

Maren Annette Anderson Christensen

Born 30 October 1846

Died 24 June 1921

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Maren Annette Anderson Christensen

Written by: Fred T Christensen (son)

Submitted by: Nettie Rhea Brady Adams (grand daughter)

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Maren Annette Anderson Christensen was born in Dramen, Norway on October 30, 1846 to Christopher Anderson and Anne Guerine Haagensen. There were six children in this family. The eldest daughter, Andrine and a son, Anders, died in infancy. Andreas grew to manhood and died at sea. The three younger daughters Annette, Christianna (later known as Aunt Yanna) and Amelia, together with their mother, after the death of their father in 1860, became converts to the L.D.S. church through the visits of Mormon Missionaries. They immigrated to America in 1863.

Little is known of Annette's life in Norway, other than that they lived in a city near the water's edge. The writer has heard her tell of taking her younger sisters in a rowboat for a ride; one of the little girls falling in the water and the difficult time she had drying the child's clothing before going home. Her father, being a carpenter on a sail ship was away from home much of the time. From the few details given of her early life, it is concluded that they were in comfortable circumstances until the father died at sea.

In 1861 or 62 Anne Guerine managed to save enough to pay for their passage to America and to Utah. At the time of their departure for America, being in humble circumstances, they were then forced to sail second or third class on the sailing vessel and were treated much like cattle during their six weeks journey across the Atlantic Ocean.

Arriving at New Orleans, after some delay, they went by steam boat up the Mississippi River to Keokuk, Iowa. Inconsiderate of the Mormon Immigrants, if a child fell into the Mississippi River, the crew would not stop the boat to pick it up from the churning waters but would steam on up the river with no concern.

After some delay, their company was fitted out with wagons drawn by Ox teams and the journey across the plains was begun. Grandmother Anderson (Anne Guerine), being a simi-invalid, Annette walked the entire distance to Utah in order that her mother might have a place in the wagon and her younger sisters ride a part of the time. Not much is known of this long journey

overland to Utah, but the writer has heard her say that when each day ended it was her assignment to gather her apron full of Buffalo "chips" to be used for fuel in cooking the meals.

Just how long she remained in Salt Lake City is not known, but Sanpete County, Utah, was designated as a place for settlement of Scandinavian Immigrants. It is presumed that this mother and her three daughters were assigned to Fairview, about one hundred miles south from Salt Lake City, to be cared for by sympathetic friends.

Not much is known of their early activities in this new and strange place. Although they were not destitute when they left Norway, their funds were exhausted when they began life anew under these unusual circumstances.

On September 23, 1865 Annette was married to Otto Edward William Thorvald Christensen as second wife, as plural marriage was practiced by the Saints at that time. Christianna (Aunt Yanna), the second daughter was married to James Martin Allred, and Amelia, the youngest to James Vance in 1873.

After a lingering illness, the mother, Anne Guerine, passed away January 25 1874 and was laid to rest in the Fairview Cemetery.

Some years after the polygamous marriage of Otto and Maren Annette, Otto and his first wife, Mary Ann, decided to separate. Mary Ann taking with her their daughter Luanne, and Otto their two boys, Edward and Charles. There being no alternative, Maren Annette assumed the care of these boys and thus made them a part of her family. During the interval an epidemic of Diphtheria broke out in the neighborhood. Edward and Charles were afflicted; also my sister (Rena) Guerena, and Amelia; all being ill at the same time. With the help of kind neighbors and the use of home remedies (no doctors were available), Charles, Tena and Amelia recovered, but Edward passed away. This took place in the two rooms at Fairview where they lived at the time.

In the fall of 1877 Otto was called by the Church authorities to fill a mission for the church in his native Denmark. He responded and left his home late in October, 1877. His son, Fred, was born on November 7, ten days after his departure.

In Fairview, Maren Annette experienced the frightening effects of the Black Hawk Indian war. It was not uncommon for her to gather her small children and rush into a nearby home for protection when an alarm was sounded on a brass drum. (The Fairview Mercantile stands on the south east corner of the block up on which the fort was built.) She mentioned particularly a family in Thistle Valley, some miles to the north, being slaughtered by Indians, their feather bed being ripped open and the feather strewn over their bleeding bodies. Also seeing a boy who had been herding cows nearby, ride into town with arrows shot into his back by Indians as he rode to give the alarm. The boy, having left his companion killed on the spot, lived but a short time after his arrival in town.

