rooted in rural communities and Grundtvigian environments in Denmark. For these immigrants it was obvious that churches and congregations, schools, folk high schools, cooperative dairies, and community halls that they had known in Denmark, could be established in the U.S. Singing, lectures, folk dancing and gymnastics were expressions of the social life and the values that they appreciated in the old country and wanted to bring with them to the new. What the immigrants founded at the end of the 1800s their descendants have in many cases continued and renewed, and today there is a Grundtvigian environment in the U.S., which has its own American character.

The purpose of this article is to describe the Grundtvigian environment in the United States today and try to explain why this environment has indeed been preserved to this day. First, a picture
is drawn of some of the institutions and meeting places of the group. Then we will take a long step back in the history of the Grundtvigian Danish-Americans to search for reasons that the cultural and religious traditions have been remembered, told, renewed and passed on through generations. Finally, some of the Grundtvigian Danish-Americans will tell their stories of how Grundtvigian values and traditions inspire them in their religious life and everyday life.

The Danebod Folk Meeting

The Danebod Folk Meeting is a good place to start, if you want to get an idea of what the Grundtvigian environment in the United States is today. The Danebod Folk Meeting is an annual 5-day meeting, which has been held every summer since 1946 at the former Danebod Folk High School, in the small town of Tyler in southwestern Minnesota.

In recent years, about 130 Americans have participated in the meeting. They are almost all second, third or fourth generation descendants of Danish immigrants. Very few of the participants are born in Denmark. Most are aged over 60, but some younger participants bring the average age down. The meeting is open to all interested. But in practice, virtually all participants are members of a congregation in the great Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,
abbreviated ELCA. Needless to say, many people travel long distances to come to the meeting in Tyler.

*Danebod Lutheran Church in Tyler, Minnesota, which was built in 1895.*

*Some of the participants at the Danebod Folk Meeting in 2010. The wooden building in the background has been used for gymnastics and folk dancing for more than 100 years.*
The program for the 5-day meeting is packed. After starting Wednesday afternoon and evening, each day has this program: three lectures - morning, afternoon and evening, two singing hours, storytelling, devotion, Danish language classes - and late every evening there is folk dancing. The last evening - on Saturday – a music feature or something festive is arranged. The meeting ends on Sunday morning with service in the Danebod Lutheran Church, located beside the former folk high school, and a finishing lunch.
In addition to the nationwide meeting in Tyler, Minnesota, a similar meeting has been held in Solvang, California, in February every year since 1986. It is a three-day lecture event under the name “The Farstrup-Mortensen Memorial Lectures,” which has the explicit intention to clarify and communicate the Grundtvigian understanding of the human and the Christian aspects of life. Both the Tyler and the Solvang meetings have participants from throughout the United States. At both events competent and knowledgeable lecturers, often recognized researchers or teachers are invited to give their view and insight to the audience.

Family camps

The former Danebod folk high school in Tyler is also the setting for another important activity within the Grundtvigian environment in the U.S. It is the so-called family camps, held each summer over three weeks in June, July and August. Each camp has about 150 participants - children, parents and grandparents. The participants are somewhat more mixed than at the Danebod Folk Meeting. There are people, who have grown up in the Grundtvigian Danish-American environment, and there are people without a Danish-American background, who have gotten an interest in the folk high school practice established by the family camps.

The program of an ordinary day at a family camp includes morning gymnastics, singing, folk dancing, lectures for adults, crafts, musical features, campfire, and late at night, more folk dancing. In other words, these are the activities that have characterized the Grundtvigian communities over the years. There is no professional management of the camps. They are led by volunteers, where a family undertakes the task to run a week of camp.

In the small community of West Denmark, Wisconsin, a family camp has also been organized in recent years. It is a three day long camp held each summer and with a program which is completely in line with the folk high school tradition: singing, lectures, folk dancing, gymnastics, and arts and crafts. In recent years, about 170 children and adults have participated in this camp. Most participants come from Minneapolis and other cities in the Midwest and have some connection to the congregation and the community in West Denmark. But there are also people from other churches, including a dozen Catholics, and a small number of atheists or nonbelievers. Some
participants are not of a Danish background, but as one informant noted: “By the time they leave they are!”

The West Denmark Parish Hall, which among other things is used in conjunction with the annual family camps.

The church in West Denmark, Wisconsin. The exterior is inspired by the style of the Danish medieval village churches.
How many people are we talking about?

The Grundtvigian environment in the United States has similarities with Grundtvigian oriented environments and folk high school environments in Denmark, along with many differences. One point where they are similar is that it is difficult to quantify how many
people they include. It is not a fixed group with membership cards we’re talking about, but many forms of affiliation and identification.

There is a nationwide organization in the environment which operates within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). It is called the Danish Interest Conference and was originally formed in 1962, when the Grundtvigian Danish church – (official name: the American Evangelical Lutheran Church (AELC)) - merged with a former German, Swedish and a former Finnish immigrant church and established the Lutheran Church in America (LCA). Later in 1988, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) was formed by the merger of the Lutheran Church in America and the American Lutheran Church (ALC).

The monthly magazine, *Church and Life*, published by the Danish Interest Conference, has about 450 subscribers. But as we have seen here, the group of people who have some affiliation with the Grundtvigian environment and tradition in the U.S. is somewhat bigger than that.

**A glance at the history of the Grundtvigian environment in America**

After this short introduction to the contemporary Grundtvigian Danish-American environment, one may well ask: What kind of tradition are we dealing with? How far back does it go, and how has it been preserved and renewed to the present? And what is altogether the Grundtvigianism we are talking about?

To understand the unusual preservation of cultural and religious traditions that the Grundtvigian environment reflects it is necessary to look at values and traditions that the Danish immigrants brought with them from the old country and also more robust factors such as the scattered settlement of the Danes in the United States, which was very different from the settlement patterns of the Norwegians and Swedes.

When the Norwegians and the Swedes began to emigrate to America in larger numbers in the 1840s and 1850s it was in the era of the sailing ships, where an Atlantic crossing often lasted 7-8 weeks. Then came the voyage inland on rivers and lakes, and it often went on with wagons and on foot. The journey was long and difficult, and therefore it was normal to emigrate in groups often led by an experienced traveller. In many cases the groups settled together after arriving at a pioneering area in the west. This led to the founding of a number of Norwegian and Swedish settlements in states like Illinois,
Wisconsin and Minnesota that later developed into Norwegian and Swedish communities with their own congregations, associations, businesses, etc.

It was different with the Danes when they began to migrate to the United States in larger numbers from the 1870s. Their exodus was more often an individual undertaking. Now steamships were sailing emigrants across the Atlantic and the trip lasted “only” 2 weeks – later just 1 week. Railroads were laid across the U.S. in line with the settlement of the West, (the first transcontinental railway opened in 1869). Now, you could buy a ticket from, let’s say, Aarhus in Denmark all the way to a small town on the prairie in Iowa and, all in all, it made it relatively practicable to emigrate on your own.

When Danish farmhands, workers and farm laborers and their wives and girlfriends read ads from railroads and steamship companies that you could get 160 acres (approx. 118 Danes tønder land) of good farmland in the American West for a few dollars, then it may well have put ideas in motion. It was precisely the prospect of getting your own farm that was the great attraction for the Danish rural emigrants.

The result was that thousands of young Danish immigrants from the 1870s and 1880s dispersed in small groups or even alone in newly established settlement areas in states like Iowa and Nebraska. For most of those who tried it, it was a harsh and lonely experience to start a new life on the American prairie, and many expressed a need to get together with fellow countrymen to found congregations and associations.

The scattered settlement of the Danes was also a huge problem for the Danish church organization that was founded in 1872 with the support of the state church in Denmark and in 1874 organized itself under the name of the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, here abbreviated the Danish Church. For, how could the church bring people together in congregations and help build Danish communities with schools and folk high schools etc., when the Danes scattered in all directions?

That was the reason why especially some of the Grundtvigian minded ministers, teachers, farmers and newcomers began to discuss if the church should take the initiative to establish Danish schools and colonies, i.e. joint settlements of Danish immigrants.
These people had a simple and clear perception of their sense of belonging and identity: they were Danish in America, and they saw themselves as part of the Danish people. The leading figures among them wanted the Danes in America – in thought and spirit – to remain a part of the Danish people. As one of the ministers of the Danish Church, O.J. Stevns, said in 1879 at the church’s annual convention about the motives to build Danish schools:

“The goal is: Danish children’s schools in all our congregations. Not Saturday or Sunday schools. Not one- or two-month vacation schools, but Danish-English children’s schools throughout the year... The purpose of the Danish children’s schools is to lay the foundation of the Danish people’s preservation here in America.”

Similar ideas lay behind the establishment of the Danish folk high schools. The first school was built in Elk Horn, Iowa, in 1878 and in the following years another five Danish folk high schools were started in the United States and Canada. But the schools and the folk high schools were, just as the church and the congregations, to fight with the problem of the scattered Danes. So eventually, “Danish colonies” became the answer to a series of difficulties, which ministers, teachers, farmers and newcomers envisioned, and at the end the Danish Church undertook the task to try to gather Danes in colonies.

The Tyler colony

The first colony that was organized by the church was started at the small town of Tyler in south-western Minnesota in 1884. Here the Danish Church signed a contract with a railroad company for the sale of a tract of land of about 140 sq. km exclusively to Danes during a period of three years.

Over the next years a few hundred Danish families settled and a couple of congregations were founded. The colony got a Danish children’s school and in 1888 a folk high school, namely Danebod Folk High School, mentioned earlier. The community hall (the Stone Hall) was the place where the colonists gathered for singing, dancing, and gymnastics, and the church services were held here until a real church was built in 1895.
From the 1880s to 1918, about 10 Grundtvigian oriented rural colonies were established. The Ringsted colony in Iowa had already been started in 1881-1882 as a private colony project, but initiated by members of the Danish church in Clinton, Iowa. After the Tyler colony got started a number of new Danish colonies were founded on the initiative of the Danish Church and the organization, Dansk Folkesamfund (The Danish People’s Society).

Communities like Dannevang in Texas, Withee in Wisconsin, Askov in Minnesota, Dagmar in Montana, Solvang in California, Dalum in Canada and others were to gather immigrants and their descendants around congregations and common social activities. Here the Danish language was spoken in the next generation or more, and the Grundtvigian understanding of the human and Christian aspects of life was passed on in churches, associations, schools and homes. In many of the colonies various kinds of cooperatives, for example cooperative dairies and insurance companies, were put up. Seen as a whole these cooperatives helped to strengthen the social and economic community of the colonies.

**Frederik Lange Grundtvig**

A single man had a great share in the fact that the Danish Church in America set the goal to gather Danes in colonies. His name was Frederik Lange Grundtvig, and he was born in 1854 as the youngest son of N.F.S. Grundtvig (1783-1872), the famous Danish minister and hymn writer. Frederik Lange had become a minister in the Danish Church in America in 1883, and he soon became the unofficial leader among the Grundtvigian minded.

Frederik Lange Grundtvig and other leading Grundtvigians had more ideas up their sleeve than the establishment of Danish colonies. In 1887, they founded an organization, Dansk Folkesamfund, (Danish People’s Society), which they hoped would help create a folkelig (i.e. national) revival among the Danes in America. In turn, this should result in new large colony projects. The invitation to the founding of Dansk Folkesamfund gives an impression of the spirit among the Grundtvigian leaders at the time. It said among other things:

“When we here in America continue to be Danish, it is indeed because we can not or will not do violence to our hearts, but it is also our conviction that we in no better way can benefit the
land we now belong to. When it is a world historical event of the first rank, that people from all countries assemble here on America’s soil, and meet in the English language, it is not the least, that hereby the best opportunity is given for people to communicate with each other and enjoy each others work...

It is our belief that the small contingent here of Danish people possess a spiritual inheritance which is not without significance for mankind, and it is our hope that we Danes here in America should contribute to the passing on of this inheritance to others. If we give up our mother tongue, we cut ourselves off as Danes to have any influence on the spiritual life over here. Thus we fail not only our own folkelige (national) task; but we mistreat the land in which we live and build. It is our firm belief that we are just the best American citizens, when we continue to be Danish.”

The invitation also set out a series of objectives for the work of Dansk Folkesamfund, the first of which was: “To settle Danes in a few places, as a precondition that a strong Danish spiritual life can thrive.” Other tasks mentioned were aid to schools, meetings, establishment of libraries, establishment of homes for urban youth, etc.

It is interesting to see how F.L. Grundtvig developed his view on the role of the Danish immigrant population in America and the whole issue of the character of the American society. For example, he called America “Folkestævnets Land,” which may be translated “the country where the peoples meet.” Hereby, he meant that there was not one American people, but many peoples in America. And they should each strive to preserve their culture and identity. Thus, they had something to learn from each other, and thus they could enrich the American nation. About the role of the Danes in this “Folkestævnets Land,” Grundtvig wrote in 1898:

“The Danish people fail their God-given calling, if they here in America abandon themselves and their own: they must teach the peoples to look soundly at the relationship between the human and the Christian.”

F.L. Grundtvig’s thoughts on “Folkestævnets Land” was a kind of ‘key concept’ in the Grundtvigian movement’s attempts to formulate
a synthesis of - or perhaps rather a defense of - its Danish heritage in the face of American society and its underlying claim for adjustment. Frederik Lange Grundtvig’s concept of “Folkestævnets Land” has later been recognized as a forerunner of the discussions and formulations about “cultural pluralism,” which became known in the United States from around the year 1915.6

At any rate, Frederik Lange Grundtvig’s and other Grundtvigian’s understanding of the concept of people (“folk”) was atypical compared with other Scandinavian immigrant groups. Norwegian and Swedish ministers and other cultural leaders in the U.S. did generally not see themselves as part of the Norwegian or Swedish people, but as belonging to a Norwegian or Swedish immigrant group in America.7

The Grundtvigians not only had the ideology with them from Denmark, the role was also given: They saw themselves as the religious and cultural leaders of the Danish immigrant population. They published newspapers and magazines; they wrote most of the Danish-American literature and tried to set the agenda for the Danish-American debate.

The Inner Mission movement in the Danish Church

By the end of the 1880s, Inner Mission oriented ministers who had come to America from Denmark began to voice their objections to the Grundtvigian influence of the Danish Church. The Inner Mission ministers looked upon the ‘folkelige’ or ‘national’ work with schools, folk high schools, and colonies as a derailment of the mission of the Church. It removed the focus from the essential: faith and salvation. In 1890, one of the Inner Mission ministers worded his group’s view on the folkelige (national) work like this:

“I insist on my conviction that since our first parents at the Fall of Man lost their true humanity, no one can reach true humanity except through Jesus Christ. To begin a kind of “folkeligt” work, which can lift without having to start to lead people to salvation in Jesus Christ, is therefore in my eyes to turn the case on its head and meaningless.”8

Before long, the two wings of the Danish Church were on a collision course, and in 1894 came the final split, when the Inner Mission wing chose to go. At that time the church had about 120
congregations and nearly as many “preaching places” and about
60 ministers. The majority of the congregations followed the Inner
Mission ministers, while a slight majority of the ministers remained
in the Danish Church.

In 1896, the Inner Mission ministers and congregations founded a
new Danish church, the United Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church
in America, here abbreviated to the United Church. The attitude was
here that the language had to change to English, when the majority
of a congregation naturally spoke that language. The Inner Mission
ministers considered it of no special value that the Danish language
was spoken. Language was just a medium, a means to reach people
while the Christian message was paramount.

The real challenge for the Grundtvigian environment

A major challenge for the Grundtvigians in the U.S. was from the
very start and continued to be: How to preserve the core values of
church and daily life under the impact of the assimilation process?
One can say that in general the strategy was to separate in order to
preserve. The schools can serve as an example.

After 1900, it was increasingly difficult to maintain the Danish
children's schools both in the rural communities and in the
congregations in the cities, and after 1910, there were few places
where these Danish schools were run. So the kids now typically went
to the American public schools and gradually they became more and
more American - socially, mentally and linguistically.

The reaction of the Grundtvigian environment at large to these
challenges was that one had to be able to speak Danish. For some, the
Danish language was still the mother tongue of the Danes in America.
For others, knowledge of the Danish language was now more a way
to mark their affiliation with the environment.

To cope with this task, a new type of school, the vacation schools
(ferieskoler) were introduced. They lasted typically for two months
of the American public schools’ holiday. Here the kids were taught
written and spoken Danish, Danish history and geography, religion
etc. The success of the vacation schools is reflected in the fact that the
number of congregations with vacation schools rose from around 20
in 1896 to 61 in 1915.

The strategy to separate sides of daily life in what one had to
“give up” and lay out in the common American space - and then on
the other hand, the activities one would preserve and make an effort to maintain, you can see used in several areas.

In the youth association, Dansk Sammenslutet Ungdom, Danish was the language at the association’s meetings for a long period, while English easily could be the language before and after the meetings. Use of the Danish language must probably be seen here as a way to signal an affiliation with the Grundtvigian circles.

Another example of the ambiguous language and identity issue can be found in this little story that the editor of The Danish Pioneer, Sophus Neble, told in 1912 after visiting a Danish folk high school in America:

“It was the summer season and the school was frequented by young girls - mainly daughters of Danish farmers. The School Superintendent believed in the possibility of preservation of Danskheden (Danishness) in the second generation and it was with a certain pride in being able to disprove my opinion as he led me about in the school. I attended dinner with all the young girls. They were ruddy girls, typical Danish faces; dinner consisted of øllebrød and pancakes, typically Danish: not an English word was spoken at the table, and when I later in the classes was shown the girls’ style books it amazed me how correctly most of them had learned to write Danish. The School Superintendent believed he convinced me, but when I later walked away from school and on the road and met a crowd of young girls who were no longer in school, as they pleased and happy jumped around with each other and were themselves, they all spoke English.”

Neble wanted to make the point that the folk high school people’s faith in a Danishness in the American-born generation was naive. But the question was whether the folk high school people really believed in the preservation of the Danish everyday language? Was it not rather the point that a folk high school stay with ‘Danishness’ from morning till evening should be normative and leave a stamp on the students in their American daily life? Were the students made familiar with the Danish language and the Grundtvigian values, they would have something to navigate after they left school. And, one may add,
the Grundtvigian environment would be the place where they could feel at home.\textsuperscript{12}

At regular intervals, discussions occurred in the Grundtvigian oriented newspapers and magazines, at the Danish Church’s annual conventions, at lectures and in novels etc. of how traditions and basic values that the Grundtvigians had brought with them from related communities in Denmark should be implemented and transformed in the very different American surroundings. Two topics were in effect debated for several decades, the question of language and of national or \textit{folkelig} affiliation.

The starting point of the Grundtvigians was as mentioned earlier that the Danish immigrants in America were part of the Danish people and the Danish language was their mother tongue. This starting point was taken for granted as long as the immigrant generation was in the majority and the leading generation in the environment. But as the American-born generations became more dominant, the need to revise some of the traditional notions became more and more urgent, if they stood in the way that ideals and reality could be linked. The strategy was as told to separate in what you were willing to (or had to) give up and what you in turn would fight to preserve.

After the turn of the century, you could hear individual voices in the environment like the folk high school teacher, minister and author Kr. Østergaard argue that the Danish-Americans no longer were merely a part of the Danish people. But that the Danish-American population was at the same time “American citizens,” and Danish of “nationality.” The latter meant, however, that links to the old country, “particularly in the spiritual life,” were still vital. The mother tongue and the \textit{folk} traditions are the “organs that bind us to our tribe, and if these are cut, there are only withering and death to wait,” he wrote.\textsuperscript{13}

In the early 1920s, some ministers in the Danish Church began to open up for a new interpretation of the native language of the Danish immigrants and their descendants. For example, the minister V.S. Jensen argued that the “national language” might well be English, while the “church language” was Danish.\textsuperscript{14} In fact, he just described a reality that most people knew from their daily lives. But there was still a long way for many to accept the English language being used in the Danish Church services!

Parallel with these discussions of what was right and wrong in terms of adaptation to the surrounding society, we can see that the Grundtvigian environment actually \textit{had} some social and cultural
preconditions for maintaining and renewing their social community and identity.

An important precondition was the existence of about 10 organized rural colonies with a Grundtvigian background and a Danish-dominated everyday life, as mentioned earlier. In 1910, about 5-6,000 people lived in these colonies, including children who were born in America.

At this time, the Danish Church had about 100 congregations and 8 ‘preaching places’ and about 21,000 baptized, who were attached to the church, that is both children and adults. The Inner Mission church, i.e. the United Church, was already at its formation in 1896 slightly larger than the Danish Church, and it had in 1908 approx. 170 congregations, 55 ‘preaching places’ and 20,000 adult members.15

In 1910, the Danish-American population as a whole numbered 436,000 people, of whom 181,000 were born in Denmark and the other 255,000 were born in the U.S.16 The two Danish Lutheran churches had at that time only managed to attach a small part of Danish immigrants and their descendants to them.

This naturally puts the visions of the Grundtvigian leaders to assemble the Danes in colonies and create a *folkelig* revival among the Danes in America in relief. The Grundtvigian environment was in a double sense a minority, and some of its leaders sometimes expressed their disappointment that so many Danish immigrants went to other churches or simply did without. These included Frederik Lange Grundtvig, who returned to Denmark to stay in 1900. But the preservation and renewal of the Grundtvigian communities and environment as a whole stood and fell not with the belief in the cause, but just as much with the social and cultural conditions that lay in the practical everyday life.

**Institutions that helped to preserve and renew the environment**

The folk high schools were important meeting places, not least for the areas where they were located. They reached out to many people, who often travelled long distances to attend a folk high school event. The schools struggled almost all the years with economic difficulties and fluctuating numbers of students, but they left their mark on many young people in the Grundtvigian environment. Enok Mortensen, an expert on the Danish-American folk high school movement has estimated that they had around 10-12,000 students through the approx. 60 years they were in operation.17 The great depression that
hit the American agricultural states and farmers violently in the 1930s was also the fate of folk high schools, and by 1940 they had all closed.

Grand View College in Des Moines, Iowa, was established in 1896 by the Danish Church with the primary aim of training ministers for the church. But eventually a number of college courses were established, ranging from a few months of folk high school-style courses to two-year college educations in nursing, business and teacher education.

Throughout most of the 20th century, Grand View College has had an almost invaluable importance for the preservation and renewal of the Grundtvigian environment. GVC was the place where young people from the scattered rural settlements and communities could meet and establish friendships - and not infrequently marriages. At the same time the group of college teachers included some of the leading theologians and people within the environment. At GVC, the values and dilemmas of the environment were under constant consideration and negotiation. Several of the people I had the opportunity to interview in 2010 told me of the importance of Grand View College - today Grand View University - for both their social contacts, their values and their entire sense of belonging to the Grundtvigian environment.
Yet another hurdle - the language change in the Danish Church

The question of the use of the English language in the services of the Danish Church was a hot potato in the 1920s, and the attitudes were sharply divided. One group claimed the necessity of the Danish language, so it actually was considered a sin against God and man to abandon it. In practice, the language change was initiated by church members who had difficulty in understanding Danish, and from the early 1920s ministers were asked in more and more cases if weddings or funerals could be held in the English language.

In the work with children and young people the shift to English as the dominant language took place between 1930 and 1934, which resulted in a growing support for the Sunday schools. The transition from Danish to English in magazines and newspapers related to the Danish Church occurred during the first half of the 1930s. The language shift in church services came later. In 1935 a majority of 2200 church services were held in the Danish language and 1550 in the English. Ten years later, there were 3000 in English, but only 1160 church services in Danish.\textsuperscript{18}

But the shift to English did not alter the fact that the Danish Church primarily reached out to people of Danish origin. Statistics from 1946 showed that only 3\% of the church members were of a non-Danish background.\textsuperscript{19}

After 1945, a trend among the Lutheran churches in the U.S. pointed toward the grouping of related immigrant churches. And as already mentioned, the history of the Grundtvigian Danish Church ended formally in 1962, when it merged with a Swedish, a Finnish and a German church and formed the Lutheran Church in America (LCA). The ‘Danish’ and the old country now played a very subordinate role. But the Grundtvigians were interested in maintaining their own identity within the new church, and established their own small faction with its own church magazine. Both exist today, as already mentioned.

Voices in the Grundtvigian environment in 2010

An interesting question is how Grundtvigian Danish-Americans of today would characterize their identity and basic values. To answer this question, I interviewed about 25 people in the Grundtvigian Danish-American environment in 2010, whom I met at the Danebod
Folk Meeting, at Grand View University in Des Moines, and during visits to private homes.

Several informants told me about the importance of belonging to the Grundtvigian group, while living an ordinary American middle class life. An example: A middle class woman from Houston, Texas, with a family background in the Dannevang community in Texas, tells about her relationship with the Danebod meeting. She says:

“You know, Baptists have revivals, and things like that. It (the Danebod meeting; HBS) is sort of a Grundtvigian revival!”

And she goes on:

“You sing songs about peace. In there (in the lecture hall; HBS) they are talking right now of the judicial system in the U.S. and what we can do to improve it. They talk about the environment... You just get here with people, who care about the same things you care about... It is a kind of feeling I hardly get any other place. Especially in Texas...”

Almost everyone I spoke to pointed to the community around singing and folk dancing as important. Many of the informants have been familiar with singing and folk dancing since childhood, for example, in vacation schools, and these two activities still stand as the epitome of togetherness in the group. They are also key activities at the family camps. Lessons learnt with the body - such as singing and dancing - apparently sit deep and last long! An informant had this comment to the importance of singing among the Grundtvigians: “Singing was our first language.”

The Grundtvigian group and the surrounding society

The participants at the Danebod Folk Meeting and the family camps are aware that the surroundings - neighbors and acquaintances – do not always understand what it is all about. As one informant says:

“When you explain this (the Danebod meeting; HBS) to somebody else, who doesn’t have a clue as to what this is
about. They don’t understand, you know... They’ll think, well, it is a church thing... But they don’t understand.”

Another informant says:

“When I try to tell my friends back home what I’m doing, they will look at me, kind of like: “You what?”

A third informant talks about the reactions from other congregations to the Danebod Folk Meeting or family camps. They say for example:

“What would a church have a gathering, where you sing, and you dance, and you do crafts and you don’t study the Bible!”?

To this, my informant tells these wondering people that the Grundtvigian Danish-Americans have really nothing against the Bible, but that life is bigger than that book! This informant also mentions that people from other churches are often surprised when they hear that meetings and camps such as these are run without professional management, but by volunteers.

But there are also members of local congregations for example in West Denmark, who look with scepticism at these meetings and family camps, because in their view they confuse church and culture, and therefore do not wish to participate in them.

**What kind of Grundtvigianism do we find in the USA?**

Part of the answer to this question is implied in the following statement: One informant calls herself a Grundtvigian, but with the explicit reference to the Grundtvigianism that has developed in the U.S. in the small Danish colonies. That is, she is not a Grundtvigian in the sense of being a student of Grundtvig or someone, who has studied Grundtvig.

