

Biography of  
Lydia Knight Young  
(Pioneer of 1850)

Written by her Granddaughter  
Wilma Stolworthy Hawkins

History of Lydia Knight Young

Lydia was born June 6th, 1844, in Nauvoo, Illinois, the daughter of Lydia Goldthwaite and Newel Knight. Both her father and mother were close friends of the Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum. Lydia was only a few weeks old when the Prophet and Hyrum were murdered in Carthage jail. Her Mother was too weak to go see the remains of their bodies; but her father Newel, was among the faithful few who were given the privilege to view the remains and see the bodies secretly buried. They were much disturbed during the few following months by the severe persecutions that followed the death of these great and good men. However, they tried to keep up their home and care for the little ones that had come to bless them.

Lydia's mother had been married in the fall of 1828 to a young man named Calvin Bailey; but he had deserted the young mother and his baby daughter, and Lydia had been forced to return to her father's house. Here a baby boy had been born to her but died soon after birth. The little girl died also and she was left alone. It was about this time that her mother had heard the gospel and joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Later she met and married Newel Knight, who had also known sorrow. His wife Sally had died leaving him with a small son, called Samuel. The next few years found the following children born to them: Sally, born Dec. 1<sup>st</sup>, 1836, James Philander, born April 29<sup>th</sup>, 1837, Joseph, born Oct. 18<sup>th</sup>, 1840, Newel, born Oct. 14<sup>th</sup>, 1842, Lydia, born June 6, 1844.

The years 1845-46 were filled with persecutions and hardships; but little Lydia grew up feeling only love and security in her home. A baby brother was born to her mother, Sept. 6th 1845. Her family was forced, to leave their home in Nauvoo and start for the west the 17th of April, 1846. They had two poorly constructed wagons, three yoke of oxen and one or two cows. In these wagons were their provisions and the few things that they felt that they could take with them. So, as a two year old child Lydia slept, played and made her self at home in the covered wagon that for the time being was her only home or shelter. The journey was slow as the men stopped to work and add more provisions to their store, as they found an opportunity to do any sort of job that would pay in food or money.

This small company of people was offered a home on the Ponca Indian Reservation by a friendly tribe of Indians. They built rude log houses and made themselves as comfortable as they could.

The father was not well and one night in January Lydia's mother was awakened by her husband. He said to her, "Lydia I believe that I shall go to rest this winter." The next night he awoke with a severe pain in his right side. He grew steadily worse and early in the morning of the eleventh of January he passed quietly away.

Thus Lydia was left a widow with a family of seven small children to care for as best she could. In the spring, Pres. Brigham Young called all the Saints together and they built a temporary city in which to live until they could move on to the west where a permanent home could be built. Lydia moved here with her family. Some of the brethren built her a small cabin and she had hardly moved into it when she gave birth to a baby boy on August 26th, 1847. He was named Hyrum.

In the spring, the Indians came down in great numbers, and Pres. Young thought it would be wise to move across the river to Pottowattamie. Arriving at this place Lydia's mother found herself again without a roof to shelter her and her family. She finally moved into a sort of half cave, half hut, on the bank of a creek. It offered little protection to her and her family, but here she was forced to live for one year.

In the spring of 1849 the water in the creek was very high. Little Lydia slipped away from her mother's watchful care and fell into the stream. Her mother took her pail and went to the stream to get a bucket of water and as she reached the bank she saw her little girl's head on the top of the water. Dashing in the mother grasped the tiny tot and after some severe struggles succeeded in reaching the bank with the almost drowned child. After hours of work the child was revived and seemed little worse for the experience.

In June another widow moved away and Sister Knight hearing about the move visited the widow and bought her cabin for a small sum of money that she had saved up by doing washings. The winter of 1849-50 was spent in fairly good comfort; but as spring neared Sister Knight grew restless and felt that she and her family should be moving to the Great Salt Lake Valley, where the Saints were gathering. Pres. Brigham Young also sent word that Sister Knight should be helped to move to the valley. The days were spent in hurried preparations and in June of 1850 they found themselves ready to accompany Bishop Hunter's Company on the move west. Arrangements had been made so that the three younger children could ride, but the rest of the family walked most of the way across the plains. They arrived in Salt Lake City on the 3rd of October, 1850. The oldest brother, Samuel, had come

earlier to the valley and was living with his Uncle Joseph W. Johnson, his father's brother-in-law. The whole family was welcomed into the home and here they stayed for a few weeks; but Sister Knight's independent spirit soon decided to move her family onto a vacant lot in what is now the First Ward. The mother and older children made adobes until they had enough for a small home. Brother Johnson helped and the walls were laid up and by Christmas the family was able to move into the unfinished house. When the little family was settled they found themselves more comfortable than they had been since they had left Nauvoo.

