

Lorenzo Dow Watson

NOTE: this paper is focused mostly on Lorenzo's time in southern Utah Territory. There is an abundance of information available in the "History of Lorenzo Dow Watson", available at sites.google.com/site/lorenzodowwatson/home/history-of-lorenzo-dow-watson

Lorenzo Dow Watson was born 17 September 1845 in Limerick, York, Maine. He was the seventh of nine children of David Watson and Susan Pendexter Day. He was always called "Low" at home.¹ He lived with his family in Limerick² until he finished grade school and studied two years at the academy. Then his father sent him to Portland [Maine] with a load of vegetables and pork for the Northern Armies fighting the Civil War. One of Lorenzo's cousins offered him \$300 to take his place in the army. He sent his team home with a neighbor and joined, even though he was only sixteen years old. During the first night on the ship taking them to Tennessee, his money was stolen.³

His parents were upset and sent a minister to bring Lorenzo home. He entered the academy for his graduating year. Lorenzo planned to return to the army when he was of age. His father told him to join the hometown unit, so Lorenzo enlisted in Company L of the 2nd Volunteer Cavalry in December 1863 at Augusta, Maine. He was described as having brown hair and blue eyes. He was discharged in December 1865 in Florida, suffering from scurvy and malaria.⁴ He was a poet and the family still has many of his poems.

In the spring of 1866, Lorenzo left for the gold fields in California with some of his army comrades. They sailed down the Atlantic, around Cape Horn, and up the Pacific to San Francisco. He found he didn't like mining, so he worked in a leather store and learned to be a saddler. After a year, the group decided to return to Maine by land. They rode their horses through Dead Man's Valley [Death Valley] and Arizona to Parowan, Utah Territory. Lorenzo found work in a harness shop, making harnesses and saddles. He made the first tooled saddles in the territory. He boarded with the Browns, and Mr. Brown loaned him his law books. Lorenzo planned to enter an eastern university but he joined the Mormon Church in 1868 and decided to stay in Parowan. He taught school for two winters. One of his older students, Sarah Melissa Clark, became his wife in May 1871. They had twelve children.⁵

Lorenzo had noticed the salt deposits around the Little Salt Lake, northwest of Parowan. From his time in the mines in California, he knew it was valuable and that there would be a market for it in Pioche and Bullionville, Nevada. He persuaded his brother-in-law Edgar to join him, and in the summer of 1872 they hauled salt the 108 miles to Pioche. His next venture was learning the lumber business, followed by setting up his own sawmill with Edgar. They sent for machinery from St Louis and had it shipped to Salt Lake City by train. They hauled it to Parowan by mule and horse teams, taking six weeks. Some of their white pine wood was used by Brigham Young in the building of the Tabernacle organ. Lorenzo and Edgar also donated lumber for the basement of the Parowan rock meeting house.⁶

¹ History of Lorenzo Dow Watson.

² United States Census, 1850, 1860.

³ History of Lorenzo Dow Watson.

⁴ Maine, State Archive Collections, 1718-1957; Maine, Civil War Enlistment Papers, 1862-1865; Civil War Soldiers Index, 1861-1865; History of Lorenzo Dow Watson.

⁵ History of Lorenzo Dow Watson.

⁶ Ibid.

When Lorenzo heard of the silver strike near Leeds, he knew there would be a great demand for timber, lumber, and shingles for the mills and shelters. In 1876, he left Edgar in charge of the sawmill and took his wife and three children and two hired men to Silver Reef, Washington, Utah Territory. He obtained a large one-room lumber house from Captain Cordon, with a small cook stove which Melissa used to cook meals for her family and others. Frank Fish and his wife and three children also shared the house and meals with them, as they had arrived at camp with nothing. Lorenzo stacked his lumber in the large yard by the house, and then delivered by mule team at a good price.⁷ He provided lumber, shingles, mine timbers, and other items. He hired others to freight for them while he personally operated his store.⁸ He lumber for the hospital and most of the frame building were purchased from Lorenzo.⁹

Lorenzo's oldest daughter, Vivien, told a story about Henry Lyman, one of their hired hands. He was combing his hair in their little house, took a step backward, and completely disappeared. He had fallen through the trap door to the cellar. The children thought he was magic, and were very glad he was not hurt badly. The family returned to Parowan by 1876, when he used his law knowledge to prosecute a case before the court.¹⁰