The Grundtvigian environment in the U.S. today has its prominent people like theologians and teachers and has previously had some theological heavyweights. But as one of my informants said, he knows not a single minister in the ELCA, who today is occupied with N.F.S. Grundtvig’s thoughts. Grundtvig is not generally known today in the academic, theological world in America, but is relatively well-known among American educationalists.
The Grundtvigianism that existed within the former Danish Church (official name from 1952: the American Evangelical Lutheran Church) until it merged with other churches in 1962, was formulated and renewed in a dialogue between theologians and laity. But after the AELC stopped existing that year, and its congregations in some cases merged with other congregations, and ministers of other national backgrounds and other theological persuasions became the norm, the Grundtvigian perception on the human and the Christian aspects of life has increasingly been ‘left’ for retelling and development in forums like the Danebod Folk Meeting and the annual Solvang meeting both dominated by laity, and in the monthly magazine Church and Life. It seems that it is not so much on the basis of theological studies and scholarly books on Grundtvig that the environment in recent years has developed and renewed its Grundtvigianism, but perhaps more through shared experiences and narratives.

It is important to note, though, that the Danebod and the Solvang meetings over the years have had a number of competent and inspiring people on the lecture podium, who have contributed with insights and reflections from disciplines such as medicine, social sciences, politics, theology, history etc. This has undoubtedly helped to give the Grundtvigian environment openness to the modern world that seems to go in a good hand with the cultural and religious traditions that have developed in the small Grundtvigian communities.

But what kind of values do the Grundtvigian Danish-Americans see as the hallmark of their tradition and environment? I have tried to list some of the general statements about values under the following headlines:

The close relationship between the religious life and everyday life is clearly very basic. An informant says about the Danebod-meeting:

“…this is part of our faith, the way we live out our faith, but it is not cloistered in a church or in a particular religion or anything like that. It is how we understand the way we live out our Christianity in that we need to educate ourselves in a wide variety of ways... That’s why I love all the variety of lectures...”

Someone else says:
“...we were infused with the idea that our whole life was our faith.... We don't separate. That's why we can sing the Danish hiking songs right next to “Gracious and Mighty God.”

A third informant says:

“I’m also happy with the singing, because all these Grundtvigian songs are, when it comes down to it, about, what life really is.”

Finally, an informant expressed his experience with the Grundtvigian Christianity and understanding of life this telling way: “We lived it; we never put it into words.”

An appreciation of ordinary life

A statement often heard was: “Life is good.” Someone even had a cap on his head with this text! It's about the appreciation of the beauty and value of ordinary life. An example: One informant told me about her grandfather, who was a janitor, and he was appreciated for and loved his work. This is often not the case any longer, because we no longer appreciate ordinary things and the ordinary life.

Non-materialistic values - as opposed to the materialism of society

Theses values were worded in different ways. An example: It’s different what you see as a rich life and society considers a rich life. Society thinks of wealth as something you accumulate. We look at wealth as something with people and friends, and for instance to help others.

The importance of education and “life-long learning”

The importance of education has been a key idea in the Grundtvigian environment since the establishment of the first folk high schools in the United States in the 1870s and of Grand View College in 1896. The Danebod Folk Meeting is an excellent example of “life-long learning,” which is also highlighted by several informants.
Participation in voluntary work - for the common good
Several informants mentioned the participation in voluntary work as something integrated into their everyday lives, something that you do for the common good.

Awareness of nature and the environment
Several informants worded statements like “to live in close contact with nature” as something that has reference to N.F.S. Grundtvig’s ideas.

Politically, the Grundtvigian environment is overwhelmingly “liberal”
Most are Democrats. One informant put it this way, what is probably a common view: “The Democrats are not always good and right, but they are closer.” Not a few within the environment will be posted on the Democratic Party’s left wing.

Finally, tolerance and openness are values that are described in several ways.

Tolerance
An example: The question of ordination of homosexual ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was in 2009 the big topic of discussion within the ELCA. The decision in the form of a vote by a delegate meeting of the ELCA fell at the same time the Danebod Folk Meeting was held. Therefore, the participants at Danebod followed the vote with great interest directly via the Internet. When the decision fell and it was a yes to the ordination of homosexuals, it was received with applause and satisfaction with the vast majority of those present at Danebod. This reception is in stark contrast to the reception which the decision was met with in a number of congregations in the ELCA that after the vote in 2009 chose to leave the church.

Openness to other groups and individuals
The Danebod Folk Meeting and the family camps at Danebod are open to all. The same applies to the annual family camp in West Denmark, and there are indeed both Catholics and non-believers and people of non-Danish backgrounds present here. But this openness also applies to the social events of the West Denmark congregation from the same
motto that everyone is welcome. Therefore, one can see Catholics and other non-members participate in the activities of the congregation with the exception that the Catholics do not participate in church worship services.

**Openness to change**

An informant mentions that in the U.S. it has become common for people to marry and adopt children across racial and other divides. In connection to the mention of marriage across races this woman refers to her own religious tradition, namely the Grundtvigian, and then says with emphasis:

“NFS (Grundtvig; HBS) would be happy to see people exploring greater human limits.”

**Awareness of tradition**

There should be no doubt, however, that the awareness of tradition and the retention of traditions are core values in the Grundtvigian environment, also today. This is felt in the entire form and sentiment at the Danebod Folk Meeting that people appreciate the values and traditions that have been inherited from previous generations, while also being open to new people and new ideas.

Awareness of tradition can have many different expressions. A few examples: One informant told me that after her husband’s death she had installed a bell in her Lutheran church in which the Grundtvigian key concepts were engraved: “To the Bath, To the Table, and to the Word - I call you.”

Likewise, at the funeral they sang some of the beloved hymns of N.F.S. Grundtvig like “Built on the Rock the Church doth Stand.” For the fellowship after the funeral they had to procure food from afar like medisterpølse (Danish type sausage) that was flown in by air from Solvang, California, because there was no one in the area, who could make medisterpølse. And as my informant added: “We had to have a Danish meal.”

**To end**

We may conclude that the Grundtvigian Danish-American environment over the years has not resembled many other ethnic communities or groups or sub-groups in the United States. And it does
not fit at all into the general picture of the Danish immigrants and their descendants who in many measurements and assessments have been described as some of the fastest and easiest integrated immigrants in the United States. The Grundtvigian environment does neither resemble the other Scandinavian-American church environments nor the former Inner Mission oriented environment that much more easily found their place in the Bible-oriented, Christian USA.

The distinctive character of the Grundtvigian environment has remained ever since the first Danish ministers and teachers in the 1870s in America began talking about the Danish immigrants being part of the Danish people and that the Danish language was their mother tongue, despite the fact that they lived in America. In many respects, the leading Grundtvigians were unrealistic in their visions and goals during the first decades. They dreamed sweet dreams and often looked towards Denmark and things Danish, while the majority of the Danish-American population took a different path.

The long process of the integration of the immigrants and later the descendants in the U.S. taught the Grundtvigians that they had to separate things in order to maintain and transform. It was impossible in the long term to imagine an everyday life marked by Danish culture and language even in small rural communities, and therefore the challenge was to identify and justify areas of everyday life, which could be influenced according to their own ideals. Schools and associations, mentioned earlier, were areas where the group succeeded for a period to maintain and develop a social life and values according to their own traditions. It also contributed greatly to enhance the environment that besides the churches there were meeting places like the folk high schools and Grand View College, where the church tradition and folkelige activities such as folk dancing, gymnastics, singing, lectures, etc. went on side by side.

In the post-war period, the Danebod Folk Meeting, and later the Solvang meeting and the so-called family camps gradually got the role of being places where the social relations between people in the scattered congregations were created and renewed and where the tradition was retold and new ideas considered. The monthly, Church and Life, should also be mentioned for its important function to inform about individuals and events and to keep its readers in touch with both the heritage and current discussions of the Grundtvigian environment.
All in all, the Grundtvigian Danish-American environment today is characterized by a unique combination of tradition awareness and openness to renewal through contact with new people and new ideas.

2 Simonsen, op.cit., p. 42.
3 This assessment is based on a review of the development in the colonies in Tyler, Withee, Dannevang and Askov in the first half of the 20th century. Simonsen, op.cit., pp. 212-221.
4 Simonsen, op.cit., p. 58.
5 The weekly Dannevirke 13/4 1898. Quoted from Simonsen, op.cit., p. 100.
8 Simonsen, op.cit., p. 87.
9 The inspiration to talk about this separation is drawn from Fr. Barth, who speaks of ‘front-stage’ and ‘back-stage’ to describe changes of the visible and invisible characteristics of a minority group in the meeting with a surrounding majority culture. The social life will take place on the premises of the majority culture, i.e. the ‘front-stage’, while the minority group in time will find its cultural identity in non-articulate parts of the daily life, which are labelled ‘back-stage’. Here the traits that deviate from the majority culture might be kept alive. Fr. Barth, “Introduction,” in: Fr. Barth (ed.): “Ethnic Groups and Boundaries. The Social Organization of Culture Differences.” Bergen, 1969. pp. 31-32.
10 Simonsen, op.cit., pp. 203-204.
11 Simonsen, op. cit., p. 206.
12 Ibid.
13 Simonsen, op.cit., p. 162.
14 Simonsen, op.cit., p. 208.
16 Simonsen, op.cit., p. 189.
189 and p. 206.


One of the most controversial social issues in the western hemisphere today is the integration of immigrants into a host society. The problems appear to be many and the solutions few. In Denmark we have had a long and at times heated debate about immigrants, their integration into Danish society and their religious practices – including how religion can influence the integration process of immigrants. During the last 10 years this “problem” has made headlines over and over again and has often greatly influenced the decision making process of our parliament. But we are not alone. The “integration problem” exists in all countries – though the approach to and view of immigrants greatly vary – and maybe especially in the western hemisphere – at least if you look at the amount of laws and restrictions made here in connection to immigration. One thing is for certain – there is no simple answer as to how we make “the others” a part of “our” society.

A returning bone of contention in the public debate has revolved around religion given that the meeting between immigrants and host societies often also involves the meeting of religions. Along with religions there might also follow other worldviews, different traditions, customs and gender roles, which can make sparks fly between immigrants and the citizens in a new homeland. The meeting with a foreign religion can – even in a secular society as Denmark – make tempers boil and put the true meaning of integration to the test.

It is easy to think that these issues with integration belong to our modern and globalized world. But people have always migrated from place to place – so maybe our problems are not as original as one might think?

In 2008 I was an intern at The Danish Immigrant Museum in Elk Horn, Iowa. Here I was thoroughly introduced to the history of the Danish immigrants in America. In this old Danish settlement – with a Danish church, windmill and museum – there seemed to be an unwillingness to assimilate completely to the American way of life
even many generations after the initial immigration to the US. This retention of being Danish is far from unique. All over the Midwest you will find remnants of Danish colonies and settlements from the 1800s. The foundation of Danish colonies highlights the fact that not all Danish immigrants wanted to become completely American.

One of the traces from the colonies and the first Danes are often Danish churches. They were one of the first things that were built in connection with the settlements of the immigrants. The church society of the Danish immigrants *The Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* and also after 1894 *The United Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church* and *The Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church in North America* – here simply referred to under one, as “The Danish Church” – was especially in the Midwest an extremely important part of the Danish-Americans’ lives in the late 1800s. The history of the church is remembered and told today – not only because of the fraction between the Grundtvigians and the followers of Inner Mission and the subsequent schism of “The Danish Church” in 1894.

But why did the schism in “The Danish Church” occur? The Grundtvigians and Inner Mission co-existed then and still do today in the national church of Denmark, but somehow they did not manage to remain unified in the US. There are many explanations as to why the church split – some simple, others complicated. Scholars have pointed to personal strife among the high-ranking ministers as a cause – as well as the heated newspaper debate, lack of education and experience among the Danish ministers and a radicalization of faith in both denominations. Furthermore the scholars emphasize the theological dispute between the Grundtvigian and the Inner Mission – including the status of the Bible, the possibility of conversion after death as well as the church’s involvement in the preservation of Danish culture. One of the main points of the church dispute at the time was therefore about the issue of integration and religion. Should the Danish immigrants remain Danish in language and culture with the church as an aide – or – were the immigrants and the church better off being Americanized? As is well known the debate was heated and lasted for several years – and even reached the old country of Denmark.

Religion and integration is thus not only a contemporary issue of today’s modern world – but was also very much a question that
occupied the minds and hearts of Danish immigrants in the US in the late 1800s.

This intriguing realization made me focus my Master’s thesis on the question of what role religion played for the Danish immigrants/the Grundtvigians and the followers of the Inner Mission in the US – if it had an influence on their integration into American society – and if the schism of “The Danish Church” could be understood in this light and if so, how?

This article does not allow me to take you through the process of working the theories, historical sources, scholarly books and articles that brought me to my findings – I will therefore skip to the end and answer my three main questions.

**What role did religion play in the lives of the Danish immigrants?**

There is no doubt that religion played a major role for the Danish immigrants in the US – at least the ones affiliated with “The Danish Church” by the end of the 19th century. Scholars like Will Herberg1; Oscar Handlin2; Tuomas Martikainen3; Richard Alba; Albert J. Raboteau; Josh DeWind4 and Charles Hirschman5 point to the fact that immigrants generally became more religious when they immigrated to a new country. This was also true for the Danes. They built privately financed churches, founded their own church society or became members of an existing one. According to Hirschman religion is also more rooted with immigrants than before their emigration. This fact is apparent with the group of Danes who fought for “The Danish Church,” its foundation, development and preservation.

“The Danish Church” was far more than a simple Danish-American institution. It was of great importance to the immigrants. The church could fill the void in many immigrants’ lives. Here they could find new friends and a replacement for the family they left behind. Alba etc. categorize religion and immigrant churches as forms of systems which create meaning. Through religion the Danish immigrants could find a higher meaning in their new lives in the US. Scholars also accentuate the great psychological significance immigrant churches had for the immigrants. “The Danish Church” functioned as a refuge in a foreign land. The church formed an ethnic community, which helped the Danes through the initial difficult time. The community could give them a new sense of self and self-esteem as well as helping them to form their identities. According to Hirschman
religion was exactly where immigrants could reaffirm their identities – especially in connection to the traditions and customs that might have been taken for granted in the home country. As a result the affiliation to “The Danish Church” forged the identity of many Danes and at the same time individuals could find support among the other members of the church who shared the same world-view, customs and background.

When immigrants chose to become a member of “The Danish Church” rather than other church societies it was probably based on the desire to stay in contact with something familiar – i.e. their native language and culture. Danish prayers, Danish sermons, hymns and traditions all helped maintain an emotional link to Denmark. Mortensen and Martikainen emphasize that it is not always possible to separate religion and ethnicity – they more often constitute a whole. This is apparent with Inner Mission but especially with the Grundtvigians. Both groups retained the customs and traditions of “The Danish Church;” the Danish language and their “Danishness.” The church was a familiar place and represented cultural continuity – it offered a safe base where Danes could gather, help each other and together face the strangeness of their new home in their own pace. They could also introduce their children and grandchildren to their Danish heritage.

In the case of “The Danish Church” it was not only about the emotional link to the home country. “The Danish Church” was in direct contact with the Danish national church. This made the church transnational – it created a link across borders and cultures – and drew the Danish immigrants closer to Denmark. The Danes could get news from Denmark – from the church papers. They could debate theology, settlement and immigration strategies and employ ministers directly from Denmark.

Hirschman, Martikainen and Alba etc. also stress the practical meaning of immigrant churches. Immigrant churches cover an important need for the immigrants when they first arrive to the host country. The immigrants can search for information about jobs, a place to live, and education for their children, language classes as well as discuss potential problems with integration. “The Danish Church” covered these needs for the Danes – it is reasonable to assume that Danes have used this network to share information about work and the experiences they have made regarding farming and trade. “The
Danish Church” also offered education with the founding of Danish schools, folk schools and seminaries. In *Dansk Folkesamfund* the practical side was even more apparent – Danish-Americans helped the new immigrants to find land, work and housing – even before they left Denmark.

Consequently “The Danish Church” not only met the spiritual needs of the immigrants but also took care of their worldly needs and thereby assumed a socioeconomic role. The community that the church offered the Danish immigrants could probably also achieve economic mobility and social recognition. This must have been evident especially in the Danish settlements and colonies. Here the Danes could form actual parallel communities where they could achieve the respect and recognition that might not be possible in the US – or in Denmark.

This leads me to my next question:

**Did religion influence the integration of the Danish immigrants?**

By evaluating several parameters set up by scholars I determined that the Danish immigrants had a very good chance to integrate into American society. It is clear that both the Danish immigrants and the US as a host country openly welcomed the integration process. According to Henrik Bredmose Simonsen⁶ the Danes were well integrated in 1900 – at least socially and economically. But what influence did “The Danish Church” have on the integration of Danish immigrants?

Scholars agree that religion can play a major role in the process of integration of immigrants into a host society – both in a negative and positive direction. Martikainen points to the fact that participation in the religious institutions of a host country almost always leads to assimilation. The immigrants become a part of the religious institutions and rarely retain their ethnic characteristics – in some cases though specific ethnic congregations form. Presumably this is what happened to the majority of the Danish immigrants (in 1900 only every fourth Dane was a member of one of the two biggest church societies). In connection with the general integration of the Danes into the US they might have become members of for example an American church.

Members of “The Danish Church” however specifically chose to join an ethnic community – and this must have had an effect on their integration. According to Herberg and Hirschman immigrants in the US do not have to assimilate completely to be integrated into
the American society. As early as the 19th and 20th century being an American could also include having a religion from Denmark. You could be an American and at the same time retain your heritage. The American self-image was tolerant as it incorporated huge areas and many different people and cultures. This means that the focus of the Danes on retaining their “Danishness” did not necessarily halt their integration but instead was a step towards feeling Danish-American. Hirschman emphasizes that immigrants learn to become Americans through participation in religious organizations – either American or their own. “The Danish Church” might therefore well have enhanced the integration of the Danish immigrants. The church offered a sense of community and information about jobs, housing and other immigrants – things that help newcomers start their new lives, get a sense of belonging and incorporate them into their new country.

“The Danish Church” could assist in the cultural, structural (economic) and political integration. In terms of the cultural integration the Danish immigrants did not face a big opposition within the American church societies, as they were both predominantly Protestant. Especially Inner Mission incorporated well into the very conservative church environment in the US. However the Grundtvigians were seen as quite peculiar and met some resistance – but mostly from the Norwegian churches and not the American ones. In terms of political integration it is easy to imagine that “The Danish Church” served as a representative of the Danish immigrants in the surrounding area – you could say that the church was involved in local politics. Later the church also represented the Danes in connection to the merger of the other church societies and finally with the American.

Generally seen “The Danish Church” did not stand in the way of the integration of Danish immigrants into the American society given that it helped the immigrants psychologically and materially. This might be particularly true of the Inner Mission followers. Inner Mission emphasized the importance of missionary work and the spread of the Holy Scripture – they put religion first. The question of being Danish or American was secondary and was only important if it influenced the missionary work. This meant that Inner Mission changed with the needs of the Danish immigrants. As the wish and need to retain the “Danishness” in the church changed – with the Americanization of the Danish immigrants – so did the strategy of Inner Mission. They did not want to stand in the way of integration. Inner Mission kept the Danish aspect as long as there was a demand
for it – after that they looked for new ways of doing their missionary work.

The Grundtvigians – who were prominent in the church before the schism – had a very different attitude towards “Danishness” and integration. For them religion and “Danishness” were two sides of the same coin. According to Tine Engelbrekt Wanning, the Grundtvigians saw it as their divine duty to preserve the “Danishness” in the US – (in their eyes) there would be no Christian life without “Danishness” – religion and ethnicity were completely inseparable.

It was therefore essential for the Grundtvigians to retain the Danish culture among the immigrants in the US. The means were the preservation of the native language, the publication of Danish songs and poems, the founding of schools, folk schools and seminaries as well as settlements and colonies. In spite of this focus on the “Danishness” the Grundtvigians were actually not against the integration of the Danish immigrants into the American society – at least to a certain degree.

According to Peggy Levitt, immigrants often use religion this way as a way to place themselves in proportion to their homeland and the US. The Grundtvigians associated Christianity with a nationalistic affiliation to Denmark and with an authentic Danish identity. In this way they put up a barrier between themselves and the American society. At the same time they claimed that their faith made them into better Americans.

The Grundtvigians dismissed the existence of an American people that the immigrants could join. America was a continent not a nation. They acknowledged the need for a common language for communication purposes – which happened to be English – but that did not mean that one should submit to the English spirituality and give up the Danish. To the Grundtvigians it was not God’s wish to even out the characteristics of the many groups of people gathered in America. On the contrary the country was especially chosen by God to be “the workshop for the spirit of the different people” whose interaction would ultimately lead to the improvement of human kind. By that the Grundtvigians did not mean that they should be disloyal to the country that had accepted them with open arms – but that they would be the best American citizens by retaining the “Danishness.”

Besides participating in this “interaction” the Danish people also had a duty to present the substance of the Danish people and “The
Danish Church” – in particular “the Grundtvigian light” which could be found there. The Danes had a spiritual mission: to influence the English Christianity in a positive way – and the US was the country where this would be possible.

The prerequisite for the completion of this duty was the idolization and development of the Danish characteristic. However Wanning emphasizes that the work for preserving the Danish folksiness was by many considered a goal in itself.

Despite of this emphasis on “Danishness” it was neither possible nor desirable to isolate the Danish people in America. The wish was not to move a small piece of Denmark to America untouched – what they wanted was to bring the Danish folksiness and spirituality, which would find its form of expression in the US. It was even every immigrant’s duty to learn English – but according to Wanning the Grundtvigian assimilation program was a contradiction. The goal was to be part of an interaction between different groups of people but the means to do so promoted isolation. The aim was a spiritual isolation with a physical integration, which would be impossible to maintain. This paradox was most obvious in the case of the colonies. The Danish colonies should have been spiritual and cultural centers which were not supposed to isolate the Danes from other people – but even so it was bliss when you could say about a colony that it was a real little Danish village or that Danes owned all businesses.

The Grundtvigian view of “Danishness” and religion must have hindered the integration of Danish immigrants into the American society – especially in terms of their cultural or spiritual integration. Grundtvigianism encouraged a self-image that separated “us” and “them” along with the idea that the Danes were unique. Even though the Grundtvigians did not want to physically isolate the Danish immigrants completely from the surrounding community – their methods and especially the colonies had exactly that effect. Wanning emphasizes that the work to preserve the “Danishness” became a goal in itself – and probably was exactly that for most of the ordinary Grundtvigian Danish-Americans. Most likely it was only a small elite of the Grundtvigians who supported the high reaching theoretical contemplations about their role in the US. But whatever the motive the focus on “Danishness” and the Grundtvigian interpretation of religion probably did slow down part of the integration process for
a group of Danish immigrants – but it was impossible to bring it to a complete stop.

According to Hirschman and Alba etc. it is much harder for the first generation of immigrants to incorporate into a new society. It was precisely in this group that you found the big majority of members of “The Danish Church” and the Grundtvigian emphasis on “Danishness.” It was for this group that it made the most sense for the church to have a function as a culture bearer and to offer cultural continuity. Later generations did not have these memories and needs – which meant that “The Danish Church” along with its “Danishness” lost its raison d’être. The church lost its meaning for many immigrants as they were integrated into the American society. The immigrants did no longer wish to be maintained in the “Danishness” and had other wishes for and demands of their church. In time even “The Danish Church” had to accept its new role.

**What were the reasons for the Schism in “The Danish Church?”**

The schism in “The Danish Church” can be seen in continuation of the importance of religion for the Danish immigrants and their integration process. However it is not possible to point to one single and decisive reason for the schism – there was a multitude of causes that led to the split. It would probably have happened in any case but certain events accelerated the schism – and you can therefore roughly divide the cause into two themes – the direct causes and the underlying causes.

I think like Thorvald Hansen⁹ and Erik Helmer Pedersen¹⁰ that the ministers – in particular F.L. Grundtvig and P.S. Vig – were pivotal to the split in “The Danish Church.” The strife between the ministers was personal, bitter and irreconcilable for a small but leading group in the church. They put their personal strife on display in the church papers and made it practically impossible to reach a compromise later. It was not necessarily a strife that reflected the views of the congregations – nonetheless it had great consequences for them. With the lack of a strong leadership in “The Danish Church” the ministers were responsible for making the working-relationship a success. However nobody took real responsibility and the debate was allowed to escalate to the degree that it did. The small group of ministers involved wore blinds and acted according to their own agenda instead of what was best for the church society – whether egotism or idealism was the root of the dispute is hard to say.
The different views of the two denominations as to preservation of “Danishness” in the US were also a decisive factor. For the Inner Mission it was wrong to focus on the “Danishness” and the secular. But for the Grundtvigians it was inseparable from their understanding of faith and the practice of their religion. It was – like Henrik Bredmose Simonsen describes – a struggle for “Danishness.” In the eyes of the Grundtvigians it was natural that the church constituted an ethnic community and was an institution, which was a bearer of culture. For Inner Mission it was more of a necessary evil to reach the Danes during their initial time in the US and later became completely redundant as the Danish immigrants became integrated into the American society. The two groups therefore had a fundamentally different view of what religion should include and it can be hard to see how they could compromise – especially when they in the US had the opportunity to take their own path and were not forced to remain a unity.

According to Alba etc. immigrant churches are places where you articulate the relationship to the host country – meaning systems change for the immigrants as a result of the new surroundings and challenges and this can lead to theological disputes. You could say that the Grundtvigians and Inner Mission did exactly that – they debated how the relationship to the US should be handled – should you preserve “Danishness” or integrate into the American society? And was it even the mission of the church to address this question?

Furthermore you can see the schism as an expression of the ongoing development of “The Danish Church” in the American environment. Mortensen emphasizes that when religion -and along with that - culture meet it can cause friction – but the meeting can also bring a new perspective on one’s own religion and culture and this can help forge a new denomination or enrich the old. You find the same reasoning with Martikainen who points to the fact that not only immigrants become integrated – their religion does too. They change and adapt to the new host country. This can help explain the development of “The Danish Church.” The Grundtvigians and Inner Mission become radicalized in time as a result of opposition from the surrounding communities, which can have led to a form of isolation and a renewed strengthening of the idealism behind their faith.

They collaborated in the face of adversity and reaffirmed the faith of one another and the practice thereof. Both denominations also had a completely new freedom in the US. Contrary to the national church
of Denmark “The Danish Church” had to fight for their members among competing church societies. It was therefore necessary to clarify the values and focus of the religion to be able to “sell” the faith and distinguish it from the diversity of other denominations. The encounter with the religious environment in the US leads to theological disputes in immigrant churches and the strife of the Grundtvigians and Inner Mission concerning the Bible, conversion after death and “Danishness” can be seen in that light. That it was even possible that this could lead to a split in “The Danish Church” can be attributed to the openness of the American religious community with room for many different denominations and a tradition for freedom of religion. According to Hirschman the American religious pluralism directly encourages the foundation of distinctive church societies – and this invitation was thoroughly welcomed by the Danes.

How is this relevant today?
As a history major I of course think that history is very important for our lives today. By looking at history we might become more nuanced in our way of looking at hard social issues like migration. How was it years ago? What did they do differently? Was it a success or a failure? What is still the same? Can we find inspiration in history? The questions – and possibilities – are endless. When looking at periods in history we have the privilege to be able to see all stages from the beginning to the end – for example to see an outcome of a political decision or a specific movement in society.

