

A House Divided – Missions

Robert A. Christiansen, Apr '18

The bulk of this report is taken from Susan Easton Black, Shauna C. Anderson Young, and Ruth Ellen Maness, *Legacy of Sacrifice: Missionaries to Scandinavia, 1872–94* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, 2007).

This report complements the article *A House Divided* in *The Bridge*, the journal of the Danish American Heritage. *A House Divided* tells of sixteen cousins from northern Jutland, most of whom converted to the Mormon faith before immigrating. Three of the twelve female cousins married men who subsequently served missions in Denmark.

John Erik Forsgren, one of the first four Mormon missionaries to Scandinavia in 1850-52, was the stepfather of several of these cousins.

Missionaries listed herein are:

1. Andrew Rasmus Anderson
2. Oluf Christian Larsen
3. Jens Christian Nielsen

The following is copied verbatim from *Legacy of Sacrifice: Missionaries to Scandinavia, 1872–94* on 1 Apr 2018.

#1 - Andrew Rasmus Andersen

(Anders Jensen)

1844–1919

Residence: Lehi, Utah Co., Utah

Arrival date in Copenhagen: 22 November 1874

Missionary labors: Århus Conference

Departure date from Copenhagen: 22 June 1876

Name of departure ship: *Otto*

Birth date: 9 March 1844

Birthplace: Veddum, Skelum, Ålborg, Denmark

Father: Andersen, Jens

Mother: Rasmusdatter, Ane Katrine

Spouse: Pedersen, Mary Ann (Mariane)

Marriage date: 1 January 1863

Marriage place: Ephraim, Sanpete Co., Utah

Spouse: Nielsen (Jespersen), Mariane

Marriage date: 1 August 1868

Marriage place: Endowment House, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake Co., Utah

Spouse: Andersen, Nielsina Maria

Marriage date: 10 April 1871

Marriage place: Endowment House, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake Co., Utah

Death date: 10 July 1919

Death place: Lehi, Utah Co., Utah

On 13 March 1861, Andrew, an only child, joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Denmark. His wealthy father paid for sixty or seventy Latter-day Saints to voyage to America. His father saved only enough money to take Andrew and his mother to America in 1862. Unfortunately, his father died while crossing the North Sea (see “Life Sketch of Andrew Rasmus Anderson,” 8–9).

Andrew and his mother arrived in the New York Harbor on 29 May 1862. They journeyed with the C. A. Madsen wagon train to Utah. After arriving in the Salt Lake Valley, they settled in Ephraim, Sanpete County. In that community, Andrew fought in the Black Hawk War from 1865 to 1867. One year later, he became a United States citizen on 21 November 1868 (see “Life Sketch of Andrew Rasmus Anderson,” 13, 16).

By 1870, Andrew was the town marshal in Lehi, Utah County. In Lehi, he had much success growing sugar beets, potatoes, and corn on his farm, which bordered Utah Lake (see “Life Sketch of Andrew Rasmus Anderson,” 21).

In 1874, Andrew attended general conference in Salt Lake City. At the conference, he heard his name read aloud: he was being extended a mission call to Denmark. He readily accepted the call and arrived in Copenhagen on 22 November 1874. There he was assigned to be a traveling elder in the North Jutland Conference and later president of the Århus Conference. During his tenure as president, he raised money to build the Århus chapel. He donated one hundred kroner toward the chapel construction. On 22 June 1876, Andrew boarded the sailing vessel *Otto* and departed from Denmark with 405 emigrating Latter-day Saints and several other missionaries (see “Life Sketch of Andrew Rasmus Anderson,” 26–27).

Returning to Utah, he continued to serve and lead. In 1879, he was elected mayor of Lehi, a community of 2,026. He also served on the board of directors for the Lehi bank and as the director of the People’s Co-operative Institution (see “Life Sketch of Andrew Rasmus Anderson,” 21–22).

