A BRIEF HISTORY OF
JAMES AND ANNIE ELIZA RASSMUSSEN PETERSEN

James (Born Jens Pedersen) Petersen was born April 29, 1858 at Modenup, Fyn, Denmark. At an early age his parents joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and started to Utah. Out of the family of seven that left Denmark only four made it to Utah. These being the children of the family.

The children were taken into foster homes until they became of age to go on their own. Although sickly as a child, James was given a blessing and promised he would go to a new land and would outlive all his family which came true. He even outlived several of his children and his wife.

James married Annie Eliza Rassmussen, Oct. 16, 1879. She was born at Copenhagen, Denmark on January 13, 1860. She came to America with her mother, who remarried and also lived in or near Mt. Pleasant, Utah.

After marriage the young couple traveled over the mountain to Castle Valley where he had taken up a homestead a few miles down stream from Castle Dale. Their first home was a combination log and dugout affair. Into this home their first child a daughter was born.

Their second home was in a rented cabin in town. Their next three children were born in this residence. While living in the above place they built their permanent home on a three acre plot about two blocks North East from the center of town. The first building being an adobe brick of which James had built. The young couple then built a larger home next to the adobe building and then the adobe building was known as the wash house.

On the lot besides coops, cow sheds and other outbuildings was a large garden area and a large lawn with a well kept orchard. The lawn and orchard and house was a favorite gathering place for many social events in the community.

The original store of the now Castle Dale Co-op was started in a room in their home. After a few years James and his sons built the building on Main Street and moved the expanding store into it. Above the store was a dance hall. Some 20 years of doing business the store was sold to others and has since been known as the Castle Dale Co-Op. While it seems most of the credit of starting the store goes to James, it was actually the doings of Annie Eliza and her concern for her neighbors that brought the store into being. She would send out to mail order houses for family needs, and she would order extra things that she knew others would be needing. From a few pantry shelves it moved into the family parlor then eventually into the building on Main Street. They even had their own script.

Uncle Jim and Aunt Annie as they were affectionately called, were home loving, family loving, community and State loving, Church and Nation loving, industrious, honest and peace loving. Always serving others and taking price in everything they did. Besides the store they farmed, had an interest in a coal mine and were constantly involved in some sort of community growth as in a short autobiography James wrote.

The couple were married Oct. 16, 1879 and later were sealed in the Endowment house, June 31, 1881. James had been ordained an Elder Jun. 1, 1881. From June 1881 to March 1893 was secretary of the First Sunday School which included Castle Dale and Orangeville. From 1893 to 1899 was in the Sunday School Superintendency was ordained to a High Priest December 6, 1885 and set apart as a High Councilman where he served until 1923.

He was a member of the Stake Board of Education for about 35 years, and was the treasurer and had charge of building two Academies. One later used as a ward house, the other on the edge of the bench called Emery Stake Academy. James was a ward clerk for many years, School Trustee, Secretary of Canals, Member of town board and County and local President of Farm Bureau and etc. James helped to build most canals and roads in and around Castle Dale.

James and Annie had eleven children of which all but one grew to maturity, married and had families. Two went on missions for the L.D.S. Church. All grew to be honorable and industrious citizens.

An insight to Annie Eliza was given at her funeral by Mrs. Clara Wickman who said, "The Petersen family may claim these sentiments. There are many wonderful mothers, but none so good, so loving, so gentle and so wonderful as mine." Annie was a quiet unassuming woman not given to great show or display. But a follower of the Savior in love and charity. An active member of the Relief Society as a visiting teacher, work director and any call made of her. She served many times as a midwife and constantly helped the sick and unfortunate. She will be greatly missed by the Community as well as her family."

The children of the family were Elsina Marie, Anna Johanna, James Erastus who died as a child, Diantha Sephronia, Parley, Leo Wilford, Delbert, Vern, Myrtle Amanda, Rex and Blenda Irene.

Annie Eliza died November 7, 1930. James died June 2, 1931. Leaving behind an enviable record of love and service. An example to their family and all who knew them.

This information was taken from "A Family Portrait" compiled by Frona L. Johnson, a granddaughter and submitted by Loyd B. Petersen, a grandson.

This is the building constructed by James Petersen and sons, which later became the Castle Dale Co-op.

THE BIOGRAPHY OF JAMES PETERSEN

by

Sephronia Petersen Larson and Chloe Larson Cook

Jens Pederson or James Petersen, son of Rasmus and Anna Marie Jesperson Hansen Petersen, was born in Serslow, Fyen, Denmark, April 28, 1858.