If we look at Denmark: the migration debate in Denmark has a tendency to focus solely on the responsibility of the immigrants when discussing whether or not an integration process has succeeded. We have a long list of demands and restrictions telling immigrants who want to settle here what they must do and what they must not do. It is a package deal without room for looking at the individual. In the last decade or more we have only looked at the immigrants and how they fail or succeed in integrating into Danish society – and we have neglected the perspective that Denmark as a host country has a huge responsibility for making integration a success!

But what is a successful integration process? We need to discuss what integration really is. Is it to become exactly like the native population or is it all right to retain your personal heritage? Can you be really Danish and at the same time be Hindu? Can you practice Islam
and have successfully integrated into Danish society? Maybe we could follow America’s lead on these questions – learn from past mistakes and successes – and celebrate diversity instead of trying to level out the differences, celebrate a truly multicultural society and freedom of religion, speech etc. But first of all we need to discover what it means to integrate, how the process works, what our responsibility as a host country is, what responsibility the immigrants have etc. These are not easy questions and they may never be answered fully – which is why we desperately need an open – and open-minded – debate if we wish to become a country where everyone is welcome, have rights and feel like a part of Danish society.

It also becomes clear when looking at the history of the Danish immigrants in the US that integration takes time and comes in many forms and unexpected ways. Many generations later some people still feel more Danish than American – despite the fact that they have never been to Denmark. We need to consider this too when looking at immigrants today – especially as they are even more transnational and emotionally connected to their homeland than the Danes were in the 1800s - due to today’s technology.

The point is – we need a more nuanced and tolerant debate on immigration. History can give us that perspective – on our culture, heritage, religion and social construction – and maybe open our minds a little. It is therefore crucial to tell the stories of the past if we want to make informed decisions and not repeat the same mistakes over and over again. If we look at our own history first – like e.g. the history of the Danes in America – maybe that can help us understand the migrants in our country today? Is their behavior so very different from ours back then? Or did we just forget what it takes to settle and build a new life in a strange and foreign country?
The Danish Windmill on Main Street in Elk Horn, Iowa. The mill was disassembled in its original location in Nørre Snede, Denmark, and reconstructed in Elk Horn in time for the bicentennial celebration in 1976.

The replica of “The Little Mermaid” which stands in the city park in Kimballton, Iowa. The original statue, representing Hans Christian Andersen’s well-known fairy tale, stands in the harbor in Copenhagen, Denmark, sculpted by Edvard Eriksen in 1913.
A “Viking Ship” in the Tivoli Fest Parade in Elk Horn, held each year during the last weekend in May.

9 Hansen, Thorvald: Church Divided – Lutheranism Among the Danish Immigrants, Grand View College, Des Moines, 1992.
10 Pedersen, Erik Helmer: “Den danske kirke i Amerika,” i Højskolebladet, 118. årgang, nr. 27, 10. September 1993, side 433
Danish Emigration: Using Private Letters as a source - Two examples
by
Pernille Buchholtz

During the research for my master’s thesis in history at the University of Copenhagen, I was fortunate to be able to visit the Danish Immigrant Museum in Elk Horn, Iowa, and the Danish American Archive and Library in Blair, Nebraska. My quest was made possible by the Bodtker Grant from the Danish American Heritage Society, which I was lucky to receive. This article captures the essence of the purpose of my thesis: to examine the assimilation of four Danish women by using their private letters. My thesis was contextualized by a chapter describing Danish emigration at length and, more importantly, a discussion of some of the issues concerning the use of letters as a source. I owe many thanks to the wonderfully helpful staff at the Danish Immigrant Museum as well as at the Danish American Archive and Library – their help was greatly appreciated.

Danish Emigration to America – Four Phases
Throughout the 19th Century and in the first decades of the 20th, a vast number of people left Denmark. Not only were there fluctuations in the course and extent of the movements during this period but the composition of the emigrant groups also changed over time. Among scholars of Scandinavian migration, it is widely acknowledged that the era of emigration roughly can be divided into four phases, each phase characterized by a specific type of emigrant more often seen than in any other phase.

The first phase (The Introductory Phase) might in theory stretch over a long period of time and is dominated by male emigrants who belonged to the upper social classes and were well educated. In this phase the total number of emigrants was relatively small, and the people who migrated came mostly from urban settings in their homelands. In Denmark, this phase must have lasted until around 1850, and these early emigrants can be described as vanguards to the mass of people who was yet to come.
In the next phase (*The Growth Phase*), the number of emigrants increased and a wider section of the population chose to leave their native country. Peasants make up a larger share in the mass of emigrants and actual group wanderings, where an individual takes on leadership and organizes the group's journey, is more commonly seen. These groups usually consist of families, people from the same neighborhood or people who were connected in some other way. In this phase, men are still more inclined to emigrate than women, however it was far from unusual to see female passengers on steamships crossing the Atlantic; most of these women migrated to the US with their family. The increasing number of families among the emigrants bears witness to the poor living conditions in Denmark. For a family, established at a certain place and with children to tend to, it was far more difficult to let themselves be uprooted than for a single man with a minimum of obligations. The main incentive for emigrating in this second phase is the desire for the higher living conditions thought to be found in The United States. When the number of migrating families declines in the early 1880s it can be ascribed to the improved possibility of employment in the Danish cities, where the dense smoke from the factory chimneys began to rise above the rooftops and marked the beginning of the age of industrialism.

The third phase (*The Saturation Phase*) is characterized by an enormous increase in the number of emigrants. The Danish era of mass migration saw close to 90,000 people leaving the country between 1881 and 1890. The average age of the emigrant drops and the male-female ratio is more evenly balanced than previously.

In the fourth phase (*The Regression Phase*), the number of female emigrants grows both numerically and relatively compared to male emigrants and this is the case until the turn of the century. This is due to the large number of women who emigrated alone with the hope of finding a job in the industrial business or as a servant or a maid. The growing Danish-born population in the US was eager to employ women of their own nationality as housekeepers, servants or maids and many single Danish men were in want of a Danish wife. Thus the premise for leaving the old land and migrating to the New World was relatively good for young women in this fourth and final phase of the Danish emigration.
Sources, Theory and Method: Using Letters in a Historical Analysis

Karl Larsen, who collected and commented on a large number of Danish emigrant letters, wrote in 1912: “The private letter is an encounter between two people without witnesses.” This is quite accurately one of greatest forces of the private letters, although the use of it as a historical source is not entirely unproblematic.

The main issue is the question to which degree the letters can be labeled as representative. Of the enormous amount of letters that crossed the Atlantic probably only a few letters per thousand were preserved until the present day. Is the content of these handed down letters representative for the entire group of emigrants? Or should the remaining letters be accepted as simply representing that particular writer’s thoughts and opinions? The fact is that not all emigrants wrote letters to send home, and amongst historians there are different opinions as to whether the writers of the remaining letters can be trusted as spokespersons for the entirety or even the majority of the emigrant group. Historian Charlotte Erickson, who has collected a number of letters from Scottish and English emigrants in Invisible Immigrants, argues that the fact that certain emigrants even wrote letters home is a testimony to their lack of adaption to their new life, and as a result they continued to keep in touch with the old land. Furthermore, Erickson points out that the many emigrants who were not able to write or read obviously are completely unrepresented. As these illiterate emigrants predominantly came from quite straitened conditions, an imbalance in the representation of the different social classes occurs and suggests that emigrant letters should not be considered representative at all.

Erickson has some reasonable arguments but in relation to the letters of Danish emigrants, there are a couple of aspects to take into consideration. First of all, the degree of literacy increased quite a lot among the Danish population from the middle of the 19th Century, which was a direct effect of the school reforms of 1814. Illiteracy would probably still be more common among the lower classes but the majority of the Danish emigrants were capable of reading and writing letters regardless of their social class. Whether they chose to or not might very well be determined by other factors. Secondly, the argument that all emigrant letters are not representative due to the simple fact that they were ever written might be worth taking a
closer look at. At this point, it is a matter of opinion, since it would be almost impossible to analyze all emigrant letters ever written with the purpose of determining whether or not the writer is adapting to the American society. As a counter argument, it can be pointed out that the average of letters sent home from Danish emigrants per year (3.6 – 3.8 letters per year per emigrant from 1875 – 1905) suggests that the majority of Danish emigrants did write home (and probably more than once) at some point in their life. This would mean that the majority of Danish emigrants did not adapt to their new way of life according to Erickson’s line of argumentation. Furthermore, it can be reasoned that the emigrant letter simply reflects a very human need to keep at least a minimum of contact with the loved ones who stayed behind. Naturally, there are quite possibly a number of emigrants among the writers who did not adapt and to whom the letters symbolizes exactly that. But a full dismissal of all emigrant letters as representative seems too extensive.

Yet another issue whether letters are representative can be emphasized. As previously mentioned probably only a few letters out of a thousand that were written and sent back home have been preserved until the present day. One might speculate why these letters have survived; is it an act of mere coincidence, or are these particular letters distinguishable in a certain way, for instance in terms of language, the way they are written, originality or maybe the writer’s persona. If this is the case, then the overall question of being representative is tainted. However, to take the speculation a step further, one could ask if there is really any guarantee that the most informative letters have not been lost?

Naturally, there is no way to completely and definitively determine whether those letters which are at our disposal, are representative for the entire group of emigrants. These issues do probably to some degree affect the overall question of being representative, and when private letters are used in a historical analysis, a certain amount of caution will be needed in connection with the problems listed above.

**Determining assimilation by using private letters**

Assimilation has been the subject of sociological research for many decades. Milton M. Gordon, a sociologist, was in 1964 the first to establish a model for the course of assimilation and the different stages that form the process. Gordon believed the process of assimilation to
be far more complex than just a “superficial Americanization of a set of values” and the use of English as the main language instead of the mother tongue.\textsuperscript{16} Gordon’s model, divided in seven stages, has been the subject of much discussion among scholars. However, the central thought in Gordon’s model – that assimilation is a multidimensional phenomenon, which can occur in different phases instead of being either existing or non-existing – is widely recognized as being one of the cornerstones in the study of assimilation. Gordon’s thesis laid the foundation for additional theorization of the assimilation process and inspired many others to continue working with the subject. One of these is Elliott R. Barkan, a historian specializing in ethnic studies including migration, who has developed a similar model\textsuperscript{17}. Gordon’s and Barkan’s models surely have different advantages and weaknesses determined by which context they are used in but when it comes to using letters as a source of identifying an individual’s degree of assimilation, Barkan’s six-stage model is preferable. First of all, this is a result of the fact that Barkan focuses on the emigrant’s experiences exclusively, whereas Gordon includes the society’s attitude towards the immigrants (prejudices and discrimination). The emigrants wrote about their observations and commented on their surroundings, but their letters rarely offer any insight in how society perceived them, the emigrants. Therefore, Barkan’s model, exclusively focusing on the emigrants’ own personal experiences, is most applicable when it comes to analyzing emigrant letters.

Secondly, Gordon’s model has the purpose of illustrating the complexity of assimilation whereas Barkan’s model to a greater extent is directed towards the process of assimilation in practice.\textsuperscript{18} This too suggests that Barkan’s model is more suitable in this case and in light of these aspects, the six-stage model is the basis of the following analysis.

Barkan’s model of assimilation is based on thirteen modification factors. Possible changes in these factors signify movement from one stage to another. The modification factors are as follows: Identity; language; norms/values/culture; association and membership of organizations; network; personal relationships and spousal choice; status; interest in the homeland; citizenship and political involvement; geographical mobility; occupation and occupational mobility; personal goals; and boundary maintenance/interaction with the larger society. The modification factors and the changes herein determine at
which of the following six stages, the individual in question is most likely in:

1) Contact: Newly arrived immigrants whose focus is primarily on the country they left. The individual is inclined to settle near other people of same ethnicity. There are great efforts to maintain traditions and culture.

2) Acculturation: More interaction with the surrounding society. The individual adopts cultural and linguistic elements from the core culture but most people still use their native language on a daily basis. Most emigrants still have a strong focus towards the old land.

3) Adaptation: The acculturation increases and the individual becomes more integrated into the core culture. Socioeconomic mobility occurs more often and the individual might seek acknowledgement and status outside their ethnic group.

4) Accommodation: The focus towards the homeland as well as the use of the native language is limited. The individual might be bilingual and participates more and more in the surrounding society. All interest in the native country is of a more nostalgic character.

5) Integration: The individual is increasingly more included in the core culture, even though some cultural, symbolic, linguistic expressions, identification- and behavioral characteristics still exist. Most individuals at this stage identify with the core culture.

6) Assimilation: The individual has become a part of the core culture both culturally, linguistically, institutionally and in terms of identification. The individual no longer sees him- or herself as a part of the original ethnic group.

The letters in question will be analyzed with the intention of determining the writer’s degree of assimilation based on possible changes in any modification factors. Since no two writers are the same, the content of emigrant letters greatly varies - far from all letters include what we are looking for. However, during a longer period of time, where we are able to follow the writer through life, and
more often than not the writer gives several clues, either directly or indirectly, of how assimilated she is.

An Example of what the Letters Tell Us

Meet Marie & Johanne

The two women, whose letters will be analyzed in the following, are Johanne Nielsen (1842 – 1902) and Marie Hansen (1850-?). Johanne emigrated from Denmark as a young woman in the early 1870s with her husband Herman, and their three daughters. The family settled in Illinois but later relocated to Iowa. Marie emigrated around the same time as Johanne, in 1874, when she was twenty-four years old. She and her husband, Christian, were probably already married and had a child at the time of departure. The family chose Massachusetts as the setting of their new life.

The eighteen letters in Johanne’s collection are all sent to her nephew, Christian Mengers, between 1887 and 1902. The first letters at our disposal are thus written 10-15 years after Johanne crossed the Atlantic to settle on the lush Iowa prairie. Marie’s letters are sent to Denmark between 1875 and 1912. Most of the 23 letters of the
collection are written to Marie’s sisters while a small number of letters is directed to her parents.

Identity, language, norms, value and culture
Johanne considers herself a Dane for the entire span of time covered by her letters. She often mentions that she longs to hear her native tongue on a daily basis and her letters are written in Danish without exception and without any appearance of American words or idioms. She continues to celebrate Christmas in a Danish way and clearly associates a traditional Christmas with her homeland. In 1898 she visits Denmark during the holiday and the next year, she cannot seem to find any joy in celebrating Christmas in America. She writes: “Christmas is coming once again but it doesn’t feel like it here. Oh, such a wonderful Christmas I had last year. That, I will never forget. Here everything seems so dead.”

Marie’s language changes gradually. During the first couple of years, her Danish is flawless but as time passes she starts to implement English words, such as “Sitting room” and “Present Time.” The letters written in the later years are virtually a mix of Danish and
English. This bears witness to the fact that Marie learns and uses the English language frequently. Her daughter, Laura, has no interest for the Danish language, Marie writes: “[She] doesn’t seem to take interest in learning Danish. When we speak Danish to her she understands but finds it below her, as a true American, to speak any other language than English.”

Although Marie uses the English language, she never quite seems to feel like a part of the American society. She continues to speak of Americans as ‘them’ and observes her surroundings as a spectator: “…I have to give to them Yanks; they are practical and efficient people. It is worth taking notice of.”

Associations, organizations, network and personal relationships
Johanne’s letters have very little information about her participating actively in the surrounding society. It is tempting to conclude that this means that she did not interact with her surroundings, however, we cannot know for certain. She does write quite a lot about her participation in Swedish services but mentions that this is only due to lack of a Danish-speaking congregation. She never mentions any close friends besides her relatives. Johanne feels immensely lonely and this is a subject in many of her letters. She writes: “You must think that I shouldn’t speak of loneliness when I have my husband and my children. But Christian, I am truly lonely.”

Like Johanne, Marie is silent about participating in any activities outside her home. She writes that she feels lonely and lacks “good friends.” She does, however, speak of the Kalberg’s and the Sorenson’s, two Danish families that her family has befriended. Marie’s network seems to exist mainly of people from the same ethnic group as she herself – Danes.

Assimilation?
Johanne’s letters portray a woman who is lonely and continues to be drawn back to Denmark. From the content of her letters, Johanne never reaches beyond stage 1 of Barman’s assimilation model. She has a limited contact to the surrounding society and, almost stubbornly, maintains the culture and the tradition she knows from Denmark. She adopts no American terms and uses Danish exclusively in her letters. She does not interact with Americans or build any personal relationships with anyone outside her ethnic group. Her constant
longing for Denmark is perhaps the strongest evidence of her lack of assimilation and attachment to the American culture.

Marie must belong to stage two of the six-stage model. Her mixing of English and Danish in her letters is a testimony to her learning and using English. However, her network does not seem to include anyone but people of the same ethnic origins as herself. Additionally, she seems to keep a certain distance to her surroundings and does not at all identify with Americans. Marie’s focus is still on Denmark, even after two decades in the US. Hereby, Marie only experiences a mild degree of adaptation.

The above shows how letters can be used to examine to which degree the writer adapts to the American society. The two women, whose examples have been outlined in this article, did not show a remarkable ability to assimilate in any way. A study of this size is too small to be comparable to the greater emigrant group so the question of being representative is not important in this particular case. However, the issue of being representative is indeed valid when it comes to a more extensive research including a larger number of letter collections.

1 Helmer Petersen 1985, 18
2 Runblom & Norman 1976, 29
3 Hvidt 1971, p. 192
4 Grøngaard Jeppesen 2005, IV.2 (p. 124), V.2 (p. 191), VI.2 (p. 267) og VII.2 (p. 322)
5 Hvidt 1971, p. 181
6 Ibid., 31
7 Hvidt 1971, p. 181
8 Larsen 1912, Vol. I, p. 185, translated from Danish: “Det fortrolige brev er to menneskers møde uden vidner”
10 Ibid., 28
11 Erickson 1972, p. 6
12 Stilling 1992, 26
13 Hvidt 1971, p. 343
14 It is important to point out that Erickson centers her arguments around Scottish and English emigrants and thus her stand might very well be valid in that context
15 Gordon 1964
16 Brøndal 1999
17 Christensen, 2003
Barkan 1995, p. 51

19 Johanne Nielsen’s letters can be found at the Danish American Archives and Library (DAAL) in Blair, Nebraska. The letters are a part of the Hansen-Mengers Collection, registered as HAN 988

20 Marie Hansen’s letters are filed under Juliane Marie Christopheine Hansen, A746 at the Danish Emigrant Archive in Aalborg (DEA)

21 DAAL, HAN, 988 3-1-19, Dec. 1899. This and all following quotes are translated from Danish by the author

22 DEA, A746: Nov. 5, 1886

23 DEA, A746: March 7, 1889

24 DEA, A746: July 4, 1880

25 DEA, A746: July 4, 1880

26 DAAL, HAN, 988 6-1-3, Oct. 1900

27 DAAL, HAN, 988 3-1-12, forår 1893

28 DEA, A746: 6, jan. 1887

Literature


Brøndal, Jørn Etniske enklaver i det amerikanske Midtvesten, 1066: Tidsskrift for historie, nr. 2, 1999


Erickson, Charlotte Invisible Immigrants. The Adaption of English and Scottish Immigrants in Nineteenth-Century America Leicester University Press, 1972


Helmer Pedersen, Erik  
*Drømmen om Amerika*  
Politikens Danmarks historie  
Politikens Forlag, 1985

Hvidt, Kristian  
*Flugten til Amerika eller Drivkrafter i masseudvandringen fra Danmark 1868 – 1914*  
Jysk Selskab for Historie og Universitetsforlaget i Aarhus, 1971

Jeppesen, Torben  
Grøngaard  
*Danske i USA 1850 – 2000. En demografisk, social og kultur-geografisk undersøgelse af de danske immigranter og deres efterkommere*  
Odense Bys Museer, 2005

Larsen, Karl  
*De, der tog hjemmefra, bd. I-II*  
Gyldendalske Boghandel og Nordisk Forlag, 1912

Olsen, Anne Lisbeth and Niels Peter Stilling  
*A New Life; Danish emigration to North America as described by the Emigrants themselves in letters 1842-1946*

Olsen, Anne Lisbeth  
The Immigrant Family on the Prairie as Seen through Personal Letters, *From Scandinavia to America. Proceedings from a Conference held at Gl. Holtegaard*  
Byhistoriskarkiv for Søllerød Kommune  
Odense Universitetsforlag, 1987

Runblom, Harald and Hans Norman (red.)  
*From Sweden to America. A History of the Migration*  
University of Minnesota Press & University of Uppsala, 1976

Stilling, Niels Peter  
*Letters from America, Danish Emigration to the U.S.A*  
Danes Worldwide Archives Studies in Emigration No. 4  
Danes Worldwide Archives & the Danish Society for Emigration History, Aalborg, 1992
Vestergaard, Birthe  
*The Assimilation of Danish Female Immigrants in Story City, Iowa, 1870 – 1914*
Unpublished masters thesis, University of Copenhagen, 1987

**Letter Sources**

Johanne Nielsen  
This collection is preserved at the Danish American Archives and Library (DAAL) in Blair, Nebraska, USA. The letters are a part of the quite extensive Hansen-Mengers collection, registered under HAN 988

Marie Hansen  
This collection is preserved at the Danish Emigrant Archives in Aalborg (DDU), Denmark under *Juliane Marie Christophine Hansen, A746*
The Copenhagen Settlement near Story City, Iowa

by Arlen Twedt

According to Thomas Peter Christensen, the third Danish settlement established in Iowa was the Copenhagen Settlement started near Story City, Iowa, in 1867.1 Located in central Iowa approximately 40 miles north of Des Moines, Story City was founded in 1855 after Yankees, many of them immigrants from the state of Indiana, began to settle in northwest Story County in the early 1850s.

Scandinavian settlement in central Iowa began when a Swedish family settled north of Des Moines near the Des Moines River in 1846, the year Iowa became a state. This was the beginning of the Swede Point Settlement that later became the town of Madrid. In 1849, Swedish immigrants settled 30 miles farther north of Swede Point along a bend in the Des Moines River. Known as the Swede Bend Settlement, this colony grew to encompass several townships in Boone, Hamilton, and Webster counties.

In 1855, Norwegians established a settlement 15 miles east of Swede Point near the village of Cambridge in southern Story County. The following year, Norwegians founded a second settlement in the northern part of Story County. Both colonies were near the Skunk River that flows through the western side of the county. Perhaps Danish immigrants began settling in Story County because of the two Norwegian settlements, but an equally important factor was the convenience of rail travel from Chicago to central Iowa. Passenger service between Chicago and Nevada, the county seat of Story County, began in July 1864.

By 1865, there were 5,914 people living in Story County, mostly in the nine townships along its southern and western borders.2 The majority of its residents were Yankee families who had migrated from points farther east. The dominant foreign-born residents were Norwegian families who made up over nine percent of the county’s population.3 In addition to its permanent residents, Meskwaki Indians often camped along the Skunk River to hunt, trap, and fish.4 The Sauk and Meskwaki tribes ceded central Iowa to the U. S. Government in 1842 in order to pay their trading debts and agreed to move to a
reservation in Kansas in the fall of 1845. The Meskwaki were reluctant partners in this agreement, and many of them refused to leave.\textsuperscript{5} Through the help of friendly white residents in Tama County and Iowa’s Governor, a special legislative session passed a law in 1856 allowing them to purchase land in their former permanent settlement area along the Iowa River in Tama County.\textsuperscript{6}

Into this setting, Danish immigrants began to settle beside the Skunk River south of Story City, Iowa.

The center of the 1875 drawing of Story City shows a field used for local celebrations with business buildings on the east side, a church on the north side, and a schoolhouse on the west side of the field.\textsuperscript{7} Three flagpoles stand in the middle of the field — one for the United States,
one for Norway and Sweden, and one for Denmark. The trees in the background are the woods along the Skunk River, and on the horizon is another church in the heart of the Norwegian settlement established on the East Prairie in 1856.

The business buildings in the drawing were later moved a few blocks west near a new railroad depot built for a narrow-gauge rail line completed from Des Moines to Ames in 1874 and extended to Story City in 1878. In 1890, the author of a history of Story City wrote, “It is the home of the only Danish consul in Iowa, W. D. Gandrup, and its population of about 800 is very largely Norwegian, with a liberal sprinkling of the Dane.”

Researchers the Early Settlers

Although the author’s primary research interest is the general history of Norwegian settlement in Story County, northern Polk County, southern Hamilton County, and southwest Hardin County from 1855 through 1905, he has also been interested in the Danes who lived among the Norwegians in northern Story County and southern Hamilton County. In 2007, he decided to learn about their settlement history by researching the Danish emigrants who settled in the northwest township of Story County. From newspapers, county histories, land records, and other sources, he compiled “A Study of Danish Emigrants Enumerated on the 1870 Census for Lafayette Township, Story County, Iowa.”

There were 94 people of Danish descent enumerated in Lafayette Township on the 1870 Census. The questions the author sought answers to through research into their lives were:

1. Who were the first Danish families to settle in Lafayette Township?
2. How did they find out about the Story City area?
3. Why did they decide to settle there?
4. Where did they purchase land?
5. What years did the Danes living in Lafayette Township in 1870 emigrate?
6. Where did they emigrate from in Denmark?
7. What churches did they join?
8. How did they make their living?
9. How many of them stayed in the township?
10. What percentage of the foreign-born population were the Danes in 1870 & 1900?

As part of this research, the author reviewed Thomas Peter Christensen’s *A History of the Danes in Iowa*, and he also obtained a translation of *De Danske i Story City og Omegn, Iowa* [The Danes in Story City, Iowa, and the Surrounding Area] Rasmus Jurgens wrote in 1908 and published in *Danske i Amerika* in 1916. Rasmus immigrated directly to Iowa in 1869 along with his parents, Jørgen and Karen Marie Andersen, and his two sisters. That same year, Rasmus and his parents settled near Story City and his sisters settled in Des Moines. Appendix A contains a translation of Jurgens’ 1908 history of the Copenhagen Settlement.

The remainder of this report is devoted to confirming some of the information Jurgens included in his 1908 history of the Story City area Danes and adding to the knowledge of the pre-1900 history of this Danish colony by answering the questions listed above.

**The Beginning of the Copenhagen Settlement**

Jurgens names six Danish families who settled near Story City in 1867 and 1868—the Peder Andersen, Jens Andersen, Christian Christiansen, Jens Hansen, Jens Jensen, and Ole Nielsen families. The Christian P. Christiansen family settled north of Story City in southeastern Ellsworth Township, Hamilton County, and the other five families settled south of Story City in Lafayette Township, Story County, in an area that became known as the Copenhagen Settlement. A review of land records for Lafayette Township, however, revealed other Danes had purchased land in Lafayette Township the year before these families arrived, namely Andrew Larsen and Søren Paulsen, and still others purchased land or settled there before 1869, namely Andrew Clausen, Kjeld Pedersen, and the Hans and Cathrine Andersen family.

In May 1866, Andrew Larsen and Søren Paulsen purchased 100 acres two miles southwest of Story City and a two and one-half acre timber lot on the west side of the Skunk River. According to the 1900 Census, Andrew emigrated in 1864, but where he emigrated from in Denmark and his whereabouts until he purchased land in Lafayette
Township are unknown. It is not known if Andrew and Søren occupied the land in 1866, but in April 1869, Andrew married Ane Mette Jensen Møller aka Anna M. who emigrated with her parents, Jens and Grete Andersen aka Anderson, from the Hvejsel parish in the Nøvang Herred, Vejle County, Jylland, in 1868 and settled in the township. No trace of Søren has been found in censuses, but he is believed to be the Søren Paulsen who was living with his wife, Birgette Marie Christiansen, in Boone County, Iowa, in 1869. In that same year, Søren and Birgette sold one-half of the land purchased by Søren and Andrew.

