

F  
-  
m

# The Peoples of Utah

Edited by  
Helen Z. Papanikolas

UTAH STATE  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
Salt Lake City



# 4

## SCANDINAVIAN SAGA

BY WILLIAM MULDER

### I

In the telephone directories, Utah looks decidedly Anglo-Scandinavian. History and the statistics confirm the impression. Utah's Scandinavians and their descendants, as with most of the state's other immigrants from northern Europe, are largely the fruit of over a century of Mormon proselyting abroad. During the second half of the nineteenth century, when Mormonism preached its doctrine of the "gathering" with vigor and conducted a program of organized migration to Zion, some thirty thousand converts from Norway, Denmark, and Sweden felt persuaded that the valleys of Deseret were Kingdom Come and set out for a frontier far beyond the broader acres their countrymen were homesteading in Minnesota and Wisconsin and well ahead of the Scandinavian invasion of Nebraska and the Dakotas. Backsliders among the Mormon Scandinavians helped people the great West between the Mississippi and the Rockies: disillusioned or quarrelsome, they defected from their church emigrant companies en route and stayed behind to become first settlers in towns and counties in Iowa and Nebraska that by now have forgotten their Mormon origin. Some disaffected among the Scandinavians backtrailed to the Midwest from Zion itself, notably the family of woodcarver James Borglum from Jutland, whereby Utah lost a pair of famous future sculptors in sons Gutzon and Solon Hannibal, who one day would carve Mount Rushmore.

Zion as lodestone, however, proved strong enough to attract fresh arrivals from Scandinavia down the years. The mighty stream of the late 1800s diminished in the 1900s, reflecting changes in Mormon policy and program. The trickle swelled briefly after World War II when Mormon converts, many of whom had waited for years, put Europe and the holocaust gladly behind them. In every

This essay is based on the author's *Homeward to Zion: The Mormon Migration from Scandinavia* (Minneapolis, 1957).

census in the hundred years from 1850 to 1950, Utah residents born in Scandinavia as well as those of Scandinavian stock (those having Scandinavian or mixed parentage) appear consistently as the second largest group of foreign-born or foreign stock in the state, second only to British-born and those of British stock.<sup>1</sup> In 1900 Scandinavians formed 34 percent of Utah's foreign-born, and Scandinavian stock that year formed 16 percent of the total population. Two years later Anthon H. Lund, Danish immigrant of 1862, could tell a big reunion of Scandinavians in Brigham City, "We are now 45,000 and are a great power in our state."<sup>2</sup> His own appointment the year before to the high office of counselor in the First Presidency of the Mormon church was a recognition of that power, an official acknowledgement of the role his countrymen were playing in Utah's affairs. But by 1910 more Greeks (657) than Scandinavians (479) were giving Utah as their destination at American ports. In the decades that followed, the Scandinavian percentage of Utah's foreign-born gradually but steadily declined. By 1950, one hundred years after the first Mormon missionaries went from Utah to Scandinavia, Scandinavians comprised 18 percent of the foreign-born in the state. In 1960 they comprised 20 percent, reflecting the influx after the war. In 1970 the figures, whether absolute or in percentages, seem slight: the Scandinavian-born barely 9 percent of the foreign-born; Scandinavian stock only 19 percent of the foreign stock and just a fraction, slightly under 2 percent, of the total population.

But these figures are deceptive, yielding at best a thin profile of late immigration; to stop with them is to look at recent passports only, to the neglect of family portraits in the album of the past. The

<sup>1</sup> In 1960 and 1970 the German-born exceeded both the British- and Scandinavian-born (in 1970: 4,890 born in Germany, 4,431 born in Great Britain, 2,751 born in Scandinavia), but British and Scandinavian stock still led (in 1970: 9,289 of German stock, 24,100 of British stock, 19,303 of Scandinavian stock). In 1970, to refrain for a moment from lumping all Scandinavians together and give nationalism its due, Scandinavian distribution in the state, by country of birth, showed 724 born in Norway (3,389 of Norwegian stock), 842 born in Sweden (6,635 of Swedish stock), and 1,185 born in Denmark (9,279 of Danish stock), maintaining the same ranking among the three countries that had been true from the beginning. In the state at large, 12,736 reported one of the Scandinavian languages as their mother tongue. In Salt Lake City, metropolitan center for most of the late immigration, 7,714 residents in 1970 still spoke one of the Scandinavian languages as their mother tongue, exceeded only by the 13,704 who claimed German and the 17,972 who claimed Spanish, the latter evidence of the growing presence of the Mexican-Americans and an index of a radically different rate of assimilation: the Nordic immigrant in Utah was inclined to lose his mother tongue quickly.

<sup>2</sup> The U.S. Twelfth Census (1900) shows 24,751 inhabitants of Danish stock, 14,578 of Swedish, and 4,554 of Norwegian in Utah for a total of 43,883 of Scandinavian stock, or very close to Lund's round figure of 45,000.

Scandinavian die was cast early, and the imprint on the state today is unmistakable, even though it is no longer common to call certain towns and neighborhoods in Utah Swede Town<sup>3</sup> or Little Denmark and even though many descendants of the early convert-emigrants no longer think of themselves as Mormons. Utah's Scandinavian saga, moreover, is not exclusively a Mormon story, as flourishing Lutheran congregations bear witness. Scandinavian goldseekers passed through Salt Lake Valley on their way to California as early as 1850, forerunners of the non-Mormon visitors from Scandinavia (journalists, educators, reformers, artists, adventurers, evangelists, tradesmen) who would tarry among the Saints for a season, some to stay. But the branches of the Scandinavian tree, even where secularized and obscured, owe much to the parent trunk. It is a story of a transplanting rather than an uprooting, with Mormon methods in proselyting, emigration, and settlement providing a humane husbandry.

## II

The earliest Scandinavian converts to Mormonism were won not in Europe but in the United States among the Norwegian immigrants in the storied settlements at Fox Rixer in Illinois, Sugar Creek in Iowa, and Koshkonong in Wisconsin Territory, within missionary striking distance of Nauvoo, the rising Mormon capital of the 1840s. Joseph Smith, the Mormon prophet, hoped to recruit missionaries for Scandinavia among them who would lead their countrymen to settle in and around Nauvoo to strengthen Zion as converts from the British Isles were already doing. By 1843 the Norwegian Mormon congregation at Fox River numbered fifty-eight, including several of the famous "sloop folk" of 1825; Knud Peterson of Hardangar, immigrant of 1837, better known in Utah history as Canute, who would be one of the early settlers of Lehi; and Aagaata Sondra Ystensdatter, eighteen and also an immigrant of 1837, from Telemarken, who as Ellen Sanders Kimball, wife of Brigham Young's counselor Heber C. Kimball, would be one of the three women in the first company of Mormon pioneers to enter Salt Lake Valley in 1847. Norwegian congregations sprang up in Iowa and Wisconsin as well, and by 1845 one Lutheran minister lamented that nearly a hundred and fifty Norwegians in the western

<sup>3</sup> Yet as late as January 1975 a letter appeared in the *Salt Lake Tribune's* "Public Forum" captioned "Advice from Swede Town" and beginning, "I live in 'Swede Town,' which is in the very northwest end of the Capitol Hill area at 1550 North."

settlements—some eighty in the Fox River colony alone—had followed the “Mormon delusion.”

After the death of Joseph Smith, Brigham Young visited the outlying congregations of the Saints in quick succession trying to hold the pieces together. He called on the Norwegian Branch at Fox River in October of the martyr year and on a hundred acres northeast of nearby Ottawa “laid out a city,” called it Norway, and “dedicated it to the Lord.” Brigham Young declared that it would be a gathering place for the Scandinavian people and that they would build a temple there. But the Norwegian converts had to abandon that hope as the Mormons had to abandon Nauvoo. A hundred Norwegian Mormon families made ready to go west with Brigham Young, but the dissenter James J. Strang threw them into confusion with his counterclaims to the succession. Most of the Norwegian congregation eventually joined the reorganization under Joseph Smith III, son of the prophet, who in the 1850s united many splinter groups and individuals adrift around Nauvoo following the “Brighamite” exodus.

Brigham Young, meanwhile, did not forget the Fox River converts. In December 1847, back with news of fresh beginnings in the valley of the Great Salt Lake, he sent word from Council Bluffs to the Norwegian settlement urging them to come west. In April 1849 twenty-two Norwegians, Canute Peterson among them, left Fox River in six wagons headed for the valley. At Kanessville, Iowa, they joined Apostle Ezra Taft Benson’s camp on the east bank of the Missouri River to become known in Mormon history as the Norwegian Company. Already on the grounds were a group of Welsh emigrants under Capt. Dan Jones. From Kanessville the companies traveled together, a mingling of tongues typical of Mormon migration. At the Weber River they encountered Apostle Erastus Snow and two Scandinavians, John Erik Forsgren and Peter Ole Hansen, eastward bound to carry the gospel to the old countries. After battling waist-deep snows in the mountains, the Norwegian Company reached the valley on October 25, in time to be numbered in Utah’s first census, along with one Swede and two Danes. An early Gentile Scandinavian on the scene was Christian Hoier, a Norwegian forty-niner on his way to California, who wrote a letter to Bratsberg’s *Amtstidende* about these *Thelebonder* among the Mormons—the first of many letters and travelers’ accounts about Utah that would find their way into Scandinavian newspapers.

The Swede in that first census was John Erik Forsgren and the Danes were Peter Ole Hansen and his brother Hans Christian. John Erik and Hans Christian, both sailors, had embraced Mormonism in Boston in the early 1840s and had gone to Nauvoo. Hans Christian had written the news of his conversion to his younger brother Peter Ole in Copenhagen, who hastened to Nauvoo, where Brigham Young set him to work on a Danish translation of the Book of Mormon while Hans Christian entertained the Saints with his fiddle. After the fall of Nauvoo, Forsgren marched to California with the Mormon Battalion in 1846 and Hans Christian Hansen came west in 1847 with the pioneer vanguard, Peter Ole following soon after. It is a smiling coincidence of history that in these early representatives Norway, Denmark, and Sweden were all three "present at the creation," significant tokens of the important role the three kingdoms (and Iceland as well before the decade was out)<sup>4</sup> were to play in the peopling of Utah, harbingers of the harvest to come from "the land of the north."

## III

Most Mormon converts were won in the compact villages of Denmark and southern-most Sweden. In far-stretching Norway and northern Sweden the needle of emigration to America was already oriented, and Utah seemed a meager offering alongside the riches of Minnesota's "New Scandinavia." But the leaven of religious dissent and social unrest was at work in all three countries. The times were ripe for the "Gospel of America." The Mormons found many poor and not a few notable exceptions among the affluent who were persuaded the ancient gospel had been restored and were eager to dedicate their worldly possessions to the upbuilding of God's kingdom in the West. The first American missionaries recruited

<sup>4</sup> Some Mormon proselytes were made in Iceland as early as 1851 when two natives, Thorarinn Halfidason, a cabinetmaker, and Gudmundur Gudmundson, a jeweler, learning their trades in Copenhagen, were baptized there and on returning to Iceland won several followers. Numbering fewer than four hundred during the half century to 1900, Icelandic Mormons emigrated a handful at a time, usually via Liverpool. A group of sixteen settled in Spanish Fork in 1855-56 forming the nucleus of what is claimed to be the first Icelandic colony in America in modern times. Possessed of literary and musical gifts, and skilled in a variety of crafts, the small but influential settlement deserves separate study. Kate Bjarnason Carter, perennial president of the Daughters of Utah Pioneers, is a descendant of the first settlers. Halldor Laxness, internationally known Icelandic novelist, has written a fanciful novel about them: *Paradisarheimt*, translated by Magnus Magnusson as *Paradise Reclaimed* (1960).

preachers among the converts themselves, laymen from all walks of life—farm laborers, shoemakers, tailors, carpenters, stonemasons—who went two by two through most of the provinces of Denmark and ventured into Sweden and Norway to spread the Mormon contagion as fortune favored them and the letter of the law allowed. These native elders became so well known they were celebrated in the street ballads of the time. In 1856 the itinerant artist Christen Dalsgaard encountered them in a carpenter's cottage and recorded the scene in *Mormon-praedikanter* ("Mormon Preachers"), a colorful genre painting notable for its sympathetic realism, which hangs in the Statens Museum for Kunst ("the State Museum for Art") in Copenhagen today.

