

Robert Christiansen's Family Overview and Origins
Christiansen, Rasmussen, Larsen & Hansen
© 2017 by Robert A. Christiansen, updated by RAC 18 Sep '17.

If you are trying to determine whether you and I are related, you might first look at the charts in the first section. However, three of my great-grandparents (Christian Christiansen, Niels (Christensen) Larsen, Maren Larsen) had earlier marriages who don't appear in this overview document at this time.

Family History Origins - Contents

Section	page
Robert Christiansen's Great-Grandparents - Overview	2
My Grandparents' Origins	7
Map - Denmark Origins of Robert Christiansen's Great-Grandparents	8
Immigration from Denmark	9
Council Bluffs and Pottawattamie County When My Family Immigrated	10

Can you help me? Any document of this scope will lack important information and contain errors. I would very much appreciate your assistance in helping me improve the next revision. It's best to contact me via my website, bigpigeon.us, using the contact form therein.

– Robert A. “Bob” Christiansen, Sep '17

Finding my great-grandparents grandparents:

All my great-great grandparents and my great-great-great grandparents that are known to me appear in the Christiansen, Rasmussen, Larsen and Hansen volumes of my history. As of Sep '17, I know of all of my great-great-great grandparents except for the following:

Christian Christiansen's Unknown Grandparents:

His father, Christian Olsen's parents.

His mother, Ane Katrine Mogensdatter's parents.

Dorthe (Hansen) Hansen's Unknown Grandparents:

Her mother, Karen Margrethe Hansdatter's parents.

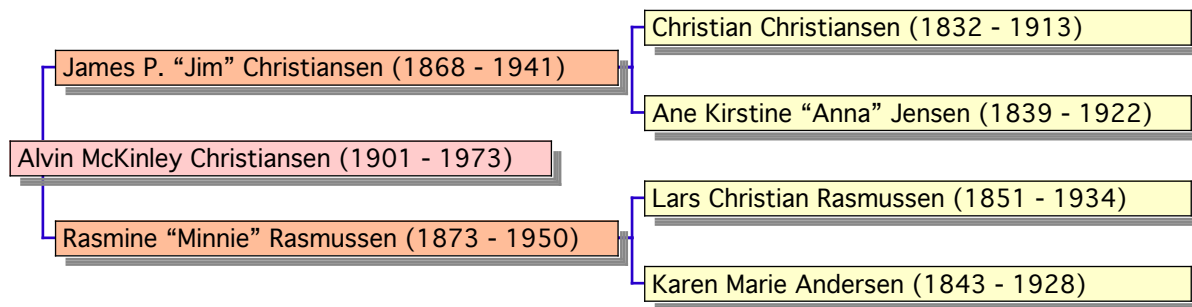
Robert Christiansen's Great-Grandparents - Overview

My eight great-grandparents were all born and raised in rural Denmark, immigrated as adults to Pottawattamie County, Iowa between 1867 and 1886, settled north of Council Bluffs in Boomer and Hazel Dell Townships. In this farming area, they lived out their lives, as did most of their children. My great-grandparents all died at home or in a child's home, and are buried, as are my grandparents, in the St. Paul's Lutheran Church Cemetery in Boomer Township, about eight miles west of Neola, Iowa.

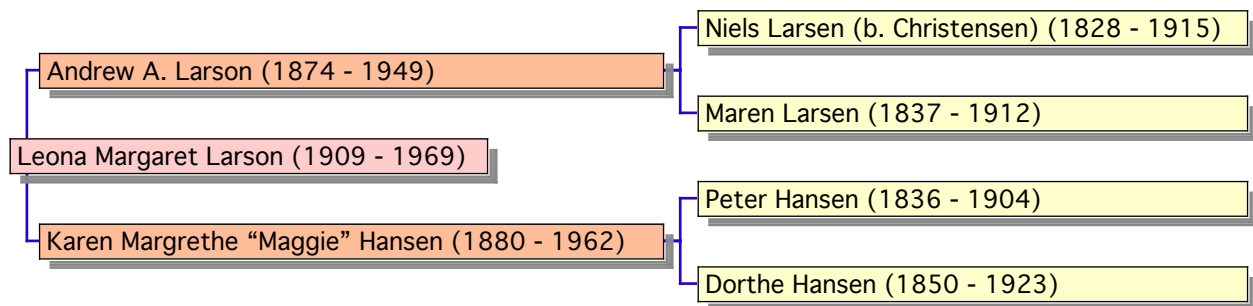
Three grandparents were born in Denmark and immigrated with their parents. Only my maternal grandfather, Andrew A. Larson, was born in the United States.

