

Across Oceans, Across Time® ...

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Mette Marie Friis was born in 1841 in Vamdrup parish in Ribe County, where she married Johannes Andreasen Geltzer in 1864. Johannes died the following year, but the young widow soon found a second husband, **Jens Larsen Kyed**. The couple had four children, Johannes, Søren, Magnus and Ane, before Jens left for America in 1882. In the fall of 1885 Mette Marie and her young children followed Jens to Gibson City, Illinois. Left behind in Denmark was Mette Marie's teenage daughter, Sophie Geltzer, whom she never saw again. Sophie married and raised a family of her own, and left for her descendants this photograph of herself and her mother taken in the late 1860s. As was frequently the case, contact between the American and Danish branches of the family was lost over the years. The Kyed children, their surname usually found anglicized to Kyde, gradually dispersed from central Illinois and moved west as they themselves grew to adulthood and married. Sophie's half-siblings lived, worked or ended up in Nebraska, Colorado, Washington and South Dakota. Jens and Mette Marie in turn lived in western Nebraska and Monona County, Iowa, before finally settling in Blair, Nebraska. There Mette Marie died on March 6, 1920, and was buried in the city cemetery with a tombstone detailing her origins. A few months later, at the age of 80, Jens Kyed applied for a US passport. He is not buried alongside his wife, so his final resting place may be in the land of his birth.