

A Brief History Of Thomas Samuel Bladen

Written by His Daughter Rhoda Bladen Willis

For The Cedar City Camp Of The D.U.P.

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Submitted by-
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Thomas Samuel Bladen, son of Thomas and Mary Cattle Bladen, was born in Cedar City, Utah November 13, 1852. He was the second boy born in Cedar City, being just a few minutes younger than Stephen Walker, the first boy born in Cedar City.

His parents and five sisters, Mary Ann, Eunice, Elizabeth, Margaret and Alice all natives of England, emigrated to Utah in the year 1851. Their voyage was one of trials, and sorrow, as a bad epidemic of cholera broke out among those on board ship while they were crossing the ocean. His mother was very sick and his sister Elizabeth died just as they were about to land. They buried her on land under a lone tree beside the lonely grave of another young girl. With sad hearts, they continued their journey and after eleven months of traveling with ox-teams and all of the trials and hardships of such a long journey, they finally reached Cedar where they made their home, and where their two sons, Thomas and Cornelius C. Bladen were born.

His father, a skilled mechanic and iron-worker, was born in Madley, Shropshire, England on June 9, 1816, and died in Cedar City on February 9, 1899, at the age of eighty-two years, eight months.

His mother was a ribbon weaver. She was born in Artrill, Warwickshire, England on August 18, 1814, and died in Cedar City on April 12, at the age of eighty-two years, eight months.

After living here about five years, his father becoming very dissatisfied of the hardships of pioneer life, was possessed with an overwhelming desire to return to his native land. At this time he was called on to fulfil a mission there, and left Cedar in April 1856. After his mission, he did not return for many years, and his wife with her little children, struggled bravely on through all the hardships of pioneer life.

His mother would work hard all day, for a little flour, sugar, soap, or anything that she could use and it was very little she could get for a hard day's work.

Often, their meal was only a hard dry crust, and the boys would go out to the ditch and dip it into the water to make it more palatable and many time they would have to go out in the brush and dig sego to get something to eat. Then when times were a little better, and they could have a spot of molasses in the center of their slice of bread, that was a real luxury, and they would eat all around the spot of molasses first and save the piece with molasses on for the last precious bite.

Winter and summer the boys went barefoot, not knowing what it was to wear shoes until they were about sixteen years old.

There home for a number of years was a dirt cellar, with a small cupboard put in the dirt walls on the two sides and across the back end and the wall formed a shelf.

In those days, the Indians were rather troublesome, and the few ~~xxxx~~ cattle owned by the people of the town had to be herded on the meadows below town, so the boys of the town took turns in herding.

The two brothers, Thomas and Neil took their turn with the rest. One old Indian would always come and take their lunch away from them. They got tired of that and decided they would fight him if they had to, so they armed themselves with their pockets full of rocks and a club, and when he came they would let him know they intended to fight. He finally went away jabbering to himself and they were, not bothered by him again.

The two brothers worked the greater part of their lives, and in their young manhood their interests were one. As time went by they obtained a little more land to farm and a few head of cows and horses, but for many years, they worked with ox-teams. Then as times grew better, they were able by, working for building material, and by exchanging one kind of work for another to build a home over the old dirt cellar, in which they had lived so long.

In the year 1877 Thomas was one of a company of 14 called to work on the Manti Temple. While there his work was quarrying rock. The company worked there for four months. Sister Marian Arthur was their cook while there.

On April 15, 1879 he was called with a company of nine others from Cedar to go on an exploring trip in San Juan county. Those called from Cedar were John C. Dun, Robert Bulloch, James Davis and family, John T. Gower, Joseph Neilson, George Urie, George Perry, Kumen Jones, Thomas S. Bladen and Jesse N. Smith, chaplain of the company. They were gone about six months and made three hundred and thirty miles of new road and traveled altogether eight hundred and eighty miles.

On January 27, 1882, he was married to Eliza Ellen Adams in the St. George Temple. They are the parents of nine children, three of whom are diseased. Those diseased are: an infant son, Miss Amy Bladen and Mrs. Mary Lambeth. Those living are: Mrs. Rhoda Willis, Mrs. Peter F. Leigh, Mrs. Lewis Ence, Mrs. Clifton McConnell, Mrs. Henry H. Mc Connell and Thomas A. Bladen all of Cedar City.

In the fall of 1885 after he had moved his family from his ranch at Three Creeks where he had been dairying during the summer, he moved back to the mountain to a place called, "The Old Setting", somewhere near Orderville grove. He took his wife with him to cook for the men who were logging and sawing the lumber for the "Old Tabernacle". Sarah Bauer, then just a young girl helped with the house work. Lehi W. Jones, William Tucker, Simon Matheson, George Perry Jr., John Coppin, George Hunter, Samuel Leigh, Daniel T. Leigh and Thomas S. Bladen were the nine men. They worked there about six weeks.

