

A Short Sketch of

Maren Mortensen

by Armenta Martha Anderson

Maren was born in Vrejlev, Denmark on 11 August 1837. She married Poul Christian Andersen. They had five children, therefore she often helped earn their living. Once, when her husband was ill and she was returning from work, she heard a great commotion across the hall in the next apartment. She learned that their neighbor had come home drunk and was being very mean to his wife. The woman screamed for help. Maren rushed in just in time to see the man push his wife in the corner and raise a butcher knife to stab her. Maren stepped up behind him and grabbed the hand holding the knife in such a grip that he was forced to drop the knife on the floor. Then she threw him down and gave him the thrashing of his life. Then she told him that if she mistreated his wife again while she lived that she would whip him again. As she was going across the hall to her own apartment she met the police. She explained to them what had happened. They thanked her for her intervention and said she would not be wanted by them for what she had done.

Maren and her husband heard of the Mormon elders being in their neighborhood. They decided to attend one of their cottage meetings. They became interested and after much investigation, study and prayer they applied for baptism. Soon the spirit of gathering filled their mind. Then death took the husband and father from this family.

After she joined the Church her father and folks disowned her. She had two brothers that were well-to-do, but they gave her no help. Her brother, Christian Casper Mortensen, invented the first bicycle. He was too lazy to walk to work, so he made a bicycle from a big wheel from a wagon and a small wheel. When the people saw him coming down the street they ran from him and said that he was crazy. He applied for a patent but before he got it someone else got the patent and the credit. He also made a telephone from a can, a pig bladder and a string. His room was in the attic. He fixed a can and string in the ceiling of the other rooms and ran the string to a can in his room. Then at night he would listen to the conversation. In the morning he would tell them what he had heard. It was quite a mystery to the rest of the family.

After the death of her husband, Maren was both mother and father to her family. But she was still determined to come to America. She kept one of the older boys out of school to help with the children and the house. For this the officers threatened her several times and at last they put her in jail. But she said that it was a blessed time as now she could have one of the boys bring the material to her and she could make clothes for them all and their trip to the new land. In just one year she earned enough money to pay for their tickets from Denmark to Salt Lake City, Utah, also to fill a large basket with food, and also a good supply of clothing

for her family, and \$9.19 in American money.

She set sail for a new land where she would have to provide for herself and family, learn a new language to speak and write. She made her first home in Fountain Green where she met and became the wife of Soren Hansen. She also met other converts from her native land.

During the years she lived in Fountain Green and Castle Dale, she would go out every spring and shear sheep. She could shear one hundred and fifty head a day with the blades. When the shearing season was over she would take her wool home and wash, card and spin it. Then she wove it into clothing, knit stockings, gloves, caps and other items.

She died 5 November 1913 and was buried 8 November 1913.

She always paid her tithing.

She wove many rugs and carpets.

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