

The American Family

I remembered that there was something about someone who had gone to America!

When I was a little boy, we occasionally talked about someone from Brenderup wanting to try a new life abroad. I remember there were some who went to Australia and also some who went to Argentina and Canada as well as the United States.

However, this story starts long before I was born. I only remember it because my grandmother (on my fathers side) got letters from her sister in America. I collected stamps so I was lucky enough to get a 15 cent airmail stamp. It wasn't that common back then, so for me it was a great rarity.



Yes, in fact we have to go all the way back to the beginning of the 20th century. At that time it was very popular to seek happiness in the "new" world.

Now, well over 100 years later, with new digital tools I have been given the opportunity to find out (at least partially) what became of a distant relative and whether there are perhaps descendants I can get in touch with.

The work consists of reading old censuses, immigration records from Ellis Island, which all immigrants to the United States had to go through, ship manifests, cemetery indexes, as well as various sources with mentions and images. It is extensive and time-consuming work, but a bit like playing detective, and there are many unknowns along the way, because not all sources are equally trustworthy (after all, this is hard-written information), but then the reward comes when you succeed in getting the equation to go up.

The year 1905 :

Thorvald Vilhelm Larsen lived in Bogense. He was No. 2 of 7 siblings. He was just over 18 years old and wanted to try his luck in America. He arrived at Ellis Island on 12/3-1905 on the ship Mongolian, which sailed from Glasgow. In 1906 he obtained American citizenship. He settled as a farmer in Cassville, which is a small town in the state of New York, with a landscape very similar to that of Denmark.

The year 1912 :

Thorvald longed for his childhood sweetheart, so he travels to Denmark at the age of 25 and visits my grandmother's sister Andrea Julie Nielsen, who lived in Skovby just outside Bogense. She was no. 6 out of 7 sisters and now 23 years old.

Thorvald returns to America on 24/2-1912 with the ship Lusitania, which sailed from Liverpool.

His mission was successful because Andrea arrived at Ellis Island 17-18/4-1912 with the ship Hellig Olav, which sailed from Copenhagen on 4/4-1912.



Andrea and Thorvald were married in 1912 and settled in Cassville. They lived as farmers and it seems they did well. (Later, Thorvald's sister and 3 other brothers also came to America, but that is a completely different story).

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Titanic:

The newly built ship Titanic sailed from Southampton on 10/4-1912 and sank after hitting an iceberg on 15/4-1912. This therefore means that from 4/4 - 18/4 Andrea was on the Atlantic sea not far from the Titanic when the accident happened. They were also called to help, but were unfortunately too far away to be able to reach it.

Children :

Andrea and Thorvald had 3 children: A boy and two girls.

Son of Andrea and Thorvald:

Burt W. Larsen *1914 †1973. His middle name is probably William, as Thorvald was called. It is a little more American than Vilhelm. Andrea was called Mrs. William Larsen.

Son's child :

Burt had one child: a boy. His name was **Carl Burt Larsen** *1936 †1964.

Carl was educated at the Naval Academy in Annapolis, trained as a pilot at Graham Air Force Base, Florida and received jet training at Webb Air Force Base, Texas.

He was killed when he crashed his plane an F-105D during landing in Osan, Korea on 23/1-1964. He was then 27 years old and stationed for the USAF at Kadena AFB, Okinawa, Japan.

He was buried on 3/2-1964 at Arlington National Cemetery, Virginia. Thorvald wrote to my grandmother:

He rests in his Homeland only a short distance from President Kennedy's Burial Ground, so in death he lies close to the great and mighty.

He left behind a 6-year-old boy and a 4-year-old daughter.



The tombstone at Arlington

1. Daughter of Andrea and Thorvald:

Lillian Olivia Larsen *1918 †1920. The middle name is probably inspired by Thorvald's sister, who also traveled to America.

She was killed at just 2 years old when Thorvald backed the car out of the garage without noticing that the little girl was playing behind it.

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2. Daughter of Andrea and Thorvald:

Lillian Doris Larsen *1922 †2013.

It was not planned that they would have more children, but the loss of the little girl made them want one more child.

Fortunately, it turned out to be a girl, and she was also named Lillian. She has always had inferiority complexes because she was a surrogate child.

Daughter's children :

Lillian married John Sander Gold and had 4 children: 2 girls and 2 boys.

Kristen Ann Gold *1946

Art teacher for 29 years and retired in 1998

Kristen's nickname is Kris, and I have email contact with her. She is also helpful with information about the family.

Patricia Lynn Gold *1948

Has a university degree from Cornell University in food and nutrition.

Patricia is nicknamed Pat.

Has 2 children and 2 grandchildren

Brian J. Gold *1949

Worked on finer art books for libraries and museums around the world.

Was CFO of the Ithaca Science Museum until he retired

Jeffrey William Gold *1957

Jeffrey is nicknamed Jeff.

Has 1 child

Lives in Atlanta, Georgia and owns several companies in the construction industry.

He has figured out how to turn plastic waste into fuel and has started a large company, NEXUS, working on it.

The above is just a brief summary of the entire history of my American family. The genealogical research has resulted in a great many sources, documents and pictures.

The total American family with spouses, children and in-laws now includes approx. 200 people.

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The ending:

Thorvald *1886 †1969 had poor health in his last lifetime. He had several heartbeats and the doctor forbade him to do anything. It was hard for him.

He collapsed on the pavement with a heartbeat when he was going to pick up the newspaper on a cold day in January.



Andrea * 1888 †1969 moved in with her daughter Lillian. She falls and ends up in the hospital. They won't let her come back to the daughter, but wanted her in a nursing home. She got angry because she suffered from high blood pressure and believed that she had the worst health and therefore she should die first! She died in June, almost ½ year after Thorvald.

