

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



In the 1880s and '90s Danish immigrants stepping onto the busy docks of New York City often saw the above face and a familiar and comforting sight as they began to feel their way in a new land with strange customs and language. The ecclesiastical ruff worn by Pastor Rasmus Andersen told them that a fellow Dane was present, someone whom one could trust to ask assistance from or obtain guidance about the many strange situations they were confronting. According to an 1883 article in the *Brooklyn Eagle*, whenever ships arrived from Scandinavian ports the pastor was there to greet the new arrivals and give them a small brochure on which was printed the names and addresses of Danish clergymen serving congregations throughout the country. -- Fynbo Rasmus Andersen (1848-1930) came to the U.S. in 1871 as a missionary sent out by The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Danes in North America. Following ordination in Wisconsin and serving congregations in the Waupaca, Wisconsin, area for several years, Andersen came east to New York and New Jersey, where he ministered to Scandinavian immigrants and seamen, as well as Danes settled in the metropolitan area, for over four decades. In 1883 he founded Our Savior's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Brooklyn in a modest brick building on Ninth Street, which for a time was notable as one of the smallest churches in the city. Within five years the congregation had quadrupled and the congregation had to seek larger quarters. Fund-raising to purchase a new building was accomplished, among other things, through a fair and a lecture by Danish-American journalist Jacob A. Riis. In order to provide sailors with religious services in their own language Rev. Andersen also arranged to hold monthly Danish services at the Navy Yard in Brooklyn. His work was supported by the local Danish consular authorities as well as the agents of the Danish Thingvalla Line. In addition to his active ministry, Rasmus Andersen was the author of numerous books and articles on church history, immigration and biography. He died in Brooklyn.