

## Across Oceans, Across Time® ...

### Stories from the Family History & Genealogy Center ...



Many Danish-Americans have ancestral photographs similar to this formal portrait of the family of **Juliane Marie Enevoldsen Olesen Christensen** taken in the 1890s. And like this image, we often wish that the people portrayed could come alive and tell us something about their lives. Behind this picture is a story of one woman whose life probably didn't turn out exactly as she expected. Born in 1844 into a solid farmer's family in Sindbjerg parish in Vejle County, Juliane was working as a domestic when she married journeyman miller, Anton Olesen in Øster Snede. When Anton was unexpectedly killed in a steamship accident in 1868 at the age of 29, she was expecting her 2<sup>nd</sup> child, a daughter who was given the name Antonie (later called "Nea") in his memory. In 1870 Juliane Marie and Antonie became part of the stream of immigrants to Chicago. The two traveled steerage class, arriving in New York on July 8<sup>th</sup>. Three days later "Mary" and Antonia "Indvaldsen" were enumerated in the federal census taken in Chicago as "just arrived from Denmark." The following year she married immigrant house painter Hans Christensen. By 1878 Mary's oldest child, Bodil Marie, had joined her mother and her three American-born half-siblings, Albert, Thora and Clara, and the family moved to Story City, Iowa. But more deaths followed, first daughter Thora, and then in 1886, her husband Hans, at age 43, followed by her year-old daughter Flora, leaving Mary as the sole breadwinner for her family. She did so by dressmaking and millinery work and perhaps some of the dresses in the above photograph are her handiwork. Despite these setbacks and the ensuing economic hardships the family prospered. And Mary was to try matrimony a 3<sup>rd</sup> time in 1911, when she married Hans Hanson, with whom she lived until her death in 1923 at the age of 78.