

**I WAS BORN IN DENMARK -  
WHERE DO I BELONG?**

- A Special Research on Danish  
Immigrants' Integration Process in the  
USA of the 1900's.

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## **Preface**

In the center of the Mid West, in the heart of the United States of America, surrounded by fertile cornfields, a conference was held in October 2002 in Omaha, covering the relationship between Denmark and USA since World War II.

The weekend long conference was attended by more than 400 persons. A number that surprised the planners, who had expected at the most a couple of hundred participants.

The main theme was spread over a number of secondary themes, which had in common that they all described the relationship of two nations in a new light, and thereby signaled a change within the celebration of the trans-Atlantic community. Where Danish-American gatherings until now to a high degree have been characterized by æbleskiver, frikadeller and folk dance, the conference in Omaha revealed a more varied focus on the matters that affect Denmark and USA.

Also within the migratory historical field the conference marked a new beginning by first and foremost shifting the focus away from the 1800's and bring it into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. At the same time the different contributors especially concentrated on the aspects of the Danish-American history, which regards the role of the immigrants, and the experiences the Danish immigrants have had. At the conference I thus presented a number of observations over the theme, which is the starting point for this Special Research. It is in regards to the ability of the Danish immigrants to readjust to the American milieu:

Their way to become Americans.

My interest in migration history started at the Danish Emigration Archive, where I was an intern in the spring of 2001. Through the registration of a high volume of letters, written by various Danish emigrants to their families in Denmark, an impression was formed of a history, which was very different from the one I had learned at the university. This was the common man's history, history from the bottom, the personal history of the individual.

It is no exaggeration when I claim that I immediately was fascinated by the history about the Danish emigrants, and it was thus natural to me to let my special deal with those.

This decision brought me to the Danish Immigrant Archive in Nebraska, USA in the spring of 2002. I spent three months here scrutinizing letters until I found what I could use. I would not have been able to make the trip if it had not been for the Danish American Heritage Society, which decided to let me be the first recipient of the Edith and Arnold Bodtke Grant. Also Aalborg Stiftstidende's Fond should in this connection be thanked for their financial contribution. Most of the writing has taken place at an, for a historian, untraditional location, namely at Lindholm Leisure Center, which is being thanked for making the facilities and equipment available.

Of individuals who have supported me in this is first and foremost Birgit Flemming Larsen, now retired from the Danish Emigration Archive, whose insight and generosity is the reason for my interest in Danish migration. I also thank professor James Iversen, who mediated the contact with the Danish American Heritage Society, and professor John W. Nielsen from the Danish Immigrant Archive, whose personality, enthusiasm and knowledge has inspired not only me, but many others as well.

Last but not least I wish to thank my advisor professor Per Boje for constructive criticism and

expert counsel.

Torben Tvorup Christensen,

Aalborg in April 2003.

## **Introduction**

Integration is a word one sees daily in newspapers and the electronic media in connection with the immigration situation in this country. In relation to the concept of integration is the term assimilation, which is seldom used. This concept is often used in the literature, which over time has dealt with Danish emigration to USA. Where it as a rule is difficult to find positive words in the immigration debate here in Denmark, the situation is different in regard to Danish emigrants, who since the 1850's have gone to North America. When museum conductor Torben Grøngaard Jeppesen in the year 2000 published the book "Dannebrog on the American Prairie", it was thus very noticeable, that he was able to establish that Danish immigrants to USA were able to assimilate into the American society much more rapidly than other immigrant groups. Torben Grøngaard Jeppesen cited just the common impression, which had been the prevailing one within the area of research since the publication of Kristian Hvidt's doctoral thesis "The flight to America, or Driving Forces in the Mass Emigration from Denmark 1868 to 1914" in 1971. One perception, which simply states that Danish immigrants, contrary to other nationalities, were scattered over a bigger geographic area, and thereby were more rapidly being assimilated into the American society than groups that stayed together based on ethnic similarity, whether they lived in cities or in settlements on the prairie.

Whether this is true or not depends on the way one considers such concepts as assimilation and integration, and before I take a final hold of the problem formulation it can thus be necessary to first look at what the research so far has come up with - what is already known about this aspect of the history.

## Research Outline

One of the first ones to devote time to just assimilation among American immigrants was the historian Marcus Lee Hansen (1892 - 1938). Although he was of Danish ancestry, he never occupied himself with his cultural origin, but concentrated from the start of his career till his death only on the total aspect of the field of migration. One new angle in Marcus Lee Hansen's time was that historians until then mainly had been occupied with parts of the immigration area, usually determined by their own nationality. Marcus Lee Hansen broke away from that custom, and instead aimed to embrace the entire area. Aware of this difference he expressed among other things the following:

*"It differs from other studies in being a flank instead of a direct attack upon the problem; instead of studying emigration as such it investigates the economic, social and political environment in which the movement operated that its fullest significance may be appraised"*. During his career Marcus Lee Hansen covered many of the themes of the research field, and there are thus many aspects of his work, which can be brought to light. In the following it is just a limited part of Marcus Lee Hansen's research that is mentioned. But that which is brought out must be considered as belonging to his main points of view.

At the time Marcus Lee Hansen started his career there was a sharp distinction between colonialists and immigrants with the American Revolution as a separating line. One distinction, which according to Marcus Lee Hansen's view was meaningless, since he considered the European colonization of North America as a continuing process stretching over centuries. This expansion of the time-wise aspect he also tied in with a more geographic expansion, since he, in contrast with earlier research, did not just concentrate on American immigration as an separate case, which affected USA alone. Marcus Lee Hansen also included immigration to Canada and the activity taking place between various immigrant groups across the border between USA and Canada.

Most interesting, however, are the considerations he placed on the significance of the European. Through visits to the European archives he was the first historian, who researched the powers forming the basis for the European emigrant waves. In this immigration to America he saw a direct continuation of the great European expansion. A doubling of the collective population in Europe in the 1700's had to result in a growing emigration across all borders and oceans. The borders of the American continent thus also became the border for the European expansion, and could thus not be viewed as an internal American affair. It was his conviction that the European exodus was at least as important a research area as was the American immigration. The perception of this force, with which the American border worked in Europe he called 'Neo-Turnerism'.

Marcus Lee Hansen acknowledged the Turner 'Frontier-tese', and placed weight to Turner's statement regarding the influence of the surroundings/milieu on the immigrant in the border area. But he acknowledged especially also the influence of culture, and which meant that the immigrant and the Anglo American views differed. But instead of focus on the effort to create one continuous culture emerging on American soil, his vision was that the immigrant background, which he meant that all had in common, should be used as a common denominator in uniting an ethnically divided nation through the celebration of the American people's Pan European origin.

All through his career, Marcus Lee Hansen was eager to spread this vision. In his last official appearance on May 24, 1937 at the National Conference of Social Work, Hansen gave a lecture on the theme "Who Shall Inherit America?". Here he admitted that his real interest in the immigrants did not as much concern their search for work or land, but rather their unconscious character as bearers of a culture from an old world to a new one.

According to Marcus Lee Hansen, the immigrants' visions of America were varied and the experiences in this different milieu were mixed. In the cases where the immigrant lived in an exclusively American milieu, there was a risk that he or she would lose the original characteristics and end up as a social hermit. In most cases, however, the immigrant ended up among countrymen, but when these together established a community, the result was neither European nor American. During Marcus Lee Hansen's time there were many of these communities scattered across the Midwest, and it was Hansen's wish that there would be a thorough investigation of the influence of the American society on these and on the single individual.

This wish was in particular expressed in an inspiring overview of the themes for research "Immigration as a Field for Historical Research" from 1927. In short, the essay is a sort of appeal to the historians to take the foreign wanderings up for a study of basis for the social, political and economic conditions in the countries of the emigrants.

Where Marcus Lee Hansen is especially inspiring is at the previously mentioned emphasis on the immigrants' instinctive quality as bearers of a culture from an old world to a new. In this view lies implicitly an occasion to draw forth and discuss the cultural meeting among immigrants and the new country they came to, and there are masses of untreated materials, among them letters, which can be utilized to throw light on a line of relevant conditions.

Probably Marcus Lee Hansen's most influential work "Immigration as a Field for Historical Research", set the standard for the later Danish research starting with Kristian Hvidt's doctoral thesis "The flight to America, or Driving Forces in the Mass Emigration from Denmark 1868 to 1914" from 1971.

Through participation in the International Historian Conference in Stockholm in 1960, Kristian Hvidt was inspired to do a research on the background of the essay "Migration from Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century", prepared by the historian F. Thistlethwaite. In the essay Thistlethwaite pointed out that the international migration prior to 1914 had been under strong discussion in the countries where the migrants had gone, but was poorly treated in the countries from which the people had emigrated. The essay as a whole was viewed as an integration process, only with poor historic importance.

We do, however, know something about the Danish immigrants' integration in USA, and it seems natural to continue with "Flugten til Amerika" (The Flight to America), because Kristian Hvidt in his thesis in passing mentions the theme, although it is outside the area of the dissertation, but adds that "*it is a subject, which highly needs an independent, expert treatment.*" Following this request there have been some quite significant publications, which have treated this area with gentle interest from the various problem treatments of the field.

Hvidt made his own assertions about the unique position of the Danes, regarding assimilation, based on the measuring stick, that the assimilation process went together with the settlement patterns of the immigrants. According to him the Danish immigrants distinguished themselves in that respect from other nationalities, because they settled among Americans and other immigrant

groups, as opposed to immigrants, who settled in groups based on a national community, and thereby were slower in assimilating. Hvidt reached this result by use of the American census reports, and created the following chart, from which can be determined that the Danish settlement was more evenly spread out than the other national minorities reflected in the chart.

Table:

The concentration of national minorities in the United States in 1910

<i>Denmark</i>	<i>Sweden</i>	<i>Norway</i>
Iowa ..... 10.4	Minnesota ..... 19.6	Minnesota ..... 28.6
Wisconsin ..... 9.6	Illinois..... 16.9	Wisconsin..... 16.1
Minnesota ..... 9.4	New York ..... 6.9	North Dakota ..... 12.6
<i>Germany</i>	<i>England</i>	<i>Ireland</i>
New York ..... 14.9	New York ..... 14.7	New York ..... 24.2
Illinois ..... 12.2	Pennsylvania .... 12.5	Massachusetts ..... 14.1
Wisconsin ..... 9.6	Massachusetts .. 7.9	Pennsylvania ..... 12.7

*Italy*

New York ..... 35.2

Pennsylvania ..... 14.2

New Jersey ..... 9.1

The table shows the distribution among the different groups of immigrants, but it does not mention anything about the individuals behind the numbers. Thus the even distribution of the Danes in relation to the other groups does not clarify whether they preserved their relationship to the Danish culture, just as we are unable to determine if the Irish in New York were determined to become Americans.

Another method used by Hvidt to emphasize that the Danes quickly became part of the American society and cultural life, was the use of the birth tables in the census reports to point out that among the 255,000 immigrant children in 1910, both parents of 57% were Danish, while 43% were the result of a mixed marriage, where one of the parents was either American or from another national minority. It was different among the Swedish immigrant children, of whom 72% descended from “pure” marriages, and only 28% from mixed. Kristian Hvidt uses these numbers to conclude that the Danes, contrary to the Swedes, for instance, to a greater degree mixed with other sections of the population than their own. He does acknowledge that the numbers can also be used to show that there was a “disproportion between men and women in the Danish emigration, while there was an almost balanced proportion from Sweden”.

He last thing being treated in “The Flight to America...” to point out the poor solidarity among the Danes in relation to for instance that of the brother people, was the association with the Danish Church in USA. By comparing the number of churchgoers to the Norwegian and Swedish congregations, Hvidt arrives at a total attendance of 25%, compared with the Swedes at 40%, while the Norwegians were clear up at 75%. Based on these numbers, Hvidt maintains that “*the Danes took less part in the national life in America, and thus appear to have assimilated at a quicker rate with the local population.*” From the numbers one could also conclude, that the Danish immigrants were either ungodly or that the pastors in the individual congregations were such poor preachers that people stayed away.

In closing, Hvidt completely distances himself from the statistics and instead focuses on the movements within the Danish church society in USA by calling attention to the feud between the Grundtvigians and Inner Mission. By this he gets closer to the area of a different influx, and the result is an excellent description of the attitudes of the two organizations in regard to the meeting of the Danish-American cultures. The central point for the Grundtvigians was preservation of the Danishness, which was expressed by maintaining the Danish language in the home, school and the church. The Inner Mission on the other hand was on a superior plan opponent of such a view, and instead demanded that their supporters should not prevent their descendants from becoming part of the American society and culture. By calling attention to this aspect of history, K. Hvidt made a turn away from the anonymity of the statistics and instead brought out the actors behind

the history.

The feud between the Grundtvigians and the Inner Mission is an excellent example of how the organized part of the Danish immigrants could have opposing views in regards to the correlation with the American culture. The historian Jette Mackintosh wrote the PhD dissertation “The Danes in the Mid-West”, in which she devoted her time to the different directions of the two religious persuasions. The dissertation is a research of the two villages of Elk Horn and Kimballton, Iowa, which together formed the greatest concentration of Danish immigrants in USA. Although only 2 miles apart the town of Elk Horn was populated by Inner Mission people and Kimballton was Grundtvigian. The peculiarity in that respect is the varied pattern of development in the two towns, which forms the starting point in Mackintosh’s research. The focus here shall be on her treatment of the integration related sides of the history, or what Mackintosh herself calls the gradual assimilation, without specifying what she means by that. As Hvidt did, Mackintosh also ascertains, that there are several special similarities in the Danish emigration as compared with emigration from other countries, and she mentions three facts: *“It starts late, and does not really get going until the 1880’s, it is predominantly an agricultural migration, and it makes no special impression, since most of the immigrants are quickly assimilated.”* What is peculiar with the Elk Horn-Kimballton settlement and its inhabitants is the assimilation of the populations of the two towns, which differed so much from each other. Mackintosh tries to find the reason in the religious views. In the strongly Inner Mission Elk Horn no special emphasis was made on preserving the Danish language, although it was preserved in the church until about 1940. In Kimballton, on the other hand, the Danishness was honored, and clear up until 1961 they tried to have church services in Danish, just as they tried to preserve Danish culture through upbringing and education. Jette Mackintosh furthermore mentions that: *“the teaching of Danish follows ... the goal set within the two faiths, in which the declared goal of Inner Mission was that Danish was to be preserved as long as it was necessary to reach the new immigrants, while Danish to the Grundtvigians was an important part of their cultural ballast. Already around the year 1900 the teaching of Danish ceases in Elk Horn, except in a vacation school, while in Kimballton they are still teaching Danish in the 1930’s.”* Mackintosh thus imagines that the entire area was bilingual from 1915, although in such a way that the people from Elk Horn were predominantly English-speaking, while the inhabitants of Kimballton spoke Danish until some time after World War II.

It is easy to imagine that the tempo of integration among the inhabitants of the two villages differed. And if one assumes that it is connected with the views within the two organizations, the Inner Mission must have been the first ones to become integrated into the American society, while the Grundtvigians came limping behind. “Danes in the Mid-West” confirms the claim, but does mention that the gradual assimilation of both settlements as a whole can be seen by use of the local newspaper The Kimballton-Elk Horn Record, which has been printed in English since at least 1916.

The closest Jette gets to a definition of the concept of assimilation is when she writes in her conclusion:

*“The Danishness on which the ethnic community was based, and at least the Grundtvigians strived to preserve, while they as did all immigrants felt that they were citizens of their new country was a statistical concept, which did not go through the same dynamic development*

*through time, as did the concept of Danishness at home in Denmark. The immigrants brought with them the Danishness, which existed when they left, and the dynamics contained in this concept, while it developed away from its origin after the arrival in America, was the gradual mixing in of the American language, culture, mindset and customs, in other words assimilation.”*

Someone who has been occupied with the Danish church society in America is Henrik Bredmose Simonsen, who wrote the book: “The fight for Danishness, Faith and Nationality in the Danish Church Society in America”. As did Mackintosh, Simonsen also gets far in this complex field, and also takes up the question of assimilation/integration by emphasizing attitude of both the ecclesiastical and the non-ecclesiastical organizations.

Regarding the attitude towards language and Danishness Simonsen shows, on the background of, among others, P. S. Vig, who was among the leaders within the Inner Mission movement, that Inner Mission was open to adapting the English language. Simonsen’s research reveals that the attitude to the question was varied. For instance, P. S. Vig was of the understanding that the Danish language should have high priority with the pastors, because he sensed a special relationship between the language and the church’s spiritual life. But P. S. Vig saw the preservation of the Danish language as an instrument Inner Mission was to utilize in its preaching and did not look at the English language an enemy. On the other hand, he foresaw that it would be the language of the organization in the future. Thus Inner Mission conscientiously worked on a transition from Danish to English, since due to conditions, it depended on both languages.

Outside the church organizations, in the clubs and lodges, the same demands were not made to questions of faith and to attitudes. Here the purpose was different since the basis was to help people over the culture shock, which was brought on in connection with the immigration; next it was to function as a center where the individual immigrant could come and be together with cultural and linguistically equals. A second purpose of these clubs, which were primarily located in towns, was in the interplay between the Danish and American culture, and in this stressful area to be of help in the social and employment readjustment period. According to Simonsen, the non-ecclesiastic organizations worked in a way to first of all help the Danish immigrants to acquire the American way of life, and to afterwards find all the Danish again, since it should not be lost. It was a part of the heritage from which he immigrant should never be separated.

Simonsen himself mentions that this attitude illustrates a will to adapt but it also reveals other relationships, which are more difficult to express. What that means is the cultural baggage which the immigrants brought from home, and which is not easy to shake off. How he mentioned Danishness is to be retrieved is part of the purpose of the help by the organizations, but not to the extent as for the ecclesiastical organizations. Simonsen lists three things, which the individual immigrant has in common with those he met in the immigrant society:

*“1. They could speak Danish, 2. They had memories from Denmark and generally had connections with the family “at home”, and 3. The organization magazine, songs, flags and other items should express - be symbols of - a national background, which was theirs, just as other immigrants had expressions and symbols of their national background.”*

Where the maintenance of the Danishness in the individual immigrant and the succeeding generations of the Grundtvigians, at least, was almost a holy matter, it was an almost sacred matter, it was different within the secular organizations. Simonsen lists several examples

showing that they preferred the American to the Danish. The passing on of Danish values to future generations ought to be considered as secondary, while it seemed to be a natural development that the descendants of the first generation became a part of the new society. Contrary to the church institutions, among the secular organizations there were no children's or youth clubs, where one could otherwise pass on the Danish values. It was thus up to the individual immigrant whether one wished to raise one's child according to one's own cultural background.

Henrik Bredmose Simonsen has hereby gotten to the core of the matter, and one tends to believe that it was also up to the individual immigrant whether one wished to preserve one's cultural identity, and if it were even possible that it would be lost. Just as one could claim that it was also a question of how close a connection one wanted to the predominant culture in one's new society and to what degree.

The condition for being able to pass on cultural values to one's descendants probably rests on one's desires in that regard. At the same time one ought to be open to the possibility that the immigrants themselves, and thereby also their descendants, were characterized by something more indefinable: A Danishness, a set of values, which was ingested with the mother's milk. In order to find instances of such declarations, one must make use of the survival of the individual immigrant. In other words, one must get down on an individual plane in order to uncover this entire difficult process, which started with emigration and ended up with a life in the foreign.

"A New Life", or "Et Nyt Liv" which is the Danish title, has treated the conditions, which the Danes went through as immigrants in the USA, and has come into existence based on the letters from 50 Danes, who emigrated to North America during the period 1842 - 1946. In nine main topics (= nine chapters) the migration process is described from the reasons for emigration on to the treatment of the question of assimilation or separation (A Divided Heart), since the focus is on facing the American culture, a topic repeated in each chapter. According to the authors of the book the first years were crucial to the later fate of the immigrants in the USA. It was here the basis for a new life was created, and there were several hindrances in this process, which first had to be overcome: Restlessness, problems with the new language, adjustment to the American way of life, and the many impressions from a world very different from their native country. The authors themselves do not use the word, but it causes one to consider the mentioned conditions as parts of an integration process. In such a process the language played a special role, and in step with the economic and social modernization of the pioneer fields, the command of English was a determining necessity for anyone who wanted to get along in society. Without special skills it was difficult for the immigrant to get along in society, and the language was the first and most important challenge, but as long as the individual immigrant or the immigrant society preserved its own language, infiltration into and interaction with the American society was impossible.

A second factor, which could have importance in the way the immigrant got along, was in the interplay with the American society and its influence on the immigrants. What kind of society was it and what kind of culture had the immigrant come to? "A New Life" relates the influence as follows: To many Danish immigrants it was striking, that everyone took care of his own. In many of the letters used by "A New Life" it is emphasized that the most important goal toward survival was hard work. One could not expect to get rich, just as one was best off financially, if one went alone, and got a job right away. On the other hand one would be rewarded with an

income four times higher than at home in Denmark. In addition to that the meeting with America also meant freedom for the immigrants of the 1800's. As a rule this influence was seen in spite of the hard work as a benefit which surpassed all efforts. Hand in hand with freedom came equality, and for people who had lived as servants in Denmark, life in the States meant association with people from all nationalities. A problem that was real for many. Home-sickness, also understood as loneliness, want of family, rootless-ness, and lack of a safety net in case of illness, was according to "A New Life", a phenomena most of the immigrants experienced according to their letters to relatives at home.

