

THE DANISH CONTINGENT IN THE POPULATION OF EARLY IOWA

INDIVIDUAL IMMIGRATION FROM DENMARK TO AMERICA DOWN
TO 1840. THE BEGINNINGS OF ORGANIZED IMMIGRATION.
THE EARLIEST CITY COLONIES AND RURAL SETTLE-
MENTS. THE COURSE OF MIGRATION
TO IOWA

Organized emigration from Denmark is of much more recent date than that from Norway or Sweden. According to the United States census of 1860 there were only 5,540 Danes in the United States in that year, the total immigration between 1851 and 1860 being 3,749.¹ In that decade the total immigration from Norway and Sweden was 20,931. During the preceding ten years only 539 immigrants had arrived from Denmark. While it would be impossible to ascertain to what extent individual immigration took place before 1851, these figures show that the movement, which had struck such deep root in Norway in the early forties and in Sweden in the later forties, did not take hold of Denmark before the fifties; and even then it was only local, affecting chiefly the smaller islands of Möen, Ærö,² Langeland and Lolland.

¹ See Table II in *The Iowa Journal of History and Politics* for January, 1905, p. 77.

² For the years ending September 30, 1845 and 1847, the number of immigrants from the Scandinavian countries is as follows:

	1845	1847
Norway.....	813	833
Sweden.....	115	482
Denmark.....	54	13

The first Norwegian settlement was formed in 1825, the first settlement of Swedes in 1841. A few small Danish colonies date back to 1844 and the years immediately following; but as a rule they did not grow much until after 1864, which year inaugurated the later extensive immigration from the province of Sleswig.

While, however, extended immigration from Denmark to this country is of comparatively recent date, it is a matter of record that there were Danes in this country twenty years before the establishment of the Swedish colony on the Delaware. The date of this earliest visit is 1619, the year before the coming of the Mayflower and five years after the founding of New Amsterdam by the Dutch. In a former article¹ in this series reference has been made to the fact that in the early part of that year King Christian IV, of Denmark, fitted out two ships for the purpose of finding a Northwest passage to Asia.² On May 9, 1619, sixty-six men under the command of Jens Munk, a Norwegian,³ sailed from Copenhagen bound for the western hemisphere. The fortunes of that expedition were briefly described in the article referred to, from which I will here quote the following:—During the autumn of that year and the early part of the following year he (Jens Munk) explored Hudson Bay and took possession of the surrounding country in the name of King Christian, calling it Nova Dania. The expedition was, however, a failure and all but three of the party perished from disease and exposure to cold in the winter of 1620. The three sur-

¹ *The Iowa Journal of History and Politics* for July, 1905, p. 347.

² The names of the two ships were, *Eenhjørningen* and *Lampreren*.

³ Born in Barby, Norway, in 1579.

vivors, among whom was the commander, Jens Munk, returned to Norway in 1620.¹

While the commander of the expedition, Jens Munk, was a Norwegian, the crew was made up largely, perhaps exclusively, of Danes. Rasmus Jensen Aarhus, a minister, accompanied the expedition as its chaplain, being thus the first Dane, whose name has come down to us, to visit the New World, as we do not know the names of any of the other members of the expedition. The expedition possesses little importance since it plays no part in American history; nor did it have any influence upon immigration from Denmark. Its interest lies in the fact that it is the first recorded visit of Danes to America and that it was the earliest attempt in modern times at colonization in the United States from a Scandinavian country.

To what extent Danes were present among the early colonists of New Netherlands, it would be difficult to say. It is supposed that there were Danes and Norwegians in New Amsterdam² as early as 1624.³ There was a fairly prosperous colony of Danes and Norwegians in New York about 1700. In 1704 these colonists built a large stone church on the corner of Broadway and Rector streets, the property being later sold to Trinity Church; the present churchyard of Trinity Church occupies the site⁴ of the old stone build-

¹ See also Anderson's *First Chapter of Norwegian Immigration*, p. 21.

² In *The Iowa Journal of History and Politics* for July, 1905, p. 348, we have noted the names of two Norwegians living there in 1633.

³ P. S. Vig in *De Danske i America*, Blair, Nebraska, 1900, p. 4.

⁴ Rev. R. Anderson believes he can trace this colony back as far as 1617, which, however, seems to me doubtful. Cf. Anderson's *First Chapter in Norwegian Immigration*, p. 21; and *The Iowa Journal of History and Politics* for July, 1905, p. 348.

ing. In this connection it should also be borne in mind that Danish colonies were established in the West Indies as early as 1650, and that after that date Danes frequently found their way from the West Indies to the American colonies. The name of one such has come down to us to claim a place in Danish American annals, namely, Jockum Melchior Magens, born of Danish parents on March 4, 1715, at St. Thomas. He was a citizen of New York between 1749 and about 1760, returning in the latter year to the West Indies, where he died in August, 1783.¹ Similarly Lars Nannestad, born in 1757, and one time postmaster at St. Thomas, became a citizen of New York, where he died in 1807. In Trinity Cemetery on Broadway in New York there is a monument with a Danish inscription bearing his name.

