

THEDA KARTCHNER

Theda Kartchner was born April 29, 1875 in Panguitch, Garfield, Utah to John Kartchner and Lydia Amelia Palmer. Married David Patten Black December 10, 1892. They had ten children: four sons and six daughters. Died March 12, 1962 in Salt Lake City, Salt Lake, Utah. Buried in Blanding, San Juan, Utah.

Theda's folks moved from Panguitch to Orderville and lived in the United Order for two years but she was too young to recollect anything that happened there. From there they moved to Snowflake, Arizona, where her grandfather and father were called by Brigham Young to colonize. Her father was the first man to start a home on the town site.

The first song she ever learned was "Little Purple Pansies" in the first Primary organized in Snowflake.

A small school was built nearby and Theda was enrolled. She was frightened and shy and afraid to go but when her parents convinced her to go she loved it and "looked forward to the days it was open and hated to see it close."

"One warm sunny morning my father pulled up to the door with the team hitched to the running-gears of the wagon, when I asked if I could go with him he said "Yes, we are taking you down to the river to be baptized, as you are eight years old today. We drove down to the little Colorado River and I was baptized. I had a wonderful feeling then and I have felt ever since that this is the true Church of Jesus Christ. All my life I have been grateful for the blessing of that day, which made me a member of this church and the song that thrills me more than any other is 'I Might be Envied by a King for I am a Mormon Boy.'"

When she was eight they visited her Grandmother in Orderville and she attended "It was very easy for me to get tickled and

school there for a few months. One day she got to laughing in school and her teacher made her sit in a seat with a boy, which in those days was real punishment. "That was the first time I ever saw the boy I later married. He was one of those I sat by."

Theda's father was a polygamist so they moved to Old Mexico where they didn't have to worry about him being arrested. "How I did hate to leave our home and all the comforts, prosperity, and the chance for good education for the poverty, trials, and hardships in Mexico." Theda was fourteen years of age at the time.

"The first town in which we stayed was Diaz. We made a shanty, covered it with brush on top and used the wagon cover around the sides. We lived here for several months.

We hadn't been here long when the Spanish people became suspicious of us thinking we had come to take their land. They gave us notice to get out in fifteen days or they would kill us all."

The Church talked to the President of Mexico and told him we wanted to live in peace and had no intentions of taking large tracts of land. The President sent word to stop all threats and let the Mormons stay in peace.

Because of her mother's health they moved into the mountain colonies. "In the mountains we were in constant fear of the Apache Indians, beside the fear of the outlaw Mexicans, also wild animals and snakes."

Before winter her father built a one room log house and the settlers built a little school house right close to their home.

very hard for me to stop laughing. One day

in school a girl sneezed so hard she hit her head on the desk and I started to laugh. When the teacher told me to stop and I couldn't she made me stand in the corner on one foot until my leg ached all night."

Wherever the family lived Theda thought it was very important to be in school and she went to school whenever and wherever she could. "I never went higher in school than the fourth grade but I was anxious for knowledge and it seemed I had a good education for those days."

"On the 24th of July all the community took a lunch and went to the river to celebrate. As we drove up I caught sight of a young man leaning on a pretty horse. I fell for him right there and deserted the partner I came with to go home with him and we were always together after that. This young man was David Patten Black. About a year and a half later we went to his father's place and were walking around and sat on a big log fallen across the stream and he lifted me down and asked me then to be his wife."

Before the marriage, her father took her to the door and pointing said to her, "See that big pine tree on the hard rocky hillside standing all by itself?" She answered, "Yes." Her father then told her, "That is the way your life will always be if you marry Dave Black." She married him anyway.

Theda always wanted to be called a lady, not a woman. And she always acted like a lady.

Her first child was born a year and a half later and Theda had a hard time of it. It was the only time her mother was there to help her with her babies because her mother died soon after.

Her baby boy, the fourth child, became ill. "I dreamed my mother and I were walking along a rugged canyon stream and came up into the open and the baby was dirty and I took his clothes off and my mother picked the baby up and said, 'I'll take care of your

baby and you wash the dirty clothes,' I woke crying and just a week from then he died."

