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Life Sketch of Mary E. Cox Whiting
by Lucinda Cox

Mary Elizabeth Cox daughter of Johnathan Upham Cox and Lucinda Blood Cox was born Dec. 15, 1826 in Oswego, Trogo County, N.Y. Her story follows: My father was a miller but the last two years of his life he was almost an invalid and his work in the mill was carried on by his oldest boys. We were a large family - twelve children. Father died when I was a little girl three years old and my brother, Johnathan was born six months after my father's death which occurred in April 1830. William, my oldest brother was twenty years of age and on his young shoulders devolved nearly the whole care of the family but he had the whole care of the mill for so long it was a comparatively easy for him with the help of his two brothers next younger than he, Charles 18 and Walter 16, both of whom looked to William for council in all things.

We were all taught obedience and I never heard jars among the boys as one might expect among a large number. Mother was never well after father died though she lived years. When I was six and one half years old William thought it best to move to the northern part of Ohio so that he could get some land to farm and have employment for the younger boys and he accordingly went to Nelson, Portage County, Ohio and secured 80 acres of woodland covered with heavy timber of all kinds with a thick growth of underbrush. He then came back and took mother and the five small children and came on the canal to Buffalo, then across Lake Erie to Painsville. A team met us there and we soon passed thirty miles arriving at our new home. But what a change! --a log house in the center of a little clearing, most of the trees and brush being cut out and burned. Fences made of split rails laid one upon another enclosed the place. It was many days before it seemed like home but we children soon found delight in the new home that compensated for what we had left behind. Mother never gained in health but grew worse until she died: when we were left to shift for ourselves. The three oldest boys were married and so homes were found for Johnathan and me. The others were at work where they had a chance and the home was sold. The proceeds after mother's expenses were taken out were divided among the family without a jar that I ever heard. Walter was married to Emiline Whiting about two years before mother died and as the boys began to leave home about that time we were seldom together.

William married Sarah Ann Beebee before Walter was married. I went to live with a Mr. Barber in Nelson, Ohio and Johnathan, a Mr. Rote in Mindham. Mother died in December 1838 and was buried in Nelson.

Walter Cox and Edwin Whiting with their families and Amos Cox, 16 years old, had gone to Missouri at that time, the gathering place of the Latter Day Saints. None of us had ever heard the gospel only as we heard of "Old Joe Smith and his gold Bible" and everyone thought that Mormonism would soon be a thing of the past and forgotten so were surprised to learn that Walter and Emiline also Edwin and Elizabeth had joined the Mormon Church in Missouri and they were soon driven with the rest of the Saints from the state

and settled in St. Lima, Ill. They remained there until 1845 when the Saints were driven out and had to flee for their safety.

I lived with Mr. Barber two years then went and stayed with my brother, Charles in Garrettsville, Ohio. Soon after a Mr. Davis who lived in Akron, Ohio was looking for a girl to help take care of their children, three little girls, so I went home with him and stayed two years. I was never mistreated by anyone but was often lonely being away from all relatives and especially sister Harriet who I almost worshipped. It was also a great trial being separated from my little brother Johnathan.

I always loved books and so I learned easily, was always encouraged in my efforts to get an education, as a consequence at 14 years of age I was far ahead of most children of that age. An occasional chance to attend a select school and one term at an academy were all the chances I ever had except the common schhols. In the summer of 1841, on presenting myself as a candidate for a teacher, I was given a certificate for teaching all the common of the English language, and taught four summers in Ohio. In 1844 I came west with my brother Walter; my sister and her husband, Charles Jackson also coming west to Illinois.

In Aug. soon after the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum, the mobbing commenced and the Saints were compelled to go to Nauvoo after having their homes burned and much other property destroyed. I had taught three terms in Lima, Ill. then went west with my brothers and their families to Nauvoo for I had been baptized in April 1845 by Father Mosley in the Mississippi River, being there to attend the April Conference (Church). That was a busy time for the people for they had previously agreed to leave the state within a year, so we were all unprepared it meant business for us.

In the meantime our beautiful temple was nearing completion and many were looking to receive great blessings there. It was there that I entered into the celestial order of marriage with Edwin Whiting and his wives, Elizabeth and Almira, Jan. 27, 1846 and have never regretted it, knowing as I do the Lord has blessed us together. We moved from Nauvoo in April of the same year and came west as far as Mt. Pisgah in Iowa as many of the Saints had gone through the state and built up what was known as Winter Quarters where the town of Florence now stands. We were not prepared well enough for the journey so we stopped and went to plowing and planting. The Whitings and Coxes put up a chair factory and made chairs which they hauled back to Quincy, Ill. where they found ready sale for them.

