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HANNAH JANE MCCLEVE JACKSON

Author Unknown, Interview

MAIDEN NAME: Hannah Jane McCleve

BIRTH: July 4, 1880; Taylor, Navajo Co., Arizona

PARENTS: Alexander Gilmore McCleve and Emma Cecelia Jennings

MARRIAGE: Charles Thomas Jackson; December 28, 1898

CHILDREN: Charles Gilmore (1899), James Harvey (1901), Emma Verdell (1903), Sarah Annis (1905),¹ Diana May (1908), Ivan Henry (1910), Cyrus Rodwell (1912)

DEATH: March 18, 1973; Mesa, Maricopa Co., Arizona

BURIAL: Pinedale, Navajo Co., Arizona

Hannah Jane McCleve (Jackson) was born about sunrise on a beautiful Sabbath morning, July 4, 1880, at Taylor, Arizona. She is the daughter of Alexander G. McCleve and Emma Cecelia Jennings. At this time the family was still living in a dugout. Alexander had hauled logs from Pinedale (then called Snowflake Camp) to build a house. It was almost completed, and

1. See Carrie Lindsey Flake, 184.



Hannah Jane McCleve Jackson. Photo courtesy of Marie Noble.

the family moved in when Jane was a few weeks old. This house still stands in Taylor (1950).

When Jane was five years old, the family made a trip to Utah. In speaking of this trip she says, “The preparation for this journey and the trip itself stand out vividly in my memory today. Also the two years we stayed there. Two of the big events were the addition to the family of another baby girl, Anna Morgan, and

the purchase of a Magic Lantern show.² I often went with Father when he took his show to the different communities after we returned to Arizona. It was a forerunner of the movie, and I always thrilled with the splendor and grandeur of places in the old world that sometimes seemed as real to me as the little log cabins of our town.”

Hannah Jane loved school. She often said that each day was an adventure through her reader, history, and geography. Among her favorite teachers were Louis Cordon and his wife Ella, and Mr. A. A. Armstrong.³ She loved good books and would read only the best.

In 1890 the family moved to Pinedale where they set up an Indian Trading Post. They stayed here about a year and then moved to Woodland, just south of the present site of Lakeside. Here they were prosperous and would undoubtedly have been successful in their work, but the altitude was too high for the mother, and her health began to fail. The family moved back to Taylor, where they built their permanent home. In 1897, Alexander G. McCleve passed away, leaving his widow and children to carry on alone.

In 1898 Hannah Jane was married to Charles Thomas Jackson. To this union seven children were born. At first the family lived in Taylor, where most of the children were born. Twice they moved to the vicinity of Pinedale and spent the summer. In 1907 they moved to Pinedale and took up a homestead one mile south of town. Here the family was very happy and worked hard to build a home. Tragedy struck the happy home, and in 1912 the second child, ten-and-a-half-year-old James Harvey passed away. Two years later, September 26, 1914, the father passed away.⁴

Hannah Jane had great courage and unwavering faith. She loved the gospel and knew that strength and help came from obeying the Lord’s commandments. Undaunted now, she went forward, striving to carry out the plans that had been made for the family. She collected the thousand-dollar life insurance policy and took her family to Salt Lake, where she went through

the temple. Speaking of this event she says, “All during Charlie’s illness (from May 16 to September 26) he grieved constantly about the temple work not being done.” It had been a family aim for years but hadn’t been fulfilled. He talked about it constantly, both in and out of delirium. He asked her if she would stand by him and have the work done. The promise was given, and she was told that she would not need to worry about the finances as they would be provided. She was given the assurance while going through the temple that the work was approved and accepted.

The little family was in poor circumstances, but they were blessed with health, faith, and a determination to carry on. Although there was no financial aid from other sources, steps were taken to build for the future. By hard work and with complete cooperation from all members of the family, the little farm produced most of the vegetables and other food the family needed. Laundry was done for other people. This was hard, as the water had to be carried or hauled quite a distance. Hannah Jane was very talented with her hands and did much fine sewing and other handwork, which furnished the needed cash. With all these hardships, she had time to live with her family. The home evenings of these years will live forever in the memories of her children and grandchildren. She would gather them around her and tell them beautiful faith-promoting stories, stories from the Bible and Book of Mormon, as well as stories from other good books. Music played a very important part in the home. Both instrumental and vocal music was encouraged. No gossiping or criticizing was permitted in the home. She instilled within the hearts of each of her children an abiding love for our Father in Heaven and his gospel plan. Her children all hold positions in ward and stake and civic affairs. All her children but one graduated from high school, two have college degrees, and one has filled a mission.

All this work and worry took its toll of her health, and it began to fail. She had to spend much time in bed, and the doctor said an operation was necessary. At this time [about 1923], her brother Henry brought his three motherless children for her to care for. They were Erma Dorothy (six), Glenn (five), and Arthur (three).⁵ She kept them for many years and then suffered a complete nervous and physical collapse. For six years she was practically an invalid. During that time she had two major operations. The doctors told

2. The Magic Lantern was a seventeenth-century image projector using pictures on sheets of glass. As the precursor to motion pictures, magic lanterns could actually make the image appear to be moving as compared to a stereoscope, which just made the pictures on cards appear in 3D.

3. Louis Paul Cardon (1868–1947) and wife Ellen Clymena Sanders (1874–1953); after some years in the Little Colorado River communities, Cardon moved to Mexico and then after 1912 lived at Tucson. A. A. Armstrong is unidentified.

4. Charles Thomas Jackson died at Pinedale, Navajo Co., Arizona. AzDC: Chas. T. Jackson.

5. Their mother, Doris Shumway McCleve, died August 11, 1921, at Chandler, Maricopa Co., Arizona.

her she would never be able to work again. But she has turned her deft fingers to making beautiful handwork, flowers, and other things that kept her busy and happy, and helped in a financial way.

After the death of her husband, she built a home in Pinedale. The same sweet spirit that prevailed on the ranch was prevalent in this home. It was a place where young people would gather to sing and hear stories that were told so beautifully.

Although compelled to work hard to provide for her family, Hannah Jane found time to work in the Church. She held many offices of trust and responsibility. To these she gave her best efforts, with always a prayer in her heart for divine guidance. She worked in the Relief Society, Primary, Sunday School, Mutual, and Genealogical Society. She has always been interested in genealogy, and when her health failed and kept her from more active work, she spent her time in research and temple work. She has done the work for hundreds and has had remarkable experiences in research and temple work.

She feels that the Lord was ever mindful of her and her family in their efforts to live as they should. She is grateful to him for the faith and testimonies they have. Her family has been a great joy and satisfaction to her, and she feels that the Lord has blessed her greatly.

She has had seven children, five of whom are still living; twenty-eight grandchildren; and over fifty great-grandchildren. Her children are Charles Gilmore, James Harvey, Emma Verdell, Sarah Annis, Diana May, Ivan Henry, and Cyrus Rodwell.

ELLIS AND BOONE:

Hannah Jackson was still alive when *PWA* was published, but this sketch was apparently written from an interview in 1950. The two children that had died were James Harvey (in 1912) and Emma Verdell Jackson Neff (in 1946). Hannah McCleve Jackson died March 18, 1973, at Mesa, but was buried at Pinedale.

When writing a history of the Relief Society titled *Women of Covenant*, Jill Mulvay Derr and her coauthors included this description of the early 1920s. "A cheerful independence often characterizes reports from stakes and missions," they wrote. "Josephine C. Kimball, president of the St. Joseph Stake Relief Society in southeastern Arizona, reported in a general Relief Society conference, 'In some instances we have had charity and

social services rendered, but we do not need a great deal down there where we are all poor alike.'"⁶

Although Josephine Kimball was living in the Gila Valley when she gave this report, the people in Pinedale, including Hannah Jackson, could have said the same thing, "We are all poor alike." Nevertheless, important Navajo County educators came out of Pinedale, including two of Hannah Jackson's children. Gilmore Jackson was a longtime teacher at the Snowflake Union High School, and Annis Jackson Flake taught second grade at the Snowflake Elementary School after her marriage to John T. Flake.⁷

However, the most prominent educator from Pinedale was a cousin to Hannah Jackson, J. Rufus Crandell. A brief biography in the Snowflake Stake Centennial book begins with this paragraph: "Born in obscurity, J. Rufus Crandell was the oldest son of a large family of eleven children. His birthplace was Lakeside, then called Woodland. The time was August 11, 1892. Inspired by his mother [Sarah Jane McCleve Crandell], at age 15, he came out of the hills of Pinedale with all the clothes he owned on his back or in a flour sack which also contained his fiddle and bow, . . . the bow protruding out of the neck of the sack."⁸ Rufus Crandell married Laverne Richards of Joseph City, and, with no children of their own, they played the violin and piano or sang at special occasions; directed choirs for stake conferences and funerals; gave piano, organ, and a wide variety of instrument lessons (many gratis); took music students to contests at the college in Flagstaff; and taught in the public school system of Snowflake—for fifty years.

With "no financial aid from other sources," Hannah Jackson was able to provide an education, including good books and music, for her children. They, in turn, gave of themselves to their communities.

6. *Relief Society Magazine* 8 (June 1921): 347 in Derr, Cannon, and Beecher, *Women of Covenant*, 239.

7. Palmer, *History of Taylor and Shumway*, 102; see also comments from Ellis and Boone in Carrie Lindsey Flake, 186.

8. Erickson, *Story of Faith*, 74–75.

METTA SOPHIA HANSEN JOHNSON

*Roberta Flake Clayton*⁹

MAIDEN NAME: Metta Sophia Hansen

BIRTH: October 22, 1831; Todderup, Aarhus, Denmark

PARENTS: Knud (Kanud) Hansen and Maren Jensen

MARRIAGE: Lars Magnus Johnson; November 8, 1869

CHILDREN: Anthon Elias (1870), Louis Elias (1872),
Maria Sophia (1878)

DEATH: May 15, 1895; Snowflake, Navajo Co., Arizona

BURIAL: Snowflake, Navajo Co., Arizona

Metta Sophia Hansen was born October 22, 1831, in Todderup, Aarhus, Denmark, to Knud Hansen and Maren Jensen. Very little is known of her early life in Denmark other than she met Lars Magnus Johnson, son of Johan Wiberg and Helena Monson, and they were both converted to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Denmark.¹⁰ Metta Sophia was converted to the Church by Anthon H. Lund.¹¹ She named her first son Anthon after this man who converted her. After their conversion, it was decided that Lars Magnus would come to America first and work to pay for Metta's passage so that they could be married in Zion.¹²

Lars Magnus arrived in America and went to Utah. He arrived there during the time that the Church was practicing polygamy and was urged



Metta Sophia Hansen Johnson; although the family said there was no photograph, this image was in a circa 1895 photograph of Relief Society women in Snowflake. Photo courtesy of Stinson Museum, Snowflake.

