

## **Anna Kirstine Jensen**

The following is excerpted from Marie Christensen Robb's account of her grandfather Christian H. Christensen's life, written around 2004. The 'Elaine' referred to is Elaine Lucas Raichle, Marie's cousin, daughter of Lillie Christensen.

In 1888, Christian had been in the new country for six years. This must have really been the land of opportunity for young immigrants. By this time, CH had not only learned the language, and had more than 50 cents to his name, he was also instrumental in encouraging other Danes to come to Nebraska. He told Elaine he had brought 200 Danes to Fremont by advancing them funds for their trip. When they paid him back, he sent for others.

One of the enterprises he helped with was to encourage young women in Denmark who wished to emigrate to come to Nebraska to marry the many single men. A man would pay passage for a woman, and when a group of women arrived, each was more or less assigned to the man who had paid for her passage.

In the spring of 1888, young Anna Kirstine was among the group. She arrived in Fremont with others by train. The new arrivals were each introduced to the man who had arranged for their trip. Anna said that when she got off the train, she knew she could not marry the man who had paid her passage. Grandpa (CH) was leaning against the building, watching. He had not sent for anyone. She said that when she saw him she decided he was the one she wanted to marry. Apparently this was a mutual feeling, and, on her 21<sup>st</sup> birthday (August 15, 1888), they were married by Judge J.J. Barge. (Anna told this story to Elaine.)



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**MARRIAGE RECORDED.**

*Mr. Christian H. Jensdatter* No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Before the County Judge of Dodge County, Nebraska,  
*Mrs. Anna Johansen* August 15 1887

**APPLICANT'S AFFIDAVIT.**

The State of Nebraska,  
 COUNTY OF DODGE. *Christian H. Jensdatter* an applicant for a Marriage License,  
 do hereby swear that my name is just as *Christian H. Jensdatter*; (that my  
 place of residence is *Fremont Nebraska*; that my age is *36* years; that the name of  
 my intended wife is *Anna Johansen*; that her age is *21* years; and that there is  
 no legal impediment to our wedding that I know of.  
 I furthermore do solemnly swear that the following schedule, containing the names of the applicant's parents, their ages,  
 color, place of birth, residence, and parents' names, is correct in every particular to the best of my knowledge, information,  
 and belief, to-wit:

NAME OF PERSON	AGE	SEX	PLACE OF BIRTH	RESIDENCE	COLOR	RELATION TO APPLICANT
<i>Christian H. Jensdatter</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Denmark</i>	<i>Fremont Neb</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>Father</i>
<i>Anna Johansen</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Denmark</i>	<i>Fremont Neb</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>Mother</i>

*Christian H. Jensdatter* is *Denmark* *Denmark* *Denmark* *Denmark* *Denmark* *Denmark* *Denmark*  
*Anna Johansen* is *Denmark* *Denmark* *Denmark* *Denmark* *Denmark* *Denmark* *Denmark*

Subscribed and sworn to before me August 15 1887  
*J. J. Barger* County Judge

**MARRIAGE LICENSE.**

The State of Nebraska,  
 COUNTY OF DODGE. OFFICE OF THE COUNTY JUDGE.

WHERE IS HEREBY granted to any person or persons to whom the marriage license is given by the County Judge of said County, within ninety days, of the names of the parties, ages and place of  
 residence as follows:  
*Christian H. Jensdatter* *36* *Male* *Denmark* *Fremont Neb* *White* *Denmark* *Denmark* *Denmark* *Denmark* *Denmark* *Denmark*  
*Anna Johansen* *21* *Female* *Denmark* *Fremont Neb* *White* *Denmark* *Denmark* *Denmark* *Denmark* *Denmark* *Denmark*

And the person taking this license is required to make due return of the amount of the license to the County Judge of said County, within ninety days, of the names of the parties, ages and place of  
 residence, and by whom solemnized.  
 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of said County, at my office  
 in Fremont, in said County, this 15 day of August, A.D. 1887.  
*J. J. Barger* County Judge

**CERTIFICATE OF MARRIAGE.**

To The County Judge of Dodge County, Nebraska:

THE CERTIFICATE, that on the 15 day of August A.D. 1887, at Fremont  
 in said County, according to law and to authority, I duly joined in marriage the *Christian H. Jensdatter*  
 and *Anna Johansen* and that there were present as witnesses *Larsen Rasmussen* and  
*Christian Johansen* both of Dodge County, Nebraska.

