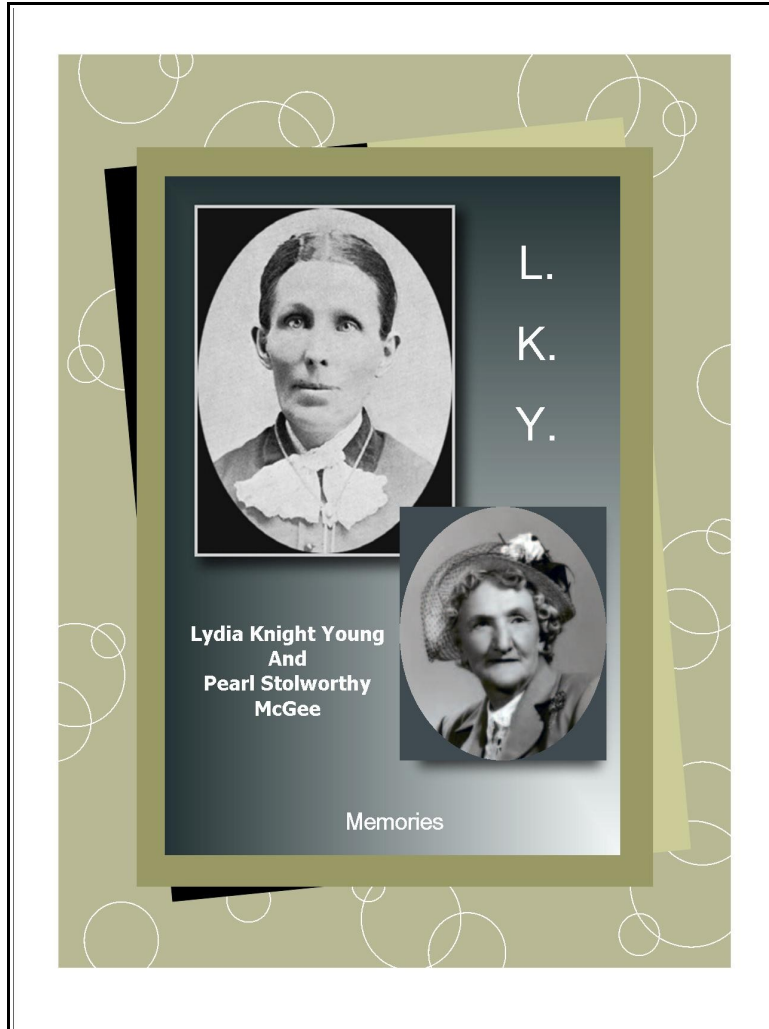


# HISTORY OF LYDIA KNIGHT YOUNG

By Pearl McGee<sup>1</sup>



My Grandmother, Lydia Knight Young, was born of noble parentage, Newel Knight and Lydia Goldthwaite Knight. Her parents were loyal and dear friends of the Prophet Joseph Smith. They were the first couple married by the Prophet, and previously he had received a revelation regarding their union making it known that their marriage was brought about by the will of God. Little Lydia was carried safe and warm close to her mother's heart during the last terrible persecution of the saints and the Prophet in Nauvoo. Lydia was born June 6th, 1844 and Joseph Smith

<sup>1</sup> Pearl Vilate Stolworthy was number five of fourteen children born to Lydia Rosanna Young and Henry Thomas Stolworthy. She married Joseph Carr McGee in Salt Lake City on February 10, 1909. They had five children. This account of her grandmother's history is given here as she wrote it except it has been run through our modern spell-checker and a couple of footnotes have been added for clarification. Pearl did not date her account.

was murdered by a mob on June 27th. Although Lydia's mother was a dear close friend of the Prophet and his family, she was too ill to see his remains or to attend the funeral service, but the father, Newel Knight, was among the faithful few to behold the bodies of Joseph and Hyrum and help with the secret burial. Their hearts were, as with all the faithful saints, crushed and bleeding with the tragedy.

