

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



This front-page article in the August 20, 1936, issue of the *Omaha World-Herald* was one of several accounts of the sad and unexpected fate of long-time Omaha park horticulturalist **Peter Mariboel Jensen**. Born in 1871 in Hove parish in Ringkøbing County, Peter M. Jensen received practical training as a gardener prior to his immigration to the U.S. in 1893. He settled in Blair, Nebraska, married a fellow Danish immigrant, Poulina Marie Hansen, and worked there until around 1906, when he moved his family south to Omaha. Here he was hired as one of the 'florists' in charge of maintaining Omaha's many city parks. His chief workplace was Hanscom Park, located just south of the birthplace of President Gerald Ford, where Jensen was assistant foreman. Besides creating many of the flower beds in the city parks, he personally designed and supervised the orchid house in Hanscom Park that was given to the city by Mrs. Sarah Joslyn following a 1913 tornado. The summer of 1936 was exceedingly dry and hot. After working 10- to 12-hour days seven days a week in an attempt to preserve his plants, and suffering a case of sunstroke for his efforts, Jensen grew increasingly despondent over the drought's continuing effect on the flowers and plants that had been his responsibility for three decades. One morning he went to work as usual and hanged himself in one of the park greenhouses. He was quoted in one article about his death as having remarked to his wife just a short time before his death "My flowers are fading and dying. I cannot keep them fresh. And I feel that like them, I, too, am wilting away in this heat." Although descendants of Peter M. Jensen still reside in Omaha no monument other than a tombstone exists for this Danish immigrant who worked so conscientiously to create and preserve a vibrant and beautiful environment that his fellow citizens might enjoy.