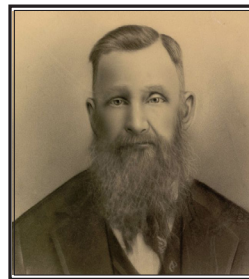


JENS O. PETERSEN

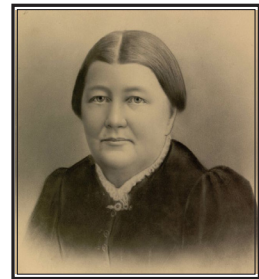
Born: 1820 Denmark

Age: 36

Willie Handcart Company

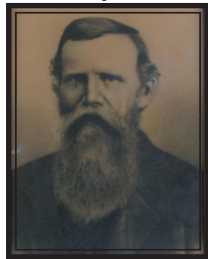


Jens O. Petersen

Anne Marie Jensen
Petersen

Jens worked as a cooper and was also an excellent cabinet maker. He made a sturdy and beautiful doll cradle for one of his daughters that is still in the family. In 1856, the Peterson family decided to emigrate to America. They left Liverpool, England, aboard the sailing ship *Thornton*. Jens had with him his wife, Anne Marie Jensen (age 32), daughters, Johanne Sophia (11), Mette Maria (9), and sons, Hans Peter (7), Christian O. (5), Peter O. (4), and James Christen (1). Ane and five of the six children had birthdays on their way to Zion.

Early in the journey, many of the handcarts broke down and repairs were necessary which caused greater delay. Jens's wife, Ane, worked hard alongside Jens in pulling the cart in which the smaller children rode. When they camped at night, Ane would bake what bread the entire family was to eat the following day. She also washed what clothes they had when possible. One night little Hans dreamed he was hungry and got up and ate all the bread that was to last the whole family the next day. Rations got so low that his mother would take their allowance of flour, wet it in a little cold water, then stir it into some boiling water without any salt.



Peter O. Petersen

Peter wanted to ride on the handcart one day but Jens said he couldn't. His mother picked him up and carried him awhile and let Jens pull the cart alone. The older children always walked, but there was a place fixed in a corner of the handcart for little James (called Jens).

Soon they were compelled to lighten their handcarts by unloading bedding and clothing, which later caused much suffering from the cold. All members of the Peterson family survived their trek.

When the company was stopped by storms near the Sweetwater, the last ration of food was given out. The rescuers reached them soon afterward, and helped them continue their heartrending journey. This was a terribly difficult experience for Jens and his young family. Besides the freezing cold, the blowing snow and uneven rocky ground made traveling very difficult.

Jens recorded an experience he had which was retold by his grandson, Jens Peterson: "When they were having such hard times with low rations and cold weather, one man decided he didn't want to put up with any more so just said he wasn't going another step. Different ones tried to talk to him and urge him to go on, but had no effect upon his decision. Grandpa, Jens O. Peterson, asked for permission to talk to the man. Some told him it wouldn't do any good, so they went on and grandpa tried to reason with him, but that did no good. Finally he said, 'Well, if you are not going, I'm going to give you a whipping before I go on,' and he slapped him quite hard on the face, and started running to catch up with the company. It made the man angry and he started after grandpa and both of them caught up to the company. The man went on and later thanked grandpa for saving his life."

Jens settled his family first at Fort Ephraim, where a daughter was born in September 1857. The family then moved to Brigham City for about two years, and finally settled in Logan. They had a total of twelve children. Jens died in Brigham City in January of 1900, at the age of 80. Ane died one year later, 17 February 1901, in Logan.

Sources: "Mette Maria Peterson Olsen, by Ada O. Morris; email from Howard Bangerter, July 2006; "Biographical Sketch of Elder James Olsen," by himself; "Ane Jensen Pedersen / Petersen," Daughters of Utah Pioneer history files; Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel website.

Mette Marie
Peterson