

**William Strong**  
**1827-1888**

William Strong was the son of my great, great grandparents, Jacob and Sarah (Hill) Strong. He was born October 30, 1827, at Strongstown, Pennsylvania. When he was a boy his parents joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and they moved to Nauvoo, Illinois. He was baptized in the Mississippi River by the Prophet Joseph Smith.

The same hatred and persecutions that had driven the Mormons out of Kirtland and Missouri started again in Nauvoo, and a mass exodus started taking place on February 4, 1846, and on February 11th, the river froze over so thick that 400 wagons were able to cross the ice. A little later William's family sold their 10 acres of property to get a wagon and enough supplies to make the trip. They left Nauvoo on May 8th and joined the other saints in Kanesville.

After they'd been in Kanesville about a month, Captain James Allen of the U. S. Army came with a message asking for 500 men to join the U.S. Army. William's father was too sick to go, so William joined in his place. He was a Private in Company E under Captain Daniel C. Davis for one year in the War with Mexico.

The Mormon Battalion marched from the Missouri River to the Pacific Ocean, a distance spanning over 2000 miles. Because much of the distance was untrodden wilderness and they were short on water and rations, they were forced to spend many hours building roads and digging wells. They were not called to fight against the Mexicans, but to make first claim on the land and then protect it. They arrived in San Diego late in January of 1847.

After William's release from the army, he helped build a sawmill in the Santa Cruz Mountains. He also helped to build a sawmill on the American River for Mr. Sutter when gold was discovered. He didn't stay at the mill because he wanted to join his family. He said the "real gold" for him would be seeing his family again.

In the summer of 1849, William drove east with an ox team to meet his family. They were so happy to see each other again, and he assisted them in their journey to the Salt Lake Valley.

One night the wagon train had set up camp on the banks of the Platt River in Wyoming for a brief rest and to let the oxen, horses and cattle feed. The people needed to wash their clothing and bedding. Martha Bromley Alvord, nearly 17, was scrubbing clothes when a dark, handsome, mature-looking young man came over and began talking to her. She was impressed with his dark eyes and flashing smile. Later that evening the camp was called together for prayers, and William was by her side. A romance started and continued to grow. When the wagon train arrived in the Salt Lake Valley in 1849, plans had been made for their marriage. One month later, on November 28th, 1849, they were married.

Because of his service in the Mormon Battalion, William was given a piece of land in Weber County, 30 miles from Salt Lake City. They built a log cabin and established their home. On April 23, 1853, their first child, Harriet Louisa, was born. They were a happy family, but times change.

They moved to Springville when U. S. troops, under the command of Albert Sidney Johnson, passed through Salt Lake on their way to establish Camp Floyd. The

first Presidency ordered this move because they didn't know what to expect from the army. In the fall the family returned to their home, and all was well until a stranger came to their door. It was Harriet Neeley. She was walking to Salt Lake to join her people, and she asked for a night's lodging. During the night a snowstorm came and Harriet remained.

William believed in plural marriage, and a romance with Harriet Neeley began. Martha was deeply hurt. She loved him so much she didn't want to share him with another woman. Church policy was that the first wife had to give her consent, but Martha was not able to do this. She took her child, Harriet Louisa, and went to the home of her brothers, Benjamin and Reuben, who gave Martha and her child love, compassion and shelter. In 1855 Martha divorced William.

Martha went on to marry Abiel Campbell, and they had 2 girls, Abina and Sylvia. Martha's daughter, Harriet Louisa Strong, really loved these little sisters. At the age of 15, Harriet went to live with her grandmother, Sarah Hill Strong, who was the president of the 10th Ward Relief Society. Harriet became a seamstress, and on August 2, 1869, married William J. Poll. Their wedding gifts consisted of 1 rolling pin, 1 wooden potato masher, wooden salt and pepper shakers, 3 wooden bowls, 3 cups and saucers, 1 iron kettle, 1 kerosene lamp, 1 step stove, 1 straw tick, 1 pair of army blankets, 1 sheet, 1 quilt and 2 pillows. They lived in an adobe house on the corner of 4th South and 10th East in Salt Lake City.

During the years 1868-69 grasshoppers did so much damage to their crops, they were in need of additional food. William and other members of his family, with bedding strapped to their backs, walked to Echo Canyon, about 80 miles from Salt Lake. Here he worked helping to grade the road for the completion of the transcontinental railway which was to connect the west with the east and do away with immigration by handcarts and ox teams.

William and Harriet Neeley had 13 children. He passed away very suddenly from a heart attack on December 24, 1888. He was 61 years of age.