

Biography of John Heiner

Information taken from Biography of John Heiner by his granddaughter
Biography of Johann Martin Heiner and Adelgunda Dietzel by Louise Heiner Andersen

Compiled by Dana Palmer

John Heiner was born on July 2, 1843 in Wasungen, Sax Meiningen, Thuringia, Germany, the third child, and first son born to Johann Martin and Adelgunda Dietzel Heiner. He sailed to America with his family on May 18, 1845 and landed in Baltimore on June 24. They lived in Baltimore 19 months and then his father was offered an opportunity to work as a weaver for a Mr. Bear in Franklin County, Pennsylvania. While in Franklin County, Pennsylvania, Elder Jacob Secrist visited with his parents before embarking on a mission to Germany. His sister told John's mother about the "strange" Gospel he was teaching and also about a meeting he was holding. When his father heard about the meeting, they went to it and found he was teaching the truth. They looked up the Bible quotation from that meeting on November 15, 1852, and continued to attend Elder Secrist's meetings. His parents and two sisters were baptized December 13, 1852 by Jacob Secrist, after which Elder Secrist left on his mission. When he returned from Germany, John, Anthony and George were baptized by their father, Martin Heiner and confirmed by Jacob Secrist in April of 1855.

John began working for a farmer, Mr. McLivery, and lived with him until April of 1859, when he and his 5 brothers and 4 sisters went with their parents, and started for Utah. All his earnings were used to help pay expenses on the journey to Utah. They hired Joseph Mainser to haul them to Pittsburgh. They had to cross the Allegheny Mountains, which took three weeks. Then they traveled on a steamboat, which was a lumber craft down the Ohio River to Cincinnati. They visited with John's Aunt Mary Batch who was childless. She wanted to keep two boys and two girls since there were ten children. But his parents could not spare even one and hurried onto St. Louis where they changed boats and went up the Mississippi River to Florence where they stayed several weeks making preparations to cross the plains. They bought one yoke of cows and a new Shuttler wagon. While in Florence, the people bought wild steers and they yoked them. They would run and bellow and turn their yokes upside down. It was like a wild west show.

John took a job with the Emigration agents, and came with them to Utah. It took about 90 days to travel from Florence to Salt Lake City. He arrived on August 26, 1859, just three weeks prior to his family's arrival. He went to work and earned some flour; it proved to be a great blessing to the family since his Mother, Adelgunda had used the last flour they had.

The first lived in the dugout at the mouth of Parley's Canyon. They then moved to Bingham Creek. John soon got employment with Daniel H. Wells in Salt Lake for their food and clothes. John hauled stone for the Temple with his oxen while working for Daniel H. Wells. One ton was a load.

In 1862, his family moved 4 miles northwest of the Jordan Bridge, in what is now known as West Jordan. They planted their crop but the water got so high that it covered

the land and killed the crop. They planted grain again the next year, but the alkali killed it.

In the fall of 1863, they bought 40 acres of land in North Morgan. John married Sarah Jane Coulam, daughter of John and Sarah Cordon Coulam, on March 23, 1867 in the Endowment House and they made their home in Morgan. While attending conference in the Salt Lake Tabernacle in 1868, their names were called, along with others, and they were asked to go to Southern Utah to the Muddy Mission. This call came from Brigham Young and the Muddy Mission consisted of colonizing the Muddy, which was located in St. Joseph, Lincoln County, Nevada.

John and Sarah with Elizabeth and her husband, Thomas Grover made preparations in the fall with the company of Saints, each taking their belongings in their own wagon. In the company was Brother George W. Larkin, who was a very dear friend to John. They were the only two men in the company whose teams could pull their own leads up to the top of the long steep hills. They called each other Brother George and Brother John. They endured many hardships on the way, their journey lasting ten weeks.

Two weeks before they reached St. George, Utah, John and George had pulled their own loads up to the top of a long steep hill and had taken their teams back to hook on with the other teams to help pull their loads up. Brother George said, "Brother John, we'll sure have to hurry or we are sure going to get our shirts wet this time," because as it very often happened, a big black cloud suddenly would appear in the clear blue sky. They hurried as fast as they could but in spite of everything they were drenched to the skin before they were able to make camp. The rain didn't last long, but as it stopped a cold wind took its place, chilling them to the bone. They both took an awful cold and were very sick. The next morning both men rode on a bed in the wagon while their wives took the driver's seat. In two days Brother Larkin was delirious, and John was some better.

Of course, Brother Larkin did not know that John was sick too, and sent for him to please come and administer to him. "I feel so sorry for Sister Larkin," said Sarah. "Tis hard to have her husband so sick out like this where she can't keep him warm and take care of him right. God has been good to us hasn't he, dear?" "Yes he has," replied John. "Why I feel almost alright to night. I think I'll go over to Brother Larkin's wagon and administer to him." "Oh, you must not do that, John. The wind is so cold. Stay in the wagon." "He would do the same for me were he in my place. I've got to." John got up out of bed and answered the call.

After he had administered to Brother Larkin, he sat down and visited with him for an hour. All the time he was taking chills and was very sick. He went back to his own camp and crawled into bed shivering and groaning. The shivering was followed by a fever and coughing. Sarah drove the team for two weeks until they reached St. George. Everyday it grew worse in spite of all the remedied he tried. He was stricken with pneumonia. A pan filled with ashes was placed by the bed for him to spit the great chunks of phlem into. He also was coughing up blood, which worried Sarah greatly. They decided that they would stop in St. George until John recovered before continuing on to the Muddy. The rest of the company went on their way. Sarah Jane made friends with Brother George Ashley and he provided them a room in his log cabin. Sarah believed the worst to be over. As the days went by, her hopes went also for each day the pan of ashes

was needed more instead of less than she had hoped. Each fit of coughing brought up its pieces of his lung and left John weaker and weaker.

Seven days after they had reached shelter, John coughed up his last cough and went on his mission to the other side. John died January 12, 1868 and was buried there. Brother Larkin was delirious and unconscious for four weeks. When we was well enough he came and said, "Brother John laid down his life for me." John's young wife, Sarah Jane, came back to Morgan, being very pregnant and bore their child, Sarah Coulam Heiner. Sarah Coulam Heiner, their baby girl was born four weeks after John had died.