

Across Oceans, Across Time® ...
Stories from the Family History & Genealogy Center ...



In 1899 two eventful happenings took place in Thorshavn in the Faeroe Islands. The first was the installation of running water in the homes in the town; the second, the birth of a 12th child into the Lützen household. Although a majority of family members voted to call the little girl *Dusine* (or 'dozen'), she was named Kirsten. Although her physical surroundings were sometimes harsh, Kirsten's childhood in a wooden house with red window frames and a sod roof was idyllic, surrounded by a garden crowned by a large myrtle tree that over the years supplied bridal wreathes for most of the town's brides. One by one Kirsten's older siblings were sent to Denmark for their education; some returned to the islands, while others settled down in various places in the 'home country.' Transportation to Denmark, via Leith, Scotland, was slow, and coming home for Christmas was not an option. Kirsten's mother could not imagine her "children" celebrating the holiday without home-made cookies, so each year she would start her Christmas baking in November, preparing large tin cans of cookies to send to her distant offspring. Residents of the Faeroes had to be largely self-sufficient, so whale kills were one means of providing meat and fat for the family larder. Many people were sent out from Denmark to work for a period of time. For a number of years Kirsten's best friend was Nina Helms, the daughter of a Danish judge. Although the Helms family later returned to Denmark, Kirsten and Nina, shown above, remained in touch, and when Kirsten later came to Denmark their friendship was renewed, and eventually extended to their husbands and children. Kirsten came to Denmark at age 18, later married Aage Helgesen Vedel, and resided there the rest of her life, visiting her home islands only rarely. In 1976 she wrote her vivid memories of her childhood in the Faeroes for younger family members. These have now been translated and a copy deposited by the family with the Family History & Genealogy Center.

The Danish Immigrant Museum

Your Museum in the Heart of the Continent

Box 470, Elk Horn, Iowa 51531

Become a member

Contact us at: 1-800-759-9192 or www.danishmuseum.org

Member of the American Association of Museums