In the spring of 1867, three Danish families decided to settle in Lafayette Township—the Hans Andersen aka Anderson, Peter Andersen aka Anderson, and Jens Jensen families and a single man, Anders aka Andrew Clausen, who accompanied the Jensen family to Iowa. All of them arrived in the spring, so it appears they crossed the Atlantic to New York or Quebec and traveled from there to Chicago where they boarded a Chicago Northwestern train for their trip to central Iowa. Andrew Clausen did not purchase land until 1874, but the three families purchased land south of Story City in and near the woods along the west side of the Skunk River in 1867. Hans and Cathrine Anderson purchased land one mile south of Story City, Peder and Dorthea Anderson purchased land two miles south of Story City, and Jens and Karen Jensen purchased land two and one-half miles south of Story City.

These emigrants may have discovered the Story City settlement area independently of one another because the Hans Anderson family likely emigrated from Jylland, and the Jensen family and Andrew Clausen emigrated from Sjælland. Jurgens states the Peder Anderson family emigrated from Østrup, Jylland; however, their two children were born in Skipsted, near Oldenberg which is now Sipsdorf near Oldenburg in Holstein, a region in northern Germany lost by Denmark in 1864 at the conclusion of their war with Prussia. It may be that they moved to Jylland after 1864.

Karen Jensen's obituary states, “Only one Danish family preceded them to this county, as far as is known, but they died some time ago.” It is unclear from her obituary if she and her husband were the first family to settle near Story City and another Danish family had already settled elsewhere in Story County or if the Danish family that preceded them was the Hans Anderson family or the Peter Anderson
family who may have settled near Story City before the Jensen family arrived. After Cathrine Anderson died in 1884, Hans began living with his children, the youngest having already established his home in Carroll, Iowa. Hans died in 1894 in Winters, California, where his other children were living at that time.\textsuperscript{14} If, in fact, the first Danish family to settle in Story County was Hans Anderson’s or Peter Anderson’s family, Karen Jensen’s 1923 obituary which states, “… they died some time ago,” suggests it would be the Hans Anderson family. Peter and Dorthea Anderson died in 1904 and 1906, but their son lived near Story City until 1943. There were, however, no members of the Hans Anderson family living in the area after his children sold their land in Hamilton County in the 1880s and moved to California.

In 1868, five more Danish families settled in the Story City area—The Jens Anderson family, the Christian P. Christianson family, the Jens Hansen family, Kjeld Pedersen, and the Ole Nielsen family. Jens and Grete Anderson and Jens and Kerstene Hansen purchased land one mile south of Story City, the Anderson family purchasing land from Hans and Cathrine Anderson who moved a few miles farther north of Story City into central Ellsworth Township, Hamilton County. Ole and Thrine Nielsen purchased land two miles southwest of Story City, and Kjeld Pedersen also purchased land two miles southwest of Story City. As previously stated, Christian P. Christianson purchased land two miles north of Story City in Ellsworth Township, an improved farm of 240 acres.\textsuperscript{15}

During late 1867 or early 1868, Andrew Clausen returned to Sjælland to accompany other emigrants to the United States as he would again in 1869 and 1870. One of families he accompanied to the United States in 1868 was his sister, Thrine Nielsen, and her husband, Ole. The Jens Hansen family emigrated from Sjælland that year, too, and they may have been with Anders and his sister and her husband. Kjeld Pedersen purchased land on April 17, 1868, more than a month before Ole Nielsen and Jens Hansen purchased land, a date of purchase that indicates Pedersen arrived in the United States prior to 1868.

The Jens Anderson family came to the area with the Christian Christianson family.\textsuperscript{16} They were guided to Story City by Morten Christian Pedersen, a Dane who immigrated to the United States in 1863 and returned to Denmark on more than one occasion to accompany other emigrants to the United States.\textsuperscript{17} In a letter written
to relatives and friends in Denmark after settling on his farm north of Story City, Christian Christianson states, “On 1 June, we landed in Quebec, all in good health. That same evening, we left by train, through Canada or British America and through Michigan, one of the United States, and continued to travel without ceasing, day and night, until the sixth, almost always through forest land, and came to a lake, Lake Michigan, crossed it by steamship, which took nine hours, and landed in Milwaukee in the state of Wisconsin.

“There we rented a house for a month, because we had decided to break the journey for the others while M. C. Pedersen and I traveled out to look over the country, because we had not yet decided upon any specific place. We traveled ceaselessly for most of this month and inspected much good land. Enormous stretches of excellent land lie uninhabited and could yield abundant food and clothing for millions. We traveled mainly in the states of Minnesota and Iowa.”

Table 1 below contains the author’s list of Danish immigrants who purchased land in Lafayette Township before 1869. Additional information about these early Danish landowners in Lafayette Township is contained in Appendix B.

**TABLE 1** The first Danish landowners in Lafayette Township

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family &amp; year of settlement</th>
<th>Parishes named by Jurgens, 1908</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Larsen, 1866</td>
<td>Not mentioned by Jurgens</td>
<td>Emigrated in 1864 and purchased land in Lafayette Township in May 1866 together with Søren Paulsen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Søren Paulsen, 1866</td>
<td>Not mentioned by Jurgens</td>
<td>Purchased land in Lafayette Township in May 1866 together with Andrew Larsen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Clausen, 1867</td>
<td>Mentioned by Jurgens, but no parish listed.</td>
<td>Emigrated with the Jens and Karen Jensen family and returned to Denmark the following three years to accompany other emigrants to the United States.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hans and Cathrine Anderson, 1867</td>
<td>Not mentioned by Jurgens</td>
<td>Their oldest son, Andrew, emigrated in 1866. Their other son, Louis, was born on a farm in 1851 near the city Vejle in Jylland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peder and Dorthea Anderson</td>
<td>Østrup, Jylland</td>
<td>Their sons, Andrew and John, were born in 1847 and 1854 near Skipted, Oldenberg, Denmark, which is now Sipsdorf, Oldenburg in Holstein, Germany.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jens and Karen Jensen</td>
<td>Karise, Sjælland</td>
<td>Emigrated from the Varpelev parish, Stevns district, in Pæstø County, Sjælland, together with Andrew Clausen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jens and Grete Anderson</td>
<td>Vejle, Jylland</td>
<td>Emigrated from the Hvejsel parish, Nørvang district, Vejle County, Jylland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jens and Kerstene Hansen</td>
<td>Toksværd, Sjælland</td>
<td>Their daughter, Christine, was born in Nestvik, Sjælland, in 1852.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ole and Thrine Nielsen</td>
<td>Karise, Sjælland</td>
<td>Emigrated from the Varpelev parish, Stevns district, in Pæstø, Sjælland, accompanied by Thrine’s brother, Andrew Clausen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kjeld Pedersen, 1868</td>
<td>Not mentioned by Jurgens</td>
<td>Emigrated with a family in 1866 and purchased land in April 1868 that he sold as a widower in 1874.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jens and Karen Jensen’s Pioneer Story

by Gladys Johnson Heghin, granddaughter

Reprinted by permission of Lewis Heghin, grandson of the author
Photos courtesy of Francie Heers, Jensen family historian

Jens Jensen was born ... in 1827 at Rødby not far from Varpelev. Jens became a soldier and a farmer. He fought in the Slesvig-Holstein War. Karen Jensen was born in 1839 in the parish of Kongsted near the village of Eskilstrop.... They were married in 1855. When Karen’s foster-father died, Karen and Jens inherited his good farm.

While they lived in Denmark, they had six children.... Jens and Karen and the children came to America in 1867, traveling first class on the wheel-steamer ‘Northern Light.’ ... We are not sure where they landed in America, but they crossed the country as far as Nevada, Iowa. ... They stayed in Nevada for a time and then bought a farm on the Skunk River, about two and one-half miles from Story City.19 Their seventh child ... was born on this farm.
The Jensen farm was on a hill above the river, and in the hillside they found a cave. They spent their first Iowa winter in this cave. They built a wall of sod or logs (we don’t know which) across the front of it to keep out the cold and snow. When spring came, they built a log cabin on the farm and lived in it. Some years later, a farmhouse was built around the log cabin. If it is still there, that log cabin is ‘built in’ to the kitchen of the house.

It is said that Jens Jensen often drank too much. One day a traveling preacher stopped and talked to him and converted him, and he quit drinking. Karen was a Lutheran and went to St. Petri church in Story City. Jens went with her although he considered himself a member of the traveling preacher’s church. (It may have been Seventh-Day Adventist.)

When they became citizens of the United States, their sons changed their last name from Jensen to Johnson. Eventually, the parents did, too, and for a long time the family was known as the Jensen-Johnsons in Story City. They did this to Americanize their name. Jens translates into English as John. Many immigrants Americanized their names at that time.20

The Lafayette Township Danes in 1870

When the 1870 Lafayette Township Census was conducted from August 11 through 13, there were 94 Danes enumerated in the township (92 born in Denmark and 2 born in Iowa). Enumerated in 18 Danish dwelling houses were 16 families with a total of 47 children ranging from ages 1 to 23 years old, three couples without children, one single woman, five single young men, and one elderly man. One man was a blacksmith, two were coopers, and the rest were farmers and laborers. There were also 62 Danes, foreign born plus children born in the United States, enumerated in four of the eight townships adjacent to Lafayette (18 in Howard, 12 in Milford, 15 in Franklin, and 17 in the township sharing Lafayette Township’s northern border, Ellsworth Township in Hamilton County). There were no Danes living in the townships west and southwest of Lafayette Township in
Boone County or in the townships to the northeast and northwest in Hamilton County.²¹

Beginning later in 1868, emigrants were asked to declare their destination when they left Denmark. They emigrated from both Copenhagen and Hamburg, Germany, but the only records available are for Copenhagen. The total number of emigrants declaring destinations for northwest Story County and north of Story City into Hamilton County and their destinations from 1869 through 1908 are listed in Table 2. The Chicago Northwestern Railway Co. completed its line from Nevada to Ames in 1865, but it was not until 1879 that Danish emigrants began declaring Ames as their destination. By then, there was a narrow-gauge rail line that could take them from Ames to Story City. This line was completed to Story City on January 1, 1878, and extended into Hamilton County when the towns of Randall and Jewell were founded.

**TABLE 2** Central Iowa destinations declared by emigrants departing Copenhagen 1869-1908

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Central Iowa Destinations</th>
<th>Beginning Year of Departures</th>
<th>Ending Year of Departures</th>
<th>Total Number of Emigrants Departing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nevada</td>
<td>1869</td>
<td>1908</td>
<td>367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ames</td>
<td>1879</td>
<td>1908</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randall</td>
<td>1882</td>
<td>1904</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewell</td>
<td>1884</td>
<td>1907</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story City</td>
<td>1884</td>
<td>1906</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>689</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Dansk Demografisk Database, http://ddd.dda.dk/

Eighty-four of the 367 emigrants departing Copenhagen who declared Nevada as their destination town emigrated during 1869 and 1870. Among these 84 emigrants were six families and one single person (26 individuals) enumerated on the 1870 Census for Lafayette Township. Four of the families and the single person were from the county of Præstø in Sjælland (two families and the single person from the Toksvær parish, one family from the Magleby parish, and one family from the Varpelev parish). Others likely settled in townships adjacent to Lafayette Township and elsewhere in Story and Hamilton
counties, but since the focus of this study was on Lafayette Township, they were not researched.

The 1900 and 1910 U.S. Censuses collected respondents’ year of emigration. According to the reported year of emigration from these censuses and information from the *Dansk Demografisk Database*, one of the 92 Danish emigrants living in Lafayette Township in 1870 emigrated in 1864, 12 in 1867, 11 in 1868, 38 in 1869, and 18 in 1870. Year of emigration could not be determined for the remaining 12 Danish emigrants in Lafayette Township. The eight families and three single individuals who emigrated in 1869 (38 people) emigrated directly to Lafayette Township, and with the exception of Andrew Larsen who emigrated in 1864, it appears the others with known years of emigration came directly to the township, too.

**Settling on the Wet Prairie**

Story County is in the southern part of the Des Moines Lobe, a region extending from the north central border of Iowa down to Des Moines in south central Iowa. The glacier creating the Des Moines Lobe left behind a level and gently rolling landscape dotted with numerous prairie pothole and kettles which is why the Des Moines Lobe is sometimes referred to as the Prairie Pothole Region of Iowa. These wetlands and the shallow nature of the Skunk River Valley created serious drainage problems for pioneers within the Skunk River watershed. H. D. Ballard, who moved to Howard Township in 1857 recalled, “In coming along the route from Iowa City we had many times been asked where we were going; and when we told them to Story County, they informed us that Story was the wettest county in the state and that we could not get a living in that county.”

The first settlers in Story County selected land close to its rivers and creeks and avoided the open prairie. H. H. Boyes, who settled on the east side of the Skunk River in Howard Township in 1854 later recalled, “It was not thought at that time that the prairies distant from the timber and streams would ever be settled. It was all covered with tall grass, with no herds or flocks to graze it down, and in the fall would be swept by terrific prairie fires, leaving the landscape black and scorched. Then, when winter came, with nothing to hold the snow, the winds would fill the air with blinding snow.”
When Danes began purchasing land in Story County in 1866, Lafayette Township was still mostly unsettled. Andrew Frandson (1849-1914), who arrived in 1869, states, “At that time, the whole area lay as wild prairie, and as far as the eye can see there was no houses to be seen even though a few settlers lived here and there. The land was cheap, five or ten dollars per acre, but farming wasn’t very good because it was difficult to sell your products and they cost only a little.”

One of the families Andrew Clausen accompanied to Marshalltown, Iowa, in 1870 was the Peder and Margrethe Rasmussen family. While living temporarily with a relative, Peder went to Story City to see his friend, Søren Christiansen and his brother-in-law, Niels Madsen. In describing his first visit in a letter to a friend in Denmark, Peder states, “I went around to visit more than 20 Danish families living near Story City, but I did not like the country hereabout. It was for me too marshy (swampy) and too flat (level) without proper drainage for the water.” After returning to Marshalltown, Peder found land prices high in Marshall County, and when Søren Christiansen wrote him about a farm for sale four miles south of Story City in Franklin Township, Peder returned to Story City and decided to purchase the farm. Peder wrote, “The farm has 80 acres of rather high land, with a depression (valley) in the middle which make up a good meadow of about 8 acres. Only very little digging (ditches) will be necessary. The valley is falling to the east. A (main) road is passing near the farm, and there is a road at the northern side of the fields. The farmland is fenced with oak posts for every 5 yards and with 4 rows of thick steel wire. The soil is a rather light, dark humus (loam) to a depth of 1 to 1½ yard with a calcemus [calcareous] clay in the underground.” Peder Rasmussen’s letter to his friend in Denmark is Appendix C.

Unlike the Norwegians whose experience with the wet prairie in northeast Grundy County, Illinois, gave them the confidence to begin a settlement on the wet prairie in Howard Township in 1856, the early Danish immigrants were initially hesitant to move out on the wet prairie. In his memoir, *The Boy on Kiegl Creek*, Guy D. Johnson (1895-1986), whose grandfather, Jens Anderson, purchased 40 acres in central Lafayette Township (Section 15) in 1874, states, “There were very few fences when they moved out on the prairie. A lane was fenced thru a place they called Copenhagen. That was a mile and a half west of the timber. Beyond this there [were] no fences and Father told me
that there were no houses as far as you could see out northwest across
the prairie."\textsuperscript{31}

Andrew Frandson also settled in Section 15 after he had accumulated enough money to purchase land. His obituary states, "Work at this time was very scarce and for the first few months he practically worked for his board but with the privilege of going to school during the winter months. He later secured work as a cooper, his trade, at Marshalltown. Here ... he accumulated enough money to make first payment on a forty acre tract of virgin Story County land. In 1874, he began to improve the forty which was to become the nucleus of the home which has been his for so many years."\textsuperscript{32} Frandson's oldest son, Julius, later recalled, "Father often told how he was criticized and razzed by friends and relatives on the river for daring to buy land so far from civilization, so far from timber, neighbors, and roads."\textsuperscript{33}

Andrew Frandson's son, Phillip E. Frandson, co-author of "Occupying the Wet Prairie: The Role of Artificial Drainage in Story County, Iowa," states, "During the 1870s ... a colony of Danes settled on a portion of the big wet prairie of eastern Lafayette Township at about the same time that Norwegians were occupying other portions. By 1880, the Danes formed a solid block of settlement, called the Copenhagen community, in the south central part of the wet land. At a somewhat later date, the Danes occupied the wet land in the extreme northwestern corner of the township.

"The fact that it was possible to form a new Danish community several square miles in extent on the flat till plain of eastern Lafayette Township within a short distance of timber and near one of the areas of earliest settlement in the county suggests the degree to which the big wet prairie had been avoided.... The present-day distribution of Norwegians and Danes within the township, although not precisely that of 1880, is evidence of the permanence of their settlement and implies successful occupation of land which had been avoided through the first twenty or twenty-five years of settlement in the county. The fact that old settlers recall that a few squatters were living on some of the less wet spots only emphasizes the low esteem in which the big wet prairie was held at the time of the Norwegian and Danish settlement."\textsuperscript{34}

Once settlers began moving out on the prairie, Lafayette Township filled up rapidly. Below is an 1883 plat map of Lafayette Township and western Howard Township. The small black squares on the map
represent farmhouses, and there are very few parcels of land where the owner had not built a farmhouse. When the 1885 Iowa Census was taken, the census enumerator found 38 Danish families living in 15 of the 36 sections in the township. Seventeen families were enumerated in Sections 13, 14, and 15, the Copenhagen community referred to above by Phillip E. Frandson, and seven families were enumerated in Section 6 in the northwest corner of the township. The remaining families were mostly enumerated in the eastern one-half of the township. The school Andrew Frandson likely attended was Schoolhouse No. 6 in the northwest corner of Section 24, a schoolhouse commonly known as the Copenhagen Schoolhouse where the first 16-week term of school began November 1869.

Source: State Historical Society of Iowa Library and Archives
The Jensens Came to America

from “The Boy on Kiegley Creek” by Guy D. Johnson
Reprinted by permission of Ken Cameron, relative of the author

My grandparents, Niels and Ane Jensen, moved to America in 1870. They started from Denmark in 1870 and landed in Nevada, Iowa, on July 14, 1870. They had two children, John, my father and Aunt Annie. Grandfather’s brother, Morten, and his wife and a man they called Tobby came with them.

They spent a rough three weeks on an old steam freighter ship crossing the Atlantic Ocean. Father told that he was not seasick a single day the whole three weeks they were on the ocean. The rest of the folks were sick a part of the time and Aunt Chistene stayed in bed the three weeks they were on the ocean. They had some bad storms and the old ship rocked and rolled. The ship had been used for hauling cattle and then cotton. The immigrants had to nail boards to make pens and beds where they could live while crossing the ocean. They came thru Chicago by train a year before Chicago burned down in the big fire of 1871. At Chicago, they bought tickets for a place called Ames. The conductor put them off at Nevada. He told them there was no town called Ames and the immigrant trains stopped at only places like Nevada and Boone. Father told that they found out afterwards that all there was at the place called Ames was a siding, a platform and a pen with a loading chute that the Iowa State College Farm used to ship livestock in and out also a place to unload brick and lumber.

There they stood on the platform at Nevada in the rain and wondered where they should go or what they should do. A railroad section man came over and talked to them in Dane. He helped them pull and carry their things into the freight shed and there they spent the night. Grandfather’s brother’s wife was sick. Aunt Chistene had a bad time all the way across the ocean. Her baby, Annie K., was born that night in the freight shed at Nevada. Father told that it rained a slow rain most of the night. Next morning, Grandfather
and Tobby found which way to go and started out a foot in
the wet and mud up to Great Grandfather Jens Anderson’s
farm. They had come over to America in 1865 [186838].

Grandfather [Great-grandfather] Anderson had bought
40 acres on the west side of Skunk River. His forty is now a
part of the Woodland Dairy Farm south of Story City. There
was no town here at that time. Grandfather and my father
walked along the west bank of the river and they saw a
few houses in the woods but as far as they knew, Fairview
[Story City] had not been started.

The Andersons had been down to the platform at Ames
and waited in the rain and when the train went thru and
did not stop, they guessed that Niels and his folks had got
lost in Chicago or New York City. They were surprised to
see them come walking in and loaned them a wagon and
a team of horses. Grandfather and Tobby went back after
the rest of the folks. They moved into an old school house
that stood in Great Grandfather’s hog lot and there started
keeping house in America. Grandfather had $200 left after
the trip and he bought lumber for $100 to build a 12 X 14
foot house. They put it on the west bank of Skunk River and
just east of the road that ran along the river. I suppose he
hauled the lumber from Nevada as there were no saw mills
up this way. A few years later, a saw mill was started over
on the east side of the river. It was some job to haul things in
those days as there were no roads or bridges. Grandfather
used another $100 to buy a cow.

In the summer he worked for the neighbors where
he could find something to do and in the winter time he
worked at the tailor trade making suits, overcoats, and
clothes. Most of the pay he got was something to eat. My
father helped the neighbor women with light chore jobs.
He was six years old in 1870. The women paid him with
ten cent paper money and by the end of 1872, he found out
his whole handful of paper money wasn’t worth a nickel.
There was a money panic in the East. Chicago had burned
down and none of the paper money was any good. Two
more boys were born while they lived in the little house by
the river, Uncle Martin and Uncle Charlie.
Father told about the big fish he caught in the river just below their house. He also told about catching rabbits in the woods. When the snow got deep, the rabbits would make paths into the brush piles. He would take the old Pot Hound and they would round up the rabbits. Father got on the opposite side of the brush pile from the dog and held his sack down in the runway. The old dog would let out a howl and the rabbits would run right into his sack.

In 1874 Grandfather bought 40 acres for $100 in the southwest corner of Section 15 in Lafayette Township and moved out on the prairie. It was three miles west of where they had been living. The land was about midway between Kiegley Creek and Spring Branch. Spring Branch was more like a swamp than a creek. There were no roads or fences and in March of 1875 they got a snow and cold weather so that Spring Branch froze over. So they put some log runners under the house and hitched four horses to the house and pulled it over the ice and snow out to the 40 acre place. They pulled the house up on a little raise just north of the southwest corner. There was a good sized pond right on the corner. A few years later, Grandfather bought 40 acres for $160 and it joined the first forty on the north. Uncle Julius was born on this farm in 1877.

Danish Land Ownership in Lafayette Township, 1870-1880

In 1848, the United States government authorized the sale of land in Lafayette Township, but the first parcel was not sold until a Federal Land Office opened in Ft. Des Moines, Iowa, in 1853. The first Lafayette Township land patent was issued to Henry Burham in September 1854, 120 acres of virgin prairie and timber beside the Skunk River in Section 13. Burham was born in Virginia, and his wife, Sarah, was born in Ohio where their first five children were also born. Five years after the Burhams received their patent, the United States government issued its last patent for Lafayette Township.

When Danish emigrants began buying land in Lafayette Township in 1866, they, like the Henry Burham family, were also interested in land close to the Skunk River. The Burhams paid the government price of $1.25 per acre for their land, but ten years later this land had
greatly appreciated in value. Based on the following amounts paid for their first purchases, however, it is clear some of the Danes had the economic means to buy this land:

On May 7, 1866, Andrew Larsen and Søren Paulsen paid $650 for 100 acres in Section 23 of Lafayette Township and a 2.5-acre timber lot in Section 18 of Howard Township.39

On July 1, 1867, Jens and Karen Jensen paid $2,000 for 80 acres in Section 24, 28 acres in Section 19 of Howard Township and a 5-acre timber lot in Section 13 of Lafayette Township.40

On August 3, 1867, Peder and Dorothea Anderson paid $125 for 40 acres in Section 24 of Lafayette Township, and on June 3, 1871, they paid $2,000 for 81.14 acres in Section 13 of Lafayette Township.41

On October 2, 1867, Hans and Cathrine Anderson paid $1,050 for 39.5 acres in Section 13 of Lafayette Township and a two-acre timber lot in Section 31 of Howard Township.42

On April 17, 1868, Kjeld Pedersen paid $250 for 100 acres in Section 23 of Lafayette Township and a 2.5-acre timber lot in Section 18 of Howard Township.43

On May 26, 1868, Ole and Thrine Nielsen paid $1,300 for 100 acres in Section 23 of Lafayette Township and 2.5 acres of timberland in Section 18 of Howard Township, a purchase witnessed by Thrine’s brother, Andrew Clausen.44

On May 27, 1868, Jens and Kertene Hansen paid $1,800 for 84 acres in Section 13 that included timberland along approximately one-fourth mile of the Skunk River.45

On August 29, 1868, Jens and Grete Anderson paid $1,200 for 39.5 acres in Section 13 of Lafayette Township and 42 acres on the east side in Section 31 of Howard Township, a purchase witnessed by M. C. Pedersen, the guide who accompanied the Anderson and Christianson families to the United States.46

Appendix D lists the values of real estate and personal estates reported by the owners of Danish dwelling houses in Lafayette Township in 1870. Seven of the owners did not own any real estate, and the remaining 11 owners reported owning real estate valued from $150 to $3,300. When the values of real estate and personal assets are combined, the totals for the 18 Danish dwelling houses range from $0 to $4,700. Five of the families who settled in the township during 1866-
1868 were still living there in 1870, and their combined estates ranged from $1,000 to $4,700.47

For the majority of families listed on Appendix D, the area of Denmark and county they emigrated from are also listed. At least one-half of the families emigrated from the county of Præstø south of Copenhagen, and six of these families emigrated in 1869. Jurgens states, “A Danish man by the name of Anders Clausen who had been living in this country for several years, had that same spring [1869] sailed to Denmark and come back to Story City as a leader for about 30 newcomers, among them four families who bought land. The rest were unmarried men.” Rasmus Jurgens, his parents, and his two sisters were one of the families that came to Story City that year with very little money. Rasmus’ father, purchased a timber lot beside the Skunk River for $24 and presumably built a place to live there.48 When the census was enumerated the following year Rasmus’ father (Geo. Anderson, age 70) was working as a laborer with only $100 in personal assets.

According to local historian, Svend P. Jensen, Anders Clausen, who went by the name, Andrew, was born in Præstø County in 1839 and emigrated in 1867, “presumably” with the Jens and Karen Jensen family whose pioneer story was described earlier.49 Whether Andrew and the Jensen family knew about the Story City area prior to their departure from Denmark or discovered it after their arrival in the United States is not known, but they must have been pleased with the settlement area because Andrew returned to Denmark the next year and accompanied his sister, Thrine, and her husband, Ole Nielsen, to Story City and helped them purchase land.50

Svend P. Jensen credits Andrew with playing a central role in the emigration from two parishes in Præstø County, Magleby and Varpelev,51 and according to Jurgens, Andrew is responsible for many of the 75 emigrants who declared Nevada, Iowa, their destination when they left Copenhagen in 1869. In 1870, Andrew married Christine Hansen, the daughter of Jens and Kersten Hansen who settled south of Story City in 1868. Andrew and Christine purchased land in the same section where Jens Anderson and Andrew Frandson purchased land in 1874 (Section 15), and this is where they raised four children with four others dying in infancy.52 After Andrew’s death in 1892, their son, John, took over the farm.
By 1880, the number of Danish dwelling house owners in rural Lafayette Township had increased from 18 in 1870 to 32 with all but four reporting they owned land. The number of acres of improved and unimproved land they owned, the bushels of grain and tons of hay harvested, and the number of horses, milk cows, swine, and poultry are listed on Appendix E. It clearly shows Danes had established themselves as a significant part of the farming community in Lafayette Township.