There being no modern appliances and but little money, the pioneer woman was forced to utilize whatever was available to supply their household needs. Procuring a few fleeces of wool from those who had sheep; they washed the wool by hand and carded it into rolls, they spun it into

yarn on a homemade spinning wheel, which provided a fabric for clothing and blankets to be used as the needs required. It was then woven into cloth by a weaver on a handmade and operated loom. Annette brought her spinning wheel to Colorado and her daughters were taught how to "card and spin". She also saved a few rags from the small amount of commercial cloth available, coloring them with dyes obtained from the blossoms of Rabbit Brush and other tints of nature, which were found in Choke Cherries and other wild plants. Sometime after arriving in Colorado, she procured the agency for Cushing's Perfection Dyes, which she sold at a small profit to neighbors. She also had an agency for some patent medicines, including "Japanese Oil" a strong smelling liquid used for aches and pains. From this small fund, postage stamps were purchased along with other cash requirements and sometimes the necessary 25 cents needed for a dance ticket was handed to her sons when they grew old enough to take part in such social gathering and no other money was available.

Within a year after Otto returned from his mission to Denmark, he arranged for the immigration of Wilhemina Peterson, whom he had met while there, and they were married.

In 1880, together with others from Utah, father received a call from Church authorities to go to the San Luis Valley in southern Colorado and establishing a colony where church converts from the Southern States had begun a settlement in 1879. These People knew nothing about western farming and irrigation. More experienced men who knew something about livestock and western farming were needed to help them get started. He responded to this call and in the early fall, with his young wife, Wilhemina, her infant daughter Emma, and his son Charles, now 14 as a teamster, left Fairview with two covered wagons, arriving at Manassa in September of 1880.

Annette, again being left alone with her family, got along as best she could. In 1882, Otto advised her to sell her home and most of her belongings, purchase a team of horses, a wagon, pack a few belongings and join others leaving Fairview on August 10, arriving at Ephraim, a new settlement a few miles northeast of Manassa, September 20th. The services of a young man, Christian Crusier, were procured to drive the team in making the trip. The trek across the mountainous country from Fairview to the San Luis Valley was uneventful. Jordan Brady, Newton Wilson and Peter Cheney with their families were in this company.

The writer, (Fred T., Annette's son), though a small child, recalls an incident which was very frightening to Annette, The D&G Railroad from Alamosa to Durango had been completed but a year or two earlier. Daughters Rena and Amelia, with two of the Wilson girls decided to walk on the bridge of the railroad which was about 75 feet high over a deep canyon. The railroad and wagon road ran parallel at this point. The girls, laughing and joking at this high elevation, did not hear the whistle of a nearby locomotive and were unaware of danger.

The shouts and screams of their mothers and others standing below soon drew their attention and the girls barely had time to scamper to the end of the high bridge when the train passed along, much to the relief of all concerned.

In Ephraim Annette and family lived in a tent, while a rough board house, (one room) was being erected. This small building was made of rough edge lumber, nailed vertically, with cracks between battered or covered over with the same material. The roof, the same way, but covered

with a layer of dirt. Here Annette and her family of five lived during the first winter keeping warm as best they could around a small stove, using cottonwood timber for fuel, drawing water by hand in a bucket from a shallow surface well for all domestic purposes. Two cows, having been driven with other from Utah, furnished milk for the family, which supply was limited as their main feed was straw from grain grown by settlers who had arrived in 1880.

Here Annette assisted by her girls, took up carding and spinning of wool. A two room log house was erected during the summer of 1883 and the family was a bit more comfortable for the time being. During the first few years the family lived in Ephraim, an eighty acre farm had been acquired about one mile from the village., Here farming was carried on in a small way; plowing and tilling the small pieces of land between knolls and hollows, sowing seed by hand after the brush had been cleared. Harvesting was done by horse drawn reaper with a contrivance operated with a foot lever, placing small bundles of grain in small piles to be tied into bundles with straw bands. This binding was done by the girls; the boys being too young to assist, were assigned the job of finding green sheaves of straw from the small piles which could be used to make the bands without breaking.

It was during these early years at Ephraim that the older girls, Rena and Amelia, fell in love with their future husbands, Lindsay E. Brady and Andrew Paulson, respectively. Rena and Lindsay were married in the Logan Temple on December 30 1885. Amelia and Andrew were married in the Logan Temple also on October 12, 1887. Mary remained at home with her mother and brothers for some time, working as a house maid for various families during the interval.

In Ephraim Annette was made president of the Primary Association where she served zealously until the town side was abandoned.

The struggles of pioneering, and for other unknown reasons in 1887, Otto and Annette separated, she being allowed a team of horses which had brought the family to Colorado, And as guardian for the sons, Will and Fred, a deed for the 80 acres of land above mentioned, was to her.

