

Orville Cox Day

Orville was commonly known as O. C. Day and was born June 1, 1885 in Fairview, Utah Territory to Eli Azariah Day and his second wife Elvira Euphrasia Cox, whose father was Orville Sutherland Cox, which should explain how O. C. got his name.

O. C. married Otes Clysta (another O.C.) Strasburg on September 29, 1909-her 15th birthday. She had been a student of his in the Highland school located at 10400 N 6000 W.

Two years after the marriage and after the birth of their daughter, Kate, O.C. went on a Church mission to the Central States mission for 2 years, then after two more years they moved to Lovell, Wyoming where the school teacher's pay was a little better. While there an event occurred that strongly influenced his life. One night, after being sleepless for some time a group of spirits dressed in old style clothing came into view and indicated they would like to have their Temple Ordinances done. O. C. indicated he didn't think he could, way out in Wyoming. They begged and some of the many left, the others became more insistent and he finally agreed. So the family history work requested, in order to be done, would require them to move back to Utah where the library and temple were located. They moved to their old home area in Highland.

O. C. dedicated much of the remainder of his life to genealogy work and was instrumental in finding many thousands of names of his ancestors, completing several lines all the way back to Adam.

In October, 1953, while the family was at church, their house caught fire and burned to the ground. O. C. ran from the church all the way to his home (he was 68 years old) and rescued most of his genealogy-at least the part that was not readily replaceable.

On Highland they were eventually successful in purchasing four twenty acre parcels of land. Two were east of the school and eventually went to sons Wayne and Lawrence, the other two were between 6000 and 6400 West at about 10600 N and these went to daughters Kate Rogers and Dora Bringham and sons Louis and Carl.

O. C. worked hard on the farm while their family (fourteen children) was young and was the water master for the upper and lower club, Lehi and Winn ditches. He was one of the board of directors for the Lehi water company, which made him very water conscious for the Highland area.

Highland did not have enough irrigation water so not much third crop hay was harvested, so in the mid-1930's Utah Senator Watkins along with others of the House of Representatives and Senate came up with the idea of constructing a dam on the Provo river at the west end of Heber valley, where the Deer Creek stream joined the Provo river. It was called the Deer Creek Reservoir and was completed in 1941.

O. C. was one of the leaders seeing that the Murdock canal that passed through Highland was enlarged for Highland farmers to use, as well as providing more water for South Salt Lake valley. There was to be a pipeline from the lower Provo canyon across Highland through Traverse Ridge to supply drinking water for south east Salt Lake.

O. C., in contact with Senator Watkins and a lawyer, formed the Highland Conservation District to administer the water, collect taxes and oversee other ditch and water distribution. O. C. was president for many years. He was sold on the whole idea from the beginning because it would provide water for Pleasant Grove, American Fork, Highland and Lehi. For those above the canal, they would trade their rights to the canal water to those below the canal for their rights to the canyon water.

O.C. spent many hours on horseback contacting the farmers who would be involved and did a good job convincing them it was worth mortgaging their land for ninety years to get their choice of full rights of Provo or late Provo or Deer Creek water shares. The full rights to Provo water was received all season and the rights to the late Provo from July 1st and the canyon rights began July 1st or earlier depending on the runoff.

The people of northern Utah County owe a great debt of gratitude to Orville Cox Day and the great work he did in getting water here so that the area may "blossom as the rose".