

HISTORY OF JOHANNAH OLSEN AND THE HANS OLSEN FAMILY

Written by Inez Peacock Forbes, great-granddaughter of Johannah Olsen Allred.

Material for this history was obtained from Isaac Allred, son of Johannah Olsen Allred; from Nancy Allred, daughter-in-law of Johannah Olsen Allred; from Chasta Olsen Harris, granddaughter of Hannah Olsen Seeley and from family records.

Hans Olsen, son of Lars Olsen, was born 1 May 1801. He lived in Helterbogr, (Hytleberga) Sweden. He married Kjersti Persson, daughter of Perrrs.* They had ten children, three boys and seven girls. Only eight children are listed in family history. Their children were: (F) Benta; (F) Eliza, m. Niels B. Nielsen; (M) Ola; (F) Johannah, m. Wiley Payne Allred; (F) Ingrid, m. Peter Nielsen; (M) Peter, b. 1836; (M) Niels; (F) Hannah, m. Orange Seeley.

It is supposed that Hans Olsen owned property in Sweden and was a farmer there. Nothing is written anywhere about the family home or conditions in Sweden but from the way events turned out they must have been a closely knit family. The parents and four of the girls came to Utah but none of the boys came or joined the church.

When the L.D.S. missionaries were preaching the Gospel in Sweden, about 1854-56, they must have made quite an impression on Kjersti Persson Olsen, the wife of Hans Olsen, and also on some of her daughters. Kjersti wanted to join the church but her husband and sons were bitterly opposed to it. Many of their associates were also unpleasant about the new faith. However, her desire must have been very great because one winter night she took her youngest child, a thirteen year old girl named Hannah, and they slipped out of the house at midnight and walked six miles to Slimeing, Sweden, to be baptized. The missionaries had to break a hole in the ice for them to be baptized. They kept it a secret from the husband.

The daughters of Hans and Kjersti soon began making plans to come to America. Their mother gave consent for Eliza and Hannah to go to Copenhagen, Denmark, to work and save money. They worked in a China Factory polishing dishes until Hannah was nineteen years old. In the meantime they visited their home in Sweden several times before making the important decision of coming to join the Saints in America. In 1862, the two girls, Hannah and Eliza, paid their fare to come across the ocean; but Eliza went to see her father before she sailed, and he said if they would wait another year he would come with them. Eliza waited, but Hannah, young, pretty and impetuous, was determined to sail. She left Sweden in April 1862 and sailed on the ship Atana. She landed in New York in July, after seven weeks on the water.

From New York Hannah traveled westward and when she crossed the Missouri river at Florence, Nebraska, there was a group of men from Utah waiting to escort them across the plains. Among the men was a young handsome fellow named Orange Seeley. When he saw Hannah he exclaimed, "There is my girl". The feeling must have been mutual because she went to live at Mount Pleasant Utah, and they were married the next spring, 24 July 1863.

(*Kjersti Persson, daughter of Perrrs - Explanation: In previous family records and stories, this name was Chasta Akesson, but further research by the Harris family, and by Vivian Peacock Ditlevsen, proves the name to be Kjersti Perrson.)

In this same year, 1863, the three sisters of Hannah, Johannah, Eliza and Engrie came to America. The parents did not come at this time as they had planned to do. They came four years later in 1867. After their arrival they settled in Mount Pleasant, Utah, and lived out their remaining years there. It was here that Hans Olsen joined the church. He was baptized 9 June 1871. He died in January 1896.

Johannah Olsen was the fourth daughter of Han Olsen and Kjersti Perrson. She was born 10 Nov. 1835 in Sjorup, Helterborg (Hytteberga) Sweden. She was 28 years old when she came to America. She was a typical Swedish girl, about five feet seven inches tall, with large blue eyes and dark wavy hair that was as fine as silk. The three girls came to America on much the same route as their sister Hannah had. They were also met at Florence, Nebraska by an emigrant wagon train. Eliza was able to secure a ride but Johannah and Engrie had to walk most of the way to Utah.

While the emigrant train was wending its way toward Salt Lake Valley, Wiley Payne Allred and his son, Parley Pratt Allred were visiting in Salt Lake City. The young boy wanted to go out and meet the wagon train. His father told him that when he met it, he could choose a wife for him. (The Church Authorities had advised the men of the church to take these emigrant girls as their wives so that they would have security and a means of a livelihood as they moved into the circles of communities and the people of the church. When the wagon train entered the valley, Wiley Payne went to welcome it. His son pointed Johannah out to him as the girl he had chosen for his father's new wife.

Wiley Payne Allred had lost his first wife years before as they had started across the plains for Utah. He buried her at Council Bluffs, Iowa. She left him with five small children. Soon after her death he married Elizabeth Chapel, 2 July 1851, a young widow who had also lost her husband enroute to Utah from England. This marriage had been advised by Church Authorities for the mutual protection and help of the two families. It was not a marriage instilled by love, and from the very beginning Elizabeth and Wiley were not very congenial with one another. They had one daughter, Eliza, born a year after their marriage 31 July 1852, at Provo, Utah.

Wiley P. married Johannah Olsen soon after she arrived in Utah. They were married in Salt Lake City, 28 Oct. 1863. He took her to his home in Mount Pleasant, Utah. This was the same town where her sister Hannah lived.

