

PERSONAL HISTORY OF ISAAC EDWIN BLACK  
(1858 - 1951)

Isaac Edwin Black was born December 30, 1858 in Nephi, Juab County, Utah, to William Morley and Margaret Ruth Banks Black. His father, William Morley Black, was born February 11, 1826 in Vermillion, Richland County, Ohio. He had stopped in Salt Lake City, Utah on his way to the gold fields in California in July of 1849 and was impressed by the life-style and character of the Mormon people here and stayed to join the Church. Two years later, in October of 1851, he started back east to bring his wife (Isaac's mother) and two children to Utah. He arrived at the home of his father-in-law where his family was living on December 20. When his wife's parents learned that he had joined the Mormon Church, they told him he was no longer welcome in their home.

After a sleepless night he told his wife he loved her but he loved God more and that if she wanted to go with him, to have her things ready, otherwise he would take their boy and leave their girl with her and he would go. When he had the horses and wagon ready, she was ready to leave also and they left her parents home.

William and Margaret were not able to come west until May of 1852 when they joined the 18th company of Pioneers, and arrived in Salt Lake City on October 2, 1852. Thus, Isaac's mother, Margaret Ruth Banks Black, left her parents home and traveled to a strange territory among a peculiar people she knew nothing about except what her husband whom she had not seen for nearly three years, told her.

Margaret Ruth Banks Black was born January 20, 1829 in Canton, Fulton County, Ohio, to Nathaniel Butler and Barbara Ann Artman Banks. She was baptized a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints some time in 1851. The exact date is not known and it is presumed that she learned about her husband's second wife some time before reaching the Valley. In his autobiography, William Morley Black says of her: "I wish to pay tribute to Margaret. She had been baptized and she knew also that I had married Amy Jane, (his second wife), and was prepared to meet the new conditions my actions had brought to us. She accepted cheerfully her share of increased responsibilities that plural marriage brings to all who enter into it. All the rest of her life she was a real mother and helpmate in my large family."

William Morley Black and his two families lived together in Manti during 1852 and 1853. Three more children were born to Margaret and William there. (Two were twins and one other child was born, but all died as infants). In 1854 he rented a grist mill in Nephi and moved his families to that town. It was there that Isaac's older brother, John Morley was born on November 27, 1856 and two years later on December 29, 1858 Isaac Edwin Black was born.

Not much is known of Isaac's growing up years. According to his father's autobiography, the families moved from Nephi to Ephraim about 1860. (Isaac would have been about 1½ or two years old then.) William Morley Black helped build a sawmill and large flour mill in Ephraim. He states that he had a good home and farm there. In 1865, when Isaac was about six or seven years old some families were called to go start a settlement at Circle Valley. William Morley and his families were called (he had three wives by then). The Circle Valley settlement was broken up in 1867 because of Indian troubles and he moved his families to Beaver. Isaac's daughter, Pearl recalled some experiences he related regarding his life while living in Beaver:

Though he was just a young boy, he remembered helping his father build a grist mill there. Once when he had gone from home and had stayed later than he was supposed to, he was sure he would be punished for being late. As he got close to home, he started to run and cry the rest of the way. He told his mother another boy had hit him so she went out to investigate and find the boy. In her concern, she neglected to question Isaac further and he escaped being punished.

The town of Beaver was organized somewhat like the United Order and Isaac, along with other young boys herded the community cows on the hillsides. They were given no lunches to eat and they ate edible plants that Isaac knew about. One day as they were searching for some of these plants, they saw an enclosure built of rocks. Being normal inquisitive boys, they decided to investigate. They found an old Indian woman that had been placed there according to Indian customs and left to die. When she saw the boys she began to yell loudly something that sounded like "Yak-i-way", which apparently meant, "Go away" or "Get out", and some very frightened boys "Yak-i-wayed" as fast as they could.

Because of his young age, Isaac had to stay home and do chores while the older boys went with the men to get timber, etc. Isaac envied them and began to hate to milk cows and he never got over his dislike of it.

From Beaver the families moved to Washington, Washington County, Utah. There Isaac received a Patriarchial Blessing at the hands of William G. Perkins on December 26, 1873. A copy of this blessing is found at the end of this history.

In his book, William Morley mentions cutting timber in 1873 with his boys, along with John R. Young and his boys. Isaac was probably helping with this project.

It must have been soon after this time that William Morley took up a small farm just north of Glendale in Kane County.

Isaac could write legibly with either hand and when we wondered about it, he explained that his school teacher forced him to write with his right hand and since he was naturally left-handed, he learned to write with both.