The discovery by which Russia laid claim to Alaska was made by a Dane, Vitus Janassen Bering,² in 1728 and again in 1741. Bering was born in Horsens, Aarhus diocese, Denmark, in 1681. He entered the Russian service in 1704,³ distinguished himself as a sailor, and was sent out on a voyage of exploration along the east coast of Kamtchatka in 1728, which as we know resulted in the discovery of Alaska.⁴

¹ P. S. Vig in *De Danske i America*, p. 5.

² His grand uncle was the Danish historian, Vitus Bering, born 1617 in Viborg, and one time Professor in Copenhagen University. Winkel-Horn's *Illustreret Konversations Lexikon*, I, 1892, p. 338.

³ When Bering became a Russian citizen he was required to change his name to Vitus Ivanovich Bering.

⁴ There were also other Norse and Danish navigators in the expedition. The sub-lieutenant was Martin Spanberg, a Dane. See *Vitus Bering*, by Peter Lauridsen, translated by Julius E. Olson, Chicago, Ill., for a biography of Bering. See also account of Bering's Voyage of Exploration in *Vikings of the Pacific*, by A. C. Laut, New York. Macmillan. 1905. Pp. 161. Bering had fought in the Black Sea War in 1611.

The founding of Moravian colonies in Georgia, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania in the 18th century has been referred to above, as has also the fact that Scandinavians were represented in considerable numbers among the founders of Moravianism in America.¹ In 1737 Moravian teachings were introduced into Denmark. Persecuted German Moravians had already in 1735 established a colony in Savannah, Georgia. As converts to Moravianism in Denmark could not there legally practice their belief, they emigrated to this country taking part in the founding of the colony at Bethlehem in 1740 and Bethabara, North Carolina, in 1747. One of the prominent Moravian ministers in the Bethlehem colony at the time, Paul Daniel Berzelius, a Dane, we have had occasion to refer to above² as preaching among the Delaware Swedes in the Gloria Dei Church in Philadelphia, and among whom he made many converts. That there were Danes also among the Swedes in New Sweden seems very likely. In the lists of names of parishioners that appear in the church records of the colony there are several that are more distinctively Danish than Swedish in character.³

Among the German Lutherans in Pennsylvania there were Scandinavian preachers of that belief as early as the forties in the 18th century.⁴ Peter Brunholtz, who came to Phila-

¹ *The Iowa Journal of History and Politics* for October, 1905, p. 588.

² *The Iowa Journal of History and Politics* for October, 1905, pp. 349 and 588.

³ It may be borne in mind that Skåne, Blekinge, and Halland were not politically Swedish until 1658, when they were ceded to Sweden at the Peace of Roskilde. I am not able to say now to what extent these provinces contributed to the population of New Sweden.

⁴ We have before spoken of a Swedish preacher, Lars Nyberg, who was pastor of a German Lutheran church in Lancaster, Penn.—See *The Iowa Journal of History and Politics* for October, 1905, p. 588.

delphia in 1745, and who served as Lutheran minister among the Germans in Germantown and Philadelphia until his death in 1758, was a Dane, having been born in Nyböl,¹ Sleswig. Danish names are met with elsewhere. Johan Christian Leps, sometime pastor in the present Athens, New York, was of Danish birth. He is also recorded as a teacher in a German school in Philadelphia in 1773, the first high school that was founded by Germans in Pennsylvania.² In 1782 Leps withdrew from the ministry and settled on a farm near Macungie, Pennsylvania.³

But these early records are few and far between. Not until the second quarter of the 19th century does individual immigration begin on a larger scale; and even then we have but scant material bearing upon Danish-American immigration history.

Statistics show that there were only 120 Danes in the country in 1820; in 1840 the number does not seem to have been more than 1252. A few of these will fittingly find mention here because of their prominence or because of their influence upon Danish-American immigration. The name of Charles William Borup occupies an important place in the early annals of Minnesota. He was born in Copenhagen, Denmark, in 1806. He was educated for the medical profession in his native country but emigrated to America in 1827 and located in New York. In the following year he became agent for the American Fur Company and was sta-

¹ At that time absolutely Danish linguistically, as of course politically. Since 1864 it has, of course, been German territory.

² Founded by J. C. Kunze. It closed its doors in 1776.

³ Facts from *De Danske i Amerika*, p. 5.

tioned near Lake Superior. He was then undoubtedly the first Dane in Wisconsin and Minnesota and as far as we know the first in the Northwest. In 1848 Borup settled in St. Paul, and in 1853 became the founder of the first bank in Minnesota.¹ He is reputed to have been the best financier in the Territory. He was later appointed Danish consul, and was also instrumental in the building of the first Scandinavian church in Minnesota.

Another western pioneer who came to America in the same year was Niels Christian Boye; but of this Iowa pioneer we shall have occasion to speak below.