In the spring of 1880, two county residents completed “Resources and Wealth of Story County,” a review of the history and current state of development of the county, which the editor of The Nevada Representative pronounced, “… a very complete, comprehensive, and valuable review of our county” and stated, “Every resident of Story County should have a few copies to send to eastern friends.” In a section describing land opportunities in each township in the county, the authors state the following about Lafayette Township, “In the northwest corner, Story City being quite a prominent business point. Watered by a branch of the Skunk. Number acres of vacant land 6,000. Prices from $6 to $10 per acre. The Narrow Gauge road runs through this township.” In each of the townships immediately south and southeast of Lafayette Township there were also 3,000 acres of land available, but for the township immediately east, Howard Township where Norwegians had established a settlement in 1856, the authors reported no acres available for purchase.

Because of their earlier arrival to the area, Norwegian immigrants purchased a few parcels of land in Lafayette Township at the government price of $1.25 per acre. They purchased some of these parcels at the Federal Land Office in Des Moines, Iowa, and other parcels from Story County after it obtained ownership of the unsold land called swamp land. Norwegians did not begin purchasing other land in Lafayette Township in any significant amounts until the Civil War was over in 1865. From that point on, the Danes and Norwegians along with a few Germans became the dominant foreign-born immigrants in the township.

**Farming and Working in Town**

The 1885 Iowa Census completed in April 1885 enumerated 262 Danes living in Lafayette Township, an almost three-fold increase
from the number enumerated in 1870. Of the total, 183 were born in Denmark and 79 were born in the United States with 181 being enumerated in rural Lafayette Township and 81 in the town of Story City. The appeal of farmland to these Danish emigrants can clearly be seen in Table 3 listing the occupations of the adults. Farmers and farm laborers accounted for 49 of the 78 occupations enumerated. The farmers were enumerated in 38 Danish dwelling houses.

TABLE 3 Occupations of Danes enumerated on the 1885 Lafayette Township Census

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rural Lafayette Township</th>
<th>Town of Story City</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Blacksmith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harness maker</td>
<td>Carpenter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laborer</td>
<td>Clerk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laborer</td>
<td>Dressmaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Druggist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Laborer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Laborer - Railroad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Livery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Painter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Photographer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Printer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Restaurant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Servant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 1885 Iowa Census

The smaller number of Danish immigrants working in Story City confirms Jurgens’ statement that only, “A few came to work in businesses in town, and a few worked together with Norwegians and became in that way independent businessmen.” With the exception of the two clerks, the druggist, the photographer, and the printer, Danish immigrants living in Story City in 1885 were working in trade, craft, and laboring occupations.

The druggist was Wilhelm D. Gandrup who, although born in Norway, was the son of parents born in Denmark which is the reason his occupation is included on the list. Gandrup graduated from the pharmacy department at the University of Norway in 1864. He and
his family immigrated to Chicago in 1868 where he worked for ten years. In 1878, he and his Swedish wife moved their three children, one of whom was born in Denmark, to Story City where he became the town’s first druggist.58

The first county history, Allen’s *History of Story County* published in 1887, includes an 1886-87 business directory for Story City.59 Norwegians and Yankees owned most of the businesses along with a Swede who was president of the only bank and owner of the flour mill. The only Danes listed are Andreas N. Thorp, the photographer enumerated in 1885, and Hans C. Carlsen, editor of *The Review* and owner of the printing office, the printer enumerated in 1885. W. D. Gandrup is not listed in Allen’s directory even though he was still operating his drug store at that time.

According to L. J. Tjernagel, a Norwegian and the only attorney-at-law listed in the 1886-87 directory, C. P. Christianson, the Danish immigrant who settled northeast of Story City in 1868, tried to start a business in Story City in the early 1880s but met resistance.60 After the Chicago & Northwestern Railway Company purchased the narrow-gauge rail line running from Story City north into Hamilton County, Christianson was unsuccessful in his attempt to discourage railway officials from proceeding with plans to build a depot and town where Randall is located today. Christianson thought the depot and town would be too close to the depots in Story City and Jewell Junction, the original name of the town of Jewell. During this same time, Christianson was looking for a place in Story City to begin a business, but as Tjernagel states, “the narrow-mindedness of our businessmen here at the time laid all kinds of hindrances in his way, and he gave up. So, instead of discouraging the building of a depot, he and H. L. Henderson [a Norwegian] organized and built a large store in Randall.”61 Whether Christianson’s experience discouraged other Danes from starting businesses in Story City is not known, but a later business directory for Story City published in the 1897-98 *Directory of Story County, Iowa* shows Norwegians and Yankees still owning most of the businesses with Danes only minimally involved in the town’s business community.62

A likely more important reason Danes were only minimally represented in Story City’s business community is a decrease in their percentage of population within the township. On the 1870 Census, the 92 Danish emigrants in Lafayette Township comprised 40% of the
228 foreign-born people living in the township, Norwegians 53%, and other nationalities 7%. Thirty years later, the Danish influence had decreased by 15% and the Norwegian influence had increased by the same percentage to 68%; other nationalities stayed about the same at 8%. The Danish influence was higher in the countryside in 1900 than it was in Story City, 35% and 20% respectively of the 600 foreign-born people living in the township; for the Norwegians it was 51% and 75%.

**Discussion Meetings, the Literary Society, Celebrations, and Picnics**

Jurgens states, “Now [after 1869] there began a steady stream of Danes from Denmark and from some other states. We became a considerable group when we gathered for festivals, and when we were called together we met in harmony all as one.... We tried not to form organizations with laws and articles. We owned in ourselves a stronger unwritten law.... The schoolhouse was open for our use, and it was used in the wintertime one time a week for discussion meetings.” The schoolhouse Jurgens is referring to was most likely the Copenhagen Schoolhouse a mile south of where Jurgens lived in the northeast quarter of Section 14.

Jurgens also states, “Danes and Norwegians together established a literary society with a library and lectures. The members consisted of those who stood outside of the church, and many an old Norwegian felt himself to a great degree outraged by such an ungodly organization outside of the church which we shouldn't wonder about when we invited men like Kristofer Janson from Minneapolis to give a lecture.” Janson completed a theology degree in Christiania (Oslo) in 1865 and was ordained a Unitarian pastor in Chicago in 1881. While in the United States from 1881 to 1893, he organized five Unitarian congregations and presented lectures and published writings that were often critical of orthodox Norwegian-Lutheranism.

The Story City area Danes held their first Constitution Day (June 5th) parade in 1886. The event was photographed by Morris Morrison, a photographer from Ames. The explanation under the photograph states, “This picture was taken by Mr. Morrison June 5, 1886, just as the Danish band was heading the march for Fredrik Andersen’s grove.
for the first formal celebration of the day.” Fredrik Andersen’s grove was near the southeast corner of Story City. Fredrik emigrated from Svendborg, Jylland, to Nevada in 1869 with his parents, Anders and Ane Kathrine Frederiksen, and two younger brothers.

The following year the newspaper reported, “The Danes celebrated their nation’s holiday on June 4th. The right day is June 5th, but as this came on Sunday this year they took the preceding day. There was speaking & music during the day, and in the afternoon the young folks amused themselves. All who attended report a good time.”

Source: Golden Anniversary Book of Story City, 1931

Story City’s first newspaper, the Story City Herald, began publication in 1881. In 1885, Hans C. Carlsen, the Danish printer enumerated on the 1885 Iowa Census, began publishing his weekly, Story City Review, which he published until 1887. Issues that have been preserved begin with the next newspaper, Story City News, which began publication in 1887. Appendix F contains news items about the Story City area Danes that were found in a review of the preserved newspapers from 1887 through 1910.

In 1900, the Story City area Danes organized a Danish Brotherhood, Story City Lodge # 136 chartered on October 11, 1900. Of the 47 known members of the lodge, 20 were born in the 1870s, 12 earlier, and the remainder in the 80s and 90s. Existing lodge records indicate
it had 47 members during its existence and that it disbanded between 1958 and 1975.73

Who Was Nagelsen?

Rasmus Jurgens obviously decided a history of the Copenhagen Settlement was not complete without mentioning Nils Reinhardt Nagelsen. Jurgens states, “A well educated Danish man by the name of Magelsen [Nagelsen] had from his youth lived among the Norwegians, first in Illinois and now here in this new settlement. He had a strange appearance and didn’t own anything he could rest his head on, but he was a welcomed guest wherever he was pleased to be at home. He was learned in the law and an advisor to the Norwegians. He spoke fluent Danish, English, German, French, and Latin and could fluently read and translate from one language to the other. His standing and his birth was a secret which he took with him to the grave.”

Peder and Helge Tjernagel, Norwegian brothers who knew Nagelsen, made an effort to gather fragments of Nagelsen’s life story he inadvertently revealed in conversations with friends. The primary author of their article, Peder, states, “Who was Nagelsen? I have asked the question from one end of Story County to the other end of Hamilton County; I have interviewed many who ‘knew him well’ yet, after all, did not know who he was. Though I cannot to my own satisfaction say who he was, I can tell something of what he was as we observed the huge hulk of a man on his periodic journeys through our settlement and, at close range, when he called at our home.…

“It was as a colporteur that Nagelsen made the rounds of the Norwegian settlements in central Iowa. His stock in trade of Bibles, hymn books, prayer books, and other Christian literature especially of a devotional character and dear to the settlers through memories of homes across the ocean.…

“A certain woman at Ballard’s Grove near the present village of Huxley, who was apt with her needle and scissors, became the manufacturer of his clothing. His suits were made of Kentucky jean—that stiff, heavy, almost imperishable material so common in those days.…

“… Every dog and every child was his friend. Fathers and mothers were always willing to declare a recess and listen to him as he talked interestingly and familiarly not only of persons and events of the
present but also of the past. Though selling books was his business and means of livelihood, his main purpose seemed to be to disseminate knowledge based not on theories but on the experiences of the ages and to provoke thinking and the seeking of useful knowledge. He was the pioneer’s university.”

Anfin Aplin, a Norwegian who grew up in southern Story County and knew Nagelsen, states, “… He liked the people here and everybody liked him and treated him nice. He was a tall man over 6 feet, and gained in flesh right along till he got to weigh over 300 pounds. He peddled medicine for a living. He got his meals wherever he stopped, and no one ever charged him anything.

“He would go up to the Norwegian settlements around Story City, Roland, and Mickallsburg [McCallsburg]. He got all his medicine from Druggist Gandrup in Story City. He knew 12 different languages. He was a great fellow to read, and kept posted. He would look over all the newspapers there were in the house. He gathered all the news and he could tell all the news that had happened. He laughed very heartily. He had a great memory; he could speak the first names of every child wherever he stopped. He was very friendly and could tell lots of stories. He was a hearty eater. After a big meal in the summer time, he would go out on the ground and lay down and stretch. He never married, had no home, only where he took off his hat.

“He was a happy go lucky fellow with a big smile. He came here sometime in the sixties and died in the late eighties.”

According to the Tjernagel brothers, Nagelsen was the son of a wealthy man who sent him to the best preparatory schools and to the university to become a clergyman. Differences with the State church led Nagelsen in another direction as editor of one of the leading newspapers in Copenhagen. After criticizing the king, he was imprisoned, and upon his release, relatives arranged for his emigration to the United States to avoid further disgrace by their outspoken relative. Nagelsen died in 1891 and is buried in an unmarked grave in Palestine Cemetery, Huxley, Iowa.

**The Religious Orientation of Lafayette Township Danes**

Jurgens’ history contains the following description of the religious orientation of the Story City area Danes. “Missionaries from the various sects came to win us each to their own side. We opened the
schoolhouse willingly for these, but if there came voices that wished to make a religious organization, the opposition was strong. P. A. Hermansen and Rasmus Jurgens were the most ardent opponents of all religious organizations when it could or would lead in an orthodox direction…. We knew ahead of time that if we let a church organization gain a footing, it would splinter us into conflicting parties…. Thus among the Danes in Story City and the surrounding area, there arose an independent philosophic-religious trend.”

In an unpublished paper, “Little Copenhagen,” Thomas P. Christensen, author of A History of the Danes in Iowa, elaborates on Jurgens’ meaning of “independent philosophic-religious trend.” Christensen states, “While some of the more conservative-minded joined the Norwegian Lutheran congregation in the neighborhood, a number of the Copenhagen people organized a philosophical club in which the principle of free thought took the place of dogma and free discussion was used instead of sermons. The members of the club inclined both towards Quakerism and Unitarianism…. The religious life of the settlers was in such a state of fermentation that its organization at no time was very stable. The philosophical club apparently only had an ephemeral existence. Some of the most pronounced Quakers left and settled among the American Quakers of Springdale in Cedar County [Iowa].”

To more fully understand the significance of the “independent philosophic-religious trend” element within the Copenhagen Settlement, it helpful to contrast it with two prevailing theological positions among early Danish emigrants which Thorvald Hansen, author of Church Divided: Lutheranism Among the Danish Immigrants, states, “… figured in the struggle among the Danish Lutherans in America,” Grundtvigianism and the Society for Inner Mission. A major difference in their positions involved the role of the Bible in Christian life, but otherwise the differences are too multifaceted to discuss here. However, Hansen believes the supporters of the “independent philosophic-religious trend” in the Copenhagen Settlement were “probably neither Inner Mission or Grundtvigian … and not very religious and probably not interested in the church.”

The author has been unable to determine how many Danes supported the “independent philosophic-religious trend” in the Copenhagen Settlement, but it likely lost its most ardent supporter when Rasmus Jurgens moved to Des Moines after his wife died in
A review of church histories and census records for information about church affiliation among the 94 Danes enumerated in Lafayette Township in 1870 indicates many of the first Danes who settled in the Story City area held orthodox religious beliefs.

When Danish immigrants began settling in the township, the only organized church congregation in the area was the Norwegian-Lutheran St. Petri congregation organized in 1857. Its members met in homes and a schoolhouse on the east side of the Skunk River and in a barn on the west side of the river until 1865 when the congregation dedicated its first church building that originally stood one mile east of the village of Story City shown in a drawing of Story City in 1875. After the congregation completed a second church building in 1874 in the heart of the Norwegian settlement on the East Prairie, the building was moved to the location shown in the 1875 drawing of Story City. Danish members are not mentioned in a comprehensive history of the St. Petri congregation published in 1907, but an early membership list contains four Danish families and one single person who settled south of Story City and one family who settled east of the Skunk River in Howard Township by 1870.

In 1871, the Methodist Church made the Center Schoolhouse location in the middle of Lafayette Township an official appointment, and a circuit pastor began conducting regular church services. In 1876, Methodists began a Sunday school in Story City, and in 1883, they built a church building, the second church building in Story City. An obituary for Dorthea (Jensen) Cornielson (1856-1931), daughter of Jens and Karen Jensen who settled south of Story City in 1867, states, “They [she and her husband who was Norwegian] were prime movers and charter members of the Grace Evangelical Church.” A comprehensive history of Grace United Methodist Church states Dorthea “was one of the charter members in the late 1870s,” and it also lists three other Danes who settled in Lafayette Township after 1870 who became Methodists before 1894.

The congregation that appears to have had the largest Danish membership was Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Congregation organized in Story City in 1886. Twenty-nine men pledged membership, and at least 13 of them were Danish, four of whom had settled in Lafayette Township by 1870. The other members were Norwegians except for one German. The congregation did not affiliate with a synod until 1890 when it joined the Hauge Synod indicating the Danish members held
religious view similar to the Society for Inner Mission. In this regard, it is important to note that in 1868 there was a split in the St. Petri congregation that led to organizing a second Norwegian-Lutheran congregation, a Hauge congregation. Even though its members were concentrated northeast of Story City in Christytown (near Randall) and east of Story City on the East Prairie in Howard Township where the town of Roland was later founded, the fact that many of the Norwegians living in northern Story and southern Hamilton counties were Haugeans would have made the Story City area an attractive settlement area for some Danish emigrants.

Respondents to the 1895 Story County Census were asked to state their religious preference. Preferences were found for one or more family members in 13 out of the 18 dwelling houses enumerated on the 1870 Census for Lafayette Township with siblings often choosing different churches when they became adults. One family reported Friends and another Unitarian, but the remaining respondents reported Lutheran or Methodist. The family reporting Unitarian beliefs likely fits Jurgens’ “independent philosophic” description as well as another person who wrote her own obituary, perhaps because she wanted to explain why she had never joined a church. She believed Jesus was a great teacher, but she could not believe in his divinity.85

In contrast to Jurgens’ characterization of Danish religious attitudes in the settlement, the evidence indicates most of the Lafayette Township Danes held traditional religious views that were conservative and evangelical. Even P. A. Rasmussen, whom Jurgens states supported the “independent philosophic” view, became a charter member of the Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Congregation.86 It therefore appears the “independent philosophic-religious trend” Jurgens speaks of involved a small group within the Copenhagen Settlement and was not representative of the Story City area Danes in general.

Politics and Elected Offices

Considering Jurgens’ interest in discussion meetings and his forthright views on religion, one might have expected his history of the Copenhagen settlement to contain information about the political orientation of the Story City area Danes, but the only information he included on these topics concerns elected offices. “In public offices, we
did not come to play any role in the first 16 years with the exception of township offices.” He goes on to state that he was the first Danish school director and first council supervisor and township trustee.

In Thomas Christensen’s discussion of the Danish colony in Story and Hamilton County, he states, “They were, however, from the start, politically awake, which is shown by the fact that Story County alone mustered a larger number of Danish-born voters in 1875 [a total of 50] than any other county, though it was not the leading county in the number of Danish-born either in 1870 or in 1880.”87 In 1870, the total Danish emigrant population in Story County was 194, and in 1880 it was 351.88 With only males age 21 and over eligible to vote and in the case of foreign born residents, males who had completed the 5-year naturalization process, the fact that there were 50 Danish voters in the county does, indeed, indicate a high degree of interest in the political affairs of the county.

Norwegians in the Story City area were decidedly loyal to the Republican Party, and the more conservative Danes, especially the Danes who were charter members of the Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Congregation, likely supported the Republican Party, too. There must have been some Danish support for the Democratic Party, however, because Hans C. Carlsen, owner of the printing office in 1887 published a Democratic newspaper called the Story City Review. Allen’s history of Story County states, “The Review is published weekly and is politically Democratic.”89 The Story City Review was only published for two years (1885-1887) which may be an indication that Danish support for the Democratic Party was not that strong.

The 1897-98 Directory of Story County, Iowa referred to previously also contains a list of township and town officials. The 1897-98 directory lists P. Christianson as one of the three township trustees, likely Peter Christensen, an 1876 emigrant,90 but no Danish names appear on the list of town officials. Also listed in the directory is C. Rasmussen who was secretary of the creamery, likely Carl Rasmussen, an 1869 emigrant.91 The previously mentioned W. D. Gandrup was mayor of Story City at one time.92

Story City area Danes who have served in the Iowa Legislature are G. P. Christiansen of Randall who served in the House of Representatives during the twenty-ninth (1902), thirtieth (1904), and thirty-first (1906) general assemblies and John C. Jessen of Story City
who served in the House of Representatives during the thirty-sixth (1915) and thirty-seventh (1917) general assemblies.93

The Danish Foreign Born Population in Central Iowa 1870-1910

Included in Jurgens’ history of the Copenhagen Settlement is information about the number of Danes living in central Iowa. He states, “In Story County in 1910, there were 287 immigrant Danes and 332 born in America, in all over 600. Besides there were likely up to 100 whose father or mother was Danish. South of there in Polk County and Des Moines, there are a number more, and north of there in Hamilton County, not quite so many. Toward east and west there are only a few.”

Table 4 presents a more comprehensive view of the Danish foreign born populations in Story County and its border counties. The counties on each side of Story County are Marshall County to the east and Boone County to the west. The counties on Story County’s northern border are Hardin County and west of it is Hamilton County, and the counties on Story County’s southern border are Jasper County and west of it Polk County. Although Story County’s appeal for Danish emigrants changed over the 40-year period in relation to the other counties listed in the table, it was clearly the most popular destination in 1870 when Danes were beginning to discover central Iowa.94

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>1870</th>
<th>1880</th>
<th>1890</th>
<th>1900</th>
<th>1910</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boone</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardin</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jasper</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marshall</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polk</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>927</td>
<td>1,372</td>
<td>1,282</td>
<td>1,267</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data from Leola Nelson Bergmann, “Scandinavian Settlement in Iowa,” The Palimpsest 37, no. 3 (1956): 156-159.
As stated earlier, two years after Danes began settling in Lafayette Township, they began settling across the county line in Ellsworth Township, Hamilton County. Christian P. Christianson purchased an existing farm two miles north of Story City in July 1868, and the next month Hans and Cathrine Anderson sold their farm south of Story City and moved to Ellsworth Township, too, settling in the middle of the township.

The Anderson and Christianson families consisting of 11 members were among the 28 Danish immigrants enumerated in Hamilton County in 1870. During the next ten years, the county’s Danish immigrant population increased significantly from 28 to 178. Of the 178 Danish immigrants enumerated in the county in 1880, 76 were enumerated in Ellsworth Township with most of them being enumerated in an area south of the future town of Jewell Junction founded in 1881 when the Toledo and Northwestern Railroad arrived. This area became a second central Iowa settlement area for Danish emigrants. Appendix G contains a translation of a 1916 history of the Jewell area Danes.

Some of the Danes who settled in the Jewell area attended Bethesda Lutheran Church in Jewell, a congregation organized in 1887. Like the Bethel congregation in Story City, Bethesda affiliated with the Hauge Synod suggesting it was Inner Mission Danes who attended. Bethesda’s church history states, “During the early years of its existence, several Danish families joined the congregation and for this reason the congregation changed its name on January 8th, 1890, to Bethesda Norwegian Danish Evangelical Lutheran Congregation.” In 1898, though, there were enough Danish families to organize a congregation of their own, Our Savior’s Danish Lutheran Church, and they built a church in 1900. The congregation was dissolved in 1933, and its members rejoined Bethesda Lutheran Church.

The Danish emigrant population in both Story and Hamilton counties peaked in 1890 indicating both areas began to lose their appeal as settlement areas for future emigrants. In 1870, an almost identical number of Danish emigrants (192) were enumerated in Shelby County in western Iowa as were enumerated in Story County (194). Danish emigrants began settling there in 1863, and the second Danish settlement established in Iowa soon spread into Audubon County. By 1880, the number of Danish emigrants in both Shelby and Audubon counties (1,020) exceeded the total number of Danish
emigrants enumerated in the seven central Iowa counties listed in Table 4. When the 1900 Census was enumerated there were 3,372 Danish emigrants enumerated in the two counties and the Elk Horn-Kimballton area had become the most extensive Danish settlement in the United States.

An Unanswered Question

The objectives of this investigation into the third Danish settlement established in Iowa were: to confirm information in Rasmus Jurgens' 1908 history of the settlement, *De Danske i Story City og Omegn, Iowa* [The Danes in Story City, Iowa, and the Surrounding Area], and to add to the pre-1900 knowledge of the settlement. While the investigation confirmed most of Jurgens' history and discovered new information as well, one question remains unanswered—How did Andrew Larsen and Søren Paulsen who purchased land in Lafayette Township in 1866 and the first Danish families who settled south of Story City in 1867 and 1868 learn about the Story City settlement area? Did they know about it before they left Denmark, possibly through letters or from returning immigrants, or did they find the settlement area after they arrived in the United States?

Prior to beginning research on the 1870 Lafayette Township Danes, the author consulted Thomas Peter Christensen’s *A History of the Danes in Iowa* for answers to this question, but found none. The review of Christensen’s history and other sources, however, led to the development of two presumptions about how Danes could have found out about Lafayette Township. The first presumption involves the Peder Nikolajsen family who emigrated from Copenhagen to New York City in 1851 where Peder worked as a tailor. Peder’s dream was to become a farmer, and in 1854, the Nikolajsen family left New York City along with another Danish family who already owned land in Benton County, Iowa. “On the way west they visited some friends in Chicago. They were just getting ready to go to Wisconsin, and wished to have the Nikolajsens go with them. The latter were on the point of yielding when they turned the final decision over to little Lundine Nikolajsen. Having heard so much about Iowa she quickly responded, ‘We are going to Iowa, to Iowa!’” In 1854, Peder purchased land near his friend’s property in Benton County, and the two families began the first Danish settlement in Iowa.
In 1857, Peder Nikolajsen became a lay preacher and began ministering to a group of Norwegians living about 15 miles away from where he lived until he found a Norwegian pastor from Story County to serve them. The Norwegian pastor was undoubtedly Pastor Nils Amlund who became pastor of the St. Petri congregation in Story City in 1860. Some of the Benton County Norwegians had friends and relatives living in Story County, and they could have told Nikolajsen about settlement opportunities in Lafayette Township and he, in turn, could have told others about it. No information was discovered to support this hypothesis, but it still remains a possibility.

The second presumption assumes the earliest Danish settlers in Lafayette Township learned about the Story City settlement area from Danish immigrants who were helping build a rail line through central Iowa, a rail line originating in Chicago that was completed to Iowa City in 1855 and extended 120 miles farther west to Nevada, the county seat of Story County, in 1864. Jurgens states when he visited Nevada for the first time in May 1869, “there were three Danish families and also some workers” living there. No Danish immigrants were enumerated in Story County on the 1856 Iowa Census or the 1860 U. S. Census, and the Danish families living in Nevada in 1869 could not be traced through to the 1900 or 1910 Censuses which recorded year of emigration. The Nevada newspaper was also reviewed for information about Danish immigrants, and no relevant information was found. Even though no information was found to support this hypothesis, it, too, remains a possible explanation for how Danes learned about the Story City settlement area.

If there is a more specific answer to the question “how” Danish emigrants learned about Story City, it likely exists in the records of a family historian whose ancestors were early settlers in the township. Of course, it may be that no one can explain how Danes found about Lafayette Township. Had Jurgens known, he likely would have included this information in his history of the settlement.

