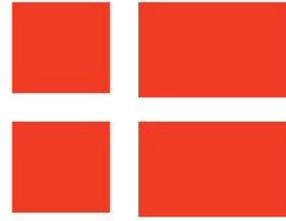


# GRØN ØST

The E-letter of the Danish Archive North East/DANE



## Summer 2012

Welcome to the Summer 2012 edition of Øst!

We had a very successful League of Historical Societies of New Jersey meeting at DANE on June 9. A number of people from throughout New Jersey attended the meeting and DANE gained a number of new friends. Thanks to everyone who helped with the food preparation, setup, and all the meeting day activities! Photos from the day are on our website and a few pictures are below.

We had a very successful “Archive Day” at DANE on August 11. We sorted out a number of items – photos, books, and files. It was a major help in getting us better organized! Thanks to all who participated!

This edition contains three very interesting articles. Agnes Jespersen Hagmueller has an article on the history of the Danish Children’s Home in Perth Amboy. Both John Hester and Henning Rasmussen provided us great articles on their families and research.

We hope you enjoy this issue!

*by Wendy Hansen Hudson*

### Summer 2012 Øst:

- Donor thanks!
- League of Historical Societies of New Jersey pictures
- The Old House – John Hester
- The Danish Children's Home, Perth Amboy NJ.1908 – 1929 – Agnes Jespersen Hagmueller
- The brief story of Laus Simonsen (1811-1891) - Henning Frydendahl Rasmussen

## Donor List

We had a successful fund raising drive in the last few months! This is very important to us because we depend on donations since we do not have dues and we do not charge for research. We had 67 separate donors and we really appreciate the support.

Thanks for your generous donation and support!

Robert Andresen, Toby Bobman, Mr & Mrs Borup, Emmy S. Brain, Kimberly Brenneman, Virginia Brodniak, Eric & Doris Brown, Karen A. Cerini, Danish Sisterhood-Freja 36, Karen M. Eskesen, Kim Farinick, Sarah & John Favara, Elsie & Richard Feltus, Robin A. Goodrich, Janice Grace, Eric W. Hagmueller, Edith Hansen, Edith Hansen (FL), Anny Hempel, JT & BL Hines, Gordon Hipko, Eleanor Hjulmand, Karen Horbatt, Waltraud Horvath, George & Birgit Jacobsen, Marion Jensen, Kevin R. Jespersen, M A Keever, George & Julia Kelly, John Kjergaard, Helen Kofod, Bruce & Marianne Kovacs, Irene Krayewsky, Ove Krebs, Kathy LaMaster, Joan & Newton LeVine, Olga & Victor Little, Long island Lodge 325, Christian Madsen, Marian S Meyer, Michael & Barbara Mitrosky, Esther Nielsen, June Nissen, Esther & Nancy Paugh, Elisabeth Pedersen, Ulla Pedersen, Sonja E. Petersen, Fred & Linda Peterson, Helen E Piatt, Margaret Piomelli, Earl & Carol Prang, Helle S. Raheem, Ingeborg Rupinski, George Ane Schultz, Norma J. Seeger, Vera Shereyko, Pauline Siecinski, W C Smith, Herbert Stemsgaard, Janet P. Stern, Jeanne R. Stotler, Barbara T. Struckman, Clifford & Eileen Theisen, Soren J. Thomsen, Maren Toth, Dorothy Varanay, Judith M. Watkins

**League of Historical Societies of New Jersey meeting at DANE on June 9, 2012**



**Making Smørrebrød on Friday**



**Checking in the attendees**



**Meeting presentation**



**Meeting attendees**



**Lunch!**

## The Old House

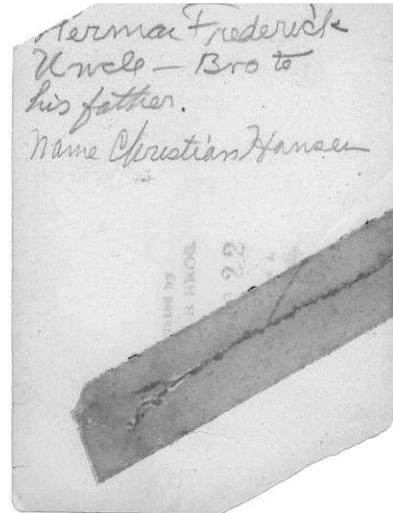
by John Hester



Many years ago, I remember my grandfather, Stanley Frederick, telling me about a trip he made when he was a boy. In 1923, when he was nine years old, he took a trip with his family to Denmark, where both of his parents had been born. A few old, fading photographs from that trip survived. Although my grandfather did his best to remember as many details as he could, many of the people and places pictured had been forgotten over the years.

