

LIFE SKETCH OF ANDERS PETTER WARNICK
AND ANNA HELENA ANDERSON WARNICK

Written by Effie Warnick Adams

Anders Petter Warnick and Anna Helena Anderson Warnick were our grandparents who accepted the gospel in Sweden and came to America with their family. Anders Petter was born July 12, 1801, in Varsas, Skaraborg, Sweden. Anna Helena was born March 23, 1806, in Brusestorp, Sventorp, Skaraborg, Sweden. They were the parents of the following seven children: Inga Maria, Adolph Fredrick, Johan August, Anna Christina, Anders Gustaf I (died in infancy), Anders Gustaf II, Carl Petter.

We do not have pictures of these ancestors, nor even a specimen of their handwriting; however, we know something of their character and personalities through recorded statements of their sons. They were industrious, hard-working, and religious. They were members of the Lutheran church and observed the Sabbath day by attending church and reading the scriptures. Anders Petter sometimes led the singing in church. They taught their children to be honest, truthful, industrious, and that waste was a sin. The only remembered physical characteristic of Anders Petter is that he had dark, wavy hair.

Anders Petter and Anna Helena accepted the Gospel of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints readily after hearing of it from a sister and then being taught by the missionaries. Anders Petter was baptized by Adam Swenson on January 13, 1860 and Anna Helena on January 17, 1860. Missionaries who have experienced a Swedish winter know what a cold experience this January baptism could have been. After joining the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, they were subjected to persecution and discrimination as most converts were at that time. Anders Petter and other members of the family lost their employment because they would not renounce their religion. This necessitated their seeking a home and employment elsewhere.

They were frugal, industrious people, and within six years they gathered around themselves enough property that, by disposing of it, they had sufficient means to pay their fare to America.

The year 1866 marked one of the largest emigrating efforts of the church. There was strong encouragement by church authorities for saints in Europe to emigrate to Utah. The Perpetual Emigrating Fund Company was in full operation, and through its functioning, ten church trains were outfitted to meet the incoming immigrants at the efforts of ten captains, 456 teamsters, 49 mounted guards, 89 horses, 134 mules, 3,042 oxen, 397 wagons. These were recruited in Utah. In addition, 62 wagons, 30 oxen and 61 mules were added by purchase.

Over 1,200 Scandanavian saints were ready to answer the call of the church authorities to come to Zion, among them most of the Warnick family. Two members of the family were not ready to make the trip. Adolph Fredrick, the oldest son, was a missionary and stayed in Sweden to complete his mission. Inga Maria, the oldest daughter, also remained in Sweden for a time. The rest of the family left Sweden the latter part of April 1866 for America. The group consisted of the following family members: Anders Petter, Age 65; Anna Helena, Age 60; Johan August, Age 31, his wife Mari Christine Bengtson, their daughter, Caroline, and son John Gustave; Anna Christina, age 27, and her daughter Charlotta Christina Age 1 year; Anders Gustaf, Age 21; Charles Peter, Age 16; and Charlotte Bengtson, Anders betrothed. These were not young people seeking adventure, but a mature family knowing they were leaving on old life behind them, but looking with hope to their new, unknown future.

On June 1, 1866, they sailed from Hamburg, Germany, on the Cavour. This was a Norwegian ship commanded by a Captain Floyn. The 201 saints on board were organized with Elder Niels Nielsen, a Utah Elder, appointed president. The ship had a long voyage on account of head winds, fog and calm, even though the vessel took the shortest route which was through the English Channel.

The Cavour arrived in New York, July 31st, 1866, and anchored just off Staten Island. The Emigrants were taken to Castle Gardens. Already on board the ship, cholera had broken out among the passengers. The sickness had been aggravated by the conditions on board. The supply of water had been very limited, and the emigrants were allotted only one quart of the putrid liquid per family each day. Other rations were likewise limited and of a very poor quality. Carl or Charles Peter, the youngest son, sixteen years old, had been so ill that his mother worried for fear he would not be allowed to land. The sickness was evident in the fact that he had lost all of his hair.

