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Where we Build and Live

by

Ivar Kirkegaard

(Translated by Inger M. Olsen*)

‘If you will give [your] arm and steel will,
The too meek voices of the home must be deafened;
And even in distant realms there are goals
For which to fight, even there can great deeds be done.’

It falls outside the framework of this small dissertation to give personal historical narratives of Danes who have put down roots in the American soil, starting from the time when Jens Munk (1575-1628) and Vitus Bering (1681-1741) came to America’s inhospitable northernmost regions during their travels of discovery and down through the time when the actual immigration from Denmark got its start around 1850. Some names can be recognized such as Jonas Bronck (died 1643), after whom the great section of the Bronx in New York is named, Hans Christian Fibiger (1749-1796), who served as an officer under Washington, the historian Paul Christian Sinding, who was professor in Scandinavian Languages and Literature at New York University in the middle of the 19th century, and many others. To those who wish information about these men’s lives and works in America, I refer to Pastor P. S. Vig’s (1854-1929) biographical narratives. We can especially thank Pastor Vig for the fact that we have anything at all about these men and women, who participated in the colonizing and cultural work from the first days of the American Colonies, up through the beginning of the actual period of immigration. Such narratives are found in Pastor Vig’s book *Danes in America*, published by Danish Lutheran Publishing House, Blair, Nebraska, 1900 as well as in C. Rasmussen Publishing Co.’s work *Danes in America*, Minneapolis, Minn. 1908, the first volume of which (completed 1909) is to a great extent built upon Pastor Vig’s and Pastor R. Andersen’s narrations. In the fall of 1906 I myself wrote, upon a request from the Danish Embassy, a dissertation in English “Danes in America,” which was to be a chapter in a historical work “The Builders of the Nation” and which

would be published by the American Historical Association of Chicago.

**The words and sentences in hard brackets are the translator's as are the 'sics' and the term 'The Red Man' and 'Indian' wherever possible I have replaced with 'Native American'. (I.M.O.)]*

In the limited space which is at my disposal here, I will attempt to impart my observations from my numerous tours of lecturing which have stretched all over the country from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Coast as well as here and there, especially in respect to the Western states, to weave in pages from the history of the immigration and the life of the pioneers.

Let us begin our travels farthest to the east in the northernmost state in New England, [that is] Maine. The first Danes who came to Maine around 1855 were almost all farmers who settled in the neighborhood of Portland, which is the area where most Danish born Americans in Maine now live. Among them one can find a few factory owners, but most are craftsmen, grocers, factory workers and farmers. They do not play any great role in the political life but a few do hold public positions. Portland is the poet Longfellow's native town. The rocky coast of the country strongly resembles Bornholm's.

In Massachusetts a few Danes are found in almost every city and town, with most in Boston, Maynard, Woburn and Worcester. The colony in Woburn consists almost solely of people from Thy, the first of whom arrived in 1881. In Boston there are numerous larger businessmen, well-respected physicians and attorneys, but the majority of the population consists of people in small shops, and craftsmen and laborers in the large factories which are found in the state. I remember a day in Worcester about 20 years ago. It was the fourth of July, 1893, the Columbus Day (sic, Independence Day). On the four English mile-long sidewalks of Main Street stood more than 100,000 people in the hot sun admiring the processions of the various nations. First came the gala wagon of the Irish with the Irish colors, a golden harp on a green bed followed by about 10,000 marching Irishmen. The Swedes came next with a grand Viking ship and the Germans with a lovely Lorelei figure on a fine wagon.

“Hello, Gambrinus!” the Americans shouted when they saw Lorelei’s guard of knights. For them the Germans and beer are inseparable concepts. Then came a small group of 62 men—every single Danish man in the town—dressed in white sailor’s suits with blue collars. There was no vehicle to march with, but we marched as proudly as anyone, in step, under the red flag with the white cross, which was seen for the first time in the old Yankee town where Paul Revere, a century before, had called “the Minute Men” to arms. People clapped and shouted hurrah so much that it sounded like the roar of the surf around Plymouth Rock, and the next day the papers of the town wrote that the “Company of Sailors representing the Danish nation got the most thunderous applause.” One never forgets such a day.

Connecticut is another one of the New England States where there is a rather numerous population of people of Danish descent in the towns of Ansonia, Bloomfield, Bridgeport, East Port Chester, Hartford, New Haven and Waterbury. In most of these towns there are both Danish congregations and secular societies; the population belongs to the same classes of society as [those] in the other New England States.

