

## History of Niels Albert Johnson

On June 28, 1972, Jens Johansen, the third child of Johan Peder Johansen with his wife Maria Kristina Larsen and their daughter Ane Christine who was born 29 July 1868 nearly four years of age set sail for America on the ship Nevada from Copenhagen, Denmark. Upon arriving in America, they made their way to Cottonwood in Utah where they located Jens' father, Johan Peder, and his family.

This was an exciting time as the families had not seen each other for about six years. Jens had married after his parents and others had left Denmark. He now had a wife and new granddaughter for them to get acquainted with. There was news to tell about relatives and friends still living in Denmark.

They also told of their own sorrow of having had a son Peter, born 2 July 1871, in Copenhagen and

living only about three months before passing away in October of 1871. Still they were glad to be in

America and were blessed with another son Joseph, born 2 June 1873 in Cottonwood, but died 5 June 1873.

Not long after this Jens took his family to Hyrum, Cache County, Utah, to make their home. It

was here their second daughter Matilda was born 30 May 1876. She was not privileged to have a family

of her own as she passed away at the age of fourteen in Hyrum on 25 June 1890.

They had a son born in Hyrum, Waldimar as it was known in the Danish language but called Walter

by his friends and associates, born 29 July 1878 and died 10 June 1907 at Hyrum, Cache County, Utah.

Niels Albert Johnson (this was now the name taken by the Johansen family) was born 8 November

1884 at Hyrum, Cache County, Utah, the sixth and last child of Jens Johansen (James Johnson) and Maria

Kristina Larsen (Mary Christina Larsen).

Niels was named and grew up in the City of Hyrum; on the 7th September 1893 he was baptized by

A. A. Allen into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. He was confirmed by N. C. Christensen

7th September 1893. Niels was ordained to the office of a teacher 30 March 1904 by C. C. Petersen and

ordained to the office of an Elder 27 April 1919 by A. A. Allen. This was just three days prior to

receiving his Temple Endowment (30 April 1919) in the Logan Temple and having his wife and all seven

of their children sealed to them. What a glorious occasion this was for the family. Many blessings

were received by this family through this temple ordinance.

## II

Niels probably completed school through the 4th or 5th reader. This was how they progressed in school. A reader was higher than a grade is now. He was an excellent reader and had beautiful penmanship. His spelling was just as the word sounded and could always be deciphered.

Niels helped his father Jens in his store which was located one block west of the cemetery on the northwest corner. The towns people often brought butter, eggs, or other commodities into the store to trade for items they needed. It was Niels' job to squeeze the butter into little boxes to make a pound of butter. The patrons could then use it for trade for something else they needed or wanted. As there was very little money available, they would barter food items for other necessities.

Niels grew up in the days of horses and was excellent in training dogs to help with the sheep. One time at the sheep camp Niels had a one-man horse. He was traded a horse with a sore hoof from a fellow who had been doctoring the horse. Niels took over the doctoring and within a week the horse would lift his hoof up so Niels could take care of it. If someone else came up to the horse, he would kick at them. Niels had an abundant love of nature, the beauties of the world, and the animals that roamed the hills. He never killed anything just to kill, only to protect his sheep or for food. Immense was his love for his sheep dogs and they felt the same love and devotion toward him. Many of his dogs loved only him and no one else could get near him or them.

Sometime in early manhood Niels wooed and won Amy Maud Hulse (born 28 October 1887 at Brigham City, Boxelder, Utah, first daughter of Joseph William and Eliza Ann Buckley Hulse), for his wife. He told the story that as he was driving a team of horses down to the main part of town at the foot of the hill, Maud was crossing the street. She turned to look at him; tripped, and fell. This he said, "She truly fell for me."

On 1 November, 1905, Niels Albert Johnson and Amy Maud Hulse were married in Logan, Cache County, Utah. To this marriage was born fourteen children, four sons and ten daughters all at Hyrum, Cache, Utah. The first was a male Niels Albert, born 21 May 1906; second a female Edith Leora, born 3 December 1907, died 8? January 1960, buried in Hyrum City Cemetery. Third a female Mary Pearl born 24 August

1909. Fourth a female Violet Jesse born 26 March 1911. Fifth a female Bertha Annie born 10 April

1913. Sixth a female Mildred Beatrice born 7 January 1916. Seventh a female Myrtle Blanch born 4

November 1917. Eighth a male Boyd Dean born 25 September 1919, died 4 May 1974, buried in the Ogden,

Weber County, Utah cemetery. Ninth a female Maud Lorraine (LaRayne) born 5 October 1921. Tenth a

female Coy June born 10 June 1923. Eleventh a male Reed Alden born 25 February 1925. Twelfth a female

Carol Virginia born 31 December 1926. Thirteenth a female Alda Lee born 7 December 1928. Fourteenth

a male Keith Deloy born 25 October 1931. They had a baker's dozen and one to spare.

