

Free Methodist Historical Society

Newsletter

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Newsletter

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As Free Methodists from around the U.S. and the world gather for General Conference July 25-28, they will also have the opportunity to celebrate B. T. Roberts' 200th birthday. The first day of the conference, B. T.'s birthday, will hold several celebratory events. B. T. Roberts, portrayed by retired Spring Arbor University professor Paul Patton, will join the conference for the day. He will bring greetings during morning worship and perform a monologue later during a boxed lunch event. GC attendees can make reservations for this luncheon, also featuring the MMHC staff, through the GC23 registration process. More celebrating will occur after the evening service on Tuesday, during the reception times.

While GC 2023 will be the major celebration, MMHC has been providing remembrances since January with monthly emails (FM History Update) about B. T.'s life as written by Dr. Howard Snyder. If you do not receive



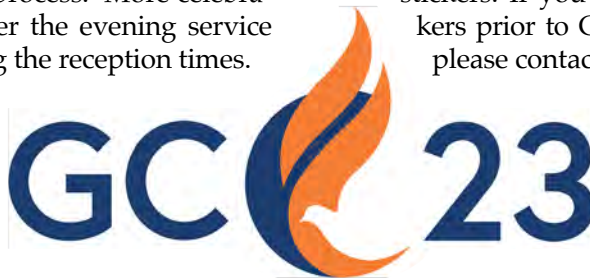
these messages and wish to, please email us or view them on our website.

There are several ways to purchase reminders of this momentous occasion. MMHC has designed shirts to celebrate the bicentennial of B. T.'s birth with "Party Like It's 1823" t-shirts. A portion of sales will benefit the MMHC.

GC23 attendees who purchase shirts, please wear them Tuesday, July 25 on his birthday. Order your shirt(s) at <https://bonfire.com/celebrate-b-ts-200th> by June 25 to receive in time for the conference. Flat B. T. and Ellen will be at GC23 again both as a photo opportunity and as water bottle stickers. If you want a set of stickers prior to General Conference, please contact us.

Dr. Snyder has also written a celebration liturgy for churches to use on Sunday, July 23. To get

a copy, email us at history@fmcusa.org or find it at the top of the website fmcusa.org/historical.



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The Mission of the Free Methodist Historical Society is to preserve Free Methodist heritage and transmit it faithfully to each generation in order to assist the Free Methodist Church in fulfilling its mission.

PETER AND INA HANSEN

PENTECOST BANDS PIONEERS IN DENMARK & NORWAY

By Christopher M. Hansen, descendent of Peter and Ina Hansen

Thanks to the efforts of Dr. David Bundy and Inge Bjørnevoll, the work of the Free Methodists and Pentecost Bands in Norway, have been well documented, except in one specific regard. The Pentecost Bands, particularly during the lengthy tenure of Thomas Hiram Nelson, have been an unfortunately neglected group in historical research. This is of no surprise, given that after the death of Vivian Dake, along with successive internal feuds, the momentum and energy that they had first exhibited steadily collapsed.

Another area of research has been the Pentecost Bands missionary work in Scandinavia under Sivert Ulness.

Yet, there were actually a few more missions to Scandinavian countries under the Pentecost Bands, which in fact documented a continued relationship between them and Ulness, even after the latter's decision to stay with the Free Methodist Church after the rift and split in the 1890s. The

first of these after the split was headed by Jens Peter Hansen (1872–1903) and his wife Ina Belle (Cone) Hansen (1869–1929).

Peter Hansen was a young immigrant from Denmark who joined the Bands likely around 1891-2.

He was from a remarkably poor family and eventually came to America. He quickly became

one of the most devoted members of the Bands. Peter Hansen rose through

the ranks quickly. By 1897 he was the division leader for the Bands in the state of Minnesota, having worked there since 1896 at least. On Christmas of 1898, he proposed to Ina Belle Cone, and they were married in April of 1899. They continued their work and at the December ingathering for the Bands, Peter and Ina both proposed a Bands mission to Denmark and Norway. These were condoned by the Bands leadership, and from January to mid-April of 1901, Peter and Ina fundraised,

mostly through donations from people who came to their meetings. Ina's personal diaries luckily survived and remain in the Hansen family, which enabled me to tabulate a rough estimate for their earnings, approxi-

mately \$200. On April 15 they began their move from Indiana to New York where they then booked passage on the SS Oceanic to England. They reached Liverpool, England on April 30. On May 3 they took another ship to Denmark, which arrived on fourth.

The trip was particularly rough. At this point, 29 year old Peter Hansen was already suffering

from tuberculosis, and Ina regularly records his agonies. In her entry

for April 26, at which point they were on the ship,

Ina wrote: "Peter is sick. Today was sick

with fever all night and a severe pain in

his side. Something like pleurisy I guess.

He must [have] taken cold. Hope he will be

better soon." This becomes a running theme

throughout her journal.

