

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF JACOB BASTIAN

During the early part of the seventeenth century Christian IV. King of Denmark, Persuaded a colony of hardy Hollanders-- were seeking refuge from oppression of their masters--to settle on the island of Amager. Even at that early period, the Dutch were noted farmers. And it was the king's object to have these Dutch settlers produce farm products for his capital city, Copenhagen; which is separated from the small island of Amager, to the south east of the city, by only a narrow neck of sea. With a market so neat, and a climate so mild as that of Amager, these hardy pioneers became very thrifty in their new home, building several flourishing villages on the little island.

In one of these villages, Sundbyvester (South by Webster), by name,-- and from these hardy Dutch stock,-- Jacob Bastian was born, March 14, 1835. His father, Bastian Sorenson (for according Danish custom, his father's Christian name because his surname), had been a seaman in his youth and early manhood. But after making a moderate fortune at sea, he had purchased a large farm in Sundbyvester (South by Webster), and settled down to the quiet life of a farmer. His mother Margaret Clean, was the daughter of one of the untitled land properties of the island. Her marriage with Bastian Sorenson had been against the will of her relatives, whose aristocratic ideas led then to think she should marry within her social rank.

Jacob was the fifth member of a family of eleven children, ten of whom were boys. At seven years of age he entered school where he studied during the winters; but in the summers he helped his father on the farm. Four years later his father died, leaving his farm to be managed by his sons. Jacob's elder brothers went to Copenhagen to work, leaving a great deal of responsibility upon the youthful head of Jacob, in caring for his mother and helping her tend the farm.

At fourteen, Jacob graduated from school. He then went six months to the Lutheran Priest to study the Bible, after which he received his confirmation as a full-fledged member of the Lutheran Church.

Young Bastian had always been a high-spirited lad. He was ever among the format of his associates, in all kinds of amusements. At the age of nine he had entered a dancing school. And at twelve he, with his partner, was one of four couples selected from three hundred students to dance before the crown Prince of Denmark. Three times he was "BARREL KING"--- That is, at a certain holiday held annually in Denmark, a barrel containing a cat sealed in it, was suspended some ten feet in the air then the competitors, mounted on fast steeds, would ride under the barrel at full tilt and strike it with a sludge. The one who was successful in striking the hardest, letting the cat out, was pronounced "THE BARREL KING". His chosen lady would then advance and place the crown upon his head and decorate

him with her colors. During the remainder of the day he would act as master of ceremonies, and at night he would lead in all the dances.

Soon after his graduation from school, Jacob entered the dockyards at Copenhagen, as an apprentice ship-carpenter. Three years later his mother fell a victim to Cholera, and died upon his knee. The sudden death of his mother at this time released Jacob from the necessity of staying near home to care for her. Therefore he went to sea, as a sailor and ship-carpenter, where he spent the most of the following four years of his life.

Gertrude Petersen, the daughter of a widow-broker, was young, beautiful, intelligent, and refined. She and Jacob Bastian had known each other from childhood. She had been his favorite partner in the dance. She had been his chosen lady when he was chosen "BARREL KING," and he had learned to adore her as Sir Lancelot might have adored Queen Guinevere.

It was not surprising therefore, that when Gertrude Petersen was baptized a member of the "Mormon Church" in 1854, she had little trouble in converting Jacob Bastian to the same faith. He joined the Church in January 1856. He also tried to convert his brothers. But they thought more of their wealth and social position, than of religion, and only ridiculed the idea of making such a sacrifice.

Jacob and Gertrude decided to get married and go to America. Accordingly they applied to the Lutheran Priest for marriage, but were refused because they were "Mormons". So they joined a company of Danish Saints who were leaving for Zion. They sailed, April 18, 1857. Two days later they, with three other couples were married, April 20, 1857, by Orson Pratt, on board the Westmorland in the harbor of Liverpool. After eight weeks at sea, they landed at Philadelphia, from which point they were to begin their long and toilsome journey across the continent to Utah.

