

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



Hans Jensen was a native of Skibinge parish, Præstø County, where he was born in 1851. As the son of a tenant smallholder and day-laborer, his family was not at all well-off and his future equally unpromising. Following the death of his mother in 1865 and his confirmation that autumn, Hans - like most of his rural contemporaries -- began working as a farm laborer in the area. After nearly a decade of this he decided to try his fortune in America, leaving for Chicago in the spring of 1873. The above photograph was probably taken around that time. He first found employment as a section hand with the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad, but moved after a few years up to Trempeleau County, Wisconsin, where he met and married American-born Mary Louise Tucker. By that time he had Americanized his surname to 'Johnson.' After farming for several years the couple moved to La Crosse, Wisconsin, in 1882, where they raised a family of seven children and Hans was employed as a teamster. With the advent of motorized transportation after the turn of the previous century the demand for a horse and team to move things gradually declined. In 1910 the family moved once again, to Peoria, Illinois, where the three eldest Johnson sons were working as printers and typesetters, and here Hans Johnson spent the rest of his life. He died in 1928; sadly and ironically, as a result of having been kicked by a horse.

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