

Stephen Edgar Tagg



Steve & Jim Tagg



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The following history was taken from a tape that Stephen did with one of his granddaughters. The date is not known.

I was born Steven Edgar Tagg, I was named after great grandpa Stephen Tagg on, August 10, 1895 at Battersea, Surry, England. We moved quite a few times when we were young. I do not remember being told where I was born. I did not know if I was born at home or the infirmary. I was the fourth child, Flor Gert, Jim and then myself, Jim is one or two minutes older than I am.

My parents are James Tagg and Kate Flint. They were small people, mother weighted about 95 to 100 pounds. They were hard working people, dad was a shoemaker, when the family started growing up Dad started a business of his own in London. Up until he immigrated to Canada

We use to visit our grandparents of my fathers people when we were young. We did not know much about mothers people. My fathers people lived in London, a little ways away from us. There were several of his brothers and father who were shoe makers, grandfathers father was a shoemaker. They were shoemakers way back. They had to work for a living in those days.

My school days I do not remember much about them. They use to go to school when they were 3 or 4 years old. The main reason for that was to get them out of the house. Jim and I went to school at a very early age about 3 or 4. I did not want to stay at school so I ran away and was going to go home. I got lost and wound up at the police station. I do not remember if this was the first day of school. I do remember running way and they got word that I did not get home from school. Jim said well we will have to go and find him. So the first place they went to was the police station. The policeman picked me up and took me there. I had stayed there for a

while. I learned to read, write, math. I do not remember how far it was to walk. The streets were different than they are today and the schools are more scattered than they are now. We might have went a ways but do not remember how far.

Salvation army people would come and help us with musice. Flow was the oldest, she use to play the tambourine and the violin. Jim and I use to play the brass instruments, we started to learn but did not play them for long as we moved away. We were not musicians and they were big instruments. That did not last long for us. We moved to another part of England.

Dad moved his shop a time or two. The shops were hard to get, sometimes he could not get what he wanted and when he could get one he wanted, he would stay there and maybe something would happen. Then something would happen and he would have to get into another place. It was an everyday proposition to try and work. I helped put on soles, heals and finish them, sand them up and finish them up around the edging and make them look like they had been repaired. I use to go in after school and on Saturday's to work. Saturdays' dad had a 3 sons and he said when he had one boy he got the work done and when he had 2 boys he got ½ the work done and when he had 3 boys they didn't get so much done. He use to say no boy at all. Mother use to like to get us 3 boys out of the house alright because there were 5 girls in the house. The girls would help mother with the house work. I can't tell you much about what they did or how they did.

When asked if he was a raskle he laughs and said yes. I was a go getter. They always said I got into mischief but I don't know why I did. My friends, I had one friend that I chased around with and he got so that he was too good for me and got with another gang and started to smoke so I never had much to do with him after that.

We were baptized in 1908. It took my dad quite a while to join. It was hard when you get an unpopular religion like the Mormons. Not all the family joined at the same time. My father and 3 boys were baptized at the same time and the girls and mother were later. We were baptized in the swimming baths. They use to have these places for swimming pools in a building and we were baptized in one of those swimming baths. Somewhere in London this happened.

I was 16 when I immigrated to Canada in May 6, 1913. There was no one else in Canada at that time that I knew. I went by myself. Jim & Bob came in February or March the next year. I knew no one there and it just came on me to go, I guess it was the thing to do at that time for the church. My parents sanctioned the idea, I guess they were glad to get me out. I came across because of the spirt of immigrating and the church. There were some elders from Canada there. I went to Canada because it took less money. It took a lot more money to come to Utah at that time. I landed at Winnipeg. It cost me about or \$50 or \$55 dollars to go from London to Winnipeg. I was on the boat about 12 or 13 days, we struck a iceburg when we was out about half way. The people got thrown out of their bunks and beds and all over the ship. Then they had 8" or 9" of water in the boat the rest of the journey and they had to pump the water out and keep it up the rest of the journey. Everyone thought they were going to drown and that the boat was going to sink, but we got through alright. The boat, I came over on was Iscannia (this could

be spelt wrong) boat, it was a small boat, not much over 10 or 12 ton boat. We got sea sick, and you could not help but get sea sick, it was kind of ruff. Everyone was feeding the fishes (as he chuckled).

When I got into Winnipeg, there was a family on the boat that use to live in London. Dad contacted them and he heard they were going, but I don't think they he knew them too well. They were going Winnipeg, Canada and asked if I could go with them. I went with them and hardly ever saw them much. When we got to Winnipeg, they had a son that had been out there a year or so on a farm. So he got in contact with another farmer and that is how I got a job. This was just outside of Winnipeg in a little town called Decker. I worked there for \$10 a month and my board. When winter came I got my board and no \$10. Then it was February, I got word that Jim and Bob were booked to Edmonton. So I left the farm and went to Edmonton. I got there by train. When I got up there I did not have any money. Then my brothers came in and I went to meet them and we went to a place to look for work and couldn't find work in the winter time. There was a farmer who said that he would take us if we would go out and milk cows for our board. Jim and I had about 10 or 15 cows to milk between us. Bob went to a hotel in Edmonton as a bellhop. He stayed there for a while and he was doing pretty good.

