

William Christopher Christensen

William Christopher Christensen was born July 18, 1875, at Fairview, San Pete County, Utah, being the fourth child of five children and the first son of Otto Edward Thorwald Christopher and Karen Annette Anderson Christensen. His father was Danish and his mother Danish-Norwegian, both immigrated to America when very young. His mother walked across the plains, allowing her invalid mother to ride in a wagon.

Living in the days of plural marriage, his mother was the second of three wives. When he was only two, his father was called on a mission to his native Denmark, leaving his mother with four children, and ten days after he departed the fifth child, a boy, was born. These were trying and hard times and continued to be so for some time.

He moved with his mother, three sisters, and a brother to the San Luis Valley, settling in Manassa, Colorado, in September of 1882; then later seven miles north to Sanford where the land was better.

When old enough to work (twelve years) he was taken out of school to farm the eighty acres that his father had provided them with.

William was blessed with a wonderful mother, who taught him to work, honor the priesthood, to pray, and to live a good clean life.

When twenty-two years old, William was called on a mission to the Southern States, where he served twenty-seven months, mostly in the state of Louisiana. He served his mission without purse or script. He, along with his companion, were mobbed and threatened several times but were never harmed.

Upon returning from his mission, he fell in love with Dixie Leona Faucett and proposed to her, but she refused. This was a difficult decision for Dixie as her mother had passed away, leaving seven children to care for and she, being the oldest, felt her responsibility should be at home helping her father.

William met another young woman by the name of Nellie Miner and soon after was married. To this union six children were born: Ora Naren, Alta Enola, Velma, Nellie Dee, William Ferrel, and Reo H. Alta Enola passed away when sixteen days old. Reo died November 16, 1957, when his plane crashed in a heavy snowstorm on Soldiers Summit in Utah.

When Rep was about $1\frac{1}{2}$ years old, Williams wife Nellie took sick and died November 27, 1913, leaving William with five children. Williams mother came to his rescue and helped him with the children. Sylvia Hostetter and Hazel Neilson also helped with the work and the children.

William was doing contract work and was building roads and canals. He started corresponding with his old girlfriend, Dixie Faucett, who had never married. In the spring of 1914, William again proposed and she accepted. They were married in the Salt Lake Temple December 18, 1914. To this union four children were born: Vaughn L., Leona, Clayl Dixon, and Kurt Jay. Clayl passed away when six years of age with after effects of the measles.

During the depression of 1925, 26, and 27, William lost his ranch, was in bad health, as also were his children. He decided to go to a lower climate, so in 1929 he started on his way to Arizona. On the way he stopped to see his old friends Don and Mattie Christensen who lived in Kirtland, New Mexico. Don, then in the coal mine business, persuaded William to haul coal for him. This eventually led to moving his family to Fruitland, New Mexico. Besides hauling coal, he, along with his boys to help, farmed an eighty acre farm.

On September 14, 1930, he was set apart as Bishop of Burnham Ward in Kirtland by Melvin J. Ballard. While Bishop, he worked hard to carry out his duties, and will be remembered for the Pioneer Day Celebration (July 24th) dances and entertainment that he tried to provide for the young people. William demonstrated his love for dancing and attended almost all the dances in his Ward up to his eighty-fifth year. He had many friends among the young people.

A few years later, William moved with his family to Ignacio, Colorado. There he had a beautiful farm and was especially proud of his wheat, yielding 54 bushels to the acre. While living there, he was made Branch President of Allison Branch and served in this capacity until he moved to Provo, Utah.

William lived in Provo for three years and worked in the building of Geneva Steel Mill. During this time he and his wife Dixie served on a Stake mission.

William decided to go back to Farmington, New Mexico, where he could be closer to his children. He bought a five acre farm, raised several hundred

chickens, and a small dairy herd. He sold milk and eggs to individual customers; thus he made a host of friends, at the same time asking the golden question, "Do you know anything about the Mormons?" He was a great missionary and always an example.

An Oil Company wanted to buy his farm and as the price was good and he was getting older and the work too much, he sold it and bought a home near where the L.D.S. Stake Center is now. It was here where William and Dixie lived until he passed away August 29, 1961.

William was a hard worker, and was active in the Church all his life. He served in many capacities, among which was Counselor in the Stake Sunday School, Bishop's Counselor, a member of the High Council, President of the Young Men's M.I.A., dance director, Branch President, Stake Missionary, Bishop for five years, and a Home Teacher. He also sent two of his children, Ora and Ferrel, on missions.

William was an example to all who knew him. He loved people and they loved him. He was honest, true, faithful, and a man of integrity all the days of his life.

Written and compiled by his daughter,
Leona Christensen McGee