At Castle Gardens the saints from the Cavour vessel were greeted by Elder Thomas Taylor, Church Emigration Agent, who told them their route would be a long one and somewhat changed from that about which they had been informed. He had experienced much trouble in making the necessary arrangements for transporting the emigrants from New York to Wyoming, Nebraska. The railroad companies, whose lines went out from New York, had apparently planned to speculate at the expense of the "Mormons," hence asked an unusually high price for conveying the emigrants westward. At length, Elder Taylor succeeded in closing a satisfactory contract for their conveyance by an entirely new route, which was several hundred miles longer, but much cheaper than the route previously used. One drawback was that the saints would have to ride across the country in cattle and freight cars.

Many details of this agonizing ride across the country are recorded by Christine M. Warnick in her history of Charles Peter Warnick, written many years later. Other details concerning the route and conditions are obtained from the day by day account kept by Church Historian Andrew Jenson, who came the same route just ten days before the Warnick.

The saints proceeded from Castle Gardens to New Haven, Connecticut on a large freight steamer. From there they went by train through Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Vermont to Montreal, Canada. Here they boarded the Uncomfortable and dirty freight and cattle cars. Their route of travel through Canada was along the north bank of the St. Lawrence River and the shores of Lake Ontario and Lake Erie, to the St. Clair River. Here the emigrants were ferried over the St. Clair River to Port Huron in the State of Michigan.

As the company traveled the long road across the United States toward their goal, many more became ill with the terrible disease of cholera. Victims were claimed one by one. The cattle cars had been swept and cleaned as much as possible and proved somewhat of a blessing, as the weary, sick people were able to lay their belongings upon the floors and rest, being too ill to raise their heads. The roughness of the engineers in starting and stopping the trains added to the general discomfort and it became almost unendurable.

Anna Helena was one who was suffering greatly. She endured three days of the terrible ride across Canada, but on the third day, after their train had crossed back into the United States from Canada, she passed away. The Charles Peter Warnick sketch records that as the train pulled away from the town of Marcella, she was left dead on the station platform. The date was August 5, 1866. From Andrew Jenson's careful daily chronology, we learn that the train would have been well into Michigan by this time, and the town where the body of Anna Helena was left was probably Marcella, Mich.

The suffering of other members of the family was also becoming intense. For five more days they endured the agony of the bumps, and the discomfort of their condition. Across Illinois they traveled, across the Mississippi River, through hostile Missouri, where telegraphed word of the Saints arrival brought hordes of ruffians to the rail stations to make their existence even more miserable with their taunts and threats.

Just before the train reached St. Joseph, Missouri, one the cars took fire and it was with great exertion that the sick were removed from it to escape being burned to death. At St. Joseph, Missouri, a number of the sick and dying had to be left on the platform of the depot. Among this number was Anders Petter Warnick and his daughter Anna Christina. Death had not completely claimed them, and loved ones obtained no further knowledge of their fate.

Residents of Missouri at that time were so hateful they seemed actually to thirst for the blood of the saints, and it was never learned whether the suffering saints were buried alive or even killed by force.

Of this time of terror and suffering, sixteen-year-old Charles Peter had these feelings, as recorded later in his life sketch: "When I look back and think of that awful scene, I wonder how we could do it and I can only think that we saw so much suffering and death, that our sense of feeling and sympathy must have been paralyzed. We thought that we were all doomed and nothing mattered--the sooner the better."

And so ended the earthly life of Anders Petter Warnick and his wife, Anna Helena Anderson. Their burial places are not known. We have none of their earthly possessions to tie us to them, but the tie we have is stronger than any material thing. It is the bond of appreciation, love and respect, which fills our souls when we contemplate our debt to them. From these brave, staunch, humble pioneer ancestors, comes to us a precious, dearly bought heritage. Because of their courage, we live at liberty, in a place of beauty and bounty. We and our associates have opportunity to be trained in the principles of harmonious and peaceful living. Experience and development through activity in the Church of Jesus Christ are ours for the taking. Eternal life is our promise through obedience to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Pres. J. Reuben Clark Jr. speaking of pioneer ancestors said: "We may claim no honor, no reward, no respect, nor special position or recognition, no credit because of what they were or what they wrought." We add--But Oh! the blessings that come to us, not through effort of our own, but through the valor and mighty faith of our Grandparents, Anders Petter and Anna Helena Warnick.

