

## Isabella (Belle) Crandall

Mystery surrounds the person of Isabella (Belle) Crandall. According to various census records she was born in 1838 in Illinois. Her name first appears as Isabel Wells in the Peoria, Illinois census of 1850 and she is living in the household of Harriet Crandall. Their relationship is unclear. They were soon to depart Peoria. Harriet's husband John Riggs Crandall had journeyed to California in 1849 leading a wagon party of pioneers to San Diego. Harriet and Isabella were about to join him.

Making their way to New York, Harriet and Isabella boarded the steamship Prometheus at Pier No. 2, North River, on Saturday, November 8, 1851, for San Juan del Nicaragua (Greytown). From there they passed up the San Juan River by steamer and across Lake Nicaragua to Virgin Bay. From there it was 12 miles by trail to the Pacific Ocean and San Juan del Sur where the steamship Pacific was waiting for them. It was 13 more days before they arrived at San Francisco Tuesday, December 9th, a trip which took in all 31 days. From the Pacific there disembarked 300 passengers, 30 ladies and 30 children. Among them were "Mrs J R Crandall and daughter." This is the first time this relationship is recorded and it is mentioned again a year later. She appears in the California census of 1852 as Isabella Crandall, age 14 and born in Illinois. A year later in the Placer Herald it was announced that Miss Isabella Crandall had married M. P. H. Love on December 31, 1853 at the residence of Dr. J R Crandall.



From this point forward her life takes an interesting path. For the next fifteen years she was to be inextricable linked to both her husband's successes and failures. After that she was on her own.

Milton P. H. Love was an early arrival to Auburn, his obituary implies a 49er, and if not, then most certainly soon after. Land Claims record a filing for 160 acres near Lincoln in January of 1852 and the purchase of a log house at the corner of Main and Court Street in Auburn the same year. Hiram Hawkins and Milton Love had the Temple Saloon built on the corner of Court and Commercial streets in 1853. Milton Love was 29 when he married and had just become Auburn's constable. In these early days this was just one of his several elective positions in both city and county government. He was also active in Masons and Oddfellows.

In the same year that Isabella and Milton's first daughter, Mary, was born on December 27, 1855, Milton and Hiram Hawkins sold their interest in the Temple Saloon. In the previous year he had been active in Democratic politics and a member of Placer County Democratic Central Committee. Like many members of the community he suffered losses in the great fire of 1855.

When their second daughter, Kate, was born in 1858 Milton had become active in court affairs. In 1857 he was in the Justice Court in Auburn; in 1858 an associate in the Court of Sessions. Then in 1859 he was elected Public Administrator for the county. He failed to be reelected to this position the following year. The 1860 census indicates a successful farming family with one servant. From this date forward there are no longer any records to indicate Milton ran for public office nor continued to be active in politics.

No long after the birth of their youngest daughter, Cora B., on August 25 1861, the family found itself in financial distress. In 1863 there was a public notice that Milton would sell his property

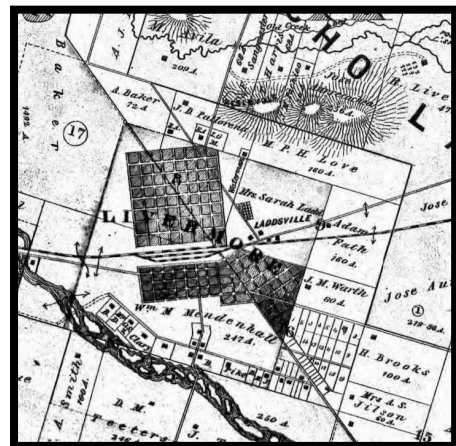
on Broad Street (the parking lot opposite the State Theater) to pay their debts. In both 1865 and 1866 he appears on the payroll for the Central Pacific Rail Road as a foreman. Construction was taking place near Auburn at the time. In 1867 he had relocated to Heatonville (Cisco Grove) and listed his occupation as carpenter - perhaps he's still working for the railroad. The following year he is in Alameda County - without his family!

