Peter Anderson

Peter Andreasen (Americanized to Anderson) was born 18 February 1840 in Nørre Ørslev, Maribo, Denmark.[1] He was the fourth of six children of Andreas Rasmussen and Caroline Pedersdatter West. His mother died when he was 11, and he ran away from his unhappy childhood and took to sea. The captain's son hid Peter until they were out of port. His first voyage was to Norway, Russia and England. He was captured and enslaved by a pirate boat, but escaped in a port in New York in 1859.[2]

About 1860, he sought employment on the ships sailing the Erie Canal and Great Lakes. He worked as a cooper to pay for a trip back to Denmark to bring his brothers to America. However, they had already sailed and he immediately left to return. On his voyage back, he met the missionaries and was baptized in the Mormon Church in 1862. The following spring, he worked his way to the Utah Territory as a teamster with Captain Joseph Horne's Company and settled in Manti.[3]

He married Ane Jorgine (Americanized as Anna Georgene) Jorgensen on 31 December 1864 in Manti, Sanpete, Utah Territory. They had ten children. The next March they moved to Salina, Sevier, Utah Territory and in April the Indian War broke out. Georgina was moved to Gunnison to have their first baby and came back to Salina in November. In April 1867, the Indians raided Salina. They moved to Nephi and lived at the Birch Mill, which Peter had helped to build, the first commercial flour mill in Utah.[4] Peter had many narrow escapes working as a courier and guard in the Indian War, and as a veteran of the war, received two medals for his actions.[5]

They lived in Gunnison and Nephi before moving to Payson in September 1867, where they lived in a nice house of sawed logs. They had two nice lots, both planted to orchard and grain. Peter constructed the Hancock mill at Payson.[6] They were called to Dixie to settle on the Muddy River in 1868. They sold their property, bought a wagon, a yoke of oxen, a stove, and food for a year. Their baby died on the way. They settled a place named Bellevue at the request of President Snow and lived there 15 years.[7]

On the 1870 census, Peter was a farm laborer, living with his wife and two children in Bellevue, Kane, Utah Territory.[8] He served a mission to Scandinavia in 1878.[9] In 1880, he was a carpenter and farmer, living with his wife and six children in Bellevue.[10] In 1884, they moved to a ranch, five miles south of Bellevue. It was named Echo Farm but was better known as Anderson's Ranch. It was a rocky barren area which they made highly productive and beautiful by their hard and diligent labor [11] It was the largest privately-owned orchard in Dixie, and its fruit orchards were long known as the best in

[1] Falster Sønder (1840-1862) Danish Church Birth Record.

[2] Skelby, Maribo, Falster Sonder, 1840-1862; Peter Anderson, by Karl L Naegle, at *Familysearch.org*

[3] Ibid; *Iron County Record*, 25 February 1921; *Washington County News*, 24 February 1921, p. 1; *Deseret News*, 24 September 1862, p. 2.

[4] *Washington County News*, 24 February 1921, p. 1; Sketch of Anna Jorgine Jorgensen's Life, at *Familysearch.org*

[5] *Washington County News*, 6 February 1908, p. 1; Peter Anderson, by Karl L Naegle, at *Familysearch.org*

[6] *Washington County News*, 24 February 1921, p. 1; Sketch of Anna Jorgine Jorgensen's Life, at *Familysearch.org*

[7] *Iron County Record*, 25 February 1921; *Washington County News*, 24 February 1921, p. 1; Sketch of Anna Jorgine Jorgensen's Life, at *Familysearch.org*

[8] United States Census, 1870.

[9] *Deseret News*, 9 October 1878, p. 13.

[10] United States Census, 1880.

[11] *Iron County Record*, 25 February 1921; *Washington County News*, 24 February 1921, p. 1; Sketch of Anna Jorgine Jorgensen's Life, at *Familysearch.org*

southern Utah. Peter built five miles of canal to water his land, orchards and vineyards. He moved to the Pine Valley Mountains where they raised summer gardens, milked cows, and made butter and cheese. He had the first telephone in Dixie and installed the first culinary indoor water system in the county in his home. He maintained a private road that was better than the public road. [12]

On the 1900 census, Peter was a farmer, living with his wife and seven children in Toquerville, Washington, Utah.[13] By 1910, they were farming with five children in Toquerville.[14] In 1915, Peter suffered with a badly infected eye cause by a puncture with a stick.[15] On the 1920 census, he was still farming, living with his wife and seven children (and next door to two sons and their families) in Toquerville.[16] On a January morning in 1921, he was plowing and on his way home, a load of straw on his wagon slipped forward and threw him on his head between the team. The wagon-wheel ran over his right ankle and leg, cutting through the flesh to the bone and severing the tendons. The shock was so great that he died 15 February 1921 in St. George, Washington, Utah. He was buried in the St George Cemetery.[17]