New York has the largest Danish population of all the Eastern states. The oldest Danish association in America was founded in New York City in 1844; initially both Norwegians and Swedes belonged to the association but now there are only Danes in “Skandinavisk Forening af 1844” [“Scandinavian Society of 1844”]. At the present time there are about 25 Danish associations in New York, as well as an old people’s home and three congregations. Danes can be found in all classes and positions in society, there are business people and manufacturers, craftspeople and artists, office workers and grocers, apothecaries and physicians – and then there are more down-at-the-heel characters among Danes in New York than in all of the rest of the country, which is not so surprising as only the very fewest of those who are already out on the slippery slope upon arrival in America manage to get away from the big city. Aside from New York there are a number of Danes in Lansingburg, Port Chester, Schenectady and Troy, and right on the border with Pennsylvania in Jamestown, there is a whole colony of people from Bornholm who, in particular, have found occupations in the large

furniture factories in the town, several of which are owned by Danes. Jacob A. Riis [1849-1914] is one of those who originally came to one of these factories. He himself tells about it in *The Making of an American*, how he was permitted to sell tables for a Danish furniture manufacturer and sold the whole wagon load in a short period of time; hence he considered himself to be an unusually clever businessman; however, it turned out that he sold according to a price-scale which would have ruined the business if he had not been stopped in time. But it has turned out that there are other activities in this country in which Riis has managed so well, that he probably is the best known Danish born man in America.

Ferries and tunnels lead from New York over and under the Hudson River to New Jersey, where in Hoboken, there are to be found a numerous group of Danes of whom many have work on Skandinavien-Amerika Linjens [the Scandinavian-America Line's] dock. A large number of Danes are found in Orange, Newark and Perth Amboy. In the latter town alone, about 6,000 Danes have settled, among those several manufacturers, a number of business people and a large number of factory workers. In Perth Amboy there is a Danish orphanage, the only one in the east, a Danish church and a large number of secular associations.

In Pennsylvania the memory of well-known Danes from the beginning of the 18th century has been preserved. One of those people was Christopher Christiansen, a Danish builder of mills who founded the first water works in America (1754-1762) in the town of Bethlehem. Another Danish man was Zakarias Poulsen who came to Germantown in 1749. In 1800 his son, with the same name, bought "The American Advertiser," the first daily in the United States. Most Pennsylvania Danes now live in Philadelphia and in Warren, the little town, which is bisected by the Alleghany River. The largest number of Danes in Warren is from Vendsyssel and Bornholm, the first of whom came in the sixties and got work in the woods as wood cutters and in the saw mills. Now there are to be found a large number of building contractors, manufacturers and craftspeople both in Philadelphia and in Warren and the Danes have made an extremely good name for themselves in the old Quaker state and are well respected in the business communities.

There are not so many Danes in Ohio and Indiana. There are only a couple thousand Danes, who are widely dispersed, but there are more Danes to be found once we reach Michigan.

There is a vast chain of Danish settlements and town colonies from Lake Michigan to the west coast of Washington and thousands of countrymen have settled in "the great North West." The settler's axe first sang in the forests of Michigan and Wisconsin, where his plow soon created "scented meadows and rich cornfields," where the land earlier had laid fallow for millennia and the virgin forests themselves felled the rotting trunks. From there, the track of the Danish travel wagons in the middle of the last century leads towards the west to the fertile fields of Iowa, the rich land in Nebraska, beautiful Colorado, the wild country of Wyoming and the sun drenched land of palm trees, California. At the same time as the current settlers went to the Northwest; log cabins and houses were being erected on the virgin topsoil in Minnesota and the Dakotas, on the meadows of the Salt Lake, fenced by the tall mountains, and farther toward the setting sun to voluptuous Idaho, to Montana's lush pastures and all the way out to the states by the Pacific Ocean, to the lovely stretches of valleys and rich yielding plateaus in Washington and Oregon.

Long before the stream of immigrants gained speed in earnest in its western and northern run, individual enterprising Danes had forced their way into the Native Americans' all but unknown lands. Thus the bold Peter Lassen [1800-1859] went out from Katesville in Missouri in the year 1839, and traveled northwest with a twelve man hunting company. On the way they joined another expedition of twenty seven men, but of the whole group only six men reached the location of present-day Oregon City. Enduring the most incredible dangers and adventures, Lassen made his way to Yerba Buena, the original name of San Francisco, and in the year 1841 he bought from 12 to 15,000 acres of land near Santa Cruz in California. He built the first sawmill in "the Golden State," served in the Mexican War and became one of his state's first and greatest citizens. In the year 1859 he was shot by an escaped criminal; in 1864 the citizens of California organized Lassen County, "in honor of and to commemorate Peter Lassen, one of California's oldest and most respected settlers who founded the first lasting settlement inside the borders of the state."

