

Christiansen Volume, Chapter 2 - Christian Christiansen and Ane Kirstine "Anna" Jensen

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The Lives of Christian Christiansen and Ane Kirstine "Anna" Jensen

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In Denmark

My great-grandparents, Christian Christiansen and Ane Kirstine "Anna" Jensen, were born and raised in the Stevns Peninsula on the island of Sjælland south of Copenhagen. They lived in this area until emigrating in 1869.

Christian Christiansen, was born in store Linde, Karise Sogn in 1832 to Christian Olsen and Ane Katrine Mogensdatter. Christian was an only child. His father died before he was born and Ane Katrine soon remarried.

Like his mother, Christian Christiansen also had two marriages. His first wife, Ane Cathrine Christensen, apparently died between 1864 and 1867. and Christian then raised their son, Christen Ole Christiansen.

Ane Kirstine Jensen was born in Tokkerup, Fakse Sogn in 1839, the second of six children of Jens Nielsen and Karen Jacobsdatter. Jens died when Ane Kirstine was about eleven, and Karen Jacobsdatter remarried, but died a few years later.

Christian Christiansen and his second wife, Ane Kirstine Jensen married in Smerup parish in 1867. Their first child, my paternal grandfather Jens Christiansen, was born in Smerup parish in 1868. A second son, Nels, was born after the family immigrated.

The Christian and Anna Christiansen Family Comes to America

On April 27, 1869, Christian Christiansen completed a Copenhagen police emigration form. Soon afterward, Christian and Anna Christiansen left Denmark, along with his son from his first marriage, Christen Ole, and their baby son Jens, my grandfather.

The Christiansens traveled from Copenhagen to New York City via Southampton on the *S.S. Northern Light*, arriving in New York on May 19. Jens was an infant just past his first birthday, which may be why he isn't listed on the passenger manifest. Incidentally, the Northern Light had left New York for Europe on March 27.

The following indented section really has nothing to do with Christiansen history. I have included it as background in case you Google on "Northern Light" and are confused by the results of your search.

The Northern Light was a three-masted wooden paddle wheel steamer with a speed of 10 to 12 knots. It was built in 1851 at a cost of \$290,000. Despite its name, the Northern Light was not built for the North Atlantic route. Rather it was built for Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt's New York - Nicaragua run.

Between the California gold rush in 1849 and the completion of the transcontinental railroad twenty years later in 1869, people, mail and merchandise often went from New York to California through Central America. The main route went by steamer to Panama, then over the Isthmus of Panama, and finally by steamer from Panama to San Francisco. Cornelius Vanderbilt developed an alternative, shorter, route through Nicaragua on which the Northern Light was initially used. This route went by water from New York up the San Juan River and across Lake Nicaragua, and

then crossed by stage over the narrow Nicaraguan isthmus to the Pacific Ocean.

In 1855 a railroad was completed across the Isthmus of Panama and soon thereafter the Northern Light began running between New York and Panama.

The sea passage from New York to San Francisco through Panama or Nicaragua took about a month. I believe the railroad from New York to San Francisco in 1869 took about eight days.

The Northern Light figured in an obscure international incident in December 1855. William Walker was a *filibusterer*, that is to say, an independent military adventurer. He and his colleagues from Tennessee and Kentucky dreamed of establishing a state in Latin America in which Anglos would be dominant, similar to what had happened in Texas earlier in the 19th Century. Some southerners supported him since it offered the fantasy of adding another slave-holding state to the Union, even if it were located far to the south of all the other states. Walker recruited several hundred reinforcements in New York who were to join his forces by traveling to Nicaragua on the Northern Light. The government of Nicaragua wasn't pleased with the prospect of several hundred land-hungry Irish immigrants joining Walker and descending on their little country. The Nicaraguan government complained to the United States government, which made a futile effort to keep the Northern Light from sailing.

The British eventually captured Walker and turned him over to Honduras, where he was executed in 1860.

During the Civil War, the Northern Light was leased by the War Department. Later it ran for a time between New York and Bremen, Germany.