Through the labors of these tenacious laymen, preaching a Zion they had never seen ("*O Du Zion i Vest*" was the Danish equivalent of "O Ye Mountains High"), Mormonism gained its own momentum in Scandinavia. They were its mustard seed. The first ten years of the mission were largely their story, some of them serving six and seven years before emigrating. During that first decade, Utah itself sent only thirteen missionaries to Scandinavia, and six of these were Scandinavians who had joined the church in America. The elders from Zion arrived in greater numbers with each passing year. Altogether 1,361 missionaries were sent out from Utah during the half century 1850–1900. "The Kingdom is beleaguered by this missionary army from Utah," complained a Swedish official. The strength was more than numerical. To a surprising degree the manpower from America was Scandinavian—converts and the sons of converts who had emigrated and had answered a call to devote two or three years in the homeland as elders from Zion.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Of the 1,361 missionaries sent from Utah by 1900, only 24, or less than 2 percent, were not Scandinavian; 516, or 41 percent, were first-generation Danes; 417, or 30 percent, were first-generation Swedes (the Swedes nearly equaling the Danes after 1886); and 130, or about 10 percent, first-generation Norwegians. Ten were Icelanders. The American-born missionaries of Scandinavian parents, the first of whom arrived in 1882, numbered 247, or about 19 percent. The proportion of these second-generation missionaries rose sharply after 1896, for the five years 1895–1900 surpassing the first generation. By June 4, 1905, when the Scandinavian Mission was divided into separate Swedish and Danish-Norwegian administrations, another 388 missionaries had spent the usual two and a half years in the field, totaling 1,749 for the life of the undivided mission since Erastus Snow and his companions had founded it in 1850. Some 67 of these returned to Scandinavia on second and third missions, among them many of the old-timers who had formed the earliest native ministry. Anthon Skanchy, Norwegian ropemaker who became a building contractor in America, served five terms. It is still a matter of pride in many families that a son, a grandson or great-grandson should return to the old country "on a mission." The Utah-Scandinavia axis has been well traveled.

The return of the native on such a grand scale advertised Utah more effectively than the literature and efforts of the Boards of Immigration and railroad land agents serving other states. *Skandinavians Stjerne* ("Scandinavian Star"), the mission periodical founded in October 1851, became a rich repository of news from Utah: territorial and national news, church communiques and doctrine, editorials from the *Deseret News* and the *Millennial Star* (*Stjerne's* British counterpart), and, above all, letters from convert-emigrants. Their postmarks provided a romantic roll call of Zion's habitations, names of far places yet familiar, endeared by the knowledge of friends and kinfolk writing from their own firesides. From Sanpete Valley, itself an Indian name, and the "Little Denmark" of the settlements, came numerous letters bearing lovely names: Springtown, Mount Pleasant, Fountain Green, and Fairview; a biblical name like Ephraim—at first Fort Ephraim and then Ephraim City, the change speaking a whole history; a Book of Mormon name like Moroni; a historical name like Gunnison. And of course a great many letters came from *Store Saltstad*, "Great Salt Lake City" itself. Letters from emigrants en route were an education in United States geography: "Fort Laramie," so explained *Stjerne's* editor in introducing a letter from that outpost in 1861, "lies about midway on the prairies and about 500 English miles from Florence." Later, business houses with immigrant names advertised in the state's foreign-language papers which were sent abroad—but even these papers were church-sponsored. In 1895 a Lucerne Land and Water Company issued an "Invitation to Danish Farmers and Dairy-men," Utah's closest approach to the immigration literature of other states.

Utah's early invitation to prospective settlers clearly required a special motivation and indoctrination, a mingling of spiritual and practical inducements. For anyone to be content in Zion, conversion—at least conditioning—had to precede emigration. Mormon missionaries were "heralds of salvation" first and only incidentally immigration agents. After arrival in Utah, should the faith falter, the glow subside, the disaffected became the object of the counterefforts of Lutheran evangelicals, whose tracts against the Mormons also found their way to Scandinavia, where a flood of anti-Mormon literature (and hence hurtful to Utah) had flourished from the beginning. Denominational societies in America as well as in Scandinavia were zealous distributors. As late as 1907 the Lutheran Mission in Utah was distributing *Luk Doren for Mormonerne!*

*Advarsel!* (“*Lock Your Door against the Mormons! Warning!*”) Balladeers in Scandinavia hawked “the latest new verse about the Copenhagen apprentice masons” who sold their wives to the Mormons for two thousand kroner and riotously drowned their sorrows in the taverns. In the doctrine of polygamy, of course, the opposition in Scandinavia saw in Mormon proselyting a bid for concubines for Zion.

The popular image of the Mormon proselytes—their poverty, their ignorance, their fanaticism—made them Europe’s ugly ducklings, objects of scorn and ridicule, though the novelist Ole Rolvaag called emigrants from the same class “giants in the earth.” It was precisely the poor and humble the Mormons were after. Poverty and ignorance were ills for which America itself was the remedy, an assurance that was one of Mormonism’s enthusiasms. The hidden resources of the humble could be magnificent. There was no way to measure the intangibles that were to be their greatest assets once settled in Utah. How could fellow Lollanders ever see in Elsie Rasmussen and Jens Nielsen more than simple, hard-working hands hiring out from one farm to another, now and then walking arm and arm to dance away the night and return in time to do the chores? How could anyone predict their heroic history? Underway to Zion, Jens’s courage would fail him crossing Wyoming’s snowbound plateau, and Elsie would load him, his feet frozen, into her handcart and pull him till his courage returned, saving him, though permanently crippled, to pioneer five settlements and build as many homes to make good his dedication to the Lord for his deliverance. As colonizer, Indian peacemaker, merchant, stockman, bishop, and patriarch he would make his broken-tongued maxim *sticket to trude*—“stick to the truth”—a badge of honor, while in sandswept Bluff, Elsie would plant mulberry trees to raise silkworms, tend beehives to provide the settlement its only sweets, spend long hours at the loom, giving her days to manual labor, her evenings to the Bible and other good books, and devote herself as foster mother to the children of her husband’s plural wives.

It was just such recruits Zion needed. Conversion called thousands like Jens and Elsie Nielsen out of obscurity. But conversion cost dearly. Nearly a third of the proselytes could not pay the price but disavowed the faith in Scandinavia itself, with others following suit after emigration. The winnowing was part of a general reformation in which conversion, itself such a profound education, was only the beginning. Mormonism took its converts where it found them and

prepared them for the American experience in an indoctrination unique among European emigrants. To this end the mission considered itself "Eden's nursery," where the gospel was sown and the seedlings readied for transplanting to Zion, the garden itself. Mormonism's practicality gave its vision substance, intended to purify motives and to improve habits.

Directly related to preparation for America was the sustained effort on the part of young and old to learn English. Classes, held often on Sunday morning, a prelude to church service, were in a real sense religious exercises; a phrase in Peter Nielsen's journal unconsciously reflects the natural affinity of the worldly and the spiritual in their lives: H.T.W. Eriksen, he says, who held an evening school in Nyby for the children, "taught them English, religion, and writing."<sup>6</sup> The private journals themselves, many of them fortunately preserved by the descendants or in Utah archives today, moved from Norwegian, Swedish, or Danish to English, the language mixed at first, then more confidently in the new tongue, though spelling remained woefully uncertain. Zion's meetinghouses would hear an odd admixture of sin and syntax in the "testimony meetings" in congregations dominated by Scandinavian immigrants. The desire to learn English, revered as the language of the Book of Mormon and of latter-day prophets, was another evidence of how completely Mormonism produced a break with the convert's past, separating him from mother church, fatherland, and native tongue, the transition begun even before he left. It was a striking contrast to the congregations Lutheranism transplanted to New Scandinavia that kept the old tongue alive as the one vital link with the homeland.

Not only English was important to salvation; so was soap. "It is not enough for a person to believe, be converted, and be baptized for forgiveness of sins. The gospel promotes a reformation in every respect where many customs and habits inherited from the fathers are not in harmony with the gospel." So went the official admonitions. Cleanliness was paramount. The Holy Spirit did not dwell in unclean tabernacles. "The first step in this so important reformation is to wash the whole body at least once a week and

<sup>6</sup> Peter Nielsen Diary, April 23, 1859, original holograph in possession of Frederik J. Nielsen, Blue Water, New Mexico, typescript translation in Archives Division, Historical Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

change linen as often. Thus may health be preserved, peace and good cheer, and sickness and death kept at bay.”<sup>7</sup>

In Scandinavia the training in this inclusive morality was intense and diligent. The converts were to legalize their common-law marriages, cease card-playing, abstain from tobacco and strong drink, and pay their debts. Converts emigrating without settling old obligations damaged the cause. False promises, gossip, and backbiting were sources of grievance and unbecoming to a people who should be united. The ideal of social and religious harmony was arduously pursued. They even attempted to erase national prejudices; their identity as Danes or Swedes or Norwegians was supposed to be lost in their association as Latter-day Saints—a fraternal feeling not always preserved in Utah. The number who fell by the wayside, often over trivial matters, only indicates how serious a commitment membership was and how far the converts had to go. Though in Utah itself Anglo-American elements might patronize them and look on the converts from Scandinavia as “dumb Swede” and “ignorant Danishman,” in all respects they were expected to be an example to an already critical world. The country crudities of some converts would furnish Utah with the comic figure of the “Sanpete farmer” and his household, earthy and unsanitary as a scene from Breughel, and they offended fastidious converts whose idealism had not anticipated such a lowly brotherhood and who did not stay long in such company. But those with tougher sensibilities remained to lift up their fellows and provide an effective native leadership. The convert-emigrants who returned from Utah on missions also served as living models of what the new life could do. They attracted their kind and strengthened the work of reformation.

Products of a conversion that shook most of them to the roots, objects of a thoroughgoing reformation in their manner of living, welded by doctrine and tried by experience, the proselytes found themselves impatient to “go up to Zion,” for in Mormon thinking, conversion was practically synonymous with emigration. Raising means to go to America became the great preoccupation of the faithful. “Everywhere among the Saints,” one of them remembered, “the next year’s emigration is almost their every thought. This circumscribes their prayers, their anxieties, and their exertions.”<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> “Et Vink til Emigranterne,” *Skandinaviens Stjerne*, 11:200–201 (April 1, 1862).

<sup>8</sup> Christian A. Madsen to John Van Cott, July 24, 1861, in *Scandinavian Mission General History*, LDS Archives.

## IV

Contrary to the folklore about the Mormons as abductors of women to supply Utah's supposed harems, the movement in Scandinavia was a family phenomenon. The majority of the emigrants were in their vigorous thirties and forties. A great many eligible young women in the emigrant companies married young men, their own countrymen, before journey's end.