### III

Niels was proud of his large family and boasted of having ten daughters. One time he challenged Alvin Allen (a neighbor) that his daughter Violet could pick more beans than any one of Alvin's pickers. The challenge was accepted and Violet, true to her heritage, won handily. This only confirmed what Niels already knew about Violet's speed.

In this day and age earning a living required a lot of manual labor for survival. Some of

Neils' employment skills were: working for the railroad, water sexton for Hyrum City, common laborer, logging wood, and his congenial personality helped him obtain employment. His motto was: "Do a day's work for a day's pay." He taught this to his children.

The first home Niels and Maud lived in was on Main Street across the street from where Niels

had worked in the store for his father. At this time a mortuary was standing there. It was owned and

operated by Christian Thompson who was married to Niels' sister Annie C. (Ane Christine) on 5 January

1887. Niels and Maud lived here until they had two children, Albert and Edith. It was the night

before Mary Pearl was born that Neils moved his family in with his mother who had been left a widow

for over two years as her husband James had died 16 of March 1907 in Hyrum and was buried on the plot

by his two children, Matilda and Walter. This second home was one and a half blocks farther east or

right across the street from the cemetery. It was here the family lived until about the end of August

in 1950. Deloy had left to go into the Navy. Reed and his wife Doreen had moved into the home at

Hyrum to look after Deloy while he finished high school. Alda Lee had married and left home in

September, 1948. After Deloy left, Reed and Doreen moved back to Logan to buy a home.

As the children were born, each one had been welcomed and a strong bond of love and togetherness

developed as they grew in size and numbers. A feeling of well being and acceptance reigned in this

home over the years. Many standards were set for the children to abide by. Discipline seldom seemed

to be a problem with the children. Much of the disciplining was left to Maud, but Niels always supported

her decisions and enforced his own punishment when necessary.

Niels never accepted second-rate work as is exemplified at the time Violet was helping to plant

beans. Papa made the furrows and Violet was to measure with a stick how far apart to plant the hill

of beans. She, being disgruntled over having to help, sowed the beans and used all the seed. Niels never said anything to her and when the row was finished he required her to pick up all the beans and replant by using the measuring stick. She wanted only to pick up the extra ones, but he said, no, she could learn to do a job right. The children all learned obedience from these kinds of experiences.

#### IV

At the time Neils worked for the railroad, he was often required to leave home on Monday morning and not return until Saturday evening. While working for the railroad an epidemic of influenza broke out. This was the results from World War I. Dr. Eugene Worley was the Doctor of the City and was called when Niels took sick. Dr. Worley had been called to almost all of the mens homes who had been working for the railroad. Drinking from the community dipper caused the spreading of this dreaded disease. This epidemic took the lives of many people. Funerals were not held in churchces, but in the open because of fear of contacting this virus.

United States declared war on Germany April 6, 1917. The first to go were the young unmarried men. The next were the young married men, then the young married men with one or two children. Niels had his draft papers filled out and was to be in the next group called when the war ended November 11, 1918. This would have meant leaving his wife and seven children at home. Maud had given birth to Myrtle Blance 4 November 1917, her seventh child.

At the time of the war, commodities were put on rations and because of the growing family Neils had he needed more flour to feed his family than was allowed. When Niels needed, the miller would give him an extra ration of flour by putting it in a grain sack used for bran or shorts as the grain for pigs was called. You could have all the pig feed you needed. This kept the family in a very necessary staple.

Niels romped on the floor with his children. Often he was a horse for them to ride, a tiger or some other animal to pounce on them and make them run. He would make a cat dance for you by tying paper on the cat's paws, then he'd play the mouth organ as the cat tried to get rid of the papers. The cat would really dance. He could make the dogs howl mournfully for you as he played the mouth organ.

Some of the most fascinating times were when Papa would find money in an empty pocket or from

your sleeve, or out of your ears. He could make money disappear and reappear, he'd put one hand to your right ear with a dime in it and make it pass through your head to your left ear into his other hand. This brought lots of fun and excitement in the home. He stirred up many batches of fudge and peanut brittle for all the family to enjoy. Surely they had many family home evenings of fun and togetherness.

