

Autobiography of  
**Ellen Hansen Larsen**

I was born in Manti City, Sampoete County, February 18, 1878 or 1877, daughter of Hans C. Hansen and Mary LeoNora Morley and was the fifth child.

The first experience in my life that I can remember, was sometime during the week of January 26, 1880. My mother was sick in bed, being confined having given birth to my sister younger than I. She had a hired girl that had done the family washing and had mopped up the floor, then went out to hang out the clothes. My brother older than me, and myself were running about the one room house, and I slipped and fell into the fireplace, with a big fire in it. (The fireplace was used for heating and cooking.) My hair and clothing caught fire, my mother screamed, jumped out of bed and got me out of the fire. There were no doctors in Manti at that time, but the lady that waited on my mother was sent for. She came and they put soot and lard plasters on my head. my arms and hands and legs. Oh, how it hurt! For weeks I lay in a cradle my father had made. I remember how it hurt every time the lady came and took off the old black plasters and put on new ones. I will carry the scars always.

Then there were three or four years that I can't remember much. In July 1883 when I was about 5, the scarlet fever was in the home. On the Fourth of July my sister younger than I died, and on the third of July my younger brother died. The two were buried in the same grave. Before this my father had built a new house of three rooms, and made some new furniture (one piece of which I still own). When he was painting the big chest, my brother and sister younger than me and myself thought we could do some painting so we made finger marks all over, where we could reach. Well paint could hardly be bought, and my father didn't have any more to do it over. Then when my sister and brother died, those finger marks became to precious to cover over and still are. They have been varnished over many time, but those marks are too precious to cover, lest we forget.

I was now the baby in the family, and was spoiled, humored and petted. Daddy would take me on his lap and sing all the sleepy-time songs he knew. He would take me with him whenever he could. One Sunday morning he was going to Sunday School. He could not take me with him, but he let me go a little way, as he did many times, and when I was on my way back home I could see some very delicious strawberries inside the neighbor's fence. So I crawled through the fence and picked some of the bright, red berries, then crawled out again. I then knew I shouldn't have done it, so when I got home I didn't want my mother to know it, so I went and crawled under my daddy's work bench to eat the berries. Soon I heard someone coming; it was the neighbor. He went and brought my mother to see me eating the berries. He had been watching me. She gave me a spanking and shut me up in a dark cellar for the rest of the day. It was awfully dark with only a crack in the door for light. Then my Daddy brought me some dinner, but I didn't want it. After a while he came and let me out, and then cooked me for crawling

under then fence for strawberries.

That fall my father with some other men came to Castle Valley to look for land to take up and to try for a better place to live, as his carpentry work wasn't enough to live on. My mother spun and wove and knit all their children's clothes, and my mother's health was not good. The company that came to Castle Valley at the time my father came, were: Hans P. Rasmussen, David Beach, Walter Bessie, William Peacock, and my father with their families. Peter Rasmussen and my father's brother Joseph came along horseback to drive the cattle. They would also ride on ahead to see if the road was passable. Many times they would ride back and stop the teams, while the men would go on and build roads. If there was any water nearby, the women would build a campfire and cook the meal while the teams were resting. Many places in Salina Canyon the roads were so narrow and slanting they would have to take one wagon at a time, and four or five men would ride on the upper side of the wagon to keep it from tipping over, and would dig a gutter on the upper side of the road so the wagons could not slip off the mountainside and into the river. They had to cross the river many times. Sometimes there would be ice that would hold up the first wagon, then maybe the next one would go through. Then they would have to chop ice and move it before the others could cross. In lots of places the mountains were so steep and rough they would have to hitch two and three teams on a wagon to get to the top of the hills. Brother Rasmussen had two span of mules, and I preferred to ride with him, because I thought four head of mules could keep the wagon from tipping over better than two head of horses, but I could walk with a lot of the other children of the company, and we did walk nearly all the way. A poem they wrote on the way:

Over hills and mountains we traveled,  
From early morn 'til night,  
Through canyon and through desert,  
With only a trail in sight.  
At night we camped by the road they had made,  
And our bedspring was merely hay,  
Our bodies were really tired,  
Before the break of day.