**Why did it remain a small settlement?**

A question the author did not think about asking when he began his investigation into the Copenhagen Settlement is, Why did it remain a small settlement? The author of *A History of the Danes in Iowa*, Thomas P. Christensen, considered it and states, “Since these
people had Unitarian leanings, they were not in harmony with the great majority of their countrymen and for that reason they isolated themselves from the other Danish colonies in the State.”105 Later, he states, “Reference has already been made to the Danish settlement in Story and Hamilton counties. In Meddelelser for September, 1882, it is mentioned as ‘a big settlement having over fifty Danish families.’ We have already seen why these people did not maintain relations with the other Danish settlements, the leaders being inclined toward ‘free-thinking’ and Unitarianism.”106 In Christensen’s unpublished paper, “Little Copenhagen,” he is even more direct when he states, “Little Copenhagen did not continue to draw settlers. Its peculiar religious life isolated it from the other Danish settlements. It was exceptional rather than typical. The Danish settlement in Hill Township, Cass County, North Dakota, appears to be the only one like it — outside of the Danish city colonies — in the United States. Yet, it does illustrate a tendency within the larger current of immigration — an eddy, perhaps within an eddy.”107

Certainly, if the Copenhagen Settlement gained the kind of religious orientation reputation Christensen describes, this could have discouraged other Danes from settling in the Story City area and carried over to the Ellsworth Township Settlement as well. Based upon the author’s research, however, it appears the “free thinkers” were a small but vocal element in the settlement, and that many others were Inner Mission Danes. Since the beliefs of Inner Mission Danes were similar to the large Haugean element among the Norwegians in the Story City and Jewell areas, a religious explanation for why this settlement area did not continue to attract Danish emigrants seems incomplete. A History of the Danes in Iowa is exceptionally well-documented, but the only reference Christensen cites for information about the Copenhagen Settlement is Jurgens’ 1908 history which, in the case of its description of the religious orientation of the Copenhagen Settlement, is not representative of the settlement as a whole.

For emigrants wanting to become farmers and landowners, the rising price of land in central Iowa was likely another limiting factor to growth in its Danish population. While some of the early families had the economic means to purchase land close to the Skunk River, land often improved by the previous owners, later Danish emigrants could not afford to purchase available land which, although it was less desirable, had risen to $6 to $10 per acre in Lafayette Township.
by 1880. Also, the wet prairie of central Iowa may have made the hilly and better drained land in western Iowa and elsewhere more appealing to Danish emigrants during a period that marked increase in emigration from Denmark that began in the late 1860s and peaked in 1882 when over 11,000 Danish emigrants entered the United States. The price and availability of land was definitely a factor for the children of early central Iowa Norwegian settlers as they married and wanted to establish farmsteads of their own. In the late 1870s and early 1880s, many of them began migrating to newer settlement areas in northwest Iowa, southwest Minnesota, and the Dakotas to find less expensive land.

For emigrants looking for work in town and the opportunity to establish their own businesses, the especially high concentration of Norwegians in northern Story and southern Hamilton counties, may have discouraged further growth, too. The ease at which Danish emigrants were able to integrate into American society and assimilate into other ethnic groups is often noted by immigrant historians, but Story City business directories for 1886 and 1897 indicate Norwegians controlled much of the activity on main street.

The Legacy of the Copenhagen Settlement

The founders of the Copenhagen Settlement were in the forefront of Danish emigration to the United States. George T. Flom states, “Organized emigration from Denmark is of much more recent date than that from Norway or Sweden. According to the United States census of 1860, there were only 5,540 Danes in the United States in that year, the total immigration between 1851 and 1860 being 3,749. In that decade, the total immigration from Norway and Sweden was 20,931. During the preceding ten years only 539 immigrants had arrived from Denmark. While it would be impossible to ascertain to what extent individual immigration took place before 1851, these figures show that the movement, which had struck such deep root in Norway in the early forties and in Sweden in the later forties, did not take hold of Denmark before the fifties; and even then it was only local, affecting chiefly the smaller islands of Møen, Ærø, Langeland and Lolland.”

The founders of the Copenhagen Settlement were also in the forefront of Danish settlement in Iowa. Thomas P. Christensen states, “By 1870, the Danes had scarcely more than decided to migrate to
Iowa. The larger influx was yet to come, as it did in the following two and a half decades. Less than three thousand Danish-born residents were found in the State by the census officers of 1870, and they were scattered throughout nearly all the counties. The groups in Benton, Shelby, Grundy, and Story counties were mere nuclei of rural settlements practically without organizations of any kind; and the budding city colonies in Council Bluffs, Davenport, Clinton, Cedar Falls, and Des Moines, were all in the first stages of growth. But the Danes had ‘discovered’ the productive lands of Iowa and the vanguard of Danish pioneers had crossed its prairies.”

In concluding his history of the Copenhagen Settlement then, it is entirely understandable why Rasmus Jurgens includes this reflection, “We Danes who came here about 40 years ago were inspired by the spirit of unity and freedom. We had lived in the groundswell of the French Revolution. We felt that current of freedom that in 1848 went over Europe, that freedom which in our birth country came as a roaring wave and whose fruit became Denmark’s June 5th Constitution.

“We newcomers considered ourselves vanguards for a larger army that soon should follow. In solemn declaration, we gave our word and handshake to each other to use our abilities and strength to guide the Danes in America to brighter and higher and truer ideals than had been practiced in the past.”

Rasmus Jurgens died in Des Moines, Iowa, in 1915 leaving a widow and four children. He is buried in Pine Hill Cemetery, Saylor Township, Polk County, Iowa. For a list of early Lafayette Township settlers who are buried near Story City, Iowa, see Appendix H.

Acknowledgements

The author gratefully acknowledges Ardis N. Petersen and her daughter, Asta Petersen Twedt, for their translations of Rasmus Jurgens’ 1908 history of the Copenhagen Settlement and Pastor Chr. Falck’s 1916 history of the Jewell Danes. He also gratefully acknowledges John. R. Christianson, descendant of the Christian P. Christianson family who settled north of Story City in 1868, for his generous research assistance, and Francie Heers, family historian for the Jens Jensen family, for sharing her research and making the author aware of Svend P. Jensen’s article, Stevnske udvandrerksænere. Others who have provided consultative advice or information are Thorvald
Hansen, author of *Church Divided: Lutheranism Among the Danish Immigrants* and Michele McNabb, Librarian/Manager, Family History & Genealogy Center, The Danish Immigrant Museum.
Appendix A:

“The Danes in Story City, Iowa, and the Surrounding Area” by Rasmus Jurgens, 1908

From Danske i Amerika, vol. 2, Minneapolis: C. Rasmussen Company, 1916
Translated by Ardis N. Petersen and Asta Petersen Twedt, Reprinted by permission

The writer of these lines was born the 14th of December 1843, in Toksvæd town and parish on Sjælland. In my early youth, I lived in Frederiksberg in København [Cophagen]. After I had finished my military service, I traveled to America and landed in New York the 1st of May 1869. The 12th of May was the first time I set foot on Iowa soil where I have lived since.

In Marshalltown, which is situated on the Iowa River, there were several Danish families or workers living. In Nevada, Story County, north of Des Moines, there were three Danish families and also some workers.

In Story City, Story County, by the Skunk River, there was a post office and a store. The population was mostly Norwegian, and they lived along the river. Iowa was at that time only sparsely settled and mostly along the rivers. There were four Danish families living along the river, all farmers, namely Peder Andersen from Østrup, Jylland, Ole Nielsen from the area of Karise in Sjælland, Jens Jensen from the same place, and Jens Hansen from Toksvæd Parish, Sjælland. These families came in 1867. When they arrived, farms cost from 10 to 15 dollars per acre; uncultivated land five dollars per acre.

In 1868, two families came from the area of Vejle in Jylland, namely Jens Andersen and Christian Poulsen Christiansen. The last named had his old father, Poul Christiansen, along, who at that time was already near the four score. He died in 1882. Both families bought farms in the woods along the Skunk River.110

M. C. Pedersen, who later began a colony in Polk County, Wisconsin, accompanied the last named [Christian Poulsen Christensen] and helped find the place where he settled down.
It was said that Christiansen brought around $20,000 from Denmark. This family was very well to do. Because of their work, Randall Station was begun three miles north of Story City in Hamilton County. They built a store there. Later they were merchants; mostly lumber business, elevator, and bank. The son, George P. Christiansen, is now the leading person in this business. He was born in Denmark in the year 1864 and was thus four years old when he came here. He has been elected two times as a member of Iowa’s legislature as a representative from Hamilton County.

The two last named families were followers of M. A. Sommer, who taught the Quakers’ belief. He was first a schoolteacher in Jylland, but he was fired for publicly preaching to the people which at that time was not permitted as a school teacher. Eloquent as he was, he began to work then as a lay preacher, and as such he has worked over all Denmark and America. In Denmark, he often sat in jail for what he said and for his bitter attacks on the church and the pastors. Sommer was influenced by Søren Kierkegaard. He was eager and eloquent, and with a musical voice, he gathered big groups of listeners and followers. Later he won his Doctor’s degree in Chicago and established a large practice, but Sommer was a restless man who continually traveled, wrote books, and spoke. He was born in Ribe, but lived in Nørre Uttrup. He traveled across the Atlantic several times. When his strength finally failed, he went back to Denmark where he died, 72 years old, in a little attic room in Aalborg. His mission in America was not without importance.

A well educated Danish man by the name of Magelsen [Nagelson] had from his youth lived among the Norwegians, first in Illinois and now here in this new settlement. He had a strange appearance and didn’t own anything he could rest his head on, but he was a welcomed guest wherever he was pleased to be at home. He was learned in the law and an advisor to the Norwegians. He spoke fluent Danish, English, German, French, and Latin and could fluently read and translate from one language to the other. His standing and his birth was a secret which he took with him to the grave.

In May 1869, Rasmus Jurgens came from Copenhagen together with his parents, a brother, and two sisters, all from Tøksvær town and Sjælland parish. The two girls soon chose Des Moines in which to live and are still known as the first Danish girls in this town.
A Danish man by the name of Anders Clausen who had been living in this country for several years, had that same spring sailed to Denmark and come back to Story City as a leader for about 30 newcomers, among them four families who bought land. The rest were young, unmarried men.

Now there began a steady stream of Danes from Denmark and from some other states. We became a considerable group when we gathered for festivals, and when we were called together we met in harmony all as one.

In 1870, T. A. Hermansen and family came and bought a farm near the town.

We tried not to form organizations with laws and articles. We owned in ourselves a stronger unwritten law. When it concerned helping the newcomer or others in case of sickness and accidents, no one refused to lend a helping hand. It was seen as a responsibility. There was probably more goodwill at that time than now when most people are well to do. The schoolhouse was open for our use, and it was used in the wintertime one time a week for discussion meetings. Missionaries from the various sects came to win us each to their own side. We opened the schoolhouse willingly for these, but if there came voices that wished to make a religious organization, the opposition was strong. P. A. Hermansen and Rasmus Jurgens were the most ardent opponents of all religious organizations when it could or would lead in an orthodox direction. We knew ahead of time that if we let a church organization gain a footing, it would splinter us into conflicting parties. To prevent this, they quoted Danish poets, older and newer radical authors, yes, even Dagslyst [Daylight] and Wisconsin-Bibelen [The Wisconsin Bible] by Marcus Thrane, Frederik Gerhard’s book, Fremtidens Trosbekendelse [The Creed of the Future], and other similar writings. The Danish Pioneer, published by Mark Hansen in Omaha and M. A. Sommer who now and then came to America soon came to our assistance. Thus among the Danes in Story City and the surrounding area, there arose an independent philosophic-religious trend.

In public offices, we did not come to play any role in the first 16 years with the exception of township offices. Rasmus Jurgens was the first Danish school director and first council supervisor and township trustee. He held this office for five years until 1884 when he chose Des Moines as his future home. A few came to work in businesses in town,
and a few worked together with Norwegians and became in that way independent businessmen.

Danes and Norwegians together established a literary society with a library and lectures. The members consisted of those who stood outside of the church, and many an old Norwegian felt himself to a great degree outraged by such an ungodly organization outside of the church which we shouldn’t wonder about when we invited men like Kristofer Janson from Minneapolis to give a lecture.

The pharmacist, W. D. Gandrup, acted as leader of this organization. Although he was of Norwegian background, he became the Danish Vice-Consul for the state of Iowa from the beginning of this office until his death in 1904.

Even though these Danes settled in a group and formed a Danish colony, it could not be avoided that they grew together with the Norwegians on the one side and with the German settlement to the west. The coming generation became therefore a mixture of these three nationalities.

In the meantime, many good memories of the faithful, brotherly Nordic unity spirit should be preserved for the coming generations.

We Danes who came here about 40 years ago were inspired by the spirit of unity and freedom. We had lived in the groundswell of the French Revolution. We felt that current of freedom that in 1848 went over Europe, that freedom which in our birth country came as a roaring wave and whose fruit became Denmark’s June 5th Constitution.

We newcomers considered ourselves vanguards for a larger army that soon should follow. In solemn declaration, we gave our word and handshake to each other to use our abilities and strength to guide the Danes in America to brighter and higher and truer ideals than had been practiced in the past.

A. C. Frandson

A. C. Frandson, Story City, has told the following: The 26th of May, 1869, I came, 18 years old, to Story City, Iowa, together with a number of Danish families. At that time, the whole area lay as wild prairie, and as far as the eye can see there was no house to be seen even though a few settlers lived here and there. The land was cheap, five or ten dollars per acre, but farming wasn’t very good because it was difficult to sell your products and they cost only a little.
In those days it was dangerous enough to settle down on the prairie since prairie fires often raged. I have seen them stretch over 20 miles and heard them rumble like the loudest thunder. They often came with a raging storm and destroyed much that the pioneer, with hard work, had acquired in property and products.

The Danes called their little settlement here København (Copenhagen). Most of the old ones are now dead, and their homes are owned by their children who all speak the Danish language.

I was a craftsman and got work in Marshalltown. Some years later, I went back and bought 40 acres near the other Danes. Now I have 400. I got my wife from the Hermansen family. We have six sons and six daughters. Several of them have gone to college. One of the girls became a doctor. Several of the sons take care of the farm. We live in an area that is now very beautiful.

The Number of Danes

Story City lies in the northwestern corner of Story County, near Hamilton County. In Story County in 1910, there were 287 immigrant Danes and 332 born in America, in all over 600. Besides there were likely up to 100 whose father or mother was Danish. South of there in Polk County and Des Moines, there are a number more, and north of there in Hamilton County, not quite so many. Toward east and west there are only a few.
Appendix B:
Brief Biographies of the First Danish Landowners in Lafayette Township

As part of the research to confirm information in Rasmus Jurgen’s 1908 history of the Story City area Danes, the author reviewed Story County land records to identify the earliest purchases of land in Lafayette Township by Danish immigrants. Below are brief biographies of the ten Danish individuals or families who purchased land in Lafayette Township in 1866, 1867, and 1868. Land and census records and obituaries contain various name spellings, so grave marker inscription spellings, if available, have been used for the spelling of names.

Andrew Larsen ‘66 — According to the 1900 Census, Andrew Larsen (April 3, 1831-1901) emigrated to the United States in 1864, but his whereabouts are unknown until May 7, 1866, when he purchased land in Lafayette Township together with Søren Paulsen (see below). It is not known where Andrew emigrated from in Denmark, but he has the earliest known year of emigration of any of the Danish immigrants who settled in Lafayette Township. Andrew and Søren purchased 100 acres in Section 23 of Lafayette Township plus a 2.5-acre timber lot in Section 18 of Howard Township for $650. In 1868, Andrew sold his half of this property to Kjeld Pedersen (see below) for $250 and purchased 80 acres in Section 14 of Lafayette Township for $400. On April 3, 1869, Andrew married Ane Mette Jensen Møller112 aka Anna M. (1850-1923) who emigrated from the Hvejsel parish in the Nørvang district of Vejle County, Jylland, in 1868 with her parents, Jens and Grete Anderson (see below). In June 1869, Andrew and Anna sold their property in Section 14 for $950 to a Danish family who had just arrived from Denmark. Anna’s obituary states, “... she and her husband located on a farm which is now west of the Northwestern depot. Then in 1871, they moved to the farm in Section 6, near the Reisehauer schoolhouse, which was their home for many years.”113 Andrew and Anna are buried in Fairview Cemetery, Story City, Iowa, where five of their nine children are also buried: John (1871-1953), Sena
(Larsen) Johnson (1874-1961), Grace (Larsen) Reischauer (1876-1954), Nels (1879-1952), and Anna Marie aka Mary (Larsen) Peterson (1882-1965). Hans (1872-1953) is buried in St. Paul’s Cemetery, Denmark Township, Emmet County, Iowa, and Otto (1885-1965) and Nettie (Larsen) Larson (1886-1984) are buried at Winnebago, Minnesota. A daughter, Belle, died in infancy.

Søren Paulsen ‘66 — Søren Paulsen aka Sam Paulson and Andrew Larsen (see above) presumably came to Story County together because on May 7, 1866, they purchased 100 acres in Section 23 of Lafayette Township plus a 2.5-acre timber lot in Section 18 of Howard Township for $650. Whether Søren and Andrew emigrated together or met in the United States is not known, but Søren might be the Søren Paulsen enumerated on Denmark’s1860 Census in Vejle County, Bredstrup Herred, where at age 32, he was a farmhand on Østedgaard. Of the four adult Søren Paulsens on this census, he is the only unmarried one, and he is not listed on Denmark’s 1870 Census. Søren retained ownership of his half of the property he and Andrew purchased until 1869 when he and his wife, Birgette Marie Christensen Paulsen, then living in Boone County, Iowa, sold their interest in the property to Kjeld Pedersen (see below) for $500. When and where Søren married Birgette is not known, but their marriage is not listed in Boone or Story County marriage records. In early 1874, Søren purchased the 50 acres in Section 23 back from Kjeld Pederson and later in 1874, he purchased two additional parcels of land in Section 23 from Kjeld. Søren’s residence on all three of the 1874 deeds is Story County, Iowa. Three years later, Søren and Birgette sold all their land in Lafayette Township. They have not been identified on subsequent U. S. censuses and Søren is not listed on the Denmark’s 1880 Census, either, so it is presumed they did not return to Denmark. On April 21, 1868, Søren and Andrew signed first papers declaring their intent to become citizens of the United States. Andrew became a naturalized citizen in 1872, but there is also no record of Søren filing his second papers in Story or Boone County.

Andrew Clausen ‘67 — Andrew Clausen (1839-1892) emigrated from the Varpelev parish in Stevns Herred, Præstø County, Sjælland, in 1867. In a history of emigration from the Magleby and Varpelev parishes in Stevns Herred, Svend P. Jensen states, “Anders Clausen
probably played a central role. He was born in Varpelev in 1839, a son of the parish’s long standing official in charge of judicial affairs, Claus Cortsen. The well-educated Anders Clausen was a dragoon in the war in 1864. The first time he traveled to America was in 1867 as leader of a group of emigrants, and the following three years he worked as a local agent. Each year he returned and recruited a new group and accompanied them to America the next spring. In 1870, he left with a group of approximately 60 people from Stevns.” One of the families who presumably emigrated with Andrew in 1867 was the Jens Jensen family (see below), but how Andrew and the Jensen family learned about the Story City settlement area is unknown. On October 28, 1870, Andrew married Christine Hansen (1852-1931), daughter of Jens and Kersten Hansen (see below), and in 1874, Andrew and Christine purchased 120 acres in Section 15 of Lafayette Township for $840. Andrew and Christine are buried in Fairview Cemetery, Story City, Iowa. Of their eight children, four died in infancy. Gena (Clausen) Knott (1874-1964), John (1875-1952), and Katie Clausen (1884-1959) are buried in Memorial Park Cemetery, Fort Dodge, Iowa. The burial location for Hans (1871-before 1952) is not known, but he was living in Blairsburg, Iowa, when his mother died.

**Hans Anderson family ’67** – Hans (1819-1894) and Cathrine (ca.1818-1884) and their two children, Lewis (1851-1921) and Mary C. (Anderson) Johnson (1854-1928) emigrated in 1867. They may have emigrated from a farm near the city of Vejle in Vejle County, Jylland, where Lewis’ biography states he was born in 1851. According to census records, their oldest son, Andrew (1848-ca.1921), emigrated to the United States in 1866, so he may have learned of or found the Story City settlement area for the family. On October 2, 1867, Hans paid $1,050 for 39.5 acres in Section 13 of Lafayette Township and a 2-acre timber lot in Section 31 of Howard Township, property Hans and Cathrine sold the following year to Jens Anderson (see below). Hans and Cathrine then purchased 40 acres a few miles north of Story City in Section 16 of Ellsworth Township, Hamilton County, plus two lots on the south side of Little Wall Lake. When the family was enumerated in central Ellsworth Township in 1870, they were the only Danish family living in central Ellsworth Township, but when the 1880 Census was taken, there were several Danish families in their neighborhood. Lewis’ biography states, “His [Hans’] wife
having died at the age of sixty-three, he sold his farm and lived with his daughter several years. He then visited his old home in Denmark for six months, but returned to this country and lived around among his children...” Cathrine is buried in Story City, Iowa, and Hans is buried in Winters Cemetery, Winters, California, where their daughter Mary is also buried. Andrew was living with his daughter in Winters, California, shortly before his death, and he may be buried in Winters Cemetery, too.

**Peder Anderson family ’67** — Peder (1822-1904) and Dorthea (1825-1906) Anderson and their sons, Andrew Christian aka A. C. Anderson (1847-1923) and John P. Anderson (1855-1943), emigrated in 1867. Jurgens states they emigrated from Østrup, Jylland, but Andrew and John were born at Skipsted, near Oldenberg, Denmark which is now Sipsdorf, Oldenburg in Holstein, Germany. A biography of John P. Anderson implies the family emigrated from Oldenberg, too, so it may be that Peder and Dorthea decided to emigrate after Slesvig-Holstein became part of Germany in 1864. Andrew’s obituary states, “they arrived in Story City early in May,” so they likely took the train directly to Nevada, Iowa. Given their arrival in Story City in early May, Peder and Dorthea apparently knew their general destination before emigrating, but how they learned about central Iowa or Story County specifically is unknown. On August 3, 1867, Peder paid $125 for 40 acres in Section 24 of Lafayette Township. The sellers lived in the state of New York, so the purchase must have been made through a land agent in Nevada. In 1871, Peder purchased 81 acres in Section 13 of Lafayette Township from Jens and Christine Hansen (see below) for $2,000, and in 1872, Peder paid $500 and assumed two mortgages totaling $350 for another 40 acres also in Section 13 of Lafayette Township for another. Peder and Dorthea are buried in Fairview Cemetery, Story City, Iowa; Andrew is buried in Lost Island Lutheran Cemetery, Palo Alto County, Iowa; and John is buried in Mt. Olive Cemetery, Randall, Iowa.

**Jens Jensen family ’67** — Jens (1827-1910) and Karen (1840-1923) Jensen emigrated from the Varpelev parish in Stevns Herred, Præstø County, Sjælland, in 1867 with six children; Dorthea (Jensen) Corneliussen (1856-1931), Ane Marie (Jensen) Strong (1858-1939), Bodil Kerstine (Jensen) Danielsen (1861-1938), John Christian Johnson (1862-1936),
Anna Margrethe (Jensen) Dalva (1864-__), and Peter T. Johnson (1867-1927). Another son, Carl Frederick aka C. F. Johnson was born near Story City in 1874. A local historian for Stevns Herred states they were the first family to emigrate from Magleby and Varpelev parishes, and “They sold the farm in the spring of 1867 and traveled to Amerika, presumably together with Anders Clausen (see above).”125 Jens and Karen’s pioneer story states, “… they crossed the country as far as Nevada, Iowa…. They stayed in Nevada for a time and then bought a farm....”126 Their farm was purchased on July 1, 1867, when Jens paid $2,000 for 80 acres in Section 24 of Lafayette Township, 28 acres on the east side of the property in Section 19 of Howard Township, and a 5-acre timber lot in Section 13 of Lafayette Township.127 A Jensen family historian does not know how Jens and Karen learned about the Story City settlement area,128 but it appears the Jensen family and Anders Clausen did not explore other settlement areas along the route from Chicago to Nevada indicating they likely knew their general destination before emigrating. How they learned about the Story City settlement area, however, is unknown. Jens and Karen are buried in Fairview Cemetery, Story City, Iowa, where Dorthea, John Christian, Peter T., and Carl Frederick are also buried. Ane Marie died in Des Moines, Iowa, Bodil Kerstine is buried in Douglas Cemetery, Douglas, Michigan, and Anna Margrethe died in Seattle, Washington.

Jens Anderson family ‘68 — Jens Anderson (1807-1893) and Grete (1819-1900) and their three children, Ane Mette (Jensen Møller) Larsen aka Anna M. (1850-1923), Ane Sophia (Jensen Møller) Jurgens (ca. 1854-1884), and Søren Jensen Møller aka Søren Anderson (ca. 1858-1896), emigrated from the Hvejsel parish in the Nøvang Herred, Vejle County, Jylland in 1868.129 They likely traveled with Jens’ friend, Christian P. Christianson, and his family on the Allen Line’s S. S. *Austria* that departed Liverpool on May 21, 1868, and arrived in Quebec around June 1, 1868. Upon reaching Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the Anderson family and Christian P. Christianson’s family remained there while Christian and his guide, M. C. Pedersen, investigated possible settlement locations in Minnesota and Iowa.130 Christian purchased a 240-acre farm north of Story City on July 12, 1868, and returned to Milwaukee to accompany his family and the Anderson family to Story City. On August 29, 1868, Jens purchased 39.5 acres in Section 13 of Lafayette Township and a 2-acre timber lot in Section 31
of Howard Township for $1,200 from Hans and Cathrine Anderson (see above), a purchase witnessed by M. C. Pedersen. The next year, 1869, Jens’ son from his first marriage, Andreas Peter Jensen Møller aka Andrew Miller (1843-1946), emigrated, and in 1870, Jens’ two sons from his first marriage and their families emigrated to Story City; Niels (1835-1921) and Ane (1838-1916) Jensen and their two children, John N. Johnson (1864-1951) and Anne M. (Andersen) Matheason 1866-1951, and Morton (ca.1847-__) and his wife, Chistene aka Annie (ca.1847-__), who gave birth to a daughter, Annie K., in Nevada, Iowa, before the two families reached Story City. John N. Johnson’s pioneer story was chronicled by his son, Guy D. Johnson, in a memoir, “Boy on Kiegly Creek.” Jens and Grete are buried in Fairview Cemetery, Story City, Iowa, where Anna M. and Søren are also buried. Andrew Miller is buried in the Danish Cemetery, Randall, Iowa, and Niels’ family is buried in Center Cemetery, Lafayette Township. The burial locations for Ane Sophia and Morton and Chistene are unknown.

Jens Hansen family ’68 — Jens (1820-ca. 1904) and Kirstine Nielsdatter aka Kersten (1825-1908) and their two daughters, Ane Kirstine aka Christine (Hansen) Clausen (1852-1931) and Maren aka Mary (Hansen) Morrison (ca. 1854-1929) emigrated from the Toksværd parish in Hammar Herred, Præstø County, Sjælland, in 1868, presumably with Andrew Clausen (see above) and Andrew’s sister and her husband (see Ole Nielsen below). On May 27, 1868, Jens purchased 85 acres in Section 13 of Lafayette Township for $1,800. Jens and Kersten are buried in unmarked graves in Fairview Cemetery, Story City, Iowa where their daughter, Christine is also buried. Mary is buried in Riverside Cemetery, Marshalltown, Iowa. Kersten’s obituary states, “She had two daughters, Mrs. Christine Clausen of this place [Story City] and one at Marshalltown, and two sons in Des Moines …. ” The only children enumerated with Jens and Kersten on the 1860 Denmark Census are Ane Kirstine and Maren, and the author was unable to identify any Danish immigrants enumerated in Des Moines Iowa on the 1910 Census that might be members of this family. The only legal heirs listed in Kerstens’s probate records are Christine Clausen and Mary Morrison, so the author believes the information in Kersten’s obituary about two sons is incorrect.
Ole Nielsen family ’68 — Ole (ca.1823-__) and Thrine Clausen (1833-__), and their two sons, Niels (ca.1852-__) and Lars (ca.1854-__), emigrated from the Varpelev parish in Stevns Herred, Præstø County, Sjælland, in 1868. They emigrated with a group led by Thrine’s brother, Andrew Clausen (see above). On May 26, 1868, Ole and Thrine Nielsen paid $1,300 for 100 acres in Section 23 of Lafayette Township and 2.5-acre timber lot in Section 18 of Howard Township, a purchase witnessed by Andrew Clausen. In 1878, Ole and Thrine sold all of this property for $1,400 with the stipulation that the purchaser assume their $800 mortgage, a sale witnessed by their son, Nels O. Nelson. All four members of this family were enumerated on the 1870 Census in Lafayette Township, but they have not been identified on subsequent censuses except for Thrine who was enumerated on the 1900 Census working as a servant for a Danish widower in Story City, Iowa. She was not enumerated on subsequent censuses in Story County, Iowa, and no record for her burial in the Story City cemetery was found.