Those days were hard to think because they were such trying conditions. Cold weather and nothing opened up for months. Jim and I were tired of milking cows and getting nothing for it, only our board. We decided to go to Cardston. It was about as bad to get a job there. The President of the Stake E J Wood had a big ranch. He hired one or two men and he gave me a job milking cows. I worked for him until the spring and then went out into the fields and did plowing and farm work. Rode horses and run cows. This was a new country and it had just opened up. The people farmed and help to build up the country and worked very hard to make a living. This is why the immigrants came in so cheap, so they could build up the country. Everything was quite primitive in those days.

I got 5 months wages \$50.00 and saved it up and sent it home to my folks. If I wanted any money I was just out of luck. The man that I worked for was disappointed that I was not going to stay on with him. He thought I would be there for spring and summer work. There was one other person that worked for the same man I did. They cooked our meals. During the day we milked cows and feed hogs. We always had a bunch of hogs on hand. They always said that the hogs were the mortgage lifter and always had a sale for them. That made him a prominent and prosperous farmer. He put me to work in the summer time and I had to go out and cut down the bushes, great big shrubbery stuff higher than I was. Getting in there and cutting down to the ground and piling it up to get it ready for burning. We use to eat and get cloths when needed and life was simple in those days.

I would work out in the field all day. Cutting down this brush and digging out stuff they called it clearing the land. I would work at that until about 4:30 or 5:00 and then I would go and round up the cows and take them in and at night we would milk the cows and feed the hogs again. I use to have to pack about 10 or 20 buckets of water from the well and fill up a barrel. They had if fixed like a syphon affair and when the hogs drank, the water went down and I had to

keep the barrel filled. Everything was quite primitive. He was successful farmer that fellow. He came from back east where they had big hog farms. He use to use a big grinder and grind out corn, oats and barley. We would have to sack it, and it was all work. People worked for their board in the winter time, they didn't pay wages in the winter. In the summer months they pay you money. This all happened my first year May to February. Then Jim and Bob came.

We saved enough money to get to Cardston and we went there for the Church. We went to work at the big cattle ranch there. We got about \$10 or \$15 a month. It was real pioneer days, in a real sense. We put up with hardships and conditions that were very hard to make a living and hard to get ahead. I worked for \$10 or 15 a month and thought I was lucky. I stayed around Glenwood until I came to Salt Lake. We got a horse or two at a time and finally we got enough pull horses so we could go plowing with horses. We would go out plowing so we could earn money or plow so many acres for a horse or a cow or buy a couple of pigs. That was the days of bartering. We had 12 or 15 head of horses between Jim, Bob and I. We use to do everything with horses and wagons. Maybe the grocery store would want a whole load of groceries brought in and you would bring them in for about \$10.00. You would go down to the freight people and load them up. They also use to go plowing and some times you would get \$3.00 an acre with 6 head of horses.

The church had a cattle ranch and they had hundreds of head of cattle. Then in this little neighborhood that we lived the church gave (all of the apostles had a piece of land) and they would sell the land and we bought 80 acres of land. The conditions were that you had to improve the land to stay there. It was raw land, you had to break the soil and cultivate the land. It took years to get the land to where we could get anywhere and then when we did Jim got married and Bob got married and Mother and Father came and the girls came. They were building the temple at this time also. This was about 1914 - 1923. This was about World War I, Bob and Jim escaped it by coming to Canada. It started about 6 or 8 months after they came to Canada and we were called up for end of World War I. Jim and I were called up at the same time and they took Jim and he had a hernia, but it did not stop him from going. They had to operate on him and they gave him the job of purchasing the food for the soldiers for the camp. He did not have to go on the battle line. They did not take me because I had one small lung and it did not fluctuate like a regular lung. I could not intake and exhale as much. They put a stop watch up to my ear and they said is that ticking. I could not hear it. They said "Oh come on you can do better than that, you can hear it." I told them that I could not hear it. So that disqualified me for the service and it kept me out of the war. They tested my breathing and put an instrument on me and told me to take a deep breath. The breath was not big enough and they told me I could do better than that. They thought I was bluffing to get out of the war. They told me that my lungs were not expanding as they should do. So between my ear and my lung it kept me out of the war. They did these tests in Calgary or Edmonton. They did not call Bob because he was younger. He went to Cardston and got a job as a bellhop and did pretty good for a kid in those days. He is 3 years younger than me.