When Jacob joined the Saints, he put all his money in a company in order to help those who had not the means themselves to enable them to come to Zion. Therefore, when the company left Philadelphia for Utah, Bastian and wife went too, as members of it. They journeyed by railway until they reached the state of Iowa. Then their money gave out on them, and they had to put their handcarts together, (the material for which, they had purchased in the East and brought with them on the train.) In making these handcarts, Bastian, being a carpenter, became very useful.

Although Bastian was ignorant of the English Language, he was fortunate in having such a good interpreter as his wife, who had learned the language while a girl, in Copenhagen. So she always acted as his spokesman and advisor.

It was the month of June when this little band of Scandinavians started from the state of Iowa, to make the longest trip ever made with handcarts, without money

or sufficient provisions. On half rations they were to pull handcarts across the wearisome plains. Then by fording streams, climbing hills, and meandering through the defiles of the Rocky Mountains, they must reach Salt Lake City before winter set in, or all might be lost, a sacrifice to the inclemency of the weather.

Their captain, Christian Christensen, was the idol of the company. When offered a horse to ride, he refused it saying, "How can I judge how much my people can do, or how far they can go, when they walk and I ride?" At night he would endeavor to keep up the spirit of his company by telling jokes, or singing songs to prevent anyone from becoming dishearted or despondent. Often at the end of a day's travel when the roll was called some would be found missing. Volunteers would then [be] called for and Bastian, being young and strong, would usually be selected as one to go back in search for them. Many times when the company would encounter streams, he with other men would stand in water up to their armpits passing the women and children over their heads.

This was the year that Johnston's Army was sent to Utah and it happened that they were coming close in the year of Captain Christiansen's Company. One day a captain from the army noticed that one of his oxen had become too sore-footed to travel, and knowing the company of "Mormons" in head of him were sorely in need of food, he sent a man to inform them that they might have the ox if they would come and get it. Bastian was sent with another man to bring it. But just as they reached the army, the stage from the West, arrived. The driver stopped and commenced shouting at the top of his voice, "News from Utah! The cursed Mormons have [been] massacred at Mountain Meadows, a whole company of people! Men, women, and children!" His companion was ignorant of what was being said, but though he could not speak English, Bastian had learned enough by now, that he could understand his perilous position. The enraged soldiers on the spur of the moment, crowded about the two Danes saying, "Down with the 'Mormons'! How shall we kill the wretches?" And, "Shall we run a knife through them or shall we shoot them down like dogs?"

Even at that moment when escape seemed impossible, God provided a protector. Sergeant Anderson, a Swedish-American, forced his way into the mob, motioned for silence, and the said, "Are you Indians? Or what are you? Why do you act like beasts? Can these poor Danes help what people have done a thousand miles from here; people they have never seen before? See, they cannot even talk our language. They are even now ignorant of their present danger. You know they have traveled peacefully ahead of us for miles. I will kill the first man who molests them." This caused the soldiers to think how foolishly they had acted. So after a moments consideration they allowed Bastian and partner to depart in peace.

Although Gertrude was delicate and sickly, she never complained of the hardships that she had to endure. She was always ready to cheer the downhearted and lighten the burdens of others. But her weak constitution could not withstand the

hardships of the journey and remain intact. And Bastian viewed with increasing alarm the failing health of his wife.

It was only three days after they reached Salt Lake City, in the Middle of September 1857, that Gertrude died. Bastian could not talk English, and everyone else seemed to have troubles of their own; so he was left practically alone with his grief. He dug the grave and made the coffin in which his wife was buried. And with the exception of Erastus Snow no one came to comfort him.

Stricken with grief he went to his friend Erastus Snow to ask for council. He was advised by Apostle Snow to marry again and try to overcome his sorrow in domestic life. Accordingly he obtained the consent of a Danish girl who had come to Utah in the same company with him, and was married to Johanna Marie Sander, October 25, 1857.