Here Sister Knight started a school for her children and some of her neighbors. They paid her a small sum and it helped to buy food for the family. Little Lydia was now a child of six years and eager to learn all that her mother could teach her. In the fall of 1851 Lydia's mother married a Mr. Dalton and to them was born a baby girl, they named her Artemesia. Things did not go well and Sister Dalton decided to return to Salt Lake City from the farm where she had been living and she again opened a school for her own and other children. In the year 1858 the family moved to Provo where they bought a farm. With the help of the boys they did well and soon were very comfortable. Here Lydia grew to young womanhood. She was much like her mother with a calm sweetness and very energetic, which made her a good worker. She became a school teacher. Her love for the gospel was very deep and she had a burning desire to live the commandments as she had been taught to do.

In 1861, she met and married John R. Young, a nephew of Pres. Brigham Young, and a son of Lorenzo D. Young. John R. had a wife, Albina Terry; but he had been encouraged by his Uncle to live the law of Plural Marriage. Lydia had also had this law taught to her and was ready to enter into it. The two women lived together many years and loved each other devotedly. Their husband John R. was filled with energy and a restlessness that kept him on the move most of the time. They helped settle many of the small communities in Central and Southern Utah. John R. was called several times to go back and help bring companies of Saints across the plains and he filled three missions. So the two girl-wives often found themselves alone with their families to care for.

In 1862 John R. was called by the Bishop of the Santa Clara Ward to go east and buy cotton jinn for the Wards so they might weave the cotton raised in Southern Utah. He took his wife, Lydia with him as far as Provo and left her there with her mother. While she was in Provo her first child was born October 28th, 1852 and was named Lydia Rosanna. This was the first girl in the family as Albina's children were all boys. When the father returned the three of them returned to Southern Utah and joined Albina and her boys. Here the two women again tried to help their husband build a home; but he was called to go east again and bring a

company of Saints across the plains. While he was gone Lydia's brother built Lydia and Albina, a small home.

Soon after his return John R. was called on a second mission to the Pacific Islands; but letters from home told of real suffering by his families. He had sold his team's wagons and all of his cattle to raise the money needed for his mission, so that his family was left almost destitute. The condition of things at home made it necessary that he be released in October; but he offered to help some converts to Utah and so did not reach home until the spring of 1865. His family was surprised to see him as they did not know that he had been released. During his absence Lydia had suffered in spirit and body as her independent nature had rebelled at the help she had been forced to take in order that the family might be taken care of. Even so they had often been cold and hungry. Flour was \$25.00 per hundred pounds and there was only a small amount left; and she had gone without fuel all winter except for the brush she had grubbed and carried home.

Soon after John R.'s 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 the families from Long Valley to Kanab. As soon as this mission was finished he was called to labor among the Indians. He worked with Ira Hatch and others trying to bring peace between the Indians and the White settlers.

During these years Lydia and Albina again were without the care of their husband and father. Lydia was gifted in making things with her hands and kept busy spinning, knitting and braiding straw which she made into hats. At this time she and her mother helped to start the silk industry in Utah. They raised the cocoons, wound the silk and knitted a shawl and silk mitts. These articles are in the keeping of a daughter or granddaughter, Matilda Staker. She had only one child during these years; but when she was with Albina she helped care for the boys too.

The first real test of her faith came when she was living in southern Utah. Here she gave birth to a pair of twins, the fifth of April, 1868. They were named Joseph and Hyrum. Joseph died the 21st May, 1868 and tiny Hyrum followed his little brother three days later. Lydia was sad indeed, misunderstandings crept into the family and Lydia went her separate way for awhile.

In 1873, Pres. Brigham Young visited in Dixie and taught the people the principle of the United Order. He also called his nephew John R. to take a group of these people to a small community and there organize a United Order. This was done, the group finally settling at a small town which was called Orderville. John R. wanted his family reunited; so he persuaded Lydia to join him there. She felt that

this was a step in the right direction, so joined him there and was baptized into the Order; 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 and here she did the work that she loved. She learned to do fancy braiding with straws both colored and plain; and to make flowers of hair and feathers to trim the hats with. These furnished the hats for the women of the Order.

Christmas Day 1875 she gave birth to a baby girl, who was named Persis Vilate. Lydia was thirteen years old and so was thrilled to have a baby sister. Life at last was being good to the family.

In the spring of 1877 John R. was called to go on a mission to England. Lydia remained in Orderville and worked at her appointed job while he was gone. On the 21st of August, 1877 she gave birth to a son. He was named Newel Knight for his grandfather and was a great source of comfort to his mother.