During the years of 45 and 46 little Lydia thrived and grew into a fair haired toddler, although the family was in constant danger from mobs of masked men, who molested the saints in Nauvoo in every way possible. Her family left Nauvoo on April 17th, 1846, with only what two poorly constructed wagons and three yoke of oxen could carry; they also took along their two cows.

As a two year old child we see Lydia sleeping, playing, and making herself quite at home in the covered wagon which was her home, or playing around the camp fire carefully watched by her mother. The journey was slow and several stops were made as the men tried to add to their provisions along the way. That winter was spent on the Ponca Indian Reservation where a friendly tribe had offered the company of saints camping room and protection. The men put up crude log cabins for their families making them as comfortable as possible, but they were all restless and anxious to be on their way to the unknown land where they might find peace and establish themselves in homes.

One night in January Lydia's mother was called to the bedside of her father, who had been very sick, "I have an acute pain in my side, Lydia," he said, "Be quick my dear." Little Lydia stood wide eyed and frightened as she watched her mother apply the remedies she had, to relieve the pain of her father, but nothing gave him relief. "Lydia", the dying man whispered, "I must leave you; Joseph needs me. Don't grieve too much, you will be protected." But Lydia's mother cried, "Don't give up, dear husband, think of me and our six little children being left in this Indian country. Newel, I can't let you go." The father looked at his wife and children as they hovered around his bed, "my dear, I will not leave you now," he said weakly. Immediately his body was convulsed with such severe pain that his wife and children could not bear to witness it. The mother and children all kneeled around his bed and prayed that God's will be done and if the husband and father were needed on the other side he could go in peace. The prayer was scarcely ended when he passed peacefully away. They made him a rude coffin out of one of the wagon beds and laid him to rest in the frozen ground of the Indian country, and the widow and her children took up the burden of living as best they could. Lydia could hear her mother going about the house saying with calm pale lips, "The Lord's will be done, He doeth all things well."

In April of that year the fatherless family went to Winter Quarters, and in August a baby boy was added to the family. Little three years old Lydia was one day playing on the bank of the river when the bank caved in and the child was caught in the swift angry water. Her mother hearing the screams of the other children jumped into the water and rescued her small daughter from drowning and she was soon playing with the children again.

The family stayed in Winter Quarters for two or three years the mother struggling to outfit herself and family so that they might go on together with the saints in Salt Lake City. It was April 1850 before this dream was realized; Lydia was then six years of age when they arrived there in October. Lydia Knight's family had all been raised to help share her burdens and how they all worked hard for their first home in the valley. The children made the adobes and then the two oldest boys worked for a man to pay him for laying up the walls; the boys finished the house as best they could with a sod roof and dirt floor.

They moved into the home in December and lived very comfortable and peaceful the rest of the winter. Here Grandmother started her school life in a school taught by her own mother. A few years later Lydia Knight moved to Provo and it was here that Grandmother grew to womanhood. As Grandmother blossomed into sweet womanhood, she took on the calm sweetness of her mother and also her energetic determined qualities, and by these driving forces she became a school teacher herself. And like her mother she had a sure testimony of the gospel and a desire to live all the principles as she understood them. In 1861 she married John R. Young, a nephew of President Brigham Young, and in this marriage were united two forces of loyalty to the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Knights and the Youngs.

Grandmother was a plural wife, for grandfather had previously married Albina Terry, and a great love and lasting friendship between the women began to grow at once. Grandfather Young was energetic and restless and was filled with enthusiasm for every new settlement, so his faithful wives were often left to protect and provide for their children as best they could. Their early homes were tents or dugouts but were as neat and clean as hands could make them. In 1862 Grandfather was called by his bishop to take his ox teams and go to Omaha Nebraska to get a cotton gin and jinni's to work in the cotton raised in Dixie. My own mother was born while he was away on this trip. He made two trips to some distant camp along the pioneer trail to help poor families to the Salt Lake Valley and was captain of the wagon trains both trips. He was away from home while on these trips for six months at a time and his families suffered hunger and cold in spite of all the faithful wives could do.

