

HISTORY OF SARAH HILL STRONG
Pioneer of 1849
By Blanche Strong Hogle

In writing this history of my Great Grandmother, Sarah Hill Strong, I might say that other histories have been written of her life, but I have found a few interesting facts that so far have never been recorded. I will quote also from a sketch of her life that was given by her Grandson, Alvin C. Strong, also information that has been recorded by her great granddaughter, Harriet Strong Spiers.

Sarah was the daughter of James Hill. She was born September 1, 1806, York County, Pennsylvania. Her father moved from York County in the year 1819 or 1820 to Indiana County, Pennsylvania, about the same time a family by the name of Strong purchased four hundred acres of land in this same section. These two men got together to lay this townsite out and to give it a name. They drew cuts to see who this town should be named for. James Strong, drawing the winning straw, gave it the name of Strongstown.

James Strong's son, Jacob, fell in love with Sarah, daughter of James Hill and they were married February 28, 1822.

While living in this section, she became the mother of five children. Three girls: Sarah, Susan and Linda and two sons, William and John Albert. Lucinda died when she was six years old and John Albert when he was eight years old. Both these children were buried in the Strongstown cemetery. The location and burial ground for this cemetery was given by Sarah's father-in-law, James Strong.

During the year of 1835, Elder Erastus Snow was sent out by the Mormon church to preach the gospel to the people in this locality. Sarah and her husband were converted and baptized. They were also confirmed members of the church by Erastus Snow in 1836.

Sarah, with her husband and children immigrated to Nauvoo, Illinois, in September 1839. In the Relief Society handbook published in 1931 are the names of the members of the Nauvoo Relief Society. Sarah and her daughter Susan, were both members of the Nauvoo Relief Society. While living in Nauvoo, Sarah became the mother of two more sons. In 1841, James Thomas was born. In 1845, Hyrum was born. In 1840, her eldest son, William was baptized in the Mississippi by the prophet Joseph Smith. In June 1846, William joined the Mormon Battalion and went west with 500 other men and boys of the Latter Day faith to fight the war with Mexico. Sarah, Jacob and children were among the Saints who were driven out of Nauvoo into the wilderness.

In Salt Lake City, September 30, 1849, word was received that one hundred fifty yoke of cattle were to be sent back from the valley to meet an approaching company of immigrants. The tenth ward was to furnish two teams. (During the year of 1848 at the close of the Mexican War, William was released and returned to Salt Lake City, residing in the Tenth Ward.) William agreed to take his wagon and David Pettigrew his yoke of

cattle. There they met his father and mother and other families and assisted them the balance of the journey. Sarah and her family arrived in Salt Lake City in October 1849. Sarah, like other pioneer mothers was blessed with many abilities. She learned the art of spinning and weaving apparel and bedding. After the wool was clipped from the sheep, the wool was washed, dried, carded and spun.. Sarah did the carding and spinning and weaving. All the clothing worn by this family was made by hand.

While Sarah and her family were living in Salt Lake City, the Saints were ordered to move south because of the approaching army which they feared were coming to destroy them. (This family was told to go to Springville.) They did not have a wagon cover, so Sarah spun the flax into thread and wove it into cloth for this purpose. In a month, the scare was over and they returned to Salt Lake City, residing in the tenth ward. The wagon cover was later used for sheets upon their beds.

The first Relief Society in the tenth ward was organized in 1867 with Sarah as their first President. Amanda M. Pierce and Elizabeth Morris as counselors. The first recorded minutes of January 2, 1873, showed these officers at the head of this organization with Mary E. H. Paul as Secretary and Mary Ann Ashman, Treasurer. Sarah served as president from 1867 to 1879. She was indeed a mother to those in distress. She was a natural nurse and understood the use of herbs. Herbs used and grown by Sarah: (by memory from Sarah Walsh Swift)

Wormwood - This was pulverized and given for worms and also used to bruises.

Wormwood is used at present chiefly for making absinths.

Tansy – was prepared by her for earache, also menstrual cramps. (Both wormwood and tansy come from the Aster or Thistle family.)

Peppers – Tea made for colds.

Horhound – A bitter mint with hoary downy leaves. Sarah extracted the juice from the leaves and put it in molasses candy to be used for coughs and colds.

Wild Peppermint – Used for tea.

Elderberries – She removed the brown bark and used the green covering which she would boil with fresh butter in salted water until it was thick enough to form a slave. This was used for burns. She also grew Hysop – a nice drink brewed for tea. Savory and Sage were in her herb garden also for seasonings.

Sarah passed away on May 9th, 1884, at the age of 78, in her home.

Resolutions of respect for Sister Sarah Strong:

“Whereas, it has pleased the Great Creator to take unto himself our beloved Sister Strong who has been President for 12 years of the Tenth Ward Relief Society, a devoted friend to the poor, and wise counselor in her family, and whereas, it is fitting that she be held in honorable remembrance therefore be it resolved by the sisters of the Relief Society of the 10th ward that while we mourn not as those who have no hope, yet we realize that we have lost a faithful President who died as she had lived, in the hope of a glorious resurrection. Resolved that these resolutions be put upon the records of the Relief Society and that a copy thereof be sent to the family of our dear sister, and also to the Woman’s Exponent.”