

David King Crafts

18 April 1832 - 17 June 1916

Phebe Ann Rodeback

2 November 1835 - 4 May 1903

Married 10 April 1856



David King and Phoebe Crafts - Early Pioneers of Deseret
Millard County Chronicle: Thursday, August 28, 1947

David King Crafts was born in Michigan on the 18 of April 1832, the youngest of five children. David's mother died at his birth and his father died when he was four years of age. At the death of the father, the children were all bonded out to different neighbors and put to work in factories with the exception of David who was too young for factory work. He was traded off to a cruel master for ten gallons of whiskey. David remained with the man until his cruelties became so unbearable that he could no longer stand it and ran away. He went to a river boat and was able to work his way to Cleveland, Ohio, where his older brothers and sisters were and they took care of him until he was old enough to take care of himself.

While David was still at Cleveland, he met a horse trader who was coming west and wanted someone to help him drive his stock out, and as David was anxious to come west, he hired out to the man and came as far as Salt Lake Valley with him where they parted company and David became a member of the Mormon Church.

From Salt Lake City David went to Cedar Fort, Utah where he met and married Phoebe Ann Rodeback in the year of 1853. Phoebe Ann's parents were among some of the first Saints to become converted to Mormonism in Pennsylvania during the early history of the church and they were very dear friends of Bishop Hunter and his family. James Rodeback, Phoebe's father, was one of the body guards of Joseph Smith and Phoebe Ann was well acquainted with the prophet. Phoebe Ann could relate many faith promoting instances to her children that had taken place in her young girlhood. She was present at the meeting where the mantle of the Prophet Joseph fell upon Brigham Young. She suffered the trials and tribulations the Saints went through when they were driven from their homes and was among those that crossed the Mississippi River in the winter. She told of the time when the Saints were near starvation and there was a cloud of doves lit among them until they had killed and piled up enough doves to last several days, then the doves rose and disappeared again. Phoebe was a kind devoted wife to David and a fine mother to their children.

David was made constable at Cedar Fort and at the time he was constable a very tragic incident took place. The men usually went in groups to the canyon to get wood or poles, but Bishop Weeks needed some poles badly, so he sent his two young sons, William and Warren up into the canyon, a distance of from two to three miles to get a load of poles. The boys did not return that night and when they had not returned by midnight, some of the men went to look for them and just as it was coming daylight, they came upon the mutilated bodies where some hostile Indians had attacked and killed them. David being constable gathered some men together and went and talked to the friendly Indians and got them to help them to get the Indians who had murdered the boys. There were nine Indians all together who had taken part in the killing and David took them alone in a wagon to Lehi. When he was about half way to Lehi the Indians began to get worked up and David said they reminded him of a pack of wild beasts and he thought of the precarious position he was in being alone with these Indians - but he said

he finally got them quieted down and delivered the Indians to the authorities where they were tried and convicted and later were hanged.

At another time while David was constable a group of Indians with Chief Walker was seen approaching town from the north. They were all dressed up in their war paint and the settlers were certain they were planning on attacking the village. David took his brother-in-law, Ed Rodeback, who could speak the Indian language, with him and they went out to meet the Indians, holding up a white flag of peace, to see if they could not get the Indians to agree to a peace treaty. They promised the Indians if they would not attack the settlers, they would have some beef killed for them and would give them all they could eat and all they wanted to take with them. When the settlers saw the Indians approaching the settlement, they wanted to fire on them because they thought they had taken two white men prisoners. James Rodeback stood with a gun in his hand and said he would shoot the first white man who raised a gun to fire on the Indians until they found out what the Indians had agreed to. The Indians came and the settlers killed several beef and barbequed them and gave the Indians all they wanted and from that time on the Indians never broke their treaty with the people of Cedar Fort.