9. Family tradition (Glen and Brenda Johnson, Woodruff, Arizona) says that Louis Johnson provided information about his mother to RFC while he was visiting in Mesa.
10. Generally, Danish surnames are spelled "sen" and Swedish surnames are spelled "son" or "sson." This is apparent in the spelling of Johnson; Lars Magnus was originally from Sweden.
11. Anthon H. Lund (1844–1921) was ordained an Apostle in 1889, Second Counselor in the First Presidency in 1901, and First Counselor in 1910. He served as mission president, president of the Genealogical Society of Utah, and Church Historian. Ludlow, *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 2:591, 4:1641.
12. Metta Sophia Hansen was baptized October 7, 1855; family tradition is that she immediately began saving to come to America. It is also believed that she gave her savings to Lars Magnus Johnson to help pay for his passage and then earned her own passage. Personal communication, Brenda Johnson.

to marry. He married Johanna Sophia Osterberg (Anderson), and as soon as he could save up passage, he sent for Metta Sophia.¹³

When Metta Sophia arrived in Utah, she found that Lars Magnus and Johanna Sophia were married. After considerable persuasion by Lars and Johanna, Metta Sophia agreed to be married in polygamy, and they were married in the Endowment House in Salt Lake City on November 8, 1869. They received their endowments this date, and Lars's first wife was also sealed to him at

13. Osterberg may be a place name; Johanna Sophia used the surname of Anderson. Information from Wayne and Phyllis Johnson, West Valley, Utah.

this time. Lars Magnus and his first wife had four boys; namely, Gustave Elias [born 1867], John Elias [1870], Joseph Elias [1872], and William Elias [1875].¹⁴

Lars Magnus and Metta Sophia Hansen Johnson had two sons and one daughter. The first son was Anthon Elias, born November 22, 1870, in Round Valley, now Scipio, Utah. He married Mary Anna Schwab August 12, 1901, and died August 13, 1952.

The second son was Louis Elias Johnson, born December 27, 1872, in Monroe, Sevier, Utah. He married Theresa Caroline Flake October 9, 1901, and died July 11, 1955.¹⁵

Their third child was a daughter, Maria Sophia Johnson, who was born March 18, 1878, in Orderville, Kane County, Utah. She married Frank Cole in 1910 and died on April 18, 1912.

When Metta Sophia came to America, she was thirty-six years old. She was a trained nurse and spoke many languages including English, German, French, and Danish. She was very educated and talented.

After her marriage, the family lived in Monroe, Sevier Co., Utah, for a while and then moved to Orderville, Utah, where they lived in the United Order. The family then decided to come to Arizona, and they came by ox team in company with the Lundquist family, Maxwell family, Bate Williams, and Hate Wilhelm families.¹⁶ They arrived in Snowflake in

March of 1880, where Lars Magnus located his first wife and family.¹⁷

In May of 1880, he moved Metta Sophia and her children to what is now known as Pinedale, and they settled on a piece of land on the Cottonwood Wash below the Mortensen and Petersen families.¹⁸ They started to build a home. Lars and the children would go into the woods and cut down trees (there were no sawmills) and then carry them on the sides of the wagon. They built the walls and made the roof out of shakes. They had no floor in the house, but had a big rock fireplace. These rocks were hauled from an old Indian ruin. Louis Elias said he could remember a big pine tree which grew up in the old ruins, showing that the ruins dated back several hundred years. They also fenced in a little land and built a small corral.

There were two families living in the area, the Mortensens and Petersens. They lived about two miles south of where the Johnson family located their home. Grandpa and Grandma Mortensen were elderly people, and their family was grown. They wanted Anthon to live with them that first winter.

When the Johnson family set up housekeeping in Pinedale, the only cooking utensils they had was a tablespoon, two large spoons, two case knives, five tin plates, a quart cup, a bake oven, a skillet, a frying pan, milk pail, and a dough pan. All of the cooking was done over the fireplace.

The first winter came early with terrific storms. Lars Magnus had returned to Snowflake and was snowed in. Metta and the children had very little to eat. They lived on wheat, shorts, and bran for a month or so. Metta was ill, and the snow was very deep. Their front door faced east and the fireplace north. Metta was praying so hard for someone to come to their aid as she feared they would starve to death. In answer to her great faith and prayers, one day after a steady week of snow, Metta looked out the window and saw a man coming. It was Niels Petersen carrying a little flour and a piece of pork, some salt, and baking powder. They were very glad to see him, to say the least.

When spring came, Lars Magnus came to Pinedale and plowed three or four acres of land. This

14. 1870 census. L. M. Johnson, Scipio, Millard Co., Utah; 1880 census, Lars M. Johnson, Snowflake, Apache Co., Arizona. Johanna Sophia Johnson had an illegitimate son born in Sweden in 1859 named Carl Gideon Anderson; he is listed on the 1870 census as Charles Johnson age 11 and may have stayed in Utah. Also, son John may have died before coming to Arizona as the 1880 census only lists three sons, Gustave, Joseph, and William E. Sons Gustave and William are buried in the Gila Valley; findagrave.com #40797397, 18326104. See Musetta Saline Johnson, 320, for wife of William.

15. Baeza, *Pinetop-Lakeside*, 54.

16. The "Maxwell family" is the family of William B. Maxwell, Mormon Battalion veteran. The final two families in this list refer to the Bateman Haight Wilhelm family (in some records listed as Williams). In 1879, B. H. Wilhelm brought his second family (wife Grace) and son B. H. Jr. (usually called Haight), to Arizona. B. H. Wilhelm was made bishop of Concho. His daughter, Clarissa Wilhelm Gibbons, also listed Edward Noble and John Naegle as part of this eight-wagon company. In 1880, Haight (age 15) was sent back to Utah to bring his mother, Lydia Hannah, to Arizona, and B. H. and Grace Wilhelm were living at Concho. Because of the pressures of polygamy, B. H. later took his second family to Mexico. Lydia Hannah Wilhelm (and her descendants) stayed in Vernon/St. Johns; B. H. died June 3, 1903, in Silver City, New Mexico. Information from Kathi Hausmann and LaVerl Wilhelm to Ellis, emails, spring 2014.

17. The 1880 census lists both families living in Snowflake but in separate households.

18. Niels Mortensen (1823–1905) and his wife Mette Marie Hansen (1822–1905); their son-in-law, Niels Petersen (1841–1902), wife Mary (1854–1936), and two children (in 1880). The oldest son of Niels and Mary Petersen was James. He tells about his life in Petersen, *Sixty Years in the Saddle*.

was in April of 1881. Metta planted lettuce, turnips, carrots, onions, parsley, and so forth. These were the first vegetables the children remembered tasting.

Around the first of May in 1881, the railroad work started. Until this time, the nearest railroad was in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Lars and Metta went to work on the railroad and took their daughter Maria and Lars's oldest son by his first wife, Gustave, with them. They left Louis Elias with the Petersen family and Anthon Elias with the Mortensen family. They worked on the railroad the rest of that year and part of the next. Lars put his ox and mule team to work, and started a blacksmith shop. They helped build the Santa Fe Railroad through to Holbrook, Arizona.

While working for the railroad, Metta's principal job was cook. Since Metta Sophia was a trained nurse, she also did much of that kind of work and performed many miraculous operations for that time. A man on the railroad cut his foot wide open. Some of the men started to wash the wound. Metta stepped in and said, "No, don't do that. Stand away and I will care for that." After examining the wound, she tore a big strip from a clean sheet and laid it on the stove until it was almost brown, then she rolled it into a ball. Then very carefully holding the wound together, she wrapped the foot from the ankle to the toe, doing it up in the blood. Everyday as she cared for him, she would watch for swelling in the leg or for a temperature. This went on for about twelve days or longer before she opened up the bandages. When they were removed, the gap had grown together. Her renown spread far and wide, and she used to say that tobacco was a good disinfectant.

In 1882, they returned to Pinedale from the work on the railroad. Metta found work wherever she could to take care of her family. Anthon continued to stay with the Mortensen family and took care of their horses, and Louis stayed with the Petersens and took care of their cattle. Metta was a professional midwife, and she was never known to have charged anyone for her services. She also cared for many people while they were ill. Brother Allen Burke said his brother Charlie accidentally emptied a shotgun in his chest when he was a young man. After 48 hours they got Sister Metta, and she took care of him and cured him. Allen Burke claimed she saved his brother's life.¹⁹

While Metta's first son, Anthon, was herding horses for the Mortensen family, he got a six-shooter and was

fooling with it. He shot himself through the ankle, and his mother took care of him, doing a perfect job.

One day Sister Metta went into someone else's home to work and left Louis at home to take care of his little sister, Maria. Maria had beautiful long hair, and while Louis was tending her, he cut it all off.

Not long after Lars Magnus and Metta Sophia came back from working for the railroad, much federal pressure was being put on the families living in polygamy. Many men were imprisoned or were taking their families into Mexico to keep from going to prison. About this time, Lars Magnus moved the first wife and family to the Gila Valley to escape any punishment. They never returned to northern Arizona. Lars Magnus died September 1, 1886, and his first wife followed him in death seventeen days later. Her death came September 17, 1886.

The Indians would often camp within one-fourth mile of the Johnson place in Pinedale. Sister Metta used to always tell her children, "When you are afraid, don't . . . let the Indians ever know you are afraid as they respect bravery." Whenever the children had trouble with the Indians they always remembered their mother's advice.

During 1880–84, they were having a lot of trouble with the Indians being on the warpath. Many outlaws and ruffians had also come into the country and were causing much trouble around Pinedale. Since the Johnson family had many close experiences with these people, Metta Sophia thought it best for Louis to go to Snowflake and live. She also wanted him to get an education which he could receive in Snowflake. She secured a place for him with the William Jordan Flake family. She thought Flake was a reliable person, of which he proved to be.

Anthon and Louis were baptized June 5, 1884, in Snowflake; Louis came to live with the Flakes in the fall of that same year; Anthon returned to Pinedale and lived with the Mortensen family. He stayed with them, and when they went to the Salt River Valley to live, he went with them.²⁰

Metta continued to live in Pinedale and kept her youngest child Maria with her. In approximately 1890, Metta Sophia and her daughter Maria moved to Snowflake and lived in the Theodore Turley home on the east side of the block that Uncle Charlie Flake's home was on. In exchange for a place to live, Sister Johnson

19. Allen Burke (1877–1940); Charles Burk (1882–1957); this surname is spelled both Burk and Burke. AzDC: Allen James Burke, Charles S. Burk.

20. The two verbs, "came," in this sentence have been changed to "went" for clarity. The family believes that these two verbs indicate an author living in Mesa.

cooked for the mail carriers. She was an excellent cook and was well known for her delicious pies. Uncle Charlie Flake used to love to stop by and get some of her apricot pie. His wife, Aunt Belle, said she could always tell when he'd been to Sister Johnson's place for apricot pie.

Theresa Flake Johnson, who married Louis, said that the families used to get their start of yeast from Sister Johnson. The children used to feel it was a great treat to go for the start of yeast, as Sister Johnson always took out her tongs and gave them a lump of sugar out of her little sugar bowl. She said this tasted better to them than any candy. Sister Johnson loved the children very much, and they all loved her.

Metta Sophia lived in the Turley home and cooked for the mail carriers for approximately two years until her son Louis bought the old Anthony Stratton home from James Madison Flake and moved her into it. This home was two blocks south of the James Madison Flake home.

Metta Sophia was a plump woman and had very chunky little hands. She had very fair skin like the Danish people do. She had a nervous twitching back and forth all the time in her neck, which was felt to be caused from nervousness and the great trials she had to bear. She was a very strong woman and could work as hard as any man. Sister Johnson had to sacrifice greatly to raise her family, as she was left with no means to raise her children. She was a very independent person and very active in the Church. In spite of her many trials, she had a very strong testimony of the gospel. She was especially active in the Relief Society work, but was very willing to do anything she could for the Church.

Sister Johnson became very ill and was bedfast. She had a tumor in her breast, and it had become very large. Dr. Joseph Woolford operated on her and removed the tumor. It was so large that they put it in a ten-pound lard bucket, and you could still see it over the top.

