

## LARS GUDMUNDSSON VENDIN

Born: 1796 Sweden (Died Oct. 23/24, 1856, buried at Rock Creek in the common grave)

Age: 59

Willie Handcart Company

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Lars Vendin was from Sweden. Little is known of him prior to his emigration in 1856. He was married to Kristina Caspersdatter and they had at least one child—a son Johan Emanuel Larsson, christened 2 December 1829. The Scandinavian Mission Record lists him as Lars G. Vendin, age 59, from Sweden, watchmaker. His “receiving number” on this record is “34,” directly following the Wicklund family, numbers 28-33. The Wicklund family was also originally from Sweden. The British Mission Record for the ship *Thornton* shows Lars G. Wendin, age 59, from Sweden, watchmaker, and PEF passenger, meaning he was traveling with a loan from the Perpetual Emigrating Fund of the Church.

Lars apparently joined the Church after moving from Sweden to Denmark. According to some accounts, Lars had carried with him a treasured silver watch. After the trek across Rocky Ridge on October 23, Lars could not continue and he lay at death’s door. Rather than be buried with his watch, Lars reportedly asked that it be turned over to the Perpetual Emigrating Fund in order to cover his expenses. Others in the company may have also benefited from this donation.

It appears in the company records that Lars was traveling by himself, without other family members, but surely not without friends.

According to research analysis done by Jolene Allphin, Lars was housed in the same tent with the Jens and Elsie Nielson family, the Ole and Ane Madsen family, the Peter and Ane Larson family, and the Rasmus P. and Anna Hansen family. Ole Madsen died the same night as Lars and was buried in the same grave with him at Rock Creek Hollow. Peter Larson and Rasmus Hansen also died in October, along with two of Peter Larson’s children. Two other children: Neils Neilson (son of Jens and Elsie Nielson), and Bodil Mortensen (who was traveling with the Nielson family) also died the same night as Lars Vendin and are buried in the same grave at Rock Creek.

No doubt Lars did all he could to assist these other families in his tent group before he died. Of the night Lars Vendin died, Jens Nielson wrote: “I told you there were five men to the tent, but now four of them were dead and I was the only man left, so I had to ask some of the largest and strongest women to help me to raise the tent, and it looked like we should all die.”

Sources: Scandinavian Mission records and British Mission records (Church history library and Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel website); diary of Peter Madsen, clerk for the Danish section of the Willie handcart company, Church History Library; autobiographical letter from Jens Nielson to son, Uriah Nielson, March 20, 1901, in *History of Jens Nielson and Family*, compiled by Clarka B. Peterson (1998), 30, in files of Jolene S. Allphin, courtesy Mike Peterson.