

History of SAMUEL COX

Some of this information was written by his brother Edwin C. Cox and collected by Clarence Olsen, oldest grandson of Samuel Cox. Other family members contributed to the history.

Samuel Cox was born 7 Feb 1837 in West Cranmore, Somerset, England, the tenth child of fifteen children born to Abraham Cox and Francis Beard. Four of these died as young children.

Having a large family of eleven to provide for, father Abraham kept the post office in their village and managed the postal service in several villages between Dean and Shepton Mallet. Abraham was also a cobbler, repairing shoes for his large family and for others in his community.

Mother Francis was the school governess until ill health forced her to discontinue her teaching. Her daughter, Elizabeth, took her place as school governess.

In those days, children went to school at an early age, some when only three years old, to enable them to get a little schooling before they were hired out to work for the aristocratic class. The Cox children were given work at the age of 7 years to help sustain the family. Samuel hired out as a footman for a Doctor Moss at Hill Grove, near the city of Wells about four miles from home. Some jobs paid a six pence a week, which was about 12.5 cents.

Mother Fanny's health grew steadily worse until she was confined to a wheel chair. The family built a four wheeled carriage that she could sit in and the children would pull her around the village for a breath of fresh air.

On a Sunday morning, the 25th of April 1852, she passed away at the age of 49. She was buried in West Cranmore, Somerset. Her death was a shock to her lovely family. Samuel's brother, Edwin Charles Cox, referred to his mother's death as the greatest calamity of his boyhood years.

As a boy Samuel Cox spent some time with his elder brother Matthew in London who was a bell ringer for Big Ben. Boys' wages at that time were sixpence per week.

At the age of 18, Samuel left with a group of local men and went to Wales where work was available in the Iron and coal mines. Samuel wrote back to his younger brother Edwin Charles telling him of the conditions there and encouraged him to join him in Wales.

The shafts were only about 24" to 30" high. While there he was involved in an accident in which he was badly crushed and was carried out of the mine as dead. However, he revived but his nose was broken and his face badly cut. Thereafter he wore a full beard to hide the scars.

After he got well he went to work as a striker at a blacksmith's shop swinging a heavy sledge hammer and he became very proficient at it and it gave him the necessary exercise that made him very strong.

He sent for his brother Edwin who came and worked with him at 10/Od per week. He met Edwin at the station and they walked nine miles over the mountains carrying his trunk between them and taking turns carrying his bag.

They found lodging at the homes of local families as they moved about the southern mountains of Wales. When they selected better homes for lodging they constantly ran into Mormon families. At first the weird tales they had heard about Mormons made them wary of this strange religion. But they were impressed with the families and especially the personal way they had of praying as though they were actually talking to a real person.

They worked at Rhymney for some time. Then Edwin left and went to Ebbevale where he got work striking at 14/Od per week. He then sent for his brother, Samuel, to join him, and when Samuel got there the only place he could find to board was with a Latter-day Saint family.

After trying everywhere to find a more suitable place and being unable to find one, he said "I don't care what he is" and went to board with them in the village of Victoria. The man's name was George Gaisford. George read the Book of Mormon every night, aloud to the family, and of course Samuel had to listen to it. He became interested and invited Edwin to come and visit on Sunday. They were both impressed. Mr. Gaisford invited them to go with him to a meeting in the Chapel on the Tump. They had to admit that the sermon was reasonable and fair minded but were still quite prejudiced.

Samuel was the first to join the church. He was baptized 18 Feb 1857. Edwin was not so sure at first. They became deeply involved, however, when they saw the persecutions heaped upon the missionaries and the local members. The local town square was a good place to have public meetings on weekends, and both of the Coxes became stalwart supporters of these functions, often received pretty severe abuse along with the missionaries.

One evening while out with an Elder Watkins, a mob led by a minister began pelting them with pieces of sod and clods of dirt. One large piece landed on top of Elder Watkin's head, knocking his high hat down over his ears. It looked so funny that they had a good laugh even while running for their lives. They held meetings about twice a week and were abused and insulted nearly every time.

One weekend the brothers went with the missionaries and a few local members to hold such a meeting. They went to Cardiff Road, stood up on the platform beside the town pump, about 5 feet above the ground, and began to preach. A large crowd soon gathered filled with bitter hostility toward the little group and began to shout and jeer at them. Some of the agitators tried to jerk the speakers from the pump platform with their walking canes. A bitter feud developed, with shouting and cursing, and stones and sticks flying.