In the spring of 1864 Grandfather was called to go on a mission to the Sandwich Islands. To raise the money required he sold his wagons, teams and all his cattle. He previously had moved his families to St. George where he left them with relatives and reported for his mission. But the destitute condition he had left his family in preyed upon his mind, and though his wives' letters were uncomplaining he could not rest. For this reason the church leaders cut his mission short and he returned home in October of that year. He offered to help some converts to Zion so he was slow in leaving the mission and he did not reach St. George until the spring of 1865. Upon his arrival Grandmother was very happily surprised as she had not known he had been released.

During his absence she had suffered in spirit and body as her independent spirit rebelled at what help she had been obliged to take, and even at that they had suffered with hunger and cold. Flour was then \$25.00 per cwt. And she had only a few days supply left and had gone without fuel all winter except for the brush she had grubbed and carried home; his other family had fared no better. But through all her hardships Grandmother did not complain for in her heart was an abiding faith and determination to live the gospel no matter what the leaders might require of them.

On his return he rented some land and planted a few acres of grain and some vegetables, but before the crop was harvested he was called to serve in the Black Hawk War. His duty was to furnish military protection for families from Long Valley and Kanab. As soon as that was accomplished he was called to labor among the Indians, trying to bring about peace between them and the white settlers. During these years Grandmother and his other families were left without the protection and care of a husband and father.

Grandmother was gifted with her hands and always kept busy spinning, knitting, and braiding straw when she could find any to make into hats. At the time of the silk worm venture in Santa Clara, Grandmother knit a pair of silk mitts and a shawl from the silk reeled by her mother Lydia Knight. These articles are owned by the Daughter's of the Utah Pioneers and are in the State Capitol Building at the present time. Her children were always clothed as earnest hands and toil could make them, but she could not always get the material to work with or the food they needed.

In 1873 and 74 President Brigham Young visited Dixie and taught the people the principle of the United Order. Grandmother accepted the principle gladly and was baptized into the Order at Orderville, and was a faithful member for seven years. Here she knew a period of peace, love and security. She was called to work in the millinery department; here was work for her eager hands and work that she

might put her skillful artistic mind to work as well as her hands. She learned to do fancy braiding with straws both colored and natural and to make feathers and flowers to trim the hats for the women and girls. About this time she gave birth to twin boys, she named them Joseph Smith and Hyrum Smith, but they died when only a few weeks old. Two years later she gave birth to a frail little girl whom she named Vilate.

In the spring of 1877 Grandfather was called on a mission to England. Grandmother remained in the United Order and found security there from hunger and want. She worked at her appointed job and cared for her small children as best she could and in August that year she gave birth to her son Newel Knight Young. About this time an Indian missionary, Ira Hatch's wife died leaving four helpless small children, and as brother Hatch was among the Indians, grandmother took the four motherless ones into her home and cared for them as she did her own. She kept them until Ira Hatch married again, and they loved her as a mother.

The following short letter written to her husband while he was in England will give you a picture of my Grandmother and her faithful uncomplaining spirit:

*Dear Husband, The day's work is done, the children are sweetly sleeping, and the nine o'clock bugle is sounding, "Hard Times Come Again no More." If I knew hard times would come no more to you, while you are in that land of poverty and wretchedness, I should be very thankful. I have been treated with much kindness by the brethren and sisters here in Orderville. I am striving diligently to overcome selfishness, and I am gaining ground a little. I feel that if there are any more needy than I am, who are laboring faithfully in the Order, let them be served first, I cannot accomplish as much work as I should like to, but I do all that I can. I am making hats, and have charge of the hat department. My baby is as nice a boy as anybody ever had; and God knows it is my desire to bring him up in such a way that he will be an honor to his parents. Vilate is very delicate, I do not feel at all easy about her, but I do hope and pray that she will be spared to us. May the blessings of the Lord be with you is the prayer of your affectionate wife -- Lydia K. Young.*

Grandfather remained on this mission for two years. Two more sons were born to them while living in the United Order. Their names were Howard and Edward. After the death of President Young, a period of dissatisfaction on the part of some individuals began to draw away from the Order, and Grandfather was one of them. This act was a great sorrow to Grandmother for it went against her loyal and determined nature. She felt that as long as the Order existed that they were duty-bound to stay in it, and so she did though her staying meant a temporary separation from her husband. Later on.....the Order was broken up and the

members all were honorably released from their obligations, and Grandfather and Grandmother were again united.

