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Biographical Sketch

of

Ether E. McBride

by himself

Pioneer Year 1856

Born: 29 Feb. 1848, Rothsay Isle of Butte, Scotland

I was born in the town of Rothsay, Isle of Butte, Scotland, in the year 1848 on the 29th day of February, close by the Rothsay Castle, (celebrated in history). At the age of five years we moved to England. Our steamer had to stop at the Isle of Man over night and we went to a hotel. We were 75 miles from Liverpool but what surprised us children most was to see that all the cats were bobtailed. The next day we went to Liverpool and loaded our household goods on a cart and started for Grandma's. She lived at Churchtown, 21 miles from Liverpool. It got very dark and we had to stop over night at the Morris Dancer's Inn. The next day we went to grannies. She was my mother's mother, and we were almost crowded out by aunts, uncles, cousins and neighbors by dozens that came to see Aunt Margaret and Uncle Robert and their family. We were very kindly treated by them all. The next day we moved to Southport where we lived three years. In April 1856, the Lord opened up the way for us to come to Zion. We embarked on the good ship Yerizon, It being a new ship had only made one trip across the ocean. The captain's name was Reed. We made a remarkable quick trip across the ocean and landed in the city of Boston on the third day of May, 1856. My youngest brother's birthday was that day, he being 5 years old. All was bustle getting past the Customs officer and getting our few belongings loaded on the cars and started westwards for the land of Zion. We were permitted to ride on the cars to Iowa City, the terminus of the railroad at that time from Chicago. We had to ride in cattle and freight cars. The night we arrived at Iowa there was one of the worst storms of thunder, lightning and rain that I ever experienced. They had wagons and teams to haul our luggage to camp, about three miles, but we had to walk it being so dark we could not see anything. Children lost their parents and parents lost their children and we had a great time there. A great number of tents put up on the camp ground and we got into one of them, but everything we had was as wet as it could be, but we passed the night somehow and were all there when morning came and the sun shone bright, then their goods spread out to dry. We were delayed there three weeks waiting for our handcars and the people got very uneasy at the long delay, as they knew they had a long journey before them.

At last we started out about three o'clock in the afternoon and a good many grumbled making such a late start, but Captain Martin told them to be patient and they would soon see the wisdom of it. We crossed the Iowa River and traveled about five miles and then camped for the night and then they could see the wisdom of making a short drive so the people could get used to camping. The next day our company started early but got pretty tired before night and then there was singing etc. until about 9 p.m. when the sound of the bugle called the camp to prayers. And so we traveled across the Iowa prairies, crossing rivers and small streams until we reached the Missouri river at a place they called Council Bluffs. We then traveled up the river about 3 miles to Florence, where there was a ferry boat and it took about 2 or 3 days for Daniel Tyler's company to arrive and then we were all placed in one company. It was such a large company, however, that we had to travel very slowly across the Nebraska Plains. Several aged persons died and were buried by the road side and after the sad rites were over we wended our way burning buffalo chips for fuel to cook our frugal meals. As far as the stretch its gaze could see there was not a hill in sight nor a tree. We crossed several streams of water and some pretty large rivers. Us children and the old folks would start early in the morning and get as far as we could until the others overtook us with the hand carts. The ox teams that hauled tents and provisions usually traveled behind the handcarts. We had a great many handcarts break down and lost some of our cattle, which made some delays. It was quite an undertaking to get nearly 1,000 persons who had never been away from home, never saw a campfire in their lives to a trip of that kind and it required a great deal of patience to get them started and to get them camped for the night. We saw a great many buffalos as we traveled up the Platte river. I will never forget one day when we met 3,000 Sioux warriors all dressed in their war paint, going east to fight the Pawnees. I remember how they laughed and jabbered to each other and how frightened we were but they gave us the road and made signs to us that they were our friends and they would not hurt us and so we got over that scare all right.

We were forbidden to kill buffalo by our leaders for it made the Indians mad to have the buffalo shot and so we used to hire the Indians to kill them for us. The first one I saw killed was a young buffalo cow. An Indian warrior went after her on horseback and when she tried to turn he would shoot an arrow into the side of her head and keep her straight for our camp and when he got her to the road he shot an arrow and struck her just back of her left shoulder and it struck so – and she rolled over dead being shot through the heart and one of our men gave him about 5 cents worth of tobacco for it and that is about what it cost to get a buffalo to eat and that was better than to make the Indians mad at us. We saw great herds of buffalos estimated to be 50,000 in a herd and so we plodded along day after day until we reached the Wyoming line and our provisions were cut down to three fourths of a pound of flour a day and as the Indians were very bad that year, we had to be very careful. The men had to stand guard every night and the weather got very cold and then commenced our suffering. We had our flour cut to one half pound a day. A great many of the older people died and many young people were not able to stand the hardships and finally we were down to one fourth pound of flour a day. Well, our teams gave out and when they died we were glad to eat them. The snow began to fall and then our sufferings were intense. My father died somewhere along the Sweet Water. The snow got so deep and so heavy that it was very difficult to travel. We finally decided we could not get any farther and so we concluded we just as well die there as anywhere else so we gave up and trusted in God to deliver us. That night three teams from the Valley arrived and reported that more would be there soon and no one that has never been in such a fix could imagine how we felt or how men and women knelt down and thanked the almighty God for our delivery from certain death. It put new life into the people.

