

## Charles Joseph Leonard Mellgren

Charles Joseph Leonard “J L” Mellgren was born 16 September 1844 aboard a Sweden sailing vessel.<sup>1</sup> He was the son of Joseph Leonard and Catherine Mellgren. He immigrated to America about 1860<sup>2</sup>, and in 1870 was a prospector, living in Cedar Creek Mines, Missoula, Montana Territory.<sup>3</sup> He married Ane Bertine Maria “Anna” Nielsen about 1874. They had six children.

Their story is interesting – Anna had immigrated from Denmark to Utah Territory and was staying at the home of a Mormon bishop with three wives. Thinking her husband would want to take Anna for his wife, the oldest wife arranged for her brother and a college chum, Charles Joseph Mellgren, who were mining engineers in Silver Reef, Washington, Utah Territory, to spirit Anna away. She hid in an empty barrel in their freight wagon and then joined them in the front seat when they were out of town a few miles. As they prepared dinner in camp, they heard horses’ hoofs. Anna quickly hid under the barrel and they put some food on top of it. The Marshall rode up and demanded to search their wagon for Anna, but did not find her.<sup>4</sup>

The two young men were taking silver specimens to Salt Lake City. They had been warned about Butch Cassidy and his gang of robbers. Anna rode in the back of the wagon, pretending to be ill, with the silver specimens hiding in her skirts. Butch ordered the two engineers out of the wagon, and one of his robbers jumped into the back. He called to Butch, “There’s a woman in here right sick.” When Butch asked who she was, Leah’s brother said she was his wife, very ill, and they were taking her to Salt Lake City as fast as they could. Butch said, “Never let it be said that Butch Cassidy was impolite to a woman” and the gang rode away.<sup>5</sup>

It was love at first sight for Joseph and Anna. They were married in Salt Lake City and Anna joined his church, the Episcopalians. They lived in Silver Reef. On the 1880 census, J L was keeping a boarding house, living with his wife and two sons in Silver Reef.<sup>6</sup> The next year, they left Silver Reef in their own private horse-drawn carriage. They lived for a short period in Phoenix and then Prescott<sup>7</sup>, but soon settled in Tombstone, Cochise, Arizona<sup>8</sup>, where J L became a merchant. He was made a naturalized citizen in 1882 in Cochise, Arizona.<sup>9</sup>

J L was the proprietor of the Oriental Saloon, the place “to get the finest wines, liquors and cigars and the best of mixed drinks”. His saloon was voted the official meeting place for the regular meetings of the Cowboys and Miners of Cochise County. J L was ordered to “be always present to minister to the wants of members”.<sup>10</sup> In 1886, J L was the first commander of the Ancient Order of United Workmen (AOUW) in Tombstone. At the end of his term he was presented with a gold quartz locket with the raised seal of the order.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Brief History of Joseph Leonard and Ane Birtine Marie Nielsen Mellgren, *Familysearch.org*

<sup>2</sup> United States Census, 1900, 1910.

<sup>3</sup> United States Census, 1870.

<sup>4</sup> Brief History of Joseph Leonard and Ane Birtine Marie Nielsen Mellgren, *Familysearch.org*

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> United States Census, 1880.

<sup>7</sup> Brief History of Joseph Leonard and Ane Birtine Marie Nielsen Mellgren, *Familysearch.org*

<sup>8</sup> Arizona Territorial Census Records, 1864-1882.

<sup>9</sup> Arizona Voter Registrations, 1866-1955.

<sup>10</sup> *Daily Tombstone*, 8 January 1886, p. 3.

<sup>11</sup> *Daily Tombstone*, 16 January 1886, p. 3; *Arizona Weekly Citizen*, 23 January 1886, p. 4.