Metta Sophia had a great desire to see her son Anthon as she hadn't seen him since he left northern Arizona with the Mortensen family and went to live in the Salt River Valley. An ad was put in the paper for him to contact his mother, and soon she received a letter from Anthon. After hearing from him, she passed away that same afternoon. This was May 15, 1895, in Snowflake, Arizona, at the home of her son Louis. She is buried in Snowflake.

ELLIS AND BOONE:

Joseph Sidney Woolford graduated in 1873 from Jefferson Medical College, Thomas Jefferson University, in Philadelphia.²¹ He married Clara Sarah Evans in 1878; they lived in California a few years, then lived in New Jersey and came to Arizona to practice medicine the end of 1894. The family settled in Snowflake, and he was probably the first doctor in the town.²² Almost immediately, he was called upon to operate on Sophia Johnson's breast cancer.

Lucy Flake records in her journal that the Relief Society sisters in Snowflake fasted for Sophia Johnson on several occasions. December 20, 1894, she writes, "to day was set for all the sisters in this stake to fast and Pray for Sister Johnson[.] she has a tumer in her brest," and on January 17, 1895, "I fasted to day and went to meeting[.] eighteen Sister[s] also fasted and prayed for Sister Johnson." On January 20, Sophia was given a blessing, and Lucy Flake wrote, "in the morning we will fast and pray while [the operation] is being done." But the doctor was unable to get chloroform, so the operation was postponed until January 22. Lucy recorded that "the Docter . . . did it successfully" and that "Sister Johnson is doing nicely." On January 23, Lucy wrote, "Myself and another Sister Set up with Sister Johnson all night and she is doing nicely."²³ Sophia recovered from the operation, but the cancer returned, and she died less than five months later.

Joseph and Clara Woolford lived in Snowflake for eight years; in 1897 they had a baby girl who lived only nine months and was buried in the Snowflake cemetery.²⁴ On April 1, 1898, May Hunt Larson wrote,

21. Quebbeman, *Medicine in Territorial Arizona*, 381; Joseph S. Woolford, "Directory of Deceased American Physicians, 1804-1929," ancestry.com.

22. The 1900 census lists eight children with four still living; combining this information with the 1910 census and the Snowflake Cemetery records, it is easy to identify six of the Woolford's nine children. Because Clara was married in 1878 and her first surviving child was born in 1883, it seems possible that one or two of the unidentified children died in California. Joseph Woodruff [Woolford], 1880 census, Nortonville, Contra Costa Co., California; Joseph W. Woolford, 1900 census, Snowflake, Navajo Co., Arizona; birth records for two children of Joseph Woolford and Clara Evans are found in Millville, Cumberland Co., New Jersey. "New Jersey Birth and Christening Index 1660-1931," ancestry.com.

23. Flake and Boone, *Diary of Lucy Hannah White Flake*, 83, 87-88, 107-8.

24. Eda Woolford, born May 5, 1897, died February 22, 1898. Snowflake Cemetery records.

“There were 14 baptisms including Doctor Woolford and Archie Parker from the Southern States.”²⁵ In 1903, the Woolfords moved to St. Johns, where their last son, Thomas Joy, was born. But Joseph only lived two years after this move; he died October 9, 1904, and was buried in Snowflake next to his daughter.²⁶ Upon the death of their father, George and Charles moved their mother to Show Low and built her a home, which she used as a boarding house to support herself. The five Woolford children met potential spouses in Show Low; the oldest daughter Sarah married John Lorenzo Willis, George married Lillie Hall, Clara married Lee Penrod, Charles married Elva Savage, and Thomas married Lottie Penrod. Descendants of Joseph and Clara Woolford still live in northeastern Arizona.²⁷

MUSETTA SALINE JOHNSON

Urilda Johnson Sorensen

MAIDEN NAME: Musetta Saline

BIRTH: May 9, 1882; Forestdale, Navajo Co., Arizona

PARENTS: John Saline and Susannah Rebecca Osborne

MARRIAGE: William Elias (Ellis) Johnson;²⁸ April 23, 1906

CHILDREN: William Harold (1907), Louis Laroy (1908), Musetta Urilda (1911), Lars Marcus (1913), Susanna Rebecca (1915), Antone Albert (1917), Hannah Grace (1918), Seth (c. 1920), Joseph (c. 1921),²⁹ Elmer Martin (1925), Thelma (1928)

DEATH: August 10, 1945; Mesa, Maricopa Co., Arizona

BURIAL: Pima, Graham Co., Arizona

My mother, Musetta Saline Johnson, was born at Forest Dale, Apache County, Arizona May 9, 1882, on their way to the Gila Valley. She had six brothers and two sisters. She loved her family with all her heart and soul, and she never would go very long without seeing them. Her mother came from England when she was ten years old with her parents; their name was Osborne.

My mother’s mother was named Susannah Rebecca Osborne, born in Worcester, England. Her father was John Saline born February 24, 1834, at Uleaberg, Finland, son of Henrick Savilaksaw and Ann Terrevoyer. My mother’s parents were married at Union Fort, Utah, February 12, 1862. My grandmother was a member of the belated handcart company.³⁰

25. *Journal of May Louise Hunt Larson*, 70.

26. Snowflake Cemetery records; 1910 census, Clara Woolford, 1910 census, Show Low, Navajo Co., Arizona.

27. Huso and Ellis, *Show Low*, 34–35; Clara Sarah Woolford, AzDC; Solomon, *George and Lillie of Show Low*, 105–26.

28. Son of Lars Magnus Johnson and Johanna Sophia Anderson; see Metta Sophia Hansen Johnson, 316.

29. Information for Seth and Joseph is from the 1930 census. 1930 census, William E. Johnson, Alma, Maricopa Co., Arizona. AzBC or AzDC for all others except William Harold.

30. Daniel and Susannah Rebecca Tillet Osborne were part of the Willie Handcart Company. Daniel died on November 1, 1856, fifteen miles west of the Green River, and Susannah died November 5 in Echo Canyon (FamilySearch.org death dates are sometimes listed as November and sometimes December). Three of their children, Susannah (age 10), Sarah Ann (age 3), and Martha Ann (age 1) survived, but son Daniel (age 7) died on the Sweetwater. Riverton Wyoming Stake, *Remember*, E-7.



William Elias and Musetta Saline Johnson. Photo courtesy of Wayne/Phyllis Johnson.

My mother went to Pima, Graham, Arizona, when she was very small and lived there until she married my father, William E. Johnson, April 23, 1906. She worked in the Church all her life, and she had a very wonderful testimony of the gospel. She was the proud mother of eleven children; and she loved us all and told us she wanted every one of us and made us feel like she loved us, and we were part of her life.

My mother had seven sons and four daughters (Harold, Roy, Urilda, Lars, Susie, Albert, Grace, Seth, Joseph, Elmer, and Thelma). Little Harold only stayed two months and passed on. Little Elmer was eleven months when he passed, and little Thelma was four

days old when she was called back to live with her Heavenly Father.³¹

My mother always made the best of everything; she was not a person who would get blue and not try to carry on. She worked very hard to teach her family how to meet hardships in life and how to get along with others. She loved little children and enjoyed her grandchildren. When she had a class in Sunday School or Primary, they would soon win a banner because she would work hard to teach them how to be quiet in the house of the Lord. She taught Primary so many years that she taught the children of some of her first students.

In 1918 when the flu was so bad, my mother used to go out among the sick and do so much to help. She would stay as long as she was needed and never did think of herself. She used to say, "The road is never too long or the night too dark to keep me from going to help anyone who is in need." She was so kind and very understanding. She would know just what to do and say in time of sorrow to make one feel better. She loved pretty things; she always tried very hard to look real nice, a little handkerchief or a pretty flower would mean so much to her. She loved the little things of life. She loved pretty flowers of all kinds. She loved to bake birthday cakes, and she never let one of her children have a birthday without a nice cake. She liked to ride horses, and when she was a young girl, she was a very good horse woman. She loved horses, dogs, and birds very much. She loved to dance, and lots of the older folks have told me what a fine dancer my mother was. She loved music and used to love to sing with her family. She was a very good homemaker; she was a good housekeeper and cook.

My mother was a very pretty person; she had black hair that never turned gray. She was about five feet two inches tall and she weighed about 118 to 120 pounds. She wore a size 12 dress. She had small pretty feet; her shoe size was 4½.

In 1945, my brother Joe, who was the baby of the family, was in the war and sent over seas, and this caused our mother to be very worried and unhappy. She had lots of faith in prayers. Her health became very bad. She had high blood pressure, so high it could not be taken. She had a bad stroke in October 1944. For eleven

31. This paragraph is from Sorensen's manuscript in Clayton, *Pioneer Women of Navajo County* (partial manuscript PWA), Mesa FHL, 3:101-3. Harold was born November 5, 1907, and died February 1, 1908; Elmer was born April 16, 1925, and died March 26, 1926; Thelma was born June 1, 1928, and died June 4.

months she lay helpless and could not be taken about or even talk to us. In March 1945, her son Joe came home, which was a happy day for her and all the family.

She always said she would love to live to have all eight of her living children married; and Joe and Louella were married April 1, 1945, so her wish in life was granted. She loved all her daughter-in-laws.

Mother was engaged to our father for eight years. During her teens, she rode horses from Pima to Thatcher to attend the Academy. She obtained her teaching certificate and in those days, teachers weren't allowed to be married, so she put off her wedding several years in order to take advantage of her education.

On August 10, 1945, about eleven o'clock in the morning, Mother passed on to join her loved ones. She was laid to rest at Pima, Arizona. My father William Ellis Johnson was never happy after Mother's death.³²

Our family feels very grateful for having such a wonderful mother, and we are all mindful and grateful for the teachings she gave us.

ELLIS AND BOONE:

In June 1888, a letter was sent out, signed by President Wilford Woodruff, asking all stake presidents to establish a Stake Board of Education and schools as appropriate. Church academies were then organized in Snowflake, St. Johns, and Thatcher. At Thatcher, a two-story brick building was built in 1892 with another two-story wing added to the north in 1893–94. The school struggled some, and then a diphtheria epidemic in the winter of 1895–96 mandated its closure. It remained closed the next year, lacking both students and money.

In 1898, a new stake president, Andrew Kimball, brought a revitalizing spirit to the Mormon communities in the Gila Valley, including the need for an academy to educate their children. Emil Maeser was hired as principal, and a second addition was added to the building. This was the same time that Musetta Saline turned sixteen and became engaged to William E. Johnson. In an age when many girls married at sixteen and began their families, it is noteworthy that Saline instead chose to attend the Academy. She waited eight years to marry, both attending the academy and teaching school. One of the purposes of the Academy was to train teachers; lectures were given for all teachers

32. William E. Johnson died November 1, 1954, at Mesa and is buried in the Pima Cemetery. William Elias Johnson, AzDC.



Sarah Allred (right, on horse) leaving Columbine Camp on Mount Graham after attending the Graham County Teachers' Institute, August 1900. Left to right: father Joseph G., mother Eliza, and sister Maggie, who presumably have brought a wagon up the mountain to bring Sarah's belongings home. Photo courtesy of Graham County Historical Society.

in Graham County. In August of 1900, thirty teachers and Emil Maeser attended the Normal Institute at Camp Columbine on Mount Graham.³³

After their marriage in 1906, William and Musetta Johnson lived in many different communities. William was often working as a miner, but sometimes he worked as a laborer or farmer. They lived in Layton, Pima, Safford, Tombstone, Bisbee, Benson, and later moved to Alma/Mesa. When Musetta died, her body was brought back to Pima for burial at the same cemetery where her two (and probably three) children were buried. Nearly ten years later, her husband passed away, dying from "silicotuberculosis pulmonary" caused from his years as a miner. They are both buried in the same valley that they came to as children so many years before.³⁴

33. Taylor, *25th Stake of Zion*, 54–65; Burgess, *Mt. Graham Profiles*, 2:378–80.

34. Arizona birth and death records; Pima Cemetery records at findagrave.com.

SARAH MELISSA HOLMAN JOHNSON

*Author Unknown*³⁵

MAIDEN NAME: Sarah Melissa Holman

BIRTH: November 18, 1838; Kirtland, Lake Co., Ohio

PARENTS: James Sawyer Holman and Naomi Roxanne LeBaron

MARRIAGE: Benjamin Franklin Johnson;³⁶ February 3/4, 1856

CHILDREN: Benjamin Julius (1857), Brigham Moroni (1859), Heber Franklin (1861), twins John Angus and Sariah Agnes (1863), Sarah Melissa (1866), Cassandra Andrie (1868), Lionel Brand (1871), Ellis Hills (1873), Delightra Victoria (1875), George Albert (1877)³⁷

DEATH: October 4/5, 1901; Mesa, Maricopa Co., Arizona

BURIAL: Mesa, Maricopa Co., Arizona

The story of Sarah Melissa Holman Johnson begins at Kirtland, Ohio, where she was born November 18, 1838, and extends through the plains to Utah (Salt Lake City), then to Arizona (Mesa) where she passed away October 4, 1901.

