

SOPHIE CATRINE WILHELMINE KLAUEN PEDERSEN

Born: 17 August 1824 in VorFrelser, Copenhagen, Denmark

Age: 31

Willie Handcart Company



Sophie married Peder Pedersen when she was fairly young. They had seven children, two of whom died as infants. Peder died of a contagious disease in 1853 when Sophie was expecting her seventh baby. In her grief, Sophie was comforted with a dream:

She was calling the children in at night when she saw two men coming down her lane on the opposite side of the road. They were each carrying a suitcase. They crossed the street and came up to her and said, "We are messengers of God." A few weeks later, she was calling the children in for the night and there were two men walking down the road just as she had seen them in her dream. She recognized them immediately. They came up to her as in the dream and said, "We are messengers of God." She invited them into her home and they promised her that if she accepted the Gospel and lived it that she would have the privilege of shaking hands with a prophet of God.

Sophie was baptized by Elder C.W. Hoshmark and confirmed by Elder L.S. Skooby in December 1855. She made plans to immigrate to Zion and was blessed to sell her homestead for enough to pay the family's passage. Sophie sailed on the *Thornton* in May 1856 with her five children: Peter (age 10), Thomas (7), Emma Sophie (5), Anne Johanne (3), and Otto August Peter (1). Mariane Louise Lautrup (30) was traveling with this family. Sophie also paid Mariane's passage.¹ Sophie gave the balance of her money to two unnamed missionaries for safekeeping until she reached America. It was never returned. On May 3, Peter Madsen recorded in his diary: "Provisions were handed out for seven days: bread, meat, pork, tea, and sugar, oats, wheat flour, rice, etc. Water is given daily, as need arises. We have enough and it is good, likewise with the cooking: at a set time and place. Some tin ware was bought and distributed to those who could not pay, namely for ... Sophie Pedersen, 6 shilling 9 pence."

Four weeks later, on May 29, Sophie's world was shattered when her son, Thomas, "fell through one of the hatchways to the second between deck, a distance of about 20 feet, and very much fractured his skull." (Willie company journal) [At 11 o'clock on June 2, Thomas died.] "At 3 o'clock he was buried in the sea with the same ceremony as those who had previously died."² Elder Ahmunsen gave the funeral sermon and Captain Collin read some verses from the New Testament." (Peter Madsen diary)

The rest of the family struggled through the hardships of the handcart trek, and all survived to reach Salt Lake City on November 9. Sophie had some toes amputated due to frostbite. She moved to Manti, where she was cared for in the home of Albert Smith. He and Sophie were married in the Endowment House on February 18, 1857.

In Albert's journal he wrote about his "Danish woman." He recorded that Sophie was economical and kept their clothes neat and clean and patched, even "patch upon patch." He wondered where she got the patches from, but they were always neat and had something they could wear to church. Albert also recorded Sophie's kindness to his children from his first wife, who had died. His son, Azariah, had served in the Mormon Battalion at age 18, along with his father. Albert wrote: "Before we were discharged he was thrown from a horse and hurt his head most severely." Azariah went through a time when his head injury caused him to have violent "fits." One time Azariah fell into a fire during one of his fits and burned himself badly. These episodes lasted for several years but finally cleared up. Albert wrote. "I feel it my duty in justice to say a word or two about Sophiah my Danish wife. ... From the first till he got over his fits and left, she was a mother to Azariah. She kept his clothes neat and clean and waited over him both night and by day, through fear that he might fall into the fire or somehow get hurt." Perhaps Sophie had extra patience and understanding for Azariah because of the death of her own son from a head injury.

(Sophie Pedersen - Page 2)

On June 23, 1868, Sophie's oldest son, Peter, was drowned. He had gone with a number of others to the Missouri River to bring in trains of Mormon immigrants. Albert wrote:

We sent [six boys] from Manti, and Peter [age 22] went for one teamster. All them that went amounted to 500 teams with a driver to each team and a horseman to every 10 to look out for camping grounds and to assist to take care of the team which was three yoke to each wagon. When the camp got to the Green River, it was very high and the water very cold and it was a cold and windy day. They tried all day to swim their cattle across. At night, they, that is the Manti boys, with a boat load of cattle and lots of others, started in a ferry boat. The boat was forced across with rope and pulleys. The boat was too heavily loaded and the cable sagged on one side of the boat and caused it to tip over. Peter and 5 others got drowned. There was five of that number belonged in Sanpete County, and two in Manti. When the news was telegraphed to this place, their sudden death cast a gloom over Manti.

Peter's body was never found, and Sophie was filled with grief. "One morning as [Sophie] was doing her work, she heard Peter coming up the walk, whistling as he always did when happy. She went to the door and saw no one. She then knew that he was happy, so she never worried about him anymore." (Sophie Smith biography, Carol Green)

Sophie and Albert had seven children. Only three lived to maturity: Albertina, Albert and Charlotte. Albert's wife died in April 1889, and Charlotte died in June 1889. One year later, Albertina died. Sophie helped raise seven motherless grandchildren for quite a few years.

Sophie lived to see the fulfillment of the dream she had in Denmark and the promise made to her by the missionaries. Sophie had prayed fervently that she would someday have the opportunity of shaking hands with an apostle. This prayer was answered when she attended a conference in Salt Lake City. Heber C. Kimball walked up the aisle past her, turned around and came back and spoke to her. He told Sophie the Lord was pleased with her. He spoke in English. Sophie responded in Danish. They both understood each other.

Sophie and Albert attended the Manti temple dedication in 1883 and then served in the temple faithfully in their older years three to four times a week. They prepared 1,500 family names for temple work. Albert and Sophie are buried in the cemetery at the foot of the Manti Temple hill.

¹As recorded in the Scandinavian Mission Record

²"The body was wrapped in canvas and covered with the American flag. It was carried out with ceremony by the brethren. ... The body was then lowered into the ocean." (Willie Journal, May 8.)

Sources: Willie Company Journal; Peter Madsen Diary; "Sophie Catrine Wilhelmine Klauen Pedersen Smith," family history (including diary of Albert Smith), compiled by Carol Green, 3rd great-granddaughter; "Emigration from Copenhagen Conference in the spring 1856," Scandinavian Mission Record; familysearch.org; Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel.



Emma Sophia Petersen



Otto August Petersen



Ane Johanna Marie Petersen