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American Ships and Danish Immigrants in 1869

by Harry R. Skallerup

During the period between the end of the Civil War and the heightening of hostilities of the Franco-Prussian War in late 1870, American-built wooden paddle-wheel steamships played a competitive role in the expansion of transatlantic passenger traffic. The war, however, along with the ascendancy of propeller-driven ships with larger iron hulls and more efficient engines, led to their demise in this trade. But within the hiatus of the wars, 1869 stands out as the year in which the first direct, scheduled steamer departures from Copenhagen to New York were made. This service was provided by passenger steamers of U.S. registry which were operated from New York by a group of three men known as the Røger (Ruger) Brothers. Their various steamship ventures have been authoritatively chronicled in *American Steamships on the Atlantic* by Cedric Ridgely-Nevitt.¹ Also, N. R. P. Bonsor in his comprehensive, multi-volume work, *North Atlantic Seaway*, devoted a chapter to their activities and placed them in proper sequence among eighty or so other international shipping enterprises that had existed thus far in time since 1838.²

These two works, understandably, are mostly about ships and shipping, so information about the emigrants who took passage aboard the 1869 Ruger Brothers ships is marginal and has to be sought elsewhere. Consequently, I consulted other sources in an attempt to find out more about the passengers who sailed on these ships, and also possibly to find material to augment the known record of these voyages. I have assembled the results of this research as a narrative of my findings, devoid for the most part of analyses and conjecture, and I present it here in the manner of one looking down the tube of a three-part telescope toward its eyepiece. That is, I proceed from a general view of the topic, "The Ships and the Emigrants," to a specific ship, "The *Santiago de Cuba* a.k.a *St. Jago de Cuba*" and its passengers, and then focus on "One Family" who took

passage on it and what became of the family after its arrival in New York, and also who their neighbors were in the two places its members took up residence.

The Ships and the Emigrants

The Ruger Brothers employed six ships in their pioneering endeavor. All of them had been built at New York shipyards between the years 1852-1864 and were fitted with engines made by ironworks firms that were also located there. Technically, they ranged in tonnage from 1,295 to 2,801 tons, and in length from 227 to 327 feet, with beams of 32.5 to 42 feet. Ridgely-Nevitt (CR-N) considered all of them superior vessels and cites two as the best obtainable when the Ruger Brothers sent them across the Atlantic. Five had seen Federal naval service for varying lengths of time in the Civil War in one or another capacity as troop transports, blockade craft, or gunboats.³ After the war, their various owners operated them on coastwise and foreign passenger ship routes. In 1869 they were available for charter or consignment to the Ruger Brothers, who employed them in a new steamship line to Europe and advertised this service from New York as Ruger's American Line. In Scandinavia, at least four of the ships' scheduled departures from Copenhagen were also included in the schedule notices for two regional steamers that operated in the Kattegat-Skagerrak waters, thus enabling passengers to make timely connections with the New York-bound ships (Figure 1). The ports of call of the ships were Christiania and Gothenburg, as well as intermediary ones *en route* to and from Copenhagen, the southern terminus.⁴

Til America med „Fulton“.
Den bedste og billigste Befordring tilbydes fra Christiania
via Kjøbenhavn til New York med det
americanske Hjul-Dampskib „Fulton“.
1780 Tons Drægtighed og 700 nominelle Hestes Kraft,
der afgaar fra Kjøbenhavn Fredag den 17de September. Man afreiser fra Christiania med „Excellen-
sen Toll“ Tirsdag den 14de s. M.
NB. Som Passager med „Fulton“ har anmeldt sig til Afreise fra Christiania en norsk
Præst, der vil holde Gudstjeneste onsdag samt har lovet at passere Emigranternes
Bedste forærvigt under Overreisen.

Contor: Store Strandgade,
Christiania.

O. Svanson,
Agent for det Americanske
Emigrant Compagnie &
the „Northamerican Lloyd“

Figure 1. Notice of the scheduled sailing from Christiania of the regional steamer, Excellensen Toll, to connect with the impending second voyage of the Fulton from Copenhagen. Advertisement from Correspondenten, August 24, 1869. (Courtesy of Sollem, Swiggum & Austheim)

The first of the voyages from New York under Ruger Brothers' auspices was made in April 1869 by the *Ariel*. Six other round-trip sailings followed in rapid succession by the *Northern Light*, *Ocean Queen*, *Guiding Star*, *Fulton*, *Santiago de Cuba*, and *Fulton* on a second trip ending in October. During this time, these ships transported some 5,255 passengers from Copenhagen, most of whom were Scandinavian emigrants. This adjusted total, along with other statistics, is contained in one of several tables in the *Report of the Commissioners of Emigration of the State of New York* for 1869. The only ships listed there as having arrived from Copenhagen are those of the Ruger Brothers, and they are given as agents or consignees for them.⁵ However, no table had a breakdown of the nationalities among the passengers on individual ships, although one gave the nationalities of the emigrants who arrived (as totals) on British and German ships. So, in order to determine the nationalities of the emigrants on the Rugers' ships and obtain the number in each group, I examined microfilm copies of their original passenger lists, and then compared the derived numerical totals with those reported by the ships and those in the Commissioners of Emigration report.⁶

Anyone who attempts to extract information from passenger lists for research purposes soon becomes aware of the many inaccuracies that they contain, despite the fact that ship captains who submitted the lists upon arrival in New York were required by solemn oath to attest that they were "full and perfect." Extreme examples of egregious errors in shipboard passenger listings and their possible effect on immigration statistics were included in an article about sources and records for Scandinavian genealogical research by Henning Bender, who reported that many emigrants boarding ships in 1869 in Liverpool as Danes were disembarked in New York as Germans due to changes in the listing of their names, nationalities, and sex.⁷ But in the instance of my study, I had to accept the evidence of nationality as written, for it would have been an endless, if not maddening, task for me to have attempted to verify each of the passengers' names on six ships against names recorded in the Danish Emigration Archives (DEA), the source for data on individuals emigrating from Denmark, available for the years 1869-1908.