After arriving in Denmark,

they took a train directly to Peter's home-

town of Randlev, and they made his parents' home the base of their operations. Peter's parents were overjoyed to have him returned to

Denmark. At this time, Peter was the last of their sons still alive, but all of the family would

remark solemnly that he looked very ill. Peter and Ina's first work was to begin sharing the

message of the Bands and their views of salvation with his family, who all took it very well

and eventually became very devout in trying to aid him. There is one rather humorous an-

ecdote from these times. As Danish custom was to have silent and rather structured prayer, the Bands, with

their loud, and often chaotic rejoicing and prayer was most certainly foreign. At one point, Ina, Peter, and his



Last known photo of Ina and Peter together (front) along with Ina's siblings Ralph Cone and Hattie Klein (back) who worked with the Bands as well.



Ina Belle Hansen and her father-in-law Jørgen Hansen (photo taken by Peter Hansen)

parents were all praying. Then, as Ina writes: "After Peter prayed I was praying and Peter was so blest he was praising the Lord and his Father told him to keep still. I guess he thought he was to be still while I prayed."

The cultural differences would come up rather frequently. Peter and Ina's mission was beset often with problems arising from language barriers (as Ina did not speak Danish or Norwegian, though by 1903 had picked it up to a conversational level) and then also because the Bands became rather easy targets for some.

They stayed in Denmark for a few months until April 26, where they arrived in Bergen, Norway. They immediately met up with Sivert Ulness, whom they would work with for the duration of their time in Norway. The Hansens and Ulnesses were both friendly but also not theologically aligned. Peter and Ina, however, continued work with him though their time in Norway could only be considered fairly miserable. They worked primarily in Vik, and were often accosted and harassed by the local populace. Ina records on one occasion an angry Lutheran lady threatening them and running them off of church grounds. They still received some encouragement from the letters they would receive and also from Sivert and Lillian Ulness, who would come and visit. But in the end, they were very glad to leave Vik. Ina wrote: "The last part of the light in Vik seemed the most trying and it was something fearful. The devil power which moves against us as we tried to pray. Things seemed to be closed up and

about all we could do was ask God to get us out of that awful place."

In February, the two returned to Denmark and settled back with Peter's family. Peter's health was worsening. But this missionary journey was not without some joy. Before their return, it was discovered that Ina was pregnant. Peter and Ina's work in Denmark between March and July 1902 is unfortunately unknown, since Ina's journal cuts off after February and no other material has been discovered since then.

However, it is known that Peter and Ina returned to Indianapolis in time for the Harvest Home Ingathering of the Bands, where members were to be elected to their leading stations. At this event, Peter was named the assistant superintendent of the Bands, along with Flora Nelson, a position he would unfortunately only maintain for a short time. Peter and Ina's son James Winfred Hansen was born on November 24, 1902, but by this time Peter's health was in critical condition. Peter was diagnosed with tuberculosis in late 1902 officially. By April at least he was bedridden and then, surrounded by friends and family, Peter passed away at thirty years old on April 3, 1903. His last words were, reportedly, "Glory to God. Glory to God. Amen." Peter's work was short-lived in the Bands, but he left a lasting impact that members would comment on for generations after, and further left at least a small mark in Norway and Denmark in the year he and Ina spent preaching to the people there of a Radical Holiness and salvation.

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REMEMBERING FRAN HASLAM, MMHC DIRECTOR

Current director Cathy Robling reflects on Fran's contributions to Free Methodist History and Archives

We are so thankful for the excellent service to the Kingdom of God that Frances Todd Haslam shared with the Marston Memorial Historical Center (MMHC) from 1988-1997. For many years, Fran served as a pastor's wife with her loving husband, Rev. Robert Haslam. She was also a mother, missionary to the Philippines, and an elementary teacher. In 1982, she came to the FM Headquarters to work for the Christian Education Department and transitioned to the Marston Center in 1988 when Evelyn Marston Mottweiler retired.

Fran coordinated many major projects during her tenure. She oversaw the packing and moving of the MMHC holdings from the FM Headquarters in Winona Lake, IN to the new home in Indianapolis, IN. With the expanded space in the new location, Fran's excellent organizational skills were used in setting up the Hugh A. White Library, the Light & Life Hour radio broadcast display and museum space. Fran worked tirelessly to make the MMHC a place for visitors, scholars and researchers to access the FM story.

Fran worked part time and at one point volunteered her time when funding for the MMHC



*Above: Fran Haslam and Dr. Bruce Kline;
Below: Archivist Julianne Class holding recovered flag.*

was reduced in the mid-1990s. Fran and Bob made significant financial contributions to the MMHC because she understood the importance of access to the valuable historical collection to those both inside and outside the church. She was a scholar herself and enjoyed directing others to material housed in the MMHC. She cared about the integrity of the collection now housed in the FM Archive.

Fran was my predecessor and mentor. For many years I consulted with her about various issues. When I was first hired in 1998, she told me to keep watch for an important American flag that had been misplaced in the move. E.P. Ashcraft, missionary to China, used this flag in the 1930s to wrap around himself to be identified as an American when he left his home to secure wheat to feed 1,500 refugees. For 25 years she asked about the flag. It was not located until November of 2022 while packing up the WMC and MMHC for a second move. I contacted Fran to let her know "the flag" missing for 32 years was found! She was devoted, kind, generous, and thoughtful and is lovingly remembered.