Ecclesiastically, he was a counselor in various bishoprics for over twenty-six years. For over seven years, he was in the presidency of the high priesthood. During these years, he followed the law of plural marriage. In 1888, Andrew was arrested for unlawful cohabitation and sentenced to three months in prison and a three-hundred-dollar fine (see "Life Sketch of Andrew Rasmus Anderson," 37).

After completing his prison term, he returned to Lehi. In his later years, he was a member of the Alpine Stake high council from 1904 to 1911. Andrew died from surgical complications and bronchial pneumonia in 1919 at Lehi at age seventy-five (see "Life Sketch of Andrew Rasmus Anderson," 38).

2 - Oluf Christian Larsen

1836-1929

Residence: Ephraim, Sanpete Co., Utah

Arrival date in Copenhagen: 16 May 1881

Missionary labors: Christiania Conference

Departure date from Copenhagen: 6 April 1883

Name of departure ship: *Cato*

Birth date: 8 April 1836

< lang="DA">Birthplace:< lang="DA"> Lille Landfaldege, Bragernæs-Drammen, Buskerud, Norway

Father: Olsen, Lars

Mother: Olsdatter, Marie

Spouse: Olsen, Emelia Christine

Marriage date: 20 April 1862

Marriage place: Elbe River (aboard ship)

Spouse: Peterson, Annie Marie

Marriage date: 23 December 1863

Marriage place: Ephraim, Sanpete Co., Utah

Spouse: Anderson, Amelia

Marriage date: May 1874

Spouse: Christensen (Larson), Hannah (Johanna)

Marriage date: 16 July 1884

Marriage place: Endowment House, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake Co., Utah

Death date: 11 November 1929

Death place: Salt Lake City, Salt Lake Co., Utah

Burial place: Salt Lake City Cemetery, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake Co., Utah

By age six, Oluf was working in a tobacco factory. In the factory, his arm was crushed between the cogs in a machine. A local doctor patched him up, but his arm was never totally repaired (see Larsen, "A Biographical Sketch of the Life of Oluf Christian Larsen: Dictated by Oluf Christian Larsen," 2).

He was introduced to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1854. "The Mormons were so unpopular that I played Nicodemus by visiting the elders when I could sneak away from my friends. The elders were thrown into prison several times but this increased the interest of the people and their sympathy for the elders," wrote Oluf (Larsen, "Autobiography of Oluf Christian Larsen (1836-1916)," 12).

Oluf was baptized on 6 April 1857 about midnight, much to the distress of his parents, who attempted to prevent his baptism. He recalled hearing in the voice of an unruly crowd his mother saying, "Oh, if I could only get hold of him" (Larsen, "A Biographical Sketch of the Life of Oluf Christian Larsen: Dictated by Oluf Christian Larsen," 14).

He was ordained a deacon on 20 September 1857 and a priest on 21 March 1858. "I felt it my duty to testify to everybody I came in contact with," said Oluf. "They mocked and reviled me." After laboring as a local missionary in Norway, he was imprisoned for preaching and forced to live on bread and water and then fined. In spite of the hardships, he wrote, "I rejoiced at the privilege of suffering in prison for the gospel's sake" (Larsen, "A Biographical Sketch of the Life of Oluf Christian Larsen: Dictated by Oluf Christian Larsen," 14-15).

After his mission, he enlisted in the army. "This was hailed with joy and satisfaction by my parents, the priest, and my friends outside the church, thinking it would be impossible for me to withstand the ungodly influence that would beset me in the army," he penned. However, Oluf found it possible to continue an attachment with the military and also to serve a local mission in Drammen before being appointed president over the Fredrickstad and Fredrickhald's districts, Østfold County, Norway (see Larsen, "A Biographical Sketch of the Life of Oluf Christian Larsen: Dictated by Oluf Christian Larsen," 19).

