

Across Oceans, Across Time ...

Stories from the Museum's collection ...



The five Chrillesen sisters immigrated to Goodhue County, Minnesota from Denmark over a nineteen-year period. Members of a large family living in Dragør, near Copenhagen, they exemplify the serial migration of many Danish families. Nineteen-year-old Edith Amalie Vilhelmine Chrillesen (2nd from right) paved the way in 1891, when she left for Red Wing. She became a housekeeper to a William Thompson, whom she later married. Next to come was 17-year-old Julie (far left), in 1893. She married Rudolph Jensen, a tintype photographer. In 1903, 16-year-old Ella Ingeborg (center) returned from a visit to Bornholm to join her married sister, Olga Sørensen (far right), and family on the *Norge*, the same ship on which Edith had traveled 12 years earlier. Heavy weather en route to New York resulted in dishes sliding up and down the dining salon tables, making eating a rather adventurous business. Ingeborg worked in a boarding house, where she met her future husband, John Peterson. In 1910, 17-year-old Ingrid Henrietta (2nd from left) arrived to join her sisters in Goodhue. Among her fellow passengers was a young carpenter named Augustinus Jensen, whom she later married. Besides their parents, Viggo Carl Chrillesen and Thora Mathilde Christina Stenstrup, the Chrillesen sisters left seven other siblings in Denmark. Their families held regular reunions in Red Wing and Winona, Minnesota, and Bay City, Wisconsin, until the sisters passed away.