

Neils Anderson and his wife, Mary Christofferson Anderson. Mary was only fourteen years of age when her chin was shot away by a cannon ball.



The WOUND

That NEVER

By

PETER ANDERSON

Photos Courtesy Anderson Family

MY MOTHER was the fourteen-year old girl who had her chin shot away by a cannon ball during the Morrisite Massacre of 1862. It happened on the Weber River some thirty miles north of Salt Lake City, Utah. S. E. Harding, Governor of Utah Territory from 1862 to 1864 wrote about the Morrisites, "... whose history has no parallel on this continent since the religious bigotry of the Seventeenth Century." And about the injured girl he had this to say, "Unhappily, the injured girl did not die. I saw her in my office afterwards, the most ghastly human face my eyes ever beheld."

The injured girl not only lived but she raised a family of eight children and died in 1928 at the age of eighty-one. We children grew up in Soda Springs, Idaho. Our neighbors were remnants of the original Morrisite band, so we heard many stories of the persecution of the Morrisites, Gladdites, Gentiles and "Pos-tates," as well as the Mountain Meadows Massacre.

To go back to the beginning of how our people became involved with the Mormons is to go back to Denmark. My mother was born there in 1847. There were two sons and four daughters all in their teens when the Peter Christofferson family became converts to the Mormon religion and emigrated to America in 1857. My mother was the next to the youngest child.

After their arrival, they were delayed in Burlington, Iowa, until 1859 because Johnston's army was being sent to Utah.

The long delay gave them ample time to prepare for the long journey west.

My grandfather Christofferson, being a little better fixed than many of the other converts, bought a team of oxen and a covered wagon to transport his belongings and family to the promised land. They had been told there were few stoves in Utah and, since there was space, Peter Christofferson bought one for his wife. Even so, the family had to walk much of the way to allow room for the sick and elderly to ride. This they were glad to do for "The Glory of God."

My mother told me that she walked barefoot all the way from Council Bluffs, Iowa. She said she rather enjoyed it because they only traveled ten or twelve miles a day and the children played along the way, picking wild flowers and gathering beads from ant hills. The beads had been spilled by traders when they bargained with the Indians, and the ants carried the bright bits of glass to their hills.

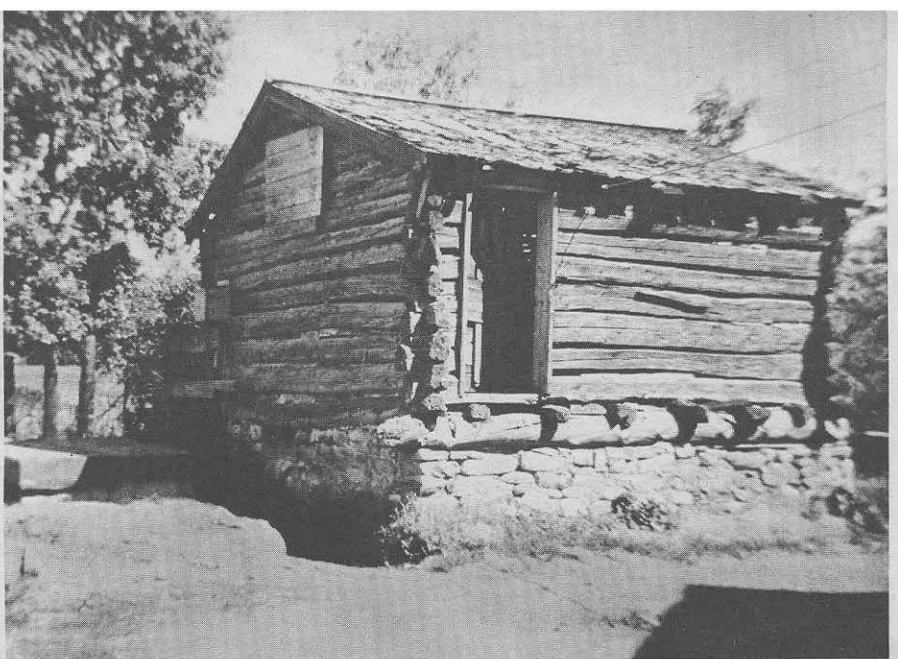
THE following story was told by my mother: "Father hauled the new stove with our other belongings to within a few miles of Salt Lake City. Then one day the captain of the wagontrain came

over to our wagon and said, 'You will have to unload the stove as there are sick people who will have to ride. We will hide it and return for it later.' We were just two days' journey from our destination, but Father did as he was asked. Later, when he inquired about the stove, since it had not arrived, he was told that it had been stolen.