This was the time for the "great move" occasioned by Johnston's Army coming to Utah. The inhabitants of Salt Lake City all moved south. Bastian and wife settled that winter in a little town, known as "E.T." in Tooele County. The following spring, 1858, he was called to Tooele, Tooele County, to work as a carpenter, in the construction of a flourmill. In July of that year he moved to Lehi, and from thence to Moroni in San Pete County, in the spring of 1859. He was selected the first city material of Moroni.

The colony at Moroni was forced to live in "Dug-outs" until better buildings would be constructed. Bastian helped do the carpenter work on the meeting house which was the first building constructed in Moroni. Although he owned a good farm, he was not permitted to work it. Workmen of his trade were so scarce that people were always glad to exchange work with him in order that they might get the jobs done which they could not do themselves.

On February 7, 1861 Bastian married as a plural wife, Christiana Hansen, and in November he was called to move to Dixie. At the end of four weeks travel, he arrived at Washington County, where he settled.

While the great Civil War was raging in the East, the people of Dixie were asked by the Church authorities to raise cotton and cane, in order that the people of northern Utah might get clothing and molasses while their supply was cut off from the Southern States. Flour rose to twenty-five dollars per hundred. And to supply this necessity for his family, Bastian would have to take dried fruits, molasses, and cotton north to exchange for flour. Many a cold winter night he was forced to make his bed upon the frozen ground. And upon one occasion he narrowly escaped freezing to death.

All their efforts to water their farms by putting a dam in the Virgin River, seemed fruitless. Several successive times it was washed out, before they were finally able to get a permanent one to stay. The treacherous river not only washed the dams

out but it destroyed the farms below, as well, Bastian had three farms destroyed in this wash, besides having a fine team drowned in the river.

In their frantic efforts to save their crops from drought, the early settlers would often work day after day in mud and water heedless of the dangerous consequences which might follow. It was not less surprising then, that after so much exposure as he was obliged to endure, Jacob Bastian on April 10, 1864, fell a victim to Typhoid Fever, and inflammatory rheumatism. In the long illness, which ensued, he came nigh unto losing his life. It was nine months before he could leave his bed, aided by crutches. The disease settled in his leg, leaving him a cripple for life.

Three years later he married Metta Marie Sander October 28, 1867. She was a sister to Johanna Marie Sander, Whom he had married in 1857. He now had three wives and a large family of children, whom he was obliged to support. And being a cripple, this task was made doubly hard. He had thirty-one children born to him of whom twenty-one grew to maturity. He now has a large posterity of both grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

His life's work after he came to Utah was one of many hardships. Most of his time and energy was spent in providing for his large family. "Mormonism" has unquestionably been the greatest factor in influencing his life. Had he not joined the Church, things would have been different. The ideal of his youth was to attain wealth, influence, and social position. But when he joined the Mormon Church, his ideal changed. It now became his desire to serve God, and to rear a family of God-fearing children, who would become instruments in making the world better. This ideal had been accomplished.

He has held few public positions. His occupation since he came to Dixie has been that of farming, with the exception of the time he has worked at the carpenter's trade. He worked as a carpenter in the construction of the St. George Temple. And since its completion, he has done considerable religious work there.

He has always been an industrious, self-sacrificing man, one who is obedient to the law and authority. One who was ever ready to sacrifice his personal comfort and pleasure for that of his family. He was never known, during his married life, to spend time or money foolishly upon himself. He made five different moves in Utah, in obedience to the call of his superiors in the Church. His industry and character were the necessary requisites of the good Dixie Pioneer. Therefore, he was selected among the first to fill this important mission. In fact his bad qualities were so few and his good ones so many, that he will always be recalled by those who know him, as one of Dixie's worthiest citizens.

Jacob Bastian died April 22, 1924, at his home in Washington, Washington Co., Utah and was buried on April 25, 1924.

ARTHUR L. CRAWFORD

(Sent in by Christie B. Carling (daughter) May 25, 1945)