

Nahum Bigelow 1785 - 1851

Little can be told of the early life of Nahum Bigelow, for it is now many years since he died, leaving behind him no record except the one kept in the hearts of loving descendants. From that record, halting and as imperfect as it may be and is, the following sketch has been made.

Born in Brandon, Rutland County, Vermont, on February 19, 1785, to Simeon Bigelow and Sarah Foster, he was trained in all those sturdy habits of mind and body common to the New Englanders of the last century. His grandparents were John Bigelow and Grace Allen. His mother, Sarah died when she was only twenty nine and was buried in Brandon in February of 1789.

The Bigelows originally came from Massachusetts. Simeon served as a Revolutionary War soldier. Sarah and Simeon were the parents of five children. Henry, who was born September 16, 1781 in Massachusetts married Lucy Barnes. Noah, the second son, was born March 4, 1783 and married Sarah Jackson. My great-great-grandfather, Nahum was the third son. The only daughter, Sally, was born in Brandon on March 9, 1787 and married twice; first to Aaron Goodrich and second to Melvin Anson. The last child, Hiram, was born in Brandon also on January 2, 1789 and he married Lucy Cutler.

Nahum had two step-mothers. His father was married again on March 14, 1790 to Elizabeth Avery. They were the parents of Elijah, Daniel Post, Thirza, Olive, Augustus, Minerva, Eliza and Simeon. Elizabeth died on April 21, 1804 and Simeon married his third wife just three months after Elizabeth's death. He married Mrs. Sarah Avery on July 21, 1804.

Nahum's brother, Noah, became a convert to the Methodist Church and was licensed to preach in 1809 and for many years preached in Vermont and the upper valley of the Hudson River. His brother, Henry, stayed in the east and died in Amherst, New York.

His people were farmers and stock raisers. But with true Yankee restlessness he determined that when he was a grown man, he would try something with greater promise of speedy wealth. With a peddlers pack he started out and he traveled from place to place for a number of years. With such glee he used to tell his children one incident of this time of his life.

One old gentleman, a French Canadian trapper, once offered him his daughter. The generous offer being supplemented by that which often makes the plainest and ugliest of women beautiful and desirable in the eyes of some men. He offered him her weight in gold. Neither the dark charms of the black eyed French girl, nor the bright glitter of her father's precious gold could tempt the sturdy New England to sell his birth right or to lend himself to anything unworthy of his name and manhood. The charms and gold were gently, but firmly refused.

One other incident of this time also remains in the minds of his children. On one of his trips (probably to Ohio) he stopped at a house and working about with the air of one old before her time, wise beyond her years, was a girl, Mary Gibbs, who was only twelve years old. The firm sweet mouth and dark blue eyes bespoke character of a high grade. In his heart, this middle aged man, for he was now thirty six years old said, "If ever I marry, that's the girl I want for my wife". The old Scottish proverb says, "If you really wish for anything, you'll certainly get the sleeves". What with wishing and adding efforts to the wishing, the two were married in Laurenceville, Laurence

County, Illinois on December 12, 1826.

The usual incidents of pioneer life with the birth of children and mingled scenes of woe and happiness, joy and pain attended this couple for a number of years. Their first child was a girl, Mary Jane, the second a son, Hiram.

The first girl was quiet, steady, and exceedingly patient but was all firm and unyielding on matter of duty and principle. Hiram was steady, sober and thoughtful beyond his years. Then came Lucy, always a bright, lovely and loveable child whose powers of attraction were early displayed and whom more than one man would have given his weight in gold to possess for his wife, so much she inherited from her father.

Then came Asa Elijah, born February 2, 1832, in a short time Lavina followed Asa. Asa is a genuine son of his father, inheriting the independence of character, strict honesty of purpose and conscientiousness of every action so notable as a Bigelow trait. Lavina was always a frolicsome lassie much like Lucy in the face, yet lacking some of the force of character of her sister.

While Lavina was a baby, rumors of the new religion of Joseph Smith and his followers came to the farm house in Laurenceville. The mysterious golden Bible and revelations from God to the lad Joseph Smith were often spoken about by friends and neighbors.