While he was a small boy his mother and father joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and decided to emigrate to Utah. While they were preparing for the trip James became very sick and his parents were afraid that he would never be able to stand the long journey. Their faith in the church they had just joined was so strong that they called the missionaries in to administer to him. During their administration they said that he should become well and strong and should outlive the rest of the family. James grew stronger and well then and within 25 years this prophecy was fulfilled.

In the early spring of 1866 his father, mother, two brothers-- Hans Peder, 15, and Niels Christian, 11,-- and a younger sister, Mette Marie, 2, joined a Church company at Copenhagen bound for Utah. They left the 28th fo May on the steamship "Aurora". The next morning they stopped at Kiel(Holstein) for about three hours to get luggage. The weather had been fine and so they went on to Altona. There the company divided and the Norwegians and some others went on board the ship "Humboldt" while the Pederson family with about 200 others boarded the Norwegian ship "Cavor" which sailed from Hamburg June 1. The "CAVOUR" was commanded by Capt. Floyn; and Niels Nielsen, a Utah Elder, was appointed president of the company with Jens Gregorsen and Carl Fred Rundquist as his assistants. The emigrants were organized into four districts in charge of which were; Elders Jens Gregorsen, Carl F. Fundquist, a Brother Jacobsen and Ole Nielsen. Two old women who had been sick for several years and two children died during the voyage. Because of heavy winds, calm, and fog, the ship had a long voyage, although it had taken the shortest route through the English Channel. The "Cavour" arrived in New York on July 31, which made two full months on the Ocean. The company left New York immediately by railroad and were taken over the same route as the one taken previously by the "Kenilworth" company. Cholera had broken out among the emigrants while on board the "Cavour" and now because of the rough treatment there was a heavy death rate. Just before the train arrived at St. Joseph, Mo., ~~a number~~ one of the passenger cars took fire, and it was with great difficulty that the sick were removed from it to escape from being burned to death. At St. Joseph, Mo., a number of sick and dying had to be left. On the trip by steamer up the Missouri River nine died in two days.

The company arrived at Wyoming, Nebraska, on Agust 11, 1866. The emigrants had no time to rest because the last train of the Church teams had already waited a long time for their arrival and it was now so late in the season that the start across the plains could be postponed no longer with any hope of getting over the mountains that year. The choleara-infested company started on the long and werisome journey two days later with sixty ox teams in charge of which was Captain Abner Lowry.

James' father took down with cholera and had to be left behind. Word was soon received that his father had died shortly after being left. About a month later his mother died and then his brother Niels of the same disease. They were all buried in unknown places on the plains. About one-third of the company of about 300 died before reaching their destination.

On arriving at Salt Lake City about October 22, he was met by William Seeley of Mount Pleasant, whom he accompanied home. There he met his oldest brother Jasper who had emigrated three years before the rest of the family. James and his little sister were taken into the home of Hans Brown who had known and baptized their parents in Denmark. His other brother Hans Peder went to work for others and four years later died at Centerville.

After working a few years for Brown he worked for Hans Brotherson awhile and then went to stay with his oldest brother Jasper for a short time. He joined the United Order and remained in it until it broke up about two years later. He then went with Jasper to Castle Balley to help settle this isolated part of the Territory. In the spring of 1878 he helped get water onto the land and helped to put in the harvest the first crop grown there. In the fall he helped to move his brother's family to their new home--a dugout in the almost wilderness of Castle Valley.

During the year 1878 an overland mail route was established over the Gunnison trail between Salina, Utah, and Ouray, Colorado, going through Castle Valley, a distance of 250 miles with no settlements in this section except at Wilsonville. A committee consisting of J. K. Reid, Orange Seely, Jasper Peterson, David Latimer and James peterson formulated a petition and sent it to Washington, D. C., asking for the creation of a post office to be known as Castle Vale. The department recognezed the necessity and on June 1, 1879 the commission was granted but the name was changed to Castle Dale.

On October 16, 1879 he was married to Annie Eliza Rasmussen Johansen at Mount Pleasant. The next day they left for Castle Dale where they were to make their home. That night they camped after traveling twelve miles and before morning fourteen inches of snow had fallen. That was their honeymoon--six days in a heavy snow storm with only an ox team and their winter supplies.

His wife, Annie Eliza Rasmussen Johansen, was born in Copenhagen, Denmark, January 13, 1860, and came to America with her mother in 1869. She was in the first company of Scandinavians who traveled all the way from New York to Utah by railroad--the whole journey from Copenhagen took only 27 days. Preparations had been made during the forepart of the year 1869for a large company of emigrants and so she and her mother joined a company of 567 besides five returning missionaries that sailed from Copenhagen July 10, 1869, bound for Utah. A Severe storm at sea necessitated the ship seeking safety near land so it anchored near Skagen. On the 12th the voyage was continued and the steamer arrived at Hull, England in the afternoon of the 14th. That night the company proceeded by railway to Liverpool where it arrived the next Morning.

