

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



A Periphatc Photographer. The FHGC recently received from Denmark a copy of the photograph above with a question about its background. The only clue was the photographer's notation "Miller, Elk Horn, Ia." in one corner. Research determined that the photographer, Peter Hansen Møller, was born in 1869 in Ærøskøbing in Svendborg County to millwright Jørgen Møller and his wife, Louvise Egidie Hansen. The Møller family emigrated in 1881, becoming one of the earliest resident families of Kimballton, Iowa. It is unknown exactly where Peter learned the photographer's art, but he opened his first studio in the town by the early 1890s. In 1898 he relocated to the slightly larger Elk Horn, where he operated a studio for two decades, and it was during this time that the above photograph must have been taken. Miller's known work is otherwise exclusively portraiture, such as the image below (the elaborate wicker chair featured frequently as a prop). He disappears from local records for a period of time around 1920, and may have traveled out west for some years before opening a studio briefly in Atlantic, Iowa, in the middle of the following decade. By 1930, however, he had left the Midwest behind and was living and working as a photographer in Oakland, California. Peter and his wife, Kristine (née Rasmussen), had no children. His only sister, Elnora, never married, so this immigrant family died out within a single generation, leaving as a legacy some portraits of turn-of-the-20th-century Iowans and a single farm family standing proudly in front of their home somewhere on the prairie.



The Danish Immigrant Museum

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