

A HISTORY OF PARADISE CACHE COUNTY, UTAH

1860—1999

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JOHN THOMAS COVINGTON

Robert Dockery Covington was a college graduate who helped on his father's plantation raising cotton and tobacco. His mother, Elizabeth Ann Thomas, was born April 21, 1820, in Marlboro District, South Carolina, and on February 2, 1839, she married Robert Dockery Covington. Shortly after their wedding John's parents moved to Marlboro County, South Carolina. The next move came with Robert's parents, Thomas B. Covington, known as "Big Tommie" and Jane Thomas when they settled in Summerville, Noxbee County, Mississippi. They established several large plantations and they prospered because of Jane Thomas's relatives who settled there in 1834. The soil was rich and they had plenty of slave labor, which helped a great deal. This was the place where John Thomas Covington was born on August 4, 1840.

It was three years later on January 1, 1843, that John's sister, Emily Jane Covington, was born. Around this time Daniel Thomas had brought home a Book of Mormon. After Robert Dockery Covington and his wife had heard Elder Benjamin Clapp preach for two weeks, Benjamin Clapp baptized them into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on February 3, 1843, in Noxbee County, Mississippi. Although most of Elizabeth's family joined the Church, Robert's family thought that he had lost all of his reason. Little did Robert's parents realize that the son they had greeted with open arms at his birth, August 2, 1815, in Rockingham, Richmond County, North Carolina, would one day be disinherited by them. In fact, in Covington books written by non-Latter-day Saint authors, Robert's name is not listed among the children. James, his older brother who also joined the Church and moved to California, is listed in the books as is his younger sister, Nancy, who joined the Church and moved to Salt Lake City. Nancy later returned to Mississippi disillusioned.

Soon after John's father had joined the Church, he desired to join the Saints in Nauvoo, Illinois. At this time Robert was an overseer on two plantations. He set his slaves free, which was protested by the slaves because of their deep love for Robert. Preparations to leave got underway. On February 1, 1845, Sarah Ann Covington was born. John had a new baby sister. John was not yet five years old, and stories tell that he "baptized" many of his black playmates in the muddy ponds before his family left for Nauvoo.

Robert Dockery Covington and Elizabeth Ann Thomas Covington received their endowments January 20, 1846, in the Nauvoo Temple. Soon, John lost his sister, Catherine Covington, who was born and died in 1846 in Nauvoo. He also lost his toddler sister, Sarah, who was born in 1845 in Mississippi. She died October 16, 1846, in Winter Quarters, Nebraska. John's life changed from a life of wealth and plenty to a life of great need and wants, but these circumstances and happenings were not all that happened to this family.

In 1847, Robert and Elizabeth along with their children, John and Emily, started for Utah in the Edward Hunter Company under the direction of Captain Daniel Thomas.

Elizabeth was expecting again, and the ordeals the Saints suffered made inroads on her health. It was a trying journey for it seemed that the forces of the elements were pitted against them. There were the dust storms, hailstorms, lack of good water, and no wood to burn. The Indians, who were camped on the opposite bank of the Platte River, would often stampede their cattle. They would often cross the river to beg or trade for food that was such a scarce commodity. Sometimes the Indians swarmed into their camp like bees and would often help themselves to whatever was handy. Housewives would often find their camping and cooking equipment gone.

One day the company stopped near some currant bushes where the men busily repaired some broken wagons. Robert sent his children, John and Emily, with buckets to gather what currants they could. They worked hard picking clean the currant bushes. Just as they finished filling their buckets full of currants an Indian stepped from behind a bush and gave a war whoop. The children dropped their buckets and fled to the camp. When they neared the camp they looked back and saw the Indian with their currants laughing at his huge joke.

On the morning of August 1, 1847, it was quiet. The heat was terrific. The party of immigrants had called a halt. The Saints had not found wood to burn for eleven days. The water was unfit to drink and some of the animals had died. The cause of their death was from licking alkali from the soil. They also had wagons to repair. Mrs. Sessions, a midwife, was called to take care of John's mother. Mrs. Sessions, who was travelling with the first hundred, had a buggy, so she drove back to the second hundred, a distance of some five miles, and took Elizabeth back to her camp and put her to bed with a new son, Robert Covington. This all took place in Scotts Bluff, Nebraska. The Saints had stopped there for the day. A. O. Smoot called a meeting and pleaded with the Saints to be more united, to trust in the Lord, and to consider these experiences like a school that was preparing them for leadership positions.

