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# DANISH EMIGRATION TO AUSTRALIA



# DANISH SOCIETY FOR EMIGRATION HISTORY

It is the aim of the Danish Emigration Historical Society  
to promote and provide information about  
the study of Danish emigration history

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# DANISH EMIGRATION TO AUSTRALIA

# EMIGRANTEN

ÅRSSKRIFT FOR DANSK UDVANDRERHISTORISK SELSKAB

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NR. 4

1988

## SPECIAL ISSUE

on the occasion of Australia's Bicentennial year  
presented at the Third International Symposium  
on Scandinavian Migration to Australia

### DANISH EMIGRATION TO AUSTRALIA

Sponsored by:

Dronning Margrethes og Prins Henriks Fond  
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# DANISH EMIGRATION TO AUSTRALIA

Edited by:  
Kristian Hvidt and Helle Otte  
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THE MINISTER FOR  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS

June, 1988

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to have been given this opportunity to send a few words to the Third International Symposium on Scandinavian Migration to Australia, held for the first time in Australia on the occasion of its Bicentennial year.

Over the years many Danes have chosen to make Australia their home. It is estimated that some 165,000 people, or approximately 1% of Australia's population, have some Danish blood in their veins. This gives us a natural obligation to uncover more of Danish-Australian history in order to increase our knowledge of common roots and to keep alive the many ties emigration has established between Denmark and Australia.

I extend my personal best wishes for a successful and enjoyable meeting to each and every one of you and, at the same time, express the hope that your symposium in Melbourne will strengthen the bonds of friendship and commerce between Denmark and Australia.

Uffe Ellemann-Jensen  
Minister for Foreign Affairs

## PREFACE

Although Denmark is that country in Scandinavia which has provided the largest contingent of emigrants to Australia, the few existing descriptions of Danish emigrants in Australia are at best incomplete and somewhat antiquated. The Australian Bicentenary provided, therefore, a most welcome opportunity for the Danish Emigration Historical Society to bring together a number of historians and other persons interested in history in the preparation of this special issue.

We hope with this special number of *Emigranten* to shed some light on a wide spectrum of Danish-Australian relations. But, of course, such a broad topic cannot be covered exhaustively in so few pages. It is therefore also our hope that this initial endeavour will inspire others to continue to explore the history of Danish-Australian migration.

We have chosen to let *Ingeborg Stuckenberg's* lively account of an emigrant journey to Australia around the turn of the century provide the introduction to the book. Travelling half way round the world at that time was in itself no simple matter. The emigrants must also have felt great suspense and anxiety about their future opportunities in a new country. Many emigrants were so affected by the journey and their sojourn on the emigrant ships that later in life they felt a need to commit their impressions to paper. None of the travel descriptions to be found, for example, in the Danes Worldwide Archives can, however, compare in literary quality with *Ingeborg Stuckenberg's* »Short Letters from a Long Journey«. In all likelihood it was also *Ingeborg Stuckenberg's* intention that these letters be printed in a daily newspaper of the time. They were not, however, published until recently by *John Kousgård Sørensen* (Copenhagen, 1986). Although the fine line between fact and fiction may at times seem indistinct, we have felt that these letters should stand alone with *Kousgård Sørensen's* brief comments.

The next article by *Peter Birkehlund* provides a historical-demographic survey of Danish emigration to Australia throughout the past 150 years. With the discovery of gold in 1851, immigration to Australia gained great momentum. This gold fever also raged in Scandinavia. The majority of the Scandinavians who travelled half way round the world to dig for gold were Danes. Some years later – in the 1870's – Australia initiated its first massive propaganda campaign in the Nordic countries. This campaign was repeated several times throughout the 1900's and was, at times, successful. The Scandinavian (and Danish) emigration to Australia can scarcely be compared to emigration to America during the period of mass emigration. But in the 1950's fully one-quarter of the total emigration from Denmark was to Australia and New Zealand. According to Danish statistics, approx. 20,000 Danes (Australian statistics show the number to be 50,000) emigrated to Australia and contributed to the formation of the State which in 1988 can celebrate its Bicentenary.

The history of Danish achievements in Australia is largely a story of the labourious efforts of anonymous, ordinary people to create a life far from their homeland. But certain individuals and groups have left their mark in the form of adventurous exploits, dramatic destinies or unusual results.



One Dane took part from the very beginning of the white man's era on this far continent – even before the arrival of the English and Captain James Cook. Australia was, as everyone knows, first discovered by the Dutch, and one of the first vessels to call at this »new« continent was the *Geelwinck*. The ship's first-mate was Johannes Bremer of Copenhagen. The year was 1696.

Other interesting pioneers included, among others, the sugar king, Edward Knox – the son of a grocer from Elsinore, who in the first half of the last century founded a veritable sugar empire in Australia.

The first Danish pioneer about whom we have extensive knowledge, however, is the fantastic Jørgen Jürgensen. The story of Jürgensen's dramatic life at sea and on four continents was published in book form last year. In his contribution to the current volume, the author, *Preben Dich*, has retold the story of how Jürgensen enrolled himself in the history of Australia.

A single pioneer does not, however, make for emigration. The emigration of a large group with a specific goal in mind presupposes a certain knowledge of that goal. The question is, therefore, what did the Danes of the 1800's actually know about Australia? Not very much according to *Erik Helmer Pedersen and Kirsten Lotze's* study of Denmark's picture of Australia. As far as America was concerned, many Danish seamen had visited that country and spread knowledge of it. But until about 1850 only British ships were allowed to trade with British colonies, and for this reason few Danish sailors had an opportunity to sail to and from Australia. Not until the discovery of gold in 1851 were the eyes of the Danish public opened to the possibilities of this fifth continent. From the close of the century and onward, the dissemination of information was officially organised by Australia in connection with various propaganda campaigns.

In time the man on the street in Denmark received a more realistic picture of conditions in Australia, but the myths – in particular regarding the natives and the English penal colonies – were difficult to eradicate. *Birgit Larsen's* selection of the Danish emigrant photographer, Niels Peter Schourup's, in themselves, sober pictures of the native inhabitants of Australia are probably quite representative of the impression most Danes had of the country well into the 1900's.

Migration history is, of course, bilateral history. Studies of the size and composition of the Danish emigration to Australia provide only half the story. One might say these studies do little more than accompany the Danish emigrants to the boat. In order to reveal the whole Danish-Australian story one must also welcome the Danish immigrants to Australia and follow them as they adapt to life there. It is, therefore, gratifying that initiatives are currently being taken in Australia to explore the »Danishness« there.

With his contribution to this issue *Erik J. Jensen* gives an example of how Danishness has survived at Poowong East in South Gippsland since 1877 when 12 Danish pioneers settled there.

There is every indication, however, that this is a rather unusual example and an exception to the rule that Danes have usually become quickly integrated into Australian society and have thereby lost their Danish identity. In order to qualify this general statement, a study of the Danish community in Melbourne and of the descendants of the earlier Danish settlers is currently being carried out. The preparation of a more comprehensive Ethnic History of Danes in Victoria is planned. In his contribution, *Mark Garner* describes this project, its preliminary results and future perspectives.

Although it is interesting to study the assimilation of Danish immigrants into Australian society, it is equally interesting, of course, to take a closer look at the way in which Danish

immigrants have contributed to their new homeland. *John Stanley Martin* demonstrates in his article that, as in many other places where Danes have settled, the greatest contribution made by Danes to Australia and its economic development has been in the dairying industry.

In this connection it is tempting to point out another aspect of Danish-Australian history which we, unfortunately, have not been able to shed light on in this volume, namely, the commercial relationships between the two countries. Danish-Australian trade connections were established early. In Denmark there was an awareness of the opportunities for trading with Australia even before the discovery of gold. In 1850 it was agreed that a Danish consulate should be established in Melbourne, and in 1854 a number of Danes founded commercial firms in Australia. Most of these did not, however, survive for any length of time, nor did they provide the basis for continuing trade connections. Neither can it be said that commercial interests between Denmark and Australia have been of special significance for either country over the past 100 years. In spite of this, in 1987 the Danish Ministry for Foreign Affairs could list 31 Danish subsidiary companies in Australia (this list also includes firms which have opened sales offices and/or representative offices in Australia).

Such economic activity is an important factor of Danish history, and certainly also the history of migration. Just as it is important to know how the brothers, Jens and Lars Hansen, made out as gold diggers in Ballarat, it is also important to know something about Danish business activities in Australia. Also because many of the Danes who settle abroad today have been sent out by firms which carry out construction or trade overseas. This business-orientated emigration is in many ways quite different from ordinary, individual emigration. But, at the same time, these two forms of emigration can be thought of as two versions of the same story and should be given equal consideration in further studies of Danish-Australian relations.

However, the most important aspect of the continuation of this research is that the efforts made should be coordinated and the resources utilised in the best possible way, in other words, that researchers in the two countries should work together whenever possible. It is our hope that this volume will provide both pleasure and inspiration and that it will serve as an invitation to such cooperation.

*Helle Otte*  
*Danes Worldwide Archives 1988*

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# Short Letters from a Long Journey

By Ingeborg Stuckenberg

Armen er overfyldt af tilreisende i Faraarstiden, naar de store Udvandringsdampere afgaar fra Bremerhafen.

Omkring Udvandringskantonerne vander de sig i Stakke, længer de over Stakillerne, sidder de paa Kartaugene og vanderende frem og tilbage, naar de ikke turde forlade Stedet, hvor de har deponeret deres vidste Lenge, til denne Refise den flablig! Kveder, an i Sanker, Spørgsmaal og Farsodninger.

De fleste er sørgeligt brudte Individier at se til, kender de som Hunde, draske som Dvornbygge eller skulende som fægtvæder efter Bøtte.

De dukker op for Daggry og flytter sig ikke fra Stedet, for Sout her paa Vættene. - an de aner - koudet flytter sig.

Bremen is crowded with emigrants – especially in springtime when the great ocean liners leave Bremerhaven. They gather in great flocks around the emigration offices. Most of them are Austrians, Hungarians and Poles. Men wearing long boots and coats, black-eyed and dark-complexioned. – Women, the very old as well as the young, wearing short-skirted dresses and, like the men, long boots. – Sitting on doorsteps and pavements, leaning against railings and walking to and fro as if they do not dare to leave the place where they have deposited their money for the voyage that fills their thoughts and conversation. – Most are in a sorry state, prowling about like dogs, languid as cows chewing their cud or glowering suspiciously like animals in search of prey. – They turn up at the offices before dawn and remain there until late at night if, indeed, they leave at all. –

They seem not to see springtime above them with its high-flying, shining, white clouds beneath the deep blue sky. – Round about in all the parks and gardens – lovely, small gardens all along the pavements – the palest green of spring unfolds in all the bushes and trees, – but they scarcely lift their eyes from the paving stones. – Scowling and grumbling they huddle together awaiting departure. – Carrying their small bundles they are driven like cattle to the railway station and up into the wagons. – With drums beating and flags flying they disappear forward on the ship which awaits them in Bremerhaven, and they are paid little attention again until it is time to count and register them and put them ashore in Australia together with other freight to be sent to the gold fields. This is »Third Class«. –

»First Class« observes them through pincez with an arrogance bordering on the comic – or cruel. –

Whenever a wave washes over the steerage deck and all the poor creatures who thought themselves safe jump up screaming and

drenched, all these be-monocled gentlemen and ladies graciously hurry over to observe this interesting little intermezzo with no thought at all for its consequences. – »First Class« – lounging in comfortable deck chairs – is somewhat indignant at having to suffer the same agonies of sea-sickness as the piffling nobodies of »second« and »third« who travel not for pleasure or reasons of health but on business or out of necessity. To these the »First Class« is a remote and priceless group. – Nouveaux Riches of the highest order are to be found in »First Class« – literally rolling in money – who think this money has made them superior to the race from which they descend, but they own not a penny's worth of good manners. –

»Second Class« is a jumble of possibilities. –

There are some who have made the voyage before – who have crossed the »Line« many times. These haughty, posh fellows who show off their knowledge with a pleasant smugness – they are immediately at home on board and look upon a voyage to the opposite side of the Earth as an everyday occurrence. – But most are making the trip for the first time – it takes many days for *them* to find their sea legs. Among these there are some with false ambitions who sit at »Second Class« table with dirty fingernails and collars, eating with knives and feeling superior to »Third Class«.

There are people with jobs and good prospects in the colonies and there are those who risk the journey trusting in Fate, Providence and the fairytale they have been told about the promise of gold. –

There is the young girl with her trousseau in her trunk and her bridegroom on a South Sea island, and there is the poor fellow constantly twisting his shiny engagement ring as he writes many a long letter. –

A poor mother travels with twin babies who are sea-sick and cry both night and day, and one little curly-headed tot travels all alone and wails at the injustice of life in a constant denial of all that is happening to

her. Oh! No, no, no!

There are young people – most likely of decent family – »sent« off across the ocean by their families to disappear and be forgotten. –

But all are strangers to one another; they examine one another critically, make guesses and evaluations as best they can, and seek company and entertainment feverishly. –

Time hangs heavily on such long voyages, and the long hours are unbearable to those who stand alone and look out over the rough sea.

The young girl with her trousseau sits with a greenish pale face singing herself a bit of courage with a happy little song, not at all suitable to her colour, but she refuses to give up and sings every verse – I counted twenty-two. –

A young man with laughing blue eyes assures her that a song is a much better cure for sea-sickness than sucking small pebbles! Heartlessly he tells her that the pebbles *do work*, but only so long as you can keep them in your mouth! –

He is a man of spirit whose name – for certain reasons – was misrepresented on the passengers' list, and he is fond of playing the Count travelling incognito.

Toward evening land is sighted, and in the twilight the ship glides slowly up the Schelde.

Like the start of a display of fireworks, the distant lamps and lights are lit on shore. – The anchors rattle down fore'-and-aft' and the propeller stops its frightful, rhythmic hammering. –

There is peace and quiet and rest. –

Those passengers who have been sea-sick are seen on deck again, attempting to look as though some necessary business has kept them from taking part in meals. – But the peace is short-lived. – At dawn there is a great racket as the anchors are noisily weighed and the ship steams slowly towards –:Antwerp! –

Everyone is on deck to gaze at the city which, with its rooftops and church towers and smoke from many chimneys, is no more

than a vague outline in the morning haze. –

The pilot is on the bridge, and the ship twists and turns through the bends of the river until finally a small group of restless figures can be seen lining the wharf. – The engine can no longer be heard. – Somewhere in a restaurant a phonograph plays »Die Wacht an Rhein«. Numerous tugs, boats and other small craft flit back and forth among the huge freighters and emigrant ships loading and unloading as the tide lowers them far below the quays. – There seems to be no space anywhere in the crowded harbour, but suddenly the ship makes a half-turn, and an open space appears along the wharf – the first hawser is thrown and the musicians on board our own ship strike up a »Parade March«, drowning out the noise and turmoil on land. –

A strong wind blows in Antwerp, with dirt and dust, scraps of paper and straw. Sand crunches between the teeth and blinds the eyes as one steps ashore. –

»First Class« is decked out in ridiculously fanciful costumes and lounge-tourist shoes – visits only the cathedral and the finest restaurants. –

»Second Class« meets on the street and in the shops, drinks »Münchener« for the last time and raises its glasses sadly as though gathered at a funeral. –

»Third Class« dares not leave the ship but stands on deck and stares out at the foreign city. –

Antwerp does not show itself to advantage in this dust cyclone. Everything is seen through a fog. –

Confused and bewildered, people wander the streets, and it is a great relief to go on board again, wash off the dust and change one's clothes. One is becoming reconciled to the small white-painted cabins. –

In fact, one is becoming used to it all, and things can be accepted as they *are* – with little or no thought for how they should be. –

Sea-sickness and its symptoms are almost

forgotten. It is quite pleasant to glide out to sea again. The land lies flat along the banks of the river. – It is Sunday. – The gulls scream above the quarterdeck. – The storm has passed, and we can hear the distant church bells ringing peacefully from the big town – they sound like those at home – a last farewell! – a friendly greeting from home.

## II

Under a leaden sky the white cliffs of Dover light up the horizon. – Like white-capped mountains the rocky coast rises from the green sea.

Land! – a symbol of promise for the dazed, tired people who have suffered 24 hours of storm on the Channel crossing from Antwerp. –

The ship is more steady now. Ropes stretched along the deck as a railing for those less inured to the sea are removed, and the frames around the tables in the saloon are taken away. –

One had almost become accustomed to the crashing of the china each time the ship lurched and the doors blew open letting waves rush into the passageways between the cabins. –

Things have become more quiet on board, and the passengers enjoy a sound sleep. –

Portsmouth slides past so close that we can see the strong fortifications rising above the water like enormous square gas tanks. They seem to guard the entrance to the naval harbour where large, modern, armoured batteries lie at anchor like grey giants. –

A little later there is land on both sides, and the harbour entrance of the Isle of Wight is passed. – Lovely, steep slopes are graced by clumps of beautiful old trees now dressed in the palest spring green. Large, stately villas and beautiful manor houses line the coast. –

One looks forward to standing on firm ground again. According to the schedule,

Southampton is the next stop, but the ship anchors up in mid-stream. This is a great disappointment.

Land is so close, and many hours pass before the tender with the English passengers comes alongside.

But *such* considerations are ignored on board. –

The passengers are treated more like common soldiers than like guests who have paid in advance. On the whole, the passengers are given no information whatsoever. – The ship's officers remain passive and indifferent on their own preserves. –

In the distance a town is visible – it must be Southampton. How pretty it looks, with rows of tiny houses shining in the sun like a handful of colourful beads strung out along the beach. But it is April and wicked black clouds occasionally darken the bright parks and lawns and whip the sea to white foam with rain and hail. –

At last an ancient little paddle steamer comes alongside, wheezing asthmatically. –

The English passengers come on board, stoic, wind-blown and in some cases already green with sea-sickness after the half hour's journey from land. –

The luggage is handed up, – the little steamer wheezes homewards, the anchors are weighed and we steam out of the Channel at full speed. –

The small, choppy waves become larger, and soon the long swells of the Atlantic make themselves felt. –

The huge waves lift majestically, a greenish gold with foaming white crests. –

It is with a feeling of awe that one beholds this immense sea for the first time as the ship glides further and further into it, while little by little England's white cliffs, shining in the evening sun, fade on the horizon. –

There is a strange feeling of loneliness when the last glimpse of land disappears. –

It is cold and windy on deck after sundown. – Evenings in the saloons are uncomfortable

and boring. The passengers gather in small groups and talk together in low voices. –

Most take a little stroll on deck after dinner; that is to say, they walk about 50 steps in one direction and then 50 steps back again; there is just enough elbow room to thread your way through the crowd when everyone promenades. –

It is not an especially pleasant or cheering walk, except for the on-lookers who observe the swinging and swaying and bowing and curtsying. –

The deck seems to lift towards you and your foot touches before you realise it, or it falls away before you get a foothold. –

After dinner one isn't always up to performing on a rolling deck, as many acknowledge while leaning out over the railing, as far away as possible from the other guests. –

A single electric lamp lights the Second Class deck, providing just enough light to enable one to avoid deckchairs and other obstacles. –

One turns in, tired and worn out as though after a walk that was a few miles longer than intended. –

The lamp, electric of course, gives a peaceful glow to the little white cabin (it is an excellent idea – these lamps fixed in the small cabins) – but even so, you stumble about more than actually walk in them. –

With the curtain constantly swaying back and forth in the opening, the door can only be closed with some difficulty. –

The cabin is only about 9 feet in diameter and a great deal of practice and agility is required to avoid bruising yourself from top to toe while undressing with the Atlantic Ocean rocking beneath you. – No sooner do you think you're sitting safely and securely on the sofa before a wave lifts the entire arrangement, and quite against your will you find yourself on your feet with your nose pressed against the mirror. Then before you have time to grab hold of anything, you are tossed into the lower berth. Here you hang on like

an oyster on a wharf timber and undress carefully before crawling under the blankets with your eyes closed so as not to become sea-sick at the sight of your overcoat, the door curtain and your other clothing swaying back and forth against the wall of the cabin like shop signs in a storm. –

There are many strange sounds to be heard on deck, in the passageways and in neighbouring cabins; the sound of the propeller and the hammering of the pistons in the machinery; the roaring and splashing of the waves as they wash over the deck; one rolls and rocks and attempts to lie as still as possible. – Sea air is strong and the sea itself tires, and before you know it, you're sound asleep and awake the next morning with a strange feeling in your midriff. –

The weather is not a whit better. –

In the saloon four wooden frames are attached to each table to keep the food and plates from sliding onto people's laps. Few appear for lunch; little is eaten and that quickly –, everyone hurries up on deck to find a place on the leeward side, and chairs are tied down securely.

Later in the day more passengers come out for a breath of fresh air. Wrapped like mummies in blankets and rugs they lie quietly and stare straight ahead, like the wounded after a battle. –

Only the best sailors get up and disappear when the bell rings at mealtimes. –

Those who suffer most remain moaning in their berths. – Sea and sky. – Sky and sea. – Not a ship, not a bird. – The gulls left us as the coast of England disappeared. – If you ask the experienced travellers, they will tell you that there are usually many ships and many sea birds – just be patient; they'll all come in good time, the whales and sharks, ships and albatrosses. If not here, then in the Mediterranean, the Red Sea or in the Indian Ocean. Don't we have plenty of time? –

And thus the days pass on the Atlantic Ocean; nothing special occurs – there is the

same monotony from morning to evening. –

At last we catch the first glimpse of Spain, like a few small dark spots which appear on the horizon only to disappear again.

A little later we see the coast with deserted sunny cliffs and reefs where breakers rise from the sea in an eternal, foaming rage. –

A few lateen sails can suddenly be seen on the surface of the sea. – Like water birds the big boats rock on the swells, now lifted over foaming crests at the bow, now hidden with all their riggings in the troughs. –

At dawn we pass the coast of Africa where Tangier lies in the distance, warm and golden.

The course changes and we turn into the strait. Ahead Gibraltar soars from the sea. –

To look upon this rock fortress is like looking at a giant painting. Steep and sunburnt it lies there – seemingly deserted and trackless; there is no sign of life.

The sky is clear and blue, the sea bright and calm. –

With its fortifications and houses – they seem so small – it is like a masterpiece of a toy. The roads are as thin as sewing thread, and only with the aid of a telescope can we see the sentry boxes and canons. –

All day we sail along the coast and gaze out on the snow-clad mountains far inland in Granada. –

There is a comfortable feeling that all is well, and one can take pleasure in the steady progress of the ship, the beautiful view and the calm weather, and then the next morning you awaken with the feeling that you are about to be thrown out of the berth. – The ship pitches in the sea as though all that is evil were playing ball with it. –

The sky is clear and the sun shines peacefully down on the troubled waters – waves wash over the deck sending foam and spray up over the funnel. –

There is a spitefulness – a wildness about the storm and the waves that seems really sinister; the ropes whistle and shriek, the awnings crack and whip in the wind, and every-

thing not fixed or secured rolls around on deck and in the cabins. – We are passing the bay at Lyon. –

The sailors say comfortingly: »this is how it always is, but in a few hours we'll be in the lee of the land«. –

The hours and the days pass, but the storm continues to blow and toss the ship about as furiously as when it began.

The old steward who helps ladies as well as gentlemen in the cabins – (this is the stewardess' first voyage and she has long since succumbed to seasickness) – shakes his half-bald head:

»Wenn die Leut' erst seekrank werden!« he says despondently, »dann hält die Gemütlichkeit auf« –

How right he is. –

One friendly little passenger who has spent the day announcing »Land ho« – in order to comfort us – declares long after sundown that he can now clearly see the gaslights of Italy, and after a relatively calm night we awaken next morning:

– in the roadstead of Genoa. –

### III

Our first glimpse of Genoa from the cabin portholes is of grey mountainsides with white villas and green gardens.

After an eight-day voyage from England in heavy seas, tossing us about both day and night, it is truly refreshing to see the solid, tranquil coastline against a clear blue sky. –

It is something of a disappointment then to come up on deck and discover that the ship is riding at anchor amidst dirty freighters. – The water is filthy and filled with newspaper, orange peel and other rubbish. –

The white, flat-roofed warehouses and stalls form a wall around the harbour, and above them the town climbs up the mountain slopes. With its white walls, green palms, flat roofs and deep blue sky, this is the Italy we know from paintings and books. –



Large coal barges come alongside, and the coal trimmers run up the gangways with their baskets, showering the entire ship with coal dust. Portholes and cabin doors are closed securely, and all those who are able to, escape to shore for a breath of fresh air. –

Boats swarm round the ship all morning. The rowers, browned by the sun of the south, shout and argue and attempt to win passengers by shouting each other down. – They know their customers well and offer us Genoa and all her attractions for one lire, and the passengers take a chance and must suffer the consequences and overcharging when they reach land and have only foreign currency in their purses. –

A paved road runs alongside the harbour and it looks as though all the streets of the town end at this main thoroughfare. Alleys so narrow that you can reach out and touch both walls at once; dark, sunless and stinking they are, with ragged clothes hung out to dry from house to house. The brightly coloured clothes are poor and tattered, but when touched by the slightest ray of sunlight they cause the alleys to sparkle splendidly. – The paved road is wide and sunlit and crowded with people. All the stalls are open and there is a bargaining and haggling, a shouting and crying just as in a busy marketplace. –

The Italians are restless and noisy, small people with black eyes and dark skin; but there is not a national costume to be seen. – at least not here at the harbour – and most look as though they are dressed in cast-off clothes. There are bowler hats, brown tourist shoes, tattered blouses, etc.; it is all very pitiful to see. –

Only on leaving the throng do you catch sight of the Genoa so famous for its beauty. –

The road runs alongside the harbour for miles – now over the slopes, now beside the surf, now between white garden walls, and now over stone bridges with arches lifted like gates above dried riverbeds. –

The sea lies blue and twinkling in the sun

and its sparkling waves break against the rocky coast, and far, far away to the north there are the glittering white peaks of the Alps with their everlasting snow. –

For those with little time to spare who haven't a wallet full of money and no Bädeler in their pocket it is difficult to determine what is *most* worth seeing in a foreign town. –

Genoa is a wonderful place as soon as you leave the modern shops – the restaurants and the electric tram cars – behind you, but in just 6 hours we must be on board ship again, and it hardly seems possible that there is time for more than a quick glimpse of the streets and the people. Then the name »Campo Santo« is mentioned by someone in the café where you have just consumed a light »Italian« lunch of soup, rice, curry and fruit, the fruit being the best part of *that* lunch.

»Campo Santo«? – You know of it, have read a little and heard something of this strange place. –

The tram car stops just outside the windows, and in a quarter of an hour the town has disappeared; you pass gardens and green bastions, and down among the white-bleached pebbles a narrow strip of water gleams; it is the river, narrow as a gutter in spring and so shallow that it just covers the ankles of the children wading in it, but the riverbed is wide and deep. – Campo Santo, this famous cemetery, is high on the mountainside and looks like a temple with its sunlit arcades. In large squares the walls enclose the green, flower-filled graveyard where poor rosaries glisten like diamonds on the wooden crosses. –

Inside the arcades it is as cold as a vault and so still that you can hear birds fluttering under the roof; your footsteps make a hollow sound on the marble flags – White marble figures bow in prayer, in grief or supplication; they stretch their arms to the heavens and bow their heads to the ground; many of them so beautiful, so touching, that you will remember them as though they had been living

beings giving voice to their anguish and misery there in the silence. You wander in a world petrified by sorrow, while the air outside vibrates in the spring sunshine, and the roses bloom. –

Time is short and it is soon time to return to town; instinctively you seek to escape from the noise and tumult of the streets and walk instead through deserted alleys where stone flags echo beneath your feet, where doors stand wide and open into poor, dark shops where surely there can be nothing worth guarding. –

All the churches are open. People walk in and out as though *this* is where they are at home; many look sorrowful and worried, others are happy and satisfied. Candles burn on the altars in the half-light; the silence, coolness and solemnity enfold you and provide refreshment. –

Small stone steps take you from terrace to terrace, and you must hurry in order to reach the ship in time for dinner. –

The ship is crowded with strangers promenading on deck and admiring Genoa as though it were a piece of scenery on a stage. Lights appear like jack-o'-lanterns on the ships, along the harbour and up over the mountainsides in the gathering dusk. –

The next morning there is a hustle and bustle and great confusion on board; there are new people everywhere, and it is some time before it becomes clear just *who* is travelling and who is saying farewell; all are equally busy. –

At mid-morning we finally steam away. –

A whole fleet of ferries, fruit boats, pleasure craft and barges withdraw hastily from the surrounding waters; people wave, handkerchiefs flutter and finally the white villas along the coast disappear; the coastline becomes more desolate and wilder with bluish mountain slopes and snow-clad peaks. –

It is bitterly cold on deck, and the passengers wrap themselves in winter overcoats and rugs.

There is no summer warmth on the Mediterranean in April. –

Before sundown we pass the islands of Elba and Corsica, their mountains gilded by the setting sun. –

The next morning the weather is grey, windy and cold with rough seas, and the first sight of Naples is awaited with great longing. The city looks boringly modern from our anchorage. Vesuvius lies across the bay hidden by clouds, and along the coast, the villas, like fairy castles, hide behind gardens and hedges.

We steam to shore on a small tender pestered by traders and boats filled with singing girls and boys which ring the ship; it is a relief to escape from this horde of ragamuffins. But once on land you are accosted by would-be guides, cabmen and beggars and can neither make yourself heard nor make your way without first pushing them aside. –

The guides remain underfoot the first half mile in spite of declarations in every language at your disposal that you would see them hanged first!

The cabmen follow along on the pavement as though ordered to do so, and when you turn they, too, turn patiently and follow as you retrace your steps. There is no ridding yourself of them until you take your own route through the alleys and lanes – the seamy side of Naples, poverty-stricken, dark and gloomy. –

In some places the pavements along the main streets are filled with stalls and tables where the cheapest wares are sold. There are beggars everywhere and every other one is so terribly mutilated by disease or some disability that you turn away in horror. A sadly crippled and worn people. –

Every other shop is a chemist's or druggist's and it is impossible to locate a decent restaurant; there are only small, cheap bars where dusty, empty flasks in the windows tell you that here you can get little more than a glass of wine. –

If you enter such a den, you'll find the host

asleep and the stall deserted. – A bottle of Chianti costs a fortune, but the good humour it puts you in is worth every penny! –

Naples changes as if by magic, all seaminess seems to vanish and romance to lie in wait beyond the lattice work, in all the alleys and stone buildings, hidden and secret behind insignificant small archways. – We spit for luck in a labyrinth of alleys because it is permitted to make a wish at every crossroads, and all the small Italians look at us and laugh with understanding and encouragement. But the tumult of the harbour shuts out all romance. The beggar children scream at you, and in the tender a hoarse singer follows you to the gangway with »Santa Lucia«. –

One hopes all evening to catch just a single glimpse of Vesuvius, but the night is black, impenetrable and foggy, and next morning we sail away down the coast of Italy.

The sea is rough. The ship rolls and pitches, but later in the day the wind slackens, and in the Strait of Mesina it is almost calm. – There is land on both sides in the loveliest sunshine. The towns, half-hidden among the mountains, seem to be cut in rock, – we can barely see the fine lines of roads over the mountain ridges, and down along the beach there are blossoming orchards and a beautiful little country village, so peaceful with its flat roofs shaded by flowering trees. We come so close that we can see people working inside, but the mountains hide the village again, the people slip further and further away, and before evening the last landfall has disappeared. –

Europe disappears over the horizon, for most perhaps forever, and once again there is only sea and sky on all sides. The passengers relax in their chairs.

The engine pounds and hammers; the strokes of the pistons seem to have become more distinct, and if you didn't know the ship was moving forward, you would think it lay at anchor, pitching in the sea.

But the wake glistens astern and the course is set – towards the coast of *Africa*.

#### IV

Having sailed from Bremerhaven to Naples in cool weather, one feels entitled to at least a little mildness of temperature while heading towards Africa in the much-praised Mediterranean. –

Straw hats and summer clothes were purchased as early as Genoa, but the order of the day on deck is still winter coats, and we continue to look on a grey sea breaking its waves against the bows and trailing a white-crested, shining wake after the ship. –

It's a boring sea, with no ships, no fish, no birds; one misses even the gulls. – The mood of the passengers is gloomy and sluggish. People do nothing or read, or pass the time sulking or sleeping – a few find the strength for a game of quoits or »Scheffelboard«, but these are played with the seriousness accorded a game of chance.

Finally one morning we awaken to quiet and calm and sun shining on a smooth sea; there is summer in the air.

Bright summer dresses and white linen suits are a joy to behold after such a long period of drabness and gloom; but spirits are still low. Someone discovers a town with towers, flat-roofed houses and high palms lifted over the surface of the water, – we have yet to see the coast of Africa – it is Alexandria, far, far away, presenting itself like a kind of mirage. – How marvellous!

But people only crowd together like half-dead herrings in a barrel to stare at the mirage in the sparkling sunshine – then sink back once more into their chairs under the awnings or contrive to play their serious games.