About this time Nahum met with an accident which nearly cost his life and which well showed the decision of his character. It was haying time, and the stack was just being topped off. Nahum and some hired men were at work, being through, all of them slid off the stack. Nahum was the last.

A pitchfork had in some way been stuck loosely in the side of the stack and as Nahum came down, the tine of the fork caught him in the thigh and pinioned him fast causing him to bleed profusely. He shouted to the men below, from where he was suspended on the fork against the upper part of the stack. The handle of the fork was sticking in the ground. "Pull out the fork, knock the fork from under me", he yelled. But all stood in amazement and no one moved. So Nahum moved his foot around and kicked out the fork and came heavily to earth, senseless and bleeding. Six weeks elapsed before he recovered from this accident.

Another son was next born on October 4, 1835 and was named Liola. Shortly after his birth, two elders preaching the new Gospel and bearing a copy of the now famous "Golden Bible" named the Book of Mormon came to the Bigelow home. They were kindly received, as were all strangers in this household. The father and mother listened kindly, but at first incredulously, to the things told by these singular men. That angels should come from heaven that God should again speak from his high and distant throne, that a new dispensation was come, there were all startling announcements. They required care, study and deep thought mingled with prayer, in order to understand and grasp their important reliability. The family Bible was brought out, and many evenings when many weary bodies ached to be at rest, the eager, truth-seeking minds of this honest hearted family were studying the sacred records to find corroborative evidence said by these men to be upon its inspired pages.

At last, his reason convinced, yet his extreme caution causing him to hesitate and ponder well this new and vastly important step. Nahum was told to follow the advice given by our Savior to his disciples, "Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto

you". Added to this was the promise anciently given to the poor in heart and simple in mind and spirit, "These signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils, etc." He was promised that if he would be humble himself and go down into the water for baptism, then would hands be laid on him by those commissioned of God for the reception of the Holy Ghost, which great witness would speak to his soul, with any or all of the wonderful signs of his peculiar presence to those who fulfill this the first law of this old yet new Gospel. At last, Nahum consented, asking God to withhold his sanction if it was not of him, and to give that sanction in majesty and power if it was his will and his Gospel. Then he went humbly down into the waters of Baptism.

Coming out, he was confirmed and promised the Holy Ghost, which straightway fell upon him and behold he prophesied and testified in burning, powerful words of truth and glory which he had that day received. No after trials or affliction, not though he was robbed and beaten, poisoned and driven again and again from house and home, aye even though he gave up his life finally as a martyr to this cause, not once did his faith and testimony waver from the light he had that day received. But like a soldier, he fought disease, calamity, mobs, affliction and death crying with his last breath upon the God who had shown him such tender mercy and kindness.

His wife and older children were also baptized on the same day of April 29, 1839. After this another son came to them, whom they named Moroni, in memory of the great Nephite general, who was the last of his race and who delivered the golden plates from their long hiding place into the hands of the youthful Prophet Joseph Smith.

The girl, Sarah had indeed been named for the mother of the Lamanite and Nephite nation by the mother, Mary Gibbs Bigelow who long before their baptism had received the gospel in her heart.

Daniel was the next child and was born in Mercer County, Illinois on March 18, 1842. The family had moved from Laurenceville County to Coles County, Illinois, living there ten years. Then after receiving the gospel had moved up to Mercer County, in the Northern part of Illinois. Four years were spent here. As it was still quite a distance from the body of the Church which was then located at Nauvoo or Commerce, as it is called on the maps, Nahum decided to move once more. He was a stirring, active man and prosperity followed his footsteps.

The children were familiar with a huge tool chest which contained many strange and unknown tools and instruments and into the traditions of the family has been woven the fact that father Nahum was an inventor, and had spent many days of his younger life in trying to solve the problem of perpetual motion. His success was that of others who wasted time in this direction. But, at least, it cultivated the reasoning faculty, developed the mind, trained the hand and interested the thoughts. This faculty was visible in a hundred handy ways about the household, and it made the Bigelow family one known to possess many comforts and conveniences otherwise unattainable in a western country.