Isaac must have been about 16 years old when the families joined the United Order at Orderville. The Book, "History of Kane County and people in Mt. Carmel and Glendale also attended. There were present: Bishop Howard O. Spencer, of Long Valley, Joseph A. Young, John R. Young, William M. Black and Allen Frost of Kanab. In this meeting Brother Joseph A. Young spoke on the principles of the United Order to be observed by its members. Also called upon those who were willing to observe these rules, to make a covenant by baptism. After the meeting about fifty of the members of the United Order, also John R. Young, Wm. M. Black and Allen Frost made covenants by baptism to observe the rules of the United Order. Instructions were also given concerning incorporating the Order according to law."

One of Isaac's jobs in the United Order was herding the sheep. He apparently went with them to the winter range and stayed all winter along with them at least once. His account of this experience tells of the loneliness he suffered during those three months, with no books or anything else to keep him company. His diet was bread and molasses, which he grew to loath. He trailed the sheep by day and stared at the coats of his campfire at night, thinking of his wife and longing to be with her. The winter finally ended and Isaac was able to move northward. His one pair of trousers, made by the women of the Order were hanging in shreds. He felt he couldn't be seen by the public in them and the sheep shearers teased him unmercifully. Finally as he was seated by himself, wondering what he could do, he saw the lambs tails that had been cut off and thrown away, and he realized they had wool on them that could be picked off and used. Secretly he gathered the tails, put them out to dry in a hidden place and when he could get away he picked the wool off them, sacked it and carried it to Homer Bouten's store in Glendale where he traded it for a pair of "store bought" pants that fit. In fact they were so long that they wrinkled at the ankles. Only then did he feel fit to go see his bride and the other members of his family. The men of authority in the Order, as soon as they saw the pants, demanded to know where he got them. When they heard his explanation, they declared that he had taken property that belonged to the Order and so had done wrong. However, they decided he could keep them if he would let one of the men borrow them to wear to conference at Kanab the next Sunday and also allow the women to use them as a new pattern for the trousers they made for all the men. Isaac gave his consent but he said later that the pants never fit as well after having been ripped apart and then sewed up again.

Other experiences during the days of the Order were: One time he was sent with a group to work on the Manti Temple. A woman was hired to cook for them. It seemed she was rather saving with the food. She doled it out to them. The men were doing hard labor and needed adequate food. Isaac remembered that each of them got only 1 or two slices of bread per meal.

Another time he was working with a group at the "Old Factory" north of Glendale. Sometimes the only food they had for their dinner would be a five-gallon can of unseasoned summer squash. One day they found a five-gallon can of grease and decided to season their dinner with it. They thought it really improved the squash until they learned they had seasoned it with horse fat.

Still another experience along that line was when he was with a group working on a project south of Orderville. They were, as usual, given little food for lunches and a young boy always tagged along and ate everything he could get his hands on, from their scanty provisions. One day they had some meat and told the boy he'd better not eat any of it because it had worms in it. Thinking it would be safe then, they hung it on a tree and went about their work. When they came back to camp for dinner the meat was all gone. When said he was so hungry, he couldn't resist it even if it was wormy.

It was while living at the Order that Isaac met Nancy Easter Allen, daughter of Lewis and Elizabeth Alexander Allen. She was born December 15, 1861 in Savannah, Andrew County, Missouri and had come to Utah with her parents in 1862 with an independent Ox team and Company. The family had been one of the "Muddy Mission" families and suffered many hardships there, among them the death of the mother, Elizabeth, in 1869. After the mission had been abandoned in 1871, Lewis Allen and Willis Webb became owners of a 10 acre farm at Moccasin, Arizona. This they turned over to the Order when they joined it. Lewis Allen joined the order soon after it was organized when Nancy was about 15 years old.

Lewis had given permission for Nancy to become a plural wife of one of the older men of the Order, but she and Isaac had fallen in love and had other plans. They sneaked away and were married in an orchard by John Morley Black, Isaac's brother. He had been on a mission and had the authority to perform the marriage. Isaac's daughter, May relates that Nancy sat on Isaac's lap all that night and cried because she had disobeyed her father.

They were severely reprimanded by the authorities of the Order and after they had publicly asked for forgiveness, they were allowed to travel, by wagon to St. George where they were sealed in the temple for time and eternity on February 1879. Nancy was 17 and Isaac was 20 years old. Their first child, James Edwin was born a year later on March 11, 1880 and on November 16, 1881 their daughter Elizabeth was born.

The book, "History of Kane County" states that William Morley Black was appointed foreman of the grist mill in Glendale, which he must have managed that mill for a time then.

The Order was broken up in 1884 and Isaac must have taken his family to Glendale then because his daughter Margaret was born there on April 11, 1884.