Thus we read about our countryman Peter Lassen in the documented history of California.

People think that Karl Vilhelm Borup [1806-1859] was the first Dane who arrived in Wisconsin. He landed in New York in 1827 and got work at the American Fur Company. He became the agent of the company in Northern Wisconsin at Lake Superior. In 1847 he founded the first bank in Minnesota in St. Paul, the capital, and he was known as a clever and respected citizen. One of his sons became an officer in the United States' army.

Since the days of Lassen and Borup, the largest section of wilderness of the Northwest has become pasture and fields; the saga of the Native American is soon a memory, and there are long distances between the wigwams and tepees on the poor reservations. There is town after town where Danes have built all the way out to the Columbia River and Puget Sound; however there are still free wide expanses, which are beckoning and there is still room for millions of homes to be built in the mighty northwest.

The first Danish settlers came to Michigan around 1850. Most were from Sjælland and they settled in Gowen, Montcalm County. Several of them served in the Civil War. Considerable Danish settlements are now found in Trufant, Ludington, Manistee, Grayling, Muskegon, Detroit and Grand Rapids. Most Danes are farmers, but a number of them work in large sawmills and furniture factories and a couple of them own extensive forest lands and the largest sawmills in the state.

By far most of the Danes in Illinois live in Chicago, comprising the largest Danish settlement in America. Besides Chicago, the larger colonies of Danes are located in Rockford, Sheffield, St. Charles and Dwight. In Chicago there have been Danes since the founding of the city in 1837. The first "Dania" society was founded in Chicago in 1862; now there are about 40 Danish societies in the city. Both the two Lutheran church synods have large congregations; an old people's home and an orphanage can also be found. Respected Danes can be met in all classes and positions in society, and Chicago is, to the best of my knowledge, the only city which has had a Danish born man in the United States' Congress, that is Charles W.W. Woodman [1844-1898] born in Aalborg in 1844. He was elected as a Republican in 1894. Just as this chapter is being written

another Danish-born man in Chicago, state senator Niels Juul [1859-1929] has been nominated as a Republican candidate for Congress.

Wisconsin became the actual cradle of the Danish settlers' movement. From the western banks of Lake Michigan and especially from the meadows and the hills around Racine and Milwaukee a little farther to the north from Chicago, the multitudes went west and northwest to Iowa and to distant Danevang and Nysted in Nebraska, and across the old settlements of Polk County to Minnesota. In Racine County the first Danish-Norwegian congregation was founded; here the first Danish-Norwegian church was built, the minister of which published the first Danish-American periodical. Here America's first Danish assembly building "Dania" was built, which was visited by Ole Bull [Ole Bornemann Bull, 1810-1880, a Norwegian violinist]; Kristofer Janson [1841-1917, a Norwegian poet]; Anton Nielsen [1827-1897, a Danish author]; Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, 1832-1910, a Norwegian author and poet]; (much later Drachmann [Holger Drachmann, 1846-1908, a Danish author and poet]) and many others. Here the first Norwegian-Danish church conventions were held, and soon the Danish language was spoken in fields and streets, in the shops and factories, at the life boat station and in the ports – right from Kenosha by the Northern border of the state of Illinois and along the coast of Lake Michigan all the way up to Lake Superior and the Canadian border. Large sections of towns became Danish-American neighborhoods with Danish officials, manufacturers, grocers, contractors, and wholesalers. Danes forged their own plow-shares, manufactured themselves the wagons and threshing machines which their fellow settlers used. And the sails on the fishing boats on the coast were hoisted by Danish fishermen.