In the year 1843, Nahum bought 160 acres in Hancock County and sent Lebias T. Coon with his son, Asa, to help to break up the prairie land. For this purpose they had four yoke of oxen and such other implements as were necessary for the purpose. The children grew. Daniel was a cute, bright and affectionate little fellow, with all the restless activity of his father, and something of the patient, forbearing disposition of his sister, Mary. Moroni was an independent, headstrong boy, controlled only by affection.

The start was made in Hancock County and everything prospered and thrived under the wise, judicious handling of father Nahum. Living only eighteen miles from Nauvoo, the family carryall was often hitched up and driven into town that all hands might attend meetings and receive a refreshing of the mind as well as giving a rest to the body.

Strict to punctuality, knowing and believing the law of tithing, which demanded that one-tenth of all the increase of the Saints should go into the Lord's storehouse for the benefit of the poor people, the fatherless and the sick among the Saints, and also to build the Temple and other sacred buildings, Nahum strictly complied with the law. Oftentimes, his wagon loaded with pork, with grain and with other fruits of his toil, passed down the road from Hancock County to Nauvoo, and in due time he was known and loved by the Prophet Joseph and his associate brethren, among whom was Brigham Young who succeeded Joseph as President of the Church.

Of Nahum it was truly said by those over him in authority, 'Behold a good man, in whom there is no guile'. Most of the Bigelow's neighbors were "outside the Church", and had a growing hatred and dislike for any and everything called "Mormon", yet they respected and honored this honest man, who never feared man nor failed to fear and reverence his God. The hatred and abuse that had followed this community from its earliest organization now began to show itself in the Church. The persecutions began in the more southerly counties and crept up until it terminated in the murder of the Prophet and of the Patriarch. Not content with this diabolical deed, the people of the state arose and demanded the expulsion of the whole people.

Encouraged by the quiescence of the governor, a man by the name of Ford, in their hellish deeds, the mobs would gather and some dark night set fire to the stacks and barns of some unsuspecting Mormon. The Mormon awakened by the unusual glare of the fire, would sometimes rush out and with frantic efforts seek to save his property. Then with deliberate coolness, the men concealed behind trees or bushes guided by the light of their own incendiaries, would use the persecuted Mormon as a target, filling him full of holes and leaving him at last to gasp out his dying breath in the arms of his wife and little ones.

All this while Nahum went quietly about his work. This sort of thing continued for another year. The Prophet was martyred in June of 1844, and in that same fall the last child of Nahum and Mary was born to the couple. They named him Joseph Smith Bigelow. He died in two years from his birth. Of that we will speak again.

In the early fall of 1845, all the saints living outside of Nauvoo were advised to move into the city for mutual protection, Consequently, Nahum took his family and moved into the city limits. Shortly after, however, President Young made an agreement with the Governor that he would move the people beyond the confines of the state if they could be unmolested until the spring, in order that proper arrangements could be made for such a gigantic undertaking. Thousands of people were to be moved away from every trace of civilization into the unknown, untrodden wilderness far in the west.

Meanwhile those with homes outside the city were given permission to return and gather in their crops if they themselves felt brave enough to do so. Having a disposition in which the fear of man had never entered, Nahum quietly took his family back to their farm in Hancock County. Governor Ford promised protection to the Saints and when the state militia was not present, he told President Young to have a militia organized to help themselves. This was done in great haste.

It was not long that Nahum was allowed to go on in the peaceful performance of his duties. The plague had settled upon some of the children, and at length attacked the father himself. The faithful mother had her hands and heart full going from bed to bed to attend to the wants and needs of the sick ones.

One night, about ten o'clock, the door was rudely pushed open and a man accompanied by nine others, stood within the house. In a harsh, savage voice, he burst out, "You'uns must leave here. Nahum raised himself on his elbow and answered sharply, "What do you mean?" "You-uns must leave here", the first man reiterated more fiercely than before. "What for?" called out the sick man, Nahum. "Because we say so," replied the desperado. "By what authority do you order peaceable citizens to leave their homes and lands which they have paid the government for?" "By our governor's authority and that of other officers". "What right has a governor or others to order peaceable citizens to leave their homes and lands in free America?"

