From Bornholm to Jamestown: C. C. Beck and the Settlement of Danish Immigrants in Chautauqua County, New York and Warren County, Pennsylvania

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One of the earliest Danish immigrant settlements in North America was a community in western New York and northwestern Pennsylvania called Jamestown. Marcus P. Jacobsen has been recognized as the first person from Bornholm to settle in the Jamestown area in 1855 or 1856, and early on, members of this community came almost exclusively from Bornholm.
Bornholm. However, histories have not recognized the importance of Charles C. Beck in the origin of this community. Emigration from Bornholm has been written about by Henning Bender. This article adds to that research by situating Beck within the larger community of Danish immigrants who helped to develop the region.

The island of Bornholm lies in the Baltic sea en route between Ystad (Sweden) and Gdansk (Poland) and is situated close to the southern coast of Sweden—Ystad is about 65 km (40 miles) northwest, while Copenhagen is a distant 150 km (90 miles) west-northwest. Bornholm
was the region of Denmark that saw the greatest percentage of emi-
gration in the nineteenth century;³ Jamestown (Chautauqua County, 
New York) and nearby Warren (Warren County, Pennsylvania) were 
primary destinations for these Danish immigrants. Although Born-
holm is the fifth-largest island of Denmark (excluding Greenland), it 
is less than one-quarter the area of Chautauqua County.

Danes in Buffalo

The community of Danes that arose in the Jamestown area can 
be traced to a small Bornholm expatriate community that developed 
in Buffalo, New York in 1855-58 around the household of Carl 
Christian Nielsen Beck, known as Charles or C. C., and Caroline C. 
Rønne. Buffalo served as a stepping-stone for the young Bornholm 
journeymen who were the first to settle in the Jamestown area. Charles 
C. Beck began working as a shipwright in the port of Buffalo about

Entrance to Buffalo Harbor, detail from Bird’s Eye View of Buffalo, 1863, 
lithograph in the collection of the Buffalo History Museum. Photo-
graph courtesy of Cynthia Van Ness. Beck’s workshop/house was one 
of the six one- and two-story wooden buildings at the center of this 
image. A warehouse labeled ICE DEPOT is located at the foot of Erie 
Street in the nearby slip (north).
1848 and he is the earliest documented Dane from Bornholm to settle in the region. Beck joined the community of Scandinavians, including a handful of Danes, who worked the ships of the Great Lakes connecting Chicago, Milwaukee, Detroit, Toledo, and Cleveland to the port of Buffalo at the terminus of the Erie Canal.

Likely the first Dane to settle in Buffalo was Peter Lawson (1800-78) from Copenhagen, who arrived about 1831. The 1850 US census lists a few other Danes in the area. Trena Strass née Wolff (1826-1906) and her sister-in-law, Fredrika Strass (1811-81), likely arrived about 1845. Trena and Fredrika may have been sisters and were married to brothers Abraham and Joseph E. Strass who were founding members of the Jewish community in Buffalo. Both women consistently reported in later census enumerations that their country of birth was Denmark, but their exact origin has not been identified. Christian M. Benson (1818-81) emigrated from Copenhagen about 1839 and lived first in Albany, New York before settling on a farm in the Town of Wales, outside of Buffalo. Additionally, the Hedde family and a couple of other Danes were enumerated, but all had moved away from the area by 1855.

C. C. Beck and Caroline C. Rønne

C. C. Beck was born in Sweden on July 10, 1826, in the southern city of Karlshamn in Blekinge län. He was the son of master shipbuilder Niels Beck and Edel Benedicte Blache, both Danes who had recently moved to that Baltic port. It was a second marriage for both parents: Beck was divorced from Dorothea Winkler (1793-1880) of Nyborg, with whom he had five children; Blache was divorced from ship captain Christopher Egholm (1788-1831) and had two children from that marriage. They wed October 11, 1827, and, in addition to Carl, had a second child together, Johan Gustaf, born April 12, 1829. Niels Beck died two years later at age forty-three on November 4, 1831, in Karlshamn. Edel Benedicte Beck moved in 1832 with her children to Rønne, the largest village on the island of Bornholm. Her youngest son, Johan Gustaf Beck, died there at age five on October 15, 1834. C. C. Beck grew up in Rønne and apprenticed as a ship carpenter. Sometime after 1845, he left the island and emigrated to America.
In 1852, C. C. Beck’s mother and Caroline C. Rønne traveled from Copenhagen to Hamburg, boarded the Norwegian brig _Thom_ (passengers no. 86 and 87), and arrived in New York City on September 2, 1852. A week later, on September 11, C. C. Beck and Caroline C. Rønne were married at the German-language Evangelical Lutheran Church (later St. John’s Lutheran) on Hickory Street in Buffalo. Caroline Christine Rønne was the second child of ship captain Christian Peter Andreasen Rønne and Annika Margrethe Christiansen and was born in Rønne on April 19, 1825. She grew up in Rønne, where she and C. C. Beck were confirmed in St. Nicolas’ Church on the same Sunday, April 26, 1840. In 1846, she left for the capital and was enumerated in the 1850 Danish census as living in Christianshavn.

