

HANS CHRISTOPHERSSEN (CHRISTOFFERSON)

1818 - 1889

ELIZABETH JACOBSEN or NEILSEN

1811 - after 1860

written by 4th Great Grand Daughter Laural Bushman November 1998

2nd writing April 2008

Denmark

Hans Christopherssen was born in Ringsted, Sjaelland, Denmark on November 25, 1818. His parents were recorded as vagrants and arrested persons. They were, in fact, landless under-classed citizens.

Hans' father, Christopher Mortenssen was the son of a 'nightman' named Morten Christopherssen. Nightmen were the lowest 'caste' in Denmark's societal class hierarchy. They were despised because of the work they did which was, unclean jobs even peasants would not do. Christopher's mother was Anne Hansdatter and her parents were Hans Jacobssen and Birthe Olsdatter.

Anne Dorthea Hansdatter, Hans' mother, was referred to as a 'drawer child' because she was born in an institution where women could go to give birth anonymously. Her mother was number 169. Dorthea grew up with foster parents Jeppe Ibsen and Karen Jorgensdatter in Ringsted. After Jeppe passed away, Karen married Hans Madsen which, is why Dorthea used the surname Hansdatter.

To sustain themselves, Christopher and Dorthea would travel around the countryside doing whatever work they could find to do. They would sleep in barns, under trees or if they had some money in an Inn. At times it was necessary for them to steal food or clothing to survive and when they were caught, the law would impose excessively long and harsh prison sentences. Under these conditions, Dorthea bore six children. Three died and the other three were taken away from her when she was in prison, including our ancestor Hans Christopherssen. (See history of Christopher Mortenssen and Anne Dorthea Hansdatter)

In the parish record where Hans was baptised it is recorded, ``...the father, Christopher Mortenssen, watchman in Ringsted, has run away.`` Christopher had left Dorthea and gone travelling with his mistress, Ane Kirstine Ahrenfeldt.

When Hans was about a year old, his mother Dorthea, was convicted of theft

and sentenced to three and a half years in prison. She took her baby with her into the prison. In 1823, shortly after being released, she helped Christopher to escape from another prison where he was serving a life sentence. They were both caught. Christopher was returned to prison where he eventually died from consumption. Dorthea was sentenced to two more years for assisting a prisoner to escape. At that time, Hans was taken from his mother and placed in a foster home. It is not known what happened to Dorthea after that except, she spent much of her life in prison. In the 1834 Danish census records, Hans is listed as being 16 years old and living with a foster father named Thomas Lange.

America

By 1854, twenty years later, Hans was married and had four children. His wife Elizabeth was the daughter of Jacob and Helen Nielsen. Sometimes she used the surname Jacobsen and at other times Nielsen or Nielson. Danish names usually end with 'sen', but not always. Many end with 'son'. In Denmark they usually had two 'ss' but that was changed in America to one 's'. On the passenger list of the ship 'Jesse Munn', Hans Christopherssen's name is spelled 'Christofferson'. He and most of his descendants continued to use that spelling after that time.

Hans and his family had joined the Mormon Church in Denmark and were immigrating with a company of saints to America. There were 333 people in the group and their leader was Christopher J. Larsen. The ship, 'Jesse Munn', left Liverpool, England on January 3, 1854. It took six weeks to cross the ocean and arrived in New Orleans on February 20, 1854. The ship's passenger list gives the following information: Hans Christofferson 35 labourer, his wife Elizabeth 43, a son Peter 9 (our ancestor), a daughter Jacobine 8, a son Erick 5, and an infant son named Hans.

From New Orleans, the group travelled up the Mississippi River to Florence, Nebraska. Family tradition tells us that Hans and his family stayed in Florence for four years before crossing the plains to Utah and while there, he was an official in the Church.

In 1860, when the Federal Census was taken in Utah, Hans Christofferson 41 was living in the ninth ward in Salt Lake City. His occupation was that of a shoemaker and he had \$75 in personal estate. Living with him were wives Elizabeth 50 and Hannah 41, sons Peter 17 (our ancestor), Baltimore 13, Emile 9, (possibly the same as Erick on the passenger list) and daughters Jacobine 15 and

Pauline 10. Their birth places were all listed as Denmark.

Peter, Jacobine, and Emile were Hans`and Elizabeth`s children. The baby named Hans that had been with them when they came from Denmark must have died. Baltimore and Pauline were probably Hannah`s children from a previous marriage but I have not been able to document that.

The International Genealogical Index shows that on August 8 1860 Hans Christofferson was sealed, in the Endowment House, to wives Elizabeth Neilson and Hanna Christofferson Neilson. On November 13 of that same year, Hans was sealed to another wife named Dorthea Peterson. On May 4, 1861, there is another entry that says Hans Christofferson was sealed to Dorthea or Larthea Peterson. This last entry appears to be either a duplication or a second sealing to the same wife, Dorthea Peterson.

According to the Salt Lake County death records, on July 21, 1863, in the ninth ward, a child named Josephine, daughter of Hans and Dortie (nickname for Dorthea) Christofferson died of diarrhea. On October 16, 1863, in the ninth ward, another person named Christofferson passed away, but there is no other information given.