In Racine, a town of more than 40,000 inhabitants, a fourth of the population is of Danish descent. In Racine there are four Danish-Lutheran churches, Danish-Norwegian Methodist, Baptist and Adventist churches; a Danish folk high school "Luther College" owned by the United Danish Evangelical-Lutheran Church along with the two largest Danish assembly buildings in the country. Danish born and people of Danish descent are found represented in all classes and enterprises, and in the city council there are continually Danish born representatives. Something similar is true –

although to a lesser degree – for Kenosha, Neenah, Waupaca, Luck, and Superior (in that town there are no less than 25 Danish dairies), Hudson, New Denmark, Marinette, Withee, Brooklyn and other smaller towns. Madison is the seat of government for the state of Wisconsin; in “The Assembly” (closely corresponding to the Danish Folketing) [the lower house of the Danish Parliament at the time when Max Henius had this book written and published, translator] six Danish born Americans have taken their seats. In the largest and most beautiful city, the Danes are a minority among the city’s Scandinavian born population, and yet some of our countrymen are counted among the city’s pioneers.

Minnesota is the most important of the country’s wheat growing states, and the wheat is the best in America. The dairy sector also has a high profile in the state (about 700 dairies) and a large portion of the grain and butter come from Danish-American farms; our women and our men have participated in clearing and plowing, sowing and planting to seed and harvest, and have participated in transforming the Sioux’ and the Chippewa’s deserted hunting grounds into one of the world’s richest bread yielding regions. Everyone who first came to Minnesota participated in the fights against the Native Americans and the wild nature. Many of them fought in the Civil War under the flag of the Union.

As early as in 1851 we find a Danish family in the small town of Hudson, Wisconsin by the St. Croix River, near Minneapolis, and some years later a larger group of Danes came from St. Louis in Missouri. Most were craftspeople or farmers in the immediate vicinity of the town. In 1855 a Danish family settled in Freeborn County, and soon the settlement Albert Lea had a host of Danes, just as Carlston now has a large Danish population of country folk. In Lincoln County, the town of Tyler is the spiritual center in a large and flourishing Danish-American region. Here is the folk high school “Danebod,” known all over the country as one of our first and most important folk high schools. Ruthton and Diamond Lake are small towns in the neighborhood of Tyler, where a number of Danes are also to be found.

Right across from each other on separate sides of the Mississippi River are the “Twin cities” Minneapolis and St. Paul, the latter is the seat of government, the state capital.

Minneapolis is the location of the largest mill industry in the country, and St. Paul is the center of wholesale businesses in the northwest; in both cities one finds clever and respected Danes in all walks of life. A Danish man has for years served in the highest position in Minnesota's school system as "State Superintendent of Schools." All in all our countrymen have made great marks on the state and country, in schools and the church – here as everywhere else where they meet in groups and work shoulder to shoulder.

We travel on to the west across the border, the Red River into the young prairie state of North Dakota. Dakota means "The Allied," that is "the united Sioux Tribes." Today there are four large Indian Reservations [stretches of land set aside for the Native Americans] inside the borders of the state. The huge prairie region, which continues far into Canada, has either completely flat land or softly rolling long stretches of hills, while the mountains are sprinkled like gigantic mole hills around in the country. The large Scandinavian immigration began in 1885. Danish settlers have preferred the northernmost regions. Kenmare is the largest Danish settlement in the state with the Danish folk high school "Brorson" [named after Hans Adolph Brorson 1694-1764, Danish poet, hymn writer and minister]. A Danish man is the President of the First National Bank there and Kenmare has many Danish mine owners, manufacturers and merchants, several churches and societies. In Larimore and Flaxton, there are Danish church congregations; in the town of Butte the government has an agricultural scientific research station, the head of which is Danish born just like the head of the famous research station in Brookings (South Dakota), Professor Hansen [Niels Ebbesen Hansen, 1866-1950] whom the Secretary of Agriculture calls "America's greatest botanist, next to Burbank."

I traveled to "Devils Lake" in North Dakota in order to give a seminar in the year 1908. It is not pleasurable to travel on a local railroad line in the Prairie States. At about six o'clock we rolled in to Leeds where I had to wait until the train on the main line arrived at 2 a.m. It finally came and I sank stiff and dead tired down into the leather of the seat. Suddenly I heard someone say in an obvious Sjælland dialect, "Yes, he is supposed to be a good lecturer." The railroad car was almost full of Danish-American pioneer families who were all going to the meetings in Devils Lake, and

people later told me that some of them had traveled 150 English miles in order to be able to participate and to hear Danish singing and Danish language speeches. That is the type of people, which makes one forget all the hardship of the travel. The town of Devils Lake (Djævlesøen) is next to the lake of the same name, given to it by the Native Americans because they believe it is bewitched. It is salty and has no visible outlet. There was no town here 26 years ago; but then three young Danes came driving in their prairie schooners out onto the naked prairie, put up their tents and each took a piece of land. Now they are very well off and one of them owns more than 2,000 acres of land. Several Danish farmers plow with steam tractors and are, so to speak, running their own railroad as a Dane was the instigator of the building of the Farmers-Railroad which is 66 miles long. Respected and well-to-do Danish Americans are found in all positions in the town.

