

# Merry Christmas 2010 from Mike & Joy Tibbitts

2104 E. 58<sup>th</sup> St., Sioux Falls, SD 57108, 605-335-6199

December 10, 2010



Melba Anderson



Alex & Josie

This has been a memorable year. The picture above is of my mother, Melba Anderson, blowing out the candles on her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday cake. We were lucky we didn't burn down my sister's house! Shortly thereafter we discovered that Mom had chickenpox...not shingles, chickenpox, at age 90! She was confined to her room in a senior living complex for a couple of weeks.

Bill continues his work with a non-profit while his wife Jana works as a lawyer in Salt Lake City, Utah. They have one child, Oliver (4).



Oliver, Bill, Jana Tibbitts



Mike & Joy Tibbitts

Nancy is working in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates as a special education teacher in a girl's school. She is so happy that her cousin Heather Nelson and her family have moved to Al Ain, not too far from Dubai.

Amy is married and lives in Denver, Colorado, with her husband Aaron Wixom and their two boys, Owen (5) and Adam (4 next week). Owen's diabetes has been a challenge to manage this year. He has had way too many scary lows.



Aaron & Amy Wixom



Jerry holding Owen (left) & Adam Wixom (right)

Jared works in Salt Lake City, Utah, and will be home for Christmas.



From Left to Right: Bill & Isaac, Nancy & Cameron, Jared & Oliver, Jennie & Austin

Jerry is in Colorado Spring, Colorado, in the Army as an officer in a group that will deploy to Afghanistan next spring. Jerry will also be home for Christmas this year.

Jennie lives in Marshall, Minnesota, about an hour and a half from Sioux Falls. Her husband Aaron Kinser is a law clerk for a state district judge. She keeps busy at home with her three boys named Isaac (4), Austin (2) and Cameron (6 months).

Kevin's twins, Alex and Josie, live in the Portland, Oregon, area with their mother, Lisa. They turn 8 next week.



Jennie, Cameron, Aaron Kinser



Isaac (left) & Austin Kinser (right)

Mike and I are still in Sioux Falls. We are doing a lot of the same things. Mike, however, will be retiring from actively practicing medicine at the end of December. He will continue his work in the medical school administration. It is quite a change for him.

I had knee #2 replaced and have hobbled through the year, working on Ponca genealogy along the way. I have no Ponca relatives but my Mormon pioneer Gates and Bingham ancestors stayed on Ponca lands during the winter of 1846-47. I just revised the poem I wrote a few years ago about that pioneer event.

## **Poncas and Mormons, 1846-47**

Wagons snaked across the prairie,  
struggling through mud and grime.  
Religious persecution forced the Mormons  
to leave Nauvoo on the Mississippi River  
at a most inhospitable, wintery time.

The pioneers travelled to the Missouri River.  
An advance party left Council Bluffs  
and headed hopefully West.  
A hundred miles later instructions were given  
for them to halt for a winter's rest.

Where to stop for the cold season  
was the question of the day.  
Warring tribes in the region  
made it difficult to decide  
where the refugees could safely stay.

Along came eight Ponca chieftains  
seeking peace from neighboring tribes.  
After observing the pioneer's plight,  
they invited the travelers to their homeland,  
willing to help in their freedom flight.

The pioneers turned their wagons northward,  
followed the Poncas home.  
Eleven days later they arrived at the junction  
of the Missouri and Niobrara Rivers  
and found they were not alone.

Poncas of all ages and sizes  
rushed out to see the wondrous sight.  
Never had they seen so many white people!  
Their enthusiastic greeting  
caused the pioneers quite a fright.

The next day Poncas and Mormons  
met and feasted together.  
Poncas performed a vigorous dance  
Agreements were concluded  
that gave friendship a chance.

Suddenly happiness turned to mourning.  
The vacated village was under attack!  
Death claimed Black Warrior.  
Wails pierced the autumn air again when  
Chief Two Bulls died shortly after him.

Meanwhile the pioneers constructed a fort,  
cut hay to feed their stock.  
The Poncas left on their winter hunt  
while Newel Knight chiseled a millstone  
obtained from local rock.

Joseph Holbrook, William Matthews and James Emmett  
left camp to find another way West.  
They followed the Niobrara River  
only to find that roaming bison herds  
had eaten all the grass.

Days were growing colder.  
Snowflakes fell from the sky.  
The day after Christmas,  
smoke billowed above the prairie,  
a fire was burning close by.

Whilst the young folks were dancing  
an alarm rent the air.  
Fire! Save our homes! Save our children!  
Move the ammunition!  
Confusion reigned everywhere.

The fire finally moved on,  
leaving the fort intact.  
But it took a terrible toll  
on food for the livestock,  
the men and women who'd fought back.

The Poncas and William Staines  
arrived in camp after hunting winter game.  
New Ponca Camp leadership  
was instructed to backtrack in the spring,  
to return to Council Bluffs again.

The Poncas helped the Mormons,  
were friendly during a difficult time.  
May their names and their children's names  
be remembered, respected, honored,  
now and throughout all time.

We are thankful for the many blessings our family has  
received this year. We are grateful a Savior was born to  
show us the way to live so that we can have the  
opportunity to return someday to live in a heavenly home  
with our beloved family and friends. We wish you a Merry  
Christmas & a Happy New Year!

Mike & Joy Tibbitts