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Jens Peter Pedersen: Day Laborer and Turner

Jens Peter Pedersen was not so different from many other poor day laborers. He made his living as a hired hand, and as a craftsman. Unsurprisingly, he never amassed enough capital to break the bonds that held the day laborers mired in subsistence poverty and tied to the local area, even after the elimination of the estate bondage (*stavnsbånd*), a system of adscription that required a person to seek permission from the manor lord if they wished to leave the area. Instead, he developed particular skills—lathe turning and clog making—which he could use to supplement the meager income he earned from hiring himself out to local farmers. Making clogs and turning a lathe, in this case to make the parts of spinning wheels, were both skilled labor. Making clogs was a common sideline (*bierhverv*) in wooded areas (see chapter on "Bitte" Jens), but turning a lathe was relatively rare. The craft required knowledge, experience, a steady hand and specialized tools. Indeed, the probate documents filed after Jens Peter's death provided a detailed inventory of the things he owned, and his woodworking tools were the only possessions that the probate officers described in any detail. Although there were some forests near Ilbjerge huse, the hamlet where Jens Peter lived in Vendsyssel, so that he had access to a large supply of raw materials, the relative isolation of the area must have

presented a very limited market for his services.[1] In fact, Vendsyssel was a historically poor area—its sparse population, poor soil, and harsh climate all contributed to the difficult living conditions prevalent there.

The short biography Tang Kristensen wrote about Jens Peter highlighted his poverty and the harshness of the local environment. In that biography, Jens Peter himself highlighted his close connection to his past, particularly his parents, and his interest in local history. It also reflects, albeit indirectly, his apparent loneliness, a loneliness which might help explain his eagerness as an informant:

> Jens Peter Pedersen er født den 1. maj 1836 på Borup mark i Tårs. Hans fader var født i Tranum, Han herred, og han har fortalt ham en hel del af det han kan. Men både fader, moder og moders moder fortalte meget. Den sidste var fra Tårs og var for resten en søster til boghandler Chr. Steen i Kjøbenhavn, der rømte fra hjemmet, sagtens for at blive fri for tjenesten (?), kom så til Kjøbenhavn og kom i bogbinderlære. Jens Peter har lært drejerhåndværket i Hjørring og har nu boet i Ilbjærge i et lille hus i 26 år. Han har altid været ugift, og der ser yderst tarveligt ud hos ham. Da vi sidst skiltes, havde han helt ondt ved at sige farvel til mig. Jeg kunde tydeligt se, han gjærne vilde, jeg skulde have blevet hos ham noget længere, da det interesserede ham så overordentlig at få disse ting skrevet op. En aften kom han i øsende regn op til mig i Lørslev skole og sad hele aftenen i de våde klæder og fortalte. Han var vant til hårdhed, og en smule regn

> gjorde ham ikke noget, sagde han (JAT vol. 6, 303).
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> [Jens Peter Pedersen was born May 1, 1836 in Borup Mark in Tårs. His father was born in Tranum, Han County, and he had told Jens Peter quite a bit of the things he (Jens Peter) could tell. But both his father, mother and his mother's mother told many stories. The latter was from Tårs and was, in fact, one of bookseller Chr. Steen from Copenhagen's sisters. Chr. Steen had run away from home to get out of working at other farms, went to Copenhagen and became an apprentice bookbinder. Jens Peter learned how to turn a lathe in Hjørring and he has lived in a little house in Ilbjerge for the last twenty-six years. He has always been single, and his place is quite shabby. The last time we parted he had had a very hard time saying goodbye to me. I could clearly see that he wanted me to stay longer, as he was very interested in getting these things recorded. One evening he came in the pouring rain up to see me at Lørslev School, and he sat the entire evening in wet clothes and told. He was used to harsh conditions and a little rain didn't bother him he said.]

Tang Kristensen's presentation of Jens Peter is self-serving, emphasizing as it did his informant's quiet longing for Tang Kristensen's attention and interest. In a similarly self-serving way, Jens Peter himself did not give Tang Kristensen with accurate information about his background.

This type of creative life history, seen in so many of Tang Kristensen's informants, is unsurprising. It was part and parcel of the informants' storytelling, and a component of an elaborate presentation of self, in which they passed themselves off to this well-known visitor as a bit more accomplished, knowledgeable, experienced or worldly than they actually were.

Family Background

Jens Peter's parents were poor. His father, Peder Christian Pedersen, from Tårs parish, was a landless cotter (*indsidder*), and his wife, Johanne Nielsdatter, came from a similarly modest background. Johanne, who was eight years older than Peder Christian, had met him while he was working as a hired hand in Vennebjerg. Johanne, at the time, was also listed as an *indsidder*, renting lodgings in the area while she too worked as hired help at a local farm. It is unclear exactly how the two met. It is possible they met through work but it is more likely that they met at one of the many festive gatherings (*lejestuer*) that were the main sources of entertainment for young men and women at the time. The age difference between the two was a little unusual, as women tended to marry earlier than men, with an average age of first marriage of thirty-one for men, and twenty-eight for women (Johansen 1979, 60). Johanne may have been unlucky in love or she might have been married previously.

Jens Kristian, Jens Peter's older brother, was an early arrival for his father, who was only twenty-two when his first son was born in 1827. Jens Peter's sister, Inger Katrine, was born five years later in 1832. In a pattern typical for young day laborers, the parents were married in 1833. Jens Peter came along several years later in 1836. He was baptized at

home on May second, 1836, one day old, and baptized a second time several months later in the local church.[2] Baptism at home shortly after birth was a common practice as it allowed for the immediate registration of the child in the church books and, more importantly, protected the child from any spiritual or supernatural threat.

It is unclear what happened to Jens Peter's older brother Jens Kristian, as he no longer appears in census records after 1834. This suggests that he may have died, because he would have been but thirteen years old in 1840, the low end of the age scale for moving away from home. He had certainly died by the time Jens Peter died in 1900, as his sister Inger Katrine was listed as his only surviving relative. Jens Peter never left home for any great lengths of time and he continued to live with his father until his father's death on April fourth, 1876. His mother had died sometime in the 1860s and the living arrangement may have been one based in part on economic expediency and in part on family closeness. After his father's death, Jens Peter lived alone although he took in lodgers to supplement his otherwise meager income.[3] Fortunately, he had inherited the small house in Ilbjerge Huse from his father.

