

A History of  
**Hans Larsen**  
**(father of Eline Hansine, wife of John Lambert)**

taken from the writings of  
Arthur Schmidt Larsen, a grandson  
(written about 1935)

*[Danish spelling of place names is used with the English spelling in parenthesis where deemed necessary. ~V Roylance]*

Hans, the fifth of eight children and third son of Lars Pedersen and Maren Hansdatter, was born 8 July 1806 in Lundby, Lyderslev, Præstø, Danmark (Denmark). His father, Lars Pedersen, the eldest of the nine children of Peder Olsen and Maren Andersdatter, was born 26 Sep 1766 and became a blacksmith in Lyderslev.

Hans Larsen's mother, Maren Hansdatter was born 20 Oct 1775, the third of six children and the third daughter of Hans Pedersen Porse, a farmer in Skjellerup søgn (parish), Danmark, and Kristin Jacobsdatter. Lars Pedersen married Maren Hansdatter 11 May 1800 in Skjellerup søgn. Lars died 26 Nov 1833, age 67 years; Maren died 20 Mar 1839, age 66 years.

Hans Larsen's mother was said to be a rather heavy set lady and of a "farmer's type." Unfortunately no photo has been seen of Hans Larsen and his wife, Elena Dorothea Stromberg Bentsen, or any of their antecedents.

On 5 Aug 1838, Hans married Miss Eline Dorthea Stromberg Bentsen in the Holmens Kirke (Holmes Church), København, Danmark. Eline Dorthea was born 27 Dec 1810, København, Danmark, and died 9 Mar 1877, Salt Lake City, Utah. Her father, Christian Bentzen Borggreen was born 19 Jun 1791, København (Copenhagen), København, Danmark, the son of Bendt Olsen Borggreen and Mette Marie Andersdatter Focht, and died in February of 1833 in København. Her mother, Pauline Kirstine Margarete Falkenberg, was born 28 Aug 1789 in København, the third child of Andreas Falkenberg and Agnette Dorthea Jensdatter, and died there 22 Oct 1826.

Hans Larsen was enlisted as a sailor in 1826, his papers clearing 18 Sep 1837 in København, Danmark. He had a furlough to 29 Sep 1837, then he sailed to Rügenvalde, a German port. Until 1840 he was a sailor and thereafter until 1847 he was known as a "pram-sticker" (a raft operator), and thereafter he was a laborer.

It is said that Hans made two voyages to the West Indies in his course of work as a sailor. An aged neighbor to Hans said that little children in the neighborhood often gathered around him to listen to his sailor stories. They would stand and listen with their mouths wide open while he told them how he stood on the bottom of the sea with his mouth open and looked up at the sky. Hans' daughter, Christine Petrine Larsen Miller, wrote of how her father would take her on his knees, when she was a little girl. and sing to her his humorous sailor ditties, or would tell her tales of his life at sea. She also told of her mother knitting stockings for the whole family.

It would only be proper to mention here somewhat respecting Apostle Erastus Snow in connection with this history because of his close association with Hans Larsen and their family

home, and the exercise of his office which brought this family into the [LDS] Church. This close association and friendship no doubt produced a kindly introduction of Hans Larsen by Elder Snow to Pres. Brigham Young.

It was said, "Hans Larsen was one of Brigham's trusty men." One of his daughters on relating the death of her father (Hans Larsen) wept, stating that Johnny (her brother) was sent to the tithing office for some liquor to give as a stimulant to his dying father. President Young was not there and the brethren in attendance would not give Johnny any. So he returned without the liquor. This daughter, still weeping, said, "If Brigham had been here Johnny would have gotten some liquor and father would have lived."

Apostle Erastus Snow had been made an Apostle in 1849, and was designated at the October 1849 conference to open a church mission in the Scandinavian countries. Peter O. Hansen, Danish, John E. Forsgren, Swedish, and George P. Dykes were assigned with Erastus Snow. They left Salt Lake City, Utah, 19 Oct 1849 and after visiting branches of the Church in the U.S., England, Scotland and Wales, Elder Snow Landed in København on 14 Jun 1850. Hans Larsen's oldest child, Eline Hansene, helped teach Elder Snow the Danish language.

During his establishment of the Scandinavian mission of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Elder Snow supervised the translating and printing of the Book of Mormon, Doctrine & Covenants, and a number of other doctrinal works. He also compiled and issued a Scandinavian Hymn Book and began the publication of the "Skandinaviens Stjerne" (Star of Scandinavia), a Scandinavian magazine, and the Latter-day Saint's organ for the nation. After having established flourishing branches of the church in Danmark, Norway and Sweden, Elder Snow intended to leave Danmark, Mar 1852 with the first company from Scandinavia to Utah, but was detained a few days on business. [He sailed instead with the December 1852 company.]