One of the photos showed a large, old, white house, obviously from a much earlier era than the time in which the photo had been taken. While most of the photos from that trip contained no descriptions to identify them, this was one of the few exceptions. It said "Herman Frederick Uncle - Bro to his father. Name Christian Hansen."

Although knowing nothing about this great uncle, my grandfather was able to explain that his paternal grandfather was named Frederick (Frederik) Hansen (using the old patronymic naming convention still in use in parts of Denmark at that time) and that, according to the inscription on the photo, he had a brother named Christian. That was the extent of knowledge he would ever have about Christian Hansen, and it was all of the information I would have for decades.



It would be years before I would see that photo again, long after my grandfather's death, and after my grandmother gave me a collection of old family photos which included the Frederick family's 1923 visit to Denmark. Again, I would see the name Christian Hansen on the back of this photo. His name was one of the few I had at that time connecting my family to the old country. With my imagination fueled by the image of this house and the name of the man who lived there, I would sometimes wonder about him. Did he have a family? Did he maintain contact with his family in America? Did he live long enough to see his nephew, Herman, return for a visit? Whoever he was, he made a strong enough impression on my great grandfather that he felt compelled to visit his uncle's home,

nearly five decades after he had last been there, and to take a photo of the place that had obviously been important to him.

A few years ago, after breaking through that proverbial brick wall in my family history, I was finally able to find Christian Hansen, with the help of an acquaintance in Denmark who was more familiar with the online records than I was at the time. This confirmed the information found on the back of the old, faded picture. Frederik Hansen did have a brother named Christian – and he had quite a story.

Christian Hansen was born on January 2, 1831 in the village of Qvellinghoi in Stenlille parish, Holbæk County, on the island of Zealand. He was the fourth of six children born to Hans Frederiksen, a woodworker, and his wife, Inger Andersdatter. Christian was four years younger than my great-great grandfather Frederik, who was born on November 25, 1826. By 1840, the family had settled in the village of Assentorp in Stenmagle parish, in neighboring Sorø County.

Answering another of my questions about Christian, I found that he did have a family, and a large one. On May 4, 1853, Christian married 20 year old Ane Kirstine Jørgensdatter in Stenlille Kirke. A few months later, they moved to Niløse parish, where Ane Kirstine had been raised, and where their first child, Ane Margrete Christiansen, was born in 1854.

In 1856, Christian, Ane Kirstine, and their daughter settled in the town of Brandstrup in Tersløse parish. This is where they would remain, living in the old, white house in the picture. The following year, their second child, Karen Marie, was born, and she would eventually be followed by eight others over the next nineteen years.

Christian was a hønsekræmmer, or poultry farmer. He sold chickens and eggs, probably going to markets in nearby towns and cities to sell his wares.

As details began to emerge, I could see that Christian's life was marked with personal and professional difficulties. A son, Christen, died in 1864 at the age of three. It also appears that his daughter Karen suffered from epilepsy, likely a source of worry and concern for her parents. Later records show that Karen would eventually go to live at Kolonien Philadelphia, a hospital in the town of Dianalund, established for the care and treatment of those afflicted with epilepsy.

On November 25, 1875, Christian's wife, Ane Kirstine, gave birth to twin boys, the ninth and tenth children born to the family. This may have put further pressure on the family's already strained finances, since it appears that Christian may have been experiencing business troubles around this time.

On March 24, 1876, Christian and Ane Kirstine's twin boys, Jens Frederik and Carl Jacob, were baptized in Tersløse Kirke. The twin boys' older sister, Ane Margrethe Christiansen, served as their godmother, with another sister, Karen Marie (not to be confused with their other sister, Karen), serving as a witness. Christian's mother Inger,

now a widow, would have been present as would most of his siblings and their families. We do know that his older brother Frederik was not there. He had left for a new life in America three years earlier, leaving his wife and children in Denmark until the day when he would be able to send for them. They were likely at the church for the baptism, including Frederik's youngest son, Herman.

