

MARY EDDA FOSTER LAKE 1852-1918



Mary Edda Foster Lake was born 4 July 1852 in Ogden, Weber, Utah. She was the oldest of six children and the only daughter of Charles Allen Foster and Mary Rhodes Hinkle. Her parents both crossed the plains and met in Utah. Mary, her parents, and brothers lived in the Ogden 3rd Ward.

When Johnston's Army started advancing, all the settlers moved south to the Provo river bottoms. The saints returned in July 1858. By 1865, the family was living in Eden, Utah. Mary and her three brothers were baptized in the Eden Ward

on 16 July 1865 by Armagead Moffett.

Mary Edda married George Lake on 7 December 1868 in the Endowment House in Salt Lake City. She was his third wife and married at age 16. George and Mary Edda made quite a couple as she was 5'1" tall and he was 6' tall. After her marriage, she went to live in Harrisville with George Lake and his two other wives, Louisa Ann Garner and Sarah Jane Hill and their seven children. She was the mother of eleven of George's children: Philomela, Samuel George, Moroni Charles, William Bailey, Jacob Alma, Mary Ellen, Sabra, Willard, Ida May, Nephi, and Ammon.

Church authorities called Mary Edda's husband, George Lake, on a mission to the British Isles just four months after they were married. After George left, Mary Edda stated, "I became somewhat rebellious. I had no children so spent my time teaching school. I could not understand why George should be called upon to leave his large family and be gone for almost 3 years." One night she had a dream that changed her thinking. She still experienced frustration and hardship but tried to meet her daily tasks cheerfully and without complaints.

When George returned from his mission the families had consumed most of the supplies he had left with them. Following the advice of President George A. Smith, George sold his farm and moved his families to Oxford, Idaho. The move took place in September and October 1871.

The family prepared for the winter, but after they had been there only two months, George was called as bishop of the ward. In the summer of 1872, George's aged parents moved to Oxford with the family. George was also elected as a selectman for the county

In 1873, Mary Edda's first child, Philomela, was born. In 1874 and in 1875, the U.S. Marshals had an indictment out for George's arrest for plural marriage. This forced him to camp out in the mountains and leave his family for three months, come back and then leave again. Finally, he was able to travel to Salt Lake where he was assigned to go to the Little Colorado Mission in Arizona. Mary Edda accompanied him while his other wives stayed

behind. Sarah Jane joined him in December 1877 with her children. Louisa Ann never left Oxford.

Life in Arizona was difficult. The people were trying to live the United Order. In 1876, while in Obed, Mary Edda's first son, Samuel George, was born. The settlers abandoned Obed, their first camp, in the fall of 1877 because of crop failures and malaria. They next settled in Brigham City in Navajo County, and a month later, leaders called Mary Edda's husband, George, as bishop. In the spring of 1879, he served a short mission to Verde Country. During their time in Brigham City Mary Edda bore three more sons, Moroni Charles in 1877, William Bailey in 1879, and Jacob Alma in 1881.

In the spring through the fall of 1880, the Lakes moved to the Gila River country. Malaria struck again, so the family moved to Forest Dale in the Mogollon Mountains, which they hoped would be better for their health. The family was blessed temporarily while they were living there. Mary Ellen was born in 1883.

In April 1883, the Lakes were forced to leave the area because they were living on the Indian reservation. They finally settled in St. David, Arizona in August 1884. George purchased a farm and built two nice houses. In 1884, Sabra was born to Mary Edda and George.

In January 1885, leaders called George to go to Mexico. In 1885-1886, they lived in the Asension, Mexico area in a city called Casas Grande. While there, their son Willard was born in 1887. They were the only white people at the time, and the children played with the Mexican children and soon were able to speak Spanish. Once again illness came to the area, and two of Mary Edda's children, Jacob Alma and Sabra, and one of Sarah Jane's children, Barnabas, died.

One day in Casas Grande, the family was almost completely out of food. Family oral history suggests that Mary said, "George, don't give up, the Lord promises are [sic] that if we keep His commandments and pay our tithing the windows of heaven will be opened and the necessities of [life] will be given." Just as they were getting ready to put a scanty meal on the table, Reves Portillo walked in with a quarter of beef on his shoulder. He placed it on the table and said, "There Senor Laguna is some fat beef. I thought you would like some and I have plenty."

While digging bulbs in Juarez, 10 year old Moroni ate what he thought was a sego bulb. It was a poisonous wild parsnip and he died that evening 21 April 1888.

About the same time, Erastus Snow set Mary Edda's husband, George, apart as a doctor sometime during this time period.. He served as a doctor to the Lamanites and the Mexican people. Many times he traveled in his calling keeping him away from his families.

In 1888, George bought a farm in San Francisco, about 5 miles north of Casas Grande. This

farm became the nucleus of Colonia Dublan. The colony grew and developed. By August 1896, it had 40 families and over three hundred people. It included a flour gristmill and a large cooperative department store. Three other children were born to Mary Edda and George in Colonia Dublan. Ida May was born in 1890, Nephi was born in 1893, and Ammon was born in 1894.

In early 1898, Mary Edda's daughter Philomela Lake Jones and her two children died in Colonia Dublan of pneumonia, and on 23 Mar 1898, George Lake, Mary Edda's husband, died of pneumonia at the age of 59 years. He was called Dr. Laguna by the Mexicans as he served his mission as a doctor to the Mexican people and the saints in the Colonies. He was buried in Colonia Dublan, Chihuahua, Mexico. He was the father of 32 children with only 16 living to marry.

After George's death, Mary Edda relied on her sons and father. Her home was destroyed by a flood in September 1898, but her family rebuilt it. She lived in Colonia Dublan until 1912 when residents left because of the revolt against the government and the raiding of their property by revolutionaries such as Poncho Villa. They had to leave everything behind taking only a some clothing and a bed roll. They traveled by train to El Paso, Texas, next to Stafford, Arizona, and then to St. George, Utah. Mary Edda's father passed away in Stafford during their stay there.

In January 1916, Mary Edda married George Henry Crosby in St. George, so she could be his housekeeper and cook. He died on 10 Oct 1916. Mary Edda did temple work in the St. George Temple while in St. George. Her health declined and while visiting her children in San Juan County, she died on 14 Aug 1918 and was buried in the Blanding, Utah Cemetery.

SOURCE:

Jeffrey, Janet Franson. *History of the James Lake, Jr. Family*. Murray, Utah: Roylance Publishing, 1990, 301-315.

Crosby, George Henry	Lake, Moroni Charles
Foster, Charles Allen	Lake, Nephi
Foster, Mary Edda	Lake, Philomela
Foster, Mary Rhodes Hinkle	Lake, Sabra1
Laguna, Senor	Lake, Samuel George
Lake, Ammon	Lake, Sarah Jane Hill
Lake, Barnabas	Lake, Willard
Lake, George	Lake, William Bailey
Lake, Ida May	Moffett, Armagead
Lake, Jacob Alma	Portillo, Senor Reves
Lake, Louisa Ann Garner	Smith, George Albert
Lake, Mary Edda Foster	Snow, Erastus
Lake, Mary Eleen	Villa, Poncho