

A History of Jens Jeppesen and Maren Madsdatter

By Cora Weihbrecht

Maren Madsen Jeppesen. Maren (Mary) was born on July 21, 1831 in Estruplund, Randers County, Denmark, the daughter of Mads Pedersen and Karen Jensen. Nothing is known of her early life. On April 28, 1855 she married Jens Jeppesen and to them seven children were born. In later years she moved to Centerfield and lived with her daughter, Sophia, until the time of her death, April 27, 1912. She was a sincere and devout Latter-day Saint. She lived her religion all day and every day. She was a Christian in every sense of the word. She was saving and thrifty. She was a small woman with large brown eyes. She kept the Word of Wisdom and prayed on her knees by the side of her bed. I remember one thing that has always stayed with me. In order to save thread she would thread and re-thread the needle until every speck of the thread was used. It took many tries before she could get the thread into the eye of the needle. But she patiently stayed with it. I can see her yet, and she said, "If at first you don't succeed, try, try, try, try, again."

Jens Jeppesen. Jens Jeppesen was born in Drastrup, Randers County, Denmark on July 14, 1817. He was a blacksmith. His first wife was Sophie Dorteia Christensen, and to them two daughters were born and one son. These children lived and spent their lives in Denmark. After the death of Sophie, Jens married Maren Madsen in August of 1854. To them were born four children while in Denmark, Mads, born January 7, 1855 and died that month on January 27, 1855. Jensine Mariane born August 23, 1856 and died December 1892, Jeppe Anton born November 5, 1858 and died January 24, 1924, and Jens Peter born July 27, 1860 and died February 10, 1865. With their three children, Sena, Anton, and Peter, they came to America. It took eight weeks to cross the ocean. They had been converted to the Mormon Church at Estruplund, Denmark. They crossed the plains and suffered all the hardships of hunger, etc., that they could bear. They settled in Moroni, Sanpete County. In this place their son, Peter, died. While there, their daughter Sophia was born on January 24, 1864. They later moved to Fort Gunnison, Gunnison, Utah. Here Jens was a blacksmith and farmer. The fort was built for their protection from the Indians, some of it being converted into homes. The house in which the Jeppesen family lived formed part of the wall. At night, the men took turns acting as guards placed around the fort. At this fort, Jen's home was blessed with a pair of twins, Peter and Mary, born on October 22, 1866. Peter died on January 9, 1867. In 1871 Jens moved his family to Salina. The Indians were very troublesome here, stealing their cows and horses. After the Indian scare was over, Jens again moved his family back to Gunnison, where they built a home. Jens Jeppesen was a very religious man and an active Church worker – officiating in the offices of the Priesthood which he held. He believed in the solemn observance of the Sabbath with no play or laughter, but attending Church, reading and resting. The last three or four years of his life he was ill and much of that time he was confined to his bed. He died on November 23, 1879. On his gravestone is inscribed the following – "He died as he had lived a faithful Latter-day Saint."