



DANE Øst

Danish Archive North East
December 2014

Hello!

It has been a while since our last Øst. Everyone has been busy at DANE!

In this issue is the President's Letter from our new President Agnes Jespersen Hagmueller. Then there is a great genealogical article from John Hester on finding hidden clues in family photographs.

We are in the middle of our annual fund raising drive. At the end of the newsletter is a page with our appeal for your help. Any size donation will be greatly appreciated and put to good use.

Sunday, December 21 2-5 PM is our Julefest. If you are in the area, please join us for a wonderful party!

Kare Venner,

2014 was again a busy and productive year for DANE. Monthly Historical and Cultural Meetings covered programs on Danish Queen Margarethe II, the Danish Home, Croton-on Hudson, NY and Danes of Brooklyn. We had a movie "Babette's Feast". There was even popcorn for the occasion. To celebrate Danish Heritage we had Fastelavn in February, Julemarked and Julefest in December. DANE members also decorated a Danish tree at the "Festival of Trees" at the American Hungarian Foundation, New Brunswick NJ. For 25 years there has been a Danish tree on display along with many other country trees.



(Vibeke Aagesen & Marian Meyers)

DANE helped the Danish Home, Edison, our home base, celebrate its' 100th Anniversary with a truly Danish flair. There were speeches from noted dignitaries, an all Danish music concert and servings of delicious smørrebrød to end the program.

In April and November our members worked on several archiving projects. Special details were concerned with digitizing and indexing church records, filming and cataloging cemetery records and photos. A round of applause goes to Wendy Hansen Hudson for compiling over 30,000+ family histories. Both Wendy and Janice Grace have been busy photographing local cemeteries and recording Danish interments. You can check "Find A Grave" on the web to see if your family members might have been listed. It is all very time consuming work and all done on a voluntary basis. Thank you goes to all those who have worked on these projects.

All of us at DANE wish you and yours a very Happy and Healthy New Year. We hope you will join us in our endeavors to record and archive our Danish "Roots". We have a lot of interesting programs coming up in 2015! Please join us.

Med Venlig Hilsen
Agnes Jespersen Hagmueller, Pres.

Hidden Clues

by John Hester

In my genealogy research, I have had the good fortune to come across several old family photographs which, thanks to information preserved on them, have helped me break down some major brick walls and find ancestors that I never would have found otherwise. Conversely, stumbling onto a long-lost ancestor in the record books has sometimes helped me identify individuals whose images would have remained anonymous forever, again, thanks to the help of information preserved on the photo that gave me some clue to go by.

In the case of a professional portrait, the information on the photo came in the form of a photography studio's stamp. It may seem like a little thing, but that small piece of information can often be a great help. That, plus some detective work, can sometimes lead to an amazing find.

Two ancestors who had been particularly troublesome in my research were a pair of siblings named Hans Christian and Karen Kirstine Frederiksen. They were the older brother and sister of my great grandfather, Herman Frederick (or Frederiksen before the name was Americanized). While Herman and his other siblings were accounted for (he had come to America in 1879 with his mother and youngest sister; two other siblings came over in the 1880s, while his father had arrived in the U.S. in 1873), Hans and Karen disappeared from the records of their native Holbæk County in Denmark in the early 1870s. Did they move to Copenhagen? Did they come to America? Did they die young? After several years of searching, I had no idea and no leads.

A group of old portraits would eventually provide the clues I needed, although the answers were not immediately apparent. During a search on ancestry.com, I had come across an old, nineteenth-century portrait of my great-great aunt, Ingeborg Frederiksen, the sister of my great-grandfather and the two missing siblings previously mentioned. The portrait was attached to a family tree started by Marge Gallimore, the granddaughter of Ingeborg. After contacting Marge, she informed me that the portrait came from the old photo album that once belonged to her grandmother, and which was now in Marge's possession. She happily agreed to copy all of the images and send them to me. Fortunately for me, Marge realized the importance of including scans of the entire image, both front and back. Most of these portraits contained the name of the photographer's studio, as well as the studio's location.

I had struck gold – or, at least, partial gold. The portraits, most in excellent condition, were all taken during the later decades of the nineteenth century and into the very beginning of the twentieth century. They were all professional portraits, taken in a studio, and so most bore the stamp of their photographer. Unfortunately, none of the portrait subjects were identified, so the studio

information was all I had. Only a few portraits were identifiable; Marge's grandparents, Ingeborg and Peder Johnson (Jensen), and a portrait of my great grandfather, Herman, taken at a studio in Perth Amboy in 1889. I was also able to immediately identify a photo showing a group of four young children photographed in Perth Amboy; the four oldest siblings of my grandfather, taken around 1900.