The wife, Elizabeth, did not take kindly to this young emigrant girl. It is easy to understand her resentment. In spite of their incompatibility, Elizabeth had been Wiley P. Allred's wife for twelve years. She had raised the family that had been left motherless on the plains and had taken good care of them. Now that they were raised and ready to take care of themselves, Wiley had brought a new wife into her home. However it was very difficult for Johannah to bear up under the strain of Elizabeth's resentment.

From the very beginning of her marriage, Johannah loved and respected her husband and was very proud to be his wife. Things were undoubtedly difficult for him in his home. Johannah was unable to speak English and she was reclining and dependent of her husband. He was a proud stern man with a good education for the times, and he expected a lot from his family. He was often impatient and irritable with Johannah. She tried to please him and conform to his wishes; showing her gratitude to him by working hard and co-operating with him in all of his endeavors.

After Elizabeth's daughter got married, Elizabeth left Wiley P. and went to live with her daughter, Eliza.

There were many troubles to contend with at this time. The family was disrupted from their home many times because of Indian wars and because of pioneering new settlements. During the years that Johannah was having her babies she had to move many times so that her children were born in several different places. She had seven children and loved them very dearly. Some of them died as babies and this was very hard on her. Her first child, William Alma, was born in Monroe, Sevier County, Utah. The second child, Hulda, was born in a little settlement called Deseret, in Millard County. Martin, Isaac and Rueben were born in Fountain Green, (Rueben only lived a few months born 23 April 1874 and died in February 1875) Sena was born in Spring City 15 Dec. 1875 and died in 15 Jan. 1876. John Taylor was born at Spring City, 31 Dec. 1879.

When Johannah had been Wiley Payne's wife for about eight years, a similar event happened to her that had happened to Elizabeth. Wiley Payne fell in love with a very refined lady, Carolina Andrea Frederickson from Copenhagen, Denmark. (born 18 Nov. 1841). These two people must have had much in common in background and education. The family said that their father thought very highly of this woman. She was a delicate person and in poor health when he married her. (31 July 1871). She only lived sixteen months after her marriage and died 10 Nov. 1873. During this time Wiley was completely devoted to her, neglecting Johannah and the family to be at her side.

This was very heart-breaking for Johannah. She turned to her children for the love and comfort she needed. She also poured out her love to them that she longed to give to her husband. It has been said of Johannah that she spoiled her children; especially her youngest son, John. She was very kind to them. She sometimes scolded them when they needed correcting, but she never spanked them. She bore her trials with a submissive courage, taking things as they came and trying to make the best of each situation. She was a hard working woman, an average good housekeeper and cook. She could make wonderful salt rising bread and she loved her cup of tea. She also liked fish which is typical of Swedish people.

Johannah carded lots of wool and spun it into yarn and knitted socks for all the family. Although sewing was not a favorite task with her, she made all the clothes for her family, even coats, pants and underwear. Her husband didn't care much for chickens but Johannah loved to have them around and she took good care of them.

She was a devoted Latter-Day-Saint and had a strong testimony of the Gospel. She was very prayerful. Her son Isaac said that many times he would go into her room and find her on her knees in prayer. It was this faith that sustained her through many hardships and heart-breaking times. She didn't take much part in public; perhaps because of her inability to speak the English language which she never learned to speak well, and perhaps of her reclining disposition. However, she liked to sing her little Swedish songs around her home. She also made an effort to see that her children went to Church and participated in public affairs.

When the family finally settled in Spring City, they thought it would be a permanent home. Wiley P. built a nice rock house and they were more comfortable than they had ever been. Johannah's mother and father lived in the neighboring town of Mount Pleasant and many times she would take her young children and walk

to Mount Pleasant and stay overnight with her parents. They had a small lot of ground on the west side of Mount Pleasant where they raised much of their food. For a time life was peaceful and Johannah was happy.

Her security was short lived. Wiley's older children had married and made homes of their own. As Johannah's boys grew up their father began looking around for a place to settle so the boys could take up homesteads. The land was all taken up in Sanpete County. In 1884 they left their comfortable home and surroundings to move to Emery on the Muddy Creek. The first summer Johannah lived in a dugout in the side of a hill. When her son Martin arrived it was raining and there was nothing but sticky clay mud. He said to his Mother, "Why did Father leave beautiful Spring City to come to this God forsaken place?" She took the move graciously and assured her sons it was best for them.

The family built a two room adobe house on the Muddy where they lived until they moved into the town of Emery. Here their son Isaac and their son-in-law built a large one room log house with a fire-place at one end. Johannah also had a cook stove for the first time. (Son-in-law - Joseph Nielson).

Johannah and her husband lived out their remaining years in Emery. Wiley Payne lived to the ripe old age of 94. She was 77 when he died and was in good health and might have spent a number of years with her family but she followed him in death by eight months.

It was a cold winter day and there was a big fire in the fire-place. Johannah stood with her back toward the fire and her skirts caught fire. She screamed and her son John rushed to her aid. He picked her up and started to run outside. Isaac met them at the door. He grabbed his mother away from John and rushed back into the house and quickly rolled her in a quilt to smother the fire. She was badly burned on her legs and body. Her daughter Hulda and her son Isaac, both endowed with their father's medical abilities, nursed and cared for their mother very tenderly. She lived for several weeks after the accident and passed quietly away. She died 18 Dec. 1912. She was laid to rest at the side of her husband in the Emery cemetery.