Although there are no known family stories (his wife's journal ends in 1885) and no primary newspaper accounts, there is a legend about Pete and Silver Reef, a ghost town near Leeds, Washington, Utah. It is known that James Newell Louder, newspaperman and postmaster, had acquired the dance hall across from the Wells Fargo office. There was a story of a "dance girl" who had gotten in an argument with the proprietor and shot him. His estate showed no money although he seemed to be rich.

Louder turned the dance hall into a grocery store and post office. When he eventually sold the building to Peter Anderson before 1896 (or before 1908 in other sources), [18] Peter (or Albert Anderson in another version) started dismantling it to move it to his ranch. As he was removing a mop board from the south wall, he found a coffee can (or leather bag in another version of the story) full of gold coins. The coins were rumored to have a value of $200 to $2,000. Soon others were tearing down the frame buildings in town but no other treasure was found.[19] This did add to the dismemberment of anything wood or stone that could be used elsewhere, and Silver Reef was disbursed across the area.

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[12] *Washington County News*, 24 February 1921, p. 1; *Iron County Record*, 25 February 1921.

[13] United States Census, 1900.

[14] United States Census, 1910.

[15] *Washington County News*, 25 March 1915, p. 5.
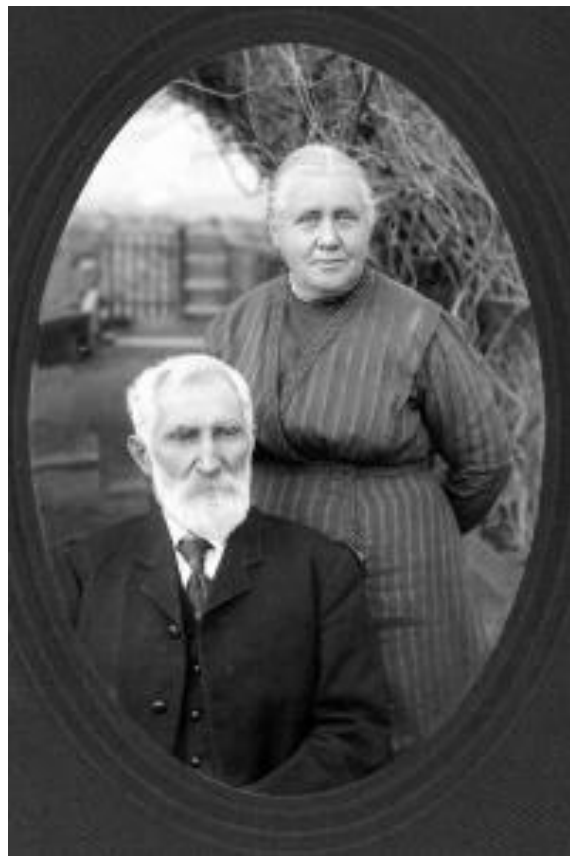
[16] United States Census, 1920.

[17] Utah Death Certificates, 1904-1964; *Iron County Record*, 25 February 1921, p. 1; *Parowan Times*, 2 March 1921, p. 4; *Washington County News*, 20 January 1921, p. 1; 17 February 1921, p. 1; 24 February 1921, p. 1.

[18] Silver, Sinners and Saints, by Proctor and Shirts, 1991, p. 145.

[19] "Memories of Silver Reef", by Mark A. Pendleton, in Utah Historical Quarterly, 1930, p. 103; "Silver Reef", Utah Historical Quarterly. Vol 29, 1961, p. 287; Silver, Sinners and Saints, by Proctor and Shirts, 1991, p. 145.

Peter Anderson driving a pair of mules owned by Silver Reef miners; his son Andrew is sitting on his left (image from *Familysearch.org*)

Peter and Anna Anderson (image from *Familysearch.org*)

Peter and Georgina Anderson family (l to r) Jessie, Laura, Andrew, Niels, Anna, Benjamin, with Georgina and Peter in front) (image from Familysearch.org)

Peter Anderson home and car at Anderson's Junction (image from *Familysearch.org*)

Peter Anderson home and farm at Echo Farm, now Anderson's Junction
(Image from *Familysearch.org*)

(Image from *BillionGraves.com*)

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