Charles C. and Caroline C. Beck lived in Buffalo for a decade and had three children there: Annie J. Beck (1853), Charles Beck, Jr. (1855), and Andrew P. Beck (1857). Their household also included C. C. Beck’s mother, Edel Benedicte Beck. In Buffalo, C. C. Beck and his family lived at his workshop, a wooden house in a triangular block at the entrance to Buffalo harbor. Some of Beck’s business included building sailboats for the new interest in regattas. Beck raced on Lake Erie as well and he was a founding member of the Buffalo Yacht Club in 1860.

In 1864, the Beck family moved from Buffalo to Jamestown where they lived on the west side of the village near the boat landing at the outlet of Chautauqua Lake. A fourth child named Alice was born in 1866 but died in infancy. C. C. Beck opened a shipwright shop and built an ice warehouse. Beck had been remarkably successful in Buffalo based on his investment in Jamestown, estimated to be $5,000 in 1865. C. C. Beck was the pioneer of the ice business in Jamestown. His large new warehouse at the boat landing was lost in a flood in 1865, but he rebuilt and in the 1870s the ice business was listed as Beck & Johnson. It was the only ice dealer included in the 1875 Jamestown City Directory. Beck took on as a partner John W. Johnson, a Dane from Hjørring who had arrived in Jamestown in 1866. They dissolved the partnership in 1879 and a year later Beck & Son sold their remaining ice business to the Swedish-immigrant company Herman Johnson and Bros; this later became part of the Jamestown Ice Company.
Aside from the ice business and boat repair, C. C. Beck built at least two passenger steamships that worked Chautauqua Lake. In 1873, he built the Col. William Phillips for W. H. Whitney of Mayville with a length of 38.4 meters (126 feet), a beam of 5 meters (16.5 feet), and a cost of $8,000. It launched June 19, 1873, was rebuilt in 1875, and was destroyed by fire in November 1876. In 1874, C. C. Beck built a yacht-styled passenger steamboat named the P. J. Hanour, with a length of 21.3 meters (70 feet) and a beam of 3 meters (10 feet), outfitted with a 40 hp engine built by Baker Bros. & Co. of Jamestown and a boiler manufactured in Buffalo. Beck co-owned the $6,000 steamboat with the Griffith family. The P. J. Hanour operated only that summer, beset with management conflict that led Beck to sell his interest, and the steamboat burned suspiciously on September 24.

C. C. Beck also built sailboats and was involved in the early regattas on Chautauqua Lake in the 1870s. His nineteen-foot Naiad won in 1871 and his Neptune won in 1873 setting a course record twenty minutes faster than all previous finishes. The developing interest in regattas and Beck’s early success with his boats led to additional business.
“Boat, on the stocks at the boat landing S.” Photograph, collection of Chautauqua County Historical Society, reference 56-0193. This is possibly the P. J. Hanour under construction at the boat landing.

“Yacht Niad,[sic] in bay near Lake-View. 1870.” Photograph. Collection of Chautauqua County Historical Society, reference 56-0047. Naiad was 6 meters (19 feet) long, cat-rigged with 30 yards of sail. It was built by C. C. Beck in 1870-71 and owned and raced by Philo Sherwin.
In 1872, the *Jamestown Daily Journal* noted, “Last Fall several orders were given to Mr. C. C. Beck, our accomplished boat builder here, for yachts, to be built in first-class style and to possess among other qualities, speed. Several yachts which had been on the Lake for a number of years and used mainly for pleasure boats, were placed in his charge with orders to fit them up for speed.”


C. C. Beck has by and large been omitted from local histories despite his essential role in establishing the Danish community in Jamestown. Neither his obituary nor later local histories gave credit to C. C. Beck for his role as the “founder” of the Danish Bornholm community in western New York, or his successes in the ice business, shipbuilding, or even sailing. His wife’s obituary in 1907 noted only, “Mr. Beck for a number of years conducted a boat livery at the city dock. His death occurred some years ago. Mrs. Beck was well and favorably known especially among the older Danish residents of the city. She had many excellent qualities which endeared her to her friends.” A best guess is that Beck’s death from alcoholism motivated the purging of his contributions in local histories and his minor description in the obituary of his wife. Most accounts of C. C. Beck’s accomplishments in local histories were written during the height of the temperance movement which was very influential in the Jamestown area, especially among prominent Swedes and Danes.

**Marcus P. Jacobsen and Jamestown**

“The first Dane to arrive in Jamestown was a 20-year-old blacksmith and carriage maker, Marcus P. Jacobsen, who came in 1854,” noted
the short history written to celebrate the city’s centennial. While Jacobsen did not arrive in 1854 nor was he the first of his generation to leave Bornholm for America, all histories agree to the important role he played in shaping the Danish community in Jamestown.