Although the collector of customs at New Orleans, on March 17, 1853, indiscriminately labeled the first chartered company of converts "Labourers and Shoemakers"—and had them coming from "Ireland"—they were in reality Danish farmers and artisans representing the same variety of skills that marked the whole emigration: the original roll of the *Forest Monarch* company has not survived, but it included several weavers and blacksmiths, a tailor, wagonmaker, seaman, miller, wheelwright, carpenter, cabinetmaker, cooper, a government clerk, a former Baptist lay preacher, a village choirmaster, a school trustee, and a good many farmers. Farmers and their families (including an occasional shepherd and a few called gardeners or agriculturalists) made up fully half the emigration in the 1850s, 57 percent in one company. In the 1860s they made up about a third, their numbers steadily declining with each decade as the proportion of laborers rose. Arrived in Utah, the later immigration would not know what to do on a farm. Carl Madsen, a carriagemaker, on his arrival in 1881 went home with Bishop Barton to Kaysville: "The next morning I was handed a bucket and directed to go to the barn. I caught the idea I was to milk the cows, a thing I had never done before."<sup>9</sup>

The "farmers" of the shipping lists were small farmers, Europe's familiar peasants—freeholders, tenants, or simply journeyman hands. Their peasant ancestry would figure years later in directives from the Genealogical Society of Utah outlining "how we must go to work if we want to construct a genealogical table of a farmer family." They included a few like the well-to-do Peter Thomsen of Bregninge on Falster Island, so prominent his conversion rocked the village, and the landed Anders Eliason of Ennerkulen, Sweden, who provided a hundred of his fellow converts with passage to America. At the other extreme were young hands like Christian Lund, who remembered herding cattle one winter for his board

<sup>9</sup> Carl Madsen, "My Conversion to Mormonism," typescript in possession of Brigham D. Madsen.

and a pair of wooden shoes, and Hans Christensen, whose sole possession was the sheep his father gave him as his share of the family property. In between were freeholders like Jens Nielsen, who at thirty years of age could buy five acres of land and build a cottage enabling him to be "looked upon as a respectable neighbor and many times invited to the higher class of society."<sup>10</sup>

The great majority in the 1850s and 1860s, decades of Mormonism's largest rural following in Scandinavia, were independent enough to pay their passage to Zion, at least as far as the frontier, where wagons from Utah Territory awaited them, and to assist those without enough saleable goods to scrape their passage together. They were, besides, a vanguard which, once established in Utah, sent help to the old country and made possible the greater emigration, proportionately, of the 1870s and 1880s. The well-to-do farmers were few enough to be especially noticed, though of course wealth was relative: James Jensen remembered that owning a cow gave his parents "some recognition socially" in the village of Haugegurp. Certainly the farmers of those early years were far from the indigent serfs they were commonly imagined to be. They were seed corn for Zion, supplying it with a skill most sorely needed. Better fitted for an agrarian experience than the urban British migration, they were destined to make the valleys where they settled known as the granaries and creampots of Utah.

Like the farmers, the artisans, who outnumbered the unskilled laborers, included the prosperous and the poor. Among them were masters, journeymen, and apprentices—at one extreme, established proprietors like Hans Jensen, whose blacksmith works in Aalborg was valued at \$4,000, and tailor Jens Weibye of Vendsyssel, who kept fourteen employees busy in his shop; at the other extreme, a journeyman carriagemaker like Jens Christopher Kempe, who had nothing but the tools of his trade. Others, like weaver Hans Zobell, owned their cottage worksteads, which they could sell when they emigrated. Ola Nilsson Liljenquist, a tailor, whose wife could afford silks and a servant, was one of the few early converts enjoying the privileges of burghership.

<sup>10</sup> *Scandinavian Jubilee Album* (Salt Lake City, 1900), p. 228; "Across the Plains in 1863," in Kate B. Carter, comp., *Heart Throbs of the West*, 12 vols. (Salt Lake City, 1939-51), 4:351; C.N. Lund, "Autobiography"; Hans Christensen, "Memoirs"; Jens Nielsen, letter to son Urian, in Albert R. Lyman, "Sketch of Bishop Jens Nielsen"; Hans Jensen Hals, "Autobiography" in WPA Writers' Project Collection, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City.

Among the artisans, carpenters and related craftsmen like cabinetmakers, coopers, wheelwrights, joiners, turners, and carriage-makers made up a considerable group. The next largest group of artisans were the tailors, seamstresses, dyers, and weavers. Smiths—blacksmiths, ironfounders, coppersmiths, tinsmiths, and an occasional machinist—followed these, with shoemakers, tanners, saddle- and harness-makers almost as large a group, not far outnumbering stonecutters, masons, and bricklayers.

There were about the same number of butchers, brewers, bakers, and millers as there were fishermen and seamen. The sailors were few. Landlocked in Utah, they might on some glorious Fourth of July climb the community flagpole like a mast, or like bargeman Hans “Pram Stikker” Larsen, work the block and tackle to hoist the stone for meetinghouses and temples. Four ropemakers, two house painters, a miner, a matmaker, a hairdresser, a hunter, a bookbinder, a printer, a thatcher, a sailmaker, a shipbuilder, five watch- or instrument-makers, four clerks, four potters, and a furrier complete the inventory of occupations. Three musicians—all members of the *Monarch of the Sea* company in 1861—alone saved the day for the professions, though the *B.S. Kimball* emigrants included a homeopath. For a budding artist like young Carl Christian Anton Christensen, whose expert silhouettes won him a scholarship to Copenhagen’s Royal Academy until he joined the Mormons, Zion had at first no call. He had to content himself with farming when he emigrated in 1857, though he kept his interest alive as an amateur, painting scenery for the Salt Lake Theatre and creating a traveling panorama of church history that won him at last a kind of fame. The panorama was rediscovered in the 1960s and went on tour again, a twentieth-century resurrection.

The basic skills were all there; others would be developed in the settlements. “I would never have believed,” wrote Christensen in 1872, after visiting the Utah Territorial Fair, “so much talent could be found among us as a people who are nearly all gathered from among the poor and most downtrodden classes of mankind.” Someone from his hometown, the Danish settlement of Ephraim, had won the silver medal for a landscape painting showing several children gleaning corn in the field just outside “our town”; a Swedish sister had received the premium for *haararbeide*, or “hair artistry”; “our friend W.” (without doubt the Norwegian painter Dan Wegeland) had received the silver medal for his portraits; a young Norwegian brother had taken the prize for wood-carving; a Swede

for an artistic watch; "and many others won premiums. . . . It's only a small part of what can be accomplished."<sup>11</sup> Twenty years later Christensen observed that he met Scandinavians "nearly everywhere" in his travels and found his countrymen in many places holding "the most responsible positions both in church and civic affairs," which he found "a greatly satisfying witness to our national character by the world's most practical nation—the Americans." He would have taken pride in their descendants in the twentieth century: scientists, university presidents, school superintendents, poets and novelists, musicians, legislators.

## v

The emigrants were rich in human resources, but they came, most of them, on a shoestring. In 1852 the Mormon mission established a *Vedvarende Emigrationsfond*, or revolving fund, designed as a branch of the churchwide Perpetual Emigrating Fund, the PEF. Translating the doctrine of the gathering into Danish rigsdaler and Swedish kroner spelled formidable difficulties. Eager brethren in Copenhagen in 1852 circulated a subscription to buy their own ship, for which they advertised in Norwegian papers, but abandoned the plan in favor of the British example of using chartered vessels. Scandinavia could profit from a dozen years of Mormon experience in transporting Mormons from England, and from a longer apprenticeship on the frontier during movements of the church from New York to Ohio, Missouri, Illinois, and finally to Utah. The Mormons were old hands at chartering ships, organizing emigrants into self-governing, self-helping communities on board, securing train or steamboat connections in the States, and, before the trans-continental railroad, assembling wagons, oxen, mules, flour, and tents at river and railroad terminals.

Mormon operations were a kind of consumer cooperative, a pooling of the emigrants' meager resources into the hands of church agents which, together with support from those already in Utah, gave them bargaining power. It meant cheaper travel for those who paid their own way, and it created a carrier for those who could not—the "Lord's poor" for whom Brigham Young pleaded ceaselessly but who, given labor and opportunity in Zion, could soon repay their passage. An air of dedication marked this activity. Mor-

<sup>11</sup> C.C.A. Christensen to Edward H. Anderson, December 29, 1891, *Nordstjarnan*, 16:47 (February 1, 1892).

mon representatives at ports of departure and arrival and at outfitting stations on the frontier considered their work "missions." Even teamsters were "called" from season to season to haul immigrants to the valley. Christian Michelsen in 1866 was shocked by the rawness of the Mormon teamsters: dressed in wide-brimmed hats, short jackets, and leather breeches, with a revolver or bowie knife in the bootleg, a long bull whip around their necks, some with a quid of tobacco in their mouths, and cursing, they did not look like "Saints." But the three hundred Scandinavian converts arriving at New Orleans on the *Jesse Munn* in 1854 were grateful to James Brown who met them: going aboard he "laid hands on their sick and felt to rejoice that I was where I could do good to the people of God." They raised "their hands to heaven" and in their broken language exclaimed, "Our brother has come from the land of Zion to help us."<sup>12</sup>

Church assistance was businesslike, but in the interest of the emigrant himself: all future help depended on keeping the PEF alive as a revolving fund; outgoing aid was not a gift but a loan, not unlike the federal student loan program today. Whether for the entire passage or for emergency aid along the way, he signed a promissory note. At Florence, Nebraska Territory, in 1860, for example, Johan Storstrom and Christian Christensen "having received the benefit of three hand cart shares" promised to pay "on demand" the sum of \$39.60. Anders Jensen, evidently in return for some service, received a voucher issued by the "Emigration Office" at Florence in 1863 drawing on the "Warehouse" for "four dollars in rations."<sup>13</sup>

Of 10,843 Scandinavian converts setting out for Utah by 1869, before the completion of the transcontinental railroad, at least 6,810 were transported from the frontier to the Salt Lake Valley in church wagons, signing IOUs for thirty-six dollars for a share of a wagon as one of eight passengers—though they more often walked. This was wholly in the 1860s. In the 1850s 1,032 went through by handcarts, which they could either purchase outright or sign for at eighteen dollars a share, four shares to the handcart. The rest, or about three thousand, went all the way as "independents," having been able to buy their own equipment and provisions. To the enemies

<sup>12</sup> James Brown to his family, February 22, 1854, typescript in Utah Humanities Research Foundation Archives, Marriott Library, University of Utah.

<sup>13</sup> Photostatic copies of these notes and the voucher are preserved in the Utah Humanities Research Foundation Archives.

of the Mormons, the pledge exacted from the converts that "We will hold ourselves, our time, and our labour, subject to the appropriation of the Perpetual Emigrating Fund Company, until the full cost of our emigration debt is paid, with interest if required," seemed a form of indenture and they accused the church of grinding the faces of the immigrant poor. The bark was worse than the bite. Threats, complaints, and pleadings rang down the years as the church tried to collect, but the PEF agreement remained a merciful instrument. At Brigham Young's death the fund's accounts receivable ran to over a million dollars, without interest.

Contributions from church members both at home and abroad, advance deposits from intending emigrants, and prepayment of passage money by those sending for friends and relatives made up the working capital of the PEF, augmented by occasional investments (PEF herds and farms in Utah), but it was not known from one year to the next how much assistance could be made available. In Scandinavia the converts helped themselves and they helped each other. For those few who possessed property and saleable goods, the proceeds were often enough to carry them through. Anna Widtsoe, widow of a schoolmaster in Trondhjem, Norway, whose son John A. would become a noted soil and water scientist, president of the University of Utah, and an apostle, auctioned the family library in 1883; Hans Zobell, weaver, sold his Danish cottage for 400 kroner (\$100) in 1869; and Andrew M. Israelsen, as a boy of seven, remembered the heavy red box of silver coins his parents received when they sold their little farm in Norway. The five hundred farmers, shoemakers, smiths, masons, tailors, and weavers and their families who made ready to leave on the sailship *James Nesmith* in January 1855 footed their own bill, some 3,813 English pounds, of which 1,638 pounds was sent to the frontiers in advance as "cattle and waggon money." In 1862 Soren Larsen Berstrup, a fifty-two-year-old farmer from northern Jutland, deposited 1,815 rigsdaler at Mormon mission headquarters in Copenhagen as one of over fifteen hundred converts, all financially independent, preparing for spring departure from Hamburg in a special caravan of four ships. Few could equal the treasure of farmer A.P. Kjersgaard Olsen, thirty-five, of Rakkeby, who in 1867 deposited 7,000 rigsdalers, which, after disbursements for passage,

plains equipment, and advances to various persons, left him a comfortable \$1,050 in exchange.<sup>14</sup>

By far the greater number, to judge from the ledger entries, had little or nothing to spare after paying their passage. Those with ampler means assisted their less fortunate fellow believers. A deliverer who like Moses never set his own feet on the promised land was Jens Andersen of Veddern, Aalborg, who had assisted no fewer than sixty of his fellows to emigrate; he met death on the North Sea in 1862, soon after leaving Cuxhaven. Almost as dolorous was the history of another benefactor, Hans Rasmussen of Ammendrup: before he emigrated in 1856 he paid the church a tithe amounting to 700 rigsdaler, contributed 1,400 rigsdaler to the mission's emigration fund, and paid, besides, the emigrant fare for thirty fellow converts. He lost everything except his life and his family in the snowstorms that overtook his company in the mountains, and he arrived in Salt Lake Valley destitute. Settled in Sanpete Valley, he sustained successive losses from Indian wars, droughts, and grasshoppers, to die at seventy-two, a severely tried Saint. The redeemed, once settled, did not always repay with kindness; some shirked their debt, which led to some fallings out among the convert-emigrants. It grieved the editor of *Morgenstjernen*, Danish monthly in Salt Lake City, that year after year many remained indifferent to their obligation: "Have you forgotten how eagerly you seized every means which would make your emigration possible?" he asked, and he upbraided those whose "views of the latter-day work" had changed: they should still honor their debt.<sup>15</sup>

One third of the means for the 567 emigrants leaving Scandinavia in 1869 was sent from Utah. Work on the approaching railroad proved a boon because it was the one type of labor for which cash was paid, cash that could be sent to waiting relatives in the old country. Scandinavians in Utah contributed twenty-five cents a month to a missionary fund, and they organized local emigrant aid societies whose contributions showed up on the emigration ledgers in Copenhagen as the Moroni Fund, the Ephraim Fund, the Provo Fund. The renowned Scandinavian Choir in Salt Lake

<sup>14</sup> John A. Widtsoe, *In the Gospel Net: The Story of Anna Karine Widtsoe, 1849-1919* (Salt Lake City, 1941), p. 74; H.J. Zobell, "Autobiography," typescript in possession of Albert Zobell, Jr., Salt Lake City; Andrew M. Israelsen, *Utah Pioneering, An Autobiography* (Salt Lake City, 1938), p. 12; Emigration Records (Copenhagen), *passim*.