We stayed at Pisgah two years during which time many died with chills and fever, among them father and mother Whiting, one of Elizabeth's girls, Emily, four years old and two of my brother Walter's little girls. The rest of us were sick for months; sometimes there were not enough well ones to give the sick a drink. Those were times of trial yet we felt that we were remembered by our Heavenly Father and had many seasons of rejoicings. I taught two terms of school in Pisgah, Albert my oldest was born there Dec. 1847 and in April 1849 we started on the great move of all moves toward the Great Salt Lake in the unexplored regions of Mexico. We were about three months reaching the Elkhorn and were organized in Brother George A. Smith's fifty. Bro Benson being of the 100 had

gone ahead for it was thought best for more than fifty to travel together on account of firewood and other conveniences and fifty were considered safe from Indians. Of that long, tedious journey volumes might be written. In our camp we had one stampede of cattle. It was after three weeks of travel and it was horrifying, being in the night about one o'clock. No one was hurt so we were all comforted although eight or ten of our cattle were lost. We saw many herds of buffalo but our worst and most trying experience was on the Sweetwater. After reaching the Black Hills we were snowed in for about three days and many of the best cattle in the company died. Father (Edwin Whiting, her husband) counted nine head in one little bunch of willows. There were only enough teams left to move the wagons to a new camp a mile or two ahead but in a day or two we met the teams sent from Salt Lake to meet us.

We arrived in the city Oct. 28, 1849 and it was one of the prettiest places I ever saw. The young shade trees on the sidewalk were yet green and many young orchards all quite green made a picture of loveliness to us weary travellers never to be forgotten. But we were soon to leave as we were chosen by Father Mosley to help form a settlement at San Pete County which had been located at Manti (It became the settlement of Manti) and it was the first of Dec. and there were so many discouragements. My husband and Uncle Orville (Cox) went to Salt Lake on snow shoes to report the starving condition of the Saints. About half of our company returned to the city and the long, snowy, dreary winter was endured by those who remained with the blessings of the Lord. We had many seasons of enjoyment in various ways and our prayer meetings were held every week. Sunday evenings and Thursdays were well attended.

Father put up a laythe and he and William who was fifteen years old, hauled the timber from the mountains on a hand sled and made a hundred chairs with rush bottoms and in April they took them to the city and sold them.

Two of my boys, Albert and Charles were (sent to) help settle Arizona. Accordingly they fitted themselves with wagons and teams and started in Feb. and settled on the Little Colorado near Sunset Crossing. Albert returned to Springville the same summer, but Charles stayed until 1878 when he came and spent the summer returning in the fall to Arizona. In the meantime May's health was so poor and it was thought that a journey might do her good so with the encouragement of her father we fitted out and went with Charles. May was benefitted by the move but never entirely recovered her health and in the spring of 1882 she wanted to return to Springville and we again commenced the homeward journey.

But alas, the sands of life were too nearly exhausted and when we reached the Houserock Springs we stopped with Bro Jedediah Adair who lived there at the time. They were so kind and though she lived only two or three days, it was a great comfort to be with friends. That was the one great trial of my life but must acknowledge the hand of the Lord who doeth all things well but the loved earthly form is still sleeping there in the lonely grave. We reached Springville early in June, weary and sorrowful but comforted greatly by the sympathy of loving friends. Albert and Oscar came to meet us with supplies and dainties for May. We stopped at Mapleton and made our home there. Fred and John built

quite a nice house there on some land they bought of Oscar.

This is the sketch as I received it but would like to add a little - I see the picture of a tiny white grandmother sitting by the fireside, always ready with song or story, sympathy or council, to advise or cheer whoever came whether young or old. Even a peacemaker, finding only good where others were telling bad qualities. She was never too tired to stay up until the crowd left. Her laugh ringing out clear as a silver bell over our foolish nonsense.

She always kept young people around her and took Clara Curtis to live with her when she was five years old. Clara was one of her daughters' younger girls and they were never long separated. Her home was Clara's until she married Joseph Burk then grandmother went to live with them and spent the remainder of her years there.

She lived for about twenty years in Mapleton and Hobble Creek Canyon but in August 1901 four of her boys decided to go to Arizona. I think it was the thought of seeing again the lonely grave of her daughter May at Houserock which induced her again to make the long trip in a wagon as there is no railroad on the route and the remainder of her life was spent in sunny Arizona.

She was the mother of nine children and today there is a host of children, grandchildren and great grandchildren to revere her memory. She began teaching at fifteen years of age since which time she taught forty two years. Her hair was snow white the last time I remember her teaching.

Few people were ever blessed with more friends who loved her for her amiable disposition, her sterling integrity and devotion to her family.

She was an energetic church worker for many years until her health failed. She was the first secretary of the Mapleton Relief Society and her handwriting in those record books is as clear and plain as print. Her mind was bright up to the time of her death which occurred at the ripe age of eighty five years. She was the first school teacher of Mapleton and taught in the kitchen of her home just north of her son Albert's place. Her boys built her that home.