

Peter Neilson 1813 by Abby Neilson.

He was born on February 22 1813 in Denmark. His parents are Nils Jensen, Hedwig Darte Christensen. He was one of eleven children which some were step brothers and sisters. At the age of seven, Peter began attending mandatory school which continued until the age of fourteen. Soon thereafter his grandfather, passed away, leaving his sixty year-old grandmother alone. Two years later, at the age of sixteen , he began working as an apprentice for a local tailor. Over the next several years, he learned the tailoring trade, which kept him employed until 1854. Many times later in life, this skill came in handy and was used to bless the lives of many, as well as provide for the temporal needs of his family.

Peter met and married Anna Maria Sorensen on Nov. 26th 1847. A year later they were blessed with a son and named him Israel after Anna Maria's father. But after Anna Maria a given birth her health started to deteriorate and was never completely restored, so Peter concerned about her failing health, Peter hired a nurse, Karren Sorensen to look after their home and young Israel. After Anna Maria died Karren became Peter's second wife.

Peter and his family left Denmark to come to America in January 1855 on a ship called the Nesmith. The trip lasted 47 days, Peter was put over a group of the saints coming to America called a district. He was responsible for the activities of the district during the trip. On the trip across the ocean one interesting thing that happened was that he was married to Karren on January 14th 1855. They arrived in New Orleans on February 23rd 1855, finally on American soil. They made their way over the next few months to St. Louis and up the Missouri River to Ft Leavenworth. Finally from there in June of 1855 they, along with their wagon train left for the Salt Lake Valley. Finally in September of 1855 they arrived in the Salt Lake Valley after 11 months of travel and trials. Many in their company died along the trip.

After arriving in Salt lake Peter and his family were assigned to help settle the Sanpete area because of some of the talents that Peter possessed. While there Peter was very successful with his farming but this time didn't last, in 1861 President Brigham Young called Peter and many other families to go south to the Dixie Cotton Mission to help the saints in that region. In December of 1861 Peter settled in Washington with many of the other saints which was a great joy to the 20 families remaining there. Peter endured many trials in Washington but remained there and eventually became a very successful and fairly wealthy member of the community.

The saints in the area had been building a tabernacle and it was almost finished and the church leaders had bought the glass for the windows and needed to pick them up in California. The glass had been paid for but there was still a bill for freight of \$800.00 that they had to pay before they could get the glass. The church leaders had raised \$200.00 of the money but still needed \$600.00. Peter Neilson had been saving for years to add on to his 2 room adobe home and had made the plans to buy the materials for their addition. Peter had saved \$600.00 for their family but instead he took the money and the morning that the men were leaving to go pick up the glass Peter walked from Washington to St George to give his entire savings, the \$600.00, to them so that the tabernacle could be finished. This is a very special ancestor of mine and whenever we see the tabernacle today, we think of the sacrifice our great-great-great grandfather made for the people then and now.