One of the mob leaders produced a rope and lassoed Edwin around the neck, jerking him off his feet. They began dragging him toward a lamppost, shouting, "string the scoundrel up". Samuel, seeing his brother's plight, charged through the crowd and gave the mobster such a blow with his fist to his throat, that it sent the would be murderer sprawling into the crowd taking 7 or 8 of the mob with him. Quickly Edwin pulled the rope off his neck and doubling it up, he made a whip with which he charged at the crowd. With Samuel at his side, fists flailing they opened an escape route and the small group of Mormons made it to a back alley. Here they ducked into the safety of the home of one of the local members. The mob milled around the rest of the night searching for them. Needless to say, that was their last street meeting "for a while".

Later, in the winter of 1858, Samuel and Edwin got work in the old Gentry Pit Mines. The seam was 18" to 20" high. Their brother, Henry, came out to visit them while there and after some time joined the church and was baptized by Edwin in the early part of 1856.

Samuel married Mary Ann, 15 Nov 1858, at Tabor Chapel, Bryn Mawr Co of Brecon, Wales. They had two children, Sarah Maria Cox, born 1 Feb 1861 at Briarhill, England and a son, Samuel Edward Cox. Samuel left to find employment. Samuel wrote back to his wife, but her mother, who opposed her daughter's marriage to that "Mormon," kept Samuel's letters from her. Mary Ann's mother made her think that Samuel had deserted her and thus separated them.

Mary Ann then married a Mr. Williams and had another son. (Samuel's daughter, Sarah Maria Cox was sealed to Mr. Williams. Sarah Maria Cox later came to Utah where she married James Alexander Boyack and they lived at Spanish Fork. She had contact with Samuel and his new family. The boy, Samuel Edward, died at sea.)

Leaving Wales. Samuel went to London where he got work as a wheelwright and while in these shops he learned carpentering and painting skills. He spent some time with the theatre on the Shakespearean stage in London, England and continued in the dramatic and musical fields periodically

all his life.

SARAH GANE

Sarah Gane was born 17 Nov. 1833 in Shepton Mallet, Sommerset, to George Gane and Jane Marchant. The family moved to London. When Sarah was four years old she was given the great honor of being a flower girl at Queen Victoria's coronation. Her father, George Gane, was a palace guard and marched in the coronation parade carrying a large banner. It was a very hot day and he suffered a heat stroke and became very ill. He never fully regained his health.

In 1841 Sarah's mother, Jane Marchant Gane, suffered a stroke that paralyzed her. For the next ten years, Sarah and her sister cared for their invalid mother until her death on 4 May 1850. In later years Sarah became an excellent midwife and practical nurse. Much of this talent was developed as she cared for her mother during this time.

(Sarah's brother, Joseph Gane, was well known in London. He was mayor of Windsor three times and was in charge of wedding arrangements when King Edward VII, the son of Queen Victoria, was married in 1863).

After her parent's death, Sarah went to work as a cook in a gentleman's home. She met the missionaries and was baptized into the church the day after her 36th birthday, on 18 Nov 1869 in London, England. It is quite possible that Sarah was introduced to the missionaries by her sister Ellen, who was baptized 4 months earlier on 21 July 1869.

The following year, Sarah married Samuel Cox on 2 Aug 1870. It is also possible that they met at church in London. Their first and only child was born 12 June 1871 in London and they named her Sarah Marchant Cox after her grandmother, Jane Marchant.

The Coxes felt to gather with the saints in Zion. So when the baby was but one month old they set sail for America. The Captain of the vessel warned them that the baby would never survive the trip, but they had faith that she would be alright. The ship encountered a bad storm at sea and many were sea sick, but baby Sarah came through with no problems. The Captain said he liked to take Mormon groups as they always had a safe voyage.

They lived briefly in Ogden Utah where Samuel worked as a builder. He afterwards moved to St. George where he assisted in building the Temple and some of his handiwork is still to be seen.

He was called to settle the San Juan country and was with the group who went through the Hole in the Rock.

THE COXES IN UTAH

Samuel and Sarah and baby Sarah Cox traveled to Utah by train. They did not have a long stay in Ogden before they were sent out to pioneer other places in southern Utah. They suffered the hardships common to early pioneers. Money was non-existent and commodities were scarce. Sarah tells of receiving a letter from her brother, Joseph. He inquired about her life in America and asked if she needed any money. Sarah did not tell him of her need for money because she remembered how he had tried to borrow her emigration money to stop her from coming to Zion.

They went to Cedar City then on to St. George where Samuel worked on the temple. In 1879 they were called with other families on a pioneer mission to settle Bluff, in San Juan, Co. to establish peace with the Indians and protect the southern settlements from bands of white renegades.

