



## **DELLA BURTON ROMRELL 1921–1902**

Della was born premature and only weighed four pounds. She was bruised by birth and her face was quite black. When her five year old sister, Katherine, first saw her new baby sister, she said she did not want that black baby. Della was born 18 August 1921, in Marriott, Weber, Utah, in a red brick house on west 12<sup>th</sup> Street. The house sat back in a field with large trees in front. It consisted of five rooms with no electricity or running water. Her father was Charles Burns Burton. The baby's mother, Ellen Winter Amidan, had been born in the same home in 1885. Della was so tiny that her mother had a hard time finding a bonnet for her to wear for her blessing. Her grandmother, Ann Shipley Burton, provided the baby with a long white dress for the occasion.

When Della was young, she and her childhood friend, Josephine Butter, shared many good times together. They liked to play house in the basement of the home where Della lived.

Della had a great fear of water which kept her from baptism into the LDS Church until she was older. On 6 July 1930, she was baptized by her father in the Mill Creek in Marriott. After the baptism, they changed their clothes in the car and went to the meeting house where she was confirmed.

Della's father worked for the railroad for 32 years. On Sundays, he loved to get up and prepare breakfast for the whole family. He enjoyed taking Della and her four sisters, Isabell (1907), Thelma (1910), Edna (1913) and Katheryn (1916), sleigh riding. Afterward they would go home for a nice lunch and enjoy more fun together. One Christmas their father made a little red table for Della and her sister Kathryn. He loved Christmas and took part with them in decorating the tree. When he went somewhere in the car, he hated to go alone so he would say to Della, "Come on, Pal, and go with me." She loved riding with him to see her Burton grandparents who always gave her candy or cookies. Della's father was important in her life, but when she was twelve years old, he became sick with cancer and died 24 April 1934.

After the death of their father, Della and Kathryn found jobs to earn money for their school clothes by picking berries, peas, string beans or other fruits and vegetables. When other pickers got bored and threw some of the items they were picking at each other, Della would not throw or waste a single item that she picked.

When Della first started attending school, the children rode in a covered wagon drawn by two horses. George Butter was the driver, and many times the children were very cold by the time they arrived at the Mound Fort School. Later, the school board provided a bus.

When Della attended Ogden High School in 1939, she and her friend Ardiene Stegan wrote and produced a pageant and won fifth place in a pageant contest in the gym classes. In high school, Della shared a locker with her dear friend, Ruth Taylor. The night of graduation in May 1940, they got together with two other girls and went to the dance. After high school, Della worked for eight months at Katherine Quinn Garment Factory, and then she and her friend Ruth found a job together working at the Model Laundry. After a year, Ruth got married and left work.

Due to the war preparation, the federal government bought up a large part of Marriott and Slaterville, including the land the family home occupied. Della's family had to move their house from its location to 268 17<sup>th</sup> Street. The move upset her mother who became ill and never fully recovered.

Della and her sister Kathryn and other friends often went to the dances at White City. None of them had ever been away from home so they took a trip by bus to California in July 1944. They spent a week in San Francisco and saw the sights, and then went to Los Angeles for two weeks.

Della took her sister's place as a Sunday school teacher in the Ogden Tenth Ward in November 1945. She loved the little children that she taught and it brought great joy and happiness into her life. Della and her friend Carol Thompson went to the Salt Lake LDS Temple 12 April 1954, and after that Della returned to the temple whenever she could.

Della attended Stevens Henager College for three years in the evenings, and was able to get a job at Sperry Rand Corporation. She enjoyed working there, and was able to buy her first car and take driver's education. One day Della met Lena Maxfield who said she knew a young man she wanted Della to meet. She made a date for Leonard Romrell and Della. They met at her house and went to an activity at the Harrisville Ward. They began dating and planned to be married. Leonard got sick and did not see her for some time. She was happy when he finally called. They were married 23 August 1963, in the Logan Temple. Pat Hardy made them a beautiful wedding cake, and Mildred and Harvey Hardy had a small reception for them at their home.

Della continued working at Sperry Rand. She had to take her turn on the night shift and some weeks she never saw Leonard until Saturday night. He was a mail carrier working days. Sperry Rand laid off some employees after President John F. Kennedy was shot, and Della was one of them.

One day while Leonard was on his mail route, Mrs. Manning invited Leonard in to see her newly adopted grandchild. He talked to her about the process of adopting a baby and she gave him contact information. The first of September 1965, Leonard and Della got word that there was a baby girl for them. They had their first experience on an airplane when they flew to San Francisco to get the baby. The little baby girl was so beautiful that Della nearly cried when the nurse placed her in Della's arms. They named her Cindy. Della's sisters Thelma and Isabelle hosted a baby shower where lots of beautiful gifts were received. Everyone was so happy for the Romrells. When Cindy was about 14 months old, Leonard and Della

decided they would like another baby, a brother for Cindy. Because of their age, they worried that it would not happen. However on 24 February 1967, they made another trip to San Francisco Children's Hospital for Rex Burton, born 9 February 1967. Rex had dark brown eyes and dark hair, a contrast to Cindy's light hair and blue eyes. They took both children to the Logan LDS Temple and were sealed together as a family.

Della served as secretary of the Mutual Improvement Association in Harrisville L.D.S. Ward from 1964-1975, and then was called as primary librarian and served as ward librarian for many years. About 1975 she was asked to be den mother of Den 3. Della served as a den mother for 22 years helping over one hundred scouts. Although she was fearful of water, she would go in a canoe with the boys at Camp Kiesel so they could pass off requirements. She helped each boy with a stamp collection, and then they made a collection of various types of rocks in an ice cream bucket. She could relate to the boys. She got down on their level, and won them over by her kindness and love. In return the boys loved her, and she started these young scouts on their way to earning their advancements in the scouting program.

Cindy and Rex grew up, married, and left home. Della and Leonard were thrilled when they became grandparents to Rowdy Burton Romrell, son of Rex and Shantel. Leonard was able to hold the baby a few times before he suffered a stroke and died, 7 February 1997. Their son Rex had a cancerous brain tumor which he battled for 22 months and finally succumbed, 23 April 1998.

After Leonard died, Della lived alone but because of her kindhearted nature, she could never let a stray cat go hungry and, therefore, had a lot of feline company. Through the years she also continued to keep track of her cub scouts. The day she died, 2 December 2002, she had a stack of Christmas Cards addressed and stamped ready to send to some of her scouts then serving on LDS church missions. The day of her death, she went for her morning walk, returned to her home, and peacefully died as she sat in her chair. She is buried in the Ogden City Cemetery.

**SOURCE:**

“Della Burton Romrell,” undated obituary.

Knight, Janice D. and Shanna C. Edwards. Remembrances of Della Romrell. 2011.

Romrell, Della Burton. *Autobiography of Della Burton Romrell*. Unpublished manuscript.

Amidan, Ellen Winter	Hardy, Mildred
Burton, Ann Shipley	Hardy, Pat
Burton, Charles Burns Burton	Kennedy, President John F.
Burton, Edna	Manning, Mrs.
Burton, Ellen Winter Amidan	Maxfield, Lena
Burton, Isabell	Romrell, Rex Burton
Burton, Katheryn	Romrell, Rowdy Burton
Burton, Thelma	Romrell, Shantel
Butter, George Ardiene Stegan	Taylor, Ruth
Butter, Josephine	Thompson, Carol
Hardy, Harvey	