In the following two pedigree charts my parents, Alvin McKinley Christiansen and Leona Margaret Larson, are sandwiched between my grandparents. My great-grandparents appear on the right side.

My father, his parents and grandparents



My mother, her parents and grandparents



As shown in the following four charts, both of my parents had double cousins:

- My paternal grandfather, James P. "Jim" Christiansen and his brother, Nels, married Rasmussen sisters, Rasmie "Minnie" and Mette Marie "Mary".
- My maternal grandfather, Andrew A. Larson and his brother, Henry, married Hansen sisters, Karen Margrethe "Maggie" and Ellen "Ellie".

Material for the families from these four marriages is in the *Christiansen* and the *Larsen* volumes.

Great-Grandparents Christian Christiansen and Ane Kirstine Jensen

Christian Christiansen (1832 - 1913) & Ane Kirstine "Anna" Jensen (1839 - 1922)

James P. "Jim" Christiansen (1868 - 1941) & Rasmine "Minnie" Rasmussen (1873 - 1950)

Vesta Christiansen (1899 - 1980) & Tolford Gerhard Thompson (1901 - 1976)

Alvin McKinley Christiansen (1901 - 1973) & Leona Margaret Larson (1909 - 1969)

Alvin McKinley Christiansen (1901 - 1973) & Lila Ferne Spencer (1916 - 1974)

Nels Christiansen (1871 - 1958) & Mette Marie "Mary" Rasmussen (1876 - 1917)

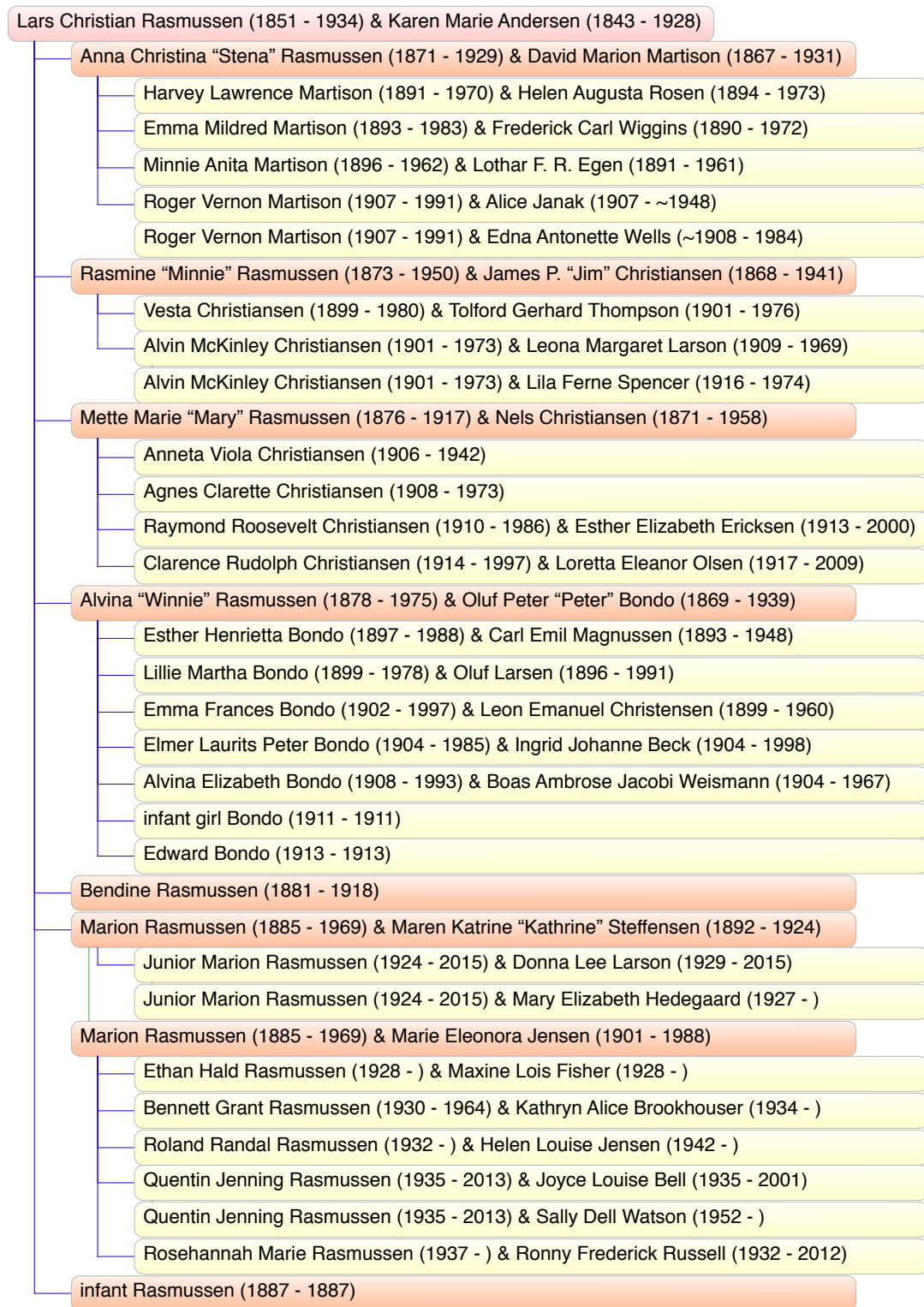
Anneta Viola Christiansen (1906 - 1942)