"Some time after, however, my oldest sister went to work for one of Brigham Young's wives. Behold the astonishment of Father when she came home to say that Brigham Young's wife was using our stove. It was the lost stove that made Father begin to doubt the sincerity of the leaders of the Mormon Church."

As the children went to school and learned the English language they told their parents of many things that were taking place in the new country. They told how the Elders, Bishops, and other influential men were trying to persuade the girls to become plural wives. When the full import of this information reached Peter Christofferson he said, "Not that! They never said anything about polygamy in Denmark. They preached Christ and His Kingdom and told us that Utah was a land of milk and honey."

Told from the viewpoint of a foreign family whose members were caught up in a struggle for which they had no taste, but from which they knew no escape



The little schoolhouse where Morrisite children went to school. Many of the Morrisites sought shelter here during the trouble.

HEALED

What was to be done? Even with the language handicap, rumors had reached the ears of the Danish emigrants. Rumors of certain death for anyone who tried to break away from the Mormon Church. Where a Gentile, under certain circumstances, would be tolerated, an apostate automatically became an enemy of the church and was apt to be found dead some dark night. The Danites or Avenging Angels, as they were sometimes called, struck cold fear to the heart of anyone who might, however unwittingly, incur displeasure of the church leaders. The threat of "Blood Atonement" hung like a shadow over every dissenter's head and no one relished the idea of having his or his father's blood shed "to save their souls."

There were no coroners or coroner's juries in those days. No railroad had opened up the country to outside influence. One thousand, two hundred miles separated Brigham Young's Kingdom from the rest of the world. The last belt of civilization was too far away to lend assistance and he was monarch of all he surveyed with no one to contest his edict. It took months of weary travel by team and wagon to reach the Mormon settlement.

My father, Neils Anderson, was born in Denmark in 1835. His family also became converts to the Mormon religion and emigrated to the United States in 1860. Father pulled a handcart from Florence, Nebraska, to the Salt Lake Valley. The Anderson family also saw the deception of some of the Mormon leaders and they, too, were anxious to withdraw from the church, but were fearful of the retribution rumored to be meted out to apostates.

Both the Andersons and the Christofersons, as well as many other Danish converts, were peaceful people and had no desire to take up arms and fight.

THE first dissenters from the Mormon Church were the Gladdenites in 1854. The organization lived but a short time. Those who could escaped to California.

Others recanted or "atoned," for we hear no more of them after 1854.

The second organization was known as the "Morrisites." Joseph Morris, the leader, or Prophet, as he was called, was a native of Manchester, England. Like thousands of others he thought the pure truth delivered by Joseph Smith had been corrupted, and conceived the design of affecting a grand reformation in the church. In his religious fervor Morris claimed to be favored with a glorious vision in which he was endowed with the holy priesthood, as the true successor to Joseph Smith.

Announcing his mission, Joseph Morris became the object of interest to all the settlers in the South Weber district, where he made his home, some thirty miles north of Salt Lake City. In a very short time he had assembled a considerable following.

Morris set up a communal colony and those who joined his organization sold their homes and land turning the proceeds over to the community fund. Many believed that Morris did receive holy visions and would lead them to a prosperous and happy community life where

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The Anderson Family
Seated: Mr. and Mrs. Anderson. Their children stand behind them. From left, Mary, Peter (the author), Lula, David, Ida and Abe. Two other children were away when the picture was made.

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The Wound That Never Healed

(Continued from page 29)

each member shared alike.

There were others who joined the Morrisites as a matter of survival. Like my family, they could not accept the edict of polygamy given by the church leaders. Anyone who had a feeling of distrust or of disagreement with the church or any of its officials lived in constant fear lest his neighbors or friends report him as an apostate.

