

A SHORT SKETCH OF MY LIFE
BY
ESTHER BLACK MATHEWS

On the record in applying for membership as a Daughter of Utah Pioneers, I recorded the following: Date was August 28, 1947.

I am Esther Black Mathews born June 15, 1854. I was married to Benjamin Lynn Mathews June 2, 1915. My direct Ancestors are as follows:

Father - George Black - Born May 23, 1854 in Fillmore Utah.

Mother - Esther ^{Clarinda King} ~~Black Mathews~~ - Born September 24, 1858 in Fillmore Utah.

Grandfather - George Black Sr. - Born May 6, 1823 in Lisburn Ireland, came to Utah with James Pace Co. in 1850.

Grandmother - Susan Jacaway - Born Sept. 18, 1835 in Clay County Missouri. Came to Utah with James Pace Co. in 1850.

Maternal Grandfather - Culbert King - Born Jan. 31, 1834 in Oswego New York. Came to Utah in 1854.

Maternal Grandmother - Eliza Esther McCullough King - Born Dec. 30, 1837 in Jackson Michigan. Came to Utah with Capt. Howell Co. in 1848.

Great Grandfather - William (Young) Black - Born Aug. 20, 1784 in Lisburn Ireland. Came to Utah with James Pace Co. in 1850.

Great Grandmother - Jane Johnston Black - Born June 11, 1801 in Lisburn Ireland. Came to Utah with James Pace Co. in 1850.

Maternal Great Grandfather - Levi Henry McCullough - Born April 18, 1810 in Northwick New York. Came to Utah 1848, Capt. Howell Co. He was member of Mormon Battilion.

I was born in the small village in Southern Utah called Coyote.(The name was changed to Antimony years later). My parents are George and Esther Clarinda King Black. They were early Native Pioneers. Both being born in Fillmore, Millard County Utah in 1854-1858. Their parents were among the first settlers in that area.

Our home was a religious one where love as well as work was expected of each child. We were taught responsibility early in life. I was a curious child, there were so many things to learn, I wanted to know the how and why of everything around me. My mother was President of the Primary so I began attending early in life. I have been told (it was also recorded in the minutes) that when I was about six months old, I was put in a large box near the front of the room and given a harmonica, among other play things, to play with while my mother and other women were busy with the other children. I soon found the funny instrument would make a noise when I blew or sucked on it. That made the children laugh.

I suppose I was a spoiled child but I had come into the family following a long period of grief and sorrow in their lives. Four boys and a girl had died following an epidemic of disease in the community where my parents were living. One brother age sixteen and one sister age twelve were left. My father had just returned from a mission in England, where he served two and one half years. Mother with the help of my brother tried to handle the ranch, planting and caring for the hay and grain, milking cows to make cheese and butter to sale. During the winter months she taught school so father could stay in the mission field. One year after his return I made my appearance in the home. A healthy curious child, to become the center of activity. I was taught to work at an early age and to look and enjoy the beautiful things in life.

Both my father and mother were active in church and civic activities of the community. My mother taught me to read early in life, first with pictures, then by words. There was a good library of books in our home. We were encouraged to appreciate and love to observe what was going on around us.

My schooling began in a two room school. There were two teachers for eight grades. We were a mixed group. I remember taking the eighth grade work three years, just to have something to do. Schools were only held six months a year.

When I was sixteen I was sent to the Murdock Academy at Beaver to go high school. This was my real first challenge, meeting others who were considered good students. I especially loved my classes in English Literature, History, Zoology. They were so easy to remember.

My summers were spent living on a ranch, milking cows to make cheese and some was separated and cream was shipped to a creamery in Monroe. There were many pleasant days spent roaming over the hills and along the cow trail, dreaming of the far away places, reading about the happenings out in the world.

I loved horses, they were my pet project. A lot of time was spent riding and caring for them. My favorite one was called Prince and he seemed to sense my every mood.

The roads at that period of time were mostly just narrow trails. If one meet someone coming the opposite direction it was a difficult problem to pass each other. Every household was expected to do so much work on them or pay a poll tax to maintain the roads in order to get from one place to another. They were dirt roads, scooped out with a scrapper and shovel. When traveling from one place to another, the common way was horseback or a wagon, sometimes for lighter travel a buggy was used. I was about eighteen when the first automobile came into the rural areas. They were very few in number.

