

## Nicholas and Helena Larsen



Nicholas Larsen was born the youngest of nine children in Moss, Norway, December 18, 1855, to Lars Baardsen and Maren Sophia Anderson. In 1863 at age eight, he joined the LDS Church in Fredrickstead, Norway. This is also when his father died and at age thirteen he and his mother came to the United States. It took them three weeks to cross the ocean, as the vessel went backward and forward with the wind so much. They landed at Quebec and then sailed down the St. Lawrence River to Chicago where his sister, Annetta, lived. He went to school in Chicago and learned the English language.

He later went to Parleys Park in Utah where he worked on a ranch for Chester (Chet) Snider. When he became old enough, he worked in the silver mines at Park City, Utah, mostly in the Ontario Mine. He also helped with the building of the foundation for the Salt Lake City Temple by hauling rocks with a yoke of oxen. The rocks were so large, they were fastened under the wagon to haul them to the Temple grounds. They could only haul one at a time.

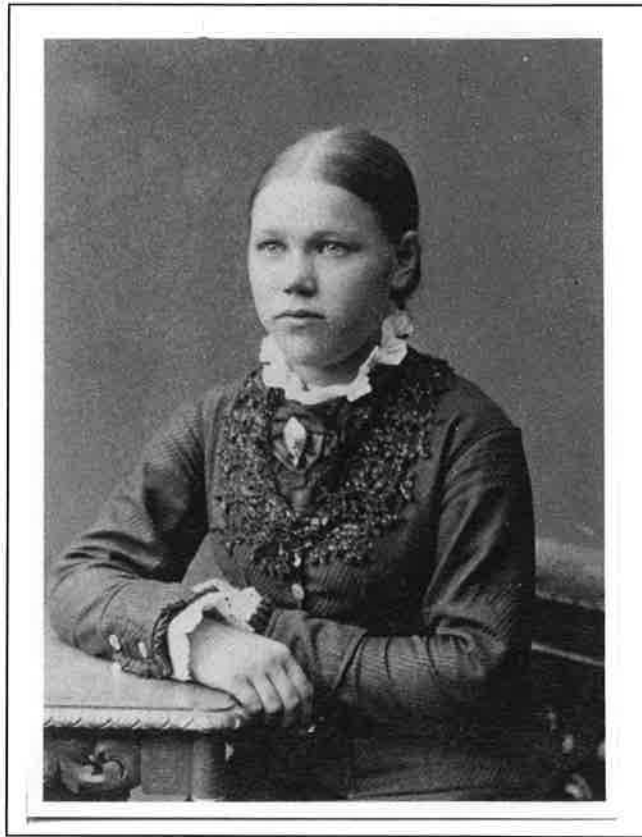
He and his mother later went to Ephraim and he built a one room log house where he and his mother lived for a while. This is where he met Helen Alfsen (also a native of Norway) and they were married November 7, 1877 at Spring City, Utah. The ceremony was preformed by Orson Hyde.

## Helen Alfsen Larsen

I, Helen Alfsen Larsen, was born in Gjerstad, Norway November 28, 1856 to Christian Alfsen and Anna Kudsen Alfsen (spelled "Ane" in Norway).

When I was 7 years of age my father and mother joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. They formerly belonged to the Lutheran Church. When I was 8 years old, I was baptized into the Church in the summer of 1865.

My father, Christian Alfsen, died in April, 1869.



When I was 18, I left my home and people and along with a group of converts to the Church, sailed from Christiania, Norway for Copenhagen, Denmark enroute to America (Zion). While crossing the North Sea, a heavy storm arose and everyone but three people aboard the ship became seasick. I was one of the fortunate ones who was a good sailor. Three girls were especially sick. I remember so well because their long hair hung down over the side of the ship and touched the waters.

I sailed on the steamship "Idaho" from Liverpool, England, July 1, 1875. There were 765 saints aboard. President C.G. Larsen, who later became Stake President of the Emery Stake, was in charge of the Company. Among those aboard was Mrs. Haroldsen, a friend and neighbor of my mother, and her daughters, Josephine Olsen (Jensen) and Nettie Olsen (Christensen). These two ladies became neighbors to me again when I moved to Ferron years later.

