One of the most useful sources for finding where immigrant families came from in Denmark is the membership rolls of lodges belonging to the Danish Brotherhood in America. A fraternal organization formed in 1882 from several Danish veterans' organizations and headquartered in Omaha, Nebraska, the organization quickly gained adherents in many Danish immigrant communities. In the following five decades nearly 350 lodges were formed in the US and Canada before membership waned due to assimilation and the consequent loss of Danish identity. Some 50 lodges surviving today are the backbone of the preservation of traditional Danish culture, food-ways and customs. Membership, which was originally restricted to Danish-born men of good character, included death and disability insurance, and was a chief reason why many men joined the organization, although membership in any fraternal organization was discouraged among religious groups such as Danish Baptists and Inner Mission-oriented congregations. Membership records, such as the above, the initial page of DB Lodge #111 in Austin, Minnesota, include such details as places and dates of birth, occupations, insurance beneficiaries, dates of membership, transfers to and from other lodges, and for members at the time, dates of death. Fortunately, the membership rolls for most lodges have survived and are in the Danish American Archives and Library at Dana College in Blair, Nebraska. Lodge rolls have been indexed by the FHGC to allow easy access to the information on members, which sometimes numbered in the hundreds. Individuals interested in finding out if their ancestors were members of the Danish Brotherhood may find contact information in the Library & Genealogy section of the museum webpage.

The Danish Immigrant Museum
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