

Sketch of the Life of Edward Peas Duzette

Written by Nora Crystal Hall Lund in May 1966

(Transcribed and edited by his third-great-grandson, Jesse S. Crisler, 26 August 2003)

Edward Peas Duzette was born 24 January 1812 in Boston, Suffolk, Massachusetts, the son of Edward Philemon Duzette and Elizabeth Jane King Duzette. It is not known under what circumstances he heard and embraced the Gospel of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, but records show that he was baptized 22 August 1832, so we know that he would be right with the Church from almost the very first. Mrs Ellen Robison, a very old lady whom Mary Stevenson told me about, who is now in a rest home, claims to have done considerable research in her day on the Duzette line. She recalls that Edward Duzette's father was killed at Far West, Missouri. Now, I am not putting that out as the truth, only to show that the Duzettes were staunch followers of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Edward married first Eliza Ann Cowan on 31 January 1839. Their children were Clarissa Maria, Elizabeth Jane, Sarah Lucy, Eliza Ann, and Mary Emma.

We pick up Edward's residence in Nauvoo, the City Beautiful, at that time the largest city in the state of Illinois. This was brought about by the united efforts of an industrious people. Hard work made a swampy river bottom into a habitable city to afford homes for a growing Church population. As the city grew, the state government leaders feared the Mormons would soon overrun this section and take possession of the state. Consequently, they started stirring up much trouble and persecution against the Mormons. They thought that if they treated the Saints meanly enough, they would be glad to pull out and leave.

In order to protect themselves from the destruction of the wicked mob, the Prophet organized the Nauvoo Legion, a military group of strong, able-bodied, brave men, to guard the people. They had uniforms, and the Prophet himself was Commander. I'm sure many of you have been impressed, as I have been, in seeing General Smith in full uniform mounted on a black horse in a large framed picture hanging in churches and private homes in the old days. Edward Duzette played a drum in this noted Legion. His friend Daniel Dennett was a fifer.

We are all acquainted with the facts of the martyrdom of the Prophet, how Brigham Young was raised up to carry out Joseph's plan of westward movement of the Saints to the Rocky Mountains. According to records at hand, we know that the subject of this sketch came to Winter Quarters, Nebraska, with the ousted Saints from Nauvoo. Here preparations were made to come west. According to *Heart Throbs of the West*, Edward left Winter Quarters 29 May 1848, with Heber C. Kimball as Captain of the second Division of 662 Saints. They arrived in the valley of the Great Salt Lake on 23 September 1848.

Now that he was settled permanently in Utah and his first wife had suddenly died, Edward realized that it was not good for man to be alone, so he started looking for another wife. Perhaps Brother Brigham probed him on a bit because the success of this new frontier depended on quick population. (I am not prepared to say what happened to the children by his first wife. According to *Pioneers and Prominent Men of Utah*, Clarissa married a Mr. Johnson, Eliza died, and Jane married Frank Farnsworth. It just names Emma and doesn't name Lucy at all.

Thus, it was that on 8 August 1852 Edward married Miss Mary Adeline Ewing. She was born 31 May 1833 in Little Britain, Lancaster, Pennsylvania. She was the fair daughter of Samuel and Esther Shaffer Ewing. She came with her family to Utah in 1847. Adeline gave birth to their first child, Alveretta Matilda, on 23 April 1854. Their family steadily increased with the arrival of Esther Minerva, Margie Jeanette, Ursella Adeline and Edward Hamner.

By this time so many Saints had arrived in Salt Lake that President Young saw the necessity of wider expansion. So, different sections of the country were explored for new settlements. The extreme southern part of the state was found suitable for the growing of cotton. The Civil War was on in the South making it impossible to get cotton from there. Upon the recommendation of a scouting party under the leadership of Orson Pratt, President Young organized the Dixie Cotton Mission and called families south to St. George and vicinity. Some were to go east along the Virgin River and make settlements.

Thus it was that we find the Duzette family trying to establish a new home at Grafton in 1862. Two more children, Rachel Vilate and Huldah Louise, were born there, but both died young. The Duzettes later moved to Rockville, a little larger town a few miles east. Here their daughter, Esther Minerva, died. Edward, who was a teacher by profession, found it very difficult to make a living in Dixie. At the townsite proper there was no room for farming, but across the River to the south and below town to the west and on to the east the soil was fertile and productive. Soon corn, wheat, and sorghum cane were being grown. In such a hot dry climate irrigation was a must for existence. The Rio Virgin from which the water was taken out in small ditches was a friend to the struggling settlers at times. But it seemed in the summer when the water was so much needed to mature the crops, Nature with a vengeance, poured rain in the Zion Canyon area, swelling the friendly old Virgin into roaring torrents of water, taking out the ditches and destroying the crops of the settlers. The Duzettes struggled on for a bare existence but were happy among these fine sturdy friends of Rockville.

Edward Duzette died 9 December 1874. Though he is dead, his Nauvoo Legion Drum lives on, made famous by its present owner, a Supreme Court judge in Arizona, Renz L. Jennings of Phoenix. Renz is the youngest son of former Rockville residents, Cyrus and Hannah Hansen Jennings (she is my first cousin). I heard a long time ago that Renz had

the Duzette drum and was making the most of it. He goes back to his little hometown of Taylor each year or two and assists with a celebration. He has organized an old-fashioned band which entertains the large crowd.

A few months ago I was watching television in my home when Gordon Owen came on the air and told the story of the drum – that it was played by its owner, Major Edward Duzette in the Nauvoo Legion. When the Nauvoo Legion group was reorganized in the early days of Salt Lake City, Edward was the drummer. He told how the famous old drum was being preserved and used by Judge Jennings in Phoenix, to this day.

I wrote a letter to Marvin Terry of Rockville, and he sent the following: "Major Duzette was a great bandleader. He taught John Dennett, Gottlieb Mattice, two Gifford men, and Oliver DeMille that I know of, to play the drum, and Allen Stout and others to play the fife."

I also wrote to my brother, Merrill Hall, who now lives in Hurricane to see what he could tell me of the Duzettes, and especially I wanted to know how Judge Jennings came by the drum. His second wife, Nell Jennings Bates, was Renz's sister. I quote from Merrill:

About how Renz came by that historic drum, I got the story from Nell, so I have it straight. You know the drum is one Major Edward Duzette played in the Nauvoo Legion. Uncle Cyrus Jennings learned to play it from the Major, so before he died, he gave it to Uncle Cyrus, who took it to Arizona when he moved there. When he died, the drum went to his oldest son, Henry. Renz was quite a small boy at the time. The drum just kicked around out in the granary and kind of got kicked to pieces. The kids cut holes in the head. Finally, Renz saw what was going on, and he got it and fixed it up, and that is how he came by it. I don't think he would part with it for love or money. The drum played a very important part in the Fourth and Twenty-fourth celebrations in Taylor, Arizona, while Uncle Cyrus was alive.

Luella Hurst Rogers states that Edward was a close personal friend of the Prophet Joseph. At one time Joseph gave Edward a sword, and this sword was handed down to his son, Hamner, and from him to the next Hamner. In 1966 this sword was in the possession of Bonnie Petty of Emery, Utah. Edward received his patriarchal blessing from the Prophet's father, Joseph Smith, Sr. In Utah Edward was appointed by Brigham Young as a music teacher for the state of Deseret. He was also a drummer in the Salt Lake City Nauvoo Legion.