At this, one fellow outside the door called out, "Don't stand there a dilly dallying; take a brand of fire and stick under the house and rout them out". The first desperado now began pulling out his huge buckskins and started for the fireplace. The wife and mother, Mary, who sat near the fire, reached out and took out the heavy tong, whose knob was as large as a hen's egg, and raising it aloft as he stooped, she looked him squarely in the eyes. Backward went the bully, quelled by the power in the woman's steady blue eyes.

"What have we done to you," she hissed out, "that you want to come in here and set our house on fire, with my husband sick?" Once more the man reached for a brand. "You touch that brand of fire and I'll hit you over the head". The flash in her eyes showed that she meant what she said.

Awed by the courage of the woman, the man retreated, and she, seeing her advantage began reasoning with him. "What do you come here for? We have never hurt you". "Well, you-uns left here once without orders, now we'll make you leave with orders". Once more she reasoned with him and at last turning to the man without he said, "We'll postpone this order for three days, and then if they ain't out, we will tumble 'em out and burn them up".

To this there came a general assent from the assembled mob. He turned to the family and repeated his threat. As he walked away, the family heard the voice of a neighbor among the mob, one who had always seemed friendly to them. But will not religious hatred make enemies and even murderers of any weak man?

Their son Hiram was at once dispatched to Nauvoo to get instruction from President Young. He returned with instructions to make out affidavits, with names of witnesses added, and send them at once to Carthage for military help, as Governor Ford had promised. Little confidence was felt in these promises, but the Saints were determined to live up to the law to the very letter and to carry out the Governor's advice in every possible way.

President Young told Hiram to use all speed, then if the Governor refused help, "Come back to Nauvoo and we will send help. Meanwhile, take this pistol to your father, and if he is put in any danger, tell him to defend himself and his family with it". The message and large horse pistol were at once delivered to his father, and then the lad sat off for Carthage, distance of about thirty two miles, with affidavits properly made out and signed. Arriving at Carthage, Hyrum was coldly received and told by the Governor to go to Brigham to get help. "Get some of your Nauvoo militia

to help you". He hastened back home to report his failure to his father and mother and then went on to Nauvoo. The evening of the third day came and the family saw the shades of darkness fall around them with hearts full of dread and suspense.

The pistol was loaded and near Nahum's hand. He was determined to do all he could to protect his wife, his children and their home. The mother and eldest girl, Mary, sat by the fire watching and listening with their ears picking up every sound. The rest were in bed, sick or asleep. At length the mother whispered, "Father, I hear horses hoofs coming." Then the muffled sounds became apparent to his own ears, he whispered back, "Listen Mary and see if you can hear what they say. "Hark yes! One of them says, "Boyd, you stay here and I'll go see". Then whispered Nahum, "You are quite sure it isn't Hiram with help from Nauvoo?" "No, no, it's two strange men; it is the mob, father. What shall we do?" For an answer, Nahum sprang from his sick bed and grasping his pistol stood against the door, holding it shut, as there was nothing but a crude latch to protect them from violence from without.

"Does Mr. Bigelow live here?" asked a stern voice outside the door. "Yes sir." "Well, I want to see him". "That's my name," range out the excited voice of Nahum. Always a loud speaker when excited, his tones were uncommonly clear, high and piercing. The men at the gate, as was afterward testified, heard every word Nahum said, but could not catch their leader's conversation.

"That's my name", said Nahum, "What do you want?" "Don't be so particular, but let me in," replied the man without, pushing with all his might against the door and forcing with his superior strength the sick man and his wife back. Once more shouting his question, "What do you want?" and receiving for reply the same. "Oh, what's the use in being so particular, let me in and I'll tell you," as he replied fairly forcing his way into the house.

Nahum stepped quickly back and like a flash pulled the trigger. The stranger only partly in the house, turned with a loud cry and shouted as he ran back to the gate, "Come on boys, I'm shot". The mother grabbed the ax and reaching for his gun loaded with #6 Buckshot, the brave man pulled his gun to this shoulder and shot the retreating form of his supposed enemy. "Hold on," yelled a voice from the outside as the shotgun again came into place. Knowing the foolish trick had been carried too far, he shouted "We're from Carthage, we've come to protect you, we've come to protect you, we're your friends".

