

A REMINISCENCE
Hans Dinesen's Narrative, 1853-1858

On Friday, September 30th, 1853, I reached Salt Lake City after nine months and eleven days of hard travel by sea and land. Ours was the first company of Scandinavian Saints that came to Utah, and most of those that composed that company are now dead and nearly forgotten, and those that survive are silvered over and nearly worn out with excessive toil and hard labor. On the 14th day of October our company started for Sanpete, led by Patriarch James Allred and Herman J. Christensen. The Indians had already commenced hostilities, and our teams were poor and nearly exhausted and our travel was slow. At Nephi we got a supply of ammunition and each man of our company traveled through Salt Creek canyon with a loaded gun upon his shoulder. Upon our arrival at Uintah, (now Fountain Green) what a vision presented itself to us. A wagon box was turned bottom side up and wheat was scattered around over the ground and we were told four men lay dead under the wagon box, who had been terribly murdered by the Indians. (Wm. E. Reid, James Nelson, William Luke and Thomas Clark were the men, killed October 1st.) On the 15th of October we reached "Little Denmark," (now Spring City); there were but few houses then. We pitched our camp near a Spring, at that time it was in the wilderness, but now it is near where the house of Apostle Orson Hyde stands. We were located where the Indians had a good chance to ambush and kill us, by crawling up through rock and brush, and we had to be very watchful -- were on guard day and night.

The first Danish meeting was held in a little log house, owned by Hans Chr. Hansen, a brother of Peter O. Hansen. Here we tried working in the United Order, and we were divided into companies for labor, all working for the good of the whole camp. One company went and cut the dry grass so as to secure food for our cattle; another went to the mountains for timber, getting such as was needed by the settlers; another went to the stone quarry near, to get out rock for building or other purposes, and the other company went back to Salt Creek, (Nephi), Provo, Springville, or Payson, to find work, to earn something to live on and to help sustain the people of the whole town. Hans Dinesen was a member of this last company, and they stopped at Salt Creek where they found some work, cutting maize, (corn) broom corn, and picking up potatoes in the field. One evening, coming in late from work and going to their wagon camp, he asked his companion--Hannibal, if there was anything to eat? He answered we have nothing but beets; they were cooked and laid away under the wagon. Dinesen was hungry and wanted something more to satisfy his craving appetite; he went to a little log house where he saw a light, some little distance away, and asked the woman who answered his knock at the door for some food, for "I told her I was hungry." She gave me some cooked squash, which was not much more palatable than the beets prepared by his mate. This circumstance is mentioned to show the situation then, how scarce and scanty was the supply of food, and to contrast it with the plenty of to-day. For this labor at Salt Creek, they got some flour, some brooms and potatoes, which was all brought home to the camp at Spring City, and divided up among the people; their potatoes were frozen solid like rocks and rattled together like so many pebbles; they had no place to keep them in to protect them from freezing and they had to eat them, everything they had was all needed to sustain life. When Prest. Young found the situation they were in, and the great danger of their starvation and destruction by the Indians, he wrote a letter to the leaders there--which reached them on the 15th of December--"for father Allred, to take the company on to Manti," and all preparations of building were abandoned. He says, "I and F. C. Sorenson had commenced to build a little log shanty for both our families to live in that winter."

On Friday, December 16th, the snow fell one foot deep; we packed up everything that could be moved and started for Manti, through the deep snow and severe cold weather. We had no sooner

started than the Indians swooped down on what was left and set fire to the houses, hay stacks, etc., and burned up everything that was left.

When we got to Manti there were but few houses into which members of our company could get, so we had to camp in our wagons on the square near where the old fort was and we suffered severely with the cold. I had only a thin covering over the wagon. Ice froze over everything, and snow was one foot deep over the ground. We barely kept alive; our food was not plentiful, and our bread was made of bran and smutty ground wheat mixed with our frozen potatoes; and wheat was ground in a coffee mill owned by Parshall, as there were no grist mills, and our bread when baked was a black as coal, and on this we had to satisfy our appetites three times a day. But this was not the worst of our troubles; the cold suffering was, if possible, worse than the hunger, as we had no fire only what we built outside on the ground near the wagons. Night after night each man had to take his turn of standing guard; there were four posts or guard houses, one was located near where Samuel Ware's house now stands, one was on the southeast corner of the Peacock block, and north across the street where the old school house now stands, (and the other two posts were probably on the south and west of these points, so that the camp was watched from each point of the compass.) Every morning and evening the drum was beat for roll call by "Drummer Beal," where the orders were given the men for place and time of guard.

