

JAMES HENRY COOK
MALINDA (WILCOX) PUGH COOK

James Henry Cook was born January 14, 1840 in Comstock County, Kalamazoo, Michigan. His father, Henry Freeman Cook was born at Homer, Courtland, New York, and his mother, Sohpronia Strobridge Cook, was born at Solon, Courtland, New York. The family pioneered west to Cedar Fort, Utah in the mid 1860's. Both parents are buried at Cedar Fort, Utah.

Malinda (Wilcox) Pugh was born December 5, 1838 in the village of Mt. Dundas, Duchess County, Ontario, Canada. She married Isaac Pugh in Iowa. They were separated sometime after the birth of her son Alfonzo. Isaac Pugh took the boy to California. Malinda was never able to find her son.

James Henry Cook married Malinda (Wilcox) Pugh on May 11, 1867 at Cedar Fort, Utah. To this union seven children were born. They are: Asineth (died in infancy), James Orran (died in infancy), Sophronia (married Lee Follet), Henry Freeman (married Emma Furman), Samuel (died in infancy), Martha Jeanette (married Andrew Hinman), and Phoebe Edna (married Herbert Young).



James Henry Cook.

James (Jim as he was called) and Malinda raised cattle and horses at Cedar Fort, Utah. Just before coming to Canada, Jim grazed his horses and cattle in the Snake River country in Idaho. His excellent stock was in demand by the pioneers arriving in Utah on their way to the California gold fields. They found they needed fresh horses by the time they reached Utah.

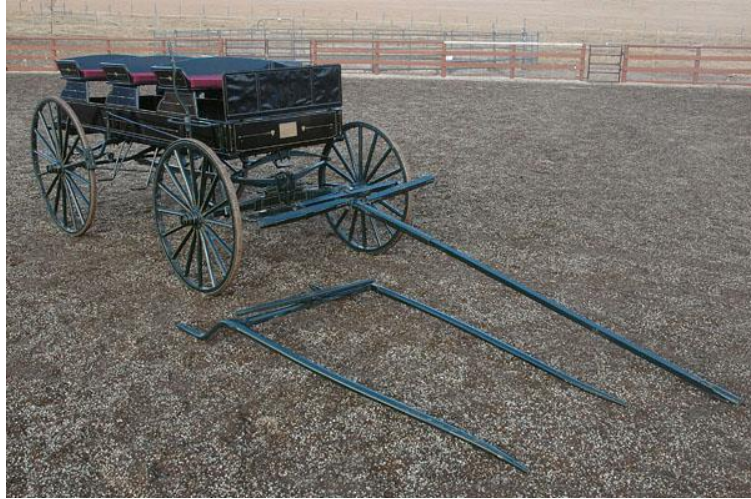
In the summer of 1888 the children were left in the care of Sophronia, the oldest daughter, and Jim and Malinda went to St. Charles, Idaho. Malinda stayed here with her brother Adam Wilcox, and Jim went on to Wyoming, looking for more land.

While here, Malinda had a stroke and died July 6, 1888, at the age of 48. It was three weeks before Jim returned and found out about the death of his wife. He was grief stricken. It was six weeks before the children knew of their mother's death. Sophronia, then 17, was left in charge of the family.

They sold the ranch at Cedar Fort and moved to Dingle, Idaho (near Montpelier) for three years. Jim was never happy here after the death of his wife. He heard of the marvelous ranch land in Alberta where hay could be cut anywhere. In July 1891, he sold the ranch in Idaho and moved his horses and cattle to Alberta. The children followed the next year.

In 1891, Jim took his son Henry and with others, trailed 700 head of cattle and 200 head of horses to Canada. They put on the "Trail Brand" which was a running bar in Idaho, and this is still a Cook brand today (1977). Jim's horse brand is still registered by Freeman (1977). One of the cowboys who also came up with cattle was Al Merkley who settled in the Magrath area. The most valued hand on the drive was a little brindie cow dog named "Buck". He would never leave the herd until the camp was set up and supper cooked. Buck never

lost a calf on the entire trip. Buck loved hotcakes and was always fed first whenever they were cooked. When the children came to Canada in 1892, Henry, the only son, drove a covered wagon and Sophronia and Edna drove a democrat. Martha Jeannette rode a buckskin race-horse sidesaddle and drove the extra horses. At the St. Mary River in Canada, they were met by a member of the N.W.M.P. who guided them to Twin lakes for the night and on to the Cook Ranch at Boundary Creek the next morning. Their father was shocked and happy to be reunited with his children, he had not known they were coming. His farmstead consisted of a bunk house for the men, a barn, a cattle shelter and a one-room log hut with a tent stretched over for a roof. He got busy adding two more rooms to the kitchen. The land is now owned by George Salt (1977).



Democrat circa 1906

The brome grass pastures he planted that first spring are still wonderful hay meadows. He was a very benevolent and wonderful neighbor, sharing with hungry friends, both whites and Indians.

One fall smallpox broke out among some Montana Indians while they were here visiting. They were held in a camp at Police Outpost Lake until U.S. officials would allow them south again. The N.W.M.P. were posted there to keep them together. When word got to the Cooks that they were starving, Jim butchered a beef to help them out, which they were ever grateful for. Two members of the band visited Jim every summer, as long as he lived, bringing him gifts of gratitude. One such gift was a pair of black and yellow mitts, lined with red flannel, which were the hide of a favorite dog. When Jim passed away, the Indians continued to visit his daughter Martha Hinman, bringing gifts to her daughters Lutie and Helen. Martha would give them tea, sugar and coffee to take home, and they would leave as silently as they came.

John always kept his money – five, ten, and 20 dollar gold pieces – in a buckskin bag on top of the kitchen cupboard. Hot biscuits and hot corn bread were his favorites. The N. W. M. P. bought horses from Jim, as well as the Lethbridge Fire Department.

Jim died of a stroke on May 6, 1906 at the age of 66 years, and is buried at Cardston, Alberta, Canada.

Source: Copied from a history of local residents in Alberta, Canada [Provided by Claudette Seward 2005]