In regard to the question about whether the Danish immigrants got integrated, assimilated or not, "A New Life" is not very direct. The authors do indicate that people were different. A few never learned to speak English, but were dependent on the abilities of their children. But these were also sometimes without such knowledge. It was especially true of those, whose ability to work was needed at home, and thus they were unable to get a thorough education.

"A New Life" excels in its use of letters as a source to illuminate the lives of a group of Danish emigrants as immigrants in North America. But since the book will contain so many relationships, it tends to be superficial in the treatment of the various topics. One way to avoid this would be to concentrate on fewer topics.

## **Problem Formulation**

We do not know very much more about the aspects concerning integration and assimilation among Danish immigrants in USA than what had been indicated in the above central works. Kristian Hvidt makes a few general declarations based on statistical materials, from which he has determined that among the immigrants during the period from 1868 till 1914 there was a rapid assimilation. Jette Mackintosh confirms this, and then focuses entirely on the split within the religious organizations by using as a starting point the settlements Elk Horn - Kimballton from their establishment up to the time after World War II. Henrik Bredmose Simonsen also touches on the subject and engages in the attitude of both the ecclesiastic and non-ecclesiastic organizations, while "A New Life" aims to show the general situation of the immigrants on the background of a wide source of materials.

What seems strange in almost all of the conclusions by the researchers is the varied approaches to the results of their research. While Kristian Hvidt for instance claims that Danish immigrants assimilated fast, because they did not to a great extent form independent societies, but scattered throughout the territories and settled among Americans and other immigrant groups, one could almost place a question mark by, whether this method is adequate to make such a claim. Is it not too one-sided, and could it not on the background of the same findings be said that immigrants cut off from association with persons from the same ethnicity are socially and culturally resigned? Just as one on the other hand can assume that groups of immigrants can encourage each other to integrate. Anyway, Kristian Hvidt's assertion is not in agreement with Marcus Lee Hansen's, which already in the 1930's claimed that the immigrant in an American milieu would lose his characteristics and end up as a social hermit, just as immigrant societies were neither European or American.

Jette Mackintosh appears to be more nuanced in her assumptions than Kristian Hvidt. Just as he did, she claims that Danish immigrants were being more quickly assimilated in the American society, and defines the concept as a gradual mixing in of American language, culture, mindset and customs. To clarify her claim, she sets up two contrasting organizations and their varied attitudes to the matters, which concerns the degree of engagement in the American society, and in this connection she uses the term assimilation. The thing that could seem strange in Jette Mackintosh's method is that she, on the background of a superior political posture in two organizations starts to establish that the newspaper common to the settlements in 1916 was printed entirely in English and concludes that the individual members of the two sides generally went through a quick assimilation, but with the possibility that the members of Inner Mission were somewhat quicker. The question is, whether one can use an organization's attitude to the use of language to claim that the members individually went through a quick assimilation process. One could just as well assume that the use of the English language probably indicates a form of approximation to the dominant culture, but in a functional plane. This means that the immigrant must in order to get along in the dominant society master the English language. It also means that one could be true to one's ethnicity, although one masters another language.

Although Jette Mackintosh claims that the assimilation process among Danish immigrants proceeded quickly, she also mentions that it was gradual. The strange part of this statement is, whether the term gradual is to be understood as something procedural within the 1st generation

of immigrants, or should gradually be understood as something that runs through future generations. A gradual mixing of the American language, culture, mindset and customs, appears to be a large bite for a 1st generation immigrant, while, if we consider such a process over a longer time span, it seems more realistic that such a gradual mixture ought to be attributed to the descendants of the immigrants.

Immediately the language and integration appear to be connected to each other. Integration is impossible if the immigrant is unable to communicate with the dominant society. It is also possible to measure the meaning and influence - of both the mother tongue and in this connection the English - in the existence of the immigrants. It thus is not strange that both Jette Mackintosh and Henrik Bredmose Simonsen emphasize the connection between language and integration in their research. But as a method to prove the *degree* of integration or assimilation, such a measuring stick appears too unsure. As I have touched on earlier, the language describes something functional, and thus one can claim that although the immigrant masters the English language completely, it does not necessarily make him an American - at least not on an identification plane. Henrik Bredmose Simonsen even mentions P. S. Vig, one of the leading people within the Inner Mission, who saw the preservation of the Danish language as an instrument the organization could use in preaching the Christian message to Danish immigrants. The fact that P. S. Vig saw the language as an instrument supports the claim of the functional aspect in an integration process. The cultural aspects are also mentioned in Henrik Bredmose Simonsen's book, which points out that the secular organizations prioritized the American culture over the Danish, and that this prioritizing ought to shine through at the individual and in the upbringing of the future generations. This causes me to place a question mark by, whether it is possible to lose one's cultural identity, and if it is possible to avoid further elements of one's original culture to coming generations?

Common to Kristian Hvidt and Jette Mackintosh is the use of the term assimilation. Danish immigrants in USA assimilated quickly, and from this claim it is easy to conclude, that Danish immigrants' experiences in the North American have been a success story. But to my ears it sounds bombastic to speak about assimilation among 1st generation immigrants, and even second and third generation as far as that goes, if one uses the term in the understanding, *to be equal with the ruling culture, since one gives up the condition of belonging to one's origin*, or to use Jette Mackintosh's own definition of the concept, as a gradual mixture of the American language, culture, mindset and customs.

All of the researchers mentioned except the authors of "A New Life", treat the integration process at a general level, and on the background of statistical material and diverse organizations' superior attitude to the question. I thus will take the liberty of placing a question mark by the limit in those methods, by which they reach their decisions and suggest a different approach. Just as in "A New Life", I will suggest that the following research is brought down on the individual plane, since by the use of letters there is a starting point in the sayings of the immigrants themselves, and then as a parallel use a more varied measuring stick, which is constructed for the purpose of recounting and balancing the role of the individual in the integration process, and from such a process determine whether Kristian Hvidt and Jette Mackintosh are correct in their allegations that Danish immigrants in the USA were quickly assimilated.

In the present research I have thus chosen to utilize a model, which partly accounts for the concepts of integration and assimilation, and is partly a bid in the process the immigrants go through from the meeting with a new world until the final adjustment. The model will, together with letters from a family, who came to USA in 1910 as well as a man who emigrated from Denmark in 1898, form the basis for the research. The purpose in using two cases is to construct the integration process in the different individuals, and thereby compare and show whether the tendency is the same in both cases.

## **Source Presentation**

There is nothing sensational in the use of letters as sources to illuminate the conditions the Danish immigrants went through in North America. "A New Life" did it, and also on the other side of the Atlantic professional historians have reproduced edited source collections, with the aim of expressing the story based on the view of the individual immigrants, as the individual had written it in diaries or letters home to the family and friends in Denmark. But as was brought out in "A New Life", the majority of these collections of letters are presented as a whole without the author's interpretations or analysis.

Although there is nothing new in the use of letters, they still add a certain character, which distinguishes them from other material: Contrary to statistical material for example, it is difficult to distance oneself from letters, just as it is difficult at some point to be touched by the immigrant's situation at that specific point, when the person wrote the letter. Thus among other reasons, letters were chosen in this special research, and because we just have this unique possibility to interview the immigrants themselves. We are lucky in Denmark. As opposed to the main part of immigrant letters that have been read, which to a high degree are seen as being written by people to whom style and language were almost insurmountable burdens, the Danish letters are remarkable in that they, clear from the 1850's are unusually rich in content and in style, which gives credit to the Danish folk school system. This is moreover one assertion not shared by Kristian Hvidt. He, on the other hand, also assumed that the majority of the Danish immigrants were not endowed with any talent for letter writing, and thus not had much to offer in regard to written expressions. This could possibly be, and according to "A New Life", the task of writing a letter, to put one's thoughts on a piece of paper, was something completely new to most of the immigrants. But forced by circumstances, the written word was necessary as a replacement for the spoken. Letters was the only possibility, if the immigrant wished to continue staying in touch with the familiar and friendly relations, who were left behind in the old country, and it is not difficult to imagine, how valuable such personal relationships were to the immigrant.

The immigrant letters can be divided into two categories: Family letters and so-called America letters. The latter was brought out in order to reach out to something different than the familiar, and served as some form of propaganda rather than to serve familiar and friendly connections. Thus such letters did often find their way to newspapers, and were often written with the intent to have them published, and to motivate others to emigrate. The family letters were different, since they were meant to cultivate familiar and friendly connections.

This presentation will be based on family letters. They are the letters from respectively the Jorgensen family and Hans Julius Nielsen, which have been chosen after investigation of 15 archive files consisting of a total of 5,690 units from the period 1876 till 2000 stored at The Danish Emigrant Archive in Aalborg and The Danish Immigrant Archive in Nebraska, USA.

The letters from this archive, which were selected for this report come from the Jørgensen/Jorgensen family. The original four family members in 1910 set course for USA. The actual file consists of 7.5 shelf-meters, of 58 L&M Boxes (Letters and Manuscripts) made up from miscellaneous documents, authored by or belonging to Hans Jorgensen (1881 - 1966), Rosa Jorgensen (1880 - 1965) as well as their daughters Edna (1905 - 1985), Ruth (1907 - 1981), Lilly (1912 -) and Agnes (1915 -). There is registered a total of about 5,000 units from the period 1898 till 1992, written by the individual family members to family and friends in Denmark. In addition to this the archive consists of a number of e-mails from 1998 till 2001, personal and official papers, business documents, clippings, diaries, pictures and more.

Hans Julius Nielsen's (1877 - ca. 1964) letters, on the other hand, are stored at The Danish Emigrant Archive and consist of miscellaneous pictures and 63 pieces of correspondence, written by H. J. Nielsen to his old teacher and his family during the period 1914 - 1964. Besides this the archive file consists of 10 Christmas cards, two postcards as well as a fragment.

It is not just by coincidence that the Jorgensen family and H. J. Nielsen were chosen. Among other considerations, the time period is significant, since the emigrations took place at a time when the large waves of emigration were calming down, and the pioneer era was coming to an end. Besides this the letters are remarkable since they, by the volume and time period covered, tell two continuous stories. This means that we on that background have the opportunity to follow the Jorgensen family closely from the first feeble emigration considerations to the realization and the life in the strange land. Also, the Jorgensen family and H. J. Nielsen spent a great part of their life in the same area in California, and at the same time, just as H. J. Nielsen as well as Hans and Rosa Jorgensen died at almost the same time.

Such concepts as emigration and immigration are highly individual phenomena, and it is thus difficult to determine to what extent the selected letters by the chosen persons are representative in relation to other immigrants. There is still, at least in comparison with the other archive files, which I have read, certain comparisons in the contents of the letters, and the selected persons are definitely representative in relation to *not* take a position, say to matters regarding integration and assimilation. Those relationships appear in the shape of suggestions, deprivation and sadness, especially up to festivals and other red-letter days, but are not otherwise dominating. That which on the other hand fills the letters being read are everyday trivialities: Birthday greetings, descriptions of field work, methods of cultivation, general job potentials, prices, climate, nature descriptions, etc.

Regarding the question whether it is the truth/reality as it were, that is related in these letters, the answer is more complicated. As mentioned in "A New Life", it is only a modest number of all letters, which has been preserved to this day. Of these letters, it is perhaps the best-written ones, or the ones with the most interesting contents that have been preserved. One must therefore show restraint in drawing conclusions on the basis of letter collections, which for unknown reasons have been preserved to this day.

In regard to the persons selected there is no reason to believe that their letters are not reliable. Yet we do not know exactly, but immediately the letter writers appear to honest in relation to that of

which they are writing about. It can naturally not be denied that in some cases the truth has been modified for various reasons. It is easy to imagine that, in order to spare the family in Denmark, they wrote that everything was well although the truth may have been different.

Also Kristian Hvidt is aware of the problems regarding the honesty in the letters, and mentions among other the immigrants, for whom it is going badly in the new world. About those he writes, that they were less apt to write home and describe their misery, unless it was for financial requests for a return ticket home. Kristian Hvidt does assume that the majority of those, who landed in North America, most likely gave: *“a relatively truthful picture of a person’s impression of details in this macrocosm, a picture that could work as an attraction to the readers.”*

The same probably goes for the letters of the selected persons. There is nothing substantial for us to assume that the conditions mentioned are not true. On the other hand, we cannot be completely sure, since we do not know the intents behind the contents of the letters.

It should also be mentioned, that the letters used from the Jorgensen family were collected by Hans Jorgensen’s brother, Anders Jorgensen, and later given to the daughters. As will be shown later in the report, there is a majority of letters written by Hans Jorgensen, but not many written by his wife, Rosa Jorgensen and the children. We do not know if that is because she did not write much in relation to her husband. It could also be because she had concentrated her correspondence toward her own family, and thus wrote less to the husband’s family.

## **Theory**

To answer the question about the significance of the concepts assimilation and integration, the historian Elliott R. Barkan was chosen. He has made himself noted by getting himself involved in the discussion regarding integration and assimilation of immigrants in USA. Among other things, he has, through the article “Race, Religion, and Nationality in American Society: A Model of Ethnicity - From Contact to Assimilation” called attention to missing consequences in the definitions of assimilation and integration. Barkan points out that this lack has brought with it an eclipse in the significance of the concepts, and thereby it has also resulted in a form of value leveling and inconsiderate use of the terms in connection with the research in the field. At the same time the article is a presentation of a model for the process the immigrants went through from the arrival in the New World until a final adjustment. What is interesting in the model is, that it considers the individual rather than using the immigrant group as a starting-point. As Barkan claims, integration and assimilation are first of all an individual process, which later has consequences for the ethnic relations (the family/immigrant group) of the individual.

In the following Barkan’s definitions and his model will be presented and then commented upon. According to Elliott R. Barkan, assimilation is the final point in an integration process, where the individual member of an ethnic group has lost all cultural, linguistic, behavioral and identifying characteristics, which identifiably and structurally characterize and separate this group from other ethnic groups. In other words, such an individual has become part of the core culture, since the person in regard to political and cultural norms, cultural and social activities, use of language, living conditions, friends, spouse, identity and national loyalty has become fused with - or only to an insignificant degree varies from - the dominant society. This should not be perceived as if one has to lose all characteristics in order to become fully assimilated. Barkan underlines that

assimilation does not mean a complete loss of identity with one's ancestors.

Integration, on the other hand, is defined by Barkan as a series of intervening processes, which in the end lead to assimilation. This is where most immigrants end up, because integration does not represent one with as complete a change as does assimilation, which describes the complete mixture or incorporation.

One can talk about integration when a person from one ethnic group has become bilingual, or exclusively speaks the same language as the predominant society. When the person in question has started to cultivate connections beyond those who belong to his own ethnic community (be it members of the predominant society or people from other ethnic groups). When the person in question has started taking part in other forms of organization life than the one carried on by the ethnic group. (Barkan mentions among others trade unions, aid associations, political parties and lodges as possible organizations). Beyond that there is talk of integration when the person in question has become acquainted with the political structure of the predominant society, and dependent of age, has been involved in certain parts of the educational system, for instance schools, high schools and colleges.

Integration also takes place when the individual is at a stage, where he or she has reached a certain acceptance by the predominant society, and has become receptive to it. Barkan uses the term bi-cultural to indicate that the person both retains elements from his ethnic origin, and at the same time takes part in an interaction with the core culture. The person in question can for instance preserve the connection with the ethnic group on the background of family, marital or religious relationships. Barkan notes here, that by such of such a bi-cultural dualism there can arise some complications on the background of the contrasts, which will come to light when "new meets old". Such complications could possibly contribute to the person experiencing a feeling of ambivalence of uncertainty, regarding his identity, just as the person can feel alienation and a lack of relationship in the both the predominant society and ethnic belonging.

On the background of the above definitions, Barkan furthermore sets up a list of observations by which he accounts for certain considerations in connection with the concept of assimilation. Beside those already mentioned, the considerations include the following:

Assimilation is the final stage in a process, which consists of a number of overlapping phases, starting with a contact phase, then acculturation, learning adjustment, adaptation and integration. (These phases will be shown in more details later when Barkan's model is presented).

Integration and assimilation are first and foremost concepts, which concern the individual person, but can also have significant consequences in the person's ethnic relationships, just as actions by the ethnic group in relations with the predominant society (for example approximation to, or distance from) can have consequences for the individual.

Assimilation is a two-way process, where the predominant society must be willing to accept those, who are open to become included, just as the persons, whom the predominant society is willing to accept, must be interested. It is therefore decisive that all hostile attitudes, discriminating actions and conflicting situations, which can lead to rejection of persons with a special ethnic attachment, are either eradicated or completely ceased.

Assimilation is a phenomenon, which points in two directions to be understood in a way, that the predominant society and culture also are influenced by the background and cultural heritage, which the immigrants bring with them. Just as society is influenced by individuals, who are only integrated. In other words, both the predominant society and those, who are integrated and

assimilated into it, influence each other, in relationships that concern norms, values, attitudes, language and behavioral patterns.

Elliott R. Barkan claims that it is impossible for an ethnic group to be advocating that its members be assimilated, since that would mean that the group should consciously decide to dissolve. In most cases the members of the group have been advised to adjust by for instance seeking citizenship, which has finally resulted in integration into the predominant society. The Inner Mission in North America is a good example showing that the story is more complicated. Here the overall goal of the followers was to acquire Americanizing as quickly as possible, and only maintain the ties to the Danish as long as it was necessary in order to recruit new immigrants to the organization. Or said in a different way: Danish was only necessary as long as there was a need to preach the gospel in Danish. To emphasize the complexity it ought to be mentioned, which, by the way Barkan does not do, that ethnic groups are not necessarily homogenous. We do see that Danish immigrants, although they have the Danish in common, could easily be very different in their approach to the world and in their evaluations.

The differences between Inner Mission and the Grundtvigians is an example of this.

In a certain connection with this, Barkan also mentions the ethnic groups, which in no way wish to interact with the predominant society. Such groups could collectively have chosen to separate from the surrounding society, since they culturally, socially and even physically have reinforced their borders and sought to prevent their members in leaving the group and become integrated. Members of ethnic groups could, on the background of this experience a feeling of being caught between what they on the one hand feel ought be their own choice in regard to the degree of engagement in connection with one's ethnic group and the feeling of being forced to be loyal to one's ethnicity. This could result in these persons feeling isolated in relations with the predominant society and culture, and thereby prevented from becoming completely a part of it.

The different units making up an ethnic community - family or group - can stay on different steps of the integration- and assimilation scale. This means in reality that members of the same family can be at different stages in the process, which leads to either integration or assimilation. Viewed in a larger time perspective this can also mean that certain elements of an ethnic culture can be weakened or completely disappear, while at the same time being revived by new immigrants. In far the majority of cases, however, it happens those ethnic groups and their institutions in time, if there is not a new influx of persons with the same ethnic origin, culturally and valuable are eradicated and lose their characteristics.

A strong leadership in an immigrant society can contribute to that the eradication slows down, but it cannot alone, and without addition of new arrivals, preserve either the group or its institutions.

### **From Contact to Assimilation**

The model created by Barkan to describe the process immigrants go through from meeting a new country until the final adjustment, he calls "From Contact to Assimilation". The model consists of six stages overlapping each other, which means that it should not be understood as if the immigrant jumps from one stage to the next. Instead there is talk about a process, where the immigrant slides through the stages, and thus could be on one step, which contains elements

from both stages. This requires that the correct conditions are present for the immigrant to go on. There could be situations or happenings, which cause the immigrant to remain at one stage, or actually to seek back to the previous one. The conditions for each step should be seen as proposals. They are not definite, but throughout the model they represent steps, which according to Barkan most ethnic groups/individuals have gone through at various times and at different levels.

With the above observations clarified, Elliott R. Barkan's model "From Contact to Assimilation" can be presented".

1. The first stage - the contact stage - is attributed to the new arrivals. Their focus is mainly directed to the native country, and they continue to hold on to the cultural and social roots, which they had before the emigration. The use of one's mother tongue is dominant, just as many at this point have not developed a form of identity, which is not connected with the one they were in the original society. Whenever possible most of them aim to settle with others with similar preferences, or to whom they are related. I assume that by this Barkan means a relationship, which beyond being family can also mean a national, regional, cultural, social and religious relationship.

They are only to a limited extent in touch with outsiders, i.e. members of the predominant society, other immigrants, etc. In those cases where this takes place, it is mainly in connection with employment.

Acquisition of citizenship is not possible at this stage.

2. The second phase, the cultural adjustment phase, is a slow and gradual intake of cultural and linguistic elements from the predominant society, since the immigrant normally starts to show signs of a certain openness toward the surroundings. It is also at this phase that ethnic societies, if it has not already happened at the contact phase, start showing up and forming organizations, issue publications in the mother tongue, etc.

At this point the immigrants mainly live together with others of the same origin. They still use their mother tongue, and take part in secular and religious activities planned by the ethnic society, just as personal networks are based on ethnic relations.

