

SHOE MANUFACTURERS

The Daniel England family built a log house which they used as a shoe shop after they had built an adobe house in front. Thomas Lee at that time was operating a tannery south of the England home and Daniel and John England worked three years for Mr. Lee making boots, shoes and harnesses from Lee-tanned leather.

Mr. Lee would go into the canyon, peel bark from the red pine trees, stack it until dry, then haul it down to the tannery and grind it in a homemade grinder until fine. With this he tanned the raw hides making harness leather, sole and upper leather which he made into shoes on homemade lasts and homemade wooden pegs.

About the year 1861, John England, with a number of townspeople incorporated and built and operated what was known as the Tooele Co-op, he being in charge of the shoe department. He had brought a pair of crimping boards and boot trees from Omaha on which to make boots, and to the best knowledge of the writer, these were the only crimping boards and boot trees ever in Tooele County. John gave the first pair of boots he made to Parley P. Pratt as a present as he was leaving on a mission to Palestine.

On October 10, 1881, John left for a mission to his native land where he labored for two years and upon his return he built a small shop which he operated until 1885, when he bought the shoe business and building from the Tooele Co-op. He operated a boot, shoe and harness shop, at times employing ten shoemakers, all work being done by hand. Boots and shoes made by England became well known.

He had regular and special built wooden lasts to fit nearly every man, woman and child in the county. Many boots were sent to Wyoming and Nevada. Some of the first shoes were made about four inches high, two piece uppers, no linings, selling for about \$2.00 and \$2.50. Shoes six and seven inches high and lined sold for \$6.00 and 7.00. Boots ranged from \$7 to \$27 depending on material and finish.

All boots and shoe uppers were hand sewn with wax ends made from 3 to 6 strands of Irish flax linen thread with imported Poland Boar pig bristles and secured to the end by twisting and waxing. All holes were made with awls for both stitching and pegging. Work shoe soles were held together with wooden pegs. After finishing the shoe, the points of the pegs were smoothed off with a small rasp on a long handle called a floater.

I remember that the first paste to secure the lining was made of boiled water and flour. Later, imported gum arabic was used. All leather for soles was tempered in water, then hammered on a lap stone held on the knees. This made the leather tougher and thinner. Men's and Ladies' fine shoes were all hand turned, meaning soles were channeled on the flesh side, upper leather sewed onto channels on the flesh side, upper leather sewed onto channeled part inside out, then she was turned right side out.

-- Albert B. England