It's safe to say that the Northern Light was far from state-of-the-art when the Christiansens emigrated in 1869. In fact, the Christiansens appears to have been on the Northern Light's last voyage, from Copenhagen to New York.

In 1870 the Northern Light was sold for \$25,000, and in 1875 it was scrapped.

Anna (Jensen) Christiansen's Aunt Maren and Maren's husband, Jens Pedersen, had emigrated earlier and were living in Council Bluffs in 1869. (Anna's brothers, Jacob and Ole Jensen, had also emigrated earlier, in 1868, and Anna's brother, Nels Johnson, had immigrated to the east coast in 1866.) When Christian and Anna arrived in Council Bluffs in 1869, they joined John and Mary Petersen, as they were now known, at their boarding house, called "Denmark House", on Washington Avenue where Washington School was later built. The Christiansens stayed intermittently with John and Mary for the next several years.

The Christiansens in Boomer Township

During one of their first two winters in Pottawattamie County, Christian and Anna, with children Christen Ole and Jens, lived in a dugout and a wagon in Boomer Township while Christian cut wood. Their camp was on the west side of what is now county road L36, in Section 16 or 21.

In the August 1870 Boomer Township census, Christian and Anna were farming with Anna's brother, Jacob Jensen, whom the census enumerator listed as "Jacob Dane".

Christian and Anna's younger son, Nels, was born in May 1871.

In June, 1871 Christian and Anna bought 40 acres of land in Boomer Township, Section 22, about 16 miles north of downtown Council Bluffs. They purchased this land for \$560 from Joseph McCoid and Emanuel Huber. This became the nucleus of the Christiansen home place on which Christian and Anna would remain until their deaths.

Emanuel Huber was a land speculator living in Council Bluffs. The extended McCoid family were early settlers in Boomer Township. I believe the Christiansen land was entirely prairie, except for perhaps some trees along the creek that ran east of the farmstead. I suspect that Joseph McCoid had broken (i.e., plowed) the prairie, an arduous task, and hence had acquired an interest in the land.

We believe that Christian, Anna and their family first lived in a small house north of what became the Christiansen farmstead.

By 1880 Christian had bought a second 40-acre parcel, in Section 21 just to the west of the original 40 acres. In 1886 he bought the 80-acre farm of his brother-in-law, Ole Jensen, which was located just to the west of his other holdings.

Not long after 1885, Christian's son from his first marriage, Christen Ole, moved from the farm to Council Bluffs, and in 1888 Christen Ole married Ane Kirstine Larsen, a first cousin of my maternal grandfather, Andrew Larson.

In 1893, Christian and Anna's son, James, married and moved to Ole Jensen's former farm a mile to the west of the Christiansen home place. In 1898, Christian and Anna's younger son, Nels, married but remained on the home farm.

Christian and Anna Christiansen's sons, James and Nels, married sisters, Minnie and Mary Rasmussen, the daughters of Lars and Karen Rasmussen of Boomer Township. To learn about the Rasmussen family, see the Rasmussen volume of the four-volume *Robert Christiansen's Family History, Christiansen, Rasmussen, Larsen/Larson and Hansen*.

Of interest: Both the Christian and Anna Christiansen family and the Lars and Karen Rasmussen family were early members of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Boomer Township. The church, organized in 1881, is about two miles south and east of the Christian Christiansen farm and about eight miles west of the town of Neola, Iowa. Thus condensed versions of portions of the Christian Christiansen and Lars Rasmussen chapters of my family history are in my *St. Paul's Boomer-Neola Early Families* report.

Of interest: The following has nothing to do with Christiansen history. My paternal great-grandmothers, Anna (Jensen) Christiansen and Karen (Andersen) Rasmussen,

came from rural areas in southeastern and northwestern Denmark respectively. Together they share an interesting historical coincidence regarding Danish prime ministers. The prime minister of Denmark in 1940 at the time of the World War II German invasion was Thorvald Stauning, whose initial political base was the same parish, Fakse, as Anna (Jensen) Christiansen was born in. The last Danish Prime Minister in World War II was Erik Scavenius, who is buried in Voer parish, where Karen (Andersen) Rasmussen lived until emigrating. (Erik Scavenius had acquired the Voergaard estate in 1915 from his uncle, Peter Bronnum Scavenius, who owned it as early as 1880, before the Rasmussen family emigrated.)