Christian Hansen's story would have a tragic ending. On April 22, 1876, just weeks after the baptism of his five-month-old twin sons, Christian took his own life at the age of 45. He had hanged himself, possibly in the house depicted in the old, faded photograph.

Christian's burial record in the Tersløse parish register suggests "nærings sorg" – trade problems - as the reason behind his suicide. Did business troubles lead Christian to end his life? Additional remarks state "dog rigtigst - efter forholdende at dømme Sindsforvirring" – "more correct - judging from the circumstances, insane."

Ane Kirstine, Christian's widow, never remarried. Within a few years of her husband's suicide, she left the house in Brandstrup and moved to the town of Tersløse where she raised her younger children, including the twin boys who would never know their father. She survived her husband by many years and died in 1909.

At the time of Christian's suicide, his nephew, Herman, was only five years old. It is possible that in the absence of his own father, whom he would have barely known, Herman had looked to his uncle as a sort of father figure. The old house in Brandstrup would have been a very familiar place to him. Herman and his family lived in Orebo, walking distance from Brandstrup. He likely spent time here, sharing meals with Christian's family, playing with his cousins, or chasing his uncle's chickens around the farm. Christian's death, and the circumstances surrounding it, likely proved to be a devastating event, one that young Herman would never forget.

In 1923, Herman Frederick (his name shortened from Frederiksen), now 53 years old, returned from America with his family, visiting places he remembered from his boyhood. We know from another photo that he and his family visited Orebo, the village where he had lived before leaving for America in 1879 at the age of nine.

Less than a mile away from Orebo is Brandstrup, the town where his uncle had lived and died. Herman may have been surprised to see the house still standing. The old place still meant enough to him that he took a photo of it, so he would have a memento to bring back home to America. As far as anyone knows, it is the only photo of the house where Christian Hansen and his family lived. Now, I know the story.

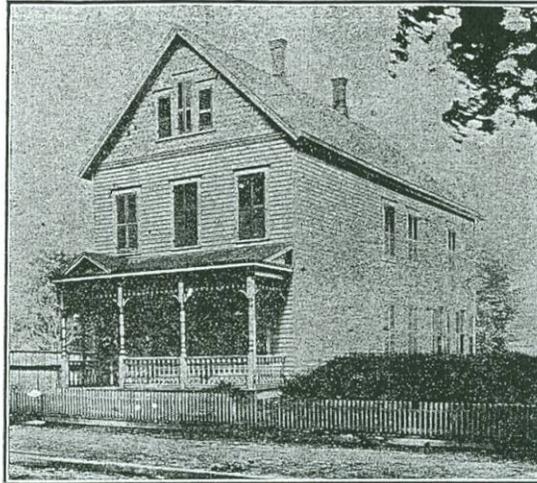


Jens Frederik Christiansen

# The Danish Children's Home, Perth Amboy NJ 1908 – 1929

by Agnes Jespersen Hagmueller

Det danske  
Ev.-lutherske  
Børnehjem  
Perth Amboy,  
N. J.



JOHS. CHRISTIANSEN,  
Præst ved Ev. Luth. Kirke  
i Perth Amboy, N. J.,  
*Forstander,*  
69 Market St.,  
Perth Amboy, N. J.

F. L. BRUUN,  
*Kasserer,*  
240 State St.,  
Perth Amboy, N. J.

AXEL G. LOBER,  
*Sekretær, p. t.*  
Keyport, N. J.

FRU H. HELSETH,  
Perth Amboy, N. J.

FRK. EMMA WANTING,  
Perth Amboy, N. J.

FRU IDA FAURSKOV JENSEN,  
New York.

JENS A. RIIS,  
Brooklyn, N. Y.

The Danish Children's Home located at State Street, Perth Amboy, NJ was dedicated 7 September 1908. Its' Board of Directors was headed by Rev. Johannes Christiansen. There are several notations concerning the Home in the Pastoral Dagbog of Rev. Rasmus Andersen, former pastor of St. Stephen Danish Lutheran Church, Perth Amboy. In the 1910 U.S. Census there were 12 children in residence.

Clara C. Hansen was the first Home matron 1908-1911. Her sister Loanna was assistant matron during the same time period. Other caregivers and matrons included Mrs. Christian Larsen, Mr. & Mrs. Simon (Emma) Smith, and Mrs. Jacob L. (Anna) Petersen served from 1919 till the Home closed in 1929.



