

## WRI- Family Activity

It is memorial day weekend. For our family activity this week we decided to go to the Washington City Cemetery. The only relative we knew of who was buried there is my Great, Great, Great Grandma's brother, Jorgen Knudsen. I did not know anything about him; my PAF file had his birth and death date, and the name of his wife, with nothing else. I was not prepared for what I would learn by finding his headstone. I was deeply moved and felt to sorrow in pain and sympathy for the great trial of this little family; at the same time, I felt to praise the sacrifices of these great people who must have endured so much to pioneer this land. I never would have thought that so much feeling could be evoked by a single headstone.

The majority of the persons buried in the Washington Cemetery are quite recent, from the last 50 years or so. From what we could tell, only the southeast corner of the cemetery has pioneer graves. We walked around quite a bit looking for the Knudsen and could not find them. Then a



Figure 1 Headstone of Washington City Pioneers: Jorgen Knudsen & Ane Sophia Christiansen (front)

single headstone over against the far east edge of the cemetery caught my attention. I wondered why a single headstone would be so far removed from the others. I decided to check it out. It was theirs. The front of the headstone was pictured on the previous page. The back is shown below. In shape and size it looks like a normal, quite new, headstone; until you read the dates. I have transcribed the names and dates below:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>DATES</u>	<u>AGE AT DEATH</u>
JORGEN KNUDSEN	MAR 14, 1828 – SEPT 24, 1878	50
ANE SOPHIA CHRISTIANSEN	AUG 22, 1833 – OCT 3, 1876	43
JORGEN LAMONI KNUDSEN	OCT 1855 – OCT 1855	< 1 month
MARIANA KNUDSEN	NOV 15, 1862 – APR 27, 1868	6 years old
ANNA MARGARET KNUDSEN	OCT 22, 1864 – APR 27, 1869	4.5 years
FRIDS A. KNUDSEN	JUNE 16, 1871 – JUNE 26, 1871	< 2 weeks
SARAH ARTEMESIA KNUDSEN	FEB 27, 1873 – MAR 16, 1873	< 3 weeks
MABEL MATILDA KNUDSEN	OCT 2, 1876 – OCT 17, 1876	< 3 weeks

These valiant pioneers lost seven children trying to establish the community of Washington. It appears that they were called to the Cotton Mission with many of the other early settlers of Washington and lost a child immediately after arrival. After a few years of peace death visited them again, taking three children within three years, between 1868 and 1871. Many of the seven children they lost here were born in the fall, meaning that Ane had to go through pregnancy during the hot summer months of this place. Then, after giving so much, she gave her own life the day after giving her last child the gift of life. A few weeks later, the baby she had given her life for died, too. I can see the devastated man trying to toil and work to somehow coax this barren land into giving forth fruit and finally being overcome himself. He had lost seven children and his wife and he could give no more. Two years after his wife's passing he too laid down his life in the alkali soil.

Like I said, I do not know their story. Before ever going to the cemetery I had decided to find out what I could about them, but now, after seeing the incredible sacrifice of this little family, I am determined to find out who they were and to writing a tribute to their incredible sacrifice and commitment to this land. Truly our current sacrifices are small in comparison. I so love and seek to honor these noble men and women that gave everything that we might enjoy the freedoms and prosperity we know today.

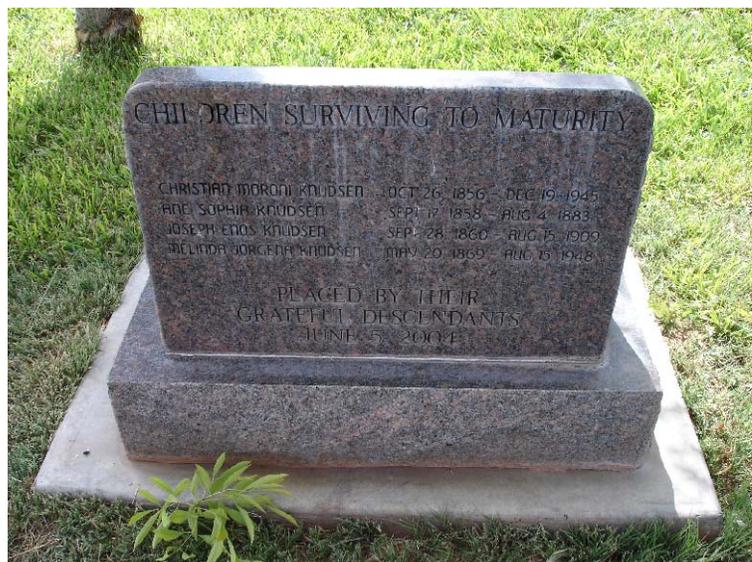


Figure 1 Headstone of Washington City Pioneers: Jorgen Knudsen & Ane Sophia Christiansen (back)