The name of Anton R. Rude, Dr. Theol., holds a prominent place in the early history of the South Carolina Synod of the Lutheran Church. He was born in Denmark, October 5, 1813, and came early to America.² From Vig's account of him we gather the facts that he studied in Andover, Massachusetts, and in the Lutheran Seminary at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, was in 1842 ordained into the Lutheran ministry, in which capacity he served in the South Carolina Synod until his death, March 21, 1883. He was for a time editor of *Lutheran Visitor*, and a professor in the Synod's seminary.

We may further mention the names of Dr. Brandstrup, whom we find located in Philadelphia since 1831, Peter Bennesen,³ who came to New York in 1832, and Peder Andreas Mosböl, a merchant whom we find located there since 1836. Henry M. Braem, Danish Consul in New

¹ In connection with his brother-in-law, Chas. H. Oakes, says Nelson in *Scandinavians*, Vol. I, p. 378.

² "In his early youth", says P. S. Vig; but the exact year is not known.

³ I believe that the name was later Americanized to Bennieson.

York, and Knight of Dannebrog, was born in New York in 1836. His father was a prosperous merchant there before 1836.¹

The well-known Lutheran churchman, Edmund Belfour, Dr. Theol., founder of Trinity and Wicker Park English Lutheran churches in Chicago, pastor in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, is by birth a Dane, being born in Alster, Island of Sjaelland (Zealand), in 1833. His father emigrated to America in 1839, the mother and seven children following in 1841. In 1850 Edmund Belfour matriculated in the College of the City of New York, from which he was graduated with honors in ethics and oratory in 1854; entering the Theological Seminary of the Lutheran Church in Gettysburg that year, he was ordained a minister in 1857. Dr. Belfour is a prominent contributor to the *Lutheran Encyclopedia*, and a leader in the English Lutheran Church of America.²

Among these early Danes belongs also Peter Lassen, one of the first pioneers in California. He was born in Copenhagen, August 7, 1800, learned the blacksmith's trade in his native country, and emigrated to America in 1829. Going to California in 1839, he there became a miller and ranchman. He was a respected, influential citizen and occupies a position of considerable prominence among the early pioneers of the Golden State.³ His name is preserved in Lassen County.

Lauritz Brandt, a mechanic and inventor who lived

¹ According to Vig, p. 81.

² Dr. Belfour is at present pastor of a Lutheran congregation in Aleghany, Penn., as Rev. Leamer of Iowa City informs me.

³ Lassen was assassinated in 1859. I have not been able to ascertain under what circumstances.

in New York between 1840 and 1881, was a Dane. He was born in Svendberg, Denmark, in 1807, where he learned his trade from his father. In 1829 he left his native country, living two years in St. Petersburg, later in Prague, Vienna, Munich, and Berlin. He came to New York in 1840, being for some time connected with the type foundry of David Bruce, Jr. Here he invented a machine for the manufacture of type; after that he lived some years in Europe, returning to New York in 1848. At the age of seventy-four he returned to Copenhagen.

One early Danish minister to America, Peder Pederson, I will mention especially because of his able service and his long residence in this country. From 1802 to 1831 he represented Denmark as Consul and Acting Ambassador, with residence in Philadelphia.¹ Pederson was especially instrumental in bringing about the commercial treaty of 1826 between Denmark and the United States. He received many titles and orders from his government in recognition of valuable service to his country. Pederson died in Copenhagen in 1851. His successor as minister was the no less well known Steen Anderson Bille, minister from 1838 to 1854.

These names bring us down to 1844, at which time immigration from Denmark may be said, for a time at least, to enter upon a new phase.² Immigrants begin to come in more or less organized groups, resulting in the establish-

¹ Pederson was born in 1774 in Sorö. The first Danish minister to the United States was Peter Blicher Olsen, who was Consul General from 1800 to 1802.

² In the years 1847 to 1852 there was almost no immigration from Denmark, a fact which was due in large part undoubtedly to the war of 1848-49 (in Sleswig). In the years closing Sept. 30, 1845, 1847, and that closing Dec. 31, 1852, immigrants from Denmark numbered respectively 54, 13, and 3. See also note 1, p. 220, above.

ment of city colonies and small rural settlements in different parts of the country. At first these groups are very small and represent, as we have said above, only local movements at home. Between 1848 and 1850 there came, according to the United States census, only 539 immigrants from Denmark. Nevertheless this period represents the beginning of the formation of settlements.

As we should expect, the first city colony was established in New York City. From the beginning of the nineteenth century we meet with Danes in New York.¹ We have already seen that a Dane, Peter Bennesen, lived there as early as 1832, and that the father of Consul Braem was a prosperous merchant there before 1836. Our records are extremely meagre, but it does not seem unlikely that a considerable number of the 1063 Danes who came to this country between 1831 and 1840 had located in New York City or Philadelphia, in which latter city was still the residence of the Danish Consulate. The presence in New York of a Danish mission and a Danish church in the early part of the eighteenth century may have led to the choice of New York as a home on the part of many Danes who came in the nineteenth century; while their near kinsmen, the Swedes in Delaware and Philadelphia, and more particularly the Danish Moravians, would have been a strong influence to attract them to Philadelphia.²

On June 27, 1844, there was formed a Scandinavian society in New York called *Scandinavia*, the first of its

¹ Other than the mission of Rev. Aarhus (1700), which I take it had lost its distinctive nationality before 1800.

