

History of Peter & Lena Sanderson Mortenson

Utah Pioneers of 1856

By Anna Rasmussen, Daughter of Mette M. Rasmussen

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For Camp Elizabeth, Parowan, Utah.

A brief history of the family of Peter and Lena Sanderson Sanderson Mortensen, who lived on the Island of Meen, Denmark in the North Sea. They were very staunch Lutherians, until two 'Mormons' missionaries by the name of Gould and Seobie, came with the Gospel message to them in 1855.

The family consisted of Father, Mother and nine children, Martin, Stena, Andrus, Hans, Peter, Lars, Mette, Mary, and Caroline. As soon as the family were converted and baptized members of the Latter Day Saint Church the non-believers joined the mobs and the family was no longer safe. Immediately the father began to make preparations to go to America, the land of Zion. The dear home and farm where so many happy hours had been spent were to be sold on March, 20, 1856. The family left their once happy, quiet home and the beautiful land of Denmark, they loved so well, for America, with the exception of the dear little boy Peter, who had died and was on native soil.

The family sailed to Copenhagen where they remained until Wednesday, April 23, 1856, when they left in company with 161 saints under John A. Almunson on the steamship 'Rhoda' for Kiel, Germany, they by railroad to Liverpool where they arrived April 29, here they went on board the ship 'Thornton', May 2nd and set sail Sunday, May 4th. For seven weeks and four days they rocked the sea, not all

of it pleasure. Landing in the New York Harbor, Saturday June 4th, after a few days here the family in company with many others left for Iowa City where they were making preparation to leave with hand carts for Utah.

The father was advised to use his means to help other Saints and was given the promise that not one member of the family should perish on the journey, which blessing was fulfilled. They came with the hand-cart company under Captain James G. Willie. After much suffering and long, hard journey they landed in Salt Lake City November 9, 1856.

Parley P. Pratt in his journal, described this company as he met them on the plains. They gathered around him and wanted to learn of there Zion to be. He made the third attempt before he could get control of his feelings. They were so careworn yet smiled through their sorrows. Parched lips, burned faces, tattered clothing, and bare feet told of their hardships and they made a Picture not soon to be forgotten. Their journey was not yet over, for after a few days rest they were advised to go to Southern Utah, to Parowan. The father and oldest daughter were cripples yet they heeded the council given.

They are many decedents but only one member of the family remains, Mrs Nette Mortensen Rasmussen, at the age of 88 years, who still retains her stalwart character of thrift and frugality. She is still industrious, active and with her mind clear; recalls many of the early experiences especially her first home in Zion, also remembers when the 14, that were buried on one grave at Rock Creek, passed. Her two brothers helped to dig the shallow grave in Frozen ground, the mother and eldest daughter helped sew the bodies up in sheets and what they could spare.

The faith of this good family never changed, and they were happy for their homes in DEAR UTAH, THE LAND OF ZION.