Table I shows the results of my count of passengers' names and nationalities from the passenger lists. For the most part, the ships' totals were found to be the same as reported 134 years ago, except for the *Northern Light* and *Fulton's* second voyage. Due to discrepancies in their total numbers and other smaller counting differences, and probable errors elsewhere (including my own), the grand total of 5,255 in the table is 95 persons more than given in the Commissioners' report (5,160).⁸ The Copenhagen sailing dates given in the table appeared in the marine notices column of the *New York Times* for each ship upon its arrival in New York.

| Date | Ship | Denmark | Norway | Sweden | Germany | Other | Total |
|---------------|-------------------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| 4/16 | <i>Ariel</i> | 345 | - | 385 | - | 39 | 769 |
| 5/1 | <i>Northern Light</i> | 494 | - | 433 | 1 | 2 | 930 |
| 5/16 | <i>Ocean Queen</i> | 163 | 3 | 1083 | 7 | 30 | 1286 |
| 6/11 | <i>Guiding Star</i> | 116 | - | 671 | 13 | 6 | 806 |
| 7/1 | <i>Fulton</i> | 183 | 40 | 188 | 20 | 24 | 455 |
| 8/2 | <i>Santiago de Cuba</i> | 178 | 77 | 154 | 4 | 10 | 423 |
| 9/22 | <i>Fulton</i> | 123 | 59 | 86 | 293 | 25 | 586 |
| Totals | | 1602 | 179 | 3000 | 338 | 136 | 5255 |

Table 1. Date of departure of ships from Copenhagen to New York with numbers and nationalities of passengers as derived from their passenger lists, 1869.

The total of 136 passengers listed in the "Other" column of the table consisted of United States nationals (about 63) and a smattering of nationalities from the countries of Holland, Italy, Russia, Poland, France, England, Ireland, and Finland. The 293 German passengers listed for the *Fulton's* second voyage were taken aboard at Swinemünde, the port for Stettin (both in Poland today), before the ship continued on to Copenhagen. This voyage of the *Fulton* to Swinemünde initiated a direct steamer link to the Baltic, and it was the Ruger Brothers and the North American Steamship Company-Swinemunde Division that spearheaded the opening of this market.⁹

The total figure in the table for the Scandinavians is, of course, the one of most importance, but about all that can be said about its accuracy is that it indicates the approximate number of passengers from the three nationalities who sailed on each ship. Some degree of erroneous recording of nationalities was evident in samplings that I made of names on each ship's passenger lists against the DEA record, but I do not believe that the overall proportions among the three countries would be affected much if all of the names were

verified. The relatively low number of Norwegians on these ships may reflect a late awareness of the sailings or a low response to them, perhaps due to a tighter market in Norway.¹⁰ In contrast to this figure, the Commissioners' 1869 report indicated that a total of 5,903 emigrants from Norway were landed in New York from German and British vessels (steamers and sailing ships), and a lesser 3,593 were recorded from Denmark. The total number for Sweden was listed as 25,055. Finland and Iceland were not listed, although Helgoland was, with two emigrants, and Schleswig with 1,584 (1,208 on German, vs. 376 on British ships).¹¹

In addition to the recording of personal information about emigrants on their vessels, shipmasters arriving in New York were also required to indicate on their passenger lists the names of those who died on a voyage. On the *Guiding Star*, *Northern Light*, and two voyages of the *Fulton*, a total of eleven deaths had occurred. Eight were infants, two to eleven months of age; two were babies, one and two years old; and one was a 74-year old woman. Cause of death was recorded only on the *Fulton*, and in the instance of the woman, who was German, a terse, undated note, "Died at Southampton Old Age" was written on her line. A three-month old German infant also died there of "Cholera infection." Presumably the deceased were buried on British soil. Others were buried at sea, such as a six-month old Danish infant who died of pneumonia on the *Fulton's* first voyage. This occurrence was noted in the arrival news of the ship in the *New York Times* on July 21, perhaps because the burial took place just two days before landfall. Only one birth was recorded on the voyages of the Ruger ships. It had occurred on the *Northern Light*, three days distant from New York, and the date and time were noted on the Danish mother's line in the passenger list.

Upon arrival in New York, all vessels were subject to quarantine inspection, and emigrants were subsequently disembarked at the Emigrant Landing Depot at Castle Garden, located on an island at the foot of Manhattan. The Commissioners of Emigration had been examining and processing immigrants there since 1855. During this time, the scope of their interest and jurisdiction in the matter of emigration had led to the organization of some fourteen departments within the agency, which fortunately, a contemporary

commissioner, Friedrich Kapp, described in a book in 1870.¹² He discussed each of the departments, some at length, and explained their functions and how they severally related to all matters of concern to emigrants, such as procuring tickets for railroad travel, currency exchange, aid to the destitute, liaison in regard to writing letters and receiving mail and money, and local and regional employment. Kapp also devoted a chapter to the Emigrant Hospital that was maintained at Ward's Island, situated in the East River, where seriously ill emigrants were treated. In another building, called the "Refuge," destitute immigrants were sheltered while they awaited mail and money from their kin or friends and worked at chores assigned to them. A "Nursery" and other buildings dedicated to specialized purposes for emigrant assistance were also part of the Ward's Island compound.¹³

According to the Commissioners' *Report*, three passengers from the *Ariel* and one from the *Ocean Queen* were reported admitted to the hospital. How long they were confined there, of course, is not known, nor are the problems other emigrants might have encountered at arrival: whether some had friends, letters, or money awaiting them; if any had to stay at the Refuge, etc.; or, finally, how the members of these gatherings of immigrants from seven separate voyages fared as individuals and families in their new surroundings. However, from my foregoing review of sources of contemporary information concerning them, we now at least know the approximate number and proportion of the nationalities of the Scandinavians who came to New York from Copenhagen on American ships.