When Johnston's Army came to Utah they made a camp in the north end of Cedar Valley, but as sufficient water did not run the year around, they left there and made a permanent camp five miles southeast of Cedar Fort. On August 1859 some soldiers from Johnston's camp fired on the town of Cedar Fort during the night. David Crafts was one of the men delegated to go to Johnston's camp to find out the cause of the outrage. When they arrived, they found General Johnston and Colonel Crossman were still up and although the officers denied any knowledge of the soldiers firing on the town, the men felt sure that it had been the General who had ordered it. However, the camp of 5,000 soldiers brought prosperity to the valley, they consumed all the farm products that the farmers could produce and asked for more. They had so many horses that they needed much hay to feed their stock so David Crafts, Tom and Walter Smith, and Henry Hales contracted to deliver them one hundred tons of hay, which they knew they could get in Tintic Valley where the hay grew wild.

It was while they were getting this hay that David had his faith sorely tried. Tom Smith had been with the Mormon Battalion and had seen the gold in California, and one day when the men were not working, David and Tom discovered the Centennial Eureka Lode. They saw the native metal in the rock and knew they had discovered a fortune. Their first thought was to build a monument to locate there, but they remembered the orders given to the Saints by Brigham Young that there was to be no mining excitement in Utah at that time, because the need of food was so great that everyone was needed to help to produce it. Also, they didn't want outsiders coming in with the intension of overriding the Saints again. Finally Tom told David the decision was to be left to him and David said, "We had better obey the advice of President Young." Although they knew they were passing up a fortune, they never regretted their decision.

The Crafts family moved to Cache Valley where they lived for about three years, but due to the ill health of Phoebe Ann, they moved back to Cedar Fort.

In the year 1874 the Crafts family, the family of Henry Hales and the family of John Chamberlain moved to Millard County. They settled twelve miles west of Deseret, in what they named Laketown. Laketown was made a branch of the Deseret Ward with David Crafts the presiding Elder. At one time there were nine families to settle in Laketown.

They found the valley productive and abundant with wild game and fish. David was a great gardener and he grew large quantities of vegetables and melons on his ranch, and the Crafts were known for their hospitality both among the whites and Indians and both were always welcome at the ranch. The children said they could not remember a time that there was not someone besides the family at their home in Laketown. At times there were from 300 to 500 Indians that would camp at the ranch on their way to and from the west mountains where they would go to gather pine-nuts. They would stop to fish at the river and were always allowed to turn their horses in the pasture and to eat of the squash and melons that were in the Crafts garden. David said he had never known an Indian to lie to him or to break a trust. In one instance he was greatly repaid for all the kindness he had ever shown the Indians. The Crafts had a ranch in the Swaysee mountains where they let their horses stay on the range. At one time they had many valuable horses out there and some horse rustlers came in and began rounding up the horses. The Indians were there at the time and knew the rustlers had no business with the horses, so they waited until dark when they sent an Indian in the forty miles to tell the Crafts what was happening. He arrived at the ranch early in the morning and Frank and Ed Crafts rode out and got there just in time to find the rustlers leaving the mountains with all their stock.

The Crafts family and the Crafts ranch were widely known in Nevada as well as Utah. The ranch was on the main highway between the two states. There was a great deal of traffic by there during the mining boom in Nevada, and the Crafts ranch was the first accommodations after leaving the state of Nevada 100 miles to the west.

The Crafts built a reservoir at Crafts Lake and built many miles of canal, but during the drought they sold out to the Swan Lake Company. David and his sons discovered several mines in the Drum district and were actively engaged in the mining works for many years. They built a gold stamp mill out in the Swaysee mountains and later built a smelter, together with C. M. Howard, the husband of Rebecca Crafts. The smelter was located halfway between Oasis and the Drum mountains. A postoffice was established at the smelter and the privilege of naming the postoffice was given to the Indian Silver who had worked for the Crafts for a number of years. He called the smelter Wyno (Indian language meaning good).

About the same time the Crafts sold out their ranch to the Swan Lake Company, they turned over their mines and mining interests to the Jesse Knight Company. David and Phoebe moved back to Cedar Fort where David died in the year 1916.