"Good heavens", cried Nahum as the gun fell from his now nerveless grasp, "Why didn't you tell me you were my friends?" and then to the men now crowding into the room, "Why didn't you tell me you were my friends? I'd no more have shot you than I would my wife or children". Great drops of sweat stood upon his forehead and he trembled with the agony of remorse that came to him with the knowledge of the mistake that he had made. The poor fellow who had carried his ill-timed joke to such a miserable length, staggered into a chair, whispering warily in his pain. "Just see how you've hurt me". One bullet hole in his left breast and one in his left hip were bleeding profusely. He was at once laid upon a bed, while a doctor was sent for from Carthage.

It is necessary now that I shall go back a little and relate what happened outside and why such a silly scare or joke had been attempted on the family. The little party, numbering four men and their leader, Lieutenant Everett, had been hastily dispatched after the lad, Hiram, had left Carthage. The cowardice of the Governor suggesting that if he broke his solemn pledge when notified properly as provided by law, in some way he or his position might be liable to summary

vengeance. So in all haste he sent the relief squad under Lieutenant Everett.

Arriving within the neighborhood, some inquiries were made, as it happened of one of the mobbers themselves, a man by the name of Sam Dixon. Dixon was taken along with the soldiers, either willingly or unwilling. When near the house, the mobber suggested to the soldiers, "Let's have some fun with the old man. We'll give him a good scare. He's expecting the mob, and if we keep quiet, he'll take us for them and be properly scared". For a little sport, the suggestion was adopted, with the result which I have told.

As soon as the excitement inside the house had abated a little, the wounded Lieutenant spoke to Nahum saying, "You need not have trouble over this matter, for I will at once make a deposition in writing, telling the whole truth and putting the blame where it belongs". Just then one of the family called out, "The mob, the mob. They are surrounding the house. See them gathering out at the gate!" "Boys," called out the wounded leader, "to your arms and do your duty". Suddenly remembering, old Sam Dixon slipped hurriedly out to relate what protection had been sent to the house, to disband the mob, for that night at least. He had forgotten in the general excitement that the signal agreed upon among themselves was to be the firing of a gun.

The gunshot of the brave farmer had done more than to heavily punish the maker of a bad and ill-timed jest, it had also sounded the signal for his deadly enemies to assemble and burn his home about his ears. Upon hearing, however, how matters stood in the house, the mob quietly disbanded and dispersed. United State's soldiers with faithful guns out of every door and window were not the sort of people that mobbers, cowardly, murderous bullies that they were, cared to meet. So for awhile, the household was unmolested by these fiends in human shape.

Another painful scene of this dreadful happening was yet to be enacted. Nahum, who was sick and feeble, was obliged to go up to Carthage to "stand trial". True to his word, Lt. Everett, made out an affidavit entirely clearing Nahum from any blame. The wounded Lieutenant was left at his homestead to recover. The mother and daughters doing everything in their power to relieve his suffering and pain.

A soldier was sent along with Nahum to protect him from the violence of the mob. His faithful wife insisted upon going also fearing that the life of her husband might be taken on the way to his trial. In a wagon, on a hastily arranged bed, the intense rays of the midsummer sun pouring down upon his head, no wagon cover, nothing to tide the scorching heat, the sick man was taken by those having part in charge eight or ten miles out of the way, making a long dreary two days journey of that which might have been accomplished in one day.

As they traveled, word flew abroad that the Mormon who had shot the second officer in the State Army was being taken to Carthage. Everywhere cowards gathered about the wagon, swearing, cursing him, threatening and even demanding his life. "Let's take the old fellow out and flay him alive," said one man. "If you take him, you'll have to kill me first", quietly answered the wife.