Agnes Clarette Christiansen (1908 - 1973)

Raymond Roosevelt Christiansen (1910 - 1986) & Esther Elizabeth Ericksen (1913 - 2000)

Clarence Rudolph Christiansen (1914 - 1997) & Loretta Eleanor Olsen (1917 - 2009)

Great-Grandparents Lars Christian Rasmussen and Karen Marie Andersen



Great-Grandparents Niels (Christensen) Larsen and Maren Larsen

Niels Larsen (b. Christensen) (1828 - 1915) & Maren Larsen (1837 - 1912)

Annie Dorothy Larsen (1872 - 1958) & Nels Christian Augustine "Chris" Johnson (1868 - 1942)

Dorothy Christine "Dollie" Johnson (1898 - 1990) & Christian Thomsen (1891 - 1967)

Minnie Marie Johnson (1900 - 2001) & Arthur Otto Wohlers (1896 - 1969)

Nels C. "Sonny" Johnson (1902 - 1906)

Marvin Chris Johnson (1905 - 1993) & Cecile Mae Hutchison (1907 - 2005)

Florence E. Johnson (1908 - 1966) & Clarence B. Ryan (1907 - 1983)

Andrew A. Larson (1874 - 1949) & Karen Margrethe "Maggie" Hansen (1880 - 1962)

Albert Henry Larson (1900 - 1987)

Edna Marie Larson (1902 - 1946) & Louis William Petersen (1899 - 1988)

Lillian Dorothy Larson (1904 - 1990) & Hilding Ferdinand Gidlund (1902 - 1961)

Florence Edith Larson (1906 - 1945) & Carl Bernard "Bernard" Larsen (1908 - 1972)

Leona Margaret Larson (1909 - 1969) & Alvin McKinley Christiansen (1901 - 1973)

Ethel Irene Larson (1912 - 2015) & Oscar Adolph Torneten (1906 - 1976)

Helen Ruth Larson (1915 - 2013) & Victor Thybo Petersen (1912 - 2006)

Vernon Edwin Larson (1919 - 2003) & Thelma Mae Schroder (1920 - 2002)

Alice Elaine Larson (1923 - 1954) & Norvin Clarence Oamek (1922 - 2007)

Henry Larson (1877 - 1957) & Ellen Marie "Ellie" Hansen (1887 - 1982)