Almost before we know it, we have arrived at *Port Said*. –

The flat land and the small, flat houses in the wretched, poor-looking town are there

before you quite expect them, and then, the moment the ship drops anchor, it is unbearably hot. –

What a strange panorama. –

Arabs, Negroes, brown and yellow quadroons, Europeans, people of every possible descent come out to the ship in boats of every description. – Along the beach there is a continuous flow of people who apparently haven't a thing to do. – At the landing there are a few rather impressive buildings, but the remainder of the houses, in particular in that part of town where the natives live, have a most squalid and shabby appearance. –

The Europeans here are for the most part public servants or well-to-do businessmen who rarely show themselves outside their houses in the noonday heat, and as our ship arrived in such style, it seems to have been the cause of all the activity on the promenade. – If for no other reason than to get away from the ship, which they are beginning to work up a grudge against, most of the passengers hurry ashore at the earliest opportunity. –

Small Arab boys who speak a few scraps of English take you ashore in their boats – and you feel at once that you have arrived in Africa. – The heat pulsates above the town, and the roads are paved with several inches of thick dust which stirs with every step you take. – Mats, carpets, blinds, sheets, anything which can be used is hung in front of doors and windows to protect against the sun. –

In the stalls, where there is the strangest mixture of everything which could possibly tempt the natives, men or women sit half asleep, basking in the sun, while thousands of flies cover the fruit, meat and bread on display. At the sight of strangers the sellers awaken with wild gestures and offer their wares in unintelligible gibberish – they beat at the flies and demonstrate and point, but fall into their semi-dormant state once more as soon as the strangers have passed, and the flies swarm down on the fruit and meat and

continue undisturbed their most unappetising business. –

Half-naked children, dark-skinned and dark-eyed, are everywhere; they romp in front of the houses in defiance of the heat and great clouds of dust, but, strangely, only a few of them beg. –

Although it is late afternoon before we return to the ship, there is apparently no life at all behind the drawn blinds. – The drowsy population seems to do as little as possible. Only the coolies, naked to the waist, toil and sweat despite the heat to supply our ship with a fresh load of coal, carrying the coal baskets on their bare backs. – A lonely, stooped old Egyptian lugs a goatskin filled with water on a strap over one shoulder. A small group of poor looking Arabs dressed in dusty, grey-white burnouses and white head scarves have found rest in the shadow of a hoarding. Brown, lean and strong of muscle they sit quietly staring at the dust and sun. –

Our stay here is quite brief, and after having loaded a small supply of coal, we steam away again and pass through the Suez Canal which is just wide enough to let two ships pass side by side. – Darkness falls quickly, and in the gathering dusk we see a figure running along the shore, just keeping pace with the ship. – Why this figure is following us no-one knows; noiselessly he runs on bare feet in the soft sand; we see him now and again like a shadow, and the quiet ship glides slowly in between Asia and Africa. –

It has been said that there are hundreds of flamingoes and other wading birds along the Canal, but if there are, we must have passed them in the night for there were none the next morning – only desert on all sides. – Dead, desolate, yellow stretches of sand as far as the eye can see. –

Every few hours we pass small landings where ships moor in order to take turns in passing one another. Nice little houses where miniature gardens with palms and flowering bushes make a startling impression in all the

barrenness. – One has heard that the drifting sand sometimes blows like an evil rain over the ships, making it impossible to remain on deck, but *our* journey is peaceful with no unusual incident or variation. Looking at the barren desert through a telescope one discovers an oasis here and there where there are two camels or a donkey standing in the shade of one of the few palm trees. – A lonely eagle circles noiselessly high above this solitude, and there is no other sign of life. –

At lunchtime a »caravan« is announced and people leave the tables to watch a few camels and Arabs camped on shore waiting to cross the Canal. – As we pass through the Bitter Lakes we pick up speed and the ship follows a row of buoys so close to one another they look like giant balloons strung on a string. –

Now and then in the Canal we approach a steamer or a dredging machine; this slows our speed, as either they or we must pull aside so the vessels can pass. We finally reach Suez; like a big oasis, the town lies at the edge of the desert with its palms and gardens of flowers; it looks quite oriental, and the bay is a shining greenish blue with small, choppy waves twinkling in the sunshine. Unfortunately, we only see the town from a distance. Our stay is too short to allow time to go ashore. The post is delivered and we take on a little water and steam off to enter the Red Sea where, as darkness falls, we see phosphorescence in the wake for the first time. – The heat has now become oppressive, and the »punkas« are placed in the saloon where they sway back and forth during meals. Like little sails they pass above the tables circulating the air which seems to stand quite still in spite of the movement of the ship and the open skylight and windows. –

The coolness of tropical nights cannot reach into the cabins where the air is suffocatingly hot. –

The heat seems to cling to the ship's sides and follow it despite the cool of night. –

Small electric windmills hum throughout the night in all the cabins; fellow passengers moan with the heat in neighbouring cabins. Few are able to sleep. –

The days pass monotonously, with eating, bathing, sleeping and dozing. – We borrow travel books from one another and throw ourselves desperately on the mercy of the ship's library, but the best books are never there; we become apathetic in the heat and sun. A few small flying fish leap from the water and like big blue-grey dragon flies whirr briefly in the air and disappear again in the waves – apart from that there is nothing. – For four days we sail in this monotony with sun and heat and an almost smooth sea; we become more and more lazy, not even looking forward to meals. Hunger is gone; there is only thirst. –

At noon we pass through the strait at *Bab el Mandeb* and at 11 p.m. we drop anchor in the roadstead of *Aden* in the loveliest moonshine; – they say it rains here once in every five years. – All we can see of the town are the lights, but the natives come out in their boats shouting and calling to each other. Everything on board is closed and locked, even the portholes are screwed shut; the crew are familiar with the natives and their talents. Like cats they come on board with ostrich plums, pearls, fans and baskets woven of multi-coloured straw. Silently these black shadows glide among the passengers, suddenly, frighteningly appearing beside you with white teeth gleaming in the moonlight as they smilingly offer you their wares. – The unloading goes on all night in the light of torches and the heat keeps the passengers on deck until far beyond normal bedtime. – At dawn we weigh anchor and *Aden* disappears before daylight, and when the first passengers come on deck we are well into the *Indian Ocean*. –

## V

Passengers on an ocean liner await the monotonous, seven-day voyage from Aden to Colombo with stoic resignation. – There is not a cloud in the sky and the sea is smooth and quiet. Great swells rock the ship drowsily and gently and one gazes for hours into the ship's white-flecked, green wake. –

People on board treat one another offensively. –

The first to come on deck in the morning snap up the best places in the shade where there is a bit of a sea breeze; they turn their backs on their fellow travellers and when boredom becomes *too* overwhelming, bury themselves in books in which they have no interest. –

Every so often a roly-poly German studies the half-sleeping individuals lounging in the deckchairs. – He has had his usual »Frühschoppen« and does what he can to liven up the group.

»Haben Sie das Buch gelesen?« he asks each morning, – and when he sees »Sudermann's« novel: »Frau Sorge«. – »Haben Sie das Buch gelesen? Na! – ist es traurig? – dann können Sie es über Bord werfen!« – this despite the fact that the book is not even his, and then he nods encouragingly and walks on. – The next day he is back again, says exactly the same thing and thinks himself extremely witty. – He sits in his shirtsleeves in the morning and plays several lovely waltzes on the fortepiano before bathing, but no one dares to compliment him because of a pompous young fellow from the »colonies« who has been in Europe and is »educated«. He plays a practiced »Chopin«, almost as well as a »pianola« – nothing more than technique with no true musical talent. – A little German Doctor makes something of a fool of himself by loudly proclaiming the lad a »maestro«, – and the boy becomes all the more pompous until one day he appears leaden-eyed at 12 o'clock luncheon after having imbibed with the other toppers the previous night. This adds

a discordant note, and enthusiasm for the »maestro« cools. –

It was hot as we left Aden and becomes even hotter as we approach Colombo. The sun burns from early morning until its fiery ball disappears in the sea again. – »Sokotra«, the last cape of the African coast, inspires little interest, and scarcely anyone bothers to stand up to see the Maldives as we steam past them at dusk. –

Darkness falls quickly, but the heat continues to pulsate around the ship. – One constellation after another disappears above us, with always a new one to replace it. – The Great Bear is at the far edge of the horizon, and Orion cannot be found where one is accustomed to finding it. – The Southern Cross rises on the firmament; one expects something magnificent, and, like so many other things on the journey, it is a disappointment. – But the starry sky is beautiful with the Milky Way flowing like a narrow white trail of mist and the millions of glowing planets. –

There is heat lightning on the horizon each evening. The profound stillness surrounding us is broken only by the constant drumming of the pistons to which we have become so accustomed.

The sea is as silent as the desert. Phosphorescence flashes and sparkles in the wake and along the sides of the ship, *rising* like great golden bubbles, whirling round and disappearing – as though some mysterious deep fountain were sending these fine glittering sprays to the surface to spread them like a shining river in the wake of the ship; in the dark they sparkle like falling stars emerging from the sea. –

The air lies heavy as before a storm, and the passengers speak together quietly. Gradually they leave the deck and the windmills can be heard humming in the small cabins where sleeplessness is the greatest affliction. –

In the morning there is music on deck and lemon soda with ice – instead of boullion. The ship's stewards provide the music. – They

are busy men – now serving as waiters, now as musicians. In the morning there is a concert on deck, at noon table music in the first-class saloon, in the evening a concert in the second-class cabin, except on Saturdays when music is provided on the third-class deck where the passengers shake a leg to all the newest dance tunes, and Sunday morning we are awakened by a hymn rather than the usual morning bell.

The heat is still oppressive, even the bath is lukewarm. It is rumoured that there will be a ball that evening on the second-class deck in an attempt to better acquaint the passengers with one another. –

The temperature is uncomfortable and the atmosphere dull. The music strikes up and a few couples bravely venture to dance amidst the chairs. – Among others, there is a young former actress who enjoys herself tremendously – she has scandalised the more prudish of the passengers throughout the voyage. – But there are few who answer the call of the music, and like a slight puff of forced gaiety, the dancing dies out and the musicians play on alone. One is reminded of the ballet »Far from Denmark or Costume Party On Board« and cannot help smiling sadly at the thought. – But also these seven days and seven nights come to an end, and one morning we awaken from the trance-like sleep caused by the heat and notice that the ship is not moving. –

Although it is still half-dark, passengers tumble out of their cabins to discover that we have dropped anchor off Colombo. –

Boats – strange dugout trees filled with natives, glide round the ship in the dawn, and the deck is already crowded with sellers, even tailors who take the measurements of the passengers and deliver the finished goods (»khaki« or white) in just three hours. It is all a fight for survival. – The sun! – This fire ball we try desperately to escape – rises red and blazing over the land to gild Colombo in all its glory. –

Conditions in the saloon are unbearable

and it is almost impossible to consume one's first meal there. The air is nauseating – The punka boy has not yet arrived, it is far too early in the day, but the passengers are up, probably because of the heat, and they scurry to the boats to come ashore – to reach the shadows before the heat becomes too unbearable. – Our ship must take on coal; *that* in itself is enough to drive the passengers off. –

One must experience it to understand what it means to go ashore in the tropics.

There are Malays with turban and sash – or swimming trunks – that is all they wear; – brown-black skin, shining with the sun and heat, lean, but strong of muscle and well-proportioned, with sparkling eyes and white teeth – they beg or offer their assistance. – As cabmen they pull light, two-wheeled carts. – Climb aboard and they will trot along, in spite of the sun and dust, with the sweat pouring off them. – They demand three or four times the actual price of the tour, and, of course, never get it. –

Two English hotels seem almost European, but once inside you are served by barefoot Malays with curved combs in their hair. – Noiselessly they glide across the smooth stone flags. –

The names of the dishes are English, but the food itself is plain. – The punkas sway above us like the wings of giant dragon flies, and here, like elsewhere in the big houses, they are electric. – In the smoking room or the promenade the newest English newspapers – they are at least three weeks old – can be found beside wicker chairs equipped with foot rests to bring both legs up to the level of the seat. – And you can buy laces, fans and feathers, »fruits from India and pearls from Damascus«; there is everything, just like at the bazaar.

The flies buzz, the punkas whirr and the heat is suffocating. – The Europeans one meets are for the most part Englishmen and women dressed in white. Gentlemen and ladies in large, flimsy Stanley hats. – The

gentlemen have furrowed faces and sunburnt skin. – The ladies in their light, silken outfits have white powdered faces. –

All seek the shade; only the natives and a few »khaki« clad soldiers feel obliged to walk in the sun. –

The more well-to-do of the passengers hire vehicles and travel to the mustard fields, famous for their beauty. – We others remain in town and look with wonder upon the vegetation in the gardens, an abundance of colour and beautiful flowers such as can be found only in the tropics. We almost envy the natives in their light clothing as we see them resting in the shade of a tree, sleeping the soundest sleep while the sun glows, and burns and heats the air and makes it vibrate. – It is almost unbearable. – We must return to the ship again. – The deck has been washed down and scrubbed after delivery of the coal, and preparations are already being made to weigh anchor. –

Small Malay boys ride below the ship on

## VI

The Indian Ocean is like a mirror – smooth and blue in the daylight. – Like a giant soap bubble glowing with reds and golds, it reflects the light and breaks it into all the colours of the rainbow at dawn and sunset. – In the moonlight it is liquid silver and in the dark of night like polished coal. – It is as though giants wallow in constant unrest beneath the flat surface; the swell of great waves cause the ship to swing and roll as if rocked by invisible powers. –

A traveller's progress is never quick enough, and even if one flies on the wings of the storm, the time seems long at the thought of the hundreds of miles yet to cover. – We sail full steam ahead and seem to move at a snail's pace. It is strange to see how the face of the ship has changed since we entered the heat. – All three decks are practically enveloped in awnings. – The crew – from the

captain on downwards, now wear white dress and caps; and the passengers wear the lightest possible apparel. – The ladies in thin white frocks or pure silk and the gentlemen in white or »khaki« coloured trousers and sports shirts; all wear light, imaginative hats. Everyone would, of course, prefer to wear nothing at all. The heat quivers around us; the bath water at 26°R is refreshing, but we approach the Equator with alarming speed, and everyone anticipates blazing heat once we get *that* far. – Not only the attire of the passengers has changed in the heat; it is as though with the change in temperature, the passengers, too, have changed. – As on most large ships with many on board, there are people here of all types. –

There is the man travelling with his wife. – The husband is older and seems to worship her – the wife has been seasick the entire trip and has to be led to and from the cabin and placed in a chair on deck; the husband has cared for her like a servant and wrapped her carefully in pillows and rugs. – She could answer only in feeble whimpers. – But she has chunks of tree trunk and dive for coins thrown down to them – not once does a coin reach bottom. –

They climb up onto the ship's railing and dive head first into the water and sing »Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay« in English for a penny, smacking their wet elbows against their bodies in time to the music. –

But the sun is already far to the west, and the ship glides out of Colombo's harbour. At the entrance to the harbour two ships keep watch. Our orchestra plays the English national anthem as we pass them, and the English soldiers *shout for joy* – longing for their homeland. – We, too, feel tears sting our eyes even though they are not our own soldiers. – Love of country is first *truly* understood when you are far away from your homeland. –

We steam past the big armoured batteries in the most splendid of tropical sunsets and flaming mists to begin our twelve-day jour-



ney, without pause, to the coast of *Australia*. – got her sea legs now and appears in a wide variety of costumes, bedecked with diamonds and rings, powdered and coiffed and with friendly smiles for the ship's officers. – Then there is the wife travelling with the husband. – The husband can never make a decision, deferring always to his wife in a whining voice, and the prim wife loudly requests all his food and drink. They seem to be in greater harmony in the heat. – There is the young girl travelling alone who seemed depressed and sad while we dressed in winter clothes; – she flutters now like a butterfly among the passengers and ship's officers. – Then there are all those young people who have left home – »for one reason or another«; they seem now to have resigned themselves to it all and spend their time flirting both right and left; and there are all those other taciturn and timid ones who seem to have relaxed in the heat. – The heat is our common denominator; it sees no rank nor class, and one might just as well be pleasant and attempt to make the best of life on board. – Every forenoon the captain meets with the doctor, the first or second-mate, two stewards and the chief steward to inspect the ship. That is to say, they make the rounds of all three decks and offer a military greeting to the first and second-class passengers who, lounging in their deck chairs, nod with faint smiles. – As regards »the doctor«, he seems to have little to do; he, like most German doctors, has the scar of a broadsword on one cheek, and his principal occupation seems to be courting the most attractive of the ladies, playing quoits with them and taking his meals in first class. – Fortunately, there is little illness on board. Most are sea-sick, but *that*, of course, he cannot cure. – The captain has his place among the first-class passengers and the mates – the engineers, the doctor and the chief steward dawdle away their spare time on the second-class deck. – All drink a lot in the heat, especially beer, and the size of the glasses is

inversely proportional to the price. – The crew hang along the sides of the ship and paint all day long; there is nothing else for them to do. – They are pitied as they climb over the railing in the sun to be lowered down the sides which they paint right to the water's edge; not a wave splashes up to wash the colour off, and the paint dries immediately in the sun. – Of course they wear as little as possible, but the perspiration pours off them nonetheless.

One of the passengers has imitated a cuckoo bird throughout the voyage and now almost all the passengers, including the ladies, have learned to do it; – all find it extremely funny, but, in truth, it is not the least amusing.

At precisely 12 noon the whistle blows and pocket watches are set with meticulous accuracy; a bill is posted showing how many miles we have covered over the past 24 hours and bets are placed. – The one who comes closest to the correct number wins. A little flag is stuck in the chart each day to show our exact location, so the entire voyage is a progression of small flags on the chart. – Distances are measured and calculations of when we shall reach the next harbour are made, but we might as well save our pains. In this weather it is easy enough for the captain to ensure that we reach each harbour on the day designated in the timetable. – Most of the passengers have gradually lost interest in the meals – it is too hot to eat. – On departure from Bremerhaven most probably had great plans for all that they would accomplish on the long voyage. – The ladies immediately appeared with large pieces of needlework and the gentlemen with thick books, no doubt dealing with science and art, to be studied thoroughly; – but – in the North Sea it was too cold, and on the Atlantic one was scarcely well enough, the Mediterranean was cold again, in the Red Sea there was little desire, and in the Indian Ocean the heat is too overwhelming; now there is little needlework to

be seen and the books rest quietly in their respective cabins. – One can scarcely bear to think about work, much less do any. –

We cross »the line« (as we, of course, all refer to the Equator) one evening at 6 o'clock – that day the sun stood directly over our heads and there was no trace of shadow from the mast or funnel. But the crossing itself creates little interest and one wishes only to be miles away from the place. Now and again dolphins break the mirror smooth surface of the sea; appearing like ranks of soldiers with bodies sparkling like metal in the sun; for just one moment they arch their glistening wet bodies and then disappear again in the deep. – You try to remember how many millions of living creatures swarm beneath the keel but give up the attempt almost at once in the heat. – The small, whirring flying fish are scarcely noticed now; one day follows the next in a long, boring procession. – Finally, one morning the first albatrosses are seen following the ship. – The seamen say this suggests cooler weather, and they are quite right; there is something gathering on the horizon – this sign of grey weather is welcomed by all on board. The next day is cool with a light breeze and fleecy summer clouds. – There are more and more albatrosses in our wake. With stiff wings they follow the ship in sweeping circles and compete with the gulls for the waste. – Attempts are made to catch them with fishline and hook, but they are too wise and have tried that sport before. Only one young bird took the bait, but the line broke as it was being hauled on board. Hopefully the bird will digest the hook in time; we saw it later with the fishline hanging from one side of its beak. –

We are now surrounded by Australia's gulls, but the land is still far distant and not until the evening of the following day does it rise from the sea, dead ahead, first as small fixed dots which disappear again, then as both stripes and dots and finally as one solid mass, *land*. – It is getting cold again. The crew

has clad itself in blue with shining buttons, and the passengers wear overcoats again. – On this side of the Earth, late May is winter, and the 21st of June is the shortest day. –

We see the lighthouses ashore switched on, and at 8 o'clock in the evening we moor up at the quay in Fremantle, the first port of call on the coast of Australia. The third-class deck is crowded with people. People one has never seen before appear and queue up at the gangway to be inspected by Customs officers and agents before going ashore. Most of them are from southern Germany, Hungary and Italy and are on their way to the gold fields at Calgoorlie and Coolgardie. – They are required to have a certain amount of money before being allowed ashore. They have put their small savings into this last attempt in the gold country. – Most come with great expectations and no idea of the disappointments awaiting them. –

## VII

*Fremantle* will one day be one of west Australia's largest commercial centres. But now it is only a small town with one or two banks, mostly one storey houses and a main street, but the climate is good. – The big ocean steamers put in to the wharf, and once the railway connection with the larger cities of Australia has been made, the town will form the only natural port of import and export of goods passing from India through the Suez Canal to and from Australia and Europe; but it will be several years yet before that happens. – Just now it is the immigrants who have made their homes here, and the town looks as though it had shot up from the Earth just a few years ago. – The railway goes from here to the gold fields at Calgoorlie and Coolgardie – where the heat and drought are sometimes unbearable. – The gold doesn't lie in heaps upon the ground, and the work is

hard; the wages are good, but the mines are owned by the Companies. – We leave Fremantle as soon as the goods are loaded and the post and passengers despatched. We head south and round the point at Cap Leuween. It is evening, and we have become so used to the smooth surface of the sea that it doesn't occur to us that we are now entering other waters. – We are awakened in the middle of the night by the terrible rolling and pitching of the ship; it sounds as though the water is washing over the deck and splashing against the inside wall of the cabin. – Only half awake I hear my fellow passenger say something about »water in the cabin« and switching on the light discover that there is water everywhere, splashing from one side to the other as the ship rolls. Our suitcases, clothes, boots, etc. swim about in great disarray; it is a terrible sight. – We stand knee-deep in water and attempt to save our belongings by tying them down in the upper berths and then wade into the passageway and continue to the saloon where there is water all over the floor. – We feared at first that the ship had sprung a leak, but, fortunately, it was only a great wave which broke over the deck and burst open the door to the passageway, filling the saloon and our cabin and leaving this awful mess. – The other passengers slept, and while the stewards sopped up the water in buckets we were shown to another cabin where we tried to calm ourselves, but we were unable to sleep much *that* night. – For three days and three nights we were tossed and tumbled about. – The waves continued to break over the deck and there was no change so long as we were in the great Australian Bight. –

The ladies disappeared completely from the saloon and fewer and fewer gentlemen appeared at mealtimes. – Liquids such as soup were served in cups and solid foods were eaten without the aid of knives and forks. One of the ladies is consumed with fear. – She is married, but her husband is so

sea-sick that he has no care for anything else. – She jumps up and screams every time a large wave washes over the deck. The officers attempt to comfort her, but she is inconsolable, crying and wailing and convinced that we are about to sink. – At night she lies awake up in the smoking saloon and the stewards take turns keeping watch over her; she has aged amazingly in the past 72 hours and is almost unrecognisable by the time we reach Adelaide. –

Port Adelaide is a kind of port town to Adelaide and the larger steamers must drop anchor in the roads. – Adelaide is a pretty town with wide, straight streets, a zoological and a botanical garden, nice parks and a few good-sized buildings; but Adelaide is a quiet town. As we were to spend the night at anchor many wished to visit the theatre or attend a variety performance, but there were none – absolutely no amusements whatsoever even though the town is larger than many Danish towns with as many as two theatres. – There are many Germans in the town, and Australasia's only German newspaper is published here. – Most of the Australian wine is grown nearby in small vineyards, but it is the same here as with so many other things nowadays, and the larger wine growers have joined together to form companies which control the market; but delicious grapes can be bought for very little money. –

Melbourne is the next stop along the coast of Australia. From the port town of Port Melbourne you can go by train to the heart of the city in just 15 minutes; there you find yourself once more in a metropolis. – Ten to twelve storey houses form the centre of town; there are wide, straight streets, electric tramways and throbbing business life, just as in one of the big cities of Europe or America. – From Melbourne the big steamers go from Cape Town directly to London with gold and butter, wool and hides, fat, frozen meat and many more of the products of Australia. And on those days when the great ocean liners lie

waiting in the harbour of Port Melbourne the traffic is especially lively. –

We unload for two days and nights and then sail into the Bass Strait where both the wind and the current are against us. We pitch and roll in an evil sea while keeping close to the coast the whole time, but the sea continues to tumble the ship about, rolling and tossing it until one fine morning we round »the heads« which form the approach to Sydney harbour. –

One little lady who lives in Sydney shouts for joy, and she is right, the harbour entrance is quite beautiful. It is a huge natural basin with small islands and is surrounded on all sides by tree-covered slopes liberally sprinkled with lovely country estates and splendid villas. – A number of steamers and ferries handle the traffic among various ports of call and the town itself which lies at the far end of the basin. All this magnificence is watched over by a clear blue sky and sparkling sun-

shine. The little lady waves to friends on the landing-stage. Hawsers and ropes are thrown ashore, and as the ship's journey ends, we see it moored to the wharf for the last time. –

One is gripped by a strange, spontaneous sadness at leaving the ship for the last time. We have longed for the end of this seemingly endless voyage and the feeling is therefore unexplainable, but it is as though one is about to bid an old friend farewell, a friend with whom one has shared both good days and bad. – Many of the passengers walk about as in a fog; now that the time has finally come to disembark they seem scarcely to know one another, and each is concerned only with getting personal belongings ashore. They neither hear nor see and hurry only to get away, no matter how, just away from the ship; in their haste they forget even to say good-bye to those with whom they have travelled for the past two months. –

# About Ingeborg Stuckenberg

by *John Kousgård Sørensen*



Ingeborg Stuckenberg with her sons. Circa 1896.

It was towards the end of March 1903 that Ingeborg Stuckenberg boarded an emigrant ship in Bremerhaven bound for Sydney. She continued on from there to New Zealand.

She had set exacting standards for herself regarding what she considered to be a meaningful existence, and neither she nor those closest to her could – in her opinion –

live up to these. She finally decided to leave her famous husband, Viggo Stuckenberg, and their two sons, aged 11 and 12, and she would seem to have done so without warning, prior discussion or any farewell letters. She wanted to disappear quietly from her life in Copenhagen and start a new life, in new surroundings, and with a new man.

On board ship she met a mixed lot of people from every level of society and with very different motives for emigration. There were the arrogant upstarts in first class whose futures in the unknown were already assured. There were adventurers who had let themselves be tempted by tales of Australia's gold fields. There was the young girl planning to marry a man on the opposite side of the Earth. There was the mother with two screaming babies who was probably on her way to join her husband in a foreign land. And there were those who were not emigrating of their own free will, children of gentlefolk who had stepped outside the law and now had to disappear and be forgotten in their homeland. And there were the Eastern Europeans in third class who had led lives of misery and looked upon emigration as their last, harsh chance of survival. In short, a motley crowd, precisely drawn and often critically judged in Ingeborg Stuckenberg's lively account.

Ingeborg Stuckenberg was born in Copenhagen in 1866, into a prosperous merchant family, and was therefore in her late 30's when she left her homeland. Her artistic talents had already manifested themselves – she drew, played the piano and sang better than most – and her talents were further developed after she in 1884 became engaged to and in 1887 married the author, Viggo Stuckenberg. The circle of poets, critics and artists she then got to know came to value her sure assessments, and Viggo Stuckenberg himself quickly discovered her talent for writing. She became his sounding board and read his

manuscripts, suggested corrections and, incidentally, wrote some of the prose accredited to him. Her idealistic, uncompromising philosophy of life was also much admired. It was, however, not always compatible with the problems of everyday life.

In any case, the difficulties of married life became more and more pronounced with time. The natures of these two musical people were quite different. »*Two different aptitudes for happiness and life run afoul of each other,*« wrote Viggo Stuckenberg. Around the turn of the century they moved to the gardener's lodge of Sorgenfri Castle north of Copenhagen and became the neighbours of gardener Hans Dines Madsen and his wife, Clara. This did not improve the relationship between the Stuckenbergs. It was Hans Madsen who travelled to New Zealand with Ingeborg early in 1903. Their stay there far from measured up to their expectations. Disappointed and disconsolate, she committed suicide in New Zealand in 1904.

Ingeborg Stuckenberg's brief letters were apparently intended for publication in a Copenhagen newspaper. It was perhaps their purpose to serve as a warning against emigration unless it were well planned and based on realistic information about the conditions and opportunities in the foreign country in question. Perhaps there was also some thought of strengthening a hard-pressed economy. But this goal was never achieved. The letters were first published in 1986.<sup>1)</sup>

As they stand, the letters provide a vivid description of an emigrant journey near the turn of the century and combine picturesque detail from the ports of call along the way with accounts of the boredom and daily monotony of life aboard ship, where the proximity of fellow passengers with their various peculiarities sometimes became a strain. But they also provide an impression of a perceptive mind, sensitive and open to beautiful experiences of many kinds.

# Danish Emigration to Australia

by Peter Birkelund



## COLUMBIA.



Af Øvrigheden concessioneret Hoved-Bureau  
til  
**Befordring af Udovandrende**  
fra Hamborg over England  
med Seil- og Dampflibe til  
**AMERIKA, AUSTRALIEN og NY-SEELAND**

ved  
**J. P. Bølle,**

ensle Agent i Kjøbenhavn for D<sup>r</sup>. Morris & Co.  
St. Anna Plads Nr. 18 i Stuen, Kjøbenhavn.

Til Passagerernes Sikkerhed er der deponeret i rebe Penge ved Øvrigheden i Hamborg 15,000 Mark Courant, og i Liverpool 1,000 P<sup>d</sup>. Sterling eller 17,000 Mt. Hambg. Courant.

### Prospectus.

De hamborgske, engelske og amerikanske Love indeholde de strengeste og hensigtsmæssigste Bestemmelser over Valget af de Skibe, som vi betjene os af til Befordring af vore Passagerer over andre europæiske Mellemhænder. Førend en Rejse tiltrædes, undersøges Skibenes Dygtighed af Øvrigheden. Desuden er det os magtpaaliggende, kun at vælge saadanne Skibe til Døerarten, som have et rummeligt, høit og lyst Mellemdæk og som føres af menneskefærdige Capitainer.

### Befordring med Seilskib til N<sup>y</sup>-York over Liverpool.

Passagererne erholde paa Døerarten med et Seilskib til Amerika fri og rigelig Kost, saaledes som fannet er forestrevet efter de nye amerikanske og engelske Love af 1ste Mai og 1ste October 1855, nemlig:

Hvid Skibs-Tæppe . . . . . 3 P <sup>d</sup> .	Martiner . . . . . 2 P <sup>d</sup> .	Salt . . . . . 4 Lob
Veel . . . . . 1 "	Drethed . . . . . 1 "	Smey . . . . . 2 "
Davreemel . . . . . 1 "	Smedstød . . . . . 1 "	Heber . . . . . 4 "
Ris . . . . . 14 "	Thee . . . . . 1 Lob	Øddike . . . . . 1 Flaite
Kræer . . . . . 14 "	Sutter . . . . . 1 P <sup>d</sup> .	Sand baalig . . . . . 3 Flaite

Alle disse Victualier leveres Passagererne daglig i velagt Tilstand til berømt Tid. I Sygdomstilfælde anvies Medicinende en Plads i Skibshospitalet, hvor han under Behandling af en Læge og de nødvendige Medicamenter frit. En fuldstændig med Lægemidler forsynet Afrik medtages til dette Bemed. For at der selv paa en saa lang Rejse ei skal opstaa nogen Mangel paa Stibene, medtages ombord et overflødig Quantum af de oevnævnte Levnetsmidler, samt det Værdemateriale, der udføres til fannet Tilberedelse, nemlig for 10 til 13 Uger. Alt dette maa betvivelsløst for Øvrigheden, førend Skibet afseiler, for at undgaae Worden, er det ingen Passagerer tilladt, fuldstændig at holde sig selv med Kost, endstjænt det er at anbefale for Enhver at medtage nogle Levnetsmidler til eget Brug. Soveskibe (Koiene) i Mellemdækket anvies Passagererne roligt ombord. Mellemdækket er ca. 7 Fod høit paa Skibets Sider og foroven vel forsynet med Vinduer, som at det er lyst om Dagen. Om Matten oplys Mellemdækket med Lanterne. For Cengelskaber eller Strafsel og Pællen, samt for Spise, Drikke, og stærke Visker, Skee, Anis og Gaffel, hvilket alt sammen kan kjøbes i Hamborg, have Passagererne selv at sørge.

Den sædvanlige Rejsebagage medtages fragsfrit, d. v. s. for Børne 100 P<sup>d</sup>., for Børn det Halve. Overfragt beregnes med ca. 3 Rdr. N. M. for 100 P<sup>d</sup>. Enhver Passagerer har under alle Omstændigheder selv at agle paa sin Rejsebagage, da han paa hele Rejsten beholder den under eget Tilsyn.

Passagepengene for Døerarten til N<sup>y</sup>-York tilligemed de amerikanske Jattigpenge, Kopskat og Hospitalspengene udsjøre til N<sup>y</sup>-York:

**Første Kogst:**

**Anden Kogst:**

**Mellemdæk:**

This article will present an outline of Danish emigration to Australia up to about 1970. The information is largely gathered from Danish archives and the emphasis is therefore on *emigration*. Immigration, how the Danes settled and got on in Australia, will be touched upon only briefly. Likewise, as the subject under consideration is the phenomenon of emigration, the emigrants themselves will rarely be heard.

Danish emigration was largely determined by what could be termed »pull-factors«. These included gold fever, free or assisted passage, good economic opportunities, etc. It is understood that the »push-factors« in Denmark were more permanent and constant and, therefore, secondary. The pull-factors, on the other hand, were of vital importance for the size, composition and direction of the emigration, and, without these factors, very few Danes would have been tempted to settle in Australia. The main question to be answered is therefore: What exactly made Danes choose Australia as their future home? Or, in other words: What, in particular, pulled Danish people to Australia?

Danish emigration can be divided into *five periods*: the time prior to 1868, the period from 1868 to 1899, the period from 1900 to the end of World War I, the period between the wars and the time after World War II.

The sources of information about Danish emigration to Australia are scattered, fragmentary and very different. The relevant archives are incomplete, contemporary literature is sparse, and the statistics frequently inaccurate. All of this means that, while it is possible to study some periods in depth, others can be looked at only superficially.

The information in this article has been drawn primarily from various official Danish archives which have recorded information on emigration from Denmark since 1868. These include the Copenhagen Police Department, for the period from 1868 to 1934, the Danish Emigration Office, for the period from 1934

to 1959, and the Directorate of Labour for the period from 1959 to date. No Australian archives have been used.

This presentation will be divided into the above-mentioned five periods. The historical progress of Danish emigration to Australia will be described for each period, and the main demographic features will be displayed insofar as these can be deduced from the Danish emigration records.

## DANISH LEGISLATION AND EMIGRATION AUTHORITIES

The first Danish emigration act was passed in 1868 and was intended to protect the emigrants while they were travelling. It served this purpose well, but little could be done to protect emigrants from the methods of cynical emigration agents.

The police were given authority over the agents and their work as well as the responsibility of registering all emigrants. The law authorised the agents to make out a contract with each emigrant. This contract included information as to the route to be travelled and the cost of accommodation and board, etc. The emigrant was thereby provided with some degree of security on the journey to be made.

In the 1920's more governmental control of emigration from Denmark was called for, and in 1927 a parliamentary committee was appointed to look into the question. Later that same year a report was issued recommending that emigrants should be provided with more information but that they should be given no other state support of any kind, neither moral nor economic! In 1934 a new act was passed, and the Emigration Office took over the control and registration of emigrants. This office also provided free information about the countries to which Danes wanted to emigrate.

A new and simplified emigration act was passed in 1959. This act closed the Emigration Office and transferred its work to the Directorate of Labour. Neither control nor reg-



istration was carried out after this date, and all state protection of emigrants was discontinued. Only the information activities were left in operation.