The soldier who had been sent for their protection was a brave and humane man; honor be to his name and memory. His name was Bush and he would reason, argue, and if necessary, tell the assembled crowds plainly and roughly, "I've come along here to see justice done by this man and I am going to do it. I'm a soldier of the United States Army and if you kill this man, no matter who or what he is, you'll have to trample over my dead body to do it". A judicious fingering of his

heavy arms accompanied always this declaration and it had the effect of reducing the clamors to growls of future threats and menaces.

This sort of thing was repeated all along the route. "Let's hang him up to the first tree. Tie a stone around his neck and throw him into the river". Through it all the wife firmly held her place at the side of her sick husband, silently praying to God, fervently thanking him for raising up so powerful a friend in their sore need as the brave soldier, Bush.

Upon reaching Carthage, the word was quickly spread that the Mormon had been acquitted of his crimes. The case being quickly disposed of because the affidavit of the wounded man, Everett, entirely clearing Nahum from all blame before even the most vindictive court.

The party hurried home and upon arriving there, found the Lieutenant removed and the children alone and frightened for the lives of the absent parents. Nahum well knowing what the darkness of night would bring hastily gathered all of his family together and taking a few quilts hurried out into the cornfields. It was already dark and no time was to be lost.

Midnight brought the realization of their fears. At the house were seen lights, shots were repeatedly fired, windows were smashed and diligent search was made for the fugitives. Great blood hounds were turned loose to hunt through the fields for their would-be victims. Down under the corn huddled the family, even the baby, holding their breath and not daring to move lest their hiding place would be discovered.

Father," whispered the children, "the dogs are coming down this row. Oh, what shall we do?" "Lie still and pray" was the quiet but firm reply. Their prayers were heard, neither wicked men nor fierce dogs discovered their retreat and towards morning the sounds ceased and the family felt relieved, for awhile at least.

The condition of their house and premises the next morning convinced Nahum that he must move his family into Nauvoo if he wished to preserve their lives and his own. Fortunately a man from the city passing their door that morning agreed to take them all down with him.

One other incident which occurred to Nahum in this great blast of persecution, which swept over Illinois blackening her fair fame and sullyng her skirts with the innocent blood of men, women and little children, must be here related as it was of great affect on the after life and health of Nahum, indeed causing at last his death.

Asa, the second son, a fearless, resolute lad, was sent back to the farm. It was Asa who had saved the lives of the whole family the morning before their departure. It happened in this wise: Sent down to the spring for water, on their return to the house from their hiding place in the cornfields, he noticed as he stooped to draw the water a green glistening scum on the top. "If you drink that," something seemed to whisper to him, "You'll all be poisoned".

Blowing away the scum, he took a portion up to the house, carefully repeating the warning his spirit had seemed to receive. The bucket was hung out of reach, some of the water was bottled to take into town for chemical analysis, and water was obtained from a distant spring for that day.

This boy, Asa, was left at the farm to do what he could to gather and save the crops. Recovering his

health in part, after a week, the father resolved to return to the farm and help the boy. He was warned that there was a dire threat ready to put into execution should he dare venture away from the safety of the city. Never afraid, he snapped his fingers at the warnings and went back to his farm.

No sooner did he make his appearance than he seemed to meet with great kindness everywhere. Evidently this pretended kindness had its desired effect; the farmer was thrown entirely off his guard. Invited to take breakfast with one Sam Porter, he at once complied and went over to his house. At breakfast Nahum noticed and alluded innocently to the fact of the coffee tasting bitter, but was laughingly assured that the bitterness must be in his own mouth.

Immediately after his return to his own house, he was seized with a sudden and strange pain. It grew into agony, and he was soon conveyed by the boy to Nauvoo. There his distress was beyond description. His screams were heard at a great distance and scarcely could the people about him hold him in his terrible struggles for life and breath. Medical skill acknowledged itself powerless. Then was called into requisition that wonderful, but little understood power of faith and prayer.