At this time Church authorities had advised the town of Ephraim be abandoned, owing to water seepage, and a new site be located about three miles north on a higher elevation. The husbands of Rena and Amelia having erected small log houses at this place, named Sanford, they also built a one room log house for Annette to be occupied while the log residence in Ephraim was being moved to the new location. Here Annette began pioneer life again for the third time. Here, although much occupied in caring for the needs of her family, she found time to serve the Church in the Relief Society and again as President of the Primary Association.

Making her own soap; sewing rags for a new carpet; carrying water from an outside well and heating it on a small stove; doing the washing by hand (in her life time she never owned a washing machine.) knitting stockings and mittens for her children, her idle moments were few, yet when Saturday night arrived we were given to understand it was bath night. Water was heated on the small kitchen stove, the wash tub brought in and placed beside it, and our ablutions went through a regular course, though often in the winter time the side away from the stone became chilled before the process was completed. Our clean clothes, often patched and mended, made us ready for the Sabbath next day.

A few chickens, together with a cow or two, furnished eggs and butter for the family use; the surplus being taken to the store and sold in exchange for a little sugar, salt, kerosene, and a few other essentials for food and clothing. It was not uncommon to see Annette walking to the store with a mall pail of eggs, a pound of butter, and carrying a half gallon can for kerosene under her well-worn cape.

The morning meal often consisted of pieces of bread steamed in a skillet with a portion of grease poured over it and seasoned with salt and pepper. Clabbered, unskimmed milk, with homemade bread, was often the menu for the evening meal. In some way she saved enough money to purchase a sewing machine, thereafter making her dresses, our shirts and underwear.

It was in December of 1889 that Louise Sorensen Christensen, wife of Charles Christensen, passed away, leaving a small son, Otto and an infant Louis, two weeks old. There being no other alternative, the parents of Louis, the Sorensens, took the older child into their care and Annette, through sympathy took the infant Louise into her home to care for, Fred will never forget the cold winter December morning when mother came into our home carrying in her arms this motherless child. Not being accustomed to nursing a baby other than the natural way and the baby being far from normal in health, the care, anxiety and sleepless nights experienced in his early life are too numerous to mention.

Annette cared for him as her own and provided him with schooling as time passed. After grade he attended the San Luis Stake Academy and later served our country in the First World War; serving in the USA, France and Germany.

Each of her children and Louis loved her dearly and as the years passed, Rena and her family returned to Utah to make their home; Amelia lived one block away and besides caring for her own family gave mother much attention; Will and Fred lived on the same block as their mother and saw her frequently. The grandchildren too, as they grew older, were very attentive.

When Mary, who had married Willis Alphonzo Brady, died in Fairview, Utah, on May 17, 198, Annette went to Fairview. She attended Mary's funeral and then assumed the care of Mary's family of small children. She returned home, her heart broken, as this was the first break in the family members she had experienced. Louis, the foster son, being with her and seeing him almost grown up after the arduous task of his raising seemed to stimulate her grief.

In June of 1913, Nellie Christensen, Will's wife passed away, leaving a family of small children without a mother's care. Annette, now 67 years of age, again found place for unstinted service. Although Will had excellent assistance from a kind young lady in the person of Sylvia Hostetter, she felt the responsibility of these children and gave them attention until late in 1914, when he married Dixie Faucett, who so nobly assumed the care of the family.

Even though foreign born and mingling in early life with those who spoke the dialect Norwegian, she learned to speak English perfectly. She was envied by her children for her beautiful penmanship. Through correspondence she ever encouraged those whom she loved and was ever ready to share what she had with friends and neighbors.

Suffering with Rheumatism much of the time for her later life, she would often forecast weather changes by the aching of the muscles of her limbs. In late years she developed stomach trouble, from which she could get but little relief. Fred vividly recalls wringing towels from water as hot as she could bear, applying them to her abdomen to alleviate pain. Finally taking her to Denver, Colorado for a diagnosis of her ills, with no permanent relief found. Local doctors could relieve her only temporarily.

After a lingering illness of several weeks, much of this time in great pain, on the morning of June 24, 1921, Annette passes away to her great reward. Her four living children were with her and saw her sadly laid to rest in the Sanford Cemetery, where a marker of marble with the dates of birth and death inscribed with bold letters "Mother" at the top.

This closed the earthly life of one of God's most choice spirits. Although not known throughout the world as some women may be, she served her family, her community, her church and country as only a true Christian mother can serve. We of her posterity have hoped that as she passed to a better land, that she was cheered by the knowledge that the posterity which she left behind are enriched by her affectionate tenderness; consoled by the thought that her teachings have not been in vain which have been so helpful in our endeavors to tread paths of rectitude and of honor. The boy or girl who has shared life under a devoted mother's care has had a privilege never to be forgotten; made richer as the days pass by in the wonderful memories that only we can relive with MOTHER. May we ever cherish the meaning of the word, so meaningful of all, MOTHER.