<sup>15</sup> "Betel Eders Emigrationsgjaeld," *Morgenstjernen*, 1:168 (1882).

City held benefit concerts. In Ephraim, Sarah Ann Peterson of the Women's Relief Society urged her sisters to donate all Sunday eggs to the fund, and other settlements followed. In 1872, to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the arrival of the Mormons in the Great Salt Lake Valley, friends and relatives in Utah sent \$10,000 to Scandinavia. In 1883 they sent \$30,000 more to Sweden alone, enabling so many to emigrate that the mission could hardly function.

Prepaid tickets were among the forms of assistance from Utah. J.A. Peterson, steamship passenger agent in Salt Lake, advertised regularly in the Scandinavian weeklies that his tickets were good for a year and those who wished could travel "with the Latter-day Saint emigration." Copenhagen headquarters received deposits to individual accounts which led to a regular savings system in a bank called significantly *Bikuben* ("The Beehive"). The *Regenskabs Bog* or "account book" was as important to Mormon migration from Scandinavia as the Book of Mormon itself. It required long years for some to save enough from their pittance to accumulate even the few dollars needed for passage. "The great question among the Saints is 'How shall we get to Zion?'" wrote Niels C. Flygare in 1878. "Many have been in the church for fifteen or twenty-five years and grown old, but they are not tired of assisting in the good cause." Mission leaders advised thrift. By saving ten örer (2.5 cents) daily, the young, unmarried folk, who were unburdened and earning a living, would save 300 kroner (\$75) in ten years. It was slow; painful saving, but it brought them one by one, family by family, ever closer to the great day when they could go "home to Zion."

## VI

Going to America involved more than stepping aboard a vessel on one side of the Atlantic and disembarking on the other. For the Scandinavian converts it was a whole series of journeys. They first had to make their way to Copenhagen, main assembly point, then to Hamburg and across the North Sea to Grimsby or Hull for the train ride to Liverpool. The North Sea passage was often the roughest part of the whole journey: accounts describe the horrible retching in the holds of the vessels, sometimes little better than cattle boats. Shelter at various stages of the journey certainly had none of the comforts of home; a sensitive Norwegian woman found the "poor Saints" packed into a large hall in Copenhagen, given beds on straw in a loft in Hamburg, with no segregation of men and women,

quartered in a "kind of stable" in Grimsby, and sheltered in "a rude shed" in Liverpool.

From Scandinavia to England was but a foretaste of interminable changes, endless distances. After the Atlantic, crossed in sailing vessels until 1869, there stretched a continent to cross. Until 1855 Mormon emigrants traveled the New Orleans route, utilizing the waterways to get as far inland as possible—Keokuk or Quincy on the Mississippi, Atchison or Saint Joseph on the Missouri. To avoid the murderous climate of the lower Mississippi, all emigration after 1855 passed through eastern ports. The route in the states was determined by the best contract Mormon representatives were able to make. Scandinavian companies made up whole wagon trains and, after the full journey could be made by rail, occupied entire coaches. Brigham Young once toured the coaches carrying six hundred Scandinavians arriving in September 1872, going midway to Ogden to greet these "strange brothers and sisters from across the sea."

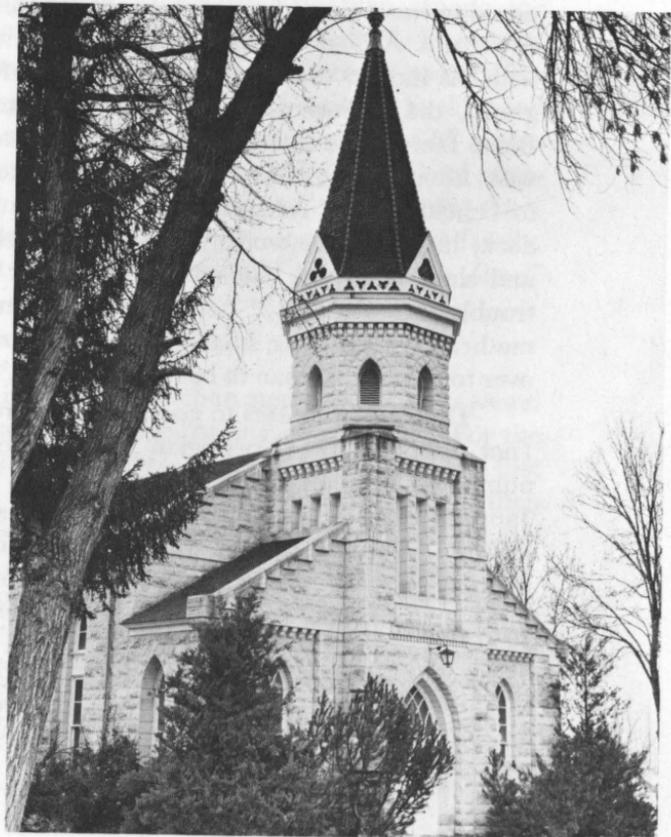
The tortuous itinerary did not disturb the Saints as they prepared to leave the old country, for there was too much excitement at departure. A Dane remembered the scene in Copenhagen in 1869: with his mother and sister he stayed with four hundred other emigrants, the greater part Mormons and "mostly farm folk," at the Bolles Hotel. The sitting room was in constant motion. Some people went about in the crowd begging to be taken along. "It was a sight to behold"—four hundred people marching from the hotel to the dock, lugging their worldly goods to the clanging of loose tinware and singing "Think not when you gather to Zion your trials and troubles are o'er. . . ." At the dock he remembered vividly how a mother gave her three small girls a last embrace before turning them over to a young woman to be taken to Utah.<sup>16</sup>

The first emigrants to go all the way from Scandinavia to Utah (not counting the Norwegian forerunners converted in Illinois) numbered a small band of twenty-eight, whom Erastus Snow in January 1852 — with his following nearly six hundred and growing daily — ventured to send out like doves from the ark. They made hurried preparations to join a company of British Saints embarking from Liverpool in February on the *Ellen Maria*, but they missed connections, and it was March 11 before they boarded the *Italy*. Snow himself caught up with them four months later in Kanessville, Iowa, from where he escorted them to Salt Lake Valley in Eli

<sup>16</sup> Zobell, "Autobiography," p. 52.



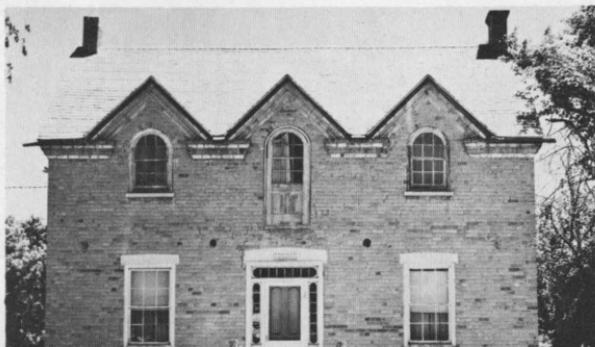
*Left: Scandinavian immigrants began settling in Ephraim, Sanpete County, in 1854. As the town prospered, these Latter-day Saints built a handsome meetinghouse for worship.*

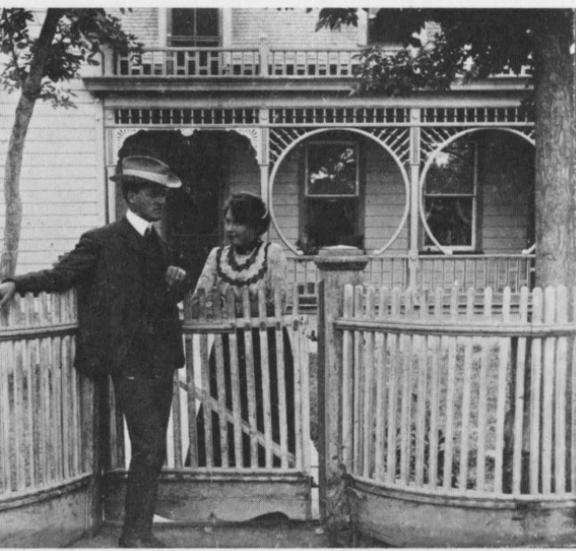


*Right: Scandinavian stonemasons built the beautiful Spring City chapel of Sanpete limestone. Gothic in design, it reflects the finest craftsmanship inside and out.*



From the top: Children could trade eggs for candy at Jensen, Christiansen and Co. the "Green Store" of Richfield, Sevier County. Many Danes and other Scandinavians settled in central Utah. Rev. Harald Jensen served as pastor of the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church in Salt Lake City in the early 1900s. Hans Peter Olsen, Danish-born farmer and member of the town board of Fountain Green built his home in 1877. It is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

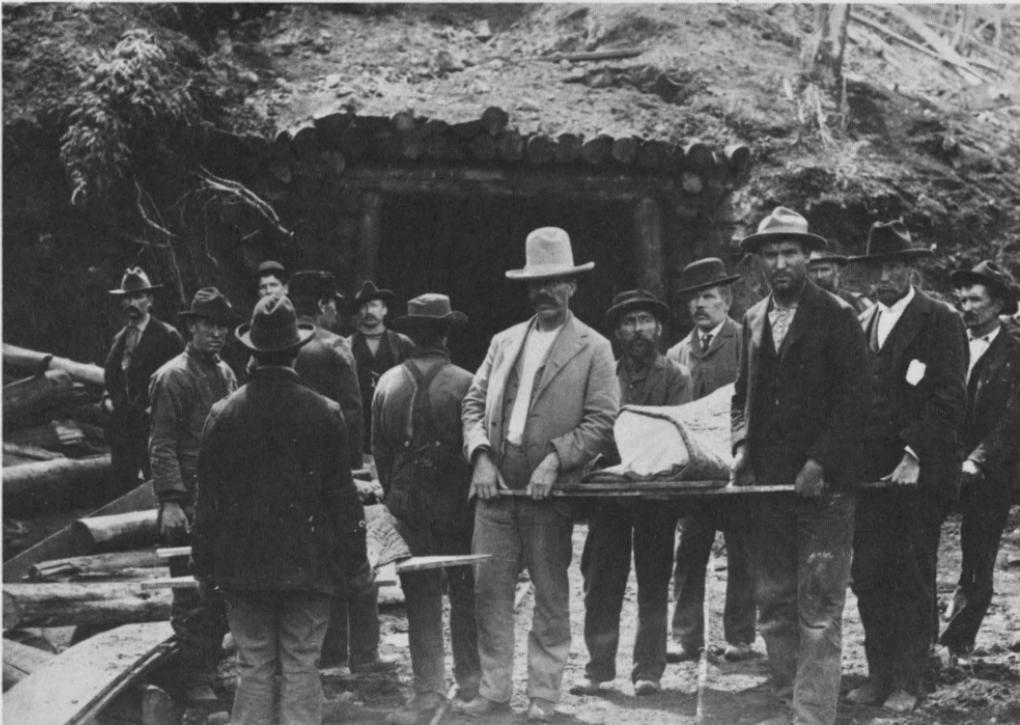




From the top: *The Elsinore Hotel, operated by Jens and Inger Jensen, was popular with salesmen and other travelers. Augusta Lund of Copenhagen came to Utah in the early 1900s where she married Joseph L. Lund, a son of Danish immigrant parents in Mount Pleasant, Sanpete County. Employees of the Jensen Creamery in Salt Lake City worked for Danish entrepreneur Wiggo F. Jensen.*