² Among the earliest Danes in Philadelphia were Dr. Bonneville, who came before 1825, and Harman Boye who came in 1825. See below, p. 233.

kind in this country. The founder was James Peterson.¹ Among the founders and early members of the society there were many Danes. As members of the Danish colony we find Harro Paul Haring,² Hans Jørgen Hansen, Peter Gildsig,³ N. Erlandsen, Martin F. Sørensen, E. T. Christiansen, Hans P. C. Hansen, Lauritz Brandt, and Peder Mosbøl. Among the prominent Danes in the New York colony is to be especially mentioned Paul C. Sinding, the first appointee to a Scandinavian professorship in an American university, the University of New York, where he was made Professor of Scandinavian Literature in 1859.⁴ He is also the author of a very well-written work, *History of Scandinavia from the Early Times of the Northmen and Vikings to the Present Day*, which reached the tenth edition.⁵

In Baltimore there have been Danes since 1846, though in small numbers. The earliest Danish settler in Chicago was probably Christoffer Johnson, who was born in Copenhagen, 1819, came to Chicago, 1838, and died there, 1896.⁶ George P. Hansen, a Dane, is also named as living in Chicago about the same time. Milwaukee had a Danish settler as early as 1844. His name is C. H. Molbæck and

¹ Of whose Danish nationality, however, I am not absolutely certain.

² Born in Husum diocese, Denmark, 1798; died in 1870 in London.

³ He built and was proprietor of the Gilsey House, on Broadway, one of New York's substantial hotels at the time. The present proprietors are, I believe, two sons of Peter Gilsey.

⁴ See account of this in an article entitled *Nordiske Studier i amerikanske Universiteter*, by George T. Flom, that appeared in *Amerika*, September 9 and 16, 1898.

⁵ The work is dedicated to James Lenox, founder of the Lenox Library in New York. Prof. Sinding was born in Alsted, Denmark, in 1813.

⁶ A brief account of him is given by Vig, p. 108.

he is still living there, having finished his eightieth year last October.¹ There were, however, few Danes in the city before 1860, C. H. J. Möller, editor of *Fremad*, and Lars Lamp² (who came in 1859), being named as the earliest. There were Danes early in New Orleans, as e. g., Henry Frelson, who was a wealthy merchant—but the records are exceedingly meagre. Among other towns may be mentioned Watertown, Wis., where Lauritz Jacob Fribert located as editor of *Dagen* in 1842; Kenosha, Wis., settled by Danes before 1850; Neenah, Wis., also settled before 1850; Waupaca, Wis.; Jamestown, New York; Perth Amboy, New Jersey; Moline, Illinois; Salt Lake City;³ and Indianapolis.

In the last named city a small colony of Danes from Möen was formed about 1860; and here was organized the first Danish Lutheran congregation in America in the nineteenth century, April 17, 1868.⁴ My friend, the Rev. M. Fr. Wiese,⁵ who organized this church and was its first pastor, writes me that the first Dane in the city was Peter Weis from Möen, who came in 1860 or, possibly a little

¹ His address is 320 Third Ave. Facts obtained from P. Jacobsen, Racine, Wis.

² He later became a pioneer settler at Sleepy Eye, Brown County, Minnesota.

³ Where there was a Dane as early as 1847—Hans Christian Hansen, born in Copenhagen, Denmark, November 23, 1806, died in Salina, Silver County, Utah, 1890. "He was a pioneer musician of Utah, as well as one of the first settlers, and a good citizen," writes J. F. Smith, Jr., of Salt Lake City, in a letter to me under date of November 29, 1905.

⁴ Facts therefor not correct in Bille, *A History of the Danes in America*, p. 16, *Wisconsin Academy of Sciences*, Vol. XI.

⁵ M. Fr. Wiese, Pastor of the West Koshkonong church of the Norwegian Synod at Clarkson, Wisconsin, was born in Falster, Denmark, May 11, 1842, emigrated to America in 1863, locating first in Racine, later coming to Madison, Wisconsin. He was for a long time pastor of a Norwegian Lutheran church at Cambridge, Story County, Iowa.

earlier. About the same time came Rasmus Svendsen and wife; and he became a grocery merchant there. N. P. Olson was also among the first settlers. In 1868 there were about fifty Danes, writes Rev. Wiese, mostly from Falster, but some from Møen and Sjælland.