In 1885 Isaac took a second wife. Nancy was opposed to this marriage and had said that she would leave if it took place. Apparently Isaac was thoroughly converted to the doctrine of plural marriage and on October 10, 1885, he married Elvina Hansina Olsen in the St. George Temple. Nancy took her, then, three children (and another on the way) and went to Kanab and stayed with her sister. Isaac went to see her and was able to persuade her to return home. He then moved his two families to Huntington, Emery County, Utah and on Christmas Day Nancy gave birth to a son, Allen. He died on January 1887, when he was only a little over a year old.

Isaac had been interested in moving to Huntington because of the possibility of having a grist mill of his own. Apparently this did not work out, though he worked in a mill there for some time. Meanwhile, his and Nancy's family increased. Alvin was born October 2, 1887, Clarence Andrew on January 10, 1890 and Elmer on September 25, 1893. In 1894 the family contracted diphtheria and it caused the death of their oldest daughter, Elizabeth on November 12, 1894 at age 13. On May 16, 1895, another daughter May was born.

Isaac's second family was also growing. A son, Martin Isaac, was born August 27, 1885. A second son, LeRoy was born January 26, 1888. Another son, William Henry, was born October 27, 1889 but died the same day. A daughter, Fanny, born September 23, 1890, lived for only four days. Another son, Harvey, born October 4, 1891 died at age 19. A fifth son, Frank Afton, born on April 19, 1894 died February 4, 1910 at age 15. Another daughter, Dora, was born June 19, 1896 and lived only 11 days. This must have been a period of deep sorrow for this family.

In June of 1896 there was an opportunity for Isaac to operate a grist mill in Glendale so he moved his families back there. Nancy bore three more children in Glendale. Rial was born December 24, 1897, Nellie on August 22, 1899 and Permelia (Pearl) on August 29, 1901.

Elvina also give birth to more children in Glendale. A daughter, Anna was born March 22, 1898, a son, Glen on August 19, 1899 - died November 6, 1900. A son, Walter Edwin was born December 24, 1900, a son Ward on August 6, 1902. It must have been late 1902 or in 1903 that they all moved back to Huntington because Elvina had three more children who were all born in Huntington: Ellis, born December 21, 1904, Rulon born February 22, 1907 and Marie born October 25, 1911.

In October of 1907, Isaac was called on a mission for the Church to the Western States. After serving for about six months he was laboring in Denver when he slipped on some ice one day and injured his leg or hip. He was hospitalized for a short time and then released from the mission and sent home.

Isaac's families lived in Huntington until about 1908 when they moved to Castle Dale, Utah. About this time Isaac went to Mexico where he built a grist mill. He stayed there and ran the mill for about a year. He learned to speak the Spanish language while he was there. When he returned, in about 1910, he moved his families to Ferron and leased a grist mill there for two or three years. About 1912 they moved back to Huntington.

In about 1914 Isaac and Nancy with their three youngest girls May, Nellie and Pearl, and their youngest boy, Rial, moved back to Glendale. Shortly after this, Isaac was asked to help build a grist mill in Kanab. His son, Alvin helped him and when it was almost ready to run, with new machinery and his son Rial and son-in-law Edgar helping to rivet the water pipes, the mill caught fire one night and burned to the ground.

Isaac acquired the grist mill in Glendale, which he ran for many years until he retired about 1905 and turned the mill over to his son Alvin. During those last years at the mill in Glendale, his grandchildren there greatly enjoyed visiting him, where they got weighed on his mill scales, got to eat "germade" and enjoy listening to his stories of his adventures, also his words of wisdom and advice. Some of his grandsons helped there at different times. One of them, Vernon Black son of Alvin, relates this:

"I believe the best lesson I ever had in being economical or thrifty was one winter I helped him in the flour mill. We decided to save every kernel of corn that we found that hadn't found it's way into the grinder. After the milling season was over, we had about one gallon of corn. He then proceeded to tell me he would grind it and give it to some family who was not so fortunate as us and that if we had let the corn go, maybe those people would have had to go hungry a few days. And that is the way the Lord would have us do it." Isaac also had visits from Indians at the mill. They would come begging for food. Isaac had, during his lifetime, associated with Indians enough to gain a knowledge of their language. He could speak enough of their words to make them think he understood everything they said. He always gave them flour, etc. and he enjoyed visiting with them.

Isaac turned the grist mill over to his son, Alvin about 1925. He had served in the bishopric as second counselor in the Glendale Ward for six years. He moved from a house at the south end of town to one on Main Street near the General Store about this time.

Two of his daughters, May and Pearl took nurses training in Salt Lake City and he loved to go there to visit them. He enjoyed traveling though he was never able to go very far from home in those later years. He was able to visit his brother John in Blanding as well as other relatives there at one time.

