

A Brief History of Thomas Samuel Bladen

Written by his Daughter Rhoda Bladen Willis

For the Cedar City Camp of the D. U. P.

Cedar City, Utah, January 1937.

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, being just a few minutes younger than Stephen Walker, the first boy born in Cedar.

His parents and his 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 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 fulfill 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 any thing that she could use and it was very little she would get for a hard days work.

Often their meal was only a dry hard crust, and the boys would go out to the ditch and dip it in the water to make it more palatable and many times they would have to go out in the brush and dig segos to get something to eat. Then when times were a little better and they could have a spot of molasses in the center 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 the 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.

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

In those days the Indians were rather troublesome, and the few 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 at 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 pockets full of rocks, and a club, when he came they let him know they intended to fight. He finally went away jabbering to himself and they weren't 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 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. Duncon, Robert Bulloch, James Davis and family, John T. Gower, Joseph Neilson, George Urie, George Perry, Kumen Jones, Thomas S. Bladen, and Jessie 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 deceased. Those deceased 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 Mc. Connell; 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 their ranch at Three Creeks where they 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 Britain. On Oct. 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 18. On October 20, he set sail on the Ethiopia in company with

fourteen elderd. After eleven days on the ocean they landed at Liverpool October 31. From there he was sent to Cardiff to labor in the welch 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 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 recieved the welcome news of his 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 captain said it was the worst he had 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 17. 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 o'clock 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 Agricultural 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 holidays and on many other occasions.

For a number of years he and his wife were members of the committee in charge of the Old Folk's annual party, and did their part with the other members to make the parties a pleasure and success.

For many years he called for dances such as the: Scotch Reel; Speed the Plow; The Tempest; Uprer Reel; Virginia Reel; and quite a variety of quadrilles. He often went to theneighboring towns , Parowan; Beaver , Toquerville, and 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 strict refinement.

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

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He was a man who never cared for public office or speaking. He 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 on 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 if he could 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 67 years two months, and 23 days.

Perhaps some people thought him stern, 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.

Copy of Thomas Bladen' Citizenship Certificate, made from the original
by John K. Bladen.

Certificate of Declaration.
State of New York.
County of Rensselaer, Troy Justice Court,--ss.

Be it Remembered, that THOMAS BLADEN, a native of England, appeared in the Justice Court of the City of Troy,--the said court being a court of record, Having a common law jurisdiction, and a cleark and seal--on the 18th day of April, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seventy, and declared on Oath in open Court, that it was his bona fide intention to become a Citizen of the United States, and to renounce forever all allegiance and fidelity to any and every foreign Prince, Potentate, State or Sovereignty whatsoever; and particularly the QUEEN OF GREAT BRITAIN.

In Testimony Whereof, the seal of the said Justice Court of the City of Troy is hereunto affixed, this 18th day of April in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seventy, and in the 94th of the Independence of the United States.

By the court,

John Kennedy Clerk

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Thos. Bladen Sr. was the son of Wm. Bladen and Margaret Baker. He was born June 9, 1816 in Maddley, Shropshire, England.

He, along with his wife and five small daughters, came to the United States as a convert of the Mormon Church. During this trip, one of the younger daughters was stricken with cholera and died just before landing in the U. S.. She was buried on shore. No definite knowledge of the exact date of their landing was found, but it is believed that it was about 1849. In an article written by John D. Lee in the Nov. 29th 1851 edition of the Frontier Guardian, he tells of their settlement that fall in Juab, on Salt Creek, in Millard County. It was then quite safe to travel with small escort from Juab to Parowan in Iron county. There was also an extension of Parowan south, about twenty miles, on what was known as the Little Muddy, on Coal Creek (now Cedar City) where coal was found.

Bro. Caruthers was appointed to reside there, and about twenty-five men were also located there. Brother Bladen and others, who understood the manufacturing of iron, were in that company. Brother Bladen engineered and made the model of their first blast furnace as shown herewith. He also helped cast two iron bells from the first run of iron. The larger bell was used to call the workers to work, and was mounted between posts inside the old fort. The smaller bell was used to call the settlers to church.

In another report to Pres. Young written by John D. Lee in the Frontier Guardian of 1852, it states that Bro. Bladen was in favor of erecting a water power system sufficient to give the ore a fair trial, as Mr. Bladen was confident of the ore's possibilities. But in case the percentage of the ore was not sufficient to warrant the establishment of an iron works, this power could be converted to mill purposes or other machinery without much loss.

For some time the iron industry seemed to be making progress. Then came the outbreak of the Walker War with the Indians in 1853. This stopped all operations as all energies of the colonists were turned to defense against the enemy. This set back to the iron industry was followed by severe floods down Coal Creek which took out or destroyed the first furnace. Finances were exhausted and more missionaries were sent out to recruit more skilled workers and finances. Mr. Bladen's interest was in everything that could be made if iron for the use of the colonists could help with the building up of a great industry in Zion.

Two sons, Thomas S. and Cornelius C., were born to Bladen and his wife at Little Muddy (Cedar City).

Bladen was called to go back to England on a mission mainly to convert and enlist iron workers to come here and help to open up the immense iron field that Brigham Young saw was necessary to the success of his colony of Latter Day Saints.

Bro. Thos. Bladen arrived in Liverpool with other missionaries on Aug. 7, 1856, where he remained several years. While there he received an unsigned letter telling him that his family had been wiped out by the Indians. He then returned to Schenectady, N. Y. where he re-married. But in 1888 he learned that his family at Cedar City was still living so he returned there. He passed away on Feb. 9, 1899.

Copy of this letter written by Thos. Bladen Sr, to his wife (Mary C.) on
Apr. 13th, 1856, from Salt Lake City just before leaving for a mission to England

Dear Wife, I take up my pen to write a few lines to inform you that I have arrived in this city in good 'elth and all that was with me. My mules look well thank God for it. I have made arrangements with Brother Snow to go with 'im to the states, also purchased some goods from 'im to the amount of 70 dollars and one yoke of cattle 90 dollars, that is the best I can dew at this time for you and the children. The goods consist of 4 lbs tea, 2 cups for the two sons, two brass kettles, 6 cups and saucers, 2 teaspoons, some dress pieces, 4 pair of sox for you and 2 for Eunice. One bold of factory 40 yards, 13 yards of drillin. Could not get any smaller size at this store. One hide of calf-skin, and two large pieces of sole leather, 2 balls of hamp, some cotton and thread, 2 lbs of epsom salts. I could not get any sugar or coffee or candles or pepper at this store. I could get them at the others if I had money. I have done all I can at this time. Seed all the land and take care of all the produce from it. I have selected to the best advantage I could out of what there was in the store. That's my timporal blessing for you at this time. As soon as I can I will send you another. Leaving the lord to help you and all you have, hoping that I may be preserved from all danger till I return to my family. If I can send you what you need will as soon as possibly can. The arrangements I made with Brother Groves is all sun away.

Thomas Dowel stead of going to the states, they sent 'im to the Sanwich Islands.

Jese Lowes will bring you a yoke of oxen and wagon and they are your own.

The reports of the loss of brethren property in Iron County as not arrived in this city yet. I find only 6 days service in the Indiar War, that is all the returns to my credit, for they showed me, and it is gone to Washington. I am at Brother Long, Brother and sister Long give the joined love to you and all their acquaintances. I sent the leather instead of boots and shoes, you can have them made to your mind. Tell Joe Clews its a blessing he is not come, for Salt Lake is poor times. Flour is high, 12 dollars to 20 a hundred and can't be got at that.

So I remain your affectionate husband and father, and may the lord bless you and the children and all you have, amen.

Thomas Bladen.