

CHARLES HENRY CROW

&

MARY SHARP CROW



CHARLES HENRY CROW 1830-1900

AND

MARY SHARP CROW 1831-1912

Oliver Twist, the story of a orphan boy born of the parish workhouses in England in the mid-1800's, was written by Charles Dickens. The novel, one of social criticism, describes the English slums of the Victorian Era in England. The characters of Oliver Twist were fictitious, but the slums, the crime, and the poverty, were a very real part of Dicken's time. The Victorian Era had brought many changes to England. Especially noticeable were their attitudes as were reflected in the Poor Law of 1834. Orphans were either sent to the Work House where they worked hard and received little to eat, and often dying from the conditions, or sold to an apprentice who very often mistreated their cheap labor.

Such were the times and conditions when Charles Henry Crow was born in the small town of Alvechurch, Worcestershire, England. He was born August 18, 1830 to Charles Crow and Sarah Wildsmith Crow. His father, a needle maker by trade, died in May 1845 when Charles H. was 15. Charles was the oldest of the seven children and his mother was to give birth to twins in September. This necessitated Charles to start working at an early age. At 17, he was apprenticed to a harness and collar maker, Mr. William Pearman. Charles seemed to be more fortunate than many apprenticed children of those days. Charles followed this business through life and at a later date did the temple work for Mr. Pearman and his family.

On December 26, 1853, at age 23, he married Mary Sharp in St. Mary's, Atherston, Warwick, England. Mary was the daughter of

Thomas Sharp and Mariah Spencer Sharp of Heather, Leicestershire, England.

Shortly before he was married Charles H. heard the Mormon missionaries and knew they weren't preaching the English religion, which his mother believed in, and they weren't teaching the Catholic religion which his father believed, and he was puzzled as to what religion they were teaching. He was taught the doctrine by a fellow workman, the late Thomas Lloyd, of Wellsville, Cache County.

The first Sunday after they were married, Mary had dressed in her Sunday best, put on her wedding bonnet, with little silk syringe flowers on it, and announced, "I am going to church", meaning to the Church of England. Charles accompanied her and together they walked about a block or less, when he slowed down and turned to her and said: "What would you think if I asked you to go with me to a newer church than what you have been going to? I've been hearing about an entirely new religion. Would you mind going with me today?" She said she about fainted at the suggestion, but thought to herself that she wasn't going to quarrel or get angry with "the father", as she always called Charles, on the first Sunday after they were married, so, she agreed and they went. She had never heard anything like it preached before, but liked what she heard, and started going regularly with Charles. Charles was baptized three weeks later on January 15, 1854 and Mary was baptized shortly thereafter. They belonged to the Birmingham Conference, and he was ordained a Priest and labored as a local missionary.

In December 1854, Mary gave birth to a set of twins. The little boy named Charles, lived 7 days while Mary his sister only 3 days.

On February 14, 1856, together with his wife, Charles sailed from liverpool in the ship "Caravan", their destination being Utah. When they reached America, they remained in New York for about three years. In April 1856, Mary gave birth to another boy Heber Charles, who died in November and was buried in Brooklyn. In January 1858, a little girl, Sarah Jane was born to them. She died one year later and was buried in New York City.

During their stay in New York, Charles was ordained an Elder and labored as a teacher among the Saints in the New York branch of the Church. He took many opportunities to share the gospel. Charles H. was employed by a harness and saddle firm in New York which had the contract to provide harnesses and saddles for the so-called Johnston's Army. At various times officers of the army called at the establishment in pursuit of the contract. On one occasion an officer, who had been told that Mr. Crow was a Mormon, was somewhat insulting in his remarks to Charles. Charles replied "You sire, are going out west to be licked!"

In May 1859, they left New York City for Utah driving one of Alexander Pyper's ox-teams across the plains in Bishop Frederick Kesler's company. They arrived September 1, 1859 and soon after his arrival in Utah Charles started building a home. It was a two story rock dwelling on the southeast corner of Ninth East and First South. In April of 1860, Mary again gave birth to a little girl

whom they named Anne Mariah. Then in September 1861, she gave birth to Alma Henry.

In 1864 Charles opened a harness shop in Salt Lake and subsequently entered into partnership with Daniel Seegmiller, whom he had baptized in New York, and who had been his fellow workman in a harness establishment there. The harness and saddle shop was located on 58 South Main Street.