The earliest rural settlements are: (1) that of Hartland, Waukesha County, Wisconsin, founded in 1845 by Chr. Christiansen, from Lolland, Denmark, and whose descendants still reside there; (2) New Denmark, Brown County, Wisconsin, settled first by Niels Hansen Godtfredsen and wife and two others from Langeland in 1848;¹ (3) Raymond Township, Racine County, Wisconsin, where there were Danes in the early forties;² (4) Gowen, Montcalm County, Michigan, a very large settlement of Danes from Holbæk, Sjælland, dating from 1850. The first settler in Gowen was August Rasmussen, from Hallebyore (1850), who was also instrumental in bringing others of his countrymen to the settlement. Rasmus Jensen from Sæby diocese, Sjælland, came in 1852; Anders Jensen and Jens Sörensen both from Hallebyore were among the earliest settlers. The first Danes in Racine were Rev. C. L. Clausen, who came in 1843, C. M. Reese (year not known), and P. C. Lutken, who came in 1857.³ From these settlements as well as directly from Denmark through Clinton, Burlington, and

¹ Godtfredsen was born in Stoense diocese in 1814; died in 1894.

² As Peder Johan Mourier, born in Denmark in 1812; died in Racine, Wisconsin, in 1853. He may have been the first Dane in the township.

³ According to letter from Peter Jacobsen, of Racine. Of this interesting and important settlement Mr. Jacobsen has kindly furnished me a full account with complete list of settlers down to 1873, which, however, space forbids including in this discussion.

Davenport as the gateways of immigration, Iowa received its first Danish citizens. We shall now pass on to the first Danish immigration into Iowa.

THE FIRST DANES IN IOWA. THE EARLIEST DANISH SETTLEMENTS IN THE STATE. THE COURSE OF MIGRATION.

THE ELK HORN SETTLEMENT IN SHELBY COUNTY.

DANES IN POTTAWATTAMIE COUNTY. THE

COMING OF THE DANES TO DAVEN-

PORT AND DES MOINES

The first Dane, and indeed the first Scandinavian in Iowa, was Niels Christian Boye, who was born in Lolland, Denmark, in 1786. He came to America in 1827 to settle an inheritance, left by his brother, Harman Boye, who had come to this country in 1825 and had been engaged in the Virginia State survey. Boye, who had been a merchant in Denmark, decided to remain in America, located in Philadelphia, and conducted a store there until 1837, when he removed west as far as Iowa, settling first in the present County of Muscatine and later in Linn County. In 1842 he came to Iowa City, where he was engaged in merchandizing¹ until his death in 1849.² Boye was thus not only the first Dane in Iowa, but also very likely the first Scandi-

¹ J. B. Newhall in *A Glimpse of Iowa in 1846*, Burlington, 1846, p. 91, mentions Boye as a grocer and provision merchant.

² He died of cholera in St. Louis where he had gone for the purpose of buying goods for his business. I may cite the following from an obituary of the time. "Died of cholera in St. Louis, Mo., on Saturday, the 23d of June, 1849, Neil C. Boye, merchant of this city. Mr. Boye visited St. Louis for the purpose of renewing his stock of goods, and whilst thus employed, fell a victim to the fearful scourge which for some months past has been devastating that city. Seldom have we witnessed so deep and general an expression of sorrow for the dead and sympathy for the living as in this instance."

navian in the State, having come to Iowa at least two years before Hans Barlien.¹ Boye was married and had thirteen children all of whom emigrated with him except one—later the famous Danish surgeon, Claudius Julius Boye, who died in Copenhagen in 1879. Miss Julia Boye of 533 North Linn Street, Iowa City, is a daughter of N. C. Boye, and the only surviving member living in Iowa City. A son, Chas. Boye, printer, died in June, 1904, in Iowa City. Another son, Erasmus Boye, is residing at Coffeyville, Kansas.

The first Danish pioneer in the western part of the State was in all probability Christopher Overgaard Mynster,² who was born in Copenhagen, June 24, 1796. In 1846 he emigrated to America with his family, locating as a merchant in Washington, D. C., where he lived until 1850. In that year he came to Kaneshville (Pottawattamie County), the present Council Bluffs, and bought a large number of claims of Mormon residents who were about to leave for Utah.³ In the following year he returned to Washington for his family. He settled permanently in Kaneshville, where he died from the Asiatic cholera in 1852.⁴ The Mynster family were the only Danes in Kaneshville in that year. Wm. A. Mynster, a well-known attorney of Council Bluffs,⁵ was a son of C. O. Mynster. He was born in Copenhagen in

¹ See *The Iowa Journal of History and Politics* for July, 1905, p. 368.

² Rev. Vig says that the Danish form of the name Mönster, was changed to avoid being called "Monster."

³ *Biographical History of Pottawattamie County*, 1891, p. 319.

⁴ As Rev. Vig informs me.

⁵ *Biographical History of Pottawattamie County*, p. 320; and also *Historical Atlas of Iowa*, 1875, p. 532.

1843, being eight years old when the family settled in Kaneshville. The family name appears in "Mynster Park" and in the "Mynster Addition" to the city of Council Bluffs.