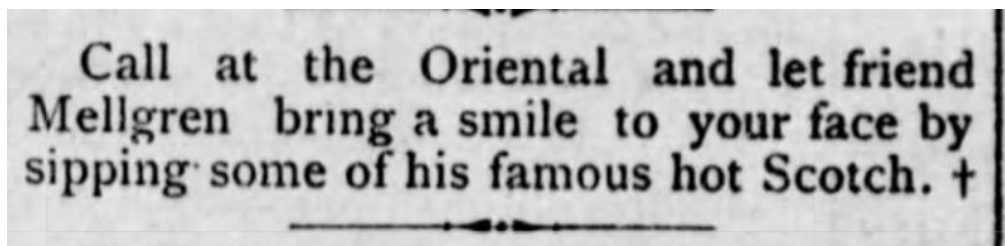
In 1886, J L purchased and renovated the swimming baths on Fifth Street. The opened on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July with prizes for swimming and diving matches.<sup>12</sup> He discharged all of his Chinese help after 253 citizens signed an anti-Chinese agreement.<sup>13</sup> He was probably the hardest hit in town but there was great fear of the Chinese immigrants flooding the town. He served as city treasurer in 1888.<sup>14</sup> On the 1900 census, he was a gold miner, living with his wife and five children in Deadwood City, Lawrence, South Dakota.<sup>15</sup>

By 1906, J L and his family were back in Tombstone.<sup>16</sup> He was a miner but also ran the Arlington Hotel with his wife Anna.<sup>17</sup> They renovated the entire building and installed modern conveniences like acetylene gas lighting.<sup>18</sup> In 1920, J L worked as a silver miner and ran for state mining inspector.<sup>19</sup> He and his son purchased control of the Tombstone Co-Operative Milling Company in 1921.<sup>20</sup>

J L died 13 April 1928 in Tombstone and was buried in the Old Tombstone Cemetery. J L was one of the pioneer mining men in Tombstone and had the most important properties in that district during the early days of the camp.<sup>21</sup> Anna died in 1938 in Tombstone following several years of frail health and partial blindness and deafness. She was also buried in the Old Tombstone Cemetery.<sup>22</sup>

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "J L Mellgren". The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid and somewhat slanted.

Signature of J L Mellgren on the voter registration lists  
(image from Arizona Voter Registrations, 1866-1955)

A rectangular advertisement with a black border. The text inside is in a bold, serif font and reads: "Call at the Oriental and let friend Mellgren bring a smile to your face by sipping some of his famous hot Scotch. †". There is a small horizontal line below the text.

(Image from the *Tombstone Daily Epitaph*, 12 January 1886, p. 2)

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<sup>12</sup> *Daily Tombstone*, 29 June 1886, p. 3.

<sup>13</sup> *Daily Tombstone*, 1 March 1886, p. 3.

<sup>14</sup> Arizona Voter Registrations, 1866-1955.

<sup>15</sup> United States Census, 1900.

<sup>16</sup> Arizona Voter Registrations, 1866-1955; United States Census, 1910.

<sup>17</sup> *Tombstone Weekly Epitaph*, 25 August 1918, p. 8; Arizona Voter Registrations, 1866-1955; Bisbee Daily Review, 16 March 1921, p. 7.

<sup>18</sup> *Tombstone Weekly Epitaph*, 29 January 1922, p. 8.

<sup>19</sup> *Arizona Republic*, 17 August 1920, p. 3.

<sup>20</sup> *The Mining Journal*, Vol 6, 1921, p. 37.

<sup>21</sup> *Tombstone Weekly Epitaph*, 19 July 1914, p. 2.

<sup>22</sup> Brief History of Joseph Leonard and Ane Birtine Marie Nielsen Mellgren, *Familysearch.org*

**For Sale.**

At the Oriental, one dozen and a half of shaded cards belonging to two noted sports, C. & T.

I declare myself openly and above board, that I am keeping nothing but a first-class sporting saloon, and all games are guaranteed to be strictly on the square. No others allowed.

J. L. MELLGREN,  
Prop. Oriental Saloon.

(Image from the *Tombstone Daily Epitaph*, 12 February 1886, p. 2)



Joseph Leonard Mellgren (image from *Familysearch.org*)



(Image from *Findagrave.com*)

Research by Elaine Young, PhD, 2016  
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