

A SKETCH IN THE LIFE OF CHRISTIAN HANSEN

(Told by himself at the age of 83)

I was born in Skuldelev, Frederiksborg, Sjaelland, Denmark, January 15, 1820. My father was Hans Rasmussen. He died when he was 66 years of age. My mother was Anne Sophie Simonsen daughter of Simon Christensen. She died at the age of 82 years.

There were four children in the family as follows: Rasmus Hansen, Anders Hansen, Christian Hansen, and Anna Elizabeth Hansen.

In the year 1842, on the 16th of December, I enlisted as a soldier. I served four and one half years as Guard Hussar, or Kings Life Guard. In the war of 1846, between Germany and Denmark, for the possession of Schleswig Holstein, I served six months.

I served as a Corporal with the Cavalry; rode a fine black horse that no one else could ride; no one had ridden him before I came, and they had to sell him when I left.

After being mustered out of the service I went to work for Hans Christian Bonderup, Copenhagen, as coachman. This was in June of 1847. I drove for him six and one half years. He was a rich man and treated me as his son. He was a wholesale grocer. I only hired to him for one month and stayed six and one half years.

I was married November 1, 1850, to Elizabeth Erickson, of Torslev, same county. Mr. Bonderup furnished us three nice rooms and a kitchen to live in. I used to black the harness and wash the buggy and he was very proud of me.

I have done the temple work for Mr. Bonderup since coming to Zion and my wife Elizabeth did the work for his wife.

We joined the church on the ninth day of April 1853; we were both baptized on the same day by C.C.A. Christensen, a home traveling missionary. After we joined the church, Mr. Bonderup did not turn us out, or show any opposition; he only felt bad because I had been deluded. He said I could stay as long as I wished and he would not interfere with my religion, but of course I had joined the church and received the spirit of gathering. When we were leaving, he and his son came out on the ship to bid us goodbye, and to try once more to persuade us not to go and offered to pay our fares back, if we would remain and go back to work.

We had two children die in Copenhagen before we left - one just shortly before we left. We embarked December 22, 1853, on a sailing vessel. We went from from Copenhagen to Kiel in Germany, from Kiel to Lubeck, from Lubeck to Hull, England; thence on railroad to Liverpool. We embarked from Liverpool in a large sailing vessel in January 1854. We were on the Atlantic nine weeks and four days, landing in New Orleans in March, being the last company that came that way.

From New Orleans we embarked in a steam flatboat on the Mississippi to St. Louis about 300 miles. We remained in St. Louis two or three weeks and got work as we could. I was always successful in obtaining work, as I was apt in working about the ship. I had sewed sacks and handled groceries. I had already begun to understand some English. We had to stay here for a time because the ice was so bad in the river. There was so much floating ice we were almost afraid to land at St. Louis. From here we embarked on another steam flatboat to Kansas City; here we remained two or three weeks until we were rigged out for our journey across the plains. It took us about two weeks to go from St. Louis to Kansas City.

Brother Empey came from Salt Lake and purchased our cattle for us. Of course we all had to pay for our own, or our proportion, as there were ten people to each wagon. I was the teamster to our outfit and drove two cows and four oxen. It was a great sight. When we were all hitched up, the cattle ran and stampeded in all directions. Of course we were all green hands except our Captain. It is almost a miracle that no one was hurt; wagons were tipped but nothing broken. There were 62 wagons, with three or four men dragging at each team with ropes on the cattle. Some got away and ran until they were tired, when they were caught, but I tell you it was a sight that will never be forgotten by those who saw it. We started across the plains in June.

One day as we were camped on the Platt River hundreds of buffalo came among our cattle and right at our camp; we killed about eighteen. Another time when our provisions were nearly gone, another herd of buffalo were sent, as by the Lord, to replenish our store.

We used to form our wagons into corrals, with the cattle on the inside, but once the cattle stampeded from the guards twice in the same night, but fortunately none were lost.

When we arrived at Chimney Rock we had another stampede with our teams when they were hitched. We had been warned of this, as every company that ever passed this rock with an ox team had a stampede. There were two or three accidents. One man was drowned at Ft. Leavenworth while fording or swimming the river with the cattle.

Two days before we arrived at Salt Lake City a girl was born to my wife. We arrived at Salt Lake City October 5, 1854; just the day before conference, having been nine months and thirteen days from the time we left Denmark.

EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF CHRISTIAN HANSEN

As remembered by his son, James C. Hansen

Father was among the early settlers of Brigham City, doing what he could to get a start until the Buchanan war when he moved his family south as far as Provo where they lived for some months; then they returned to their home at Brigham City.