"When my eighth child was three month old we were driven from our home in Old Mexico. We just walked out of our home and left everything we had. We went to El Paso where we lived all summer in tents. The government had a commissary where we got provisions, just enough for each day.

Dave was with the horse herd so we were alone. The mosquitoes nearly ate us up and I was terribly afraid of snakes for we were sleeping on the ground. Before we got tents we all stayed under a big lumber shed and the townspeople would come and climb the fence to stare at us. Grandma and Grandpa Black and my family had just a little space and Grandpa was old and stiff and the children stumbled over him and he was cross and sometimes tears would run down his cheeks.

All the colonists had gone to every part of the United States and we were the last to go out because Dave had to see that the horses were taken care of. Finally they made arrangement for us to go to Huntington. We were given train fare. I was exhausted when we got there. Our folks had all gone to Blanding, or Grayson, as it was called at that time so we joined them there. My last two children were born there."

In 1943 Theda had her eye operated on for a cataract. While she was in the hospital she dreamed that her daughter Marie came to the foot of her bed and just stood still looking far off and never spoke to her. It was soon after when Asa, Marie's husband, died. "One night I woke up with a terrible feeling. My father heard me and tried every way to make me feel better. I just suffered to think I was causing my poor old father to get out of bed and sorrow over my feeling the way I did. We just sat there and talked and all at once I felt at ease and peace again and went back to bed. The next day they called me about Asa dying and I just turned to pa and said, 'See that wasn't all for nothing.'"

We stayed in Blanding and lived with Marie and I tended her children while she helped with school lunch. I felt I wanted to work in the temple so we moved to Salt Lake. Marie brought her three children and came with us. I tended her children when she worked and went to the temple when she was off work.

When Theda was 65 she attended the BYU for while. "I never had anything in my life more pleasant and satisfactory than that was."

Theda always felt the need to be in the temple working and took every opportunity to live as near as possible to one of the temples.

"I lived in the principal of plurality most of my life and believed it to be a true principal, even when I was a girl I felt like I wouldn't be doing right if I couldn't live this principal. I am grateful I had this experience and for what I learned in my life through living it. I was always converted to the principle of the United Order, too.

At age 80 Theda attended two classes for the blind every week because she couldn't see to read.

About this time the LDS Church bought all the houses on the block where Theda lived so she moved three blocks away, straight up a hill, to live with her daughter. Her daughter tells the following story: Wanting to make sure her mother could walk up the hill from the temple to their home with no trouble, she took her mother, in the car, to Temple Square and left her. When she got home her mother was standing on the porch waiting for her and asked as she came up the walk, "What took you so long?"

She and her daughter lived there for about one year and then on March 12, 1962, while visiting another daughter in Salt Lake, she had a cerebral hemorrhage and was rushed to the hospital. For a few minutes she was

in horrible agony, then went into unconsciousness, and a few hours later passed quietly from this world. . . .

My Most Unforgettable Character

Written by Geneva Laws, a granddaughter

She was getting old - in age perhaps - but was as young in spirit as a teenager. She was a small woman with long gray hair and pretty twinkling eyes.

The first I remember her most clearly she was about 80. She and her husband lived in Salt Lake City about two and a half blocks from the Mormon Temple where they owned a fine old apartment house. . . . She used to sit in her old straight-backed rocker, stately as a queen, her knitting needles clicking, and listen to the phonograph or the days radio programs. She loved to knit and used to knit dishrags and stockings for her family.

Every day that it was open she would walk to the Temple and often spent her whole day there. When the Salt Lake Temple would close for the summer she then went to the Manti Temple until it closed. At this time she tried each year to come to Blanding to say with our family.

Then in the winter of 1958 her husband was killed in a car-train accident. Yet she went on with the courage she had always shown.

She had boundless energy and once at a family picnic she was even caught jumping the rope with the kids, at the age of 85