Lorenzo married Emily Adeline Crane on 26 December 1879 in St George, Washington, Utah Territory. They had nine children together.¹¹ On the 1880 census, Lorenzo was a saddler, living with his wife Sarah and their five children, as well as his second wife Emily, in Parowan.¹² He visited Silver Reef from time to time.¹³ Lorenzo rented a room and set up a saddle and harness shop in the Parowan United Mercantile Institution. In 1882, he applied for a Cavalry pension.¹⁴ He was arrested for cohabitation, paid a \$300 fine, and served time in the penitentiary four times. He was pardoned after the Edmunds Act was passed.¹⁵

In 1889, Lorenzo and his son Edgar, fourteen years old, were coming down a steep mountain grade with a load of wood. The wagon brake gave way, they jumped off, and fell in front of the hind wheel. It passed over both; Edgar died four hours later, and Lorenzo was badly hurt.¹⁶ In 1890, he was listed as a war veteran, with a disability caused by "material poisoning".¹⁷ He also suffered from relapses of malaria. Lorenzo was admitted to the bar in February 1896, with one of the best scores ever in southern Utah.¹⁸

In 1896, Lorenzo fell sick with a chill and thought it was malaria. It turned out to be double lobar pneumonia, and he was sick five days before he passed on 17 September.¹⁹ He was buried in the city

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ *Saga of Three Towns*, by Marietta M. Mariger, 1951, p. 89.

⁹ *The Archaeology of Abandonment*, by Paige Margaret Peyton, 2012, p. 159.

¹⁰ *History of Lorenzo Dow Watson*.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² United States Census, 1880.

¹³ *Salt Lake Herald*, 17 February 1880, p. 3.

¹⁴ US Civil War and Later Pension Index, 1861-1917; General Index to Pension Files, 1861-1934.

¹⁵ Territorial Case Files of the U.S. District Courts of Utah 1870-1896; *Salt Lake Evening Democrat*, 25 February 1886, p. 4; *Salt Lake Herald*, 22 August 1886 p. 13; 30 September 1886, p. 8; 23 December 1888, p. 5; 25 December 1888, p. 47; 22 June 1889, p. 5; *Ogden Standard-Examiner*, 21 December 1888, p. 1; *Salt Lake Tribune*, 7 March 1895, p. 8; 29 September 1910, p. 6; 21 November 1893, p. 5; *History of Lorenzo Dow Watson*.

¹⁶ *Salt Lake Herald*, 14 September 1889, p. 8.

¹⁷ US Census of Union Veterans and Widows of the Civil War, 1890

¹⁸ *Salt Lake Herald*, 14 February 1896, p. 3.

¹⁹ *History of Lorenzo Dow Watson*.

cemetery. Sarah applied for a widow's pension in 1897.²⁰ She and eight of her children were living next door to Emily and her six children in Parowan on the 1900 census.²¹ By 1910, she and three of her daughters were living with her oldest daughter's family in St George.²² She continued living with one or another child in St George²³ until her death in 1930. She was buried in the Parowan City Cemetery.²⁴ Emily and five of her children had moved to Cedar City, Iron, Utah, by 1910.²⁵ She was a city librarian in Cedar City in 1920²⁶ and died there in 1933. She was buried in the Cedar City cemetery.²⁷



Lorenzo Dow Watson upon entering the Army
(image from the History of Lorenzo Dow Watson)

²⁰ General Index to Pension Files, 1861-1934.

²¹ United States Census, 1900.

²² United States Census, 1910.

²³ United States Census, 1920, 1930.

²⁴ Utah Death Certificates, 1904-1964.

²⁵ United States Census, 1910.

²⁶ United States Census, 1920.

²⁷ Utah Death Certificates, 1904-1964.



Lorenzo "Dow" Watson (images from the History of Lorenzo Dow Watson)