In the 1845 census, the year that Jens Peter was vaccinated against small pox, his father Peder Christian was no longer listed as a carpenter, but rather with the catchall designation of day laborer, an annotation that probably reflects greater laxity in the census collection than any real change in status. By that time, the family had moved in with Inger Christensdal, in an *aftægt* arrangement, acquiring her house in return for providing her food and lodgings in her old age. By 1850, Peder Christian had moved again to another of the Ilbjerge huse and through another *aftægt* agreement, this time with Inger Jensen, managed to acquire a (very) smallholding: the house had just enough land to support his family, but only barely. Even though the tax valuation for the

Ilbjerge huse was 2-2-0-0.5, it was divided over eleven houses, producing a range of valuations from from 0-0-0-0 at the low end (a house with no land), to 0-4-2-1.25 at the high end.

In 1851, Peder Christian's fifteen year-old son Jens Peter was confirmed, and the minister noted "udmærket godt" [excellent] for knowledge, a very high grade, and "meget godt" [very good] for behavior. By 1855, the situation at home had changed: the *aftægtskone* had died, and only Jens Peter and his parents lived in the house. In 1860, Jens Peter was still living at home, although soon thereafter, at the age of twenty-four, he moved to Ulstrup in Sct. Olai parish, to work as a hired hand. Ulstrup was a small manor farm with a valuation of 5.6 barrels of *hartkorn*, just west of the larger Spangerhede (15.75 barrels of *hartkorn*), and several kilometers north west of Ilbjerge Huse. By the time Jens Peter moved back home, his mother had died.

Jens Peter's story gets a bit murky after he moves away from home. He apparently worked at the manor farm for four years, presumably both as a hired hand and a woodworker. His skill with wood can probably be traced to his father's profession as a carpenter. An early interest and experience with woodworking made it easier for him to get more formal training in lathe turning, a skill he probably learned in Ulstrup, since there are no other documented periods away from home. Ulstrup was close enough to Hjørring that he could say that he had learned his craft there, as he did in his short interview with Tang Kristensen. In any event, Jens Peter had clearly acquired his expertise between 1860 and 1870, since that later census listed him as a turner (*dreier*).

In 1864, according to the departures list (*afgangsliste*) for Sct. Olai parish, he moved from Ulstrup to Vidstrup, a village just to the north and west of Hjørring, again presumably to work. Hired hands could "move" twice a year—in May and

November—and it was also at this time that most weddings took place. In that regard, Jens Peter was no different than many of his cohort, and he married in November 1864. The church records for Ugilt parish recorded that Jens Peter, a hired hand in Ulstrup, Sct. Olai parish, married Mariane Christiansen, who worked for her father in Lørslev, after having visited the church together to confer with the minister on the sixteenth and thirtieth of October.

Mariane was born in 1844, the oldest of four girls. Mariane's parents, Christian Mikkelsen and Maren Sørensdatter, enjoyed a much higher economic and social status than Jens Peder's family. Mariane's father, Christian, was listed in census records as a *gårdmand*, an annotation that indicated that his holdings included some land. The number of hired hands at the farm confirms this, and suggests that the farm was a relatively large undertaking, probably with an assessment of several barrels of *hartkorn*. Given their age difference, along with the economic gap, it is unlikely that the two had known each other in childhood, even though they both grew up in Ugilt parish. Not even church would have brought the two together, as she was confirmed in the neighboring Tårs parish.[4] They probably met in much the same way that Jens Peter's parents had met—a local celebration or a *lejestue*. Oddly, soon after their marriage, Mariane disappeared from all public records, not appearing in the 1870 census, even though there was no notation of her death in the church books during the intervening years. In later census records, Jens Peter appeared as unmarried (*ugift*)."[5] Jens Peter did not help clarify matters either since, in his discussions with Tang Kristensen, he indicated that he had never been married. Later biographies confound matters even more. So, for example, in the second edition of *Gamle Kildevæld*, the editors have omitted the annotation that Jens Peter had not been married, providing instead the scant

information that exists about Mariane. The most likely explanation for Mariane's disappearance, if she did not die, was parental involvement. Since Mariane's parents were farm owners, they would presumably have gone to great lengths to annul or otherwise dissolve her marriage to Jens Peter, as a means to protect their wealth, particularly if a better prospect had presented himself.

The case of the disappearing wife was not the only unsolved mystery in Jens Peter's life. When he died on May twentieth, 1900, he left behind a surprisingly complex series of obligations and debt, as well as a son, Laurids Peter Pedersen.[6] In the mid 1850s, the local minister noted in his records that more than ten percent of all children born in the parish were born outside of marriage (Munkholt 52), and so the out of wedlock birth of Laurids Peter was not anomalous. After a court resolution from April ninth, 1889 established both Jens Peter's paternity and his obligation to the child, he did what was right and supported the child with annual payments of forty crowns, which were to continue until the boy reached his fourteenth birthday. In contrast to Jens Peter's first wife Mariane, Laurids's mother, Jensine Larsen from Stoksted was very poor. This fact, coupled to Jens Peter's advancing age, may have prevented any thoughts of marriage if that had ever been their intention. According to other parish records, Jensine was unable to support Laurids by herself, as she received poverty assistance.

The court order that stipulated Jens Peter's child support payments also included an interesting clause that read: "Ligesom Bidraget kan forhøjes eller nedsættes af Amtet, saaledes kan Faderens Forpligtelse til at bidrage til Barnets Underhold og Opdragelse, saafremt dertil findes Grund, ustrækkes til Barnets fyldte 18 Aar" [Just as the contribution can be raised or lowered by the county, the father's required contribution to the child's upkeep and upbringing can, in the

case that there are reasons for such, be extended until the child reaches eighteen years of age]. Since the provision made no mention of what should happen in the event of Jens Peter's death, Jensine sent a letter on June twenty-eighth, 1901 to the Vennebjerg district offices requesting that the annual payment continue until 1905. This request was approved and it burdened the already small estate for an additional two hundred crowns. Given the modest size of the estate, the detailed paper trail left in the wake of its settlement seems unusual at first. The competing interests of several parties who had an interest in the estate might help explain this level of detail. In addition to Jensine, both the local parish, who had paid Jens Peter old age assistance, and Jens Peter's sister, Inger Katrine, who had moved to the United States, were eager to wring what little they could out of the estate. In a letter to Inger Katrine requesting a power of attorney for her brother-in-law to represent her interests in probate, a local attorney, Valdemar Bosk indicated that the estate was likely to be very small. Amusingly, in that same letter, he asked her to use six-cent stamps on her return letter, as these stamps were rare in Denmark and Valdemar apparently had a philatelic streak in him.[7] Valdemar was, of course, correct in assuming that the estate was miniscule and barely worth pursuing at all. Even the six-cent stamp turned out to be a poor investment.