About this time Ira Hatch's Indian wife died and left four small helpless children. Ira was away at the time, so Lydia took the four small children in and gave them a home and a mother's care until he returned, remarried and took the children into his own home. They always loved Lydia and called her Mother.

The following short letter was written to her husband in England, while he was on his mission. It gives a picture of Lydia's sweet uncomplaining spirit and of her desire to live the gospel.

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 needier than I am, who are laboring faithfully in the Order, let them be served first.

I cannot accomplish as much as I would 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 Young

John R. remained on his mission for two years, and then he returned home bringing with him a young English girl, whom he married. She died soon after the birth of her first child.

October 30th, 1880 another son was born to Lydia and was named Howard Spencer. Two years later her last son was born, 24th of August 1882. He was named Edward Webb. Three years before this her daughter Lydia was married to a young man named Thomas Stolworthy. The marriage was performed in the St. George Temple, December 12th, 1879.

Lydia was visiting with her mother in St. George, when her mother passed away. This dear lady had been doing ordinance work for her dead relatives. She arose this morning as usual and she and Lydia had breakfast together, then she left for her work in the Temple. She came home and complained of not feeling well, so she lay down to rest. When Lydia went in to see if all was well with her mother, she found that she had passed away in her sleep. She died April 3rd, 1884.

Lydia felt that she had lost her best friend, as she and her mother were much alike and understood each other. She however, had her small family to care for so she went bravely on.

After the death of Pres. Young, Pres. Snow said that it was no longer required of the people of the Church to live the United Order. As a consequence many of the members withdrew from the Order. Here trouble again came to Lydia as her husband John R. was among the first to want to leave the Order. Lydia felt that they should stay with it and support it. This brought trouble between husband and wife again. She felt that as long as the Order existed that she would stay with it; and so she did though her stay meant that she and her family would again be separated from her husband and the children's father. Years later when the Order was dissolved she rejoined her husband.

At this time the United States government was requiring that all men with plural wives... take a test oath against this principle; and began to enforce the law of cohabitation. If they did not take this oath they were disfranchised by the government. They thus became outcasts, children without t. v O~K-, men without a country. The Church decided to meet this crisis by making settlements in Mexico, where men could take their families and again live a normal life. John R. talked it over with his wives and they decided to make the move to Mexico. Albina wanted to

remain in Utah; so she was left at Loa with her children. Lydia's family consisted of her three sons, Newel, Howard and Edward. Lydia was living, at Huntington Utah, and Vilate had married Eugene Buchanan. She died soon after the birth of her first baby, the 16th of March, 1893 in Hyrum (Lyman), Utah.

The entire trip to Old Mexico was made by team, over desert and mountains. It was long, tedious and full of hardships. However, Lydia's life had been filled from the first with these so she accepted them and went bravely about her tasks. When they arrived at Colonia Dublan, Lydia was left here to make her home, while the rest of the family went on to Pacheco... (John R. left sometime later and settled in Fruitland, New Mexico.) Again Lydia and her husband disagreed as Lydia felt that she could not return there and try to live a law that was prohibited by the government. She had made many dear friends in her new home and she decided to remain at Dublan. She was very ill with pneumonia at the time the rest of the family left. A Brother Call took her into his home and cared for her while she was ill. The neighbors went in and helped with the work, but she was so ill that only one person was allowed in the room to care for her. One day Sister Elizabeth Farr went to the door of the room just to look at her dear friend. Lydia was lying there so frail and white that she looked like a heavenly angel; and there was a heavenly feeling in the room as though the angels were watching over her. The whole community was praying for her and the Lord heard their prayers and Lydia passed the crisis and slowly regained her strength. The Lord continued to bless her and she lived to raise her boys in the love of the gospel. Life was again a constant struggle for her and it was all she could do to even poorly feed and clothe her family. She lived at first in a small Mexican home built of adobe with a flat roof. I know that life was far from easy for her; but she had many friends and she spent many hours in service to the town and its people.

