

Martha Ann Hyde

Martha Ann Hyde, daughter of Rosel Hyde and Mary Ann Cowles, became a third generation member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints when she was baptized on 28 September 1851. Her grandparents, Polly Tilton and Heman Hyde, had accepted the gospel in 1834. Heman and Polly took their family and moved to Kirtland in 1835. Martha's parents met during this time and were married in Quincy, Hancock Co., Ill. Martha was the first of twelve children born to this union. She was born in Payson, Adams Co., Ill. on the 20 Mar 1841.

Her parents suffered many persecutions, along with the other Saints. Martha often told of being hastily bundled into a wagon by her parents, and looking back to see their home in flames. Although a tiny girl when it happened, Martha remembered sitting on the Prophet Joseph's knee, and spoke of his love for children.

When the prophet Joseph and his brother Hyrum were slain at Carthage jail, Martha was three years old. Her family gathered in Nauvoo with the other Saints. From here they began their long journey to the Rocky Mountains. They were in the last company to leave Nauvoo. They wintered in Council Bluffs, and in the spring of 1848 began the journey across the plains to the Great Salt Lake Valley. She was seven years old during this journey in covered wagons, and remembered walking much of the way, helping drive the cattle. She and her family went through many of the trials and experiences common to all the pioneers.

Her girlhood was spent amid pioneer conditions, new homes and cities being built. It was a rough, hard way of living and of arduous toil. The family lived in the Salt Lake City area for four years, then when Martha was twelve, they moved to Kaysville to make a permanent home. They received their allotment of farmland and proceeded to build a home from available materials.

Martha and her family were faithful Saints, following the teachings of the Prophet. On 30 March 1856, ten days after her fifteenth birthday, Martha entered into plural marriage, becoming the second wife of Edward

Hunter. He was 20 years her senior, and had been married 13 years to Mary Ann Whitesides.

When Johnston's army came to Utah, the families moved south. They were prepared to burn their homes if the army did not keep their agreement to camp outside the city and leave the homes unmolested. The Hunter family moved to Payson, Utah until the Saints were able to return to their homes. While there, Edward heard from the other settlers of the good possibilities for agriculture and stock raising in Willow Creek (now known as Grantsville). When the danger was over, the family returned to Kaysville. Their first child, Rosel, was born here when Martha was eighteen. Edward then moved his families to Willow Creek, and the rest of the children were born there.

He received some farmland and began the building up of that community and his own property. Sheep raising and farming became the family occupations. Martha lived with her children about one mile from the center of the settlement, on the Hunter farm. She was a loyal, patient, loving wife and mother, and in trials incident to a polygamous marriage, was continuously patient and enduring to a remarkable degree. She never doubted her husband's love or the truth of the principle.

Martha taught the children in the Hunter home, their reading, writing and numbers until schools were established. Churches and houses were built of "dobies" (sunbaked adobe bricks). This method of building was learned from the Mexican Indians by the Mormon Battalion members on their march to Mexico. She raised her family in strict Latter-day Saint discipline. The children attended the Church Sunday School and Sacrament meetings. They did the necessary work about the farm and herded the sheep out on the ranges. The boys, when very young, had the responsibility of taking care of the herd. Their mother would be watching for them when they came home for supplies and would come out to meet them and hear what new perils they had gone through. Sometimes they had lost a water-keg from their wagon and had to keep the herd going extra days before they could find water to make camp. Sometimes they had killed a bear or a mountain lion, or a horse had broken his leg in the rock crevices and had to be shot. When the range wars broke out between the sheepmen and the cattlemen, new perils were encountered.

Martha also was a keeper of bees and was able to work with them without fear or harm from their stings. She was neighborly and generous to less fortunate friends and relatives.

One of her sons, at the age of five, fell upon the stem of a cut willow, which ran into his nose and caused a hemorrhage and he bled to death. Five sons and five daughters grew to adulthood. This family was the real achievement of Martha Hunter. Of her sons, three became bishops, the other two were counselors to bishops. All were married in the Temple and had large families, raising them in L.D.S. homes. These were the days of midwives and little medical care. She delivered one of her babies herself. She and Edward adopted an Indian baby, whose mother had died. The baby was known as Saidee, and was raised as though she were born into the family.

It was not all toil and hardship in Mormon pioneer towns. Dancing, dramas, and quilting socials were enjoyed as only the Mormon pioneer knew how to enjoy them. Early in Grantsville, a band was organized and an opera house was built. In Martha's early married life she attended a dance, and hurt her husband's feelings by dancing the first dance with a young man while her husband danced with Mary Ann, his first wife. He thought she should wait to dance her first dance with him. Thus, plural marriage brought its own problems of etiquette!

The members of the two Hunter families were to each other as real brothers and sisters. They felt as one large family, which indeed they were.

When Martha was fifty-one, her husband died. Her youngest child was seven. Edward had provided well for his families, and they did not suffer financial hardship after his death. In common with other early Utah settlers they had purchased stock in the enterprises and industries of Utah. The Z.C.M.I., the Amalgamated Sugar Co., the Consolidated Wagon and Machine Shop were among the stocks they purchased. Stocks were held by Martha Hunter. It was the interest from these investments that gave her income during her long years of widowhood, after she sold her farm and sheep.

When Martha sold her family farm to August K. Anderson, he made a down payment planning to pay the rest later. Martha refused to hold a mortgage or a deed so that she could foreclose if he was unable to pay her the

rest of the money. "You have more confidence in me than I have in myself," he told her. He was able to pay the debt in full.

She sold her sheep in 1915 and divided the money among her children, and grandchildren of those who had died, saying, "I want to see the children enjoy this money while I am alive."

She also owned three houses in Grantsville, living in one and renting out the other two. Her health was very good up until the time of her last illness. Contentment was one of the chief characteristics of the last years of this woman's life. She was grateful to be independent. She lived alone peacefully and happily. She loved to read, and the *Deseret News* was her paper. She also enjoyed light fiction, novels and tales of adventure. Visits with old-timers were especially enjoyable to her. Martha hated display or over exaggeration, and showed her ancestry in her controlled emotion and plain speech.

Martha was buried at the side of her companion in the Grantsville Cemetery, having passed to the other side on 28 November 1924. She left 83 grandchildren and 126 great grandchildren. Her 83 years on this earth were spent in serving the Lord and her family, and her legacy continues to pass through her posterity to many generations.

Source: *History of Martha H Hunter* by Helen Hale Winward