Our homes were lighted by candles or coal oil lamps. It was a happy day when we had gas lights installed. The gas came from a tank located outside of the house.

While I was at the Murdock Academy I met a young man I was attracted to but felt he was a passing fancy. He was several years ahead of me in school. After he graduated he went to the University of Utah and became a school teacher. His name was Benjamin Lynn Mathews.

After two years at the Academy, my mother became very ill so father felt she should go to Arizona to spend the winter with my sister living in Mesa, away from the cold and snow. I had to drop out of school to take care of the home and father and John, an orphaned boy who, with his sister had lived with us since early childhood. The parents had died and left six small children, who were adopted and raised by different families in the community. Many orphaned children had been welcomed and given a loving care and home by parents.

Everyone was made to feel welcome. My younger sister and Kathrine had gone to Arizona with mother.

The next year I was able to go back and attend the summer session. I was determined I would get an education. I renewed my acquaintance with Lynn (that was the name he was called) and we promised to write letters to each other. From there I went to Manti so I could finish high school. I enjoyed many wonderful experiences that year while living in my brother's home.

Late in the summer of 1914 I was offered an opportunity to teach school at Hatch Utah. It was a ~~two~~ teacher school and a challenging experience. My only training was in Sunday School and Primary and a short training class I had attended. There were 26 pupils in grades one through four. It was the school year of 1914-1915. What a challenge it was. The principal as well as the superintendent of the county schools were most helpful with suggestions and encouragement. The county schools had been consolidated, but a very short time and it was the beginning of better schools through out the state.

At Christmas time Lynn rode his horse from Minersville where he was teaching school, to Antimony to spend the holidays with me. We had really only had three weekends together. We felt we knew each other well enough to get married, so we decided that the following summer was the time.

On June 2, 1915 we went to the Manti Temple and were married. My parents went with us and we stayed a week and went through the Temple several times. We got back on the train and went back to Marysville where we stayed one night. The next day we went back to Antimony. After several exciting days in Antimony we went to Minersville where we were to make a home, with a wagon and team of horses. It took us two and one half days. We called that our honeymoon.

Late in August the superintendent of the schools, Mr. White, asked Lynn if he would move to the Moscow Mining District and take over the school there. Quite a few children in the area lived where the building that was used for a school house was located. They named the place Shaunty. The homes were ~~homes were~~ built along both sides of a deep gully or wash. The high water ran down in the Spring. The town was about one mile from the main Moscow Mine. There were several mines scattered around through out the hills where a few families lived. There were fourteen families living in Shaunty.

We needed to find a place to live, but there was nothing available except a few old shack that were boarded up and the natives said were haunted. We decided to build our own. We bought some lumber and layed a floor and walls.

We put heavy building paper on the walls, linoleum on the floor, and put a heavy tent over it for a roof. We had a door in the north side but there was no windows. We brought a small flat top stove to cook and heat water on, a couch that would make down into a bed, a small drop leaf table and three chairs. We took a large box and made a cupboard, put a curtain in front of it, with a few other necessary articles of things like a clock, lamp, dishes, etc. We set up housekeeping. The only source of water for the community was a well located about one half a mile from where we lived. The water was rather hard and had to be hauled or carried to where ever one lived. We were comfortable and happy we spent a lot of time reading or rereading the books we had, or roaming over the hills around us, exploring all the interesting things available, like haunted houses and mines.

In the summer for about two months, we would go to Minersville where we brought a ~~two~~ room house and moved it on a homestead, that dad Mathews was proving upon.

Our first son was born in the tent, as we called it our home. The baby came premature as I was expecting to go to Minerville to stay for the big event. Luck seemed to be on our side, as dad and mother Mathews came over to check on us, the night Gerald was born. There was a lot of snow and we had no transportation to get anywhere. Maybe we were rather ignorant and needed some one to check in on us. The only telephone was one mile away at the Moscow Mine. We had spent a pleasant evening visiting and the folks were going to leave and stay with other relatives living in the area, when Mother Mathews said, this girl needs help, you better go for a doctor quick. So Lynn ran most of the way up the hill for help. There was a doctor living in Milford about 18 miles away, a Dr. Perrish. His wife was a trained nurse and the doctor said he would come. The roads were narrow and crooked and covered with snow and ice, mostly up hill. They got stuck in a snow bank twice on their way. He was one of those kind doctors who never hesitated when some one needed him. (this story told in detail in another history).