It is a well known fact that with the arrival of U.S. troops in Salt Lake City in 1862, under General Patrick Conner, trouble started immediately for the inhabitants there.

Many of the officers and soldiers, through misinformation and ignorance held the Mormon people in contempt and acted accordingly. Many acts of lawlessness were committed by soldiers stationed at Camp Douglas, located in the bench, east of the city. Frequently drunken soldiers were in trouble with the city police.

People living in the eastern part of the city were especially molested by soldiers entering their premises and stealing from their gardens and insulting their women.

Residents of the eastern part of the city formed a special police organization to protect their homes, and patrol the streets, especially at night. Trouble continued for two decades or more.

Mr. Crow was connected with the Salt Lake City Police Department for years, and at one time represented the eastern part of the city in the City Council, being one of Salt Lake City's five aldermen. He was active in maintaining order and protecting the rights of the people living in that district. For many years

Charles was Captain of the Eleventh Ward Special Police providing protection without monetary reward.

First South was the main street over which soldiers traveled to and from Camp Douglas. George (one of their sons) recalls his mother telling of standing at the gate of her home on many nights, and hearing shots ring out and fighting between citizens and soldiers. At one time the Crow residence was the home farthest out of the heart of the city. Out of these conditions are the following stories:

One night three or four soldiers, passing the Crow residence, came to the window and asked Mary for a drink of water. At this time Mary was ironing by the light of a candle, and hoped the soldiers would not cause any trouble. Frequently people came to their well for water, it being the only well in the neighborhood. She accommodated the soldiers with water, passing a pitcher through a small square opening in the wall. Evidently, it was not water the soldiers desired. They demanded that she hand the water out to them through the door, which was locked. She refused to do this saying, "If you want a drink, take the water out of the pitcher." This they refused, demanding that she open the door and give it to them. The soldiers were under the impression that her husband was away from the home on police duty as was frequently the case. However, this night he had a few hours leave, and had come

home and laid down to rest for a short time. On being awakened by the loud demands of the soldiers, he jumped out of bed, threw open the door and said, "Now come in!" The soldiers were surprised, and in fear ran away.

One afternoon a drunken soldier, on his way to Camp Douglas from the city, entered the Crow premises, and went into one of the rooms of their new house, which was in course of construction, fell down and went to sleep. When Mr. Crow returned home in the evening, his wife told him about the drunken soldier, and he went to where the drunk lay asleep. Upon being awakened, the soldier was surprised to see Mr. Crow standing over him. He arose and staggered away saying: "Say, Crow, where do you bury your dead."

Charles had a reputation among the soldiers of being able to handle himself well. On one occasion a delegation of soldiers met Charles and said, "We have a soldier at Camp Douglas now that can whip you." A company of new soldiers had recently arrived, among whom was a trained, scientific fighter. However, without hesitation, Charles replied, "I will meet the best man you have at Camp Douglas." So these two men met and fought it out.

Neither contestant had seen the other before the fair and square fist fight, - bare knuckles.

One evening the soldier with a few of his friends, and Mr. Crow, with a few of his friends, met at the corner of 7th East and 1st South Streets.

The fight started with each man feeling the other out. Finally the soldier led, and Charles countered, knocking his opponent down. The soldier said, "Well, partner, you did that pretty slick." Again they fought, and again the soldier went down - this time to stay - a knockout.

In March 1863, Mary gave birth to a son whom they named Orson Hudson. Their baby only lived five months. Then in the year 1864, the Indians in Sanpete County became hostile and started killing many men and women during the course of the next couple of years. It became necessary to provide an armed force of Cavalry and infantry to guard the settlements and the stock, especially in Sanpete Valley. Several companies of the militia from Utah and Salt Lake Counties had already been called out to assist the people in Sanpete and about the middle of July 1866 word came that it was the turn of the 3rd Regiment of Infantry to furnish relief for Sanpete. So, on July 29, 1866, Charles was called to fulfill his military duty. On that day, the 3rd Regiment of Infantry of the Nauvoo Legion was called to take their turn. On August 9th, they marched from the 20th Ward School house in Salt Lake armed and equipped with 8 days provisions under the command of Major Andrew Burt, with Captains William N. L. Allen and Charles H. Crow, and

First Lieutenant Charles Livingstone in charge of Company A, 1st Battalion, 3rd Regiment, Nauvoo Legion. The company numbered five platoons, with 12 men in each, together with 8 teamsters, making in all 72 men, principally from the 11th and 12th Wards of Salt Lake City. Two platoons -- Captain Crow and Lieut. Livingstone were commanded to go to Fairview and North Bend to guard the settlers as they harvested their crops. They were there 6 weeks on guard, during which time they saw no Indians and returned home on October 3rd.