Her father, James Sawyer Holman, was born in Templeton, Worcester County, Massachusetts, September 17, 1805; her mother, Naomi Roxanne LeBaron, was born in LeRoy, Genesee County, New York, October 7, 1815. They were married March 24, 1833, and became the parents of twelve children. Sarah Melissa was the third child. They were early converts to the Mormon Church and passed through the many persecutions and trials inflicted upon the members throughout the early days of the Church. Nevertheless,

Sarah Melissa was brought up in the gospel from early childhood and remembered the many happy and wonderful occasions when the Prophet Joseph Smith was in their home. At one time when she was about six years old, her health was restored through a blessing by the Prophet.

Shortly before Melissa was born, the family had moved to Kirtland, Ohio. It was here that the first temple was built and dedicated, March 27, 1836. They lived here but a few years. Persecutions became so unbearable that the Saints (Mormons) decided to leave.

About 1840 and 1841, the Saints moved to a place they called Nauvoo on the Mississippi River. Some traders and explorers had traded a spot of land on the Illinois side of the river for a few sacks of corn. Then came a group of French people who tried to establish a community but failed.³⁸ The Prophet Joseph Smith saw the possibilities of the place and was inspired to buy it for the Saints. The hilly sides were good, but the lower parts were very marshy. The industrious people soon drained the swampy areas and built very fine homes. A temple was built and a hotel started called the Nauvoo House. Many of these fine buildings are standing and in good repair today, showing the fine workmanship, good taste, and high quality of the people who built them over a hundred years ago.³⁹

Nauvoo the Beautiful became a most thriving metropolis of that day, larger than Chicago with a population of over 20,000. This is a testimony of the industry and courage of the people and divine guidance of their leaders.

The Holman family established a home here, worked in all community affairs, aided in the building of the temple, and raised crops. Soon persecutions began again. The Holmans and others were driven from their homes by raging mobs who often set fire to their homes. The people were forced to flee and find shelter in caves or any kind of place in the coldest of winter weather. Life became uncertain and unbearable. Finally, the Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum were

35. An entirely different sketch was written by Melissa's daughter Cassandra Johnson Pomeroy and submitted to DUP on December 2, 1930. It included much of the Jubilee letter and was included in Gardner, *Benjamin Franklin Johnson Family*, 224–330.

36. Johnson, *My Life's Review*.

37. These dates and names reflect Sarah Melissa Johnson's list in the 1881 Jubilee letter. Clayton, *Pioneer Women of Navajo County* (partial manuscript PWA), Mesa FHL, 2:51–57, and <http://bfj-family.org/index.php/histories/wives/sarah-melissa-holman>.

38. Apparently, this is a reference to a communal group, the French Icarians, but they bought property at Nauvoo, including the temple, after the Saints abandoned the city and went west. Piercy, *Route from Liverpool to Great Salt Lake Valley*, 94.

39. Without knowing authorship or date of this sketch, it is hard to evaluate the statement that many of the buildings in Nauvoo were in good repair. Generally, buildings that were standing needed repair before the Nauvoo Restoration project began in 1962. Archaeologist Dale L. Berge provides one example of Nauvoo building restoration purposes, methods, and outcome. Berge, "The Jonathan Browning Site," 201–29.



Benjamin F. and Sarah Melissa Holman Johnson family; seated, left to right: Sarah Melissa (555), Sarah Melissa (mother), Benjamin Franklin (father), Sariah Agnes; standing: Ellis Hills, Cassandra (540), George Albert (boy), Benjamin Julias, Brigham Moroni, Delightra Victoria, Lionel Brand. Photo courtesy of FamilySearch.

arrested on false charges and taken to Carthage jail in Illinois. Here they were murdered by horrible enraged mobs. There was no recourse in the law. This whole terrible story is a blot on our American history.

The Saints of Nauvoo lost their lands, crops, homes, animals, and all they possessed. The temple was demolished and destroyed. Sarah Melissa, though young, could never forget the sorrow and heartaches of those days.

In [1844], the Lord made known through a miraculous circumstance the chosen leader of his church, Brigham Young. Early in the year [1846], Brigham Young with a chosen group set out to “find the place” the Lord would have them abide.

In the summer, James Sawyer Holman left his family at Mount Pisgah and started out with a herd of sheep for the Rocky Mountains, the first sheep to cross the desert.⁴⁰ It is told that he walked all of the way to Salt Lake City. A young boy on a horse went along

to help herd the sheep. The next summer the mother and family, with help of brothers and sisters, started out to cross the plains.⁴¹ The oldest son, thirteen years old, drove the oxen and cows. James Sawyer, father, came back to meet his family.

Arriving in Salt Lake, they began again building a home, planting crops, and assisting in the activities of the Church. Here, too, they moved about colonizing in Salt Lake City, Spring Lake, Fountain Green, and adjacent country. James Sawyer Holman was bishop of Spring Lake. His family was always faithful members of the Church.

Meanwhile Sarah Melissa had grown to be a beautiful young woman. She had a charming sense of humor and seemed to leave sunshine wherever she passed. Benjamin Franklin Johnson admired her and desired her hand. He had married her sister who was four years

40. James S. Holman was with the Charles C. Rich Company of 1847. MPOT.

41. James Sawyer Holman (42), his wife Naomi (31), and six children—Harriet (14), James (12), Sarah Melissa (9), Susan Adaline (6), Sanford (3), and Silas (1)—traveled to Utah in 1848 with the huge Brigham Young company. MPOT.

older than she.⁴² He was one of the early men of the Church who accepted the practice of polygamy. Before leaving, October 28, 1852, for a mission to Hawaii, he had asked her to marry him, but she preferred to wait. When he returned home, they were married.

A big mansion house was built in Spring Lake. Melissa loved the other families, and they were very happy together. The big farm provided all kinds of fruit, vegetables, grains, grasses, and practically everything was grown, including beautiful flowers. Benjamin Franklin Johnson and his sons were very good agriculturists. He was industrious and versatile. There were cattle and sheep, and from the leather shoes were made for the entire family. Benjamin Franklin Johnson made harnesses and saddles, too. He had quite a trade in this. Of course there was always plenty of meat, milk, butter, and cheese. Even broom corn was grown, and brooms were made. There was cane for sorghum and molasses. Mulberry trees were in his orchards, for the family tried working with the silk worm. Sheep provided wool for clothing and bedding, poultry provided eggs and meat, bees provided honey; all of these things meant a lot of work such as canning, drying, and preparation for storage. There were cellars and storage facilities adequate, and they called for a lot of labor and a lot of women to do it. Sarah Melissa was very busy in her home; it was a busy life for all.

They had happy times, especially evenings. There were always enough members of the family to have a good choir, orchestra, program, or dance. Some were very talented musically.

Sarah Melissa raised a large family of eleven children. She occupied the center of the big house. The large central dining room was the prayer room where each morning all of the families were called to kneel in prayer. The children were taught to pray and to understand the gospel at home and at church, Sunday School, and Primary. They were taught to read and write in the home by their mothers until a teacher was available and could be boarded in the home, paying in part for his or her services. Melissa was naturally gifted as a nurse and would leave at any time of day or night when sickness called her. Sometimes she received pay,

perhaps in produce, but more often in good thanks from her friends and neighbors.

Of her eleven children, two were twins, a boy and a girl. One day an Indian rode up with something in a sack. It was a little Indian boy, he wanted to trade. Melissa took the little frightened boy, bathed him and put nice clean clothes on him. She had to teach him not to catch and eat mice. He was named Kemo and grew up with her children to be loved and respected.⁴³

Benjamin Franklin Johnson was quite a stern man at times. He had to be a disciplinarian to manage so large a family. It was quite a feat to provide adequately for his numerous posterity. Some of his younger children felt that he was a little too stern at times and that they probably did not get enough consideration from him. Melissa was a peacemaker, understanding, and kind. She smoothed many feelings in the family and restored happiness.

She worked all her lifetime for her family, her people, and her church. She held many church positions. She was Relief Society president in Spring Lake for many years. In 1880 the little ward conceived the idea of a Jubilee Box in which the Relief Society women would put records and letters, especially to their own families. This box was to be kept sealed for fifty years. In 1931 it was to be opened. As Melissa was president, her letter was enclosed. It took a little correspondence by women back in Spring Lake to locate her family, as her daughters and sons were quite scattered.⁴⁴

Later in 1882, the Johnson family sold their home and moved to Arizona. The older boys and families came first. Benjamin Franklin Johnson bought some land near Tempe from Senator Carl Hayden's father, Charles Trumbull Hayden.⁴⁵ Some of the people in Tempe were kind to the Mormons, especially the Hayden family. The Johnsons built several homes. Sarah Melissa moved to a home in Mesa on North First Street near Center. She was getting older, and her health was not good. A Doctor Jones of Tempe said she had cancer.

42. The first Holman sister to marry B. F. Johnson was Harriet Naomi Holman, March 17, 1850. One year after marrying Melissa, Johnson also married a third sister, Susan Adaline Holman, February 8, 1857. B. F. Johnson had a total of seven wives; one died before the move to Arizona, and another marriage ended in divorce in 1849. Johnson, *My Life's Review*, 389.

43. See Gardner, *Benjamin Franklin Johnson Family*, 240–41 for more details about difficulties Native American children adopted by Mormons experienced as adults.

44. Melissa's Jubilee letter is included in Clayton, *Pioneer Women of Navajo County* (partial manuscript of PWA at the Mesa Family History Library), 2:51–57; Gardner, *Benjamin Franklin Johnson Family*, 235–37.

45. Not mentioned here is that the three wives of B. F. Johnson who were the Holman sisters (Harriet, Sarah Melissa, and Susan) came to Arizona by rail. Johnson, *My Life's Review*, 281.

In 1893, her daughter Cassandra was married to H. C. Kimball Pomeroy. They invited her to go with them on their honeymoon to San Francisco. As she had wanted to visit folks in Salt Lake City, she went with them to San Francisco then on to Salt Lake City. She was good company and enjoyed the trip.