Kjeld Pedersen ’68 — Kjeld (1821-1896) and Caroline (1831-1869) Pedersen aka Peterson and their four children, two of whom were Paul Peterson (1856-1927) and Anna (Peterson) Cameron (1865-1952), emigrated in 1866 or 1867. Their whereabouts are unknown until April 17, 1868, when Kjeld Pedersen paid $250 to Andrew Larsen (see above) for 50 acres in Section 23 of Lafayette Township and a 1.25-acre timber lot in Section 18 of Howard Township. The next year Kjeld paid $500 to Søren and Birgette Marie Christensen Paulsen (see above) for 50 acres in Section 23 of Lafayette Township and a 1.25-acre timber lot in Section 18 of Howard Township, the other half of the property Andrew and Søren purchased in 1866. At the time of these purchases, the family may have been living north of Ames, Iowa, in Franklin Township where Kjeld and the four children were enumerated on the 1870 Census. In 1874, Kjeld sold all his property in Lafayette Township to Søren Paulsen. When the 1880 Census was enumerated for Franklin Township, Kjeld, Paul, and Anna were living in a dwelling house on a timber lot near the Skunk River in Section 23 where Kjeld was working as a miner, Paul was working at a flour mill, and Anna was keeping house. Kjeld and Caroline are buried in the Ames Municipal Cemetery, Ames, Iowa, where Paul and Anna are also buried. The burial location of the other two children is unknown.
Appendix C:

Peder Rasmussen’s Report about His Trip to America and His First Months in Iowa

Translated by Svend P. Jensen, Reprinted by permission

Story County in Iowa, North America, 10. February 1871

My dear friend!

As I have now soon been living in this country in 9 months, I will now fulfill my promise to let you know how I and my family is getting on, and how different things are in this country, as far as I have learnt to know them.

I will start with a short report about our journey. We sailed from Copenhagen on May 13 in the afternoon on an English steamboat which was too little for the number of passengers. Still, I and my family were lucky to get a rather good berth because I knew from old days the agent’s man in charge on the ship. Lars Hansen from Bjelkerup (near Store Heddinge) and his family, who was also on this ship, was unlucky not to get a real berth the first night. The voyage over the North Sea was rather nice. The weather was good. Of course, many people became seasick, but it did not in the least affect me either here or on the Atlantic. On board we had to take care of our own food.

On Monday May 16 just before noon, we landed at Hull in England. As it was low tide when we arrived, we had to be sailed to the harbor in small boats. The ships in the harbor were laying on the bare ground. Our luggage was taken to the railway station without charge. The agents of the company followed us to the hotel. Here we enjoyed a very good beef soup for dinner and had coffee. Then we walked to the railway station which was very large and beautiful. Soon we were in the compartment and the train went fast towards Liverpool. It would have interested you very much to take the trip across England. The landscape we went across the first two hours was the most beautiful you could imagine. The wheat was nearly an yard high, the barley and the oats were nearly as long. The rye-grass and the clover were about ready to be mowed. The grain
was everywhere sown in rows (drilled). Every field was enclosed with carefully cut hedges of thorns. We saw a lot of workers in the fields weeding and hoeing between the rows. We saw many very nice living-houses, and the trees in the gardens stood in full bloom. All this, and the mild summer weather, made a good impression on us. The first part of the country was very flat, but later we came to a more undulating and hilly landscape. Here you could realize that it was a land of industry and factories. We passed town after town with a lot of high, smoking chimneys. We also came through several long tunnels.

At eleven o’clock in the evening we arrived at Liverpool, a town with more than 500,000 inhabitants and with a very large shipping trade. We were taken to a hotel where we had dinner and something to drink, and we got a very good room with fine beds. We drank a very good English Porter. In the morning after breakfast, we went to the railway station which was situated on a hill. Here our luggage was lifted on a wagon which was drawn to the harbor by one of the very big English horses. Our baggage had to be taken on board by a barge because the very big ship could not go near to land.

We sailed on a very big ship by the name of Nemesis. On the middle deck I measured the length to 100 favne (about 190 metre). We had a good berth in the middle of the ship. In the afternoon of May 17, the ship left harbor and we sailed over the Irish Sea towards the Atlantic. We had beef soup several days together with some meat and boiled potatoes for dinner, then pea soup with pork (or bacon), and one day cooked dried and salted codfish. For breakfast we had newly baked white (wheat) bread and coffee, and a ration of butter for the whole day. In the evening bread and coffee, or oat meal porridge. The food was sufficiently fresh and good for the whole journey. On Sundays we had extra food. Every day we had so much meat and fish and potatoes, that I could have a good portion roasted with a lot of butter because at the cook we could have roasted (grilled) all we wanted after four o’clock.

The weather was very good all the time. During the day we Danes visited each other in our rooms where we together enjoyed Danish brandy and English beer which we could buy on the ship as much as we wanted. We took walks on the deck and talked about this and that. In the evenings the Scandinavians danced and sang on
the deck. The English and Irish enjoyed themselves with other kinds of plays.

The next day we stopped at the Irish town of Queenstown and took many new emigrants on board. When we had sailed in 6 days, we saw some big fish flying over the water, but no other strange things. Only a few persons became seasick.

In the morning of May 28, we could see Amerika. It was a very nice view as we sailed in towards New York. The ocean goes into the land as a fjord (bay) for about two Danish miles (15 km). Along the coasts we saw very large fortifications. On both sides the landscape rises from the coast with beautiful woods and houses with gardens along the beach, and in front the immense town of New York. We had to lay for anchor two days in quarantine. We were all vaccinated against smallpox. One child had died during the trip. It was brought inland and buried.

May 30 we were allowed to go ashore. We came into an immense building called Castle Garden. Here was sitting a great number of officials. Our names and age was entered in a journal, also from which country we were coming, and our destination. Here were brokers changing gold and coins for the highest rate of exchange. It was possible to buy all kinds of food, and tickets to all destinations in Amerika. Here were also a number of hotel proprietors offering us rooms and meals. But not everybody could enter these premises. They had to have a permit from the town council. We came to a Dane named Schmidt living not far away. Here we had very good rooms and food for 1 1/2 dollars per day for each grownup person, nothing for the children. The next day we came back to Castle Gardens to have our baggage weighed and transported to the railway station from which we travel further on into the country. Here I met Lars Hansen and one of his sons. They had come with another ship one day later than us. We bought tickets to our destination by an agent in the town. I saw only very little of this big town. There are really three towns divided by the Hudson River. New York has about one million inhabitants, and in Brooklyn there are over 300,000.

We left New York in the evening a little before sunset. The train had very good and beautiful carriages. There was a passage in the middle. The seats were as the finest sofas, covered with deep velvet plus in red, brown or green colors. In every chair there were seats for two persons. The back of the chairs was covered with the same
At night, there was a brilliant light from large, gilted [sic] lamps. At every chair there was a window. Each wagon was provided with a lavatory (privet). Also, in each wagon there was a barrel with fresh water, and also a stove which may be heated when it is cold.

After having passed many towns, we came in the forenoon to a big city by the name of Harrisburg. After two hours, we came into other carriages which were even prettier. From here we were driving all the night and the next day. Near evening we came to another big city by the name of Pittsburg. We had been crossing the states of New Jersey and Pennsylvania. The last part was very woody and mountainous. Several times we came through tunnels. These mountains are very rich in coal. For many miles there was only coal along the sides. We were sleeping the night over in Pittsburg. Then we came into new carriages, and the train drove fast into the state of Ohio, then over a part of the state of Indiana, and then we reached the city of Chicago in the state of Illinois. Here we stopped a few hours. It is a big city with more than 300,000 inhabitants.

In the afternoon of June 3, we entered the Northwestern railway and now we were on our way to Iowa. At sundown we passed the great, majestic river Mississippi which is the border between Illinois and Iowa.

At noon on June 4, we were in Marshalltown in Iowa. Here I and my family stopped. We came down to Peder Pedersen fresh and in good health except for a little abscess our little Petrine had got on her neck. We found Peder and his family in the best of health, and we were all happy and satisfied. Though Margrethe had been seasick some days, this was forgotten long ago.

Marshalltown has 4 to 5,000 inhabitants and is making good progress. Of course, we have passed many other towns. Peder Larsen and his family went with Clausen to Story City together with a family from Næstved. We took some days rest at Peder, my wife’s brother, in Marshalltown. Then I went over to my friend Søren Christiansen and my brother-in-law (Niels Madsen). Here all were in good health and good humor. I went around to visit more than 20 Danish families living near Story City, but I did not like the country hereabout. It was for me too marshy (swampy) and too flat (level) without proper drainage for water.
I came back to Marshalltown and enjoyed myself looking at the town and the churches of which it has seven, and now and then I had a pint of beer. After some days, I received a letter from Søren Christiansen in which he told me that I possibly could buy a farm situated four English miles to the south from his place, and it would be a good bargain in his opinion. First, I went around to look at some farms for sale in Marshall County, but the prices were too high. Then I came back to Story City and went out to look at the farm together with Søren Christiansen and Niels Madsen. I found this place attractive, the land was fertile, the landscape beautiful, and the living-house new and very good. But I did not make any offer because I wanted that my wife should see the place before buying it. Therefore, I went back to get my wife and the small children with me to look at the farm. The three big children were already out to earn money. Rasmus earned one dollar a day and the food for plowing, and the girls got 1 1/2 dollars per week in Marshall.

Margrethe liked the farm, and I and the owner came to an agreement about the price. The farm has 80 acres of rather high land with a depression (valley) in the middle which make up a good meadow of about eight acres. Only very little digging (ditches) will be necessary. The valley is falling to the east. A (main) road is passing near the farm, and there is a road at the northern side of the fields. The farmland is fenced with oak posts for every 5 yards and with 4 rows of thick steel wire. The soil is a rather light, dark humus (loam) to a depth of 1 to 1 1/2 yard with a calcemus [calcareous ]clay in the underground.

With the farm followed the harvest. There was 20 acres with barley, 10 acres with wheat, 10 acres with oats, and 28 acres with maize (corn). It all looked very good except some of the wheat. I also received a grey horse 8 years old, a grey colt 1 1/2 year, 3 big young cows, 3 calves, 2 sows, 14 pigs from this spring, more than 50 hens, a reaper or mowing machine, an usual plow, and good harrow, a plow for plowing round the maize, a machine for planting of maize, a new carriage with springy seats, a good harness, forks and spades. In the house a bedstead, table, 6 chairs, mirrors, a stove which is also for cooking the food on, all kitchen and diary equipment, a gun (rifle) with double barrels, some equipment in the cellar, and the curtains in the windows. In short, all their possessions except their bedclothes
and personal clothes. His wife was ill. For all this I paid him 2,900 paper dollars.

Peder Rasmussen
# Appendix D:
## Danish Dwelling House Information on the 1870 Lafayette Township Census

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name as spelled on the 1870 Census</th>
<th>Year emigrated, area, and county</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>No. in Dwelling</th>
<th>Profession, Occupation, or Trade</th>
<th>Value of Real Estate</th>
<th>Value of Personal Estate</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anderson, Geo. ‘69 Sjælland, Præstø</td>
<td>70 2 Laborer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rasmus Jurgen’s father, Jørgen Andersen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anderson, Jno. ‘68 aka Jens Andersen Jylland, Vejle</td>
<td>64 8 Farmer</td>
<td>$800</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>Their son, Nels Johnson, 35, laborer, and his wife and two children living in dwelling. ’70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anderson, Peter ‘67 Sjælland, Præstø</td>
<td>47 4 Farmer</td>
<td>$800</td>
<td>$300</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarson, A. ‘67 aka Andrew Clausen Sjælland, Præstø</td>
<td>32 1 Farming</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>$200</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanson, Carl Sjælland, Præstø</td>
<td>47 5 Blacksmith</td>
<td>$300</td>
<td>$200</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanson, Hans ‘70 Sjælland, Præstø</td>
<td>32 5 Farmer</td>
<td>$150</td>
<td>$200</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hansen, Jno. ‘68 aka Jens Hansen Sjælland, Præstø</td>
<td>50 5 Farming</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>$400</td>
<td>Two laborers at dwelling: C. Anderson, 29 Hans Hanson, 36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanson, Peter ‘69 Sjælland, Præstø</td>
<td>48 2 Farmer</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson, John ‘67 aka Jens Jensen Sjælland, Præstø</td>
<td>43 8 Farmer</td>
<td>$3,300</td>
<td>$600</td>
<td>Likely emigrated with A. Clarson aka Andrew Clausen.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson, Peter ‘70 Sjælland, Præstø</td>
<td>49 7 Farmer</td>
<td>$600</td>
<td>$350</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knudtson, E. ‘69 Sjælland, Præstø</td>
<td>42 6 Farmer</td>
<td>$1,200</td>
<td>$400</td>
<td>Hans Hanson, 48 or 78, laborer enumerated with the family.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larson, Andrew ‘64 Sjælland, Præstø</td>
<td>32 5 Laborer</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>Martin Johnson, 23, son of Jno. Anderson ‘68, and wife living in dwelling. ’70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measson, Nels ‘69 Sjælland, Præstø</td>
<td>45 8 Farmer</td>
<td>$1,200</td>
<td>$3,500</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Income</td>
<td>Wealth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merkel, Carl '69</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Cooper</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nelson, S. P. '69</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>$150</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nelson, Ole '68</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Farming</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
<td>$1,200</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peterson, Fredk. '69</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Laborer</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chris Frandson, 21, cooper, living in dwelling. '69 Sjælland, Præstø

Ole’s wife, Trine, is A. Clausen’s sister.

C. Clarison, 40, female, living in dwelling.

Source: 1870 Census, Schedule 1
## Appendix E:

### Agricultural Information Reported by Danish Farmers on the 1880 Lafayette Township Census

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name as spelled on the 1880 Census</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>No. in family</th>
<th>Own or rent</th>
<th>Improved acres</th>
<th>Unimproved acres</th>
<th>Corn acres</th>
<th>Oats acres</th>
<th>Wheat acres</th>
<th>Hay harvested - tons</th>
<th>No. of horses</th>
<th>No. of milk cows</th>
<th>No. of swine</th>
<th>No. of poultry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anderson, And. C. '67</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anderson, Jens</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anderson, Jens '68</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anderson, Peder '67</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christianson, Soren '69</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clausen, Andrew '67</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frandsen, And. Chr. '69</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hansen, Niels</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanson, Andrew</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanson, Hans '70</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hermansen, Peter A.</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jensen, Jens '67</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jensen, Nels '70</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson, Fred</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson, Peter '70</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson, Peter A.</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jurgens, Rasmus '69</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knudtsen, Rasmus '69</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larsen, Andrew '64</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madson, Nels '69</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merkel, Carl '89</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miller, Soren</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nelson, John</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nelson, John</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nelson, Sam '69</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petersen, Peter C.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peterson, Anders</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peterson, Christen</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peterson, Hans</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peterson, Peter</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plog, Christian</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorensen, Anders</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: 1880 Census, Schedules 1 & 2*
Appendix F:

Local News about Danish Events from Story City and Roland Newspapers

Below are local news items the author noticed about Danish events as he was reviewing the preserved issues of Story City and Roland newspapers from 1887 through 1910 for information pertaining to the settlement of Norwegians in the area.

_Story City News_, June 10, 1887 – The Danes celebrated their nation’s holiday on June 4th. The right day is June 5th, but as this came on Sunday this year they took the preceding day. There was speaking & music during the day, and in the afternoon the young folks amused themselves. All who attended report a good time.

_Story City News_, September 9, 1887 – Mr. Andrew Clauson has still another flowing well on his farm which he succeeded in getting last Saturday. The well is in his cattle pasture about 40 rods southwest of his house. Hoping to get a flow here he had spent a month’s time in excavating a large circular pond containing about an acre of land and being about 7 feet deep at the deepest place. George and Christ Johnson bored this well (which by the way is the fifth flowing well out of nine wells bored this season by the boys) and found water at the depth of 75 feet. The flow can be raised about 5 feet from the bottom of the pond. We feel like congratulating the boys upon their success and especially Mr. Clauson who proposes now to have [a] fishpond of his own. He will probably stock his pond with German carp like those in Mr. T. Henryson’s ponds.

_The Story City Herald_, June 7, 1895 – There was a Danish picnic at the Jondall farm southwest of town, Wednesday. A large number of Danes and others were present and a good time is reported.

_The Story City Herald_, June 5, 1896 – This is the Danish 4th of July and several country picnics are on the program.
**The Story City Herald, June 3, 1898** – Saturday is Danish Day and will be celebrated at Watkin’s Lake. “Bill” Meyers has completed all the arrangements to have all kinds of amusements for the people. It will be a regular old-time Danish celebration. Everybody Welcome.

**The Story City Herald, February 24, 1899** – There was a play given in the Opera House last Friday night in the Danish language by a troupe from Nevada [presumably Nevada, Iowa].

**Roland Record, June 9, 1899** – There was a large crowd at the Danish celebration at Watkins Lake Monday night. Quite a number were over from Roland.

**Roland Record, May 30, 1900** – Billy Myers, the proprietor of that popular summer resort, “Watkin’s Well,” is preparing for a “big time” on June 5th, Dane Day. Billy has the reputation of giving his guests a good time.

**The Messenger, August 7, 1900** – The Danish Evangelical Lutheran church of Jewell Iowa will be dedicated Sunday August 12 at 10 o’clock says the **Jewell Record**.

**The Story City Herald, April 18, 1902** – The Danish Brotherhood Lodge of Story City with well-filled baskets went out to John N. Johnson’s Saturday evening and enjoyed one of the best social times of the season.

**The Story City Herald, February 3, 1905** – The Danish dance which was to be held Tuesday evening was postponed on account of inclement weather.

**The Story City Herald, June 9, 1905** – Tuesday was the fifth of June and Danish celebration day…. Route 3 News: The Danes had a big celebration June 5th over at the J. P. Andersons. They report a fine time.

**The Story City Herald, October 5, 1905** – All the ladies of the Copenhagen district were guests of Mrs. J. Charlson on Route 3 Monday…. Hans P. Clausen, Will Richie and families of Blairsburg were guests of John
Clausen, Saturday and Sunday. They also visited with Mrs. Christine Clausen of Story City.

*The Story City Herald*, February 22, 1906 – A basket social will be held at the Copenhagen school, March 2nd beginning at 8 o’clock. Ladies are asked to bring baskets. All are invited. A short program will be given.

*The Story City Herald*, March 15, 1906 – Route 1 News: R. E. Madsen used the King drag to good purpose Saturday on the road leading from the Copenhagen school house to town.... Miss Emilie Merkel closed her winter term at the Copenhagen school house last Friday, with expressions of satisfaction from all sides.

*The Story City Herald*, March 15, 1906 – Route 1 News: The basket sociable held at the Copenhagen school last Friday was well attended. The baskets were sold by Henry Donhowe, and he was successful in arousing that spirit in the people which willingly opens a well-filled pocketbook to a good purpose. It was success beyond expectation. Nine dollars was realized from the sale of one basket alone.

*The Story City Herald*, July 25, 1907 – R. E. Madsen has sold his farm to Nels Paulson receiving $110 an acre for the land. He expects to go to California next spring.... Route 4 News: The Danish Brotherhood met at John H. Johnson’s last Sunday. The Brotherhood’s goat was busy as A. O. Hansen was initiated in the order. The goat must have been in extra good condition, as Mr. Hanson wasn’t able to go to work the next day.

*The Story City Herald*, November 19, 1908 – Rev. A. Larsen Died Suddenly: Well Known Pastor of Thor, Ia., Laid to Rest Last Sunday: Rev Andres Larsen, at Thor, Ia., died Friday morning, Nov. 13, from heart failure. He was buried on Sunday, his brother, Rev. L. P. Jensen, officiating at the home and at the grave, while the Revs. O. P. Vangnes, J. E. Jorgenson and H. Fechtenburg spoke in the church.... Rev. Larson was born in Denmark in the year 1849 and came to America in 1870. He attended Luther college, Decorah, Ia., and studied theology in Springfield, Ill., and in Madison, Wis. He became a minister in 1878 and accepted a call from a Danish Lutheran congregation near Blair,
Nebr., which charge he served for 26 years, when he was called to Thor. Ia., where he spent the last four years of his life. He leaves a wife and ten children, all of whom, except one daughter, who lives in New Jersey, were present at the funeral. … The deceased was well known in Story City, having occupied the St. Petri pulpit on a number of occasions. He was devoted to his high calling and made friends wherever he went.

The Story City Herald, June 3, 1909 – Long article about the 4th of July celebration in (Aarhus) Denmark.
The region around Jewell is like a precious gem whose worth in a raw condition can only be appraised by those who understand it. This area was originally just swamps with some hills that raised up from them. On these hills there were first some from the eastern states who settled and became owners of large areas around there. They didn’t find the jewel hidden in that area. Their ownership went to others, and one of them died a few years ago as a poor man in one of the smallest houses in the outskirts of town, and his son lived right across from him as the owner of a few acres of the poorest swamp land in the area.

It was when the land was drained that it rose in value. Twenty-five or thirty years ago, one could buy land by Jewell for about eight dollars an acre; a year and a half ago, the average price of land was $200 [per acre].

Two rail lines of the Chicago Northwestern cross each other by Jewell. First the town was started north of the railroad; dilapidated commercial buildings still testify to former glory. But a man by the name of King, also called Slough King because he owned so much swampland, got it arranged so that they began to build on the south side of his land, and there lies the business district and most of the town now. The original Jewell has gotten the name “Dog-Town” because it has fallen into disrepair.

Our farmers, like in so many other places, were tested by the hardships of pioneer life. The first ones came to the area in 1880. They were P. K. Kristoffersen, Niels and Erik Hennigsen, Jørgen Bonde (George Johnson), Nikolaj and Marius Brock, Peter Nielsen and Thomas Jensen. Many came later. Niels Henningsen lived with his wife and children in a little house about a mile and a half south of the
now existing town. There wasn’t much of a chance to earn what was necessary to keep the family going. And then Niels had to walk the approximate ten miles southeast down to Story City to work on the railroad. The family didn’t have any clocks, and one night he woke up and thought it was time to go to work. So he started out on the way through water and ice over the swamps in bare feet and reached Story City early in the morning. Later he got a farm that after his death had a value of $200 per acre.

He was not the only one who has swung himself up. Old Thomas Jensen came to the Jewell area without many dollars in his pocket. Now he is presumably one of the richest men in Jewell—and that says something. He has also been a town alderman. There were others for whom things didn’t go so well. An old railroad man remained a poor man all his life in spite of how hard he and his wife worked. But his house and lot have risen in value like a lot of other places around here, so now they are likely worth $1,000.

There is a Danish man who lives in Jewell, and likely there are not many places that have someone to match him. That is shoemaker master Peder Thomsen. He has only a tenth of amount of his sight in one eye, and has been at the blind institute in Copenhagen. In spite of his poor eyesight, he has been able to see more with them than many others with their two good eyes. He is quite a bit at home in music and gardening skills. With steadiness and good work in the shoemaking business, he has collected quite a few properties in town, so now he is a moderately well-to-do man.

One odd person was also among the Danes in Jewell. At the funeral of one of his parents, he suddenly got off the wagon and started turning cartwheels along the road.

Sometimes there were some strange things that happened among our people in the old days, but it could also be the opposite. Also at a funeral, when we sat down to the table, one of the guests spoke out loud inappropriately about the Lord. Another one rose up and said that he couldn’t stand that there was anything like that said about God in his presence. The first person had very little to do with the church, but there came a change over him. A few years later he became deathly sick, and the pastor went out to him. The pastor had seldom seen a man who was so thankful for what he told him about sin and grace.

In 1898, Our Savior’s Danish Evangelical Lutheran Congregation was founded and two years later built a very beautiful church. They
also built a good parsonage. The congregation regularly conducts vacation school.

About ten years later, there were many Danes in the colony, but a number of them have moved away, so now there are only about 125. A few of them are known in wider circles like Peder Brandrup as county treasurer and J. C. Christensen as doctor. There is also a Danish Brotherhood Lodge in Jewell.
Appendix H:
Danes Who Lived in Lafayette Township by 1870 Who are Buried in the Township

Listed below is the author’s list of Danes who lived in Lafayette Township by 1870 and who are buried in the township or nearby. The main source for this listing is Story County, Iowa, Grave Marker Inscriptions compiled by the Story County Genealogical Society, 1993.

**Center Cemetery, Section 16, Lafayette Township**
- Frandson, Andrew C. 1849-1913
- Jensen, Niels 1835-1921 & Ane 1838-1916
- Johnson, John N. 1864-1951 (son of Niels and Ane Jensen)
- Matheason, Anne M. 1866-1951 (daughter of Niels and Ane Jensen)
- Merkel, Carl C. 1836-1897 & Anna Marie 1837-1905
- Merkel, Julia 1864-1938 (daughter of Carl and Anna Marie Merkel)

**Fairview Cemetery, Story City**
- Anderson, Cathrine 1818-1884 (unmarked grave, ref. Hamilton County Death Records)
- Anderson, Jens 1807-1893 & Grete 1819-1900
- Anderson, Peder 1822-1904 & Dorthea 1825-1906
- Anderson, Søren aka Same J. 1858-1896 (son of Jens and Grete Anderson)
- Hanson, Carl 1822-1897 & Annie Christine 1824-1897
- Christiansen, C. E. 1858-1917 (son of Søren and Bodil Christiansen)
- Christiansen, Nels P. 1862-1915 (son of Søren and Bodil Christiansen)
- Christiansen, Søren 1824-1904 & Bodil Marie 1830-1912
Clausen, Andrew 1839-1892 & Christine 1851-1931 (daughter of Jens and Kersten Hansen)

Corneliussen, Dorthea 1856-1931 (daughter of Jens and Karen Jensen)

Dennis, Jennie 1858-1916 (daughter of Nels and Anna Madsen)

Hansen, Hans 1793-1875

Hansen, Hans 1838-1929 (believed to be son of Hans Hanson born 1793) & Carrie M. 1832-1908

Hansen, Jens 1820-ca.1904 & Kersten 1825-1908 (unmarked graves, ref. SCH, 12/24/1908)

Hanson, Carl 1822-1897 & Annie Christine 1824-1897

Jensen, Jens 1827-1910 & Karen 1840-1923

Jensen, Peter 1821-1904 & Karen 1821-1906

Johnson, Chris 1856-1931 (son of Jens and Karen Jensen)

Johnson, Mary P. 1858-1916 (daughter of Peter and Karen Jensen)

Johnson, Peter T. 1866-1927 (son of Jens and Karen Jensen)

Jurgens, Ane Sophie ca.1854-1884 (daughter of Jens and Grete Anderson)

(believed to be buried in an unmarked grave)

Larsen, Andrew 1831-1901 & Anna M. 1850-1923 (daughter of Jens and Grete Anderson)

Madsen, Line 1854-1905 (daughter of Nels and Anna Madsen)

Madsen, M. P. 1860-1903 (son of Nels and Anna Madsen)

Madsen, Nels S. 1825-1899 & Anna 1827-1898

---

Mt. Olive Cemetery, Randall, Iowa

Anderson, John P. 1855-1943 (son of Peder and Dorthea Anderson)

---


2 1865 Iowa Census.
This estimate is based on the number of Norwegians enumerated on the 1860 U.S. Census in Story County, Iowa, 388, out of a total population of 4,051.