### THE EMIGRATION AGENTS

After 1865 a system had developed whereby individual persons took it upon themselves, as a sideline, to operate as sub-agents for foreign shipping companies. The Emigration Act of 1868 eliminated these part-time agents, and professional agents took over the market.

The Danish Ministry of Justice had to approve the agents and these, in turn, had to meet certain requirements. They must not, for example, have any criminal record; they had to have lived in Denmark for at least 5 years and had to provide a guarantee of as much as 10,000 rix-dollars. The number of main agents varied from 10 to 15. Most carried out their business in Copenhagen, but in the late 1800's there were a few agents operating from Jutland as well. The main agents created a network of sub-agents all over the country, and these sub-agents were typically men with small businesses who were in close contact with the local population.

This system of agents remained in force until 1959 when the law was changed and the concept of »authorised emigration agent« abolished. After that time the market was open to anyone.

### MAIN FEATURES OF THE AUSTRALIAN IMMIGRATION

In 1787 England decided to use Australia, or New Holland as it was called at that time, as a convict settlement after American independence had put an end to the deportation of convicts to America. New South Wales was chosen as the first white settlement, and of the first 1500 people to settle there, 760 were convicts.

The first free immigrants arrived in 1793, but up until 1830 the majority of the immi-

grants were convicts. The population increased from 190,000 in 1840 to 400,000 in 1850 and continued to increase rapidly throughout the next ten years. This was probably due largely to the fact that the British government made funds to cover travel expenses readily available. In 1831 a system was established in accordance with the principles of Edward Gibbon Wakefield who advocated the sale of colonial land to finance immigration.

It was, however, the discovery of gold in New South Wales and Victoria in 1851 which led to large-scale immigration. In the gold-digging period most of the immigrants paid their own travel expenses, but several Australian colonies continued to assist in the payment of travel expenses throughout the 1850's. During the gold rush the population grew to over one million, and in 1860 there were 1,146,000 people in Australia.

Up until that time the immigration policy of the Australian colonies had been determined in England, but toward the end of the 1850's the colonies gradually took over the responsibility for immigration. Full control was attained in 1869. When the gold fever began to die out in the early 1860's, the Australian colonies extended their assisted passage schemes to attract new immigrants. From the 1860's until World War I this fundamental principle of the immigration policy of Australia meant that nearly half of the British immigrants were given travel assistance. In addition to offering assisted passage, the Australian government made a strong effort to attract wealthy immigrants who could pay their own travel expenses. British citizens were preferred, but, on occasion, assistance was also given to others from northern Europe.

There were 3 main systems of government supported immigration: selection, nomination and land-order.

Under the terms of the selection system, immigrants who were to receive assistance to

travel to Australia were selected by colonial agents in England. This system was used to a great extent by all the British colonies. Use of the nomination system meant that relatives, friends or others in Australia paid a share of the travel expenses; the government paid the remainder, provided the emigrant was accepted. The person making the nomination also had to guarantee that the immigrant would not become a burden to society. Under the terms of the land-order system the government offered free land to immigrants who paid their own fare (full-fare emigrants). The value of the free land was normally equivalent to the cost of passage. The land-order system was especially well developed in Queensland, but was not employed at all after 1900.

Not all these systems were in function all the time, and they were altered in accordance with the economic, social and political situation prevailing in the colonies. From the mid-1880's up to 1905, assisted immigration was largely suspended due to economic difficulties. In 1901 when the Commonwealth of Australia was established, control of immigration was transferred to the federal government, but it was not until 1920 that the government actually played an active role in immigration policy.

The first parliament passed the Immigration Restriction Act which eventually confirmed the White Australia Policy, i.e., a white population was considered desirable and there was a general ban on immigration of coloured people. On arrival, an immigrant could be required to take a dictation test in any European language, as there was no real political desire to prohibit immigration of people due to the colour of their skin. The test was especially aimed at restricting the entry of Asians but was also applied against unwanted white people. This unpopular test was abandoned in 1958.

All immigration subsidies were suspended during World War I, but in the 1920's Aus-

tralia entered into several agreements with England for the purpose of bringing a greater number of British immigrants to Australia. The best-known of these is the »£34 million Agreement« of 1925 which was intended to transport 450,000 British immigrants to Australia over a ten-year period. All immigration assistance was brought to a halt by the depression in 1930. Although immigration schemes were generally not successful during this period, more than 200,000 immigrants who had received some assistance in the payment of travel expenses arrived between 1921 and 1929. This brought the number of immigrants who had received some kind of subsidy since the initiation of such programmes to a total of more than 1,000,000.

After World War II Australia began an intensive immigration programme directed at British citizens, including persons who were not of British descent. The desired increase of population was fixed at 20 million by the year 2000, and this meant an influx of immigrants of 70,000 per year. 1.3 million immigrants received assistance in the period from 1947 to 1967, and in 1968 the population had increased to over 12 million. In the 1970's an economic decline resulting in increased unemployment led the Australian government to make drastic reductions in immigration.

#### DANISH EMIGRATION PRIOR TO 1868

There is scant information regarding Danish emigration to Australia prior to 1868, but it is possible to outline the main features.

The first Danes in Australia were visiting sailors who made only brief stops while on board foreign ships. The first Dane to set foot on »Terra Australis Incognita« was Johannes Bremmer and he did so in 1696. Others followed, and the most famous of these was undoubtedly Jørgen Jørgensen.

Other, more anonymous, Danes settled in Australia, but it is not possible to determine the exact number of those who emigrated to Australia up to the middle of the 19th cen-

ture. The Finnish historian, Olavi Koivukangas, estimates the number of Scandinavians to have emigrated up to that time to be a few hundred, most of them Danes.

In 1851 gold was discovered in New South Wales and in Victoria, and when this news reached Scandinavia, emigration to Australia increased rapidly. Precise figures for this emigration are not available, but several estimates have been made. A contemporary Swede, Corfitz Cronqvist, estimated the number of Scandinavians in Australia in the 1850's to be approximately 1500 Swedes, 1000 Danes and 300 Norwegians. Koivukangas agrees that these are likely figures but points out that the Danish share should be larger, probably about half of the Nordic population. It is estimated that about 5000 Scandinavians took part in the gold rush.

Most of the Scandinavian immigrants were men who went to the gold fields in Ballarat, Bendigo and Castlemaine where the often joined other Scandinavians. Many gold diggers were well-educated men – doctors, lawyers and businessmen are mentioned. Only a few were successful in the gold fields and even fewer could later return to their homelands or settle in Australia as wealthy men.

The Scandinavians became the second largest of the non-British populations in the gold fields, outnumbered only by the Germans. The majority of the Scandinavians were Danes. There were three reasons for this according to the Danish-Australian Jens Lyng. First, a large number of Scandinavian ships called at Australian ports, and when the gold fever broke out, many sailors left ship for the gold fields – with or without permission. As Lyng puts it: *»It is a well-known fact that a considerable proportion of the floating population at the mines consisted of runaway sailors«*. Secondly, the main shipping centre of the peninsula of Jutland in this period was Hamburg, and this gave the Danes easy access to shipping. Thirdly, the war between Denmark and Schleswig-Holstein ended in 1850 leaving a

great number of Danish soldiers who found it difficult to adapt to civilian life. News of the discovery of gold in Australia was, therefore, especially tempting to this group.

The gold fever cooled during the 1860's and many returned to Scandinavia, while others went to New Zealand or America or became sailors again. But many stayed in Australia and took up their original occupations as artisans or farmers.

## EMIGRATION FROM 1868 TO 1899

During the 1860's England reduced the activities of its monopoly for sending immigrants to Australia, and in 1869 the recruiting of emigrants was taken over entirely by the Australian colonies.

Queensland was the first colony to attempt a large-scale campaign to attract Scandinavians to Australia. As early as 1863 Queensland had passed an immigration act under the terms of which an Agent-General in London could make an offer of favourable conditions of travel and settlement for British, Irish and German citizens. The Agent-General could offer free passage to farmers, farm labourers, artisans and domestic servants. Full-fare emigrants were offered 40 acres of free land and later on as much as 160 acres in the fertile Darling Downs. This offer proved popular, and in the period from 1863 to 1865, about 30,000 immigrants came to the colony. In 1867 gold was discovered at Gympie Creek and other places in Queensland, and this gave further impetus to the immigration. In spite of the massive immigration to the colony, the population did not increase proportionately because of wide-spread migration to the cooler colonies in the south. It therefore became necessary to increase efforts to recruit Europeans, and for that reason Scandinavia was included in the propaganda scheme in 1870.

An emigration agent in Copenhagen was licensed by the government of Queensland to provide easy terms for Danish emigrants to

the colony. They were offered free passage, free land or guaranteed employment. Lyng writes about this free passage: *»The voyage started in Hamburg and went from there by sailing ships chartered by the government of Queensland. The emigrant had only to pay the fee to the agent in Denmark, nothing else«.*

The free passage was, in reality, an illusion since the travel expenses had to be repaid within two years. If a family with two children went to Queensland on the so-called free passage basis, shortly after arrival they would find themselves on 120 acres of untilled land with no house and a debt of 435 rix-dollars, which at that time was an enormous amount of money.

While the agent in Copenhagen tried in his advertisements to suppress the fact that the money had to be repaid, his agent in Aalborg made no attempt to hide the true facts. In an »Emigration manual« he stated that the travel expenses could be paid in one of three ways: the total amount could be paid prior to the voyage, half could be paid in advance and half given on credit, or all could be given on credit. The amount of this credit had to be repaid one or two years after arrival in Australia. Only young female domestic servants were offered travel completely free of charge.

The offer of travel on credit may have been just what a great many poor people had been waiting for. The census of Queensland shows that the number of Danes increased from 554 in 1871 to 2223 in 1881. Likewise, the number of Norwegians and Swedes increased. There were 118 Norwegians in 1871 compared with 442 in 1881 and 253 Swedes in 1871 compared with 583 ten years later.

In 1874 the government of Queensland decided to transfer all immigration activity to England, and the German Agent-General in Hamburg lost his licence to send emigrants to the colony. The reason for this was that conditions on board the chartered German vessels were miserable. And when the propaganda campaign in Denmark ceased, so, too,

did the emigration. The direct connection between Hamburg and Brisbane was opened again in 1876 although conditions on the ships were still terrible.

In 1878 a new offensive was implemented in Copenhagen to bring immigrants to Queensland, and this time the Copenhagen agent could offer genuinely free passage. This offer caught fire immediately, and more than 500 Danes obtained free tickets and sailed to Brisbane that year. The interest in Queensland as a destination for emigration later cooled, and during the last twenty years of the century, fewer than 50 people a year emigrated to the colony. Queensland continued to offer free passage until 1886; then the amount of the offer was reduced, and in 1892 it was cancelled. Subsidised emigration from Scandinavia to Queensland was resumed in 1898 and it continued until 1901.

In the 1870's Tasmania also tried to attract Danish emigrants by offering free land to all full-fare immigrants. Although free passage was not given, easy terms were offered to poor farming families and female domestic servants. If the immigrant settled in Tasmania, the subsidy did not have to be repaid. Some Danes accepted this offer, but as the census shows, the number was small. 15 Danes lived in Tasmania in 1870, and in 1881 the number had increased to 136.

From about 1870 until the turn of the century, Queensland and Tasmania were the only two colonies which offered Scandinavian emigrants free or assisted passage and inexpensive or free land. Quite a few Scandinavians, however, made their way to other colonies in Australia, and many migrated from Queensland to the cooler New South Wales and Victoria. A Danish settlement was established in East Poowong, Victoria, in 1878, and by 1881 this settlement had a population of 121 Danes and 90 Swedes and Norwegians.

As recorded in the files of the Copenhagen Police Department, Danish emigration from 1868 to 1899 totaled 5741 people. Some

demographic features can be deduced from these same files: 63% of the emigrants were from the working-class, and of this group 38% were farm labourers, 19% were workers from the cities and 6% were servants. Only 5% of the emigrants were self-employed people, while persons with no occupation of their own, i.e., married women and children, etc. comprised 32% of the total. More than half of the emigrants (55%) were young people between the ages of 15 and 30. The children (from 0 to 14 years old) made up 20% and persons over 30 years of age about 25%. As in all overseas emigration, the men dominated the picture – about 2/3 of the emigrants were men and 1/3 women. About 43% of the emigrants were part of a family group.

The analysis shows that the emigrants in the 1870's, when emigration was at its highest, consisted mainly of farm labourers from Jutland who went to Queensland tempted by subsidised passage and inexpensive land. In the last twenty years of the century it was mainly artisans from Copenhagen who travelled to Australia.

## EMIGRATION FROM 1900 TO 1918

Free and assisted passage – schemes to attract immigrants to Queensland – were resumed in 1897 after the severe depression of the 1890's. In 1898 such assisted travel was extended to include Scandinavians, and one man, August Larsen, was designated by the government of Queensland to manage the emigration from the Nordic countries. Larsen made several trips around Denmark, Norway and Sweden to spread propaganda in favour of Queensland. In addition to his efforts, about 35,000 circulars and booklets of different kinds were distributed in the Scandinavian countries.

In April, 1899, the first »Free and Assisted Passage« emigrants sailed for Queensland and others followed shortly thereafter. According to contemporary reports made by the Agent-General in London, 157 Danes left

in 1899 and 378 left the following year. Economic difficulties and a severe drought forced the government of Queensland to suspend the scheme in 1901, but by that time more than 1100 Scandinavians, about half of them Danes, had already set sail for Queensland.

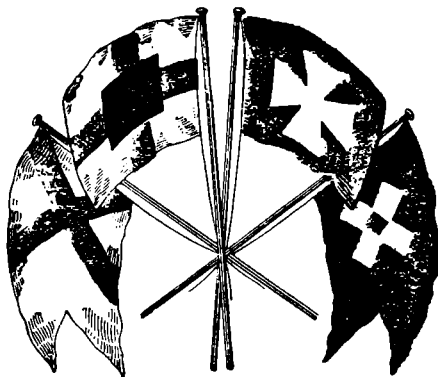
There is no record of most of these emigrants to Queensland in the Danish archives. Many of them simply bought a ticket to England, and as they had no emigration contract, they were not registered as emigrants.

The number of emigrants to Queensland indicates that there was some interest in the information provided, but the offer was received with suspicion by some due to rumours about the situation there. Especially persistent was the rumour about the slave-like conditions faced by the assisted immigrants in Queensland. Another rumour reported that young men were forced to join the British Army and to fight in the Boer War in South Africa. There is no doubt that this kind of rumour reduced the emigration to Queensland.

After Queensland terminated the assisted passage programme in 1901, subsidies did not again become available until 1906, when New South Wales implemented new immigration schemes. Other states followed – Victoria in 1910, South Australia in 1911 and Tasmania in 1912. These programmes were suspended during World War I.

The actual content of the New South Wales travel support scheme from 1906 is not known. Free or inexpensive land was not offered, but assisted passage was provided for farmers, farm labourers and domestic servants, and the state guaranteed immediate employment. New South Wales apparently found it important to recruit immigrants from Denmark and in 1911 applied for permission to establish an information office in Copenhagen. The application was refused on the grounds that this kind of activity was regarded as unauthorised emigrant recruit-

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ment and therefore could not be allowed.

In 1910 the state of Victoria implemented a large-scale immigration campaign in Scandinavia. This campaign addressed itself primarily to financially strong farmers and experienced farm workers who were willing to settle in and cultivate the recently established irrigated areas along the river Murray. The plan is described in two »manuals« which the government of Victoria published in 1910 and 1913.

In 1910 Victoria made an offer of 4 million acres of agricultural land to 30,000 new settlers. The price of this project at that time was £3.3 million (DKK 59.4 million). The size of the plots varied from 2 to 200 acres. The government undertook to supply water and, if necessary, water could be supplied outside the already irrigated areas if farmers of the same nationality wanted to establish their own settlement. The land could be acquired on easy terms and large loans were granted for the establishment of the farms. The offer included assisted passage; 80% of the ticket price could be borrowed and repaid over 5 years. Farmers who wanted to inspect the area before buying could go to Victoria on a Visit-ticket which could be purchased at half the price of an ordinary ticket. Furthermore, half of the price of the Visit-ticket would be refunded if the farmer bought land in the area. In addition to assisted passage, the offer included easy terms for the purchase of land, and a guaranteed occupation with good wages. The »manuals« enumerate Victoria's advantages: the same field could be harvested three times a year, free schooling, low taxes and high prosperity! To those with racial prejudice, the Federal Government guaranteed that Australia would never be inhabited by races other than the white. To the farm labourers it was emphasised that an active and hard-working labourer could save up to 900 DKK (£50) a year and thus be able to buy his own farm within a few years.

In 1914 Victoria sent agents to Denmark

and Sweden to draw more attention to the immigration programme. In both Sweden and Denmark the agents received some negative and rather harsh newspaper publicity. An article in the Danish newspaper, *Social Demokraten*, stated that the purpose of the two agents was to recruit 14,000 Scandinavian emigrants. The article concluded with a general warning against emigration to Australia because of the high level of prices there, the fact that the land offered to the immigrants was not first-class and the rate of unemployment sometimes very high.

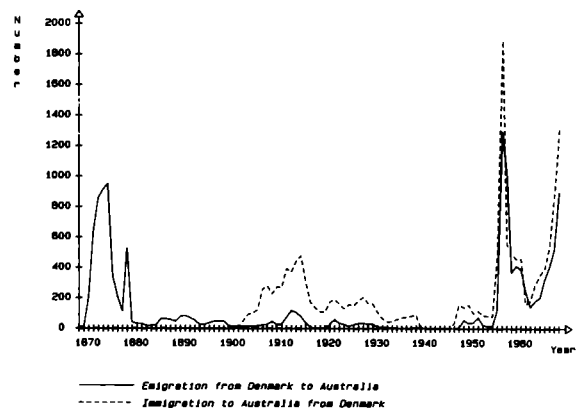
In addition to sending agents, the government of Victoria had planned to publish a leaflet describing Victoria and its resources to be sent to all the schools in Denmark and Sweden, but the outbreak of World War 1 put a stop to this plan.

According to Lyng, the efforts made by Victoria in Scandinavia in 1914 resulted in the emigration of no more than about 40 to 60 young Danish farmers.

It is not known what immigration programmes there were in South Australia and Tasmania from 1911 to 1912, but they apparently had no influence on Danish emigration.

In 1902 Australia began to record arrivals by nationality, thus making it possible to

Fig. 1. Danish Emigration to Australia 1868 - 1968.



Source: Danish and Australian Statistics

compare the emigration records kept in Denmark and the immigration records in Australia. Fig. 1 shows that according to the Australian records 4092 Danes immigrated from 1900 to 1918, whereas the Danish records for that same period indicate that only 678 Danes emigrated. One explanation for this discrepancy is that the Australian records include businessmen and visitors as well as immigrants. But since not everyone who emigrated from Denmark was registered, the Danish emigration figures are probably too small. The true number is probably somewhere between the figures of the two countries.

But in spite of the discrepancies of the figures, both indicate the same trend, namely, that especially after 1910 many Danes were attracted to Australia.

Although about two-thirds of those who emigrated in the first eighteen years of the century were from the working class, they appear to have been better educated than had previously been the case. About 20% of those who emigrated during this period were married women and children. The group consisted mainly of young adults, and about 50% were between the ages of 20 and 30. 15% were people in their thirties, 10% were children and 14% were persons over 40 years of age.

During this period 80% of the emigrants were men and only 20% women, indicating that many of those who emigrated were unmarried. Families made up a total of 30% of the emigrants.

Due to the assisted passage programmes, Danes emigrated to Victoria and New South Wales in particular, and in the years just before 1910, emigration was dominated by skilled and unskilled workers from Copenhagen. After 1910 it was farmers who dominated the picture. Lyng's allegation, that only 40 to 60 Danish farmers accepted the travel and land subsidies offered by Victoria in 1914, is probably correct. But many had already left for the state prior to that time.

## EMIGRATION FROM 1919 TO 1939

As previously mentioned, the Australian federal government officially took over the responsibility for immigration in 1901, but the government didn't become an active participant in immigration programmes until 1920. Until that time immigration remained the responsibility of the individual states.

In the period between the two World Wars no assisted immigration programmes were offered to Scandinavians. However, a number of immigration agreements were made between England and Australia in the 1920's, among others the »£34 million Agreement« of 1925. The 1920's and 1930's became decades of immigration restriction as Australia attempted to limit the immigration of all nationalities other than British. These restrictions were often felt by Danes who wanted to emigrate to Australia during this period.

In 1924 Australia ruled that on arrival any immigrant over 18 years of age must have £40 in landing money or a landing permit designating him or her as a nominated immigrant. This restriction was especially directed against the large numbers of immigrants from southern Europe who came to Australia in the early 1920's with no money and no knowledge of the English language. Due to the depression, assisted immigration was abandoned in 1930; in 1932 the restrictions were further tightened, and all prospective emigrants had to be approved and be given landing permits prior to departure. Any emigrant who did not have this permit was rejected and had to return to his homeland. The restrictions were modified in 1938, and some assistance was again offered, but the outbreak of World War II in 1939 put an end to all subsidies.

This meant that Danish emigration was not encouraged, but the desire to attract Scandinavian emigrants still existed unofficially. In the early 1920's Jens Lyng was a member of the New Settler's League in Melbourne. Here he agitated for support to young Scandina-



vians who were interested in emigrating to Australia. When Lyng visited Denmark in 1923, he brought with him an offer of land on favourable terms for 40 Danish families in South Gippsland, where a Danish settlement could be established. The Government promised to build houses and provide the money for fences and roads. In order to ensure the success of the plan, each family was required to be in possession of £400 upon arrival at Victoria.

The project failed because as Lyng said: *»Things were booming in Denmark when I arrived there, and there was no desire amongst people with capital, to migrate«*. When the Danish Consul in Victoria, who happened to be in Denmark at that same time, voiced his opposition to the project, it was dropped.

Danish records indicate that 358 persons emigrated to Australia in the period between the two World Wars, whereas 2438 Danish immigrants were recorded in the same period. In spite of this discrepancy in numbers, emigration and immigration show the same trend.

The Danish emigration records for this period indicate that it was mainly working class people who emigrated to Australia; about one-third of the emigrants were farm labourers, and about one-third were industrial workers and artisans. The distribution of age remained unchanged; it was still the young adults, people in their twenties, who emigrated to Australia. The proportion of men to women also remained the same – 75% of the emigrants were men and 25% women. One-third of those who emigrated were members of a family group.

Emigration in the period between the two World Wars was low as there was little to attract people to Australia. In addition, the lack of travel subsidies and the numerous restrictions kept Danish emigration to a minimum.

## EMIGRATION FROM 1945 TO 1970

In spite of demobilization of the army in

Australia, there was a serious scarcity of labour after World War II. The Australian Labour government, which up till then had been against wholesale immigration, changed its previous policy and initiated an extensive immigration programme. It was imperative that the country be developed, and more hands were needed for this work than could be provided by the country itself. The policy of national defence also called for greater numbers of people. During the war the Japanese had threatened to invade Australia, and mass immigration provided a means of combating such a threat. With its population of 7 1/2 million, Australia could not have withstood such an invasion. There certainly was land enough for more people. For years various politicians had been pointing at the big open areas of Australia which continued to attract the over-populated countries of Asia like a magnet.

The aim was to increase the population to 20 million people before the year 2000, and that required an annual growth of 2%, or about 70,000 new immigrants every year. A new Department of Immigration was established in 1945 in order to ensure that Australia received its share of the emigration from Europe. British immigrants still had preferred status, and it was therefore decided that the quota of non-British immigrants should not exceed 10%. This policy was, however, not in force for long.

The majority of the Australian people did not agree with the decision of the authorities to increase the population through wholesale immigration. Even with a good labour market there was wide-spread aversion to immigrants. The authorities attempted to change this attitude by declaring such nicknames as »Pommy«, »Dago«, etc. undesirable, and it was decided that all newly arrived persons should be called »New Australians«. This campaign was quite successful, but even so, as will be pointed out later, not all Danish immigrants were made to feel welcome.

When World War II ended there were about 6 million refugees and displaced persons in camps throughout Europe. After negotiating with IRO (the International Refugee Organisation) Australia agreed to take a substantial number of these people, and a delegation was sent to Europe to select them. Upon their arrival in Australia, the refugees were obliged to work for two years at an assigned job not necessarily in the profession for which they had been trained. There are records of surgeons who worked as cleaning personnel and musicians who milked cows in Gippsland. A total of 17,000 refugees came to Australia under the auspices of the IRO.

In March 1946, England and Australia agreed to encourage the emigration of British citizens, and this agreement was soon followed up by others. In December 1946, an arrangement was made between Australia and Holland whereby both countries would subsidise the transport of Dutch people to Australia. In spite of these agreements, the desired quota of immigrants was not filled, and some time after 1948, emigration deals were made with Ireland, Malta, Italy, Germany, Austria, Greece, Belgium and Spain. And in the late 1960's agreements were also signed with Yugoslavia and Turkey.

The main impediments to wholesale immigration in Australia were the lack of shipping to transport the emigrants and the shortage of housing in Australia after the war. It became easier to obtain shipping space as soon as the demobilisation of the soldiers was completed, but the housing shortage continued to put a damper on immigration for many years. Nevertheless, Australia received its greatest influx of immigrants in this period following World War II. About 2.4 million immigrants arrived between 1946 and 1968, and more than half of these were non-British.

The prospects for Danes who wanted to emigrate to Australia were not too bright at this particular time. Entry permits were given

only to those who were nominated for such a permit by someone in Australia who could also provide housing and a job or to those whose professions were especially needed in Australia. When an entry permit had been obtained, transportation then became a problem because only British emigrants could be given passage on British ships – no foreigners were allowed. There could be up to an 18-month wait for passage on a Scandinavian vessel bound for Australia, but ingenious agents soon solved that problem. Danish emigrants were sent by ship to New York, by Greyhound bus from New York to San Francisco and then by plane from San Francisco to Sydney. The cost of travelling this route was approximately DKK 4000 whereas the cost of passage on a Scandinavian ship sailing direct to Australia was about DKK 2500. An airline ticket from London via the United States to Australia cost at that time about DKK 5000.

The Danish National Bank's restrictions on the issue of foreign currency provided an additional problem for emigrants in the 1940's and 50's. Just after the war, the Australian government ruled that the immigrants had to be in possession of at least £200 on arrival. This amount was, however, soon reduced to from £10 to £50, depending on the category of the immigrant. Nominated immigrants were, for example, totally exempt.

As indicated by the large number of inquiries directed to the Danish Emigration Office, there was great interest in emigration to Australia in the years following the German occupation of Denmark. Of the 6114 inquiries received in 1946, half were about Australia.

In November 1945, an Australian delegation, which also visited Denmark, was sent to Europe to determine the extent of interest in emigration to Australia. But it wasn't until June 1947, when the Australian Minister for Immigration, A.A. Calwell, came to Denmark that serious negotiations took place. At a meeting held in the Danish Foreign Ministry

at which representatives from the Government Emigration Office also took part, Mr. Calwell suggested that Australia and Denmark should enter into a migration agreement similar to that between Australia and Holland. Although the Danes were rather reluctant to make the economic and moral commitment such an agreement would entail, they agreed to consider the suggestion. No agreement was ever reached.

At the same meeting Mr. Calwell suggested that it would be good business for Denmark to buy or charter some American C4 troop transport ships to transport emigrants from England to Australia, thus demonstrating that he did not fully understand the non-committal Danish attitude towards emigration.

On October 1, 1948, the »Empire and Allied Ex-servicemen's Scheme« for those who had served in the British armed forces was extended to include foreigners who had served in the allied forces, as well as members of the resistance movements in Holland, Belgium, France, Norway and Denmark. On arrival in Australia applicants would receive from £30 to £35 if they were of »sound health and good character«. There was an upper age limit of 35 for women and 45 for men if they were single or married with no children; married couples with children had to be no more than 50 years of age. In special cases the money could be paid prior to departure.

This subsidy agreement was publicised via the Danish newspapers and radio in the spring of 1948, and the Emigration Office received a few inquiries before the agreement became effective, but interest was moderate. Only 115 former members of the Danish resistance movement and ex-soldiers applied to take part in the scheme from 1948 to 1950. The reasons given by those who wished to emigrate included such statements as: *»I was in a German concentration camp, and I don't want to risk that again«* and *»I want my children to grow up in a free country unthreatened by anti-democratic*

*dictatorships«*. The desire to emigrate was a direct result of the fear that the horror of war might be repeated.

Very few Danish »warriors« emigrated under the terms of this programme. A total of 82 Danes received subsidy from 1947 to 1953; the programme was cancelled in 1956.

The Australian government was interested in increasing the number of Danish immigrants. Therefore, in the summer of 1950 the British Embassy asked the Danish Emigration Office whether builders and skilled metalworkers might be interested in emigration to Australia if immigration restrictions were eased. An offer of housing in an immigrant's hotel was made and a subsidy of £30 was promised. Other such inquiries were received throughout the 1950's.

In the autumn of 1951 the first news of increased unemployment in Australia was received through diplomatic channels. This unemployment, together with the shortage of housing, led diplomats to issue warnings, in particular to unskilled workers, against emigration to Australia. Because of the unemployment problem, the Australian Federal Government decided to reduce the number of immigrants which could be received from 150,000 in 1952 to 60,000 in 1953. Danish citizens were not affected by this reduction.

In March 1952, the Australian Department of Immigration studied possibilities for increasing the number of Danish emigrants to Australia. Their report concluded that it would be advantageous for Danes of low and middle income to emigrate, as the standard of living in Australia was higher than that in Denmark. Short-term factors, such as the increasing unemployment in Denmark (in November 1951 there were 71,000 unemployed in Denmark) and an increasing shortage of housing in Denmark would, according to the report, lead to increased emigration from Denmark over the next 2 to 3 years. The report predicted that most of these people would emigrate to the United States or Can-

ada. But with the introduction of an assisted emigration scheme for Danish citizens, the Australians thought they would be able to secure from 1000 to 1500 Danish immigrants per year. The cost of such a programme was estimated to be low, and the report concluded that with the introduction of such a scheme there were only two factors which could limit Danish emigration to Australia: the housing shortage and the unusual isolation that Danish farmers and farm workers would experience.

The first word of negotiations between Danish and Australian authorities regarding the Australian »General Assisted Passages Scheme« (GAPS) appeared in a Danish newspaper on March 29, 1954; similar articles appeared throughout the summer, and an agreement was finally reached in September.

Under the terms of this scheme, which was also in use in the United States, Sweden, Norway, Finland and Switzerland, Danish citizens of certain ages could get the economic help of £37 or its equivalent of DKK 725. The following were eligible: single men between the ages of 18 and 35, single women between the ages of 18 and 30, married couples under 50 with children under 18 and childless married couples under 45. Applications were to be considered regardless of the profession of the applicant or the number of family members. Single persons had to be in possession of £10 (DKK 156) on arrival, and families had to have at least £20. Economic support was provided on the condition that it be repaid if the immigrant left Australia within 2 years. Although the immigrant had to accept whatsoever work that was offered by the authorities, he was allowed one refusal.

In connection with the assisted passage scheme, Australia wanted to establish an office in Copenhagen for administration of the programme and the selection of applicants from the Nordic countries. The Danish Foreign Office agreed to the setting up of such an office provided that the word »emi-

gration« was not included in the official name. The Australians suggested the name »Australian Information and Visa Office« and this was accepted as satisfactory.

In April, 1955, Australia opened not an emigration office but a consulate in Copenhagen, and GAPS started activities in Scandinavia.

The first emigration to Australia subsidised by this scheme took place late in the summer of 1955. 24 Danes left from London on board the *Arcadia*, which sailed via Suez and India to Sydney, and 12 Danes sailed from Marseille via Panama, Tahiti and Caledonia on board the *Caledonian*. The scheme got off to a slow start, probably due in part to articles about the poor conditions of immigrants in Australia published in Danish newspapers in the spring of 1955. Another reason for the slow start was perhaps the »National Service Act of 1951-53« whereby all young men who were at least 19 years of age and who had been in Australia for more than 12 months could be conscripted for military service. This Act also covered those who were not British citizens. However, a 1869 agreement between Great Britain and Denmark stated that citizens of the two countries should be exempt from military duty in the service of the other. This agreement was also valid for the armed forces of Australia. In the summer of 1954 Australia requested the Danish government to repeal this agreement. This Denmark refused to do, and in July, 1955, the agreement was also recognised by Australia. Another attempt to have it repealed was made by the Australian government in 1967, but again Denmark refused.

Emigration to Australia increased in 1956, not only because of the assisted passage scheme, but also because the Australian Consulate carried out an advertising campaign in the newspapers and issued pamphlets describing Australia. In addition, special impetus was provided by the meetings held by the Consul or his staff all over Denmark. The re-

sults of all this activity can be seen from the following: in 1955 126 Danes emigrated, in 1956 this number increased to 1296, and in 1957 1007 Danes went to Australia. During the first four months of 1956, the Australian Consulate received approx. 2000 applications from Danes who wanted to emigrate.

The emigrants left in batches. In October, 1956, 250 people went by special train to Cuxhaven where they boarded the ship, *Castle Felice*, bound for Australia. In December, 1956, the departure of 88 emigrants on a plane chartered by the Australian government was preceded by a speech made by the Australian Consul. From January to March, 1957, 486 Danes sailed from Bremerhaven on board the *Skaubryn*.

Emigration to Australia was good newspaper copy in the latter half of the 1950's. Australia was still considered »a land of opportunity«, and newspapers carried many stories describing the conditions of Danish immigrants in Australia, good as well as bad.

Some of these stories were written by disappointed immigrants still in Australia or by Danes who had returned to Denmark to stay. They harshly attacked the description of conditions in Australia provided by the Australian Consulate and claimed they had not been told the truth about the difficulty of finding housing and a job. The Australian Consul countered by claiming that such stories were exaggerated and the accusations unfair. There were other articles by satisfied, well-established Danes who could not understand the problems described by the newcomers.

In truth, the immigrants did face difficult conditions. There was a distinct shortage of housing everywhere and rents were high. For these reasons many Danish immigrants had to spend a long time in the immigration centres before obtaining their own homes. The labour situation was difficult as well, and unskilled workers, in particular, had difficulty finding jobs. Artisans and farm workers could

usually find work but they often had to travel far to get it. These problems were a common topic in the diplomatic reports received by the Foreign Office in Denmark.

Headlines such as »Facing a Tragedy in Australia« and »Emigrants Who Can, Rush Back to Denmark« were typical of the type of warnings which often appeared at this time. But there were also articles with a different content which appeared under such headings as: »Cantankerous and Spoiled Danes Should Stay in Denmark«.