In this phase it also happens that certain first generation immigrants seek citizenship. The majority postpones it, however, unless there are special economic, political or personal motives present.

Predominantly, the focus of the immigrants is still directed toward the native country.

On the other hand, there is a greater possibility that the second generation immigrants (Barkan defines these as children of immigrants and immigrants, who are not yet teenagers) have close contact with the predominant society, by which elements of integration seems to happen, among other things in the form of mixed marriages. Barkan does not mention who they married. But it can be assumed that it is both to individuals of a different ethnic background and to persons from the Anglo-American core culture.

3. The third stage - the learning adjustment stage - is characterized by a larger balance within the ethnic group in the number of individuals born in a foreign country and individuals born in USA. At the same time is found a considerable degree of adjustment to the American cultural pattern,

among other things illustrated by an increased use of English as the preferred language.

The focus of the immigrant group (family or society) is to a smaller degree directed to the land of birth, and more toward the American society and culture, just as more first generation immigrants choose to obtain American citizenship.

Certainly both second and third generation immigrants tend to at a higher degree to separate themselves from their ethnic origin. Others do not go that far, but yet they experience a certain degree of integration since they connect with people of a different ethnic origin. This establishment of contacts happens for instance at schools, clubs, athletic clubs and by dating, which lead to a more frequent occurrence of mixed marriages.

Beyond this more and more families experience certain economic possibilities, which can lead to the choice of leaving the ethnic group, if one belongs to one, and seek employment in more mixed milieus.

4. In the fourth stage - the readjustment stage - only a small part of the first generation of immigrants is present, and the ones who are, belongs to for example ethnicities which are culturally close to the Anglo-American culture. Far more visible are the third and fourth generations. Their attention is only slightly directed toward the country of origin (the parents' (immigrant's land of origin), just as the use of English is predominant. Where there is still a tie to an ethnic group, participation in diverse activities have shrunk considerably.

This stage is also marked by the fact that among these individuals there is a considerable degree of geographic mobility, just as in occupational and educational respects there can be noted certain changes compared with the individuals from earlier stages.

Finally in this stage we find more and more integrated individuals, who have an either objective or nostalgic interest in the origin of one's ancestors.

5. For the individuals who reach the integration stage can be detected a considerable degree of incorporation into the predominant society. Yet there can be certain cultural, symbolic as well as identity and behavioral characteristics as well as certain linguistic expressions, traditional food courses and celebrations of special festivities, which result in a tie to one's ethnic origin.

The majority of individuals at this stage identifies with the predominant society, and shows only slight or only symbolic interest in matters affecting their land of origin or its original society.

6. The sixth stage - the assimilation stage - is attributed to those individuals, who have completely become part of the predominant society. That is, they culturally, socially and institutionally identify with the American core culture. It is possible that certain people have preserved a knowledge of their origin, but one cannot perceive oneself as part of an ethnic fellowship. In far the most cases such fellowships do no longer exist, and where they do, it is mostly limited to the celebration of ceremonial and other special occasions. An example, which can illustrate this is the special Tivoli and Christmas celebrations held at the Danish Immigrant Museum in Elk Horn, Iowa. Here people get together on Memorial Day weekend and Thanksgiving weekend to celebrate Danish food and festival traditions.

At this point it is probably sort of important to explain, what Barkan understands by the descriptions the predominant/Anglo-American society and the idea of core culture - in other words the milieu in which the immigrants are integrated and assimilated.

According to Barkan, the American society is dominated by a culture, whose development can be traced back to the time, when the part of North America, which was populated by immigrants, was still a colony under British rule, and the population was mainly made up of English people. Their value basis, ideals, religious convictions, class criteria, political institutions and symbols have from that time set the standards for those, who arrived in North America and later in The United States of America.

This definition could seem rather simple, and it is also difficult to define exactly what American culture is, other than a mixture of many different cultures dominated by an Anglo-oriented. In practice this probably means that at different times, through the many immigrants, has been an input of diverse cultural currents, all of which have been placed under the so-called Anglo-American. This also means that the Anglo-American culture has been forced to take a position to this mass of varied cultures, maybe to find out exactly what American culture should not be like. Beyond this I would like to add a couple of concluding commentaries to Barkan's readjustment model. I will first and foremost mention the possibility that there actually are people who do not fit into Barkan's assumptions, but for special reasons have not gone through many of the phases described by Barkan. It can be persons, who for certain reasons have been especially eager to become integrated, and thereby do not fit into the model. That immigrants both in the contact stage and in the succeeding ones hang on to their cultural and social roots is probably also a truth with modifications. One can imagine that certain persons emigrated from their native country due to various conditions, which have worked as an impulse to emigrate. Dissatisfaction with the political system or family disagreements, just to mention a couple of examples. This is not to say that there were no elements from one's original culture, which consciously or instinctively are preserved (language, food, religion, etc.).

This said it is also fair to point out that Barkan's stages are not imperative in their form, but are just suggestions open to changes. One can wonder why he has chosen six stages instead of fewer or more, but the important part in this connection is to call attention to the fact that immigrants, who came to USA as expected have gone through a number of stages, which have in common that they are links in an integration process and not, as some have assumed, either remained loyal to their nationality or head over heels jumped into a change where, roughly speaking they were instantly Americanized. Barkan's definitions of the concepts integration and assimilation with the model used, reveal the *complexity* in those relationships the emigrant meets on his way as an immigrant, in the process of *becoming* integrated rather than *be* integrated.

## **Methods Section**

It is almost a tradition, that the migration historic field is divided between historians and sociologists, but also other sciences have been occupied in the field. Among those are economists, geographers, demographers and statisticians.

The big difference between sociologists and historians is the method used. Where the sociologist mainly works with theories, which considers the immigrant group, the historian works primarily with unique events. Jette Mackintosh points out that, "*while the theories of the social scientists are generalizing, since they do not consider the concrete events, but rather the repeated pattern based on theoretic observations, the field of the historian is the concrete situation - the unique.*"

Although Barkan's model is general in its assumptions, it does consider the individual rather than starting with the immigrant group. By this the model agrees with the overall view of integration expressed in this research, as an individual process, which varies from person to person, while at the same time it is helping to describe the concrete situation at a personal level.

In the following Barkan's model will thus be used as an aid to investigate the progress of the integration process in the persons chosen for this purpose. By use of the model together with the Jorgensen family and H. J. Nielsen's letters, I will examine the level of readjustment in the members of the Jorgensen family and H. J. Nielsen, by treating each phase until reaching the stage where each individual has reached it. By this the model takes on the character of being a guiding tool, which shall assure a certain form for the underlying structure in the analysis, and thereby prevent an uncontrolled version of the family history as told through the letters.

Instead of a slavish examination of the letters, I have in advance chosen those in which the family itself describes the subjects that have a relationship to their life as immigrants. These are not necessarily direct descriptions, but just as much hints, which both directly and indirectly touch on the immigration subject. For example deviations from the "normal" gender-role patterns, variations in language usage and formulations, etc.

The following analysis section will be divided into sections corresponding to Elliott R. Barkan's stages. This means that I, after a short presentation of the Jorgensen family and the historic context into which they go, under the same headings as in Barkan's model and based on its assumptions, will go through and discuss the experiences of the family members. After that H. J. Nielsen's process will be described based on the same conditions.

In the analysis I have chosen not to separate the letters of the Jorgensen family - and thereby the family members - from each other, but treat them in relation to Elliott R. Barkan's stages in order to have the possibility to study the diversity in each family member's situation. There can for example be incidents about which they separately write to the relatives in Denmark, but to which they have differing approaches.

The analysis regarding the Jorgensen family ends with the death of the last of the parents. The daughters certainly continue the correspondence with the Danish relatives, but their messages become more impersonal just as the correspondence finally shrinks to become just greetings at festivals. There are memoirs, but they are more descriptions of the merits of the daughters as well as anecdotes, rather than descriptions of their special position as former immigrants and descendants of immigrants. Yet there will be relevant information in these memoirs, which were first gathered by Ruth and later by Lilly Jorgensen and given the title "Aaben Gættet", a title which refers to a happening related to the father's first car purchase.

In closing there will be a discussion of the question of integration and assimilation, before the conclusion is presented.

### **The Jorgensen Family. Thoughts About Emigration**

*"God willing, we have thought about going to America"*. Thus starts the story about Hans Jorgensen and his family.

The year is 1909, and the written lines are parts of a longer letter, which Hans Jorgensen wrote to his younger brother Anders on August 29. These are not new reflections presented by the then

cabinetmaker residing in Aarhus. They are actually thoughts he has had for about five years.

The contemplations were started by the financial situation in Denmark. Hans Jorgensen must have found that times were getting worse and worse, and it was especially difficult to make a living in the furniture trade, where the unemployment was high.

Another problem, which to Hans Jorgensen was inextricable, was the population growth in Denmark, and the only way to improve the situation was through emigration.

We do not know if that realization spurred him to leave. It is most likely that what seriously stirred his thoughts of emigration, was a meeting with Pastor Kristian Anker from Lincoln, Nebraska. He was on a visit to Denmark in the spring of 1909 to urge prospective interested people to come to America. According to Hans Jorgensen's letter, he and Kristian Anker met, and the pastor, who himself has lived in the states for 28 years, promised that the family could live with him, until they found a place of their own to live.

It is, however not without reservations that Hans Jorgensen tells his brother about his decision. It is especially difficult to leave relatives and especially his aging parents.

That is the way Hans Jorgensen closes his letter to his little brother, and there is nothing else that tells about or supports these thoughts and expressions, just as we do not know about Rosa Jorgensen's version of the story. We do not hear from the family again until after they have emigrated.

USA, at the time of the Jorgensen family's arrival, had had several experiences with immigrants, and before I continue, it could be an advantage to give a short outline of how the situation was for those who arrived in the country.

The majority of immigration to USA came in waves. For the Danes these can be divided in five: First phase, 1820 to 1850, "The pioneer period", when 2,000 Danes immigrated. About 30,000 Danes immigrated in the second phase, 1850 to 1870, "The Family and Mormon Immigrants". In the third phase, 1870 to 1895, "The Mass-immigration Period", about 200,000 Danes went to America. Fourth phase, 1895 to 1910, "The emigration from the cities", where 100,000 emigrated from Denmark, while in the fifth phase, 1910 to 1940, "The Conclusion", about 50,000 Danes emigrated. The time of the Jorgensen family's emigration is thus between the two phases, the fourth and the fifth. The characteristics of the fourth are the emigration from the cities. While the population in the cities increased during this period, there was increasing dissatisfaction due to increasing unemployment. Thus the ones who came to USA were immigrants with dreams of independence and realization of occupational expectations. The fifth phase, on the other hand, was characterized by an increasing number of restrictions by the American authorities, for the purpose of slowing down immigration to USA. Already at the beginning of the 1900's came from the political side wishes to limit the number of immigrants, especially from Eastern and Southern Europe. In 1907 the so-called Dillingham Commission, which was established by the Congress in Washington for the purpose of examining the migration to USA, as well as its consequences, issued a report in which, among others it was concluded that East European immigrants had considerably more readjustment difficulties than the West Europeans. The problem was noticeable, since the majority of immigrants since the end of the 1880's had come from Eastern and Southern Europe.

The Dillingham-commission report had consequences, and in its wake followed a number of restrictions. From ca. 1899 up to 1914 almost 15 million immigrants arrived in USA. The

following 15 years the stream declined to 5.5 million, while the numbers during the 1930's and forward declined to almost nothing.

The colossal number of immigrants in the first two decades of the 1900's had other and different and far more unfortunate consequences for the nation, since an internal hatred of foreigners of proportions so far unknown arose toward the new arrivals in general.

The restrictions also had consequences in the Danish emigration, since emigration changed from the masses to be reserved for people with special skills. That is, people with a background in trade and industry or with other special talents. About 50,000 Danes chose to leave their native country during the period 1910 to 1940, and to go to America.

## Contact

### 1910. Lincoln, Nebraska

From the memories written by the daughters, we know that the family left Denmark on April 1, 1910, and arrived in Lincoln, Nebraska on April 13. There is nothing else, which tell anything about the trip and the first impressions. First 16 years later, in 1926, Rosa Jorgensen writes a letter to her mother-in-law, dated January 19, in which she describes the trip across the Atlantic and the trip to the final destination. From the letter it appears, among other things, that it took 12 days to cross the Atlantic, and that the family, after experiencing different kinds of weather, arrived in New York at 5 o'clock in the morning. In New York the family stayed at Castle Garden until 2 o'clock the following morning, without any food and with two sick girls before the trip continued by train to Nebraska.

Only aboard the train did the family have an opportunity to eat and to experience how profit-oriented a land they had come to. Rosa Jorgensen writes that as soon as the passengers were seated a man came around passing out boxes of candy to the passengers. Confused by America's hospitality and sympathy toward tired immigrants the family accepted the candy, only to discover later that the man came back later and demanded 50 cents per box. With this experience Rosa closes the letter to her mother-in-law with the remark that after this occurrence, she was going to be more careful in the future.

We are now going forward to July 1, 1910, that is more than two months after the family's arrival, before there again is any material telling about the condition of the family. According to this letter from Rosa Jorgensen to her mother the family has rented a house in Lincoln, the capital of Nebraska, from a Danish widower, who is on a visit to Denmark. Besides this we find out that Hans Jorgensen has found a job with an Irish entrepreneur, and is doing carvings in houses. Rosa Jorgensen also tells that she has become a member of a women's society belonging to the Danish congregation in Lincoln. The meetings take place in the homes of the women, and are thus helping to expand the social circle of the individual members. The descriptions given here indicate, in relation to Barkan's assumptions, that the Jorgensen family as new arrivals have settled in an area where there are other Danes, while the association with people of foreign nationality is limited to Hans Jorgensen's co-workers.

Rosa Jorgensen also tells about an event in which the entire congregation took part, under the leadership of pastor Anker. It was a visit to the Danish congregation in Weeping Waters, Nebraska. She tells in details about the event: How they were met by a Danish welcome banner, had lunch in a big tent, and then had time to socialize and experience the area on their own. Through a further description is felt a focus and interest, which is still directed toward Denmark. Not just by Rosa herself, but also among the other participants. She writes for instance:

*"The area looked much like a Danish landscape, and there was great enthusiasm, so it seemed like one big family with jokes and seriousness, and Danish songs mixed together. We met some people who came from Bjerringbro, and everyone wanted to know from the newcomers about how things were going in the old country."*

The interesting part of the letters is the references to the introduction to new customs and a new language. Rosa tells about an event, where the congregation had surprised pastor Anker with a

little party. Neither she nor the rest of the family had experienced that kind before, and it is clear that what she is describing a surprise party. Rosa Jorgensen is writing in detail to her mother about it and explains further that this form of entertainment is called "Prai". She had probably misunderstood the English word surprise. This little misunderstanding does not disclose Rosa Jorgensen's linguistic capacity, but it indicates that there were certain difficulties. The fact that she chooses to write the word could be seen as an indication of her interest in the English language and as an attempt to use it. Later in the letter she admits that she has difficulties with the English language. At least in comparison to her husband, and it appears that he had studied English prior to the departure from Denmark, and after their arrival in Lincoln he subscribed to an English language newspaper. In addition to this and in order to improve his ability, he often went to services in English-language churches. Rosa Jorgensen tells her mother that she went with him to one of those services, and she writes that "*Dad understood all of it, but I did not get much of it*".

The interesting part is the deliberate step Hans Jorgensen at this time takes toward a form of acculturation. It is difficult at this point to say if this is a move from the contact stage to the acculturation stage. But it is important to mention that such an interest in being able to communicate in English indicates a certain openness and will to cooperate.

In closing the letter, Rosa Jorgensen mentions the two daughters, five-year old Edna, and Ruth who is three. They have started attending a Danish Sunday school, where they are already learning the alphabet in preparation to be taught Danish.

### **1911. Hampton, Nebraska**

From a letter dated May 1, 1911, after the family has been in USA for a year, it is indicated that the family has moved to Hampton, Nebraska, where Rosa Jorgensen's brother, Anton Schultz, is a pastor. Among other things the letter tells that Hans Jorgensen has changed profession and is now working as a farmer on a rented farm.

Most of the letter covers an accident, in which the almost 4-year old Ruth has been kicked by a horse and has a broken leg. Hans Jorgensen also tells about the extreme climatic conditions in Nebraska. He tells that within a one-week period the family has experienced both warm weather, heavy thunder, rain, snow and frost, and closes by the finding that this is typical American weather.

Far more interesting is a letter, which Hans Jorgensen writes to his parents a little over four months later. The letter is interesting for several reasons, partly because we get an insight in the everyday living of the family, and partly a look at Hans Jorgensen's impression of the America he knows.

The family's existence is hard at this time, due to the work on the farm. Hans Jorgensen writes: "*I cannot understand that I am always so busy; but there is always so much that has to be done; I am always "bissi" from 5 or 6 in the morning till about 9 in the evening*". The letter also mentions that Rosa Jorgensen, who is called Mutter, is also busy with her work, which besides the housekeeping also involves doing the chores. In spite of all their duties, the couple is still satisfied with the life on the farm, and Hans Jorgensen hopes that they will be able to rent a farm again next year. This could be difficult since all land is taken, and nobody is expected to leave

the area.

There are certain especially interesting passages in the letter, where Hans Jorgensen mentions that the family is doing well. They feel secure living on the prairie, and Hans Jorgensen remarks that people out there never lock their doors. He also writes: *“America is a good country, and therefore I have taken out the first papers to become an American citizen.”* The application requires that Hans Jorgensen under oath had to renounce allegiance to the King of Denmark, and declare that he is neither an anarchist nor a bigamist.

Hans Jorgensen does not mention the reason he thinks that America is a good place, and thus we do not know why he decided to become an American citizen, but what is most important in this connection is not so much *why* he wants to be a citizen, but that he *wants* to, after just one and a half year stay. This means, in relation to the theory, that there is a change underway. Maybe it is too early to speak about a direct change from contact stage to acculturation stage, but there can be seen in Hans Jorgensen’s case elements from both. Although Barkan mentions that acquisition of citizenship in the contact phase is not possible, the desire can well be there. This is exactly supported by Hans Jorgensen’s application for “First Papers”. In addition to this there is the first feeble use of English language elements, which could indicate a certain openness toward the American society.

## 1912

In 1912 the family is increased in several ways. Hans Jorgensen’s younger brother leaves Denmark to join the family in Nebraska, and in the fall Rosa gives birth to a baby girl. This event changes the distribution of roles in the family, and suddenly there is a need for untraditional methods, since they are living thousands of miles from family and relatives.

Rosa Jorgensen’s mother dies at the beginning of the year, and in a letter she writes to her in-laws there are expressions, which can be interpreted both as distance and deprivation. Rosa Jorgensen writes, for example: *“It seems to me that I have lost so much, because nobody is like Mother. I always knew that I could go to her with my deepest problems and my biggest joy, and find understanding.”* The writing also spurs her to remark: *“I am so happy to know that you two dear old ones are at home on the familiar places that I know so well; one even knows the stair steps.”*

It is worth noting the use of the term “at home”; by that Rosa Jorgensen expresses, two years after leaving, that to her, the old home residence in Denmark is still her home. When she writes about the joy of knowing that her in-laws are at places with which she has an intimate knowledge, it could indicate that she feels a certain security in knowing that through them there is still a connection to that which she has left. In other words, her focus is still directed toward the land of her birth and all the familiar.

In the fall Rosa Jorgensen informs her father-in-law that she has given birth to a girl. The entire family, including Anders Jorgensen, who has gone to the relatives in Nebraska, are happy with the addition, who is the object of the attention of the entire household.

When Anders Jorgensen writes to his father at the beginning of December, it is to tell about the upheavals brought on by the newborn. Anders Jorgensen has to admit that the work of a farmer’s

wife is not easy, since the men have to take over her duties while Rosa Jorgensen is bedridden. The sharing of the work between the two men is done in such a way that Hans Jorgensen is primarily doing the field work, while Anders Jorgensen takes over the duties of the woman, which consist of preparing meals, cleaning house, do the baking, grind, do the laundry, watch the children and receive visitors.

Anders Jorgensen knows that the relatives in Denmark will wonder when they hear this, since he writes: *“Have you ever heard of father and uncle taking care of everything under such an arrangement... It certainly is not very common.”*

Another subject Anders Jorgensen mentions in the letter is also pertains to Rosa Jorgensen. It indicates that while Anders Jorgensen still was in Denmark he had conversations with his parents about whether Rosa Jorgensen was satisfied living in America. Anders Jorgensen reassures his parents by mentioning that Rosa Jorgensen is *“the same good, kind mother here as she was at home, and she is in no way suffering by being here.”* Anders Jorgensen then adds that the entire family is looking forward to visit the Danish relatives, when some day they will be wealthy enough to take the trip to Denmark.