Witness under my hand this 15 day of August, 1887.  
*J. J. Barger* County Judge

Grandma's childhood story is rather classic. Ana Kirstine Jensdatter was born in Mandemarle, Moen, Denmark, on August 15, 1867, the third child of Jens Jensen and Ane Katrine Hansdatter. Her brother, Jens Peter Jensen, was born June 13, 1863; her sister Rasmine Marie Jensdatter, was born May 28, 1865. Her father died, as a result of being kicked buy a horse, when she was quite young. Her mother was unable to care for her, so she was apprenticed to a nearby manor house when she was seven years old. Following is her story, as told to Elaine. They put her in the fields with "honey-buckets" over both shoulders, to spread manure. She refused to do it - she was spunky all her life. She said that even at seven, she knew she was too good for that. So they transferred her to the 'castle' to apprentice in embroidery. She learned well and served the rest of her indentured servant years in the 'big house.' She was there until she was 20, when the chance came to go to America. A boy she knew paid her passage to come to America to be his wife. When she got to Fremont, she chose CH, instead. Eventually, other family members also made Fremont their home. CH brought his 14 year-old brother, Lars (Louis) over in 1888, as well. Louis later became mayor of Redwood City, California.

Ana's mother (Anne Katrina Hansdatter Jensen) remarried a man named Hans Wolff. They had a daughter, Sine, who married Hans Ludvigsen, in Fremont. Mr. Wulff, ('Bestefar'), and Mrs. Wulff ('Bestemar') lived with CH and Anna until Mr. Wulff's death in 1917. Ane Katrine then lived with the Ludvigsens until her death in 1923. Elaine remembered them both. Bestefar was a

carpenter and made a leather and wood footstool for the Lucas family. He was a large, kindly man. Bestemar was tiny and frail appearing. They are both buried in Fremont's Ridge cemetery.



Lillie Christensen, Ana Katrine Hansdatter, Nadine Christensen, Anna Kirstine Jensen Christensen

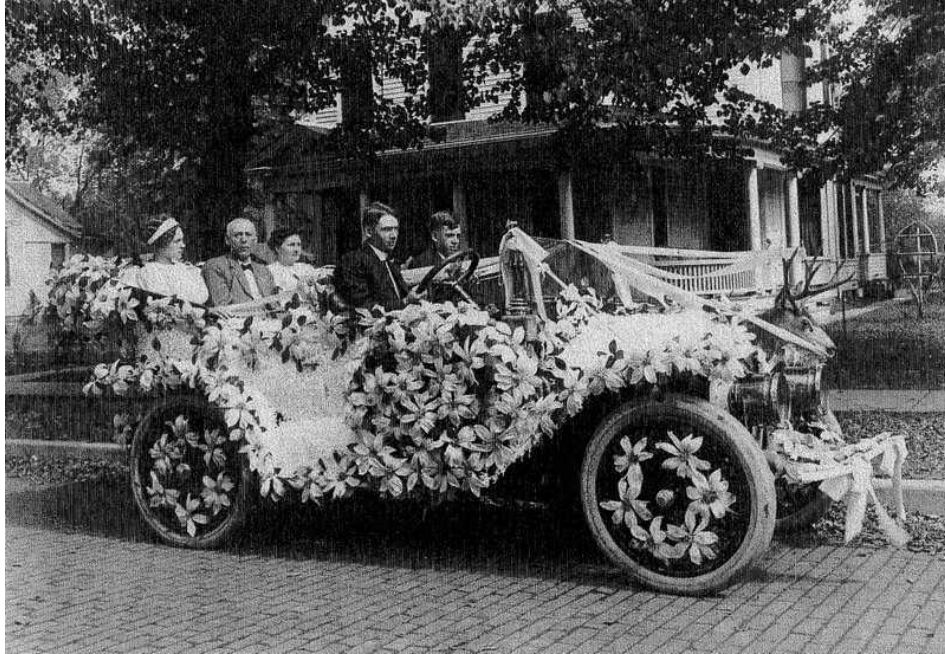
CH and Anna made three trips back to Denmark during their marriage. The first, in 1894, was reported in a newspaper clipping from the Fremont Tribune: "the Christensen family left for a visit to their former homes in Denmark and plan to remain overseas until March." Alfred (b. 1893) often remarked that he has been told he had been to Denmark but had no recollection of it.