Seemingly abandoned in the high Sierras, Isabella and her 3 daughters, ages 9, 12, and 15 made their home in or near Truckee in 1870. It was there that Mary Love married William Sayre on September 1, 1870. Her son William was born in Truckee on August 23, 1871 and then shortly thereafter they moved to New Jersey where William Senior had been born.

Ten years later, Isabella and her daughter Cora B appear in the 1880 census for San Francisco. Isabella listed her occupation as dressmaker. Her daughter Kate had married a Canadian, Charles Wilson, in 1876. In 1886 Cora married Edwin Selecman. Isabella was living with Cora's family during both the 1900 and 1910 census. However, it was at her home at 393 Haight Street in San Francisco where she died on March 16, 1912 not more than 100 feet from where her other daughter Kate was living on Webster Street.

One of the unanswered questions about her life is the apparent absence of any known contact with the Crandalls after she left Auburn. None of those little notes in the Placer Herald about a visit. And not a mention in the probates of either John or Harriet Crandall. Her obituary states, "She came to California with her adopted parents, Dr. And Mrs. Crandall." I wonder, were they?

After deserting his family Milton P. H. Love maintained a residence in Alameda County, the first being in Oakland. He appears in a city directory where his occupation is listed as carpenter. He continues to live in Oakland until some time after 1875 when he purchased 160 acres north east of Livermore from Charles A. Tuttle. In the same year he ran for Justice of the Peace for Livermore and lost. Later that year he was appointed by the Governor as a Notary Public for Livermore. In 1882, now at attorney at law, he was admitted to practice in Livermore Superior Court. On Tuesday, the 9th of October, 1883 M. P. H. Love, "a pioneer of this state, died in Livermore at the age of 58 years. He was a native of Georgia, and came to this State on the discovery of gold, locating first in Placer County. He was a Mexican Veteran and a member of the Masonic Order. For some years past he had been engaged in the practice of law, but he died comparatively poor." He was buried in the Roselawn Cemetery in Livermore.



And what became of the three daughters? Mary and her husband, William Sayre, lived in New Jersey from 1872 until, at least, 1878. The Hunt family tree on ancestry.com lists 3 children born in New Jersey and then three more in Mexico, two of whom died there. An additional two children were born in El Paso, Texas in 1884 and then a son in Tucson in 1886. Mary died early in 1887 and was buried in Tucson. She was 14 when she married, 15 when her first son was born and had just turned 31 when she passed away. The following year her husband remarried. Of course he did - a railroad engineer with eight children and the oldest barely 16. His new wife added three more. William died in 1930 and is buried next to his two wives in the Holy Hope Cemetery and Mausoleum in Tucson, Arizona.

According to the Honolulu census of 1900 Kate Love had married Charles Wilson in 1876. They had two children both of whom were deceased. Why she went to be in Honolulu is unknown,

but the census form indicated she had just arrived earlier that year. In the next census she is in San Francisco with her husband and they are living at 141 Webster Street. He was a carpenter and she was a dressmaker like her mother. Ten years later they were living just around the corner at 425 Haight Street and it was here that she died on September 25, 1928. Her husband had died on January 10, 1921. Both were buried in Mountain View Cemetery, Oakland.



The 1900 census informs us that Cora B. Love married Edwin Selecman in 1886, but there is no record of this marriage in ancestry.com. The marriage may have taken place in Elmira, Salano County where Edwin appears in the Great Register for that year. The family would be residents in Elmira until sometime between 1910 and 1920. Edwin and Cora had five children and after Edwin died in 1919 Cora moved in with her youngest daughter in Monterey. She appears there in both the 1930 and 1940 census. I cannot find a death record for her, but findagrave has a listing for her in the Vacaville-Elmira Cemetery where it is recorded she died in 1956. She would have been 95.