Jens Peter's possessions were valued at a scant one hundred sixty-four crowns and eighty øre two days after his death, and sold at auction for two hundred twenty-eight crowns, thirty-eight øre. The most valuable possessions were his wood working tools (forty-two crowns), his workbench and its accessories (twenty-six crowns), and his lathe (twenty crowns). He also owned a roll top desk (five crowns) and a pot bellied stove (three crowns). After various fees related to the auction of his possessions, the total income from the sale

was one hundred eighty-three crowns and thirty-five øre. The entire estate including other outstanding obligations was finally valued at two hundred seven crowns and twenty-one øre. This included two crowns and thirty øre in loose change found in his effects, and fifteen crowns paid back to the estate from a voided contract for one hundred seventy-five crowns to purchase a small house in Lørslev (Matr. number 21d). This last agreement between Jens Peter and the house seller, Christian Jakobsen, was convoluted: Jens Peter refused to move into the house until he had been given a purchase agreement, and Christian Jakobsen refused to give him the papers until he moved in. After Jens Peter's death, Christian not only kept the original deposit of forty-five crowns but also kept the house! The terminated agreement also tells a rather sad tale: After years of toil and frugal living, Jens Peter had enough money to buy a real house, rather than the huts that went by the name of "houses" at Ilbjerge huse. With this new house, he would have pulled himself that much further out of the pit of rural poverty. But the manipulative nature of the seller and his own untimely death conspired against him, making even this most modest of all steps toward economic security a step too far.

By the time probate ended in March 1902, numerous fees had been deducted from the estate: thirty crowns for his burial (including fifteen crowns for a casket and burial clothes, eleven crowns for clothing the body, pall bearers and a small reception for those who attended the funeral and four crowns for grave digging); three crowns to Carl Holmen for loss of service of a spinning wheel that Jens Peder was repairing for him at the time of his death; and forty-six crowns fourteen øre in additional probate costs. Laurid's mother, Jensine, had been paid eighty crowns in child support from the estate and still had an outstanding claim of one hundred and twenty crowns against it. The value of the estate was now only forty-

eight crowns and seven øre. The end result of settling Jens Peter's estate was that his sister Inger Katrine (who was out several six cent stamps) and the parish inherited nothing, and Jensine came up seventy-two crowns short.

Jens Peter's death triggered a search for his one living heir, his sister Inger Katrine.[8] The results of this search are interesting, as her life reflects many of the problems confronting young men and women in the poor rural areas of Vendsyssel. Among Jens Peter's effects, the parish bailiff discovered two nearly illegible letters from Inger Katrine sent from the United States. The conventional wisdom in the village was that she had emigrated, and the discovery of the letters confirmed this. She had married the brother of a local butcher in the late 1860s, and moved in the 1870s first to New Jersey and later to Michigan. The letters were clearly treasured by Jens Peter and his father. Even though they had been read and reread, they were always carefully refolded along the creases, and placed back in their envelopes.

The letters reveal several interesting things. First, they make it quite clear not only that Inger Katrine could write, but also that her brother and her father could read. The handwriting also offers a glimpse of how reading and writing were used by the rural poor: her script is nearly incomprehensible and many words are spelled phonetically.[9] In the second letter, there is some indication that she had moved to the United States to pursue her new found Mormon faith. The passage is ultimately unclear, and may simply be musings on her own observations of the rising number of Danish Mormons in the United States. The Mormons had made significant inroads in Vendsyssel in the decades immediately after the passage of the Danish constitution. But even if Inger Katrine was not a Mormon, she was keenly aware of the connection between the Mormon Church, Vendsyssel and emigration to the United States. In

any case, the letters offer a small window into Jens Peter's personal life and the impact of an increasing globalization on that small corner of Vendsyssel.

The Local Environment

Ugilt parish is flat, although a series of hills runs along the eastern border of the parish, with Munkholt at ninety-one meters the tallest of these. The landscape is deeply glaciated, and a large moraine runs just east of the parish church. The western part of the parish is much flatter, and is the result of the seabed rising. In the midst of this flat area is a small moraine, Ilbjerge, and it is alongside this moraine that the small collection of houses known as Ilbjerge huse sat. In the southern and southeastern part of the parish, there were some small forests that covered hilly terrain. These forests were a boon to the local economy. Otherwise, the soil was inconsistent if uniformly bad, in some places sandy and in other places clay.

The first mention of Ugilt dates from 1436, with reference to a settlement called Vggilt. In 1474, it was referred to as Wgell. Other towns in the parish also date back to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries: Lørslev is first mentioned in 1408 as Lødhersløf; Linderum is first mentioned in 1395, with the appellation Lyndrom; and the town of Glimsholt is first mentioned in 1340 as Grumsholt, and later Glymsholth (1532). These towns all lie along an east-west axis, with Lørslev in the west and Glimsholt in the east. Many of the small collections of houses and farms in the parish are also named: Bollermark, Hejselt, Rughaven, Burskov, Drastrup, Fårbjerg huse, Åsholm, Skærshede, Lørslev Østerhede, Ilbjerge huse, Tranehuse, Spangerhede Mark, Lørslev Vesterhede, Egebjergstavn, Tangefælled,

Krathuse, Sigtenborg, Søndermark and Arndal, and reflect the diffuse settlement of smallholdings throughout the parish (Trap 1958, vol. 6, 184). Along with the neighboring parish of Tårs, Ugilt parish was long considered one of the poorest in the entire country (Munkholt 50).

Linderumgård was the largest manor farm in the area, dating back to the early fifteenth century. The other large manor farm was Egebjerg, although there were a number of large farms that did not reach the level of manor farm or *proprietær* farm, including Spangerhede, Mølskovgård, Mølgård, Søndenåen, Knudsholm, Tange, Ajstrup, Dalsager, Rogntved, Melbæk, Vormstrup, Højbjerg, Nålmose, Munkholt, Stadshede (the forest ranger's farm), Gildeladen, Smørkrogen, Skajbjerg, Kringelborg, Snapholt, Horsevad, Bukholt, Stensodde, Romholt, Koldborg, Hornbjerg and Oven Ugilt (Trap 1958, vol. 6.1, 184-5).