The Saints had many hardships to bear during their trek westward. They often traveled many miles with sparse food for their cattle and other animals. Indians often came into their camp and would spread blankets on the ground wanting to trade or be fed. They had been counseled not to trade with them, but to feed them. There was much sickness and death among the pioneers. Eliza R. Snow was a great comfort to the sorrowing. On one occasion she remarked, "Death makes occasional inroads among us. Nursing the sick, tending wagons was laborious service. The patient faithfulness with which it was born. To cosign loved ones to these desolate graves was enough to try the hearts of the strongest." On August 5th, they camped eight or nine miles from Fort Laramie where the food was plentiful and the water was good. They remained there for five days to repair wagons that were in need of repair, to wash and mend cloths, and to bake.

Traveling became very hard and slow due to the rough terrain. There were hills to climb and several wagons broke. In September, the pioneers crossed miles of sand and the winds blew very hard. They waited there with fearful storms of sand, rain, and snow. They encountered pioneers going back east to help the remaining Saints travel west. The

travelers camped all night with the party and gave them words of encouragement. They told them about their new homes in the West. Their encouragement was welcomed and the women of the company prepared dinner that night.

The last miles into the valley were hard ones because of the cold and rugged mountains they had to traverse. They arrived in Salt Lake City, on September 24, 1847. The trip had taken its toll on Robert's wife. She was very frail and the hardships had all but taken her strength. She had hoped to get stronger, but the cold winter winds along with a severe cold only added to her troubles, and on December 7, 1847, she left her devoted family to carry on her good name. Marian Adair, a good person, helped the family by assisting with the new baby. Milk was very scarce and she fed the baby buttermilk and clabber.

John's father then married a widow, Malinda Allison Kelly. John, Emily, and baby Robert had a new stepmother and stepsister, Kate. The family settled in the Big Cottonwood Ward in Salt Lake City. While they were in Big Cottonwood, Robert was able to teach school and was called "Professor Covington." This is the area they were living in when the locust infested the Salt Lake Valley. Their crops were spared, so they shared their food with their starving neighbors.

In the fall of 1849, when John was only nine his father accepted a call to serve a mission in the Southern States. On December 28, 1849, a new daughter was born to Malinda and Robert. She was named Mary Ellen Covington. Mary did not meet her father until she was almost seven years old and John was almost sixteen. This was in the spring of 1856 when Robert returned from the Southern States Mission.

Robert took a plural wife on December 28, 1856. Her name was Nancy Roberts. Three children were born to Robert and Nancy. When Nancy Roberts died, Robert's second wife, Malinda, mothered Nancy's children as well as those of Robert's first wife, Elizabeth.

The Covington family accepted a call to settle Dixie and moved to Washington, Washington County, Utah. John found himself in new surroundings once again. His next few years were filled with hard work, planting and harvesting of grains, corn, tobacco, and cotton. In 1858, they planted grape cuttings from California and Chinese Sugar Cane. In 1861, they planted peach stones and peach trees began to grow.

Robert's family prospered and built a spacious home. Robert cut large stones from a nearby mountain and built a grand home for those pioneer days. The walls were three- feet thick and were built in colonial style. There were two fireplaces on each of the three floors. The upper floor was used as a dance floor for the young people for many years. Many people spoke of Robert's generous hospitality.

When John was twenty-two, he made a trip north for supplies and on the return trip as he neared Washington he was met by his father who, during the rest of the trip, brought him up-to-date on the town news. John inquired if there were any new girls in

town. His father answered, "there was some new girls, but the prettiest was a little Swedish girl." His father concluded, "If you don't marry her, I trust I will."

Shortly after a brief courtship, John married the sixteen-year-old Swedish girl, Johanna Ludblad. They began a happy life together. From Washington the young couple moved to Paradise. They returned to Washington and later moved to Beaver to be near Johanna's mother.