So, not all of those who joined the Morrisites were religious fanatics. Some joined as a means of escape, thinking that in numbers they might stand a better chance of survival. The Andersons and Christoffersons were of the latter group.

Morris continued to receive revelations and supposedly under the influence of the Holy Spirit, he dictated letters to Brigham Young and to Heber C. Kimball which he delivered in person. Brigham Young thoroughly denounced Morris in strong language.

The Morrisites continued to increase in numbers. Brigham Young sent John Taylor and Wilford Woodruff to make an investigation. Solemnly, they "cut off" and "disfellowshipped" all the adherents of the new sect. By the spring of 1862 the latter numbered 500 people, all collected in a little camp on the Weber River called Kingdom Fort.

Life there was of a startling nature. Christ was soon to come. They had no need to plant or reap any more and, with all things shared in common, they proceeded to devote their time to religious exercises. Three English and three Danish clerks were busy and set apart to write down the revelations that flowed in streams from the lips of the prophet Morris. His followers, even now, preserve a large manuscript volume of them.

But the Lord delayed to come and the zeal of some of the converts rapidly cooled. They wanted to withdraw from the colony. Here began the difficulty that was to destroy Brigham Young's rival prophet. As the apostates withdrew, the question arose as to how much of their property they could reclaim. It had all been consecrated and therefore belonged to the church. But when the dissenters went to take back their share, they would make no allowance for the support they had received while living with the Morrisites.

A feud arose. The dissenters threatened a little war. They applied to the Mormon courts and the latter were only too pleased with the opportunity of dealing with the Morrisites. Writs were issued, served and repulsed.

The dissenters from Morris waited for a chance to seize the movable property of the Weber colony. As wheat was being sent to the mill they pounced upon it and took possession of the team and wagon, too. The Morrisites captured some of these plunderers and held them in custody. Their wives appealed to the civil authorities, bringing matters to a head.

Mormons living nearby accused the Morrisites of stealing their cattle, which they denied, stating they only took or retaliated when they, themselves, had been robbed.

The Morrisites refused to drill in the Territorial Militia. They were arrested and heavily fined. They declined to pay and resisted execution claims on their property. Complaint was made to Chief Justice Kinney (a Mormon), who issued writs for the arrest of the leading Morrisites. Robert T. Burton, Sheriff of Salt Lake County, attempted to serve the papers but returned without success.

The Nauvoo Legion was at once ordered out, with several cannon, and placed under Burton's command. On their way to Weber River they were joined by volunteers from Ogden, Kaysville, and Farmington, "who went along to see the fun." Early in the morning of June 13, 1862, they arrived at the Morrisite camp with 500 well-armed men and five pieces of artillery.

The militia took possession of the Morrisite cow herd, killing such beef as they needed to feed the men, then sent the boys, who were attending the herd, into camp with Burton's proclamation calling for surrender.

FORT KINGDOM consisted of a few houses made of willows, woven together and plastered with mud, a small schoolhouse, some dugouts, a number of covered wagons surrounded by crude fortifications and the bowery, or place of worship. The latter consisted of a framework made of poles and covered with willows. Underneath were benches for the worshippers.

The following is a copy of the document sent to Morris by Burton: "Headquarters, Marshal's Posse, Weber River, June 13, 1862. To Joseph Morris, John Banks, Richard Cook, John Parsons and Peter Klemgard:

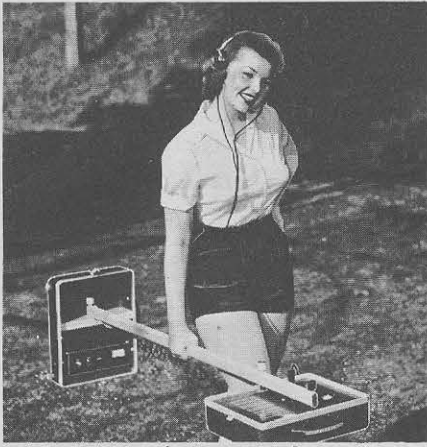
"Whereas, you have heretofore disregarded and defied the judicial officers and laws of the Territory of Utah; and whereas, certain writs have been issued for you from the Third Judicial District Court of said Territory, and a sufficient force furnished by the Executive of the same to enforce the laws, this is therefore to notify you to peaceably and quietly surrender yourselves and the prisoners in your custody forthwith.