As for the fate of the ships, three of them, the *Ariel*, *Northern Light*, and *Fulton*, never made another transatlantic voyage and were gone from the sea within a few years. The *Fulton* was dismantled in 1870, having been idle after its last voyage. The *Northern Light* sailed coastwise until broken up in 1872; and the *Ariel* perished dramatically by striking a reef and sinking off the east coast of Japan in 1873. The *Ocean Queen* made one more round trip to Europe for the Ruger Brothers in 1870, touching at several ports including Swinemünde and Christiansand. In 1876, it ended up in a breaker's yard, as did the *Guiding Star* in 1874. Before that the latter had made

a round trip voyage to Havre in 1870 for another company. CN-R credited the *Guiding Star* with being the "Last wood side wheeler to make the Atlantic trip," while NRPB gave the honor to the *Santiago de Cuba*.¹⁴

The Santiago de Cuba a.k.a. St. Jago de Cuba

My great-grandparents sailed on the *Santiago de Cuba* when they emigrated from Thisted, so naturally I selected it as the ship to research further in my attempt to find out more about the Danish passengers aboard the Ruger steamers. Another reason for choosing it was that their contract with the steamship company has been passed down the generations to me, and it is an excellent primary source, to say the least. But in addition, the ship itself had a noteworthy past because of the unique role it played in Civil War history, and also for its association with the development of the American West. So I trust that a few paragraphs here that sketch this earlier record will be of interest to the Danish American community, as well as its later story.

The *Santiago de Cuba* was launched in Greenport, New York on April 2, 1861, just ten days before Confederate guns in Charleston began the Civil War by bombarding the Federal garrison at Fort Sumter in its harbor.¹⁵ Although its name was never changed until near the end of a long career many years later, the ship was also known as *St. Jago de Cuba*.¹⁶ This was the anglicized name long used for the port that had once been the capital city of Cuba, named in honor of St. James, the patron saint of Spain. Ambiguity regarding the new ship's name was already evident in July. On the 13th of the month, the *New York Tribune* reported that the shakedown trials of the "Santiago" had been successful and that it was to be the first ship of a proposed line to run between New York and Cuba. Six days later the newspaper noted that the "St. Jago de Cuba" had cleared New York, bound for Havana and "St. Jago." However, after one round-trip voyage, the prospects for its future success in this trade during wartime appeared uncertain to its owners, Valiente & Company in New York, so in September 1861 the ship was sold to the Federal government. In November it was commissioned in the U.S. Navy as one of several newly acquired or chartered merchant

ships engaged to strengthen the service for the ensuing conflict. Initially, the *Santiago de Cuba* was reported to be armed and configured with "eight broadside guns, one Parrot gun, a crew of 120 and a guard of marines."¹⁷

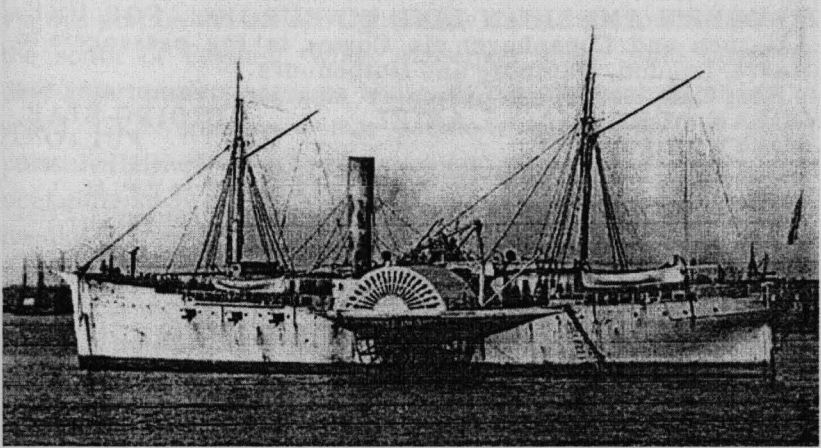


Figure 1. The *Santiago de Cuba* photographed as a warship during the Civil War. (Library of Congress)

The ship served throughout the war in the interception of Rebel and other vessels attempting to run blockaded Southern ports and in additional duties, and proved to be fast and reliable. It distinguished itself by capturing some eleven Confederate and British merchant ships in the South Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico, the most valuable one being worth \$330,000 in prize money. It also saw duty in a naval squadron that searched for the Confederate raiders *Florida* and *Alabama*, and in January 1865 it took part in the capture of Fort Fisher at Wilmington, North Carolina.¹⁸ Finally, as a veteran of the war, on April 14, it had the honor of returning General Robert Anderson to the ruins in Charleston harbor that had been Fort Sumter. There he raised the same tattered flag that he had been forced to strike four years earlier.

The *Santiago de Cuba* was decommissioned shortly thereafter and was sold at auction. It was refurbished as a passenger steamer again and employed on a New York route that served as the Atlantic Ocean link for travelers who crossed Nicaragua and Panama overland on their way to or from California. By the time the Ruger

Brothers engaged the ship in their new venture to serve Scandinavia, it had also made trips to New Orleans via Havana. Up until then, it had operated as originally intended - in coastwise trade; but on June 16, 1869 it was to be sent on its maiden voyage across the Atlantic.

RUGER'S AMERICAN LINE TO EUROPE.—FOR BRE-
men and Copenhagen via Cowes, taking passengers to
Havre, London, Hamburg and Gothenburg.

First class sidewheel passenger steamers, comprising the
OCEAN QUEEN, AKTEL, GUIDING STAR,
NORTHERN LIGHT, FULION.

The well known steamship **SANTIAGO DE CUBA** will
leave pier 46 North river, Wednesday, June 15, at 2 P. M.