He was blessed with not only leadership abilities but also musical talents. For example, he wrote a song at the death of King Oscar I. It appears his song was "undoubtedly the first in print about His Honor's demise." He is credited with organizing the first Mormon choir in Norway in 1859. Although he enjoyed much success and happiness in Norway, he desired to emigrate. He wrote that "every avenue to get money was closed against me" until April 1862. He then departed from Scandinavia with emotions that were "mingled with joy and sorrow." After arriving in the Salt Lake Valley on 29 September 1862, he wrote, "Coming down through Emigration Canyon we found teams camping all the way inquiring for

friends and relatives” (see Larsen, “Autobiography of Oluf Christian Larsen (1836–1916),” 25, 33, 37).

He and his wife lived with H. O. Magleby in the Salt Lake Valley for a brief time. Oluf worked in his carpenter’s shop. They moved to Springtown, Sanpete County, and later to Ephraim, Sanpete County, before settling in Circleville, Piute County. At each of these locations, Oluf used his carpentry skills to earn a livelihood to support his family. He built dams and dug canals to supplement the family income. With the coming of the railroad, he wrote, “Merchandise now was reasonably cheap because of railroad transportation and grain was a better price.” Gaining employment with the telegraph lines in 1871 greatly enhanced his economic base. “It seemed that the blessings of the Lord followed us from this time and we were more prosperous,” he wrote (Larsen, “Autobiography of Oluf Christian Larsen (1836–1916),” 54–55).

In 1881, Oluf accepted a mission call to Scandinavia. “The people of Ephraim were very kind to me. They gathered up a nice little sum of money and with what I could scrape together I had plenty to take me to my mission field,” he penned. He crossed the Atlantic aboard the *Wyoming* and arrived in Copenhagen on 16 May 1881. He was assigned to labor in the Christiania Conference. “I now felt perfectly at home, because of my previous missionary work, ready and prepared to do what was required of me,” he said. On this mission, he saw his mother. “A great change had taken place with her, especially intellectually,” he penned. He labored in the Bergen and Hedemarken branches (see Larsen, “Autobiography of Oluf Christian Larsen (1836–1916),” 55–57).

During the mission, Oluf was imprisoned for five days in Drammen. He settled the problem by paying a fine of ten speciedaler. He wrote, “I never idled my time away” (Larsen, “Autobiography of Oluf Christian Larson (1836–1916),” 65). He departed from Copenhagen with 103 emigrating Latter-day Saints and several missionaries aboard the steamer *Cato* in 1883 (see Jenson, *History of the Scandinavian Mission*, 138, 269).

He returned to Ephraim and reunited with his family. He was nearly “overcome by the kindness of the [local] people [for] no debt had accumulated during my absence,” he wrote (Larsen, “Autobiography of Oluf Christian Larsen (1836–1916),” 66).

He was arrested in 1888. This time it was not for preaching but for cohabitation. He pled guilty and was sentenced to six months in the Utah penitentiary. “I little dreamed that I would be imprisoned in this glorious republic of America by obeying and practicing the religious doctrine of my church. . . . If I didn’t know there is a righteous God over-ruling everything for the good of those who love Him, I could be tempted to curse [the] nation” (Larsen, “Autobiography of Oluf Christian Larsen (1836–1916),” 69–70).

After being released from prison, he moved to Salt Lake City. Oluf died in 1929 at his home in Salt Lake City at age ninety-three (see Larsen, “Autobiography of Oluf Christian Larsen (1836–1916),” 70–75).

