

Life story of Selma Elmina Baker Nielson, as related to and written  
by Hilma Nielson, daughter-in-law. 1959-1965.

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By R.O. Baker

*Nelson Elmina  
Grandmother*

She was born Oct. 14th, 1878, in Beaver City, Utah. The sixth child  
of Philip and Harriet Thompson Baker. Her brothers and sisters are: Linda  
Marie, Harriet Mirantha, William Phillip, Annie Lovina, Marie Jasimine,  
Daniel Ray, and Rudger Clifford.

The Baker home where she was born and spent her girlhood days was  
located on north Main, a tidy and very humble home. Their life, as a  
family was a happy one, although they had many hardships and sorrows.  
They were always together as a family in their work, recreation, and  
church activities. Each morning and evening they knelt as a family in  
prayer, and thanked their Heavenly Father for the blessings of the day.  
How grateful they were for food, shelter, clothing, and having the priest-  
hood in the home. Many times they were healed by faith and prayer. As a  
group they sang, and played musical instruments. Most of them were given  
God's choicest talents, a gift of music, and a sense of humor. So the  
family had fun together. She said we didn't all have shoes sometimes,  
but we could dance barefooted anyway. Each evening the father read from  
the Bible to them, as mother did her sewing. The girls did mending,  
darning, crocheting and tatting. The family all had something construc-  
tive to do. They would practice singing together and on their musical  
instruments. They had such jolly times when company came in for the  
evening.

While she was a small child, the Indians would come to their home.  
A few of them were friendly, but the majority were not. She said, "How  
frightening it was to look at the window and see Indians looking in with  
their hands cupped over their eyes so they could see into the room."  
When there was trouble with them her father would hide his family in a  
(dugout) cellar camouflaged by straw. One day an Indian came to their  
home all feathered and covered with paint, wanted food. Her mother gave  
him all she could spare but he wanted more. He took her butcher knife  
and tried to frighten her by striking at her, holding her by the braid  
of her hair, as if to cut it off. The oldest daughter, Mirantha, crawled  
out of the bedroom window and ran for help. Help came in the form of  
Galia Pollock, a large Irish woman, who came with the handle of Grampa  
Bakers grindstone in her hand. She ordered him to leave...He left quite  
willingly.

Fort Cameron was located two miles east of Beaver. A Military base.  
It was also protection from the Indians. It was always a thrill to see  
this place, it looked so large and spacious to her as a child. The Hos-  
pital had a long porch all around it, both the first and second story.  
She and her friends loved to walk around the porch and play hiding seek.  
Their May Walk was always to Fort Cameron. Her mother would cook a special  
treat and they would carry their lunch in a pretty basket. All of the  
children of Beaver would walk together and spend the day playing games.  
The path to the Fort was used many times by lovers who went for a stroll on  
Sunday afternoon.



Her schooling was at the Haeser Academy (Fort Cameron) where she graduated under Professor Bickley. She also took vocal lessons from him and sang vocal solo's in church, celebrations, besides singing in the choir and choruses. She held the position of chorister in Primary, M I A. and Sunday School while still very young, along with teaching many classes of children in the organizations.

In their home, mother and daughters made hats. Many lovely hats trimmed with lace flowers and ribbons. One hat her mother made was a straw, sailor hat with a black band and streamers down the back. This hat took first prize at the county fair. The hats were made from straw gathered from the field. This particular hat being in style, she was very proud to wear it, not only because it was stylish; but because of the hours her dear mother had spent making it. Of all the hats she had, during her life, her memories went back to the white sailor straw hat, her mother made for her and entered in the fair. It certainly was a prize to her.

Mother Baker also taught her to weave on the loom. They made linen cloth, carpets and rugs. She learned to be a good seamstress--to make all kinds of clothing. The teaching of her parents--to save, and to make the most of their resources. This helped her through so many hardships, with her own family.

