

## **CHRISTOFFER JENSEN (1849 - 1944)**

Christoffer Jensen was born on March 17, 1849 in the Parish of Jungshoved, Prøstø, Denmark. His father's name was Jens Rasmussen and his mother's name was Ane Olsen. He left Denmark on April 17, 1866 when he was 17 years of age. He was accompanied by his brother Peder. He went from Copenhagen to Liverpool, and from there to America. He was then allowed to enter the United States at New York on July 3, 1866. By the fall he went to work in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

In September 1867, Christoffer and his brother Peder left Minneapolis driving a yoke of oxen to find suitable farming land to the west and north. Christoffer Jensen selected his homestead in what is now section 17, Tordenskjold Township, and his brother Peder settled in section 18. The land had not yet been surveyed by the Government and Christoffer and Peder Jensen were the first white men to permanently settle in what later became known as Tordenskjold Township.

Christoffer Jensen was married first to Ane Jensen (she had the same surname) in 1869. Ane was born in Denmark in 1853. Two children were born to them. Hans was born in 1870 and Mary was born in 1873. Ane died shortly after Mary's birth and was buried on Peder Jensen's homestead on land that would later become the Tordenskjold Lutheran church cemetery. Hans died of pneumonia on March 28, 1891.

Mary grew up on the Tordenskjold farm and in Fergus Falls, Minnesota. She moved with her family to South Dakota and while there she met Robert M. Tyson. Robert and Mary were married on December 8, 1896 in Wahpeton, North Dakota. In 1903, they moved to new land along the Canadian border, near Sherwood, North Dakota. Robert bought a homestead claim relinquishment there and they made their home on a farm 13 miles west of Sherwood. His homestead was in Section 2 of Stafford Township. His 160 acres was immediately north of Henry Jensen's and a mile north of Christoffer Jensen's. Robert learned that he was not really cut out to be a farmer, so on May 24, 1908 they moved to Russell, North Dakota where he became an implement dealer.

After Ane's death, Christoffer returned to Denmark for a visit. He met his second wife Kersten Hendricksen on the boat coming back to America in May of 1876. Kirsten Henriksdatter was born on March 1, 1856 in Førslev Parish of Sorø County Denmark. Her father was Hendrik Christensen and her mother was Ellen Thomasdatter. Upon his return on July 11, 1876, he filed his affidavits for final proofs and payment for patenting of his homestead claim. Christoffer received patent to his homestead on October 10, 1876.

Christoffer Jensen married Kirsten Hendriksdatter on December 4, 1877 and they first settled into the homestead at Tordenskjold. Kirsten accepted Hans and Mary as her own.

Christoffer and Kersten had their first child Henry in 1879 in Tordenskjold, Minnesota. Henry moved with the family to South Dakota, Texas, and eventually North Dakota. While he lived in South Dakota he was acquainted with members of the Tyson family. Henry married Annie Tyson on July 25, 1903 in Minot, North Dakota. They lived on Henry's homestead in Section 11 of Stafford Township. Henry's place was next to Robert Tyson place immediately on the north and ½ mile north of his father Christoffer Jensen's place. Henry was granted a patent to his homestead on June 16, 1904. Their daughter Marion was born in 1904 while they were living in Stafford. In 1908, Henry and Annie and family moved to a farm near Mora and Calloway, Minnesota. Henry died Dec. 6, 1918 at Red Lake Falls, Minnesota during a siege of Spanish influenza.

Christoffer and Kersten sold the Tordenskjold homestead and moved to Fergus Falls in 1882. Shortly after this move they had two more children, Annie Jensen in 1882 and Hannah Jensen shortly after in 1883. Then they had a son named Johnny Jensen in July 1884, but he died the following month on August 7, 1884.

Christoffer and Kirsten had their son James in Fergus Falls in 1885. James moved with the family to South Dakota, Texas, Oklahoma, and eventually North Dakota. James settled in Stafford Township, North Dakota along with his family in 1903. He also made his own homestead claim in Williams County, North Dakota and went to establish residence there on June 20, 1907. In December 1907 he was back in Stafford and had a job working at Walker's Bakery in Sherwood, North Dakota. On September 11, 1910 James was married to Randina Rockne in Mohall. By 1919, James was partners with his brother Henry in an auto and implements business in Red Lake Falls, Minnesota.