We continue toward the North West. Montana has been the scene for more horrifying Indian fights than any other state, but now it is peaceful and quiet on the large Indian Reservations. The richest Danish-American in the US lived in Montana, a contractor from Fyn [Funen] who at his death in 1907 left a fortune in mines and forests estimated at about 20 million dollars. Danes have settled in small towns and in the countryside around in the state in places such as Dillon and Fairview, in the mining town of Butte and many other places. Fairview was founded in 1889.

Idaho is as yet only partially populated and large stretches of land are advertised for sale. The climate is especially attractive for Scandinavians who are used to cold winters, and a number of Danes have consequently settled in Idaho's lush pastures where they own many dairies. In Idaho Falls, one of the state's most important wholesalers is Danish born, and along the full length of the railroad line (Oregon Short Line) from Ogden, Utah, over Dillon to Butte live Danish trades people, stock breeders and farmers, almost without exception, well-to-do people.

The Danish-American population in Washington is far more numerous than in the last few states mentioned. In the flourishing, rapidly growing cities of Spokane, Everett, Bellingham, Seattle, Tacoma, etc., there are well-to-do and respected countrymen in numbers, in private positions and several in public life. One native

of Denmark is the head of the state's veterinary department; another one was, for a number of years, the state auditor. Wood cutters, mill workers and farmers who, for the most part came from Danish settlements in Iowa and Nebraska, are especially to be found around Wilbur (on the large plateau in the middle of the state) and in Enumclaw, between Seattle and Tacoma at the foot of North America's grandest mountain, Mount Rainier (14,500 feet), which the Native Americans call Mount Tacoma.

Oregon is the Native American name for the Columbia River which, with its tributaries, forms North America's second largest river system. A number of Danish born Americans are found in the fast growing mountain town, the rose city of Portland. The Danebod settlement (now part of the city of Eugene, ed.) was founded in 1900 by Danish farmers from Iowa, Nebraska and Minnesota. In the Danish settlement of Junction City, about 100 English miles south of Portland, the roads have hedgerows or tall trees and the fields are so well cultivated, the gardens so lush and well-cared-for as if they were on Fyn or Falster. Even though it is only about 10 years ago when most of the Danish settlers arrived (many from Withee, Wisc.) they now have a vigorous congregation, church, societies, etc.

From Junction City the train goes south to San Francisco through California's northern mountains where gold diggers' deserted mining towns stand as tacit witnesses to the fairytale days of the gold country (1848-49). The adventurers came from the deserts of the south and east and over the mountain passes, they fled from the ships in the San Francisco Bay and marched northward up to the foothills of the mountains and the sluices of the mountain streams where the enticing gold lay hidden. There were many Danish sailors among the first gold diggers; other gold seekers came via Panama or from the east across the Glorieta Pass (in New Mexico, ed.) where later the Santa Fe railroad was built through the great American desert. Later Danish farmers came, and some of the gold diggers became farmers and everywhere where they settled, villages sprouted. The virgin forests in Humboldt County yielded to lush clover and cornfields. Danish-Americans are the leading agriculturalists and fruit growers in both Sonoma County and in the wheat regions of the Salinas Valley, in Alameda's fruit gardens, pastures and strawberry beds and in the Watsonville region's sugar

beet fields. In the San Joaquin Valley their vineyards are greening; on the sun-baked Fresno plain the juicy raisin grapes are ripened and dried, and the raisin boxes in the cities of the Far East often have the names of Danish-American firms. "The oranges glow" in the Danish American fruit gardens from Haywards (sic) a little south of Oakland by the San Francisco Bay to Los Angeles and San Diego by Mexico's northern border and no American of foreign birth is more esteemed or cleverer in trade than our countrymen. There are a number of larger Danish grocery stores in the smaller towns; but the largest and most numerous are found in San Francisco and the neighboring city of Oakland. Merchants, shipbuilders and ship owners are found in abundance in San Francisco and in all lines of business there are leading Danish-American businessmen, wholesalers, manufacturers, and clever craftsmen.

