

Across Oceans, Across Time® ...

Stories from the Family History & Genealogy Center



This neat little woman was born Anna Maria Carstensen in Hellevad parish, Aabenraa County, on 21 April 1848. At the age of sixteen she became a German overnight when her home in the duchy of Slesvig was turned over to Prussia. At 21 she married a young miller, Niels Christian Juel, with whom she had eight children. But Niels Christian died of dust pneumonia in Løgumkloster in 1892, leaving his widow with eight children between the ages of 22 and 4. By that time their eldest daughter, Nicoline, had emigrated with other relatives to America, so the decision was made that the rest of the family would join her. In later years the children recalled that it was a horrendous journey made on a crowded ship. They all became infected with lice, and the youngest, 5-year-old Gunder, became so ill with pneumonia that Anna Maria was told that she would not survive. Not wanting to bury her daughter at sea, Anna Maria nursed her fiercely. The little girl completed the journey but was not able to walk when the ship arrived in New York. The immigrants had to pass through health inspection, so Anna Maria carried her daughter. When questioned by the physician about why she was carrying such a big girl and what was wrong with her, Anna Maria blithely replied, "Oh, she's just afraid," and all the family members were given a 'healthy' stamp. After traveling by train from New York, they arrived in Marne in southwest Iowa and immediately began putting down roots. Back in Løgumkloster Cemetery they later placed a large monument on Niels Christian Juel's grave with the notation "elsket og savnet af Hustru og Børn i USA" (loved and missed by wife and children in USA). Anna Marie later married another immigrant, Hans Olsen, but he died after only four years. She then resided with a daughter for several decades, passing away in 1942 at nearly 94 years of age. At her death she had 72 living descendants, all Americans.

The Danish Immigrant Museum

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