

JOHN CHESTER HITCHCOCK- 1832-1924



John Chester Hitchcock, his wife Petrea Jensen,
two sons, William on the left and Willard on the right

John Chester Hitchcock was born 3 March 1832 in Warsaw, Genesee, New York. He was just two years old when his father, Seth Hitchcock, died of cholera in Zion's Camp in Missouri. He was baptized into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 1 March 1841. After his mother remarried, John C. Said he left home at about the age of 8 years of age because his stepfather was brutal to him. He said he was bound out and made his own living from that time. He had many homes and did all kinds of work.

When the Saints had to leave Nauvoo and Illinois, John left with his sister Louisa Samantha and her husband Ancil Twitchell. He stayed in Winter Quarters, Iowa with them When Ancil was called to serve in the Mormon Battalion, John drove the team for Louisa to Utah. They came in the Heber C. Kimball Company in 1848. He undoubtedly went to San Bernardino, Calif, with the Twitchells in 1849. He said he drifted into Mexico and worked on a ranch for about five years. He learned the Spanish language and was a favorite of his employer, who wanted him to stay and marry one of his daughters. He at one time split rails and also panned for gold in California.

At age 25, John Chester Hitchcock, married Petrea Jensen, daughter of Soren and Kristina Marie Jensen Jensen. They were married in Ephraim, Sanpete, Utah 5 March 1857. They were pioneers of Sanpete County. During the Indian troubles he served in the Melita. He was Captain over 10 hearders who cared for all the cattle in Spring City. Many raids were made on the herd and it became a very dangerous job at times. He was in the Company of James T. Allred.

He went with others to help emigrants cross the plains. They went to Missouri to meet them. The boat which the emigrants came on was delayed two weeks because of sickness and when they finally unloaded into the wagons, many were still sick. This illness proved to be cholera. John said he never witnessed anything so terrible. At every campground they buried 1 to 9 bodies. He was Sergeant of the Guard on this trip of 200 wagons. One man named Bradley was hauling a family of 9 and they all died. They put 4 more into his wagon and they all died. When they wanted to put more into his wagon Bradley said "No, " ..He would haul freight but no more persons". Such was the terrible illness.

John moved his family to Ferron, Emery, Utah, in 1899 after living in Spring City, Sanpete, Utah. He was one of the first pioneers in Castle Valley, and endured many hardships of homesteading at the time. Only four of his twelve children lived to maturity.

He was a man respected by all who knew him. He testified of the Prophet Joseph Smith, of whom he was personally acquainted. He said he sat on Joseph's knee many times as a boy. At the time of Joseph's and Hyrum's death, he was 30 miles from the place but knew it was soon as it happened and told his employer he was going home for the Prophet was dead and he wanted to see him. He was a faithful Latter-day Saint and lived to the age of 92 years. He died 8 May 1924 at Valley City, Utah, at his daughter Melissa Burdick's home. He was buried in the Ferron City Cemetery 10 May 1924 near his wife who died 15 Aug. 1920.

Written by Olive Hitchcock Olsen, Grand-daughter
If you have any information regarding this family, please contact Marla Burdick