Washing and ironing was a problem, as water had to be carried so far and heated on the stove in a boiler or kettle. Then they were scrubbed on a wash board and wrung out by hand. Then the flat irons were heated on the stove to iron. It was hard to keep them at the right temperature. The white shirts were my worst problem and my family grew up thinking they had to wear them.

When we needed groceries we would phone or write to a store in Milford which would deliver them each Friday. Otherwise we made do with what we had in

the house. Our first ~~ten~~^{two} years were spent in Shaunty. We were happy and comfortable.

Lynn was offerred a job in Antimony as principal of the three teacher school. They would give 125.00 dollars per month. At the mon^es he had received 75.00 dollars and did his own janitor work. So we decided to move.

In 1920 when the Garfield Stake was orgainzed, Lynn was asked to serve as Stake Clerk. The wards were far apart so he had to be gone a lot of time helping to get the wards organized and again when it was report time. This too is another story for history. He served thirty-five years in this position.

The years were busy ones. We had bought a small farm that needed a lot of improvements done on it.

Our growing family kept us busy. There were few modern appliances to make home making easy. We were blessed with seven sons and four daughters. We helped them all we could and with their own efforts they all received college and master's degrees.

My life had been a labor of love. I have never felt imposed upon and willingly did all I could to make life happy for everyone.

In all my activities I always had a full support of my husband and children. Continually I taught classes in Primary, Sunday School and in the M.I.A. In 1920 the Bishop asked me to help orgainze a Religion class to be held once a week. In which I taught one of the classes but also acted as supervisor for ~~five~~ years, until it was joined into the Seminary system. The smaller classes were returned to the Primary activity. At this time I was a counselor in the ward Relief Society. My main repsonsibility was to care for the sick and dying in the ward. The closet doctor and undertaker lived sixty miles of uniproved roads away from our community. They were unavailable only in extreme cases. I had ~~st~~ started helping do such things when I was a young teenager, so the leaders felt I was a natural one for the job. I worked mostly with women and children.

One of the hardest task was my own mother. She was living in Manti and became very ill. She expressed a desire to come to me. It was a privelege to get her and care for her the last three weeks before her death in April 10, 1923. With the help of another good sister the the ward we prepared her body for burial. She was one of many others I helped care for throughout the years.

In 1925 I was chosen as first counselor in the Stake Relief Society, with

President Irene N. Rowan and others. When the Rowans were called to the Texas Mission, I still served with Ida H. Steed until August 1933, when I was set apart by President George Albert Smith as President of the Garfield Stake Relief Society. President Smith was the President of the Twelve Apostles.

The next ten years were challenging ones. Many things were happening. The World War to the Korean War. A serious depression and many other happenings. We held health clinics in each community every month. A doctor would come down each month from Salt Lake City. We also sponsored clinics on food and how to preserve it by canning and drying, with the help of the Farm Bureau.

During this period of time the Welfare Program in the church was restarted and organized from the ashes of the past. There were local meetings and District meetings to arrange for and conduct. Being the wards were so far apart, we had to go to them most of the time.

During all this time I still served as a Relief Society Visiting Teacher in my ward. I also kept the the ward records over a period of nineteen years, as the ward Statistical Clerk, I served under five Bishops. In 1953 I was called to be President of the Ward Relief Society where I served until 1957.

In the civic and community life I willingly did what I was saked to do. As a volunteer in Government activities I was a member of the local draft board at the Antimony Precinct during World War 2. I also acted as a local register for twenty-five years. I was secretary and tresurer of the Camp Forrest Daughters of Utah Pioneers from 1947 to 1963.

We moved to Roy Utah in June 1963 and that fall I joined the Polly Hammond or Camp 40 and have enjoyed it very much. *I served as Secretary several years in this Camp*

Through out the years I have met so many people which has been a blessing in my life. My family has been a joy to me and for them I have tried to do my best and to be an example for them to follow.