She had brought many children into the world and nursed untold others back to health before coming to Mesa. There were few doctors here, and their skill in medicine in those early days was very dubious. Good nursing and prayers for the sick were vitally important in healing. When a person was ill, the pioneers would say, "Go quickly and get Aunt Melissa." She loved the Indian people and helped and nursed many of them. She showed them how to be clean and sanitary and how to take care of their children. A story is told that she nursed an Indian mother and baby through severe sickness; wishing to repay her for her kindness, she named her little son "Aunt Melissa." This name he bore throughout life.

October 4, 1901, at the age of sixty-three, four years before the death of her husband, Benjamin Franklin Johnson, she passed away. She had lived a full life of beautiful service, beloved by all who knew her. She was a true Latter-day Saint mother and had a strong testimony of the gospel.

ELLIS AND BOONE:

When the Charles C. Rich company began their westward journey in 1847, part of the assemblage included 115 sheep, which James Sawyer Holman helped drive. It is not apparent from Rich's diary whether these all belonged to him or were a "community" flock, as became the norm in Utah during the pioneer period.⁴⁶ By the 1870s, village herds began to expand, particularly in Utah and Sanpete Counties, areas where the Holman family settled. In fact, grandson Warren Holman became part of the renowned Jericho Clip. Sanpete County historians wrote, "As small bunches of sheep in Fountain Green grew to herds of 3,000 head each, the quality of the animals and their wool improved with bloodlines provided by the purebred Rambouillets from Mount Pleasant. On December 10, 1908, the woolgrowers of Fountain Green joined in founding an association with 318 shares at \$50 per share. Headed by Henry Jackson, the officers included

N. P. Aagard, J. L. Nielson, J. P. Anderson, and Warren Holman. This organization made up the "Jericho Pool," a nationally promoted clip of wool from 100,000 Rambouillet sheep, shorn at Jericho in the Tintic Valley of Juab County. It was sold under the trade label of "Jericho Wool Clip," and its quality earned for it the highest prices in western wool."⁴⁷ It is interesting to consider some of the reasons why Mormon pioneers did not bring large herds of Utah sheep into Arizona as they did cattle, although James Pearce and Z. B. Decker of Taylor both had sheep.

The Johnson migration to Arizona ultimately came as brothers Benjamin and Joseph Johnson looked for a place to build a town "where all [the family] could gather and become a strong unit in [the] Church."⁴⁸ On December 7, 1882, Wilford Woodruff wrote to B. F. Johnson, "I hope you will get a settlement in some part of the country that will suit you and be a benefit to you. Most of the people speak highly of the Salt River country. I expect it is quite warm in mid summer." By 1887, over 300 family members had moved to the Salt River Valley and settled in the Tempe area; this is thought to be the largest single family relocation to Arizona.⁴⁹

B. F. Johnson's problems living polygamy in Arizona are well known. Originally, none of his wives were willing to come to Arizona; eventually all five did, but the Holman sisters, in particular, insisted upon separate homes. The wives also felt the responsibility of providing for their own children; some homesteaded land and others ran hotels and boarding houses. When Benjamin went to Mexico in 1890, all refused to leave their Arizona homes.⁵⁰ One descendant wrote, "BFJ recognized that his fretful and over-sensitive temper was the main cause of much of his family troubles. Although his children seemed to grow up with a love for their father, Benjamin's wives tended to withdraw from his confidence, and much of the remainder of his life was spent with anxieties because of their withdrawal."⁵¹ B. F. Johnson's seventh wife, Sarah Jane Spooner, took care of him in his old age more than any other wife.⁵²

46. MPOT.

47. Antrei and Scow, *Other Forty-Niners*, 276; Esplin and others, *Sheep Ranching in Utah*, 3–58.

48. For one perspective of the long discussion before Johnson family members moved to Arizona, see Johnson, *J. E. J.: Trail to Sundown*, 448–69; quote 449.

49. Turner and Ellis, *Latter-day Saints in Mesa*, 24.

50. Johnson, *My Life's Review*, 264–65, 270, 286, 322, 348.

51. Gardner, *Benjamin Franklin Johnson Family*, 146.

52. Johnson, *My Life's Review*, 373, 376, 383.

ELLEN JANE PERKS JOHNSTUN

Autobiography, FWP

MAIDEN NAME: Ellen Jane Perks

BIRTH: July 12, 1844 (or 1846/7); Sheffield, Yorkshire, England

PARENTS: Samuel Perks and Ellen Wright

MARRIAGE: William James Johnstun;⁵³ January 26, 1864 (div)

CHILDREN: Margaret Ellen (1865), Samuel James (1867), Elizabeth Lavina (1869), William Daniel (1873), Amity (1875), Clara (1878), George Alma (1881), Rebeckah (1883), Jesse (1885)⁵⁴

DEATH: August 30, 1937; Mesa, Maricopa Co., Arizona

BURIAL: Mesa, Maricopa Co., Arizona

I was born July 12, 1844, at Sheffield, Yorkshire, England. My parents were Samuel and Ellen Wright Perks.

My early life was spent in Sheffield. Father was born in Dublin, Ireland, but is of English blood. Grandfather was a chain maker and was called to Ireland to carry on his trade. At one time he was making an enormous chain. When asked why he was making such a big one he answered, "To chain the Pope and Priest and the Devil together."⁵⁵

My mother had five children, I being the eldest of them, three girls and two boys. When I was about five years old, we had smallpox, and one of my sisters died.

My parents were very devout Christians and often carried me twelve miles to church, when I was a baby.

Grandfather Wright lived on a farm called "Mansfield Woodies." I was very fond of visiting him. One thing I remember there was the Guinea chickens. They would fly at my back and give me a real beating with their wings. Another was how he fed his prize winning pigs. He washed potatoes, then boiled them with peelings on and mashed them up with meal. This way of cooking potatoes was a thing I met up with again in life later.

I was grief-stricken at about my fifth year when Grandfather Wright passed away. My aunt took me to her house, so I did not get to see him.

I remember how I loved to hear the band, and when the band paraded I would follow them all over Sheffield. These were officers and bands getting recruits for the Crimean War. My father went to America to avoid this draft.⁵⁶

We moved to "D" Street, Number 15, where Father was called to keep the Conference House to take care of the Latter-day Saint elders when in town. Elder Bunker was president then of the mission.⁵⁷ I was baptized in the Bath House in Sheffield by William Glover, elder from Utah state. It was done in April or May before I was eight in July. That spring my grandmother, uncle William, and aunt Nancy Perks went to Utah, Grandfather Perks having gone about two years before.⁵⁸

About September 1854, my father sailed for America. The elders advised him to leave, for the English government had guarded our house for three weeks to get him in the army at the time of the Crimean War. He was not financially able to bring Mother and us, so he went on and settled in Alton, Illinois. He was a mechanic and made iron machinery. Just as soon as he got settled, he borrowed money from a wealthy farmer and sent for us.

We sailed April 26, 1855, on Thursday. The ship was the *William Stetson*, with Captain Stetson

53. This surname is often spelled "Johnston," including on the AzDC.

54. All children except William Daniel and Amity can be documented in the 1880 and 1900 censuses. 1880 census, William James Johnstun, Sunset, Apache Co., Arizona; 1900 census, William J. Johnston, Wingate, Valencia Co., New Mexico.

55. With the Protestant Perks family in Catholic Ireland, it is not difficult to see anti-Catholic feeling in this phrase juxtaposing pope, priest, and devil; anti-Catholic sentiment was particularly strong as Irish immigrants came into England during the Great Famine (1845–52).

56. Samuel Perks (age 33) left Liverpool on the ship *Clara Wheeler*, and arrived in New Orleans on January 12, 1855. "New Orleans, Passenger Lists, 1813–1963," ancestry.com.

57. Edward Bunker (1822–1901) was born in Maine, had joined the Saints in Nauvoo by 1842, and was Utah in 1850. Two years later he was called on a mission to Great Britain where he was conference president of Bristol, Sheffield, Lincolnshire, and Scotland, but not president of the whole mission. As a returning missionary, he was head of the third handcart company in 1856. He later founded Bunkerville, Nevada, and died in Mexico. Arrington, *Mormons in Nevada*, 46–51.

58. Grandmother Jane Perks (age 53) and her two children William (age 20) and Nancy (age 8) traveled to Utah with the Appleton M. Harmon Company of 1853. Grandfather William Perks is listed as company and date unknown. MPOT.

commanding.⁵⁹ We sailed from Liverpool. There were 293 Saints on board under Aaron Smethurst. We arrived at New York on May 27.⁶⁰ Mother was very sick on the trip and gave birth to a son on May 27, 1855, the day we landed. The captain said he was the first boy to be born on the ship and asked to be allowed to name him. Mother granted his wish and so he was named William Stetson for the ship and Captain Stetson.

I remember on the ship seeing a young Irish girl hemming a black silk handkerchief with hair from her head. She and the first mate on the ship were married when we landed in New York.

A great sea turtle was caught and put on deck, and we children were allowed to ride it. Captain Stetson would put three or four of us on at once. The captain was very good to us, and sometimes he would scatter nuts and candy on the deck for us children to scramble after.

After we landed, Mother was moved to Williamsburg, across from New York City. President John Taylor had charge of the emigrants, so we were taken from the ship, it being noisy with remodeling and loading. On Monday June 3, 1855, both Mother and child died. They were buried there. Mother took convulsions the evening before. This left my little sister Clara, three years old, and me alone. I was eleven.⁶¹ Father sent money to President Taylor, and he sent us with a man going to St. Louis, but he did not care for us. The conductor was good and kind to us. He gave us fruit and cookies and came to see that we were covered at night.

We arrived in Alton on July 4, 1855. Father had come to St. Louis to meet us so we were taken to Elder Hudson, Presiding Elder. He kept us until Father came back next morning. But we were taken with Elder Hudson out to the woods where we celebrated our first Fourth of July.

Father had a house furnished for Mother, so he took us there and we lived with him. On May 19,

59. The *William Stetson* was named after one of the original owners; this trip was under the command of Captain Joshua L. Jordan of Thomaston, Maine. With 700 passengers aboard the ship, there were two births and four deaths among the Mormon emigrants. Sonne, *Ships, Saints, and Mariners*, 198.

60. Ellen Perks (age 30) with her two daughters, Ellen (age 8) and Clara (age 4) are on the manifest of the *William Stetson*, arriving in New York of May 28, 1855. "New York, Passenger Lists, 1820-1957," ancestry.com.

61. Almost always Ellen Johnstun's birth year is listed as 1844, including on her Arizona death certificate. However, the ship's passenger list for 1855 shows her as eight years old, and she is listed in the 1851 census for Sheffield Park, Sheffield, Yorkshire, England, as five years old.



Ellen Jane Perks Johnstun. Photo courtesy of International Society Daughters of Utah Pioneers.

1856, my sister died very suddenly; it was called congestive chills.

When President Bunker was released, he stopped to see us. He asked me if I would not like to go to Zion to Grandmother [Jane] Perks, and it was arranged, so I started. He put me on the boat at St. Louis and sent me up the Missouri River to Florence or Winter Quarters. There I stayed three weeks with the storekeeper who kept the church store. While in this place I baked bread in the ovens built by the first company of Saints. Brother Bunker was made captain of a handcart company so was kept that long getting the company organized. He then went with his own wagon with two yoke of oxen and one yoke of cows, and he had a teamster called "Sandy, a Scotch Man," of whom you shall hear more later.

The company was gathered at Iowa City, and left June 23, 1856, in four wagons.⁶² There were four-mule teams on one wagon and four oxen on each of the

62. The FWP and PWA versions do not agree on whether there were three or four wagons accompanying the handcarts. It may be that the fourth wagon was Bunker's.

other two, the rest were all handcarts. These were all ferried across the river at Florence or Winter Quarters. These three wagons carried the company's food supply, which consisted of flour, bacon, beans, and occasionally some vegetables which were purchased at settlements we passed. These supplies were issued about once a week.