Christoffer and Kirsten had their daughter Hattie in Fergus Falls in 1887. It was in Stafford Township where Hattie Jensen was to meet Miles McLane who had a homestead claim just ½ mile from the Jensens. Hattie married Miles on February 18, 1907 in Minot and they lived on Mile's nearby homestead claim.

Christoffer and Kirsten had their daughter Effie Jensen in Fergus Falls in 1890. She moved with her family to South Dakota, Texas, and North Dakota. She moved with her parents to Minnesota in 1909. She traveled around a bit visiting her brothers in sisters in the various places they lived. She spent January and February of 1913 with her sister Hattie in Stafford Township, North Dakota.

Christoffer was always looking for new places. As soon as he got one built up and made it liveable, and Kirsten was happy about it, he was on his way. They sold their South Dakota farm to Nels Pedersen, a close friend of the family, for \$1000. They then bought a house in Port Arthur, Texas and moved there in 1897 where Christoffer was employed as a carpenter. Christoffer and Kirsten had their daughter Edna in Port Arthur in 1897. Also, while in Port Arthur the family lived through the great Galveston flood caused by the tidal wave of a hurricane on September 8, 1900.

In June, 1902, the Jensens moved to a farm 4 miles NW of Lawton, Oklahoma. The climate was not to Christoffer's liking and he decided to move his family to North Dakota. They arrived in Kenmare by train. After their arrival in Kenmare, They were able to locate a couple of old friends and former neighbors from South Dakota, Nelson and Paulson, who were in the farm implement business. Christoffer's son Henry was working for them. Henry had already been in the area since he entered his homestead claim in Stafford Township in Renville County around 1899. Christoffer and his son James got a load of lumber and started for Henry's claim, about 30 miles north of Kenmare, 2 miles south of the Canadian line. They had to go 20 miles west to McKinney because that was the only bridge between there and Canada. They didn't know about the ford at Stafford's or Gulson's.

From McKinney they went northwest again, and about the only person they saw was George Wegdahl whose folks had just put up a house on their claim 2 miles north of what became the Jensen home. Christoffer bought a homestead claim from Henry in Section 14 of Stafford Township. Henry had a homestead claim in Section 11 of Stafford Township just ½ mile north of Christoffer's. Robert Tyson, husband of Mary Jensen, had his homestead claim in Section 2 of Stafford Township adjacent to the north side of Henry's. The entire Jensen family was now all living within 2 miles of each other.

Christoffer and James got to the Aaby's place before dark on the first day on their way to the Stafford homestead claim. The Aaby family had a good set of buildings now. They camped by a slough. The next morning they found that they were exactly on the track with only 2 ½ more miles to go. They got there and built the shack the same day. Christoffer had planned to find someone who had a plow so they could plow a fire break. They got up early the next morning and dug a furrow around the shack and then dug another furrow on the outside and burned the grass in between creating a nice fire break.

The Jensens believed that they probably had the best 160 acres in the country. They could look almost into Canada up the river, and could see Henry's place on the north. They had the best of hunting for both ducks and prairie chickens. New settlers were coming in by the trainload and everybody prospered. A small settlement named Pleasant, North Dakota soon sprouted up.

The family togetherness established in Stafford Township started coming to an end when Robert and Mary Tyson left their homestead for Russell, North Dakota on May 24, 1908. Then on March 21, 1908, Christoffer sold his claim and all his stock to William Hoppe and the family moved to Calloway, Minnesota. Henry and Annie Jensen moved their family as well. This left Hattie and James as the only Jensens left in Renville County.

Christoffer and Kersten would go on to live in various places in Minnesota. On July 21, 1938, Christoffer, Kirsten, Effie, and Edna all went together to visit Hattie and Miles in Sherwood, North Dakota. Christoffer was a short man. While in the local saloon, some patrons were making comments about his lack of height. He immediately bet them that he could put one foot on the bar while keeping the other foot on the floor. He won the bet! This was quite a feat considering that he was 89 years old at the time. The occasion of the trip was to visit the Miles and Hattie McLane family in Sherwood before their move in September 1938 to Los Angeles, California. This was the last time Hattie got to see her parents before their deaths.

The years Christoffer and Kirsten spent in Waubun and Mahnomen, Minnesota were probably the most pleasant. They always had the respect and esteem of many good friends. Kirsten died in Mahnomen on June 13, 1941. Christoffer died just over a year later on September 10, 1942. Effie cared for them until the end of their years. Their final resting place is in the old church yard by Underwood (Tordenskjold) where Christoffer and his brother, Peder, settled back in 1867