Rates of passage to Cowes, Hamburg or Bremen: First
cabin, \$90; second cabin, \$60; steerage, \$22, gold.

Apply to **RUGER BROS.,** General Agents.
For freight, at 103 Pearl street; for passage, 42 Broadway.

RUGERS' AMERICAN LINE. OFFICE 42 BROAD-
way.—The trip of the new, favorite steamer **SANTIAGO**
DE CUBA, per 16th June, affords an unusually cheap, safe
and comfortable travelling facility to all Northern Europe,
between Southampton, Bremen and Copenhagen. Fare ex-
cellent for all classes. Excursion tickets at a reduction.

Figure 2. Advertisement in the New York Herald posting the sailing date of the Santiago de Cuba and publicizing the service routes of the Ruger Brothers Ships.

Its impending departure and rates for passage to ports in northern Europe were advertised daily that month in the *New York Herald* until the ship sailed on the announced date. One of these notices, shown in Figure 2, appeared on June 12, and it is typical of other steamship advertisements of the day wherein fares, payable in gold or currency or both, are quoted. Other offers besides excursion fares (round trips within a time period) might also be mentioned in the ads, such as the cost of West-bound steerage tickets, or for tickets "for persons wishing to send for their friends." The Ruger rates appeared to be lower than those of the Inman, Anchor, and Guion lines (all British), and the North German Lloyd, and Hamburg American steamship companies. Their advertisement pointedly mentioned "sidewheel passenger steamers" as a contrasting option to propeller-driven ships, because early iron-hull versions had acquired a reputation for being noisy and uncomfortable due to intensified engine vibrations and propeller shafts; so the Rugers were appealing to travelers who held that opinion.

On June 17, the *New York Times* reported in its marine intelligence column that the "Santiago de Cuba, Zimmermann[sic], Copenhagen, Bremen, &c., Ruger Bros" had cleared the port. It made a slow passage, arriving at Cowes in two weeks' time on its way to Europe via this port on the Isle of Wight, a few miles from Southampton in the south of England, where passenger ships could board or discharge travelers going to and from the continent. In regard to speed, CR-N mentioned that paddle-wheelers with low steam pressure burned enormous quantities of coal, and thrifty ship operators, such as the Rugers, were not inclined to expend fuel needlessly in order to set records. After its stop at Cowes, the ship proceeded on to Bremen on the second leg of its itinerary. As to how long it was there, none of the sources available to me gave any dates, nor did they indicate the nature of the cargo that it delivered, received, or transhipped. But by late July, the steamer had arrived in Copenhagen and was ready to board passengers.

This was the second trip to Denmark by the master of the *Santiago de Cuba*, Louis F. Timmermann. He had taken the *Northern Light* there earlier, so he more or less knew what to expect upon arrival. Likewise, passenger agents in Scandinavia, now also experienced with the Ruger Brothers' steamers, had been signing up emigrants for the return voyage of the "*St. Jago de Cuba*" from Copenhagen, and the schedules of the steamer serving regional Scandinavian ports were posted to connect with its August 1st departure.

Northamerican Lloyd til New York, direkte

fra Kjobenhavn med det hurtige og bekvemme Hjul-Dampskib „**St. Jago de Cuba**“, **2650 Tons**. Afreisen fra Christiania den 25de og 27de Juli.

O. Svenson,
General-Agent for Norge.
Contor: Store Strandgade, Christiania.
Nærmere Underretning kan erholdes i Hamar af **O. H. Enger.**

Figure 3. The name of the steamship line that the Ruger Brothers used in Scandinavia appeared prominently in this advertisement connecting the Christiania sailing date of the regional steamer with the departure of the "*St. Jago de Cuba*." From *Correspondenten*, July 1869. (Courtesy of Sollem, Swiggum & Austheim)

The advertisement by Rugers' agent in Norway, O. Svenson (Figure 3), referred to their operation as North-American Lloyd, a company

name that they had used in 1866 in another operation. This name also appears on my passenger contract, along with the Danish agent's name, N. P. Fredericksen.

A family consisting of two adults, four children and two infants paid 288 rigsdaler (about \$160 in American money) to purchase steerage passage on the ship. This total amount appears in line with, or even less than, the steerage rate from European ports on other West-bound steamers as advertised in New York newspapers then. West-bound steerage rates were quoted higher than East-bound, and adult fares were advertised from \$35 to \$40. Each steamship line had different age limits for children's fares, so a large family's total is difficult to compare.¹⁹ As proof of the transaction, at some point, the family received a large-sized bilingual contract document which specified, among other things:

In the payment agreed on is included Freight for 100 lb. baggage for each Steerage-Passenger over 12 years. The half quantity for children over 1 year. Cabin-passengers the double quantity. Good and sufficient fare in cooked state during the passage from

Copenhagen to the place of landing according to the annexed bill of fare. Medical attendance and medicine during the voyage over.

Bill of fare from Copenhagen to the place of landing.

Breakfast: Tea, Sugar, Coffee or Chocolate, fresh bread and Butter or biscuit and butter.

Dinner: Soup, beef, pork or fish and potatoes and in addition Plumbudding[sic] every Sunday.

Supper: Tea, Sugar, fresh bread or biscuit and butter.

Passengers receive as much provisions as they can eat, inasmuch as no abuse may be perceived in regard to the consumption of the same.

NB. The company is not responsible for baggage which might get lost on the voyage.²⁰

There also were two other sections of the contract which spelled out the responsibility of the company to arrange the forwarding of passengers to their destination in the event that the ship was unable to reach it, and the conditions and means of redress available for nonfulfillment of the contract. Although the contract had spaces provided for writing in the name, age, occupation, the last residence of each emigrant, and the cost of the passage, the place and date of issue were printed: "Kjobenhavn, den 28de Juli 1869."