Every Sunday was observed as a day of rest, except for two. These days we had to make short drives to get to water.

One old gentleman named Jones was sick most of the way across the plains. [He] died at Sweetwater, one hundred miles from Salt Lake, leaving a wife and son. This was the only death as I remember.

One time on the Platte River, two little girls and I took a handcart and filled it with little children too small to walk. We thought we would help out the company. We started out after dinner. The road was very sandy, and we got tired in the heat, so we pulled off the road in some cane breaks to rest in the shade, expecting to hear the company when it came up, but we did not. When we came out to the road they had gone on. We traveled until dusk alone, then seeing the campfires down near the river, found they had had supper and that a few of the men were ready to start out to hunt for us. We were very tired and received a lecture never to be forgotten.

Occasionally they had to call a halt while great herds of buffalo passed moving to new feeding grounds. Indians would come to trade with us whenever we were near their land. One time Sandy [one of the teamsters] had been bothered a lot with them and not having any goods to exchange for a pair of beaded moccasins, thought to get rid of them by saying he would trade me for them. The Indian was very pleased and would not change the trade. These Indians followed us for three days, and I had to be hidden to keep them from stealing me. Another lesson was learned.

Brother Brigham Young sent a relief company out to meet us, but they found us in such good condition they went on to meet the following company. We arrived in Salt Lake City in the best condition of any company that year, it was said. We reached there October 2, just three days before general conference. My grandfather William Perks met us, and I went home with them. They had a married son and a daughter five months older than I.⁶³

63. William (1798–1869) and Jane Perks (1799–1859). The married son is William Perks (wife Ann and boys Hyrum and William in 1860). The daughter is Nancy Ann Perks.

The year before was when they had the cricket and grasshopper war, so food was very scarce. They were not allowed to peel potatoes, but boil them with the jackets on just as my Grandfather Wright had done to fatten his pigs on. Upon seeing potatoes served this way, I refused to eat them saying, "I am not used to eating pig potatoes." Since then I have learned a lot about pioneering. The next November I was taken sick. They called it mountain fever, but I believe it was nothing but lack of food.⁶⁴ I was not used to such coarse rations as corn bread and unpeeled potatoes. My grandparents did not have a grain of sugar for months at a time. She had just one pound, treasuring it for emergencies. They could not buy flour for money, but my grandfather heard of a man who had offered almost any price for some nails. Grandfather was a smith, so he hunted around and found some scraps of iron. This he made into square nails. These he carried on his back for eight miles and traded for flour. When he reached home, I watched Grandmother roll the top of the sack down and make a little cake in the flour sack so as to not waste any flour. When it was done, she cut it in four quarters. I will never forget how eagerly I watched it cook and how sweet it tasted to me. Better than anything I have tasted since.

One time we went to church from the country and had to walk. Father had sent me a pair of shoes, and I was so proud of them. Grandfather made me go barefoot, carrying my shoes and stockings in my hands and would not let me put them on until we were almost there. That sure hurt my feelings.

Johnston's army was sent out to annihilate the Mormons, so we moved from Salt Lake to Lehi until the trouble was over. I believe in July we returned home to Salt Lake City. The soldiers made a fort at Cedar Valley, southwest of Salt Lake. Grandmother died that summer.⁶⁵ Nancy Ann Perks, my aunt, had been working for a Snider family then when Jesse

See findagrave.com #63661481, 63661498, 70314824, and 66002967; 1860 census, Ann and Ellen Perks, Salt Lake City Ward 14, Salt Lake Co., Utah; 1860 census, William Perks, Fairfield, Cedar Co., Utah (Camp Floyd post office); 1870 census, William Perks, Butte, Deer Lodge Co., Montana; 1880 census, Martin Hefling, Union, Union Co., Oregon.

64. Mountain fever: Rocky Mountain spotted fever is a typhus-like *Rickettsia* disease transmitted by ticks. It is seasonal, occurring in late spring and early summer, and people usually recover. Of course, with being sick in November, Johnstun was probably right, and she was just starving.

65. Jane Wilson Perks died November 30, 1859, Manti, Sanpete Co., Utah.

Johnstun married Betsy Ann Snider. I, being alone with Grandfather, was given a home with Jesse and Betsey. I lived with them five years.

Grandfather kept the toll gate at Parley's Canyon and worked on the road.⁶⁶ I was kept there alone with the old people and was afraid of all these people passing, so I decided to leave.

Manuel Wayman, a neighbor of ours, had moved on a homestead on the Weaver [Weber] River, so I thought I would go live with them.⁶⁷ But I was overtaken by Ephraim Snider, a brother-in-law of Jesse Johnstun. He persuaded me to go live with Jesse where Nancy Ann Perks, my aunt, had been living. So she went back to help Grandfather, and I took her place.

When about fifteen years old, I was crossing a corral to feed the calves their milk and was run over and trampled on by fighting cows and have still a weak sunken back from this.

Jesse was killed while working on his sawmill when his baby was nine days old.⁶⁸ He was impressed to bless his baby that night and name her. The next morning he was killed.

While living with the Johnstun's, I was taught many valuable lessons, which later were a blessing to me, such as spinning and sewing. I remember the first dress I made. I had woven the cloth. It was sheep's gray linsey. I, being an extra girl, my turn came last. There was to be a celebration. It was the evening before, and my dress was not even cut out. After the day's work was done, I went to my room, locked the door, and went to work. I had no pattern, so I ripped the dress up that I had on, cut the new one by it, and sewed them both up by hand before morning. I trimmed the new one with black buttons and worsted braid. It was very pretty, and I was proud that I, too, had a new dress for the celebration. From then on I made all my clothes.

One time I was sent up the canyon to get the cows. It grew dark, and on returning along the road with the cows I saw a man with a white shirt on standing by

the road. I was so afraid I did not know what to do. I finally made myself go by, and I found it was only a burned tree with a piece chipped off which looked like a white shirt. This taught me a lesson to be sure my eyes did not deceive me.

One summer when I was eighteen years old, I worked for Mrs. Carrington, the wife of President Albert Carrington.⁶⁹ I worked for her doing spinning. She paid me for my work with things that I needed and also a little money. This yarn that I spun was woven by a special weaver and made by a tailor into a suit of clothes for Brother Carrington. The suit was exhibited at the Territorial Fair and took the prize.

I lived with Betsy until fall, then my father came to Utah with his wife, Ann Ceston.⁷⁰ I lived with them until I was married in January 26, 1863, to William James Johnstun. He was just twenty years older than I and had been married before. His father was James Johnstun, and his mother was Amity Welsh. After I was married, Father and his wife returned to his old home in Alton, Illinois, and remained there as long as he lived.

We were married by Harris Eldridge, in the Sugar House Ward. Father played a joke on me. Sunday he asked me to carry a note to the bishop. I did, and it proved to be a request for him to marry me. I was so angry at him for not doing that himself.

William was a hostler at the stage line in Salt Lake, so that was our first home town. We lived in Salt Lake working for Jenson [Judson?] Stoddard. He was called to go and help colonize what they thought to be Arizona Territory. Mr. Stoddard was pretty well fixed and did not wish to go, so William volunteered to go in his place.

We had a good covered wagon and a span of government mules. With a company consisting of Captain Smith and wife, George Noble, Fred Kelsey and wife, we went to St. George where we were advised by President Snow to camp until we had an interpreter to go with us. We camped at Camp Springs for three weeks, spending Christmas there.

66. Parley's Canyon is named after Parley P. Pratt, who in 1848 explored this canyon as a possible route into the Salt Lake Valley. He was given permission to make a toll road, which was eventually called the "Golden Pass Road." This is the route now for Interstate 80. See *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, 365.

67. This is probably Emmanuel Wayman (1829–1908), who married Margaret Johnstun (1829–1916) in 1856.

68. Jesse Walker Johnstun, an older brother of Ellen's husband William James Johnstun, died at Parley's Park, Summit, Utah, on May 6, 1860. In the 1860 census, Ellen and her aunt, Ann Perks (five months older than her), were both living with S. C. Snider, a miller, in Salt Lake City Ward 14, Salt Lake Co., Utah.

69. Mrs. Carrington is unidentified, as Albert Carrington was a polygamist. Albert Carrington (1813–1889), born in Vermont, was made an Apostle in 1870. He was a counselor to Brigham Young from 1873 to 1877. However, Carrington was excommunicated in 1885 for moral transgressions. He was rebaptized in 1887 and died in 1889. Ludlow, *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4:1634; Bergera, "Transgression in the LDS Community," 119–161.

70. Onboard the *Clara Wheeler* with Samuel Perks in 1855 was Christopher Ceston (age 40) and his wife, Ann Ceston (age 37). "New Orleans, Passenger Lists, 1813–1963," ancestry.com.

Brother Andrew L. Gibbons joined us as an Indian interpreter.⁷¹ We then traveled down the Virgin River to what was called the Muddy. We were instructed to get as close as would be practical to where the Virgin emptied into the Colorado River.

We first camped on the Muddy Creek, but when President Snow came down he advised us to settle on the high land on account of health. So after raising one crop they laid out a canal to get water on the high land and laid out a town. We were discussing a name for it, and I suggested it be St. Thomas for Captain Thomas Smith. This was adopted. So St. Thomas was settled. Later Overton and St. Joseph were settled above us. It was a narrow valley, but very fertile.⁷²

Our first building was an adobe fort where we lived for several years. When we lived first in the lowland, William made me a willow shanty with the wagon bed for the bedroom. Here my first baby Margarette Ellen was born on July 15, 1865. She never slept in a house for about two years. An old Swedish lady, Grandmother Anderson, helped a great deal; she was a nurse. Brother Gibbons was very fond of Maggie; she was a very pretty girl.

The Indians in this country were very poor. We fed them once a week with a thin mush. They were so hungry they would eat it with their fingers when it was boiling hot. This made us short of supplies, which made it necessary to make a trip back to get more.

William was one to go after the provisions; not having much to get with, he traded our fine mules for a yoke of oxen. They were called Cotton, being white, and Line, having a line down his back. Also, he brought flour and such staples as he could, including a beef and a milk cow.

When living on the Muddy, there was a hill of solid rock salt. William helped cut great chunks of salt to sell to the other settlements. We ground up pieces of salt for our own use.

When Maggie was two years old, we went up to Salt Lake and on north to Kays Ward. Shortly after arriving, my second child, a son, was born. While there, William met his former wife, Elizabeth Harris, who married [Daniel] Browett [Mormon Battalion, died 1847]. They had lived together for thirteen years, then became divorced. She had never had any children.

71. Apparently this refers to Andrew Smith Gibbons (1825–86) who was living in St. Johns when he died. Gibbons, *Saint and Savage*, 211–32.

72. For further information about pioneering on the Muddy, see Arrington, *Mormons in Nevada*, 37–45.

We had a room in her house. She was devoted to little Maggie. When Sam was born, she walked the floor, wringing her hands and cried. I said, “Don’t feel so bad.” She answered, “I am rejoicing, for we have a son.” Some of the Mormons were practicing polygamy. I think it is right, so I gave my consent, and she and William were married again.⁷³ She then returned with us and lived with us until the government said we could only have one wife, then she went back to her home, as she had no children, and remained until she died.