Now the trip leaves the Pacific Ocean & turns back through Nevada, where there are quite a number of Danish-Americans around the mining town of Reno and on eastward to the Mormon state of Utah through the vast desert and across the railroad track which has been placed right through the 30 mile wide salt lake. Not until the eastern bank of the salt lake is reached does "civilization" begin again. The country is friendly and rich, the fields well cultivated and the farms well-kept and they become larger and more numerous the closer one gets to the capital, Salt Lake City. Many of these farms are owned by Danish born farmers, who have helped make these valleys fertile.

One of the very first Danish pioneers was Hans Christian Hansen, who was among the 147 settlers who together with Brigham Young founded Salt Lake City in 1847. In 1852, 28 Mormon immigrants (sic) came from Copenhagen and in the following year almost 300 Danish Mormons arrived. Under the most incredible exertions and hardships and in numerous frequent fights with Native Americans, the first Mormons carved a road to Salt Lake City. There where the settlers carts once stood in the poor potato fields which were planted first, in the north the golden wheat, the oat and barley now wave, or the sugar beet field is unfolding luxuriantly between field and meadow; in the south, peach, fig, and almond trees bloom and ripen, the grapes are hanging in long

bunches, cotton and tobacco give plentiful harvest to Danish-American farmers.

Salt Lake City is an exceedingly beautiful and enterprising city where the mountains' icy clear springs babble in cooling cleansing streams along the sidewalks of the main streets. There are numerous Danish-Americans; many of them are prominent men in the city as well as in the whole state and they sit in important political positions; just about everybody seems to be well off and satisfied with their lot.

From Utah's capital the trip goes to the north up to Ogden through sun drenched, well-tilled meadows. From Ogden, an enterprising attractive town where Herman Bang [1857-1912] died, and whose leading Danish business so beautifully honored his memory, the train runs straight east across the southwestern border of Wyoming up the naked Rocky Mountains which form the large dividing wall "The Great Divide" between West and East. Now we are approaching the town of Rawlins, in the neighborhood of which many Danish-Americans have settled and carry on animal husbandry on the lush pastures. A number of them are farmers or "cattle kings" (own large herds of cattle), others are mine workers. In the town of Rawlins itself, there are a number of craftspeople and grocers.

Then the Colorado Mountains appear on the horizon, blue and distant like airy castles in the sky. The plateau's monotonous, endless green turf is broken by fields and kitchen gardens and farm houses become more numerous as we get closer to Denver, the largest and loveliest town in Colorado.

The first Danes came to Denver long before the first locomotive. It was in the sixties when gold was found and the little mining town of Cherry Creek, later West-Denver, was founded. There were also Danes among the first gold seekers and adventurers but several years passed before they gathered as a group. In 1879 the first Danish American society was founded in Denver, now there are four and a church and in the town a fairly large number of people of Danish descent live, most are craftspeople and businessmen but there are also individual wholesalers (coal and food). Two Danish architects have built the widely known Free Mason temple, which is the most magnificent in America. Colorado is known as one of the

healthiest resorts for people with lung diseases; in Brush there is a sanatorium called "Eben-Ezer" which is maintained by the two Danish-Lutheran church societies. Several hundred Danish-American farmers live in the vicinity of Brush.

From Denver the express train takes us east across the Nebraska border. Scattered about on the far-flung meadows of this rich state, live thousands of Danish-American farmers, most of whom have become affluent, through hard work. Many of them came directly from Denmark, others from the older Danish settlements in Wisconsin and Illinois and the towns of the distant Atlantic states. Around 1870 the first pioneers settled on the naked prairie where at that time free land could be taken (homestead). In Nebraska there were forests in only a very few places and building timber was therefore very expensive. Because of the lack of trees, the settlers built themselves dirt huts of sod. In a few places out in the western part of the state there are still such huts but otherwise they have in the course of the years given way to well built and beautiful farms as the settlers gradually, through laborious and faithful work, put acre after acre of the rich bountiful prairie top soil under the plow. But it went far from smoothly all the time. Desperate years followed good ones. Drought, hail storms and grasshoppers at times laid huge stretches of land to waste. These people suffered in silence and it took courage and strong wills to keep going and try to prosper again. It has only been a score of years ago or less since the Danish Nebraska farmer has had enough corn to sell. The trip to the often distantly placed railroad was tiresome along the wide clay roads and if he finally got his load on the railroad he was subjected to the most exorbitant freight rates. Then he learned to place his corn "on the hoof" (that is, to feed pigs and cattle—mostly the former) and managed to prosper in that way. In Howard County the Danish church's folk high school is in Nysted; and not far from Nysted are the villages Dannevirke, Farwell and Dannebrog of which the last one is solely populated by Danish-Americans. In Fremont, Rosenborg, Ruskin and in other places there are many Danish-American farmers. There are many of our clever countrymen in the capital city of Lincoln. The largest city in Nebraska, Omaha, has a large Danish-American population, Danish names can be seen everywhere on the signs in the streets of the town and Omaha is the

