

## METTA GUDKJARSEN NELSON

--By Eunice M. Nelson

Metta Gudkjarsen Nelson was born 28 Nov 1827 in Denmark. She was converted to the L.D.S. Church and baptized before leaving Denmark with an independent company of L.D.S. converts. This was the first large company to come from Scandinavia. John E. Forsgren served as the Captain. They left Copenhagen on December 20, 1852, sailing to Liverpool. Here the 279 Saints waited until the sailing vessel Forest Monarch was ready to sail on Jan 16, 1853. It docked at New Orleans on March 16, 1853. The company then boarded a steamboat and sailed up the Mississippi River to St. Louis where they remained for about a month. From there they proceeded up the river two hundred miles to Keokuk, Iowa where they outfitted for crossing the plains. They arrived safely in Salt Lake City on September 30, 1853.

Brigham Young directed these Danish people to go to Sanpete. They stopped at Spring City, which was then called Little Denmark. The settlers were busy gathering in their abundant crops of potatoes and wild hay; they were also getting out logs for building more homes. Near Christmas a friendly Indian came and warned the settlers that a war party was on the way to massacre them. They hurriedly loaded their wagons with belongings and set out toward Manti. As they came to the turn in the road about one mile south, they looked back and saw the houses and haystacks in Spring City in flames.

The Manti people took them into the fort and assigned them a place to spend the winter. Elizabeth Crawford Munk's "History of Manti" lists Andrew and Metta as man and wife among these refugees.

I have not been able to find where they were married. Both Metta and Andrew came in the Forsgren Company from Denmark. It must have been a civil ceremony because it is not listed in the Church Offices in Salt Lake City. They were probably married in Spring City by an Elder's ceremony, which was considered a civil ceremony. The Church Archives report Andrew Nelson and Metta Gudkjarsen were sealed at the home of Isaac Morley in Santaquin on June 22, 1859. Also, on June 22, 1859 Metta Christine Jensen and Andrew Nelson were sealed, and later all were sealed at the Endowment Rouse in Salt Lake City.

Andrew and Metta obtained a city lot when the fort at Manti was abandoned. They built a home, took up land for farming and pasture, and supported themselves in the regular pioneer manner. Their son Andrew Jr. was born April 2, 1857, a daughter Emma was born Feb. 10, 1861. August was born Aug. 14, 1863.

In May 1865 Andrew Nelson left Manti for a mission in Denmark. Metta's son Joseph was born Nov. 30, 1865, which was six months after Andrew left for his mission. Metta had the four children, the farm and livestock to care for with what help she could get from the neighbors.

When Andrew had been in Denmark on his mission a few months another group of converts was ready to emigrate to Utah. My father, Peter H. Madsen, was among them. He was 18 years old. It is my impression that Andrew was worrying about Metta and asked my father to go to Metta when he reached Manti and help her care for the farm work. Not the least of this work was going into the mountains and hauling firewood to heat her home.

My father stayed at Metta's home until Andrew reached home in the fall of 1867 - and a few weeks longer.

It seemed that Metta was generous in sharing her home with young people. Anna Laurentsen also stayed with her when she arrived from Denmark. She later married Andrew Jr.

Another girl, Christine Anderson - later wife of James Crawford, stayed with Metta - for years. When the Niels Hansen family moved to Ferron he left his daughter Hannah Hansen Ralphs with Metta for a time.

When her husband Andrew returned from his mission in 1867 he brought with him two orphan girls, Camilla and Sophia Moller, whose elder married sister had died crossing the plains. They had intended making their home with this sister. Alone among strangers who spoke different language, they were bewildered. They were happy when the trusted missionary, Andrew Nelson, took them to Manti. Metta took them into her home, Andrew married them in the spring of 1868 - they were is third and fourth wives. However, Christine had withdrawn from the family, leaving the three wives.

Metta's son Christian was born April 7, 1869. They lived congenially in Manti until 1889 when Andrew was disfellowshipped from the L.D.S. Church for neglecting his Church duties. Metta then withdrew from the family. She came to Ferron and lived with her son Christian in the home now owned by Clarise Beverage and husband Alex.

About 1892 when Emma and John Lemon were planning their home, Metta looked at the plans and remarked "This fine large house and not a room for me." They immediately added an East wing to the plans and finished the home. In her later life, Metta occupied those lovely rooms and died there April 11, 1902. She is buried in the Ferron Cemetery.

---

#### NOTES ABOUT METTA NELSON

---

Metta was the daughter of Gudkjaer (Godfrey) Nielsen (born 1798) and Else Jensen. Her family disowned her when she joined the Mormon Church and was given one dollar (or its equivalent) and sent away. She suffered many hardships before she got to Utah. The ship on which she sailed was on the ocean eleven weeks and the emigrants were so weak that they had to be helped to shore when the ship landed.

She came on to Utah by ox-team in 1853, traveling with the Captain Forsgren Company. She was married to Andrew Nelson in 1853 at Spring City and was called by Heber C. Kimball with her husband to settle Spring Town, now Spring City. They were unable to do this because the Indian hostility forced them on to Manti. —Lillian Nelson

---

As a young woman, Metta was tall. She had pretty black hair and dark brown eyes. She was even-tempered and mild. She could fit in and didn't take sides. — Kate Hall and Arthur Lemon