

## WILLIAM DECATUR KARTCHNER



William Decatur Kartchner was born May 4, 1820 in Hartville, Montgomery, Pennsylvania to John Christopher Kartchner and Prudence Wilcox. Married Margaret Jane Casteel March 21, 1844. They had eleven children: six sons and five daughters. Died May 14, 1892 in Snowflake, Apache, Arizona. Buried May 15, 1892 in Snowflake, Apache, Arizona.

William was only six when his father died from excessive drink and exposure with rheumatic fever leaving his mother in poverty with five children to raise.

His mother joined the old Baptist Church soon after his father's death. His father had been an infidel and would not allow his family to attend religious meetings.

His mother sent him to school, where he was unhappy. He moved back and forth between home and different jobs until he was twelve. At that time he hired out to ". . .the day the mob was to meet to go to Carthage an Express was sent to Nauvoo from our Co. to Raise a force To go Gard the Jail But Not meeting with Success the

learn the blacksmith trade. He was badly mistreated here so he and his brother ran away. He made arrangements to work for his passage on a boat to Cincinnati.

Later another brother wrote and told them to come home and go into business with all their brothers, which they did.

It was in 1843 when he heard the Mormon missionaries were in a town 10 miles away. "I saddled my horse and rode down, stayed over night and was baptized the 8<sup>th</sup> of May. My brother, John, heard of it before I returned home and met me at our gate and asked me if I had been baptized by them damn Mormons. I answered in the affirmative. He damned me and the Mormons. I tried to pacify him to no purpose. This was the first disturbance between him and me and that which was formerly my whole delight for my future home was now loathsome and I bore it one month during which time my whole facilities were exercised in prayer and study which led me to flee to the Church for peace and safety which I did in June. I went straight to the Prophet's house, had an interview which was very agreeable and consoling. I worked on the Temple some times and was baptized in the river for my father and other dead relatives. Returned home late in the fall and sold out to my brother in November and worked 20 miles below Nauvoo for the winter where I became acquainted with Jacob L. Casteel's family and became familiar with Margaret Jane and was married to her."

A son writes, "My father and mother lived in Nauvoo by the side of Joseph Smith, the prophet, five or six years and were there at the time he was murdered."

From William's journal about the martyrdom of the Prophet and his brother:

Leading apostles was absent on missions & the Temple committee was urged to Raise the force But Reynolds Cahoon aposed the Enterprise Saying Joseph Left word for them

to Stay at home he advised them to do so & and the Result is two of the best Men upon the Earth was Martyrterd the mobbers Numberd Some over one hundred and fifty & as soon as this Horrible deed was perpetrated the mobbers, & citizens fled Leveing Carthage in a fright about this time a wagon Drove to Carthage from Nauvoo and the bodies were put in & they was Placed in the Hall of Josephs Manshon for two days for the afflicted Saints to Gaze upon passing in at one door & out the other. . .”

Shortly after William and Margaret were married they were called to go on an expedition to the Missouri River to help put in crops. The man in charge was not honest and insisted that all goods be handled by himself. He doled out such a small amount to everyone that they almost starved before they could extricate themselves from the group.

Some Frenchmen and Indians came into their camp and offered them food and a boarding place if Margaret would do the cooking. They gladly accepted the offer.

Early in the Spring of 1847 they joined the Mississippi Company. William was offered a wagon and half a team (he had to supply the other half) to haul supplies for another family. When his brother was upset William was leaving he told him, “I would rather be a Mormon dog than to stay in that country when my people had been robbed, pillaged, murdered and now exterminating orders issued for them to leave the United States.”

When they arrived in Pueblo, Colorado they prepared to winter there. At this time the family who he had a contract with broke it and turned them out of his wagon and withheld provisions. William made camp under a cottonwood tree and was at the mercy of kind friends. It was here that their first child was born.

While wintering there a detachment of the Mormon Battalion composed of the sick and disabled were sent to their camp for a change of diet to help them get well.

They received word that President Brigham Young and a company would start from Missouri in the early spring and they were to intercept them at Fort Laramie. When they reached Fort Laramie they learned they were only three days behind Brigham Young. They reached the valley July 27, 1847.

In 1850 William and his father-in-law and their families were chosen to go to Southern California to start a colony. The company bought a ranch called San Bernardino and they flourished. “In 1857 President B. Young called for all saints to come home to Utah and in a general rush to sell out we received little or nothing for our places and many could not endure the sacrifice of property and remained there and many died there and all who stayed became cool in the gospel.”

William was severely afflicted with rheumatism much of the time. When he was called to colonize on the Muddy River, near Overton, Nevada he was promised that if he went he would not have any trouble with his rheumatism.

The family next lived in the United Order until it was disbanded and then while they were living in Panguitch they were called to colonize in Arizona. This was their last move and the settlement became Snowflake.

William married Elizabeth Gale on December 5, 1862.

At no time did William refuse a call made by the leaders of the Church, but was always faithful in carrying out his responsibilities.

William became blind before his death and died in full faith of the gospel.

William was found dead in his bed on the morning of May 14, 1892, age 72 years.