When we came down through Oak Springs and into Castle Valley, and for a long, long way, the wind blew sand and snow mixed into our faces and nearly blew the covers off the wagons. There was no water to camp on, and it was way in the night before we could camp and they had to pick up anything they could find to build a fire to see to eat. That was our introduction to Castle Valley. That night we camped under the ledges southwest of where Emery is now. But Emery was further east by the river. I think we landed in Molen, which was settled first, on the 4th of April, 1877.

For months we lived in a dugout in the south side of Bertha Beach's. There were no stores, so three or four teams would have to go together to Sampete for supplies. There was work to do every way you looked. The greasewood were so

thick you could hardly get through, on my father's claim, and they thought the soil was best where the brush grew the thickest. But after getting it broke up, they found it mostly to be hard pan. For our garden spot and our orchard, which my father hauled from Manti, he dug out the hard pan, and hauled it away to the creek bottom and hauled in its place dirt he dug from under the squawberry bushes, and mixed fertilizer with it. When worked up, it made very good garden spots and in three or four years work we raised melons by the wagon loads.

We also raised grapes and loads of potatoes, but had to go to Sanpete for the seed, so there was lots of road work to be done and there was no pay for it, only the use of the road. The oldest girls went to Manti to school the first two or three years, and stayed with my Father's parents. The first school house was also a church house, and was made of hewed logs, and made in a T shape. In a few years they organized a theatrical troupe that consisted of the following: Johnson Black McDonald and wife, their son John and daughter May, Jim Herery, Tom Jackson, Aunt Till, Walter Bessey, Lottie Hanson, Ester Fjeldsted, Hyrum and Emily Cook, and Maria Shoemaker. They put on many shows that brought in means to start a fund that was to help buy the new church house and furnishings.

Now I have strayed away from my autobiography so will slide back.

My first earnings was \$1.00. I went with my parents to the south fields in Manti and gathered ground cherries. My daddy told me I could sell all the cherries I could pick, and buy anything I wanted to. I was a little girl, but I could get around the biggest bushes and get the biggest cherries faster than the rest. In Manti at that time of the year they sold fast. So I got my first little hat. I wanted to buy something to wear that was bought, because my mother made all our clothes, spun the yarn and wove the cloth, knit our caps and stockings.

The first school I went to was in Molen. My first teacher was Maryetta McDonald. We all went to the school in the same room, from 6 years old to 20; no desks, one little table the teacher had for her use. The benches were made with plank with four good legs and as long as the room; a narrow hall at each end. We sat on the benches and held our book on our lap, but we had only about two books and a slate to write on. The benches were far enough apart so the teacher walked between, and she always had her knitting work and could see all the students, and if we were idle we would have to stand up in front and hold out our hand with a book on it. The same went if we whispered.

*Note: This is all that Grandma Larsen wrote in her autobiography. However Pearl, her oldest child, has contributed the rest from her memory.*

She grew to womanhood in Molen. Fell in love and married John F. Larsen. Other girls envied her because her husband moved her into a new frame house, with new furniture. That was very unusual in that day in that area. Four children were born in that house, without a doctor's assistance. They had only midwives at that time. Mother had many sick spells and had a heart ailment that plagued her all her life I guess. But one of the most serious sicknesses was a long siege of

typhoid fever.

One day Dr. Graham told father he had done all there was to do, that there was no hope for her. He said she wouldn't live until morning. Father sent the word to Grandpa and Grandma Hansen and Grandpa came up to sit the last night with her, so Father wouldn't have to be alone.