#3 - Jens Christian Nielsen

1830–1920

Residence: Moroni, Sanpete Co., Utah

Arrival date in Copenhagen: 2 December 1876

Missionary labors: Århus Conference

Departure date from Copenhagen: 23 June 1879

Name of departure ship: *Cato*

Birth date: 10 August 1830

Birthplace: Hvingelenhuus, Fåborg, Ribe, Denmark

Father: Christiansen, Niels Jens

Mother: Jeppesdatter, Maren

Spouse: Andersen, Ana Maria

Marriage date: 2 October 1856

Marriage place: Big Cottonwood, Salt Lake Co., Utah

Spouse: Christensen, Karen

Marriage date: 29 September 1873

Marriage place: Salt Lake City, Salt Lake Co., Utah

Spouse: Petersen, Ane Christine

Marriage date: 14 June 1883

Marriage place: Salt Lake City, Salt Lake Co., Utah

Spouse: Petersen, Tomaline

Marriage date: 20 September 1911

Marriage place: Manti, Sanpete Co., Utah

Death date: 26 December 1920

Death place: Moroni, Sanpete Co., Utah

Burial place: Moroni, Sanpete Co., Utah

“My parents was of the Lutheran faith and in that faith educated, and I took my examination as a good Christian,” wrote Jens. He received a meager education in the Noruf School in the Noruf District. Due to the poverty of his parents, he was forced to seek employment at an early age. His main employ was cork cutting in the city of Vejle. By 1852, he was superintendent over the cork factory and “everything was looking good for me in the future” (Nelson, “Histore of Jens

Christian Nielsen”; Bitton, *Guide Mormon Diaries and Autobiographies*, 257; Carter, *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 5:486–92).

In 1852, he attended his first Mormon meeting. After the meeting, there arose a disturbance, and threats were made against the elders. Jens said to the disturbers, “They [have] not said anything but what was Bible doctrine.” He was baptized on 1 February 1852 by Elder Winberg. He wrote, “I received a testimony that I had done right and felt satisfied that I had embraced the truth” (Nelson, “Histore of Jens Christian Nielsen”; Bitton, *Guide Mormon Diaries and Autobiographies*, 257; Carter, *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 5:486–92).

After his baptism, he boldly shared the truths of Mormonism with everyone he met. His words led to a whipping, being shot at with a pistol, and having rotten eggs thrown at him. Wanting to avoid further impending harm, on 4 June 1852 he departed from Denmark bound for Hamburg, Germany. In Hamburg, he was ordained an elder and participated in local missionary work. “I scattered a number of our pamphlets,” he penned. Unfortunately, he also faced persecution, arrest, and imprisonment. He suffered through many court appearances and jail but admitted, “I will say that the warden treated us with respect and kindness” (Nelson, “Histore of Jens Christian Nielsen”; Bitton, *Guide Mormon Diaries and Autobiographies*, 257; Carter, *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 5:486–92).

He next traveled to Copenhagen, where he boarded the steamer *Britannia* and sailed to Hull, England. Then he journeyed by train to Liverpool, where he boarded the vessel *Helias* for America. This was a difficult time for Jens. He had no money and felt “a burden to the saints that was poor and young in the gospel” (Nelson, “Histore of Jens Christian Nielsen”; Bitton, *Guide Mormon Diaries and Autobiographies*, 257; Carter, *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 5:486–92).

After arriving in America, he was advised by Elder Erastus Snow “to work with those who had apostatized and others, hold meetings and if possible bring them back into the Church.” He accepted the advice and visited many old friends and past acquaintances in the St. Louis, Missouri area. From there, he journeyed up the Missouri River. After arriving in the camps of Israel near Council Bluffs, Pottawattamie County, Iowa, Jens wrote, “I visited the Saints and tried to encourage them in the gospel of Christ” (Nelson, “Histore of Jens Christian Nielsen”; Bitton, *Guide Mormon Diaries and Autobiographies*, 257; Carter, *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 5:486–92).

He stayed for a time in the midwest and presided over the Danish Saints in Mormon Grove, Pottawattamie County. From Mormon Grove, he wrote letters “to the scattered Saints that work far off.” He taught the Saints “to get up in the meeting and bear testimony, the sisters as well as the brethren, and it brought a good spirit in the congregation.” He faced apostates, like Niels Syrup, who “tried to turn the Saints against me, and said the building of temples was wrong, and Brigham Young was from the devil” (Nelson, “Histore of Jens Christian Nielsen”; Bitton, *Guide Mormon Diaries and Autobiographies*, 257; Carter, *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 5:486–92).