On July 31, 1894 he received a call to go on a mission to Great Britian. On October 6, he bade his aged parents and his wife and six little daughters goodby and left by team for Milford where he took a train for Salt Lake City. He left Salt Lake on October 13, and arrived in New York October 18th. On October 20th, he set sail on the Ethiopia in company with fourteen elders. After eleven days on the ocean they landed at Liverpool October 31st. From there he was sent to Cardiff to labor in the Welsh conference. It had always been his desire to visit his parents native land, and to meet and talk with some of his relatives there, and also some of his wife,s relatives. While there he was granted a leave of duty for this purpose. He met quite a number of his people and was well treated. One of his cousins surprised him by calling him by name, before he could tell him who he was.

Although his health was anything but good, while in England, he ~~en~~ ~~h~~ enjoyed his missionary work very much and felt well paid for his efforts and the time he had spent there. On November 14, 1896, he received the welcome news of honorable release.

He was to set sail for home December 3, 1896 on the Steamship Circassia. There was an awful storm during their voyage. The Captian said it was the worst he had ever witnessed in the fifteen years that he had been on the water. All on board were thankful when they landed safely at New York on December 17th. From there he took the steamer York Town down the coast to Norfolk, Virginia, where he took the west bound train. From Milford, he came on by team, arriving home about nine or ten oclock Christmas eve 1896. He had been away twenty-six months and eighteen days, and was thankful and happy to be home with his family.

In 1896 he was appointed a member of the main committee to take charge of the building of the Branch Normal school, now the Branch Agriculture College of Utah. This committee and the people of the town were faced with the task of providing ground, financing and constructing the school in the dead of winter. The success with which this difficult task was accomplished stands as a tribute to the foresight and courage of the committee and the citizens of the town. His brother also did his part, working at the saw mill hauling logs and lumber on sleds with their faithful team Hank and Rum.

In 1907 he with others formed a company to produce electricity for Cedar City. For fifteen years he worked hard to promote the interests of the company, often going in the night, winter and summer to work on the canal which was a constant source of trouble.

He did considerable work on the Old Ward Hall, and was among the first to buy stock in the Bank Of Southern Utah.

He was a member of the "Old Brass Band", which for many years was the center of attraction on hollidays and on many other occasions.

For a number of years he and his wife were members of the committee in charge of the "Old Folks Annual Party", and did their part with the other members to make the parties a pleasure and a success.

For many years he called for dances, such as the Scotch Reel, Speed the Plow, The Tempest, Upper Reel and quite a variety of quadrilles. He often went to the neighboring towns, Parowan, Beaver, Toquerville and New Harmony to call for dances. He enjoyed dancing himself and liked to see others dance and enjoy themselves, but he could not tolerate rudeness or vulgarity. To him, a dance was a place of pleasure and ~~xxxxxxxx~~ strict refinement.

He was a lover of good music and singing, and preferred the good old songs.

He was a man who never cared for public office or speaking. He ~~pre~~ preferred to take his part in other ways. He was not afraid of hard work, and always did his share of it never putting pleasure before duty.

He was honest in his dealings and expected the same of others. He was a lover of nature, s beauties and did not like to see things destroyed.

He took great pride in his farming, and in partnership with his brother farmed in the Cedar fields and also on his ranch at Three Creeks, where they raised excellent crops of barley, oats and potatoes as well as a vegetable garden.

Early every spring he would go to the ranch and plant his crops and later move his family there to dairy and take care of the garden, while he divided his time farming there and in the Cedar fields. They also raised a good garden in town.

In the last few years of his life when his health was failing, and he could not take care of things as he used to, it hurt him to see things neglected.

The last few weeks of his life were ones of constant suffering, and he felt that death would be a happy release to him. He died February 7, 1920 at the age of sixty-seven years and six months and twenty-three days.

Perhaps some people thought him stern, but his best friends knew him better. He expected his children to mind and was always thoughtful of their welfare. He would romp and play with them, and sing jolly and lively songs for them.

We, who knew him best, think of the good life he lived, of the good advice he gave, and we shall always cherish his memory.

A copy of the above sketch was loaned to Wallace H. Adair by ~~the~~ Bell Armstrong, historian for the Daughters of the Utah Pioneer in the first ward, Cedar City, Utah and recopied for the Federal Writers' W.P.A. Ogden, Utah.

Submitted by Wallace H. Adair
Iron County Worker

I hereby certify that the foregoing history is an exact copy of the original sketch by Rhoda Bladen Willis which was written by her from family records.

Lillian B. Cozby
Cedar City Librarian