Linderumgård belonged in the early fourteenth century to Stig Pedersen, the leader of the Vendelbo jurisdiction. In 1665, the manor farm came under the control of Erik Rosenkrantz of Rosenholm (see the chapter on Kirsten Marie Pedersdatter). The manor changed hands numerous times up through the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, primarily because of the insolvency of some of its owners. By 1800, the farm was valued at 45.5 barrels of *hartkorn*, a considerable valuation. After repeated sales, bankruptcies, litigation over ownership, and the inevitable sale of various parts of the property, the farm was sold in 1881 to Bartholomæus Hasselbalch for 127,000 crowns, at which point the farm was valued at eighteen barrels of *hartkorn*, a drop of nearly two thirds in its original valuation. While this decrease meant a concomitant drop in the power of the manor farm, it meant a far higher rate of land ownership for everyone else in the parish (Trap 1958, vol. 6.1, 186-7).

Egebjerg was already a manor farm in the Middle Ages, built according to local legend in 1300 by Niels Stigsen. His great grandson, Niels Pedersen, killed the priest in Ugilt some time in the mid fifteenth century. By 1688, the farm had a *hartkorn* value of nearly fifteen barrels, with approximately 136.5 acres of land under plow (Trap 1958, vol. 6.1, 185). The farm changed hands numerous times during the eighteenth century, and by the early nineteenth century, when it was sold once again, this time to Anders Nielsen Ræbild, it was valued at twenty-three barrels *hartkorn*. By 1905, when it was sold yet again, its valuation had declined to a little less than eighteen barrels (Trap 1958, vol. 6.1, 186). The change in valuation over the years was a function of small parts of the estate being sold off rather than any change in the quality of the fields. The shifting valuation accordingly reflected the gradually increasing level of land ownership among the lower classes. Land ownership in these areas was to a large extent a "limited good"—only heath reclamation could increase the amount of land available and then only incrementally (Foster 1965).

Mølgård, one of the other large manor farms in the area, was parceled out in 1818 by a new owner, who kept the main parcel for himself (valued at nine barrels). Another large farm, Mølskovgård, was an outlier of Linderumgård. It too changed hands numerous times during the early nineteenth century, and by 1898, it had a valuation of a little more than ten barrels. Spangerhede had an equally convoluted history and, by the mid nineteenth century, had been acquired by a Copenhagen merchant, T. G. Pedersen, who handed control of the farm over to his son. The other large farms in the area were on the smaller side and had significantly less interesting histories (Trap 1958, vol. 6.1, 187-8).

The parish had several areas of historical or archaeological interest. At one point there was a "holy spring"

in the forest, but by the early twentieth century, it had dried up (Trap 1958, vol. 6.1, 188-9). In addition to the old spring, twelve ancient mounds have been preserved in the parish, eleven of which are on the Linderumgård estate. There are also three Iron Age burial sites at Egebjerg. At Linderumgård, other archaeological finds include a burial site where swords and clay pots from the Celtic Iron Age were found. Also, a sword from the early Bronze Age was found in Uggerby River, near Rogntved plantation on the western border of the parish (Trap 1958, vol. 6.1, 189).

Although there were numerous large farms in the overall region, transportation to and from the region was difficult. This was particularly true along the western side of Vendsyssel. Frederikshavn, on the eastern coast, had, since the seventeenth century, been an important harbor, and roads connecting Frederikshavn to the south were established early on. A major road connecting Frederikshavn to the market town of Hjørring was an important artery through northern Jutland. The majority of transportation, however, was focused on the sea and small boats plied the coast putting in at the various fishing villages that dotted the shoreline. This maritime focus changed in 1871 with the establishment of the Nørre Sundby (Aalborg)—Frederikshavn railway. The rail corridor, however, continued to favor the eastern part of the region.[10] In the late nineteenth century, the transportation infrastructure in central and western Vendsyssel was poor and this reverberated throughout the economy of the isolated region. Even changes in local power after 1849 did little to improve the economic infrastructure of the area.

The politics of Hjørring county were conservative up through the late nineteenth century. In the Hjørring electoral district, where Ilbjerge Huse was located, the representatives to parliament were almost all from the conservative party, *Højre*. It was not until the last decades of the century that

several of these representatives changed their party affiliation to the more farmer-oriented *Venstre*. By that time, however, *Venstre* was no longer the liberal party it had once been. Neither the Social Democrats nor the smallholders' party, *Radikale Venstre*, made any significant in-roads into the political landscape of the district despite the crushing poverty that reigned there. It might well have been that the electorate was too poor to care about national politics, dedicating their time and energy to finding food, earning money, and staying warm.

As a reflection of the politics of the area, there were only two newspapers at mid-century, and both of these were organs for conservative points of view. *Hjørring Amtstidende* (Hjørring County Times), founded in 1843, and *Frederikshavns Avis* (Frederikshavn Newspaper), founded in 1853, had a consolidated hold on the print media up through the end of the nineteenth century. The one break in this otherwise close control over public opinion was the more liberal *Vendsyssel Tidende* (Vednsyssel Times), which was founded in 1872 by a group of *Venstre* politicians. Much later, in the early twentieth century, a more radical newspaper, the *Vendsyssel Venstreblad* (Vendsyssel Left Paper), was published, but only from 1912-1958 (Trap 1958, vol. 6.1, 43).

Although Hjørring county was hardly a hotbed of political activism through the latter part of the nineteenth century, it was a center of considerable activity on the religious front. Earlier in the century, rationalist ministers had taken control of the folk church, as they had through much of the country. These ministers focused on bettering the material lives of their parishioners. Through their efforts, progress was made in the care of farm animals and the productivity of farms up through the first half of the century. From 1536 until 1892, Ugilt and Tårs constituted a single pastorate, with Ugilt as the main parish. Accordingly, a

chaplain in Tårs assisted the minister for Ugilt until the official split of the two parishes into independent administrative units. Many of the ministers in the pastorate stayed at their positions for an unusually long period: from the Reformation until 1892, there were only seventeen ministers in the pastorate, with an average length of service of twenty-one years (Nørrelykke 1974).

One of the main areas of church influence was the development and control of the local schools. The schools in Ugilt and Tårs developed together, largely because the two parishes were under a single pastorate. In 1859, one hundred ten children were enrolled in the school, and in 1871 the school was expanded. By 1891, additional schools were built in Nørre and Søndre Tårs. There is little of note in the school history of the parishes, but given the history of political strife in the pastorate, one can surmise that the schools were subject to the same small town politics.