During this crossing of the Atlantic, fair weather prevailed and I was thrilled when I saw my first iceberg. We landed in Castle Green (or Castle Garden) New York, July 14, 1875, where we remained for a few days. We then got on a train and headed for the west.

We arrived in Salt Lake City, July 29, 1875. I found some old friends who wanted me to stay with them, but I didn't. I went to Ephraim, Utah in an open buggy drawn by mules. The man who drove the mules was named Peter Davis. When we arrived at our destination, the dust was so thick we could have written on our dresses.

When I first arrived in Ephraim. I shed many bitter tears from homesickness and loneliness. Two or three of the girls went back to Norway as soon as they could, but I stayed.

A little more than two years after I came to Ephraim, I married Nicholas Larsen (also a native of Norway) November 7, 1877 at Spring City, Utah. The ceremony was preformed by Orson Hyde.

They were called by Bishop Dorius to settle Castle Valley with a group of others and left Ephraim about November 16, 1877. Nicholas had just completed a one-room long house that he had to sell to buy equipment for the trip. There were no roads across the mountain so the company had to make their own and the heavy snow that fell made it doubly hard for them. At times, the oxen would wander away during the night causing the men to search for hours and sometimes even days to find them. He had a government wagon with three yoke of oxen. The group that crossed the mountain included Swen Larsen, his son, Chris and also Peter J. Peterson and wife Caroline. They had to melt snow for drinking and cooking, but even under such trying times, they still had the courage to sit by the fire at night, sing songs and play games to ease the tension and forget their troubles.

Their company was the first to reach Ferron Creek and the dreary picture that greeted them was disheartening. They were the first white settlers to arrive on Ferron Creek. They lived in their wagons until the men built dugouts where the town of Ferron was later built. Nicholas and Peter Petersen built a dugout together. It was made by digging in a bank and walling it up on the front and sides with logs. The cracks were filled in with mud. There were no windows except where the logs did not fit or one was purposely left out. The door was of logs hewed down to three or four inches thick and five inches wide fastened to cross pieces with wooden pegs. They were hung on home-made hinges which squeaked woefully until relieved by a little bacon grease. This door was very bunglesome but substantial. Grub boxes were used for tables and three-legged home-made stools for chairs. The bed was four posts driven in the ground, poles nailed lengthwise to form the railing and willows and limbs laid in the opposite direction. They had no stoves, but did their cooking on the camp fires with frying pans and bake ovens.

The following spring they moved further down the creek where the town of Molen was later built. They built a one-room log cabin made from cottonwood logs which was later used by Brother Fjelsted for a store.

"Such a dreary and desolate place I have never seen as was Castle Valley at that time of year. We lived in our wagons for some time until my husband and Peter Peterson built a dugout where the town of Ferron was later built. We built a one-room log cabin made from cottonwood logs. Later on, it was used by Brother Fjelsted for a store."

*The following history is taken from the book entitled Castle Valley – A History of Emery County. Copyrighted, 1949:*

*"Today, Ferron with its modern homes, its lawns and tree lined streets, is an oasis in the desert. Perhaps our pioneers had a vision of such a beautiful place; but this is doubtful. It is only necessary to travel a few miles in any direction to find the kind of country that greeted the first comers.*

*Those who were called and responded were Nicholas Larsen and his wife, Helen; Peter F. Peterson and wife; Swen Larsen and son Niels Christian.*

*Nicholas and Helen had been married on November 7, and on November 15, they left Ephraim with the four others and began the trek. Nicholas owned a large government wagon. Very likely this was one of the wagons sold to the Mormons when Johnson's army was hurriedly called east at the outbreak of the Civil War. There had been a company stationed near Ephraim.*

*In this wagon, the small company packed most of their provisions. They had flour enough to last one year, potatoes, carrots, onions, cabbage, bacon, dried apples, peaches, currants and ground cherries. Helen Larsen had a large crock of butter which lasted all winter.*

*To pull this wagon, Nicholas had three yoke of oxen. The other men had their own wagons and ox teams, all loaded. They took the road south from Ephraim, past Mayfield, and followed a trail up the canyon over Gilson Mountain, then down the Gunnison Trail and Salina Canyon eastward.*

