

CHARLES J. AND JACOBENA SPONGBERG

LOUISA SPONGBERG'S PARENTS

Jacobena Funk was born in 1832 in Bornholm, Denmark. Her parents had eleven children. The entire family joined the Mormon church after hearing missionaries. The Funk family prepared to migrate to America because of the severe persecution Mormons suffered in Denmark during these times.

Charles Spongborg was born in 1826, in Swa, Vestmanland, Sweden. He completed an apprenticeship as a blacksmith in Sweden and found work in Copenhagen, Denmark. Here he met Mormon missionaries, was converted, and decided to embark for America.

In 1857 Charles left on the same ship the Funk family was on. Charles was 31 and Jacobena was 25. During this voyage Charles became acquainted with Jacobena. They had much in common. They both were going to America, they belonged to the same church, and they both needed friends and encouragement. They fell in love on the ship.

They were an attractive couple. Charles had black hair and dark, brown eyes. Jacobena had black, wavy hair, brown eyes, and a good sense of humor.

The ship took six weeks coming across the ocean. This romance lasted all the way. One year after arriving in America they were married. They spent two years in Iowa preparing for the trip to Utah.

In 1859 they joined a large company of Mormons and started for Utah. Some of the company travelled in wagon trains pulled by teams of oxen, horses, and cows. Jacobena was pregnant. She and her sisters walked most of the way. A lot of the time they were barefoot. When their food became scarce they gathered wild berries. Somewhere on the plains between Iowa and Utah Jacobena had her baby. The baby's name was Helen.

Charles used his skills as a blacksmith to assist others with mending wagons, setting tires, and making shoes for the animals. The shoes were made from scraps of rough iron such as old wagon parts. He took his turn guarding the camp in the evening against Indians and wild animals.

Their journey ended in Salt Lake. They stayed here a few months. Charles found employment in the fields harvesting grain and hay. This work was done with a scythe.

The next Spring the family moved to Ogden. The main part of Ogden was west of present Washington Avenue and the river was mostly covered with a willow flat. Charles spent several months clearing away brush to make building lots. He later sold many of these lots. On one of his lots he built a log cabin. It consisted only of four walls and a roof. There was no ceiling, windows, floor, or doors; and this can be very cold country.

That October a second child was born. The following day, Helen, their first child, died. Jacobena was very weak and was in bed. She felt that she had to help Charles in some way, but she was unable to do so. A small casket was made of two wooden slabs. Jacobena's sister and brother-in-law went with Charles to bury the small child. Charles carried the little box on his shoulders. It was pathetic, three in the procession and Jacobena in bed at home.

Soon after this the couple decided to move farther north to Cache Valley. In 1826 they moved to Richmond and lived there one year. A third child was born. Some of Jacobena's family lived in Richmond and this helped considerably.

In 1863 they moved to Franklin, Idaho, walking the twelve miles from Richmond. Charles carried the little girl, Anna, and all their belongings. Jacobena carried the baby.

At that time there weren't many settlers in Franklin, so Charles did much to help build the town. He set up his blacksmith shop as soon as possible. The Indians were very troublesome at this time. In order to protect themselves the settlers built their houses very close together in an oblong shape, forming what is known as 'the Old Fort' in Franklin history. The women looked to Charles for protection while their husbands were in the fields. They would go to his blacksmith shop when they saw Indians appearing.

Charles did lots of blacksmithing for the people of Franklin as well as travelers. He liked to tell about the time President Brigham Young and members of the Mormon Presiding Council spent two days at his house on their way to Bear Lake. Later, Charles and three other men went to Bear Lake to secure lumber for the first meeting house and the first school house in Franklin. Charles made nails and other metal parts for these buildings.

Charles built the first substantial home in Franklin. It was made of stone and had six rooms. It still stands and was later owned by Albert Parkinson(1920-1930?). All other homes in the area were made of logs or adobe.

Jacobina was a very good homemaker. She devoted her life to her family. She was a good cook and seamstress. She spun and wove many carpets. She was charitable and generous and she believed in doing good for all. She had some cute little sayings. When she was alarmed or surprised she would say "Per all pot" or else she would say "Pervrie tell!".

In 1871, twelve years after arriving in Utah, Charles and several other men made a general survey of the country north of Franklin from Worm Creek to Mink Creek. They decided to locate on land east of what is now Preston. Each man took a quarter section of land under the homestead law. These men were some of the early pioneers of Preston. Charles was 45 years old.

There were several springs with excellent drinking water on the Spongberg property. Other homesteaders would come and haul it home in barrels. Later, people dug wells.

Charles built a small house on this Preston land. He and the older daughters cleared the land while he still had his blacksmith shop in Franklin. Charles, Jacobena and the small children lived in Franklin one year to make a living. Then he moved all the family to the Preston flats. He walked each morning to his shop in Franklin and returned at night. The family thought nothing of walking to Franklin for church.

Twelve years later Charles sold his Franklin property and set up a new shop on his Preston farm. In this shop he shod horses for farmers. One day one of his customers was in severe pain because of a tooth ache. Charles pulled the tooth. This was repeated later, so he sat up a chair and acted as the dentist of the area.

Coal was the fuel normally used in blacksmith's forges, but it was not available in the area. Instead, Charles would haul birch and maple he found in the canyon, and made his own charcoal. Charles and a carpenter from Ogden built the first threshing machine in Cache Valley. They built it from scrap iron that the Johnson Army had left near Salt Lake City. Charles did custom threshing for the other farmers on the flat. His machine was later taken to Willow Creek just south of Brigham City and sold to a company of men who used it for years to thresh their grain.

Charles Spongberg and David Jensen built the first irrigation ditch in Preston. It came from Worm Creek along the north side of the hill and irrigated the land on the east bench. Later Charles helped build the Worm Creek canal.

One of the Spongberg grandchildren, Onetta Peterson, described some of her remembrances of her grandparents. As a young child, Onetta rode a horse to the local farms carrying the notice of the irrigation water schedule because her father was the water tender. The Spongbergs lived three quarters of a mile north of her farm and when Onetta rode to the Sponberg farm, her Grandmother Jacobina treated her to cocoanut. She remembers Charles as being a very kind grandfather. He looked very dignified and wore a goatee.