Such adverse publicity had a considerable effect on emigration. The number of emigrants decreased from 1007 in 1957 to 369 in 1958. This occurred in spite of the fact that GAPS was still in force and that an additional subsidy agreement was introduced by ICEM (The Inter-governmental Committee for European Migration) which further reduced the fare.

ICEM took over the tasks of IRO at the beginning of 1950. IRO had been mainly concerned with the emigration of refugees and displaced persons who had been forced to leave their own countries because of the war. In 1951 these problems were, for the most part, solved, and the organisation was dissolved. ICEM had a broader purpose in that it was to organise the transport of »... migrants, for whom existing facilities are inadequate and who could not otherwise be moved, from certain European countries having surplus population to countries overseas which offer opportunities for orderly immigration, consistent with policies of the countries concerned«. Denmark became a member of this committee in 1952.

In the summer of 1957, Australia expressed a desire to have Danish emigrants covered by ICEM regulations, along the same lines as emigrants from several other European countries. This issue was discussed at an ICEM meeting held in Geneva in August of that year. At this meeting the Danish representative pointed out that this was a matter to be determined by Australia and ICEM only and

that the Danish government would not make any economic contribution. Therefore, in September the Australian Consulate distributed a letter to some 200 Danes who had expressed an interest in emigration. They were informed that they could sail for Australia from Rotterdam on October 30, 1957, on the *S/S Waterman* chartered by ICEM. The fare was quite low, and 34 people booked passage on the ship. And then the trouble began.

Emigration agents who learned of the matter felt their business threatened and brought a complaint before the Danish Emigration Office accusing the Australian Consulate of acting as an unauthorised agent. The Australian Consul admitted that he was not aware of the provisions of the Danish Emigration Act, and when he had acquainted himself with them, he requested that a member of the consulate be authorised as an emigration agent. This request was denied, and when ICEM later applied for the authorisation of an agent, their application was also turned down.

Negotiations among the various parties took place during the following months, and a solution was arrived at that winter. The Danish agents accepted the right of ICEM to function in Denmark, provided that the emigrants were registered through them and a full fee paid. Attempts to reduce this fee failed, and as neither ICEM nor the Australian government were willing to pay it, the price of the emigrant's fare was increased.

Emigrants who could be given consideration under the ICEM regulations were the same as those considered under the terms of GAPS, but the age limits were increased in May, 1959. Just as in GAPS, the emigrants assisted by ICEM were obliged to repay the subsidy if they left Australia within 2 years.

Official approval of the arrangement worked out for Denmark was not given until a meeting held in Washington, D.C. in May, 1958. Canada, in particular, was opposed to the arrangement, possibly because this

country feared the loss of some of the emigrants from Denmark.

At the end of 1958 the Australian Minister of Immigration, A.R. Downer, tried again to increase emigration to Australia by increasing the amount of the GAPS subsidy from £37.10 to £57.10 (DKK 1100). In addition, the minister himself made a tour of Europe in the spring and summer of 1959, arriving in Denmark in late June for a 3-day visit. Once more, the Australian Consulate held propaganda meetings throughout the country, this time with the participation of a selection team. This meant that prospective emigrants could be given a medical examination and speak with a selection officer during the same visit. This plan also saved those living outside the Copenhagen area the time and expense of travelling to the capital. At the same time large advertisements describing the splendour of Australia appeared in several newspapers.

But the low-priced tickets available through ICEM and the increased subsidy via GAPS could not compensate for the negative information in the Danish media about the unemployment and lack of housing in Australia, to say nothing of the patronising attitude of Australians towards newcomers. Many reports from the Danish Consulate in Sydney from 1959 to 1965 show that these problems were all too real. Therefore, only about 400 Danes emigrated to Australia from 1959 to 1960. Another reason for this low number could be the increasing prosperity in Denmark at this time.

In July, 1961, there was a riot in the Bonegilla immigration camp. More than 1000 immigrants who were discontent with their conditions attacked the local labour exchange. Some of them carried signs reading: »Give us work or send us back to Europe«.

At the end of 1960 the ICEM programme for Danish citizens was cancelled, and in October 1966, GAPS was replaced by a new immigration programme called the »Special

Passage Assistance Programme« (SPAP). Conditions with regard to qualifications, age limits and the obligation to stay in Australia for 2 years were largely the same as under the GAPS arrangement, but the subsidy offered was considerably higher, up to AS335 (DKK 2800).

The new SPAP arrangement was apparently attractive as seen from the fact that the number of emigrants in 1968 was 896, compared with 410 in 1966. But once again warnings in the press about unemployment and the shortage of housing soon stemmed this stream of emigrants. Many of the articles told of Danes who wanted to return to Denmark but were unable to do so within the first 2 years because of the obligatory refund of the subsidy.

In May, 1971, the Danish embassy in Canberra reported that Australia wanted to reduce the number of immigrants. This was partly due to the fact that an increase in the number of immigrants was not consistent with the non-inflation policy of the government and partly to the fact that the economic boom in Europe had lowered the average quality of the emigrants. One report expressed it this way: *»It has apparently been concluded that it does not pay to scrape the bottom of the barrel of the European labour market«.*

The SPAP arrangement was allowed to expire in 1974. Danish emigrants to Australia could no longer obtain support and the number of entry permits given was limited.

In the years from 1945 to 1958, the Danish Emigration Office registered 3068 persons as emigrants to Australia. During this same period, the Australian authorities recorded 4368 Danish immigrants, of which 2768 had received some kind of travel assistance. The number of emigrants from Denmark to Australia from 1959 to 1968 was recorded as 3735, while Australia noted the entry of 5035 Danish immigrants.

The number of emigrants' to Australia from 1945 to 1958 was higher than the 3068

noted above because those who travelled by air were not registered as emigrants. It is, however, not likely that many travelled in this way because it was so much more expensive to travel by air than by sea.

After World War II farmers and farm workers made up only 5% of those who emigrated, probably due to the difficulty of acquiring land in Australia. The currency policy of the Danish National Bank also had a restrictive influence on emigration. The number of workers from the cities increased after the war, and the number of non-working family members, i.e., wives and children, increased to one-half of the total of all emigrants to Australia.

Likewise, the distribution of the sexes also changed, and after the war approximately 40% of those emigrating were women and 60% were men. This was largely due to the increase in the number of families emigrating; family groups sometimes made up as much as 70% of the total of those emigrating. Persons in their 20's were still the dominant age group at this time, but the number of children was on the increase.

## RE-MIGRATION TO DENMARK

Not all the Danish emigrants found it easy to leave Denmark and move to the opposite side of the globe to start a new life. Many had difficulty in adjusting to the new environment. It was hard to find a decent home and a good job, and many of the newcomers found the new language a daily trial. Some immigrants became so homesick that they had to return to Denmark. Others, probably the majority, found it easier to adjust to their adopted country.

Certainly not all the emigrants who left for Australia intended to stay there forever. It is likely that many young people emigrated with the intention of returning to Denmark after a few years when they had satisfied their craving for adventure and perhaps saved a little money.

For the majority who did settle permanently in Australia, it became much easier to visit Denmark once faster shipping routes and cheaper air travel became available. It is difficult to determine, in fact, exactly how many Danish-Australians did just come back to visit Denmark and how many returned to stay. Neither the Danish nor the Australian statistics are entirely accurate on this point, and, considering the many uncertain factors, it is difficult to conclude anything definite about actual re-migration.

Nevertheless, some attempt will be made here to indicate in broad statistical terms how many Danes returned to Denmark after spending a period of time in Australia. It has been possible to research only the statistics for certain periods of the 20th century.

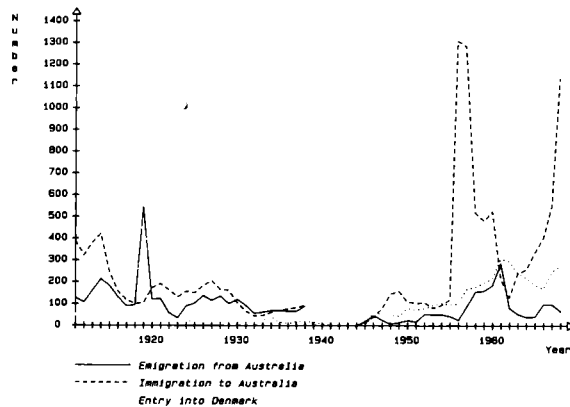
In the 19th century Danish re-migration from Australia was probably limited. The danger involved, the price and the time it took to travel such a great distance kept many from making the trip twice. An exception to this is seen, however, toward the end of the gold rush in the 1860's. At that time many returned to Denmark or travelled to other countries.

From 1911, the Australian statistics record the permanent departure of Danish citizens, that is, of those who left after having lived in Australia for at least one year. The interrelationship of the Australian statistics for immigration and re-migration are shown in Fig. 2, and from 1933 these numbers can be supplemented with the number of Danes who travelled to Denmark from Australia.

The figure can provide no more than a guideline due to the many uncertain factors in the statistics. But if the main trend is valid, it can be concluded that prior to World War II the percentage of those who re-migrated was about 70. In the period after 1945 the percentage can be calculated to be about 20.

A re-migration of almost three-quarters of all those who emigrated seems surprisingly high, but the Australian census shows that the

Fig. 2. Danish Re-migration from Australia 1911 - 1968.



Source: Danish and Australian Statistics

Danish-born population in Australia decreased greatly during this period, thus indicating that the percentage is probably correct. The reason that so many Danes re-migrated in 1919 was probably that the end of World War I made it possible for them to do so. Most of those who left at this time were probably returning emigrants, but it is not actually known whether they were just visiting Denmark or if they were going to stay there. It can be assumed that some were businessmen and visiting relatives who were stranded in Australia by the war and who could not return to Denmark until the end of hostilities.

The re-migration statistics for the period from 1945 to 1968 are more accurate and indicate that one-fifth of all Danish emigrants to Australia returned to Denmark.

## CONCLUSION

Danish emigration to Australia took place mainly in two periods: In the 1870's and in the time just after World War II. There was a somewhat smaller number of emigrants, but nonetheless a significant one, at the beginning of the 20th century. These periods were also the periods in which Australian immigration programmes were directed specifically at Danish citizens. In those periods when no

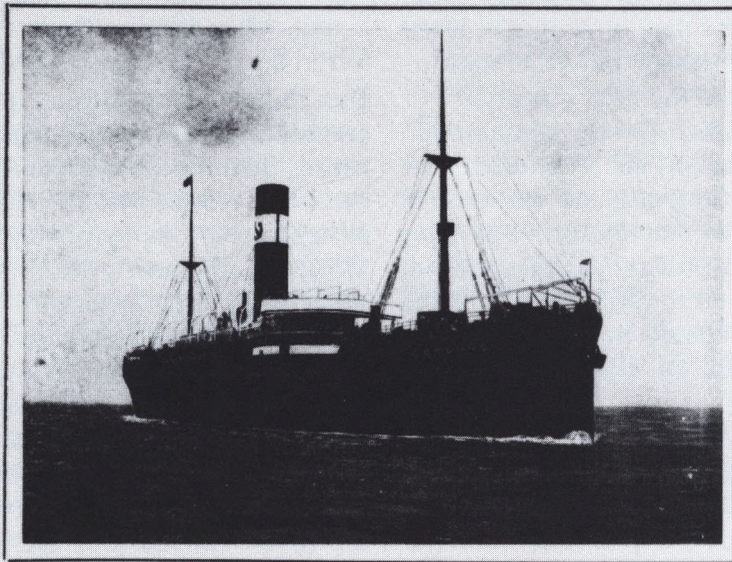


**THIRD CLASS.**

# P AND O

## BRANCH SERVICE

(Late LUND'S BLUE ANCHOR LINE)



To South Africa.

# AUSTRALIA.

New Zealand. Tasmania.

travel subsidy was available, emigration was correspondingly low.

It can therefore be concluded that the volume of Danish emigration to Australia was determined largely by the Australian immigration schemes. Other factors influencing emigration were the reports in the press, both positive and negative, and the activities of the

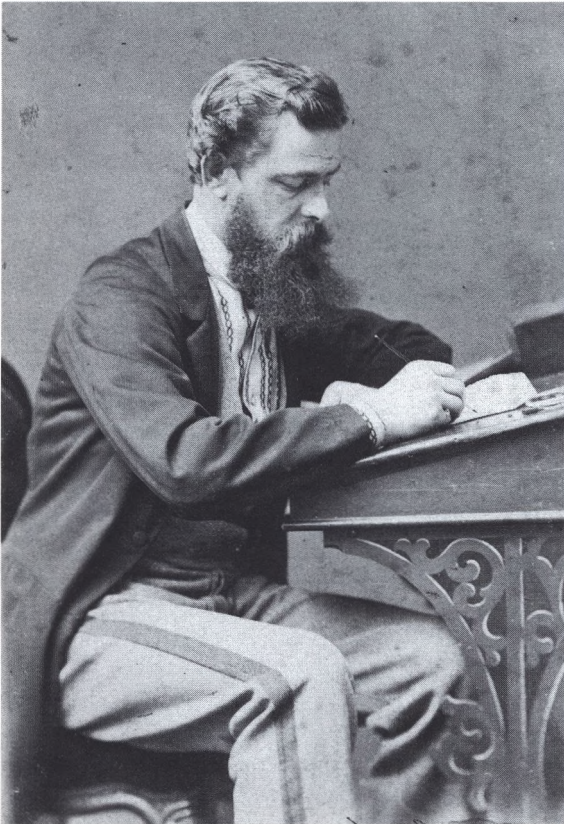
Australian Consulate in Denmark. But economic support was, without question, the greatest stimulus to emigration.

In general, the distance to Australia, the cost of passage and the unfamiliarity with that part of the world kept Danish emigration to Australia to a minimum, and only economic support could lead to an increase.

# Niels Peter Schourup – a Danish photographer in Australia and New Zealand

by *Birgit Larsen*

Niels Peter Schourup.  
Photograp from the 1860's.



In his book, »Photographers in and from Denmark till 1920«, Bjørn Ochsner notes that 14 photographers of Danish origin had established themselves in Australia or New Zealand by 1920.

One of these was the artist, Niels Peter Schourup, born in 1837 in Nykøbing on the island of Mors in northern Denmark. In this part of the country he was known as the cartographer who had designed a map indicating all the buildings in Nykøbing for a special publication honouring the town.

In the autumn of 1862, Schourup, who was 24 at the time, emigrated to Australia on board the British sailing vessel, *William Jackson*.

The Danes Worldwide Archives in Aalborg, Denmark, holds a collection of letters written by Niels Peter Schourup to his family in Denmark. In his first letters home, Schourup gives a detailed description of the 101 days he spent on board ship and of his earliest days in the unknown, foreign land he finally set foot on. He was also interested to learn of the progress of the Nykøbing publication, as he did not see the final version in print before his departure.

William Jackson, 1st January, 1863

My dear parents, sisters and brothers,

I can think of no better way to celebrate the first day of the New Year than to let you know, my dear ones, how everything has gone until now. I can't thank God sufficiently for the good fortune that put me on board this British ship; a more honest and pleasant man than Captain Levin would be most difficult to find. He will simply do anything for us. The only thing for which I can blame him is that he so spoils us that we are not as fit to go ashore as we otherwise should be.

Proof that he has given us much to eat can be seen in that up till now 100 chickens and ducks have been slaughtered, as well as 6 sheep and 1 pig – and that is only for the consumption of the saloon, where we are but 6 persons – the captain, 2 mates and 3 passengers. The steward and his boy most certainly get the same food, as they are here to serve the saloon only. The boy is a nice little chap, only 12 years old. You could say he has gone to sea before his time.

As it might be of interest to you, I will give you a short description of the ship. It is the size of one of our new frigates. The saloon itself, or dining-room, is 25 feet long and beautifully equipped. The cabins, or sleeping rooms, are situated around the saloon.

Whenever the weather permits – which it does most of the time – we have had stormy weather only a couple of times – you live in such a saloon just as comfortably as in a room on land. Here is everything to make a room cosy – even lots of flowers.

It is an excellent vessel; none of the ships we have caught sight of have been able to keep up with us, as with a gentle breeze we do 12 to 14 sea miles a watch. Today we have been at sea for 95 days, and we expect to arrive at Port Adelaide in 5 or 6 days.

It will be quite nice to see land again after having seen only sky and water for a quarter of a year; in spite of this, however, the time has passed extremely well. There is always something to do; if nothing else, you can play with the cats. We have no fewer than 5 cats on the ship. Apart from the above-mentioned animals which have already gone the way of all flesh, we still have one pig which probably will live to see Australia. There is also a goat which each day sup-

plies us with milk for the coffee and tea, and there is a dog.

The two mates – the only crew members with whom we are in contact – are exceptionally nice and gentlemanly. All officers on board are British, whereas the rest of the crew is rather mixed. It is made up of 7 different nationalities – there are Negroes, Germans, Danes, Norwegians, Swedes, Dutch and Americans. But I am sure all of them are honest people.

The voyage has gone well up till now; 8 days after leaving Copenhagen we entered the Channel; we saw Dover in beautiful moonlight, but since then we have not seen any sign of land. On the 19th of October we passed the island of Madeira without seeing it.

On Sunday the 9th of November we crossed the Equator – and during that time it was, of course, rather hot. I celebrated my 25th birthday at the 13th latitude – that is, on the other side of the Earth. On Sunday the 7th of December we passed the meridian of the Cape of Good Hope. The Cape is, as you know, at the southernmost tip of Africa. On Monday the 22nd we had the year's longest day, so you can see it is just about the opposite of home as regards the weather – for example, today is New Year's Day and we have fine weather with a temperature of 16°C.

I have drawn portraits of the captain and the mates – to their great pleasure – and it is probably because of that that I am their favourite. I must not forget to tell you that the captain, like a true Englishman, also has his little peculiarities, and some of them are most unusual. If he scolds the goat and whips the dog or lifts up the cats by their tails or their ears, then you can surely swear that the wind is wrong. On the other hand, if he feeds the goat, plays with the dog and give the cats meat then the wind is always a favourable one. – But whatever mood he is in on deck, he is always the gentleman in the saloon, or when he speaks to us; he jokes with us and supplies us with illustrated magazines in such abundance that we have not been able to read them all in a whole year. I am, by the way, not the first to have noticed that he is an unusually pleasant man, because the other day I was reading some old newspapers from Melbourne and saw a letter from his former passengers. They thanked him publicly for his kindness and

splendid treatment of them during their voyage.

I will close for now, as I don't know anything more of interest for you. As soon as I have seen how things are going ashore, I will finish the letter. I hope you will answer me as soon as possible and not forget to let me know anything of interest or to tell me how the industrial exhibition in Aalborg went as well as about the map of Nykøbing.

Please give my best regards to the family and all my acquaintances. You, dear Theodor, must especially give my regards to our three neighbours, Serritslev, Sørensen the postman and Sørensen the clerk and tell the latter that I did not have to present my passport in Copenhagen.

6th January, 1863 – Today we can see land again. Although we have been as comfortable as possible, I feel an indescribable joy at seeing God's dear earth again. It is Kangaroo Island we can see – about 35 miles from Port Adelaide. We will probably not reach it until tomorrow as the wind is against us, and we must tack.

Adelaide, 25th January – As you can see, I have already been here for 3 weeks. We came ashore on the 7th, and the voyage lasted a total of 101 days. The reason I have not written before is that the mail does not leave until Wednesday morning; it is picked up only once a month.

The luck I had on the sea seems to follow me on land. After a few days I obtained a job with a photographer, Professor Hall, and, curiously enough, the first thing I did in Australia was to paint my own portrait – as a test. They do not ask for recommendations here, but rather, »what can you do?»

You can see from the enclosed article which I have cut from a newspaper that the test turned out well. I thought it might please you to see me favourably spoken of in the town's principal newspaper.

Some Englishmen are very nice people, and I live here in the house of the professor as though we had known each other for many years. The first day I was there I was invited to go for a drive with his family. We went to the seaside 2 Danish miles from the town where we enjoyed ourselves the whole afternoon. Since then I have made many excursions together

with them; in short, they show me much attention, so you can see that I am very well off for the time being. But Paradise is never perfect, and we are plagued by many things, such as mosquitoes, a kind of gnat, and a most terrible heat which is sometimes as much as 30 to 40°C. I have never before been able to sweat – but here I sit quietly and sweat the whole day. How it is possible to endure hard labour I do not understand.

I would like to give you a description of this strange country, but time and place do not permit and I do not know much about it yet. Let me just tell you that it is not without reason that Australia has been called the country of wonders. Here you can find animals, birds and plants of such strange shapes, colours and characteristics as cannot be found anywhere else in the world.

Some of the flowers we use great effort to grow in pots at home are here the size of the trees in our dear forests at home. There is such an abundance of fruit here that you can buy more grapes for a penny than you can eat in a whole day. On the other hand, many other things are unbelievably expensive – a pound of tobacco costs 5 rix-dollars, and one glass of distilled spirits or brandy £6 – in spite of this, drunkenness is unfortunately common here.

One of my fellow travellers, Mr. Milner, has got a job, too, at a draper's shop, whereas the other, Mr. Tegner, has nothing yet. There are a number of Danes, Norwegians and Swedes here, so we can soon establish a Scandinavian Club. The best part of it is that there are some very nice fellows among them.

I know that Morsø Avis likes to publish summaries of letters which have come from emigrants. There is certainly nothing here to summarise, and in any case I would not like it – neither would I like for any unauthorised person to see my letter. But, if they like, they are welcome to print the enclosed article, and in that way my dear countrymen can see that I do not disgrace them down here.

Concerning the remainder of our voyage, I would just like to add that our dear captain remained true to himself to the end. We took leave of him a few days after our arrival here, and he continued to Melbourne.

I do not know yet how much money I will earn, but I feel certain I shall be able to repay the money bor-

rowed from the Savings Bank within the time stated.

I would ask Theodor to give my regards to Mrs. Lynge and to little Marie, and, of course, to all my good friends, and you, dear Mother, please give my regards to the Søgaard family, to Uncle and all the other relatives. You probably won't see Uncle Niels, but if you should, please give him my regards, too. To think I might have stayed at home because of him and never have been so happy as I am here now – and I feel sure that in time I shall also be able to earn some money. I must admit that it is perhaps more luck than wisdom which has led to my success, as there are many emigrants here who are very badly off.

That is all for now except for my best regards to you, dear Mother and Father and all of you from your loving son and brother, Peter.

Write soon.

My address is:  
Mr. Schourup  
care of  
Professor Hall  
Hindley Street  
Adelaide, South Australia



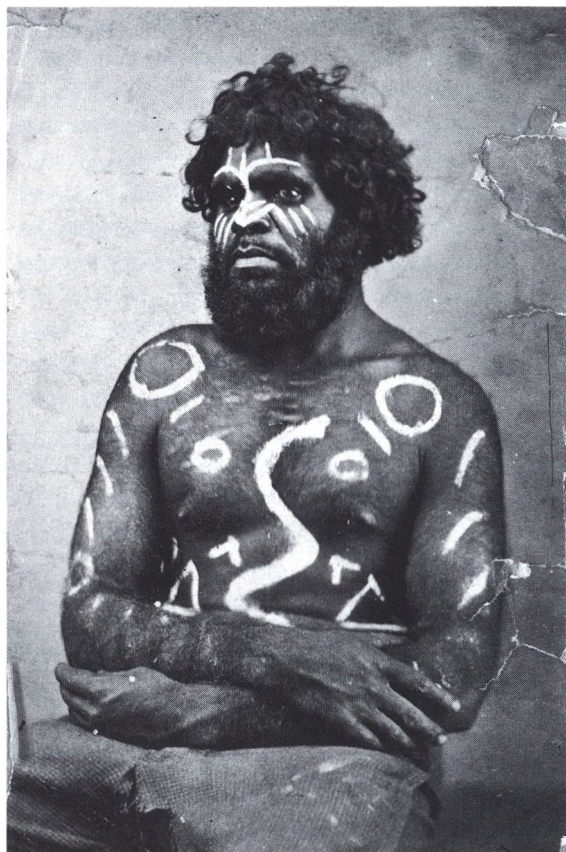
According to the above letter, the young artist-photographer obtained employment with a photographer in Adelaide shortly after his arrival. In later letters he continued to be very optimistic about the future in his new country. After a few years in South Australia, Schourup moved to New Zealand. He started his own photographic studio in Christchurch and developed what became a flourishing business at 150 Colombo Street.

In a letter to his brother in Denmark written in June, 1882, Schourup described how some of his photographs had been presented at a great exhibition in New Zealand where he was awarded a gold medal for his work. This resulted in such fame that customers flocked to his studio.

The letters written after 1883 were less optimistic. Crop failures had led to a number of bankruptcies, and there was less business for the photographer.

Conditions in New Zealand continued to deteriorate; there was a great scarcity of money, and it became obvious that Schourup would really have liked to return to Denmark. The prospect was made more attractive by the fact that sailing ships were being replaced by steamers, thus reducing the length of the voyage to only 40 days. But as he wrote: *»For the time being, my prospects for going home are almost as good as if I wanted to take a journey to the Moon«.*

Unfortunately his health failed, and Niels Peter Schourup died on the 24th of January, 1887, at the age of 49.







# Jørgen Jürgensen

*by Preben Dich*



C.W. Eckersberg's Portrait of Jørgen Jürgensen. Painted circa 1808.

The story of the Danes in Australia is, for the most part, a story of the struggle of industrious, ordinary people to create a life for themselves far from their homeland. A few individuals and groups, however, have left their mark in the form of exceptional accomplishments, dramatic destinies or unusual results.

A Dane was there from the very beginning of the white man's era on this distant continent – in fact long before the English and James Cook arrived. Australia was discovered by the Dutch, and one of the first vessels to touch at this »new« continent was called *Geelwinck*, the ship's first mate, Johannes Bremer, was from Copenhagen. The year was 1696. The proof of this event is a small tin plaque set up by the ship's crew on Dirk Hartog island off the west coast of Australia. It is on this plaque that one can read of Johannes Bremer.

Australian historians say that the first Scandinavian ship to enter Australian waters was the Danish frigate, *Fredensborg* which almost went aground in 1818 on what was then an almost unknown group of islands northwest of Australia. This group has since been named the Monte Bello islands.

The first Danish pioneer about whom there is considerable knowledge is the adventurous Jørgen Jürgensen, son of a Court clockmaker from Østergade street in Copenhagen. The account of his life on the oceans and four continents is so fantastic that were it not possible to document his accomplishments, not even the most imaginative author of fiction could invent a story quite like his.

The story of Jørgen Jürgensen is the story of a mischievous boy from Efterslægtsselskabet's school who in turn became a sailor, mate, captain, whaler, explorer, dueller, pirate, prisoner of war, plotter of coups, secret agent, author, dramatist, gambler, doctor, preacher, thief, condemned and later deported convict, customs officer, geodesist, policeman, socialist, journalist, farmer and

drunkard!

The most significant acts of his life were staged in four towns: Copenhagen, Hobart, Reykjavik and London.

#### IN CAPTAIN COOK'S FOOTSTEPS

Jørgen was born in Copenhagen on April 7th, 1780. His father was the respected Court clockmaker, Jørgen Jürgensen, who could not afford to provide all of his five children with much schooling of any kind. But the unruly Jørgen Junior was much more interested in going to sea than in book-learning. As he later wrote:

*»The visits of foreign ships filled my head imperceptibly with a desire to go to sea and visit other countries. When I saw a Danish East-Indiaman set sail with all the officers on deck in their fine uniforms, my heart burned with the envious desire to be one of them. And in my wildest dreams I could imagine nothing more enjoyable than to move across still waters in a big ship together with new people and in new surroundings.*

*Perhaps my father intended to cure me of my longing for the sea when he apprenticed me to a collier who had brought a load of coal from Newcastle for the blacksmiths of Copenhagen.«*

In 1794 the 14-year-old boy from Copenhagen put to sea for the first time with the good ship, *Jane*. At first he sailed only in the North Sea and the Baltic, but later, in 1798, he joined the crew of a whaler bound for South Africa. After some exciting experiences as a whaler and as a midshipman on board the armed British schooner *HMS Surprise* during a sea battle against the French, he was taken on as second-mate on the brig, *Lady Nelson*, which was on its way to Australia to carry out a hydrographic survey. The ship weighed only 60 tons, but, in spite of its size, it carried a crew of 15 and was armed with six large cannon.

The waters to be studied and surveyed were those which today separate the Australian mainland and the island and state of Tasmania. At that time – in 1798 – it was not

known whether there was a strait there or whether Tasmania was, in fact, the southernmost tip of Australia.

Tasmania was discovered in 1642 by the Dutch explorer, Abel Jansz Tasman. He called this new area Van Diemen's Land (after the Dutch governor of East-India, Anthony van Diemen). Not until 200 years later, in 1856, was the island given its current name of Tasmania together with its own colonial government and parliament.

From 1642 to 1772 no Europeans visited the island – which no one realised was an island. The black native population enjoyed a quiet, Stone Age existence with no inkling of the suffering soon to be inflicted on them by the white man. Two Frenchmen, du Fresne and Fureaux, carried out brief explorations into this unknown area in 1772, and James Cook paid it a quick visit – to obtain fresh water – in 1777. But no white settlement was established there.

When the British naval vessels and convict ships of that period sailed from Europe via South Africa to the colony of New South Wales on the east coast of Australia, the route passed south of Van Diemen's Land. This was a dangerous, cold and stormy area. The southern tip of the island lies on the 44th parallel and these waters were known to seamen as »The Roaring Forties«.

The *Lady Nelson's* first task was to investigate a theory put forward by a British doctor, Dr. George Bass, in 1797 that there was a strait separating the mainland and Van Diemen's Land. If this theory could be proven, and the strait were navigable, a good deal of money and 500 sea miles could be saved on runs to and from Europe.

Before the *Lady Nelson* reached her destination, Bass and the well-known British explorer, Captain Flinders, had already made the run through the strait and back again.

The *Lady Nelson* made the first passage through the strait on January 1st, 1801. And second-mate Jorgenson, as Jürgensen was

called in English, gave a detailed account of the characteristics of the strait in the log book. Three days later the *Lady Nelson* sailed slowly to her mooring in Sydney Cove in the lee of the little promontory on which modern man has constructed the magnificent opera-house designed by the Dane, Jørgen Utzon, and built both as a cathedral of music and in appreciation of the sailing ships which brought the first colonists to the continent.

It was a proud second-mate of 20 who stepped ashore in the new world to enjoy a well-deserved shore leave. Together with other members of the crew of the *Lady Nelson* he was praised by Governor King, although there was some disappointment at the fact that Flinders had made the first run through the strait.

A few days later, the *Lady Nelson* set out on new surveying tasks. Among other things, a study was to be made to discover what possibilities for colonisation existed on the southern coast of the mainland, west of the Bass strait. On the 14th of February, 1802, the *Lady Nelson* sailed into a previously unexplored bay where two narrow peninsulas formed a perfect natural harbour. The place was immediately named Port Philip, after the first governor of New South Wales. Captain Murray and his red-headed second-mate, Jorgenson, were the first to set foot on shore. A group of sailors quickly followed, but what was to have been a peaceful landing, ended in a blood bath. A group of black natives attacked the white men with spears and stone axes. The sailors retaliated with their muskets. But what ended the battle was a salvo from three of the *Lady Nelson's* cannon which frightened the natives out of their wits. Three black men lay dead. They were the first victims of the colonisation which later led to the founding of Melbourne, one of the world's largest sea ports and today the capital of the state of Victoria. Several years ago, a local politician suggested that some new streets be named for the officers of the *Lady Nelson*.

Nothing came of the idea, and there is therefore no Jorgenson Street in Melbourne today.

While Jorgenson sailed among the islands off the coast of Australia, a war was raging in Europe. Scattered details reached the distant colony after much delay. Had Jorgenson known, for example, of the English assault on Copenhagen in April of 1801, he would no doubt have been less enthusiastic about continuing service on board His British Majesty's naval vessel. The ship was named for the wife of the admiral who led the attack on the city of his birth, killing and wounding over 2000 persons, including several of his old school fellows and friends of the family.

The French were also active in the South Seas, and occasionally French ships entered the harbour of New South Wales seeking shelter or provisions. There was a formal coldness between the French and British, but nothing approaching a war-like atmosphere. And when, again after some delay, the French-British peace of 1802 was proclaimed in Sydney, Jorgenson was among those who celebrated on board the French marine research ship, *Coromandel*. His festive mood was somewhat dampened by news of the tragic battle of Copenhagen, but he was comforted by the news of peace. A peace which was to be short-lived.

One of the things Jorgenson learned from the French was that there was a plan afoot to discover whether it would be possible to create a French settlement on Van Diemen's Land. Other rumours confirmed this. A worried Governor King wrote therefore to the Colonial Secretary, Lord Hobart, in London and requested permission to initiate a British settlement on the island as a »branch« of the colony in New South Wales.

The request was approved. The Colonial Secretary determined that the leader of the new settlement should be a naval officer, David Collins, and that he should be given the title of Vice-Governor.

Governor King realised, however, that time

was short. French activity in the Bass Strait suggested that their settlement was imminent. King did not, therefore, wish to wait until Collins arrived from London. Instead he quickly equipped two vessels, *Lady Nelson* and the 362 tons heavier former whaler, *Albion*. The leader of the expedition was the 18-year-old lieutenant and nobleman, John Bowen. His orders were to locate a suitable place for the settlement near the mouth of the Derwent river on the east side of Van Diemen's Land. Bass and Flinders had previously anchored there and had notified Sydney that there was suitable terrain, the possibility of establishing a harbour and fresh water.

On board the two vessels there were 49 persons who were to settle the new colony. They had with them 150 tons of provisions. In addition to the new settlers, the two ships carried their normal crews, thus bringing the total »party« to about 65 persons.

The *Lady Nelson* sailed from Sydney on August 28, 1803, a cool, damp winter morning. The newly appointed first-mate, Jorgenson, gave the helmsman the first instructions on how to shape a course which would bring the two heavily laden ships to their destination, 700 sea miles distant. It was a gruelling trip.

At one point, one of *Lady Nelson's* masts broke and had to be replaced by a jury mast. »The Roaring Forties« lived up to their reputation as some of the world's roughest waters.

Nine days and nights later the ships dropped anchor in Ralph's Bay at the mouth of the Derwent. The storm had abated and visibility was so good that the island's future settlers could get a clear view of their new home. It was green and fertile with a mountain in the distance which lifted its snow-clad heights to a total of 1200 metres. It was later named Mount Wellington.

