

My History

Written by **Sarah Ellen Breakell Neibaur O'Driscoll**

My father, Alexander Neibaur, was born Jan. 8, 1808, at Ehrenbreitstein, Alsace Lorain, France. His father, Nathan Neibaur, an educated Polish Jew served as an aid to Napoleon Bonaparte. His mother, a French Jewess, both being of the higher class of Hebrews. Father was educated to become a Rabbi in the Jewish faith. He graduated from the University of Berlin as Surgeon and Dentist, speaking seven different languages. After leaving the University he went to Preston, England, where he met and married Ellen Breakell, my Mother. He was the first man to join the Mormon Church in Preston in 1837. Mother came in later through a vision in 1841. From there they went to Nauvoo, where Father met and taught the Prophet Joseph the Hebrew and German languages. They went through all the persecutions of the LDS, being driven from their homes five times. In 1848 they came to Utah. The Brigham Young Company landed in Salt Lake City September 20, 1848. They settled on second East between second and third south. They lived through the winter in a tent with seven children. Through the winter Father, with the help of his eldest son, fourteen years of age, made adobes enough to build a hut twelve by fourteen feet, with mud roof and floor. In that hut I was born, May 21, 1849, with a big rainstorm and mud running down the walls and under mother's bed in streams. When I was two years of age, I had my first ride to the hot springs.

In 1855 came the grasshoppers. I can never forget it, we had nothing to eat but bran mush and pigweeds and I, like the seagulls couldn't keep them down, and many times I would faint from weakness. For several years the kids called me "seagull." At the age of six years I had my first schoolteacher and for the next six years I had twelve different teachers. At the age of seven I met with an accident. I was a daring youngster and didn't like to be beat. The kids dared me to climb and put my hand on the head of a lamb over a gate twelve feet high. I got there and just as I was about to put my hand on the lamb's head a gust of wind threw me to the ground. Just as I fell Brigham Young and Hyrum Clawson came along. Brigham picked me up and carried me to the house of Hyrum Clawson, that being the nearest place, where they cared for me. No broken bones but a bad cut on my head and badly bruised. That ended the climb. They sent for Father and Mother and Brigham and Hyrum Clawson and Father administered to me.

Just after my eighth year, Edwin D. Wooley, bishop of the 13th Ward, baptized me in City Creek just through the Eagle Gate. At the age of eight years I received a reward of merit for being a good little girl, which reward I still have.

I had to stop school at the age of twelve. I still have my slate and fifth reader, the two costing \$3.00. After quitting school, Mother being an invalid, I took her

place with Father in the match making business, making boxes, filling them with matches, sometimes taking them to stores and doing the trading for the family. At the age of fourteen, I had my first experience in surgery with Dr. W. F. Anderson, assisting him with a broken leg, cuts and bruises on the arm and hands of one of my girl school mates. For several years after, [I] was called by the Doctor to assist him in many ways. On March 8, 1852, the Salt Lake Theatre was opened to the public, I attended the first play. In 1854 I received a certificate for singing which I still have. I sang in the first company in the Salt Lake Theatre under David O. Calder, leader. In 1867, I was a member of the tabernacle choir and sang at the first conference held Oct. 1867. On Nov. 16, 1867, I married John O'Driscoll in the old Endowment House, the ceremony being performed by Brigham Young, Jr. As I was leaving the room President Young called and asked my age. I told him and he turned to the others and said, "Oh, she's old enough." [Sarah was 18 at the time.]

In 1869, my first babe was born and for nine weeks, I was very sick and weak. In May my sister's (Bertha) husband was killed here in Kamas, kicked by his horse. She went to Salt Lake and as there was no work of any kind, times being hard, and nothing to do, we arranged to come here and take her piece of ground, it was just a squatters' right. She had an old wagon, a pair of small ponies, one cow, and one acre of wheat. On June 15, 1869 we arrived in Rhodes Valley, now called Kamas. I had one dime that Father gave me just as we said, "Good by." Also fifty lbs. Of flour, one lb. Coffee, and three lbs. Sugar. We lived in one little room on the south side of the fort. As soon as we got settled John started with a few poles which he hauled over Jordan, taking four days to make the trip, for which he got flour, a little bacon, and some Dixie molasses. I embroidered panties for the kids for which I got butter, cheese, and anything we could use. While waiting for the wheat to ripen I worked in the hay field. Mother Gines cared for my baby. When the wheat was cut and hauled I was to do the stacking, as John threw it off the wagon. When I had the stack up eight feet it slipped out and down, and I came in a heap to the ground. Brother Harder was our aid and came and stacked the wheat. We had a good laugh and felt as happy as if we had good sense. In Oct. we went to Salt Lake where John got two days work at his trade. There was a Jew peddler came to Father's with four hundred lbs. of butter. He wanted it made over and put in two lb. Rolls. I took the job which took me two days, for which I received five dollars. We came back to Kamas and in January 1870, we moved out of the fort into one room owned by Ward S. Pack.