In the night Daddy came upstairs and brought of us children down one at a time to kiss Mother goodbye. She lapsed into a coma. A few hours passed slowly away. Then she opened her eyes, Saw Grandfather first and said, "Pa, I can't die yet, I've lots of temple work to do. I just can't die."

It was a long hard road to complete recovery. She had a couple months in bed. She had to learn to walk all over again. She lost all her hair, and when it came in again it was pure white. But she finally got well. She had three children after that: Two boys, Leonard and Chester, and a girl, Edna. When Leonard was born, her heart stopped beating and Dr. Graham injected a shot of strychnine into her heart. She had an infection from that wound and ironically it was that very scar or scar tissue that many, many years later became a cancer.

They raised their large family of nine children and performed three missions to the Manti Temple, then moved to Salt Lake to work in that temple. Mother had an operation for cancer, performed by Dr. Curtis Robbins on 15 January 1947 or 1948. She recovered enough to do more temple work and was fairly active for almost three years. Then she died in Salt Lake of cancer of the liver on 4 November 1950.

During the time she was raising a family and up until they moved to Salt Lake the last time, she was very active in the Church. She was President of the Y.W.M.I.A., President of the Relief Society, Secretary of the Relief Society, Sunday School teacher, Relief Society visiting teacher, and genealogy committee member. She loved music and sang very well. She with her housework, made artificial flowers, did hand sewing, crochet work. She loved to write poetry and songs, She and Father had lots of hardships and heartaches, but had lots of joy and happiness, too.

One dream that she had that impressed her very much was about our brother Leonard. For some time after they moved to Rochester, they weren't very active in the Church. Leonard had reached his twelfth birthday, when he should of been ordained a Deacon, but hadn't. One Saturday night she dreamed this dream that impressed the whole family so much that Sunday morning we all went to Church. The dream she had, she put into verse, and follows in this Book of Remembrance.

## **My Dream of the Judgment Day**

by Ellen Hansen Larsen

One Sunday morn before the day had broke,  
From fear and trembling I awoke,

I had had a dream that to me means much,  
That dream my trembling heart did touch.  
I dreamed the judgement day was at hand,  
And the people had been gathered from all over the land,  
Within a large round room, with a grandstand high,  
An engraved hall, for each one to pass by.  
At the end of the hall an oval table grew,  
A passage on each side, for you to pass through,  
The door on the right was glittering bright,  
While the one on the left was dark as the night.  
There was no other way to get from this place,  
Except to go to the right, or the left apace,  
Your actions show the way you may go,  
And are stamped in black or gold, just so.  
Upon this table lay a large book before,  
That measured about four feet by four,  
And in it was written every name,  
Some in glittering jewels, some showed no fame.  
Before this book sat an aged man,  
Turning page by page the best he can,  
His long beard, his hair, and clothes were white,  
And his dark blue eyes were sparkling bright.  
Each family waited on the grandstand high,  
For their names to be called, before they could pass by,  
The males and the mothers, were all they had to give,  
Full account of the lives they had had to live.  
We watched and waited for quite some time,  
For the turn of our family to fall in line,  
And Chester, being the youngest son,  
Was called and went the very first one.  
The judge motioned for him to take the right,  
He looked at the book, then passed through the door so bright,  
Then came the name of his brother Ray,  
And the judge motioned for him to go the other way.  
The oldest son had to fall in line,  
And to my discomfort, next name was mine,  
I went to the left as I was bid,  
As I looked at the book I would like to have hid.  
I then asked the judge, what the reason was about,  
The name of our Leonard had been left out,  
He has not acted, that is all that is due.  
Within the door on the judges right,  
Were arches set with jewels sparkling bright,  
All was a beautiful sight, I'll say,  
But few, were they, who chanced that way.  
Through the door on the left there was no charm,  
It was dark as the night and maybe harm,  
But many passed that weary way,  
Brimful of sorrow on that judgement day.

My dream to the children I had to tell,  
And off to Sunday School we all ran,  
Determined to make of ourselves, a better man.

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