The history of the pastorate in the early nineteenth century, and the later developments in the ecclesiastic direction of the pastorate, was closely tied to Hans Hansen Boye, a young man of considerable means, who purchased Hvidstedgård and the churches in the pastorate in 1778. He married Helene Charlotte Justdatter Schandorff, the daughter of his predecessor, but died soon after taking over the estate. His widow married Erik Jessen Trap, an intriguing character who actively fought the widespread discrimination against "*rakkere*," the untouchables of Danish rural society. Trap also did a great deal to advance the congregation's economic well being (Gaardboe 1968; Hansen 1952). After Trap's death, Helen Charlotte chose her son, Hans Boye, to succeed Trap as minister. Boye eventually stepped down in 1826. By then, the progressive foundations for the pastorate had been established.

Andreas Listø Høeg, Boye's successor, was an advocate for the local poor, an important, progressive position to take given the poverty of the area and the nascent national debate concerning poverty assistance. During his seventeen-year tenure as the lead parish administrator, he oversaw the implementation of clearer and more consistent rules governing care for the indigent. He eventually stepped down in 1843, at which point Peter Neergaard replaced him. Although isolated, these parishes were hardly cut off from the political and cultural currents of the day, as Neergaard's activism attests. Neergaard was as close to a secular minister as one could find: he was a rationalist, deeply engaged politically, and particularly interested in agricultural advances. In fact, he was accused several times of missing important church functions (weddings and funerals) because he was too busy with his farm work. He worked diligently to eliminate "pligtarbejde" (*hoveri*) or villeinage for the smallholders in Hjørring county. He was also a member of the bank board and, from 1856 to 1862, a member of the county board. Yet despite his work on behalf of the smallholders, he considered himself a member of the *Højre* party, standing for election to the constitutional assembly for that party in 1848. Although he was defeated, he later won election to parliament for the Frederikshavn electoral district as a member of the *Højre* party.[11]

Neergaard was replaced by H. A. Krøyer, who remained in the pastorate for ten years without much lasting religious or political influence. His successors through the remainder of the century, however, were involved in a fairly dramatic series of developments, which brought to the fore the tensions between the Inner Mission and the Grundtvigians. Ulrik Peder Christian Nissen, who had spent nearly twenty years in Greenland as a missionary minister, came to the pastorate in 1873. With his white hair and chiseled features,

he looked like an old seaman, and became the center of a Grundtvig inspired community (Munkholt 60). Nissen and pastor Heiberg from Vrejlev attempted to broaden this sense of community and, on a quarterly basis, held joint services, a practice that lasted for four years. These joint services helped bring the communities from all three local parishes—Ugilt, Tårs and Vrejlev—closer together. The practice, however, stopped over a political disagreement between the two ministers. The local Grundtvigians soon abandoned Nissen in favor of Heiberg, and church attendance plummeted. In 1883, Nissen was replaced by J.V. Tørslev, who was far more involved in the Inner Mission movement, changing Ugilt into a center for Inner Mission activity. Tørslev was also the last minister for the joint Ugilt-Tårs pastorate.

Although the Inner Mission dominated the parishes in the eastern and northern parts of the county, they were also active in Ugilt parish. The Inner Mission was powerful enough to establish a folk high school in Horne in 1891, approximately seventeen kilometers to the north of Ilbjerge Huse. Pastor Tørslev was instrumental in starting the "Ugilt meetings," a series of Inner Mission meetings held in the Ugilt parsonage from 1887 to 1892. This turn toward the Inner Mission also found expression in the building of the Tårs Mission House in 1896. By the time Tørslev left the pastorate in 1892, church attendance was once again high but, more importantly, the Inner Mission had become a considerable cultural and political force in mid Vendsyssel.

Tørslev's successor in Ugilt was another Inner Mission minister, Jens Krogsbæk. Krogsbæk continued Tørslev's work, and was deeply involved in the various revivals that were common throughout Vendsyssel in the 1890s. While the Inner Mission dominated in Ugilt, the Grundtvigians dominated in Tårs, as they did in much of the south and west of the county. In the local area, several articulate ministers

had been in charge of the pastorate in the mid nineteenth century and once again, in the 1880s, they found in P. C. August Kristensen (1854-1915) an excellent ambassador. When Tørslev, the Inner Mission minister, took over the pastorate in 1883, the pastorate's chaplaincy was filled by August Kristensen. Although he had been born and raised on Bornholm, he had made his way, through Vallekilde Højskole, to Jutland. He was, by all accounts, an outgoing and friendly man who, along with his wife Laura, was deeply engaged in the social life of his congregants. One of the lasting legacies of his work was a relative rapprochement between the Grundtvigians, who found in him an articulate defender, and the Inner Mission folk, who had the bully pulpit of minister Tørslev on their side. In 1892, the pastorate was split, Tørslev left for Sengeløse parish, and August became the minister of Tårs parish.

August's politics were supportive of *Venstre*, and it was with his support that one of the first secular meetinghouses in Vendsyssel was built. Because political meetings could not be held in churches or schools, there was an acute need for public gathering places. August's social and political engagement, however, also led to what some dubbed "the war in Tårs" (*krigen i Tårs*). At the time, various progressive rural parties were in the making, among them the "Dansk Landarbejder Forbund" (The Danish Rural Workers' League). Some of the local farmers felt that this party was too left leaning—almost socialist—in its ideology. They were afraid that the organization was really a socialist cotter's group that wanted to overthrow the existing economic order, and many of them felt that August's politics had veered even further to the left than *Venstre*. They also believed he was the leader of this new movement. The confrontation between August and the farm owners led to a series of meetings in the meetinghouse in Tårs. Ultimately the meetings had a far

different outcome than the farm owners expected: August convinced them to establish a medical insurance plan (*sygekasse*) for the local smallholders, a radical, almost socialist departure from the far more conservative norm. Successful in the short run, the long-term fall-out of the confrontation proved insurmountable for August and, in 1896, he moved to Vrejlev parish, taking many of the Grundtvigian followers with him.

Hjørring county was not only a focal point of the two main warring, evangelical factions in the Danish Lutheran church, the Grundtvigians and the Inner Mission. Already in the 1850s, in the immediate aftermath of the constitutional reform guaranteeing the freedom of religious choice, numerous international missionary movements began attracting followers there. The Mormon Church was successful in finding converts, and many of these converts emigrated to the United States. The Mormons' missionizing in Hjørring was stopped short by one woman, Kirsten Marie Larsdatter, nicknamed Skov Kirsten, the daughter of a local farm owner (Munkholt 54-9). As a child, she had suffered a permanent injury to her arm in a sledding accident and, consequently, she had few prospects for employment or marriage. At first, she resigned herself to a life as a weaver, but soon discovered another calling. Although she had toyed with being baptized as a Mormon in the early 1850s, she became disillusioned with the Mormons and soon decided to focus instead on the teachings of Grundtvig. She eventually developed a reputation as a Grundtvigian proselytizer, and became close friends with Grundtvig's wife Asta. Despite some run-ins with the bishop of Aalborg, and criticism from local ministers who felt that a woman should not be engaged in the type of lay preaching that Skov Kirsten did, the church eventually realized that she was a helpful and articulate spokesperson for the needs of local congregants, and an

excellent defense against the proselytizing of the Mormons. Because of her proselytizing, the Grundtvigian's were able to get a stronger foothold in the area, and Mormon missionary activity decreased noticeably over the course of the 1860s.