This could indicate that among the relatives in Denmark there could have been some worry about Rosa Jorgensen’s conditions. It is not known what caused this worry since there is nothing in the previous correspondence, neither that, which has been used or the not used part, to give cause for any worries. The only thing is found in the letter in which Rosa Jorgensen mentions the death of her mother. But there could be some correspondence, which no longer exists, just as we do not know about Rosa Jorgensen’s role in the decision to emigrate. If it was exclusively Hans Jorgensen’s decision, then there could be enough reason to wonder about the well-being of the daughter-in-law.

A few days later Anders Jorgensen again writes a letter to his parents. This time to wish them a Merry Christmas and to tell about the family. Anders Jorgensen writes:

*“All in all I can say that we think, speak and feel over here almost as we did at home.”* The reason that he uses the word almost is that he is convinced that there has been a change in people, who live in America, and mentions in that connection the Danes, who have lived there for more than 20 years, and he writes that they are not like the Danes living in Denmark. Anders Jorgensen especially likes the solidarity between the Danes in the area, and exemplifies this by pointing out that there have been at least 34 to visit Rosa Jorgensen and the new baby. It should also be mentioned that everyone is on a very informal status with each other.

Anders Jorgensen’s information reveals that there is an ethnic society of Danes in and around Hampton, where the family lives. We must assume that it has been sizeable since they had a Danish pastor, and thus also a Danish congregation on the area. The solidarity indicates that the individual network of the people was based on ethnic relationships. Also among those, who had been in America for more than 20 years.

It can therefore be assumed that it was relatively easy for the Jorgensen family to maintain their Danishness both linguistically and culturally, although certain situations did require readjustments. The thought is here especially about the mentioned birth, which made a deep impression on everyone involved. Not just because it was an addition to the family, but also due to the change in the roles of the sexes. That the situation had forced a change in the thought process can be seen in the correspondence to Denmark, since a total of five letters refer to the

changing in the duties of the men.

It is probably incorrect to claim that this means a readjustment to a different cultural pattern than the Danish one, but it is certain that the family was forced by the circumstances to break with traditions in order to survive.

The conditions of the two older daughters at the time are known only from their own memoirs. In these it is mentioned that the girls started attending public school when Edna Jorgensen was five years old and Ruth was seven. It is furthermore told that neither of them spoke any English when they started in first grade, just as it is mentioned, that the majority of the pupils were of German descent.

### **Summary**

If the information in this section is compared with the contact stage in the theory section on page 23, it forms a picture, which is in agreement with Barkan's assertions. When the Jorgensen family arrived in Nebraska, they associated from the beginning with other Danes, and took part in the life of the Danish congregation in Lincoln, and later with the Danes in Hampton and probably mainly used the Danish language.

It is not known, to what extent the family maintained their cultural and social roots, with the exception of their correspondence, but the arrival of the new baby did, for some time at least, change the distribution of the work. We also have no knowledge of the extent of contact with persons of nationalities other than Danish, except for Hans Jorgensen's work relations during the period when he worked for an Irish contractor. It was probably limited to this connection alone, and maybe other work-related associations after the move to Hampton.

When one considers the individuals, based on the background of the letters, a pattern appears, which deviates a little from other general statements made by Barkan. At the linguistic level there is a clear difference between Hans and Rosa Jorgensen's personal reasons, and it can be felt that Hans Jorgensen has been most active in trying to overcome the language barriers by studying some English prior to the emigration and consciously trying to improve it after arriving in America. This relationship reveals not only a difference in the language motivation, but could indicate that the couple, maybe due to the difference in sex, could have had different ambitions both before and after the emigration. This is supported by Hans Jorgensen's decision to become an American citizen and the worry by the Danish relatives regarding Rosa Jorgensen's condition. She expresses her deprivation in the letter to her mother-in-law, but this can also be interpreted as an openness in Rosa Jorgensen than in her husband, since it is possible that he could have neglected to mention his wants and was focused on the advancement of the family.

Where there at least in Hans Jorgensen is a trace of openness toward the dominant society, and thus the starting signs of accumulation, it is more difficult to detect this in the children, due to the lack of information available. We do know, however, that in Lincoln through study of the Danish language in Sunday school, they have acquired a connection to the Danish, just as they themselves claim that they knew no English before they started attending the public school. Just the fact that they start attending public school could indicate an urge to become further integrated, since such an institution through its influence could have pointed the daughters in the right direction - seen from an American point of view.

## Cultural Change

### 1914

One cannot see a certain date where it suddenly can be determined that the entire Jorgensen family has moved from the contact stage to acculturation. But at the beginning of 1914 there were considerable changes in Hans Jorgensen, which indicate that there at least as far as he is concerned has been a change.

In a letter Hans Jorgensen wrote to his brother Anders Jorgensen, who at the time was living somewhere else in USA, possibly at the Danish educational institution Dana College in Nebraska is revealed a special relationship, which supports the claim that a change has taken place. The letter is mainly about the plan of the family to move from the rented farm in Hampton to a different one in the same area, and about certain acquisitions Hans Jorgensen must make in that connection. The special part of the letter is not the contents but the language, which in the beginning is Danish, but toward the end becomes a unique mixture of Danish and English. Among other things Hans Jorgensen writes: *"I was going to haul manure, and to a big sale on Wednesday ... he (the cattleman) has 3 big teams of mules and one of them is just like Mollie (presumably Hans Jorgensen's own mule) but mouse black. They will be sold separately."*

One can here make the claim that there has been a gradual use of linguistic elements from the English-speaking society. What is noteworthy is the fluent change from one language to the other, and both the sentence structure and the correct spelling reveal a familiarity with the English, which indicates that Hans Jorgensen is in a form of contact with the American society. Probably in the continual connection with his work, which is revealed in the quoted sentence. At the same time it should be mentioned that the letter is addressed to a person, who probably has the same qualifications as Hans Jorgensen himself.

The language is also the main theme in a letter written by Hans Jorgensen in early spring to the relatives in Denmark. The letter is written entirely in Danish, but with a few words in English as an exception. Among other things Hans Jorgensen writes, that he has started to break the corn stalks in the field, using the English word *stock*, just as he has substituted hectare with acres.

Another relationship illuminated by Hans Jorgensen is the school attendance by his daughters Edna and Ruth Jorgensen. Hans Jorgensen mentions that there has been a special emphasis on the pupils' pronunciation when they are reading, and remarks that it is probably due to the many different nationalities represented in the class. We also find out that the girls, at relatively nine and seven years of age, are getting along fine, and that they speak only English to each other - both at home and away from home. This information reveals that the girls are also, after four years in the USA under the influence of the American society, which is distinctive of the acculturation stage, just as it here is in this phase the elements of integration seem to appear among second-generation immigrants in that they get closer ties with the predominant society. According to them, it was difficult to make contact with others of their own age, since the move/moves made them feel as if they were not part of a group, but remained strangers on the move. The two sisters probably had a fear of being considered as strangers and different. Ruth Jorgensen especially remembers one case where the difference between the sisters and the other

pupils came through, and where she felt that it was important to be like the others. That was in regard to food culture. The girls brought Danish open-faced sandwiches in their lunch boxes, but in order not to be different the girls asked their mother to put two slices of bread together, and thus change them to English sandwiches.

In December 1914 Hans Jorgensen took inventory of his virtues and property, and through this we get an insight in the association with the ethnic group, his status in the immigrant group and as a farmer. Besides the fieldwork, which at this time consisted of “*huske Corn*” (harvest corn), Hans Jorgensen has “*36 steers and heifers worth \$1,800.00. 2 cows and one calf; 7 horses; 76 hogs and 41 sows ... 1 big boar. (And) 125 hens.* He has also gotten a job as verger at the church, is a member of the church council, vice president of the Sunday school and Sunday school teacher. In other words, Hans Jorgensen is active in the church activities, which was established by the Danish society in Hampton, and this is in agreement with the statements found about the acculturation phase. At the same time one gets the impression of a person, who has a certain status in the Danish community, and is engaged in the activities affecting not just the ecclesiastic life, but also the Danishness connected to that life.

### **1915. Sidney, Montana**

In March there is again an addition to the family, when another baby girl is born. She is given the name Agnes. Later in the spring Hans Jorgensen travels to the state of Montana, where he discovers certain possibilities, which are not found in Nebraska. In Montana the price of land is much lower than in Nebraska, and the family thus has the opportunity to own their own land. In addition to this there are many Danes living in the area round Sidney, just as the climate which, according to Hans Jorgensen, is more bearable in the summer than in Nebraska, where it is too hot.

Around Christmas is sensed a touch of sadness in a letter to Denmark from Hans Jorgensen, and for the first time he expresses his longing for something old and familiar, since he writes: “*I shall never forget Christmas in Denmark; it was as if the Christmas spirit was in the air. Everyone looked forward to Christmas, maybe in different ways, but “Christmas “ was always felt deep within one’s heart. Yes, we are also looking forward to Christmas; but over here it is as if one is alone with the joy.*” It is difficult to see if Hans Jorgensen by this means that the family is going to celebrate Christmas alone, without relatives and friends, or if in America they have a completely different attitude toward Christmas than in Denmark. Later on in the letter he writes: “*If only we could stop in and see you on Christmas Eve, but that will have to wait. If it is God’s will, then the time will come.*” It almost seems as if Hans Jorgensen here knows that the prayer can be interpreted as homesickness, so he assures them, that everyone is fine, “*and could not have had it better in Denmark, even under quiet conditions [probably a reference to the world war]. Never a worry about the daily bread and health and joy of our children.*”

### **1916**

The family had moved to Sidney, Montana by July 1916, and Hans Jorgensen worked as a carpenter but still has plans to get back to farming. The family owns land and Hans Jorgensen has, together with “mutter” built his own house and expects to add a barn in the fall. In

September he is still working as a carpenter, but admits that he does not care for it and would prefer farming. That is the reason the family had moved from Lincoln to Hampton, Nebraska at one time. In spite of the carpenter work Hans Jorgensen is satisfied with living in Montana, and expresses that the entire family is well. The daughters Edna and Ruth Jorgensen attend school a mile from home, and Hans Jorgensen tells that they are doing well, and are among the five best in their class in spelling.

In the annual Christmas letter Hans Jorgensen starts a tradition that continues till his last correspondence. The letter writing has gotten out of hand and it takes too much time, and he decides to introduce the so-called "omgangsbreve" (shared letters), which means that instead of addressing the letters to one person or one couple they are addressed to several. This way Hans Jorgensen could write to all relatives in Denmark at one time, and thus not forget anyone. As he writes, the family wishes to keep in touch and not become strangers. Hans Jorgensen also tells that everyone is fine. Rosa Jorgensen is involved in congregational work, and the four daughters are happy. The only difficulty is the weather; the winter has been especially severe with temperatures down to -40 degrees. It is especially difficult to be outdoors when it is windy, and Hans Jorgensen illustrates this with the following example: "*One day (it was 30 below zero) I drove Edna and Ruth to school, against the wind. My cheeks froze as stiff as ice, and turned white. They are still sore from it.*" The reason this citation is included is that it will later show that weather conditions in Montana were a determining factor in the family's later life in America.

## 1917

Not until a year later do we hear from the family. A large part of that year's correspondence was lost, and Hans Jorgensen shows his frustration that the family in Denmark has not received any letters from USA, just as they have not received letters from Denmark. The hopeless situation is blamed on the war, which has also caused everything to become very expensive in America, and Hans Jorgensen writes: "*We are anxious to hear how everyone is doing.*" The last thing they had received was a telegram with the message that Hans Jorgensen's father had died. This naturally had a great effect on the family, and Hans Jorgensen expresses his sorrow over never again seeing his father, and that he now only has the memories. It should also be added that he did not become a farmer in 1917. Hans Jorgensen continued to work as a carpenter, but expects to be able to go back to farming in 1918, and has already purchased the necessary - livestock and machinery - and he has also expanded the buildings. In closing he mentions, without giving any further details, that he will become an American citizen on January 8, 1918.

In an attached letter from Rosa Jorgensen is expressed an almost poetic nostalgia, probably brought on by the death of her father-in-law, and maybe because of the Christmas season. Anyway she writes: "*Our dear bereaved ones at home. Just a loving greeting from me and the children. Our thoughts are often with you. The Christmas tree lights shone on all of your beloved faces as well as your cozy room, where everything is so familiar and cozy down to the smallest item, even the pictures on the wall, and Hans could recognize some of the photographs on the desk...Grandfather sitting among you; now the chair is empty...*"

Rosa Jorgensen is probably referring to a photograph of the Danish family in their room, when she writes that the lights from the Christmas tree were shining at their faces. It is interesting in

this connection that the theme here is almost identical to the content of the passage found in Rosa Jorgensen's letter from 1912, where she writes to her mother-in-law about the familiar places in Denmark, that she knew so well. The need to know and to recognize seems to be important to Rosa Jorgensen and to be an expression to hang on to the idea of something unchanging, something familiar, in a changing existence.

## **1918**

In 1918 Hans Jorgensen was again able to consider himself a farmer, and this is also the year of the end of the First World War. Both situations make the Jorgensen family happy - especially the latter, since the families on both sides of the Atlantic again can expect regular mail delivery.

One problem which not only Europe and America, but also the Jorgensen family had trouble with, was the ravages of the Spanish Sickness. Several in their area had died from the sickness, among them a neighbor's three grown children. Hans Jorgensen himself had been sick, but had recovered again. The entire family was well at the beginning of the winter, the work was a success for them and they had acquired an automobile. The two older girls, Edna and Ruth, have been helping their father in the fields after school, while the third daughter, Lilly Jorgensen, six years old, had started school.

Born in the USA Lilly Jorgensen should supposedly have had an advantage over her two Danish-born sister in regards to the language and American values. But because she was being raised in a family with a strong connection to the Danish traditions and values, she has maintained Danish identity at least until she became of school age, and probably beyond that.

She remembers that she at the age of six or seven started to learn to write and read Danish. A part of the teaching was given through participation in Danish summer school, where the pupils were taught to write, read, sing and about Danish literature by students from the Inner Mission Seminary, Trinity Seminary in Blair, Nebraska. Beyond this she learned much by writing Christmas greetings to the relatives in Denmark. This took place by her writing an outline, which was then edited by her mother Rosa Jorgensen. From Lilly we also know that they always spoke Danish at home, as well as relaxing at home by playing and singing Danish hymns and folk songs. Lilly Jorgensen was taught English by her father before she started school.

## **Summary**

It would be appropriate here to pause in the presentation and summarize the most important points from the period 1914 to 1918. This is a period, which in the area of letter writing is dominated by Hans Jorgensen - and, it appears - by efforts to establish an occupational footing. There is not much information regarding these themes that is of interest in this connection. Yet the knowledge that is available gives the impression of a family, which is mainly of a Danish mindset, speaking Danish at home and taking part in activities planned by the Danish society in Hampton, Nebraska, and later in Sidney, Montana and is involved in the arrangements of these. But it is also a family, which is in touch with the surroundings, and influenced by the impulses from it. Most clear is the influence by the language, but also the elements of culture seems to gain admittance, at least by the two oldest sisters, at least as expressed in the need to be like the rest of them (an example is the English style sandwiches). An important step toward the American society is taken when Hans Jorgensen - and thereby automatically the rest of the family - acquire American citizenship. Through this the family acquire a number of civil rights,

which enable them to, on an even footing with other Americans, influence society and consider themselves as part of it. On a structural plane this means that the family principally has become integrated, they are officially Americans; but in reality rather Danish-Americans.

### **1920. A Visit to Denmark**

Denmark is still a focal point, and on Tuesday, February 24, 1920, the entire farm inventory belonging to Hans Jorgensen's farm is put up for sale. The family is going to Denmark - to visit - but first they are going to stop in the state of New York to look into employment possibilities there.

The correspondence with the Danish relatives ceases during the period, and only the memories of the daughters are sources to describe the family's stay. According to those memories the family left Sidney, Montana and went to Blair, Nebraska where they spent four weeks with Rosa Jorgensen's brother, Anton Schultz, who at the time was a pastor in Blair. Also Hans Jorgensen's brother, Anton Jorgensen, lived in town and was studying at Dana College.

From Blair they continued to the state of New York, where they visited a family what had left Sidney, Montana and had settled in Pen Yan. The plan was apparently that the Jorgensen family, after visiting Denmark, intended to settle there and operate a dairy. They arrived in Denmark in April, and one of Hans Jorgensen's acquisitions was an automobile, which the family used to visit relatives and friends all through the country. It is likely that part of the income from selling the farm was spent on that purchase.

The family spent part of the time in Christiansfeld, where by coincidence King Christian X was visiting as part of the celebration of the reunification of Southern Jutland. The Jorgensen family supposedly experienced seeing the king riding his horse, and at the occasion had watched him from the steps of the Brothers' congregation church - the children each with an American flag waiving to the majesty, who returned the greeting with a hand salute.

The Jorgensen family celebrated American Independence Day in the Rebild Hills, and then went on to Skagen, before going on to Veringe on Funen. Here unfortunately the then seven-year-old Lilly Jorgensen was infected with diphtheria and was hospitalized in Assens for two weeks. Close to the end of her hospital stay she had a visit from her father's mother, who came together with Hans and Rosa Jorgensen to visit Lilly Jorgensen. She writes: *"I cried when they left. I realized I would probably never see my grandmother again. It had always been a disappointment to me that we never had grandparents to visit. Other children in school talked about going to grandmother's house."* It is probably too much to make the claim that the lack of grandparents should have made Lilly Jorgensen feel alienated to her classmates. The want is just as real, and one can imagine that it has been difficult for her to do without her grandparents, especially if the classmates told about the relationship to theirs.

Lilly Jorgensen also relates her getting back to America by writing that she is glad to return to USA. When the ship arrived in New York harbor, she saw through the porthole the Statue of Liberty, and at the sight of the statue she recited the Pledge of Allegiance, sang American songs, and writes that she now felt that she was back home again. We do not know the reliability of this claim, since it is not supported by anything else. It should be emphasized, however, that Lilly Jorgensen at that time is only seven years old, and the time before these memories was written down could easily have modified the realities, so that her reconstruction deviates from the truth. However, if we accept the statement as being fairly truthful, it reveals a relationship, which is

interesting in relation to the third stage, the acquisition stage, which among others is characterized by a larger focus toward the American society and culture. Lilly Jorgensen's reaction to her return to America reveals that at least her orientation is toward the nation where she was born and raised. This is so although neither she nor the rest of the family had a home to return to.

### **1920. Fresno, California**

Two months after the Jorgensen family's return to USA the correspondence to Denmark resumes. It has taken this long because the Jorgensen family wanted to clarify living- and employment conditions before writing to their relatives.

After their arrival in New York, the family spent some time there as tourists, visited acquaintances where their clothing was stored, and again investigating employment potentials, but then decided to go on to Blair, Nebraska. Hans Jorgensen left his family there while he went on to Sidney, Montana to take care of some financial questions. Before he left the couple had decided that if he bought land up there, the rest of the family would follow him by themselves. Hans Jorgensen returned to Blair, and the family then went to California together with a young man, who had just arrived from Denmark.

After a long trip they arrived in Fresno and Rosa wrote in her letter: *"Just imagine getting to live in the shades of palm trees. I have always wished for it, but never thought that it would become reality. Yes, it is wonderful here, and they say that it is winter now. Oranges and Lemons have their golden fruits and look like decorated Christmas trees --"* One feels the positive mood in Rosa Jorgensen's quote, and she seems elated by having her dreams come true, to live in these exotic surroundings. On that background one could imagine that through the fulfillment of such a need, and if it has not happened before, there could come an openness in these new surroundings, which can promote the integration. One could thus claim that also climate and local conditions could have an influence on the will to become integrated. It could at least be contributing to making living easier.

Rosa Jorgensen further reports that the family, through old acquaintances from Montana, whom they have met in the Danish church, has acquired a farm costing \$24,500.00. They make a down payment of \$4,500.00, with the balance due over a period of 20 years. The size of the farm is 20 hectare, and the house has ten rooms. Hans Jorgensen has resumed the work of farming, bought a car, while the children are back in school. They no longer have to walk to school, but are transported by school bus. In closing Rosa Jorgensen notes that after nine months of traveling she is happy to again having a home, and that there are Danish families living on both sides of the road. By this she reveals that the fellowship with other Danes thus still is important to her.

### **1921**

In a letter from January 1921, Hans Jorgensen writes approximately the same as Rosa Jorgensen, but in more detail about certain conditions, which his wife just mentions. Before these are mentioned, it shall here be noted that Hans Jorgensen instead of writing "mutter", which he has done so far, when Rosa Jorgensen is mentioned, now the designation "mother" is used. Another small sign of change.

As a picture of the times, Hans Jorgensen remarks that the last thing he saw before leaving Denmark was an airplane, and that was some of the first he again saw at his arrival in New York.

Here he writes that the family was permitted to debark the ship among the first ones, because they were American citizens. The reason they did not settle in New York state was that there were many idle dairies, and Hans Jorgensen thus concludes that it would probably be an insecure investment to start life there. The weather was the reason that they did not settle in Montana, which had been their last residence. Hans Jorgensen had had enough of cold weather, and probably inspired by two married couples Hans and Rosa met on the ship to Denmark, they decide to go to California. According to the letter, Hans and Rosa Jorgensen had discussed possibilities with the California Danes, the possibilities of growing fruit there.