This date seemed to me a good starting point from which to compare the passenger list of the *Santiago de Cuba* with DEA data,

although in its *Copenhagen Police Records of Emigration* on CD ROM, there are some 750 references to it. However, thanks to the Archive, this number was winnowed by computer to 416 people who were recorded as sailing on the ship; and not all of their contracts had the July 28 date (29 were before it, and one after).²¹ Without this helpful assistance, it would have been impossible to match names on the passenger list with those in DEA with even the diminished degree of certainty that I was finally resigned to accept.

As with many hand-written documents on microfilm, the writing on the passenger list at times was not clear, some letters were badly formed or faint and difficult to decipher; and in this listing almost every name had some kind of spelling or transcription error. Full names were shortened to fit the space of the column for entering them, many "sen" endings were converted to "son," the initial "k" often became "c," double "s" became single, etc., and other less obvious renderings prevailed. However, the task of reconciling the number of passengers on the ship (423) with the number that the DEA furnished (416) was more difficult. The two sets of figures finally balanced at 409, when 14 names (eight Americans not registered, and six purported Danes not in DEA, including an infant whose parents were) were subtracted from the passenger number, and seven persons in DEA who were not on the ship were subtracted from the DEA number. Finally, the totals of nationalities on the passenger list as given in Table 1 versus the totals found in DEA did not differ greatly. They were: Denmark 178 on the passenger list vs. 169 in DEA; Norway 77 vs. 81; Sweden 154 vs. 149; Germany 4 vs. 10; Other 10 vs. 7 (not on the ship). Regarding the recording of the wrong sex of passengers, there were eleven errors (six were children). Ages and most occupations (with one consistent exception mentioned later) mostly coincided, however.

Like many other steamships of the time, the *Santiago de Cuba* had accommodations for three classes of passengers, first and second cabin, which cost more, but offered more space, privacy, and amenities - and steerage.²² On this voyage, ten Danes, four Swedes, three Germans, and seven Americans sailed in first cabin, and nineteen Danes and one American went second cabin. All those in both classes who could be found in DEA had New York as their

destination. Among the ten first-cabin Danes, five were men: a carpenter (28 years old) a seaman (25) and a rentier (48) with no occupation given on the passenger list and "U.S." listed for nationality. An agent (24) and a cigar maker (22) were not in the DEA. The other five were women with separate contracts, three of whom were in their 60s and two, 25 and 35 years of age. In the second cabin, Danes of both sexes ranged in age from 19 to 33 years, and all had separate contracts, although there were four different sets of consecutive numbers (from separate geographic areas) among them. As listed in the DEA, ten were men: two carpenters, three farmers, and one each of cabinet maker, weaver, tanner, merchant, and clerk. On the passenger list, the occupation of one of the farmers was missing, as was the weaver's who had been listed as female.

Based on the last places of residence recorded for the 169 Danes in all three classes on the ship recorded in DEA, they had come from every county except Haderslev and Skanderborg.²³ There were 103 males and 66 females. Thirty-five of the total were children under 15 years of age (23 male, and 12 female). The 169 were thinly distributed in the counties, with only one to ten persons indicated in each of 16 counties. Two other counties had 11 and 13 each, but concentrations of 18 in Hjørring, 26 in Svendborg, and 49 in Copenhagen (12 outside the city) counties made up 55 percent of the total. In regard to families, 22 from 11 counties comprised a total of 80 emigrants and represented 47 percent of the total (families being defined here as couples with or without children, and a single parent with one or more children). The largest number of the heads of families were in their mid-thirties (in a range from 24 to 63 years of age), but among all of the Danish passengers, those between 20 and 30 were the largest age group (the extremes of the total ranged from 11 infants under a year old to six adults between 60 and 70 years of age).

Among the 79 men in the three classes of accommodations on the ship whose occupations were verifiable in DEA, 34 were craftsmen or in trades. There were one each of cigar maker, cooper, lithographer, mason, painter, saddle maker, tailor, tanner, watchmaker, and weaver; two each of shoemaker and smith; three of bakers and seamen; and seven carpenters, as well as seven joiners or

cabinet makers. Also, there were two bookkeepers, two clerks, and three merchants listed, as well as three servants, the rentier, and one man, a veterinary surgeon, possibly in the only professional occupation on the ship. There were five discrepancies among the total of all occupations, but in the largest single occupation, that of farmer (33 of them), every man who was a *landmand* in DEA was listed as a laborer on the passenger list, except the one farmer sailing in first cabin. Presumably, he became known by the purser, captain, or other person who wrote or copied the final list. But on the *Northern Light*, Captain Timmermann's other ship, no *landmand* had been converted into a laborer on its passenger list, and on the passenger contract that I have, *landmand* was translated simply as farmer. Perhaps in this case the compiler, for whatever reason, may have interpreted *landmand* as farm laborer, and then just used the word laborer instead of farmer to fit the space on each line.

The foregoing numerical results derived from the information about the Danish emigrants were condensed into just two paragraphs, primarily to portray the composition of this small group as a whole without commenting on each part as it was reported. This was done to avoid making erroneous generalizations from a small statistical sampling where data could easily be skewed due to inherent limitations and random flaws. Yet, when one views the parts as a whole, it mirrors in many respects Hvidt's more statistically sound and knowledgeably explicated larger portrait of Danish emigration. The ratio of men to women, their relatively young age, the proportions of children and families, county concentration, kinds of occupations and percentage of farmers, appear to parallel Hvidt's findings.²⁴

However, one last part in this survey, the destinations of the emigrants as reported in the DEA, differs notably. Hvidt stated that only one-third of the total emigration of Danes during the years 1869-1910 set out for New York, and that a majority headed for other specific locations.²⁵ On this voyage, it was just the opposite. The majority of Danish passengers (72%) had indicated New York as their destination. Only 20% specified locations such as Omaha and Racine, and a few other cities, while another 7.5% selected Chicago. The percentage of Norwegians and Swedes on the ship who had

indicated New York as their destination was even higher (91% and 93%), which perhaps may indicate, that exigencies in the contracting process played some part in this aspect of the emigrants' recorded decisions at that time.

