

# The great Danish/American tubist

## August C. Helleberg.

August C. Helleberg the great tubist in early American tuba history was in many years thought to be a native American. In Denmark we have for many years known the anecdotes concerning his visits to Denmark.

After Norman Schweikert (a former hornplayer with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra) found a copy of August Helleberg's death certificate, we knew for sure that August C.Helleberg was born \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ Denmark.

The author of these pages has worked on this puzzle for many years. The work should have had more structure and system. The publication of this web- page does not mean that the work ends here, only that the knowledge obtained until now was worth publication.

From 1st of December 2004 to 23th of december 2008 there have been 12.892 visits on the Web-sites Helleberg,Danske Tubaister and Curriculum Vitae for Jørgen Voigt Arnsted. In the year 2008, there have been 3541 visitors.

From sep. 2009 a new server host the webpage. There are ca. 240 visitors every month.  
<http://www.voigtarnsted.dk/>

On this address you can find 12 pages concerning August C.Helleberg



Anders Christian August Helleberg Born 7th March 1861  
Kirkegaardsvejen in Aalborg, Denmark.

Christening: 28th July 1861 in the Church of Budolfi, Aalborg.

A short resumé concerning of August C.Helleberg´s life.

August C. Helleberg (in the following text AH) was number five of six children. His father Christen Helleberg Pedersen, was a sergeant in the Danish army. The Helleberg family lived under poor conditions. AH learned to play brass instruments in Aalborg, Denmark before he went to school. He and his brothers were taught by their father. The father died in 1870, when AH was nine years old. In the first half of the seventies, when AH´s mother, Benthe Marie Helleberg went to Norway with her four youngest children; Thomas, Johannes, August and Caroline. In 1875 the Norwegian population was registrated, and at that time the mother and her four children lived at Parkveien 9 in Kristiania the capital of Norway /now Oslo). Mr. Peter Pereira, a great grandchild of AH, owns a photo, taken in a studio in Kristiania with the three brothers wearing uniforms of the Norwegian army and holding brass instruments. At that time, the situation of military music in Denmark at that time had changed dramatically. In the late 1860s the number of Danish military musicians was reduced from 650 to 300. This could be the reason why the Helleberg family went to Norway. Already in 1878 AH (17 years old now) emigrated to America. He went together with Anna Reese (18 years old) from Sdr. Tranders South of Aalborg. The family story is that August Helleberg eloped with Anna Reese and that they subsequently married in New York. According to the census of 1900 is, August Helleberg and Anna Mathilde Laurine Reese were married in 1879. Anna Reese was a daughter of the owner of the an old inn in Sdr. Tranders. AH earned his income as freelance tubist in New York. The family grew, they had two daughters born in 1880 and 1882. In 1883 they could afford to go to Denmark with their two children and visit their family. After the visits they took AHs mother with them to America. Two of the AHs brothers were also emigrated to America. AH played in various orchestras in New York and soon he was one of the leading tubists. He was also an excellent doublebass-player. In 1888 the father of Fred Geib (another great name among American tubists) emigrated from Germany to New York with his 15 years old son who played the tuba. The father came to AH to ask for advice concerning his son´s education. AH became the teacher of the young man. AH played in New York orchestras with the conductor Theodore

Thomas.AH was member of The New York Philharmonic. From 1891-95 he was the first tubist in Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Back in New York AH again played in The New York Philharmonic Orchestra and he was for many years employed in The Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. 1898-1903 AH played in the Sousa Band including tours to Europe. AH played also in other famous bands in New York as The Conways Band and the Goldman Band. AH was also active in the recording industry. He played a lot of phonograms, among others with the great singer Caruso. AH collaborated with the Conn Factories as designer of instruments and mouthpieces. The Helleberg mouthpieces, which he developed, are still used all over the world. AH was legendary as a musician and virtuoso, on the tuba as well on contrabass trombone. He was the leading tubist in America from the 1880s to the 1920s, so for more than 40 years. During the last years of his life he owned a musical instrument shop in Arlington, New Jersey.

August C. Helleberg died on 17th November 1936 in Newark, New Jersey, USA.

Mr. Peter Pereira, Chicago is a great grand son of August C. Helleberg. He is a son of Beatrice Marie Bowie, who is a daughter of Wilhelmine Helleberg (1882-1974). Wilhelmine is the second oldest daughter of August and Anna Helleberg. Mr.Pereira tells: Quotation:"My understanding is that August Helleberg and his three brothers were military musicians in Kristiansand, Norway. (Kristiansand should be Kristiania, the capital of Norway, later called Oslo. See below.) I believe August left from there to go to New York. (1878). I have a picture of three of the brothers taken, I believe in a photo studio in Kristiansand. I have also a picture of August in his instrument shop in New Jersey, taken shortly before he died in 1936. I know my mother (Beatrice Marie Bowie) had many fond memories of him (August C. Helleberg) as she enjoyed it when he took her to races in Denmark, Paris and a variety of others". Quotation finished.

After making inquiries in Norway I have found out that it was not Kristiansand August Helleberg went for. He went to Kristiania the capital of Norway, in our days called OSLO. The authorities in Oslo tell us that, in 1875, the widow Marie Helleberg (b.1829) and her children Thomas, (b. 1853), Johannes, (b.1856), August, (b.1861) and Caroline, (b.1864), all of them born in Aalborg Denmark, lived at the address Parkveien nr.9 in Oslo. In 1878 they had moved

from the address. I know that August Helleberg emigrated from Norway to America in 1878.

I believe that Marie Helleberg, the mother of the three sons in 1878 moved to Copenhagen with her daughter to live near her oldest son, Andreas, who was employed as a hornplayer in The Royal Opera, and his family. The three younger brothers emigrated all from Norway to America in the period 1878-1880. The oldest brother, Andreas emigrated from Copenhagen to America in 1884.