Other missionary groups included the Baptists and, in the 1870s and 1880s, the Adventists, who also began attracting significant groups of converts. The Adventists were most successful in the Hvetbo and Børglum districts, both in the sparsely populated and isolated southern and western parts of the county. The Methodists managed to attract enough followers in the larger towns to be able to build churches in both Hjørring and Frederikshavn. All these groups contributed to the lively religious landscape that was a hallmark of late nineteenth century Vendsyssel, and an important part of the cultural environment in which Jens Peter lived, worked and told his stories.

Day Laborers and Small Craftsmen

The life of a day laborer was difficult. Even with the land reforms and repeated state sponsored incentives to increase home ownership during the latter part of the nineteenth century, the majority of rural Danes remained landless.[12] For them, joining the ranks of the poor land owning *husmand* class was often an unattainable dream. Even though the *husmænd* were poor, they at least owned their houses and their land. Pure day laborers (*daglejere*), in contrast, lived in rented houses and rooms; lived with their parents or relatives; or had their lodgings at the farm where they served. In the latter case, the workers were bound by contracts renewed semi-annually or annually and would have been considered hired hands (*tjenestekarl, tjenestedreng, tjenestepige*, etc.), rather than day laborers. *Indsiddere* (*Inderste*) sat somewhere between the

husmænd and the itinerant *daglejere*: they usually owned their house or part of a house, but had no land to go with it.

The economic differences between these groups were at times minimal. It would be misleading to put the categories along a rigid scale. Even though the economic and social gap between the wealthiest *husmand* and the poorest day laborer could be enormous, most people found themselves somewhere along that continuum. Some of the day laborers who rented houses were far better off than some *husmænd* who owned both house and land. Since day laborers were usually paid in seed, *husmænd* occasionally had to borrow seed from them, an inversion of the normal flow of goods.

The categories were loosely applied by census officials as well, and were often influenced by local usage. Instead of describing a person's profession, the labels as used in the census tended to describe both employment and land ownership. Accordingly, a person might have appeared in the census records as "husmand og daglejer" or "indsidder og daglejer." These labels described stages in a person's life as well: a recently confirmed young man (*konfirmand*) might hire himself out as a hired hand (*tjenestekarl*). Later, he might acquire enough capital to buy a small house (*indsidder* or *husmand*) yet, to make ends meet, might continue to hire himself out as a day laborer (*daglejer*). In fact, almost all *husmænd* and *indsiddere* had to hire themselves out as day laborers at one time or another, either out of sheer fiscal necessity or because day labor was included in the original purchase contract for their house. Given the tiny size of many smallholdings, the income from day labor could far exceed the income that a *husmand* could eke out from his meager plot. In the worst cases, the income earned from day labor was used to pay the expenses related to owning the smallholding, rather than supplementing that income.

Work as a day laborer was uneven, and followed the rhythms of the agricultural cycle. Although the advent of machines for certain tasks such as harvesting (mowing, gathering, binding), threshing, and chaff cutting reduced the demand for day labor by the beginning of the twentieth century, there were other equally important tasks such as thatching, fertilizing, and building drainage that still required huge amounts of manual labor. Even the advent of the steam-powered threshers in the waning years of the nineteenth century did not obliterate the need for day laborers during the winter months. Prior to the introduction of these machines, threshing offered day laborers a steady, albeit mind-numbing and physically demanding, source of income throughout the winter months. Threshing continued at many farms well into the planting season of the early spring. Steam threshers, by contrast, could take care of a farm's threshing in a matter of days. But the thresher required a large number of workers to operate it, offering day laborers an opportunity for concentrated work. These machines were also not adopted by all farms, as the smallest farms did not have harvests large enough to justify renting one of these behemoths.

Once the threshing was completed, farmers shifted the work of day laborers to other tasks. The goal of farmers was to increase output and efficiency, and extra workers were always needed. The low price of labor up through the end of the nineteenth century and the "lumpiness" of this work (it was not spread evenly throughout the year) helped sustain the market for day laborers. Also, because of this low price of labor, many farms were slow to mechanize. The initial capital investment to purchase machines was a barrier to entry for many small farmers and, coupled to a pervasive suspicion of these new technologies, most farms made the transition to mechanized farming slowly. It was not until the inter-war

period in the early twentieth century that the mechanization of Danish farms was completed (Steensberg 1964, vol. 2, 420).

The largest need for day laborers was during harvest time. A photograph from 1888, for example, taken at the manor farm Avnsøgaard in Holbæk amt, shows at least fifty people gathered for the harvest, many of these local *husmænd* and *indsiddere* hired as day laborers for the occasion (Steensberg 1964, vol. 2, 425). Harvesting involved both men and women. The men would mow the fields with long scythes, and the women would follow behind, gathering the sheaves (*neg*), and binding them. These sheaves would be driven back to the farm, where the threshing would begin. While some of the harvest would be threshed immediately, the majority would be stored and threshed during the following months, the steam thresher not withstanding. Usually, barley was the first grain to be harvested, in mid August, and the other grains followed. The harvest usually lasted through September. Poor weather could interrupt the harvest, and smallholders pressed into service at larger farms to assist in the harvest often had their hands full trying to harvest their own fields as well.

Day laborers were also in high demand during the planting season. Already in the early spring, farmers would need assistance in driving fertilizer—phosphor and animal manure—out onto the fields. If a farmer had decided to use marl, day laborers were hired to help dig the marl pits, to drive the marl to the fields, and to work it into the soil. When the planting started, the fields were plowed, the seed was spread by hand, and then the fields were rolled. Once fodder beets and turnips had become important crops as part of the shift in agricultural production from grains to animal products, day labor was needed for the constant weeding these crops required. On days when day laborers did not have any paid work, or at night after they had returned home, they usually worked at various secondary jobs if they had the

necessary skill, such as carding and spinning wool, making clogs, weaving, and knitting. The products of this piecework either supplied their own family with necessary goods, or were sold to others on surrounding farms. Some of these goods such as homespun or clogs could make their way to the local market towns.