About one hour was consumed at each call, standing around in the deep snow, very thinly clad, some with their knees and toes out, and hair pushing itself through the holes in the crown of their old hats; and those that had nothing for a wrap, made a "surrappa" out of an old horse blanket by cutting a hole in the middle, and putting their heads through,--made this do for the use of an overcoat. And in the midst of this trouble and hardship, Erastus Snow, then an apostle, came to us and gave us this cold comfort, "two Indian squaws could come and burn out this little town and cut your throats. If the Lord did not preserve you, all your guarding was in vain." He had instructions from Prest. Young to "organize the Scandinavian meetings," and he said "this should last as long as the Scandinavian emigration should continue." And at this time Herman J. Christensen was appointed to preside over these meetings; with Niels P. Domgaard and Mickel Johnson as counselors. This pleased all the people for Christensen had the confidence of all the Scandinavians, and he was a good and faithful man.

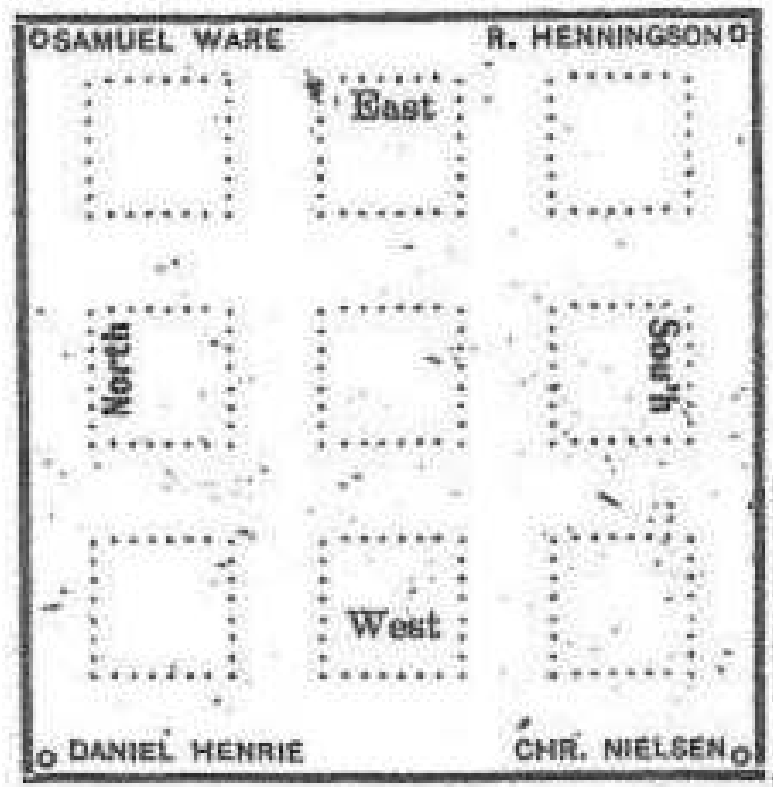
Shortly after this John Fosgreen came down to Manti to effect a settlement with some of the emigrants to whom he was indebted or borrowed money, and he was owing Soren Olsen \$200.00 which he could not pay, when at this meeting Warren S. Snow arose and uttered this very remarkable prediction, "Soren Olsen if you will give this debt to Forsgren I'll promise you, that before a year from now, your wife shall bring you a pair of boys," and tis prediction was literally fulfilled, for within a year from that time a pair of twins boys was born to that happy family.

In February, 1854, "I quarried rock from the quarry when the snow was a foot and a half deep, and laid up rock around my wagon box to make a little house to help protect us from the weather, and the storms continued, five or six inches of snow fell every week."

