

History of

INGRE SWENSON PETERSON

by her granddaughter Zelma Peterson Beardall

Ingre Swenson, my grandmother, was born 24th of Feb. 1828 in Bladinge, Kronobergs, Sweden. Her father was Magnus Swenson, born 16 Dec. 1791 at Kalvsvik, Kronobergs, Sweden and her mother, Catharina Larsen, was born 14 July 1790 at Bladinge, Kronobergs, Sweden.

Her parents were quite well to do owners of a large estate. When she was about nine years old her father (Magnus Swenson) died leaving her mother with six children to care for. Her mother married again and as the stepfather was so cruel to the children they all left home. They separated and managed to get employment to keep themselves. Grandmother (Ingre Swenson Peterson) told of one wealthy family that she worked for who refused to feed their hired help. She got so hungry one day that she went to the swill barrel and skimmed off the biscuits that were floating on top and ate them so she would have strength enough to go on with her work.

At the age of twenty-two she was married to Magnus Peterson by a Lutheran minister. This was on 31st of Dec. 1851.

About five years after they were married they experienced their first great sorrow. They had a fireplace in the home and the baby, Peter Magnus, caught his clothing on fire from the fireplace and was burned so severely that he died. Not long after this the Mormon Elders came to the community and when grandmother heard their message she gladly accepted it and was baptized in August 1859 by Elder Andrew Johnson. The faith and testimony which they received from the gospel lightened their sorrow over the loss of their little boy.

The spirit of gathering was with them and they were anxious to come to Zion where they could make their home with the Saints. On the 10th of April 1863 grandmother (Ingre Swenson Peterson) commenced her journey to America. With their four children, John, August, Swen Magnus and Ida they were willing to forsake all relatives, friends and home for the gospel. They first went to Copenhagen, Denmark, where they joined a company of saints and continued to journey by railroad and steamer to Hamberg, Germany, then by steamer to Greensberg, England. This was a miserable voyage because the sea was so rough and the accommodations were very poor. After remaining in Greensberg eight days they took the train for Liverpool, England, where they went on board a sailing vessel, May 8, 1863. After five weeks and two days they arrived in New York harbor June 13th. During the five weeks of the voyage grandmother suffered so much from sea sickness that she was unable to help herself in any way. Fortunately, the children and grandfather enjoyed good health.

From New York to St. Joseph, Missouri, they rode in cattle cars with planks for seats and straw strewn on the floor for beds. There was a shortage of passenger cars at this time because of the war being fought between the North and the South. From here to Florence they traveled by steamboat on the Missouri River, where they were compelled to remain for two weeks waiting for ox-team to continue their journey across the plains.

At this time sickness entered the family and they had only gone five miles when death snatched from their daughter, Ida, age one year. She was buried at the first camping grounds near a spring on a lonely ranch. After laying her to rest grandmother rode three miles in the wagon, and then walked the other eleven hundred miles on foot. She had so much sympathy for the oxen pulling their heavy load that she would not ride even when there was room in the wagon.

During the eleven weeks that it took them to cross the plains her health was good. Along with the other six hundred saints she was able to endure the hardships of the journey, climbing steep rough trails, wading deep streams, etc. As they walked along she would gather dry buffalo chips and carry them in her large full apron to be used to make the fire with when they camped. Sometimes the chips were more plentiful than usual and she would carry her load ahead for a while and then throw them away just to refill her apron again later. She traveled without murmuring or complaining of her situation, but ever thanking the Lord that she was numbered with his people that were gathering to Zion.

The company arrived at Salt Lake City, Utah by way of Emigration canyon September 17th, 1863, making a journey of five months and seven days from Sweden to Utah.

They passed through Salt Lake City and stopped at Mill Creek for two days, then came on south to Springville, Utah. They were obliged to beg for food because of their poverty.

In Springville they built a mud-dugout on the corner of fourth east and fourth south (the northeast corner) just outside of the old fort wall. This fort had been built around plot A to keep the Indians out. How happy they were with the Saints even in this mud dugout. Later they built a one room log house on the opposite corner, and six years after coming to Springville they owned a farm and a four room adobe home. This home still stands (1955) back of my brother George's home.

Grandmother was a large, strong, healthy woman. She could pick up a sack of grain and throw it upon her shoulder as easy as a man. She worked hard all her life. She did washing and house cleaning for others, assisted her husband in the field, and gleaned wheat heads day after day, then would carry her load home on her back at night and thresh and clean it by the wind. On August 12th, 1864, she gleaned wheat all day, then carried her load home and at nine o'clock that evening her daughter, Rhoda, was born. She would rake grain, help tie bundles and shock it up, then walk home in the dark. She was a very good cook for the meagre supplies she had. I can still remember how good the pies were that she made of dried apples with currants in them, also her anise bread and cookies.

Grandmother was a visiting Relief Society teacher for 15 years, and had Mrs. Sarah Snow as her companion. Their district was from what is now fourth south on out south to the old Moroni Miner home. With a large basket on their arm they would visit from twenty to thirty homes and collect donations for the poor. Any commodity that the family would care to donate would be accepted. They would take their lunch and be gone all day. Quite often a friendly family would invite them to eat with them.

Grandmother never took any leading part in church or civic affairs because she never learned to speak the English language very well, and then she was a home loving woman and spent most of her time working for her family and helping her neighbors. She was very hospitable even in poverty. She was generous to a fault and would have given most everything away if grandfather hadn't held her down a little. She felt very badly if some should come to her home and she didn't have something to give them. I remember as a child that she would give us lump sugar if she had nothing better for us.

Our home was next door to grandmother's but I can still remember how much I enjoyed going to her home and sleeping at night. It wasn't often but it was a rare occasion to me. I can still picture her in her immense, full skirt but no matter how full it was she always seemed to be able to find the pocket hidden among the folds and the peppermints usually to be found in it.

She was very clean about her home and work. She always milked the cows because she said the men weren't particular enough. Grandfather would stand near with a willow to brush the flies away while she did the milking.

They were interested in temple work and did the work for all their relatives and friends whom they had the records for. This work was done in the Manti Temple. It would take them a full day to go down to Manti in a wagon, then they would stay several nights with friends, and do temple work during the day.

Grandmother had four sons and four daughters: Peter Magnus (the little boy who died in Sweden) John Nelson (Nels John, my father), August, Swen Magnus and Ida, who were born in Sweden and Rhoda, Emma and Anna Mary who were born in Springville.

Grandmother died September 14th, 1907, at the age of 79 and was buried in the City Cemetery at Springville, Utah.

There is also a historical sketch of the life of Ingre Peterson addressed to her daughter Anna Manwaring, age 27 years April 14, 1892, written by Ingre Peterson containing these additional remarks.

Through all our trials the Lord continued to bless me. I always feel to rejoice in my labors in serving God and doing those things that all true Saints should continue in doing to enjoy God's blessing. I enjoyed the good counsel of the First Presidency, Apostles and leading men of the church, who spoke by the spirit and power of God. The last conference being in April 1892, where I also saw the last stone with the angel placed on the Salt Lake Temple, on the sixth day be President Wilford Woodruff, where there was upwards of forty thousand people to witness the sight.

And before closing this in the depository for safe keeping for fifty years, I pray the blessing of God to attend all my posterity down to the last generation until we all meet in our Father's Kingdom, crowned with glory and that it may be said of them at the great day of judgment

"Well done good and faithful servants enter thou into the joy of thy Lord," and my advise to those who may receive or read this in the future is to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness that all else may be your reward and my testimony is that the gospel revealed to Joseph Smith is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Yours respectfully,

Ingre Peterson