In the year 1892 she took a job working at the woolen mill. Charles Nielson of Richfield was hauling mail from Beaver to Milford. They soon met and fell in love. After courting a while she went to Salt Lake City. Mostly to think about marriage to Charley. While there worked. Very soon he came to Salt Lake to see her. They came to Richfield to meet his family and she decided to go home and prepare for their wedding.

In those days the art of homemaking was taught in the home. It consisted of knowing how to make a fire in the stoves, how much fire to have in the cook stove to bake at the right temperature, how to make and keep yeast sweet and alive for baking. How to make vinegar, cure meat, dry vegetables and fruit, know how to make candles, must take pride in their lamps, to keep them shining and bright-filled with coal oil and their wicks trimmed just right for the flame--to light their home at night. They must know how to patch, darn, mend, make quilts, make soap, she must learn the home remedies and how to use each, to be able to take care of her family during illness. How important it was to put a white wash on the line each Monday morning. This consisted of carrying tubs of water from the ditch, heating making suds, sorting the articles properly, scrubbing on the board by hand each article twice, boiling the white things to keep them white, all must go thru two suds taking each batch in turn of light to dark, and then the stockings, rinsing and bluing, hanging on the line in proper form. Then the suds must be utilized by scrubbing floors, chairs, table, porches--everything in sight. The woodwork looked clean and beautiful in their homes--just the natural grain of the wood all shiny and clean.

The mother and sisters helped her to make a trousseau from the home made linens--quilts, crochet dollies, everything hand made. Her wedding dress, her trousers were small but practical, all she needed.



They were married Nov 25, 1896 at Beaver, Utah, at her home. They had a wedding and shower with friends and relatives invited. They received dishes, washboard, tub and boiler, so they were ready to start their own home. So after a wedding dance, they left Beaver and her home to come to Richfield to live. Her emotions were as any bride leaving their home and friends for a new life, and home of her own. She said, "There was a tear, but she was oh so happy." Starting her life as a bride of Charley, as she called him. They moved into a small house with a dirt roof southwest of town, (Richfield) October 14, 1897. Her first child was born on a very rainy night. The rain came down in torrents and came right through the roof. The family of sister-in-laws held pans over the bed to keep Mother dry. She remembered the drip-drip- of rain in the pans during the night. When Theris was four days old they moved her y wagon to Charley's sister's home, Alice Jensen. From there when she was able they moved to a home, also in southwest of Richfield. Here, Vernal was born 1899, but she stated she was fortunate she could stay in bed 12 days that time.

Charley started as an employee of Richfield City, springing streets, to keep the dust down. He had a team named Curt and Dock that he used to pull the water tank thru the streets. This was a very essential job for the city and we were thankful to have it. They bought a home on 2nd East 1st North, and along with the happiness of the new home a third son Harold was born 1901. Then in 1903, Bessie a 3½ lb. baby girl came to bless their home. Mother Baker made a bed with warm water in a glass jar and soft cotton, for the baby! She said she was small, but she brought loads of joy. She was always her Daddy's girl. When Ray came in 1906 their happiness and gratitude was boundless to have been so blessed with five children. Other homes they lived in was on 4th East, 1st North, then they moved to 245 East 1st North where they lived all the remainder of their lives together.

While the children were growing up the family loved to go camping and fishing by the streams and Fish Lake. Sometimes friends or relatives would go along. These were such fun trips for the children. There was excitement when a trip to Grandma Baker's was planned. They would go by buggy and camp one night on the road. This required preparation of a grub box, bedding, clothing, oats for the horses. Each child was willing to help, right down to the harnessing and hitching of the team. They also loved to have Grandma Baker visit at our house.

All the children were taught--and could play a musical instrument. Many enjoyable times the children had with their friends in their home. Everyone felt welcome. She smiled--as she remembered getting the children ready for Church, the polished shoes, white shirts, ties, hair cuts for the boys and Bessies bows of ribbon and dresses--these were happy memories. She said, "I ALWAYS TOOK THE CHILDREN TO CHURCH."

2 She set a good example to her children to live by, when they grew up and married. They all lived in Richfield close to their mother. Her children loved her and always enjoyed her company, she kept them laughing with her sense of humor and her cheerful happy disposition. There was always something good to eat in her home, she was a good cook and loved to have company come in for some of her Danish Cakes or Apple Pie.