town where the Danish Brotherhood was founded. Danish farmers are found everywhere in the state, and businessmen are found in almost all towns. Blair is a spiritual center for the "United Church." Just outside the town is Dana College and Trinity Seminary, the largest and most important school of the United Danish Evangelical-Lutheran Church.

The preceding remarks about the Danish-American farmers in Nebraska serve as well for our countrymen in South Dakota, who have experienced the same hard fight for existence and in time have managed to fight their way to independence and prosperity. Almost all owe their prosperity to agriculture, animal husbandry and the dairy business. Viborg is one of the oldest Danish settlements in South Dakota, founded in 1872. In Denmark, Yankton, Hetland, Erwin, Beresford, Deadwood and Lead City there are rather numerous Danish populations; in the latter two towns many people work in the mines there.

Before 1860 only a few hundred Danish Americans lived in Iowa, but after 1870 the influx has been so brisk and rising that this state now has the largest Danish-American population of all the states in the Union. Danish churches, schools and societies are found in abundance. There is hardly a county where none of our countrymen can be found, and a couple of these—almost exclusively Danish—counties are just as large as Lolland and Falster put together. Danish farmers have thus some time ago been able to build the Farmers' railroad from the city of Atlantic through Kimballton to Elk Horn. Half a century ago Iowa was a waving sea of prairie. Now one has to travel for some distance before finding an uncultivated spot within the borders of the state. Several of the large transcontinental railroad lines cut through the state and well-maintained roads cross one another in all directions. Beautiful friendly towns and large substantial farms are sprinkled over all of Iowa and it is no exaggeration to say that the Danish-American farms are the best built and best kept and that no other foreign born population has a better reputation than our countrymen, just as none has larger credit in the banks. The Danish-Americans have introduced draining techniques according to the Danish pattern and many, e.g., in the regions around Newell, Rutland, etc. find employment doing drainage work. In regions where the predominant segment of the

population are Danish farmers, the citizens of the small friendly market towns are likewise for the most part Danish born or of Danish descent. Here we find countrymen by the hundreds as bankers, grocers, realtors, physicians, pharmacists, master craftsmen, etc. In Council Bluffs there are considerable numbers of Danish-born residents. The town was originally founded by Mormons who stopped off there on the way out to Utah; a few settled down in Council Bluffs. Along the main street of the town, Broadway, ran the old track formed by the Mormon pioneers' camp wagons. Now Broadway is an almost unbroken row of Danish businesses and shops.

In Des Moines, the capital of the state, in Clinton, Cedar Falls, Cedar Rapids, Waterloo, Audubon and many other towns you will likewise find Danish-Americans in all professions. In Des Moines lies Grand View College, the Danish Church's school for educating ministers for the congregation and teachers for the schools. In addition there is an elementary and high school, which educates young people of both genders in Danish and in English. The first Danish-Americans who settled in Cedar Falls in 1866 were settlers from Wisconsin. In this town one of the first Danish congregations in America was founded. About 150 miles north of Des Moines is the small town of Ringsted whose inhabitants almost all are of Danish descent. Fredsville, a village a bit southwest of Cedar Falls, is the center of one of the largest Danish-American settlement regions in America, more than 40 English square miles in size, owned by well-to-do farmers and tenant farmers.

As an example of the Danishness of these regions, I can mention that in the village of Dike I found a farmer who spoke a flawless Jutland dialect, even though neither he himself, nor his father, had ever seen Denmark. His grandfather was one of the immigrant settlers there.

Elk Horn is the center for another equally large Danish-American population. In Elk Horn in 1878 the first Danish folk high school in America was built which is still in operation. The town furthermore has a Danish orphanage.

