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By Ole Overgaard

Have you ever heard about a little town in Arizona by the name of Overgaard? Probably not. I hadn't, until I suddenly saw the name on a map. I, a Danish journalist from the city of Aalborg, and family were planning a trip to the USA, and we decided to find out how our family name got to Arizona. After seeing the beautiful Grand Canyon, we went along Highway 40 to the city of Holbrook. From there it is only 50 miles to Overgaard. It is a very small town, but with a lot of vacation homes in the big woods which surround the town.

Besides some few houses, the town has only a general store, a restaurant and a post office. The postmaster and other people could only tell us that their town was named by a man called Chris Overgaard. He founded the town in 1938, when he and some other people started a sawmill on the site. The postmaster had heard that Chris Overgaard came from Germany or Scandinavia.

Back in Denmark I wrote in my paper, **Aalborg Stiftstidende,** about the small town in Arizona with a Danish name. Shortly after the story appeared the telephone rang — again and again. A lot of people from the area around the town of Hadsund in Northern Jutland, only 40 miles south of Aalborg, wanted to tell me that they had known Chris Overgaard or had heard about him.

His real name was Kresten Overgaard, but he had Americanized his first name when he emigrated from Denmark with his wife, Jensine. It was about the turn of the century. Before that he had gone bankrupt with his sawmill and clog factory in the village of Solbjerg near Hadsund, not far from his native village, Veddum. This I learned from Chris Overgaard's nephew, Paul Dehn, now 56, who lives in Norup close to Hadsund. Chris Overgaard settled in South Dakota, and in the bigs woods there was a lot to do for a Danish "timberman". He got his own sawmill and had many Danish workers, Dagney Christensen, now 76, remembers. She now lives in Hadsund, but in her younger days, she visited the Overgaard family in the USA. In the twenties six young men from Chris Overgaard's native village of Veddum went to the USA to work in his sawmill. One of them was Niels Rasmussen, now 71, who stayed in the USA for 47 years. When he retired in 1974, he returned to Denmark and now lives at Veddum.

"I went to the USA in 1927," Niels Ramussen says. "As most of the young Veddum boys who went to Chris Overgaard's sawmill, I planned to stay in the USA for only a couple of years, earn about 10,000 Danish kroner and then come home again. But I liked it and stayed for 47 years.

"When I arrived, Chris had a big sawmill close to Keystone in South Dakota. We were 30 in the woods and at the sawmill. I remember that Chris got a contract to deliver one million railroad ties a year, but then the depression came in 1929 and 1930. The railroad company broke the contract and Chris got a new Cadillac as a solatium. I stayed with him for four years. Afterwards I had various jobs, until I went back to Denmark. Most of the time I lived in Los Angeles. I know that Chris lost all his money in South Dakota, when he tried to find oil. Later he went to Arizona, where he started and supervised a big sawmill for a company. I did not know that the place bore his name until I read it in the paper."

"His sawmill and camp was called **Overgaard's Camp,** and since then it must have become the town of **Overgaard,**" says Niels Rasmussen. He knows that Chris went to Ohio when he retired, and there he died about 1960 — more than 80 years old. He never saw his native land again.

Pictures are of Kresten and Jensine Overgaard and their sawmill operation in South Dakota.

*Ole Overgaard is a Danish journalist with the newspaper **Aalborg Stiftstidende** in Aalborg, Denmark.*

Ashtray

By Marianne Larsen

see an overflowing ashtray
see all the dead cigarettes
death is not beautiful
no matter how small it is
see a book that's been torn to pieces
see the crumpled declarations of trust
confidence torn to bits is not beautiful
under any circumstances
see the frightened one
it's she who has done it
filled the ashtray and ruined the book
fear is not beautiful

Translated from Danish
by Nadia Christensen

OLD WOMAN

By Marianne Larsen

she went
to a large building
with a small room
among a mass of people
with ordinary human memories
she went
into the room
that kind folk via long-term mortgages
and manila envelopes
had helped her enter
life with the necessities
the contract said
desk and bed and table
and easychair
and a little air between the walls
she breathed in and out
when she felt like it
no one came
and she decided to
lie down to die and die and die
till there was nothing left
but a little air between the walls

Translated from Danish
by Nadia Christensen