Marcus Peter Jacobsen was born June 23, 1834, in Polvsker parish at the southern tip of Bornholm, son of Jacob Hansen and Mette Kirstine Mogensdatter. He apprenticed in Rønne under the blacksmith Jørgen Christian Bjørnsen and was enumerated in that household in 1850 and 1855, indicating that he was still on Bornholm as late as February 1855. Jacobsen arrived in America in 1855, likely at first staying in the Beck household in Buffalo, but then moving on to Jamestown. When Marcus P. Jacobsen moved to Jamestown in 1855 or 1856, the village was only the third largest in Chautauqua County and substantially smaller than Rønne. The railroad would not arrive in Jamestown until 1862, there were no sidewalks, and dirt streets prevailed. Jacobsen may have chosen to settle in Jamestown because it was developing an assortment of small manufacturers, had limited skilled labor, and was emerging as an important Swedish immigrant community. Swedish settlers, who had first arrived in the village in 1849, helped build Jamestown into a prominent industrial city. For several decades, Jamestown was one of the most Swedish cities in America.

After arriving in Jamestown, M. P. Jacobsen soon married Sophia C. Lawson, and their first child, Martha, was born on February 17, 1858. Their second child, Marcus F. Jacobsen was born on August 23, 1862. Born October 25, 1839, in Mörlunda parish, Kalmar län, Sweden, Sophia Christina Larsdotter (Lawson) had emigrated with her widowed mother and siblings in 1851. Her mother, Anna Cajsa Jonsdotter, was a founding member of the Swedish Methodist congregation in Jamestown in 1852. Her uncle, Israel Israelsson, emigrated with his family in 1853. His wife, Johanna Lund, died aboard the Sagadahock during a voyage marked by cholera, and two of their children likely died before the 1855 New York state census was completed. Their remaining son died in 1862 at age twelve. In Jamestown, Israel married the widow of his older brother (Sophia’s mother), and together, they were leaders in the Swedish Methodist community.

Marcus P. Jacobsen was successful in Jamestown and owned businesses manufacturing carriages and wagons considered to
be the best in the area. His design innovations included a patent for carriage steering and suspension.\textsuperscript{16} Jacobsen also became active in real estate, including investments with his father-in-law. Through marriage, Jacobsen was connected to the larger Swedish community. But also, from an early date, Jacobsen became involved in the Yankee culture of Jamestown: “M. P. Jacobson [sic] joined the [Ellicott Hook and Ladder] company in 1857.”\textsuperscript{17} Jacobsen was the first Dane in Chautauqua County to be naturalized as a citizen of the United States on January 28, 1861. Marcus P. Jacobsen, “well known resident of Jamestown” died at his home in the city on January 8, 1920.\textsuperscript{18} His younger brother, Christian Michael Jacobsen, born on September 23, 1843, emigrated from Bornholm after the Civil War, and was also a blacksmith. He lived in Fredonia, Chautauqua County and later moved to nearby Erie, Pennsylvania where he died on November 17, 1940.

\textbf{Andrew C. Holmes and Rev. N. H. Holmes}

Andrews Christian Holm was born January 11, 1833, in Allinge parish, to Christine Vilhelmine Lind and Peder Nicolai Holm, a master blacksmith. A. C. Holmes claimed to be the first (of his generation, the Becks were five to ten years older) to leave Bornholm. His obituary
John Everett Jones noted that he arrived in America on August 24, 1854, but he has not yet been located on a passenger manifest. He is enumerated in the Danish census on February 1, 1855 as a member of his parents’ household in Rønne, and in the New York State census on July 28, 1855 as living in Buffalo. He moved first to Jamestown and then to the nearby village of Ellington where he ran a general store. In 1863, A. C. Holmes married a local woman, Julia Fitch (1841-1920). Holmes later became a salesman representing Jamestown furniture manufacturers throughout the eastern United States. He died on April 30, 1919, in Jamestown.

His younger brother, Nicolai Ovald Holm, was born December 29, 1841, in Rønne. Nicholas emigrated in 1858 and was listed in his brother’s household in 1865. He served three years in the Civil War with the Levant Sharpshooters (United States First Battalion Sharpshooters, Company 7). Nicholas Holmes was the only Bornholm Dane from Chautauqua or Warren County who enlisted and served during the Civil War. Holmes was taken prisoner in 1864 and survived Libby (Richmond), Belle Isle, and Salisbury prisons. He escaped from Salisbury and made his way from North Carolina to the Ohio River where he rejoined the Union army. After the war, now known as Nicolas Howell Holmes, he graduated from Allegheny College and became a well-known Methodist minister. Later in his career, he was briefly president of Pittsburgh Female College and Beaver College. He died in Washington, DC in 1915. The Holmes brothers were connected to several other Bornholm emigrants: 1) their aunt, Christiane Holm, was the mother of Nicholas and John P. Romer; 2) their uncle, Christian Holm, was the master blacksmith with whom John Kofod apprenticed; and 3) their uncle, Hovald Holm, was the master blacksmith with whom Nicholas Romer apprenticed.

L. H. Tideman

Lorentz Henrik Thidemann was born August 14, 1834, in Rønne, the son of Jens Christian Thidemann and Karen Margrethe Mogensen. He was apprenticed in 1850 to Ole Boss, a master painter in Rønne and was living in Copenhagen in 1855. He emigrated and was living in Jamestown in 1860. In America, he modified his name to Lawrence H. Tideman and became well known in Jamestown as a carriage painter. He marketed ice chests for Beck’s ice business in its
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early days. Tideman was also a house painter and sign painter. He received US Patent No. 147,531, issued July 25, 1873, for “Plastering-Boards for Walls” a technique for renovating cracked walls. Around 1872, L. H. Tideman married a dressmaker named Anna Neberle (or Ueberle), an immigrant from Baden, Germany. She died in 1893; he died July 20, 1899 at his daughter’s house in Jamestown.