When Maud was sick or had a new baby and only Niels to help, he always prepared her meals and would take her the very best of what they had for her to eat.

Niels was called to serve the Mutual Improvement Association or YMMIA as a counselor along with Brother Albert Nielsen and Don. J. Allen. Knowing he should take his turn conducting the meetings made him very reluctant to accept this position. The brothers promised him he would not have to conduct meetings if he felt he couldn't, so Niels accepted the position. Soon seeing his responsibility to take his turn in conducting the meetings, he accepted the challenge and within six weeks was taking his turn.

V

Niels had an enormous sense of humor and loved to play tricks or joke. He had a real gift for story telling. He could keep you spellbound with his tales; that usually consisted of clouds, rain, hills, snakes, deer, fish, or of nature in general. It was after the children were much older they realized these stories were tall tales.

Niels told of the time he was in the mountains working very hard. He had lost his canteen of water. The heat was unbearable, he was so thirsty he thought surely he would die if he didn't get water. Just as he supposed he was taking his last steps a cloud settled above him. He immediately poked his finger into the cloud and water trickled out. He drank to his heart's content, then took a piece of cloud from the outer edge to plug up the hole and shut the water off.

Another favorite story was of the time he was with his sheep on the Nevada desert in mid-winter and his dogs took off after a jack rabbit. He called and called to them but they didn't come, so he finally had to leave them and go back to camp. In a day or two the camp was moved on to have more grazing. Early in the spring on his return through that same area he heard someone calling their dogs, he listened and listened. Finally he realized it was his voice; it was unthawing and he was

calling his dogs, and sure enough here came his dogs running back to him.

Work wasn't very plentiful, so Niels was hiring out to do farm labor. As the children needed to be kept busy, he took them to the beet fields with him. He would space the beets and the younger children would come along and pull the double beets out. The older children learned to thin the beets by themselves.

It was in the fields the children were taught to do an honest day's work, dependability, and to do a good job. If the work wasn't done to papa's expectations, it had to be done over. He always insisted in honesty and fairness to one's fellowman. What a man of inward strength to take this young family and truly teach them the art of work. Many times his patience must have been tired as the children had to be told over and over the things they needed to learn. Great are the rewards for the parents who "teach diligently." Due to the quality of work the family did, they had more work than they could handle. They were all respected by their fellowmen which was exemplified at the time of Edith's death on 8? January 1960. After all the family had been gone from Hyrum 2nd Ward for over ten years, the Relief Society at Hyrum still insisted on preparing lunch for the family after Edith's funeral; as her body was taken to Hyrum City from Neola, Duchesne County, Utah, to be buried. Truly there had been a superior bond of love and respect developed through the years with the townspeople.

Some of the fun and exciting experiences while going to the fields and working have really made for happy memories.

One time the horse had diarrhea so papa (as he was called by all his children) held his foot on the horse's tail, then the passengers weren't sprayed while traveling to and from the fields.

Another day as they left the house early in the morning, as was the habit, the lunches had been packed in an eight-pound lard bucket.

## VI

They hurriedly picked up their lunch and left. When they opened the bucket at noon, they found a pail full of lard. A friend (Elva Lamb-legs Anderson, so called because of two streams of snot that ran all the time from her nose) had gone with this day to help. She took sick and had to go home so the children had all shared her lunch, which was very distressing to their appetites.

Another day as they had settled down to eat their sandwiches, they usually opened them to see what surprise was waiting for them, Violet Jesse had hers opened, examined, and ready to close and enjoy when a bird flew over and its droppings landed squarely on her sandwich.

One extra hot day a can of Sardines was taken to the beet field to have for lunch. As they all settled down to receive some much needed nourishment, they discovered no one had brought a can opener. "Necessity is the mother of invention," so they used their hoe to open the can of fish. Not being very expert in this art, it took a number of strikes to get the can opened. Then they had to twist, twitch, and wriggle to get at the much desired Sardines. This experience was remembered for several days as the odor on the hoe was long lasting.

Niels worked with his family for about two years in the fields and then obtained work as the watermaster for Hyrum City. The children then went to the fields on their own.