In August, 1931, Isaac's wife Nancy became ill with acute constipation. There was no way to get her to a hospital. After a few days of intense suffering, she passed away on August 8, 1931. Isaac's daughter May came to stay and look after him but on October

25, 1931 he suffered a heart attack and died a few hours later that day. He was buried in the Glendale Cemetery beside Nancy.

Isaac Edwin Black was a big man. In his youth he was tall (6 ft. 5 in.) and slender. He said his trousers were always too short. His eyes were bluish grey and he blinked them very fast. He had a keen sense of humor and a quick wit that earned him many friends. He had an unusual ability to settle differences between people. He could persuade them to sit down and talk over their troubles calmly and they could usually come to an agreement peacefully.

He was kind and friendly. When his daughter Margaret (Maggie) was old enough to want to go to adult dances, one of her girl friends, also longing to dance once said, "I know we will get to dance once. Brother Black will dance with each of us."

He was known as "Uncle Ike" to most acquaintances. He was a flour miller and farmer and had in his life done many things to help make a living for his father's large family and later for his own.

Isaac's daughter May remembered that a most wonderful thing happened when he traded something for a pedal organ. It took a prominent place in their parlor and she and her sister Nellie learned to play it. May said she practiced playing church hymns every chance she got and when Isaac's father, William Morley Black, lived with them for a while, he would sometimes sing the hymns she played.

May also remembered that her father loved politics and often invited politicians to their home to discuss with them their views on issues of the day. She remembered having to give up her bed to the visitors and find another place to sleep.

May said the family moved so often that a story got to making the rounds that went like this: "A neighbor was passing by Isaac's home one day when he noticed that all the chickens were laying on their backs with their legs crossed. Curious, he asked why they were doing that and one of them said, 'Don't you see? The wagon cover is on the wagon, we're moving again.' They were waiting to have their legs tied and be loaded on the wagon."

Isaac was a spiritual man. He related a heavenly experience that he had when he was in his late twenties or early thirties and living in Emery County, Utah. He and his older boys were hauling timber to help build up Huntington, when he suffered a severe pain in his right side. He prepared food for the boys and they retired. Sometime during the night he felt his spirit leave his body. He

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looked down and could see his own body and the boys lying in the bed. He stood about three feet above them, wondering where he was supposed to go and what to do. He didn't remember anything more until he went through a gate and some immortal being looked up his record and said, "We know him." Then, turning to another man, he asked him to take Brother Black to see his relatives, which he did. Brother Black saw his mother and they greeted each other with joy. While they were talking, someone else came up and said, "You come and go with me. You must go back; your work on earth is not finished. He felt so regretful about leaving he wept, but an angel said, Don't feel badly; at the age of 52, 62, or 72 (Isaac could not remember which age the angel said), you will come back and your work will be finished. Your family is too young and they need you." When Brother Black's spirit returned to his body, he saw it and it was cold as he entered it again.

From then on he spent his life working in the church, doing everything he could to complete his mission on earth so he could return to the beautiful conditions and scenes of his heavenly experience.

On October 25, 1931 at the age of 71 years and 10 months, he had a heart attack and died, saying he knew it was the time he was to go.

Isaac's children and their spouses and number of children are as follows  
By his first wife, Nancy Easter Allen

1. James Edwin, b. 11 Mar 1180, md. Sarah Lavinia Foote 18 Oct 1901. 11 children.
2. Elizabeth, born 16 November 1881, died 12 Nov. 1894. Age 13.
3. Margaret, b. 11 Apr 1184, md. William Edgar Cox 16 Sept 1904. 16 children - 2 died inf.
4. Allen, born 25 Dec. 1885, died 5 Jan 1887. 6 children, 1 d. infant.
5. Alvin, b. 2 Oct. 1887, md. Sarah Elizabeth Cox 25 Apr. 1907. 6 children, b. 10 Jan 1890, md. Sarah Matilda Biddlecome 19 July 1909. 10 children.
6. Clarence Andrew, b. 10 Jan 1890, md. Sarah Matilda Biddlecome 19 July 1909. 10 children.
7. Elmer, b. 25 Sept 1893, md. Iva Mae Brinkerhoff 17 Jul 1914. 2 children.
8. May, b. 16 May 1895, md. Alfred B. Randall 17 Apr 1948. No children.
9. Rial, b. 24 Dec. 1897, md. Kathleen Isom 19 June 1923. 6 children.
10. Nellie, b. Aug 22, 1899, md. Walter S. Carpenter 20 Apr 1917. 5 children.
11. Permelia (Pearl) b. 29 Aug 1901. md. Walter S. Carpenter 22 Feb, 19 No children.