



SETTLEMENT CANYON CHAPTER LAST SURVIVING IMMIGRANT PIONEER HILDA ANDERSON ERICKSON



Hilda was born on November 11, 1859 in Ledsjo, Sweden. She was the fifth child of Pehr and Marie Kathrina Anderson. Her parents joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints on July 3, 1856 before Hilda was born. In May of 1866 Pehr sent his wife and their three youngest children, which was Hilda and her two younger brothers, to the United States.

They left from Hamburg, Germany on July 1, 1866 on the "Cavour", one of the smallest ships ever chartered by the Church. It took them nearly nine weeks, about two weeks longer than normal, to arrive in New York. Since 1864, Wyoming, Nebraska was the place from which the Church wagon trains started for the Great Salt Lake Valley. From here, Hilda age 6, made the journey by foot and wagon across the plains in the "Abner Lowry Company". This was the last wagon train to leave from Wyoming, Nebraska.

They arrived in Salt Lake City, Utah on October 22, 1866, nearly six months after leaving Sweden. They lived with a friend, Frederick Peterson, in Mt. Pleasant, Utah for a time, then moved to Grantsville where Hilda's father joined them in 1868. One of her other brothers, John, joined them in Grantsville later. Her brother August stayed in Sweden.

On February 23, 1882, she married John A. Erickson in the old Endowment House in Salt Lake City, Utah. The following year the couple was called to serve a church mission in Ibapah, Utah working mainly with the Goshute Indians. They served on this mission for twelve years.

Hilda became known as the "doctor" because of her skills in the art of caring for and healing the sick. Because of these skills, she was sent to Salt Lake City for medical training where she received her license to practice. She was credited with treating and healing almost every kind of illness, and for delivering hundreds of babies. Hilda rode side-saddle on her many errands of mercy.

While in Ibapah, Hilda also gave birth to two children, Perry and Amy. She opened the first of her businesses selling merchandise and serving meals to miners, while taking care of as many as 40 milk cows and 2,000 sheep. In 1893 Hilda and her husband left Ibapah and homesteaded a ranch 30 miles down the valley. This ranch later became known as the "Last Chance Ranch" and proved to be one of the most prosperous ranches in the valley. When the children were old enough and needed more schooling, Hilda moved with her family to Grantsville City, leaving John on the ranch.

In 1925 Hilda established a general merchandising store, and managed this along with a Texaco gas station and a lumber and coal yard in Grantsville. She managed these for 21 years, selling in 1946. Hilda's husband John, died in 1944 at the age of 83.

Remaining active in old age, she owned and drove her own automobile until age 94. At the age of 100 she was honored in Grantsville for her accomplishments and for being the last living pioneer. In her 101st year, she was the Guest of Honor in the Pioneer Days Parade in Salt Lake City on July 24th. At the age of 99 she enjoyed one of her last great adventures, flying to Nauvoo as a special guest. On her return she flew in the first jet passenger airplane to land at the Salt Lake International Airport. She died January 1, 1968, at the age of 108.

With great respect and appreciation, we honor Hilda Anderson Erickson as a noble representative of the dedication, sacrifice and devotion of the 80,000 pioneers who crossed the plains by wagon train and by handcart, and to the millions of descendants who are and will be the modern-day pioneers.