

## KAREN CAMILLA MOLLER NELSON

By: Eunice M. Nelson

Karen Camilla Moller was born in Denmark on October 13, 1845 at Hornslet, Randers, Denmark, also called Rodskove. Her father, Soren Jensen Moller, died in 1853. His home was named Stattsgaard. Her mother was Anna Christine Rasmussen. She died in 1857. Camilla's father was a concert master at Trivoli, Copenhagen. This was a large resort and cultural center and is still going strong today.

Camilla was the next to the youngest in a large family. After her parents' death their grandmother Moller (Marie Nielsen Moller) took the children into her spacious home and raised them. This ancestral home, Mollerup, had been granted an ancestor as a reward for valorous service to his country. Grandmother Moller gave the children a good education, including a trade which would enable them to always earn a good living. Camilla and Sophia were skilled tailors. One brother, Rasmus, was a carpenter and another, Jens, was a musician. Jens later came to New York City as a professional musician.

In 1865 to 1867 Andrew Nelson was an LDS missionary in Denmark. He learned that they wanted to come to America. That the married sister Maria and husband were emigrating was all right, but he tried to dissuade the girls, Camilla 21 and Sophia 19. He thought them too gently raised to endure the hardships of Utah pioneers at that time. He advised them to wait longer in Denmark.

The ancestral home, Mollerup, was sold at the time of the grandmother's death in order to settle the estate among the heirs. Sophia and Camilla had their share of the estate in cash so they could easily pay their passage. Also, they wanted to live near the sister Maria and her husband who were emigrating. They also had a trade and felt they could always provide for themselves.

Andrew Nelson returned from his mission on the ship with this group of converts. The ocean journey was safe and it was exciting to dock in New York. The train ride from New York to the place of outfitting for crossing the plains was an adventure. Soon after arriving on the plains the girls were on a river bank admiring the scenery when a gust of wind blew one girl's hat into the water. She was aghast at the thought of crossing the plains bareheaded. The other girl felt sorry for her and threw her hat into the water in sympathy. Both crossed the plains bareheaded. When they arrived in Salt Lake City they were as brown as Indians.

The girls endured the usual hardships of the long journey. Somewhere while crossing the plains, probably in Wyoming, the sister, Maria Johnsen, gave birth to a baby and died. The two young girls cared for this baby tenderly. In spite of all the care they gave it, it too died and was buried in a lonely roadside grave.

On reaching Salt Lake City the girls were bewildered. This was no city, it was only a rough pioneer town. The cash the girls brought from Denmark was gone. These people couldn't afford hiring seamstresses to

sew their clothes, so there seemed to be no way of making a living here. They didn't even understand English, and most of the Danish emigrants lived in Sanpete. When it came to making a decision as to what they could do they chose to go to Sanpete with the trusted missionary, Andrew Nelson.

On their arrival there Metta took them into her home and comforted them. Sure, the house was already crowded. There was Metta and her four children, Andrew Jr., Emma, August and Joseph; also, the hired boy, Peter H. Madsen, who had been sent to help Metta run the farm, care for livestock and haul firewood from the mountains. And now her husband Andrew and two orphan girls, Camilla and Sophia, who were utterly unprepared for lives of hardship were there also.

Soon the townspeople began feeling sorry for Metta in her overcrowded home. They pointed out a man in Gunnison who was amply able to care for another wife. Also, Brother Dennison in Manti could support another wife.

When Camilla and Sophia heard of this plan for their disposal they said "If we must marry for a home we choose to marry Andrew Nelson." And so on March 28, 1868 they were both married to Andrew Nelson in the Endowment House. Sophia is listed in Church History as the 3rd wife and Camilla as the 4th wife of Andrew Nelson of Manti, Utah.

Camilla was a small, delicate girl with a high sense of humor. She loved adventure, she loved to study and read, and she loved luxury, but she met life as it came. She cared for home and children tenderly. Through it all she kept her ability to enjoy life along the way. She encouraged her children to get an education as far as she had the means. She had many friends who loved her.

Camilla said each family should have a son named after Frederick the Great - she named her first son Frederick. Also, each family should name a son for the great Erasmus - she named her second son Erasmus. Then, learning of the great American statesman, Benjamin Franklin, she named her third son Franklin. (When this son grew up he changed his name to plain Frank K. Nelson.) Her girls were: Anna, Clara and Julia. Julia died in infancy.

At first Camilla and Sophia had homes across the street from each other. The Presbyterian Church wanted this corner on which to build a church and mission school and teachers' home. Camilla sold her home to them and procured a home one block East.

After the disfellowship trouble in the Nelson family Camilla and her family lived alone and joined the Presbyterian Church. Camilla continued living in Manti after all of her children were married and moved to other localities - Anna Geck in Los Angeles, Clara Nelson and Frank K. in Salt Lake City, and Erasmus in Ferron. Later in life when it became hard for Camilla to get around, Anna Geck had a room added on to Clara's home in Salt Lake City and moved her mother into it so she would never have to live alone. Clara cared for her tenderly until her death, Dec. 27, 1922 in Salt Lake City. She is buried beside Andrew in the Manti Cemetery.