My great-grandparents, Christian and Anna Christiansen, both died at home in Boomer Township, Christian on 9 Feb 1913 at the age of 80, and Anna on 23 Jan 1922 at the age of 82.

At some point the house on Christian and Anna's farm was remodeled so it could be divided into two apartments, with two families living under the same roof. After Nels Christiansen married in 1898, Nels and his wife and children lived in the dwelling along with Nels' parents. A generation later, the Christiansens repeated this pattern of sharing the family home. After Nels' son, Clarence, married in 1939, Clarence and his wife Loretta shared the farmhouse with Clarence's father and sisters.

Christian Christiansen established a century farm. After Christian Christiansen gave up farming, his son, Nels, farmed the Christiansen home place. And later Nels' son, Clarence, took over the farm.

Although the Christian Christiansen farm is no longer in the family, as of 2011 the old farmhouse is still used by the current owners.

Of interest: Living on prairie land, Christian Christiansen satisfied his need for wood for fencing and heating by purchasing a woodlot several miles to the west. This woodlot remained in the Christiansen family until around 1948.

Of interest: Christian Christiansen was reputed to have been a physically strong man, having once dug 100 postholes in one day. By convention, 81 posts were needed to fence one side of a square 40-acre plot.

Christian and Anna Christiansen had two children, six grandchildren, and twelve great-grandchildren. The children and grandchildren are listed in a following chart on the following page. The next two chapters sketch the lives of the sons and older descendants of Christian and Anna Christiansen.

After the following sections on Christian Christiansen's sons, James and Nels, most of the remainder of the Christiansen chapter consists of material about Anna (Jensen) Christiansen's siblings and their families.

End of the *Lives of Christian Christiansen and Ane Kirstine "Anna" Jensen* section of the *Christiansen* volume of *Robert Christiansen's Older Relatives*.

Older Descendants of Christian Christiansen and Ane Cathrine Christiansen (chart)

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Christian Christiansen (28 Feb 1832 - 9 Feb 1913)
& Ane Cathrine Christensen (22 Apr 1835 - aft 1863)
m. 5 Dec 1857, Smerup Sogn, Præstø Amt, Denmark

Christen Ole "Chris" Christiansen (14 Jul 1864 - 22 Apr 1936)
& Ane Kirstine "Christina" Larsen (28 Mar 1862 - 23 Aug 1917)
m. 2 Mar 1888, Council Bluffs, Pott. Co., IA

Christen "Charlie" or "Carl" Larsen (abt Aug 1886 - abt 1898)

Arthur Charles Christiansen (9 Sep 1891 - 18 Nov 1965)
& Edith Rebecca Kretchmer (9 May 1894 - 16 Jan 1980)
m. 7 May 1912, Pott. Co., IA