Sister Elizabeth Farr, who was one of her truest friends wrote, the following of these years that we her family knew so little about. *"Sister Lydia K. Young was our first school teacher in Colonia Dublan, Chihuahua, Mexico. The school was held in one room of Heleman Pratt's home; and we found her to be a very loving and kind teacher. She also taught in Sunday school and was called to be First Counselor in the Relief Society when it was first organized in 1891. She was also the first President of the Primary when the Dublan Ward was organized in February of 1891, and Elizabeth Farr was called to be the secretary. She was very kind and gentle and the children dearly loved her. They always remembered the example she set for them. The kind words and deeds she said and did will always remain in their hearts. To know her was to love her; and she was dearly loved by old and young alike. Many trails came her way while trying to establish a new home in a strange country among strange people, but there were no complaints from her. She was never too tired or too busy to help any one in need.*

*One day while I was visiting her and talking about our Primary work, somehow our talk became more personal and she said to me, "When my call comes to go I would like you to ask them to sing, 'Oh, My Father and then have the Children sing, 'Hark, Hark, Tis Children's' voices." Not long after this she was taken ill and died. She was always faithful and true to the Gospel teachings, and tried valiantly to live each and every commandment given by the Lord. She always thrifty; had her own garden, cows and chickens. Always when we called to see her there would be a cool drink of buttermilk waiting for us. I loved her dearly and still miss her kind companionship." --Elizabeth Farr*

I remember reading a story Uncle Knewel (Newel) wrote about those first hard days in old Mexico. As a child he wanted a pair of red topped boots. His mother kept telling him that no matter how she tried she could not get them for him; but boy like he kept on talking about them and persisted in praying each night that he might receive the boots. One day an Uncle came to visit them and much to Uncle Newel's joy he had a pair of red topped boots for little Newel. Later on as he grew older he returned home one night to find his mother kneeling in prayer asking the Lord to protect her boy from doing that 'which was wrong while he was away seeking pleasure.

I remember so well while we were there that two little Mexican children came every day with a penny to buy a slice of bread as they were hungry. Grandmother could not find it in her heart to take the penny, until the children returned day after day with the same penny and made the same request. Finally grandmother took the penny and the children were so surprised that it showed on their faces; but that was the last time they came to beg bread.

In 1893 she returned for a brief visit to Utah, perhaps because of Vilate's death, but she was in Salt Lake to attend the dedication of the Salt Lake Temple. She longed to have money to educate her children, and so finally it was decided to send Newel to Provo to attend the Brigham Young Academy. Her brother Jesse Knight lived in Provo and gave Newel a scholarship, which helped. While attending school he met and married a young girl named Tina Buchanan. When school was out he was returning to Old Mexico, and as our family had decided to move from Utah, Father sent mother and five of us younger children with him. Father planned to move to old Mexico, but Mother was not well enough to make the trip by wagon, so she was to go by train with Uncle Newel. Tina was expecting a new baby so she stayed on with her mother in Utah. Thus in the spring of 1899 we found our selves on our way to old Mexico.

I remember well the day we arrived. All of Lydia's friends were there to see her welcome her daughter and children. I am sure that we were rather a sorry

looking group as the trip had been long and tiring and we had been held up at the border while our baggage was checked... We were given a royal welcome by every one and how we did enjoy that visit with Grandmother. She was living in her small home then; but her brother Jesse Knight had heard of her plight and soon after our arrival he sent money to buy her a comfortable home, and she moved into it while we were with her. Now for the first time Grandmother had a home that she could be proud of, and how happy she was in it.

The boys were grown now and for awhile she again knew peace and happiness. Mother, however did not like Old Mexico, so she wrote Father telling him how she felt. He was at Kirtland, New Mexico when he received the letter, and as he liked the San Juan Valley he decided to buy a farm, there. After he was settled his second, wife was taken ill and died, so mother returned to "New Mexico. Saying good-bye to Grandmother wasn't easy. We all loved her so.

Letters came often from her telling of her peace and happiness in her new home; but finally word came that she was ill. Then I remember one day when we went after the mail, there was a letter edged in black. We, as children had never heard of such a letter so we thought of it only as a special letter of some kind; but when mother saw it she knew what had happened we were startled to see her begin to cry. We hurried after Father who was always a bulwark of strength when trouble was around. When we returned we heard, that Grandmother was dead; but the letter also told of the great love that was shown Grandmother at her funeral. All of the children had brought flowers so some of the sisters had taken them and spelled out Grandmother's name with them. Lydia Knight Young died the 8th of May, 1905, and was buried in the Dublan cemetery.

Truly our pioneer women played an important part in settling the waste places of the west. Their love for the gospel and loyalty to their leaders was measured by their unselfish lives and the deeds they performed will stand always as a monument to their way of life. They supported their husbands in all they were called to do, and their toil worn hands, showed, that there was no task too great to build homes and rear their children to honorable manhood and womanhood.

Forgotten graves, where sweet, wild flowers  
Fair faces nod mid ugly brush and weed,  
They seem to whisper, "We have remembered"  
Can love forget? Ah, never, no, indeed.  
Forgotten graves, with all your tender memories,  
Forgotten graves, upon the land and sea.  
With prayer today fond hearts remember, these  
Forgotten graves—wherever they may be.