Motivational influences aside, it is definite that 423 passengers boarded the *Santiago de Cuba* in Copenhagen for a passage ... "to be effected from there to New York by the steamer *St. Jago de Cuba* departing the first of August Four o. Cl. p.m....," as stated in the passenger contract. CR-N recorded the date of departure a day later, with the ship taking sixteen days from Copenhagen (without mention of a stop at a Channel port) to reach New York. Upon arrival, the *New York Herald*, on August 19, reported it in its shipping news column along with six other steamers and several sailing vessels that had entered the port the previous day. It noted that the *Santiago de Cuba* had arrived with 423 passengers and merchandise from Copenhagen, and that it had experienced westerly gales nearly all of the passage, but all was well. Interestingly, news of another kind was also on the same page of the newspaper, but it was not as agreeable. An article reporting a "Desperate Riot at a Picnic" that had occurred in close-by Jersey City involving some 600 people was followed by another that described "A Heavy Forgery in Nebraska" - accounts of life from near and far in their new world to welcome the immigrants?

Sixty-one years later, one of the dwindling number of the passengers from the stormy voyage was to return to the village where he lived as a boy and relate his recollection of being in "One Family" on that trip to a Danish newspaper reporter. The *Santiago de Cuba* no longer existed by then, but it had outlived its running mates by a considerable number of years. As late as 1899 it had been listed by the American Bureau of Shipping as the *Marion*, the name it was given in its last configuration as a schooner-rigged coal barge in 1886. After its historic Copenhagen trip, it made two more crossings to Havre for another company in 1870. CR-N thought that it was likely that on its last trip there it (and the *Guiding Star* also) had carried military supplies to France for its war with Prussia. In 1873, the ship was rebuilt as a propeller-driven steamer with a new engine, and made mostly coastwise voyages thereafter. These last

events in its career, as well as the earlier ones sketched in my article, were summed up in a paragraph of admiration by CR-N, which he ended by stating ... "She had started life as a paddler; in middle age she became a screw steamer; and, as a dowager, although at the end of a tug's tow line, she could still set sails to help her on her way."²⁶

One Family

The following story of my great-grandparents' life in America after their voyage aboard the *Santiago de Cuba* may not be the most interesting or insightful one among the twenty-one other Danish families who were on the ship, if their stories were to be known. Yet it adds another experience to the overall immigrant record, as it tells of two generations of a large farming family who came to Chicago during one of the early peak years of Danish emigration and how they prospered.

According to the family passenger contract, their last place of residence was Skjoldborg in Thisted county. Both Søren, a *landmand*, and his wife Ane were 44 years old and had six children ranging in age from eleven years to two months with them when they arrived at the wharf in Copenhagen. A seventeen-year-old son, alleged in our family lore to have been a tailor's apprentice then, was left behind. The only other persons from Thisted county who boarded the "*St. Jago de Cuba*" at that time were Jens K. Jensen, *landmand*, 28, and his wife Kirsten Maria, 22, and their child Jensine, nine months of age. Their last place of residence, listed in the DEA, was Villerslev, which is about 13 km to the south of Skjoldborg, itself being about six km from the city of Thisted. At that time, both families had indicated New York as their destination.²⁷

After arrival, the Skallerups continued overland to Chicago by train, and were living there in time to be listed in the 9th U.S. census for the city, which had been set for the month of July 1870.²⁸ Søren, being the head of a household, was counted, and although his surname was not severely butchered on the ship's passenger list, in the census record it is misspelled as Schellrup, and his first name is indecipherable. His age is also wrong at 40 years, and he was listed as a "Laborer." His wife Ane, "Keeping House," was recorded as 37, and the eldest son, Niels, 17, was with them, and was indeed a

tailor's apprentice. How he got there, I have yet to learn. A daughter, Else Marie, 13, was now Mary, and "Sewing" was listed for her in the "Occupation" column of the census ledger. The next oldest child Jens, 12, also had an English name change to James, and was "Cigar Making." Two other sons, Christian, nine (now Chris), and Jens Peter, seven (now Peter), were recorded "at school." No other children were listed, so two infants who survived the voyage at the ages of six and two months at the time it began had already died.

The family was living in the 9th Ward of Chicago, which then was about 2.5 square miles in area and bordered the western limit of the city, well away from the section that was consumed in the historic Chicago Fire of 1871. Their immediate neighbors were born in Ireland, Canada, New York, and Ohio. But the census index had also indicated that there were eight other householders in the ward who were listed as having been born in Denmark.²⁹ A review of their records in the full schedules indicates that there were 25 persons in these households, making the total for the ward 32 with the Skallerups.

The heads of the eight households were all married males, two of whom were in their 20s, three in their 30s, two in their 40s, and one 56 years old. Their occupations were listed as laborer, gardener, porter in a store, railroad clerk, cigar maker, and three as seamen. In the group, four had divulged the value of their personal assets at \$100 (porter), \$500 (cigar man), \$1,000, and \$2,000 (two seamen). The porter also had real estate valued at \$3,000, and one seaman at \$5,000. Only two had wives who were born in Denmark, and their ages were 20 and 40 years. The ages of nine children in four of the families ranged from nine months to 25 years of age (only three were born in Denmark). This information suggested that the arrivals of most of the families predated the DEA records. Nevertheless, I checked the names as listed in it against the census index and under possible variations and found no matches. In respect to George R. Nielsen's portrait of Danes in Chicago in 1870, this sampling is too small to generalize from, but it reinforces the view that they were scattered in the city, away from its heart, and showed diversity in occupations.³⁰

As for the other New York-bound voyagers on the *Santiago de Cuba* from Thisted County, the Jens K. Jensens, their household did not appear in the 1870 census index for the entire city, so they apparently had gone elsewhere. Also, none of the thirteen passengers on the ship (Danes, Swedes, or Norwegians of householder status) who had indicated Chicago as a final destination was included in the census. Eight of them had been listed in DEA as farmers by occupation, and one a veterinarian, so they probably had indicated Chicago as their destination only to get closer to the farmlands of the Midwest or beyond, and did not tarry long.