The farm Hans Jorgensen bought in California goes up for sale again, since there are problems getting the money due him from the sale in Montana because of a poor harvest. Hans Jorgensen is thus unable to pay down the amount agreed upon; but the family is promised that they can stay until the farm is sold. Hans Jorgensen therefore makes a living by staking up and pruning grapevines for winegrowers. This work apparently does not bother Hans Jorgensen, who writes: *We have wonderful sunshine every day and it is a pleasure working outside in shirtsleeves. I had never thought that it would be this nice in California.*” It is apparently Montana’s cold climate Hans Jorgensen refers to, when he expresses his joy of working in California.

It is probably a deliberate decision that Hans and Rosa Jorgensen chose to settle in an area, where there were other Danes. At least Rosa Jorgensen appreciates the Danish neighbors, and Hans Jorgensen mentions the Danish community and writes that he has twice been with the congregation out looking for land that could be used to form a Danish colony. From the letter one gets the impression that The Danish Lutheran Church is the gathering point, and the Jorgensen family has here met many old acquaintances from both the time in Lincoln, Nebraska and Sidney, Montana. The church is also the gathering point for the daughters, all four of them attending Sunday school, and Edna and Ruth are going to confirmation preparations.

The job of pruning continues through the winter and into next spring. From a letter written by Hans Jorgensen it appears that he is optimistic in spite of the strenuous work. *“I like it”*, he writes in English, but then continues, realizing that the recipient of the letter does not have the same knowledge of the language that he has: (in Danish) *“that is, yes, how do you say it, I like it.”* The background to this is given later since, knowing about the economic differences between Denmark and USA, and the conditions under which he works in USA, he writes *“I am also a day laborer, and that is not quite the same as being a tourist; but I would prefer to be a tourist in Denmark and day laborer in America than the opposite. Here I can drive my own car to work, and that could not be done in Denmark.”* The family still dreams about owning their own farm since that would give more stability and at the same time mean less work for Hans Jorgensen, since everyone would be able to help.

The letter also reveals that the entire family has become involved in the life of the congregation in the Danish church in the Fresno area. Also Hans and Rosa Jorgensen are attending Sunday school, and the number of participants gives an insight in the size of the congregation since according to the letter there are 200 participants at the Sunday school meetings.

## **1921. Selma, California**

Due to disagreements with the new tenant of the farm, which Hans Jorgensen was unable to purchase, the family was forced to leave the rented house in April. They then move to Selma, California, where they get the loan of a farm from a Danish family who is going for a three-month stay in Illinois. The agreement is that the Jorgensen family is to live there for free and in return take on the duties that go with the work on the farm. Just a week after moving in, Hans Jorgensen makes an agreement with another Dane to rent his farm for the remainder of the year and the next year as well, but they decide to stay at the borrowed farm until the owners return from Illinois.

Both farms are located about 1/2 mile outside Selma, the town where, according to Hans Jorgensen, the family always had wished to live. He does not write about the reason, but instead mentions that Rosa Jorgensen has a job as fruit picker at a cannery in Selma. Rosa Jorgensen apparently takes the job in order to improve their financial conditions, and as far as we know it is her debut on the labor market. Where their associates until then probably had been other Danes, it is now possible that she now to a greater extent gets into contact with Americans. Anyway, Hans Jorgensen writes that the company hires and employs many women, and it almost seems that he defends Rosa's positions to the Danish relatives when he continues: *"They are not what you in Denmark consider factory girls. Here they are high school girls and housewives from all walks of life. It is as if everyone is interested in getting the harvest done."*

She is back home again by October. The family has moved to the rented farm, and Hans Jorgensen supplements the farm work by selling brushes for Fuller Brushes. The girls have started school in Selma: Agnes Jorgensen in first grade, Lilly Jorgensen in second, while Edna and Ruth Jorgensen are in high school.

## **1922**

Edna and Ruth Jorgensen are apparently doing well in high school, and in March 1922 they are elected to represent Selma High School in a type writing contest. The two sisters win the contest by typing 48 words per minute.

It is still too soon to determine a change in stage based on this information. It should be mentioned, however, that the learning stage among other things is characterized by the way immigrants for instance through the school establish connections with people of different ethnic origin, whereby they experience a certain degree of integration. We still do not know about the friendships of the sisters with other people, but information about their knowledge reveals both competence in Edna and Ruth Jorgensen and recognition by the system, since it chose them to represent the school. Although this relationship is not enough to conclude that the sisters have moved into the acquisition stage, it is proof that they are getting along in the predominant society. There is nothing to indicate that the opposite is the case.

## **1923**

A view into the friendship relationships of Edna and Ruth Jorgensen is given in a letter, which the almost 16-year old Ruth Jorgensen writes to her uncle Anders in April 1923. The letter has the signs of being written by a teenager, contains themes such as friendship, school attendance and grades, teachers and life in general, and is written in English except for a few words in

Danish. Ruth Jorgensen writes among other things to her uncle about the family home: "*You just ought to come and see how nice our little house has become.*" Although a few Danish words have sneaked into the letter, it ought to be emphasized, that they are the exceptions, and have probably been written that way due to the nationality of the recipient of the letter. Anders Jorgensen had by that time moved back to Denmark, but has most likely maintained his knowledge of English. Although it is not known for certain, it is assumed that Ruth Jorgensen was able to express herself quite well in Danish, she had chosen English. It is not known whether this is because of Anders Jorgensen's background, or consideration to herself, since English is her preferred language. But with our knowledge of her capabilities, and it is verified by the letter, it draws a picture of a person who at a linguistic level has experienced an adjustment to the American language pattern.

According to the letter the two sisters have a friend, Dorothy Schuler, who is not a Dane. Ruth Jorgensen likes her and writes that they have had many good conversations. A problem has occurred in that Dorothy Schuler is going to move away and Ruth Jorgensen mentions that she does not know, what the two sisters are going to do, and she writes: "*There are of course a lot of others, whom we know but they aren't real friends.*" As far as boys goes, she remarks that most of them are not worth talking to since they are too silly.

Ruth Jorgensen likes living in California, and gives a detailed picture of the nature around the family home. The beauty of the orange trees fascinates her, especially in the spring when they are in full bloom and smell like perfume.

Edna and Ruth continue to do well in school. Ruth Jorgensen is doing a little better and is the fifth best on the school honor roll. The reason that Edna is not on the roll is poor grades in "Piano lessons".

Their relations with the teachers are strained due to their behavior. Ruth Jorgensen writes for instance about one of the teachers that he is good professionally, but he is a man without morals and is decidedly rotten. She gives the reason that the teacher was supposed to have said that he hated children. Also the English teacher was mentioned, and about her Ruth Jorgensen wrote that she was among the best in the USA, but not very pleasant in her everyday language.

## **1924-1925**

Both Edna and Ruth Jorgensen finished high school in 1924, and the further progress of the sisters is revealed in connection with occupations. Their choice of employment can also tell something about the degree of involvement and the will to become integrated. The choice of employment can naturally also become a question of taking what is available, but nevertheless it means that one is employed and thus in a formal interplay with the elements of the American society.

Immediately after high school Edna Jorgensen gets a job in Susanville, California with the U.S. Forest Service. According to a letter written by Hans Jorgensen in September 1925, he has also spent time in Susanville, working as a carpenter in connection with some tunnel project. The letter also mentions that Edna Jorgensen is no longer in Susanville, but has been transferred to San Francisco. Ruth Jorgensen works in an office in Selma. Lilly Jorgensen is to start in high school, and Hans Jorgensen has started attending a business school in Fresno. He writes that this choice is made because he needs to seek different work since his body can no longer tolerate

heavy manual labor. He has thus decided to work with his brain since it is not worn out yet, and he wants to become a bookkeeper.

There is now a pause in the letter, and Hans Jorgensen finishes it on November 19, 1925. In the meantime he has sat for exams in arithmetic and bookkeeping, and has apparently done well. Anyway, he has discovered that he is as capable in learning as are the younger people, although he probably spends more time preparing.

## **1927**

It is not bookkeeping, but continuing carpenter work that becomes Hans Jorgensen's main occupation the coming years. Again in 1927 he expresses that he gets tired doing manual labor and writes that he needs to make a change. In the letter is also mentioned that Edna Jorgensen has found a friend, whom the family is looking forward to meet. On December 10 the same year she marries her friend, whose name is Henry Emil Jorgensen and who is also a Dane. It is not known how Edna Jorgensen met her spouse. There appears to be no separation from the ethnic origin in choosing a spouse, but rather an affirmation of the ethnic relations.

## **Summary**

The period from 1920 - 1927 is still dominated by Hans Jorgensen's effort to find an occupational niche. At the same time it is a period showing big changes in the integration process among the individual family members, and their differences become more visible. The connection to the ethnicity continues to be of great importance for Hans and Rosa Jorgensen and among other things is expressed by the choice of residence, where the tendency shows that they choose to settle where there is already a representation of Danes and there take active part in things related to the Danish. The couple does not appear to be isolated from relations with the American surroundings, and Hans Jorgensen especially reveals through his work, language and habits to be open to the opportunities in the American society. An example of this can be seen on p. 51, where Hans Jorgensen informs, that the kind of life the family has in USA would not have been possible in Denmark, and gives the example that in USA he is the owner of an automobile, which most likely would have been impossible in Denmark.

On the background of correspondence from the period it seems reasonable to assume that both Hans and Rosa Jorgensen are thriving well in the acculturation phase, although at different stages within it. The difference is especially expressed in that Hans Jorgensen through his work appears to be more integrated than his wife, although she also, although only through a short period through her work had been in contact. Common to both of them seems to be the fact that they both had the same degree of interest in matters concerning the Danishness.

Hans and Rosa Jorgensen's interest also rubs off on the daughters, who through participation in Sunday school secure association with their ethnicity. At the same time the daughters experience a change, which is more progressive than that of their parents. The result is that they take direct steps toward the deeper infiltration into the American culture. Conditions verifying this are first of all their school attendance. At the same time the period also reveals that at least Edna and Ruth Jorgensen go through a process, which in linguistic, friendship and occupational respects have clear relations to Barkan's learning stage. In Edna Jorgensen's case, though, the integration does not go deeper than that she confirms her ties to her ethnicity by choosing a spouse of the

same origin as herself.

### **1928**

In 1928 a change takes place. Times are difficult for the building trade and Hans Jorgensen takes the opportunity to make a change and becomes a furniture maker. At the beginning of the new year he opens a furniture repair shop in a rented location in the center of Selma.

It is with certain misgivings that he starts the business, and he does not expect to have full-time work right away. But there has been full time work right from the start. In August 1928 the shop is expanded to include repairs of mattresses. For that purpose he has constructed an electric machine, which is used to kart the inside of the mattresses. Hans Jorgensen is not making much on this work, but he hopes that as soon as the business gets established, he will be able to increase the prices. Rosa Jorgensen is helping him. She braids chair seats and sews mattress covers.

### **1929**

Almost a year later Rosa Jorgensen writes to her in-laws and reports that they have had a very busy year, but despite being busy, their earnings are still poor, and they are having financial difficulties. For that reason they are considering yet another change, but Rosa writes that she will let Hans Jorgensen tell about that.

Besides this the letter is about red-letter days, and in this connection Rosa Jorgensen mentions that Agnes Jorgensen has been confirmed, Lilly Jorgensen has finished high school, while the couple themselves have celebrated their silver wedding anniversary. There is a long description of that, and she writes that the Danish congregation in Selma had a surprise party for the couple in the church and on the occasion had given Hans and Rosa Jorgensen a silver coffee service. Due to the financial difficulties at the time the couple had decided not to have a celebration, and therefore had kept the date a secret, but without any luck.

The ties to the Danish are revealed in various forms through the letter. For example Rosa Jorgensen writes on behalf of Edna Jorgensen and asks for some Danish songbooks to be used in her home. The request can be viewed as a need to maintain or secure a Danish thread in the new home, and thereby reveals that there is still a certain interest in Danish culture. Rosa Jorgensen also expresses in the most direct way so far, that she misses her good life in Denmark. This is revealed in a number of cases of looking back at certain episodes she has had with individual members of the family, for which she thanks each one and wishes that some day she will be able to embrace them and summarizes by writing: *“No, those days will never be forgotten, they are written in the heart as dear memories, and nobody knows how much I live in them.”*

Especially the last remark reveals something about the fact that Rosa Jorgensen lives in two worlds, the one she left and the one in which she now lives. We do not know to what degree she lingers in the past, but it could be quite a bit, when we consider what she writes, and include previous correspondence. The quotation also says something about Rosa Jorgensen’s integration development. If one compares it with Barkan’s phases, it shows that she is still in the cultural

change phase, since the focus is mainly directed toward Denmark.

The plans for change that Rosa Jorgensen mentions in the letter are defined in an attached letter written by Hans Jorgensen. In the letter he mentions that he has considered starting making caskets.

### **1931**

Late in the summer of 1931 the plans have been realized. After three years of planning Hans Jorgensen has started to make caskets, which are sold to undertakers. There have been difficulties acquiring production permits, since there are already 14 firms in California, but after a long tug-of-war the permit is finally received. Besides this, the now 27-year old Ruth Jorgensen is in Los Angeles taking nurses training; Lilly Jorgensen, 18 years old, has gone to Blair, Nebraska to study to become a teacher at Dana College, while 16-year old Agnes Jorgensen has started her last year in high school. The almost 26-year old Edna Jorgensen lives, according to her father, in a modern marriage with a husband, who makes coffee, cleans house and does the dishes.

It appears that the children are taking part in the American society. There seems to be no signs of isolation or segregation, but rather cooperation and participation. There is this in common in the four girls that they have a Danish heritage, but this does not appear to be a hindrance to them. They are living with a Danishness, which is tied in with the elements they have acquired of the American culture. As an example there is Lilly Jorgensen, who like her sisters had attended American public school, high school, and then started further education at a Danish institution, as Dana College was at that time.

### **1932. Easton, California**

In 1932 there is yet another change of occupation with Hans Jorgensen going into what is to become his final profession. In a letter dated September 27 he informs his brother Martin, that he has purchased a building lot in the town of Easton about 14 miles from Selma and they have moved there. Without giving a reason why, Hans Jorgensen has personally built a funeral home, and has hired a person to perform embalming of the bodies, while he is planning on building and selling caskets, and otherwise handle all other aspects of the business. After the letter has been unfinished for two months, Hans Jorgensen finishes it and tells that the family has maintained the connections with friends and the congregation in Selma. Hans Jorgensen writes furthermore that the business has given him much work and he has been busy with both that and the completion of the building itself. For instance the family has only now built their own house on the lot, and had meanwhile been living in the workshop where the caskets are being built.

In the letter there is also a few lines written by Rosa Jorgensen, about the notice she has received about the death in the Danish circle of friends. For the first time in the correspondence being handled, Rosa Jorgensen is expressing herself in a Danish, which has been Anglicized in both sentence structure and language. She writes: *"It took us by surprise to hear about Emil Nielsen's death."* The quote shows that Rosa Jorgensen is not only familiar with the English language, but that it also has a certain dominance in her way of expressing herself, and thus probably also in her daily life.

## 1934-1935

The correspondence to the Danish relatives now becomes more and more sparse. There are some letters in the shape of congratulations, but otherwise there is no specific information given. At the same time the communication is intensified with the scattered daughters. Two letters from 1934 reveal that Lilly Jorgensen at that time is teaching at the Indian High School in Oaks, Oklahoma. Otherwise the letters tell about the work at the funeral home, and especially about how many caskets are being sold to other funeral homes in the vicinity.

In early September there is another letter to Denmark. Hans Jorgensen writes one of the so called rotating letters, where he states that he realizes it has been a long time since he has written. There are no apologies, but he rather wonders where to start.

Hans Jorgensen then reports on the family. Only he and Rosa Jorgensen are left at home. The youngest daughter, Agnes, was married on June 16 that year to Viggo Madsen, who is not further introduced, and the couple live in Oakland, California. The eldest daughter Edna and her husband Henry Jorgensen live in San Francisco and have two daughters, Rosamund Jorgensen, two years old, and Virginia nine months old. About Ruth he tells that she finished nurses training in 1935 at Highland College of Nursing in Oakland, and has a job at a tuberculosis sanatorium in Livermore, California. Lilly Jorgensen also finished her teacher training in 1935 from Fresno State College, and has since August worked as a teacher at the mission school in Oaks, Oklahoma. Hans Jorgensen also writes that she became engaged the previous year to Severin Sorensen, whom she met at Dana College, and is also teaching at the Indian reservation.

Hans Jorgensen then tells in details about the work as undertaker, telling among other things about how many funerals he has had since 1933. That year they had 6 funerals; in 1934 there were 16, and until September 1935 they have had 13. He expects that the number will increase, and compares it with 1934, where 13 of the 16 funerals were during the period after October 1. The cost of a funeral is also mentioned, and it can be anywhere from \$75.00 to \$400.00. Then there is also the income from sale of caskets that he himself makes. Hans Jorgensen does not mention any amounts, but that he delivers to Mr. Robinson in Selma and Mr. Erricson in Kingsburg.

That the funeral home does not have just Danish customers is revealed in a slightly morbid fashion. Hans Jorgensen writes that he is a licensed funeral director, but cannot embalm the bodies. That requires a special license, and Hans Jorgensen is in a partnership with Robinson from Selma, who does the embalming. The arrangement is satisfactory, at least in regards to the American clients, but Hans Jorgensen himself handles the work as far as the Danes are concerned. That is, Hans Jorgensen only applies make-up to the faces. The rest of the body is still taken care of by Mr. Robinson. Hans Jorgensen writes that the reason he has chosen to take care of the face is: *"I know best how the Danes wish it, and I have had good luck with all of them. Robinson had fixed one while I was away, and it took Mother and me two hours to get it off again. Since then we do not want him to do it anymore."*

## 1936

That the business is doing well is revealed in the letters the following year. Besides that, we learn that the couple has acquired a radio, and Hans Jorgensen writes: *"I have lately had a 10-tube radio at home on trial. I can get all stations in the United States, part of Canada and Mexico but*

*not Europe. I then tried a 12-tube, but it was not much better. It will be difficult for us to hear from Denmark direct."*

Hans Jorgensen's remarks are almost self-explanatory, and one still can sense the importance Denmark has to the couple. Together with the expression that it will be difficult to listen to the Danish stations is revealed a hint of deprivation. After 26 years in USA, the country that they left still has a big role in Hans and Rosa Jorgensen's life, and although there has been an influx of both linguistic and cultural elements from the American society, their focus is still directed toward Denmark. One thus seem to be able to use the term bi-cultural about the couple, since they have both maintained elements of their original culture and with the acquisition of the American, where especially the language is noticeable.

The last relevant letter for the years to come is written by the couple in July 1936. The information about the business is almost like that in the previous letters, although Hans Jorgensen is expecting an increase in the workload. He is looking forward to this after a stagnant period.

They are telling that the daughters are all well. Without mentioning the job situation, Hans Jorgensen writes that Agnes and Viggo Madsen are still in Oakland. He also just mentions that Edna and her family live in Berkeley, while Lilly is on her way from Oklahoma to spend her vacation with her parents. Ruth Jorgensen is also mentioned, and her father writes that she is happy in her work at the sanatorium in Livermore.

#### **1941 - 1947. Fowler, California**

The postal communication to Denmark is reduced to a minimum and completely ceases for a period of about 10 years before it resumes. There is no actual explanation for this, at least for the period before World War II. During the war the lack of mail, according to the daughters recollections, is that they were only allowed to receive and send one annually. Red Cross administered the mail service, and it was not permitted to give information about residences or occupations of family members.

It is also in the memoirs we need to seek information about the further life of the family. Among other things is told that Hans Jorgensen in 1941 again needed a change, and thus decided to move the business to Fowler, California, which did not have a funeral home. Agnes and Viggo Madsen, who had two daughters, Marcia and Vicki Madsen, born in 1937 and 1940, at the request by Hans Jorgensen, in 1942 move from Oakland to Fowler, where Viggo Madsen is offered a partnership in the funeral home. He becomes trained to be an embalmer at the same time he is assisting his father-in-law in the funeral home. Besides this Agnes and Viggo Madsen are managers of a flower shop, established in connection with the father-in-law's funeral home. Hans and Rosa Jorgensen retire in 1946, and Viggo Madsen takes over the business together with a man named Byron Holler.

In 1947 Lilly Jorgensen marries Severin Sorensen, and they both continue their teaching jobs in Oaks, Oklahoma until 1939, when they move to Ames, Iowa and Severin Sorensen studies agricultural science at Iowa State University. After finishing his education in 1942, the couple moves to Nebraska City, Nebraska and get employment. Lilly stays at home, taking care of their children. They also have two daughters: Charlotte Anne Sorensen (1938) and Starla Sorensen (1945).