The rest, however, were a mystery. Sadly, although several of the portraits were taken in various locations in Denmark, stamped with the portrait studio logos, they were also missing any other identifying information.

Adding to the mystery was the fact that some of the portraits were taken in places in the United States where I knew my ancestors had never settled. Some were close, like Philadelphia or Vineland, New Jersey, but there were a couple that had originated in the Midwest. One image picturing a dapper young man, complete with a bowler hat and handlebar mustache, was taken at a studio in Escanaba, Michigan circa 1880s or 1890s. Michigan? I knew I had no family there.

Could some of these portraits have come from friends who had migrated to different parts? I had no way of knowing, but I certainly had no information to indicate that.

Time passed, and the identified portraits remained in an envelope on a shelf. It was a search for Maren Sophie Hansen, my great-great-grandmother, on familysearch.org that began to change things. Maren Sophie was the mother of Ingeborg and Herman, as well as the two siblings I could not track down. I had searched for her many times without success, and she seemed to disappear from the record books after the 1890s.

On familysearch.org, I found a "Sophia Hansen" listed as the mother of the groom on the 1899 marriage record for a John Frederick. The record also listed, as the father of the groom, Fred Hansen which, coincidentally, was the name of my great-great-grandfather. A Fred Hansen, married to a Sophia Hansen – since my great-great-grandmother was named *Maren Sophie* Hansen, it had to be a coincidence. After all, the wedding didn't even take place anywhere around here – it took place in Iron Mountain, Michigan, and I knew I didn't have family in Michigan.

Eventually, I was able to find more information about this "John Frederick" in the birth record for his son, Charles Oscar Frederick, born in January of 1892 in the town of Escanaba in Michigan. Escanaba, Michigan...that sounded familiar. In any event, it appears that John and his future wife, Kristina, would eventually become the parents of two sons born several years before their marriage. Their second son, Herman, was born in the town of Sagola, Michigan, in June of 1897.

Herman Frederick? Coincidentally, that was my great-grandfather's name. What are the odds?



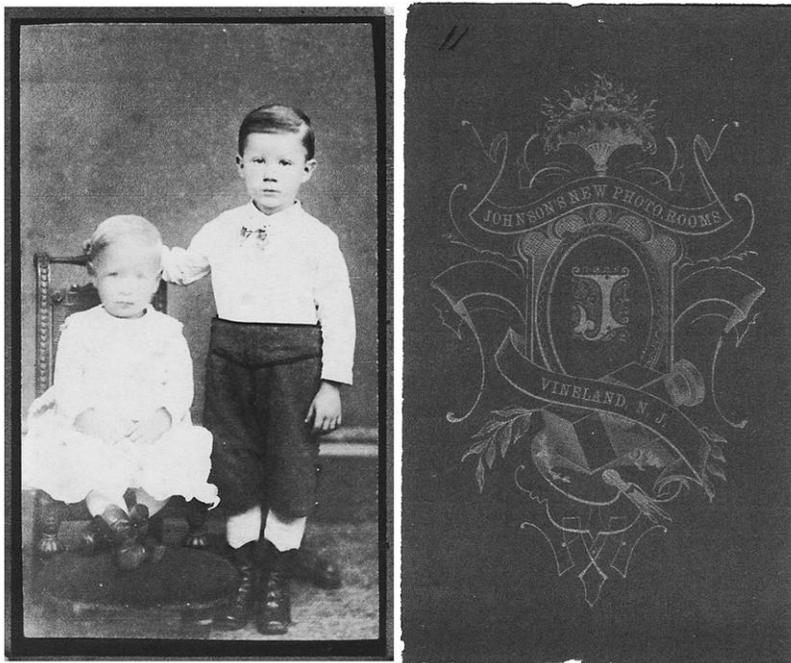
And then it hit me. I found the folder of Marge's photos and eagerly flipped through them until I found the one I was looking for – the dapper young man with the handlebar mustache and bowler had had indeed been photographed in Escanaba, Michigan, as the photographer's stamp clearly showed – the birthplace of John Frederick's son. The time period was perfect – early 1890s. Was this John Frederick? I looked at his 1899 marriage certificate again. At the time of his wedding, he was 45 years old, putting his year of birth around 1854, the same year Hans Christian Frederiksen, my great-grandfather's long-lost brother was born.

The final proof came, again via familysearch.org, when I found the death record for John Frederick, which I now knew was his Americanized name. He died on December 4, 1943 at the age of 89 in the town of Hibbing, Minnesota. I was able to follow the paper trail for John and his family from Michigan to Minnesota, confirming this was the same person. His date of birth, given in his death record, was March 13, 1854, the exact same birth date as Hans Christian Frederiksen. His father was also named on the death record – Frederick Hansen. Hans Christian had finally been found. Not only that, but I could now – officially – put a name to the dapper young man in that 1890s portrait taken in Escanaba, Michigan. Without that photograph, and the location of the photo studio stamped on it, I might have dismissed my first encounters with "John Frederick" and his mother Sophia as mere coincidence. And without locating John, or Hans, in Escanaba, Michigan, I might never have discovered the identity of the man in the photo.