The following children moved with the Crafts to Millard County: Edward, Lorenzo, Rebecca, Mary Matilda, William Frank, Bayard Percy, Mabel and Elmer. The children all eventually left the county with the exception of Bayard Percy, who remained there and engaged in farming and is still a

resident at Deseret.



Top row from left to right: Mary Matilda Crafts, Bayard Percy Crafts, Frank Crafts, Charlie Howard (Rebecca's husband), Rebecca Crafts.
Next row: Ed Crafts, Mabel Crafts, David King Crafts (father of family) and Phebe Rodeback Crafts (mother of family), Elmer Crafts and Lorenzo Crafts. Circa 1885

David King Crafts
by Marjorie Crafts Hemdon, granddaughter

David King Crafts, was born 16 April 1832 at Mt. Clements, Michigan, the son of Parsons Crafts and Judith Chase Dudley. When David was a small child, his mother died. When he was six years old, his father died. David's oldest sister was married and her husband wouldn't let her keep the younger children, so she gave them to anyone who would take them. David was given to a man who sold him to an Inn Keeper for \$10 worth of whiskey. Here he worked in bondage as a stable boy.

One night the Inn Keeper's cow didn't come back. David was sent to find her. When he came back without the cow, the Inn Keeper was very angry and whipped him. The next morning, he was again sent to find the cow, with a threat that if he didn't find her, he would be beat to within an inch of his life. He looked all day, but couldn't find the cow. That evening his master was about to hit him when David jumped through a window and ran away. He was befriended by a farmer, and he stayed with them until they moved away.

He then worked his way on a ferry boat to Cleveland, Ohio where he knew one of his sisters lived. As he stepped from the boat, a boy twelve years old, alone in a large city, he didn't know where to go. A man came up to him and asked him where he was going. David said he was looking for a sister by the name of Mary Crafts Stacy. The man said he would help him find her and he took David home. David was very surprised to learn that the man was his brother-in-law and the husband of his sister, Mary Crafts Stacy. They took David into their home, and he stayed there until he was grown.

At the age of nineteen, David and a man by the name of David Lockland were buying mules for the government. On their journey west, they met and joined the Pioneers. While traveling with them, David became converted to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and was baptized in the Plate River by Thomas Slight in September 1851 and confirmed by John Hockings. He was ordained a Seventy by Mr. Townsend in 1852.

They traveled with the Pioneers until they came to Salt Lake City, Utah. He and another group of Saints were sent to settle Cedar Fort. Here he met and fell in love with Phebe Ann Rodeback, daughter of James and Phebe Beagle Rodeback. They were married by Bishop Allen Weeks on 10 April 1856. In November 1861, they were sealed in the Salt Lake Endowment House.

David and Phebe Ann lived in Cedar Fort until after their second child was born, then moved to Hyrum, Cache County, Utah. Because of Phebe's poor health, he sold his farm in Hyrum for a wagon, a family Bible and ten dollars and moved to Lake Ferren, Millard County, Utah. They had a farm and did fairly well for awhile until the people up river from them took their irrigation water. While at Lake Ferren, many people and wagon trains stopped at their home to rest on their way to California. They decided to move back to Cedar Fort.

At that time it was the county seat of Cedar County; with Eurable Snow as the Judge, David became the County Sheriff. While he was sheriff, two young men named Weeks went into the canyon to cut poles to build corrals. When they didn't come home at night, a posse was formed to look for them. The posse found the mutilated bodies of the young men. They had been killed by Indians.

Because David was the sheriff, he had to go to the Indian's camp. After talking to the chief, he finally convinced him to turn the two renegade Indians over to him, and David took them to jail at the "Point of the Mountain" in Salt Lake County, and turned them over to the sheriff there. The two Indians were convicted and were the first men hanged in Utah.

I remember Grandfather as a kindly, old gentleman, wearing a long white beard and sitting in a rocking chair. He patted my head and said I looked like my cousin, Mildred Hughey. Grandfather was a farmer and miner. He died 17 June 1916 in Cedar Fort at the home of a daughter, Mary Crafts Hales.