"An answer is required in thirty minutes after the receipt of this document; if not, forcible measures will be taken for your arrest. Should you disregard this proposition and place your lives in jeopardy, you are hereby required to remove your women and children; and all persons peaceably disposed are hereby notified to forthwith leave your encampment, and are informed they can find protection with this posse.—H. W. Lawrence, Territorial Marshal, per R. T. Burton and Theodore McKean, Deputies."

When the note was handed to Morris, he put on his priestly robe and crown, took his divining rod and proceeded to inquire of the Lord what was to be done. One, who was a lad in the camp at that time, gave this account of what followed: "Mr. Morris was seen to come out of his dwelling with a paper in his hand. The revelation was read to the assembled council, and a peculiar document it was. It purported to be from God, Who was represented as being pleased with His faithful people there, and as having brought the posse to show His own power in the complete destruction of their enemies. It also promised that now the triumph of His people should come, their enemies should be smitten before them, but not one of His faithful people should be destroyed; not a hair of their heads should be harmed.

"The council at once stepped into the bowery, close to which lived all the leading men, and, to save time, singing was omitted. The meeting opened briefly by prayer. Mr. John Parsons, in his clear, sonorous voice, then read the revelation to the assembled Morrisites. Mr. Cook arose to consult with the people as to which should be obeyed—the proclamation demanding the surrender of the prisoners held in custody of Peter Klemgard, and

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The Wound That Never Healed

(Continued from page 42)

four of the leading men of the church, or the revelation forbidding the surrender of these men.

"Before the people had a chance to speak or vote or do anything at all in the matter, the booming sound of cannon was heard and screams from the third seat from the stand in the bowery. Instantly two women were seen dead in the congregation. The lower jaw, hanging only by a small strip of skin, was shot off a young girl of twelve to fifteen years of age. It was the fearful and heart-rending screams of this girl that stopped the meeting.

"The people arose in utter confusion. Mr. Cook, still on his feet, suggested to all to go at once to their homes and each man take care of his own family as best he could. Never was revelation more immediately falsified in the history of the world; for, scarcely had the promise of absolute safety been made, ere sudden destruction came."

And now the tragedy as told from my mother's point of view: "The Mormons would disguise themselves as Indians and pounce down on our drivers as they were taking the grain to the mill. They would steal our supplies and run off our stock to try to force the Morrisites back into the church. The Morrisites captured some of the thieves by sending strong men out with the supply wagons. The thieves were not Indians as they appeared, but Mormons dressed up like Indians. They were taken prisoners and locked up."

The same cannon ball that shot off my mother's chin killed Mrs. Barbara Deit-helm and Mrs. Joseph Marsh. One of the women held a small baby in her arms. After the woman fell, Mrs. James Bowman picked up the unharmed baby.

The Morrisites ran to their homes, seeking shelter as best they could. Burton had stationed his men so that the whole camp was under cross-fire by both his cannon and the rifles in the hands of his men. The flimsy shelters were hit time and time and again, wounding women and children as well as men. There was no milk for the children and they cried from both hunger and fear. There were about ninety able-bodied men in the camp at that time and about 300 women and children.

His followers continually asked Morris for guidance and he, never losing faith in their deliverance, encouraged the people to defend themselves as best they could, with shotguns (used for hunting ducks) and a few Mexican firelocks that were in the camp. Every moment they believed that Morris would receive a revelation that would save them.

Rumors of the Mountain Meadows Massacre were fresh in the minds of all the Morrisites. None of them were convinced that if they did surrender they might not be letting themselves and their families in for a similar fate.

The fighting continued sporadically day and night. Ten of the Morrisites were killed and two Brighamites. On the third day, the Morrisites were exhausted. Someone raised a white flag. When Morris saw it he said, "Your faith has gone and the Lord has forsaken us. I can now do nothing more."

THE POSSE rode into camp and amidst the wildest confusion, men and women were separated. The men stacked their guns. Many of the women could not speak English and expected momentary destruction.