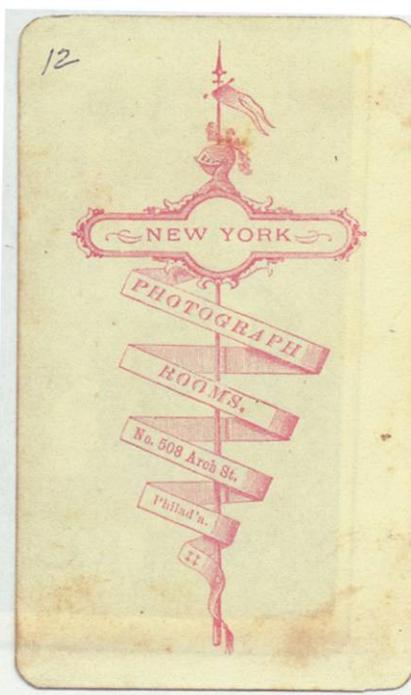
With one sibling down, that left one still missing – Karen Kirstine. The clue that finally led to her discovery again came in the form of "Sophia" Hansen. In 1905, Sophia, age seventy four, is living with widowed Christina Jessen and her children in Hightstown in Mercer County, New Jersey. Sophia's place of birth is listed as Denmark, and her date of birth, November of 1830, matches perfectly with Maren Sophie Hansen. The date of birth for Christina Jessen, September of 1857, shows that Karen Kirstine Frederiksen, with her married and Americanized name, had been found at last. Adding further confirmation to this was an old

family photo, taken around 1940, which I had inherited from my great uncle. In the photo, my great grandfather, Herman, is surrounded by a number of people, including his sister Ingeborg and her family. Two other women in the photo, identified as Mary and Anna Jessen, had long been a mystery. Mary and Anna Jessen are found in the census records along with their mother and grandmother in 1905.

That was not all. With the help of Wendy Hudson, records were found that showed Karen Kirstine (“Christina”) and her family – including her still-living husband, Niels Jessen - had lived in the town of Franklin in Gloucester County, New Jersey in the later decades of the nineteenth century.



Digging back into the collection of photos sent to me by Marge, I found one photo of two young boys, obviously taken around that time, in Vineland, New Jersey, according to the photographer's stamp. Vineland is a few short miles from Franklin. The photo is likely of Karen Kirstine's first two sons, Frank and Frederick Jessen.



Another portrait from the collection may show Karen Kirstine herself. It is a photo of a younger couple, likely taken in the 1880s or earlier at the New York Photograph Rooms, not in New York, but on Arch Street in Philadelphia. Gloucester

County is less than thirty miles from Philadelphia. Could this be a portrait of Karen Kirstine and her husband Niels? Without any other known relatives in the vicinity of Philadelphia at that time, it's very possible. Adding to the likelihood is that years later, Karen Kirstine and her children would eventually move to Philadelphia. A second portrait in the collection shows this same woman, photographed at the Searing and Hunt Studio in Plainfield, New Jersey.



If you have old family photos, share them freely with anyone who is interested in digging into your family's history. If you do, however, always remember to include any information that comes along with them. That information may seem insignificant at first, but it is those hidden clues that may lead you to an amazing discovery.



December 2014

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT

Dear Friend of DANE,

Danes came to the United States in fewer numbers than other Scandinavians. BUT!! What wonderful contributions they have given to their new Homeland. DANE is dedicated to preserving the great history and culture of those Danes and their descendants.

Our recording and archiving information is done by volunteers who spend many hours gathering data. Our databases contain over 25,000 names. These come from inquiries, digitized church and cemetery records as well as many records of Danish organizations. DANE celebrates traditional Holidays and Customs. We have monthly meetings dealing with Danish history, culture and help to those who need family genealogical information and research.

Money is needed to support our events and work. We are asking you to support DANE by making a donation so the Archive can continue our progress in adding to our collections and making the public know how much the Danes have done for this country.

Tours are available by appointment. If you are in the neighborhood give us a call—732-287-6445

Need help with family research? E-mail us at danenj@aol.com

Tusind Tak for your generous past support. With that help the Archive has grown and with your on-going support it will continue to grow.

We wish you all a wonderful Holiday Season and a great New Year.

Glædelig Jul og Godt Nytaar

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Please visit our website: www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~njdane

You can see all that is happening at DANE



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