Peter, Herman, Nelson, and Christian Greenlund

Peter, Nelson, and Christian Greenlund were among many young Scandinavian men who came to America to look for gold in California. Born Mogens Peter Grønlund on January 18, 1831, Niels Grønlund on October 15, 1834, and August Christian Grønlund on January 25, 1837, in Rønne, these sons of Herman Peter Grønlund and Caroline Fredrike Hintze emigrated to America in 1857-58. A fourth son, Herman, born March 11, 1833, emigrated with his family in 1867.

Nelson Greenlund arrived in Jamestown in 1857, where he worked for Marcus P. Jacobsen for a year before taking off for adventure in California. There he met up with his brothers Peter and Christian. Finding no luck in their prospecting, they returned cross-county to the Jamestown area. In 1860 Nelson married Mary Louise Sadler (1844-1932) and settled in nearby Randolph, Cattaraugus County. Mary’s sister, Calista L. Saddler (1833-78), wed Peter Greenlund a year later. Christian Greenlund married Lucy Viola Nutting (1845-1926), also from Randolph, about 1862. The brothers moved to Warren, Pennsylvania in 1862 and began a furniture manufacturing business. In 1879, Nelson Greenlund opened a prominent furniture store in Warren that also served as the storefront for his business as an undertaker. Nelson Greenlund’s obituary included a description of his travel to America and his adventures in California:

[Nelson Greenlund] left Bornholm April 8th, 1857, traveling through Copenhagen, Kiel, Hamburg, Hull and Liverpool. Here he took a sailing vessel, April 25th, bound for New York where he landed May 26th, after a long and tedious journey of 51 days. He proceeded to Buffalo, N. Y., where he met the following friends from Bornholm: C. Beck, J. Mortensen, H. Ancker, L. Tideman, and A. C. Holmes. He finally arrived in Jamestown June 5th, where he met Marcus Jacobsen. These
six men were the only Danes from Bornholm in America at that time to the best of Mr. Greenlund’s knowledge. 21


James and John C. Kofoed

Jens Kofoed was born December 23, 1832, in Allinge parish, son of Niels Nielsen Kofoed and Karen Pedersdatter. He apprenticed as a blacksmith alongside Marcus P. Jacobsen under Jørgen Christian Bjørnsen in Rønne. He emigrated from Bornholm with his brother and Nelson Greenlund in 1857. In 1860, Jens Kofoed was listed boarding in the household of John M. Brunson as “James Kafford, blacksmith” in the town of Charlotte in Chautauqua County. James Kofoed was again listed as a blacksmith living in Charlotte in 1865, but he was then married to a local widow named Eliza (last name unknown). In 1870, James and Eliza Kofoed were listed next door to his brother in Topeka, Kansas. Aside from these census listings, no further documentation about him has been discovered.

Hans Christian Kofoed was also born in Allinge (not in Hasle) parish, on March 12, 1835. In 1860, he was working as a journeyman cabinetmaker in the village of Randolph (Cattaraugus County, New York). Known in the United States as John C. Kofoed, he married Jeanette Perry (1839-80) in 1861, with whom he was living in Randolph in 1865. They then moved their family to Topeka, Kansas, where they appear in the 1870 and 1880 censuses. Kofoed owned a successful furniture store in Topeka. In 1886, Kofoed moved to Los Angeles, California where he became a land developer. John C. Kofoed died in Los Angeles on January 27, 1910.
Nicholas and John P. Romer

Lars Nicolai (born September 26, 1836) and Hans Peter Rømer (born November 25, 1841, in Rønne) were sons of ship captain Andreas Petter Rømer and Christiana Holm. Nicholas emigrated in 1857 and John P. Romer arrived in America in 1862. They settled first in Jamestown and worked for the Jeffords Axe Company. Nicholas Romer soon became the manager of the factory. In 1861, Nicholas Romer married Johanna Larsdotter, also known as Jane C. Lawson. She was the younger sister of Sophia Lawson, the wife of Marcus P. Jacobsen. They lived in Dexterville, a village just east of Jamestown, where the Jeffords Axe Works was located along the Chadakoin River (the outlet of Chautauqua Lake). Like the Beck family in Buffalo, the Romer family took in itinerant Danish travelers. In the 1870 US census, the Romer household included three young children, brother John Romer, a Swedish maid, and two Danes: Nels Munch and Nicholas Schenk. During the winter of 1870-71 their other boarders included Anthony Ronne and Jacob Riis. The Jeffords Axe Company factory burned in 1869. The family moved in 1871 to Buffalo and were employed to set up a new edge tool manufacturer in that city. This led the Romer brothers to start their own business, Romer Bros. Axe Company in Gowanda, New York, in 1876; their production later relocated to Dunkirk.

