

Peter Neilson Sr. 22 Feb 1813

By Savannah Sparks

Peter Neilson was my great-great-great Grandpa. He was born in Jutland Denmark on February 22nd 1813. He was raised by his grandma. His mom's name was Hedwig and his dad's name was Niels. He learned to be a tailor. He was married in 1847 to Anna Maria Sornsen. They had a boy named Israel in 1848, and his wife died in 1852. He was baptized a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day saints in 1853. On November 26th 1854 he left Denmark with his son and a servant girl to sail to America with other member of the LDS church. While they were sailing a huge wind came and they were afraid for their lives. They blown to Norway, but were all safe. When they got there they found out that six other ships had wrecked on the same sea, and they saw dead bodies washed upon the shore. After they set sail, many more storms came, and they again were afraid for their lives. Each time they were safe. They believed it was because of their prayers and faith that they were kept safe. On Christmas Eve they landed in Hull, England. What should have taken only five days to sail took them thirty days because of the tempestuous storms.

Peter married Miss Karen Nielsen on board the ship on January 7th 1855. One of the men on board said he had a prophesy that they would reach America on Feb. 11th 1855. On Feb. 11th 1855 they set eyes on America.

Peter and his family traveled with the saints from New Orleans to St. Louis up the Mississippi River. They lost 17 people on this journey, _From here they journeyed across the plains and arrived in Salt Lake City on September 6th 1855. Their travel from Copenhagen, Denmark to Salt Lake City took them 10 months and 20 days. President Erastus Snow told Peter's group that he traveled with, that they were the most prospered of any company of saints that had yet come to America(this meaning they had lost the least amount of people).

Peter and his family settled in Ephriam, Utah, until Peter was called on a mission to go and help settle in what they called "Dixie" territory. Later Peter brought his family to Washington, Utah to build a life there.

There is much about Peter's life I would like to share, but one of the things he is well known for in Washington county is the special gift that he gave. The Prophet of the LDS church told the people of the Dixie area to build tabernacle, something that the saints could look to as "an ornament to the city." It took them several years to build, and they were very proud of it, having made many sacrifices to get it done. It was almost all the way fanished, except for the special window pains they had ordered for it. They still didn't have the money they needed to pay for them. They had raised \$200.00, and were still short \$600.00.

The night before they were to deliver the required \$800.00 to the teamsters, who were bringing the window pains, Peter was thinking about the remodeling he was going to do on their small home. The next day he was going to go and purchase the lumbar. That night Peter could not sleep. He had saved \$609.09 dollars for the comfort of his family. Was he required to sacrifice his entire savings? Peter woke up very early and walked the six miles from his home in Washington to were the men who were to leave to pay for the windows were. They did not know how they were going to get the money, but had faith they would somehow get

it. They were very relieved when they heard a knock at the door and to find Peter with a bandana of gold coins with the exact amount of money that they needed. Peter felt very blessed in his life for this sacrifice and many more sacrifices he made in his life to help the LDS church to grow.

Today in Washington stands a statue of Peter Neilson and there is a picture of him in the Tabernacle in honor of him. I am grateful to have an ancestor like Peter Neilson and hope to follow in his footsteps as he has set a great example to me of faith and sacrifice.