

Mrs. Nels Jensen
Narrator

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KMRS
Interviewer

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- LT: 00:00 This is *Reminiscing in West Central Minnesota: a Saturday, KMRS News Feature*. Today, we are talking with Mrs. Nels Jensen from Hancock. Mrs. Jensen, you came from a country that we haven't really talked to too many people from actually. We've talked to lots of Norwegians and some Germans and some Swedes, but you can from another Scandinavian country.
- NJ: 00:25 Denmark. I was born in 1889 and I got here in 1908.
- LT: 00:37 How old were you about then when you came over?
- NJ: 00:39 I was past 18.
- LT: 00:43 Do you remember much about the old country in Denmark?
- NJ: 00:47 I can't remember. I don't know if remember so much about it.
- LT: 01:01 You do remember coming over here though?
- NJ: 01:03 Yeah, I came over here in a boat. I don't know. We left Copenhagen and it was in March. We left Copenhagen and went out on a boat. We did get out in the water and then something broke, and we had to go back again. We didn't get off.
- LT: 01:28 How long did it take to come over on the boat?

NJ: 01:30 Sixteen days.

LT: 01:32 Was it a bumpy right? Did you get seasick at all?

NJ: 01:35 Well, no, I didn't get seasick, but there was lots that did get seasick. It was a bumpy ride. It was an awful ride.

LT: 01:44 Did you have good weather?

NJ: 01:46 Part of it was good weather, but you are indoor. I don't know. I don't take the boat very much afterwards.

LT: 02:03 What was the reason that you came to the United States?

NJ: 02:06 I come over here because my friend was over here and I kept going with him in the old country, and he went over here. Then we got married in June after I come here. Maybe it was in April we come here. I got married in June, and then I've been living here since. I never got back to Denmark.

LT: 02:36 I bet some of those early years you wanted to go back, didn't you?

NJ: 02:39 Yeah, I'd like to go back. I thought I was going back inside of five years, but I never got that far. By that time, I had the children and started to have them.

LT: 02:56 Just didn't get around to it.

NJ: 02:57 I couldn't get around then, no.

LT: 02:58 How much did it cost to come over on the boat from Denmark to New York?

NJ: 03:03 It did cost \$50, and my husband he had bought it from Jim Jensen. He did out on the farm out here. He bought them from him.

LT: 03:16 When you first got over here, you lived in Pope County, first of all, wasn't it?

NJ: 03:20 Yeah, we lived in Pope County for one year, and then we come over to Stevens County. We lived on that farm out there, six miles from town, or something like that. We lived there seven years. That was pretty good years. We had nice crops there. The lands was often filled up with crabgrass

you called it in those days. I don't know if we have that now. But it was pretty good.

- LT: 03:55 There were some bad years in there too.
- NJ: 03:57 Then we come up and seen farm out here a mile from town. Then we had some bad years. We had some awful bad years, but we had some good years too. The land was awful good there, but the weather wasn't very good in those days. We had that [inaudible 04:19] storm, I suppose you can remember that.
- LT: 04:23 I've heard plenty about that too. You mentioned too something about a big hailstorm in 1927.
- NJ: 04:29 Yeah, we had a hailstorm in 1926. It broke the windows and broke the stuff on the farm. The cows got pounded with those hails in the pasture. We lost lots of those. Then once my husband—we had some sugar cane and that frosted all night. He didn't know then they were poison when it was frosted. So he let the cows out and they eat at that, and then the cows died. They all died. We had some bad years there.
- LT: 05:17 But like you say, there were some good years to make it all worthwhile.
- NJ: 05:21 Yeah, we had some good years too.
- LT: 05:24 When you first came over here to the Hancock area from over at Pope County, you remember seeing Hancock. Hancock, the downtown, was a little bit different than it is now.
- NJ: 05:33 Yeah, it was quite a bit different. It was a big town then. There was lots of business places in town.
- LT: 05:43 What were some of the different ones? They naturally had places for horses and that too.
- NJ: 05:50 What?
- LT: 05:51 Didn't they have some dealers that sold horses and barns and livery stables, I guess they call them?
- NJ: 05:59 They had some of them too and they had a barn there where you put the horses in when they come to town if there was cold weather. Hager, he had the barn then. Then there was

lots of businesses all over. They was lots of—they sold gas. Of course, he didn't sell so much gas then.

- LT: 06:30 Lots of hardware stores, and I suppose blacksmith.
- NJ: 06:33 Yeah, he had all that. You had undertaker parlor, and had a baker here in town. Oh, it was a big town.
- LT: 06:48 Even four saloons too.
- NJ: 06:51 There was four saloons. I can remember that. My husband, he always went in there when he comes to town. He was cold. They gave them oysters and he didn't like oysters.
- LT: 07:08 The place where you are living now, you've lived here since 1941. This is what I'd call in Hancock now, but it wasn't in Hancock in '41.
- NJ: 07:21 No, it was a farm—it had been a farm all the time. When we got it we sold milk to town, but we had plenty of cows and everything. But then they decided to have the road here. They changed the road from Hancock.
- LT: 07:43 That was about 1952, you were saying. Your son was in the Service.
- NJ: 07:46 1952. Then we had a trailer house down here and it passed down here and grow and the man he worked on the big machines on the road. In '52, they changed the road there. Then they cut off the field, of course. Those nine acres that got left over there, and he sold them to Peter Gere.
- LT: 08:22 You mentioned some lots too with some new houses have gone up around here.
- NJ: 08:26 Oh, yeah. There is lot of houses. He sold some—what you called it now? I get mixed up and I can't remember things.
- LT: 08:42 You're doing fine. Actually, you got all the benefits. You used to live in the country, now you live in town and you haven't had to move, right?
- NJ: 08:49 No, I haven't had to move, but I'm in the outskirts of town. Anyway, we have the benefit of town. We got electricity and we got water. I think we got it pretty nice here.
- LT: 09:05 Hancock is a pretty fine community.

NJ: 09:09 Yeah, I don't know what you make a living off now. They have two grocery stores and they have a hardware store. There is a merchandise store, but I don't know if they sell much stuff there. Then there is the drugstore and there is the printing office and the postmaster desk still here.

LT: 09:34 They got lots of stores. I think Hancock is going to be around for a long time.

NJ: 09:38 I hope so.

LT: 09:41 You mentioned what year you were born. Could you give us your age, Mrs. Jensen?

NJ: 09:48 Birthdate, I am now 89. I was 89 my last birthday.

LT: 09:55 Thank you very much. We've been talking with Mrs. Nels Jensen of Hancock, on *Reminiscing in West Central Minnesota: a Saturday KMRS News Feature*.