Again and again he was administered to by the elders of the church and at length the evil was in part rebuked, he began more able to endure his suffering. All winter, however, he was very ill and knew that it was God and the power of God only which gave him back his life "for a little season". The move westward had been decided on by the Church and preparations were being hastily made to get the people away by the coming spring. "Only to get my family moved and to see them settled with the body of the Church, on whatever spot of earth that may prove to be". That was the constant, hourly prayer of that suffering martyr the whole of that long, hard and bitter winter. The coffee offered under the guise of friendship had almost cost him his life and yet how fervently he prayed to have a lease given him to get his family away from mob violence into some untrodden desert where men might fear naught but the wild beast of the mountain and fear to do wrong or grieve the good spirit that leads into all peace, all love and all righteousness. His prayers were again answered. Asa was left all winter at the farm, answering the rough men who came to the door sometimes with the question, "Ain't you'un afraid to stay here alone?" "No, what am I afraid of? I've done no one any harm? Sometimes a neighbor's son, Andrew Allen, would come on over there to stay with the lad.

In February 1847, the pioneers, as they were called, left the little settlement called Winter Quarters for the great trackless unknown country called vaguely "the west". The people left Nauvoo in the depths of winter, crossing the river on the ice in the month of February.

As soon as their leaders were once away, before the last ones had left the town, great bonfires of valuables and furniture were heaped up to the winter sky by the fierce mobbers now in possession of the beautiful city.

How scenes of cruelty followed their every movement in the doomed city, and how, wandering wearily and heavily across the muddy bottoms, reaching at length a spot where, worn out with despair and fatigue, their leader halted them and decided to remain there all winter to rest and recuperate, building houses and forts, cutting the wild prairie grass, settling down like a sudden swarm of bees on a lone and desolate tree, arranging schools and courts, divine services and even festivities - all these things are matters of history and can be read by anyone desiring to know of them for himself.

Nahum found measures to accompany this grand 'move' and arriving at the halting place, soon built a comfortable house for his family. It was there that Brigham Young, already with a number of wives, married with little courting, the eldest girl of Nahum, Mary Jane, and also with no courting whatever, the second girl, Lucy.

As before stated, the pioneers came out in 1847. The next spring or summer, as President Young had returned for more of the Saints, he asked to take Lucy to the west. She was allowed to go.

The year 1850 saw Nahum being assisted some by the Church with his family, also one or two others, poor and homeless, who seemed thrown on his kindness enroute to the valley. Always charitable, he was generally burdened with some one or two, heart sick or poor, who gladly accepted the charity of the family.

Arriving in Salt Lake Valley in the fall of 1848, he was advised by President Young to spend the winter in a little town a few miles north of the city. Accordingly, Nahum and his family went to Farmington. Mary and Lucy, of course, remained with their husband's family in Salt Lake City.

Asa, the second son, had resolved to get a little schooling for himself if possible. After obtaining permission, he sought and obtained labor to get means for a winter's schooling in the city. It was now the winter of 1851. Nahum had never fully recovered from the terrible effects of his neighbor's coffee.

One day, suddenly and without the least warning, the same terrible cramps, deepening into deadly agony that had attacked him in Nauvoo came upon his weakened body. Word was at once sent to Asa, also to Mary and Lucy, he requesting them to ask the President to come up once more to bid him goodbye. Aye! Goodbye! He looked on his humble, but secure and moderately comfortable cabin, his wife within the sheltering arms of peace and unity as they existed among the Saints; his children, two of them married to one of the grandest and best man ever sent to earth; his sons sober, steady and at work for the common family welfare.

All this came up before him and he exclaimed in his heart, "My prayers have been answered. Lo, mine eyes have seen thy salvation. Lord, now lettest thy servant depart in peace according to thy word". It was even so, he told them at the noon hour of that day. "Tomorrow at 12 o'clock I shall die. But Oh! How my soul longs to see the face and clasp the hand of that noble Prophet and leader, Brigham Young. Do you think he will be here in time?"

There were no telegraph lines, not even mails in those days and time went by on slow moving steady wings, not with the restless beat of hurrying as in these days of steam and electricity. All that day, that night and the next morning, between the chills and spasms of pain, would come the restless questioning. "Do you think he will be here in time?" The noon hour approached and the fast and faster hurrying breath came short and sharp. Some one watches constantly at the window to answer the ever recurring question, "Is he come?" whispers the dying man. A sorrowful shake of the watcher's head. And one minute to twelve, only the fast glazing eyes can ask the constant question. "Twelve o'clock".