Nor did four members of the Skallerup family stay in Chicago initially. In the census of 1880 they are listed as farming in Saxeville, Waushara County, Wisconsin. Søren and Ane were recorded at 55 years of age, and again the surname is misspelled (Skallrope). Sons Chris, 20, and Peter, 18, are with them, but this time their neighbors are Danes. Of the ten dwellings that appear on their ledger page listing, seven had Danish-born families.³¹ Mary had married in 1877 and moved to Iowa. But James, 21, had remained in Chicago in his cigar-making occupation, and Niels, 27, who was said to have detested tailoring, either stayed in, or drifted back to Chicago and was now employed as a coachman in a Pennsylvania-born contractor's household.

Subsequently, in 1893, Ane died in Wisconsin, where Søren in 1899 was still active and engaged in the produce trade. He later died at a son's home in Chicago in 1912, by which time all of the brothers were now living there, two having become commission merchants. More is known about James than his siblings because he was the subject of a biographical sketch included in a subscription book published in 1899 devoted to recounting the lives of living Cook County achievers.³² He had become somewhat successful in his cigar-making business; had at one time served as an elected County Commissioner for one term; and was active in fraternal and Danish American affairs. His Danish-born wife was from Åbenrå, and in 1930 they (my grandparents) were living in Chicago's Danish community, within two blocks of its Dania society, located near Humboldt Park.

That year of the Great Depression, James, and other members of Dania and Harmonien who were financially secure enough, embarked on a sentimental trip to Denmark to make a leisurely good-will tour of the "Old Country."³³ Once there, their presence was deemed newsworthy by the Danish press, and James, then 72, was one of the old-timers who was singled out to be written up and to reminisce about his early years in Denmark and his life in America. He still spoke Danish "readily in a genuine Thy accent," and when the group arrived at Thisted on its itinerary, he visited his boyhood home in nearby Tingstrup.³⁴ This was not the "Last Residence" that had been recorded in 1869 on the family's passenger contract and in the Copenhagen Police records, so Skjoldborg, given in the document as their last residence, probably was the place where the contract had been accepted.

During an interview with a writer from the *Thisted Amts Tidende*, James, among other things, told how, so long ago, his family emigrated from Denmark. His remarks were quoted verbatim in the newspaper, and they now serve to end my article by bringing the last two parts of it full circle. He was reported to have said that he crossed the Atlantic with his parents in 1868 as a ten-year old boy "in the old Danish ship, which was named 'San Jago da Cuba,' and landed in New York, from where we continued on with the immigrant train to Chicago."³⁵ So much for oral history! I would like to believe that at least the mention of the train journey was accurate. There had been a train option in his parents' passenger contract, which was worded "From this place [New York] to [blank] by rail-train Third class waggons," but it had been crossed out. Somehow Søren knew, or was advised, that tickets for train travel could be bought at Castle Garden, and that Chicago was the gateway to farmland, and was the place to go. James, who at an early age, was introduced to life in the big city, chose to stay, and at his death in 1933, he was one of the worthy Danish old settlers of Chicago.

Author's Note

In concentrating primarily on the Ruger Brothers ships, I omitted the story of the ill-famed 1866 voyage of the British-owned ship, *Ottawa*, which may be considered the first direct steamer crossing

from Scandinavia to New York. An imprecise number of emigrants sailing on it had been recruited as contract laborers for the American Emigrant Aid and Homestead Company, and the trip was a one-time, unsuccessful venture. It has been written up or mentioned elsewhere by others, mostly in connection with emigration legislation in Norway and Denmark, whereas the successful venture of the Ruger Brothers seems to have been overlooked, if not forgotten. Also, in regard to endnote 9, on Hvidt's comment about the Baltischer Lloyd steamship company, he probably had only a few pieces of the beginning story. In his footnote he presumed that the Rugers might have been behind its initiation. They could have had some early input regarding its proposal, as they appear to have been eager to explore opportunities for launching new European trade routes. CR-N inferred they were probably from Germany, as they were agents for sailing ships bound for North German ports in 1863-65.³⁶

Finally, I am mindful that in writing this article I seem to have joined the chorus of those who bemoan the inaccuracy of genealogical and emigration data. But I am quick to add that I also join those, usually the same choristers, who defend the unsung, and in many cases, unschooled gatherers and transcribers of this interesting and enlightening body of information. On a personal level, although I referred to errors by the census takers of 1870 and 1880, I am gratified that they did not skip the household of my ancestors, and that someone was there to impart pieces of identifiable information. With this in mind, I wish to express the caveat that I do not claim complete accuracy for the statistical or numerical results given here. Someone else using a different approach or methods may have attained slightly different results or interpretations.

¹ Cecil Ridgely-Nevitt (CR-N), *American Steamships on the Atlantic* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1981).

² N. R. P. Bonsor (NRPB), *North Atlantic Seaway* (Jersey, Channel Islands: Brookside Publishers, 1975-80).

³ CR-N 238, 240, 241, 296, 325.

⁴ The schedule can be referenced at the Internet site of Solem, Swiggum & Austheim, www.norwayheritage.com/p_ship.asp?sh=exelt

⁵ *Report of the Commissioners of Emigration of the State of New York for the Year Ending Dec. 31, 1869*. New York. Legislative Assembly, Documents, vol. 3, no.68 (Albany: 1870), p. 70.

⁶ U.S. National Archives. Microfilm series M237, *Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at New York, N.Y., 1820-1897*: roll no. 307 (*Arago*); no. 310 (*Ariel*); no. 311 (*Northern Light*); no. 312, (*Ocean Queen*); no. 313 (*Guiding Star*); no. 315 (*Fulton*); no. 316 (*Santiago de Cuba*); no. 320 (*Fulton*).