The Romer family is the best documented of the early emigrants from Bornholm. Their success was detailed in biographies included
in local histories. Their association with Jacob Riis has interested historians and their story is described at length in Henning Bender’s above-mentioned article “The Overseas Emigration from Bornholm and Denmark 1840-1940.” In addition, the Bornholm Museum holds a wonderful trove of photographs, which has been written about by Ann Vibeke Knudsen. Her research about these photographs is also included in a website that provides extensive coverage of early photographs of Bornholm emigrants in America.

**Jacob Riis**

While not from Bornholm, Jacob Riis is connected to the Danes in Jamestown. Riis’s memoir, *The Making of an American* (1901), recalled his time in Jamestown fondly. Of his many jobs, he noted that he “was helping with the ice harvest on the lake or repairing the steamer that
ran in summer from Jamestown to Mayville.” This is an indication that he almost certainly worked for C. C. Beck. He spent time clearing trees on Swede Hill, possibly on some of the land developed by Marcus P. Jacobsen and Israel Israelson.

Jacob Riis arrived in Jamestown in September or October 1870. He had come from Philadelphia, where he stayed with Ferdinand Myhlertz. A schoolmate of Myhlertz was living in the Jamestown area, so Myhlertz knew of the small Danish community there and suggested that Riis try his luck in Jamestown. The identity of Myhlertz’s schoolmate has not been identified. Fredrik Ferdinand Myhlertz was born on February 13, 1834, in Helligånds parish in Copenhagen; he arrived in America in 1857 and settled in Philadelphia. Myhlertz was a clerk and accountant as well as serving as vice consul for Denmark. He died on April 8, 1895, in Philadelphia. After leaving Philadelphia, Riis boarded with Nicholas and Jane Romer in Dexterville (now part of Jamestown) in a house that was at the northwest corner of East Second and Phillips Streets. That house is no longer there, and the site is currently a parking lot.

In May of 1871, Riis walked to Westfield in northern Chautauqua County and spent a month working at the house of Dr. John Spencer. That historic brick home was razed in 1998 by Westfield Memorial Hospital. Jacob Riis returned to the Jamestown area and visited the Romer family several times during his life. He died May 26, 1914, in Barre, Massachusetts.

Ole Larsen (later Olaf Lawson)

Ole Larsen was born March 4, 1831, in Rønne, to Lars Jensen and Kirstine Margrethe Jensdatter. He apprenticed under Hans Jørgen Kofoed, a wheelwright in Rønne. Lawson emigrated before 1860, when he was listed in Jamestown in the household of Alexander J. Pitts. By 1865 he had married Christina Sophia Lundberg and they were living in the town of Charlotte, next door to James Kofoed. Lundberg was born October 10, 1839, in Ödeshög, Östergötlands län, Sweden, and had emigrated from that parish in 1857. Ole Larsen was a wagonmaker and later in life worked as a cabinetmaker. He died in Chautauqua County on November 10, 1918; his wife died on March 11, 1927. His older brother, Andreas Larsen, born February 19, 1829,
Rønne, also emigrated and was listed in 1870 in the household of his brother in the town of Charlotte. He died June 4, 1917, in Chautauqua County. His wife, Ellen Cathrine Falk (1830-89) emigrated with their children from Bornholm to Jamestown about 1872.

James P. Sanders

James P. Sanders, born Jens Peter Sandbye in Nylarsker parish, on October 17, 1841, was the son of Jørgen Sandbye and Karen Kirstine Jensdatter. Sanders apprenticed as a tailor with Peter Sørensen in Rønne and emigrated about 1861. He married Clara Denslow (1840-1916) from Sinclairville in Chautauqua County in 1869. Sanders was a tailor for decades in Jamestown. He died on July 29, 1923.

John Kofod

John Kofod was born December 29, 1839 in Åker parish, son of Hans Kofoed and Getrud Line Jensdatter. He apprenticed as a blacksmith in Rønne under Christian Holm. In 1863, he emigrated and settled in Jamestown, where he worked at Jeffords Axe factory for eighteen years. He then became a partner with Elial Carpenter and James Tew in a start-up, Jamestown Axe and Edge Tool Manufacturing Company. After six years he sold his interest in the business and opened a large grocery store at the foot of Swede Hill on the corner of Barrows and Willard streets in Jamestown.

John Kofod married Lovisa Peterson in 1868. She had been born February 21, 1847, in Karlstorp parish, Jönköpings län, Sweden, and emigrated with her family from there in 1852. Peterson was the widow of Peter Morgan, a Dane of unknown origin who drowned in Chautauqua Lake during a picnic in 1867. John Kofod died in Jamestown on January 7, 1915; his wife died in Jamestown on April 30, 1923.

Charles Brown

Charles Brown went to sea about 1853 and sailed both the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans until he immigrated to the United States around 1863. He enlisted in New York City on January 19, 1864, in the New York Fourth Cavalry Regiment, Company L. That unit was merged late in the Civil War with the New York Ninth Cavalry Regiment (also
known as the Westfield Regiment). Brown mustered out July 17, 1865, and likely arrived in Chautauqua County along with fellow soldiers. Brown settled in Westfield where he became a house painter and married Mary E. Fairchild (1845-1892) of Westfield. Later he owned a clothing store in the village. In 1894 he married Susan Shutt Noble (1849-1924), also a widow. Charles Brown died at age fifty-eight in Westfield on November 29, 1895. His obituary noted he was born “on the Island of Barnholm, [sic] off the coast of Denmark.”