After we had worked hard to build up the place and had put five or six years into it, a survey was made, and it was found we were in Nevada, when all the time we thought we were in Arizona. The back taxes were so high we could not pay them, so all we could do was to leave. We lived in Long Valley until President Snow asked William to quarry rocks for the St. George Temple. While working, William got his foot smashed under a big slab of rock. It seemed that every bone in his foot was smashed. He was only off his job three weeks; they would haul him back and forth, and he would sit and quarry for them. We stayed and worked until the temple walls were finished, then we moved to Sunset, Apache County, Arizona, Lot Smith being the head. Brigham City was another part under Ballenger.⁷⁴ Here was born Clara Johnstun, March 9, 1878. This was where we lived in the United Order. Here Jesse N. Smith, Joseph Fish, and Brother Owens set me apart to be the midwife or nurse of the Sunset United Order.

I believe the time will come when we will live the United Order and selfishness will be unknown. I learned a lot of valuable lessons while there and had all been honest it would have been a great blessing. William’s work was with the sheep in the mountains. My work was nursing. I helped make the men’s suits when not busy.⁷⁵

73. The PWA reference to Kays Ward may mean Elizabeth Browet was living in Kaysville.

74. In 1876, Mormon immigrants from Utah established four camps along a 25-mile stretch of the Little Colorado River (approximately from present-day Winslow to Joseph City). Originally, these camps were named after their leaders: Jesse O. Ballenger, Lot Smith, George Lake, and William C. Allen. Two years later, most of these camps had new names: Ballenger’s Camp became Brigham City, Smith’s Camp became Sunset, Lake’s Camp became Obed, and Allen’s Camp became St. Joseph. Today, Joseph City (formerly St. Joseph) is the only one in existence. Peterson, *Take Up Your Mission*, 16–18.

75. The 1880 census lists William (age 57) and his 12-year-old son, Samuel, as shepherds. Also living with William and Ellen at this time was his first wife, Elizabeth Browitt (age 66). 1880 census, Wm. Jas. Johnston, Sunset, Apache Co., Arizona.

We lived there about five years. Then we moved to Woodruff, living one season and raising a crop, then went to Ramah, New Mexico. There we helped build the town and a reservoir. Here I continued my nursing of the sick and getting my knowledge from doctor books and experience. I have delivered many hundred babies, and not until I moved to Mesa in my old age did I cease this work.

After my husband got older, he went to Manti to work in the temple and got a pension from the government for service in the Mormon Battalion. When he became too feeble, I, with my daughter Margarette, went up and got him, caring for him as he was most as helpless as a baby for about three years. He then passed away September 26, 1912, eighty-eight years old.

The next few years I had a lot of trouble with my health with rheumatism. Being bedfast for five months, Jesse carried me to a wagon and took me to Palomas Hot Springs, where I stayed and bathed so I was able to walk once more.⁷⁶

The following fall I moved to Mesa, Arizona, where my health was much improved. Having a son Samuel and family living here I was encouraged to move here, so after one trip home I sold out there and bought my little home in Mesa, where I intend to spend my last days.

If I could live my life over, I do not believe I could do much better. I just did the best I could and did all the good I could to others. I was the mother of nine children.

[Added by RFC.] On August 28, 1937, at the age of ninety-three, she got up that morning and made breakfast for the family, did the dishes, and swept the floor, after which she laid down to rest, folded her arms across her chest, and said, "I am so tired." She fell asleep. When they went to wake her for lunch, she was gone.⁷⁷

ELLIS AND BOONE:

RFC submitted a sketch, written in first person, for "Ellen Jane Parks Johnstun" to the FWP in the 1930s. When Clayton added this sketch to *PWA*, she edited out some items and added other details. Because some of the added details were ones that only a family member would know, here is one explanation: First, RFC was given a full life sketch, written by Ellen Perks

Johnstun, sometime before Ellen's death in 1937. Then, for the FWP, Clayton edited out some details about Church membership. Twenty years later when Clayton was compiling information for *PWA*, she reinserted some of these details but dropped out other items thinking the sketch was too long. In particular, Clayton deleted information about William James Johnstun's marriages and divorces, something she also did in other sketches or used euphemisms instead of *divorce*. Therefore, it appears that the only reasonable solution for this edition is to simply combine the two versions as Kline and Perdue suggest with a multisource document, although no attempt has been made to indicate either FWP or *PWA* sketch.⁷⁸ Without finding an original sketch, it is impossible to know whether the FWP sketch is exactly in Ellen's own words or if Clayton, Ross Santee, or some other FWP writer edited the grammar and punctuation.

At the end of their lives, William and Ellen Johnstun lived apart for some years, and they apparently divorced. In 1910, Ellen was living by herself in Ramah, New Mexico, and lists herself as divorced.⁷⁹ In that same census, William, age eighty-six, was living in Manti with a "servant," a widow named Mary, age seventy-nine.⁸⁰ Ellen must have gone to Utah to get William shortly after the census; he passed away in 1912, in Ramah, New Mexico. By 1920, Ellen was living in Alma (Mesa), Arizona, where she and Clayton would have been in the same stake.⁸¹ For this volume, Johnstun's description of life on the Muddy is especially valuable.

76. Probably La Paloma Hot Springs, near Truth or Consequences, New Mexico.

77. Many sources use August 28 as the death date, but Johnstun's AzDC lists the date as August 30, 1937.

78. Kline and Perdue, *Guide to Documentary Editing*, 198–203.

79. Ellen J. Johnston, 1910 census, Ramah, McKinley Co., New Mexico.

80. William J. Johnston, 1910 census, Manti, Sanpete Co., Utah.

81. Ellen J. Johnstun, 1920 census, Alma, Maricopa Co., Arizona.

MARY ELLEN MERRILL JONES

Author Unknown, Interview

MAIDEN NAME: Mary Ellen Merrill

BIRTH: May 15, 1858; Lehi, Utah Co., Utah

PARENTS: Dudley Justin Merrill and Almyra (Elmira) Huntsman

MARRIAGE: Daniel Philemon Jones,⁸² August 26, 1877

CHILDREN: Daniel Dudley (1878), Orren Cloyd (1879), William Orlando (1880), Guy Wesley (1882), Bertram Merrill (1885), Rollin Philemon (1887), Doctor Byron (1889), Collins Ray (1891), twins Elmer and Emily (1894), Mary Lora (1896), Hugh Colton (1899)

DEATH: November 26, 1945; Mesa, Maricopa Co., Arizona

BURIAL: Mesa, Maricopa Co., Arizona

Whether May 15, 1858, came on Saturday or not, Mary Ellen Merrill does not know, but there is an old saying, “Saturday’s child must work for a living,” and this was certainly true in her case.

Her parents, Dudley Justin Merrill and Almyra Huntsman Merrill, were among the first converts to the Latter-day Saint church to emigrate from the old country, crossing the plains with handcarts, walking all the way.⁸³ That was a trying experience to the older ones, a very hard [journey] and one never to be repeated by any of the participants. And yet, severe as it was, Dan Cupid stalked along beside the young and gallant, and many a journey began then has lasted throughout life and, according to the belief of these trusting souls, will last throughout endless eons of time.⁸⁴

82. “Daniel Philemon Jones,” in Jenson, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia*, 3:133–34.

83. Immigration information for Merrill and Huntsman was not located at MPOT; however, they were in Utah by 1852, which is before handcarts were used. Dudley Merrill was born in New York, and Almira Huntsman was born in Indiana; find [agrave.com](https://www.ancestry.com) #22254732 and 88396220.

84. The original reference to Dan Cupid is probably Shakespeare’s *Love’s Labor’s Lost* (III, i, 180). However, by the early twentieth century, Dan Cupid was associated with Valentine’s Day and



Mary Ellen Merrill Jones. Photo courtesy of FamilySearch.

Mary Ellen’s parents were married shortly after reaching Salt Lake City, Utah.⁸⁵ They remained there only a little while, then went thirty-five miles south to a little settlement named Lehi. It was here that Mary Ellen and the two older children were born. Emigrants from the East and Europe continued to come in great numbers, and as fast as one place was settled and considered safe and desirable, the hardiest and thriftiest of the pioneers were called to go farther away and open up new locations. Dudley Merrill was one of that class, so he was called from Lehi to Smithfield, Cache County.

Mary Ellen’s schooldays began in Smithfield, and she remembers how proud she was of her little pink calico dress and her lavender sunbonnet with slats in it. She had no shoes to wear, but neither did the other children, and no one had a brighter dress nor prettier bonnet than she. When she was seven years old, the family moved to Bear Lake County in Idaho. There

the delivery of anonymous sentimental messages.

85. Dudley Justin Merrill and Almira Huntsman were married July 24, 1852.

was lots of broom corn raised there, and the children used to gather it for their mother to make brooms and willows from the creek nearby for her to weave baskets.

This strenuous pioneer life proved too much for her mother, and they had been in Idaho only a short time when she took sick and her husband took her to Salt Lake City, where his parents still resided, for treatment. She died there, and Mary Ellen, who was eight years old then, stayed with her grandparents.⁸⁶ She was small for her age but had to learn to work, so her grandfather made a long bench for her to walk back and forth on as she spun the thread and yarn used in making the stockings and clothing for the family.

When she was nine, her grandfather died, and her grandmother married again. Her father had also remarried, this time to her mother's sister, Ellen, so Mary Ellen went and lived with them, helping to take care of the other five of her mother's children.⁸⁷

When she was twelve, she went away from home to do housework and work in a restaurant at Soda Springs, so named for the spring of boiling soda water. She continued to work there until she was sixteen, then went to Salt Lake City to live with an aunt and worked for her board and what few clothes she had. Because she was so neat and such a hard worker, her services were much in demand. She never got more than her room and board and two dollars a month.

A very tragic thing happened in one of the homes in which she was working. It was in Bingham Canyon. A stranger rode up to the place, and the man she was working for went to the door and opened it. The visitor shot him; he fell back into the room, dead. The stranger then rode away and was never heard of again. Mary Ellen helped pick her employer up and put him on the bed. When the inquest was held, she had to tell what she saw, which was all she knew.⁸⁸ That incident

86. Almira Merrill died September 14, 1867.

87. Ellen Huntsman was a half sister to Almira. The 1870 census lists Dudley Merrill (age 37), with wife Ellen (age 22), six children by his first marriage, and a new baby. 1870 census, Dudley J. Merrill, Bennington, Rich Co., Utah Territory.

88. This specific incident could not be located in a newspaper search. However, an 1874 note reports that "Bingham, five miles within the can[y]on, is remarkable for nothing especially different from other mining camps . . . excepting that murders are rather more common. A few days before our arrival there was a lively family difficulty, in which a father and his three sons were killed. Their relations contemplate killing the murderer when they catch him, and as in that case the murderer's friends will 'go for' them, and as the 'going for' will be avenged, there is likely to be a diminuation of the population of the camp." *Deseret News*, May 20, 1874, 11.

is still an unsolved mystery, and one she will never be able to efface from her memory.

During this time her father was again called to help settle a new country, this time it was Arizona. Daniel W. Jones was the captain of the company and had his family along. Among them was his son, Daniel Philemon, a young man of twenty-one. Mary Ellen was now nineteen. Again history repeated itself, and as the romance of her parents began as they crossed the plains, so hers began on the way to Arizona. He often told her that when he first saw her he thought she was a fine girl and determined then to win her for his wife if he could. She rode a little black mare all the way, and many a mile was covered as he walked by her side, and they talked of the things so dear to the hearts of those in love.

Their last Christmas spent in their native state was at St. George, Utah, and a very happy one it was for these young people, with its dancing parties and Christmas cheer.