Pay for day labor was uniformly low. Frequently it was paid in seed and cloth, rather than money. Pay for threshing, for example, was based on the amount threshed—threshing three barrels of rye, for example, would result in the payment of one measure of the same grain (Graves 1921). Even though many day laborers did not have fields on which to sow this grain, it could be exchanged as barter in the low-level economy that existed at the time. While the general economy was fully monetized, this secondary rural economy was only partially monetized. Pay for other types of work was often in money, and the size of these payments was dependent on the time of year: from Michaelmas (*Mikkelsdag*, September 29) until midsummer (*Skt. Hans*, June 24), standard day labor wages were fifty øre, and from midsummer until Michaelmas, twenty-five øre (Graves 1921, 121). The winter pay differential was often made up by the extra in-kind payments received for threshing. The wages also included meals, a small but important consolation for the people surviving on otherwise meager wages.

Jens Peter was more fortunate than many day laborers in that he had mastered the highly technical craft of turning the various pieces of spinning wheels that, given their constant use during the winter months (usually from Mikkelsdag until Gregorius, March 12), often required repair or replacement. The craft afforded him a degree of independence as he was not entirely at the mercy of the fluctuating day labor market, and this placed him somewhat higher than most other day laborers on the economic ladder. Even though rural

craftsmen (*landhåndværkere*) like Jens Peter had an economic advantage, competition could be intense and the market was strictly regulated, particularly outside of market towns. Laws dating back to Christian V's Danish Law (*Danske Lov*) and to earlier privileges granted to market towns during the reign of Christian II, put strict limits on the type of crafts that could be practiced outside of market towns. Up through the mid nineteenth century, craftsmen, with very few exceptions, were required to live and work in those towns. Standing exceptions to this law were granted for smiths, weavers, butchers, rye bread bakers, wheel makers and brewers. With the permission of the county commissioner (*amtmand*), several other crafts were allowed to work outside of the market towns as well: carpenters, coopers, tile makers, potters, tanners, saddle makers, glaziers, painters, watchmakers, cobblers, tailors, French bread bakers and spinning wheel part turners (Dagligliv II, 529). Craftsmen who received this permission had to stay outside an eleven and a half kilometer radius of market towns, and not engage in commerce with the inhabitants of the market towns. This latter regulation constrained the market share available to rural craftsmen. Certain other craftsmen were always required to work in the market towns, including all those who worked with shipping (sail makers, compass makers, etc.), all those who worked with metal (goldsmiths, coppersmiths, pipe makers, etc.), all those who worked in the construction crafts (joiners, plasterers, masons, etc.), all those who worked producing foodstuffs (sausage makers, distillers, etc.) and then various miscellaneous craftsmen, including tobacconists, tanners, printers, binders and the like (Steensberg 1964, vol. 2, 529).

The craftsmen who worked in the market towns were organized into guilds (*laug*), which had strict rules governing membership. These membership restrictions allowed the guilds to have strict control over the market and the quality of

goods produced. An 1857 reform of the commerce laws relaxed the restrictions on craftsmen considerably. When the law was finally implemented in 1862, all craftsmen were allowed to live and work outside of market towns, a huge concession to the demands of farmers and rural craftsmen alike who felt that their access to the crafts market was overly regulated. In a return concession to the craftsmen in the market towns who feared the competition of rural craftsmen who had lower overhead and, in many cases, better access to raw materials, a seven and a half kilometer radius was established around market towns, and rural craftsmen were not allowed to work within this radius.[13] The change in regulations governing crafts resulted in two major developments in the economic landscape: First, the rural population got far greater access to a far greater array of craftsmen. Second, the competition in the crafts increased dramatically, since journeymen who had formerly been restricted to the market towns were now able to establish their own shops outside of town. These journeymen could then compete on a slightly more equal footing with their earlier masters, who had otherwise dominated the markets. This change was hugely beneficial to the rural craftsmen, coming as it did at the same time as changes were underfoot on farms related to the reorganization of agricultural production (Steensberg 1964, vol. 2, 555). At least for a little while, rural craftsmen had a great deal of work. This shift in the markets and the relative rise in wealth among rural craftsmen may also help explain why Jens Peter's heirs thought that his estate might be worth fighting over.

Unfortunately for most crafts, including crafts like Jens Peter's, this market reorganization came too late to foster sustainable growth. Increasing industrialization and the availability of manufactured goods such as clothes and shoes, coupled to the increased competition in the crafts and the

attendant drop in prices from the formerly closely controlled and regulated markets, placed many crafts on an accelerating downward spiral toward oblivion (Steensberg 1964, vol. 2, 557). Much like the musicians (*spillemænd*) whose popularity was eclipsed by the advent of the radio and the phonograph, only the craftsmen whose skills could translate into the newly industrializing production environment (smiths becoming bicycle smiths for example) or whose skills translated into a new growth industry (printing for example) were able to survive. Even though the reformed commerce laws were intended to diffuse the concentration of craftsmen in towns and cities, increasing urbanization led many craftsmen to move back to the market towns.

Overview of Jens Peter's Repertoire

Jens Peter's repertoire consisted almost exclusively of legends and descriptions of local topography, beliefs and practices. Of particular interest is his frequent, almost insistent use of place names in these stories, linking the narratives to the local geography. He attributed few of his stories to people he knew, although at times he noted that a story was one that his father could remember. Since the two lived together, it is not surprising that Jens Peter cited his father as a source. In most of his stories, Jens Peter assumed a somewhat detached narrative position (Tangherlini 1994, 285). There are a few statistically significant anomalies that appear in Jens Peter's repertoire given his age, gender and class status. Ministers, for example, appear with greater frequency than would be expected, (31% versus 14.8%), as do female folk healers (cunning folk) (7.8% versus 2.9%). Reading through Jens Peter's repertoire, one gets the sense of a narrator deeply interested in local history, and eager to

explain the complexities of local community life during the past century.[14]

First and Second Meetings—1893

The first time that Tang Kristensen met with Jens Peter, there was little in his performance that suggested that he was soon to become one of Tang Kristensen's most prolific legend informants, since he only told nine stories. Nevertheless, in *Minder og Oplevelser*, Tang Kristensen refered to him as an "uudtømmelig kilde at øse af" [a bottomless well from which to draw] (MO vol. 3, 486), an evaluation that could only have been made in retrospect.[15] Even though Jens Peter told very little to Tang Kristensen during their first meeting, Tang Kristensen returned to Ilbjerge later during that same trip and collected from him a second time. In *Minder og Oplevelser*, he mentioned the second meeting briefly, noting, "At jeg ogsaa denne Gang søgte op til Jens Peter Pedersen i Ilbjærge, kan ikke undre nogen, og det var en meget rig Høst, jeg ogsaa denne Gang fik hos ham" [That I made my way up to Jens Peter Pedersen in Ilbjerge that time as well should not come as a surprise to anyone, and it was a very rich harvest that I got from him that time as well] (MO vol. 3, 500).