Other Danish Immigrants in the Jamestown Area before the end of the Civil War

Several Danish families not from Bornholm have also been documented in the Jamestown area before 1865. Those identified to date all have their origins in Schleswig-Holstein. An early Danish immigrant, James T. Koffoed, declared his intention to become an American citizen in Buffalo, New York on November 1, 1852 (the same day as C. C. Beck). There is no confirmation that he was from Bornholm and no other sources have documented him in America. Nelson Greenlund mentioned meeting two men called J. Mortensen and H. Anker in Buffalo in 1857. J. Mortensen may have been the same as Peter Morgan, but that has not been documented. H. Anker was likely John Anchor who was working as a cabinetmaker in Mayville (Chautauqua County) in the 1860 US Census. He has not been documented later.

The only Danes enumerated in Chautauqua County in the 1855 New York state census were Carl A. Zimmerman and his family in the town of Pomfret. The family arrived in New York City on April 21, 1854, aboard the bark Elise from Hamburg. The manifest listed their origin as “Holsteen” [Holstein], a duchy that was legally part of the Danish state until 1864. Although both Carl and his wife Mary were born in the Ditmarsken district in the Duchy of Holstein—she in Meldorf and he in Heide, the 1880 US census identified the birthplace of Mary Zimmerman as Denmark and that of her deceased husband Charles as Holstein. The obituary of Charles A. Zimmerman (1820-72) noted that he was a concert violinist who studied with Louis Spohr and was part of the Jenny Lind orchestra on her American tour.
Bornholm Emigrants who arrived after the American Civil War

Danish immigrant communities became more diverse after the Civil War, as women and families joined the journeymen who had settled in the Jamestown area. The first Bornholm emigrants to marry in the Jamestown area were Lars Peter Holmes and Ane Marie Møller who were married by Rev. C. O. Hulgren at First Lutheran church (Swedish) in Jamestown in 1866.30

Emigrants from other regions of Denmark also began settling in the area after the Civil War. John W. Johnson was born Jeppe Johansen on July 19, 1844, in Tversted parish, Hjørring amt. He was the son of Johan Christian Jeppesen and Maren Larsdatter. He emigrated in 1866 and became a partner of C. C. Beck in the ice business. Two sisters and a brother also immigrated to Jamestown. J. W. Johnson died on March 12, 1918, in Jamestown.

John Love was born Hans Peter Lau on December 5, 1848, in Øster Marie parish, son of Anders Michael Lau and Gjertrud Kirstine Hansen. He emigrated from Bornholm in 1868. In Jamestown, he married Marina Kofod, who had immigrated about 1870. Born in Rønne on January 10, 1848, Marina was the daughter of Anders Kofod and Jensine Catherine Ipsen. Her son with John Love, Henry F. Love, was the speaker for the history of the Danes at the Jamestown Centennial ceremonies.31 John Love was a long-time partner with A. P. Olson in his furniture manufacturing business. Marina M. Love died on December 11, 1917; her husband died on January 21, 1923, in Jamestown.

August P. Olsen was born on August 22, 1849 in Povlsker parish, son of Jens Olsen and Karen Kirstine Lidgård. He apprenticed under Andreas Larsen Holm in Nexø as a woodworker and emigrated about 1870. He settled at first in Titusville, Warren County, Pennsylvania, and then in 1874 started A. P. Olson & Co., a furniture manufacturer in Jamestown. Olsen was married to Ida Johnson (1857-96) a Swedish immigrant. He died in Jamestown on August 4, 1919.

John Hintze was born Jochum Peter Johannes Hintze on March 27, 1848, in Trinitatis parish in Copenhagen. His parents were Rasmus Søren Hintze and Dorthea Elisabeth Ronne, both from Bornholm, who had migrated to the capital. Hintze moved to the United States around 1870. In 1872, Hintze was part of the committee in Jamestown for the Grant and Wilson Political Club during the US presidential election.
He was listed in Jamestown in the 1875 New York census, but by 1880, he had returned to Bornholm, where he became a successful businessman and served as consul for Great Britain and Portugal in Rønne.32

Charles Ipson was born Mathias Carl Adolph Ipson on August 16, 1846, in Rønne, son of Henrik Ipson and Karen Maria Grønlund; and he was a first cousin of the Greenlund brothers. His father developed and produced a type of cement used underwater in marine construction. Ipson apprenticed as a woodworker, married Sophia Hintze (1851-1932) in 1872, and emigrated to the United States. Sophia was the sister of John Hintze, listed above. Charles Ipson was successful in furniture manufacturing in Jamestown and became involved in local government. He died in Jamestown on October 20, 1926.