We have already referred to Rev. Claus Laurits Clausen as the first Dane in Racine, Wisconsin. He organized there, in 1843, a Norwegian congregation, and served until 1852 as pastor for various Norwegian congregations in southern Wisconsin.¹ It would be tempting to give a fuller account of this Danish pioneer, this great churchman, who became one of the leaders in religious work among the early Norwegian settlers in Wisconsin and Iowa, as also, though to a far less extent, among the Danes in Iowa. Since, however, his activity was associated so largely with the Norwegian church, and as we have already had occasion to speak of him above in connection with an account of the settling of Mitchell County, Iowa, by the Norwegians,² only a brief note will be added in this place.

Clausen was born in Ærø, in the diocese of Sogn, Denmark, on November 3, 1820. He was educated for the ministry and it was his intention to enter the African mission. On a visit to Norway in 1841, however, he was urged by T. O. Bache, a merchant in Drammen, to go rather to America as there was great need of missionaries and teachers among the Norwegian settlers in southern Wisconsin, from whom letters had come asking for religious instruc-

¹ Brief biographies of Clausen may be found in Anderson's *First Chapter of Norwegian Immigration*, Nelson's *History of Scandinavians*, and Vig's *De Danske i America*.

² See *The Iowa Journal of History and Politics* for July, 1905, p. 381.

tors.¹ Clausen decided to do this and emigrated in 1843, accepting a call in the old Muskego settlement² in Racine County, Wisconsin. I do not believe there were any Danes in the settlement at the time of the organization of the congregation although the town of Raymond received many Danish settlers very soon thereafter. In 1846 Clausen took charge of the Norwegian congregations on Rock and Jefferson Prairies, Wisconsin. In 1852 he led a number of emigrants across the State into Iowa as far west as St. Ansgar, Mitchell County, Iowa;³ where a settlement was effected, being the westernmost white settlement in Northern Iowa at that time. As the settlement was exclusively Norwegian and remained so, we need not further discuss its history in this connection.⁴

Clausen was the first president of *The Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Synod in America*, informally organized, January 6, 1851,⁵ at Rock Prairie, Wisconsin. In 1868 he withdrew from the Norwegian Synod; and when the Norwegian-Danish Conference was organized in 1870 he wrote

¹ An account of these facts was given by President C. K. Preus (of Luther College) in an address before Edda, at the State University of Iowa, Dec. 15, 1905, on *Pioneer Church Work Among the Norwegians in Amerika*, a brief account of which appeared in *Skandinaven* (Chicago), for Friday, December 29th, 1905, over the signature —X.

² This settlement had been founded in 1839.—See *The Iowa Journal of History and Politics* for July, 1905, p. 360.

³ See *The Iowa Journal of History and Politics* for July, 1905, p. 381, note 3, where an account of that interesting expedition is quoted.

⁴ There were only fifty-two Danes in the whole of Mitchell County as late as 1870.

⁵ This is the year that I have always understood to be that of the organization of the Synod, and writers usually give it so. President Preus informs me, however, that the formal and actual organization was not effected before October, 1853. An account of the organization of the Synod in that year was given by Pres. Preus in the lecture before Edda referred to above, note 1.

its constitution and became its President, resigning, however, in 1872 on account of poor health. While living in Iowa he directed missionary work among the early Danes in the State and organized various congregations. Thereafter he lived some years in Virginia and Pennsylvania; in 1878 he accepted a call to a Norwegian Lutheran congregation in Austin, Minnesota, where he remained till 1885. He died in 1892 in Paulsbo, Washington. In 1856-57 Clausen served in the legislature of Iowa as Representative from Winneshiek, Howard, Mitchell, Worth, and Winnebago counties. In the Civil War he was appointed field chaplain of the Scandinavian (15th) regiment of Wisconsin¹ by the Governor of Wisconsin. We shall now discuss briefly the order and growth of the earliest settlements of Danes in Iowa.

While the Mynster family formed the original nucleus of the extensive Danish population of Council Bluffs it was many years before anything like a colony can be said to have been established at that place. The State census of 1856 gives only three Danes for Pottawattamie County, these residing in Kane township; while in 1870 the population was only 328. In the meantime a permanent settlement was effected near Luzerne in Benton County. In 1854-55 a party of sixteen persons, of whom Peter Nikolajsen and the brothers Gustav Adolf Lundberg and Vilhelm Lundberg were the leaders, located there. The last two were from Sorö, Denmark.² Peter Nikolajsen was born in

¹ An account of the steps that led to the organization of the famous "15th Wisconsin" at Madison, Wisconsin, on September 15, 1861, is given in *Amerika* for December 15, 1905.

² They both died in Iowa.