Another son was born to Charles and Mary on this same day. His name was John Edmund.

In a civil capacity, he was constable in Salt Lake City for sixteen years. As a special policeman, he was active in raids against liquor and gambling houses and houses of prostitution. He also served as one of five Salt Lake Aldermen, as a member of the city council from the fifth precinct, being appointed to the position made vacant by the death of Judge Alexander Pyper.

Like many other early day officers of the law, he had enemies. The old files of the "anti-Mormon paper" (tribune) published in Salt Lake referred to him as "cut throat Crow", "Old Crow" and "Charlie". Charles name appeared many times in the newspaper both the Tribune and the Desert News. One article from the Desert News of January 2, 1867 reports:

Burglar Shot

On Thursday night, December 27, 1866 shortly before 12 o'clock, Mr. Charles Crow, firm of Seegmiller and Crow, saddlers, on East Temple

Street, was lying in his store, one of his workmen being with him, when he was awakened from a dozing condition by a noise in the building, and heard some person walking through the front part, evidently carrying some article of saddlery, from the sound of straps trailing along the floor. He could not see who the burglar was, but a form of some kind barred the passage of the street door, which had been open by the burglar, when Mr Crow fired and hit the thief, who dropped. Mr Crow immediately went to the City Hall, reported the circumstance to the police, and gave himself into custody. The burglar was carried to the City Hall, with a saddle which he was carrying off when so suddenly stopped.

He was then known to be "Dutch Charley", a character more notorious than respected, whose thieving proclivities had made him well known to the members of the police force. "Charley" lived until about 4 a.m. He was attended by Dr. Ormsby, whose professional services were called for, gave his name as Charles Bues, from Zurich, Switzerland, expressed sorrow for the act he was committing when shot, and did not wish his friends to know how he came by his death. His antecedents in the mining regions pointed to such an end, in some places. An inquest was held on Friday morning, and a verdict returned in accordance with the facts, upon which Mr. Crow

was discharged.

(Earlier: Burs stole a horse from the tithing yard, across the street from the Salt Lake Temple, took same to Dr. Richard's property and tied the horse back of the Seegmiller and Crow harness shop. The horse belonged to a Mr. Bates of Tooele, Utah.)

Another article in the Desert News of August 27, 1883 shows that the law officers had many of the same problems that we find in our society today. The Articles states:

An Outrageous Doctrine

A few days ago, at the instance of Messrs. W. Jennings & Sons an attachment was issued in their favor in a suit against Mr. Scott, a saloon keeper on the State Road, at the old Howard place. The papers were placed in the hand of Constable C.H. Crow, who proceeded to the premises, made the attachment and placed a man in charge. On Thursday judgement was awarded to the plaintiff and execution issued. Mr. Crow proceeded to the saloon to levy according to law. A few minutes after his arrival, however, the men he had placed in charge stepped out of the door for a moment when Messrs. Meekins and Skillicom, who were inside, locked and secured it, and refused to allow Mr. Crow to enter. The latter then obtained a warrant of arrest for the two parties named. Armed with this, he again sought admittance and was refused, then he broke in the

door, entered, and proceeded with the legal business entrusted to him. The two men arrested were taken before Justice Alma Pratt, of Farmer's precinct, before whom the original proceedings were brought. In the progress of the case Attorney Tripp, who appeared for the defendants, uttered an incendiary statement to the effect that the parties in the saloon would have done just right if they had shot Mr. Crow down. Thus an attorney at the bar has exhibited as little decency and has so limited an idea of the dignity of the profession as to openly advocate the shooting or murdering of officers while executing the due process of the law. Such sentiments are disgraceful in the extreme, and reprehensible in the highest degree.