From the top: *Kate B. Carter, long-time president of the Daughters of Utah Pioneers, represents the state's unique Icelandic heritage. Many Finns came to Utah to work in the mining camps. When 200 coal miners lost their lives on May 1, 1900, in the Winter Quarters mine explosion at Scofield, Carbon County more than sixty of the dead were of Finnish extraction.*





Left: *Ellen Sanders Kimball, a native of Norway, was one of three women in the pioneer company of 1847 and one of two Scandinavians (the other: Hans Christian Hansen). Below: Two Norwegians, John A. Widtsoe and Torleif S. Knaphus, brought diverse talents to Utah: Widtsoe as an agricultural scientist and Knaphus as a sculptor.*

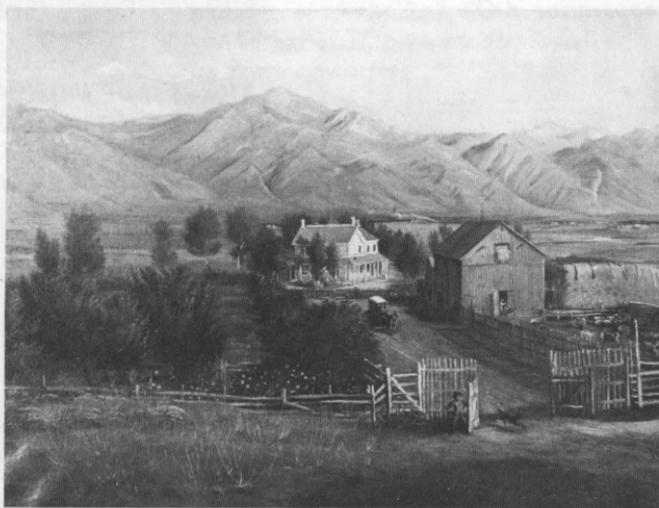


Below: *A Scandinavian celebration at the Logan Tabernacle in 1903.*

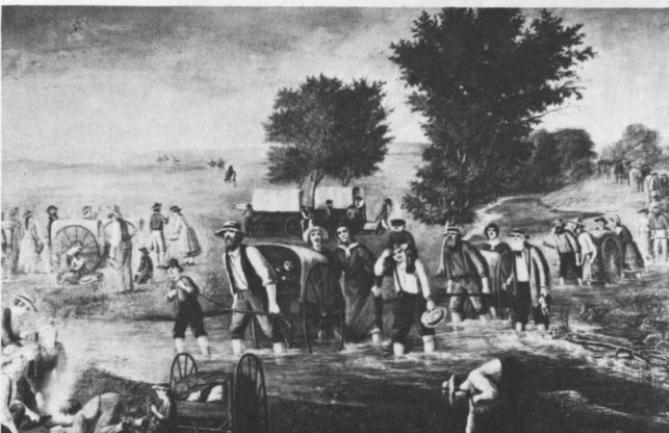


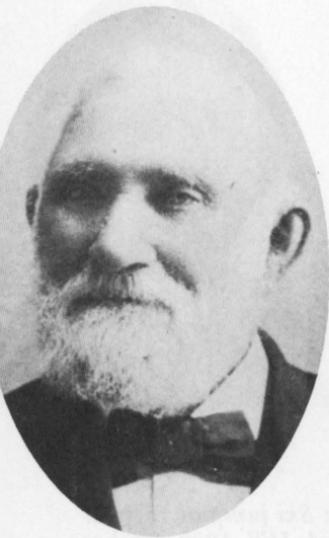


*Left: Ski jumping meet at Ecker's Hill, 1937. Utahns of Norwegian ancestry led in the development of the state's winter sports.*



*Right: Danquart A. Weggeland of Norway painted the Bennion farm and other Utah scenes. Below: Another Scandinavian artist, C.C.A. Christensen of Copenhagen, painted panoramic scenes from Mormon history.*



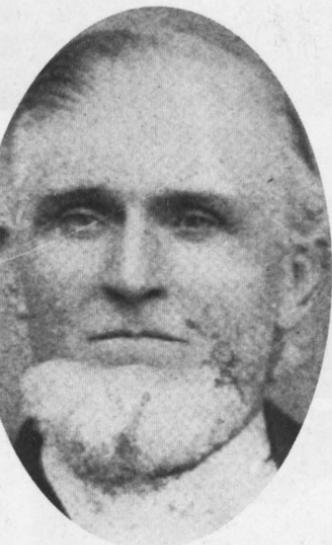


Ola N. Liljenquist, Swedish-born bishop of Hyrum, established the most successful cooperative in Cache County.



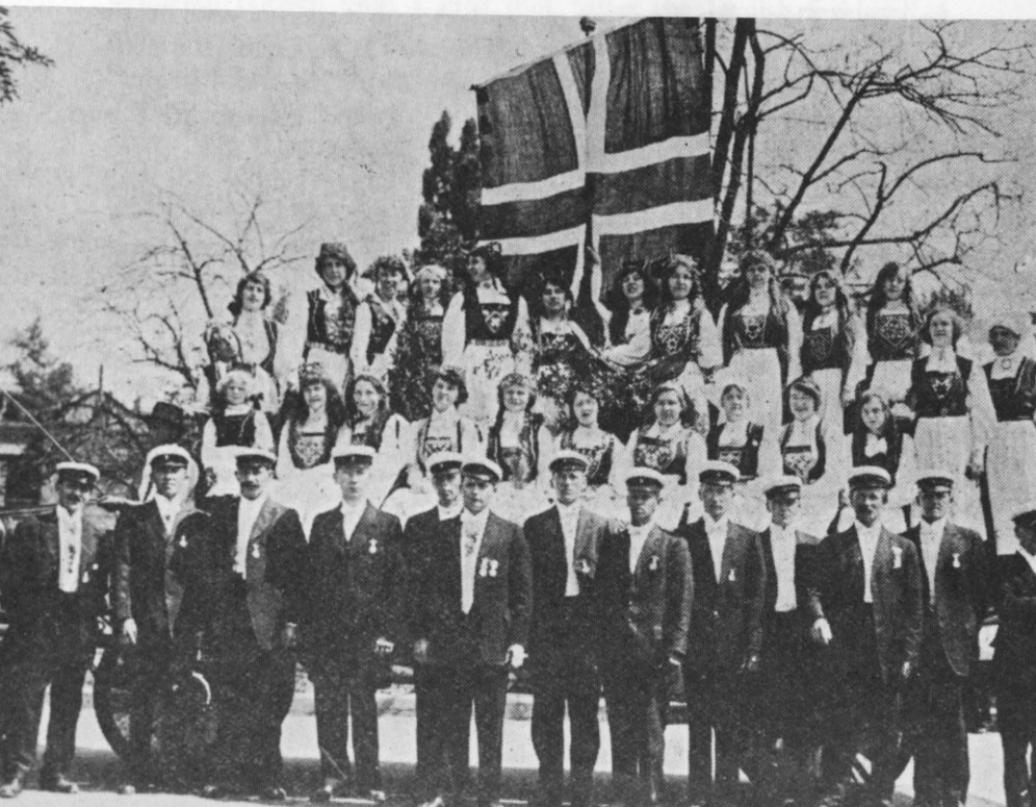
Above: Hyrum Dairy was managed by the United Order of Hyrum under Bishop Liljenquist. Below: Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church was built in 1885.

Another Swede, John Erik Forsgren, served in the Mormon Battalion and led the famed Forsgren company of Scandinavian immigrants to Utah in 1853.





Left: *Hilda Anderson Erickson, a native of Sweden, studied under Dr. Romania B. Pratt in order to serve both Indians and whites at Ibapah, Tooele County, by delivering babies, extracting teeth, and performing minor surgery. Below: Costumed members of a glee club, Det Norske Sangkor, proudly displayed the Norwegian flag.*



B. Kelsey's ox train. *Stjerne* could tell its anxious readers in Scandinavia that the "little flock of Danish Saints" had arrived on October 16 "alive and well satisfied and they urge their friends to follow them."<sup>17</sup>

A few of the emigrants had already bought places to live and turned the first soil. Niels Jensen and his nephew Frederik Petersen were getting ready to build a pottery in Salt Lake's Second Ward, soon to be known as Little Denmark. Clerk Conrad Svanevelt's wife had a new baby, a girl they called Josephine Brighamine in honor of the two prophets; the Rasmus Petersens were staying temporarily with Erastus Snow, turnabout for the time he had made his home with them in Denmark; tailor Wilhelm Knudsen looked forward to the arrival of his father's family the next year and went north to the settlement at Box Elder to get ready for them; midwife Augusta Dorius married Henry Stevens and went south to Sanpete Valley, where Cecelia Jorgensen followed to become in time the plural wife of Hans Jensens Hals. It was a sad day when *Stjerne* had to report Svanevelt's defection, removal to California, and final return to Denmark, but a happy one when it could announce his reunion with the Saints. So ran the news about the five families, six bachelors, and four spinsters who were the vanguard of the Scandinavian emigration.<sup>18</sup> They were never out of mind, though it was not until death that some of them figured again in the news from Utah: the obituary always remembered they were "one of the first twenty-eight," and that paid them the highest respect.

An even greater watchfulness followed the adventures of the company led by John Erik Forsgren that sailed with 199 adults and 95 children under twelve from Liverpool on January 16, 1853, aboard the *Forest Monarch*, the *Mayflower* of the Mormon migration from Scandinavia. (In 1953, the centennial year of its departure, the *Forest Monarch* figured as a float in Salt Lake City's Pioneer Day parade.) It was a long nine months before the Forsgren company could record in their journals: "September 30, 1853. This day we entered the Valley and camped in the center of the

<sup>17</sup> *Stjerne*, 2:110 (January 1, 1853).

<sup>18</sup> "Efterretninger fra Emigranterne," *Stjerne*, 2:288 (June 15, 1853); "Fra Vesten," *Stjerne*, 3:187 (March 13, 1854); "Niels Jensen," *Stjerne*, 19:314 (July 15, 1860); Andrew Jenson, *Latter-day Saints Biographical Encyclopedia*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City, 1901-26), 2:67, 3:126; "O.U.C. Monster," *Morgenstjernen*, 3:192 (1884); *Scandinavian Jubilee Album 1850-1900* (Salt Lake City, 1900), p. 220; Salt Lake City Second Ward, Historical Record, LDS Archives.

city.”<sup>19</sup> More characteristic of the future emigration in numbers and organization than the first group, the Forsgren pilgrims provided a more genuine test of the ability of the Scandinavian Saints to make their way to Zion and establish themselves as equal citizens of the kingdom.