After a good night's rest they began the trip up the river. Jorgenson navigated, assisted by the second-mate, Harry Risdon. Lieutenant Bowen's knowledge and abilities were concentrated in the areas of combat and admin-

istration, while the three-year older and more experienced Jorgenson was accustomed to sailing in narrow, rock-filled waters. Navigating the Derwent was child's play for him.

Friday, September 9th, 1803, at 3 p.m.

– A historic date and time in Tasmania's, and therefore also Australia's, history. In a loud, clear voice first-mate Jorgenson gave the order to drop anchor. The *Lady Nelson* and the *Albion* had arrived at their destination, a little cove on the northern shore of the river, perfectly suited for a landing. And in bright sunshine the people and their provisions began to disembark. It was hard work, and at sundown, as the tired settlers sought shelter and rest in the hastily erected tents, a tot of rum was poured for the ships' crews – the first since they had sailed from Sydney. Mission accomplished!

The *Albion* sailed again the next day. She had to take part in the annual whaling before the big mammals migrated too far south with the approach of spring.

The *Lady Nelson*, and with her, Jorgenson, stayed for three weeks. The practical Dane helped construct the first wooden house, dig the first well and make the first fishing net. All this while the impractical leader of the expedition, Lieutenant Bowen, sat in his comfortable cabin writing the report which would give him a place in the history of the country. A history written by the British about the British. The landing place was named for the British second-mate: Risdon Cove.

There was no place for the Dane in the history of Tasmania.

Jorgenson later described the landing place: »An impenetrable thicket of scrub out of which grew some of the biggest rubber trees on the island«.

The *Lady Nelson* set sail again on October 2nd. A brisk westerly wind brought the ship quickly out of the Derwent River, and 12 days later it was back in Sydney harbour. Here news was received that David Collins had finally reached Australia and was in Port Philip to establish a kind of port of disembarkation

for the continued colonisation of, among other places, Van Diemen's Land.

The *Lady Nelson* joined Collins' two ships, the HMS *Calcutta* and the *Ocean*, at about the time the new Vice-Governor was forced to give up the Port Philip project because of, among other things, a lack of fresh water. Bowen and Jorgenson gave a report of the expedition to the Derwent. The decision was then made to transport 400 colonists and convicts from Port Philip to Risdon Cove. The transport was carried out by the *Lady Nelson* and the 600 ton freight bark, the *Ocean*.

In the meantime, the first colonists in Risdon Cove had worked hard to establish a smooth-running community. But luck was not with them. There had been no rain for four months, and most of their domestic animals had died.

Patrols which had been sent to the area reported that the settlement was perhaps located too far up the river. The wind, weather and ground conditions were apparently better a little further down at the foot of the big mountain.

On February 16th, a little more than four months after she had left, the *Lady Nelson* was once more back in the Derwent, this time together with the *Ocean*.

Collins inspected the little colony and decided to move it further down the river. On February 20th he determined that the new settlement should be at Sullivan's Cove, 5 miles from Risdon. He named the place for the Colonial Secretary in London, Hobart. Hobart is today the capital of Tasmania and has a population of 45,000. Risdon Cove is known today as »Bowen's Landing«, and is a kind of museum park at the edge of modern Hobart.

After completing some small repairs and taking on supplies of fresh meat and water, the *Lady Nelson* once more sailed out of the Derwent. Jorgensen had helped to write an important chapter in both his own life and the history of Tasmania.

Little could he know that Van Diemen's Land and Hobart were to play an even more important role in his life. And this in both a dramatic and a tragic way.

He continued to sail with the *Lady Nelson* for a few more months as her crew surveyed along the northern coast of Tasmania, but signed off the ship in May, 1804, when she docked in Sydney. Jorgensen had tired of the military atmosphere on board and of always being second-in-command. He longed also to have a little fun and relaxation in Sydney where alcohol flowed freely and where women looked like real ladies and not worn out work animals. Jorgensen's first experience on land was not, however, very amusing. He signed off just after some Irish convicts had rioted. After mass trials, eight were hanged in the market place in Sydney and nine were whipped nearly to death. 500 strokes of the whip to each! Jorgensen drowned the memory of what he had seen in wine, women and song.

## JORGENSEN THE WHALER

When his money ran out, Jorgensen shipped on board a seal-fisher which worked the waters around New Zealand.

*»We killed several thousand of these harmless animals. It was surprising to see with what zest the sailors went about this task. With the greatest enthusiasm and tirelessness they struck the seals down with their clubs and spread them out to dry or salted them in barrels. At that time a sealskin in London cost a guinea,«* wrote Jorgensen in a report that today is reminiscent of the great discussion of the Canadian killing of baby seals. People seem not to change much in spite of all other development. Whipping and torture for rebels, and beating with clubs for innocent animals.

After fourteen days of this incredibly bloody slaughter of seals, Jorgensen happened to meet the captain of the whaling ship *Alexander*. They exchanged news of the whales' whereabouts. Captain Rhodes had

had a bad season and was therefore interested in hearing Jorgenson's descriptions of the large schools of whales in the Bass Strait and off the east coast of Van Diemen's Land.

Jorgenson had also developed a new, more efficient method of catching whales: *»We must do it as they do it on the Faroes in the North Atlantic. The school must be driven into a cove or the mouth of a river so the whales run aground on the banks and can be killed in an instant.«*

Captain Rhodes offered to make the experienced Dane his partner on the *Alexander*. Jorgenson accepted and became an assistant captain at the age of 24.

The whaling went even better than anticipated. Jorgenson was right, there were many whales off the coast of Tasmania. The hunt also took him into the mouth of the Derwent where he had an opportunity to meet his old friends and see how quickly Hobart had developed into a well-organised town with military fortifications, a solid prison, a church and a house for the Vice-Governor.

Jorgenson's experience contributed to the establishment of a permanent whaling station at Hobart and whaling played an important role in the economy of Tasmania well into the 20th century. Partly because of the energy of an enterprising Dane.

Jorgenson then decided that the *Alexander* could turn a nice profit by sailing a cargo of whale blubber direct to Europe instead of sharing profits with the owners of a freighter. He was also eager to pay a visit to his home in Copenhagen.

The voyage took them south of Cape Horn and they put in at New Zealand, Tahiti, Brazil, Saint Helena and Portugal before arriving at their final destination, London. Here Jorgenson sold his share in the *Alexander* and went home to his family in Denmark.

## KING OF ICELAND

The son of the Court clockmaker was made welcome, and the tales of his adventures spread quickly throughout the better

homes of Copenhagen. But it offended many to learn that he had in fact done service in the navy of the enemy, namely the British. The Napoleonic Wars were still raging, and Denmark had taken the side of the French monarch *against* England. After the tragic bombardment of Copenhagen and the loss of the navy in 1807, Jorgenson decided to show himself a true patriot and joined up as the captain of a privateer (he became, in short, a pirate) to sail against England. After an encounter in the North Sea he was taken prisoner and sent to England as a prisoner-of-war. With the help of good English friends he obtained a release from the cramped prison ship and was put on board a ship bound for Iceland where the hungry Icelanders, who had been cut off from supplies from Denmark because of the war, were eager to trade.

It was on this expedition that Jorgenson achieved what could be termed world-wide fame after serving as the »monarch« of Iceland for nine weeks in 1809. This came about after a coup in which the Danish Lord Lieutenant, Count Trampe, known with a certain amount of both scorn and admiration among many in Europe as the »King of Iceland«, was removed from office.

But the Icelandic adventure ended with the intervention of the British navy. The English King could not accept this Danish use of an English ship in an action which could only complicate the war in Europe. Jorgenson was once again taken prisoner.

An endless number of fantastic exploits filled Jorgenson's life from 1809 to 1826. He was in and out of prisons, was both accepted and rejected, gave assistance and was guilty of deceit. He drank and gambled, wrote literature and suffered economic disaster. Among other things, he served the English King at one point as a secret agent in France, Germany and Poland. In addition to sending reports back to Whitehall, he wrote accounts of his travels which were later published in

book form – his descriptions of the continent's brothels, in particular, received wide attention!

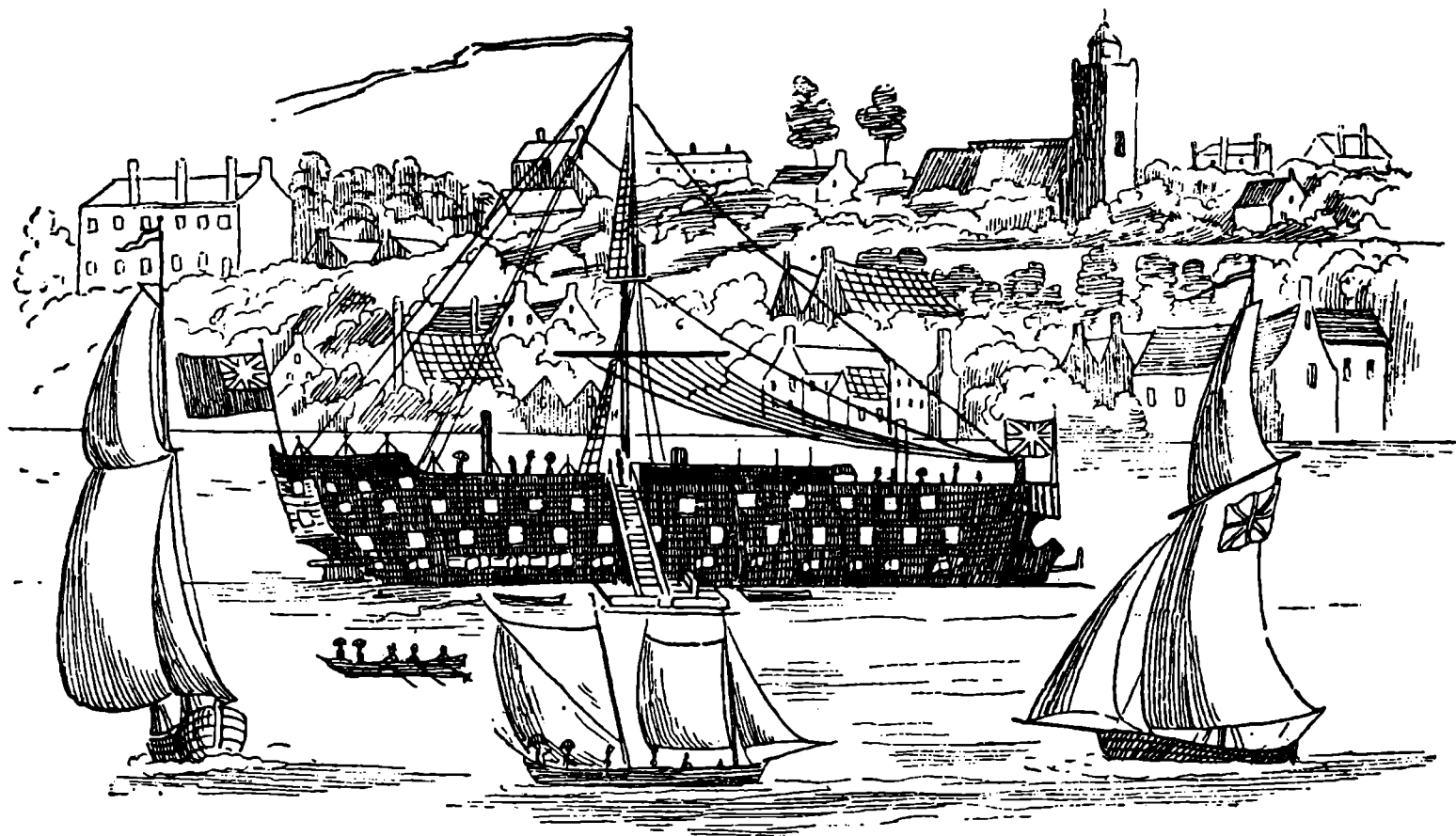
#### SENTENCED TO DEATH AND DEPORTED

Jorgenson's addiction to gambling put him head over ears in debt and led him to do a bit of swindling here and there. Things came to a head with the theft of furnishings and bed linen from the landlady of his lodging house and an attempt to avoid being deported to Denmark. On January 3rd, 1823, he was sentenced to death at the Old Bailey; this sentence was later commuted to life imprisonment and yet again changed to deportation to »the colonies«. He spent the time in prison in the study of theology and medicine, and for a time assisted both the vicar and the doctor of Newgate prison.

On November 5th, 1825, Jorgenson and 150 other prisoners were put on board the convict transport ship, *Woodmann* which was being made ready for departure in Sheerness near the mouth of the Medway River. Long rows of fettered convicts clad in coarsely woven uniforms were put aboard the 423 ton vessel. They were lined up on deck for presentation to Captain Daniel O'Leary. It was here they first learned where the ship was bound. Jorgenson must have felt that fate had had a hand in things when he heard that the *Woodmann* was bound for Van Diemen's Land, or to be more exact, Hobart, near the mouth of the Derwent. Here many able bodies were needed in developing the new, promising colony.

Twenty-two years had passed since the *Lady Nelson* had sailed up the Derwent for the first time with a Danish first-mate at the helm.

And such is destiny that on April 29th, 1826, it was also a blond, though somewhat older, Dane who piloted the prison ship, *Woodmann* through the hidden rocks of the Derwent. The ship had been ravaged by tropical fever on its four-month voyage, and many had died, including the ship's doctor. On the



67 Jørgen Jürgensen's own drawing of a floating prison.



last part of the journey Jorgenson served as ship's doctor, and as Captain O'Leary himself was both weak and inexperienced, it was the fettered Dane who navigated and steered the final miles up the Derwent to Hobart. Jorgenson described the journey in his memoirs:

*April 29, 1826:*

*»We sailed up the river in a brisk breeze. I, who had been in this same place 24 years previously, before any white man owned a single piece of land on Van Diemen's Land and everything was a wilderness, was very moved. Along the river I noticed a number of farms with cosy looking houses.*

*But the real surprise came when we reached the harbour next morning. I have visited many colonies and settlements all over the world, but never before have I seen such a great change as that which had taken place and now lay before me here, namely beautiful Hobart Town. If I had read a description of this beauty, I would have cast it aside as exaggeration. The foundations have been laid here for future strength and welfare in less than a generation.*

*When I thought back to the time when I helped to found the first settlement at this place, I felt sadness at the whims of Fate. My head sank down upon my breast and I couldn't help shedding a tear over my helpless situation and my shattered hopes. – And yet I was cheered by the thought that time heals all wounds and that a fresh start, new vigour and faith in Providence could lead to a better future.«*

The ship anchored in Hobart's harbour that afternoon. The next morning all the convicts were led ashore. In close ranks they marched with clanging chains to primitive barracks near the harbour. Here they were inspected by the Vice-Governor of the island, Colonel George Arthur, who ordered them to lead pious, honest and hard-working lives. He assured them that those who did not conform could expect to be punished.

When Jorgenson had last been in Hobart in November, 1804, on board the whaler *Alexander*, there had been 433 white people on Van Diemen's Land. And Hobart had been no more than a cluster of huts on the river bank.

Now, in 1826, the population of the island

had grown to 13,000. About 6,000 of this number were convicts; the remainder were either volunteer immigrants or previous convicts who, after having served their sentences or having been pardoned, had stayed on the island. Released prisoners rarely had the money or the opportunity to return to Europe.

Hobart now had over 5,000 inhabitants. No longer only a cluster of houses, it now reached far inland and up the side of Mount Wellington.

Vice-Governor Arthur's oft-repeated plea to the colony authorities in Sydney and to the government in London was for more people. The judges in England were aware of this wish, and it influenced their sentencing. A request for additional female prisoners had resulted in extensive raids among London's prostitutes.

The arrival of a new shipload of convicts was an occasion of interest to everyone in Hobart. Together with the convicts there was often news from England – to say nothing of letters, parcels or greetings.

And the town's two newspapers took notice of who arrived. On May 6, 1826, the *Hobart Town Gazette*, a weekly paper, noted that the *Woodmann* had docked with a load of convicts. Among them, wrote the paper, was *»a person born in Denmark by the name of Jørgen Jorgenson. Formerly a doctor's assistant in Newgate Prison in London and well-known among most of the convicts in the colony. He is a very intelligent man and speaks several languages. He took part in the founding of the colony as the first-mate on board the Lady Nelson«.*

Jorgenson's fame was thus acclaimed from the beginning. It was strange for the 46-year-old Dane to have to start over again from the beginning. As a humbled convict. While it was true that the newspaper wrote of his intelligence, his Icelandic adventure and many voyages, his books and sermons and fine connections counted for nothing; in fact he soon gained a reputation as a dreamer.

The Australian historian, Frank Clune, wrote in 1954 that *»in all of Australia's history of convict-colonisation there is nothing to compare with the tragic irony of Jorgenson's life: The curious spider's web that Fate spun around him encompassed and controlled his life.«*

Clune compares Jorgenson with Shakespeare's Hamlet: *»The legendary Dane of Elsinore with all his rhetoric and intricate metaphors clearly had a wrong to avenge and was incited almost to madness by a spirit. Jorgenson's tragedy was far more complicated. The reason for all his misfortunes lay within himself.«*

One by one the new convicts in Hobart were required to report to the local prison authorities. Here they were given a medical examination and were asked about their qualifications and wishes. Most of the prisoners were fit for nothing but physical labour. Jorgenson said that he was not afraid to use his hands, but that he perhaps had qualifications that could be put to better use. He was, after all, no longer a young man.

Vice-Governor George Arthur was of the old school of public servants who believed that order and discipline were best maintained through severe punishment and perpetual threats.

Twelve thieves, the so-called »bush rangers«, were sentenced to death on the very day the *Woodmann* docked in Hobart, and on May 4th they were hanged outside the town's prison. All the convicts in the town in addition to the soldiers and school children were called out to witness the executions.

In the course of 1825 and 1826, there were 103 public hangings in the little town. Thirty-seven persons were sentenced to death at one single Court sitting.

Public whippings were carried out as a matter of course. Jorgenson and his comrades from the *Woodmann* were made aware of the severe conditions awaiting convicts from the very first.

Jorgenson's first job was to serve as a clerk in the local customs office. Although not too

interesting, the work was fairly independent. He could go and come as he wished in Hobart so long as he returned to the prisoners' barracks each evening. After several months he succeeded in securing simple private lodgings with the help of friends. But he was still a convict, that is, subject to the arbitrary decisions of the colonial administration and given a very small income.

Convicts were welcome to frequent the town pubs so long as they did not become inebriated or disturb the »free« citizens. There were severe punishments for those who broke these rules. In the beginning Jorgenson didn't visit the pubs often and he gave gambling a wide berth.

*»My deportation has completely eliminated the unfortunate fondness for gambling which has plagued me for many years. Returning to the gaming tables would be the worst thing that could happen to me.*

*I felt like most of the other convicts on Van Diemen's Land. To be suddenly set down in new surroundings and given a new job – just like a new graft on a tree – it hurts for a while, until you become accustomed to the pain. Only then can the convict become a new person in both body and soul.«*

## POLICE SPY AND EXPLORER

In the autumn of 1826 Jorgenson sought out the Chief of Police, A. Humphrey, and told him that he had heard about some suspicious fellows who had a large number of »Treasury Bills«, a kind of government bond. He thought they must be either stolen or forged. Humphrey asked him to investigate further. Jorgenson associated with the town's criminal elements with the blessing of the Chief of Police for a couple of months. In January, the police took action. 4000 pounds worth of forged bonds were confiscated and the forgers arrested.

At a single stroke, Jorgenson gained the respect of the authorities – while, at the same time, losing the respect of his old comrades from the *Woodmann* who now saw him as a

disgusting informer.

Now was the time to make use of his old talents. He began to ring the doorbells of influential people with money. The perservering convict made quite an impression, and Vice-Governor George Arthur soon received the following recommendation signed by two bank managers and ten prominent grocers:

*»The undersigned managers of The Bank of Van Diemen's Land and grocers residing in Hobart recommend that Jørgen Jorgenson be pardoned.*

*Jorgenson has just brought to light a large number of forged Treasury Bills which would otherwise have created great difficulties for the government and for trade in our colony.*

*It says something for Mr. Jorgenson that when offered fifty pounds for finding the bonds, he refused and emphasised that his motive in this endeavour had been to return these securities to their rightful owners in the event that they were stolen or to keep them out of circulation in the event that they were forged.«*

But the Vice-Governor was not disposed to pardon Jorgensen just a few months after his arrival on the island. He had, after all, been sentenced to life imprisonment, and all indications from London were that he was something of a trouble-maker.

But there was one person who felt a debt of gratitude to Jorgenson: Chief of Police Humphrey. So he put Jorgenson in contact with Edward Curr, manager of Van Diemen's Land Company, the largest undertaking on the island.

Van Diemen's Land Company was founded in 1824 when the British Government awarded it the concession to explore and exploit the northwest part of the island. This concession was later expanded to include a much larger section of the island. It was hoped that valuable deposits of minerals might be found on the island, and it was felt that with a good system of transport, it would be possible to find large areas of good farmland.

In 1826 only a few narrow strips of land

along the coast had been explored, while the mountainous interior was virtually unknown, inhabited only by rare, exotic animals and black natives, »aborigines«.

The Van Diemen's Land Company decided to start a settlement at the northwest corner of the island if conditions there proved suitable. In order to make certain of this, they needed to equip an expedition.

And this is when the manager of the company, Edward Curr, got the idea of using Jorgenson. Humphrey had told him of Jorgenson's efforts in 1804 and 1805. It was not possible to obtain a geodesist for the job, but Jorgenson could both read and draw a map, and he was also capable of keeping a journal. Finally, he was used to leading a gang of workers. Perhaps it was also of some importance that, as a convict, Jorgenson was not entitled to earn more than one-half shilling per day, while a »free« leader of an expedition should have received at least 1 1/2 guineas.

Jorgenson was delighted at the prospect of getting away from the tiresome customs office. To have an opportunity to explore virgin lands was especially appealing, so if only Humphrey could get his release from service at the customs office, he was ready to leave as soon as possible.

If he succeeded in carrying out this job to the satisfaction of the Company, he would be one step closer to freedom. He would not be forced to leave this world in bondage as a convict.

On Humphrey's recommendation Jorgenson and another convict, together with a black bearer, started off on September 2nd, 1826, to carry out a task which, to be honest, was practically impossible. Their orders were to find a route over land to the northwest coast of the island. This was a distance of a little over 300 kilometres as the crow flies.

This expedition was comprised of the first white men to cross what today is known as the Central Plateau, an enormous protected area of swamps and lakes on a plateau in the

middle of the island. Most of the rivers on the island rise here, including the Derwent. The plateau is surrounded by mountains teeming with game. In his journal Jorgenson describes encounters with kangaroos, wallabies and a cat-like carnivore found nowhere else in the world and therefore called The Tasmanian Devil.

There was a minimum of provisions, and Jorgenson regretted that they had no rifle with which to shoot some of the many roe deer. But the black bearer, who was called Andy, made a bow and some arrows and with these shot a number of animals.

Jorgenson wrote frequently in his journal and located points of interest on hand-drawn maps. On October 16, 1826, he wrote as follows:

*»When I placed the compass on a rock to make an observation, it began to vibrate so violently that I couldn't use it. There is probably a vein of iron ore hidden somewhere nearby.«*

It was not iron, but tin. The mountain Jorgenson had discovered was later named Mount Bischoff for a president of the board of directors of Van Diemen's Land Company. Mining was begun in 1873, and this proved to be the richest tin mine in the world at that time. The mine is closed today and has been turned into a museum.

Jorgenson's three-man expedition did not reach the west coast of the island. Snow, exhaustion and lack of provisions forced them to turn around – just 75 kilometres from inhabited areas.

Jorgenson returned with a voluminous journal filled with careful measurements and descriptions of the natural surroundings. He wrote that in his judgement it would be possible to establish a land route across the island.

The journey had taken nine weeks. Jorgenson received a total of £8 for his efforts!

Jorgenson felt that he now deserved to be made a free man. After serving only 18 months of a life sentence. He applied for a

pardon in January, 1827. After another expedition across the island (where, among other things, he met a number of the black natives) he returned in July to his humble lodgings in Hobart. A letter from the Vice-Governor's office awaited him, and in it was a »ticket of leave«, that is, a kind of conditional pardon making it possible for the recipient to take work and be paid a »normal« wage. But he was still under the jurisdiction of the prison administration. And the conditions for this partial pardon was continued good behaviour and a weekly meeting with the authorities, to whom he was to describe his activities.

This pardon was given as a reward for his efforts as a »detective« and as an »explorer« as well as for his otherwise good behaviour. – And, of course, this had to be celebrated. For the first time in years he let himself go. He went on a three-day binge in the town pubs, and ended up drunk as a lord at the police station. On July 11th he was fined 5 shillings and given a severe warning.

## POLICE OFFICER JORGENSON

As an almost free man of 47, Jorgenson began to make a new life for himself. Van Diemen's Land Company no longer had any use for his services, and he decided to try to earn his living as a writer.

Jorgenson made an agreement with a local printer whereby he would write articles for a biweekly magazine called *The Colonial Advocate*. The articles dealt primarily with the two expeditions he had carried out on the island. Later he was offered a steady job on the magazine, but his career as a permanently employed journalist lasted only a fortnight. He became bored and resigned.

But, as always, Jorgensen knew just what to do. He sought out his old friend, Chief of Police Humphrey, and got a job as a police officer!

Jorgenson was hired as a constable – an ordinary assistant police officer – in the Field

Police of the village of Oatlands, situated about 30 miles northwest of Hobart at the edge of a large uninhabited area. His job was to protect the white colonists against hostile natives and the so-called »bush rangers«, that is, escaped convicts who made their living by armed robbery. His salary was £25 per year plus a reward for every lawbreaker he arrested. His job commenced on June 1, 1828.

Of his motives for becoming a police officer Jorgenson writes:

*»In this colony it has been difficult for the government to build up a police force which could protect life and property. Even the highest salary hasn't tempted free men to join in the capture of wild and desperate bush rangers and to pursue them over deep rivers and into the almost impregnable mountains. A chance to be free was incentive enough to make any convict risk his life to defend free colonists and other settlers...«*

This rugged Dane seemed to have a genuine talent for police work, and he succeeded in locating and catching numerous criminals. The campaign against the white bush rangers led to a tremendous decrease in the number of assaults and cattle thefts in the Oatlands' area.

While hunting down lawbreakers, Jorgenson met a 28-year-old Irish waitress, Norah Corbett, at an inn in Campbell Town. The girl had a detailed knowledge of the area's underworld, and she shared her knowledge with Jorgenson.

As a offshoot of his police work, in 1828 Jorgenson was made a member of a special police corps which was given the job of driving all the black natives out of Tasmania. The white people were tired of the eternal conflict with the blacks regarding rights to the land, and Vice-Governor Arthur decided to move the more than 2000 black natives to Bruny Island off the east coast of Tasmania (an island about the size of the Danish island of Samsø).

But the blacks refused to give up their homeland, and the new police force was therefore ordered to force them to do so. Jor-

genson was given command of a company or a group of 18 men. There are no specific details of his efforts in this action, which ended in a veritable massacre. Only a handful of the blacks survived and they ended up in prison.

But the authorities were apparently satisfied with Jorgenson's efforts. On June 3, 1830, he discovered a notice in a local newspaper saying that Jorgen Jorgenson was among 12 pardoned convicts. He was now a 100 per cent free man. The only condition of the pardon was that he was never to set foot on the British Isles. He could, on the other hand, travel to any other place, for example to Denmark.

#### FREE AND HAPPY?

But 50-year-old Jorgenson had no plans for leaving Tasmania. One of the reasons for this was that he had fallen in love with Norah Corbett, and another was the fact that in reward for his efforts against the blacks he had been given 100 acres of land near Spring Hill, just south of Oatlands.

On January 1, 1831, Jorgenson quit his job as a police officer and moved back to Hobart. On January 12 he married Norah in St. Matthew's Church in New Norfolk, 25 kilometres west of Hobart. The wedding supper was held in New Norfolk at the »Bush Inn«, a building which still stands and is one of Australia's oldest rustic buildings.

Jorgenson's new dream was to cultivate his 100 acres of sunbaked mountainside. Although he personally put a lot of labour into the clearing of the dense thicket, Norah was not much help. She preferred the town pubs. After a few months Jorgenson gave up, and today another of his dreams lies barren at the foot of Spring Hill, inhabited only by reptiles.

Slowly his savings disappeared. Norah's uncontrollable drinking and Jorgenson's own weakness for festive occasions often landed both in gaol.

Jorgenson did what he could to keep himself out of debtor's prison by writing. He

made the rounds of Hobart's two daily newspapers and the weekly *Colonial Times* almost daily with articles and contributions on all sorts of topics. And he often engaged in sharp controversies with politicians, public officials and other writers.

He became interested in economics. Why shouldn't a former navigator, doctor and preacher also show an interest in economics? Among other things, he was the author of a 132-page book entitled, »Observations on the Funded System«. It was his intention with this book to take stock of the economic policy which had resulted in the enormous debt incurred by Great Britain and her colonies. He refuted the economic law of the jungle of Adam Smith and encouraged the proletariat to settle its account with the greedy capitalists – and this 17 years before Karl Marx put forth his theories.

He wrote as follows:

*»A clever and impudent hypothesis has gone unchallenged and has brought many nations to a miserable state. Great masses of people are thought to have been born for the sole purpose of being available to serve the vices, excesses, luxury and arrogance of the few, and to the eternal degradation of the character of man, these few have taken noble titles, marks of distinction and fine names which should otherwise have been the prerogative of the holiest of holies...«*

These were most courageous and provocative opinions to put forth at that time. But as they were printed in only 400 copies, Jorgenson's thoughts did not become so widespread as to pose any threat to the order of society. And, as they said in Hobart: *It's only Jorgenson who is so often thrown in gaol for drunkenness.*

His marriage to Norah continued to be a burden to Jorgenson. She was an ignorant, fat, sharp-tongued and drunken woman, frequently guilty of adultery and other not quite lawful behaviour.

On Christmas Eve, 1833, Norah was sentenced to three months' imprisonment for indecent behaviour. This provided Jorgenson

with a period of peace. He began writing his autobiography to be printed in the *Hobart Town Almanack*. The work was entitled »A Shred of Autobiography« and described his life from his childhood in Copenhagen to his deportation in 1825.

Jorgenson began writing of his life at the age of 54. He had lost most of his notes and his memory was no longer quite clear. Nevertheless, he exhibits a surprising sense of detail which gives the portrait of his life credibility. In many respects it is a kind of defence, but there are also passages of sharp self-criticism.

*»Who should be better able to describe a man's life than he himself? The intelligentsia of our time has a passion for autobiographies. It is no longer necessary to have a Homer to immortalise an Agamemnon. For where can you find a person unwilling to sing his own praises – or to proclaim his own exploits from the house tops – or, as in my case, a person who can bear the thought of his destiny's deplorable but educational tribulations remaining unknown and unmourned?«*

Early in October, 1834, Jorgenson proudly turned in a manuscript written in his neat, legible handwriting. The almost unbelievable story of the boy from Copenhagen who founded Hobart, became the monarch of Iceland and, finally, a convict, appeared in the Christmas issue of the almanack. There was talk of little else that Christmas in Hobart.

In 1835 Jorgenson unexpectedly received a letter from home via the Danish embassy in London. It was from his brother, Fritz, who wrote to tell him that both their mother and the oldest brother, Urban, were dead, and that a legacy of 2000 rix-dollars was on its way to Tasmania.

In the midst of his sorrow at the death of his mother, Jorgenson was delighted at the prospect of getting some money. But before it even reached him, he had borrowed against his legacy and spent the entire amount on drink.

Jorgenson wrote the last letter we have

from his hand on September 11th – to his brother. He composed 16 closely written pages which can be seen in the Records Office in Copenhagen. The first lines are written in awkward Danish and the letter is then continued in English. He writes in his own defence for those relatives and friends who have only second-hand knowledge of his activities on Iceland and elsewhere.

*»You are correct when you write in your letter that I have often had the opportunity to create a brilliant career and fame for myself and to become the pride of the family. But love of gambling was not the only weakness which kept me from making progress. All of my passions were violent. My breast always bubbled with deep thoughts of gaining attention for myself.«*

Norah died in July, 1840, weakened by alcoholism and malnutrition.

Jorgenson became immersed in self-pity. A friend described him in a letter as *»a grey-haired, muddle-headed drunkard whose greatest concern it is to find someone to pay for the next tankard of beer.«*

This is the last testimonial we have of the former king of Iceland, the adventurer, criminal and genius, Jørgen Jürgensen.

On January 26, 1841, clerk John Abbott

made the following notation in the Hobart death register: »Jeorgan Jorgensen, male, sixtione years« died of pneumonia in Colonial Hospital on January 20.

Jorgenson's final resting place is unknown. He had no relatives who could arrange a decent funeral. It is most likely that the hospital arranged a discreet burial in the »poor« corner of Hobart's municipal cemetery. The old cemetery is today a public park. Children play and tumble where Tasmania's first colonists lie buried. In one corner of the park there is a pile of old, cracked, moss-covered tombstones. Many bear inscriptions showing the dates of death to be between 1804 and 1845. None of them carries the name Jorgenson or Jürgensen. There was no money for tombstones for poor boozers.

But 5 miles away in a newly organised museum at Risdon Cove a film depicting Tasmania's earliest history is shown daily. It begins with the words: *»Once upon a time, there was a Danish sailor. His name was Jorgen Jorgenson.«* And on the screen appears the Eckersberg portrait of the young, red-headed adventurer. The Court clockmaker's son from Copenhagen.