Then came the years of persecution of the polygamist families, the men were forced to live in what was called the underground, and the plural wives lived in daily fear of being found by United States Officers, They were afraid to tell their names to any stranger and some men lost their lives. Sickness, poverty and fear my Grandmother shared along with many wives; she was always brave and cheerful, but Grandfather finally decided to take his family to Old Mexico.<sup>2</sup>

Grandmother's family consisted of her three sons: Newel, Howard, and Edward. Lydia had married H. T. Stolworthy, and remained in Huntington, Emery County Utah and her daughter Vilate died in 1893.<sup>3</sup>

The entire trip from Utah to Old Mexico was made by wagon, over deserts and mountains and they often suffered from hunger and the journey was long, tedious, and expensive and full of hardships, but when they crossed the border they all felt happy and free from their persecutors. Grandfather left Grandmother in Colony Dublan and took his other family on to Pacheco. While on the trip to Pacheco Grandfather was accidentally shot through his arm and suffered greatly with it and it was finally amputated.<sup>4</sup>

Grandmother was proud and ambitious and in providing for her family well, she toiled beyond her strength. Her love for the gospel was stronger than her frail body. She died in 1905 when she was 61 years old. She was only sick a short time, and had been active in her church to the very last.

Home for her, had no price of toil and patience, danger, suffering, and hardships. Through them all she found a way. Her never failing courage banished

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<sup>2</sup> Evelyn Jimerson, in her Newel Knight Young Biography, places the time of entering Mexico by the John R. Young families as "early 1891."

<sup>3</sup> Lydia's daughter Vilate was with the family when they entered Mexico. Soon after their arrival she married the young widower Eugene Deloss Buchanan. They were married in Dublan on October 30 1891. They returned to Utah and were sealed in the Manti Temple on 20 July, 1892. Vilate died at Lyman, Wayne County, Utah, shortly after the birth of her first child, on March 16, 1893. She was laid to rest in the Lyman Cemetery in a spot overlooking her father, John R. Young's Wayne County homestead.

<sup>4</sup> The facts relating to the accident which cost John R. Young his arm was clouded in mystery for many years. In his own Memoirs he offered only scanty and conflicting information in the two areas he touched on the subject. Information provided by John R.'s grandson Howard D. Roberts' family in his "Memories" finally clarified the issue. This subject is treated in greater detail in another section of this history. Suffice it to say here that the accident occurred, not in Mexico but near Deming, New Mexico in March, 1892.

doubt and conquered fear. She was mother, wife, and partner—every inch a Pioneer.

Pioneer women played as important a part as the men. Their love of the gospel and loyalty to their leaders was measured by their lives, and their support of their husbands in all they were called to do. Their toil worn hands showed there was no effort too great to make for their new homes.

When I was eleven years old we visited Grandmother in her home in Dublan, Mexico. She had a four room adobe house. I remember flowers, trees and shrubs outside. Inside it was neat and clean; many things had been made by her own hands. She taught us to braid with long wheat straws, some of them brightly colored, and they were soaked in warm water. She had many sizes and shapes of wooden blocks the braid was put over after it was sewed together. This was done while it was still very damp and when it was dry it was the same shape and size of the wooden block. We also learned to make horse hair flowers, to knit and crochet.

We were there for her 55th birthday. The Ward joined in a celebration. She was president of the primary association. We had ice-cream, the first that Grandmother had eaten as well as many of us children.

I have met several people who came from Mexico—they knew and loved her for her sweet friendly ways, and admired her faithfulness in living her religion and her love and devotion to her family.

She was Aunt Lydia to everyone who knew her well. Her sons and daughter were faithful latter-day Saints. They honored and blessed her memory by being true and faithful workers.

*--Pearl McGee*

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