Entirely Unjustifiable

A short time ago, so we are informed, officer Crow had a warrant of arrest and an execution to serve, and in the performance of his duty met with considerable difficulty. In the consideration of the case of which this was a feature, when it was being investigated before the court, the attorney for the resisting party declared that if the officer had been shot while engaged in his work it would have been perfectly justifiable. The name of the murderous minded attorney is Tripp. It is just such sentiment as this, expressed in just such a manner,

that encourage violent people to acts of lawlessness culminating in deeds like that by which our brave and fearless Marshall Burt fell. Persons or papers which thus incite people to deeds of violence against the law's authorized executors are undeserving of public respect. They are a disgrace to the profession to which they belong. A client or a cause can be defended without encouraging violent resistance to the constitution authorities.

In the meantime Mary gave birth to another son, Thomas William, in October 1866. On September 2, 1868, Anne Mariah died, at the age of eight. Nine days later, on September 11, Franklin was born. Two more sons were born to Mary and Charles -- Charles Spencer, who was born in June 1871, and George Holbeach in May 1873. Charles now had six sons lived to raise families of their own. Charles S. and Thomas later went into business with their father.

In 1885 the President of the Church, general authorities, stake leaders, etc., had been arrested, fined, or were in hiding, unable to take care of their families and responsibilities due to the polygamy raids. The law was being administered unjustly and many mistreated. This treatment started with a few, but ended with many being caught up in it.

As a result of these times, an event which came to be known as the "Half-Mast Incidence". On July 4, 1885, many of the church citizens decided they should have a protest instead of a celebration and put the flag at "half-mast" to show liberty was

dead. Many flags in downtown Salt Lake (Tabernacle, Z.C.M.I., and City Hall to mention a few) were put at half-mast. There were verbal fights all day and talk of calling in the soldiers from Fort Douglas to put the flags back. A crowd was gathered and marched down to Z.C.M.I. where they figured they could forcibly raise the flag. There they found 18 police officers including Charles to stop them. In the Salt Lake Tribune on July 5 (Sunday) we find the following protest about Charles' part in the incidence:

"Half-Mast" Incident

Excerpts copied by George H. Crow

Fred Culmer suggested that a crowd sufficiently large could be raised in five minutes to put the flag where it belonged, which seemed to fire Crow up to the point where he is always aching to be - the "cleaning out point", and he said as he turned to go into the Hall: "This is a mob and I'll clear the street"....

Charles Crow is simply thirsting for gore and he came here having a chance yesterday to gratify his desire, but a drop of blood shed on the occasion and in behalf of the flag, would have resulted in a speedy settlement of the whole Utah trouble.

(2) Crow said in the Tribune office on Friday that the Mormon Church would yet overthrow the Government of the United States and rule the country; that the Gentiles would get all they wanted of the muss, and that, too before they looked for

it. He wanted the Tribune to put it down and print it, and here it is.

(3) In front of the big Co-op Store (Z.C.M.I.) Mr. R. H. Baskin was discussing the matter with a party of gentlemen and expressed his indignation in very plain terms when Crow, the beast, stepped up and threatened to arrest him. "Arrest me if you dare", said Mr. Baskin, eyeing the brute scornfully. Mr Joseph Jennings stepped up at that moment, commanded Crow to leave Mr. Baskin alone and told him if he was not very careful he would not hold his office longer than tomorrow. Crow slunk back into the crowd like a whipped cur. When Baskin threatened to pull the flag down, Crow said to him, "If you touch that flag, I'll knock you down." (Charley Crow - right name Charles H. Crow, was a member of the City Council when William Jennings was Mayor of Salt Lake City. Mayor Jennings' term of office ended in 1884 - the year previous to the half-masting of the flag, William Jennings was Vice President of Z.C.M.I. Probably young Joseph Jennings thought that his father might desire the removal of Charley Crow from the position of Constable. The position of Constable was a side-issue with Charley Crow - who had a prosperous harness and saddle business. - Comments by George H. Crow)

(4) TRAITOR CROW - (a heading) On the City Hall steps: Constable Crow, who on account of his many manifestations of knavery, is one of Marshall Phillips' pets, was belching forth his treason from the City Hall steps when the Stars and Stripes were being lowered to the grounds. "That's right", he railed, "take it down and I'd see that it is a long time before it goes up again. Bury it six feet in the ground and let it stay there until all these 'Freedom Shriekers' are dead."

