

HISTORY of JULIA LILLIAN BARKER and DAVID KUNZLER

Contributed By Rayman Meservy · 2013-03-16

As the white-topped buggy passed down the road and came to a step in front of his friend, Ervin's home—a strange feeling came over David, and an urge to go and see his friend 'Erv' and his lovely wife as they had encouraged him to do so often. Always he would find good homemade pies and cakes, chicken and dumplings, and all the homemade goodies that make a house a home. He was always welcome there.

The white-topped buggy carried Erv's wife's (Clara) folks from Pleasant View, usually driven by father, LeRoy, with Mary Ann and four daughters and little son in the seat behind; Lillian, the oldest daughter at home, Mary Grace, Peary, and Violet.

David could always tell when the whole family came to visit because then the white-topped buggy came. When Clara's mother came alone, as she did quite often, it was just the small one-horse buggy that she drove.

David liked to visit with Clara's mother. She was a very interesting person, full of fun, songs, and stories. She could entertain you for hours and you never tired of listening to her.

David was a farmer, who with his older brother, Jack, and his sister Caroline had made the living for the family while his father, John Paul Kunzler who was a widower, went on a mission to Switzerland. Times were not easy and David always had to work hard on the farm and in the wintertime took a job on the railroad to earn money to help out. After a number of years, David had earned enough to purchase a new "Ford Machine," one of the first in Willard. This was really a privilege to own and operate. On many occasions, Erv coaxed David to take them down to Pleasant View to visit Clara's folks and he would put in the gas. This David gladly did, as he enjoyed visiting with them as much as Erv. When the Ford pulled up to the Barker home, was it just his imagination or did he see an extra sparkle in the eyes of 17 year old Lillian?

On these occasions the Barker family learned to respect this fine young man, who brought Clara and her little family to visit, and it was with sadness that they bade him farewell when he went into the service of his county (World War 1) in May of 1918. Lillian promised David if he would write, she would write back.

David did write. He was in the 88th Division, arriving in France about 4 September 1918, and started intensive training in the 21st area near Semur. Barely one month later, the need for fresh men in the front lines became so acute, that without further experience, the 88th Division was sent to the Haute Alsore Sector, where, by October 17th it had relieved the 38th French Division. It remained holding a considerable portion of the line until the signing of the Armistice. By that time it was scheduled and prepared to take part in the projected attack on November 14th, east of the Meselle River. John J. Pershing, commander-in-chief of the American Expeditionary Forces wrote, "The Division has met cheerfully every call that has been made upon it. Each individual in your command may return home, satisfied that he has done his full duty, and proud that he has had the opportunity of being a member of one of our fighting organizations.

In June of 1919, David was discharged. The correspondence between David and Lillian had blossomed an interest that resulted in their courtship and marriage on 1 December 1920, a year and half after David's return. This was pleasing to Lillian's folks. When David asked to marry Lillian, they told him (knowing of David's many fine qualities) that there was no one they'd sooner give her to than him.

Lillian was a special girl. After Clara's marriage, Lillian was the oldest daughter in the family of nine children (ten with Clara), making her responsible for the care and welfare of the home while her mother went on her numerous missions of mercy. Lillian's mother, Mary Ann, was constantly caring for the sick and selling herbs and medicine. Lillian was a bright girl. During the flu epidemic of 1918, Lillian was studying at Weber Normal College. She dropped out of school to care for her siblings, so her mother could care for the sick. Lillian, not only cared for their physical comforts, but taught them. Violet, Peary, Grace, and Louise told of how she curled the girls' hair into long ringlets around her fingers. Lillian taught them the alphabet, backwards and forwards, helped them recite many poems and songs, taught them to read, and helped them write their names, all before they went to school. This helped them to be foremost in their classes.

David's Aunt Katherine Keller, who lived in Manti, coaxed David to bring his young bride-to-be to her home in Manti and be married in the Manti temple, and then spend a week's honeymoon at her home. David and Lillian first traveled from Willard to Salt Lake. On November 29th, a Monday morning, they caught the train from Salt Lake to Manti and arrived that evening. David and Lillian stayed at Aunt Katherine's. On Wednesday, December 1st, David and Lillian were married in the Manti temple, attending two sessions that day. Aunt Katherine prepared a lovely wedding supper. While there, David chopped enough wood to sustain her through the winter. He also dug a big patch of carrots and prepared them for winter.

David brought his sweet young bride to Willard, where he rented a small home from his boss, Matt Madsen. (At this time, David was working for Matt on his farm.) The home was formerly August Braegger's place.) David had furnished the home with furniture. There he and his bride settled in their honeymoon cottage. David and Lillian lived there until first child, Rayman, was about to be born. Then they moved and purchase a home in Willard from Mr. Doyle. They just finished moving when their first little son came into the world on November 2nd 1921.

While living in the Matt Madsen home in North Willard, Lillian would catch the school bus, get off at Clara's, and help her with her new twins that were born that year.

David and Lillian remained in their home in Willard, raising their family as each new one came along, with all the love and devotion that good Latter-Day-Saints could provide. They taught their children that serving their Heavenly Father was number one in their lives. Through example, David and Lillian taught them to be charitable, patient, persistent, and dutiful.