I well remember how glad we all were and how we all rejoiced in the prospect of arriving in the valley the next day. Several teams arrived and finally we were all loaded into the wagons. The wagon we were in belong to Ebenezer Richardson of Ogden City. We traveled slowly along, early and late until we arrived at the gigantic

mountains. The snow was very deep and there were a great many men there from Salt Lake with shovels digging the snow out of the road so the teams could pull the wagons up the long hill and they had built fires on the side of the road so people could warm as all who were able to walk had to do so. The teams could get through finally. We got to the top then it was down hill and we finally arrived in Salt Lake City on the 30<sup>th</sup> day of November, 1856. Our teamster took us to his sister's place where we were very kindly treated and it seemed as though all the company soon were friends and were soon scattered all over the country. The next day we drove as far as Farmington. The snow being very deep, we stopped at a Mr. Grover's place and oh how different it was from our other stopping place. After the older folks got through supper there was not any food to feed a cat left for us hungry children so we had to go to bed half starved. Next morning, we started for Ogden where we arrived about sundown. We were taken to an old gentleman's house, he being a poor man he told his housekeeper to see that we had plenty to eat. His wife had been dead about two years. Everybody in that part of the country seemed to be very poor as most of them had been driven from their homes in the east and robbed of all they had and had just got homes started again and began to get a little around them again. After stopping with the old gentleman a few days they got us a house about 10 by 12 feet covered with dirt and dirt floor. A fireplace in one end of the room and when it rained the water and mud would run down the walls and drip on our beds and us children used to say to mother, "Is this Zion to live in a place as this?" She would say, "Never mind children, the Lord will provide. I have thought many times how mother must have felt to live in such a place after living in a comfortable home but I never heard her complain.

Some men brought us a load of wood and we had to grub sage brush to keep the fire going. There were five of us, my oldest sister was 15 years old, my oldest brother 13, and I was 8, my youngest brother was 5 and sister 3 years. Many times I have heard her cry her self to sleep for want of something to eat and say, "Take me to my own home." We got through the winter somehow and in the spring my sister went to work for a man by the name of Fairchild. Our

principal diet during the winter was cornmeal and salt and squash. Mother was sick most of the winter but she was better when spring came. We used to dig segos to eat.

My sister was married to Jacob Ferrin the next spring. About one year ago she died. She had eleven children, 85 grandchildren, 150 great grandchildren. The Indians killed her husband in 1882.

I went to school barefoot all winter and so did many other boys. My mother was married to the old man who was so kind to us. He was a good old man to us children. He had a boy about my age and a girl the age of my youngest sister. Chauncey West, Bishop of Ogden City at that time and he was very good to the poor. The man my mother married was Samuel Ferrin, his oldest son married my oldest sister.

In 1858, as Johnson's army was approaching the territory with orders from President Buchanan to annihilate the Mormons there was quite a rustling to again leave our homes. Where, oh, where were we to go? To go south was the council of Brigham Young. The road from Ogden South was lined with teams of every description taking their belongings and all the food they could haul. The women walking barefoot, going where, they did not know. A few men were left in every place to burn everything that would burn if the soldiers undertook to force their way in. All companies of men were armed and sent to Echo Canyon, determined to fight or die at that place as they had been mobbed and robbed and driven and they were determined to fight it out at that place. But finally the President sent Thomas S. Cain and others and were sent by the president. All difficulties were settled, and we moved back to our homes. I went to Provo and heard Brigham say, "This is the first time that Israel were ever permitted to go and retain their homes and we shall never, no never flee before our enemies again."

After getting back to our homes my step-father took up a farm of 200 acres of land about three miles from Ogden where I had my first acquaintance with the Indians. As we had no other playmates I got quite familiar with their language and manners and customs which came in quite handy in after years. In 1862, we moved into

Ogden Valley and there were lots of Indians there at that time. It was a beautiful valley covered with grass and we could mow hay in almost any part of the valley. We had to cut our hay with scythes, as there were no mowing machines at that time. A good many people moved into the valley that year, Grantsville got to be quite a settlement as there were a great numbers of Scandinavians settled in the north end of the valley. Where we settled people took up land and settled on their farms but in 1865 the Indians got so bad we were ordered to abandon our farms and build closer together so as to protect ourselves. So we surveyed a place and Brother Ballantine picked the place, got a surveyor named Genkins. He surveyed a tract of land and Ballantine with other named the place Eden and then we had to vacate our farms and move into Eden. It seemed as though we were never going to get settled but the valley is one of the most prosperous parts of Weber County. The grasshoppers were very bad for a number of years and the people nearly got discouraged. In 1866, the Indians got so bad Captain Pleasant Green Taylor, who was captain of police in Ogden, was called on from headquarters to organize a company of 50 minute men to guard and protect the northern settlements. I joined the company in May 1866. We had to have good horses and be well armed and ready at a minute's notice to go where and when we were ordered. I well remember being ordered at 3 P.M, to start at 4 P.M., for the south end of Bear Lake about 100 miles. There were no roads at that time and we had to follow Indian trails. We rode all night until about 10 o'clock the next morning. We found a number of families just beginning to make homes and start a place, since called Lake Town, situated at the south end of Bear Lake. We found a few Indians about three miles above their settlement but they were peaceable, all having their squaws and papooses with them and that put an end to that expedition and we had a good many such trips. In 1867, we were released and the company disbanded and we stuck to our farms and in the course of a few years all of the boys were married and settled down in life. Of course we passed through many trying scenes that I don't wish to mention nor to harrow your mind with such trying scenes, but I also know that God, our Heavenly Father, has had His protecting hand

over us in many instances so we have not had to shed the blood of our fellowmen.

Your brother in the Gospel of Peace.

E.E. McBride.

*Typewritten by Mildred Dunkley*