In spite of what we read in these news articles, he was a trusted and loyal body guard to Presidents Brigham Young and John Taylor, and had the confidence of the leaders of the church. He had a bed at Church Headquarters and slept there after his shift was over on many occasions. At the time of the fatal illness of Brigham Young, Counselor John W. Young had Charles come in and administer to his father. At one time President Taylor and some of the other church leaders contemplated lodging at Charles home. At the time they were sought by U.S. Deputy Marshals. On account of the traffic, especially soldiers, being rather heavy on this street, the Church officials finally decided not to stay at his residence.

Charles was president of the 22nd quorum of Seventies for a number of years, and later he acted in the same capacity in the 57th quorum. This position he held until the time of his death.

Those who knew and associated with Charles thought highly of him. In some letters that were written to George, his son, we get

more insight as to the kind of man Charles was.

Heber M. Wells, son of the late Mayor Daniel H. Wells states: "I recall that he (Charles) was a staunch defender of the faith and a stalwart defender of the leaders of the Church. A man of great physical courage, surmounted by a powerful, muscular body, and an integrity and loyalty surpassed by none of the brethren. He was a body guard of the First Presidency whenever any sort of peril was imminent." (Note: Daniel H Wells also became second counselor to President Brigham Young.)

A letter from another of Mayor Wells sons gives us more information on the courage and power of this man:

...I knew him quite well, I remember him as an officer on the police force of Salt Lake City and also in his business of harness making, under the firm of Crow & Seegmiller, as a boy, and have always regarded him as a man who was willing to give his life, if need be, in the defense of his brethren - a man whom I know enjoyed the love and the confidence of my own father, who was Mayor of Salt Lake City.

I remember very distinctly the time when the mob gathered around the City Hall on an election day and endeavored to seize the ballot and stuff it in the interests of the Liberal Party. My father, as mayor was notified of the disturbance and immediately went down to the City Hall and elbowed his way through the mob, and it was then, no doubt, when your father assisted him in getting through.

But notwithstanding the help, his coat was torn from his body into shreds, but having found entrance into the City Hall, my father went up onto the balcony and read the riot act to the assembled mob and commanded them to disperse. As they did not do as he ordered them, he then addressed himself to the officers which were within the hall behind him and said, "Officers, do your duty."

Your father was among those officers who did their duty, by marching out into the mob and using clubs and other implements they could lay their hands upon. The mob soon dispersed without any fatalities to anybody, peace was restored, the election went on, and my father was re-elected Mayor of Salt Lake City. Your father was one of the officers who came to my fathers aid and was arrested with others by the U.S. Marshal for doing his duty. (Letter to George H. Crow, from Rulon S. Wells, June 26, 1936)

Although Charles was a man who was not afraid of anything and was a powerful man, he was also a man who was sympathetic and compassionate. In a letter from George D. Pyper, son of Alexander Pyper, we read:

I am happy in saying that my own contact with your father in 1870's and 80's did not show any of the hardness that was ascribed to him by some. He drove a wagon across the plains for my father in

1859 and I have never heard anything but good of him and his conduct in crossing the plains and the years following. I have heard some of the stories that you refer to, but of course know nothing of the truth or falsity of them.

He was constable during the period in the 80's that I was Justice of the Peace and faithfully carried out the legal papers issued by me. To show that he did not have that unsympathetic nature that some ascribe to him, I will cite one instance. I issued a warrant for the arrest of a man who was alleged to be leaving the territory with intent to defraud his creditors. Your father served the warrant, but instead of immediately placing the man in prison, he did something rather unusual. The man was an actor and was appearing in the Salt Lake Theatre in a play.

Your father went with him to the Theatre and sat in the wings during the process of the play and did not execute the warrant until the play was over.

In this case we were both sued for \$10,000 damage for alleged false imprisonment; we won the case.

I often visit him at his harness shop on Main Street. He made harnesses for my father and myself and was always square in dealing with the people. He was a rigid disciplinarian, and I found in the execution of legal papers placed in his possession,

a champion of law and order. He may not have had the tenderness and gentility that some men manifest, but he would have laid down his life for the leaders of the Church.

Charles H. died at his home in Salt Lake City, at the age of 70 on December 27, 1900. He was survived by Mary and six sons. Mary died twelve years later on November 24, 1912.