I found that the farm work was very hard we got up at 5:00 am in the morning and milked the cows, feed pigs and hornesed the horses and then we would go out in the field and plow until

noon and from 5:00 am until noon was a pretty good day. But we always went out in the afternoon and plowed too. We went to bed at night about 9:00 or 9:30. We worked until 4:30 or 5:00 with the horses, then you come in and take care of the horses and feed the chickens, cows and pigs. Then you go in and have some supper and then you could go out and lay on the lawn or go to the shops, or fix the machinery.

I got to Salt Lake by train. It was 800 miles. I came to Jim's place and it took me a long time to find a job, about 6 or 8 weeks. I worked at a car barn working on the street cars at night. I use to go in about 10:00 at night. Then worked until 7:30 or 8:00 in the morning. It was hard work and I think I was paid about 41cents an hour, that was good wages in those days. That was average wages for average work. I was there quite a while, and I got to be a mechanic on the street cars and repaired them at night. The cars were out in the day time so I worked at night. There was a crew of about 5 guys and they was alright to get along with. I worked at it for about 18 months and then met Jean.

I met Jean at the 2nd ward at 5th east and 7th south. Jim and Lilly went to that ward. They lived on 4th east between 6th and 7th south. I stayed with them for a while, but after I went to the ward and met Jean. I had to go back to Canada because I came down on a visitors permit and did not have a visa. I was not suppose to work or anything else. I was suppose to come and be on vacation and I stayed my limit. Finally a letter came and I had to go to the immigration office and talk things over. I went up to the immigration office and they asked me if I was going back to Canada. I told them yes, I was going to go back, most any time now. They told me that I could not stay any longer because I didn't have a visa. That was like a passport. I went back up and stayed about 10 months. Then I decided it was time for me to get back to Salt Lake. I was corresponding with Jean all the time I was in Canada. We thought each other nice people when we met.

While I was in Canada I went back to the farm. When I came down the second time to Salt Lake I left everything up there and came for good. I had 6 head of horses, 2 wagons, 6 sets of harness and some farming equipment. I left it all. I don't know if anyone bought anything, they just disposed of it. Someone probably just came and got them and used them. I bought some ground and it was not working well so I turned it back to who I got it from. I got my visa after waiting 11 months. There were only a certain amount of people allowed into the US at one time. I had to be put on a waiting list and go to Calgary to get my visa. That was about 90 or 100 miles from where we lived. I finally got it and thought I just as well get on the train and come on down.

I got down here and things were pretty tough and work was not plentiful. This was about 1928 about one year before I got married. Ruth came along with me, she had her visa also. We looked around for work and did not get anything worth while, it seemed like everything was dead. Seemed like there was not much progression in the way of work for new comers. I took what ever I could get, unloading cars, tires, batteries and jobs like that. It was a days work here and a days work there, just from day to day. I went around looking for work and put in an application at several places and did not want to do night work. I finally got in on one, when

they were building the Utah Woollen mills. I got a job there being a plumbers helper, setting up machinery, taking machinery off the railroad cars at the depot, loading it on trucks. There was 4 or 5 men doing that. I also operated a carding machine for 10 years. It made the wool into yards. We use to work long hours. Jean and I were married at this time.

I decided to marry Jean about Christmas time of 1928. Jean had a little apartment on 3rd east and 8th south a four unit outfit. We went around looking for a house. Rent was too high and Jean did not want to be too far from her mother. We stayed there for 3 years and paid \$18.00 a month rent. It was quite a bit for those days, it was an upstairs apartment. It was nice and roomy. They had a fold out bed in the wall that we never used. Jean worked until she got pregnant and then got where she could not work any more.

We had a still born girl first and it kind of upset the apple cart. All the kids were born at home and we had a doctor come to the house. They use to make house calls in those days, it was a doctor Stevens. We got along pretty good as long as I was working. After 3 years we went out looking for a house, we did not want an apartment any more. This was on or around new years day. Jean's brother had a chum that was renting here and was going to move. That is how we heard about our house, we decided that people were in it and we could not kick them out. They had the measles and would not let us in the house. The lady next door came and talked to me and told me that the house was for sale. I told her that I could not buy anything right now, but that I would like to rent it though. So they got the name of the owner who had moved to a bigger house. He was a fireman who ran a fire ladder truck. This man said that he wanted sell the home and I told him that I couldn't buy anything. He told me "lets talk." So I asked him how much do you want for it. He told me what he wanted. I said "how much do you want down." He said that he wanted \$150.00. I said "now look, where would I get \$150.00 from." He laughed and he said "well I am going to sell the house or if I don't sell it, I am going to turn it back to the mortgage company." He said if you want the house then you give me \$150.00 and I'll give you the deed. He said "You can take it over from there, I had it rented to a fellow that was going to buy it and sold to him and the guy paid him \$25.00 for a year and couldn't keep up so decided to turn it back to him." And he said "I'll give you the benefit of 12 months payments at \$25.00." So I took it over for what was remaining on the loan. Which was a large some of \$1,500.00, in those days it was a lot of money.