The Warnick family, without the companionship of their father, mother, and sister, assembled at the docks in St. Joseph with the remaining members of the company. Here they boarded a steamer for the voyage up the Missouri River to Wyoming, Nebraska. The two nights journey up the river was filled with suffering death. Wyoming, Nebraska was the outfitting place for the Mormon emigration crossing the plains in 1864 to 1866. This little place, its historic significance now almost forgotten, is located near Nebraska City, about forty-five miles south of Omaha, Nebraska. To breathe its fresh air, and drink the pure water available was a blessed thing for the harassed saints who landed there after their trying ride in crowded ships and cattle cars. Earlier companies had enjoyed days or even weeks of rest here while preparing for the remainder of the journey. This company had no time to rest or even make any needed preparations. Abner Lowrey and his sixty ox-team train had already waited a long time for their arrival. They were impatient to be on their way, for the season was late.

The Abner Lowrey train was known as the Sanpete train, for most of the wagons and teams had been recruited in Sanpete county. It was the last of the emigrant trains to travel all the way from the Missouri River to Salt Lake City with ox-teams, as the Union Pacific Railroad was being built from Omaha westward, and the following year (1867) the road was opened by rail for several hundred miles west of the Missouri River.

Those Mormons traveling under the Perpetual Emigrating Fund, as the Warnick family was, had a precise scale laid down for them. Each wagon was to carry 1,000 pounds of flour, 50 pounds each of sugar, bacon, and rice, 30 of beans, 25 of salt, 20 dried fruit, 5 of tea, plus a gallon of vinegar and 10 bars of soap. About ten persons were assigned to each wagon. The journey was contemplated to be two or three months in length. Emigrants were each allowed 50 pounds of baggage free of charge, but personal baggage was not great by the time the saints had arrived at the Missouri River. Many of their bundles had been opened and articles stolen. Others had brought too much and had discarded it along the way. Others had only meager belongings in the first place and not much to bring.

After only part of a day in which to make preparations, the members of the Warnick family started, with other company members, on August 13th on the 1,500 mile journey across the plains. Families of the entire company had suffered death proportionate to the Warnick family. Some families had been entirely wiped out. There was sorrow and continued suffering in the depleted ranks. Many companions were left in shallow graves dug hurriedly by the wayside as the train wended its way to the Platte River. One noon all the men that were able were busy digging one large grave in which seven bodies were buried.

They had not been out many days when Anders Gustave passed away, and it was only a few days after that when Charlotte Bengtsen, his betrothed, died. The new-born infant of August and Mari also succumbed, and then their son Johan Gustaf was buried also. On September 22, Christina's orphaned daughter died.

Andrew Jenson says of this company, "If the details of the journey across the plains of this "The Cavour" company were written it would probably present one of most pitiable and heart-rending chapters in the history of the Church, but it is perhaps better to close the episode and not revive the memory of something so touching and sorrowful. At some future date, undoubtedly, more details will be published about the experience of that ill-fated company, and in the great hereafter those who laid down their lives on the way will have an opportunity to give an accurate and truthful account of their sufferings."

On October 7, 1866, it is recorded in Church Chronology by Andrew Jenson, that part of Captain Arza E. Hinkley's relief train, which was sent back 450 miles to meet the last companies, returned to Salt Lake City with 87 passengers from Captain Abner Lowry's

train. On the 22nd of October, the survivors of Captain Lowry's company arrived in Salt Lake City, approximately six months after they had left their homes.

The Warnick family had traveled approximately one month in their native land of Sweden and Germany, two months on the ocean, two weeks by steamer and train over eastern United States and Canada, and two and a half months by ox team crossing the plains from the Missouri River to Utah. Of the eleven who had left Sweden, with one born on the way, only four reached the land of Zion. They were Johan August, his wife, Mari, their daughter, Caroline, and sixteen-year-old Carl or Charles Peter. Three years later, on August 6, 1869, oldest sister, Inga Maria, was reunited with the family, arriving from Sweden on that date with her four children. On the 21st of October, 1871, the oldest brother, Adolph Fredrick, arrived in Utah with his future wife, Christine Olson. The earthly members of a family, strongly bound by love and common ideals, was thus again reunited. May these same ties also forever bind their descendants.