

Across Oceans, Across Time ® ...

Stories from the Family History & Genealogy Center ...



One of **Alice Olesen Jensen's** earliest memories dates from when she was four, in response to the local grocer's question of what she would like to do when she grew up. Her straight-forward answer was "I would like to go to America and become a great actress, or perhaps a famous dancer!" Even at such a young age, the idea of going to America was a reasonable possibility. Moving forward a decade or so, life in German-occupied Denmark had become both interesting and challenging for a young teenager. Alice graduated from *gymnasium* in Fredericia, but Danish universities were closing as dorm rooms were taken over to house German soldiers or civilian refugees. She moved across country to Copenhagen to attend *Mariaforbundet*, a combination finishing school and women's college, where she learned skills such as making hamburgers out of grated beets and candy from carrots and also put in time as a hospital pediatric assistant. After Denmark was liberated, Alice became engaged to the interesting young pharmacy graduate named Erik she had met while in high school. A few years more, Alice and Erik were married and thinking of going to the U.S. for a few years to experience something new. In October 1950 all the red tape had been cut, sponsors found, and farewells said, and the couple started their adventure by spending 10 turbulent days in a tiny windowless cabin on a ship filled with post-war refugees and displaced persons. They found jobs and settled in Michigan. Alice didn't become an actress or dancer, but raised three children, went back to school and received a degree in Dental Hygiene, and worked in both private practice and county agencies. Nearly a half century later, in response to questions from her adult children about her life in Denmark, she wrote down her memories in *Bright Milestones Back Along the Road*, an interesting example of the many biographies and family histories found in the Museum library.