One day he came and asked for money to pay some equity, I told him I could not give him any money that I did not have any money. So I gave him a script that was worth about \$100.00. He told me he needed a new fireman's uniform, I was able to get him one from Utah Woollen Mills and I gave him the script. We still owed him about \$100.00, so we gave him the script and he said that he would give us the warranty deed. So he gave us the deed, and that is how we got our start here.

Times were very hard then, it was right in the middle of the depression. This was about 1930. The depression struck back east and it took about one more year to get out here. You never knew if you had a job from day to day. If you got one day's work in, you never knew if you would be there tomorrow. It was pretty tough and we weathered it and had some ups and

downs. The government took over with some home loans. The fellow says "I can't put a home loan through, unless you spend about 100 or 200 dollars and make improvements on the home." This fellow had to put something on the paper work that said I was repairing the house. They decided that they would put the loan through for \$1,000.00, it would take about 800 and 900 dollars to pay off the loan prior to the mortgage company. The government man felt that if they had a loan for \$1,000.00 it would go through easier, than if I had not fixed the place up. So we put on a new roof. We put cedar shingles on it. We contracted it out and had someone do it for us. They felt if I had a new roof that I would have more of an interest in the home. It also provided work for a man. It took them 2 or 3 weeks before it could be approved. Then we found out that the government had run out of money for loans. It then took about 3 more months until we did finally got the money.

In the mean time we did not pay anything for the home. when the loan went through we paid \$10.00 a month. We could pay more on the loan if we wanted to, but it had to be complete payment like a full months payment. The contract went for 8 or 10 years. Then we built another bedroom on the back. I bought a few dollars lumber at a time and then the lumber man said "why don't you get a two hundred dollars and I'll let you have the lumber and then you can go ahead with your building." I told him that I did not have a two hundred dollars. He told me to go to a bank. I told him I did not know a banks. He told me to try Tracy Collins bank. They let me have two hundred dollars and so I paid them so much a month plus interest. I got all the lumber I needed to finish the house with and paid the bill off and got it taken care of. Then we sailed a little bit easier. We built a bedroom and bathroom at the same time. Eileen was a little girl when we were building this new addition. She got her finger in the socket and let out a little yell. I was lucky to get our house because the guy was trying to get rid of it.

We named Eileen after two girls that Jean's dad knew at his work. He came home from work and said that he finally came up with the name for Eileen and told them the names were Eileen and Yvonne. We had a hard time picking out a name for her. She was 2 or 3 years old when we decided to have another child. I was still working at the Woollen Mills. We finally had a son and he was born in the bedroom and a good size. He was too big for the baby casket so we had to take the next size baby casket for him. He died right after birth. They tried to make him breath and but could not get him to breath. The doctor went out of the bedroom and said I can't tell her that her baby died. He told neighbor that use to live here and watched while the birth was going on, she had to be the one to tell Jean that the baby had died. He was a beautiful baby. We were going to call him Stephen George or George Stephen. We never got any further with our family after that.

We were getting along in life and getting to the point and it would be risky. We thanked the Lord and left it up to His judgement. Jean was 29 when we got married. We had some ups and downs in life, and we have had some experiences in life, but as a whole life has been pretty good to us. We were luckier than lots of people in those early years and some did not have as good as luck as us.

We use to go over to the 3rd ward and take Eileen to Sunday school. I use to take over a car full of kids, I guess I had 6 or 7 kids. There were lots of kids and neighbors around here. I

use to get them from primary. The 3rd ward use to be over where the Deseret Industries is now on 7th south. State street was not as lively as it is now. The kids when they first started primary use to go over to the Jefferson ward because it was closer to the school for the kids. When they had been there for a year or two, then they went over to the 3rd ward, but it worked out alright. Jean was the primary president one time. Eileen went over to the Harvard ward also.

I also worked at OC Tanner doing maintenance man. Mr. Tanner had a jewelry factory down by the old Capital building on 2nd south. I also did a lot of work out to his house, any little job they wanted done, I would go out there and do them. I looked after his sprinkling system for years. Every year I had to fix about half dozen and replace the parts and fix them up. I had to dig them up first to be able to fix them. I worked for Mr. Tanner for quite a long time. I made him a guest closet under the circular stairs of his house. He got me over there one day sizing it up and we decided where we needed to put the closet. It turned out real nice.

The last place I worked was the school board.