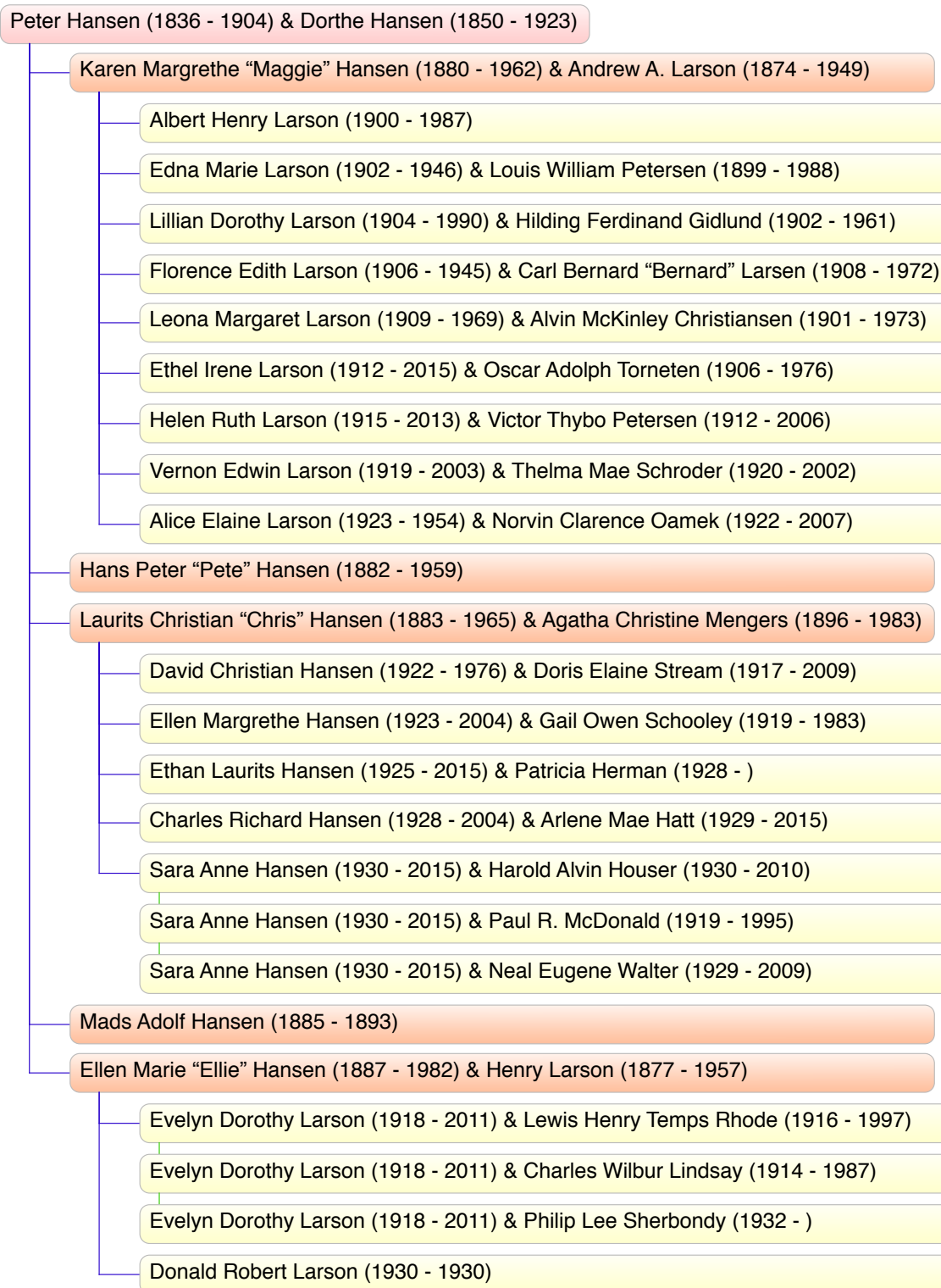
Evelyn Dorothy Larson (1918 - 2011) & Lewis Henry Temps Rhode (1916 - 1997)

Evelyn Dorothy Larson (1918 - 2011) & Charles Wilbur Lindsay (1914 - 1987)

Evelyn Dorothy Larson (1918 - 2011) & Philip Lee Sherbondy (1932 -)

Donald Robert Larson (1930 - 1930)

Great-Grandparents Peter Hansen and Dorthe Hansen



My Grandparents' Origins

My paternal grandparents' origins: (See the map on the following page.)