In Fremont paper, November 1944:

Lillie (b. 1890) remembered the deep snow in Denmark, reaching to the window of the attic room where she slept. They intended to stay for a year, but when Anna learned she was pregnant again, they started home immediately, so the child would be born an American citizen. She remembered it as a rough crossing and she spent most of the time in bed in a tiny cabin as the trunk that held their possessions rolled back and forth with the roll of the ship. Henry was born in August, 1895.

The second trip was for their silver anniversary in 1913, and CH and Anna stayed in Saeby, Denmark, at a hotel owned by his sister Kjerstine and her husband John Wohlk. There are printed programs of the banquet with songs and poems composed and performed for the occasion. They traveled back from Denmark to the US on the biggest passenger ship of the time, the *Imperator*. (see separate document)



The Christensen family in their 'flower car' for a parade? Lillie, CH, Anna, Alfred (at the wheel), and Henry Christensen c. 1910-1920?



c. 1922 Anna and Christian, Marie Christensen, and Maybel Christensen (Alfred took the picture) on the way to Wisconsin to visit Anna's brother Jens Peter.

*Excerpts from interviews 2004-2007 with Marie Robb (b. 1918)*

*Your grandmother was a seamstress, right?*

Well, yes, although she did more embroidery and needlepoint, things like that. I don't remember her ever making garments. But that came from her training in Denmark, when she refused to carry manure to the fields, they took her into the house and taught her to do handwork, which she did forever. Every woman did, in those days, you were never without some hand work.

*Do you have any that she made?*

A few things, not much. I've got a bench, in my front hall, that was in her apartment, and I know she did that. And then I've got a chair, that she had needlepointed the covers on that, but it wore out, so I needlepointed some new covers for it. And then, let's see, there is another little wooden bench, and I think my mother did the needlepoint on that one.

*Did you play games as a family?*

We played cards. My Swedish grandfather – I'm sure he was against cards, dancing, liquor, anything. My Danish grandparents loved to play cards. They played 'Pitch' a lot. My parents played bridge, my mother especially. I suspect my father played cards with his hunting and fishing buddies when they'd go off. Uncle Henry and Aunt Helen spent a lot of time with the grandparents, playing Pitch in the evening.

*Did you go up to your grandparent' house by yourself?*

Oh, yes. It was just a walk through the schoolyard, across the street, and their house was right next to the school. My grandmother, anytime I arrived at the door, would give me a piece of candy, hard candies. I do remember I was told I was to let my mother know where I was, when I went off. I remember one time, thinking I wanted to go to Grandma's, but I didn't want to go back in the house to let Mother know. I can still remember the feeling of going around the other side of that school building, where she couldn't see me. I didn't want to run - it was like trying to go fast in a dream, when you just can't – I knew I was doing something wrong, and I was going to go ahead and do it anyway, and my legs just didn't want to work very well. But I did, and I got my candy. I think that was the last time I ever did that.