Not much is told about Edna and Henry Jorgensen, other than they through the entire period continue to live in San Francisco, where Henry Jorgensen works as a bookkeeper at Pacific Gas and Electric Company. In 1940 the couple has their third daughter, Ellen Jorgensen. For Ruth Jorgensen this period is marked by training and career. She quits her job at the tuberculosis sanitarium in Livermore, after she, following the death of her sweetheart, has a nervous breakdown. She spends some time with her parents and in 1940 she decides to pursue a bachelor degree in Nursing Education. She gets her degree in 1943 from Berkeley University and the same year she joins the American military nurses' corps. As chief nurse with the rank of second lieutenant she is deployed to France with her unit in November 1945 and works in a field hospital in Mourmelon. The following year she is promoted to inspector for the American military hospitals in all of France, and is released from the military in 1947 with the rank of major. Ruth Jorgensen is awarded the World War II Victory Medal and American Campaign Medal for her service.

The next letter is also from Ruth Jorgensen, written after her discharge in 1947 during a stay in Denmark, where she visited with her parents. The letter is a circulating letter written in English, and a report of the many experiences of the family during the visit, but it is also a report on the cultural differences she meets as a person, who has adjusted to the American culture, but with connection to the Danish. Ruth realizes and expresses already in the beginning of the letter, that in spite of all the beautiful places, the light nights and romantic villages, the stay in the old country is far different from the life they are used to in USA. Ruth Jorgensen could not imagine living in Denmark, but she writes: *"We could not be satisfied to live on a little Danish farm which looks most picturesque with low waving straw-thatched roof."* She mentions that one cannot open a window without smelling the cows and the rooms getting filled with flies, just as the placement of the dunghill is so close to the building that one cannot avoid the stench.

Ruth admits that their life in America probably has become too comfortable, but she prefers it to all of the needs the Danes are having. She writes: *"Maybe ours has become too artificial a manner of life, I don't know, but it does nevertheless seem to me that there is nothing to be said for a bathtub in every home."* About hygiene she seems to notice that it is not very high among the Danes, and mentions especially the Danish males, to whom taking a bath is at the most a weekly event, and she writes further: *"Even among the more privileged group, sturdy healthy young men and women do not seem to feel the need of deodorants."* Ruth Jorgensen has made these discoveries in connection with the visits to the various relatives at both Hans and Rosa Jorgensen's side before and during her stay at Jegindo. Collectively the Danish relatives represented a broad section of the population, since there were both farmers, craftsmen, teachers and pastors.

The pastors were represented by Anders Jorgensen, who together with his wife lived on Jegindo, because he had his call there. Ruth Jorgensen also comments on the parsonage and writes that the house, although it was built in 1925, lacks both bathtub and washing machine. She also wonders why there is only running water in the kitchen, and she writes: *"Running water unless otherwise specified refers only to cold. And that is considered a rare luxury."* Ruth Jorgensen also admits: *"I like the niceties of American life. Many of the niceties to which we are so sensitive seem to be missing entirely here."*

By emphasizing these needs Ruth Jorgensen reveals that she and the rest of the family were used

to such conveniences in their life in America. It is doubtful that it has advanced the integration process, but it is possible that it has eased the transition. At least it seems to be such an incorporated part of Ruth Jorgensen's life that in this area she has adjusted to the American cultural pattern. Of other cultural differences Ruth Jorgensen mentions the relationship of Danes to art and breast-feeding and the eating habits of the Danes. In regards to art she writes that the Danes appear to have a closer relation with it than people in USA. She has for instance noticed that people she has visited have much art hanging on the walls. Not just oil paintings of landscapes, but often also paintings of undressed people and statuettes of naked children and breast-feeding mothers. The relationship of the Danes to nakedness, according to Ruth Jorgensen, is much more relaxed and natural than the

Americans'. In wonder she has been able to observe that her well educated engineer cousin allows his 3-year old daughter to run around naked, and to let her to relieve herself in a pot right in the living room, while the rest of the family is gathered there. Ruth Jorgensen has also experienced during a visit to Haderslev school, that a teacher's wife unaffected sat and breastfed her baby, while the guests sat around in the apartment.

Ruth Jorgensen also mentions about an uncle in Verninge on Funen, that he has a tall statue of Venus in his dining room, and Ruth Jorgensen writes that even a small one in a home in the States would attract attention. The same uncle also has a large sensational painting in his living room of a naked woman sitting with her back to the viewer, and Ruth Jorgensen writes that one can almost sense her wondering: *"I don't know how long it would take me to become quite unconscious of her, but I don't think most of our American friends would understand nor appreciate such a display."*

Ruth Jorgensen's expressions almost speak for themselves and leave the impression of a young woman, who tries to distance herself from the strange culture, but one still wonders. There is nothing condemning in her expressions, but behind it all is the feeling that she views the life of these Danes as different and foreign compared with what she is used to in USA.

The Danish food is not foreign to her. Ruth Jorgensen and her siblings have in all their lives been served Danish meals by their mother. Still the letter mentions small variances, which indicate that also in the eating habits of the family has entered something from the American society. Ruth Jorgensen wonders, for instance, why neither coffee nor water is served with the meals. She has also observed that only in certain cases it is served after the meal, usually in connection with breakfast, while there are special servings of afternoon coffee and evening coffee.

Such small differences can seem minor, and appear to be only because of people's differences in eating habits, and also regarding hygiene, relationships to art and breast-feeding. But by closer scrutiny appears a picture, which is more of a different shade. Behind the immediate expressions of the letter is hiding a number of deeper reaching facts about a family's gradual changes. Their life is no longer like that of their relatives, but has over the years been influenced by a different culture. This influence has perhaps made the biggest impression on the daughters, since they have not known the culture to the degree their parents have, when the family left. They have thus not been influenced by it other than what has been passed on by their parents. It is even possible that this transfer has been different for the two American-born daughters as compared to the two Danish-born, in step with the parents being influenced by the American culture.

A number of relationships in the letter indicates, that changes gradually have taken place in many areas, and it can safely be stated that at least Ruth Jorgensen is at the learning acquisition stage,

but it is also highly possible that the other three sisters are there as well, although they through growing up and through their marriages have secured a continuing attachment to the Danish - an attachment which has become weakened in Ruth Jorgensen, since she is the only daughter who is not married, and through her work both before and during the war has been involved with a potentially broad section of the American population.

One relationship, which points to the sisters being at the learning stage, is first and foremost in the language, friendship and cultural areas. The fact that the letter is written in English reveals a confidence in both the letter writer and recipient, just as in her choice of English one must assume that this is the language primarily spoken by the sisters. Ruth Jorgensen does write "Alle Friends" in her salutation, but from the contents is shown that it is specially meant for the sisters, since they are all mentioned. But the friends are also mentioned, and by a quote on the previous page it is revealed that the sisters have American friends, again proof that there has been an integration to and with Barkan's third stage. As with Hans and Rosa Jorgensen, it can also be seen that the sisters have become bi-cultural, but contrary to the parents the weight seems to be on the American culture.

As Barkan remarks, there can on the strength of such a dualism also come complications in the meeting of cultures, but where it to him appears to be a problem, which can arise when the immigrants from a given culture come to USA and collide with the culture there, the opposite happens with Ruth Jorgensen. Here is talk about a person, who at the beginning carried the Danish culture, but has gradually gone through so many changes in the direction toward the American that she at the reunion with the original feels ambivalence and perhaps even alienation. But although it on the background of the letter can fairly be assumed that the focus of the sisters is mainly directed toward the American culture, it is still directed toward the Danish, although to a lesser degree. The reason for this is partly due to the familiar circumstances, and partly due to the attachment to Danish-minded institutions in places where the sisters together with their parents have lived in USA. In the letter the attachment to the old country is furthermore illustrated by the need Ruth Jorgensen has, to say goodbye to King Christian X, who dies during their stay. In the letter she explains that she had a strong wish to go to Copenhagen to see the King's casket and together with the many Danes file past his casket and show her respect to the man, who had done so much for Denmark. In this connection she refers to the king's stance during the war and the reunification 27 years earlier, which she has also experienced. The parents fulfill her wish and they go to Copenhagen to take part in the funeral procession.

### **1951-1966. Hans and Rosa's Retirement**

In 1951 Hans Jorgensen again goes to Denmark for a visit, this time alone, and the reason is given in a detailed report about the trip. According to it Hans Jorgensen has been sick, and was afraid that he was dying, and he had thought much about the relatives in Denmark, and that he would like to see most of them again. With his wife's consent he therefore decides to go, and he spends six weeks in Denmark.

Hans Jorgensen does not die for some time, however, and together with Rosa Jorgensen he gets to celebrate his golden wedding in 1964. By that time the couple is 83 and 84 years old. From a letter written by the couple to their Danish relatives a report is made about the celebration, which was attended by the entire family. At that time there are 31 members, who come from Texas,

Nebraska, Hawaii and Iowa. Besides telling about the celebration for the couple, the letter also reveals that it was done in a Danish manner. They had eaten roast duck for dinner, and finished with kransekage, which Lilly and her husband, Severin, had brought from Iowa, where they knew a Danish baker.

The following year, 12 days before she died, Rosa Jorgensen writes her final letter, which is addressed to the eldest daughter Edna. The letter tells about the everyday doings of the couple, as well as about illness. It is very special since it is written entirely in English. There are several spelling errors in the letter, where Rosa Jorgensen probably spelled the words the way they were pronounced. Otherwise the letter is written in a simple language, easy to understand. Among other things Rosa Jorgensen tells about the following, when she gets sick while eating supper: *“I got dinner made all right then I got such a pine in my stomach and tried to lay down but that didn't work so I left dinner and dishes and went to bed couldn't lay anyway to be comfortabel, so I got Papa to put the elc warming pad on and then I went to sleep...”*

It is possible that Rosa Jorgensen chose to express herself in English because of the recipients of the letter. The letter is still noteworthy, because on the background of her earlier correspondence one could be tempted to expect that she, contrary to the rest of the family is the one, who has had the most difficult time of settling in. Maybe that is actually the case, but she has still acquired some elements, here illustrated by the language, in order to get along. Although I here use the term acquire, it does not mean that Rosa Jorgensen late in her life is still at the learning stage, but it describes the functionality in her conduct. In other words, she has acquired a demeanor in order to function in relation to her surroundings.

The last letter to be emphasized is written by Hans Jorgensen to the grandchild Charlotte. Just as Rosa Jorgensen, Hans Jorgensen also expresses himself in English, probably due to the linguistic limitations of the grandchild, and summarizes his feelings toward his deceased wife. He writes, that after a long life together: *“Here has been soo lonesome since Bedstemor went. Nobody to talk to. You know we really lived together... And you know we really loved each other. Let me just tell you - Many times when we passed each other I would give Rosa a kiss and always she said thank you. She never forgot that. Let me just tell you another thing we had always prayed that we may live together till our children grown up and we even got more than we prayed for...”*

Hans Jorgensen died on September 20, 1966.

## **The Daughters**

The life of the four daughters before and after the death of Hans and Rosa Jorgensen shall here in closing be written based on their own memories.

The eldest daughter, Edna, and her husband, Henry Jorgensen, stayed in Oakland, California the rest of their lives, and all the way through their marriage they kept a connection with Denmark and the Danishness. In the home it was expressed in the couple's recreation, in which the Danish song treasury was important. Their religious lives were connected to “Our Savior's Lutheran Church” - A Danish congregation in Oakland, and both taught Sunday school there for 25 years. They also traveled to Denmark several times to visit their relatives. At the time of their golden wedding anniversary in 1977 the family consisted of three daughters and three sons-in-law as well as seven grandchildren. It is not mentioned to whom the daughters are married, but according to the memories, a couple of non-Danish family names have sneaked into the family. They are “Slonski” and “Schloenvogt”, and probably belong to two of the sons-in-law. Edna

Jorgensen died in 1985 from a heart attack. She was 79 years old, and Henry Jorgensen died in 1999 at the age of 94.

Ruth Jorgensen never married, but lived alone until retirement when she moved in with her American girlfriend Katherine Harrison Wright, whom she had known since she was a student nurse. Ruth remained in the nursing profession through her working years. In 1952 she earned her master's degree in "Administration and Guidance in Nursing and Nursing Administration" from Columbia University in New York. The following year Ruth Jorgensen became secretary general for "California League for Nursing", and had her headquarters in San Francisco. This position also gave her a seat on the board for "National League for Nursing", where she was active until 1967, when she retired.

Ruth Jorgensen visited Denmark four times; in 1947, 1953, 1957 and 1965, and on those trips she purchased furniture, which she used to furnish her home. From the memories we also see that she introduced Katherine Harrison Wright's family to Danish food and Christmas traditions. Ruth Jorgensen died in 1981 at the age of 74 years.

There is not much information about Lilly and Severin Sorensen. Only that they, besides the daughters Charlotte and Starla Sorensen in 1952 had a son, Karl. That same year she went back to teaching and taught for 11 years. The couple stayed in Nebraska, and went to Denmark in 1975 and 1985.

On the other hand, there is a little more known about Agnes and her husband, Viggo Madsen. Just a year after they took over Hans Jorgensen's funeral home in 1947, they sold their share to Byron Haller and concentrated on the flower business. About the daughters it is told that Marcia Madsen finished high school in 1955 and went on to study at Fresno State College. She was married in 1957 to a man by the name of Tony Guierrez, and the couple had two children: Peter Guierrez in 1959 and Susan Guierrez in 1962.

Vicki Madsen finished high school in 1958 and continued her education at Reedley College in California. She was married in 1960 to Ray Ward. They had three sons: Chip Ward in 1963, Matthew Ward in 1966 and Mark Ward in 1969.

Agnes and Viggo Madsen's social life was marked by an interest in their common Danish background, but also an interest in the local society. The interest in the Danish was expressed in Danish-American engagements in the Fowler vicinity, where both were involved. The couple had for instance for 11 years the responsibility for decorations for the not previously mentioned "Æbleskive-fester", where they each year used a theme from H. C. Andersen's fairy tales. The involvement in the local society was expressed in various ways. Among these Viggo Madsen was on the Fowler Elementary School Board for 13 years, and the board of Fowler Fall Festival and the local fire department for 48 years. Agnes was a Girl Scout leader in Fowler, and was besides president of the board of "Fowler Improvement Association" for 10 years. The couple retired in 1977 and Viggo Madsen died in 1997.

## **Hans Julius Nielsen**

### **Acculturation. - Learning?**

### **1914. Easton, California**

The first letter in the correspondence collection written by Hans Julius Nielsen to his former teacher and wife in Denmark was written in November 1914. It was then 16 years since he had arrived in the USA in 1898 at the age of 19. For that reason it is not possible to comment on the contact phase, but according to this first letter Hans Nielsen is not in this phase, but rather in the acculturation phase, where he has been for some time. The letter reveals a number of relationships, which affirm this, and furthermore it is the only one preserved, in which he directly expresses his relationship to both Denmark and

California, where he, together with his wife, Meta, and their daughter, Eleanor Kristine Nielsen, lives on their own farm, where he raises fruit and cotton. His wife, Meta, was born in California to Danish parents who came from Southern Jutland, and she is thus a second-generation immigrant.

In the letter, which is written in Danish, with a few exceptions, where H. J. Nielsen instead of using the Danish land measure, uses the English term acres, he reveals his relationship to Denmark and USA, by writing:

*“Once in a while my thoughts go back to the little Denmark, although America is my home, and California my pride. This is where I learned to take care of myself; here I became a man; here I built my home, more wonderful and beautiful than I had ever dared imagine, when I was home. Yet I have many lovely memories from the dear land of my birth, and I have always been proud of being a Dane, and I have always tried to promote Denmark, when possible. But if you saw the conditions under which I am living, and the opportunities here, you would not wonder why I prefer the sunny California, and especially the beautiful San Joaquin Valley.”*

This quotation reveals that H. J. Nielsen’s focus at this time is still directed toward Denmark, although he prefers living in California. However, it does not reveal whether there has been an acquisition of linguistic or cultural elements from the American society. Yet it is likely that there has been an acquisition of both elements. At least from a letter, which H. J. Nielsen wrote 47 years later, that he shortly after his arrival in the USA taught himself both English and Spanish. This letter also mentions that he went to America with a good friend, Godtfred Jacobsen, with whom he lived and worked the first 10 years after coming to the States. For several of those years they worked in the town of El Paso De Robles, California, where the majority spoke Spanish, and for that reason H. J. Nielsen and his friend had to be able to speak both languages in order to communicate.

### **1930 - 1939. Fresno, California**

Not until 1930 is there another preserved letter from H. J. Nielsen - that is 16 years after the first letter. During that time the family has been increased by two more daughters, and all three girls are attending high school. Besides this the family has moved from Easton to Fresno, California, where H. J. Nielsen owns and operates a fruit and cotton farm. According to the letter H. J. Nielsen’s brother and sister have also immigrated to the USA and live in the Danish settlement of Solvang.

In the letter H. J. Nielsen also reveals something, which is also to become special in almost all of

his later correspondence, that he has a keen eye for what goes on in USA both in economic and political concerns, just as his letter reveals a talent for in detail to describe the California scenery. Those descriptions are often the openings of his correspondence.

Thus in this letter there are two predominant themes: A thorough description of Yosemite National Park, and the depressed economic situation in the USA caused by the crash of the stock exchange in 1929. As a business owner H. J. Nielsen has also felt the crisis and he writes: *“All of the country’s productions are not worth anything; in other words, there is overproduction of everything. Cotton, which is the biggest export article, is at the lowest price since before the war; wheat and corn are not worth anything. Fruit and raisins cost nothing. Dried figs are not worth harvesting, since it is impossible to sell them, and the same goes for dried apricots. Dried peaches are a little better.”*

Almost one and a half years later H. J. Nielsen finds out that it does not look any better in Denmark. The Danish newspapers to which H. J. Nielsen subscribes, and which confirm his ties to his land of birth, report on difficult times and high unemployment and poor conditions for the farmers. The situation is no better in the USA, and for H. J. Nielsen that means a big drop in income, since the price of produce is still very low. About this situation he writes: *“Much of our fruit has not been harvested since it wasn’t worth doing so. I have several pounds of grapes, which have not been picked, and under my fig trees are so many dried figs, that one cannot see the ground for figs. I have my cotton from the last two years, since it is not worth anything. I have 10,000 pounds of the best cotton, and could easily sell it, but I could not get as much for it as it cost to produce it.”*

Another matter mentioned by H. J. Nielsen in the letter reveals a situation relating to Barkan’s third stage, the learning stage, which shows that H. J. Nielsen takes an active part in the American society and cultural life. He writes that in 1931 he was elected to the board of the Fresno High School. Part of his work consists of, together with the rest of the board, hiring teachers and paying salaries to the school personnel.

Whether this is a sign that H. J. Nielsen is at the learning stage is difficult to determine at this time, and later correspondence also shows that he also takes active part in the Danish fellowship in California to a greater extent than mentioned by Barkan’s learning stage. It is thus probable that H. J. Nielsen is at a stage with elements from both the acculturation and the learning stage.

A letter from 1933 gives an insight to H. J. Nielsen’s Danish-related engagements, since he writes that as a delegate for the Fresno Organization of Danes he went to an annual meeting in Watsonville, California, where there were a few hundred Danes living at the time. H. J. Nielsen also explains something about the organization and the annual meeting. He reports that there were between 500 and 600 Danish immigrants gathered there for a week.

In 1934 the engagement in the American and the ethnic group is confirmed, when H. J. Nielsen is reelected to the board of Fresno High School and becomes president of the school board. At the same time, in April he takes part in a Danish conference in Fresno as a member of the reception committee. According to H. J. Nielsen the conference was attended by Danes from all over the USA - a total of over 1,000 - and the guest of honor was the Danish Hollywood star, Johannes (Jean) Hersholt.

In the same letter it is a satisfied H. J. Nielsen, who writes to his old teacher and his wife. The contentment is attributed to the fact that the nation, according to H. J. Nielsen has awakened and has started a change, which will improve the political and economic situation. These two

situations show that he has an interest in the political situation in the country and that he is in favor of the Democrats. In the letter, which reveals that H. J. Nielsen is entitled to vote, and thus is an American citizen, he expresses great satisfaction in the election of Roosevelt as president and he thinks that he is a man with the welfare of the common people in mind. For that reason he thinks that it is possible that work will be done to reduce the big unemployment in the country.

In 1936 H. J. Nielsen can state that things have changed for the better. In a letter written to Kristine Sorensen, who in the meantime has lost her husband, he gives credit for the improved conditions to the fact that the Democrats at the last election won over the Republicans. H. J. Nielsen expresses his joy that President Roosevelt again has won the election for president, and he writes: *“Roosevelt won by over a 10,000,000 majority votes, and if the Republicans had not carried out such a dirty and false election campaign, then they would not have suffered such a terrible loss. But thousands of liberal Republicans could not digest all that dirt flung out by their party, and thus voted for Roosevelt.”*

By the end of the year, in November 1939, the joy has changed to worry over the situation in Europe. H. J. Nielsen is not the only one, who is worried, and in a letter to Mrs. Sorensen he writes as follows: *“Many Danes around here are very worried for Denmark in these days of war; especially with such a robber and bandit as Hitler, who is at the rudder in Germany, and more and more in America feel that Hitler’s power should be crushed...”*

In the letter is also made room for an event, which has made a deep impression on the Danish immigrants in California. It is the visit by the then crown prince Frederik and crown princess Ingrid to the state, where they spent several days as a part of a larger visit to the USA. Everywhere they were received with joy for their straightforwardness.