It is known that Hans Larsen was seeking further for light and truth than what his state religion, Lutheranism, offered him. From 1847 to 1850 he was a Baptist (reference is had from Holmens kirkebog (Holman church books), København, Danmark.) We find that he was among the first Danish people to embrace the first form of religion offered or dared to be offered in Danmark, aside from the state religion [Lutheranism]. In 1840, Peter C. Mønster, a Baptist reformer, introduced his religion into København, Danmark, and had by no means been free from the repeated persecutions and imprisonments normally visited on people outside the state religion.

Mr. Mønster had, interestingly, investigated the message being introduced by the first Latter-day Saint missionaries to Danmark and had hoped to bring himself and his congregation into the Mormon Church. But when he learned he could not continue to hold his pastoral position over them, Mr. Mønster hesitated. When his members continued accepting the new faith, his former interests in the revealed religion turned to bitterness against it. Hans Larsen was a member of Mr. Mønster's congregation.

Here is the story of the first Baptist meeting attended by the LDS missionaries as told by Hans Larsen's children who came with him to Utah:

Father was at home from his work on the sea, so he attended meeting. After the meeting was dismissed, Mr. Mønster came, as customary, to the door to bid his members goodbye, and in turn met the Elders from Utah, who were seated near the door. A discussion between them took place which resulted in the Minister recalling a meeting right then to hear from these strangers. On hearing their message that night, my father was converted at once. After this meeting was ended, he invited the Elders to his home where they stayed until other headquarters could be arranged for.

Several successive church activities occurred in the Hans Larsen's house, as recorded in the *Scandinavian Journal History* of that time. The following information comes from the *Scandinavian Journal History*:

Monday 15 1850: Mr. Mønster visited the brethren, with the result for further interest in their message in a desire to investigate to a point of imparting 350 members with himself, in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Sunday 23, 1850: The elders continued preaching and bearing testimony with the result of soon finding themselves surrounded by a small circle of friends.

Sunday, July 21: Their first meeting was held at the home of Peter Berkstrom, who lived on Store Kongensgade (Great King Street). A spirited investigation was made by the followers of Mr. Mønster who was now beginning to warn his members against holding meetings and thereby inciting persecution to the banishment of the Elders. But the seeds of truth of Christ's Gospel had been sown and were bearing fruit. By the first of Aug 1850, eight or ten of Mr. Mønster's members applied for baptism.

Brother Snow did not urge the action of the new applicants, but rather held them back, whereupon the Lord made known to his servant that he was to do so no longer.

Sunday 11 Aug: Elder Snow called these applicants for baptism together and gave them instructions prior to performing this divine and sacred, essential ordinance, "The doorway to Eternal Life!" which would be attended to the following day, Monday 12 Aug 1850.

Monday, 12 Aug 1850 is a memorable day in Church History in Danmark, when this day, the first converts of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as taught by Him, through His divinely appointed servants were taken in the evening into the clear waters of Øresund, immediately outside the ramparts of København, and fifteen in number were immersed by Elder Erastus Snow as the first fruits of their divinely authorized labors and preaching of the Gospel of Christ in Danmark."

Among these were Hans Larsen, and Eline Dorothea Stromberg Bentsen, his wife. At their house on Christians Havn, a meeting was held Sunday, 18 Aug 1850. Where the newly baptized members were confirmed and three little daughters of Hans and Eline Larsen were blessed by divine authority according to the pattern given by the Savior of the world eighteen hundred years ago. These were Petrine Christine, sitting right, [in the photo of the surviving children of Hans Larsen] Marie Magdelene, standing left, and Margaret Christine (buried at New Orleans), who were the first children so blessed in this dispensation in Danmark.

Sunday 25 Aug: Another meeting was held at Hans Larsen's house on Christenhavn where the Sacrament was again administered and little children blessed.

Friday 6 Sep 1850: Elder George Parker Dykes baptized Eline Hansine Larsen, age 12, daughter of Hans and Eline Larsen, a member of the Church, she being the first young lady baptized in Danmark in this dispensation by divine authority.

Sunday, 8 Sep: A meeting was held in the forenoon in Hans Larsen's house, and one in the evening at the same place. In the afternoon of that day the meeting was held at the home of Peter Beckstrom. The Sacrament was administered and several children were blessed, but the record is not clear as in whose house these ordinances were performed.

Sunday 29 Dec 1850: Hans Larsen was ordained a Deacon.

June 22, 1851: A meeting was held in København. Hans Larsen volunteered a mission to Børnholm, Danmark.

On Dec. 20, 1852: The first large emigrating company, "a precious cargo" of Saints to America, numbering about 300 souls, men, women and children, under the captainship of John E. Forsgren, left Danmark bound for Utah.