While Niels was working as Hyrum City watermaster, he had to check for leaking hydrants and leaks in pipes, this necessitated the horse he drove to make frequent stops. Also, Niels would visit the town men as he went along. Soon the horse was trained to stop along the road whenever they approached anyone. On the days the girls got to take the horse and rig to the fields, they prayed they'd not meet any of the townfolk as the horse would always stop to the side of the road to visit. This was somewhat embarrassing as they had nothing to visit about.

It was while Niels worked a sexton for Hyrum City Cemetery that pine trees were planted in the cemetery. Because many hands make light work and here again the children needed to be kept busy, they were required to carry water to the little pine trees which now tower beautifully into the sky and really make the Hyrum City Cemetery one of the most beautiful in the country. The law then did not require the dead to be put in a vault to be buried as they do now and Niels was always upset when he found another grave where the earth had given way.

## VII

Niels took his family many times to the canyon of Blacksmith's Fork on outings. Sometimes he would fish and then prepare the meals, while Maud had a day of relaxing and being "Queen for the Day."

One place Niels fished so often it was called, Niels's rapids. Reed recalls of going fishing with papa and bringing to camp fish large enough they would have to be cut in several pieces before frying for supper.

Sometimes the family went chokecherry picking, traveling in a rig (a one-horse wagon with shaves). Niels and Maud would ride in front on the spring seat with the children running, skipping, or stealing a turn on back of the rig. They would take a number three tub, that was used for the weekly baths, and also the boiler that was used to heat water or to bring soiled clothing in weekly, with them to transport the chokecherries home. Then the jelly was made to be eaten throughout the winter. What a treat this was on Maud's delicious homemade hot bread with fresh churned butter from the cow's cream.

Other time Niels logged poles from Blacksmith Fork for the Utah Power and Light Company, also for the railroad or neighbors. He would bring wood out for the neighbors and trade with them for something he needed. One time he traded Lou Bent Nielsen a ton of mahogany wood for a ton of hay. Brother Nielsen was very disappointed because the ton of wood was much smaller than the ton of hay.

There were many nicknames placed on the people of Hyrum and Niels had his share. He was called Niels Cedar Post because he logged and sold poles, also Niels Kill-a-Pig because he butchered so many pigs. Spring almost always found him with a pen of weinners for sale. One spring after selling all but the runt of his piglets from one of his sows, he put the runt in with another sow whose piglets were younger, a neighbor Pete Anderson came by and wanted to buy a pig. Niels took him to the pen and immediately the neighbor desired the runt piglet. Niels told him what he'd done, but the neighbor insisted that was the weinners for him, so Niels sold it to him. The runt never did grow very much and was finally sold to another neighbor (Glen Henderson) who butchered it and roasted it whole.

## VIII

At Christmas time the nuts and candy were always placed in piles before going into the stockings,

to see that each child had the same number and same kinds of candy and nuts. This always eliminated any bickering. Goddies and treats were always shared equally by all.

Christmas was a special time for all the family. The Danish tradition of Neils' heritage was followed.

There was always much preparation going on to prepare the feast and activities for the evening.

The children had many tasks to perform to help make the evening more glorious. After everyone had enjoyed a most delicious meal, the dishes washed and things put into place, the family would circle around the Christmas tree to exchange the gifts they had purchased for one another. The ooohs and ahaahs were delightful to hear, everyone thrilled and excited. This was truly togetherness in its fullest and Santa always came with more gifts before morning. This family tradition has been very well preserved by Neils' descendants.

When a child had a birthday, he received a delicious treat of peanuts. This was a desired treat and always made him feel very special.

Neils believed in good grooming and wanted your hair combed neat and becoming. He insisted our clothes be clean and shoes polished. At one time or another every son or daughter heard him call as they would walk down the road, "Straightened up and stand tall." He insisted we stand erect and with good posture, none of his children were allowed to slump or go stooped shouldered.

Neils tried to teach each of his family to feel they were important. He liked them to use good grammar and to speak well. He felt it was much better to say cemetery rather than graveyard.

The girls frustrated Neils many times, as he would be shaving in the mirror in the kitchen, the girls would fudge in front of him, first one and then another at times they would be three deep combing their hair. This being the only mirror for them to use and he being outnumbered would have to give up until they were through.

June tells of the time she was prissing and fixing up in the mirror. Papa pointed his finger at her and said, "My dear girl, you're fixing yourself up now to catch a man and you must remember that after you catch him you must still fix yourself up to keep him."

IX

Papa never had his patriarchal blessing because he felt he was never worthy of one, but when O. M. Wilson (the patriarch) would see him, he'd always tell Niels the Lord had a blessing for him but papa never went for his.