The posse acted over again the same scenes which had been enacted by the Missouri militia when they captured the Mormons, destroying, plundering, and insulting. Only the parties were changed.

While the captors were robbing the homes of all valuables, watches, jewelry and money—even tearing off the women's finger rings, Burton, with his gun in his hand, demanded, "Where is your prophet? Show him to me!"

My mother, with the lower part of her face in a bandage, was only ten feet away from Burton.

Someone said, "There he is," and pointed to Morris.

"Will you surrender in the name of God and the Mormon Church?" Burton asked.

Morris replied, "No, never. What I have told these people is eternal truth."

Mother said Burton tried to ride over Morris but he grabbed the horse by the bridle.

Burton said, "You d-d fool," and shot Morris. Then he sneered, "There's your prophet! What do you think of him now?"

He then shot Joseph Banks. Mrs. James Bowman, the woman who picked up the baby after it had fallen from its mother's arms when she was killed three days before, was an Englishwoman. With the baby in her arms she cried, "Oh, you cruel wretch, how could you kill a good man like that?"

Burton shot her, too, and the baby took a second fall.

While Morris was still struggling in his death agony, a Danish woman raised him in her arms crying bitterly. Burton rode up and shot her to death also. Later, when Burton was questioned about killing the four people after they had surrendered, he said, "They were mischief makers and deserved death anyway."

After it was all over, the Mormons tried to blame the last four deaths on radicals but Brigham Young said (according to H. P. McLane), "Morris and Banks will be taken no doubt, but if I had my way I would spare neither man, woman, or child, but as it is a United States affair they can have it as they please. The worst I dislike is that after they have been routed, the accursed devils will try to sneak back into the church again."

The dead bodies were thrown into a wagon, with Morris' robe, crown, and rod. Followed by the captive Morrisites they were taken, under guard, to the city.

The bodies of Morris and Banks lay for several days in City Hall where they were visited by great crowds, eager to see the noted "Schismatic." The vast majority of these people regarded it simply as the proper punishment for one who had "set himself up to teach heresy in Zion and oppose the Lord's anointed."

Mrs. Bowman, who was expecting a child, did not die immediately but lived three days. She begged that her husband be allowed to come to see her but he was a prisoner and could not come. The baby she held in her arms when she was struck down lived to maturity.

Several of the Brighamite militia testified that Banks was only slightly wounded when a cup of water was handed to him by the Brigham surgeon, Dr. Peter Clinton; that he drank of it and expired within a few minutes. The Morrisites suspected poison.

The following affidavit will give most clearly the Morrisite version of the affair: "United States of America, Ter-

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The Wound That Never Healed

(Continued from page 44)

ritory of Utah, ss. Alexander Dow, of said Territory, being duly sworn, says: "In the spring of 1861, I joined the Morrisites, and was present when Joseph Morris was killed. The Morrisites had surrendered, a white flag was flying, and the arms were all grounded and guarded by a large number of the posse.

"Robert T. Burton and Judson L. Stoddard rode in among the Morrisites. Burton was much excited, and said, "Where is the man? I don't know him."
"Stoddard replied, "That's him," pointing to Morris.

"Burton rode his horse upon Morris, and commanded him to give himself up in the name of the Lord. Morris replied, "No, never, never."

"Morris said he wanted to speak to his people. Burton said, "Be d-d quick about it."

"Morris said, "Brethren, I have taught you true principles." He had scarcely got the words out of his mouth when Burton fired his revolver. The ball passed in his neck or shoulder.

"Burton exclaimed, "There's your prophet." He fired again saying, "What do you think of your prophet now?"

"Burton then turned suddenly and shot Banks, who was standing five or six paces distant. Banks fell. Mrs. Bowman, wife of James Bowman, came running up crying, "Oh, you blood-thirsty wretch!"

"Burton said, "No one shall call me that and live," and he shot her also. A Danish woman came running up to Morris, crying, and Burton shot her also. Burton could have easily taken Morris and Banks prisoners, if he had tried. I was standing but a few feet from Burton all the time.—Alexander Dow. Subscribed and sworn to before me, this 18th day of April, A.D. 1863. Charles B. Waite, Associate Justice, Utah Territory."

