

DUP AF Book 2 page 48

Biographical Sketch

of

Lydia Thornton Adams

by Cynthia Adams Okey

Utah Pioneer of 1852

Born 19 October, 1830 at Pickering, Ontario County, Canada

Married 1854 in the Endowment House in SLC

Died 30 Apr. 1901 in American Fork, Utah

Lydia Thornton Adams is the daughter of Oliver and Mary Griswald Thornton, born 19 October 1830, at Pickering, Ontario County, Canada. She was the oldest of twelve children and proud of the fact of being born the year the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints was organized.

Her parents were earnest speakers of religious truth and were much confused at the cry of the many churches of their time of "Come join us for here is the way, low here is the way, to receive Christ and be saved." Seven years after the organization of the Church, her parents accepted the gospel as taught to them by the missionaries travelling in Canada. Aunt Lydia was ten years old when she was baptized.

Early in the Spring of 1838, the Thornton family decided to move to the head quarters of the Church at Kirtland, Ohio; remaining there three months, they joined the movement westward and went with the Saints to Far West, Missouri.

In February, 1839, they were driven by mob persecution to leave Missouri and they moved to Bear Creek, near Fairfield, Adams County, Illinois. From here they moved to Hancock County, Illinois, and settled on a farm near Carthage. It was owned by a man named David R. Fales. They were living here when the Prophet, Joseph Smith, and his brother, Hyrum, were martyred, 5:30 o'clock, June 27, 1844, by an armed mob with blackened faces. They the gun fire and felt the sad oppression that hung over the country side but did not know what had happened until midnight when the wife of George D. Grant came to their home and told them the Prophet had been killed.

The Grants lived on a neighboring farm and Mrs. Grant, filled with fear, had waited until darkness came, then she took her baby and another little one in her arms and went to tell the sad news to the Thornton family. Brother Grant had gone to Nauvoo to tell the sad news to the Saints, there.

Aunt Lydia's parents took her and their older children to see these great leaders as they lay in state in the Nauvoo Mansion. Those two noble men with their pallid faces, hallowed looking even in death, was an incident in her life she never forgot.

They later moved to Nauvoo and, in the Spring of 1846, they Nauvoo with the Saints and went to Iowa. It was at about this time Aunt Lydia was married to Edmond Butler, being about sixteen years of age.

They remained in Iowa two years, then moved into Lynn County, Missouri, hoping there to find peace and rest from persecutions of mobs and wicked men. But not so, they were soon forced to move on, this time going 150 miles west, settling along the Des Moines River. Here they engaged in farming and freighting for two years and managed to get two wagons and two good teams of horses, and struggled on to Kaneshville, near Council Bluffs, Iowa.

They stayed here until the Spring of 1852, when their one ambition was realized; they were able to go on to Great Salt Lake and join the main body of the Church. They arrived in Salt Lake City in the Fall of 1852. Brigham Young sent the family to American Fork. They took up land and built a house where the old Thornton home now stands, east of town.

Aunt Lydia's mother had six children during the fourteen years they were travelling from Canada to Utah. Aunt Lydia was with them during all this travelling, persecutions and trying times. Being the oldest of the children it fell her lot to take a large share of the responsibilities of her mother's burdens. She also had married, had had three children and lost them all and was a widow before she was twenty-two years old.

Imagine, or think if you can going through such tragic experiences for one so young. What faith, courage and determination she must have had. Through trials and sorrow, hunger and persecution she went, coming out each time like pure gold tested seven times in a furnace of white heat. Can we appreciate our pioneer mothers enough, their value, their integrity, their sacrifice for what they knew to be true?

The Thornton home in American Fork was across the road from where Joshua Adams owned land. While working here, no doubt, is how he met, wooed and won Lydia Thornton, for his bride. For two years after their arrival here she became the first wife of Joshua

Adams. Being married in 1854, in the endowment house in Salt Lake City.

In 1857, the first I remember, is that she lived on the north east corner of second north and first west streets, in the big brick house, now owned by Phoebe Lynch. It was here that most of all her ten children were born.

Years later father moved my mother (Mary Hoggard Adams) from the house beside the state road, about one block and a half north and built Aunt Lydia the two story brick home, on the site where we had been living. This home is now owned and occupied by James T. Larabry. (1934)

She proved herself a worthy Latter Day Saint, a tried and true pioneer, a faithful and loving wife, a devoted and affectionate mother. Her husband was her ideal of manly and saintly perfection. Her home, her kingdom and her children her life's ambition. She sought no public duty and to the public she was very quiet and retiring. But, her life was full of good queenly principles worthy of emulation by her numerous posterity.

She died in American Fork, Utah County, Utah, April 30, 1901. Being the mother of ten children, Joshua; Lydia Ann; Amos F.; Thomas Ephraim; Alice Melissa; Sabina Clark; Charity Melissa; Joseph Steven; Emeretta and Oliver Marion. Three of this family are still living at this writing, November 29, 1934, 16 living grand children, 10 dead, 26 living great grand children, 3 dead, and 1 living great grand child, making a total of 56 descendants of this noble woman.

#### *Our Pioneer Parents*

*Oh if I had the words and the power  
And could put them into rhythm,  
I would write them down on paper  
Of your dear parents and mine.*

*I would tell you of their sorrows,  
Of their trials and their joys,  
Their anticipation of the morrow*

*Give them courage without alloy.*

*Did they stand those trials for nothing  
With no hope of any reward?  
They gladly helped their neighbors  
They had faith in a Living God.*

*Now let us their children  
Strive to make our lives sublime,  
That they will be glad to welcome us  
To live with them all time.  
Cynthia Adams Okey*

*This history was prepared for the Daughters of Utah Pioneers by Cynthia  
Adams Okey and given by her December 13, 1934.*