In the spring a little land was broken up and wheat and seeds sown under much difficulty, and in the summer when warm weather had come, countless numbers of grasshoppers came in clouds, so thick as to darken the air; these deposited their eggs in the ground and in the spring of 1855 the people sowed an abundant crop; the grain came up in a rank healthy growth, and the warm rays of the sun hatched out the countless millions of eggs, and the result was the grasshoppers eat up everything, and the people raised only a few squashes and some potatoes, and before digging time came, the Indians got a large share of the potatoes. The men then had to scatter out to get subsistence; some went to Springville and Provo to glean wheat. "Me and my mate, Paul C. Larsen, sold a new wagon for twenty bushels of wheat,--giving us only ten bushels each for bread

for our families and for seed for another season.”

“We built a stone wall, 12ft high, 3ft thick at the bottom, around nine blocks of the town, commencing at the west corner where Samuel Ware now lives, running west three blocks; south three blocks; east three blocks, and north three blocks, thus:



At Hemmingson’s was a tower, and near Daniel Henrie’s was a tower, and this was built to protect us from Indian depredations.”

There was no record of this labor kept, or if it was kept, it has never been found. The rule was for every man to work "two days on the wall and two days on labor tithing each week".

In the spring of 1856, wheat was very scarce, and Pres. Brigham Young told us to drill our wheat in the fields and we should raise a hundred fold. "I drilled half a bushel of wheat on two acres of land and after harvesting and threshing I measured up eighty bushels of good plump wheat, showing a yield of an hundred and sixty fold."

During the summer of 1856 he had much sickness in his family, but he had to go into the harvest field to work. He was so weak and worn out, but had to work early and late; and it seemed as though bad luck had followed him up; as his cattle had died, and with much to endure, he thought of the saying of the Lord, "I make rich and I make poor", so he was comforted. He heard Wilford Woodruff in a sermon say, "Jesus was always poor. He had never earned a dollar in his life, and in His poverty the rulers had asked for the taxes to be paid, and He told His apostle to go and catch a fish, and he would find a piece of money in his mouth, and to take it and pay the taxes." See Matt. 17, 24-27vs. These things comforted him.

In 1857, the army was coming to Utah, and Gov. Young proclaimed martial law. The people with one accord were ready to listen to their prophet and leader, and the results of all that season, with the various phases occurring are a matter of history and have been published, so it is not

necessary to repeat it here. The people were sustained and peace followed in 1858.

[LINE MISSING FROM ARCHIVAL COPY] perienced by Hans Dinesen are no more than were experienced by many others, and if their sketches were written they would be very similar; and the reader can apply these dark trials to every one of these hardy and brave men, who passed through those early days of building up and making a success of the settlement of Manti. It may not be amiss to say a few words of his earlier experience in fatherland.

Soon after his marriage, or in 1849, he had to enlist, and was a soldier in that fearful and bloody war between Germany and Denmark. He had been religiously brought up by his mother, and taught to rely on the Lord; and always "have the fear of the Lord before his eyes". And when he started to the war she said, "May the God of heaven be with you my son, and may He please protect you, for I cannot follow you there". And he found he was protected in the four battles he was in. And when he had become so tired and broke down with sorrow and pain, he laid down on the battle field, on the night of July 6th , between several hundred of his dead comrades, and all the life that was near him for some distance was his horse that had a bullet shot through it. After his release from the horrors of war, he soon prepared for emigration.

In recounting the sufferings in the early days of Manti, the brave women, who shared the toil, exposure and hunger of their husbands should not be forgotten; theirs to suffer not to murmur, and no greater epitaph can be written for these men than can be written for the pioneer women of Manti. They suffered the pangs of hunger alike. The cold winter storms searched their weakened frames alike, and no better word can be said for any and all of them, than that they were true to the trust imposed in them, and all displayed their faith, manhood and integrity by remaining steadfast through all their privation and suffering.

How my heart grows weak as an infant,
And the fountains of feeling will flow;
As I write of these trials, so stony,
Which the souls of these true ones passed through.
These mountains of trouble hung o'er them,
"The tempest of fate blowing wild."
There's nothing on earth half so lovely
As to know, they were Deity's child.