According to H. J. Nielsen, the future royal couple also spent one day in Fresno, and he writes about the event as follows:

*“Most of the Danes from the vicinity were in Fresno to greet them. Fresno is The City of Flowers, and they were almost buried in flowers. They were overpowered with the finest of fruits, both dried and fresh. For refreshments were served the finest wines for which Fresno is famous. People were surprised when the crown prince asked if they did not have anything better, and when they asked: “What would your highness wish?”, he answered simply “half a beer”.”*

## **1940 - 1949**

Just as with the Jorgensen family, there are no letters from H. J. Nielsen for the period under the Second World War. Not until the winter of 1945 are there again letters to Denmark, and in those are expressed great relief that the war is over. The thanks are directed toward Churchill and Roosevelt, and H. J. Nielsen writes: *“(They) stood at the helm and by the assistance of the other countries they steered the ship safely into the harbor. It was too bad that Roosevelt did not live long enough to see the end of the war.”* After that Roosevelt was praised for his work as president, and H. J. Nielsen continues by writing: *“There has never been a president in this country elected more than twice. Roosevelt was elected four times.... May his work and memory live forever. If it had not been for him, things would probably have looked grim today, all over the world.”* H. J. Nielsen’s own family did not go through the war without a loss. A son-in-law was shot down over France.

Where the focus in this letter can mainly be ascribed to political situations in the USA and the

world, the attention is again directed to nature and the ties to the Danish in the letters of the coming years. H. J. Nielsen tells, for instance in 1946, that his favorite dishes are Rødgrød med Fløde (red fruit juice thickened with flour - with cream), and red cabbage. The enthusiasm for the latter dish is shared with the couple's American friends, and H. J. Nielsen writes: *"It is a typical Danish dish at festive occasions. Many of our American friends, who have been to Danish parties, praise this dish, and many have prepared it after a Danish Cookbook."* The quote reveals not only that the Americans have good taste, but also that H. J. Nielsen has American friends - information relevant to Barkan's relationship to the learning stage, from which is revealed that persons living here experience a certain degree of integration by establishing ties with people of a different ethnic origin.

According to H. J. Nielsen it is not only red cabbage the Americans like. According to a letter written in 1947, also Danish dairy products and Danish girls are highly appreciated among the Americans in California. In Fresno is located one of the world's largest co-operative dairies, according to H. J. Nielsen. The name of the enterprise is "Danish Creamery", and was started by Danish immigrants in the 1890's. In 1947 it was not owned solely by Danish-Americans, but by people of several nationalities from all over California. H. J. Nielsen and his wife are both shareholders, and H. J. Nielsen writes: *"I bought a share more than 40 years ago. At that time a share cost \$50, and it has grown so that today it is worth about \$1,000 per share."* H. J. Nielsen also gives a view of the sales volume of the dairy and writes: *"They produce about 40,000 pounds of butter each day. Last year the income from sales of butter, cream and milk amounted to about \$10,000,000."*

H. J. Nielsen also mentions in a letter that the majority of Danes living in the Fresno area are originating from Jutland, and he claims that the ones from Jutland outnumber by three to one the ones from Funen, while there is nobody from Zeeland living there. Another claim made by H. J. Nielsen is that about the reputation of the Danish girls among the American men, and about this relationship is written: *"Danish girls are in great demand among the American men due to their cooking and housekeeping skills."* The story does not reveal whether this is due to the Danish food or the girls in general, although it is most likely the latter.

In regard to the cooking skills, a letter from the same year reveals that the H. J. Nielsen family has taken on the American tradition of celebrating Thanksgiving. Thus turkeys are also being served to the family, and H. J. Nielsen writes about the celebration: *November 21 is the great Thanksgiving Day, which is one of the most important festivals in America. Meta prepared the largest turkey we have ever had. It weighed 21 pounds alive. It was stuffed with dry, grated white bread, which is stirred with butter, cream, milk, fruit and vegetables. It took her 6 hours to cook it. It could just exactly fit in the oven."* This citation reveals that H. J. Nielsen is under influence of the American culture, at least as certain traditional elements are concerned. At the same time the letter reveals that H. J. Nielsen has no problems going between the cultures of the American society and similar ones in the Danish. He also writes about an event in the Dania society, where Danish songs had been sung. Especially one of these has made an impression on H. J. Nielsen. It is about a song brought back to California by a woman who has just visited in Denmark. It was written after the end of the war and is titled: *"Now the sun is again shining on little Denmark"*, and about it H. J. Nielsen writes: *"I think it is the most beautiful song I have ever heard. Not a single word about anger or hatred, just a break in the dark cloud, through which the blue sky can be seen... Now the sun is shining again, I thought when I returned home that evening. That song*

*should be considered one of the prettiest songs in Denmark.”*

The Dania Society is probably not a church-organization, but H. J. Nielsen also takes active part in church-related activities arranged by the Danish society. In 1948 he tells his friends in Denmark that he and his wife have visited Solvang, where as a delegate for the Danish congregation in Easton he attended the annual meeting of The Danish Lutheran Church in America together with about 600 representatives from various American states. The same letter also reveals that on April 12, 1948 H. J. Nielsen is 70 years old, and that the Danish congregation had celebrated his birthday in the church fellowship hall.

The religious freedom in USA is the theme in a letter, also written in December 1948 - a theme to which H. J. Nielsen returns a couple of years later. But in this letter is revealed that H. J. Nielsen has become council president at the Danish congregation in Easton, and thus has much to take care of. The volume of work is due to the fact that the congregation does not, as is the case in Denmark, receive financial support from the state, but must survive entirely on the basis of generous people's donations, and financial contributions by its members. A great portion of the daily operations is performed by the women, and H. J. Nielsen explains: "Here in our churches it is the women, who do most of the work. In almost all of our churches the women have their own societies, which in several ways collect money for the pastor's salary and for the maintenance of the church building. We have many lecture meetings, and the women always bring sandwiches, coffee and cakes. Hardly two weeks pass by without such entertainments."

#### **1950 - 1964**

As mentioned earlier, the many religions of the USA are again brought up in a letter written by H. J. Nielsen at the beginning of 1950. His insight in the area reveals not only his interest in religion, but also his vision of people. Seen through the spectacles of the day, he must be considered a very tolerant man, although we in our politically correct times would probably distance ourselves from some of his uses of the language. Nonetheless, the passages in the letter give the impression of a person, who is curious about other nationalities than his own, just as the citations reveal that he has been in contact with them. H. J. Nielsen writes among other things:

*“We, the white people, fully believe that those who do not think the way we do are some terrible heathens. The more I associate with those, whom we call heathens, I get a different impression. I have attended Chinese funerals in their pagodas, where they practice Confucianism, and I have been to Japanese Shinto Temples...I have been in Catholic churches, which are the biggest and most magnificent churches. We have Mormon churches here in Fresno, and let me say about them that they are as a rule the most capable and industrious people...The Negroes in this country are as a rule Methodists, Presbyterians and Adventists and they have their own pastors and churches, but they are very superstitious, and they are not very brave on a dark night. The Red Man is the only one, who has not built a house for his God, although they have places where they worship their God. They believe in an almighty God, just as much as do the Christians...You must not believe all of those terrible barbaric tales you have heard and read about the Indians. The white man taught the red man to become barbaric. There is no nation, which has been mistreated as badly as has the red man.”*

From the letter it can furthermore be seen, that H. J. Nielsen's activity in the Danish society

continues to be considerable. He is for instance one of the driving forces behind the establishment of an Old people's home in Solvang, and he writes about the plans: *All the Grundtvigian churches in this country agree that due to the wonderful climate and Solvang being a unique Danish town, that it is the best location. The population of the town immediately donated a building lot and the use of the Danish folk school and meeting house.*" What is especially interesting in this citation is that H. J. Nielsen here reveals that he is a Grundtvigian, since it can be seen as relevant later in the research, when H. J. Nielsen's integration process is compared with that of the Jorgensen family, which certainly had ties with the Inner Mission movement. H. J. Nielsen also tells in the letter that the congregation in Easton will have a visit by the former Danish church minister, Arne Sorensen, and that the congregation on that occasion will perform the stage play "Elverhøj" (Fairy Hillock).

The many conveniences of America have no doubt by this time entered the daily life of the Nielsen family, but in 1951 there was an addition in the form of a washing machine, which H. J. Nielsen and his wife received as a Christmas present from their children. One can sense the excitement of this wonder in the letter writer, who writes: *"All one has to do is put 8-9 pounds of clothing in the machine, plus soapy water, then it washes for 15 minutes, rinses 3 times with cold water, then spins for 10 minutes so fast that all the water flies off the clothes so that it is almost completely dry, and you do not touch the machine from the time you push the button and until it stops by itself when the wash is dry. Meta was a little nervous, so I had to help her."*

H. J. Nielsen mentions his wife again two years later in a letter, in which the couple thanks for a present they have received from the recipient of the letter. The wife would have liked to say thank you for the present, but H. J. Nielsen writes: *"My wife would like to write a few words, but she has difficulty writing in Danish."* This bit of information gives us an occasion to inquire about the familial language use by the couple. One could assume that the wife, since she has lost her writing ability, has also lost part of her language. If she has, then it is likely that the couple speak English to each other. Meta Nielsen was born in the USA, and has thus probably gone through the same educational development as did the daughters in the Jorgensen family, whereby she just like they gradually had used English as her preferred language. This degree of integration could have urged her husband, H. J. Nielsen to a similar degree of integration.

We must advance to 1954 before there is another report of an event, which is relevant to this research. From a letter written by H. J. Nielsen this year we learn that he is not the only family member, who has emigrated from Denmark to California. Four of his siblings have taken the same route, and H. J. Nielsen writes: *"Kathrine was only 16 years old when she came over and she is my youngest sister. She was only 2 years old when our mother died. I was the first one to arrive in California and it has been a great joy for me to assist all of them, Karoline, Sofie, Kathrine, Kristoffer to get settled after they arrived. At that time we did not live under the circumstances we do now, but we all made a living and we have some good memories about the many years that have passed, and none of us has regretted that we dared come."*

The fact that H. J. Nielsen had not been alone, but for a great part of his existence in America was surrounded by close relatives could be contributing to reduce the longing for Denmark, just as it could have been helping to reduce the focus toward his land of origin. That he thus did not have to concentrate his energy toward the other side of the Atlantic, but was able to cultivate familiar ties in close vicinity could thus have been helping the integration process.

Another relationship, which had enabled H. J. Nielsen to live an existence without feeling

isolation and estrangement could be attributed to the fact that he was surrounded by many countrymen, both in his circle of friends and through his involvement in the Danish society. In 1955 H. J. Nielsen tells about the marks made by Danish immigrants in the American culture, and again claims that Danish girls are popular with the American men due to their housekeeping capabilities. He also tells that it is possible to buy Danish baked goods in almost every bakery in California.

In a letter written to friends in Denmark in the fall of 1957 H. J. Nielsen reminisces about his early years in the States. As mentioned earlier he went to the USA with a friend by the name of Godtfred Jacobsen. The year was 1898 and H. J. Nielsen was 19 years old when he and his friend left. H. J. Nielsen writes that Godtfred Jacobsen died in 1954, and he still misses him very much. The friend's importance to H. J. Nielsen can be felt when he writes: *"He is buried at the Washington Colony Cemetery, and hope to be buried as close as possible to Godtfred when my time comes. We were together for 10 years."* According to the letter he and his wife have visited the Old People's home in Solvang. In the letter H. J. Nielsen refers to the residents as being old, although he is 80 years old, and he writes about the conditions under which the residents live: *"It is a joy to hear the old people talk about how nice it is there, and they praise the manager and his wife. They call them father and mother... There is a speaker in a tree, from which the most beautiful songs flow over the home, and one room has a television set with songs and talk from all corners of the world...Nothing has brought us as much entertainment as has television."*

Television is mentioned in many ways in many ways in the letters, and it easy to see that this American convenience has gained great acceptance in the life of H. J. Nielsen.

In the following year, 1958, something special happens within the Danish society in the Fresno area, which again gets H. J. Nielsen to sharpen the pen and write to Denmark. By this we get the impression of a man, who is tolerant in many respects and open toward the American society, but yet has his limitations regarding which ethnicities the Danes ought to rub shoulders with. H. J. Nielsen writes:

*"One of the biggest scandals here among the Danish population is a young beautiful girl, who got married to a coal-black Negro. Her grandparents are Danish, her grandmother comes from Lolland and her grandfather from the Aalborg area...She (the girl) was very gifted, graduated from high school with high grades. Attended Fresno State College, where she met him. When she was 18 years old she received a nice new car as a birthday present from her parents, but it was not long before she had him along when driving the car. The parents forbade him from coming to their house, but before they knew about it, they were married, and some time ago she had a baby girl. She moved in with his parents, who live in the part of Fresno, which is called Nigger town. The girl was an only child and she has always been spoiled and able to do anything she wanted. The parents are now so desperate that they do not know what to do. They had expected something great from her. She has tried to get in touch with some of the ones she and her parents had associated with, but nobody wants to accept her husband as a guest."*

H. J. Nielsen mentions some of his own grandchildren in a letter written a few months later that same year. From the information he gives we get an impression of the Danish position in the family. The letter mentions that H. J. Nielsen's daughter's daughter has gone to Des Moines, Iowa to attend College. He writes: *"They learn everything they would learn at other colleges,*

*plus Danish.*” This information reveals that it can only be Grand View College in Des Moines, Iowa to which he is referring. In contrast to the Inner Mission Dana College in Blair, Nebraska, Grand View College was the headquarters for academic activities within the Grundtvigian society in USA. It can thus be assumed with great certainty that the Nielsen family was Grundtvigian, just as the citation tells that 3rd generation of the H. J. Nielsen, 4th generation if his wife Meta’s family is included. She was 2nd generation immigrant and yet had an interest in maintaining ties with the ethnicity.

In the first letter used, which was written in 1914, there is a direct expression of pride in being both Danish and American. In the last two pieces of correspondence to be emphasized, it is the pride of being a part of the USA on which we shall focus. In 1959 H. J. Nielsen writes to Denmark and tells that the last veteran who took part in the American Civil War has died at the age of 116 years (?). The event gets H. J. Nielsen to reminisce on the president of that time, and he writes: *“It was Abraham Lincoln, who was president, and at Gettysburg said the immortal words: “The love made of the people for the people by the people must not perish from the world.” And it is perhaps those few words, which have done that all the nations of which America consists have united and made the mighty nation that we are today.”* This theme is again taken up in a letter written in December the same year, and H. J. Nielsen expresses that America has become part of him and he a part of America: *That is one thing of which we are proud, that during the short time of almost one generation, have changed from one of the wildest to one of the most true nations. When one thinks that here is a population from all nations of the world, and that we, the races from the entire world have been united the way we are. That is something we can be proud of.”*

The last letter is written five years later, before H. J. Nielsen dies. Only a fragment has been preserved, but from it appears that it is referring to the death of President Kennedy, and the message sounds like this: *“You have no doubt heard about the sad event that our beloved President Kennedy was shot by a fanatic idiot. Kennedy will probably go down in history as one of America’s great men. When he was installed as president he said the famous words: “Ask not what America can do for me, but rather, what can I do for my country”.”*

### **Summary**

If I should make a short comment on H. J. Nielsen’s integration development during the period 1914 to 1964 on the background of Barkan’s stages, the conclusion must be a both and an and - both Dane and American. In the relationships, which speak for the fact that he is at the accumulation stage is that he takes active part in the activities that he himself is helping to arrange within the Danish immigration society in Fresno and in California. Without mentioning exactly when, during this period he acquires his American citizenship, and has kept his focus toward Denmark. The question is to what degree? H. J. Nielsen’s conduct also reveals that there is a clear focus toward a considerable attachment to the American society. From his correspondence it appears that he is actively following a main plan, just as he through his school administration work also is personally involved in the life of the society. Those relationships reveal that H. J. Nielsen is at a stage, where elements from both the accumulation stage and the learning stage are represented.

But although H. J. Nielsen’s interests are directed toward both the American and the Danish

society one gets the feeling that H. J. Nielsen immediately appears to be more Danish than American, which seems to be confirmed by the degree of participation in the Danish society.

### **Assimilation/Integration?**

By using Elliott R. Barkan's integration model it can be established that concerning the Jorgensen family and H. J. Nielsen a number of changes can be traced, which can be characterized as integration. The Jorgensen family and H. J. Nielsen did get integrated into the American society. The question is just to what degree, and here it appears from the letters that Hans and Rosa Jorgensen at the time of their death were at the accumulation stage, while their daughters, probably all of them, were at the learning stage. H. J. Nielsen, on the other hand was at a stage, which contained elements from both the acculturation and the adaptation stage. Before this is considered further it ought to be specified what is meant at each stage by acculturation and adaptation beyond the definitions given by Barkan.

My reason for expanding on Balkan's descriptions of acculturation and adaptation is to indicate that the process through which the immigrants pass at those stages is mainly of a structural character. To adapt to and acquire are actions one takes on in order to function, and thus describe something purely functional, needed in order to know and comply with the requirements set by society, and where the most important thing is to learn the language, to work, and the laws. The acculturation phase and to an extent the adaptation stage thus do not describe that which is determined by emotions, which means that immigrants feel that they are part of society and identify themselves as being part of the core culture, although a considerable degree of adjustment toward the American cultural design has taken place during the adaptation stage. The identification part of integration thus takes place partly during the adaptation stage and becomes more visible during the adjustment stage and becomes extremely visible during the fifth stage - the integration stage - where far the most individuals identify with the predominant society.

### **The Jorgensen Family**

When Hans and Rosa Jorgensen, together with their children, Edna and Ruth, arrived in the USA they came to a continent to which over 200,000 Danes had preceded them. They were part of a wave of over 100,000, and were not themselves to establish ethnic enclaves, Danish congregations, organizations, etc. - All of this already existed when they arrived. Their only task was to decide the degree of involvement they wanted in the Danish organizations and the church became a big part of this.

Although it is not directly mentioned in any of the letters the Jorgensen family likely belonged to the Inner Mission. At least the pastor, Kristian Anker, who encouraged Hans Jorgensen to come to the USA, was Inner Mission, just as Dana College in Blair, Nebraska, where both Anders Jorgensen and Lilly Jorgensen were students, was the academic and theological headquarters for Inner Mission in USA. Its Grundtvigian counterpart was Grand View College in Des Moines, Iowa, and here the family had no ties. Interesting in this connection is the information given about Inner Mission in the research outline and the knowledge acquired from the letters about the same. The letters reveal that Inner Mission's declared goal to acquire Americanization as rapidly as possible was not consistently followed. The daughters for instance were taught Danish in

Sunday school, and writing, reading, singing and Danish literature by students from the Trinity Seminary in Blair, Nebraska. On the contrary there is nothing that indicates Hans and Rosa Jorgensen consciously tried to raise their children to preserve a Danish cultural character, just as one does not get the impression that the family intended to praise the Danishness. On the contrary one gets the impression that the Danishness the family preserved in their American life was just a natural part of their identity and was especially noticeable in the parents. As Jette Mackintosh mentions, this Danishness was a static concept, which remained what it had been at the time the family emigrated. With this as a starting point and in the wake of it, the entire Jorgensen family developed - the six original members and their descendants - toward the American culture.

Both Hans and Rosa Jorgensen and their four daughters preserved their ties to Denmark through the connections with relatives there and through a number of Danish traditions. The daughters kept up those traditions after they grew up and had their own families. The food traditions have already been mentioned, but the sisters also write about a certain tradition, which all of them preserved: *“As a family, we still carry on the same Danish Christmas Eve customs. The new in-laws seem to adjust to it.”* The sisters explain precisely what those traditions consisted of, writing that to the Christmas traditions belong the baking of pepper-nuts, klejner, and jødekager. The Christmas tree decorations were also of a special Danish character with braided Christmas hearts and heart shaped baskets filled with pepper-nuts and candy. Also the celebration of Christmas Eve is typical Danish, with Rice porridge and an almond prize, pork roast and candied potatoes, red cabbage and red beets, and for dessert apple cake with whipped cream.

Those elements of traditions are also interesting, when we include Marcus Lee Hansen’s view of the immigrant as a bearer of culture from an old world to a new - or just from one world to another. The sum of such elements from many different immigrant cultures can be claimed to be creating a special American culture, which is saturated with input from various ethnicities, mixed together through intermarriages. A culture, which is more multitudinous than just the assumption that the American culture is dominated by an Anglo-oriented.

This assumption is not especially relevant in relation to the problem approach in this research. Yet it should be mentioned because the Jorgensen family and H. J. Nielsen for that matter have also, as so many thousand other immigrants, undeniably had their own stamp on the American society, and thereby belong in the debate about USA’s cultural position, where the two opposing concepts of “melting pot” and “salad bowl” continue to be on the agenda. Is the USA a “melting pot”, where all ethnicities become mixed into something completely different? Or a “salad bowl”, where the immigrants and their descendants continue living according to their old culture, like separate pieces of vegetables held together with a dressing, which figuratively is to be understood as “Americanism”, that is the functional space containing workplace and political and legislative structures? We know that the Danish Christmas traditions were passed on from Hans and Rosa Jorgensen to their daughters and their Danish sons-in-law, who passed them on to their children. It could also in this connection have been interesting to know, if those children passed the traditions on to their offspring, and if their future spouses brought elements of traditions into the marriages thereby creating a generation of multiethnic members. Hans and Rosa Jorgensen’s daughters claim in a quote that their sons-in-law apparently have adapted to those Danish Christmas traditions.