After a hard day of travel or work Samuel was never too tired to play his violin. He loved music and he could really make a violin sing. It was music for the soul, better than any medicine.

In southern Utah, doctors were seldom seen and hospitals were absent. Sarah Cox became an angel of mercy to the sick and injured. She often rode horseback, being gone for 2 or days at time to

serve someone in need. She was an excellent midwife and practical nurse. There was no night too dark or weather too stormy, no journey too lonely when she was needed. It must have been worrisome to Samuel and daughter, Sarah, for her to be gone alone in such a dangerous environment.

Sarah Gane Cox took with her to Bluff, a little wood "Charter Oak" stove to cook on. This was considered quite a luxury, as most of the people cooked over the fireplaces. Sarah Cox took that little stove with them wherever they moved and used it the rest of her life. Later in life, they bought her a modern range, but she preferred to keep her little "Charter Oak."

They were often in fear for their lives. They not only had to contend with Indians, but also with all the white renegades who chose that out of the way and wild country to hide from the law. Whenever they left the settlement, they would dig a hole in the ground to hide their little stove, so that the Indians or renegades could not find it.

The Sun Juan river was very unpredictable and often washed out the dams that they had laboured so hard to build to irrigate their fields and gardens. Then the water would wash away their land, gardens and everything within reach. It was very discouraging and impossible to raise enough food to have what they needed to eat.

Their daughter, Sarah Marchant Cox, was around eight years old when they made the rugged trip to Bluff. The sun and sand was so hot that little Sarah always wore her sunbonnet. She would run a little way in her bare feet, then take off her bonnet and stand on it to cool her feet, then run again.

Sometime later, they were among the first settlers of Price, Utah. Their daughter, Sarah, grew to young womanhood. At eighteen, she fell in love and married Erastus Olsen on 27 December 1889, in Provo Utah.

Clarence was their first born son. Erastus and Sarah were sealed in the Manti temple on the 21 of September 1892. Nine days later, their second son, Elmer, a year old, took sick and died. Three more children were born in Price - Clara, Gane, and Murrel.

Early in 1898 Erastus Olsen decided he was tired of trying to get enough water to farm with. So he persuaded the family including Grandpa and Grandma Cox to move to Canada. Before leaving Price, Sarah went to the store and bought among other things, two cans of baking powder to take with them. The store was giving tickets on that brand of baking powder just then. Sarah, joking with the storeowner, put her tickets in the box and hurried home. Some people were buying as many as one hundred cans of baking powder to try to win the prize, which was a large music box, which played 12 different tunes. The next morning one of the townfolks rode by and asked Sarah if she was going down to pick up her music box? On finding she had won she saw to it that it was picked up before leaving town. For the rest of her life, she treasured this music box.

In 1897, the Erastus Olsen and the Cox families moved to Canada. They made the trip by train to Lethbridge Alberta and took their horses and other belongings with them. There was no train from there to Cardston in those days. So the last 60 miles of the journey had to be made by wagons. Their first year in Canada was spent in a little log cabin in Cardston, just east of Biglow home. There Charles was born and 27 days later he died.

The next year the families moved to a small farm in Aetna. Grandpa Cox built a little rock house across the street from the Olsen home so Grandma Cox could trot back and forth to see that everything was taken care of. Erastus improved the farm by planting a row of trees along the windward side. They were all kept busy in the ward, Grandma Cox was president of the Relief Society. Grandpa Cox led the choir and helped put on plays in the M.I.A. where his daughter Sarah was Young Women's president. Sarah loved to take part in plays and to teach young people how to act in the plays.

Three more children were born to the Olsen's - Ray (1900) died when 3 days old, Myrtle (1901) and Melvin (1903)

The people of Aetna found a true friend in Grandma Cox. She was a devoted Relief Society, president, practical nurse and mid-wife. Everyone called for her to deliver their babies and to look after anyone who was sick or had an accident. She never expected any pay but gave her services to all who were in need of them. She was called on at any time of the day or night. Everyone thought a great deal of her wherever she went.

The farm was small and land was high price, and difficult to obtain. So in 1905 they bought 480 acres of land 13 miles south west of Cardston (1 mile west of Beazer). Sarah Cox was at once put in as YWMIA President (1905 and Erastus was president of the YMMIA (1905) Grandma Cox was placed again in as Relief Society President and Grandpa Cox was asked to lead the choir and be the ward drama director.

