



2009

## An American Presidential Election In the Eyes of a European Observer

Louis Christensen

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/thebridge>



Part of the [European History Commons](#), [European Languages and Societies Commons](#), and the [Regional Sociology Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Christensen, Louis (2009) "An American Presidential Election In the Eyes of a European Observer," *The Bridge*: Vol. 32 : No. 1 , Article 8.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/thebridge/vol32/iss1/8>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Bridge by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact [scholarsarchive@byu.edu](mailto:scholarsarchive@byu.edu), [ellen\\_amatangelo@byu.edu](mailto:ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu).

# An American Presidential Election In the Eyes of a European Observer

By  
Louis Christensen

*After "election fever" ran rampant in the United States throughout the year 2008 and Europe was also "running a temperature," it might raise a few eyebrows to read what a European observer wrote home after having attended the presidential election in 1848.*

*He was an experienced traveler who had worked in several places and traveled around in Europe before he, at the age of twenty-nine, sailed to America in 1846 and stayed for six years. He was well versed in publishing as a writer and editor and wrote articles filled with observations from his extensive travels in the United States, which were published in Denmark on his return home in 1852.*

*The author was "Alex Felix," a pseudonym for Hans Peder Christian Hansen, who was born in Copenhagen in 1817. His evaluations and his platform for observations give us a view of America's past with fresh and sympathetic eyes. We learn at the same time how earlier types of governmental systems distinguished between aristocratic and republican. This is made clear in the very first sentence of the report. The writer's native country of Denmark was still an absolute monarchy, but while he was in America, a new Danish constitution was adopted in 1849, with democratic elections, after a peaceful revolution that made the country a constitutional monarchy.*

*The preface to this collection of his travel descriptions ends with these two sentences: "All the many impressions that I have received during my lengthy stay in the United States I have written down in the following sketches and scenes. I hope that my countrymen will read them with interest.*

*"On the Ohio River, February 1851. Alex Felix."*



*The American Eagle as created by the Danish immigrant artist, Christian Gullager (1759-1826), who also painted a famous portrait of George Washington.*