A Perth Amboy Evening News article dated May 1912 listed donations were received from the Danish Sisterhood, Dana Relief Society and the Ladies Society of St. Stephen Church. Other donations included a chicken, a goose, 3 boxes of soda water, and 100 lbs of flour from Mrs. Karl Mathiasen. Also in the listings was a pair of shoes, 1 suit of boy's clothes, two hair brushes and ribbons.

The Home was moved to 414 Compton Ave, Perth Amboy in 1916. There were yearly September celebrations marking the anniversary of the Home's founding. At one such event held on 18 September 1926. Rev. P. Gøtke, newly appointed pastor of St Stephen and Danish author and poet Ivar Kirkegaard were the principal speakers. Frem Singing Society and Danish soprano Madame Emena Von Holstein provided music. Refreshments were served by members of the Ladies Auxiliary.



A Festive Celebration at the Home



**John Albert Jespersen**  
**Confirmation 21 April 1918**



In 1915 there were 9 children at the Home. Six were of Danish descent; the Jespersens, Jasper, John and Julius, Tuella and Alla Spears, and Marius Jensen. Irene, Julius and Naomi Wagner were of Swedish parents. They attended School #7 in Perth Amboy. They all were educated in the Danish language at St Stephen Sunday School. The church was then located at Broad St. Perth Amboy. When the children reached the age of 14 years they were sent out to some kind of job or employment. In the case of John Jespersen he was sent to work on a farm at Flemington NJ. After a brief time he returned to Perth Amboy and apprenticed as a carpenter with the firm of Smith & Ostergaard.

The Home was incorporated in May of 1912 and became known as the Children's Home of the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church. The Board was led by Pastor A. L. Dorf, St. Stephen. It remained at the Compton Ave. address until it closed in 1929.

Photos are from the John Jespersen collection. Additional information on the Home can be obtained from DANE archive.

## The brief story of Laus Simonsen (1811-1891)

*by his great-great grandson,  
Henning Frydendahl Rasmussen, British Columbia, Canada.*

I have always been interested in family history but it is only recently that I have been able to find the time to go more in-depth with my research. I am extremely lucky to live in a time when the computer and the internet has made it possible to have access to information, such as church records and census records in Denmark, while living in Canada half a world away. And I have been fortunate to be able to enlist the assistance of Ms. Nanna Iversen at the archives in Broerup, Denmark and, not least, the Danish Archives North East in New Jersey, where Ms. Wendy Hansen Hudson has been outstanding in providing information about my forefather, Laus.

I began by looking through an old family tree that was prepared by my dad's uncle some 80 years ago. Under my great-great grandfather, Laus (Laurids) Simonsen, the only information available was a brief note that he had died in America! No birth date or other information. This, of course, triggered a lot of questions in my mind! Why did he emigrate and why did he leave his daughter, my great grandmother, in Denmark? Why was he never mentioned by my dad or my grandfather Laurids, who must have been named after him and who was born in 1876, 5 years before Laus left Denmark? I started to work backwards from the church records of my great grandmother and found that Laus Simonsen was born on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 1811 in Westerby, Oested parish, Vejle County in the southern part of Jutland, Denmark, as the son of farmer Simon Andersen and his wife, Mette Lausdatter. There are no records of his early years other than he was confirmed in Oedsted church in 1825. Laus was married on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June, 1838 to Else Joergensdatter, (born in 1812 – exact date unknown) and they settled on a farm in Gesten parish, Ribe county.

While living in Gesten parish, Laus and Else had 3 children. Ane (Anna ), who became my great grandmother, was born on February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1839. Simon was born on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1841 and Mette was born on May 15<sup>th</sup> 1843. It is not clear why they left Gesten parish but the church records show that they moved to Broerup parish, Ribe County in 1844 where they bought a farm in the small village of Gjerndrup. The farm still exists today and is what in the old days could be considered a fair size operation with a couple of hired hands.

Laus' wife, Else, died in 1845 from an unknown illness, shortly after the move to Gjerndrup and Laus was re-married the following year to Kirsten Marie Nielsdatter (born in 1819), who was the daughter of the previous owner of the farm, Niels Mortensen and his wife Maren Madsdatter.