⁷ Henning Bender, "The First Data Base on the Internet," referenced at the Internet site of the Association of European Migration Institutions, www.aemi.dk/news.php3?page=33

⁸ The total figure given in the *Report* table for the Ruger ship arrivals from Copenhagen was 5,358. However, it included a total of 198 German emigrants from another of their ships, the *Arago*, which had boarded these passengers, and no others, at Bremen (not Copenhagen) in March. I subtracted this number from the *Report's* total, which made it 5,160. When the additional 95 passengers from my review of the passenger lists are added to this figure, the result is the adjusted total of 5,255.

⁹ Kristian Hvidt in a footnote in *Flugten til Amerika*, alludes to the formation of the Baltischer Lloyd steamship company in 1869 and remarks that it transported 12,100 Scandinavians to New York that year. According to NRPB (v. 2, pp. 772-74), this company was not organized until 1870, and its first ship, the *Humboldt*, sailed to New York from Stettin via Copenhagen and Christiansand in 1871. Also, the 1869 Commissioners' *Report* (pp. 70-71) listed only three German steamship lines landing emigrants in New York that year, and Baltischer Lloyd was not one of them. It should also be noted regarding the beginnings of Scandinavian oriented steamship lines, that Det Norsk-Amerikanske Dampskibsselskab's first ship to sail to New York was in July 1871 (NRPB v. 2, pp. 772-78). I wish to thank John R. Christianson, former editor of *The Bridge*, for informing me of, and translating, Hvidt's footnote and for answering my questions concerning it. The footnote appears in Kristian Hvidt, *Flugten til Amerika, eller Drikrafter i masseudvandringen fra Danmark, 1868-1914* (Aarhus: Universitetsforlaget, 1971), 361-62.

¹⁰ NRPB v. 2, p. 775, remarked that emigrants from Norway usually went by sailing ship or steamers to Hamburg, Bremen, or a British port for transshipment overseas, and that the connecting services of the Anchor and Allan Lines (both British) had become increasingly popular by 1869.11.

¹¹ Commissioners, *Report* 83-84.

¹² Friedrich Kapp, *Immigration, and the Commissioners of Emigration of the State of New York* (New York: The Nation Press, 1870). Reprint (New York: Arno

Press, 1969). Friedrich Kapp (1824-1884) was a German author of several books of history, biography, and commentary. He came to New York in 1850, was a commissioner of emigration 1867-1870, and subsequently returned to Germany.

¹³ Kapp 108-141.

¹⁴ CR-N's claim (p. 349) is based on the ship's round trip return date to New York, whereas NRPB (v. 2, p. 323) apparently considered the round trip departure date from New York more notable.

¹⁵ Much of the history and information about the *Santiago de Cuba* in this section is from CN-R (pp. 214, 285, 312-13, 322-29, 363, 365-66, 368), and is not cited otherwise unless as a direct quote.

¹⁶ The specifications of the ship are given in CR-N (pp. 363, 365) as: length 227 ft., beam 38 ft., depth of hold 19 ft., tons 1,567; built by Jeremiah Simonson, Greenpoint, New York; engines built by Neptune Iron Works, New York.

¹⁷ The New York Tribune, November 6, 1861.

¹⁸ U. S. Navy. Naval History Department, *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships* (Washington: Govt. Printing Office, 1976), vol. 6, p. 328.

¹⁹ In 1863, the U.S. Mint valued a silver two-rigsdaler coin at \$1.1065.

²⁰ North American Lloyd Steamship Company. *Contract no. 154 [registration no. 5873]*. Copenhagen, July 28, 1869.

²¹ I am indebted to Birget Flemming Larsen of the Danish Emigration Archives for her help in this matter. See Bender (endnote 7) for a description and brief history of the DEA database.

²² NRPB, (v. 5, pp. 1823, 1850-57) has a useful appendix on "Classes of Accommodation" throughout the history of passenger shipboard travel; however the cost of travel received scant treatment in it.

²³ There were five men from Schlesvig with separate contracts that I included as Danes. They had Danish names and/or were listed as such on the passenger list.

²⁴ Kristian Hvidt, *Flight to America: The Social Background of 300,000 Danish Emigrants* (New York: Academic Press, 1975), 39-41, 78, 82-83, 106-07, 112-18.

²⁵ Hvidt 171.

²⁶ CR-N 329.

²⁷ The records of these two families can be referenced at the Danish Emigration Archives Web site: www.emiarch.dk under Contract no. 587300 (Skallerup), and no. 585900 (Jensen).

²⁸ U.S. Census, 1870. *Schedules, Cook County, City of Chicago, Illinois*. U.S. Archives Microfilm series M93, roll 204.

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- ²⁹ *Chicago 1870s Census Index* (North Salt Lake City: Heritage Quest, 2000). CD ROM, ACD-0095.
- ³⁰ George R. Nielsen, "Chicago Danes in 1870; a Demographic Study," in *On Distant Shores* (Aalborg: Danish Worldwide Archives, 1993), 343.
- ³¹ U.S. Census, 1880. *Schedules, Waushara County, Wisconsin*. U.S. Archives Microfilm series T9, roll 1452.
- ³² *Album of Genealogy and Biography, Cook County Illinois* (Chicago: La Salle Book Co., 1899).
- ³³ H. Einar Mose, *Dania Society of Chicago; The Centennial History 1862-1962*. (Chicago: Privately Printed, 1962), 48-50.
- ³⁴ *Thisted Amts Tidende*, "Hjem til Thy Efter 62 Års Forløb." 6 Juni 1930.
- ³⁵ *Thisted Amts Tidende*, "To Thyboskæbner i Amerika." 16 Juni 1930.
- ³⁶ CR-N 311.