

The Lady with the Pen

Elise Wærenskjold in Texas

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New Orleans, where he had gone to buy merchandise. At almost the same time his two youngest children died. They had never been really well since their difficult North Sea crossing. A grown son passed away later. Of the three remaining sons, the twins are merchants, both well off, one [*Hans J.*] in Shreveport, one in Jefferson. The youngest is a farmer in Rusk County, married to a sister-in-law of his foster father, a rich American who brought him up after his mother's death early in 1848.

Thomas Grøgaard is also married to an American, but Hans Jacob [Grøgaard] married a daughter of Lassen Reiersen, who, with his brother Carl, had emigrated to Wisconsin.²⁴ Later both returned to Texas; the third brother, Andreas, still lives in Chicago. Three of Grøgaard's four daughters were grown when they left Norway. The oldest [*Marie*] lives in Prairieville; the second, Helene, married Georg Reiersen, also a brother of the editor. He is in business with his wife's brother and is a man of means. The third daughter was married to an American; she died, leaving a daughter. The youngest is married to an American doctor.²⁵ As Grøgaard had many friends and relatives in Norway, I thought the information about the fate of this family would be of interest, should your paper reach Norway, as I presume it will.

At the end of August, 1846, still another company of emigrants from Christiansand, under the guidance of Sexton [*Ole*] Reiersen, left for Havre de Grace. From there they took an American ship to New Orleans. There, several left the party to go to Wisconsin, while about fifty, chiefly natives of Omli Parish, continued their journey by steamer to Texas. But the low water in the [*Red*] river caused them to land at Alexandria. A Danish family, C. Lindberg (brother of the well-known scholar) with three children, and Mr. [*James Hendrick*] Staack from Lauenburg, continued up river by a smaller steamboat

²⁴ Hans Jacob Grøgaard, the younger, son of Christian, obviously was named for his illustrious Norwegian grandfather. (See *ante*, n. 19.) Grøgaard and Georg Reiersen operated a commission business in Shreveport.

²⁵ Mrs. Wærenskjold visited Christian Grøgaard's widow, Thomina, in Nacogdoches and was permitted to take the youngest daughter, Emma, to return and live with her. In 1857 Emma married Dr. Thomas Miller Matthews, a physician from a distinguished Virginia family. She is said to have been a dazzling beauty. Information furnished by Mr. Thomas Matthews, grandson of Dr. Matthews and Emma, and by Mrs. L. M. George, granddaughter of Carl Reiersen, both of Athens, Texas; Mrs. George to the editor, April 14, 1961. Andreas Reiersen was a ship's captain.