

The Life of John Henry Cazier¹ written by himself

Being in a reminiscent mood, I will attempt to dictate a brief autobiographic sketch of my early life. I was born in Nephi, Juab County, Utah, May 19, 1859.

My father was a Virginian, born March 14, 1821. My mother was of English extraction, born June 14, 1841. She joined the Mormon church in England and immigrated to the United States in 1854. The crossing of the Atlantic was made in thirteen weeks in a sailing vessel.

My father was enroute to Utah with the first Mormon immigrants when war was declared with Mexico. He enlisted in the Mexican war and left his first family in Council Bluffs, Iowa. After the war he was honorably discharged in California and made his way back to Council Bluffs before the first immigrants to Utah, reaching there, I think, about the year 1848, moving to Nephi about 1851 and living there up to the time of his death in 1890. My father enduring many hardships and deprivations during his early days in Utah. He was always called upon in emergencies. When there was a hazardous journey to make he always responded to the peoples' call and was always commended for his bravery and respected by both his friends and the Indians.

I remember distinctly one time when the Indians had committed many depredations. The leaders were caught and taken to Sanpete County for trial. They objected to going with the men designated to conduct them and insisted on John Cazier being deligated to see them safely to their destination. Although they knew he was an uncompromising foe to their wrong doing they knew that if he promised their safe conduct he would be as good as his word.

Another incident I remember was an uprising of the Indians in Thistle Valley. They annihilated a whole family of whites, except for one little girl. She crept away and hid and afterward was found by them and quartered alive. This so enraged the white settlers they turned out enmasse and scoured the country, finally capturing the Indians responsible for the crime in the Red hills east of Nephi. They were brought to Nephi and executed.

I remember very well us boys of curiosity stealthily crept down by the mud wall and witnessed their execution. They were tied with straps taken from the horses halters, and, as I remember, most of them were shot by a man of the name of Kislin, a merchant of Nephi.

We had to live very economically when I was a boy, there being a scarcity of both food and clothing. While I do not remember ever going hungry our fare was very meager at times. Although my father was harsh spoken and rough in his ways he was generous and indulgent to a fault with his family and although his language did not indicate that he was a religious man the people counted upon him as one of the pillars of their church and

¹ Son of John & Angeline Hallowel Cazier.

community. I remember well one of his oldest acquaintances, in speaking at his funeral, likened him to a diamond in the rough.

My mother too was very ambitious and made the best of everything. I remember well day after day and week after week of seeing her take the raw wool from the sheep, scour it, card it into rolls, spin it into yarn, weave it into cloth and make it into clothing for us without having it ever leave our home. Many a night after going to bed I have heard the spinning wheel, and the shuttle being thrown through the warp in the loom until all hours of the night.

My father maintained what was termed in those days a polygamist family and while I do not remember more than one wife besides my mother I understood there were others, so to be candid in this narrative I could not say definitely how many mothers I was blessed with.

My own mother had a wonderful memory and often related to us children incidents and anecdotes of the early days in crossing the plains and in the settlement of Utah which I would give a great deal to be able to relate at this time but which seemed just the natural course of events at that time and had I been competent to record then I perhaps would not have done so. My mother's family consisted of eight living children, three died while young.

We did not get much schooling or other advantage in those days in Utah.

When I was twelve years of age, my father being a freighter, I commenced driving a freight team, going on freighting expeditions at first with my father. Having no shoes, I went barefoot until my feet were as hard and as resistant to stones and other obstacles as the tires of an automobile now are and even to this day I have blisters on my toes owing to the nails being stubbed off so often.

While my father was freighting he pretended to conduct a farm too, and I alternated between the farm and the freight business until I was twenty years of age. I gained a slight knowledge of farming and irrigating. In those days when our turn came around to take the water we irrigated all night and many a night I have jumped from dry ground to what I thought was a dry spot and landed in mud and foam up to my knees.

At the age of twenty I joined my father's freight outfit and went to Montana, freighting all over that state before there were any railroads there. We went to Fort Benton on the Missouri river, as far up as the river was navigable, and would load from there up to the mining camps and then back to Snake River, Idaho, where the terminus of the Utah Northern railroad was at that time, and freight from there back north again. In fact we would get a load of freight to almost any place we wished to go. While I was only a boy I shod my own mules, did my own collecting and purchasing and remitted the net earnings to my father in Utah.