The Jorgensen family remained faithful to the culture they had left behind. Let us now instead try

to encapsulate the integration and completely concentrate on the processes, which each individual family member went through.

The part of the presentation referring to the Jorgensen family can in more than one regard be attributed to Hans Jorgensen. He does most of the correspondence; it is supposedly his decision that the family should emigrate, and it was he, who led the family across parts of the North American continent. This conduct is worth paying attention to, since it tells much about the person. Apparently the moving of the family from farm to farm and Hans Jorgensen's changes of trade can be accredited to the fact that he wished to become independent. But as can be seen in the letters Hans Jorgensen repeatedly expresses a need to change, and this leaves us with the impression of a restless character. The authors of "A New Life" have dedicated an entire section to this conduct under the title "Restlessness". This characteristic is, according to the authors, typical for Americans, and they illustrate it by pointing out that while a 30-year old American on the average has moved 10 times, and Europeans of the same age have moved less than four times on the average. The authors assume that this can be traced back to the age of the big emigrations and explain it by pointing out that the types, who emigrated were restless persons, who were willing to leave all that was familiar. They took this conduct with them to America, and moved from place to place in their search for work.

The Jorgensen family mobility can thus be ascribed to the fact that the father was restless. But I would instead suggest the designation "rootless" to describe Hans Jorgensen's character. When he and his wife first broke the deep ties with their native soil, family and culture, the roots were cut, and they did not have the same obligations in their relationships across the Atlantic. With the ties broken and the roots cut the family mobility could probably be interpreted as a search, not just for work, but also for something deeper: A feeling of belonging.

At the arrival of the family in the USA in 1910, Hans Jorgensen was probably the one, who was most determined to establish a constructive existence in the American, and in order to ease the transition he had already before the trip improved his qualifications by learning some English. This was expanded right from the start, and for that purpose Hans Jorgensen subscribed to an English-language newspaper and attended English church services. This reveals that Hans Jorgensen already at the contact stage at a very early time has taken two steps toward the acculturation phase. These steps are confirmed by the fact that he already the following year decides to apply for American citizenship, just as one can sense a use of English words in his speech. Four years after his immigration, in 1914, the infiltration of the language is visible, and one can with certainty notice that there has been an addition of linguistic elements, which indicates that Hans Jorgensen is in touch with the American society, and thus has entered the acculturation phase.

In 1918 an important step is taken toward the American society, when Hans Jorgensen - and the rest of the family - receive their citizenship. Through this the family attains a number of civil rights, which enable them to on an equal footing with other Americans to influence the society, and they themselves feel a part of it. At a structural niveau this means that the family in principle has become integrated, have officially become Americans, but in reality rather Danish-Americans. The designation Danish-American is suitable, because it indicates that the family has become *equal* with American, but not *identical*. The Jorgensen family now actively and legally become part of the American society and culture, although not with the same basis, but on an equal footing with the Americans.

Through changing jobs Hans Jorgensen secures the contact with the American society all the way through his life, and through the correspondence to Denmark it is revealed that he through work, language and habits displays an openness toward USA and the possibilities there. Among these in 1921 he expresses that the life the family lives in California would not be possible in Denmark, and states for instance the fact that they are in possession of a number of material goods, which would not be possible in Denmark.

Conditions that speak for Hans Jorgensen remaining at the acculturation stage throughout his life, and did not pass through the learning stage, is first and foremost, that his focus remained directed toward Denmark, and not toward the American society, which exactly characterize the learning stage. It also does not appear on the background of the letters that there is an essential degree of adjustment to the American culture pattern, but rather an affirmation of the Danish, since Hans Jorgensen through his life took part in the religious activities, which were planned by the Danish congregations at the locations where the family lived. Just as his personal network was probably based on Danish relationships. In addition to this there are various Danish traditions, which he together with Rosa Jorgensen preserved through his lifetime.

Rosa Jorgensen's integration process is more difficult to evaluate based on the information available. She does not fill in very much in the collective correspondence, but the knowledge we have about her leaves the impression of a person, who has a more difficult time adjusting than did the other family members. When she moved to Lincoln, Nebraska in 1910, her mastery of the language was not as good as her husband's, and her interest was oriented more toward the Danish - both in USA and her country of origin.

The period from 1910 to 1920 is known as a time where Rosa Jorgensen mainly expressed how much she misses that, which she left at home in Denmark. Not until the family in 1920 settled in California does one sense a positive mood in her, and she seems to be happy living in the fertile area. Those new surroundings could have caused Rosa Jorgensen to, in case it had not happened earlier, open up and settle down, which could have promoted her integration.

The following year, in 1921, she took on work as a fruit picker, and thus got in touch with individuals other than her Danish contacts. On the background of this as well as the fact that in 1918 she became an American citizen, it can with certainty be said that she during the period 1918 to 1921 arrived at the acculturation stage. Almost ten years later this statement is confirmed by the fact that her language grammatically and verbally to a high degree has become influenced by the English. An influence, which likely is being intensified during the succeeding years, and finds a fairly correct expression. Anyway, shortly before she died, she is at a stage, where she is able to express herself in a simple, but easily understood English. A linguistic conduct that she probably took on in order to get along in the society and among her English-speaking children and grandchildren.

As is the case with her husband, there is nothing that gives us reason to assume that Rosa Jorgensen advanced beyond the acculturation stage. Just like Hans Jorgensen, she remained there and mainly kept associating with other Danes, but was in a functional interaction with the American society.

In regard to the Jorgensen daughters the integration process is marked by far bigger dynamics, due to the fact that they much earlier in their life, through the school system, were drawn into the American society and cultural life. At the same time it is important to point out that they did not, as their parents did, go through a contact phase - at least not Lilly and Agnes Jorgensen, who

were born in USA - but stepped directly into the acculturation stage. The two oldest girls, Edna and Ruth Jorgensen, started attending public school when they were five and seven years old, respectively. Two years later, in 1914, they were well integrated in the school system. They did well and already spoke English to each other. At the same time they tried to be like their classmates, and changed their eating habits toward the English. In 1916 when the family moved to Sidney, Montana, they were still doing well, and were among the top five in their class in spelling.

Lilly Jorgensen - the third sister - started school at the age of 6 in 1918, thereby also coming under the language cultural influence from the American society. Lilly Jorgensen further insists that after the trip Denmark in 1920 she felt at home when the family returned to American soil. This memorized declaration reveals a relationship, which is interesting when compared to the learning stage, which among other things is characterized by a larger focus on the American society and culture, and which indicates that her orientation already at this time, when she was seven years old, was directed toward the nation in which she was born and growing up.

In 1921 the youngest daughter, Agnes Jorgensen has also entered the educational system. Lilly Jorgensen is in second grade, while Edna and Ruth Jorgensen have started high school. Here they are chosen to represent the school in a typing contest, which they win. The knowledge of this talent revealed both competence in the sisters and at the same time acknowledgement from the system by selecting the girls to represent the school. The two sisters' general proficiency in the English language indicates that they at that time are at the learning stage. During the same time period is also given an insight into the two sisters' friendship relationships, which is also oriented in a direction other than the Danish.

After high school in 1925 Erna and Ruth join the workforce, and in 1927 Edna meets her future husband.

The correspondence shows that all four sisters during the period 1920 to 1927 experience a change, which is more aggressive than that of their parents. The result is that they take direct steps toward a deeper infiltration into the American society and cultural life. This is confirmed first of all by school attendance, and at the same time the period reveals that at least Edna and Ruth Jorgensen go through a process, which in language, friendship and occupations have close relationships to the learning stage. The last two sisters are probably going through the same process as the two oldest, and they both finish high school. Lilly Jorgensen goes through training to become a schoolteacher, while Agnes Jorgensen becomes a flower store owner.

From about 1913 and to the present time the girls appear to be involved in and take part in the American society. Common for all four girls is that they always have carried on a Danish heritage, which does not appear to have been a hindrance for them. They have lived with a Danishness, which has been connected with the elements they have taken on in the American culture. Elements which have probably been developed in step with the girls becoming adults. At least it is known from Ruth Jorgensen in 1947 that the many comforts of America have won acceptance with the sisters, just as her visit to Denmark that same year leaves the impression of a young woman, who is attempting to live into the habits of a foreign culture, but still must wonder about the life lived by the Danes, and which is different and foreign compared to what she is used to in USA.

In 1947 the life of the Jorgensen sisters was not like that of their Danish relatives, but had for many years been under the influence of the American culture. An influence, which probably had

made a special impression on the sisters, because they had not, to the same degree as Hans and Rosa Jorgensen, had knowledge of the culture, which the family left behind, and thus were not to the same degree under the influence of it, other than what had been carried over to them from the parents.

All through their lives the sisters maintained the ties to their Danish origin, and confirmed their belonging to the ethnicity by their choice of spouses, through the maintenance of the ties to relatives in Denmark, and to the culture and Danish traditions. The question is just to what degree, and with the information available about the four women, it can with certainty be stated that they all were at the learning stage. Since it is not known, to how strong a degree their attention was directed toward Denmark, how dominant the use of the English language was, and to what degree they took part in activities arranged by groups of Danish immigrants, it is difficult to evaluate whether there had also been some elements of the adaptation stage in their lives. It is most likely that the children of the Jorgensen daughters, who received such, passed through the adaptation stage.

### **Hans Julius Nielsen**

It would have been expected that H. J. Nielsen, who was a supporter of the Grundtvigian movement had appeared to be a little less integrated into the American society than his Inner Mission counterparts in the Jorgensen family. That is the way one would assume the situation to be, if we were to stay with the information given to us in the research presentation. But H. J. Nielsen appears to be no less integrated when compared to Hans and Rosa Jorgensen, rather the opposite. It can be seen from the correspondence that H. J. Nielsen in many areas was more engaged in the American society and cultural life than were the parents in the Jorgensen family, and that to a degree that clearly relates to Elliott R. Barkan's learning stage. This can most clearly be seen in H. J. Nielsen's involvement in Fresno High School, where he was on the board, first as a member, and later as president. This shows that his focus to a considerable degree was directed toward the society in which he lived. Other relationships confirming this are his interest in the internal political affairs and in the nation in general. Besides this H. J. Nielsen's circle of friends also included Americans, just as elements of typical American traditions were part of the Nielsen family's life. Among these was the celebration of Thanksgiving Day.

All of this does not mean that H. J. Nielsen had lost the connection with his Danish beginnings. Just as was the case with the Jorgensen family, H. J. Nielsen preserved all through his life in America, the connection with his ethnicity, and like the Jorgensen family took active part in the religious activities, which in H. J. Nielsen's case were arranged by the Grundtvigian Society in California, and whereby he through his life held on to parts of the integration development, which is connected with the acculturation stage. But H. J. Nielsen also took part in secular activities, and besides this also had an interest in his old land of birth, an interest that was especially expressed in his worry for Denmark during World War II. Beyond this the Danish engagements consisted of a number of activities, where H. J. Nielsen for example was a delegate to a Danish conference in California, member of various Danish organizations, and one of the driving powers behind the establishment of an Old People's home for Danish immigrants in Solvang, California, and furthermore apparently had a good view of what was happening in the Danish society in the Fresno area.

There could be several reasons that H. J. Nielsen went somewhat further in the integration scale than Hans and Rosa Jorgensen. H. J. Nielsen was only 19 years old when he emigrated from Denmark in 1898 as opposed to Hans Jorgensen, who was 29 years old, and Rosa Jorgensen, who was 30 years old. The fact that H. J. Nielsen was only 19 years old could be the reason that he was not as tightly tied to his nationality as were Hans and Rosa Jorgensen, but was more receptive to a foreign culture. The fact that some of his siblings also chose to settle in California could also have advanced his integration, since he, through them, did not feel a need to stay in touch with Denmark, as the Jorgensen parents did, but was able to maintain his ties with relatives close by. Most of all the advancement can be credited to the fact that H. J. Nielsen was married to a second- generation immigrant. Meta Nielsen's integration process was probably, like the Jorgensen daughters', much more dynamic than that of her parents, caused by the fact that she at an early age through the school system became involved in the American society and cultural life. She probably also entered at the learning phase, which could have caused H. J. Nielsen to strive for a deeper integration in the American society than Hans and Rosa Jorgensen, who came together to the USA, and thus were equal in their integration process.

The functional and identifying aspect, which is mentioned in the introduction to this section, shall again be mentioned in the closing, since H. J. Nielsen directly indicates that in his old age was at a stage containing elements of identifying integration.

In addition to pointing out that H. J. Nielsen was structurally integrated in the American society the last letters especially also show that in H. J. Nielsen's life had been a degree of identification with the USA. H. J. Nielsen declares, that he had become a part of USA by using the word *we* about the nation to which he had immigrated, and which became his home from he was 19 years old and until he died in 1964: *"We have become the great nation we are today."*; *"That is one thing we are proud of, that in the short time of almost one generation, have come from being one of the wildest to one of the most true nations. When one thinks about the population here comes from all the nations in the world, and that we races from the whole world, have become as united as the way we are, that is something to be proud of."*

Because the American society and cultural life had both a structural and a certain identifying influence in H. J. Nielsen's life, but also because the Danish heritage is not missing, the description Danish-American is the most accurate denominator to use for H. J. Nielsen, as well as for the members of the Jorgensen family. The word declares that there is a interest relationship pointing in two directions, but by this also reveals the complexity in Danish immigration to the USA.

## **Conclusion**

The purpose of this special research has been to establish if Kristian Hvidt and Jette Mackintosh are correct in their claim that Danish immigrants were quickly assimilated. For this purpose I have chosen a different entry, and the result is different than the conclusion reached by authors of the research presentation. Let me in this connection immediately emphasize that I, on the background of only two cases neither want to generalize nor declare that the more than 300,000 Danish immigrants, who since the 1850's have settled in the USA, have lived through a progress, which is identical to the persons, which have been used in this research. But two cases are enough to make me wonder and to again suggest that the history is more varied than has so far been assumed - without regard to address, time period and religious conviction.

On the background of the individuals used in this research a surprising result can be presented. By the use of Elliott Barken's model it is possible to determine that none of the members of the Jorgensen family, or H. J. Nielsen became assimilated. Such a thorough change is impossible, because assimilation according to Balkan is the final point in the integration process, and because this means that the individual has lost all cultural, linguistic, behavioral and identifiable characteristics, which identifies and structurally mark and separate them from other ethnicities. If this definition is compared to that, which has been revealed in the various letters, it is clear that none of these elements to an extensive degree is missing in either the Jorgensen family or H. J. Nielsen.

But even without the use of Barkan's model and instead using Jette Mackintosh's definition of the concept as a gradual mixing of American language, culture, mindset and habits, a question mark can be placed by the use of the term assimilation. It is necessary to gradually attach that term, and there shall be no doubt that Jette Mackintosh's definition as such is an excellent statement about the concept *integration*, which is exactly a gradual process of mixing, and which is exactly what happened to the persons in the two cases:

They were gradually integrated into the American society by gradually taking on elements of the English language, American culture, mindset and habits - and this to a stronger degree by the daughters in the Jorgensen family, and possibly also by H. J. Nielsen, than was the case for Hans and Rosa Jorgensen.

Another thing that could seem surprising, is the membership by the persons in organizations, on the background of their superior manner Jette Mackintosh remarks, have had an influence on the integration of their supporters. In other words: If we are to believe both her and Kristian Hvidt's declarations, we ought to assume that the Jorgensen family, because they are followers of Inner Mission became more integrated in the American society than H. J. Nielsen, who was a Grundtvigian. Even without the use of Barkan's model, it is clear that H. J. Nielsen in certain respects appeared to be more integrated than Hans and Rosa Jorgensen, and was closer to a level with the Jorgensen daughters. Yet according to H. J. Nielsen's letters, he was still Danish at heart, and praised the Danishness by participation in the activities arranged by the Danish society. Whether this is because of Grundtvigian mindset, or just a natural thing that one does not lose one's cultural identity because one moves to a foreign country, is difficult to determine on the background of the letters. The same tendency is also seen in Hans and Rosa Jorgensen, and to a certain degree in the daughters. None of them completely lost the identity connection to Denmark, but preserved them throughout their lives and that in spite of the fact that they were followers of Inner Mission.

In regard to the use of the knowledge of the language as a measuring stick to evaluate whether or not an immigrant is integrated, one must be careful in one's assumptions. Although the immigrant is able to get along linguistically in the foreign culture, one cannot precisely evaluate the degree of integration of the individual. However, the linguistic capability does signify a closeness to the dominant culture, but on a functional level. Although we do not know first-hand of H. J. Nielsen's knowledge of English, it is probable that he was at a level with either Hans and Rosa Jorgensen or their daughters, all of whom spoke English. This proves that they all had an interest in being able to get along in the American society. The motivations can be different, but nevertheless, for the individuals in this research it was necessary to be able to speak English in order to get along and to communicate in the predominant society. To all of them the language

was an instrument, and thus meant that especially H. J. Nielsen, Hans and Rosa Jorgensen and to a certain degree their daughters remained true to their ethnicity although they mastered a foreign language.

Henrik Bredmose Simonsen, who has just brought up the linguistic aspects in his book "Kampen om danskheden" (The struggle for Danishness), also mentions the secular organizations which prioritize the American culture over the Danish, which ought to shine through in both the first generation immigrants and their descendants. This is another organization's superior attitude, which looks different on an individual plan. Neither H. J. Nielsen nor Hans and Rosa Jorgensen appear to have prioritized the American over the Danish, whereas it is a little more difficult to evaluate it in the daughters. It appears to me, however, that none of the individuals in this research lost their cultural identity, but on the other hand gained elements from the one they arrived at. Besides this it is evident in both the Jorgensen family and the Nielsen family that they passed on elements from the original culture to the succeeding generations. In the case of the Jorgensen family this is expressed in the preservation of various traditions, while in H. J. Nielsen's case it is expressed in a single passage, where he writes that his grandchild has gone to the Grundtvigian Grand View College in Des Moines, Iowa, for the purpose of learning Danish.

It is understandable that Kristian Hvidt assumed, because the Danish immigrants did not as many others, to a great degree form independent societies, that they thereby at a more rapid pace became part of the American society. It appears to be a wise conclusion, if it had not been that one thereby forgets the complex aspects of ethnicity, culture and identity as being a part of the immigrant. Although the majority of the many Danes, who immigrated to USA, did not settle in Danish colonies, there could easily have existed Danish fellowships in spite of the wide dispersal, although, without there being talk about decided settlements. But even if this should show up not to be the case, one could still insist that integration would be of a structural character, and that the immigrant will preserve the social and cultural characteristics acquired prior to the immigration.

None of the persons in this research resided in independent Danish communities, but they lived in places where there were considerable representations of Danish immigrants. One could thus assume that the association with countrymen could have obstructed a rapid integration, since they through the association constantly confirmed the ties to Denmark. But although persons, with H. J. Nielsen and Hans and Rosa Jorgensen being the most active, were associated with Danish organizations, they still integrated and were able to get along as citizens in the USA. It is difficult to determine how this was done, but it could be because the Danish immigrants in USA, at a superior political, religious and cultural level, were not complete strangers to the predominant Anglo-American culture. And if we are to accept the general tendency, which claims that the integration process of Danish immigrants was smooth compared to other ethnic groups, the explanation could probably lie in the similarities in the structural spheres between Denmark and USA. In order to determine this a thorough examination of the geographic spread on the background of a source material other than the statistical and with emphasis on the connection between integration and distribution.

Another fact that could have worked in prompting the integration is, as I touched on in the problem formulation, the immigrant group. Although Elliott R. Barkan writes that it is impossible for an immigrant group to be an advocate for its members to become assimilated, because this would mean that the group is dissolved, I will claim that it can be contributing to the

individual becoming integrated. Perhaps the group - organizations or concentrations of persons with the same national background - will not be aware of this prompting, but the fact that the immigrant is not alone, but has a network of ethnic equals, can counteract estrangement and strengthen the individual to go through the integration process. These are assumptions, which have not been documented, but again I refer to Marcus Lee Hansen, who claimed that the immigrants, who lived in an exclusively American environment, would lose their characteristics and end up as hermits, while the immigrant society was neither European nor American.

The ethnic society, to which people in this research were connected, was likewise *neither nor*, but *both and*: Neither Danish nor American, but both Danish and American. The same is to be said about the people in this research: They became Danish-Americans, and as I have mentioned earlier the designation reveals that there existed an interest relationship, which pointed in both directions, but it also means that they became equal with the Americans, but not the same as, and thus not assimilated. It is my hope that this research can be of assistance in revealing the complexity in the part of Danish emigration history, which deals with the integration aspects in the life of the immigrants. This is not to say that the works by others are not equally complex in their contents, but in my opinion, some of them have with their measuring sticks prevented the nuances to come through and become visible.

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