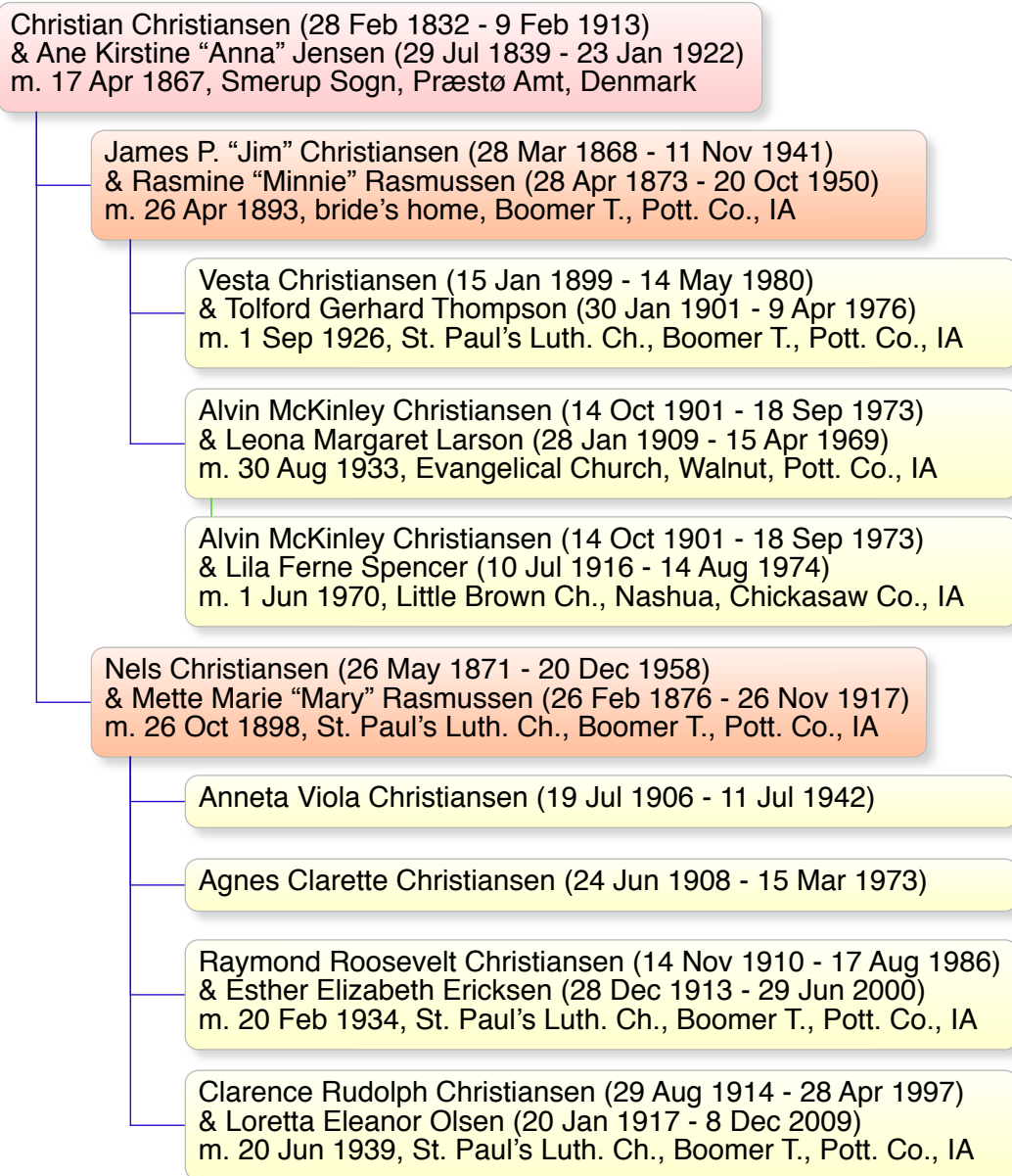
Oscar C. Christiansen (9 Mar 1893 - 20 Aug 1972)
& Eurith Marie Hatfield (1 Jul 1894 - 2 Jun 1976)
m. 15 Dec 1914, Pott. Co., IA

Oscar C. Christiansen (9 Mar 1893 - 20 Aug 1972)
& Oneta Beatrice Boarts (14 Jul 1904 - 23 Jun 1939)
m. abt 1920

Oscar C. Christiansen (9 Mar 1893 - 20 Aug 1972)
& Bernice M. Erickson (8 Feb 1912 - 9 Nov 1996)
m. Oct 1941, Omaha, Douglas Co., NE

Older Descendants of Christian Christiansen and Ane Kirstine "Anna" Jensen (chart)

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End of the *Christian Christiansen and Ane Kirstine "Anna" Jensen* chapter
of the *Christiansen* volume of *Robert Christiansen's Older Relatives*.