Laus and Kirsten Marie had 8 children. Only two of their children, Ole (born 1852) and Else Marie (born 1860) survived into adulthood. It is not known why Laus and Kirsten Marie decided to leave Gjerndrup in the early part of 1863. Could there have been

financial problems? They moved to Vejrup parish, Ribe County. There, in the summer of 1863, Mette (from Laus' first marriage) died, 20 years old, from an unspecified illness. They left Vejrup parish in 1867 and moved to Starup parish, Ribe County. But already the following year they moved again, this time to Faaborg parish, Ribe County. The 1880 census showed that they lived in a rented house and Laus was listed as a "cabinet maker". Laus was now 69 years old and none of his surviving children were, of course, in the household. My great grandmother, Ane, had married a blacksmith, Rasmus Rasmussen, in Gjerndrup, (incidentally the blacksmith shop was located close to Laus' old farm there) and Simon and Ole had left for the US where they arrived on April 16<sup>th</sup>, 1873. Simon and Ole settled in Perth Amboy, NJ, where Simon Simonsen in 1875 later married a fellow Danish emigrant, Clausine Marie Bensen. Simon's and Ole's younger sister, Else Marie, decided to join them in Perth Amboy in 1879.

Laus and Kirsten Marie must have felt quite lonely back in Denmark with only one daughter remaining in the country and with the rest of their surviving children in America. It is unclear why Laus and his wife, considering their advanced age (Laus was 70 and Kirsten Marie was 62 years old) decided to immigrate to America in 1881. In those days there was no old age pension available and maybe they felt that their 3 children in the new country could provide for them?

Laus lived the rest of his life in Perth Amboy where he died on July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1891. His last address was on East Avenue, the same street (address?) as his son and daughter-in-law, Simon and Clausine. Kirsten Marie died in 1895. Laus and Kirsten Marie are buried in Alpine Cemetery, Perth Amboy, where their headstone can still be seen.

Simon and Clausine, (also known by the name Sena) according to the records, do not appear to have had any children, but the mystery is that there is a Carl Simonsen marked on Simon's and Clausine's headstone in Alpine Cemetery! Simon died in 1911 and Clausine died in 1926. (Clausine remarried a John Nissen Dall after the death of Simon but she is buried with Simon at Alpine Cemetery).

Laus' and Kirsten Marie's daughter, Else Marie, married a fellow Dane, Rasmus Berthelsen, in 1882 and they lived for a while in Perth Amboy. They later moved to 438 Main Street in Bridgeport, Connecticut. It is believed that Rasmus may have died before 1930. The date of Else Marie's death has not been found either, but it is believed that she died after Rasmus, i.e. after 1930. Rasmus and Else Marie had two children. Anders (Andrew) Berthelsen was born in NJ on February 16<sup>th</sup>, 1883 and he died on September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1949 in Hamden, Connecticut. Kirstine (Christine) Marie Berthelsen was born in NJ on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1884. It is not known when she died but it is believed it was after 1930. Anders Berthelsen married Ruth Labrague around 1905. They had 3 children. Louis (born 1905, died 1962), Viola Ruth (born 1907, died 1984), Lawrence (born 1908, died 1990).

Kirstine Marie Berthelsen married Harold Cox around 1907. They had two children: Leroy (born around 1909) and Elsie (born around 1911). Date of death has not been found.

There is not much information about Ole Simonsen. He appears to have moved around a lot and for a period of time he was living with his sister, Else Marie and brother-in-law in Connecticut. It is not known when he died.

Many questions remain unanswered. I believe there must be living descendants of Rasmus and Else Marie Berthelsen. But how do I find them? And how do I solve the mystery about Carl Simonsen who appears to be a son of Simon Simonsen and Clausine (Sena) but who is not recorded as their child anywhere as far as we can find out? The headstone indicates that Carl was born in Denmark on February 12<sup>th</sup>, 1879 and he died in Pensacola, Florida on August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1906. Could he have been a relative of Clausine and adopted? Are there any photos of the Simonsen family?

I would like to extend a big thank you to DANE - and Wendy Hansen Hudson in particular - for the wealth of information that was provided to me. If anybody has any further information, especially about Laus Simonsen's life in Perth Amboy or about possible descendants of Else Marie and Rasmus Berthelsen - and in particular - about the mysterious Carl (Charles) Simonsen, I would be most grateful to hear from you. I may be contacted at [raseng@telusplanet.net](mailto:raseng@telusplanet.net)

My daughter, Elisabeth, has kindly proofread this brief account of Laus Simonsen's life.