Father always thought that Brigham was the place the Lord wanted him because of a dream or vision he had before he joined the Church in Denmark, in which he saw just such a place. It seemed to be made known to him that he should see such a place. He had almost forgotten about

his dream until after he arrived at Brigham and went to the mouth of Box Elder Canyon, when he again saw his vision only in reality. When he saw the maple and box elder trees growing in profusion, the dead ones lying crisscross before they had been penetrated by man, and the beautiful streams of water that came rushing and tumbling over a rocky hill side, all of which he had seen in his vision, he was convinced that he was in the right place. I think the remarkable thing about it was he had never seen a mountain - not even a hill of any size - or any wild wood. I have heard him say he could not imagine anything that looked like that at the time he had the vision.

They had their short rations, of course, the first winter 1854-1855. They began tilling the soil in the spring. If I remember right they got one or two small crops before the grasshopper war.

I have heard them say the hoppers were so thick they darkened the sun like a dark cloud. We have heard how they lived on segos; so I asked father how they could live on the segos when they were so scattered and slow digging. He said they were not like the segos we knew. He said there was a patch just west of the city, maybe an acre or two, where they grew thick as they could stand; they were as large as small onions. He said the whole town would go there to dig and would clean the patch up. They would go away sorrowing but still having faith that the Lord would provide, and when they had used all that they had they would return to the patch to see if perchance a few might have been missed and, lo, the patch had returned. You could not tell that any had been dug; thus they got through until harvest. Another thing they said was that the segos seemed to agree with them perfectly, either cooked or raw. Thus the Lord saved His people.

Father lived at Brigham City practically all his life, after coming from the old country. He was a great friend of President Lorenzo Snow. He never spoke of President Snow's faults or allowed anyone else to do so in his hearing.

When they tried to establish the United Order in Brigham City, father entered it with all his heart. The way I remember it they were not required to give all they had to the order, but only what they wished to give. I remember something had been given into "Co-op", as it was commonly called, and one of the older boys was objecting and father said, "Oh hush up, or I'll give you into Co-op."

The Brigham City Dairy or Cheese Factory was started about 1872, and father was put in charge. This was a United Order or Co-op concern, as were all the manufacturing plants. He ran this about ten years when Co-op dissolved. I might state here that this dairy was no small affair. They ran some seasons as many as 700 cows. It was the largest concern of its kind in the entire west. When the dairy was sold, it was purchased by my oldest brother, Willard S. Hansen.

Father took the farm just south of what is now Collinston, near the Peck Spring, which furnished water for the farm. He lived here most of the time for 12 years; I say most of the time because he had two homes in Brigham City ever since I can remember. Father believed in the doctrine of plural marriage and had three wives - my mother, Hansine Christine Hansen being the second. They were married about 1858 in the Endowment House in Salt Lake City. He married Maria Petersen about 1869. He was the father of 22 children. His first wife, Elizabeth, had five, three dying in infancy. My mother, Hansine, had eleven children, five dying in childhood and one son

after he was grown and left a wife and three sons. Maria had six children, three dying in infancy. At this writing, January 1927, there are nine sons and one daughter living.

In the fall of 1881 father was called to fill a mission to Denmark. He only stayed a little over a year. He could not stand his native climate. I remember when he left that he bade me such a tender goodbye I had to cry as I was surprised to find he loved me.

Father was always truthful and honest; anyone could cheat him in a trade if they wished to because he told the truth and thought everyone else did the same. He was always a hard worker and never made a dollar by speculation. He always loved horses and took a great deal of pride in driving a good team. I think he usually had good health. He camped out on the farm and plowed when he was 80 years old. He traded the farm at Collinston for Brigham property and spent his last few years there.

He loved purity of life and looked on immorality as next to murder. He was conscientious and did other people's work better than his own, if anything.

He was religious and had a great respect for authority. He used to say he did not believe anyone was as good as he knew how to be. He said he would be about perfect if he was as good as he knew how to be. He would say, "I am about as good as I can get this old fellow to be." One of his funny sayings was, "What do you want to go to the theatre for, dem on the stage dey acts like fools and dem dat pays to go to see it, dey is fools."

Another one, when we boys were just beginning to shave was, "I tenk de fox and de goose come to quarrel wether it is feder or hair."

One thing I remember very distinctly when my brother Peter was going to be married, I think, he went to Salt Lake with a team and father hitched up the team and helped him off, as I suppose he had done for the other boys. As Peter drove out of the yard father said, "Well, if I can live to hitch up for Simeon, the youngest in the family, when he gets married I will be satisfied."

Just after father's funeral Simeon came to four or five of us boys who were standing talking and said, "Do you think it would be all right for me to go to Salt Lake this evening, I am supposed to get married tomorrow."

Father had lived even as he wished.