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She told of when the Third Ward was organized under Bishop Coons. She was called as 1st. Counselor to Hannah Beutler in the Primary. Later 1st. Counselor to Martha Jensen in M I A. Chorister for Abigail Ogilvie in Relief Society, Block Teacher in Relief Society for 40 years. All this time being a member of the Ward and Stake Choir. She sang in Bard MIA Quartet consisting of Naomi Hippler, Lydia Anderson-soprano, Edith Rasmussen, Nora Nielson-Alto, Jodie Bean, Lamar Robinson-Tenor, John McGregor, Kenneth Hood-Bass. They won in the MIA District contest and were scheduled to go to Salt Lake City for final contest, when she received word, her Mother had passed away and she had to leave the quartet and go to Beaver. She was in all kinds of entertainments and ward activities, in the community, political rallies and everywhere she could see with her beautiful Alto Voice. When the congregation was singing you could hear her voice singing the Alto, above them all... and oh how she loved to sing. She sang with all her heart and soul. Many have said how they loved to hear and watch her sing because she acted like she enjoyed it so much.

She told how she ran with her baby in her arms when the tabernacle was on fire. How she reached there when the tower fell, she thought she heard her baby say, "Oh My!!" How they bought choir seats and books for the new tabernacle, they all donated to get. Once a chair. She valued her friendship with the Quorum Members. In all the years she sang, she enjoyed the Sixth Ward and sang as good at 80 years as ever.

She gave credit to her good husband for having the privilege of working in the ward. He would tend the children, many times he baked the bread, fed the children and tended them. He donated freely to help with the activities she was engaged in. He also played the Harmonica Accordion for ward dances and dances in the homes. They both loved to dance and many evenings were spent with the group dancing the Polka, Two Step, many Quadrilles, Trolley Hip, Scottish Scween, Step Dances and many more, which require them to know the changes of steps for each dance. For these special occasions she designed and sewed beautiful dresses and gowns. She always looked lovely because her face was so cheerful and happy, it radiated the good and choice spirit her Heavenly Father had given her.

When the "Flu" struck Richfield, after world war one. She said, "How blessed she and Charlie were because they didn't contract this dreadful Flu, although they spent many days and nights caring for the sick friends and relatives. When a death occurred they were there to help and comfort the bereaved ones, to help lay them to rest.

She seemed to be a natural nurse, she loved to help the Doctors with home deliveries (babies) and caring for the mothers each mornign and in the evenings she would put on her white apron and again go the home, care for the mother and baby. She had the thrill of caring for some of her daughter-in-laws when her grandchildren were born. Many times she was called thru the Relief Society to help with the sick and deaths of the ward. She decorated the ward chapel for funerals for many years. She kept the white table cloth, drapes and funeral decorations at her home, ironed and washed them and together with flowers, from her own garden, go to the Church and have it ready for the funeral. (She took her own potted plants too). Also in their home nursing it required a lot of skill, one must know how to make a Mustard Plaster, Cough Syrup, Chest Rubs, Catnip Tea, Salve for healing wounds, Poultices-for drawing out infections, and numerous other treatments.



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One of the reasons why she was so good at nursing was her cheerful attitude and encouraging words. She laughingly mentioned how she managed to have hot fresh bread and butter to serve Dr. McQuarrie while he was waiting for the baby to come.

She enjoyed her grandchildren and great-grandchildren, each one bringing a little more sunshine into their lives. They were all fond of Grandma & Grandpa Nielson. She always had something very special for each one of them. She made a Santa Claus suit especially for them and it was used to make other children and people happy on Christmas...She even wore it herself on many occasions, to bring laughter and fun at Christmas parties. After she was 80 years old she made many lovely gifts and gave them to Grandchildren and others for "keep sakes."