Marriages solemnized in the Parish of *New Norfolk* in the County of *Buckingham* in the year 1831

No. *65* *Jorgen Jorgenson* of the Parish *Brighton* and  
*Norah Cobbett* of the Parish *— Do —* were  
married in this *Church* by *Banns* with consent of  
this *Twenty fifth* day of *January* in the year 1831

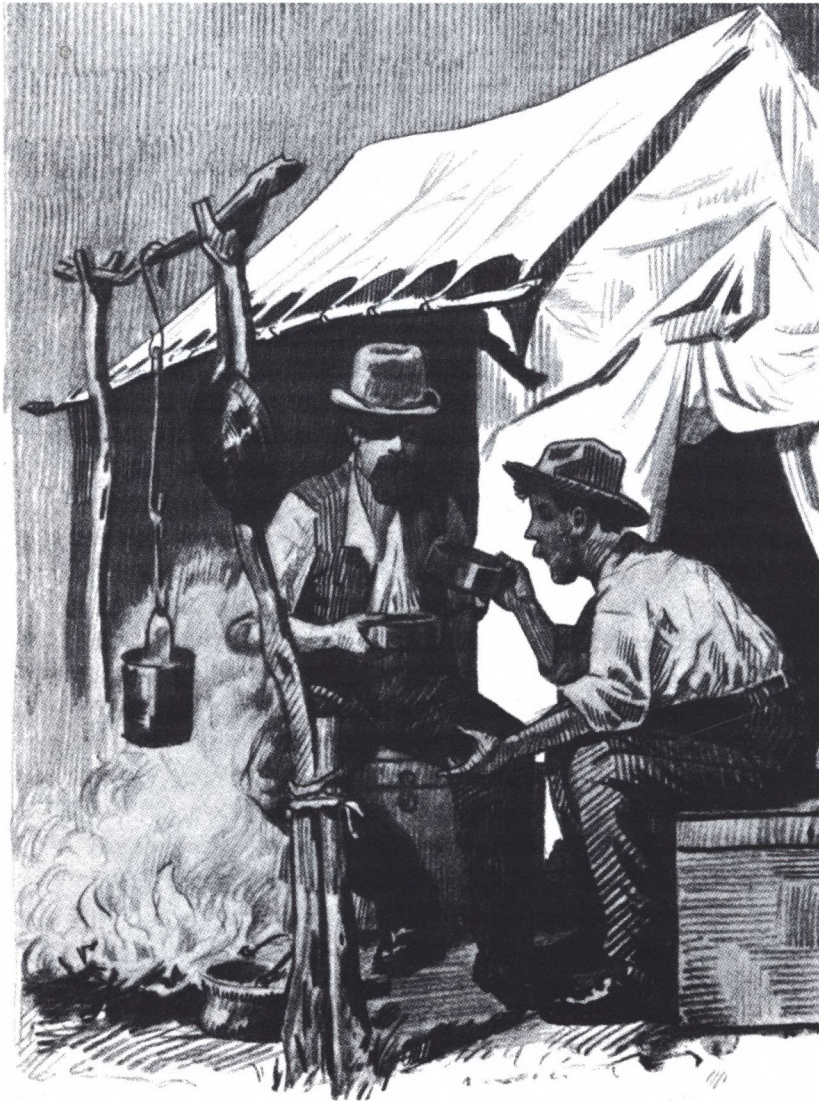
By me *H. D. Robinson* Chaplain.

This Marriage was solemnized between us { *Jorgen Jorgenson*  
*Norah Jorgenson*  
In the Presence of { *Martha Jantzen* of *New Norfolk*  
*W. I. King* of *—*



# Denmark's Picture of Australia 1800 - 1870

by *Erik Helmer Pedersen and Kirsten Lotze*



»From a gold mining camp in Queensland«. An illustration from Thorvald Weitemeyer's »En Udvandrer's Æventyr i Australien«. (An Emigrant's Australian Adventure), Copenhagen 1914.

## SCHOOL BOOKS DISCOVER AUSTRALIA

There is no doubt that the Dane of the 1820's had a pretty good idea of conditions in America and, in particular, »the North American Free States« (U.S.A.). What the reading public knew of the distant continent of Australia at that time is more doubtful. Of course, most had some knowledge of the geography of the continent and its flora and fauna, but most of this was second or third-hand knowledge. German, French and English magazines and books were usually the source of the information occasionally provided about conditions far away in the South Seas. Where America was concerned, on the other hand, many Danish seamen had become personally familiar with the country during the Napoleonic Wars when they had transported goods to and from the blockaded United States. Few Danish seamen had ever sailed to the continent of Australia. Until the Navigation laws were finally abolished in 1850, only British vessels were permitted to trade with British colonies.

But although the general public was largely uninformed, those in Denmark who had a particular interest in geography were aware of conditions on the new continent almost immediately. As early as 1800 the Vice-principal of Herlufsholm school, A.W. Brøsen, wrote a long passage about the founding of the colony of New South Wales in south-eastern Australia in his »New Collection of Accounts of Journeys and Topographies...« Based on contributions by five authors, Watkin Tench, Arthur Philip, John Hunter, John White and David Collins he presented a detailed description of the history of the colony, its geography and ethnological features. He also mentioned the existence of a map of New Holland, as Australia was then called. This map had been published in 1795 in Nuremberg by Professor F.G. Canzler and could be purchased in Copenhagen »in the usual shops«.

The historical section in the above-men-

tioned book is a kind of diary of the founding of the colony of New South Wales in 1788 and its development over the next few years. There were great expectations for this area. In particular, it was thought to be especially appropriate as a place to which English convicts could be deported, on the condition that they be accompanied by a man with sufficient authority to preserve law and order. This man was Captain Arthur Philip.

But difficulties began to mount up as soon as his squadron dropped anchor in Botany Bay on January 20, 1788. It was particularly difficult to obtain provisions and drinking water, and throughout the first years, it was necessary to depend on supplies from home. Little by little the means were found to expand the area of the colony and to explore further inland. Three years after the founding it was estimated that the number of inhabitants in the two areas, Sydney and Parramatta, had grown to a little over 4,000.

For the most part, the colonials lived in a constant state of controversy with the natives, the »wild ones«, as they were referred to at the time. In addition, there was an enemy within: the deported convicts themselves, with all their inherent vices and miseries. They had no thought for anything but getting back to England as soon as possible. Many of the »free« colonials were so intoxicated by the sight of nature's bounties that they gave themselves over to boozing and other excesses. Financed by the British government, the expensive »social experiment« thousands of sea miles away from home gave cause for many a parliamentary debate.

The long account of Botany Bay concluded with a few chapters on the geography and natural history of the area. In particular, the leaping animal, or kangaroo, was the subject of much comment. The few birds to be found were of »indescribable beauty«. The natives, on the other hand, were not characterised by their attractiveness. They had wide noses, big mouths and thick lips. Their eyes were deep-

set and shadowed by large brows. This was all set off by their »detestable dirtiness« as they didn't wash themselves but, instead, rubbed their bodies with the fat from the game they had killed. They usually walked around completely naked, but a few of the men – and, incidentally, the girls – did wear a stick stuck through their nasal cartilage. They seemed not to know the difference between »mine« and »yours«, and if they became annoyed, their anger knew no bounds. They recognised no public authority, neither here nor there, but although they quarrelled among themselves, they subjected themselves willingly enough to the authority of a leader. The report ended with a few comments on personal and social forms of self-expression among the wild ones.

#### AUTHORS OF TEXTBOOKS COPY FROM ONE ANOTHER

A detailed study of Danish geography books and encyclopedias from the 19th century would disclose how the youth of that day, and an interested general public, were kept informed of conditions abroad. There is, of course, no space to provide such detail here, and the following notes should therefore be viewed as a first attempt to discover just how the picture of Australia was formed in the public awareness.

One of the most popular textbooks from the early 1800's was written by a senior master at the Metropolitan School in Copenhagen, H.A. Kofod, and was entitled »Geographic Handbook in Accordance with the Newest Political Changes« (the 4th edition from 1819 is cited here). It is a big book of almost 500 pages, but the first mention of Australia does not appear until page 461. Here Australia surfaces among thousands of other areas and countries which the poor reader must keep track of. Australia, also called Polynesia or Southern India, is presented as *»the 5th continent, the most recently discovered...«*

The dominant element in this new part of

the world was New Holland, also referred to as »the mainland« Its borders in relation to the surrounding waters were shown on a map. The climate was described as mild, and the soil was said to be of varying quality. *»The inhabitants look like Negroes, are dark brown with wool-like hair... They live almost entirely by fishing...«* It was specified that the east side of New Holland was better known than the west side. The English part of the big island is called *»New South Wales...where they have founded a colony of criminals, originally on Botany Bay, but since moved to Port Jackson«*. West of the colony there were blue mountains, first crossed by Governor Macquarrie. There the town of Bathurst is now located.

In 1821 Jacob Riise published a »Textbook in the Geography for Use in the Schools«. He was a versatile man and the major influence behind the historical-geographical quarterly, popularly called *Riise's Archives*, printed in Copenhagen from 1820 to 1864. His textbook is comprised of 496 pages and is a shorter version of a handbook in geography published the year before. This, he agreed, was too comprehensive for use in the schools. A school book should never contain more than the pupils should learn. It is stressed in the preface that, especially in connection with the preparation of the sections on overseas areas, he has used the newest reference works and maps. Over half of the book deals with the old world, Europe, and not until page 296 do we cross the Ural mountains. After brief sojourns in Africa and America one finally, on page 439, reaches Australia which is treated in a series of short paragraphs. He states that this part of the world is comprised of the mainland, or Austral land, also known as the big island, New Holland, and various groups of islands in the Pacific Ocean.

The author made use of round numbers in his presentation of New Holland's size and population, and he also made an admission: *»It is primarily the coastlines of this land which are known... the interior is almost entirely unknown and*

has many mountains...« Rivers are virtually non-existent. The climate is more or less pleasant and healthy, and »the vegetable products of the land are manifold... The number of inhabitants is unknown...they belong to the race of Negroes and have a low cultural level...« It is also mentioned under the description of New South Wales that the English have placed a large penal colony there.

It is worth noting that Jacob Riise did not publish an article about the new continent in his *Archives* until as late as 1829. Observant readers would have recognised the information about »New Hollanders« in his volume 36. It was originally taken from *Hormayer's Archives*, published in Vienna in 1814. Furthermore, in 1827, volume 2 of a competitive publication, Carl Fred. Güntelberg's *Magazine for Descriptions of Nature and People* had included an article by the Englishman, P. King, about the wild ones on the western, tropical coasts of Australia. His expedition had captured one of the wild ones in order to carry out ethnological »experiments«, that is, to observe the reactions of the prisoner and his friends in connection with the capture. The aim was to make contact with the natives, but as they did not understand each other's languages, they could do nothing but stare fiercely at one another.

On the Goulborn Islands off the northern coast the white men were the victims of a »traitorous« attack by the natives. In order to punish the natives they stole one of their canoes. A fort was later established on Melville Island, and at the same time it was discovered that this *was* an island and not a part of the mainland (Van Diemen's Land).

The natives on this island were described in a relatively objective manner. The same cannot be said of Jacob Riise's informant in the article from 1829:

*»In no part of the Earth does one meet a person on a lower level of psychological and spiritual development than on New Holland, where, with regard to colour and physiognomy, the inhabitants belong to*

*the Negro race, but owing to their thin arms and legs and disgusting ape-like facial features, they are of much lower standing than the Africans...«*

The article stated that there was no great difference from tribe to tribe, but that those who lived in the forest seemed closer to the orangutan than those who lived on the coasts. The laws of civilization were unknown to them. If, for example, a girl did not immediately say »yes« to a suitor, she was »persuaded« by threats and even violence.

The truth content of such descriptions is not very high. Occasionally it became too much even for Jacob Riise, and he attempted to disassociate himself from his source by providing the article with a footnote. This he did, for example, in volume 59, 1834, when he published »Fragments of Captain Sturt's Travels to the Inner Regions of New Holland«. In the introduction, the author was permitted to give a short description of the land, which was said to be quite distinctive. The trees were, for example, green and the animals not very wild, whereas this could not be said of the local human inhabitants. The rivers sometimes flowed in the opposite direction, away from the sea, and the climate was so healthy that there was practically no need for doctors. The publisher inserted here that the author had, unfortunately, only been at the place in dry years, and that one could not, therefore, entirely trust his information.

There are some indications that *Riise's Archives* did not have an extensive circulation outside the Copenhagen area. When senior master, Christian Frederik Ingerslev, from Horsens published his »Textbook in the Geography in Accordance with Stein's Kleine Geographie für Gymnasium und Schulen« in 1838 he admitted in the introduction that regarding information about overseas areas he had had to trust his source, »as I didn't know of anything better to put in place of the original...« Neither Ingerslev nor Stein seemed to know much about Australia. The Australian aborigines were described as being as black as their

African brothers, »but ugly, with thin limbs and protruding stomachs, and extremely crude, almost like animals...«

The »brutish« blacks and the »corrupt« whites in exotic Australia brought forth many different reactions among »civilised« Europeans. A noteworthy Englishman, Sir J. Mackintosh, wrote in 1835 that with the exception of a place in parliament, nothing would be dearer to him than to be made a legislator of the Botany Bay colony. At the head of an army of British soldiers, school teachers from Lancashire and good Methodist ministers from Ireland he would, at the very least, know how to save the children of the malefactors from corruption. He wrote in *Riise's Archives*, volume 2, page 6, 1840, if this did not happen, then in 50 years' time the place would become »the worst plague of the World, a playground for knaves...«

This same year, in volume 8, Riise reproduced a fresh article from *Das Ausland*, about »The English Criminals on Tasmania«. Macquarie Harbour was the site of the penal colony until the early 1830's when it was moved to Sarah Island in this same harbour. The article included a number of dreadful stories of various attempts at escape from the isolated institution, but, with the moral sensitivities of the reader well in mind, it was added that the majority of such attempts failed, at least when the escape route was over land. One especially staunch band of escaped robbers had not, however, been recaptured until a substantial reward was offered for information about where they were holed up.

But with or without Riise's help, the geography books were gradually gaining more substance regarding the world outside Europe. In I.S. Høyen's »Geography for Board Schools with an introduction expanded by J.F. Bernikow, Teacher in Vinerød«, published in 1842, the same story is told about the original inhabitants and the penal colony in New South Wales, but the author is, at least, aware of the positive side of the Australian adven-

ture. And even *Riise's Archives* began a more serious approach. In volume 23, 1844, an article was printed under the title »The Religion of the Australians«. This article stated that due to the arrogant and foolish attitudes of the colonists towards the natives, they had unfortunately not really made contact with them. This had kept them from obtaining greater knowledge of their most exceptional lives. The previously mentioned author, Collins, and a few others had, however, made so much information available that it was possible to make some conclusions regarding the wild ones' concept of religion. They were said to be vaguely aware of the fact that there were higher Beings beyond human reach. If, however, the evil Beings became angry with one, it was possible to placate them by sacrificing gifts or by very unpleasant personal ordeal.

An anonymous English explorer of Australia wrote in *Riise's Archives*, volume 2, page 32, 1846, about how he and two of his companions felt upon reaching an uninhabited sheep station on a deserted plain, well off the beaten track. The bushes and trees were small and stunted and formed a thick, almost impenetrable thicket. The »station« was no more than a mud hut, and the only traces of civilization were a little book and a woman's comb. »Just the place for a hermit,« was one of the comments. The sight caused a few men to leave service immediately, and those who remained had to make it on their own. The situation became even more critical when a group of natives turned up and began to ask rude questions about why the foreigners were there and about their equipment. They finally withdrew to the thicket again and even promised to help where they could. The author did not feel quite comfortable, however, until assistance arrived from the right station.

## AUSTRALIAN GOLD FEVER SPREADS TO DENMARK

In the early 1850's reports of Australia's rapid growth over the previous 10 years made good reading in Danish newspapers. On January 19 and 20, 1850, *Berlingske Tidende* published two long articles about developments in the colony of New South Wales. The source of both was the English paper *The Globe* which, in turn, had its information from the official statistics for the period from 1838 to 1849. More than 220,000 people, of which 2/5's were children, cultivated 163,331 acres of land in New South Wales and cared for 1.8 million head of cattle and no fewer than 11.7 million sheep. This led, naturally, to a large export of wool: in 1839 about 7.2 million lbs. were exported and 23 million lbs. were exported in 1848. In spite of a lack of such important things as food and timber, *The Globe* felt that the development of New South Wales would »*continue in riches and material well-being more rapidly and with brighter prospects than any other colony the world has seen till now...*« With *The Times* as its source, *Berlingske Tidende* reported on September 9, 1850, that »*some down there are interested in a possible separation from the mother country.*« A month later the same paper pointed out that this was no more than a bubble on the surface and that, on the contrary, there was a strong desire to establish a direct steamship route to England.

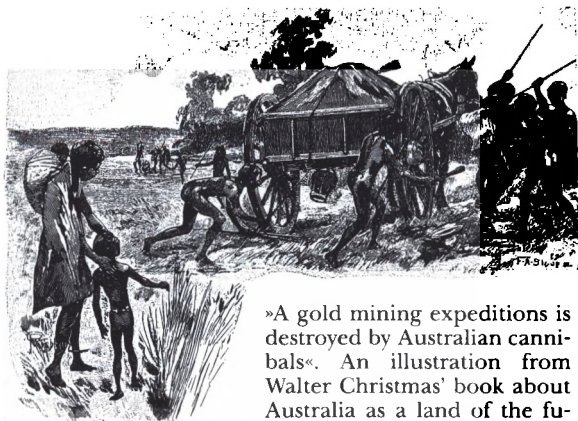
*Berlingske Tidende* carried a special column dealing with England, and on September 8, 1851, this column printed a real sensation, fresh from *The Globe*, under the headline: »On the Discovery of New Gold Mines in Australia«. A local newspaper in Bathurst had first published the news, and even though *The Globe* stated that it had certain reservations, it could not be denied that the gold simply lay shining in the sand of the riverbed. At least the people of Bathurst believed the story: »*Judges left their benches, grocers their offices, clerks their desks, and house servants their positions to make their fortunes at a single stroke.*« Naturally,

the Danish newspaper followed up this story of the discovery of gold in Australia. The reports from down under – with London still the major source – alternated between scepticism and enthusiastic optimism. And on September 25, 1851, Danes could read the following:

»*The recently received reports from New South Wales surpass almost anything even the most sanguine could have hoped with regard to the sudden and unexpected discovery of almost unlimited mineral wealth...*«

But such discovery brought with it both advantages and disadvantages. First the advantages: Gold would decrease in value, resulting in a general economic upswing to the benefit of all mankind. The disadvantages were, although great, hopefully only temporary. The limited and expensive labour force available in the colony would leave for the gold mines rather than continue in current jobs. Furthermore, the price of the necessities of life had already gone up considerably. Experience from the California Gold Rush, 3 years previously, had shown that investments in prospecting equipment almost exceeded whatever riches could be taken from the ground (September 29, 1851). The pessimism was, however, of a transient nature and on August 18 the news from Australia was that everyone had left to seek their fortunes at the mines: »*It is fairly common that a gold prospector earns from £100-200 a month.*« A thorough study of Danish newspapers from the time would probably disclose that editors around the country cut quite a few passages from *Berlingske Tidende's* gold articles. *Horsens Avis*, a provincial newspaper which was generally rather interested in foreign news, made practically no mention of the discovery, and printed only a small notice on November 11, 1851, that rumours of the discovery of gold in Australia had caused prospectors in California to break camp and cross the ocean to try their luck somewhere else.

But the observant reader of Danish news-



»A gold mining expedition is destroyed by Australian cannibals«. An illustration from Walter Christmas' book about Australia as a land of the future. Copenhagen, 1903.

papers in 1852 was regularly reminded of the Australian adventure in gold. *Berlingske Tidende* carried a total of 16 articles on the subject throughout the year, and *Horsens Avis* was close behind. There was no doubt now that the dream had become a reality. The disadvantages of this had, in the meantime, become equally apparent. The negative consequences of the policy of charging high prices for land now showed themselves. Immigrants with few means could not afford to buy land, and the otherwise so stable and down-to-earth worker from the English countryside easily became an Australian swagman, always on his way to new adventures. In order to keep the indispensable shepherds on the land it became necessary to pay them twice their usual wages (*Berlingske Tidende* January 28, 1852).

Equally unfortunate was the fact that the local authorities did not have the necessary power and authority to maintain peace and order in the gold fields. Lawlessness flourished over all and the gold prospectors refused to pay the required licence fees and paid only those rates they found reasonable. And these were always considerably lower than what was required (May 13, 1852).

All this did not dampen the wanderlust of the many thousands of Englishmen and other Europeans who wanted to try their luck in

Australia. It did, however, lead to some concern in England. Think what would happen if the country were actually depopulated! Emigrants to America were already pulling many friends and relatives to God's Own Country. This worry was not, however, shared by those in the shipping business, whether in Liverpool or Hamburg. The more who wanted to emigrate, the better. Many new ships were built to transport them, among these, screw steamers which could carry as many as 320 emigrants. Of the German harbours, Hamburg, in particular, profited from the emigration to Central and South America and to Australia. Unfortunately, the infamous »special agents« were especially active in this city. Their speciality was to cheat people rather than to actually help them depart properly. The trip itself was difficult enough. Even a fast ship took almost 6 months to make the voyage to Melbourne and back. In spite of this, no fewer than 4,357 persons arrived in this city in November, 1852, and on the return voyage the ships were loaded to the rails with the heavy and quite valuable metal from the gold fields.

Also Danish interests asserted themselves with regard to emigration to Australia. Carl Rydberg »of Copenhagen« inserted an advertisement on January 24, 1853, under the heading: »Australia & California«. »America and Australia« read the headline of another advertisement in *Berlingske Tidende* on February 7, 1853, paid for by E. Skouboe, Skindergade 16-18, Copenhagen. As the main agent for a number of shipping firms in Hamburg, he could register travellers for as many as 4 departures to Australian harbours in the period from February 15 to April 15, 1853. And if one was not well versed in the English language, education could be provided at Amagertorv 6.

The newspapers now brought the first reports of Danish emigrants to Australia. On February 15, 1853, *Næstved Avis* printed a letter from two former residents, the brothers

Johan and Carl Galle, newly arrived in Sydney. Having obtained work as gardener's helpers they could earn 360 rix-dollars a year, many times what a gardener's helper could earn in Denmark. But, not content with that sum, they planned to dig for gold as well and encouraged other young people to do the same. The climate was so healthy that illness was practically unknown.

In the spring of 1853, those who were interested in Australia could purchase a book by Charles A Kann entitled »Australia and its Gold Country« for 64 shillings. The sub-title promised the curious reader no more nor less than: »*A specification of everything you need to know with regard to passage, arrival, settlement and gold prospecting when you emigrate to Australia*«. In general, the author did not recommend that people emigrate if it were possible for them to make a modest living in Denmark. On the other hand, Australia was the ideal place for those in straitened circumstances. The gold lay there roundly strewn over an area of 100 square miles in pieces weighing from one ounce to a cent he said. If one was above associating with the often so uncivilised and brutal gold diggers, one could join up with the service sector. Sooner or later, the gold was bound to find its way to your pocket. Women were in great demand among the young men, and lack of outward beauty was no hindrance for finding happiness.

E. Skouboe's brochure from the same period was written in more sober tones. Entitled »Information and Practical Advice for Emigrants to Australia«, it was said to be written with reference to »*the newest and best sources*«. And it cost only half the price of Kann's publication. Neither did Skouboe encourage people to emigrate, but if they were determined to do so, he would give them some good advice. The desire to work and physical strength were of invaluable benefit »out there«. He said there was no danger of landing in a penal colony as the last deportation had taken place as long ago as 1840.

One problem was the relatively high prices. With the exception of meat, food was very expensive, and this was also true of housing. Farming was the best and safest way to earn a living, and he would not advise going to the gold fields. That was like taking part in a lottery where there were a lot more duds than prizes. It was too expensive to travel via England, and too difficult as well. One should choose instead a shipping firm in Hamburg, Dieseldorff & Company (Godeffroy & Sohn), to be more exact, for which the author was the main Danish agent. It cost, however, all of 430 rix-dollars to secure a cabin for the passage to Australia, whereas the price of a place in steerage cost »only« 180 rix-dollars. If one would travel only on a Danish ship, there was another agent, Alexander Ballen & Co., Gammelstrand 16, Copenhagen, who sold passage on the brig *Hiram* which was owned by the merchants, Moses & Søn and G. Melchior. It was due to sail to Melbourne in June, 1853.

#### THE LIFE OF THE GOLD PROSPECTOR

In 1854 E. Fog, a teacher from Kundby west of Holbæk, published five letters from a Danish gold prospector in Australia, J.M. Jensen, who was one of his relatives. The book was entitled: »A Journey to the Gold Mines. Letters from a Danish Artisan«.

The letter-writer had left Copenhagen on March 29, 1853, together with 7 other Danes. They travelled from Altona to Hull and from there to their port of disembarkation, Liverpool. After some difficulty – and certainly with no assistance from the agent Thiele – they finally sailed from Europe on board the bark, *Carntyne* on May 17. In the good company of respectable and educated people, among them 28 other Danes, their 95 days at sea passed without incident. The food was good and in generous supply, but they had to prepare it themselves in a diminutive kitchen measuring no more than 4 feet x 1 foot. At about the same time as the *Carntyne* arrived in Melbourne, another ship from Hamburg,



the *Wilhelmsbury* dropped anchor. She had 700 passengers on board, among them 21 Danes. On this ship the atmosphere was almost the opposite of that among the *Carmyné's* passengers. As far as the *Wilhelmsbury* was concerned, the realities of the voyage had far from lived up to the tempting advertisements.

The 5th and last letter written to those back home is dated »Bendigo Goldmine, September 18, 1853«. Australia had filled the writer with conflicting emotions. Melbourne's wide avenues with the many shops, and the city's almost European air, were among the positive things, whereas the atmosphere created by the gold prospectors was somewhat repulsive. Here money was the only law, and that was hard on people. If it proved impossible to earn the money honestly, other ways were immediately available.

Once the Danes had equipped themselves with the necessary prospecting equipment, they left for the gold fields. The work was back-breaking and strenuous as most of it took place at a depth of from 12 to 16 feet. Once it was brought to the surface, the gold-bearing soil had to be washed several times in order to bring forth the valuable gold dust. But the letter concluded with the news that they were of good courage and still had some money.

A Norwegian gold digger, Carl A. Olsen, worked in Bendigo during this same period and he met there a couple of men from Southern Schleswig with Danish sympathies: »They were farmers and could speak only Danish and were happy to meet fellow countrymen, as the Dane prefers to consider the Norwegian...« (From »A Gold digger's Story. From journal entries made during eight years spent in the gold mines of Australia«, 1882). Carl Olsen found some gold but also made a good living as a sailmaker and merchant. When he had finally collected enough gold dust, he sent the valuable metal to Melbourne with the gold wagon, which had a military escort. He returned to Norway

a relatively properous man on board the *Shalimar* of the *White Star Line* where the gold was kept in a steel safe on the ship's deck. But after his many experiences in Australia, life in Norway seemed rather dull, and, together with his brother, he returned to the gold mines. This time his profits were more modest as there had simply been too many other prospectors at work. Instead of gold, he got some spiritual benefit from the trip. He became a Methodist, and in 1861 returned to his homeland with a sanctified soul and an empty wallet.

News from the gold mines made good newspaper copy. On January 3, 1884, *Horsens Avis* printed fragments of letters from three former residents, the three sons of J.B. Cohn: Jacob, Julius and Moritz, who, at that time, were all residents of Melbourne. Melbourne was a big, modern city with a population of 108,000; a population which was increased by 4,000 in a single week. No fewer than 200,000 persons worked in the Victoria area's gold mines. Some were unusually lucky in their very first attempt at prospecting, while others, although they found gold, immediately lost it gambling or used it on other dubious entertainment. Wages were high; female domestic servants made, for example, £35 to £40 a year, but the prices followed suit. The letter-writers had, like others, discovered that travelling via England was much to be preferred to the voyage from Hamburg. Those Danes recently arrived on the *Wilhelmsbury* had been very dissatisfied with the treatment they had received on the voyage. The three Cohn brothers made good in Australia. In 1857 they founded a brewery, Victoria Brewery, in Bendigo and had the honour of introducing dark lager beer to Australia. Brewer Jacob Cohn's villa bore, of course, the name »Horsens« after the town of his birth, and, according to the records, it was the Dannebrog and not the Union Jack which flew from the flagpole in front of his house.

*Berlingske Tidende* also published a letter

from the Cohn family in Melbourne and, a few days later, a similar epistle taken from the newspaper, *Bornholms Avis*. The letter in this case was from three residents of Rønne who had travelled to Australia the previous year aboard the same *Carntyne* which had carried the above-mentioned J.M. Jensen. It is doubtless he who is described as »Journeyman Lund«, son of smallholder, Mads Jensen from Sose southeast of Rønne. Even though Lund had found work which paid 13 rix-dollars, 3 marks per day, the letter-writers felt he was eager to get to the gold mines. Among 99 Danes on board the *Wilhelmsbury* there were, incidentally, 10 from the island of Bornholm, each one listed by name and home town. It must have pleased the families and friends back home to hear such good news from their dear ones so far away. The letters also indicated that the good, frugal Danes in Australia were annoyed to see a lot of clothes and shoes discarded when they could no longer be used out in the field.

## THE FINAL CHAPTER OF THE GOLD STORY

The newspapers continued to publish letters and other news from the Australian gold fields, but the reports soon began to indicate greater awareness and experience on the part of the writers. It seemed as though some of the initial lustre had rubbed off the gold. This gave the prospectors more time to look around and some were approached by blacks who insisted: »*Very good white man, you give poor black fellow, me, kupper*«. But as the black natives were not in the least interested in physical labour, they were of little use to the colonials.

Danish newspapers continued to carry many advertisements for the cheapest and best transportation to Australia and other tempting places inserted by the major agents of the shipping firms in Liverpool and Hamburg. Information in the newspapers about Australia began to be more business-like. It

was noted, for example, that after several years' anxiety, English financiers were relieved to find that the consequences of the big gold find had not been as damaging as they had feared. The £100 million introduced on the market over the past 4 years had neither influenced price levels nor caused a shift in other values. In other words, the world, and in particular England and the United States, had become £100 million richer! The outlook for Australian trade, on the other hand, was not so good in the mid-1850's, if the reports from the Danish merchants, Melchior & Company, of Melbourne were to be believed. In spite of the big gold finds, money was scarce as the gold naturally had to be minted in England before it could be of benefit to Australia. In addition, on November 30, 1854, there was news of riots in Ballarat. Meanwhile, the articles about Australia became shorter and shorter. Readers had probably tired of hearing of nothing but Australian gold.

In the meantime, the professional writers had discovered Australia. The Danish journalist and later theatre director, Robert Watt, spent three years in Australia toward the end of the 1850's, and he sent various articles home to Danish newspapers and weekly magazines. Perhaps Watt was the anonymous letter-writer who wrote home from Port Albert on October 6, 1859, (published in *Berlingske Tidende* December 5, 1859). The writer had sailed from Copenhagen on June 2, 1858, on the brig, *John* and had reached Port Philip after a strenuous journey of 116 days.

He was overwhelmed by Australia. The large, wide boulevards with fine shops displayed all kinds of European luxury goods and sold them at near European prices.

»*It is not so important here to have learned something definitely and thoroughly; the important thing is to get a good idea and have a little luck in carrying it out...*«, he wrote. He went on to say that, among other things, a Danish student had sold coffee to thirsty passers-by on a street

corner, but had later lost his entire fortune when he embarked on business dealings with other, cleverer speculators. The letter-writer himself had had no luck in finding a job and had instead begun prospecting for gold. In this he was fortunate in that new finds had been made at Port Curtis just at that time. As a consequence, people put down whatever they were doing to be first among the many fortune hunters. Fortunately, most of the Danes in Melbourne had found a fixed point in a Danish agent for the Danish firm of merchants, Melchior & Company. *»Here nearly all speak Danish, the kitchen is Danish; in brief, one feels at home in this house...«*

As mentioned earlier, Robert Watt wrote a number of articles about Australia for the leading weekly magazine of the time, *Illustreret Tidende*. Most of these were later published in three collections: *»On the Veranda. Pictures of Life in Australia«* (1864), *»Copenhagen - Melbourne - Paris. Scenes and sketches«* (1867) and *»Trips and Adventures. Realistic Views«* (1885). The first collection was written under the name *»Bob«*, but that perhaps had something to do with the *»copyright«* issue. All the stories are similar in that life in Australia is described as being at the same time festive, dangerous and colourful. Everything happened at a fantastic pace and preferably on horseback. For better or worse it was a society dominated by men. A woman could, depending on her station in life, be given one of two roles: she could be a domestic servant or a fine lady. Too much idleness would encourage even the most virtuous girls to not-quite-nice behaviour, and if they were not careful, they would sink to the bottom and be forced to live on the income they could earn in the streets. He wrote that integrity was a relative concept in Australia. Even the well-to-do were a bit ragged around the edges. Social roles and values were often reversed. A student could become a worker and an uneducated rascal go straight to the top. Background counted for nothing.

Not all writers just skated over the difficulties as *»Bob«* did. The Danish author and historian, Mathias Steenstrup, was one of the first in Denmark to give serious content to the concept of *»education of the general public«*. In the years from 1855 to 1868 he published a magazine which, measured with the yardstick of the times, was of considerable quality. It was entitled *Dansk Maanedsskrift*, and in the second series, volume 2, 1859, Steenstrup printed *»Rough Sketches from Australia according to Frank Fowler...as reported by P. Holten«*. The author of these sketches was originally a reporter in The House of Commons, but poor health forced him to make a long convalescence in Australia. Employed by local magazines and newspapers, he saw most of the country, and it was his impressions from these sojourns he passed on to his readers.

He was immediately attracted to the natural beauty of the countryside. He wrote that it had been almost painful to the eyes to view the Paradise-like loveliness which greeted him upon entering Sydney harbour. The city of Sydney itself was full of historical atmosphere. Here the convicts of former times had laid stone upon stone to raise public buildings and had, in this way, engraved their names forever. Melbourne was even more beautiful and, with its wide boulevards, gave the impression of being quite European. The sewage system did not, unfortunately, measure up to these standards, and the city had an aroma all its own. The most youthful elements in the local population were especially noteworthy. Shameless they were, and rude to everyone. Drink and immorality were the rule, not the exception. Servant girls impudently demanded wages of £35 per year plus two days off a week and an extra helping hand with just about anything you could name. The aristocrats among the population were of a different quality. They were not as egoistic and close-fisted with money as they were reputed to be. They and their land had

need of only one thing to give developments the proper impetus: immigrants. And they were sure to come because the opportunities »down under« were legion.