Danish Cultural Institutions in the Jamestown Area

Danish immigrants in the US belonged to a variety of religious congregations. As a result of the small size of the population and the lack of religious homogeneity among them, there were few Danish churches in the area. A Scandinavian Evangelical Lutheran church was organized in 1871 in Warren, Pennsylvania, with Herman Greenlund as one of its founders. However, this church split along national lines after a decade (in about 1882). Local histories note that Danish services were held in the Jamestown YMCA in the 1880s and 1890s. A Danish Congregational church was organized in October 1900 and disbanded in 1920; its building was acquired by Emmanuel Baptist Church.33 A Danish Society was organized in Jamestown in 1882 with Charles Ipson as its first president. It seems to have been a mutual aid society and social group. In Warren, the Danish Mutual Aid Society “Dana” was founded in 1895. There have been several lodges of the Danish Brotherhood in America in the area, including Jamestown Lodge #93 and Lodge #171, Warren Lodge #8 and Lodge #202, Corry Lodge #222, and Erie Lodge #242.34
Table 1. Danish born residents in Jamestown area. US and New York state census figures. Jamestown is located in Chautauqua County, New York, Warren in Warren County, Corry in Crawford County, and Erie in Erie County, Pennsylvania

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Population and Persistence

The Danish American identity was important to the Bornholm emigrants who settled in the Jamestown area, specifically to set themselves apart from the much larger Swedish community. The Swedes had first arrived in Chautauqua County in 1844 and Warren County in 1846. Jamestown in the 1870s was unsuccessfully accommodating an avalanche of Swedish immigrants who arrived after the end of the Civil War because of the poverty in Sweden. This led to a shantytown on Swede Hill that was detailed in an article in the *Jamestown Journal* on January 14, 1870. Two Swedish families were interviewed through an interpreter and their precarious, impoverished lives were described. The article announced an upcoming benefit by the Ladies’ Home Relief Society to deal with the destitute. While not as alarming as what Jacob Riis would see later in New York City, the circum-

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stances of some Swedes in Jamestown perhaps sensitized him to immigrants’ problems beyond his own experiences.

This poverty among some of the new Swedish immigrants made it useful to distinguish being Danish from being Swedish. Jacob Riis recalled, “The Danes had a good name in Jamestown, and we were all very jealous of it. We would have starved, every one of us, rather than leave unpaid debts behind.”36 Prestige and a separate identity were important from the start of the Danish community.

On the other hand, it became increasingly useful for the Danes to be aligned with the Swedes as they ascended in industry and government in Jamestown and Warren. A pan-Nordic bloc emerged in the 1872 national election when Swedish political influence on local elections was first established in Jamestown. In response to a split at the national level in the Republican party, a Wilson and Grant Club was organized locally that was both ecumenical and Scandinavian.37 The leadership included seventeen members: twelve Swedes, five Danes, and one Norwegian. C. C. Beck served as one of two vice presidents.38 The Danes were overrepresented; at that date there was a population of about one Dane for every twenty-seven Swedes in Chautauqua County and one in nine for Warren County.

The success of the Bornholm community in the Jamestown area is noteworthy. No other ethnic group of immigrants or migrants prospered to such an extent in Warren and Jamestown. Being Danish brought with it a little more prestige in the area. But it is important to note that the success of the Bornholm community was based on the immigration of a narrow subset of the population. Nearly all early settlers were young journeymen who had completed their apprenticeships in Bornholm, especially in metalworking. With a focus only on that segment of the population, the achievements of the Danes in the Jamestown area are comparable to the Swedish or English immigrants with similar backgrounds. Also of note, the persistence of the early Bornholm Danes in the Jamestown area reflected not only their skills but also the opportunities available in the region during their lifetimes.

Jamestown was never a large community in Danish America; over the decades only about one percent of all Danish immigrants settled in the Jamestown area. Nonetheless, Jamestown and Warren were
important early destinations for immigrants from Bornholm, and a significant Bornholm expatriate community flourished there until the 1910s with family ties that extended well into the twentieth century.

Endnotes

1 The Jamestown area straddles the boundary between western New York and northwestern Pennsylvania. Jamestown developed into an industrial center and Warren prospered from its proximity to the oil fields. For Swedish Americans, Jamestown’s Swedish-language newspapers served immigrant communities from Buffalo to Cleveland to Pittsburgh to Altoona to Corning and Rochester. Jamestown was the preferred destination in the area for early emigrants from Sweden and remained connected to the later, nearby communities in Warren, Corry, and Erie, Pennsylvania.


4 Posts by Inge S. Jensen to the DIS-Danmark.dk on September 29, 2009 identified the Danish parents of C. C. Beck.

5 Both Niels Beck and Edel Benedicte Blache had been granted divorces or were in the process of getting divorces. Moving to a foreign nation was a basis for divorce in Sweden in this period; correspondingly, it may have been a factor in Niels Beck’s relocation from Denmark to Sweden.

6 New York Passenger Lists, M237, Roll 119, image 14/719. NARA.

7 C. C. Beck’s sailboat Banner won its division in the Buffalo Yacht Club’s first regatta in 1860. He built the yacht Adele that was owned and crewed by other BYC members and won the Buffalo Regatta in 1875. “The Adele is a famous old yacht and has won every race in Buffalo waters for some years,” Buffalo Morning Express, September 20, 1875, cited in The History and Lore of the Buffalo Yacht Club, 1860-1960 (Buffalo, NY, 1960).

