

The following biographical account of the Busk family was related by Myrtle Busk Fransen, youngest child of Christian and Christina Busk.

Christian Hansen (Busk) was born March 8, 1859, in Denmark. He and his two sisters came from a fairly well-to-do family who had financial dealings with the State of Sweden, at that time a part of Denmark. (Apparently the family had loaned the state some money and were held in high regard by the local government.)

Being the only male heir, Christian stood to inherit the family farm, but when he began courting Christina, whose family was not so well-to-do, his parents disapproved. He decided to come to America and told Christina he would send for her as soon as he earned enough money for her passage. Christina's parents sent her brother Jurgen to America to make sure their daughter's future was safe and secure. When Christina finally received her ticket, she ran across the meadow waving her letter in the air and shouted to her youngest sister, "I'm going to America! I'm going to America!" Right away she went shopping for the material for her wedding dress in order to sew it during the long voyage across the ocean.

Christina left Denmark September 5, 1883. Her married half-sister thought she might never see her again and was so distraught to lose her best friend that she immediately went into labor and had a baby that day. Today that baby is living in Waterloo, IA, and is 107 years of age.

Christina's voyage took six weeks and was very difficult. Many passengers were seasick and Christina did what she could to help them. Consequently, she was unable to finish her wedding dress and had to get married in her everyday frock. Christian and Jurgen met her at the dock and she and Christian were married immediately because there was no place for a newly arrived, Danish-speaking, unmarried young girl to dwell. Their marriage took place Oct. 23, 1883. The couple settled in Perth Amboy, N.J. where Christian worked in the shipyards for a few months. In 1884, they moved to Minnesota because Christian saw an ad in a local newspaper about a Danish settlement in Westbrook, MN. Christina's brother, Jurgen, accompanied them and also settled in the area.

During their years in Westbrook, Christian applied for U.S. citizenship and it was granted Oct. 27, 1891. In 1893 Christian decided to change the family name to Busk which was a county in Denmark. The decision was reached because of numerous difficulties in getting mail -- the name "Christian Hansen" was so common. In those days, all you needed to do was to go to the county courthouse and say you wanted to adopt a new name. The name Busk became the family's respectability and good fortune in America.

Eight children were born to Christian and Christina Busk in Minnesota:

Annie was born	Aug. 20, 1884
Sophie was born	May 13, 1886

Henry was born	Sept. 2, 1888
Alfred was born	Oct. 17, 1890
Carl was born	Jan. 1, 1893
Dave was born	Feb. 8, 1895
Bill was born	July 29, 1897
Myrtle was born	Feb. 8, 1900.

When Myrtle was 2 years old, the family went to Marvin, S.D., because Christian's homestead in Minnesota was too small to provide acreages for his sons when they came of age. Christian set out for S.D. and bought a great deal of land there to properly take care of his family. The land he bought was pure prairie farmland with no buildings or trees to shade the land or the family from the scorching South Dakota summer sun.

The family joined him later and as they came across the prairie just west of Marvin, Carl, who was chasing the cattle, was met by a cowboy. The cowboy asked Carl, "Where are you going, little boy?" And Carl answered, "South Dakota!!!" (Carl was also the one who insisted that his life insurance would not cover him if he ate tomatoes. If their dad wouldn't eat something, then the kids wouldn't eat it!!) Well, the cowboy laughed and told Carl that he'd been in South Dakota for a long time. (As it turns out, this incident occurred very near Marvin, S.D.) The family lived in wagons until their house was built. But in 1904 (Aug. 20 to be exact), the place was leveled by a devastating cyclone that nearly destroyed the family.

The men were out in the fields haying. When they saw the boiling clouds in the sky, Carl, Alfred, and Dave came home with the team and tethered the horses in the barn. The boys raced for the house and the trap door in the pantry which led the way to the basement. Alfred and Dave were on their way down when the kitchen door blew open. Their mother went to shut it with Bill and Myrtle hanging onto her skirt.

They never made it to the door.

Myrtle woke up hiding in her mother's apron after the two of them had been pitched into the garden. Bill broke his leg from the force of the kitchen stove landing on it. A big part of the house was lifted up by the cyclone and miraculously moved over the heads of Alfred and Dave as they tried to make their way to the basement. When it was over, the kitchen was gone.

Henry cried that his mother wasn't making any sense due to the injuries she received during the storm. She had two gaping holes in her head, but eventually regained her health and senses. A yellow, short-haired house dog disappeared during the storm but was found in a field. The boys got a pillow to carry him home. The family survived the cyclone.

When Myrtle was 8, Christian became very ill and had to leave the farm. Carl accompanied him to Ortonville where the doctor said he could do nothing

for the sick man. In Rochester another doctor advised the family to change climates. So, Alfred took over the farm and Christian, Christina, and Myrtle left for Washington to stay with Christina's youngest sister. They ended up in Cooley City, WA, after a treacherous journey down a steep bank to the river bottom deep with ashes using four horses hitched to a wagon. Christian felt good in Cooley City and rented a house for himself, his wife, and Myrtle. But six weeks later his health had not improved considerably and they left for Portland, OR. Unfortunately, that move didn't help his health either. Within a two-year period, they decided to move back to South Dakota. Sept. 2, 1913, Christian Hansen Busk died. Christina died March 2, 1923.

Wonderful memories are made in a large, loving family. Bill and Myrtle used to play together because they were the youngest children. Bill made a bit and a bridle so Myrtle could be his make-believe horse, and he galloped her through their mother's flower garden that she loved so dearly. All the boys contributed to the garden -- a wild rose bush grew in the corner and hollyhocks lined its perimeter. The family tended chickens, ducks, sheep, hogs, cattle, and horses. Myrtle remembers Dan and Flory, a team of horses used to farm the rich fertile soil.

During World War I, Dave left for the army and Christina knit over 100 pairs of socks for the allied soldiers as she walked after the cows. She was always a buffer between her children and their father who was stern but just and fair. She played games with them and had fun, but never wore make-up, jewelry, or curled her hair. On the day before Christmas Eve she and the girls made pepper nuts to celebrate "Little Yule" or "Little Christmas Eve." The recipe for the rolled-dough pastry treats have been handed down to the family from the eldest daughter, Annie, and then to Annie's daughter, Amy. After their mother's death, Carl remarked that he didn't know if there was a heaven, but if there was he was certain that his mother would be there.

Dave was the first to own a car -- a Model-T Ford. He was the only son to marry at an age other than 22. And he sang. He led the singing of Danish hymns in church services at the Busk place in Minnesota as he stood on a chair. He sang "Home Sweet Home" when Snip brought Myrtle home from a date. And he sang at Myrtle's 80th birthday party. (Actually, all the boys were musical and enjoyed spending their leisure time playing the harmonica.)

It is interesting to note that all of the offspring of Christian and Christina Busk lived to be over 80 years old, and they all celebrated their 50th wedding anniversaries.

The Busk Family Tree has branched out into a mighty and formidable orchard from which we all spring.