- 1 James P. "Jim" Christiansen was christened "Jens". Jens and his parents, Christian Christiansen and Ane Kirstine "Anna" Jensen, came from the Fakse area south of Copenhagen on the island of Sjælland.

See the Smerup Sogn church where Jens Christiansen was christened:

http://www.danmarks-kirker.dk/roskilde/smerup_ros.htm

- 2 Rasmine "Minnie" Rasmussen and her parents, Lars Christian Rasmussen and Karen Marie Andersen, came from Voer parish in northern Jutland north of Aalborg.

See the Voer Sogn church where Rasmine Rasmussen was christened:

<http://aalborgstift.dk/kirker/bronderslev/voer-kirke>

My maternal grandparents' origins:

- 3 Andrew Larson was born in the United States in Pottawattamie County, Iowa.

- 3a Andrew's father, Niels (Christensen) Larsen, came from Visse in Nøvling parish just south of Aalborg in northern Jutland.

See the Nøvling Sogn church where Niels Christensen was christened:

<http://aalborgstift.dk/kirker/aalborg-ostre/novling-kirke/>

- 3b Andrew's mother, Maren Larsen, came from near Hillerød in northern Zealand.

See the Ølsted Sogn church where Maren Larsen and her older siblings were christened:

http://www.danmarks-kirker.dk/helsingor/olsted_hel.htm

See the Alsønderup Sogn church where Maren Larsen's younger siblings were christened (the family moved when Maren was a toddler):

http://www.danmarks-kirker.dk/helsingor/alsonderup_hel.htm

Niels and Maren each had children from an earlier marriage; Niels' child remained behind; Maren's children immigrated with her.

- 4 Karen Margrethe "Maggie" Hansen and her parents came from Toreby and Radsted parishes on the eastern end of Lolland, an island south of Sjælland. Maggie's baby brother remained behind when the family immigrated.

See the Toreby Sogn church where Maggie Hansen was christened:

http://www.danmarks-kirker.dk/lol_fal/toreby_lol.htm

You can find more details including some limited immigration information in the Notes chapter that ends each of the four volumes of my family history.



Denmark Origins of Robert Christiansen's Great-Grandparents

(Denmark Political Map courtesy of MapsOfWorld.com)

- 1 – Christian Christiansen & Ane Kirstine Jensen (near Fakse/Faxe).
- 2 – Lars Christian Rasmussen & Karen Marie Andersen (Voer parish).
- 3a – Niels (Christensen) Larsen (near Aalborg) & 3b – Maren Larsen (near Hillerød).
- 4 – Peter Hansen & Dortha Hansen (east end of island of Lolland).

Immigration from Denmark

I know few details of my great-grandparents' immigration to the Council Bluffs area between 1867 and 1886. These are mostly general comments.

Much of the early immigration to the United States from Denmark was by members of the Mormon (or LDS) church, and the Mormon immigration story is well documented. Early Mormon immigrants from Denmark generally travelled in groups and often traveled to the United States thusly:

- First by ship from Denmark to Hull on the east coast of England.
- Then by train from Hull to Liverpool on the west coast of England.
- Finally, by chartered ship from Liverpool to New Orleans (until 1855) or to New York City (starting in 1855).

During the period when my great-grandparents immigrated, the common routes from Denmark to the United States were:

- Via Liverpool to New York, e.g., the Anders and Maren Larsen family (the Mormon route).
- Via Glasgow to New York, e.g., the Rasmussen family.
- Via Hamburg or Bremen in northern Germany to New York.
- From Copenhagen to New York without changing ships, e.g., the Christiansen family.

Immigrants after the Civil War traveled much faster than a short generation earlier, as steamships had replaced sailing ships for transatlantic passenger service. The two-week Copenhagen to New York journey in 1870 might have taken two months in 1850.