8 Their residence and warehouse were indicated on the 1867 map of Jamestown. Beck’s investment was noted in “Flood in Jamestown,” Jamestown Journal, March 24, 1865, 3. Special thanks to Norman Carlson of Fenton History Center in Jamestown for bringing this news article to my attention.

9 See more in the separate section for John W. Johnson.


11 Charles C. Beck was noted to have a “derangement of stomach” in the 1880 US census. His cause of death on July 21, 1888, was bluntly listed as “Alcoholism.” Lake View Cemetery (Jamestown), Death Certificate No. 3431.

12 Jamestown Evening Journal, April 26, 1907, 12.

14 A. J. Lannes, Civic and Industrial Progress of the Swedish People in Jamestown, 1848-1914 (Jamestown, NY: Vårt Land Co, 1914), 11. Jacobsen was also listed as immigrating in 1856 in the 1910 US census. Lannes was a newspaper editor who likely interviewed Jacobsen, so 1855 is the probable date. Olaf A. Olson likewise noted: “The first Dane came here in 1855, and he was M.P. Jacobson.” Olof A. Olson, “The Swedes,” History of Chautauqua County, New York, 748. Jacobsen’s arrival in America has not yet been identified on passenger lists.

15 The population of Rønne in 1850 was 4,700, and of Jamestown in 1860 was 3,150. The reasons behind Jacobsen’s decision to settle in Jamestown are unknown but may have been related to the growing Swedish community there. Dunkirk had the fastest growing economy in the area after the completion in 1853 of the New York and Erie Railroad and was competing with Buffalo as a transit point for travel to the Midwest.


17 Jamestown Evening Journal, June 15, 1904, 9. The fire companies in Jamestown also served as fraternal social groups.


19 L. H. Tideman enlisted in the New York Sixty-eighth National Guard Regiment, Company B in 1863. This company was disbanded without service after three months. A soldier named Peter Nelson enlisted January 19, 1865 in the Town of Portland, Chautauqua County and died from wounds in hospital April 15, 1865. His origin has not been determined, but he may have been Danish.

20 An appreciation of his work was published in the Jamestown Journal, May 6, 1870, 8. “Card of Thanks. The colored people of Jamestown desire us to return their hearty thanks to their fellow citizens for the aid and sympathy rendered in helping them to take part in the celebration of the ratification of the 15th Amendment, at Corry on the 26th inst. They desire also to return special acknowledgement to Mr. L. H. Tideman, for the banner he painted for the occasion - the finest one that appeared in the procession.”

21 Warren Times Mirror, September 6, 1910, 2. Greenlund’s account ignored Caroline C. Beck altogether and left unmentioned the role that the Beck household played in establishing the Bornholm community in Jamestown and Warren.

22 Mrs. Nicholas Romer is misidentified in Henning Bender, “Den oversøiske udvandring fra Bornholm og Danmark 1840-1940.”

23 Anthony Bohn Ronne was born on November 11, 1848 in Rønne, the son of Mogen Jensen Rønne and Elsebet Johanne Bohn. He emigrated in 1869 and worked as a tool and pattern maker. He settled in Hartford, Connecticut where he died on August 13, 1917.


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27 Erie County Circuit Court. Naturalization Petitions, Liber 8, 165. This is unlikely to be Jens Thorsen Kofoed, born in Rønne on December 21, 1831 – he was listed in his native city in the 1850, 1855, and 1860 Danish censuses.


30 Rev. C. O. Hultgren, First Lutheran Church (Jamestown). Pastoral Acts (1864-1888), 26. “9 Dec. 1866 Lars Peter Holm o. Anna Maria Möller båda från Bornholm Danmark.” Lars Peter Holm was born in Nexø on October 2, 1838, son of Anders Munch Holm and Karen Kristine Hansdotter. Ane Marie Møller was likely the daughter of Hans Peter Møller and Stina Margareta Koefoed born in Åker parish on January 30, 1841. She died about 1870. Holmes returned to Denmark and married Ane’s sister, Johanne Cathrine Møller, born on November 24, 1845, also in Åker parish. They travelled to America aboard the SS Pennsylvania and arrived June 19, 1874. Holmes was a farmer in Cherry township, Warren County. Johanne Cathrine died there on August 5, 1895, and Lars Peter Holmes died in Warren on November 12, 1917.


33 The Zion Free Church in Jamestown is noted in Robert A. (Bob) Olsen. “Non-Lutheran Denominations Among the Danish Immigrant Churches,” The Bridge 36, no. 1 (2013). It has not been identified in local newspapers or city directories; it may be an alternative name for the Danish Covenant church.


37 Jamestown Daily Journal, August 24, 1872, 2.

38 1870 US census: Chautauqua County with 60 Danes and 1,625 Swedes/Norwegians; and Warren County with 101 Danes and 916 Swedes/Norwegians.

Bibliography

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**Additional Source Notes**

Documentation for C. C. Beck: