

HISTORY OF KAREN MARGRETTE ERICKSEN

I was born in Uhe, Denmark November 19, 1873.

My father's name was Niels Christian Ericksen. My mother's name was Nelsina Nielsen.

The first thing that I remember was the birth of my only sister, Elsie. My half brother Anton was baking potatoes in the fireplace to amuse my brother Niels and myself. I kept running away to ask the nurse how my mother was. My mother tells how one day when she had been outside, she caught me holding the baby with one arm and straightening the cradle with the other. It seems that whenever Mother went out I would take the baby up and tend her until it was about time for mother to come back, then I would put her down and fix everything so she would not know I had been holding her. This day she came back sooner and caught me. I was four years old and one month when Elsie was born.

One day I remember that we went to see my father's sister, Aunt Karen who had beautiful long red hair. We loved to watch her comb it. Another time I remember running away to the forest with one of my cousins to visit a lady who lived in this forest. When we got there the lady gave us boiled milk and bread. It tasted so good to me and I would never eat it at home. Father heard about it and decided to punish me by making me eat it at home. I remember going to see my grandfather Ericksen and going to the store with my brother Niels to buy rock candy for Grandfather. He always gave us some.

One day Father and Mother went away to work and a terrible thunder storm came up and we were frightened almost to death. Niels, who was about seven years old, got the Bible and tried to read it. Father soon came home through the storm, though, because he knew we would be frightened.

We lived in a thatched roof house, quite a large home. I remember a large pile of white sand in front of the house where we loved to play.

When I was about seven years old some Mormon missionaries came to our home. My father had never been able to make up his mind in regard to what church he wanted to join and when he heard the message of the missionaries, it seemed to be just what he had been looking for. My mother was also happy to hear the gospel. They soon joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They were baptized in the dead of winter and they had to cut through four feet of ice before they could make a hole large enough. All the neighbors said that they would take cold, but my mother and father did not have a sign of a cold.

After joining the Church, their greatest desire was to go to Zion. One day my mother said she went to a spring to get water. As she returned her heart was grieved because she was afraid they would not get to come to Utah. Just then, a voice said, "You will go to Zion and you will live to be fifty-four years old." She looked around thinking that one of the missionaries had spoken to her but

she could not see anyone anywhere.

It was not long after that father got to sell one of his homes. With the money he bought tickets for mother and four of us children and a half brother sixteen years old. We were to stay with some friends who lived in Salem, Utah, until he could dispose of his other place and join us.

We traveled to Veile and there we got on a train which took us to Aarhus. I was much impressed with the train as there were no doors. It was in Aarhus that we took the boat for England. From there we boarded a ship for America. It took us nine days to reach the promised land. One sight that interested me was a large volcano on some island. I was terribly sea sick all the way across the ocean. I remember my first sight of New York City. The tall buildings were impressive. We got on a slow train to take us to Utah. It seemed that I was sicker than ever as I rode on the train. I remember going through a tunnel and as we looked out to see some men shelling corn. One of the missionaries told my brother Niels to get out and get an ear of corn. We had never seen any before. It took Niels a little while to make the men understand. Before he got back, the train started to move. But as it happened, they backed up and Niels was once more safe on the train.

When we stopped in Ogden, mother bought a pie thinking that I might eat it, for I hadn't eaten much all the way. I could only eat a tiny bit of the crust.

We went on to Salt Lake City and had to stay at the Mission Home or a home for immigrants for three days. We then came to Spanish Fork. There was no one to meet us as Mr. Christiansen, the man we were to stay with, had been to meet the train three days, but on the fourth day he did not come. Someone at the station took us to a Brother Hansen's. He was a polygamist. He had several wives. They made us welcome for that night. The next day someone came for us in a covered wagon. Mother only had three dollars and four small children to care for and also a stepson, sixteen years old. Mother got a job picking up potatoes for Brother Christiansen. I had to stay home and care for the small children. The baby was only a year old. We finally moved in a little log house and oh, how happy we were to be by ourselves. The lady who let us stay with her had been so cross to us.

We started to school that fall and we could not talk English so the teacher had older girls sit with us and help us to learn the language.

Father came from Denmark the next year. He brought mother's nephew and my other half-brother. After Father came he got us a better place to live. We moved up the head of the pond. There, my two youngest brothers were born. Joseph first and then Hyrum. Hyrum died when he was only seven months old.

I went to school for three winters. Niels and I herded cows in the summer for three years.

When I was 12 years old, I went to work for a lady in Spanish Fork. After that I worked out until I was married. My next job was in Provo. When I was about seventeen I worked up a Castle Gate for a lady who cooked for railroad section hands.

I finally went to work for Libbie Tolman, who lived in Eureka. One day, when we were looking out of a window, we saw two men with packs on their backs and they looked like old tramps. One of them was Libbie's brother-in-law Milton. She and I were always joking and I said as I looked at them, "Well, if I had known they were coming, I would have dressed up to meet them!" Libbie said, "One of them is Cal's brother Milton." I felt pretty silly.

The first time I met Milton, I took Ruby, next to the baby, down to Will Tolman's place to let her hear Uncle Will play the fiddle. While I was there I met Milton for the first time. When I went to leave he said, "If you ever take a notion to be an old man's darling, be sure and let me know." It made me angry and I scowled at him and went out and slammed the door and he just Ha Ha Ha'd.

Not long after this, he asked me to go to a dance in Silver with him. I wanted to go to the dance so I went. The dance lasted until daylight. I had a wonderful time.

After I left Libbie's, I went to the Red Rose mine and got a job with Lizzie McFate, cooking for miners. She was Aunt Laura Tolman's sister. I still went with Milton to parties and dances. In September we decided to get married, so I went home to Salem and we were married

September 30, 1891. We lived at the Spy about a month, then we moved to Eureka for the winter. In April, Milton went to Star Valley and I went home for a couple of weeks. I was to go to Star Valley with Milton's mother. Milton wrote to me at Salem and told us not to come to Star Valley as the road was too bad from Montpelier to Afton, but I did not get the letter. So we started out. When we got to Montpelier we stayed overnight. The next morning we started. We had to ride on a one-runner sleigh with boards nailed over it. We had to sit on an old quilt. We got along pretty well until we got to Thomas Forks hill, then we had to get out and walk as the snow was off and it was muddy. We rode again and walked again and it was just two months before my baby was to be born. The trip was a most miserable one, as the snow from the road pelted us in the face. When we got to the halfway house we were soaking wet. Milton's mother made a bed for us. I was absolutely exhausted. The next morning we went on a sleigh until we got to Crow Creek, then we had to change to a buggy. When we got into the valley, it started to snow. There was a foot or more of snow on the ground. The first stop was at the meeting house. Milton and all of his relatives had been to Church and were just coming out as it was just over. We all went to Uncle John's and Aunt Jane's for dinner, then on to Milton's mothers to stay for three weeks. We then moved to a little log house a few miles from Fairview.

On June 22, 1892 our first child, a son, was born. He only lived six weeks. He died with pneumonia after being sick for only about 24

hours.

On June 15, 1893 Myra was born, one week less than a year after Orson Milton was born.

Beatrice was born October 26, 1894 in the same little log house. Warren was born May 10, 1896. When Warren was about 6 months old both he and Beatrice had pneumonia. Only prayer and having them administered to by the Elders saved their lives. My prayers have been answered so many times!

Clementine was born November 30, 1897.

Before Emery was born, we moved from the one room log house to a large two room house across the road. We were very happy to have more room. On May 1, 1899 Emery was born. My dear mother came from Salem to be with me.

When Emery was six months old, we received word that mother was very ill. We left the older children with Aunt Maggie and Uncle Orson Porter and started by team and wagon for Salem, taking the little baby Emery with us. Uncle Joe and Aunt Elsie Horrocks went with us. The night before we arrived in Salem we were camping out and I had a feeling that mother was gone. I knew we would be too late to see her alive. Not long after this we arrived at Salem and found that mother had passed away the very time that I felt she had.

Soon after we arrived back home, Milton was called on a mission. We took the children and went to Salem where I was to stay and keep house for my father while Milton was away. He went to the North Western Mission and spent six months there. Most of the time he was

in Portland, Oregon and The Dalles, Oregon. He had terrible headaches while there and had to come home because of his health. We went back to Star Valley that fall and on the 22nd of October, 1900, Laura was born.

When Laura was six months old, we decided to move to Otto, Wyoming. Spragues, Merkleys, Orson Porter, Myron Porter and their families went with us. We drove cattle and it took six weeks to get there from Fairview. We had sixteen wagons, we drove 700 head of cattle. I drove a white top buggy and held a baby in my arms and with five small children to care for. Milton had to drive the covered wagon with supplies, etc. It was no fun, I assure you.

When the Otto Ward was organized, I was chosen as a Relief Society teacher. That summer the families lived so far apart that we would be all day getting our beat. We walked and carried our babies. We had a hard time making our visits that summer. Later we moved from Otto to the ranch about two miles from town. Before we moved, on the 12th of March, 1902, Foster was born. After we moved to the ranch, John Fielding was born, August 31, 1903. Then on the 5th of April, 1905 Cyrus was born. Our daughter Beatrice had asthma so badly that only a change of climate seemed to help her. We moved again, this time to Salem, in February of 1906. That was the year of the great fire and earthquake in San Francisco. Lionel was born the 24th of April, 1907.

We moved again in the fall of 1908 to Fairview, Wyoming, where we had lived before going to the Big Horn. On May 14, 1909, Elsie was born.

In the year 1911, Uncle John Tolman let Milton take some sheep to the Big Horn, where they did not need to feed them in the winter, as there was not much snow. Again we moved to Otto, Wyoming. This time we went by train. We arrived at Aunt Elsie Horrocks in January of 1911 in a fierce blizzard. All of the children became ill and not long after this Warren and Foster had pneumonia. They were very ill, but with our prayers and the help of a good old doctor from Burlington they recovered. In October 11, 1911, Velma was born at Otto.

We stayed with the sheep and took care of them but lost money, and so in July of 1912, Uncle John sold the sheep and had us move back to Star Valley. We had to drive a herd of bucks and this took us three weeks. We had a sheep wagon and a white top buggy.

We lived in Fairview in one of Uncle John's houses. This house had been Uncle Frank's before he moved to the Big Horn. Vaughn was born in this house May 31, 1913. When he was a few months old we bought a dry farm and lived there until 1918, when we sold it and moved back to Salem, Utah.

We have lived here since July 1918, and here I am, right back where we lived seventy-four years ago. I am so thankful that my parents came over and joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for I firmly believe it to be true. I still have twelve living children and they are all so good to me and I thank my Heavenly Father for them.

History of Karen Margrette Tolman
written in her own words in 1955.