

HISTORY OF ASAY TOWN

BY NAOMI A. JENSEN

(Compiled and written and mailed to State Central Company, October 28, 1969, by Naomi A. Jensen, Historian of Camp Dale, Daughters of Utah Pioneers, Castle Dale, Utah. Granddaughter of Joseph and Sarah Ann Asay and daughter of Jerome and Nancy Asay.)

## ASAY TOWN

### NOW A GHOST TOWN IN GARFIELD COUNTY

Yes, there was really a Town of Asay! Asay Town with an elevation of 7000' was well named; the majority of the ten or twelve families who settled along the banks of what became known as Asay creek in 1872, were descendants of Joseph Asay or were relatives by marriage.

Asay Town began when my grandfather Joseph Asay took "squatters rights" on land on the creek that was part of the headwaters of the Sevier River. Squatter's Rights were the way pioneers obtained their land, until land offices were established in Utah. An office was established in Beaver, Utah, in 1876-77, but it took several years for the pioneers in Southern Utah to file on their homesteads. The Asay's and the balance of the original company of settlers, were exiles from the Muddy mission in Nevada, who had lived a year in Long Valley towns.

They grazed their cattle and horses on the nearby ranges and used the upper waters of the creek to run saw mills and a shingle mill. Although wheat often did not mature in the short growing season at this high altitude, they raised oats and wild hay was cut.

As more families gathered they were strung along the creek, and they developed farms and ranches along both forks of Asay creek, but the greater part and nucleus of their town was, just west a short distance from the present highway and bridge across Asay creek. Here was a small log school house, where they also held their church meetings.

Hillsdale, also a ghost town was settled the same year just ten miles down the river. It was named for Joel Hills Johnson who came with Deliverance

Wilson who was also an exile from the muddy mission, in search of a site for a saw mill. According to Parmer Asay, Hillsdale was the first settlement to have a school, and the school at Asay Town was the second.

Rebecca Wilson was the first teacher at this little school. When Rebecca taught the Asay Town school, the pupils, probably encouraged by their parent, bought and presented to their teacher a fine velvet covered album, with a note of thanks for her interest in them and her work. This was signed by each pupil attending the school that year. The album and a photostatic copy of the note and names have been placed in the Daughter of Utah Pioneer's Museum at Hatch, Utah, the following names are those on the list:

Charles Asay	Joseph A. Sawyer
Eugenia Sawyer	Cora Asay
Alice Asay	Eleazer Asay
Annie Englestead	Marion Englestead
Leonard Asay	Lorenzo Workman
Parmer Asay	Amos Asay
Isaac Asay	Jacob Englestead
Eleanora Asay	Daniel Asay
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Charles and Amos were children of Jerome Asay; Alice, Cora, Isaac and Charity were children of Isaac Asay; Eleazer, Leonard, Eleanora and Daniel were children of Aaron Asay.

The following is a clipping from the "ROOSTER VALLEY SHOPPER," a weekly paper printed in Richfield, Utah.

Thursday, July 17, 1969, Area obituaries.

#### 100 YEAR OLD WOMAN DIES AT RICHFIELD HOME

Mrs. Keziah Rebecca Wilson, 100, died Monday at the home of a daughter in Richfield of natural causes.

She was born St. Thomas, Nevada, September 19, 1868, to Wellington Paul and Rebecca McBride Wilson. She married Jesse Stephen Wilson, of Hillsdale, October 6, 1895, later solomonized in the Manti LDS Temple. He died November 12, 1916.

She was an active member of the LDS church having worked in all the auxiliaries.

Survivors, sons, daughters: Mrs. Eunice Cope, Miss Agnes Wilson, both of Richfield; Don, Annabella; Jesse S. George D. Calvin and Mrs. Leora Sawyer, all Hatch.

Funeral services will be held Thursday at 1 p.m. in the Hatch ward

chapel. Friends may call at the ward chapel from 11 a.m. to service time at the chapel. Burial will be in the Hillsdale cemetery by Springer Mortuary, Richfield.

My aunt, Sarah Meeks, sister to Nancy (Meeks) Asay, wife of Jerome Asay, was the second - Mamie Fay, George Haycock and Dicy DeLong, who later married Victor Showalter, and moved to Lovell, Wyoming, also taught at Asaytown.

Asay town was never organized as a ward, but Asay and Hatch were both branches under direction of Panguitch ward. James Dutton and Isaac Asay acted as presiding Elders, until the Mammoth ward was organized in 1892, to include both settlements. Hatch was only three miles from Asay Town.

On April 14, 1887, my father, Jerome Asay, made application to U.S. Postal authorities for a post office to be known as "Asay". This was granted and he became the first post-master on August 11, 1887.