On April 6, 1870 my second girl was born. Ellen Davis of Marion. The snow was four feet deep all over the valley and in twelve days the snow was all gone and the grasshoppers were just hatching out, having laid their eggs the fall before. Through the winter John cut and got enough logs for one room twenty by fifteen feet, which he put up on the lot where Joseph Holt now lives. On Dec. 14, 1870 Mother died, leaving Father with the two younger children. He

sent for me to come and stay with them at the old home. John got a job at one hundred dollars a month and for the next three years while he worked at his trade, we stayed through the summer in Salt Lake and came back to Kamas for the winter, where we had no rent to pay or wood to buy. Through those three years of saving and strict economy we saved enough to pay for a second hand wagon, a pair of three year old steers, and two cows with enough hay to feed them through the winter. In March 1874, we sold our lot in Kamas to Ward R. Pack for \$20 and moved on the Provo River, now Francis Ward. Our one neighbor being one mile South East, and Kamas the nearest town. Three years later they organized a Dramatic Company, with Ward E. Pack manager, and Geo. B. Leonard Stage manager. Our first play was "Black Eyed Susan," I taking the part of Susan. We first played in Kamas, we then played the same in Heber, Charleston, Walsburg, and Coalville. Through the next eight dramatic seasons I took part in twenty-eight different casts and for fifty years have been a clown for the people of Kamas and have enjoyed every minute.

While on the ranch there were many accidents, their being just a rough wagon and cattle trail and having to ford the Provo River thru five streams in summer and over the ice in winter. Joseph Murdock brought the mail from Heber to Kamas once a week. On one of his trips just below our house his horse broke through the ice upsetting the cutter and throwing him in the river. I was just outside and heard a cry for help. John and my brother hurried over, got the man and his outfit out safe and brought them to the house. They put the man in dry clothes and my brother, Nate Neibaur, brought the mail to Kamas while I dried and pressed the clothes so they would be ready for his departure. One another occasion while Don Pace was freighting for the store he was caught in a blizzard and had to leave his outfit two miles below our home. We asked him to stay for the night but he got home to Kamas all right. The next day with his son Tom, who was then but a small boy, started out to get his outfit and while crossing the Kamas bench was caught in another blizzard and got lost but after a long struggle they got to our place. The boy's feet and legs were frozen almost to the knees while Don, himself, was not much better. While John put up the team, I got hot water and worked with the boy's feet, he begged me to get cold water, but I kept on with the hot until I had him all right and ready for his shoes and socks. Later in the summer while milking the cows, we heard the cry, "Help!" John hurried to the place where he found two men and a team of mules struggling in the swamp. He got them home where they stayed two days. The older one was an English Lord in poor health, sent out from England to travel thru the hills of Utah.

I have had an experience with all kinds of illness, broken bones, all kinds of wounds and one case of rattlesnake bite.

In 1884, with the help of my fourteen year old girl, while the men worked in the canyon we milked eighteen head of cows. I made thirteen hundred lbs. Cheese,

cared for the garden besides other work for the family which had to be done, and on the 27 of November of the same year I gave birth to my tenth child. I have been with ten different M.D.s, six midwives and helped them bring sixty-six babies into the world, had three confinement cases of my own, am the Mother of twelve children, six of them living, forty-two grandchildren and forty-six great grandchildren.

In 1876, Geo. W. Emery was elected eleventh Governor, for the territory of Utah, and 1876 I had the honor his company for two days while he trailed the Kamas range hunting cattle. When he left he made me a present of a fine yearling heifer. WE worked on the ranch for thirty-six years. In 1905, I was appointed local registrar of Vital Statistics for the Francis precinct, which place I held until 1910, when we sold our home and bought the home I now occupy in Kamas. In 1910, I was appointed local registrar for Vital Statistics for the Kamas precinct which position I now hold. In 1918 I was appointed registrar for the voting precinct no. 12 of Kamas, which position I held until 1931.

Thru fifty-six years of married life with my dear husband, thru many hardships, sorrows of pioneer life, on the twentieth day of October 1923 at the age of seventy-eight years, dear John quietly went to sleep without pain or struggle. For the past ten years I have lived on with the love of dear children and friends, with the hope I can keep on until the end with many good wishes for the Utah Pioneer Daughters.

When the world war came on, thirteen of my sons and grandsons came under the draft, two grandsons went to France and to the front and were in some of the battles. Both were severely wounded but came out all right and came home when the war ended.

Returning to my school days, at the age of ten years, under my teacher Martha Haven, she made me her assistant teaching the first and second grades. Referring again to the old Fort in 1862 there were twenty-seven families living in the fort and I can name every family and just where they were located. In 1869 the town of Kamas was surveyed and laid off into town lots. Samuel Atwood as Bishop. I lived to see all the changes as predicted by Mother Shipton, first published in England in 1485, before America was discovered by Columbus, except to her prophesy pertaining to the end of the world.

Thru the year 1932, in my eighty-third year, I pieced quilts, quilted two of them, covered two others, made and embroidered two oblong tops, embroidered six pair of pillow cases and all was hand work.

Signed: Sarah E. Neibaur O'Driscoll, Kamas, Utah

P.S. I also rode on the first street car in Salt Lake City, which was pulled by small mules.

Corrections:

Line 8, pg. 1

“He was the first man to join the church in Preston in 1837. July 30, 1837 . . . the brethren repaired to the river Ribble, and . . . baptized nine individuals, one of which was George D. Watt, the first man baptized in England . . .” *The History of the Church*, Vol. II, p. 504

Alexander was the first Jewish convert baptized.

Line 9, page 1:

“Mother came in later through a vision in 1841.” Records indicate that both Alex and Ellen were baptized April 9, 1838. The family was in Nauvoo, Illinois after April 1841.