ANDREW CHRISTIAN JENSEN

(A brief biography of ANDREW NIELSEN CHRISTIANSEN JENSEN)

Andrew was born July 20th 1856, in the little farming village of Osterby, Parish of Trandjberg, County of Aarhus, Denmark. He was the son and third child of Niels Christiansen and Karen Jensen.

Andrew's grandfather, Christian Rudolph Phillip Jensen of Horhaven, had joined the then 'unpopular' Mormon Church in 1852. Later, Andrew's father also joined the Church, being baptized Oct. 28th, 1855. Andrew's grandfather and father were among the first in their section of Denmark to join the new religion from America. And Andrew's father became a staunch defender and supporter of the Mormon Faith.

Under Danish law, the local Parish Priests of the late Luthern Church acted as the Registrars of the Government; and were required to keep the official records of births, deaths, marriages, census, and the military roll. Apparently it "irked" the local priest to be required to enter the records of a Mormon in his good Luthern Parish Register. The Priest could not christen the child, and receive a fee-yet he was required to enter the birth. Accordingly, the name of Andrew does not appear in the register of the Trandjberg Parish. The entry merely states that "on July 20th 1856, a son was born to Niels Christiansen and Karen Jensen, the Mormons of Osterby."

Under the old Danish custom, Andrew was known as Andrew Christian Nielsen. And in all the Registers, the children of Niels are known by the surname of Nielsen. However, Elders of the Church suggested that the family should all keep the same surname of the Father, so Andrew and the other children took the surname of "Christiansen".

It would appear from the Parish Register that Niels and his family were the only Mormons in the village at this time, and undoubtedly they were subject to considerable "un-social" treatment from the local populace. At least, Niels soon moved (about 1857) to the village of Ravnholt, Parish of Tiset, Aarus Amt. This was the home of his wife's father and family. And, no doubt, Niels commenced to make plans to "go up to Zion"- the promised land in the Rocky Mountains.

The 1860 Census of Asrus County, Tiset Parish;

Niels Christiansen	Age 34	Husfadder	Mormon
Karen Jensdater	32	Wife	"
Jens Christian Nielsen	7	Born	Trandjborg P.
Anne Johana Nielsdater	5	"	"
Andrew Christian Nielsen	4	"	"
Johan Young Nielsen	2	"	Tiset P.

grandmother Anderson

Niels was a poor country farmer; and America was a long way from Denmark. It appears that Niels soon decided if nothing better could be arranged, he would send the family to America--one by one. For, according to Fred Anderson, of Huntington, Utah, his mother Anna Johana, was sent to zion alone, in 1864 when she was only 9 years old. According to this story, young Anna walked across the plains. Sometimes she was permitted to ride on the wagon tongue, or cross-trees of a wagon. She would help gather prairie 'firewood' in her apron (buffalo-chips) for the evening fires of the company she travelled with. When she arrived in Salt Lake City, she was alone; and she nearly starved for two months, living on potatoes only. She was finally able to make her way down to Fountain Green, Utah, where an Uncle was living (the uncle was Soren, Brother to Niels.)

Luck deemed to come to the family, either through the emigration fund, or some other means. In 1866 the entire family migrated to Utah. Andrew was then only 10 years old. Afterwards, John Young, the younger brother of Andrew, wrote some of the details in his personal history. He states the family left Denmark in 1866, sailing for America from Liverpool, England, May 2nd, on a ship called the Kendworth or Kenelworth, the company was under the direction of Samuel Sprague. They arrived in New York on July 17th. They crossed the plains in an Ox Team train, under a Captain Joseph Rawlings. They did not stop long in Salt Lake, but made their way to Ephraim, where they stopped for a short time. Then on to Fountain Green, Sanpete County, where they made their home. The Grandfather, Christian R. P. Jensen, and a brother of Niels (Soren) had preceded them to Zion, and were already located in Fountain Green. The old original Fountain Green L.D.S. Ward record lists these families as among the first members of the Ward.

When the family settled in Fountain Green, the Church Authorities suggested the family of Niels should take the same surname as the grandfather, of Jensen. Accordingly, all the children changed their surname from Christiansen, to Jensen. However, Niels continued to go by the surname of Christiansen, and the two children who were born to him in Fountain Green also kept the surname of Christiansen.

Living was hard, and the family was poor. Niels and his wife had to "farm out" the children. They worked for other people for borad and room and a few clothes. But the children learned to work. Young Andrew became a good sheepman and herdsman. Early in his youth, he was "on his own", making his own way and earning his own livelihood.

At a General Church Conference in June 1877, Brigham Young called for a settlement of Castle Valley in Emery County. This was the last colonization order the great leader gave, as he died some 2 months later. In the spring of 1877 a group of men had been sent to explore the headwaters of the San Rafael River, in Castle Valley. They reported good water available.

On September 22, 1877, a Priesthood meeting was held in Mr. Pleasant to organize the settlement of Castle Valley. Only a few men responded. Andrew was one of the few. Not too favorable reports had been given of the area. Even the Indians avoided the area. The Indians name for the country was "Blow Valley" because of the winds.

The company was finally organized, the first caravan consisted of five wagons, drawn by oxen. Sixteen men were in the party, including Andrew, and his older brother, James. They started out from Milburn, Sanpete County, going up Dry Canyon, then south to Horseshoe Mountain, through Millers Flat, Scad Valley, and Joes Valley Canyon in to Cottonwood Canyon, thence into Castle Valley. They arrived in November of 1877. They built roads and bridges and passes for wagons.

