

## Across Oceans, Across Time<sup>®</sup> ...

### Stories from the Family History & Genealogy Center ...

UNIVERSITY HIGH SCHOOL															
URBANA, ILLINOIS															
NAME <i>Smedegaard, Hans</i>				ADDRESS <i>1213 W. Green-Urb.</i>											
PARENT OR GUARDIAN <i>Mrs. C. Dickenson</i>				OCCUPATION <i>912 Ayers Place Evanston, Ill.</i>											
First Year	1st Sem.	2nd Sem.	Unit	Second Year	1st Sem.	2nd Sem.	Unit	Third Year	1st Sem.	2nd Sem.	Unit	Fourth Year	1st Sem.	2nd Sem.	Unit
English	<i>I</i>	<i>cr</i>	<i>1</i>	English				English				English	<i>IV</i>	<i>B C</i>	<i>1</i>
Algebra		<i>96 96</i>	<i>1</i>	Plane Geom.	<i>cr</i>	<i>1</i>		Adv. Alg.	<i>B</i>	<i>- 1/2</i>		Am. Hist.	<i>A</i>		
Man. Train.				Zoology	<i>cr</i>	<i>1</i>		Chemistry	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>1</i>	Physics	<i>cr</i>	<i>2</i>	
<i>DANISH</i>		<i>75</i>	<i>1</i>	Botany				Sol. Geom.	<i>-</i>	<i>B 1/2</i>		Economics			
<i>Mech. Dr.</i>		<i>cr</i>	<i>1</i>	Anc. Hist.	<i>cr</i>	<i>1</i>		M. & M. Hist.	<i>cr</i>	<i>1</i>		Latin			
Latin				Man. Train.				Latin				French II			
Gen. Sci.				<i>Spag</i>	<i>cr</i>	<i>1</i>		French II				Phy. Ed.			
French I				Latin				Pub. Sp.	<i>B</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>1</i>	Trig.	<i>-</i>	<i>B 1/2</i>	
Phy. Ed.		<i>cr</i>	<i>1</i>	French II				Phy. Ed.							
ENTERED <i>9/15/1924</i>				UNITS ON ENTERING				GRADUATED <i>June 11, 1925</i>							
WITHDREW				DATE OF BIRTH <i>Dec. 12-1904</i>				PHYS. HIGH SCHOOL <i>Levin W. Williams</i>							
RETURNED <i>or correspondence Univ. of Wis.</i>				ENTERED FROM											
<i>o Entrance Exam. 21.80</i>															

This rather ordinary high school record for **Hans Smedegaard** is not the document of an early exchange student or someone who deliberately decided to come to America. Hans' arrival in the U.S. was somewhat more dramatic than most. After attending Stenus Kostskole he left school at the age of 14 and went to sea, working first on sailing ships and later on freighters. He sojourned in New York several times during these voyages, according to Ellis Island records. During a 1923 trip a shift in cargo on the steamship he was on caused it to capsize, throwing those of the crew on deck into the Atlantic. Hans was one of ten fortunate crewmen who managed to get hold of a nearby lifeboat, but they drifted for six days with no communications and little food except hardtack and a little water. After being picked up and transported to New York City by a rescue ship, Hans found himself stranded there with no money or knowledge of English. He spent his first night in the U.S. on the streets, sleeping in a doorway, where thieves cut open his pants pocket during the night. Despite this less than auspicious arrival, Hans managed to make his way to an aunt, Mrs. Sara Dickenson, in Evanston, Illinois. He was admitted to University High School in Urbana, Illinois, in 1924, graduated the following year, and went on to earn a bachelor's degree in general education from the University of Illinois in 1932. During the Depression he worked various places in the U.S. doing a little bit of everything from fruit picking in California, harvesting barley in Kansas, being a semi-pro boxer, and working on WPA projects. By the 1950s he had settled in Racine, where he raised a family and worked at Webster Electric as a gear specialist. Hans died on August 1, 1990. What fragmentary bits of his life are known come from his school records, Ellis Island arrival records, and a 1987 interview in the *Racine Journal Times*. The FHGC would very much appreciate learning more about this Danish immigrant.