As these emigrants traveled through the Indian country, they always hired one or more Indians to look after their teams and loose stock at night, and the consequence was that they never lost any. When an Indian is trusted, he never betrays that confidence. When they were called to come to Arizona, they were told to settle among the Indians and try and make friends with them and help civilize them.⁸⁹

Philemon Merrill, one of Mary Ellen's grandfathers, was with the Mormon Battalion, and as they marched through Arizona, he liked the Salt River Valley and directed them there.⁹⁰ When Henry Rogers and Daniel W. Jones were in Brigham Young's office in Salt Lake City receiving their instructions for the trip and colonization, Mr. Jones was there shown in vision the location where they finally settled at Lehi, Maricopa County, Arizona.⁹¹

Phoenix was only just begun; a few adobe houses had been built.⁹² When the travelers came to the Salt

89. Jones, *40 Years Among the Indians*, 238–46.

90. The Mormon Battalion route was never as far north as the Salt River Valley, but they did march along the San Pedro River, which probably influenced Merrill's decision to move there where he helped found the town of St. David.

91. Although PWA has Jones as seeing the vision of where to settle, other accounts indicate that it was Henry Clay Rogers. Turner, "Forgotten City of the Saints," 57–82.

92. The town of Phoenix began about 1867 when Jack Swilling organized the Swilling Irrigating and Canal Company to refurbish ancient Hohokam canals, thus the name Phoenix. Growth was slow and steady, but it was not until 1878 that



Daniel P. and Mary Ellen Merrill Jones, April 14, 1935. Photo courtesy of William Mack Jones Collection, Beverly Jones.

River, they did not know whether it was safe to cross or not, but a man on a white horse rode into the stream and located a good crossing. This was March 6, 1877. The weather was so fine and the water so inviting that the first thing the tired, dusty pioneers did was to find some old clothing that would serve as bathing suits, and all went in swimming.

The men went to work at once to get the water out on the desert land and when that was accomplished, there was a big celebration. All lived in their wagon boxes and tents, with sheds built over them covered with grass and cottonwood boughs. The wagon covers and tents were wet at night in order to make them cool enough so they could sleep.

fired bricks were produced. Luckingham, *Phoenix*, 13–15, 22.

All the seeds they brought with them were planted: melons, vegetables, and corn. The corn only produced tall stalks and fodder. This was traded for a kind of flour called sanitee: wheat ground and the bran and shorts left in. *Piloncillo* made from sugar cane furnished the sugar and syrup.⁹³ There were always plenty of frijoles to be had, so there was something to eat.

Because of the heat, some of the company felt they could not endure it, so the Turleys left for the northern part of the state, and the Merrills' destination was Mexico. They changed their minds, however, and settled on the San Pedro River.⁹⁴

Mary Ellen was engaged to be married to D. P. Jones, and her father did not want to leave until after the wedding, which took place August 26, 1877, and her folks left the next day. This wedding was a historical event as it was the first one performed among the whites on the south side of the river. The wedding dress was of fine white material and was more valuable because it was earned through hard work by Mary Ellen herself, and then when the first baby was expected, the wedding dress was cut up, made into dainty little clothes, lovingly trimmed with lace she crocheted.

But to go back to the wedding, all the townspeople were there. The ceremony was performed by the groom's father, at whose home it was held. The mother had made plenty of molasses cake, cooked potatoes, and fried venison that had been provided for the great occasion. Everyone had a good time until someone thought it would be quite a lark to put the newlyweds to bed. The girls caught the bride and were preparing to disrobe her, and the boys were going to do the same for the young husband, but he had other ideas. The only light for the occasion was twisted rags burning in a dish of tallow. One of the boys was holding one of these "just to throw a little light on the subject" when Dan [jerked] up with his foot and kicked the dish out of the fellow's hand, extinguishing the light and scattering the hot grease around, and the party broke up.

Happily these two brave pioneers set up housekeeping in a tent, with a shed built over it, and a dirt floor. Their furniture consisted of a trunk Mary Ellen had and Dan's pine chest. These were placed on rocks to make them high enough for a table. The bedstead was made of mesquite, corded back and forth with a strong

93. *Piloncillo*: Mexican unrefined sugar, which tasted like brown sugar, pressed into a cone shape.

94. Philemon Merrill settled at St. David, but Isaac Turley first moved to the Little Colorado River area and later went to Mexico.



Daniel and Mary Ellen Jones family, c. 1896. Seated on ground, left to right: Doctor Byron, Rollin, Elmer; middle row: Emily, Daniel (father), Lora, Mary Ellen (mother), Collins; back row: Bertram, Daniel, Orren, William, and Guy. Photo courtesy of William Mack Jones Collection, Beverly Jones.

rope. A woman in Phoenix had let her have enough ticking to make a bed. This was stuffed with grass she gathered. Her stepmother gave her two pillows made from her own mother's feather bed. The wedding presents too were spared [spare items] from the scanty stores of friends and neighbors and consisted of tin cups, four tin plates, and two knives and forks.

For a while she cooked over a campfire, and could tell any one how "hot love is in August." Finally a large army stove was purchased and fixed up in the center of the fort, and everyone cooked on it.

Mary Ellen's Christmas present from her husband that first Christmas was a set of six earthen plates, and was she proud! When the first baby was large enough to play on the floor, Mary Ellen could not put him on the bare ground, so she made a carpet of gunny sacks and tufted it underneath with straw.

Mr. Jones worked for Charles Hayden, who was very good to these first settlers. Soon the Jones family had an adobe house and real board floors. Freighting from Maricopa Station to Phoenix furnished employment for many of the early-day teamsters and was a great blessing as it enabled them to get means with which to build and furnish their homes. The Indians were always friendly and settled near their white neighbors.

Mary Ellen was the mother of twelve children, the youngest one to die was past eighteen. Her first eight were boys, then a pair of twins. Until their arrival, she had never had a doctor in the house. They were a very healthy family. Their actual wants were always provided for. When asked how she managed to clothe her big family, Mrs. Jones smiled and said: "The boys each had a pair of shoes a year. Their shirts and overalls were patched over and over again, as long as they

would hold a patch, but they were well and happy, and we always had enough to eat.”

Two of her sons were among the first to volunteer and go overseas in the World War. Both returned, but one of the twins (Elmer) was gassed. A son-in-law, Lee Jacob Huber, also went to the war. It was during this time that her eldest daughter and youngest son died, and she didn't know what minute she might hear of the death of one or both of her soldier boys.⁹⁵

Mr. Jones served for many years in the Legislature, where he was Speaker of the House, and in the Senate, where he was Chaplain.⁹⁶ When he died, July 6, 1935, his body was taken to the Capitol building, where it lay in state for two hours and was viewed by hundreds of his friends. Letters of condolence came from the governor and acquaintances from all over Arizona and surrounding states.

Mary Ellen Merrill Jones still carried on. Although hers had been a hard life, she made the best of it, and if there was a funny side she always found it. She passed away November 26, 1945.

ELLIS AND BOONE:

Mary Ellen Merrill Jones spent her entire married life in the Salt River Valley. The story of the marriage of Dan P. and Mary Ellen Merrill Jones is best told in Dan's own words:

As Mary's father, Dudley Merrill was leaving, the question of whether she would go with him or remain with me was difficult for her to decide. We had not intended to get married for some time so that I could get a start in the world. Her father was willing for her to marry me so she decided to remain with me.

We were married the day before her father left. It was the 26th of August which happened to be my father's birthday. We were married in the fort that we had built in the center of section two near where the bridge crosses the canal at the Lehi school house.

95. See comments by Ellis and Boone.

96. Daniel P. Jones served one term in the Arizona House of Representatives in 1912 and then two more terms in 1920 and 1922; he was speaker in 1923. He served one term in the state Senate in 1927. Eleanor Ferrall and Sherry S. Dickerson, "Daniel P. Jones," in Sharp and Sharp, *American Legislative Leaders in the West*, 151.

Mary had a nice white dress to be married in, but I had nothing but heavy winter clothes and it was the 26th day of August and in Salt River Valley. I had a new pair of boots, good pants, and a white shirt Brother Biggs loaned me a nice linen coat so we looked pretty well, so they all said.

We had a big dinner cooked by my mother. The main dish was roasted venison. A sheep man coming over the hills from Fort McDowell had killed two or three deer, so he gave most of the meat to us for the wedding feast.

The next day we started to keep house on what we could gather together and whatever we could get hold of. We got a large tent and pitched it inside the fort. We had a bedstead which I had made out of mesquite and corded with rope. For a time our table was a clothes chest which I had brought from Utah. The women had given us enough dishes to keep house for us two. We were as happy as if we had thousands.⁹⁷

Fifty-five years later, Dan and Mary Jones went to California to live with their son and get out of Arizona's summer heat. On July 24, 1932, Mary told her life story to her twenty-three-year-old granddaughter, Mary Eleanore Jones Greene; Eleanore wrote, "I sat at my grandmother's knee and wrote as fast as I could write as she told me her story." Many of the topics are the same as in this sketch, but there are additional details to many of the stories. Greene wrote:

Grandmother was Relief Society counselor when she was but nineteen, then when Grandfather was made bishop of [the] Papago Ward, she was president of the Relief Society and worked eight years in the Indian mission. When the children began to get big enough to want to mingle with the white children instead of their little Indian friends, they moved back to Lehi. Grandmother was first counselor in the Y.L.M.I.A. for ten years and later president. She was also president of the Primary for eight years and then president of the Relief Society again.

Her children were all well until Aunt Emily (one of the twins) took "T.B." In succession Aunt Emily, Uncle Hugh, Uncle Will, and Aunt Lora

97. Merrill, *One Hundred Steps Down Mesa's Past*, 78-79.



In the nineteenth century, when several deaths occurred in one family as for Mary Ellen Jones, many people, even doctors, thought that tuberculosis was a hereditary disease. By the early twentieth century, most people recognized it as an infectious disease. This WPA poster from the 1930s was created to help the public understand how to prevent further infections when a family member had tuberculosis. Photo courtesy of Library of Congress.

died of this terrible disease.⁹⁸ At the time this happened Uncle Elmer and Uncle Collins were in France fighting at the front during the World War, so she knew not what day she would hear ill news from their direction.

98. Emily Jones died December 25, 1917 (age 23). Hugh C. Jones died May 20, 1918 (age 18). Both deaths were tuberculosis related. Then William Orlando Jones died June 18, 1924, and Mary Lora Jones Huber died May 17, 1925, both also of tuberculosis. AzDCs.

The family moved to Mesa after Aunt Emily died, and Grandmother and Grandfather took their grandson Donald to raise as his mother (Dudley's wife) had died.⁹⁹

Finally, Mary Ellen gave her granddaughter a few additional details the marriage proposal. "The very night before they arrived in Phoenix, while the company was in camp, grandfather asked grandmother if she would go for a walk with him. They came to a log, and as they were seated there, he asked her that 'most wonderful question.'—If, when they arrived in Phoenix and became settled, she would marry him. At first she didn't reply to him at all. Finally, he said, 'Mary Ellen, if you will—kiss me!' And instead of answering, she leaned over and kissed him! So after more than fifty years of wedded life, she can tell him that she never did say 'Yes.'"¹⁰⁰

99. Esther "Etta" Ann LeBaron Jones died January 21, 1918 (age 38); her son Donald was born November 22, 1916. Eleanore J. Greene, "My Grandmother's Story," 3; in Earl Merrill collection, box 15, folder 4, Mesa Room, Mesa Public Library (punctuation added).

100. *Ibid.*, 2.