Sketches of Australia were all the rage. *Riise's Archives* could not lag behind its competitors and therefore published in volume 69 (1860) its »Sketches of Life in Tasmania« and in the following volume two articles about conditions in Australia: »Australia« and »An Excursion from Sydney to Bathurst«. The first must, however, have seemed somewhat outdated in tone with its many complaints about the monotonous view of an evergreen coastline, *»everywhere there is a complete dearth of natural beauty and fruitfulness. And these sorrowful coasts have been populated with the scum of England, its beggars and criminals...«* the report continued. There were, according to the article, no rivers, and in the big swamps the water could flow neither here nor there. The white population was said to be comprised of a special mixture of tenant farmers, colonials and pure bandits, but even the latter maintained a certain standard of decorum. The capital city was a caricature of European cities, etc. The article, »Australia« gave the land the same marks for natural beauty, etc. but it also pointed out that it was possible to see a number of things there which were not to be found anywhere else on Earth. The same could be said of the social institutions and relationships built up among the people. Since from the beginning the majority of the population had been criminals, this, of course, had to have had some influence on society as a whole. The same impression was given by »An Excursion from Sydney to Bathurst«, written by an English lieutenant colonel. In this article the author seemed practically to have fallen in love with the »bush ranger«, or escaped convict, who had to make his living as a highwayman. They were said to be almost chivalrous in their attitudes towards their victims and excused themselves politely when they found it necessary to plunder people to

the last farthing. Gentlemen that they were, they always permitted the victim to keep his drawers!

## THE AUSTRALIAN ADVENTURE ENDS

Judging from the newspapers and magazines of the time, Danish readers began to lose interest in the subject of Australia in the early 1860's. There were fewer articles, and the general education publications »discovered« other interesting spots on the map, not least Africa. A small notice in *Berlingske Tidende* on March 24, 1861, was rather characteristic for the development:

*»Melbourne Herald has published the information that the export of gold in 1860 gave a profit of only £8.3 million compared with £9.1 million the previous year. The latest statistics support this trend. The reason is that there are too few immigrants. Furthermore, many have gone into cattle raising and other types of farming, if they are not employed in public construction work.«*

There were still many advertisements for transportation to Australia, but, in fact, the party was over. *Berlingske Tidende* of August 20, 1863, carried a large article about »Danes in Australia«. At that time there were 2,000 Danes there, and very few of these had seen their dreams fulfilled. The reason for this was, in part, a lack of knowledge of the actual conditions, and, in part, the fact that there were too many people for the amount of gold to be found. 99 out of 100 gold diggers had returned to Melbourne empty-handed. A lack of knowledge of the language also made it difficult for them to get along. Danish farmers could not use the routines familiar to them because farming in Australia was carried out in an entirely different way. *»In accordance with the above, it is understandable that the Danes in Australia have not done so well...«*, it is concluded. Only a few could return to their homeland as prosperous men. Characteristically, those who worked with their hands, the artisans, were most successful. The better educated did not have their hands to fall back

on. The Danish Consul in Melbourne, an Englishman named Were, was not much help to the Danes in the area. On the other hand, former warehouse manager, Jørgen Jørgensen, of the now defunct Melchior firm was the Danes' best adviser. He had returned to Copenhagen after having been away for 10 years, and on his homecoming he was awarded the Silver Cross of the Order of the Dannebrog for his efforts overseas.

After some delay, geography textbooks began to provide more accurate information on Australia. As early as 1856 in his »Geography for Board Schools and the Lower Classes of Primary Schools«, P.H. Leonhard, a teacher at Fåborg Borgerskole, gave a more detailed description of the new continent than had been supplied by previous authors. He mentioned, among other things, that gold, silver and some copper and lead had been found there as well as coal and salt. On the other hand, he dished out the usual stories about rough heathens, the English penal colonies and the peculiarities of nature ...

C.V. Rimestad's »Textbook in Geography for Use in Teaching in Learned Schools« (1863) was probably more influenced by the Australian gold rush than any other textbook. He writes about the colony of Victoria:

*»Great progress had already been made in the cultivation of the land and in cattle raising when in 1851 great riches in gold were found. This gave rise to such an inrush that it is now the most important of Australia's colonies.«*

N.C. Rom's very popular »Geography for Primary and Board Schools« written by V. Klausen (about 1880) had not made much progress since Rimestad. He wrote that the natural surroundings were very strange compared with conditions in other places.

*»The trees are scattered and, with their vertically positioned leaves, give very little shade...«* The natives are black and *»practically naked and live on roots, worms, snakes, lizards and similar animals. Many of them are cannibals (i.e., they eat people)...«*

As late as the 7th edition (1892) of Johannes Holst's »Geography with Pictures« the same story was told of the *»ugly, dark brown, bearded wild men who from time to time shoot a kangaroo but, for the most part, live on worms, larvae and roots. Their numbers are rapidly diminishing...«* (the implication being that this was fortunate).

M.A. Sommer's »Emigration to Queensland and Tasmania in Australia with the support of the British Government. Extracts of various Publications and Prospectuses« (1870) provided a different picture of Australia. It started out most impressively:

*»Emigration has taken a new direction lately; it is not only America which can call out to the working classes: »Come hither, here is bread for everyone«, as Australia can now also invite working people thither, and it cannot be denied that the way in which attempts are made to increase the population and make the fertile soil productive can more easily be understood for those of limited means than emigration to America...«*

It was easy for young men and girls between the ages of 18 and 30 to obtain work in Australia; the man with wages of up to 360 rix-dollars per year, the girl with up to 225. But the words »up to« should not be overlooked. After two years in Australia, they would be obliged to repay the otherwise almost »free« cost of passage which, after all, was a sum of 144 rix-dollars. In return they would receive a little over 40 acres of land.

Many complimentary words were said about Australia in Sommer's publication. Of Queensland it was said that the climate was particularly favourable for consumptive persons and that many sought out the place for convalescence after illness. The area produced gold, silver and most other metals in addition to agricultural products such as wool, tallow, skins, etc. It was possible to harvest two crops a year. Even with a small amount of money it was easy to become an independent businessman there, and if one was especially interested in industry, there

was the added advantage that the colony gave a reward to those persons who produced a stated amount of cotton fabric or other products. As far as Tasmania was concerned, Frederik Buck of the colonial government had published a special »Handbook for Emigrants«, and Mogens Sommer cited this publication at length. The handbook concluded with the following statement:

»We need to get rid of many, a great many, of the working class, and it would be good if they would not wait too long before deciding to take advantage of this fine opportunity...« In the event that they decided to do so, he added that he would be pleased to accompany them to Hamburg.

While people continued to emigrate to Australia in the early 1870's, the numbers were small in comparison with emigration to the west. *Berlingske Tidende* informed its readers on January 30, 1870, that the emigration statistics from the Copenhagen Police Department showed that a total of 12,141 persons had emigrated. Of these 11,126 had emigrated to the United States, 6 to Canada and 9 to Australia. Eventually there were so many Scandinavians in Australia that they decided to join together in an organisation. A Danish emigrant in Stawell, West Victoria, wrote in this connection a letter-to-the-editor which was published in *Berlingske Tidende* on November 13, 1872. The letter writer was the secretary of the »Scandinavian Association« in Australia. The purpose of the organisation was to maintain connections with the mother country and obtain necessary information about developments in the Nordic countries. As good Scandinavians, they were dissatisfied with the fact that there was never any mention of the Scandinavian countries in the English newspapers to which they subscribed. In the interest of maintaining the mother tongue, the secretary wanted to know whether there in Denmark was some publication to compare with the English *Home News*, or perhaps an organisation which actively engaged in the preservation of the pure and

genuine native language among Danes abroad.

Perhaps a Danish emigrant should be allowed to have the last word in this brief description of the picture of Australia drawn for the Danish people. On July 31, 1880, *Berlingske Tidende* published a letter from a Dane in Melbourne, dated June 1, 1880. The letter writer had long felt that emigrants were given incorrect information about the true conditions in Australia, and he wished, in his own way, to rectify the situation. He wrote that if people's situations back home were reasonably enduring, they would in most cases be disappointed upon confrontation with Australian realities. In fact, he thought that New Zealand was better suited for Danish emigrants. The climate there was somewhat similar to that of Denmark, especially in summer, and there were still good opportunities for farmers on the islands, although the best land for cultivation was already occupied.

He continued by saying that the climate of Australia was very hot and dry. The grass withered and rivers dried out completely during the dry season. Water was therefore a very important, but also a very expensive, resource. There was still a need for artisans, whereas those involved in commerce would have a difficult time finding work, unless, of course, they spoke perfect English. Servant girls could always find a situation somewhere. He strongly advised against making any investment in mining. »*The days of the fifties, when people got rich overnight, are over, and today the work is carried out by big companies which give very little or no profit...*«

As for himself, the emigrant wrote that he had travelled via London and that the trip had cost altogether 450 kroner. It was probably cheaper to take passage from Hamburg. It was best to travel in July or August because one would then arrive in Australia in summer, and that gave the best chance of finding work immediately. Wages were reasonable, but there were big variations from trade to trade. Artisans could earn about 10 shillings a

day, whereas shepherds got only 15 to 20 shillings a week. Food prices were high except for meat.

The picture of Australia was drawn in many different ways, depending on whether it was imagined in a kind of dream sequence or whether it was viewed without extenuating circumstances »on location«.

## IN CONCLUSION

The story of how Australia was viewed from Denmark is not complete with this first contribution. A random sampling taken from various Danish archives and libraries clearly shows that there is much information about the knowledge of overseas conditions in former times to be gleaned from newspapers, weekly magazines and other periodicals. In its day this information was greedily consumed by three different groups of readers. One group was comprised of young people from the middle and lower upper classes who sought romantic, colourful experiences and exciting jobs in which they could earn easy money. The second group was made up of social reformists who in emigration saw an opportunity to provide the lower strata of society with a chance for a better life than what would otherwise be their lot. The third and final group had in mind a more practical use of the information. They were the authors of geography textbooks for use in board and primary schools and schools of higher education. They had a potentially greater audience for their publications than most other authors. The question was whether or not the final 2 or 3 pages of a modest little book of 100 pages would be read and remembered by tired country school children sitting in the darkness of early morning on hard benches in a smelly schoolroom. Australia? they might later ask themselves – wasn't that something about cannibals who, when nothing better was available, ate snakes and other vermin?

In this connection it should be recalled

that school books, then as now, were written on the basis of second or third-hand knowledge. Authors did not hesitate to copy from one another, and they lifted information from foreign publications, providing, of course, that they understood the language. They seem, in particular, to have made use of German texts.

On the basis of what we know today, it would appear that it was the discovery of gold in 1851 which opened the eyes of the world to the possibilities of the 5th continent. Even though the depiction of Australia in 1840 was more accurate than that provided at the beginning of the century, even then the land was described as a huge unexplored island far away in the South Seas with evergreen coasts, strange plants, animals and people and, of course, English penal colonies. It was obvious to anyone who thought about it that it would be dangerous to go ashore at such a place.

But all at once, in September, 1851, Australia became a real attraction, or, one might even say, an overnight sensation, just as California had become three years previously. The rumour of great wealth just waiting to be taken from the ground was no doubt passed quickly from man to man. Hundreds of Danes, most of them artisans and some from that somewhat indefinable group of gentlefolk, set forth on the long journey to take part in the race for riches, assisted on their way by the enterprising travel agents of the day.

Positive reports from the gold fields were not long in coming. There really *was* gold. This started a new chain reaction, and all the while, the newspapers, and later the professional authors of travel publications attempted to keep the pot boiling, if necessary by putting their stories on »full boost«. And, suddenly, it was all over. The main stream turned in the opposite direction – home to Denmark. Most were poorer than when they had left. Many stories about the life of the gold digger in Australia must have circulated

in Denmark in the 1860's and 70's – some containing more truth than others. If these had any influence at all on emigration to Australia, it was probably negative.



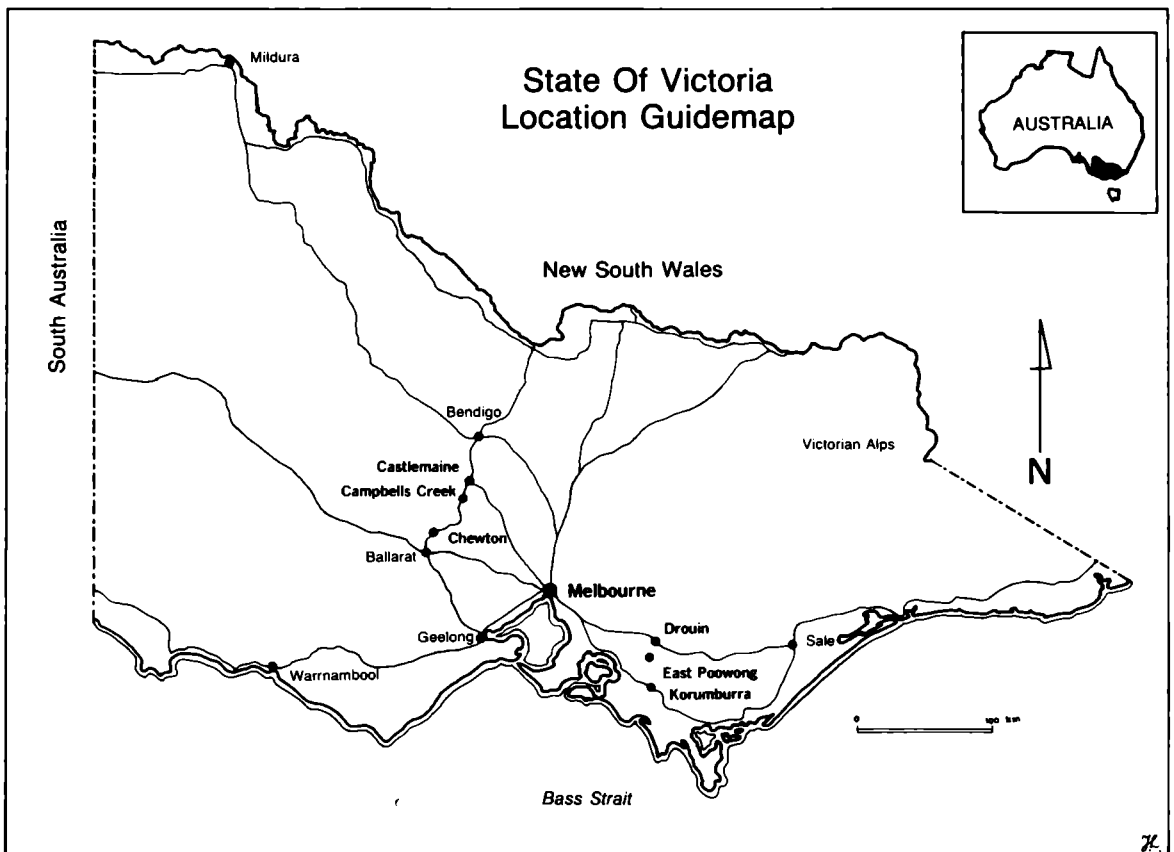


# The Danes at Poowong East

## Danish Migrants integrate into Australian Community

by Erik J. Jensen

Map drawn by the cartographer, Jarl Rolighed Larsen, who lives in the state of Victoria. 1988.



According to Australian statistics, since white settlement commenced in Australia 200 years ago, some 50,000 Danes have emigrated to this distant continent. It is estimated that some 165,000 of Australia's population today have some Danish blood in their veins – i.e., approximately 1% of the country's population. Unlike many of the larger groups of foreign immigrants – e.g., the Italians, Greeks, Chinese etc. – the Danes who settled in Australia integrated into the predominantly British population and lost their national identity – quite happily so, because by and large, they felt at home with their British/Australian fellow citizens. They became real »Aussies« even in the first generation, and their children and grandchildren all lost the language of their Danish ancestors. Many lost even their Danish surnames as they changed their family names to make them look and sound more British – e.g., Johansen became Johnson, Andersen became Anderson, etc.

#### THE EXCEPTION AT POOWONG EAST

Throughout Australia, the only exception to this development is the Danish settlement in South Gippsland at Poowong East in the beautiful rolling hills of the Strezleckis – some 120 km east/southeast of Melbourne. Some 12 Danes decided in 1877 that gold digging was too precarious an existence and made up their minds to seek safer and »greener pastures«. They became the pioneers of the Poowong East settlement, and some of their descendants in the 3rd, 4th and 5th generations continue to gather for meetings in the »Danish« Community Hall at Poowong East – about 20 km south of Drouin on the Kurrumburra Road. However tenuous the connection, these people continue to feel some association with the country of their forefathers. – But before commenting on this development, let us go back to the beginning and search for the reasons why these and other Danes found themselves in this country on the opposite side of the world.

#### THE START OF IT ALL

It really all started with one E.H. Hargraves in January, 1851. Hargraves returned to Sydney from the California gold fields where he had compared the geological formations there with what he had seen previously in New South Wales, and he was convinced that GOLD must exist in some parts of the colony. On arrival in Sydney he told his friends of his expectations, and they all declared him mad! Undaunted by their ridicule, he set out from Sydney for Bathurst, and from there he explored the Macquarie River and its tributaries. Finally, along one of the small creeks flowing into a tributary, he found the country he was so anxious to see again. In his excitement he told his companion Lister that gold lay under their feet. Hargraves dug a panful of earth, washed it in a water hole and exclaimed: »Here it is«. That was the beginning of it all. On returning to his inn that night, Hargraves wrote a memorandum on the discovery to the Colonial Secretary in Sydney, Deas Thomson, who announced the discovery in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on May 15th, 1851. Immediately a wave of excitement passed over the city, a wave which was to send ripples all over the world. Although the first discovery of gold was made in New South Wales, it was not long before attention turned to Victoria (or Australia Felix, or Port Phillip Territory of New South Wales, as it was called until the separate colony of Victoria was established in 1851). And – as it happened – most of Australia's early gold deposits were found in the areas near Ballarat, Bendigo and Castlemaine.

#### THE NEWS OF GOLD IN AUSTRALIA HITS DENMARK

The news of the fabulous gold discoveries in Australia reached Denmark at a time of great economic and political instability. The Danish population in the province of Northern Schleswig was especially apprehensive following the 1848-50 war between Denmark

and Prussia, and with the loss of this province to Prussia after the disastrous second Prussian war in 1864, many of these Danes decided to emigrate to escape the new German regime. Some 60,000 of a population of about 160,000 migrated from Northern Schleswig from 1867 to 1910. Although most of these Danes moved either to mainland Denmark or to the U.S.A., a substantial number – attracted by the exciting news from »down under« – decided to go to Australia, the majority to Victoria.

### ARRIVING IN MELBOURNE

It must have been a relief after the 3 or 4 month voyage from Hamburg to enter Port Phillip Bay and the busy port of Melbourne which by 1865-70, when most of the emigrants from Northern Schleswig arrived, was probably the fastest growing city in the world. By that time Melbourne had overcome some of the early problems associated with the discovery of gold up-country: During the first years of the gold rush, all able-bodied men deserted their wives, families and homes when the intoxicating news of gold reached the city. Cottages were deserted, businesses were deserted, ships in Port Phillip Bay were deserted. Even some masters of ships, accepting the loss of crew as inevitable, teamed up with their men and set off for the diggings. Few families were able to retain their domestic servants in the first flush of excitement. But soon many diggers discovered that life in the gold fields was not for them and drifted back home to Melbourne again. So the gold fields were left to the toughest males of the species, and it was into this tough environment that our immigrants from Northern Schleswig were thrown shortly after their arrival. The diggers lived in tents, with the cooking and other chores being carried out either by one of their team or by a wife, but, of course, women represented only a small minority of the population in the gold fields.

Many of the Danes and other Scandina-

vians rushed to Campbell's Creek, near Castlemaine, as soon as news of the discovery of gold in that area reached them. They pegged out their claims in the most promising locations, cut down trees, put up tents and began fossicking and taking samples of the dirt in tin dishes to wash out in the creek. Perhaps on the bottom of the dish there were some yellow specks. In the most successful areas, the »canvas towns« were subsequently replaced by timber or stone buildings. In and around Campbell's Creek you will find remnants of the Scandinavian presence, for example, a sign reading RASMUSSEN – BUTCHER to remind us that not all Danes and other Scandinavians at the diggings limited themselves to looking for gold. Many turned their attention to serving the miners with shops and hotels – and they were usually the more successful financially. At nearby Chewton Cemetery we find quite a number of graves with Danish names on the tombstones.

### MARVELLOUS MELBOURNE

The impact of gold production on the economy of Australia, and on Victoria in particular, was spectacular during the second half of the 19th century. From 1850 to 1900 approximately 66 million ounces of gold were produced in the Victorian gold fields with an average annual value – based on the current price of gold – of about AS1,000 million! It is no wonder that Melbourne became MARVELOUS MELBOURNE, the glamour city of the continent with magnificent boulevards, one of the finest botanical gardens found anywhere, the biggest and most impressive Governor's Residence in the British Empire and a huge Exhibition Building which accommodated the World Expo in 1880 (where Denmark had a stand) and the Australian Centenary Exhibition in 1888.

The successful gold miners and traders travelled in style from Ballarat to the big city of Melbourne using the luxurious COBB &

CO. coach service to Geelong, where they picked up the steamer to Melbourne across Port Phillip Bay. Travelling by COBB & CO. was the ultimate in luxury and comfort. You caught the coach in Ballarat at 6 am and arrived in Geelong by 2 pm, in time to catch the steamer. COBB & CO. made it possible to travel directly from Ballarat to Melbourne and back again in a day. The fare for the round trip was some £14 – at a time when weekly wages were approximately £2.10.0, i.e., about 5 times the weekly wage. It is interesting to compare this set of figures with the current average weekly wage in Australia of more than AS400. 5 times that figure (AS2,000) will buy an economy air ticket to Europe via Asia with the return to Australia through the U.S.A. If you fly from Melbourne non-stop to Bangkok and from there to Copenhagen, you spend about the same amount of time travelling as by COBB & CO. and steamer from Ballarat to Melbourne and back again just over 100 years ago!

### IN SEARCH OF GREENER PASTURES

But for most of the gold miners, travelling by COBB & CO. was well beyond their financial reach – they sweated it out locally in search of the elusive metal. And mining for gold became increasingly subject to government controls. All the fields were placed under the control of a government appointed Chief Commissioner, and there were assistant commissioners in charge of each field. No person was permitted to dig or search for gold or to remove it from any land without paying £1.10 per month for a licence which had to be shown to the commissioners on demand. Failure to produce the licence resulted in fines. Many of the diggers were dissatisfied with these restrictions and looked with envy at the relatively well-to-do farmers who had received grants of land on very reasonable terms in order to develop the rural economy.

In the early 1870's much was written in local papers about South Gippsland with its

big forests of giant trees, fertile soil, ample rainfall and attractive climate. It had a reputation for being eminently suitable for dairy farming. This, was sweet music to the ears of Danes in the gold mining areas who were looking for more likely ways of building a future for themselves and their families. In early 1876 two Danes in this category, J.H. Schmidt and C. Møller, took the train (which had recently been introduced) from Chewton – near Castlemaine – to Melbourne. They purchased a saddle horse and with a few basic necessities set off in search of land in Gippsland. They eventually arrived at Poowong where a local settler showed them over the country, and they finally pegged out a selection of land. They returned to Melbourne and lodged their application with the Lands Department, and shortly thereafter they were notified that their applications would be considered at a sitting of the Lands Board in Melbourne. They were subsequently granted an occupation licence for 3 years at 2 shillings per acre per annum, to be paid, and improvements to be effected in 3 years to the amount of One Pound per acre. After complying with these conditions and residing on the land for the 3 years, they were entitled to a lease. Under the terms of the lease they were to pay the balance due to the government of 14 shillings per acre in 14 half-yearly instalments, after which a freehold title would finally be granted. Messrs. Schmidt and Møller's example was soon followed by other Danes in the gold fields, Jonsten Andersen, the Byriell brothers, Mrs. Linnett, Fisher and Niels Peter Olsen (who was subsequently to become the central figure in the Poowong East settlement.

You will get some idea of the difficulties of travelling in those days from the following extract from »Pioneers of the Danish Settlement« (a chapter in the book »The Land of the Lyre Bird«) written by M.L.C. Hansen in 1920:

*In June, 1877, Messrs. Byriell, Olsen, Petersen,*



Niels Peter Olsen and Marie with 4 of their children in front of their home, »Iriholm« i Poowong East. Photograph circa 1900.

*Schmidt and Møller travelled by train from Chewton to Melbourne. There they purchased tents, tools and provisions, hired 2 drays with drivers, who were to convey them to Poowong East or Cruickston, as it was then called, and they undertook to travel a stated number of miles daily. On the 3rd or 4th day from Melbourne they got bogged near Tooradin, and the drivers refused to proceed, owing to the bad state of the road. After a delay of 3 days, the pioneers succeeded in obtaining a bullock team and waggon and made another start for the promised land – and it was still a very slow process. One night, while they were camped at Tinpot Hill, it rained and blew so incessantly that it was impossible for them to erect the tents, so they were forced to spend the whole night around the camp fire in the lee of the waggon and some scrubby timber. Next morning found them cold, wet and stiff, but as there could be nothing gained by further waiting, they pressed on, thus day by day getting nearer, if only a little, to the spot upon which they hoped to build a home and a future. Eventually they arrived at Cruickston, having done the 68 miles – 120 km – from Melbourne in fourteen days, or at the rate of under 5 miles per day.*

During the last few years of the 1890's, the Danish community in Melbourne made it their tradition to have an annual picnic in the Poowong East fields with the current residents of the Poowong community. This tradition has carried over to today. The Melbourne Danes leave home after 9 am and arrive at the Poowong East Community Hall in good time before the church service at 11 am. They drive on good roads all the way – what a contrast to the above pioneering expedition only 110 years ago!

## ESTABLISHING THE FARMS AT POOWONG EAST

Back to 1877 – the first task of the pioneers was to locate their land selections; then they had to find the best route for a track into the land and cut this track – no mean task through what was often dense jungle. This was done in part by burning the bush, and in 1877 the pioneers were helped by one of the

dryest summers on record which made the burning easier. Grass was then sown upon the ash-covered surface of the ground, and the settlers then turned their attention to building their first primitive huts.

All the pioneers had left their families behind in the gold mining areas – there is no record of how they made ends meet – and it was not until 1878 and 1879 that the Møller, Schmidt, Olsen and Staben families were reunited. Soon the problem of schooling for their many children had to be solved. Mr. Byriell offered the use of a small building on his property, provided the government would supply furniture and a teacher. This was agreed to, and some 30 children attended this first local school. The records show that school attendance was below average – little wonder, as some of the children had to walk four or five miles (6-8 km) along tracks which were often in shocking condition and frequently blocked by logs which had to be negotiated. During 1882 a new, small school building was built by the Education Department on land provided by Mr. Byriell – this was used extensively by the community as a school and a church (for Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian and Church of England services) and for public meetings, debating societies and social functions and as a polling booth at election time. In 1879 a road was constructed between Drouin and Poowong East with the help of volunteer workers. It is interesting to contrast the reports of the tough and demanding conditions which prevailed during the early years of settlement with the words of Mrs. N.A. Petersen in her book »Close to Nature's Heart«, published in 1951, in which she says – inter alia:

*»About 1892 great advancements had been made – cattle and horses were grazing on the holdings which had their fine well furnished homesteads with gardens, orchards and the necessary buildings. The sons and daughters had each their riding horses and ponies – the parents their buggy and pair. In the evening could be heard the strains of music – piano*

*and violin having taken the place of the bush accordion – the roads and railways which the pioneers had striven so hard to get were beginning to take shape. Mail was being delivered 3 times a week, linking the settlement with the outside world. Instead of 3 days' journey to Melbourne – not to speak of 14! in 1876 – we could make there and back in one day.»*

#### FROM DAIRY TO CATTLE FARMING

The farmers around Poowong East played a prominent role in pioneering the dairy industry in Victoria and established a dairy-factory in the area on a co-operative basis, following the Danish example. Today the farmers at Poowong East are primarily successful beef-cattle farmers. However, not far from Poowong East, at Neerim South, another family of Danish ancestry, Robert and Lyn Johnson (Johansen) have developed a blue-

vein cheese factory. One of their cheese-makers, Elvin Jensen, has just returned from a trip to Denmark and other European countries where he studied the cheese industry.

#### CONTACT WITH THE DANES IN MELBOURNE

In addition to the regular church services for the Poowong East community conducted by local ministers, Scandinavian pastors used to visit the community from time to time. In 1895 one of the pastors was accompanied by Captain Jens Lyng who was a well-known Danish citizen in Melbourne – for many years he edited the newspaper *Norden*, and he wrote several books about Scandinavians in Australia in Danish and English. Lyng predicted that by 1977, 100 years after the original establishment of the community, the

Wilbur Olsen and his daughter-in-law, Beryl, with Queen Margrethe in the Danish Club, Melbourne, February 4, 1987. In the background Minister of Foreign Affairs, Uffe Ellemann-Jensen.



Danish character of the inhabitants would have totally vanished, except for the names. In many ways Jens Lyng was correct in his predictions, as visitors to Poowong East in the 1980's will find what appears to be a typical Australian farming community. Nevertheless, the citizens continue to meet regularly in the Danish Community Hall, which now features the Danish flag and a picture of Queen Margrethe II along side their Australian equivalents. The Danish Australian Cultural Society (DACS) in Melbourne has done a great deal in recent years to maintain and strengthen Danish activities carried out in the Poowong East community, and no doubt their proud interest in Denmark was further strengthened in early 1987 when quite a few members of the community participated in the reception for Queen Margrethe in the Danish Club in Melbourne where they had the opportunity to meet the Queen personally.

As previously mentioned, Niels Peter Olsen and his wife became the cornerstones of the early Poowong East community, and their home »Triholm« was a hospitable meeting place for all members of the community and the many outside visitors who stayed there over the years. The central role played by the original Olsen family has been continued in recent times by one of Niels Peter's grandsons, Wilbur Olsen, who – together wife Amanda – now occupies the »Triholm« property.

It seems, therefore, fitting to end this story with a poem written by Wilbur Olsen for the Centenary celebration of the Poowong East community held in 1977:

*»Triholm«*

*In the year of eighteen seventy-seven  
a gallant little band  
turned their footsteps south to the forest deep  
of Gippsland's fertile land.*

*And Grandpa selected his chosen plot  
and settled down to work  
for he had come of Viking stock  
knew not what it was to shirk.*

*Knock off when it got too dark to work  
and up with the break of morn  
the axe swung hard and the saw bit deep  
and there TRIHOLM was born.*

*With Sunday his only day of rest  
he cleared the timbered slope  
and all they had in those far-off days  
was a great big heart and hope.*

*And when he had cleared a little patch  
and sown the good land down  
he brought his family to live with him  
from a northern mining town.*

*For Grandpa had come from across the sea  
but his labours had been in vain  
as he searched for gold in the gullies deep  
and the hills of Castlemaine.*

*This gleaming lure by the earth held deep  
might be for him temp'ry love  
but he knew full well that the real gold grew  
in the good rich soil above.*

*With Grandmother ever at his side  
they toiled, they hoped, they prayed  
poor by possession of worldly goods  
yet rich in the friends they made.*

*Kindness and friendship were watchwords here  
and quickly the news had spread  
and many a weary traveller stayed  
for a welcome meal and a bed.*

*Their family was large and they reared them well  
to band them tight like a club  
then radiate out like the spokes of a wheel  
with TRIHOLM still the hub.*

*The folks pass on and the next ones come  
but nothing will move the land  
as a monument mute to those pioneers  
TRIHOLM will ever stand.*



# An Ethnic History of Danes in Victoria

## – A Preliminary Report

by *Mark Garner*

Victoria, situated in the south-east of continental Australia, is the smallest mainland state in area, but has the second largest population (some four million people). Approximately eighty percent of Victorians live in the Melbourne metropolitan area.

The major portion of the state's population is of British-Irish origin, but throughout its history, and especially since the Second World War, immigrants have arrived in significant numbers from other places, particularly elsewhere in Europe. This has resulted in a complex mix of ethnic communities, many of whom retain their own languages in more or less regular use. In recent years there has been great interest in the demography, cultures, and languages of non-British groups throughout Australia. This paper is a report of a study (which is only partly completed) into the present Danish community in Melbourne and into the descendants of the earlier Danish settlers. It complements my earlier study into Swedes in Melbourne (see note 7) and Dr. John Martin's research into Norwegians (as yet unpublished). The study is being conducted with the assistance of the Danish Consul-General in Australia, Mr. Erik Jensen, and the Swedish Section of the Department of Germanic Studies at the University of Melbourne. The completed study will be published late in 1988.

### DANISH SETTLEMENT IN VICTORIA

Information about the settlement of Danes, as of all Scandinavians in Victoria, is

fragmentary. The many anecdotal records and such statistical material as is available are brought together in the excellent recent book by Koivukangas and Martin (1). Earlier studies by Jens Lyng (2), which were a little unreliable and are now very out of date, were previously the only published works on the topic.

There is no point in summarising these historical studies here: the interested reader is referred to Koivukangas and Martin. However, a few general points will help to provide a context for the rest of this report.

Prior to the 1850's, only a few individuals from Denmark settled in the Port Phillip District, later to become the colony of Victoria. The discovery of gold in the early 1850's in various places around the colony evoked great excitement in Scandinavia, and a considerable number of sailors left their ships while in Australia in order to dig for gold. Interest in emigration from Scandinavia was also high, particularly in Denmark, where the aftermath of the first Schleswig war of 1851 and the loss of territory to Prussia in 1864 caused many young men to look for new opportunities overseas. During the first gold rush decade, several thousand Scandinavians were reported to be on the goldfields. The Danish adventurer Claus Grønn (3) recalled in his diary:

*»During these history-making years, 1860 to 1863, innumerable Northerners, mostly Danes, laced the population in and around Castlemaine (near Bendigo). At one time my countrymen numbered*

Nogle ledende Medlemmer i Melbournes danske Forening samt den første danske Konsul  
i Victoria (afdøde I. B. Were).



I. B. Were. The Hon. F. Hagelthorn, M. L. C. Minister for Immigration. F. W. Were, General  
konsul for Danmark. L. Lauritz, Viceformand. Vice Konsul P. Holdensen, Formand.  
Bendix Hausen, Kasserer. Dr. Elwood Mead, C. E. President for Victorias Irrigations  
væsen. O. Petersen, Sekretær og Bestyrer. H. Christesen, Farmer.

*around 500. Some returned home, richer or poorer; some died, but the majority stayed on – a nucleus of sound Australian citizens.»*

The Danish-born population of Victoria at the time of the 1871 census was approximately 1,000, almost all of whom were male.

The second major influx of Scandinavians came to Australia in the last three decades of the nineteenth century. The immigrants were attracted by the offer of assisted passages to the north-eastern colony of Queensland, but many of them moved south as far as Victoria. These new arrivals offset the number of earlier settlers who had re-emigrated from the colonies, and at the time of the Federation of Australia in 1901, the Danish-born population of Victoria was more or less the same as that of 1871. This period saw the beginnings of organised communal activities among Scandinavians. Most clubs and societies were short-lived, although their history has been described by John Martin (4). Nonetheless, the most significant occurrence for Scandinavian community life in the history of Victoria occurred at this time, when the Scandinavian Church (now the Swedish Church and Scandinavian Seamen's Mission) was formed in 1883 (5).