Samuel Cox organized Beazer's first Dramatic Company and was the first director. Samuel and James B. Wright built a stage in the newly built church house in 1907. A back drop and side wings were made for the purpose of putting on plays or theatres as they were called. He painted scenery on one side and covered the other side with wall paper.

Under the direction of Samuel Cox began a period of dramatic presentations that kept the local people entertained and enthused and put Beazer on the map theatrically. They gave many would-be thespians their turn before the footlights. After playing to the home audience the troupe would pack their props and costumes; and go by wagon or sleigh to some of the surrounding towns. Some of these towns would exchange their plays with Beazer in return. Beazer's first 3 act play of record was entitled "Handy Andy".

Grandma Cox was a small woman, hard working and extremely active. She continued to practice as a practical nurse and mid-wife, caring for the sick as she had done every where they had lived. She brought more than 300 babies into this world without the aid of a doctor. However when her daughter went into labor with her tenth child, Carl (1906) she felt very apprehensive and pleaded with Erastus to take her to the doctor in Cardston. Later a doctor made several visits to Beazer but could find nothing wrong, and was astonished when he heard she died.

Sarah Marchant Cox Olsen died from complications of childbed fever three weeks later on 25 July 1906. She was buried the next day in Aetna. Beazer Ward lost a talented actress and a loving and caring Mutual President. She died at the age of 35 leaving 7 living children from 23 days to 17 years of age.

It was a frightening time for the children, the country was new, and many nights they huddled in their beds listening to the howling of the wolves. The family had a young colt and at night they would lock it in the fenced hay stack yard near the barn. One night they lay in their beds listening as the wolves killed the colt right in the stack yard.

After Sarah died, the Coxes continue to live with and care for the Olsen family. The next year (1907) Samuel bought the east 80 acres of the farm and built a home on it. Later he moved this home down into Beazer across from the school house so they could be nearer the school and church where they were janitors for many years.

They continued to care for the three youngest children until the baby Carl became 6 years old and Grandma Cox suffered a slight stroke. She was indeed a hard worker and when friends cautioned her about working too hard, she had a favorite answer. "When I die I'll have the satisfaction of knowing I didn't rust out. " The next year she suffered another stroke that left her bedridden. On 23 Jan. 1915 at age 81, grandma suffered a massive stroke and died.

Friends came from far and near to spend the days and nights with her. Many friends from Aetna came by, sleigh to help out while she was bedridden. They recalled the many days of service that Sarah had freely given. She was indeed a well loved woman.

It was very cold and snowy and Samuel built a double cement underground vault for the two of them. He put a lighted lantern in to keep it from freezing until it was set. As a young man he had seen the bottom fall out of a casket and the body fall to the ground. He wanted the best for Sarah. He bought some maple wood and with the help of his friend, Mr. Cahoon, they built a beautiful well finished casket. The Relief Society sisters lined it with satin and lace and covered the outside with white velvet brocade. The handles and breastwork were of finest silver. It was said to be the most beautiful casket anyone had ever seen. A beautiful resting place for a choice daughter of Heavenly Father.

Samuel used his carpenter tools wherever they were needed. He helped build and paint the school house. He was the janitor of the church and school. He taught religion classes in the school for many years. While he encouraged drama and music with the adults, he also had a spot for the children. He taught them how to make wooden swords and toy canons and drilled them ready for the Dominion Day parades.

Samuel Cox was a master of the violin and loved to entertain. He took a dry apple box and shaped and glued the pieces together to fashion a good looking violin. He made violins for others and he made toys, bedsteads, and other things. He carved the dog heads on the arms of the easy chair that he often napped in.

Marta Margareta Ruda worked in the Swedish mission office. One of the missionaries played matchmaker and brought her to Canada to marry Samuel. She spoke little English and Samuel could speak no Swedish, but she learned the language well for one of her years and they got along fine.

She was very hospitable, accommodating person and she continued to care for Erastus' three younger children. Marta was a lovely person and everyone loved her. She found it very hard to understand the careless ways of the people in America. She was a staunch Latter-day Saint and had taken care of the missionaries in Sweden. She enjoyed going to the temple and was a fine cook and homemaker. She enjoyed caring for cows and chickens.

Marta was the school janitor from 1927 to 1934 and they say that she kept the schoolroom spotless. She received \$105 in 1927, which was later raised to \$150 a year. In the Dominion Day Celebration of 1933, Aunt Martha sang the national anthem of Sweden in Swedish. On 25 Feb 1935 Marta died of heart problems.

Samuel made his own casket many years before he died. At the age of 89, Samuel Cox died on the 17th of May 1926 and was buried in Beazer, Alberta. His love and service to all will long be remembered.