Jens Peter's second session was nearly twice as long as the first. Since the two sessions took place only several weeks apart, it is likely that the first visit jogged Jens Peter's memory, and encouraged him to tell more of the stories that he knew. He probably also realized that in Tang Kristensen he had a willing audience for his stories, and that through these interactions his own status as a person knowledgeable about

local history would increase. This increased attention might translate into increased business: perhaps people would think of him if they needed their spinning wheel repaired or a new pair of clogs.

Third and Fourth Meetings

Although Tang Kristensen met with Jens Peter a total of four times, the third meeting was during one of Tang Kristensen's photographic excursions with Peter Olsen, in August of 1895. The fourth meeting occurred several years later, in June of 1898. This trip was again one of Tang Kristensen's longer forays, and took him, over the course of nearly three weeks, from Taps, near Kolding in the south, to the very northern tip of Jutland, Skagen. As with the trip in 1893, this trip was unusually productive. Tang Kristensen met and collected from forty-three informants, whose records spanned a total of one hundred and seventy-four pages in his field diaries. Amazingly, nearly one eighth of those pages can be attributed to Jens Peter.

When Tang Kristensen made it to Ilbjerge Huse where Jens Peter lived, he was not sure that he would be able to meet with his star informant, since Jens Peter was not at home and the weather was bad. Tang Kristensen continued on to Lørslev, and the skies opened up once again. In *Minder og Oplevelser,* he wrote that Jens Peter showed up nonetheless:

> Derfra gik jeg over til Lørslev og tog Vejen om ad Rokkedrejeren Jens Peder Pedersen, men han var ikke hjemme. Jeg fik dog talt med et Kvindfolk der oppe i et af Husene og bad hende sige til ham, at jeg gik ned til Lærer G. P. Andersen og vilde gjærne tale

> med ham. En Tid efter, at jeg var kommen til Lørslev, kom han virkelig, og det var endda øsende Regnvejr, og han var gjennemvaad (MO 4, 163).
>
> [From there, I went over to Lørslev and took the road past spinning wheel turner Jens Peder Pedersen, but he wasn't home. I did talk to a woman up there in one of the houses and asked her to tell him that I was going down to Teacher G. P. Andersen and wanted to talk to him. A little while after I'd gotten to Lørslev, he really showed up, and it was still pouring rain, and he was drenched.]

Despite being soaked, Jens Peter did not miss a beat with his storytelling, and Tang Kristensen later wrote:

> Nu begyndte han at fortælle, og jeg skrev, og saadan blev vi ved til langt ud paa Aftenen. Ja, han var utrættelig. Det var ligefrem forunderligt, som den Mand kunde fortælle. Jeg blev hos Andersen om Natten og tænkte meget paa Jens Peter. Jeg frygtede ligefrem for, at han skulde faa en Sygen paa Halsen, men han klagede sig ikke (MO 4, 163).
>
> [Now he began to tell, and I wrote, and we kept up like that long out into the evening. Yes, he was tireless. It was downright strange how that man could tell. I stayed the night at Andersen's place and thought quite a bit about Jens Peter. I was downright

worried that he'd get a throat infection but he didn't complain.]

Tang Kristensen's last remarks are interesting, as they reveal his ever-increasing concern with the storytellers as individuals. Jens Peter was remarkably talkative that day, telling nearly fifty legends.

Notes

[1] The earlier spelling of Ilbjerge huse was Ilbjærge huse, and Tang Kristensen used this spelling in his notes, recordings and memoirs.
[2] The church baptism was recorded as taking place on November 6, 1836.
[3] The 1890 census listed two other people living with him: Jens Christiansen, age 86, and his wife Inger Marie Hansen, age 83.
[4] She managed to get identical grades to Jens Peter: "udmærket godt" [excellent] in knowledge, and "meget godt" for behavior.
[5] Although the annotation "enkemand" [widower] was used in census records, its use was inconsistent and widowers were often listed as "ugift."
[6] Laurids was born March 25, 1887.
[7] The stamps in question must be the six-cent Garfield stamp, which were less common in the United States as well. Forty-five million of the six-cent stamps were issued compared to the five billion one-cent stamps issued at the same time.
[8] Or so many thought—Laurids, his son, was obviously his closest heir, and had the most legitimate claim to the proceeds of the sale of his property.

[9] This latter feature makes interpretation of the letters difficult.
[10] Hjørring was not added to the railway net until 1913, and Hirtshals had to wait even longer, until 1925. A private railway, from Hjørring to Hørby, along with the Hjørring-Åbybro line, was also established in 1913—this line went through Lørslev and Tårs, but was abandoned in 1953.
[11] His son, Niels Neergård, later the leader of *Venstre*, was briefly the prime minister of the country during the Easter crisis of 1920.
[12] The first of these major incentives came on the heels of the Three Year's War, when returning veterans were offered smallholdings at favorable rates. The next incentive was based on the pressing need to increase arable land by converting former heath to fertile soil. Plots of land on the heath were once again sold at favorable rates, with the stipulation that the purchaser had to work the land for several years before selling. The cotters' law (*husmandslov*) from 1899 was an important piece of legislation that made the transition from pure day laborer (*daglejer*) to cotter (*husmand*) significantly easier, yet did not guarantee a concomitant rise in economic status with the acquisition of property. As in previous programs, state loans were offered to rural dwellers to establish new smallholdings, on as little as four to eight acres of land; twenty thousand of these so-called national smallholdings (*statshusmandsbrug*) shot up across the country. For the most part, the plots were far too small to support a family, and contributed to the ongoing need for *husmænd* to work as day laborers. In 1919, the law was amended to require that any such new smallholdings be able to support a family; as a result of this revision to the law, another eight thousand smallholdings were established.

[13] This regulation was finally repealed in 1920 (Steensberg 1964, vol. 2, 531).
[14] A more exhaustive analysis of Jens Peter's repertoire can be found in my earlier study of legend tradition in Denmark (Tangherlini 1994, 281-314).
[15] The records from this field trip cover two hundred and fifteen pages in Tang Kristensen's field diaries, and the trip stands as one of Tang Kristensen's single most productive excursions.