John was a good musician and composed music for his violin. One night the whistling of a bird kept ringing through his head until he could not sleep. He arose and composed a song for his violin. This tune proved to be very popular, and he called it "The Ladies Favorite." He and his brother-in-law, Winslow Farr Jr., composed a song called "The Big Cottonwood Waters." Wherever he lived, John and his violin were called into service. It was an unusual sight to see him playing his violin as he danced the square dances with his partner clinging to his coattail. He would often walk miles to play for a dance, and after the dance was over he would walk home. He was full of fun and took great pleasure in teaching his children to sing and play instruments. He had an orchestra in his own family. His family and friends enjoyed gathering around the organ and singing.

On March 15, 1875, while living in Adamsville, John took as his plural wife Elizabeth Adams. She was the daughter of David Barclay Adams and Lydia Catherine Mann. John and Elizabeth were married in the Old Endowment House in Salt Lake City. At the same time his first wife, Johanna, was sealed to him. John and Elizabeth were blessed with thirteen children.

The family was not satisfied in Adamsville, but they were undecided where to go. Elizabeth was anxious to move to Wayne County where her people had gone. Johanna thought it would be better to move where they had relatives. They finally decided to go to Orderville. They left Beaver, April 15, 1877. Upon their arrival at Orderville they joined the United Order. John and his wives were hard workers. He worked in the gardens and fields, but he spent most of his time herding sheep.

The Indians were troublesome at this time. John exercised great influence over them. He with others was often called on to make peace with the Indians. The United Order owned a great deal of the Buckskin Mountain. They had a big dairy there, and they also used this range for their sheep. The Indians resented this and claimed the land was theirs. The settlers were in constant danger from them.

John was herding sheep on Buckskin Mountain when the dog "Queen," a prized imported dog, which the United Order had traded for a cow, was shot while on duty with the sheep. Reports reached John that "George," an Indian with a mean temper was making threats against him. One day while out with the sheep John crossed a deep wash and when he reached the opposite bank he came face to face with George. John was unarmed but putting on a bold front said, "I hear you were going to kill me, now is your

chance." George, impressed by John's bravery, did not shoot and later proved to be a good friend.

About the time the United Order was discontinued, John married his third wife, Lydia May Carling, daughter of Isaac VanWagoner Carling and Miriam Hobson. Lydia was born March 1, 1866. John and Lydia were the parents of seven children.

When the United Order was discontinued, John, Jonathan Beaten, and George W. Adair rented the United Order's sheep. During the summer they herded the sheep in the mountains and during the winter they were herded "out in the sand."

When John withdrew from his partnership, he purchased a dairy ranch that had belonged to the United Order. The ranch was located at the mouth of Dairy and Main Canyons. Two of John's families lived on the ranch in the summer. They milked the cows and made cheese and butter. Late in the fall they would move into town for the winter. John raised wonderful gardens on the ranch. He had a generous nature and would give sacks of vegetables to anyone who came by. He would often start for Orderville with a load of vegetables for his families but would stop and talk to everyone he met and would share his vegetables—by the time he arrived home the wagon would be almost empty. His home, though humble, was always open to everyone.

At the time of "The Raid" on the polygamists he and his son-in-law, Thomas Chamberlin, were arrested and were sent to the state penitentiary for unlawful cohabitation. He served six months in the "pen" with only his violin for company. One morning he was not feeling very well and did not get up at the regular scheduled time. He was still in bed when the doors were unlocked for breakfast. When he tried to open his door it was locked again. The other prisoners said, "Now you won't get out." John took his violin and played "The Methodists Prayer." He fairly made the violin talk. When the guard came along he found the corridor crowded with prisoners listening to the music. The guard swore and said, "Covington if you stop that violin I'll let you out." John got his breakfast with the prisoners.

When John's first wife's family was old enough to care for themselves, John and his other two wives, Elizabeth and Lydia May, moved to Rabbit Valley in Wayne County where he spent the remainder of his life. On June 3, 1908, he died peacefully in his sleep at the age of sixty-eight and was buried at Torrey.

JOSEPH GEORGE CRAPO

Joseph George Crapo was born November 7, 1806, at Freetown, Bristol, Massachusetts, son of Charles Crapo and Sarah (Sally) Lucas. He was small of stature like his mother and inherited her alert business nature. He disliked the work on the farm very much and cherished a dream of some day owning a fish smack, which is what the fishing boats were called.