In those days there were many ox teams. I have seen as high as sixteen yoke of cattle and five wagons driven by one man. There were some of the finest mule teams I have ever seen. The grass was so plentiful that the cattle they worked were fatter than our

steers get to be on the range now and we only fed our mules just enough oats to catch them with.

While I did not see any Indian trouble while there the freighters had a good deal of trouble just previous to that time and I have seen wagons with the spokes riddled with bullet marks. I was told they had been used as a barricade against the Indians.

It was December when I came out of Montana. I had one wagon loaded with miners and another loaded with Chinamen, reserving one for myself. I remember crossing what they called the Divide out of Montana into Idaho in very rough weather. In crossing Divide creek I got stuck. I could not pull my outfit through so I got off on the trail tongue of my swing wagon and attempted to uncouple the chain and give the team some slack so they could start one wagon at a time. In doing so I lost my balance and fell off into the creek. By the time I regained the bank my clothes were coated with ice and I was set through. Had I not had those miners along no doubt I would have frozen to death as the temperature was below zero at the time. There being no wood in sight, the miners cut down some telegraph poles and made a fire. I could relate many incidents that would have tried the mettle of any boy in my freighting experiences.

After quitting Montana I came back to Utah and engaged in construction work on the railroad between what was then called York and Milford, on the old Utah Central. I worked at that until it reached Frisco and then went to work around the mines and smelters. At the time the smelters closed in Frisco I had the contract to supply the Frisco Smelting Company with charcoal. I remained in Frisco about six years and was engaged about two years of that time in running a hoisting engine at the Rattler mine.

I always took great pride in my work. Whatever I did I did as thoroughly and orderly as I could. I never left a job without the best wishes of my employers.

While I was chopping wood I worked with Nova Scotians who were very proficient axe men. Although I had less experience than a great many of them I could chop more wood than any of them. They called me the creator of wood.

While I was working at Frisco, and after an acquaintance since childhood and a courtship extending over a couple of years, I married on January 1, 1883, Elizabeth A. Jones, second daughter of Edward and Martha Jackson Jones. Although I had only a few hundred dollars saved we were both blessed with health, ambition and the irresistible exuberance of youth to an unlimited extent and although we were both young and inexperienced we always lived within our means and had something laid by for a rainy day. In fact I felt the humiliation so keenly whenever my father was not able to meet his obligations that I resolved to never contract a debt that I could not pay and with the helpful cooperation of my wife I have been able to make good until recently.

After leaving Frisco I tried farming on a small scale at Nephi, Utah on a place we had paid for out of our savings but the pay days came so far apart, and as I had always been used to having money to meet my obligations when due, I could not content myself and so began to cast about for other employment.

After working a short time in the mines of Utah, Mr. N. S. Jackson of Toano, Nevada requested me to come and drive a freight outfit for him and as I always liked teaming and was considered an expert mule driver I accepted and arrived in Toano on March 22, 1887. After remaining in his employ for about a year the forwarding company offered to fit up teams for me, giving me time to pay for them. I was successful from the beginning, soon paying for my teams and when Mr. Goble of Toano wanted to sell out his hotel and other property there they advanced the money for me to buy the property and finally at the death of one of the members of the forwarding commission firm I bought his interest in that business and engaged in the forwarding and commission business for about eight years. I was also postmaster of Toano and proprietor of the hotel at that period of time, finally selling out the merchandising business to my partner, Mr. A. E. Spencer and buying the ranch on which I now live in 1898, conducting the ranching and stock raising business here since that date and building up one of the best herds of Hereford cattle that was ever in the state, together with the ranching property that was worth several hundred thousand dollars.

Through all of my experiences I have made it a point to never pay less than I have promised and have even paid more when I thought it was earned by faithful service.

Throughout all my life I have been treated with the utmost courtesy by both young and old and have found friends to lend a helping hand and even those who have proffered help without the asking. I have often felt that I have been treated with greater consideration than I deserved.