1930 saw the last trip to Denmark, accompanied by Christian's brother Louis and his wife, Tillie. They were gone for several months. From a 2003 perspective, we are learning more about this trip, as they visited many family members whose descendants have pictures, letters, etc., of the places and people they visited there. I (Marie) remember them talking about this trip – Grandma was well known for being frugal, but Grandpa always chuckled and said she really knew how to spend money when they took a trip. On this trip she ordered and brought home some handmade and embroidered linens, and a complete set of china with many serving dishes. They brought me a silver bracelet with a lovely pastel stone, that Grandma told me was a rhinestone because they had bought it while cruising the Rhine River (I thought this was very glamorous). Elaine had a large two-handled vase which Grandma brought back, wrapped in a blanket, and carried herself on the return trip. The journey took them to Germany and France as well as Denmark.  
(see separate document)





In 1938, there was a big celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary of CH and Anna. There is a home movie recording this, and many Danish couples of the same age coming to visit. (linked here: [CH and Anna 50th and 55th](#) )

They celebrated their 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1943. On a trip to California, Grandma had a great pain in her abdomen, and was treated by a chiropractor. Apparently the pain was caused by a tumor, which burst by the manipulation of the chiropractor. After that, she developed cancer, which caused her death on December 1, 1944.

#### Obituary:

ANNA KIRSTINE CHRISTENSEN was born August 15, 1867 in Mannemark, Moen, Denmark, and passed away Friday, December 1st, 1944, in Fremont, Nebr., at the age of 77 years, 3 months and 16 days. The first 21 years of her life were spent in her native country. Here she was baptized and confirmed in the Lutheran Church, received her early training and grew to womanhood. Early in life she experienced a great sorrow in the sudden death of her father, which occurred when she was still a very small girl. She immigrated to America, coming directly to Fremont, arriving May 5th, 1888. She was united in marriage to C. H. Christensen, also of Fremont, August 15, 1888, and to this union was born three children--two sons and a daughter. The Christensen family has always lived in Fremont, where they have occupied a prominent place in the business, civic and social activities of our community. After having lived a year or so in the apartment of their first place of business, they lived 13 years on West Fourth and forty-two years at their present home. Through hard work and good management they succeeded well, and by their hospitality and helpfulness have aided many a fellow countryman arriving from Denmark.

Mrs. Christensen has been a member of First Lutheran Church since April 3, 1910, where she worked hard and took an active part in all its work, and not least in the Ladies Aid, where she held an office. During the past year, on account of illness, she has been able to attend church but once, and she often mourned over this, and we missed her greatly.

Our departed friend experienced much hardship through sorrow and sickness. She was preceded in death by her parents and on May 29, 1935, by her only daughter, Lillie, which proved to be an exceedingly great loss to her, and which she often mentioned when her pastor made his calls. Mrs. Christensen was the first sick person I visited upon my arrival in Fremont in 1940, and since that time I have not known her to be real well. She had undergone serious surgicals and especially since her stroke January 28th of this year has she been in failing health, spending the last three weeks at the hospital previous to her home-going. We have shared many blessed hours together both in the home and in the church.

It is in perfect order to mention at this time that Mother was the object of constant love, patience and care on the part of her faithful husband, sons and their families. She always spoke of her daughters-in-law as "her girls" and cherished their love and kindness greatly and followed with much interest and love her grandchildren. All of this means much. What you have done for her is not in vain and is worthy of example. There are also many friends she would thank, if possible, today and not least Mrs. A. C. Christiansen, who so willingly aided her in many hours of sickness. I mention this because it is better to give flowers to the living, and it was a joy to see these two Annas together.

Mother leaves to mourn her loss her kind and loving husband, two sons, Alfred and Henry, all of Fremont, also six grandchildren and one great-grandchild, two sisters, Mrs. Marie Fries of Chicago, Mrs. H. P. Ludvigsen of Fremont, one brother, J. P. Jensen of Chicago, a number of other relatives and a host of friends.

Funeral services were held Sunday, December 3rd, at 2:30 p.m. at the First Lutheran Church, Pastor Marinus C. Hagedorn, officiating. Burial in Memorial Park Cemetery.

Organist: Miss Anna Brandt Soloist: Mrs. Paul H. Thom

Songs: Behold a Host Arrayed in White, Beautiful Savior