Some of the immigrants found a temporary home with the first twenty-eight, who had already given their neighborhood a distinctly Danish character. Some followed John Forsgren north to Fort Box Elder, where his wife was living with her father, Bishop William Davis, founder of the settlement. With John went his brother Peter, a weaver, and wife, and his sister Erika, who would become the bishop's plural wife. Most of the company, on Brigham Young's advice, went south within a few days to the high country of Sanpete Valley to strengthen Father Isaac Morley's colony at Manti. They became first settlers of Spring Town (New Denmark) and Fort Ephraim. "The first thing we did," Anders Thomsen remembered, when he arrived in Spring Town in mid-October, "was to go down to the river bottom and cut some frozen grass. We had some ox teams which had to be cared for. When we had done this we had to build a fort wall against the Indians."<sup>20</sup> In Manti, Christian Nielsen built a grist mill "after the Danish fashion." A number of artisans remained in Salt Lake City, their immigrant skills helping to build public works like the Council House, the Old Tabernacle, the Social Hall, the Endowment House, the Bath House, the Tithing Store, the Church Office, and the Beehive House and the Lion House in the 1850s, as those who followed them would work on the Salt Lake Theatre and the new Salt Lake Tabernacle in the 1860s, the Assembly Hall in the 1870s, and the Salt Lake Temple, under construction until 1893. Purely to "keep the English and Danes at work," and to set a good example for the

<sup>19</sup> The history of the Forsgren company has to be drawn from several sources: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, *A Pioneer Journal, Forsgren Company*, (Salt Lake City, 1944), pp. 1-40; Willard Snow Journal, excerpted in Scandinavian Mission General History, which also quotes a number of journals by members of the company and provides a partial list of emigrants; Christian Nielsen, Letter, April 27, 1856, original holograph in Royal Library, Copenhagen; "History of Anders Thomsen, Sr., by Himself," typescript in possession of Woodruff Thomsen; letters from the emigrants published in *Stjerne, passim* for 1852-54. The story of the Forsgren company also survives in fleeting references in many memoirs and in the oral tradition of Mormon families who take pride in their descent from the emigrants.

<sup>20</sup> "History of Anders Thomsen, Sr., by Himself."

other settlements, Brigham Young ordered six miles of stone wall erected around Salt Lake City in the winter of 1853–54.

The Forsgren company left a golden track in Utah history. An ounce of their success was worth a pound of propaganda in Scandinavia, and a hundred companies confidently followed in their wake, their adventures continually renewing the twice-told tale of the first voyagers and pioneers. They gave the migration of Scandinavian Mormons a distinctive pattern. Later immigration naturally gravitated to the early centers—Sanpete and Sevier counties in the south, Salt Lake County in the middle, and Box Elder and Cache in the north becoming early, and remaining, the strongholds of Scandinavian population. “The people are like bees,” wrote Christian Nielsen from Manti; “when they fill up one place, they swarm out and build up a new one. . . . About three hundred Danish families live in this town, and about seven English miles north of us there are about as many.”<sup>21</sup> *Morgenstjernen*, the Danish monthly, in 1884 had eighty-three agents in as many settlements, evidence of the extent of Scandinavian concentration.

Scandinavian Mormons colonized Idaho and Nevada in the 1860s and Wyoming, Arizona, New Mexico, and Colorado in the 1870s; some joined refugee colonies of polygamists in Mexico and Canada in the 1880s; a few followed Mormon entrepreneurs to Oregon in the 1890s to carry on lumbering operations. Scandinavians participated in two of Mormonism’s most heartbreaking colonizing expeditions: the Muddy River mission in 1868–71, consistently wiped out by floods, and the San Juan mission in 1880 in the badlands of southeastern Utah, which they had to reach by way of Hole-in-the-Rock, a treacherous cleft in the sheer wall of the Colorado, down which they blasted a trail and a history. Scandinavians were among the seasoned colonizers who led what might be called the second wave of Mormon pioneering that sought to build up “the waste places of Zion” and extend its borders, a vigorous and far-flung program after the death of Brigham Young.

The Scandinavians gave their names to some places: Jensen, for Lars Jensen, who built the ferry on Green River in 1885; Axtell in Sanpete County, after Axel Einersen; Anderson in Washington County, after Peter Anderson’s orchard in 1869; Peterson in Morgan County, for Charles Shreeve Peterson, its bishop; Elsinore in Sevier

<sup>21</sup> Letter, April 27, 1856, *Bikuben* (Salt Lake City), December 19, 1912. Original holograph in Royal Library, Copenhagen.

County, founded in 1874, after the Danish town where Hamlet once stalked a ghost; Widtsoe in Garfield County, for John A. Widtsoe; Lockerby in San Juan after an early resident; Yost in Box Elder County, after Charles Yost in 1880; Swedish Knoll in Sanpete because Niels Anderson herded sheep there; Christianson Canyon in Tooele County, for an early Swedish settler along Deep Creek; Borgeson Canyon, for Anders Borgeson, who built the first molasses mill in Santaquin. There were, besides, nicknames like Little Copenhagen for Mantua, a hamlet of Danish families in Little Valley; and Little Denmark for a half dozen towns. Rural communities dominantly Scandinavian invariably had a Danish Ditch, a Danish Field, a Danish Bench, and a Danish Woods, indicative that language needs determined how to divide up the commons.

Scandinavian distinctions persisted: in a country where building materials were scarce, the thatched roof and the half-timbered house of the Skane countryside in southern Sweden were welcome importations, and the blue doors and bright-colored trim of the houses and the woven willow fences surrounding the yards also became characteristic of the New World communities. Old-country skills often spelled the difference in a community between want and prosperity. Sanpete Scandinavians might be accused of going to bed with the pigs and the chickens, but nowhere were the animals better housed in winter or the stock better cared for, and the butter improved as a result. A Danish farmer began Utah's first dairy cooperative, rounding up four hundred cows from his fellow townsmen in Brigham City to pasture and tend them on shares. A Yankee might raise flax for linseed oil and not know what to do with the straw, but his Danish neighbor, a flaxman, could construct a simple instrument for shredding and preparing it for the loom. The state's land grant college was from the beginning heavily staffed by Scandinavians and their offspring seeking ways to conserve the land their fathers had dearly bought.

In a number of communities Scandinavians outnumbered all other foreign-born, and their second generation formed the greater part of the native-born. But there were no exclusively Scandinavian colonies, which would have been contrary to the idea of the kingdom, whose fellowship overrode ethnic distinctions. Salt Lake City by 1885 did have a Swede Town, but it was a suburban development promoted by businessmen eager to profit from the great influx of Swedes into the capital in the 1880s. The Scandinavian Building Society in Salt Lake in 1889 was simply an urban expression,

through united cash, of what once could be done through united labor in the settlements.

The Little Denmark of Salt Lake City's Second Ward, steadily augmented since the arrival of the first twenty-eight in 1852, was not exclusive: though twenty-nine of its fifty-eight households in 1860 were Scandinavian, they lived side by side with their Yankee, English, and Scotch neighbors in a community as mixed as the country settlements. (The ward, only nine blocks from the center of the city, was still decidedly rural, devoted to dairying; other occupations among the Scandinavians there included potter, shoemaker, cabinetmaker, blacksmith, wheelwright, laborer, carpenter.) Relations were not always amicable: Charles L. Walker, later of Dixie fame, noted in his journal on Sunday, October 23, 1859, that he had "calculated to go to the Tabernacle but a Danish Brother came for me to settle a difficulty between him and a scotch man both parties were near to fighting point." After "laboring with them for about 2 hours" Walker got them to shake hands and feel "pretty well toward each other."<sup>22</sup> After 1860 the Second Ward became less the Scandinavian center, the immigrants scattering freely throughout the city, where their friends and relatives following after were naturally attracted to them and soon gave other neighborhoods a Scandinavian complexion. Scandinavian domestics, moreover, served in numerous non-Scandinavian households.

Polygamy led to international households: the Dane John T. Dorcheus married Danish, English, and Scotch wives to beget seventeen children. Twelve percent of the wives of 147 Scandinavian polygamists listed in Esshom's *Pioneers and Prominent Men of Utah* were non-Scandinavian; and 101 Scandinavian women were married as plural wives to men of other nationalities. Some of these women were married to civic leaders and leading churchmen. Mayor A.O. Smoot married Anna Mauritzen of Norway as his fifth wife, who became the mother of Reed Smoot, long-term apostle and United States senator from Utah. Apostle Lorenzo Snow, enterprising leader of Brigham City cooperatives, and one day to become president of the Mormon church, took to wife Minnie Jensen, daughter of iron founder Hans Peter Jensen, early stalwart from Aalborg, and his wife Sarah Josephine, who had translated the revelation on plural marriage when it reached Denmark in 1853.

<sup>22</sup> Charles L. Walker Journal, entries for October 20, 23, 1859, typescript, Utah State Historical Society.

Scandinavians, as Mormons and farmers, shunned Gentile establishments like Corinne, a railroad boom town, and Silver Reef, a briefly prosperous mining community, but they did not hesitate to sell their produce to the unbelievers at a profit; the cash from soldiers, miners, and railroad workers was often the only money they saw in their early barter economy. The full-scale development of the copper mine in Bingham after 1890, and its accompanying smelters and refineries, appealed particularly to the populous Swedes of Salt Lake and Grantsville who found employment there. By 1970 the census showed few first- or second-generation immigrants on the farm: 90 out of 3,389 of Norwegian stock, 195 out of 6,635 of Swedish stock, 241 out of 9,279 of Danish stock.

Some Scandinavians in the early immigration were inevitably tempted by California or were overcome by longing for the old home, or for causes either profound or trivial, backtrailed to Nebraska and Iowa to join those who had fallen by the way. Departures of the disillusioned from Zion were common enough for *Bikuben*, Danish-language newspaper in Salt Lake City, to run a facetious advertisement in 1877: "In case someone in Utah becomes tired of living among the Mormons, here is an opportunity which you will seldom find," and it went on to describe the offer of someone in Nebraska ready to "sell or trade" an eighty-acre farm for property in Utah. The ill-at-ease at first preferred to leave, but in time they asserted their claim to a stake in the new country on other than church terms and remained, often affiliating themselves with Protestant denominations that carried on educational and evangelical missions as part of the national effort after 1869 to "Christianize" Utah.<sup>23</sup> Rev. M.T. Lamb, looking for a bright spot in "all the dark canvas" of Mormonism, found immigration itself a blessing in disguise. "Through the strange providence of God there have been thrust upon the Christian workers of our country 50,000 young people in Utah, who, if they can be brought under the influences of the truth . . . are worth ten times as much . . . as they could have been had their parents remained in the stagnant, uneventful life of the old country."<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> By 1880 the Protestants had twenty-two ministers serving twenty-five mission day schools with 54 teachers and 2,250 pupils; by 1890, the high-water mark of their activity, they had sixty-two ministers serving sixty-three churches and sixty-four schools with 323 teachers and 7,007 pupils. T.C. Iliff estimated that by 1895 the Methodist Episcopal church had spent \$500,000, the Presbyterians \$880,000 on Utah.

<sup>24</sup> M.T. Lamb, "Lessons from Mormonism," in *The Situation in Utah: Proceedings of the Christian Convention 1888* (Salt Lake City, 1889), p. 88.

With Scandinavian immigrants so numerous, the denominations sensed a special opportunity and were soon making urgent appeals to the home mission societies and boards for ministers and teachers who could speak the language. "If a Norwegian or Danish Lutheran priest should go to Sanpete County," wrote Andreas Mortensen in 1887, "he would have half the Mormons follow him."<sup>25</sup> He scolded the establishment in Scandinavia, whose missions had neglected Utah. Oddly enough, it was not the Lutherans but the Presbyterians, closely followed by the Methodist Episcopal church and the Baptists, who first made inroads among the immigrants. The Reverend Duncan J. McMillan, whom Brigham Young called "a mischievous stranger," appeared in Mount Pleasant in 1875, the first denominational missionary to work in an exclusively Mormon community. Feeling himself "100 miles by stage from any Christian brother or Gentile friend," he converted Liberal Hall, being built by disaffected Mormons, into a Presbyterian chapel and opened a school. The town, as would prove true with denominational effort everywhere else in Utah, was more interested in the school than in the church, but by 1880, five years after McMillan's courageous beginnings, the Presbyterian church was organized with eleven members, the elected elders and deacons bearing names that once honored Mormon rolls in Scandinavia. Services were carried on in English, Danish, and Swedish, with hymnals ordered printed in all three languages. By 1893 the church had seventy-three members, with a Sunday school of forty-five and a home for boarding girls where they could be under "Christian influence and receive practical instruction in housekeeping."<sup>26</sup> The home was part of the Wasatch Academy, a major development out of McMillan's mission school. Still operating today under the auspices of the Women's Executive Committee of Home Missions, it was the forerunner of successful Presbyterian academies in other towns in Utah, most notably among them the still flourishing Westminster College of Salt Lake City.

McMillan extended his work to nearby Ephraim and Manti, the county seat, about equally English and Scandinavian, where his brother J.S. McMillan and wife opened a mission school in September 1877. The Reverend R. G. McNiece came down from Salt Lake

<sup>25</sup> Andreas Mortensen, *Fra mit Besog blandt Mormonerne* (Christiania, 1887), p. 283.

<sup>26</sup> "The History of Presbyterian Work in Utah," in *World's Fair Ecclesiastical History of Utah* (Salt Lake City, 1893), p. 238.

City the next spring to preach in Fox's Hall and organize the church with ten members. One of the ruling elders was Andrew Nelson, Presbyterianism's most spectacular conversion: as Anders Nielsen he had come to Utah in 1853 with the famous Forsgren company to settle in Spring Town; he had filled a Mormon mission to Scandinavia twelve years later, had married four wives, and, as a prosperous farmer, stockholder, and justice of the peace, was looked upon as a pillar of the community. Differences with his Mormon bishop over nothing more serious than card-playing ripened him in disaffection, to be plucked by the Presbyterians and become their mainstay when they came to Manti. He lived with his third wife, but to travelers he seemed that curiosity, a Presbyterian polygamist. Nelson sent his eighteen children to Manti's mission school, where attendance had ranged from 60 to 125 since its beginning in 1877, and which in 1881 was housed in a handsome building of native oölite—the same beautiful stone as the Mormon temple, the Presbyterians always added. Its pupils became public school teachers, one of them a county superintendent and another a city principal. One of Nelson's sons was Lowry Nelson, who became a well-known sociologist and, fittingly, wrote a study called *The Mormon Village*.

After McMillan's fruitful undertaking in Sanpete Valley, where the Swedish evangelists of the Free Christian Church followed in his wake, the Presbyterians were emboldened to proselyte in other Scandinavian centers: Brigham City, or Box Elder, as it was known, and the settlements in Cache Valley. Hyrum, Wellsville, and Millville kept the minister busy preaching twelve trilingual sermons a month. In 1884 the day schools in the three towns were enrolling 107, the Sunday schools 130. By 1892 Hyrum flourished with 101 in the day school. In Mendon, across the valley from Hyrum, the Scandinavian keeper of the Mendon Ward Historical Record compared the Presbyterians to the Pharisees of old, but by 1895 they could claim for Mendon "a strong and rapidly growing sentiment in favor of higher Christian education."<sup>27</sup>

The Congregationalists, despite their admirable New West Education Commission, which began an academy in Salt Lake in 1878 and by 1895 had schools in many towns with two hundred teachers and seven thousand students, paid no special attention to the Scandinavians. The Methodists did, writing a whole chapter of

<sup>27</sup> "Scandinavian Work in Utah," *Church Review*, 4:55 (December 29, 1895).

Scandinavian Methodist activity into their Utah history. They maintained a Sanpete Valley circuit, and established a First Norwegian Church in Salt Lake, with an attendant Norwegian school. The Scandinavian Methodists had small congregations in at least a dozen communities besides Salt Lake, in the main where Presbyterians had already made a beginning. "The work is hard, but looking up," was a familiar phrase in their reports. Often the Scandinavians shared the same facilities with the English Methodists, as in Brigham City. By 1897 the work in Mount Pleasant among the English and the Scandinavians was consolidated under a single pastor, a common pattern by that time. All the day and Sunday schools were conducted in English, though the congregational singing employed Norwegian and Danish Methodist hymnals as well as the Epworth Hymnal and Gospel Hymns. *Vidnesbyrdet*, the Norwegian and Danish weekly Methodist church paper, was "largely circulated in the Territory."<sup>28</sup>

The Baptists had Swedish missionaries in Salt Lake by the end of 1884, and the following year the American Baptist Home Mission Society sent five workers to Utah, two of them Scandinavians. Anna B. Nilsson, a missionary, found the work in Utah "the hardest she had ever done." Her greatest success came in the Industrial School in Ogden, in women's meetings, and in the homes, but she regretted there was no preacher to speak to them in a language they could understand. She pleaded for Scandinavian preachers. At length, in 1891, some Scandinavian brethren in Salt Lake City withdrew from the First Baptist Church to form the Swedish Baptist Church. Four years later, however, it had only a dozen members.<sup>29</sup>

The Lutherans came late and their activity was largely urban. The earlier immigrants had little love for the Establishment and failed to kindle to it no matter what their eventual quarrel with Mormonism. The Augustana Synod had the Mormon proselytes in mind for ten years before actually sending two missionaries among them in 1882, but they found the discouragements great and the soil stony. In twenty-seven years, which saw long vacancies, the only fruits were seven congregations, with 294 communicants and six churches.

<sup>28</sup> "Scandinavian Methodist Episcopal Missions in Utah," in *World's Fair Ecclesiastical History of Utah*, p. 273.

<sup>29</sup> "The Baptist Church," in *World's Fair Ecclesiastical History of Utah*, p. 284.

The yield for other Lutheran synods was equally barren. Danish Lutherans were tardiest of all, strange in view of the overwhelming proportion of Danes among Utah's Scandinavians, but it reflected the general indifference of Danish immigrants elsewhere in the United States to the home church. It was not until 1906 that the *Utah-Missionens Udvalg*, conceived in Denmark, sent Pastor Harald Jensen to Salt Lake City to found a Danish Evangelical Lutheran congregation. Denmark paid for all but \$2,700 of the \$17,000 to build the church Tabor, constructed in 1908.<sup>30</sup>

The denominational effort in Utah was an aspect of the extraordinary national attention directed to the state's immigration, seen by extremists as a means of strengthening Mormonism and its resistance to the federal government's attempts to prosecute it for polygamy. Reported the *Omaha Herald* in 1885: "The arrival in the United States of a few hundred Danes who have been brought here by the Mormon church is the signal for an outcry in the eastern press against their admission into the country, and calling on the government to stop this kind of immigration." But the *Herald* defended a program that might be "a plain matter of business" in increasing the wealth of the territory and the church, but which "combines with it positive Christian charity."<sup>31</sup> That seemed to be the opinion with Utah itself, where even an Englishman, usually condescending toward "dumb Swede" and "simple Dane," spoke well of his Scandinavian neighbors and described how the newcomers struck root:

I have seen many Scandinavian families come into Manti in pioneer days with no means of support. Most of them had small trunks that contained all their earthly wealth, a few clothes and some bedding. Some walked from Salt Lake City to Sanpete County. Former countrymen would take them into their homes for a few weeks. Then the new immigrant would acquire a lot, build himself a small adobe home, surround it with a willow woven fence. Soon a few acres of ground were added to his accumulations, every foot of which was utilized. Mother and father and every child in the Scandinavian home worked. None of the wheat they raised was wasted and after it was threshed with the flail, the Scandinavians cleaned their wheat with hand-turned

<sup>30</sup> *Danske i Salt Lake City* (Salt Lake City, 1910), p. 18.

<sup>31</sup> Quoted without date in "De skandinaviske Emigranter," *Skandinaviens Stjerne*, 35:93 (December 15, 1885).

mills. They chopped their animal feed with a hand chopper so that it would go farther, and provide better animal food. There was no waste. I am an Englishman, but I have always said that the Scandinavian was thrifty, honest and God fearing, and set us a worthy example.<sup>32</sup>

## VII

Unremitting as the demands of getting started seemed to be, the immigrants from Scandinavia were not forever pitched in a sober key. There were times when, as Christian Larsen urged, they gave up "the cares of the harvest and hay field." In their own tongue they enjoyed a considerable life of the spirit, as indispensable to their well-being as their lands and increase and the water they had learned to bring down from the hills.

The Mormon church tolerated the old tongue only as an expedient mediator, a means of teaching the gospel and informing the immigrant of the affairs of the kingdom in a language he could understand until he learned English; and in Brigham Young's time it even produced a phonetic system, the Deseret alphabet, that was expected to "prove highly beneficial in acquiring the English language to foreigners as well as the youth of our country."<sup>33</sup> But the ugly new alphabet was short-lived. The mother tongue itself proved a better instrument of adjustment than the artificial spelling reform. At least it was alive. The immigrants did not form autonomous congregations for worship in their own tongue, but for their instruction and welfare the church did foster a Scandinavian meeting in every community large enough to support one, with presiding officers drawn from the three countries. The Scandinavian meeting, or organization as it was sometimes called, in turn sponsored choirs, amateur theatricals, and outings and reunions on Old World holidays and mission anniversaries. Such lay activities growing up around the church kept it the center of the immigrants' intellectual life and went a long way toward preserving church loyalties when they were threatened in the 1870s by the denominational missions that tried to make an appeal through services in Scandinavian.

Whatever the Mormon church promoted was always inclusively Scandinavian, making no distinctions among Danes,

<sup>32</sup> Daughters of Utah Pioneers, *Scandinavia's Contribution to Utah* (Salt Lake City, 1939), pp. 25-26.

<sup>33</sup> "Eleventh General Epistle of the Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," in *Deseret News*, April 13, 1854.

Swedes, and Norwegians—an ideal inherent in their new fellowship as Saints and a union paralleling the organization of the mission in Scandinavia itself, which until 1905 was administered as a single unit. In the face of history, which had seen the three countries often at odds, the church urged harmony. Scandinavian unity seemed so complete in 1890 that “the young people of Zion do not know there are three nations in Scandinavia.”<sup>34</sup> The turn of the century, however, saw the idyll rudely disturbed in Salt Lake City when a Swedish editor attacked the *Skandinavisme* that was making mere “Swedish Scandinavians” out of his people, or worse, changing them into “Danish Scandinavians.” Otto Rydman, talented and somewhat histrionic editor of *Utah Korrespondenten*, had little use for Scandinavian union which he felt made for a bastard culture at best and at worst a Danish imposition on the less numerous Swedes and Norwegians. In his paper, founded in 1890 at first to serve the church, only later to antagonize it, he stumped for unadulterated Swedish culture and called for separate Swedish meetings. It was one thing to promote Swedish cultural autonomy in nonreligious activities but quite another to advocate Swedish separatism within the church. Besides, Rydman’s invective angered church authorities and they rebuked him. When in 1901 he tried to observe *Julottan* in a ward meetinghouse on Christmas morning—a service in Mormon eyes too reminiscent of Lutheranism—he found the doors closed against him. He retaliated by vilifying the leaders of the Scandinavian meeting and the editors of the rival and conservative *Utah Posten*, who had him tried before a church court and excommunicated. But Rydman, an accomplished performer with *Thalia*, a Swedish dramatic society, and an engaging satirist in his column signed “Tomte,” or Robin Goodfellow, was personally popular, and eighteen hundred petitioners from all over the state protested his dismissal, appealed to the First Presidency for a hearing, and endorsed his plea for a Swedish auxiliary within the church separate from the Scandinavian. When their petition was denied, they staged a mass meeting, a dramatic episode in what the American papers called “The Swedish Uprising.”

After a silence of some months, during which it studied conditions in every place where Scandinavian meetings were held and determined the status of every petitioner, the church answered the

<sup>34</sup> Edward H. Anderson, “Scandinavia,” *The Contributor* (Salt Lake City), 12:108 (December 1890).

malcontents in an epistle from the First Presidency: "To the Swedish Saints: Instructions in Regard to the Holding of Meetings, Amusements, Social Gatherings, etc." The epistle reaffirmed an established policy: "The counsel of the Church to all Saints of foreign birth who come here is that they should learn to speak English as soon as possible, adopt the manners and customs of the American people, fit themselves to become good and loyal citizens of this country, and by their good works show that they are true and faithful Latter-day Saints." The declaration advanced some telling arguments: the Scandinavian meeting in Salt Lake City was actually presided over by a Swede, with a Dane and Norwegian for counselors. Out of 521 names on the Salt Lake City portion of the petition, but 311 were members of the church, and most of these withdrew their names. The Scandinavian meetings regularly heard Swedish speakers and Swedish singing. Swedish gatherings were actually being held in the Fourteenth Ward twice a month. The joint social gatherings were always agreeable. A great many of the Scandinavians were intermarried; it would be absurd to separate husband and wife in meetings, social gatherings, excursions, and conferences. There was no objection to separate meetings where the numbers in each nationality justified them. "The inconvenience of the difference in the languages is smaller than the inconveniences of that division which has been advocated by a few extremists." Eighty percent of the signers of the petition, the epistle noted, could speak and understand English: let these attend the regular meetings in their own wards and leave the foreign-language meetings primarily for the aged and the recently arrived. "We deprecate the attempt to build walls of separation between Saints from different countries, and fanning into flame the dying embers of former national hatreds."<sup>35</sup>

The accent was on assimilation, as it had been from the beginning. The *Deseret News*, writing on "The Scandinavian Element" in 1886, had complimented the Scandinavians on "the facility with which they—the younger portion especially—acquire the language and customs of the country," and it defended those with "an accent that betrays their nationality" against "undeserved ridicule" and the charge of dullness because they could not understand the lan-

<sup>35</sup> *Deseret Evening News*, April 5, 1903. "The Swedish Uprising" was striking enough for the Swedish observer A.O. Assar to make note of it in his *Mormonernas Zion* (Stockholm, 1911), pp. 45–49. See *Utah Posten* and *Utah Korrespondenten* for August 1902 for the charges and countercharges and *Utah Korrespondenten*, January 9, 1903, for Rydman's account of the petitioners.

guage. The *News*, like the church itself, was sympathetic, but the ideal, plainly enough, as in the United States at large at the time, was the melting pot. Cultural pluralism was still in the future.