During the latter part of the last century, Danes began making their mark in Victorian agriculture, in local shipping, and in the wider cultural life of Melbourne through the Danish cultural clubs.

The first half of the present century saw a sharp decline in the number of immigrants from Denmark. Australia in the early years of the century was a less attractive destination than it had been for emigrants from Scandinavia. The possibilities of rapid wealth had declined: the supply of surface gold had given out, and the local economy was struggling in the wake of a land boom followed by depression and severe droughts. Later, the two World Wars effectively prevented immigration, and the world-wide depression of the 1930's also greatly limited the chances of mo-

bility. At the same time, social and economic conditions in Denmark had considerably improved since the troubled years of the mid-nineteenth century, and so the impetus to leave the homeland was much less. The result of these conditions in Australia and Denmark was that by the time of the 1947 census there were about half as many Danish-born Victorians as there had been in 1901.

It is worth noting at this point that one of the aims of the current project is to discover information about the second and later generations of Danish immigrant families during this period. Whilst we know a great deal about Danish cultural organisations and their activities in the years of declining immigration, we have virtually no information about the descendants of Danes, who for the most part appear to have severed their contacts with the Danish community.

The last period of this very gross historical survey is the past forty years, marked by the massive programme of assisted immigration to Australia. This incentive to immigrants was strengthened by the uncertain future of post-war Europe, as well as some local Scandinavian dissatisfaction with heavy taxes and the welfare state.

The effect of these circumstances has been effectively to treble the number of Danes living in Victoria, with the present population numbering over 1,500.

One final observation will help to set the context of the following discussion. Although, as we have seen, the quantity of Danish immigration has varied markedly in the history of Victoria, the nature of the immigrants themselves has been peculiarly consistent in one notable respect. The great majority of Danish settlers have been self-motivated people seeking adventure or better opportunities for themselves or their families. There has been no mass immigration of Danes, and it has been largely the Danish individualist who has settled in Australia. Early on, the remoteness and rugged-

ness of gold-rush Victoria attracted only the hardiest. Later, the difficult years of the first part of the twentieth century meant that only those with a strong sense of purpose or adventure came to Australia. Finally, the circumstances in post-war Scandinavia have caused only the socially mobile professional and business person to seek to leave the security of the welfare state: these were the findings of my study of Swedish immigration

(6), and are almost certainly true of Danes as well.

Furthermore, the great predominance of males among Danish immigrants until quite recently has led to extensive intermarrying with non-Scandinavians, with predictable consequences for the loss of Danish ethnicity and language among even first-generation settlers.

Collins Street, Melbourne, where the Danish club, »Dannebrog«, moved to after some years.



## THE PRESENT STUDY

This study has several related aims. One aim is to elicit from descendants of early Danish settlers otherwise inaccessible information about their forebears, and thus to enrich our as yet sketchy knowledge of those early immigrants. Another aim is to describe as fully as possible the patterns of settlement, education, occupation, and so on, of the descendants of Danes, to evaluate the »indirect« Danish contribution to Australia's history. Connected with this is the aim of answering the question, often put to me by Danes who hear of the project, »Do Danes make good settlers?«. Finally, we aim to make the findings available to other researchers – to those who

would like to compare Danish emigrants to Australia with Danes who have settled elsewhere; and to those in Australia who are interested in comparing various ethnic groups as settlers in this country.

As stated above, the study is still far from complete, but sufficient data have become available by now for us to begin to draw some tentative conclusions and to make some temporary comments. It should be emphasised, however, that what follows is only a preliminary summary of some interesting trends that can be seen by a simple statistical analysis of the first figures.

The study is based on a questionnaire, to be followed by interviews with selected respondents. The questionnaire is being sent to a random selection of people with Danish surnames in the Melbourne, Ballarat, and Bendigo telephone books. By these means, we are reaching a number of people of Danish descent who would otherwise be inaccessible to research, since second and later generations of immigrants rarely maintain contact with the ethnic communities of their ancestors. We are also about to send a questionnaire to those people who *are* associated with Danish clubs and societies; by these means we should be able to describe the activities, attitudes, and so on, of many first-generation immigrants from Denmark.

To date, some 450 questionnaires have been sent to names in the Melbourne telephone book (of an intended total of about 1,000). Approximately 50 have been returned as wrongly addressed, and of the remaining 400, a little under one-third (125) have been filled out and sent back. This is a good rate of response for such random mailings, and promises to make the final results (due in about a year's time) highly significant.

## PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS SO FAR

Approximately one-third of the respondents are first generation immigrants (that is, they were born in Denmark), and two-thirds



In 1913 »Dannebrog« had most of the 1st floor of Robbs' Buildings in Collins Street at its disposal.

are Australian born. They represent all age groups from 25 years onwards in equal numbers. It is interesting to note that, in line with the low immigration numbers for the first half of the twentieth century, only 14% of the Australian-born are second generation: 86% are third, fourth, or fifth generation Danes. The dates of arrival of the ancestors of these Australian-born respondents reflect the broad historical patterns outlined earlier: pre-1850: 1%; 1850-1900: 71%; 1900-1950: 20%; 1950 onwards: 6%.

As expected, a very large proportion of those who settled in Australia, particularly prior to 1900, were involved in shipping, as sailors, ship's carpenters, and even sea-captains. Many were attracted by the possibilities of gold, but some went straight into agriculture and a few set up businesses in the colony. A few left Denmark specifically to avoid conscription into the German army after the troubles in Schleswig-Holstein. Those who settled in the first part of the present century were more often emigrants-refugees for family reasons who became farmers in Victoria.

Some of those who left their ships in those pioneering days appear to have done so more or less accidentally. One fell overboard in Adelaide Harbour and drowned, leaving his young son to be brought up in an orphanage. Another, a conscripted sailor, could not stand the sea-sickness, and fled in Melbourne; whilst another was (perhaps conveniently) shipwrecked. On one ship, the entire crew, who may or may not have been Scandinavians, deserted; the captain sold the ship and went into business with the proceeds. A fortune-hunting Dane, whose family has shown us three surviving letters from him on the goldfields, was licensed as a captain for internal waterways in Denmark and Germany. Somehow he managed illegally to take his little vessel all the way to Melbourne where he sold it and went to dig for gold.

I hope to be able to follow up such suggestive snippets of information, as a number of

respondents have offered us access to family letters and other records. This promises to be an informative and most entertaining study of its own.

The Australian-born descendants show a surprisingly high interest in, and knowledge about, their ancestry (although the returns are obviously biased in favour of those who feel some Danish connexion). Virtually all of them were able to give quite detailed information; half have visited Denmark to visit relatives or to trace their family's history, and 70% of those who have not been to Denmark would like to do so for the same reasons.

We have the long term intention to enter on computer all of the names which come to light of early settlers, together with whatever information about them we can gather from any source, including the many family trees which have come to light during this survey. This will enable us to cross-reference the material and so provide a rich source of data on the lives of particular Danish settlers and their activities in Australia, as well as data for their descendants who are tracing their own genealogies.

The picture of ethnicity or Danish consciousness which is emerging follows this trend towards maintaining links with their roots. Whilst almost all of those born in Australia take no interest in the local Danish community, two-thirds of them express a »particular interest« in news about Denmark. Fifteen percent of these respondents, including some fourth generation, think of themselves as in some sense or other »Danish« (i.e., »Danish-Australian« or »Australian-Danish«), and the same proportion (most likely the same actual respondents) meet with Danes in Melbourne at informal social gatherings. Seventeen percent of Australian-born report having learned some Danish, usually at home, but also in formal classes. Unfortunately, we have not yet had time to analyse these figures according to generations, but there is a suggestion that second generation Danish immi-

grants may preserve their ethnic language significantly more than do Swedes (7).

A note is relevant here concerning the Danish-born respondents. This group's replies have not yet been analysed as much as those of the Australian-born, since we are awaiting the responses to the questionnaires which will be mailed to members of Danish community groups before we draw conclusions about first generation settlers. However, it would appear from first impressions that, like the Swedes, there is a rather high rate of loss of the language among this group: nearly 40% report that their command of Danish is less than good. At the same time, also like the Swedes, the first generation express a generally high rate of interest in Danish community affairs. This possible trend will be followed in detail when greater numbers of returns are available.

Finally, in an attempt to achieve our aim of tracing the social and economic fortunes of the descendants of early Danish settlers, we asked for information about their levels of education, places of residence and occupations. From the responses it will be possible to make some broad but valid generalisations. At the same time, we must allow for the fact that educated people are more likely to respond to questionnaires of this sort, so the sample will be biased towards middle-class respondents. Only a very detailed statistical analysis will help to overcome this bias. How-

ever, on present indications, a disproportionately high number of Danes (as also of Swedes and their descendants) are business, professional, or trades people, having some higher educational qualifications, and living in the wealthier eastern and south-eastern suburbs of Melbourne.

## CONCLUSION

As I indicated above, this study of Danish settlers and their descendants is still in its early stages. Nevertheless, we already have gained a substantial amount of new information about the history of Danish immigration to Victoria, and we can envisage being able to write a more complete version of this part of Australian history in the reasonably near future. Similarly, our knowledge about the effect of Danish immigration on Australia's social and cultural history right up to the present day should soon be greatly enriched.

It has been possible at this stage to mention only a few likely trends in the data. I hope to have provided a small insight into the fortunes of Danes as they and their descendants have settled in the new world down under; at least enough to inform interested readers of a little of what is being discovered. By these small gleanings, these readers, as well as researchers in other related areas, have, I hope, had their appetites whetted for what promises to be a most revealing and fascinating study.

## Notes

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# Danes and the Australian Dairying Industry

by *John Stanley Martin*

The greatest contribution of Danes to Australia and its economic development has been in the dairying industry. However, it is remarkable that the histories of the dairying industry in Australia do not highlight this unique contribution. Ken Sillcock in his »Three Lifetimes of Dairying in Victoria« of 1972 makes no reference to the Danish con-

tribution to the industry. He refers only to a German contractor's ruthless exploitation of some Swedish and Danish deserted seamen and to a Gippsland dairy inspector called Helge Pedersen in the 1950's. One may presume that the latter is of Danish descent. None of the names mentioned in this paper appear in this history of the Victorian dairy-

A Danish dairy in Queensland. Photograph from 1902.



ing industry. In the excellent article in the fourth edition of »The Australian Encyclopædia« there is no reference to the Danish contribution to the development of this industry in Australia. However, there is reference to the fact in the article on Danes in Australia a few pages further on (1). The dairying industry in Australia began with the four Zebu cattle on the First Fleet in 1788. As the settlement expanded, the industry developed in order to supply fresh milk and dairy goods to the settlers. The first significant advance came after 1815 with the opening up of the Illawarra district on the fertile coastal strip south of Sydney. The pattern there established was subsequently followed in Van Diemen's Land (now Tasmania) at Moreton Bay in what is now Queensland, in areas in New South Wales both to the north and the south of the original settlement at Sydney and in the Port Phillip District around Melbourne after 1835 and later in the Western District and Gippsland. The dairymen would occupy a new area, clear the land and start production as soon as possible.

The primitive means of production of butter until the introduction of mechanisation in the 1880's was well portrayed by William Bosse in his history of the northern Victorian town of Numurkah (1979):

*The selector fortunate enough to own a cow, provided she did not succumb from lack of water, usually found she produced more milk than the family needed. Superfluous cream was made into butter and sold to the local store, thus providing useful extra revenue for the family's meagre exchequer.*

*The farmer's wife separated cream from the milk by allowing it to settle in flat dishes. Small amounts of cream or butter could be kept cool in the Coolgardie safe or on a brick floor, constantly watered down, but more and more underground cellars were built on farms as dairying began to develop into an industry.* (2)

This farm-based industry was a poorly organised, wasteful and an unhygienic form of production. It existed for the first century of

British settlement in Australia. But the last two decades of the nineteenth century witnessed an extensive and radical transformation of Australia's dairying industry. Firstly, refrigeration both locally in cool-storage sheds and on trains, and internationally on ships, meant that goods could be transported over long distances, both within Australia and overseas, and that foreign markets, especially in the United Kingdom, were open to Australian farm products. One can take the Numurkah district as an example. Refrigerated cars were introduced to the Goulburn Valley railway line in northern Victoria in 1885 and 1886 and cool-storage sheds were built at Numurkah in 1890. (3)

Secondly, there was the introduction of centrifugal cream separators. These came to Australia principally from Gustaf de Laval's company, AB Separator, in Sweden. The original inventor of a method of utilisation of centrifugal force to separate the cream from the milk appears to have been a scientist in Munich, whose brilliant theorising led to the production of a rather impracticable machine about 1864. His discovery caused a sensation in Germany and Scandinavia, and soon many others were experimenting with viable improvements. In 1878 C.L. Nielsen came up with a successful model for a separator in Denmark, and it was on the market a year later. At the same time, Gustaf de Laval in Sweden was still experimenting with his separator, and it was also soon available. It was the latter model which transformed the dairying industry in Australia (4).

The first Swedish separator recorded in New South Wales was in 1881 and in Victoria in 1884 in a Mr Wilson's dairy, but it was twenty years before they were in general use on Australian farms (5). The farmers sent their milk to a local receiving depot or »creamery« and retained the skim milk to feed calves and pigs. In the Numurkah shire there were 14 creameries by 1889 (6). Knowledge of the new dairying technology and de-

velopments were popularised by the model dairy at the Great International Exhibition in Melbourne in 1888, where the Laval separator and the »Government Farm« or model dairy became one of the principal attractions, especially for country folk (7).

During the 1880's there was also a radical organisational change in the dairying industry. There was a strong movement towards the establishment of farmers' co-operatives. Small local co-operative butter factories servicing a number of creameries were established throughout the Australian dairying districts. The first co-operative butter factory in Australia was established at Albion Park in the Illawarra district in 1881 (8). Many of these butter factories were too small to be viable, and the tendency after 1900 was for the larger factories to absorb the smaller ones.

It was at this point that the Danish expertise entered the Australian dairying scene. In 1886 or 1887 a Danish dairy expert and enthusiast, Emil Hansen, arrived in Australia. He was a student of the famous professor Segelcke, who had played the determining role in the modernisation of the Danish butter industry. In the early stages of the planning for the Great International Exhibition in Melbourne, to be held in 1888, he was offered the position of manager of the so-called »Government Dairy« or model dairy at the exhibition. For some inexplicable reason he refused the offer of this prestigious position, and Wilson, the local dairy expert, then obtained the position (9). After an unsuccessful attempt to establish himself as a dairy-produce merchant in Melbourne, Hansen went on lecture tours of the principal dairying districts of Victoria and New South Wales for the next two years, explaining the latest farming methods and the recent application of technology to butter and cheese production in Denmark, and urging the Australian farmers to combine into co-operatives for more efficient productivity. Hansen addressed large meetings and went around on invitation to individual

farms to talk to interested farmers. Part of a speech delivered by Hansen at the Goulburn Agricultural Show in New South Wales in February 1892 was printed by Jens Lyng. Hansen told the farmers at Goulburn:

*»...Dairying has been known ever since the cow became domesticated. We all know that by shaking cream in a bottle or billy we get butter. Of later years dairying has been considerably improved through scientific discoveries, and seems almost to have reached perfection, although, no doubt, a good deal has to be learned yet. To be successful in dairying it is not sufficient to be able to work the latest machinery because so many small incidents occur which only man's brain can take advantage of, and which it is necessary to study with keen interest. To carry on dairying on scientific principles we must know something about cause and effect, and have an intimate knowledge of bacteriology, of the material used, and of the various processes to be applied; what in particular is needed in this colony is a Government dairy school... Dairies and butter factories must be kept airy, dry and clean, in order to avoid the butter becoming fishy. Aroma can be produced with the assistance of certain bacteria; in fact, in this lies the secret of the superiority and the uniformity of butter« (10).*

The response was greatest in certain dairying districts in Victoria and so Hansen concentrated his efforts there, having missed out on the position of chief dairying consultant to the Victorian Government. In the towns of Rochester and Kyneton he helped establish the first two butter factories in the colony of Victoria and managed both of them for the initial period. In 1894 ill health and disillusionment that his efforts had not been adequately rewarded by the government caused Hansen to return to Denmark. Nevertheless, in his sojourn of a decade in Victoria he had made a great contribution towards the transformation of the dairying industry in the colony (11).

Emil Hansen was succeeded in Victoria by a number of Danish experts who disseminated the latest techniques and who helped establish or who managed butter factories or

acted as technical consultants for already established butter factories. Jens Lyng estimated that several scores of Danish dairy experts arrived in Australia between 1890 and 1910 (12). The majority of these Danes went to Victoria because the dairying industry in New South Wales was older and better established, and the growing industry in Victoria had need of the Danish expertise. One such expert, also by the name of Hansen, was born in the colony of Danish parents. W. Hansen had sailed to Denmark for further education and training in the dairy industry, and when he returned to the colony, he became manager of butter factories in Thoona, Melbourne and Euroa in turn. In 1898 he went into partnership with Jørgen Pedersen, about whom we shall hear more details later, in the Rosenberg Butter Factory, but moved on to South Africa in 1900. Another expert called Pedersen, after having managed the Victoria Creamery in Melbourne, was appointed assistant dairy expert by the government of New South Wales. There his contribution was so highly valued that he was offered an important position of consultant in dairying in New Zealand (13). The best-known Danish dairying experts who came to Australia in the 1890's were Bendix Hansen and Svend Hartman.

Bendix Hansen arrived in Victoria in 1892 and was first appointed manager of the Victoria Creamery in Melbourne and later of the Shepparton Butter Factory. In 1901 in partnership with a Mr Farrell he established the York Butter Factory in King Street in Melbourne. This factory soon became the centre of a large butter and cheese manufacturing enterprise which extended to various parts of the state of Victoria. The York Butter Factory continued in operation until about the 1950's, and the name still exists as that of a bistro in the huge modern Rialto complex that has been built on the site. The firm of Hansen and Farrell bought up several old and inefficient butter factories which they totally re-

modelled and modernised as well as establishing new butter factories in Bendigo, Violet Town and Leitchville. Bendix Hansen was an enterprising man who was active in the further activities in the field of dairying. He was a member of the State Dairy Board, the Cream Graders' and Traders' Examination Board and the Dairy Industry's Wages Board. For a long period he was the representative of the Proprietary Cheese and Butter Manufacturers on the Melbourne Chamber of Commerce (14).

Bendix Hansen played a significant role in the Danish community in Melbourne. A tribute to him in the Melbourne Scandinavian paper, *Norden*, wrote of him as a splendid example of a son of Danish farming stock and commented on his tremendous capacity for hard work. *Whereas the Danes of old went off on Viking expeditions to plunder and rob, Bendix Hansen is one of those who today make a vigorous attack in the field of industry in order to protect the price of butter, but vanquishing his opponents with equal vehemence* (15).

The other outstanding Dane in the Victoria dairying industry who made the long voyage to Australia as a fully-fledged dairy expert was Svend Hartman who landed in Melbourne in 1896. For some years he gained invaluable local experience as manager of a number of Victorian butter factories. In the early 1900's he was employed by P.W. Heyman, one of the principal exporters of dairy produce in Denmark. Whereas the other Danes who played a role in the Australian dairying industry were resident in the country and, in many cases, were naturalised British subjects, Heyman operated from Denmark and made use of Danish settlers in Australia as agents for his various enterprises (16). Heyman had calculated that it would be more profitable to export tinned butter to the Far East, and especially to the Dutch East Indies, direct from Australia rather than ship it out on the long voyage from Denmark.

Therefore, Heyman sent out a tinning

plant to Australia and established a factory in Melbourne for export of the fine-quality butter to the Far East. The major problem was the fact that the Australian product was inferior to the Danish one. To raise the quality of the Australian standards of butter production, Heyman built the Boolarra Butter Factory, which he designed himself according to the highest standards and the latest technological developments in Denmark and which he equipped with the most modern Danish machinery. When it was built, Hartman took over management of the Boolarra Butter Factory. Heyman established further butter factories at Alberton and Numurkah, and a casein factory at Camperdown, the only factory of its kind in Australia.

On Hartman's advice Heyman sold his butter factories and later disposed of his casein factory to James Bell. It subsequently passed into the hands of a share-company of Camperdown farmers with James Bell remaining as their sales agent. Aware of Hartman's brilliance, Bell persuaded him to enter his employment. The Australian entrepreneur needed the help of the Danish expert in the establishment of a business to sell dairy equipment to butter factories and farmers. At that time nearly all the machinery used on the Australian dairying scene was obtained either direct from Scandinavia or from USA, where the original Scandinavian models were either copied or even improved upon. Bell then took on Hartman as a partner and manager of an engineering firm they established together in Melbourne for the manufacture of dairy machinery. So great was the success of this firm that by the 1920's all the dairy machinery in use in Australia, except for separators, was manufactured in Melbourne. Before long Bell and Hartman had established branches throughout Australia. As well as managing this growing business, Hartman edited a publication entitled *Gems from Dairy Journals* to inform Australian farmers of current trends and developments in Europe and

North America (17).

Two Danish settlers, although not trained in the field of dairying before their emigration to Australia, played a very significant role in the advancement of the dairy industry in Australia. They were Jørgen Pedersen and Poul Jørgen Holdenson.

When Jørgen Pedersen first arrived in the colony of Victoria, he went to try his luck on the gold-diggings at Bendigo. After some bitter but instructive experiences in this fruitless exercise, Pedersen selected land near Elmore, where there was a little Danish community of eight families who had moved to the land after unsuccessful attempts to amass huge fortunes on the gold-fields. Pedersen did well at Elmore but found other opportunities looming on the horizon. he sold his farm and moved into the dairy-goods business. He became a large shareholder in the Chilled Butter Factory in Melbourne but then decided, after a period, to branch out on his own. He built a butter factory at Youanmite. His next move was to establish the Goulburn Butter Factory and then the Rosenborg Butter Factory, naming it after the royal castle in Copenhagen, and a butter factory in the town of Welshpool. Pedersen became the Australian agent for a Danish firm of machinery makers (18).

Poul Jørgen Holdenson was born in 1863 in the little village of Sejstrup on the west coast of Jutland, not far from the ancient cathedral town of Ribe. At the age of 16 he left home with his brother and a school friend in order to make his way in the world. After an initial time in Hamburg and London, the three young Danish adventurers resolved to give Australia a try, landing in 1879. Like so many other young Danes in the antipodes, Holdenson started as a gold-digger but very quickly abandoned the toilsome labour for the steadier job as a farm-hand. Holdenson took on all sorts of employment and within a short time he had been a builder's labourer, a harvester, a worker in a chemical factory and

an employee in a hay and corn store in Sydney.

Back in Melbourne, the ever confident and resourceful young Dane bought a run-down sixpenny restaurant and spent all his savings in renovating it. He made it into a thriving business and later sold it for a huge profit which he invested in a wholesale produce stall in the Eastern Market in the eastern end of the central city district. Whatever Holdenson touched seemed fated to succeed. This enterprise flourished, and before long Holdenson was given an irresistible offer. His old friend from Denmark, Andreas Nielson, had been engaged in very hard work in the Riverina District in southern New South Wales fencing and tank-sinking. He came to Melbourne for a break, and it occurred both to him and to Holdenson simultaneously that they should join forces and concentrate on dairy goods. Thus in the old Eastern Market, the firm of Holdenson and Nielson had its humble beginning. It was destined to become one of the major features of the Victorian dairying industry.

In 1889 the firm of Holdenson and Nielson moved to larger premises in Flinders Lane, where they installed a butter-making plant to manufacture their own products. At this time the advent of the new dairying technology had caused numerous small and inefficient local butter factories to spring up throughout the dairying districts of Victoria. Many of them were not viable and were doomed to failure. But the firm of Holdenson and Nielson was one which survived by dint of the business acumen and hard work of its proprietors. It not only survived but it prospered and bought out many of the small, ephemeral and unproductive rural butter factories. The constant increase of productivity necessitated a second move to much roomier premises in Flinders Street (19).

Andreas Nielson became ill after a period. He had worked laboriously and was in desperate need of a rest. Nielson had become



Poul Jørgensen Holdenson 1863-1948.

very popular in the Danish community in Melbourne and contributed much to the rich cultural life of the community at the time. A born actor, he had played the leading role in many of the dramatic presentations at the Danish Club in Melbourne. Because he was also very fluent in German he took the principal role in several plays at the German Club, Tivoli, in Melbourne. The rich and varied cultural life of the Danish community in Melbourne at the time, and especially that of the Danish Club, Dannebrog, owed much to Nielson's skills and enthusiasm. In 1902 he returned to Europe in extremely poor health and, to the sorrow of many of his countrymen in Melbourne, died at a sanatorium in Switzerland 18 months later (20).

Nielson's death was a sore blow to Holdenson who for 18 months had taken over sole control of the business. In 1905 he acquired

the Fresh Food and Frozen Storage Company to form Holdenson and Nielson Fresh Food Pty Ltd with branches in many centres throughout the state of Victoria. Holdenson became the managing director and principal shareholder. The firm of Holdenson and Nielson entered the South African market and added much prestige to Australia as an exporting country.

Over the years the firm of Holdenson and Nielson continued to expand and develop. In 1939 Captain Jens Lyng wrote:

*«A few figures will show the startling growth of the business. It owns well-equipped butter factories in every dairying district of Victoria (the home of modern dairying in Australia), a cheese factory, a condensed milk and dried milk factory, in addition to supplying a large quantity of fresh milk to Melbourne. As a sideline the firm deals wholesale in bacon, eggs and honey, and it is the principal exporter of tinned butter to the East, apart from the bulk butter sent to England and a fair share of the local market. Its annual turnover exceeds £1,000,000. It produces some 7,000 tons of butter annually, and absorbs the milk and cream from more than 7,000 farms. Its fleet of motor trucks numbers more than sixty. As a testimony to Mr Holdenson's genius for organizing, it should be stated that the whole extensive enterprise is worked by only 240 hands. In the course of time several co-operative companies have come into existence, some of them on a large scale, but the firm of Holdenson and Nielson Fresh Food Pty Ltd has kept on growing» (21).*

Poul Jørgen Holdenson played a very important part in the wider world of the dairying industry. He was a member of a great variety of boards and commissions in the state of Victoria. He was a member of the Australian Produce Pool Committee, established during the First World War, the Australian Dairy Produce Stabilisation Committee, the Australian Produce Control Board, and the various Victorian state bodies connected with the board. He was for a time a director of Peters Ice Cream and of The Equitable Probate and General Insurance Co. Ltd. In 1901

he was appointed honorary vice-consul for Denmark in Melbourne and in this capacity he was an official guest at the opening of the first Commonwealth Parliament at the Exhibition Building in Melbourne in May of the same year. After the First World War he became a full consul and three years later he acted as consul-general with jurisdiction over Australia, New Zealand and the Western Pacific. In 1933 Holdenson was made a commander of the order of Dannebrog and he died in 1948 (22). The firm of Holdenson and Nielson was finally absorbed by Petersville (Australia).

An Australian of Danish descent who played a very important part in the dairying industry in Victoria was Emil Christensen. The Queensland-born son of a Danish lecturer in Rockhampton, Emil Christensen was educated in Maryborough Grammar School and from 1912 to 1919 served in the Royal Australian Navy. After his demobilisation from the navy, Christensen went to Sydney to manage an ice cream factory owned by F.A.B. Peters, an American businessman. His next assignment was in Melbourne, where he was sent to build up a branch of the Sydney-based company. The Melbourne ice cream company became so successful that it later became independent of the parent company in Sydney. As the operations grew, the Melbourne company was given the name of the original founder. Christensen was the director of Peters Ice Cream Company in Melbourne from 1923 to 1937 and from 1942 to 1971 he was chairman of Petersville Australia Ltd. The original company has now grown into an immense enterprise with many subsidiary companies, and it is one of Australia's leading producers of ice cream and many other products.

Emil Christensen won for himself a great reputation for hard work and integrity in the business world and beyond. He was ever active in the Danish community in Melbourne, and, no matter how busy he was in the world of industry and commerce, he always had

time to help Danes in need. In 1946 he was appointed the consul for Denmark in Melbourne and later was granted the personal title of consul-general, which he held until his death in 1984 (23).

There is a modern example of Danish influence in the Australian dairying industry, but it is now far removed from Denmark by three generations. Rob Johnson, a dairy farmer in the Gippsland district of Victoria is the great-grandson of Martin Johnson, a member of the Danish community at East Poowong which was first settled by Danes in 1872 and which was the only Danish communal settlement in Australia (24). The original settler's son, Martin Johnson, is still living and celebrated his 100th birthday in February, 1988.

In 1978 Rob Johnson met a goat-farmer during a visit to California, and he was impressed by this farmer's method of direct sale to the public. The fact that the middleman was rendered superfluous gave the Australian visitor food for thought. On returning home to his farm at Neerim South in Gippsland, he carefully examined various options before him and decided to start a cheese-factory. In 1981 he formed a partnership with another dairy technologist, Laurie Jensen, who was also an Australian of Danish descent, but not from the Danish settlement at East Poowong. They established a cheese-factory on the Johnson farm at Neerim South, and production commenced in 1982. The company is called Blue Cheese Enterprises, and the principal cheese produced is known as Gippsland Blue. It is not an imitation of Danish Blue Vein cheese, but it is more like blue cheeses from Italy or a young English Stilton cheese. It is a very high-grade cheese and is intended for the connoisseurs' market.

Already the cheese is sold in outlets in Victoria and New South Wales. In the middle of 1987 the production was half a tonne per week. Six months later it was three-quarters of a tonne. It is expected that the capacity



Emil Christensen 1895-1984.

production will be reached by 1990 with two tonnes of fine cheese per week.

The tourist world has not been slow in discovering the Johnson farm, where buses call in for inspecting tours conducted by Rob Johnson and his wife Lyn. In April 1987 the Danish-Australian Cultural Society at the instigation of Consul-General Erik Jensen visited East Poowong on a Sunday, and Pastor Göran Modén of the Swedish Church in Melbourne conducted a church service in the community hall. This was the fourth of such visits since the descendants of the Danish community at East Poowong were »re-discovered« by Dr Allan Nilsson, a Swedish visitor from Historiska Museet in Göteborg, and Consul-General Erik Jensen. After the service



and a picnic lunch, the members of the Danish Australian Cultural Society drove the 30 kilometres by car through the Gippsland hills to the Johnson farm at Neerim South for an inspection of the factory, afternoon coffee and a sampling of various cheeses (25). Several visitors from Denmark in the group commented on the fact that long after a century there was still a residual influence of »Danishness«.

As Australians in 1988 look back over two hundred years of British settlement, they can

survey both failures and successes, both good and evil. The estimated 165,000 Australians who have some Danish blood in their veins can look with pride, as can all other Australians, at the role played by Danes and Australians of Danish descent in the Australian dairying industry (26). They will agree with Captain Jens Lyng that in no other field of economic endeavour in Australia have the Danes who made the great land to the south their home rendered greater service than in the dairying industry (27).

## Notes

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Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and the other Australian states mentioned in this paper are referred to as »colonies« until the formation of the Commonwealth of Australia at the Federation in 1901 and thereafter as »states«. The system of currency used in Australia was one of pounds, shillings and pence until 14th February, 1966, and after that date a decimal system with dollars and cents was introduced. The imperial system of weights and measurements was used until June 1970, and between that date and 1981 the metric system was introduced.

1. Sillcock, Ken: *Three Lifetimes of Dairying in Victoria*, Melbourne, 1972, pp. 40, 115, 122 and 134-5; Codrington, S.B.: »Dairy Industry«, in *The Australian Encyclopædia*, fourth edition, Sydney, 1983, pp. 130-138.

2. Bossence, William Henry: *Numurkah*, Melbourne, 1979, p. 101. The »Coolgardie« safe was a means of cooling food before the introduction of refrigeration. Water seeped down through hessian from a flat container of water on the top of a cabinet or food-safe. This form of cooling was very popular on the Western Australian gold-fields at the end of the 19th century and hence the name either from the gold-town of Coolgardie or from the notion of keeping food »cool«.

3. Bossence, *op.cit.* p. 102.

4. Lyng, Jens: *The Scandinavians in Australia*, Melbourne, 1907, p. 43.

5. Bossence (1979) gives the date as 1886, but Lyng (1907) gives it as 1884. I prefer to take Lyng's date because he was in contact with the people involved.

6. *The Numurkah Leader*, 16th September, 1946.

7. Lyng (1907) p. 44.

8. Codrington (1983) p. 132.

9. Lyng (1907) p. 45.

10. Lyng (1907) pp. 46-7.

11. Lyng, Jens, »The Scandinavians in Victoria: Contribution to Economic Development«, *Norden*, 11th September, 1926; Lyng (1907) pp. 44-6; Lyng, Jens »Skandinaverne og nordisk kultur i Australien« *Norden*, 1st March, 1913.

12. Lyng (1907, 1913, 1926); Koivukangas, Olavi and Martin, John Stanley: *Scandinavians in Australasia*, Melbourne, 1986, p. 104.

13. Lyng (1907) p. 49; Lyng (1913, 1926).

14. Lyng (1913).

15. This reference is from an appreciation on Bendix Hansen's contribution to the Danish and business communities in Melbourne by one who wrote under the initials H.A.C. in *Norden*, 1st April, 1922.

16. Lyng (1907) p. 49.

17. Lyng (1922).

18. Lyng, *ibid.*

19. Lyng, Jens: *The Scandinavians in Australia, New Zealand and the Western Pacific*, Melbourne, 1939, pp. 109-12; *Norden*, 25th February, 1933, pp. 1-3.

20. Lyng (1907) p. 48.

21. Lyng (1939) pp. 110-11.

22. Koivukangas and Martin (1986) p. 174.

23. *ibid.* pp. 87-8.

24. Hansen, M.C.L.: »Pioneers in the Danish Settlement at East Poowong« in *The Land of the Lyre Bird: A Story of Early Settlement in the Great Forest of Gippsland*, Melbourne, 1920; Koivukangas and Martin (1986) pp. 87-8, 187-9, 227.

25. *The Trader* 11th September, 1987, p. 13; *The Sunday Observer*, 15th March, 1987, p. 13.

26. This estimation was made by Dr Charles Price, one of Australia's leading demographers, formerly of the Department of Demography at the Australian National University in Canberra and now retired.

27. Lyng (1926).

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