

## *History of Jens Hansen*

Born October 13, 1823 in  
Otterup, Fyn, Denmark

Died June 28, 1879 in  
Spanish Fork, Utah

Arrived in Utah  
October 5, 1854 with the  
H. P. Olsen Company

Had 14 wives and 37 children

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Farmington - Central Davis  
County - Rocky Knoll Camp

Information in this History is taken from a personal Diary  
of Jens Hansen translated from Danish to English.

A copy of which is in the possession of  
Elmer J. Carr, Salt Lake City, Utah

Jens Hansen was born on October 13, 1823 in Otterup Parrish, Fyn, Denmark to Hans Jorgensen and Maren Kirstine Pedersen. He was their firstborn son. The family eventually consisted of 5 brother and sisters and a half brother. His parents were very poor, and Jens sold cow hides and clay ceramics with his half brother, Jorgen Jacobsen, at a very early age to help support the family. His half brother soon refused to go with him to beg for food as he was ashamed to struggle so for his existence. Years later, his father started slaughtering cattle and Jens helped him sell meat over the country.

“About this time I became well acquainted with poverty and used to earning my bread by the labor of my hands” his journal states.

He was raised as a Lutheran and was confirmed at the age 14. Shortly after, he was sent away to work for a Hans Andersen in Lunde Parrish. They were very pleased with his work. His next employer was Simon Nielsen in St. Pedersborg. This man died while Jens was in his employ. From there, he went to Copenhagen to visit his brother, who was working for a

nobleman as a gardener. He met a man named Limkilde, a merchant from Odense who wanted him to come work for him. He worked for him only until the Summer came, then went to Frostrup, Kaarup for three years to work for Lars Stoffersen. His work was so good that Lars Stoffersen offered him an increase to stay, but Jens wanted to go to Copenhagen but found it necessary to work for J. C. Lund instead. He was a wholesaler. Jens stayed until May 10, 1846, at which time he joined the Army (1<sup>st</sup> Artillery Regiment, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battery). He went to military school to train as an officer. When he graduated, he worked as a 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant to a Physician in the Army, and on the side worked for a Beer Bottling Company. With two jobs he had a very good income. Jens got fine grades in school and got an advancement. While learning to ride a horse, he had an accident and injured his knee severely. He was taken to the hospital and finally sent home from the Army.

War broke out between Denmark and Germany in 1848 and he was called to go with Commander Baum to Snoghoj and to Haderslev. In Haderslev he was assigned to be a battery commander. He fought battles in Bov and Dybol (where he was recognized for Bravery and received a medal). He also participated in all the greater battles (Vaffede, Slesvig, Randsborg) between the Danes and Germans. In 1850, he was stationed in Aasum, Odense where he met Maren Katherine Christensen (later his wife). He traveled a great deal with the Army, seeing many battles and lost many friends. January 29, 1851 a peace agreement was signed, and the War ended.

After being discharged from the Army, he found employment in Copenhagen which afforded him the opportunity to hear about "Mormonism". He prayed earnestly to receive an answer of its truthfulness. And an Elder of the Church visited him in a room where he resided. During the conversation the Elder put his hand upon the knee that had for so many years bothered Jens. He thought, if this man was a servant of God then the healing power would affect him. He felt a chill come over his body. Jens excused himself and went into the next room where he removed the bandages to find his knee completely healed and well. On August 25, 1851 he was baptized and confirmed by Elder Christiansen.

From his diary - "One day while busy working, I felt impressed to ask the Lord if I could be given the privilege to bring souls unto him. As I knelt to pray, I was so overwhelmed by evil forces that I was unable to pray. But after a fight with my right arm and leg, then with my left arm and leg, I was finally relieved, and found myself lying on my back yet praying". He was told that his sins were forgiven and because of his sincerity he was sanctified. He spent much of his time pondering the scriptures and on November 15, 1851 he was called and set apart as a missionary on the Island of Fyn with Elder W. Andersen. He taught the gospel to his family while there and converted them. They were baptized on December 15, 1851. Many of the saints converted to the gospel came to America. On December 1852, his parents left for the United States of America. Jens took care of selling their land, home and possessions left behind, while still on his mission.