Charley retired and they bought a cabin at Fish Lake. They truly enjoyed their summers there, resting and fishing. Early morning we were up trolling for Mackinaw and in the evening we fished in front of the cabin for Rainbow. Often some of the children came to spend the evening with them. We enjoyed watching the Sunsets on the lake, some nights it would be pink and turn to a deep purple. She said, "I sat in the beauty of these beautiful quiet evenings, I thought of my Patriarchal Blessing. Where it said, Sister Nora, In your advanced years your table will be spread with the bounties of life." She did feel she had so much to be thankful for. She said it reminded her also of a poem she loved and read so many times and would like to have it added.

#### " P E A C E F U L V A L L E Y "

I'm searching for a valley where hearts are ever gay  
Where peace and real beauty is a part of every day  
Where people smile instead of frown and do the things they should  
To create happiness for all by spreading truth and good.

Where heartaches are unheard of and gold does not exist  
But should I suppose that I'll go on searching until I die  
Then with the help of God. I'll find my valley by and by.

#### IT SEEMED THEY FOUND THEIR HAPPY VALLEY.

When her husband passed away and she was left alone, her brother Clifford came to live with her, and keep her company—they lived together 13 years. She spent much of her time working in her flower garden, and with her green thumb, everything looked so beautiful. She found great comfort and joy in showing everyone her most wonderful flowers.

In 1959 the Daughters of Pioneers honored her at a meeting in Sister Anderlin's home, and read this life story as she had related, but it was as a surprise to her when it was read at the meeting. They gave her a lovely purse and paid tribute to her faithful service through the years 1935 to 1959. She had held offices as Chorister and played the Harmonica in the Camp Cove Harmonica Band. She was the Elderst Member of the Camp Cove but the youngest in Spirit. Later in the Ward Sacrament Meeting Dorothy Duchanan read this life history because she was one of the outstanding good women of the Ward that had given a LIFE OF SERVICE.



She remained in good health with the exceptions of Asthma attacks, through out her life and her family would often remark. "Mother never missed Church or going to a funeral to pay her respects to her friends that passed away."

She did Temple work when ever she could. She often said her richest Blessing was when she was sealed to her Husband for Time and Eternity. She was always humble and faithful and her mother was relieved many times by the power of the Priesthood.

February 24, 1965 after a short illness she was taken to her Eternal Home to be with her husband.

She asked that a poem of her Mother be added. To this history when she was gone, because she said it is Charley and I.

"Down Memory Lane With You"

I'd like to stroll down Memory Lane together you and I,  
And sing the songs we used to sing,  
In pleasant days gone bye,  
Our thoughts will bloom like flowers,  
And we'll gather every one.  
We'll laugh at things we used to do.  
The joyous things we've done  
And then some day if God is good,  
Perhaps in Heaven on High  
Hand in hand we'll stroll once more  
Together You and I.

Funeral services were held in Richfield Sixth Ward and Burial in Richfield Cemetery February 27, 1965.  
Bishop D. N. Hendrickson, conducting; Flowers Sixth Ward Relief Society.  
Pallbearers: Charles Nielson, Bud Nielson, Phillip Nielson  
Verdon Nielson, Max L. Nielson and Jerry Watts.

- Family Prayer . . . . . Elder Max Evans
- Prelude Music. . . . . Astrid Jensen
- Remarks. . . . . Bishop D. N. Hendrickson
- Invocation . . . . . Dean Nielson
- Song . . . . . Barbara Sharp
- Geniel Lewis, Connie Chris ensen, Dorothy Lund
- "Whispering Hope" Accompanist- Ren Anderton.
- Speaker. . . . . William Holt
- Song . . . . . Phil and Nina Jorgensen
- "In The Garden" Accompanist-Gregory Jorgensen.
- Tribute. . . . . Dorothy Buchanan
- Song . . . . . Naomi and Milo Baker
- "Beautiful Sunset"
- Speaker. . . . . Kenneth Isbell
- Song . . . . . "Abide with Me" . . . . . Bernell Sharp
- Benediction . . . . . Stanley Sharp
- Postlude Music . . . . . Astrid Jensen
- Graveside Prayer . . . . . Raymond O. Baker