One and a half years passed after Rayman David was born, and a second son, Willard LeRoy was born on 29 May 1923. Lillian was glad to have the two so close to each other. These little boys were great companions.

On the 24th of September 1925, their home was blessed with a choice little girl. David and Lillian named her Iris Lillian, Lillian as a name sake and Iris for Lillian's dear friend, Iris Taylor. When Iris was nearly two years old, a third boy was born on 6 July 1927, Hyrum Grant.

Three boys and a girl! What a choice responsibility. David and Lillian recognized their duty in raising them to be good men and woman, priesthood bearers and homemaker. They righteously prayed to their Heavenly Father for the wisdom to guide and teach them in His ways.

Just a few minutes after midnight on November 1st 1929, a second daughter was born. Dr. Cragun said to Lillian, "You can call her a Halloween baby if you." But Lillian decided she would just as soon not have a little spook. Joyce Mary was another ray of light in their home. She was welcomed by her older sister, Iris, and the boys, who were proud to have a new sister.

To have two little girls in a row is a treat, and that is what happened on April 6th 1932 when Barbara Ann came into this world on such a special day, the birthday of our dear Savior and the day of the Church's organization.

Earl Robert was the next to enter this happy family unit. Born 19 November 1934, he was the fourth son and seventh child. Lillian found she really had her hands full, but to her it was a pleasant handful, and she never complained about the many sleepless nights, busy days, and worries that come with having a large family. Their children excelled in all they did. Lillian taught them individually to be ready for school. Because of her teachings, they were usually at the top of their classes.

David took the children with him into the fields and taught them to work and get along with each other. David and Lillian bought a farm in Pleasant View, where they were living when Barbara was born in 1932. However, because of a lack of water rights that was supposed to be theirs, they lost the place. David dug a well to supply some water, but it wasn't enough. They endured their hardship and realized that tribulations can make us stronger. That was only a small blow as to what was yet to come. They went back to Willard where Earl was born in 1934.

The depression years were hard on the family, but they were fortunate to have the farm and the ability to live from the land, and not out of the store. Lillian always raised a beautiful garden with many fruits and vegetables. She canned all summer for the winter. They always had plenty of good fruits and vegetables. There was lots of good milk from David's cows. Lillian took the cream and churned butter. People came from all over to purchase her good butter.

On October 4th 1937, another little girl was born to them, evening out the family members to four girls and four boys. She was named Velda Kay and once more, the family was thankful to have another of Heavenly Father's children to rear and love in their earthly home and throughout eternity.

On April 23rd 1940, Ralph Jay was born, un-evening the score again, but welcomed heartily by all.

In 1941, World War II broke out. David and Lillian's oldest son, Rayman, decided to join the service of his country. Rayman went into the Air Force and learned to fly, which he really enjoyed. Meanwhile, back at home, more trials came to the Kunzler family. David became very ill with arthritis and rheumatics. He went to the Veterans hospital in Salt Lake. Willard came down with rheumatic fever and little Velda Kay was sick with ear trouble, having to have her ear lanced three times. The three of them were so sick. Lillian said she feared losing any one of them. Our Heavenly Father blessed them. Velda Kay's tonsils and adenoids were removed and the infection left. David and Willard recovered, and David returned to the home and farm.

Once more Lillian had the privilege of giving birth to a son, their sixth son and tenth child, Rex Douglas. Lillian was very happy, but in the happiness came great concern for their son Rayman. He was flying a P-38, which protected bombers on their missions. You can imagine the anxiety in a parent's heart. Their worry was justified for it wasn't long after the birth of Rex that Rayman was reported "missing in action" on a mission over Berlin. Fear gripped their hearts. In prayer, their hearts and minds went up to God more fervently than ever. It was their habit to pray conscientiously for the well-being and life of their first-born son.

But the ways of the Lord are a study, and sometimes we don't understand, sometimes we're not quite ready to acknowledge his powerful hand in all things. It seemed like eternities from day-to-day, as they heard no more news about their beloved son. The letter Lillian had written Rayman telling about the birth of his new brother was returned, as were all other letters. Then they were informed his Rayman having being shot down while on a bombing mission over Berlin on March 9th, two days after the birth of his little brother, Rex.

Through experiences like this, we grow and develop in faith in our Heavenly Father and learn to accept His will in all things. This they did, although it wasn't easy.

David and Lillian went about the business of living and loving their children and their God, their country, their home and way of life. They filled their lives with virtuous principles and strove to overcome each fault and temptation. It was with pride and thanksgiving that they saw each child grow up righteously—seeking the good things of life, finding their choice companions, starting their own families, and following their parents' example in raising them in righteousness.

Many have been their heartaches and hardships, but even many more have been their joys and happiness in their faith, their children, and each other. Today on the occasion of their 50th or Golden Anniversary, they have forty-eight grandchildren—all members of their family happily married, living and loving the gospel of Jesus Christ, putting this first in their lives as is their example—A fitting tribute for a most wonderful, special and ideal couple.

We pay you tribute, dear parents. Thank you for your love and faith.

We love you dearly,

Your Family