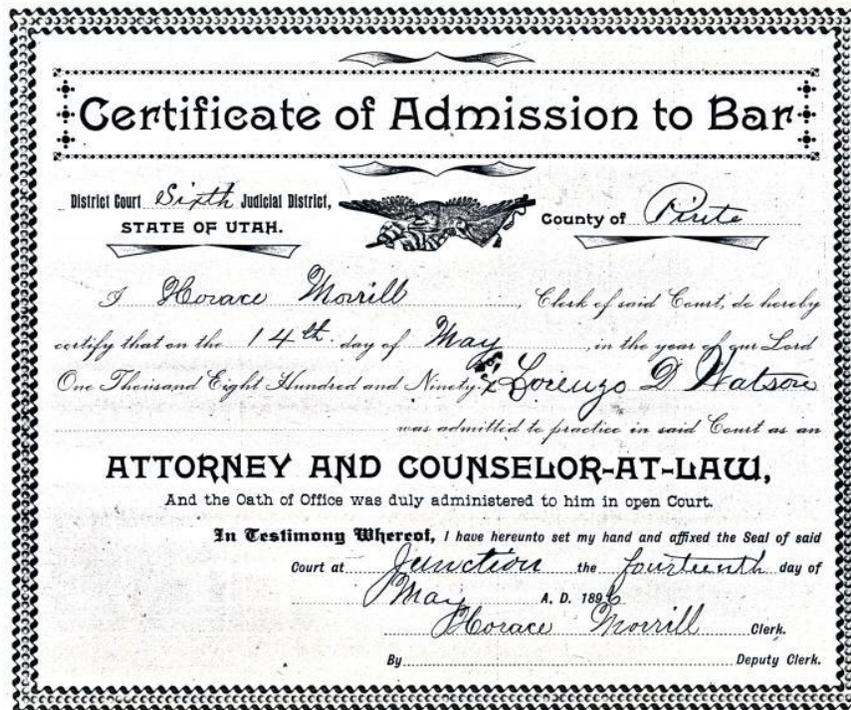
The Lorenzo Dow Watson family; Melissa is back far left; Lorenzo center; Emily back far right (image from *Ancestry.com*)



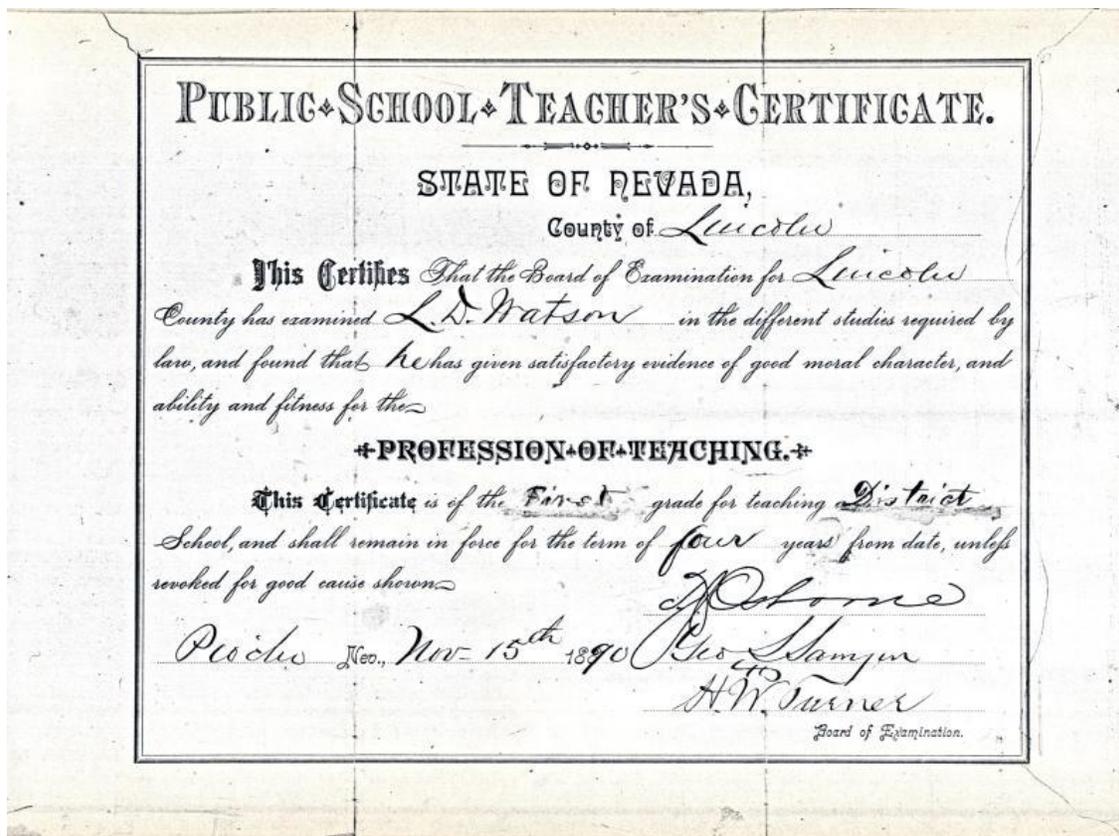
Lorenzo Dow Watson (image from *Ancestry.com*)



Prisoners convicted for polygamy at the Utah Territorial Penitentiary, about 1888.
Lorenzo D Watson is fourth from the left (image from *True West Magazine*)



(Image from Familysearch.org)



State of Nevada teaching certificate (image from Familysearch.org)



(Image from *Findagrave.com*)

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