Orange Seeley and a group of men had been in Castle Valley in 1875, with cattle for summer grazind. They had built a dug-out shelter at Castle Dale, about 20X30 feet in size.

Only 7 of the company of 16 men remained in Castle Valley for the first winter of 1877-78. They herded their sheep and cattle, and trapped. Four of the seven Niels P. Miller, Fred Peterson, James and Andrew Jensen, lived in the dug-out shelter built by the Seeley brothers.

The first log cabin in Castle Dale was built by Fred Petersen, midway between the present Castle Dale, and Orangeville. Then nearby, the Jensen brothers, Andrew and James, built another log home. (By 1882 the colony had built only 4 homes in Castle Dale.) In 1878, a third brother, John Young, joined with Andrew and James.

In the spring of 1879, John Y. Jensen, Andrew, and Fred Anderson, made a trip on foot from Castle Dale to Mt. Pleasant, to attend the May Day dance that was to be held. The three young men traveled through knee deep snow which still lay on the mountain slopes. They got wet, and had to build a fire to dry out their clothes. But they were young, and didn't mind. They were going to see sweethearts at the dance.

Susan Laura Dobbs (daughter of Thomas Dobbs Jr.) was living in Sanpete County, and Andrew took her a 'courtin'. In December of 1879, they journeyed to Salt Lake City, where they were married in the Endowment House, Dec. 18, 1879.

For the next 9 years, Andrew lived in Castle Dale, and raised his family. In Oct. of 1883, Andrew again journeyed to Salt Lake City, where he was married (in Pologamy) to Susan's older sister, Jane Annie Dobbs. They were married Oct. 11, 1883.

John Y. Jensen raised the first sugar cane in Castle Dale, and he and his brothers, Andrew and James made the first molasses. But first attempts were not too successful. The molasses hardened in the buckets. So they set the buckets out in front of the house, and let anyone who wanted to chop out a piece with an axe do so.

In 1889, Andrew made plans to move his family to new Mormon Colonies being settled

in old Mexico. Persecution of Polygamus families, under the infamous "Edmunds Tucker" law were increasing. Quietly, Andrew gathered up his families two wives and five children by now and left Castle Dale. A simple entry in the Fountain Green Ward records say "removed to Mexico."

The family made their way to Old Mexico, and settled with other Mormons in the colonies in the State of Chihuahua. They settled in Colonia Diaz, the northermost of the settlements. Colonia Diaz was just across a small river from the little Mexican town of Ascencion. Here the family lived in rugged pioneer style. The Mexicans were both friend and foe. The desert land made farming a struggle. Adnrew built a small home and the two families lived together. Possibly following his experiences in Castle Dale with molasses, Andrew went into the manufacture of lemon candy drops and molasses candy. He also made a home made broom, and did small farming for a livelihood.

Though they were all one family, and the wives sisters, still petty jealousy developed between wives at times, and between families. And as the family grew, they became more crowded in the little home. In all, 11 children were born to Andrew and his two wives.

They were constantly poor. Andrew always prayed that he would not be blessed with riches. He felt he could not remain humble with riches. And it appears his prayers were answered. Necessities of life were all made by hand. Homespun cloth, and hand made shoes. Some of the shoes were very rudely constructed, as they lacked tools for fine work. The children went bare-foot much of the time.

Andrew was generous, and gentle in nature, and was always helping some widow in need at the expense of his own family. And he was intently devoted to his church, a man of great faith and prayer. He was not a brilliant leader, but a quiet humble pillar of strength in his own way.

March 1, 1896 Andrew was sustained as Superintendent of the Sunday School of Colonia Diaz, Juarez Stake. This position he held until his death. He met with the leading men of the church in council, and in sacred "Prayer Circle" devotion. But occasionally, Andrew's family could not understand why their clothes were not as good as the clothes of the Bishops family. Little did they know of the extras Andrew was giving to others in need.

In later life, Andrew developed cancer of the stamach, and was bedridden for the last months of his life. For some weeks prior to his death, he was unable to take nourishment, and his family attempted to nourish his body by rubbing olive oil on his stomach and body. Andrew finally died April 7, 1908, and was buried in Colonia Diaz.

By 1912, the Mexican Colonies were troubled with Mexican bandits and revolutionists. Church history notes the following:

July 12, 1912- 86 wagons left Colonia Diaz, for the U.S.A. taking all the women folk and children.

Aug. 2, 1912- Orders were given for all men to leave Colonia Diaz.

The family of Andrew had to leave in a hurry, to avoid being sourged by Mexican bandits. They returned later for their possessions, and found their home in Colonia Diaz had been burned by the Mexicans, and everything was destroyed. I understand, also, that some of their records and valuables were put in the old family trunk, and burried for safe keeping. The family fully expected to return soon to Colonia Diaz. However, future develppments, and trouble with the Mexicans, changed their plans. They never returned to Old Mexico to live. The family finally settled in Virden, New Mexico, near Lordsburg. Here the widowed wives lived out their lives together, and raised their families.

One son, Burton, was killed by Mexican bandits in Feb. 1917. Riding for cattle, he had crossed into Old Mexico and was ambushed by a party of Mexican bandits. They whipped him, and dragged him behind their horses. He was left on the prairie for dead. Cowboys later located his body. It was a sad funeral party that made their way into the desert to give his body a burial. And all stood fully armed, during the service.

And so ends the saga of Andrew; from the rolling green hills of Denmark, to the dry prairies of Old Mexico -- all in the cause of the True Gospel of Christ.

The End

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(Brother to John Y. Jensen)

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