On April 24, 1853 he married Maren Katherine Christensen. His Brother, Peder Hansen was married that same day to Karen Pedersen. Jens turned his duties as a missionary over to the

Brethren and departed with his wife to Liverpool, England on December 26, 1853. When they arrived at Liverpool, a son was born and died on January 16, 1854 (Lars Christain Hansen). His twin, however, survived and was named Joseph Christian Hansen. After about 2 weeks, they departed for the United States on the ship "Benjamin Adams". His wife was very sick on the boat, but soon regained her hearth upon landing, after 7 weeks, in New Orleans. They got on a steamboat and went up the Mississippi river to Kansas. While there his half brother, Jorgen Jacobsen and several of his children died from an outbreak of cholera. They assembled themselves into camps to make the trek into the Great Salt Lake Valley. They came to Salt Lake in the H. P. Olsen Company. Much sickness prevailed on the trek from Kansas. Jens' wife became extremely ill and died on June 29, 1854. His brother, Peder Hansen also died in June. As they entered the Emigration Canyon coming into the valley, Jens' father met them. Jens, learned that his mother had died aboard the ship crossing to American from England. They were so close to America that she was buried in the United states. His father had taken another wife named Dorothea.

On October 5, 1854, they arrived in the Salt Lake Valley. They spoke no English and had a hard time understanding the sermons, but felt the spirit and brotherhood of the Church. On October 22, 1854, he was re-baptized. When he arrived, he was very concerned about how to take care of his little son and support his livelihood. So, he decided he should marry his widowed sister-in-law, Karen Pedersen. On February 3, 1856, his first and second wives were sealed to him for time and all eternity.

In light of polygamy, Jens was asked about taking another wife. After much consideration about this, he married Caroline Knudesen, whom he knew in Denmark, also on February 3, 1856. His family grew tremendously.

He helped build the canal from Cottonwood Canyon to Salt Lake, that was built to float Mountain rocks down for the Salt Lake Temple.

He and his two wives received their endowments on February 25, 1856.

He was a member of the Nauvoo Legion, and was sent to help protect the Saints from the Military sent by the U.S. to harass the Saints.

On September 13, 1857, Karen Andersen arrived from Denmark with a handcart company. She became Jens' fourth wife on December 20, 1857.

In the Spring of 1858, he moved his family to Spanish Fork to help settle that area. He worked part of the time for other people and some, on his own land that was in Salt Lake and Millcreek areas. He had much misfortune with his cattle that year, too. So, he decided to sell his land in Salt Lake and Millcreek and purchase land in Spanish Fork. He was now able to support himself by working for himself on his own land. He even had other people working for him. His material blessings grew greatly. He and his three wives were very happy and prosperous.

In 1865, he was called to serve a Mission in Denmark. He knew of his great responsibility to his family, as he had such a large one, but also felt his responsibility to the Church. Jens was glad he could leave his family in such good conditions.

His life was filled with service and devotion to the church and his family. He fulfilled four missions for the Church, all to Denmark.

They were as follows:

- 1<sup>st</sup> mission local on Island of Fyn Nov. 15, 1851, set apart by Erastus Snow - Released Dec. 26, 1853
- 2<sup>nd</sup> mission appointed April 6, 1865 Salt Lake City - set apart by Pres. Brigham Young - released Oct. 10, 1867
- 3<sup>rd</sup> mission appointed Oct. 6, 1878 Salt Lake City - set apart by John Taylor - released Sept 25, 1879
- 4<sup>th</sup> mission appointed May 2, 1885 Salt Lake City - set apart by F. D. Richards - released June 26, 1888

He was the husband of 14 wives and 37 children, one died at birth. His wives were:

- #1 Maren Katherine Christensen - 2 children
- #2 Karen Pedersen - 7 children
- #3 Caroline Knudsen - 5 children
- #4 Karen Andersen - 7 children
- #5 Maren Sorensen - 8 children
- #6 Maren Katrine Larsen - none
- #7 Maren Bishoff Jacobsen - one died at birth
- #8 Mette Marie Hansen - 2 children
- #9 Dorothea Kirstine Johnsen - 4 children
- #10 Karen Fredericksen - none
- #11 Mary Kirstine Rasmussen - 1 child
- #12 Camilla Larsen - 1 child
- #13 Anna Elizabeth Nielsen - none
- #14 Martha Christensen - none
- #15 Martha Christensen - none

In June 1897, Jens struck his head against a hay pole which was being raised to stack hay. He laid unconscious for about a week and regained consciousness just long enough to give charge of the household to his son. He died on June 28, 1897