*It was a hard trip of twenty-one days. The men spent all of their time shoveling snow, making dugways, clearing away boulders, or hunting and herding cattle. Their teams foraged for themselves. In places the men had to use poles to keep the wagons upright on the hillsides. At times they had to hitch a yoke of oxen to the rear of a wagon to hold it back when going down steep places. There were two tip overs, but they managed to gather things up without any loss.*

*One of the women became very ill. A stop had to be made. For a time it seemed they must go back. They prayed and administered to her and she recovered sufficiently to continue the journey. It was a discouraging trip at best, and might have proved too hard to endure had it not been for Helen Larsen, whose cheerful disposition made a joke of their hardships. Both Helen and Nicholas were good singers. In the evenings around the campfire with songs and jokes, they eased the dejected spirits of the weary travelers.*

*Ferron Creek was frozen over. Oxen could not stand on the ice, nor pull the wagons across until the ice had been chopped and made rough. A stop of a few days was made to look around. Much of the valley was flat, covered with Castle Valley Clover and shad scale. Nestled under the cliffs of the mountain were giant formations that seemed to be abandoned, windowless castles with stumps of chimneys still intact. The rolling hills were covered with a mat of prickly pear and grease wood so thick that only rabbits, prairie dogs and the dust colored snakes and lizards could penetrate., and abundance of bunch grass and cottonwoods along the creek beds and flat meadows made this look like a good place to stay, but being thorough, the company felt they should see the rest of the valley before making a final selection."*

In April they went back to Ephraim where they remained the following summer. On August 3, 1878 a daughter Alvina, was born. They later went back to Feron Creek and stayed the winter, then next April went back to Ephraim. Then they went to Park City where Roy (December 4, 1879) and Nora (September 7, 1881) were born. From there, they moved to Ephraim where Nicholas contracted inflammatory rheumatism.

They later moved to Castle Valley once again where they made their home. They had six more children all born in Castle Valley. Andrew Lehi, March 22, 1883; Helen Olivia, February 17, 1885; Jesse Christopher, September 14, 1887; Eugene Edward, January 2, 1891; Mary Emillia, December 15, 1893; and Eva Estella, August 8, 1896.

They lost one little girl, Olivia, to diphtheria January 6, 1887 and on January 30, 1917 their youngest boy, Eugene, was killed in an explosion of a boiler in his father-in-law's flour mill at Farmington, New Mexico.

Nicholas was made trustee of the school at the time Vera Behunin was the school teacher at Molen. He was also superintendent of the Sunday School.

He was always a hard worker. He built a lime kiln near his home at Molen, Utah and people got their lime from him. He also helped to lay brick for homes that were built

there. He sheared sheep for many years and every year he hauled enough wood to last all winter. Sometimes he played the violin in their home for entertainment.

They lived on the bench north of Molen until he became very ill in February of 1923 and was operated on for a bowel obstruction. He never regained consciousness from this and passed away February 27, 1923 at the age of 68 years.

“One of the buildings built in Molen was where we held church services. I was called to many church positions such as Relief Society Visiting Teachers and Primary Teacher.

My husband, Nicholas, and I were able to go to the Manti Temple in July, 1916. During our journey, the horses became frightened and ran away tipping the wagon over. Fortunately, no one in the wagon was seriously hurt and so after rightening everything, we continued on our journey. We received our endowments and were sealed to each other on July 12, 1916.

We lived on the bench north of Molen until after my husband died on February 27, 1923. Then I went to Montrose, Colorado and lived with my daughter, Mary, and son-in-law Paul Turner, until July of the same year. Upon returning to Ferron, I lived in the home my son Jesse bought and in 1936 was called by the church to do Temple work in the Manti Temple. I spent months there until my health started to fail.

The last years of Helen's life were spent in the homes of her daughter, Eva, and son-in-law, Royal Swasey, and her son, Jesse, and daughter-in-law, Anna [Behling] Larsen. She passed away November 11, 1944 at the age of 88 years.

She was the oldest child in her family of 8 brothers and sisters and she outlived them all.

Original information provided by Helen Jean Larsen Behunin