4 See Meskwaki Along the Upper South Skunk River: Pioneer References to their Presence in Hamilton, Story, and Polk Counties by Arlen Twedt, comp., 2012, available at the State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Iowa City, for more information about this topic.


8 Arn S. Allen, “Looking Back” in The Story City Herald Anniversary Number: A Quintuplet Celebration, 1940 (Story City, Iowa: Paul A. Olson & Sons, Publishers, 1940), 33, supplement to The Story City Herald, October 24, 1940. Paul A. Olson has an alternative explanation of the three flagpoles on p. 3, where he states, “Our own memory is that the poles were put up by the three political parties—Democrat, Republican and Greenback—which then were debating the national issues of the county.” Since Allen was two years old when he came to Story City ca. 1870 and lived there until ca. 1887 and Olson was an infant when he came to Story City in 1873, the author chose to give more credibility to Allen’s explanation of the flagpoles.


10 Arlen Twedt, “A Study of Danish Emigrants Enumerated on the 1870 Census for LaFayette Township, Story County, Iowa,” 2007. Copies were sent to the Bertha Bartlett Library, Story City, Iowa; Story City Historical Society, Story City, Iowa; The Danish Immigrant Museum, Elk Horn, Iowa; and the State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa. Also, copies of all the obituaries and biographies collected during this study were sent to the Family History & Genealogy Center at The Danish Immigrant Museum in Elk Horn.


13 The Story City Herald, January 3, 1924.


15 See “From Vejle Amt to Iowa in 1868: An Immigrant’s Christmas Letter” by Christian Poul Christiansen, translated and edited by J. R. Christiansen in The Bridge 25, no. 2 (2002) for more information about this family.

16 J. R. Christiansen, email to the author, June 1, 2007.

17 Morten Christian Pedersen aka M. C. Pedersen settled in a Danish settlement at Luck, Wisconsin, that he helped found in 1869.

According to Jens’ deed filed on July 5, 1867, he paid Josiah and Mary Ward $2,000 on July 1, 1867, for 113 acres in Section 24 of Lafayette Township (S1/2NE), 28 acres on the west side of Section 19 in Howard Township (SWNW), and five acres of timber beside the Skunk River in Section 13 of Lafayette Township (SE corner of NE). Reference: Story County Land Records, Book M, 93-94.


Elsewhere in Story County, there were only three Danes living among the Norwegians in southern Story County (Union Township), but there were 28 Danes in Nevada Township where the county seat, Nevada, is located and 22 Danes in Washington Township where the town of Ames is located.

The author received this listing as an attachment to a June 1, 2007, email from J. R. Christianson, editor of The Bridge 25, no. 2 (2002) containing a translation of a letter his great great grandfather sent to friends and relatives in Denmark after settling near Story City, Iowa, in 1868. J. R. Christianson’s informative email was a response to an email the author sent to him on May 17, 2007, seeking help in understanding why Danish emigrants began settling near Story City.

Within Lafayette Township is a 40-acre tract of prairie wetland, Doolittle Prairie State Preserve, containing nine prairie potholes. The preserve is located two and one-half miles south of Story City and is open to the public. An excellent aerial view of the potholes can be seen at http://www.igsb.uiowa.edu/Browse/landscap/landscap.htm, and information about the preserve can be found by searching for “Doolittle” at http://www.storycountyiowa.gov/. The prairie pothole characteristics of Lafayette Township can also be seen using Google Earth.

The South Skunk River watershed covers most of Story County. The southern one-third of Palestine Township in the southwest corner of the county is outside of the watershed, and a larger area in the northeast corner of the county including Middle Minerva Creek is also outside the watershed.


For an excellent history of the settlement of Lafayette Township and the problems settlers faced transforming the wet prairie into productive farmland, see Chapter 3, “Occupying The Land,” in “Lafayette Township: The Geography of a Portion of Central Iowa” by Phillip E. Frandson (master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1948), 57-82.


29 Peder Rasmussen to a dear friend in Denmark, February 10, 1871, translated by Gladys Johnson Heghin, received with correspondence from Francie Heers, family historian for the Jens and Karen Jensen family, July 18, 2011.

30 Ibid.


32 The Story City Herald, January 8, 1914.

33 J. H. Frandsen, “J. H. Frandsen Tells of School Experiences at County School” in The Story City Herald Anniversary Number: A Quintuplet Celebration, 1940 (Story City, Iowa: Paul A. Olson & Sons, Publishers, 1940), 47, supplement to The Story City Herald, October 24, 1940.


35 1885 Iowa Census.

36 David Osheim, Story City, Iowa, interview by Arlen Twedt, August 12, 2007. Information cited is from the Copenhagen school ledger book, a personal possession of the interviewee whose Wierson and Erickson ancestors attended Copenhagen school.

37 Johnson, “The Boy On Kiegley Creek,” 10-12; also published in The Story City Herald on February 15, 1978. Johnson, the son of John N. and Amanda Cameron Johnson, was born in Lafayette Township in 1895 and lived his whole life in the Story City area. He died in 1986 and is buried in Center Cemetery, rural Lafayette Township. A copy of his memoir is in the Bertha Bartlett Public Library, Story City, Iowa. It was also serialized in The Story City Herald, January 25-September 6, 1978.

38 The author has not found any information indicating they emigrated in 1865, only information that they emigrated in 1868 and likely with Christian P. Christianson who settled north of Story City in Ellsworth Township, Hamilton County. Also, on both the 1900 and 1910 Censuses, their daughter, Anna M. Larsen who emigrated with her parents, reported her year of emigration as 1868.

39 Story County Land Deeds, Book K, 364.

40 Ibid., Book M, 93-94.

41 Ibid., Book M, 192 & Book S, 480.

42 Ibid., Book M, 366.

43 Ibid., Book O, 167.

44 Ibid., Book N, 362.


46 Ibid., Book O, 18.

47 Hans and Cathrine Anderson sold their property to Jens and Grete Andersen on August 29, 1868, and purchased land northwest of Story City in Hamilton County, Ellsworth Township where they reported owning a combined estate valued at $1,650.

48 Story County Land Deeds, Book P, 543.
50 Andrew witnessed his brother-in-law’s purchase of land on May 26, 1868 (see Story County Land Deeds, Book N, 362).
52 On Schedule 2 of the 1880 Census, Production of Agriculture, Andrew and Christine reported they were renting their land, so they may not have been able to meet the terms of their mortgage.
53 The Nevada Representative, May 19, 1880.
55 Swamp or overflow land was land designated as unfit for cultivation by the federal government. After the Des Moines land office was closed, ownership of this property was transferred to the state of Iowa under the Swamp Land Act of 1850, and the state of Iowa in turn transferred ownership to the counties. It could be purchased from the county for $1.25 per acre to purchasers holding certificates of pre-emption who agreed to drain the land and convert it to agricultural and other use. Lafayette Township had 400 acres of swamp land and Howard Township had 320 acres.
56 1885 Iowa Census.
58 Knut Takla, “A Little From Story City, Iowa,” Skandinaven, December 26, 1894.
60 L. J. Tjemagel, “More Light on Randall History,” The Story City Herald, January 4, 1940.
61 Ibid.
62 1897-8 Directory of Story County, Iowa (The Maxwell Tribune, Maxwell, Iowa: 1898), 72. This useful publication includes agricultural production information about the farms in Lafayette Township, a directory of merchants and others employed in Story City, the names of township and town officials, and a list of residents in Story City and Summit, a small community by the Summit Coal Mine in the southeast quarter of Section 21 of Lafayette Township that was opened in 1893.
63 1870 United States Census.
64 1900 United States Census.
66 For more information about Janson, see The Promise of America: A History of the Norwegian-American People by Odd S. Lovoll (University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis: 1984).
67 Golden Anniversary Book of Story City: An Album of Pictures from Early Days Down to the Present (Story City, Iowa: Paul A. Olson, Publisher, 1931), 191.
In the first edition of the Story City News, the editors, C. B. Allen and O. B. Peterson, state it will be a Republican newspaper.

Newspaper accounts of the lodges’ organization are unavailable because all the issues for The Story City Herald for 1900 are missing.

Michele McNabb, Librarian/Manager, Family History & Genealogy Center, The Danish Immigrant Museum, email to the author, August 30, 2007.

Ibid.


Anfin Apland in Oley Nelson’s, En kort historie af det første norske settlement i Story og Polk counties, Iowa (Chicago, n.p., 1905), republished in English by the author in 1930 under the title A Brief History of the First Norwegian Settlement of Story and Polk Counties, Ia. 1855-1905; and re-compiled, corrected and added to by Anfin Apland in 1945 under the same title, 16.

Thomas P. Christensen, “Little Copenhagen,” (State Historical Society of Iowa Library and Archives, call no. MRC4, 6p.), 4-5.

Thorvald Hansen, Church Divided: Lutheranism Among the Danish Immigrants (Des Moines, Iowa: Grand View College, 1962), 16.

Ibid. See chapter two of Church Divided for a discussion of the theological differences between Grundtvigianism and the Society for Inner Mission.

Thorvald Hansen (author of Church Divided: Lutheranism Among the Danish Immigrants), in discussion with the author, May 21, 2007.

Rasmus Jurgens was married to Anna Sophia Anderson, daughter of Jens and Greta Anderson who settled in Lafayette Township in 1868. On April 20, 1886, Rasmus married Kirstine Rasmussen in Polk County, Iowa. Their residence in the R. L. Polk & Co. Des Moines City Directory for 1897 is 8th Street where his occupation was carpenter.


James Stanton, One Hundred Years: A Review of One Hundred Years of Progress of Grace United Methodist Church, Story City, Iowa, 1871-1971 (Story City, Iowa: n.p.,1971), 26-27.

Ibid., 17 & 41.

Fiftieth Anniversary: Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Congregation, Story City, Iowa, 1886-1936 (Story City, Iowa: n.p., 1936).

The Story City Herald, December 1, 1938.

Fiftieth Anniversary: Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Congregation, Story City, Iowa.

Christensen, A History of the Danes in Iowa, 90. Christensen’s reference for
this is Andreas’ Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Iowa (1875), pp. 432-483 and Meddelelser, vol. 2, p. 83. In the Danish Newspapers and Periodicals section of the bibliography (p. 255), Christensen lists: Meddelelser fra den dansk-amerikanske Mission. Odense, Denmark, 1872-1894. Meddelelser (Reports) were published by the Committee in Denmark. They constitute one of the most valuable collections of source material on Danish-American history.


89 Allen, 190.

90 1895 Iowa Census and 1900 United States Census.

91 Ibid.


93 Christensen, A History of Danes in Iowa, 188.

94 Story County’s appeal is also reflected in statistics on the destinations declared by emigrants departing Copenhagen from 1869 through 1908. There were 1,256 emigrants who declared Ames, Nevada, and Story City as destinations during this time period compared to 95 for Boone County (Boone), 272 for Hamilton County (Jewell, Randall, Webster City), 133 for Hardin County (Iowa Falls), 37 for Jasper County (Newton), 255 for Marshall County (Marshalltown), and 493 for Polk County (Des Moines).

95 Fiftieth Anniversary, Bethesda Lutheran Church, Jewell, Iowa, 1887-1937 (n.p., 1937), 7-8.


99 Ibid.

100 Christensen, A History of the Danes in Iowa, 74.


102 On the 1870 Census, there were 340 Danish emigrants enumerated in Benton County, significantly more than the 194 enumerated in Story County (Bergmann, 1956). However, the number declined to 91 in 1880, 84 in 1890, and 64 in 1900 indicating the Leroy Township settlement area lost its appeal for Danish emigrants and that many of those that were living there in 1870 moved to other settlement areas.

103 Prior to 1870 when Iowa: The Home For Immigrants was published in English, German, Dutch, Swedish, and Danish for circulation in the United States and Europe, Danes thinking about emigrating and those who had already emigrated had to rely mainly on word-of-mouth, letter, and newspaper information about Iowa. For Danes fluent in English, there was Nathan Parker’s Iowa as it is in 1855; A gazetteer for citizens, and a hand-book for immigrants, embracing a full description of the state of Iowa and its 1856 and 1857 updates and prior to their publication, J. B. Newhalls’s A Glimpse of Iowa in 1846.

104 The establishment of the first three Danish settlements in Iowa parallels
the founding of Norwegian settlements in the middle part of Iowa. This similarity seems more than coincidental and suggests Danish emigrants had knowledge of or contact with Norwegians prior to their settlement in Iowa. In the mid-1850s, Norwegian emigrants who had settled in the Fox River Norwegian Settlement area southwest of Chicago, especially those in southwest Kendall and northwest Grundy counties, began migrating to the middle part of Iowa. The same year Peder Nikolajsen and Gustav Adolph Lundberg settled in Benton County, 1854, Norwegians began settling in this county, too. In 1855, Norwegians established a settlement in southern Story County followed by another Norwegian settlement in northern Story County in 1856. In 1859, a Norwegian Quaker settlement was established in Marshall County, Iowa.

106 Ibid., 90.
108 George T. Flom, “The Danish Contingent in the Population of Early Iowa,” *The Iowa Journal of History and Politics*, no. 2 (1906): 220. Most of Flom’s article is devoted to the pre-1865 history of Danish emigration to the United States and to Iowa, and it does not include any information about Danish settlement in Story County. The only reference Flom makes to central Iowa is contained on the last page (244) where he states, “The Danish population of Marshall and Hamilton counties dates from the years immediately following the period we have discussed.”
110 Christiansen, “From Vejle Amt to Iowa in 1868.”
111 *Den Danske Pioneer* began publication in 1872. Thorvald Hansen has written about M. A. Sommer in the June and July issues of *Church and Life*, 1999. The title of the two-part article is “Restless Fanatic.”
112 1860 Denmark Census for Hvejsel Parish, Nøvang District, Vejle County.
113 *The Story City Herald*, March 1, 1923.
115 Story County Land Deeds, Book W, 301. In 1877, Andrew and Christine sold the 120 acres back to the previous owner, presumably because they had taken out a mortgage to purchase the land but could not make the payments. On the 1880 Census, they reported renting 160 acres, and when Andrew signed his will on June 9, 1892, he bequeathed 80 acres in Section 15 to Christine, the north one-half of the northeast quarter.
117 1900 & 1910 United States Censuses, Yolo County, California, Winters Township.
118 Story County Land Deeds, Book M, 366.
119 Hamilton County Land Deeds, Book 18, 380. This is the deed for the sale of this property on April 15, 1881. The author did not find a record of the purchase in the Hamilton County Land Deed Index.
120 The Hamilton County Register of Deaths, vol. 1 1880-1887, p. 12, lists “Cartrina Anderson, died April 10, 1884 in Ellsworth Township, 65 years.
4 months, buried in Story City, Iowa, April 21, 1884.” When the author checked the Fairview Cemetery records at City Hall, Story City, Iowa, on April 11, 2012, he did not find a record of her burial, but she is presumably buried in an unmarked grave in the cemetery.

121 *The Story City Herald*, April 9, 1942.
122 *Palo Alto Reporter* (Emmetsburg, Iowa), April 26, 1923.
123 Story County Land Deeds, Book M, 192.
127 Story County Land Deeds, Book M, 93-94.
129 See the 1860 Denmark Census for Hvejsel Parish, Nøvang District, Vejle County, http://ddd.dda.dk/, for documentation of the Jensen Møller surname.
130 Christiansen, “From Vejle Amt to Iowa in 1868,” 23-24.
131 Story County Land Deeds, Book O, 18.
132 Published in 1976, Johnson’s memoir was serialized in *The Story City Herald*, January 25-September 6, 1978.
133 The author checked the Fairview Cemetery records at City Hall, Story City, Iowa, on April 11, 2012, and did not find a record of their burial, however, Kersten’s obituary states, “The funeral services were held from the house Saturday, Rev. Vangsnæs officiating, and interment took place in the local cemetery,” *Story City Herald*, December 24, 1908.
134 *Story City Herald*, December 24, 1908.
135 1860 Denmark Census for for Toksvær Parish, Hammer District, Præstø County & 1900 United States Census, Polk County, Iowa.
136 Story County Probate Records for Kersten Hansen, Box 801, reviewed at the Nevada Public Library, Nevada, Iowa, on April 10, 2012.
138 On April 11, 2012, the author reviewed the Fairview Cemetery records at City Hall, Story City, Iowa, and did not find a burial recorded for Ole or Thrine Clausen.
139 Their son, Paul born in Denmark in September 1856, reported 1866 as his year of emigration on the 1900 and 1920 Censuses and their daughter, Anna born in Denmark in June 1865, reported 1867 as her year of emigration on the 1920 Census.
Spies cannot be heroes, unless they are James Bond. By the nature of their work, spies are unsung heroes whose life and work remain secret. Thomas Sneum, a Dane who worked for Britain’s Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) during World War II was very much like the fictional James Bond. Thomas Sneum was foolishly daring, associated easily and openly with the enemy, had several lovers, had numerous close escapes and on his return to Britain he was interned, suspected of being a double-agent.

During World War II thousands of spies worked directly or indirectly for SIS or its competitor SOE, the Special Operations Executive, which had been set up by British Prime Minister Winston Churchill in 1940 to wreck havoc behind enemy lines. Among British agents the exploits of Thomas Sneum are in a league of their own. In Britain he is recognised for his bravery and dedication, and was rewarded the prestigious King’s Medal of Courage. In 2002 best selling novelist Ken Follett wrote a novel, Hornet Flight, about Thomas Sneum’s daring escape from Denmark in a battered biplane. In 2009 British journalist Mark Ryan wrote Sneum’s biography, entitled The Hornet’s Sting.

In Denmark Thomas Sneum has never received official recognition for his contributions during WW II. No books have been written in Denmark about Thomas Sneum, but Mark Ryan’s book has been translated into Danish under the title Bag fjendens linjer.

After the war Sneum was interrogated by the Danish police as well as secret service. He was cleared and then offered back his old job in the Danish Navy’s air arm; but as lieutenant, despite the fact that he had advanced to colonel during the war. He declined the demotion and looked for other job possibilities. He then signed on with the well-known Danish ambulance and rescue company Falck, helping it built its fleet of search and rescue aircraft.
Thomas Sneum felt that the Danish military didn’t want him after the war, as he had done something his old colleagues wished they had done. The Danish military simply wanted to keep Sneum’s exploits under wraps.

After the war, Thomas Sneum no longer felt truly at home in Denmark. He eventually left the country and settled in Switzerland. As an unnamed Danish amateur historian wrote on-line about Thomas Sneum, “Maybe his past as well as his values no longer fitted into the national romanticizing and falsification of the events of WW II in Denmark.”

In Switzerland, between 1998 and 2006, Mark Ryan interviewed Thomas Sneum, who at first was very sceptical of this British journalist, who wanted to know everything in detail. Thomas Sneum, who was getting on in years, realized that this was his last chance to tell his story – as he wasn’t going to write anything himself. Sneum died on February 3, 2007.

Thomas Sneum was born on May 21, 1917, in Sønderho on the island of Fanø in the North Sea. He received an excellent education, which included learning German and English. He wanted to become a pilot and was able to join the Navy’s air arm.

When Germany invaded Denmark on April 9, 1940, Thomas Sneum was disgusted with the Danish authorities as Denmark did not resist the invasion militarily. He consequently decided to leave the country, and to try to get to Britain to sign up with the Royal Air Force (RAF).

Before departing he visited his family on the island of Fanø. Here he noticed that the Germans were installing large advanced radars.

At the beginning of the war Germany had superior long wave radars such as the Freya, which were now being set up on Fanø. The radars could pinpoint and track RAF bombers coming toward Denmark and Germany over the North Sea. The Freya radars helped Germany maintain radar superiority until 1943.

Thomas Sneum secretly photographed the guarded Freya radars and took note of the German military positions, not least along the North Sea coast. He also took careful note of other political and military developments which could be of use to Britain.

He did not tell his family or friends of his plan to flee to Britain to sign up with the RAF. Yet, he needed help in order to get out of occupied Denmark. After a long search he discovered an old de
Havilland Hornet Moth on a large estate on the island of Fyn. He made a deal with the owner whereby he and his colleague were going to “steal” the plane, so the owner wouldn’t get into trouble.

The battered bi-plane would only be able to fly half way across the North Sea. So Sneum rigged it up with an extra fuel tank whereby he would be able to refuel in midair by going out on the wing, while his companion stayed at the controls.

Thomas Sneum and his companion were able to get the rickety bi-plane off the ground and into the air. Flying over Fyn and Jutland they were shot at by the Germans, but managed to escape Danish air space and fly out over the North Sea. When they landed on the English coast they discovered that their plane had 37 bullet holes.

Their spectacular escape was of such a daring nature that nobody could imagine such an escape or believe it when told. All the airmen in Denmark, whether Danish or German, knew it was simply impossible to reach Britain due to the plane’s range of only 620 miles! Its cruising speed was 124 mph.

After their landing they were taken into custody by the RAF. Thomas Sneum, with his photos and military information, was hired by SIS, while his companion joined the RAF – and survived the war.

In September 1941, after undergoing some training, Thomas Sneum was parachuted into Denmark, the first British agent to be dropped in Denmark during WW II. He quickly made contact with leaders of the Danish underground resistance movement.

One of Sneum’s first contacts in Denmark was Major Hans Lunding, during the first part of the war the so-called prince of Danish intelligence, who was in contact with the SOE, the competing intelligence service. Sneum’s account of Lunding presents a different perspective to the one given in Lunding’s 1970 memoir entitled Stemplet Fortroligt. Their relationship was not without friction and misunderstanding, to say the least. In August 1943 Lunding was arrested and was eventually sent to the notorious Flossenbürg concentration camp in Germany.

It was also in September 1941 that Dr. Werner Heisenberg, the Nobel Prize physicist at the University of Berlin, visited Danish physicist Niels Bohr in Copenhagen to discuss progress in the development of an atom bomb. They already knew each other as Heisenberg had earlier studied under Bohr for one year at the
University of Copenhagen. Thomas Sneum was able to inform London of their meeting.

At one point Sneum checked into the Cosmopolit Hotel in Copenhagen, where the Abwehr officers stayed – the Abwehr being German military intelligence. At the Cosmopolit it was easy to meet Abwehr officers in the bar. And Sneum did. He got to know some officers quite well and in this way he obtained information he would not otherwise have had access to. However, being cozy with the enemy would later cause him much grief.

In 1942 Sneum’s situation was getting nerve-racking, as the Danish police was on to him and his relationship with Lunding had deteriorated to the point where Lunding wanted him out of the country. If he wanted to survive Sneum had to leave Denmark. He made a dramatic escape to neutral Sweden, but was arrested and jailed. He was finally released from prison and with help from British agents in Sweden he was flown to Britain. Upon landing in Britain, Thomas Sneum was arrested and thrown in jail. He was treated as a foreign spy – a double-agent – and was told that he was going to be executed. Without revealing the story, events changed and he was saved – and lived to serve Britain again.

While the book *The Hornet’s Sting* is primarily a biography of Thomas Sneum, focussing on his activities during World War II, it does deal with a couple of other issues. One is the fact that he is seen as a hero and was recognised as such by the British government, whereas he has not received any recognition by the government of Denmark. Moreover, Danes have scant knowledge of his deeds and his name is not a household name in Denmark.

Another issue is the fact that Thomas Sneum was not aware of the difference between SIS (Secret Intelligence Service) and SOE (Special Operations Executive) – but neither were the leaders of the Danish underground. They knew they worked for or collaborated with British intelligence – and SIS and SOE never clearly informed them of the difference – or of their conflicts or differences of opinion – such as their stance on active sabotage in Denmark.

The book does underline the contribution agents parachuted into Denmark made to the war effort, in cooperation with the local underground resistance movement. Despite the importance of sabotage and information regarding German troop movements, the book focuses on the Freya radar, and to a lesser degree on the
V rockets and getting Niels Bohr out of Denmark, but above all the spotlight is on the trials and tribulations of Thomas Sneum. Moreover, Sneum was a lady’s man and Mark Ryan does not neglect Sneum’s conquests in this department.

The book includes photographs, notes, an index and maps. There are also references to the various primary sources. In addition, Mark Ryan reminds readers that he would always try to check and verify what Thomas Sneum told him.

It is remarkable that after all these years it is still possible to uncover feats of heroism from WW II that until now have remained largely untold. *The Hornet’s Sting* reveals the exploits of a committed and daring agent – a true story that is more exciting than fiction. Thomas Sneum’s story involves audacious exploits, danger, intrigue and sex. Thomas Sneum’s heroic deeds deserve to be known more widely, even though, or because, he intentionally defied the Danish government. The book is well written and difficult to put down. So finally, here is Denmark’s answer to James Bond! But he is no fictional character.
ERRATA - The Bridge, Volume 34, Number 1, 2011

Corrections to the article: Remembrances. Early Years by the River: Growing up in the Junction City Danish Community, 1904-1923, by Arnold N. Bodtker:

Page 13: Incorrect photo. This is not a photograph of Arnold’s father. The caption under the photo should read: Andreas Jacobsen, Arnold’s uncle. The photo belongs not here, but on page 17.

Page 17: Incorrect photo. This is not a photograph of Arnold’s uncle, but rather of his father. The caption under the photo should read: Hans P. N. Bodtker; Arnold’s father and the photo belongs not here, but on page 13.

Page 32: Under the photo, the caption should read: (left to right) Arnold, Folmer, and Joen, about 1917-1918.

Page 62: Fourth line from the bottom of the page: the word in italics should be laken (not lakeri). [The Danes adopted the English word lake into Danish language patterns, adding to the end of the word the Danish definite article -en (English: the).]
Danish American Heritage Society

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please enroll me as a member of the Danish American Heritage Society.

- Student Membership $15.00
- General Membership (indv. or family) $30.00
- Associate Membership (indv. or family) $50.00
- Patron Membership (indv. or family) $100.00
- I would like to support the DAHS with an additional contribution of $_____

NAME __________________________________________

ADDRESS _________________________________________

CITY ____________________ STATE ________ ZIP ________

Send Membership dues to the following address:

Danish American Heritage Society
c/o Grand View University
Third Floor West Old Main
1200 Grandview Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50316-1599