A number of Danish born Americans live in Missouri in the two cities Kansas City and St. Louis. The first Dane we know about in Missouri was the pioneer chief, the great explorer Peter Lassen

(1829) who lived in Katesville. Later Danes came to Kansas City, Mo. In 1868-69, most of them directly from Denmark, the settlers found work on railroad construction and in the large slaughter houses. There are several known and respected Danish-Americans in Kansas City; the musician and composer Carl Busch [1862-1943] is especially known in American circles. Several societies have been founded in the city.

Kansas is the one of the southernmost states where most Danish-Americans live. They are found all over the state and by far the majority of them are farmers. The first Danes came to the town of Denmark, about 40 years ago; Danish-American settlers from Yorkville, Ill. and Racine settled in Greenleaf around 1868. In the surrounding area they own about 5,000 acres of well-maintained farmland and orchards. Kansas City, Kansas, lies by the Missouri River right across from the town by the same name in Missouri. There you will also find a number of Danish-Americans and several societies have been founded.

Well south of Kansas, lies the gigantic state of Texas where a Danish settlement was founded in Mackham in 1902, another in Danevang in 1894 by the now deceased pastor F. L. Grundtvig [1854-1903, minister and folklorist]. The Danish Americans here are enterprising farmers who grow corn and cotton.

There is a town called "Dania" in subtropical Florida and there are Danes here and there in the states by Mexico's border and the Golf Coast; but they are few and far between. The great northwest is the land of the Danish-Americans.

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The preceding text presents only a glimpse of the Danish-Americans areas of work, a lightly sketched but truthful basic depiction of what they have contributed as their input into the pioneer work, which has transformed desert and wasteland to field and town. Here, we have presented only small hints at what the Danish immigrant has been able to accomplish—not how he achieved it, nor who these countrymen were, nor the names of those, who each in his area has accomplished the most.

Therefore one needs to read between the lines: The regions he has cleared and put to the plow, the well-kept rich farms are his, the towns with bank and factory and shop and church and school he has founded and built; and here he continues to build. And he owned nothing when he arrived.

In addition, one ought best follow along on the map of America and pay attention to the fact that the distance from Oregon and Washington to Maine is approximately as far as from Maine to Jylland [Jutland] and that the measurement from Maine to the southern tip of Florida transposed on to the map of Europe reaches from Norway to the Sahara. Then one understands better that the United States is a continent, which also comprises quite different states in which people live under the most varied climatic circumstances and living conditions. And so, a person would not ask the question, like a Danish Realskole [tenth grade] teacher asked me in the year of the Lord 1909 during the Aarhus Festival: What is the climate like in America? One should be able to understand that New York is not America, but only America's great entrance portal, where the peoples of the old world can huddle together for a generation without knowing or understanding America and where the Danish born citizen so often continues to be a "Dane in New York." The Danes of the west on the other hand are real Danish-Americans and they place that concept of Danish-American first both in the individual and the national "Bridge Building Work." Therefore all the great associations of societies and congregations created by our countrymen are in the states which stretch from the banks of Lake Michigan to the Pacific; from there the greatest thoughts of unification have gone forth, there the most and the most important churches, schools, and assembly halls are built, there the heart beat of Danish-America is best known, and there all its pulses beat the healthiest and the steadiest.

These concluding lines are written on a train, which is taking me from a Danish Constitution Day celebration [June 5th] in Humboldt County in Iowa to a similar festival in Audubon in the same state. There were 400 Danish-Americans at the festival. They came in their own means of transportation, of which a dozen were automobiles of

the latest model. Most of them owned their own farms, many were well-to-do, a single person among the oldest ones was very rich, everybody—even those who arrived in the region only five years ago—were relatively well off. And none of them owned anything but the clothes on their backs when they arrived from Denmark. When I told them what a former New York Dane recently had written about Danish-American farmers who have “lonesome lives and fatiguing work and steady longing for home and dissatisfaction,” they answered with a burst of laughter which made all the birds in the Maple trees chirp jubilantly from delight, a laughter which expressed the Danish-American’s self-explicable satisfaction with the country and the home he himself has built and in which he continually will live, in spite of the frequent visits to the country of his childhood home.

The gathering of Danish Americans held a Danish Constitution Day celebration in Iowa. There were enough songbooks but no one needed them. The festival began with the singing of the song “I alle de riger og lande” [“In all the realms and countries” by the Danish poet B .S. Ingemann, 1789-1862] and ended with “Der er et yndigt land” [“There is a lovely country,” the Danish national anthem by Adam Oehlenschläger, 1779-1850].