The Scandinavian meeting faded in time as immigration declined, to revive briefly after World War II to accommodate the new immigration; and the great annual reunions that used to bring Scandinavians together in one town or another from all over the state dwindled. Brigham City hosted four thousand Scandinavians at a reunion in 1902. Provo drew only fifty in the mid-1950s. The celebration in 1950 of the hundredth anniversary of the opening of the Scandinavian Mission saw the last large united gatherings: an outing at Liberty Park, a pageant in the University of Utah stadium, a meeting in the Salt Lake Tabernacle.

For several generations, however, the annual infusion of fresh arrivals from Scandinavia kept activities in the mother tongue (or tongues) alive, and the denominational missions, as already noted, were especially alert to language as their opportunity, providing services in the mother tongue and schools to learn English and other arts that would broaden horizons too narrowly confined by the Mormon outlook. A happy memory in Mount Pleasant was its first public celebration of Christmas, when many saw their first Christmas tree laden with presents from eastern missionary barrels and their first oranges, which children mistook for yellow apples. Despite the fearsome image of the denominational workers as Gentiles, their students, beneficiaries of their kindly and cultured influence, remembered them with gratitude. The granddaughter of a Danish immigrant who was one of the founders of Ephraim remembered that Rev. and Mrs. G. W. Martin were "wonderful examples of people who stuck with their post" and "made friends if not converts." They were interesting, different: they would hitch up the surrey and visit the southern canyons and bring home Indian relics and wonders of nature "that the local people did not value." Their home was the town's library and their Temperance Union sponsored a reading room, "warm, well lighted and furnished with tables and comfortable chairs, with plenty of good books, current magazines, and daily papers."<sup>36</sup> Utah history owes Martin a debt: he kept the only complete file of the *Manti Messenger*.

<sup>36</sup> Kate C. Snow on Manti, Sanpete County, in "Non-Mormon Religious Denominations in Utah," *Daughters of Utah Pioneers, Heart Throbs of the West*, 7:262-64.

Altogether, whether inside the church or out, there was considerably more life of the spirit in the mother tongue than outsiders, imagining the immigrant ignorant and deprived, were aware. Ephraim by 1876 had built a little theatre where a small company of Scandinavians produced the Norwegian comedy *Til Saeters*. Most of the settlements had their local dramatic group or at least a good choir; several even had a brass band, the instruments in one instance brought in an emigrant company from the homeland. Nearly every settlement could match Ephraim's zeal. Provo and Salt Lake had Scandinavian choirs. In 1891 Salt Lake's Scandinavian Dramatic Club, which sometimes performed in the Salt Lake Theatre, as did the Swedish acting society Thalia, gave fifteen performances in southern Utah, typical of its road-show activity for the benefit of countrymen in the settlements. *Danske Klub*, another amateur group of actors, had done the same in the 1880s.

The 1890s saw a Scandinavian Mercantile Association and a Scandinavian Democratic Club. In the same decade the Swedes formed Norden Society, *Svenska Gleeklubben*, *Harmonien*, and *Svea*, and after the turn of the century those most estranged from the Mormon church joined less indigenous associations like *Vasa Orden*, just as the Danes formed lodges of the *Danske Broderskap*. English classes, insurance brotherhoods, emigration fund societies, and sport clubs multiplied. In their patriotic eagerness to celebrate Old World holidays, the national orders often ran competition with the church-sponsored organizations. Both *Vasa Orden* and the Swedish Mormons celebrated Midsommarfest at the same resort on the same afternoon, sharpening the rivalry. But seven hundred Scandinavians joined hands in Salt Lake City on New Year's Eve in 1901–2 in a ball, concert, and supper at Christensen's Hall where Gov. Heber Wells addressed them.<sup>37</sup>

A natural association, antecedent to the formal organizations and never losing its vitality, was the informal evening over the coffee cups in each other's homes when in the early days the guests, as Emma Anderson of Hyrum remembered, brought their own lump sugar in their pockets. The church frowned on infractions of the Word of Wisdom, the brethren bearing down on the use of tea, coffee, tobacco, and strong drink; but the Scandinavians believed they had a special dispensation to drink coffee and their homemade beer. "Not all the goot tings," as one of them put it, "should be

<sup>37</sup> *Stjerne*, 11:59–60 (February 15, 1902).

left to the yentiles." With at least one Dane it was a particular mark of devotion to go without coffee on Sunday. God-fearing and obedient, the Scandinavians were, if anything, more indulgent in their entertainments, their eating and drinking, than the converts from Old or New England. The past, too recently left behind, broke through the discipline of the new faith especially on festive occasions. It was then the old stories were remembered and new ones told, born of unique situations in the Mormon community. Ephraim in time came to be known as "the town that laughs at itself."

It was twenty years before Utah Scandinavians issued an organ in their own tongues, but meanwhile they contributed letters and amateur verses to *Skandinaviens Stjerne*, the mission periodical they had come to know so well as converts and which many continued to read in the settlements. *Stjerne* made isolated inlanders surprisingly well read in international affairs, but it could not satisfy their provincial and immediate needs. At last, on December 20, 1873, pricked on by the threat of denominational proselyting among the immigrants, the Danish-Norwegian *Utah Posten* made its appearance, the first foreign-language publication in Utah and the first of three weeklies to bear the name through several metamorphoses during the next fifty years. Other publications followed in its wake, often with mixed political, cultural, and religious objectives: in 1874 the trilingual *Utah Skandinav*, which proved to be too liberal for Mormon readers and lasted only three years; *Bikuben* ("The Beehive") in 1876, destined for a long life of fifty-nine years. In 1895 it became church property, in time joined by the German *Beobachter*, the Swedish *Utah Posten*, and the Dutch *Utah Nederlander* to form the Associated Newspapers that the church subsidized until 1935. One of *Bikuben's* editors was Andrew Jenson, who became assistant church historian and founded *Morgenstjernen*, a historical journal that flourished in Danish from 1882 to 1886 and proved so valuable it became the *Historical Record* in English and ran to nine volumes. Jenson's labors were prodigious: he collected the archival records and biographical reminiscences from church missions around the world that have put all historians in his debt. The Swedes established an organ of their own in *Svenska Hårölden* in 1885, which lasted until 1892, undermined, they felt, by Otto Rydman's *Korrespondenten* in 1890. In 1900 they founded a *Utah Posten* in Swedish, though Rydman took delight in pointing out that the officers of the Scandinavian Publishing Company, backers of the new venture, were anything but Swedish: three of its officers

were Norwegian, two were Danish, and its two Swedes were really "Swedish Scandinavians."

Almost a footnote to the history of Swedish publication in Utah was *Utah Bladet*, founded in 1924 by Frank Malmstedt, former Swedish vice-consul in Salt Lake. A monthly, without any religious or political axe to grind but devoted to biographies of leading Swedish citizens and articles on business, national, and international affairs, it lived less than a year. *The Northern Light*, half in English, half in Danish, lasted for a few months in Logan in 1879; the *Utah Danske Amerikaner*, a monthly "family magazine," appeared for about a year in Huntsville. Its editor, Carl C. Ericksen, who called himself The Danish Publishing Company, went broke: "What did you suppose," his townsmen asked, "would become of a man who would start a newspaper in Huntsville?"<sup>38</sup> A cultured but equally luckless effort among the Norwegians was *Varden* ("The Beacon"), founded in 1910 at the peak of Norwegian population in Utah (2,304), intended to foster "affection for Norwegian language, music, and literature." It was the outgrowth of the activity of the *Norske Literaire Forening*, with Josef Straaberg, local literary and dramatic light, and Christian Johannessen, who would become known as the father of concert pianist Grant Johannessen, as co-editors. It lived only two years, but in that short time it promoted, among other things, a Norwegian exhibit of art and handicraft at the state fair, and published lives of prominent Norwegians in the state: John A. Widtsoe, scientist; Nephi Anderson, novelist; Ramm Hansen, architect; C.M. Nielsen, judge; Martin Christophersen, landscapist and gardener; Willard Weihe, violinist; Hans A. Pedersen, businessman—a talented array Norwegians were proud of.

More than an aspect of culture in the mother tongue, the Scandinavian papers were also an instrument promoting all its other forms—its musical and literary and dramatic societies, the social evenings, the reunions. The papers advertised them, previewed them, described and reviewed them, stirring up friendly rivalry between communities, establishing standards of performance, effecting communication where before had been only association. An unflinching delight were the contributions from immigrant writers who through the papers reached their widest audience. There was not a professional among them. Even the editors had to supplement their income

<sup>38</sup> J. Cecil Alter, *Early Utah Journalism* (Salt Lake City, 1938), p. 89. For a full account of publishing ventures among the Scandinavians in Utah, see my master's thesis, "Utah's Nordic-Language Press: Aspect and Instrument of Immigrant Culture" (University of Utah, 1947).

at other tasks. Their reward was small except in the affection and esteem of those for whom they wrote—and in the appreciation of a later generation slow to discover them but grateful for their legacy.

## VIII

The Scandinavian presence in Utah persists, a strong and vital strain. The -sons and the -sens still predominate in many a small town, and even in the capital, more metropolitan and ethnically mixed by now, daily life in Utah continues to be full of reminders that one can be served by Scandinavian talent and tradition in a variety of ways, some more visible than others as they appeal to nostalgia and trade on Scandinavian associations. Shall we eat out at Finn's or Scandia Kaffe House? Shall we buy our imports from the Scandinavian Shop, our plants and flowers from Eng's? Shall we read a novel by Virginia Eggertsen Sorensen, listen to the Scandia Male Chorus or to Grant Johannessen play the piano, attend Willam Christensen's Nutcracker Ballet, admire Scandinavian architecture, see the handcart sculpture on Temple Square by Torleif Knaphus? Shall we watch the Vikings play soccer, ski on Ecker Hill, dance with the Swedes at Midsommarfest, celebrate Norwegian Constitution Day in May, laugh with Kris Kringle or be served by Lucia and her crown of lighted candles at Christmas? Shall we have Ryberg build our house and Christiansen or Madsen furnish it? Shall we go to church at Mount Tabor or Zion or Saint John's Lutheran? Shall we call Dr. Lund or Lagerquist or Larsen, get our prescription filled at Erickson Pharmacy, attend a viewing at Lindquist Mortuary?

From the cradle to the grave, Scandinavian energies, bone and sinew, mind and imagination, continue to contribute to the life of Utah's communities. We may not be aware of it. The musical lilt of Scandinavian English is seldom heard any more. Old-country customs, to be sure, are revived on festival occasions, when food and music and the old lore are brought expectantly out of their ancestral wrappings to create a special atmosphere. For the most part, daily life among the Scandinavians themselves is American, in a Utah setting, seasoned by pioneer and immigrant memories. The hyphen is less and less in evidence in Scandinavian-American. Though sometimes we point out the elements that built Utah in the way we recite "The House That Jack Built," the house is there for all to see, and who can say where the Scandinavian, or any other, contribution began and where it ends?