

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



**Plentywood, Montana, a century ago**

Montana became the 41st state on November 8, 1889, and soon thereafter became the destination of choice for thousands of immigrants seeking cheap land around the turn of the last century and farmland in the Dakotas and southern plains was platted and populated. The revised Homestead Act of 1909, which increased the amount of land each family could homestead from 160 to 320 acres, was a further draw. Danish immigrants settled in the far northeastern corner of the state, where they founded several towns that have celebrated centennials over the past decade. The latest of these communities to turn 100 is Plentywood, the seat of Sheridan County, which was incorporated on September 4, 1912. A century ago the small permanent town population was augmented by railroad crews, cowboys, and land seekers, and lumber yards and saloons did a booming business. Although surrounded by vast unfenced spaces stretching to the Canadian border, the community had already been linked to the outside world by telephone for several years, had constructed its first hospital, the town "pest house," on the edge of town, and electricity was not long in arriving. In 1914 a brick school was built at a cost of \$40,000 and the next few years saw the construction of comfortable homes and the advent of automated vehicles and farm machinery in the surrounding wheat fields.

Today Plentywood is home to 1772 people. Over the past century the community has weathered good times and bad, including the drought years of the 1930s. Stories from its history have been compiled into an interesting history, *Plentywood Centennial: Our Story Told*. For those with roots in Plentywood the book and a related historical DVD may be of interest. Both are available from Plentywood Centennial, PO Box 3, Plentywood, MT 59254. A copy of each may also be found in the Family History & Genealogy Center.

**The Danish Immigrant Museum**

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