"Yes, father, I see his carriage down the road, he is come father!" A cry echoes through the house, for even as one came, behold, the other went away. The long five year martyrdom of suffering and

pain is over forever. Loving hands and aching hearts did the rest, all that was left to do. And thus in the cemetery at Salt Lake City lies one of the sturdy Bigelow family, who died for his family, his religion and his God.

The family has grown up and married, reared their families who are likewise nearly all grown up and mostly married and settled in life. Mary Jane left the family of President Young and married again; had one only child, born after she was forty years of age, leaving her by death an orphan at six months of age. The little one soon followed. Delicate in health, quiet, patient, yet sometimes with a rare quick impulsiveness of action that generally came after pain. Mary Jane was truly a good, kind and patient woman.

Hiram married Martha Meacham at Provo (where the widow moved and settled after the loss of her husband) and lived at that place for a number of years. Called by the Church to move to Dixie, he complied and in the course of a few years moved to Arizona, where he now resides. He had reared a very large and creditable family of children, most of whom are married and living in Arizona.

Lucy, married to Brigham Young has always been a true and loving wife, a most fond and devoted mother and above all a fervent follower of her Savior's cause and kingdom. She had strength and character that finds itself unmoved under the most trying circumstance. With the courage and fearlessness of her father, she still possesses more than the sensitive delicacy of her mother's character. To her husband she was, according to his own testimony, "A wife indeed, true chaste, loving and in all things seeking to please her husband". To her children she is all and more than mothers are to children; withhold a tender enemy, a fond friend and a most prayerful, earnest seeker after truth wherever it is found. She has three daughters.

Asa is living with his family in Provo. He is the same brave, fearless, would, and like all those with Bigelow blood in their veins, conscientious and cautious to a marked degree, a loving father and kind husband. He is known as a good neighbor and honest friend. His numerous children are grownup under his wise watch and care.

Lavina married John Witt and settled in Heber City, Utah. Her large family are mostly married and settled down. She has many of the family traits; loving, kind and a good wife.

Liola, who was singularly intelligent and a spiritual child died in his youth in Illinois on August 15, 1845.

Sarah married a Mr. Cook (Daniel Dean) and had several children. They had several misfortunes, and after finally losing her reason, died in this condition in Fairfield, Utah in 1877.

Moroni, a loving, jovial, bright soul was married to Elvira Meacham and had four children, one dying in its infancy. He was called on a mission to the eastern states in 1868. On his return home he was murdered while crossing the Missouri River and thrown overboard by some dangerous desperadoes, presumably for the money which he carried. His was a beautiful soul, endearing himself to everyone who knew him. The Bigelow traits were all strongly marked in him.

Daniel married Miss Permelia Meachum and together they have reared a fine little family. The eldest girl being herself married and rearing children. Daniel is a kind, patient husband, a loving,

most devoted father and a man known everywhere for his sterling honesty and firm integrity to his beloved religion. His family is a large one, but his affection and watchful care reach out over every part and individual thereof and whoever knows, honors and respects Daniel Bigelow.

Joseph Smith Bigelow was the last child and lived only a few short months, dying during the violent persecutions which raged in Illinois.

The traits of the Bigelows are all more or less prominent through all of the names and lineage in this territory. Charitable, kind and truthful, almost to a fault, yet at times impulsive, quick spoken and very active and busy. There are no lazy ones among the Bigelows. What may be lacking in brilliancy and sparkle is made up by sound intelligence and thriftiness. Every Bigelow is proud of his name, for it is and always has been, so far as we know, a highly honored one.

If future descendants will preserve its integrity as have the past and present members of the family, then indeed my father and grandfather, Nahum Bigelow, will say as he greets us in that other better land, "Well done, the bearers of an honest name. Behold, my Savior gives it to me to say, "Enter thou in and share my rest!"

Written by Susan Young Gates

Copied from the Juvenile Instructor of 15 April 1891

By Martha C. Hale - 6 October 1940