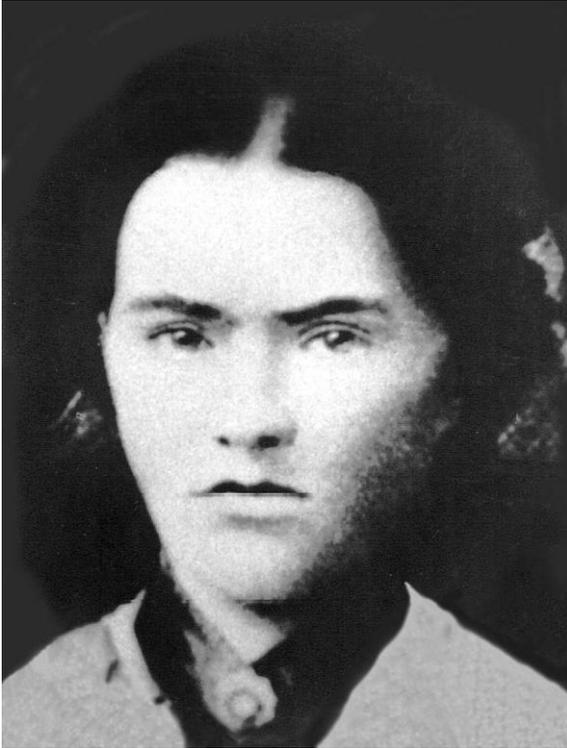


MARGARET JANE CASTEEL



Margaret Jane Casteel was born September 1, 1825 in Cooper Co., Missouri to Jacob Israel Casteel and Sarah Nowlin. Married William Decatur Kartchner March 21, 1844. They had eleven children: six sons and five daughters. Died August 11, 1881 in Snowflake, Apache, Arizona. Buried August 12, 1881 in Snowflake, Apache, Arizona.

Margaret's parents joined the Church and took part in missionary work and doing work for the dead. The Casteel blood was of French extraction with a mixture of English, Dutch and Irish.

From all evidence known, Margaret did not have much schooling, but she was a woman of fine intellect and sterling character, modest and refined in manner, and deeply religious. She was baptized at the age of 14.

She was a skilled operator and weaver. After the sheep were sheared she would wash each fleece, card, spin and weave it. They camped under a large cottonwood tree

into cloth.

Margaret was eighteen when she married William Decatur Kartchner.

Shortly after they were married they were called to go on an expedition to the Missouri River to help put in crops. (Some accounts record this was not a Church approved expedition). The captain of the wagon train gathered the feather beds and jewelry from the sisters and sold them for grain and other supplies and then insisted that all goods be handled by himself. The captain was not honest and he doled out such a small amount to everyone that they almost starved. Any who were able to walk were compelled to walk many times in water shoemouth deep for there was no road and many had swollen feet until they could hardly put their shoes on in the mornings.

Everything has been taken from them: team, wagon, tools, feather bed, wedding gifts and trinkets, all clothes except those they wore, even to William's bullet mold. They were accused of stealing a pot which Margaret said her mother owned ever since she could remember.

One day some Frenchmen and Indians came to their camp and offered them food and a boarding place if Margaret would do the cooking. They gladly accepted the offer.

Later they were able to secure passage to St. Louis on a steamboat going up the Mississippi River. They stayed there until they heard of a pioneer company leaving for the Rocky Mountains.

Margaret's husband hired out to drive a wagon for a family going west but when the family thought provisions were running short, plans were changed. They were put out of the wagon and left without provisions when the wagon train reached Fort Pueblo.

and it was here that Margaret's first baby

was born. She was the first white child to be born in the state of Colorado.

Early in the Spring of 1847 they continued westward. When they reached Fort Laramie they learned they were only three days behind the pioneers under Brigham Young. They reached the valley July 27, 1847.

In 1850 when the call came to colonize San Bernardino, California, the Kartchners and Casteels were among those called. They remained in California until 1857 when they returned to Utah. The Casteels stayed in California so Margaret left her family.

Margaret's last child was born in Nevada, where her husband was called to colonize on the Muddy River, near Overton, Nevada. It was while they were in Panguitch that they were called to colonize Arizona. This was their last move and the settlement became Snowflake. Each time her husband was called to colonize, Margaret faithfully went with him and went through many trials, struggles and sorrows. She spent thirty-four years of her life in helping to colonize four of the Western States.

Margaret had walked many weary miles and had journeyed many thousands of miles over mountains and desert behind slow plodding oxen, months at a time, having only a wagon box for her home. At last she reached a haven of rest, for Snowflake was to be her permanent home. A fine log house was built and life settled into a peaceful and less strenuous pattern of living, but hard years had taken a severe toll and she lived only three years after she began her life in Snowflake. She was only 56. Her life had been lived to a rich fullness in deeds, if not in years.