Copenhagen, 1812, came to New York, October 29, 1851, and to Iowa three years later.¹ Nikolajsen was a tailor by trade; later he became a lay preacher of considerable note among the Danes and was withal a remarkable man, writes Rev. P. S. Vig.²

The census of 1856 shows that there were small settlements in Center Township, Clinton County,³ in Iowa Township, Jackson County, and in Burlington. The nucleus of a later settlement was also effected at Elk Horn in Shelby County, the census of 1856 showing that five Danes were then located in Allen's Grove Township in that county. This settlement, which extends into the neighboring county (Audubon), is now the largest Danish settlement in the State, the total number of Danes of foreign birth being 2672. There are not, however, as many Danes residing in either Shelby or Audubon County alone as in Pottawattamie County, the total number in this county being 1808.⁴

We have seen that there were only three Danes in Pottawattamie County in 1856. In that year, however, Council Bluffs and vicinity received material additions to its Danish population, the new immigrants being part of a number of Mormon converts brought from Copenhagen that year under the leadership of John Ahmanson. In his book, *Vor Tids Muhammed*,⁵ Ahmanson describes the coming of this party of 162 Danes. The account is of sufficient interest, I

¹ Nikolajsen died in Cedar Falls, Iowa, April 25, 1903.

² In letter of November 30, 1905. To Rev. Vig I am indebted for the facts relative to the Luzerne settlement.

³ The colony of the city of Clinton is of somewhat later date.

⁴ The total number of Danes of foreign birth and foreign parentage in the three counties in 1900 was about 10,000.

⁵ *The Mahomet of Our Time*, published in Omaha, 1876.

think, to be quoted. The party, he says,¹ "left Copenhagen, April 23, 1856. On the 30th of April the steamship reached Liverpool, the 4th of May they left Liverpool and on the 14th of June they landed in New York. From this place to Iowa City they travelled by rail under the direction of the Mormon apostle, John Taylor. West of Iowa City there were no railroads at that time, and the 1300 miles that were left to Salt Lake City, therefore, had to be covered on foot or by wagon, which was possible only for those who had the necessary means. Those who did not possess the means to pay for such conveyance, and that was the larger number, had then to make the journey on foot. Moreover, the male traveller had to pull a handcart which weighed sixty pounds. . . . Mr. Ahmanson became the leader of the Scandinavian division of a handcart train of 500 persons² from Iowa City which they left the 26th of June, 1856, to Salt Lake City, which they reached the 9th of December. The journey led across the prairie from Iowa City to the Missouri River, the party being there ferried across near the town of Florence, north of Omaha, which at that time formed the boundary between the White man and the Red Skin. The journey from Iowa City to Missouri went along a river in the present Elk Horn Settlement in Shelby County by what is still known as 'the Mormon track' of that expedition. Some of the party had become disheartened by the hardships of such a journey when they had arrived at Florence and they refused to go any farther.

¹ From Vig's book, quoting the work referred to.

² Other proselytes in this country having joined the party, what proportion of these additional three hundred and thirty-eight were Danes I do not know.

Many of these repudiated Mormonism entirely; while others, remaining Mormons, settled in Council Bluffs and other places in western Iowa and eastern Nebraska.”

If the above account is correct, and there is every reason to believe that it is, the colony of Council Bluffs is the oldest Danish colony in western Iowa, and one of the earliest in the State.

Jackson Township, in Lee County, had a Danish population of eight in 1856; but I have no reliable facts relative to the formation of this settlement which numbered forty-one in 1870. The Danish colony of Davenport dates back to the later fifties, the first Danes being Peter Anderson, Christian Thompson, and Jens Mathiesen. These came between 1857 and 1860.¹ The next Dane to arrive was John Juhler,² who came from Almsted, Alsen, Sleswig, to Davenport in 1861.³ After 1865 immigrants, mostly from Sleswig, came in considerable numbers.

We now come to the so-called Elk Horn settlement to which we have already referred above as being credited with a Danish population of five in the State census of 1856. Several Danes at present residing in Shelby County, of whom I have made inquiry relative to the earliest settlement in the county, say, however, that the first Danes to settle in the county came in 1865-68. I take it that there were Danes in 1856, as the United States census records, but I am inclined to think they remained there only temporarily, going soon after to the settlement which was then be-

¹ According to a letter from Peter Hansen of Davenport, who is, however, not able to give the precise year.

² Born in 1842.

³ John Juhler, however, soon left Davenport.

ing formed in Kane Township in Pottawattamie County. The first Danes to permanently locate in the county were, it seems, Chris. Christensen, born in Doldrup, Gullerup diocese, Denmark, 1835, and Lars Veien, born in Frederikshavn, Denmark, 1829. These settled at Cuppy's Grove in Monroe Township in 1865.¹

In the year 1867 Peter Jensen, born in Borglum diocese, Denmark, came and settled in the same locality.² Christen Bertram Christensen, from Alborg, Denmark, came in 1868.³ The first Dane in Harlan was Jens Peter Sørensen, a brickmaker, who came from Jetsmark, Denmark, in 1869.³ J. P. Sorensen is the founder of the Danish Baptist church of Harlan, and C. B. Christensen was one of the charter members of the Cuppy's Grove Danish Baptist Church. The organ of the Danish Baptist church in America, *Vægteren*, is published in Harlan. The first Dane to settle in Clay Township was Christian Jensen, who came there from Moline, Illinois, in 1868. Soon after came Ole Jensen, who is still living in the township. The former is from Hindesholm, near Kerteminde, in the island of Fyen; the latter is from the island of Möen. In the following years many immigrants arrived from these two islands as well as from Ærö. Those who came from Ærö settled near the northern end of Indian Creek, while the immigrants from Fyen and Möen located⁴ near the southern extremity of the

¹ Mr. Veien died in 1903. Mr. Christensen still lives on his farm at Cuppy's Grove.