The application reads the office was to be situated on the NE quarter of section 24, Twsp. 37, Range 6, Garfield county on the mail route from Marysvale to Kanab on which route the mail was carried three times a week. The carrier then was E. George Potter, and also stated that the office would serve 24 families and 63 inhabitants.

Palmer Asay states the Post Office was established in a log house built next to the old original rock house of Joseph and Sarah Ann Asay, so it was right on the mail route from Marysvale to Kanab and as the application stated the nearest office on the North was Panguitch and on the South "Ranch" about 10 miles away. The description of the land corresponds generally with that of patent issued 10 December, 1890, to Sarah Ann Asay wife of Joseph Asay, 160 acres.

Niels I. Clove became the next post-master, 17 October, 1888, followed by I.C. Barnhurst on 16 July 1890 and Annie M. Barnhurst, 15 April 1891. The people of Asay Town began to leave for other places and the settlement of Hatch began to grow in numbers, so in 1892 the Mammoth ward was organized with Aaron Asay as Bishop. The ward included both settlements, Mammoth or Harch and Asay.

When the next post-master took office, 3 February 1898 William R. Riggs

petitioned for the office to be moved to Hatch, where he was living. This was granted 3 October 1898, though the name was still Asay and it remained Asay until 23 January 1904 when he petitioned the name to be changed to "Hatch" and Samuel R. Workman became the new Post-master of Hatch 14 December, 1904.

Sarah Ann Asay was the Doctor and midwife at Asay Town, Hatch Town, and Hillisdale. When Joseph and sons were called October conference 1867 along with 100 other men to strengthen the Muddy Mission, Sarah Ann stayed in Salt Lake City and took a course in mid-wifery from Dr. Anderson which would be needed in the frontier settlements. It is thought she joined her husband and family at the Old Muddy Mission a year or so later.

Joseph and Sarah Ann had crossed the plains with 10 sons and one daughter.

My Dad and mother, Jerome and Nancy (Meeks) Asay, lived at the forks of the road in town and took up a ranch up the canyon. Here they ran the store and post office and were influential in establishing the school. Dad carried the mail on snow shoes from there to Panguitch for \$25.00 a trip. Brigg Young was a mail carrier on the route from Glendale - He failed to come in on schedule. Men went out and brought him in apparently frozen to death. Mother nursed him back to life.

It was here in a two-room log cabin that 10 of mother's 11 children were born. One that mother remembers as the most severe winter endured was when she was carrying her fourth child. The animals froze to death. Sixty chickens froze to death one night. Dad had an old pit of potatoes (about egg size) and rutabagas that he had intended to feed his pigs. They were frozen as hard as rocks, but he shoveled them out and shared them with the people. Wild ducks were an asset in surmounting this deprivation.

Mother remembers the last meal cooked at this time she looked around the house there was a little flour and a little salt. Dad had caught some minnows, but there was no grease to fry them. Mother knelt down and prayed that her

children would not die hungry. Dad had gone with the mail, when mother opened the door to find two men outside. They said their horses were too tired to go farther and would she mind if they come in to make a cup of coffee.

They brought in beans, bacon, rice, sardines, and soap. Mother hadn't seen soap for weeks. This winter they were short of milk as they were trying to save it for the calves to keep them alive.

When the snow thawed they skinned the dead animals and sold the hides. Spring found seventeen teams taking wool to Nephi. There were four horses to each wagon. The Sevier river was swollen so they could not cross and they had to go around by Grass Valley. Summer found them making butter and cheese and salting down fish.

Interlaced with all this deprivation were the "Shindigs", the life savers of their emotional capacities. Dad could call like a professional, "Swing that gal! That pretty little Gal! The Gal you left behind you!" was his favorite. Parading their partners was the chief recreation.

1 It was following one of these lean winters that May came again. With it the thrill of having weathered another winter, and the joy of knowing God still lived & throbbed in their hearts. To show their gratitude the people banded together to have the greatest spring festival in history.

Mother's oldest daughter then 11 years old, was chosen the queen of the May. Nothing was spared to make the costume the most beautiful to obtain. White muslin with yards of crocheted lace, ribbons and new shoes were all gathered together - May Day dawned. The beautiful little queen, instead of dancing on the turf, lay cold and stiff. Her lovely clothes became her shroud. Mother and Dad never knew for sure what happened. It was called heart failure. They do know that to them too it was heart failure. The flowers never bloomed to them in May as they had previously. Dad couldn't put the vim into his calling. Mother ceased to swing her partner with the same zest. Two more

graves were added to this one before Dad decided weather was too tough to conquer. With this common bond of hidden grief between them they were finally picking up old threads in new places.