Upon arriving in New York, most of my ancestors wouldn't have seen the Statue of Liberty; it wasn't erected until 1886. Nor would they have been processed at Ellis Island, which didn't open until 1892. Rather, they were processed by immigration authorities at Castle Garden, on the extreme southern end of Manhattan Island.

From New York City, my great-grandparents would have gone by train to Council Bluffs, transferring in Chicago.

Many immigrants were cheated or had belongings stolen. In 1868, to reduce cheating by dishonest emigration agents, the Copenhagen police began registering emigrants who used agents to arrange their journey. These emigration registration forms are now a major resource for Danish-American genealogists. Not all Danes used emigration agents, but the Christian Christiansen, Lars Rasmussen, Anders Larsen, and Peter Hansen families all filled out the Copenhagen police registration forms.

Ancestry.com has an online database of ship manifests, which lists passengers arriving in New York City from 1820 to 1957. I have found the Christian Christiansen, Lars Rasmussen and Anders Larsen families in this database, but not Niels (Christensen) Larsen or the Peter Hansen family. Perhaps their names were not transcribed correctly, or perhaps they entered the United States at a port other than New York.

Council Bluffs and Pottawattamie County When My Family Immigrated

Immigrants arriving in Council Bluffs after our Civil War ended in 1865 generally found no shortage of work.

Railroads were a major employer in the Council Bluffs area, the first railroad, the Chicago and Northwestern, having reached Council Bluffs in 1867. Three other railroads arrived before 1870. Great-grandfather Peter Hansen worked for the Rock Island Railroad in Weston, and then in Council Bluffs for the Northwestern Railroad, from his arrival in 1886 until moving to a farm in Hazel Dell Township in 1895. After immigrating to Council Bluffs in 1882, great-grandfather Lars Christian Rasmussen worked briefly for a railroad before moving to a Boomer Township farm the next year.

Woodcutting was another employment source, especially in the winter. Although the loess hills north of Council Bluffs had few trees at the time, portions of the area behind the loess hills were heavily wooded. Wood was needed for fuel, fence posts, construction lumber, railroad ties, and making charcoal. During one of their first winters in Iowa, my great-grandfather, Christian Christiansen, lived with his wife and sons in a wagon and dugout in Boomer Township while he cut wood.

Most men in rural Denmark owned or rented little or no land. Thus they did not do farm work full-time year-round. They often had skills that they used in off-season employment. Carpenters and other skilled builders were in demand in the Council Bluffs area. My great-grandfather, Niels (Christensen) Larsen, is enumerated as a carpenter in the 1870 census. And my great-grandfather, Christian Christiansen, is listed as a carpenter in some Council Bluffs city directories from the early 1870s.

Other immigrants had skills that were no longer in demand either in Denmark or America. For instance, my great-grandmother Maren Larsen's first husband, Anders Larsen, was a clog maker in Denmark. There wasn't much demand for wooden shoes in the United States, so Anders is thought to have made furniture after immigrating.

The 1862 Homestead Act had little effect in the rural Council Bluffs area. By 1862, early farmers, livestock grazers, speculators, and railroads had already acquired most of the nearby land from the government. Nevertheless, it was still relatively easy to start farming in the 1870s. All of my great-grandparents except for Peter Hansen, the last to immigrate, soon owned land.

During the twenty years after the Civil War ended in 1865, improved land from ten to twenty miles from Council Bluffs seems to have sold for around \$20 per acre, versus around \$10 per acre for unimproved (generally unbroken prairie) land.

- In 1871, my great-grandfather, Christian Christiansen, bought the 40 acres where the Christian Christiansen home later stood for \$560, or \$14 per acre.
- In 1876, my great-great-uncle, Ole Jensen, bought the forty acres where the James Christiansen home later stood for \$500, or \$12.50 per acre.
- In 1882, my great-grandfather, Lars Christian Rasmussen, bought the 80-a home place, which already had some buildings, for \$1,800 or \$22.50 an acre.

My great-grandparents, like most Iowa farmers of the time, farmed on a small scale. In 1896, Niels Larsen, having farmed 120 acres for over 20 years, had 18 cattle, seven horses and thirty pigs. Peter Hansen, a new farmer, had three cattle and two horses.