Niels had a special gift of premonition. It was manifest to him many times when there were deaths and sickness in the family.

June was about five years of age when Niels came home one night and asked Maud what was wrong with June. Maud said she just didn't know but June was very feverish and really sick. Niels looked at her and knew it was serious and said he was certain she had spinal meningitis. So Dr. Baird was called who examined her and then summoned Dr. J. C. Hayward before it was confirmed as spinal meningitis. Reed, at this same time, was very sick with pneumonia. Niels was sure there was a death to come. He could always tell of trouble by the way his chin itched.

Aunt Alice Bostock (mother's youngest sister) had a boy Bernard who also had pneumonia and was very sick (at this time in history there were no drugs for the treatment of these diseases). Bernard died within a short time. After his passing, Niels told Maud that he knew now their two children's lives would be spared.

Papa and Reed were at the sheep camp at the time Violet's husband, Dave, was killed suddenly while working for the railroad. It was a shock to all the family. While there was no way to send the news to Niels other than driving up into the mountains, Neils had already sensed there was trouble at home. He had not left the sheep camp area for three days anticipating the news that was to come from home.

As Wally Petersen (the employer of Niels) drove to the camp, Niels met him as he stopped and immediately asked what the problems at home were and if it was Maud. Papa had told Reed three days before they would be going home and to have things in readiness so they could leave.

Niels was the finest of sheep herders. He never wanted for a herding job, there were always job offers and frequently one sheep man would pay more than another one so Niels would go for them. Niels always brought in the fattest lambs, the best ewes, and lost less sheep. He could be given the poorest herds and area for grazing, but still his sheep would bring the highest market price.

He herded sheep for Wally Petersen, Verlo Petersen, Gennie Petersen, also Ernie Petersen.

They all respected Niels for his ability with the sheep.

X

At one time or another all of Neils' sons spent time working with him through the summer months at the sheep camp. The boys were taught many things while with their father. Niels was a good cook

and made tasty food; he insisted on cleanliness. He taught them to care for animals and themselves in the mountains, how not to panic if they became lost. He showed them always to find a marker on one of the mountains to identify where they were, to walk downhill or follow a stream down. All of his sons were good hunters, loved to fish and found much joy in being in the mountains as did their father.

It was while the boys were with their father they were taught how to use and care for firearms. It was because of this teaching that Boyd took the highest shooter in his Battalion in the Army Sharp Shooters. He was awarded a medal for this. Reed also qualified the first time he was up as a Sharp Shooter. Out of 200 enlisted men, only about five or six qualified for Marksman the first time up. Reed was one of these.

Sometimes the days were very long in the mountains. There would be days and days of seeing no one. Sometimes Niels or his son would wait on a road for a passerby to take a letter to town and mail for them. Often it was three or four days before someone would come along to post the letter for them.

Niels had many friends and frequently they would come to visit him. Niels loved to visit and many a Sunday, if there were other sheep camps in the area, they would enjoy an afternoon of relaxing and visiting with the other herders.

Maud would save the Church Sections of the Deseret News and send out to Niels. These he would read and reread. He often read the scriptures and usually carried a Bible, Doctrine and Covenants, or Book of Mormon in his hind pocket to read in his spare time. He wore several books out this way.

XI

Because Neils recognized his weakness, he spent many of his last years herding sheep in the mountains. He seemed to of known or have a fear that he would die out in the mountains and not be found. This was exactly what happened to him.

Niels had been out on the Nevada Desert with the sheep for three or four months. No one had been sent out to help him so he was alone. It was December 13, 1944, that Wally Petersen, his employer at this time, went out to take supplies and check on things in general. As Wally came to the camp he could tell no one was around and had not been there for sometime. He scouted around the area and a short distance away found Niels slumped to the ground cold and frozen, still holding the horse's reins.

There appeared to be a circle where the horse had gone round and round. Wally called back to Hyrum to tell Maud of the news and see if Berthol (Bert) Thompson, Niels' nephew (son of Niels' sister Ane) the mortician of Hyrum could come out and get the body. Because of the red tape involved of getting Niels across the Nevada border, the distance and expense, Wally was advised to bring him home. Someone needed to be sent out to stay with the sheep before Wally could leave. All of this took time. As soon as they could, Niels' body was put in the back of Wally's pickup truck covered over and brought to Hyrum where Bert Thompson prepared his body for burial on the 8th of December 1944. Thus ended the sixtieth year for Niels Albert Johnson.