Dad had heard of the mild climate in Green River, Utah, and decided to give it a trial. This was at that time a wild typical frontier town a railroad within and the famous Robber's Roost gang without.

Asay's Town seems to have died almost as abruptly as it was born, although as many as twenty four families or more lived in this town. Already discouraged with the continued fight with the cold, the loss of a saw mill by fire in the late 1890's further complicated their troubles.

As long as grandfather Joseph Asay lived (He died 3 October 1879), his family returned to Mt. Carmel for the winter but after his death, his wife and sons lived the full year at the ranch.

Joseph Asay and Eleazer Asay moved their families from Asay creek in 1886 to the new settlement of Georgetown in Kane county; Elijah Potter lived at Asay during its hayday and losing his wife and infant daughter there. His wife Sarah Eliza Jolley Potter, died 14 December 1891, and the infant Pearl Potter died October 12, 1892, both are buried in Asay cemetery. The Potter family must have left soon after these deaths.

Brady Inglestead lived at Asay for many years, several of his children were born there, but they also left. Aaron Asay left Asay creek in 1885, going to the small settlement where Meltiar Hatch and several of his family were living.

After the organization of the "Mammoth" ward more of the Asay Town families, Duttons, Isaac Asay and Sarah Ann Asay moved north to the now growing community of Mammoth, later known as Hatch.

By this time "Asay" as a town had ceased to be. Only a few scattered families stayed on. Amos Asay left 1899 and Jerome my father left Asay

creek in 1900. Amos returned in two years to live on the Inglestead place, but soon left for Idaho and Montana. Early in 1899 Sarah Ann sold the old Asay Ranch, and went with her son Theodore to Green River, Utah.

When word was received in 1898 that new opportunities had opened up in Big Horn country of Wyoming, many of the Asays, moved to that more favorable location. By 1900 every one had left the settlement.

Thus was the rise and fall of the town of Asay. Asay's Ranch is now owned by Gilbert Yardley of Beaver, Utah.

In 1956 when the Asay Reunion was held at Asay creek, little could be found to show where the town or even any homes had been located. The little cemetery remained in neglected condition. An old shed still stood where the old shingle mill had been on the right-hand fork.

#### RECORD OF ASAY TOWN CEMETERY

Junction, Utah, 28, July, 1959, I, Theodore Parmer Asay, son of Theodore Parmer and Mary Jane Windsor Asay, was born at Asay's Ranch 27 March 1883. My mother, Mary Jane, died at Asay's Ranch 9 January 1886. There was no cemetery there at that time she was burried at Hillsdale, a small village 10 miles down the river.

Uncle Jerome Asay and Aunt Nancy's oldest daughter Rosie died at Asay Town 30th April 1886 and was burried at Hillsdale along side of my mother.

Next was Brigham Young Beard of Kanab, born 6 February 1846. He was a sheep man. He ranged his sheep near Asay's Ranch during the summer season and lived with Uncle Jerome while up there. Brigham died 6 November 1889 at Uncle Jeromes home and was burried at Kanab.

Uncle Amos and Serepta Earl Asay had a pair of twins die, Lomey and Hilgy, they were the first buried at Asay Town cemetery.

Uncle Jerome and Aunt Nancy had an infant son Heber J. who died 14 October 1881 and a daughter Eva six weeks old died 1897 who were both buried in the Asay Town cemetery.



My stepmother, Mary P. Dutton Asay, gave birth to a baby girl at Asay Town 18 July 1893, her name was Martha Eliza Asay. She died 7 January 1894 and buried there.

Elijah Potter, wife Emma Potter, gave birth to a baby girl about the same time my stepmother's baby was born. Aunt Emma or Dride as she was called died and my stepmother Marie Dutton Asay took Aunt Emma's baby to raise. These two baby girls were raised as twins. Aunt Emme's name was Pearl B. Potter, she died 12 October 1892 and was buried along side her mother in Asay Cemetery. Aunt Em Potter was buried in a temple suit my grandmother kept on hand for herself. It was not very easy to get temple clothes in those days.

July 4, 1892, Bob Bonds shot and killed a Mexican by the name of Joe Berry, it happened at James Barnhursts shingle mill up the right hand fork of Asay creek. The mexican was buried about 3-4 feet north of the Asay cemetery.

The Asay Town cemetery is located about 100 feet from the brow of the hill on the North a little West from Old Joseph Asay homestead house that stood against the hill near where the highway now crosses Asay Creek.

Plans are being made by the Asay family organization to fence this little cemetery.

A few years ago this organization erected a monument in honor of this little settlement on the highway 3 miles out of Hatch, stop and see it as you pass.

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