Brigham City and the United Order

In 1852, President Brigham Young had called Lorenzo Snow on a mission. That mission was to build a city and start a United Order in Box Elder County, Utah. This was the first opportunity for Lorenzo Snow to put into practice a plan which Joseph Smith had taught him. Brother Snow built the city and named it Brigham City in honour of his beloved leader. By the mid 1860`s he was ready to call fifty families to move to Brigham City to live and practice the United Order. In the book `Box Elder Lore` published by the Box Elder Chapter `Sons of Utah Pioneers` in 1951, we read the following:

``In the selection of the fifty families, Lorenzo Snow exercised great wisdom and spent much time...Heads of all these families were skilled craftsmen and mechanics...men of faith and works, devotion and ability.``

``Lorenzo Snow proved that a community of people could live together in a cooperative system and be happy and prosperous. The people and all their interests were united into one commonwealth...temporal, spiritual, educational, and recreational.``

One of the men chosen to take his family and move to Brigham City, was Hans Christofferson. Hans was a shoemaker by trade. He must also have been a man of faith and works, devotion and ability.

On the 1870 federal census report we find Hans 52, living in Brigham City with his wife Lotie (nickname for Dorthea) 27, a daughter named Sena (probably a nickname for Hanssine) age 7, and a son Andrew age 3. Hans was working at making shoes. It should be noted that sometimes census takers listed only those present at home that day. It is probable that there was also a son named Hans, about 6 years old, who was at school.

Brigham City birth and death records show a child, Willard Christopherson, son of Hans and Dortie Christopherson was born August 27, 1871. He passed away from Scarlet Fever December 15, 1873.

By the time the 1880 census was taken, Hans had moved Dorthea and their children back to Salt Lake City and they were living in West Jordan. The records indicate that Hans was then 62 and a shoemaker. Dorthea was 38 and they had six children, Hanssine a daughter 17, Hans a son 16 who was a farm labourer, Andrew a son 14, Clara a daughter 7, Erma a daughter 5, and George a son 3.

The 1890 census records were all destroyed by fire and by the time the 1900 Federal Census was taken, Hans had passed away. In 1900, Dorthea was living with Stena Jacobs in Richmond, Cache County. According to the Ancestral File, Hans died April 24, 1889 in Midvale, Salt Lake County and Dorthea's thirteenth child was born October 31, 1889, six months after his death.

There are many gaps in Hans' life history but from the information I have been able to document, it shows that he was faithful to God and the church. If you consider the back ground he came from as a child, he must have been one of God's special spirits to be able to recognize and accept the Light of The Gospel. He not only accepted and lived the Gospel of Jesus Christ, he remained faithful until the end of his life, no matter what he was called upon to do.

Hans Christofferson now has posterity that probably numbers in the thousands. Among them are numerous strong and faithful members of the church. They are honest hardworking people that are loyal to their beliefs, their families and their country. On April 5, 2008, Hans' third great grandson, D Todd Christofferson, was

sustained as an Apostle of the Lord. The Lord must have been watching and caring for this family line all through the dark ages.

Appendix

Note: Ancestral File (1998) has records of Hans having five wives. There are many mistakes in these records. Elizabeth is listed twice as Elizabeth Jacobson and Elizabeth Neilson. Dorthea Peterson is listed twice. A Hanna Madsen is listed as a wife. She is probably the same as Hanna Christofferson Neilson that is in the IGI. There is also a wife named Karen or Kerry Marie Anderson. I could not find any documentation to prove Hans was married to this person. After numerous hours of research I could only document the three wives listed in the IGI.

Note: As of the present date, April 2008, I have not been able to find any additional information on wives Elizabeth and Hannah. It appears that Hans left them in Salt Lake City when he moved to Brigham City with wife Dorthea.

Note: From September 2007 until September 2008, I (Laural Bushman) served a mission in the Los Angeles Family History Centre. It was while there I did the research on the life of Hans' Christofferson and learned how to research ships records and census records. It was then I found on the passenger list of the ship `Jesse Munn` the infant, Hans Christofferson. I could find no other record of this child and felt strongly that I should have his name submitted to the temple to be sealed to his parents. It did not make sense. I thought that when Hans and Elizabeth were sealed to each other in the endowment house that they would have had this baby sealed to them. The feeling persisted however, until finally I did submit his name to the Los Angeles Temple.

On the last day of my mission, I had the opportunity to talk to the Temple President and ask questions. At that time, I learned that the revelation to have deceased children sealed to parents was not received until 1896. It was then I knew why the feelings had been so strong. When Hans was sealed to Elizabeth in the Endowment House, they did not know that they should or could have their deceased infant son sealed to them. Now he is I have not found a record of this particular child anywhere else.

Bibliography

* Information on Hans Christofferson's parents and his early life was taken from research done by Mrs. Betty Christofferson Raymond and from letters written to her from researcher Arne Jensen Knudby, CAND. MAG., Bispehusene 18, DK-2620, Albertslund,

Danmark. The letters were all dated between March 1994 and May 1995.

*Other sources are identified within the text.