Hans Larsen's family formed part of this company and on the ship were waving hands, handkerchiefs and hats, and songs were sung and exchanged until they could be no longer seen or heard by each other.

The voyage across the North Sea was very hazardous and it was feared, because of the great vicious storms and high waves overwashing the ship, destruction would be certain. It was necessary to cast an anchor under shelter of Falster [island]. In due time, England was reached. It was nearly the middle January when the company sailed from England. The rest of the voyage taking little more than two and a half months to New Orleans, America, was in general reasonably calm except for much sea sickness. A few deaths occurred on the way and bodies were lowered to a watery grave.

March 17, 1853, Thurs.: The record states that a little girl who had been sick for some time died and was buried at New Orleans. This, of course, is a matter of fact with Hans Larsen's family, for little Margrette Christine Larsen died one day from landing and was buried at New Orleans. The record says March 18, 1853.

Twelve hundred miles up the Mississippi River to Keokuk, Iowa, was the next lap of that tiresome journey, where the immigrants obtained ox teams for the trek across the plains, covering another thousand miles or more.

John George Erastus Larsen, my [Arthur Schmidt Larsen's] father, was born 3 Sep 1852 and was so named by his parents in honor of the three servants of God, the first to be divinely sent to his native land and proclaim God's message there, and who had often met with the first converts in his father's home to give instructions and perform required ordinances and activities of the priesthood in their behalf.

Ardent in his newly accepted faith, Hans displayed great faith and on one occasion when one of his grandsons, Wm. H. Oblad [son of Marie Magdalene], was seriously sick and hopes by his parents were despaired of for his recovery, Hans Larsen came in and blessed him to live and today, 1940, advanced in years, Wm. H. Oblad testifies of this blessing by his grandfather, Hans Larsen.

Hans Larsen labored for years hoisting granite for the S.L. Temple with block and tackle until just prior to his death in 1876. He hauled much water for people's use and hauled water from the warm springs to the north of the Salt Lake City for President Brigham Young to bathe in as a cure for rheumatism.

The following is taken from a letter written by the next oldest daughter of Hans Larsen, Petrine Christine Larsen Miller, in 1932 then 92 years of age, and living in Thayne, Wyoming, She substantiates the recitations of Eline Hansine Larsen Lambert, oldest daughter, living in Utah. Mrs. Miller says:

"The first home the family lived in after arriving in Utah was a little pole house built in the shape of a tent, the roof was covered with sod. There was a fireplace in the south end of the house which served for many purposes.

“Soon after arriving in the valley, father went to work on the Salt Lake Temple and worked every day but one, when he was ill from undernourishment. About the third year of living in the valley the grasshopper panic came and destroyed all the crops and food. This disaster compelled both men, women and children to live on a poor ration, consisting of edible weeds boiled in salt water, they were called greens. They lived on this diet for six weeks.

“Grain was raised on the church farm and permitted for use only by the people working on the temple. The grain was ground with the old “Burr mill”. As I remember I was about 13 or 14 years of age then when I walked from the second ward to Sugar House ward with a sack of wheat on my back to be ground into flour for the family.

“Bishop Isaac Hill of the second ward married myself and my husband, Samuel R. Miller. Later we went to the Endowment House. Eliza R. Snow took care of me there. My mother’s brother, Christian Martin Bentzen, came to America long before the family left Danmark and settled in Albany, New York.”

The youngest daughter of Hans Larsen to reach Utah with the family, Marie Magdeline Larsen Oblad, was the longest at home with the family after arriving in Utah. Her disposition was to write and record things. She states in some of her notes that her mother’s brother, Christian Martin Bentzen, came to Albany, N.Y. August 1838, and three of her father’s brothers, according to the tradition, left Danmark. According to the genealogical manuscript from the church books of the parish where the family lived, the births of Christian Martin Bentzen, Peder Larsen, Anders Larsen, and Jacob Larsen, is all that can be found of them. In 1838, the time given as when Mr. Bentzen came to America, the group ranged from 20 to 37 years in age. It is probable that the Larsen brothers came to America and brought Mrs. Bentzen with them. He was the only son and had been motherless since he was 8 years of age.

Hans Larsen lived from September 1853 in Utah, principally in S.L.C., Utah and in the Second Ward until February 27, 1876, when he died there, a High Priest. It is said of him that immediately after he died, he returned and counseled his wife relative to her position in the Church. Whatever his instruction to her is not known, but in 1876, she had two women, one her own sister (Wilhelmina Caroline Bentsen), the other a Swedish lady (Emma Anderson) sealed to him as wives.

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Eline Dorothe Stromberg Benzen died just past one year after her husbands death – 9 Mar 1877. Both were buried in Salt Lake City.

*(Words in brackets were added where deemed necessary for clarification by Venita P. Roylance, great, great-granddaughter, November 2003.)*