His call to return the Saints to greater faithfulness ended on 7 April 1857, when he was released and given permission to continue his journey to Zion. Jens arrived in Omaha, Douglas County, Nebraska, aboard the steamer *Keystone*. He then purchased a team of oxen and began his trek to the Salt Lake Valley in the Knute Petersen Company. “We had our trials, especially in crossing rivers and in the buffalo country many times our oxen stampeded,” he wrote (Nelson, “Histore of Jens Christian Nielsen,” 1; Bitton, *Guide Mormon Diaries and Autobiographies*, 257; Carter, *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 5:486–92).

After arriving in Salt Lake City, he worked on the canals in Big Cottonwood Canyon and on the road leading toward Fort Union, Salt Lake County. He prepared himself to fight against the U.S. Army and was ordered to march up Emigration Canyon in three feet of snow—“I was very tired and sick and no provisions or at least very little,” he penned (Nelson, “Histore of Jens Christian Nielsen,” 1; Bitton, *Guide Mormon Diaries and Autobiographies*, 257; Carter, *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 5:486–92).

When the threat of war passed, Jens moved to Spanish Fork, Utah County. From there, he moved to Sanpete County. It was in Ephraim, Sanpete County, that he learned the cooper’s trade. By spring of 1859, he had moved to Moroni, Sanpete County. There, he dug ditches, made dams, and tried his fortune at farming. It was also in that community that he participated in the Black Hawk War as a first lieutenant. He fought in the Salina Canyon and Grass Valley engagements (see *History of Sanpete and Emery Counties, Utah*, 428; Bitton, *Guide Mormon Diaries and Autobiographies*, 257; Carter, *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 5:486–92).

In 1876, Jens received a mission call to Scandinavia. He arrived in Copenhagen on 2 December 1876 and was assigned to be a traveling elder in the Århus Conference. He served as president of the Randers and Århus branches. He recalled cutting holes in the ice to perform baptisms in those branches. On this mission, he visited his brothers who had not joined the Church. He wrote, “The hand of the Lord has been over me and he has blessed me greatly in my labor and I do rejoice to labor in the work of God” (Nelson and Blackham, “Excerpts from His Mission,” 74–83). But he did lament, “O When we think all is well then we are mistaken . . . how hard it is to get the people to serve the Lord” (see Journal of Jens Christian Nielsen; Bitton, *Guide Mormon Diaries and Autobiographies*, 257; Carter, *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 5:486–92). From 1877 to 1879, he served as president of the Århus Conference. After completing an honorable mission, he departed from Copenhagen on 23 June 1879 aboard the steamer *Catowith* 331 emigrating Latter-day Saints (see Jenson, *History of the Scandinavian Mission*, 240, 498).

At his arrival in Moroni, he was welcomed by a choir that followed him home, singing hymns in his honor (see Journal of Jens Christian Nielsen; Bitton, *Guide Mormon Diaries and Autobiographies*, 257; Carter, *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 5:486–92).

He accepted another mission call to Scandinavia in 1885. He traveled aboard the steamer *Nevada* to Liverpool and on 28 April 1885 reported to President Lund of the Scandinavian Mission. The president appointed him to labor in the Århus Conference. Once again, he was assigned to be the president of the Randers

Branch. In that branch, he preached repentance. He wrote that the “better classes of people do not come to hear.” In October 1887, he was appointed president of the conference (see Journal of Jens Christian Nielsen; Bitton, *Guide Mormon Diaries and Autobiographies*, 257; Carter, *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 5:486–92).

After his release, he again returned to Moroni. “I am now home again and I feel to thank the Lord our Eternal Father for his blessings unto me,” he wrote (Journal of Jens Christian Nielsen; Bitton, *Guide Mormon Diaries and Autobiographies*, 257; Carter, *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 5:486–92).

In Moroni, he was president of the local co-op store and later a stockholder. He was one of the presidents of the Thirty-seventh Quorum of the Seventy and a ward clerk for ten years. He served the community as mayor for two terms before being captured for violating federal laws against plural marriage. The court, failing to find him guilty, released him (see Nelson, “Histore of Jens Christian Nielsen,” 1). Jens died in 1920 in Moroni at age ninety.