² These facts are according to a letter from Louis Christensen, Harlan, Iowa.

³ Letter from J. C. Lunn, Harlan, Iowa. Both Christensen and Sørensen are still living in the places where they first settled.

⁴ *Elk Horn i Iowa, 1875-1900*, by P. S. Vig, Blair, Nebraska, 1901, p. 5.

Creek. In addition to these the settlement frequently received accessions from earlier Danish settlements in Clinton County, Davenport, Racine (Wis.), Chicago, and Indianapolis. Later it became in turn, the distributing point for many colonies in Nebraska, Minnesota, and elsewhere. The settlement includes the townships of Clay, Monroe, Fairview, Jackson, and Harlan; and extends into Sharon and Oakland townships in Audubon County and down into Brighton Township, Cass County. In Atlantic City there is a considerable Danish colony, as also in Knox Township,¹ in Pottawattamie County, just south of the Danish settlement in Fairview Township, Shelby County.

The years following the close of the Dano-Prussian war inaugurated an extensive immigration of Danes from Sleswig. The settlements that had been begun in Iowa received large accessions during this time and new colonies were formed elsewhere. Des Moines received its first Danish population in these years, the first Dane to settle there being H. P. Holm, who came in 1867. In that same year came also Michael Lauritsen, from Davenport, Christian Sørensen, and Lorens Petersen. These first four Danes to settle in Des Moines were from North Sleswig,² which was ceded to Prussia in 1864, and they are, therefore, entered in the census as Germans.

Rural settlements were now fast springing up throughout

¹ The extensive Danish population of Pottawattamie County is found almost entirely in the western part of the county.

² According to a letter from my friend Prof. P. P. Hornsyld, of Grand View College, Des Moines. The same statement will also hold true of Davenport. For these reasons it is extremely difficult to ascertain the real strength of the Danish-speaking population of the State.

the State. Thus the extensive colony of Danes in Cedar Falls, Black Hawk County, dates back to about 1860. In that year (or the following) Christian Petersen, from Sleswig, located there, being the first Dane in the county. In 1866 three young Danes came to Cedar Falls from Berlin, Wisconsin. One of these was Jens C. Anderson, who had been in America since 1857 and had served in the Civil War. He now resides in Blair, Nebraska.¹ About the same time Pocahontas County received its first Danish population, the first arrival being Marcus Lind from Lögum Kloster, Sleswig, who had been in America since 1850.² About the same time came Hans Lind from Mögelbønder, Sleswig;³ he settled upon a farm in Pocahontas County about where the town of Rolfe now stands. He moved to Rolfe in 1881.⁴

The settlement in Clear Lake, Cerro Gordo County, dates back to 1867, in which year Peter Jonsen came, being followed in 1868 by his two brothers, Louis and Laust Jonsen, from Jutland; while in 1869 Hans Nelsen and Ole Martensen came from Lolland.⁵

This, then, brings us down to the year 1867. The Danish settlements of Audubon and Cass counties are subsequent to this year; they are in fact an eastern and southern extension of the Elk Horn settlement, which, as we have seen, had its origin in Shelby County. Elk Horn is the largest and

¹ Information in letter from P. S. Vig.

² I do not know where he had been located.

³ He had been in America since 1860.

⁴ He is in the jewelry business, which had been his trade in Denmark. These facts were given to me in a letter by Rev. Vig.

⁵ Facts according to a letter from John Rasmussen, Clear Lake, Iowa.

most progressive Danish settlement in the State.¹ Here is also located the Elk Horn High School and College, a progressive Danish preparatory school supported by the church.² The Danish population of Marshall and Hamilton counties dates from the years immediately following the period we have discussed. The Danish city colonies and rural settlements in the northern and the northwestern parts of the State are of more recent formation. In late years Danish immigration has been very small, and no new settlements have been formed in Iowa and rarely elsewhere in the country. The chief influence of the Dane has been in the southwestern counties of the State. To their material development he has contributed a large share.

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¹ A brief account of Elk Horn is given by P. S. Vig in *Elk Horn in Iowa, 1875-1900*, pp. 1-9. On pages 10-52 is given a history of the Danish Lutheran Church at Elk Horn, which was organized in 1876.

² An account of the early days of its history appears in *The Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters*, Vol. XI, pp. 20-24; also in *The Register and Leader* (Des Moines) for May 29, 1904. The Principal of the school is Rev. Th. N. Jersild, to whom I am indebted for some facts relative to the Elk Horn settlement.