Here the people were at once transferred to the steamer "Minnesota," which sailed from Liverpool that noon. Elder Ole C. Olsen was appointed president of this company with Saamund Gudmundsen and Jens Johansen as his counselors. Christian H. Halvorsen was appointed captain of the gaurd with Johan B. Hesse as his assistant.
The company was divided into four divisions with Elders George K. Riis, Hans Petersen, L. Johansen and Peter T. Nystrom in Charge, the latter also acting as interpreter. The fore-half of the steamer was set aside for the company, while the after-half was assigned to about 600 other emigrants, making a total of about 1200 passengers on board besides a crew of 125 men. The unmarried men were placed in the foremost part of the ship, next to them the families, and then midships the unmarried girls. During the boyage, prayers were regularly attended to in each division at 7 a. m. and 8 p. m. Four couples were united in marriage during the voyage, and only a very little sickness prevailed among the passengers and no deaths. After a successful voyage of thirteen days the "Minnesota" arrived safely in New York on the 28th of July. The following day the emigrants proceeded westward by train, and on August 8th arrived at "Tailors Switch" near Ogden, Utah. Two children died on the train. From Ogden the emigrants were conveyed by teams north and south to their destinations as the railroad from Ogden to Salt Lake City was not yet completed. Annie and her mother went to Mount Pleasant to live. There her mother married Niels Johansen. After a few years her mother died and Annie lived in the home of her Stepparents Niels and Maria Johansen.

During the summer of 1887 James' brother Jasper died while on a mission in Denmark. On October 23 of that same year his sister died on her 23 birthday, thus leaving James the only living one of the family and fulfilling the promise made by an Elder some years before.

In Castle Dale the couple experienced hardships but in general they prospered. For the first few years farming kept them busy. Annie, though, trying to be helpful to her neighbors, ordered extra lace, pins, thread, etc., when she got a small order from a mail order house. For years she kept a supply of notions in a clothes cupboard that had been made and given to her by her stepfather for a wedding pressent. Gradually the limited stock in the home was enlarged with increasing business until in 1900 James built a brick building on Main Street and carried an assorted stock of well-selected general merchandise. Above the store was a fine dance hall which was also used for programs and parties of all kinds. In 1910, after being engaged in the mercantile business for 20 years, he sold out to the Castle Dale Co-op.

He was an enterprising business man and interested in everything of benefit to the town and country. He served on the Emery Stake School Board as secretary and treasurer for many of the 35 years he was a member. He had charge of the buildin of the first and second Emery Stake Academy Buildings. From 1881 to 1893 he was secretary of the first Sunday School in that section. It included Castle Dale and Orangeville and was organized under a big cottonwood tree on the farm of J. W. Seeley, by Superintendant Peter Johnsen. Later he was chosen as superintendant of the Castle Dale Sunday School which position he held for several years. He acted as a High Councilor under three different Stake Presidencies. He was always indentified with the progressive movements.

He helped in the construction of most of the canals and roads in that section of the state. That he actively participated in all community activities is shown by the fact at different times he was President of the Town Board, School Trustee, Secretary of Irrigation Companies, President of the Local and County Farm Bureau, and he also held other like positions.

For years the Petersen home was considered an ideal place for parties because of the spacious lawn and trees and the fine hospitality. It was a frequent stopping place for visitors and prominent people were often entertained there. Because of the large family, there were always lots of young folks around. The family consisted of six boys and five girls--Elsina, Annie, James E., Sephronia, Parley, Leo, Delbert, Vern, Myrtle, Rex, and Irene--all but James E. grew to maturity.

After their children had all left to start homes of their own, the couple spent much of their time in Southern California as several of their children were there and also the weather was milder. Towards theri Golden Wedding Anniversary in 1929 they went back to spend that time at home.

For some time their health had been failing and so inthe fall of 1930 Annie's health was such that she was taken to Salt Lake for medical examination wher she died November 7 at the age of 70. Thus her wish that when their time came she wouldn't be left alone was granted. From the time of her death James' health grew worse and about eight months later, June 2, 1931, he died at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Irene Ostler, in Monterey Park, California. Interrment for both was in the little family plot in the Castle Dale Cemetary.

This is the story of a pioneer couple rather than of just James Petersen. He was of a jolly and fun-loving nature, conscientious and serious though, if the occasion demanded; she was of a quiet nature, doing her work well and uncomplaining--indeed a companion and helpmeet (helpmate) to her husband. Together they lived a contented and well-rounded life.