NINETY-THREE of the Morrisites were arraigned before Judge Kinney. Tension was running high and it was possible that a number of the prisoners might die of their wounds if kept in prison. The judge placed bonds at \$1,500 each for their appearance in court, April, 1863. Only five signed the bond. A few of the rest could not speak English. Others said they would lie in jail till the Devil's thousand years were out before they would, even by implication, confess that they had been treated legally.

Then Judge Kinney ruled that, since it was a sort of community affair, those who had posted bond could bind the rest as their representatives. When the 1863 term of court came on, twenty of them were out of the Territory. One was dead, but most of the others appeared.

In June of 1862, Judge Kinney was the only United States Judge in Utah, and was said to be the compliant tool of Brigham Young. The prisoners were brought before Judge Kinney. Seven were convicted of murder in the second degree and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment, while sixty-six others were fined \$100, being committed to jail until the fines were paid. Two were acquitted.

Governor Harding and Judges Waite and Drake had arrived in time to hear the trial and were convinced that a great injustice was being done the Morrisites, under the circumstances. It was believed that a long prison sentence simply meant death, if the keepers in charge were so instructed.

Petitions began to circulate for their pardon, signed by Gentiles and by a very

few of the Mormons who did not condone such severity.

Governor Harding was warned not to sign a pardon, as the people were much excited and might feel it an outrage which would justify violence. To this attempt at intimidation, Governor Harding responded with his usual firmness. In a short time the remaining Morrisites were pardoned.

For thus turning loose on the community a number of persons whom the Mormon rulers classed as dangerous criminals, only three days after conviction and before any investigation had been made, Harding was severely censured by the grand jury. "Therefore we present his 'Excellency' Stephen S. Harding, Governor of Utah, as we would an unsafe bridge over a dangerous stream—jeopardizing the lives of all who pass over it—or as we would a pestiferous cesspool in our district breeding disease and death."

Many of the Morrisite women and children were taken in by Gentiles and sympathizing Mormons; others existed as best they could. Once the military camp of General Connor was established, the homeless Morrisites filtered into it for protection. Some of them went to work and remained there. And Mary Christofferson held a handkerchief over her mouth, whenever she met strangers, for the rest of her life.

In May, 1863, General Connor sent eighty families, made up of 200 persons, under military escort to Soda Springs, Idaho, where they established a flourishing settlement. Nearby the Military set up a post to protect emigrants going through the area.

Two months later Mary Christofferson and Neils Anderson were married by one of General Connor's Lieutenants, Frank Shoemaker. Their marriage was the first in Idaho Territory, as far as they knew. To celebrate the wedding the soldiers stretched out a huge piece of canvas on the ground and the whole camp held a dance.

Later Lieutenant Shoemaker married Mrs. Anderson's sister and made his home in Blackfoot, Idaho. His grave is in the Blackfoot cemetery.

Mr. Anderson was a blacksmith and had his own shop. Later he became known as the father of the anti-Mormon party in Idaho. Mrs. Anderson raised a large family but she never joined another church.

I was the fifth child born to the Niels Andersons. I am eighty-three years old. I have one living sister in Spokane, Washington. She is ninety. The rest of the family has all passed away.

I remember many of the Morrisites because they were neighbors of ours. One in particular was James Bowman, the husband of the woman Burton killed because she called him a "blood-thirsty wretch." There were others with whom I talked about the Morrisite Massacre.

My oldest sister married a half-brother of one who took part in the Mountain Meadows Massacre of 1857. He was about twenty years older than my sister's husband. I remember seeing him when I was about ten years old. He was quite sick but the two men liked to go fishing and I used to go along. That is why I have such a vivid memory of him. (He had an awful yellow complexion.) He told my sister that the Massacre was a terrible experience for him. However his family were staunch Mormons and he believed it was God's will. No doubt many of the Mormons felt the same way about the Morrisite trouble.

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The old cannon used against the Morrisites is on display outside the City Hall at Farmington, Utah. This was the cannon that shot away my mother's chin, when she was fourteen years old. The tragic story of the Morrisites is recorded on my parents' tombstone, a silent reminder of man's inhumanity to man.