

MY MEXICAN HERITAGE

MY MOTHER, ZINA CHARLOTTE CHLARSON

paragraph
indent
memories

Note to the reader: I (Ida-Rose Langford Hall) am writing this history of my parents' Mexican experience. For dates for the different moves of the Chlarson family, refer to Louis Chlarson's history which appears before this one. I will concentrate on the experiences of my parents in Mexico, in New Mexico, and in Arizona until my parents were married. My material is taken from a taped interview of my parents taken in August, 1961, at the Langford home at 3292 Orchard Avenue, Ogden, Utah.

My mother, Zina Charlotte Chlarson, was born 15 October, 1889, in Thatcher, Graham County, Arizona. Her parents were Heber Otto Chlarson and Ida Isabella Norton. Heber Otto was born in Ronneby, Blekinge County, Sweden, on the 17 November 1862. His parents, Hans Nadrian Chlarson and Johanna Charlotta Scherlin, had moved to Ronneby after they were married 20 Sept, 1861. Hans N. and Johanna met when Hans knocked on Johanna's door when he was serving as an LDS missionary. She and her widowed mother were both converted and were promptly disowned by the rest of Johanna's family. In fact, her brothers threatened to put both Johanna and her mother in an insane asylum.

Heber
1863 April
1862 Nov

While Heber Otto was still a baby, his father sent Johanna, and baby Heber, Hans' mother, Anna Persson Nilsson, and his wife's mother, Ulricka Scherlin, to Salt Lake City, the "Gathering Place" of Zion. His father was to follow as soon as he could earn enough money to pay his passage. Johanna and Heber sailed on the John J. Boyd from Hamburg, 30 April 1863.

There is a story in the family that Johanna was advised that she would need a sunbonnet to protect her from sunburn on the trip across the plains. She went to buy one and instead fell in love with a fussy little hat which she bought instead of the more practical sunbonnet. The way the family tells it, she was sunburned so dark on the trip to Utah that she never lost the tan. Tall tale? Well, at least the part about never losing the tan.

It was three years before Hans Nadrian arrived in Salt Lake City and was re-united with his wife and child. The story of both their lives during this time reads like a dime novel. Hans had his money stolen from a New York City hotel and a Swedish friend in New York offered to get him a job as an interpreter with the Union Army. Instead, the friend sold Hans as a substitute in the Union Army for a rich man's son. He fought through many battles, was wounded in the leg, spent time in a Washington D.C. hospital, and then went back to New York and beat up his supposed friend.

I think the troops
didn't come till 1869?

Johanna, meantime, did not receive any of Hans' letters. The local postmaster intercepted them because he was trying to get Johanna to become his polygamous wife. She went to Brigham Young for advice and he asked her if she thought Hans was still alive. She thought he was.

"Then follow your heart," Brigham told her. She did. After spending some time in jail for beating up his "friend", Hans joined one of the wagon trains to the Salt Lake valley and was reunited with his wife and child in the fall of 1866. If he had waited until the next year, he could have come to Utah on the train.

They settled in Salt Lake City where Johanna had been earning her living by weaving and sewing. Hans prospered, and with Hannah's consent (even urging, according to my mother) Hans took other wives, all of them of Scandanavian descent. Hans started

earning his living in Salt Lake City as a photographer, but soon branched out into silver mining and beer brewing. Family tradition is that he was also involved in an amusement park.

owned or held an interest in

He built an impressive home for his wives on the bench in Salt Lake City, about 11th East, between 3rd and 4th South. Members of the family remember a beautiful, winding staircase. According to family tradition, a jealous partner burned the home down. The partner was angry because the girl he wanted to marry had married Hans instead. When I interviewed the last surviving son of one of Hans' wives, Lars Chlarson, in 1980, he said he could remember being lowered from a second story window in a blanket during that fire. After the fire, Hans moved his families to Granite, Utah, probably to be nearer his mining interests in Cottonwood canyon.

Say which wife if you can

When the persecution against polygamists became intense, Hans took his youngest wife, Anna, and headed to Mexico to find a home for his large family. On their way to Mexico, they stopped in Thatcher, Arizona, and were persuaded by the local Saints to stay in Arizona. He built homes for each of his wives in Thatcher. My grandfather, Heber Otto, grew up in Arizona and met and married Ida Isabella Norton on 25 December, 1888, in nearby Central, Arizona.

one of his

Mother's paternal line, Norton, dates back to Revolutionary War times in Virginia and Kentucky. Her grandparents, David Norton and Elizabeth Benefield, joined the church in Indiana, and went through the building of Nauvoo, and the exodus of the Saints from that city. Their son, John Wiley Norton, was a scout in Brigham's first company to cross the plains to Utah in 1847. After a short stay in the gold mines in California (contrary to the admonition of Brigham Young) the family settled in Lehi, Utah.

how'd they get there?

young of their elderly but astute

In Lehi, a younger son, Hyrum Fletcher, met and married a young English convert, Zina Emma Turner, and infused some fresh immigrant blood into the Norton line from Lancashire County, England. Their first child, Ida Isabella, was born in Lehi, but soon thereafter the young family moved to Central, Arizona, where the rest of their children were born, and where some of the other members of the Norton family had settled.

Mother was the oldest child born to Heber Otto Chlarson and Ida Isabella Norton and spent her early childhood in Thatcher, Arizona. Before she died she asked me to be re-baptized for her. Mother said she knew she was baptized and the Lord knew it, but she wanted her baptism and confirmation to appear officially on the records of the Church. We had been unable to find her baptism on any of the ward records for branches and wards where the Heber Chlarson family lived, both in Arizona and Mexico. I did this for her soon after she died.

I could not find the in the 1850 Cal census they were planning a boarding house

While the family lived in Thatcher, Heber Otto worked for his father at the family saw-mill in Show Low. About this saw-mill, Mother once said to me:

concerning

told me the following story:

CHARGE IT!

Grandpa (Hans Chlarson) was a good-hearted fellow, but he was always in debt. He could get credit anywhere. I guess that was his fault. But they knew he was working--he had his sawmill, and mines, and he seemed to be able to get credit anywhere. And that's the only way he paid his boys. [Heber and Hyrum]. The boys very seldom saw any cash, but they would just charge what they needed to their father at the company store. Mother [Ida Isabella Norton] had never been raised to do anything but pay for what she got. She wouldn't let Heber charge things to Grandpa Chlarson. The rest of the family did, however, and that is the

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