

A History of Jessie Penrose Jones

Written by her Daughter

Jessie Lucetta Jones Cornick

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It is fitting that occasionally we review the lives and histories of our pioneers. In their earnest struggles in a new and forbidding land, in their fervent devotion to the ideals of their faith, which made no sacrifice too great, in their heartbreaking efforts to build a haven where we, their children, might enjoy the blessing of peace and tolerance, it is possible that they would not comprehend the magnificence of the task they were accomplishing, or that here they were erecting a beacon light whose rays would penetrate the far distance of the world to re-create hope in the 'glorious day of promise.' Daily incidents of their ordinary lives are lasting testimonies of outstanding sacrifice living and breathing evidence that they were sustained and guided by Divine power.

We take great pride in our mother, Jessie Penrose Jones, to whom this tribute is paid. Her life typically illustrates the love, devotion, courage, sacrifice, and achievement of the pioneer woman. Mother was born in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, England, December 10, 1858, the daughter of Charles William and Lucetta Stratford Penrose. Her name sometimes appears in the records as Jessie Lucetta Penrose in memory of a baby sister Lucetta who died in infancy. That baby was named for Mother's mother. When the baby died, Grandmother requested that one of the children carry the name Lucetta, so mother took the name as part of her own. Mother is the third of eighteen children.

Grandfather Penrose is a familiar memory to all of us. His position in this community is such recent history as to require no detailed recitals. Grandmother Penrose is not so well known, although, as will appear, her qualities of refinement, her mental

powers, her ability and fortitude in the face of every hardship equaled, if they did not surpass, those of her husband.

Grandfather Penrose joined the Church in London, England, May 16, 1850, three years after the advent of the pioneers in Utah and eight years before mother was born. It is interesting to note that he died May 16, 1925, seventy-five years to the day after he joined the Church. Seventy-five years, every hour of which he lived and worked for his church. In this seventy-five years he devoted nearly a score of them to actual missionary work in the field, and rose from a humble member to become one of the First Presidency of the Church under two presidents, President Joseph F. Smith and President Heber J. Grant.

He was the only member of his parents' family to join the Church. He entered the ministry before he was nineteen and almost immediately after his baptism he was ordained and Elder and sent to adjoining shires to preach and organize. He continued this work for eleven years until his emigration to Utah in 1861.

In 1855 Grandfather married Lucetta Stratford of Maldon, Essex, England, after he had converted the entire Stratford Family to the Gospel. Grandmother was the last one of her family to join. It would seem that even at that early date the dictates of her heart were not allowed to rule her mind, but once having accepted the truth, no earthly power or tribulation thereafter caused her to falter in her allegiance.

In the following six years four children were born, the eldest of whom, Charles Kimball, lived but two months, so that when the family emigrated it consisted of Grandfather and Grandmother, Ernest, Mother and Kate. They were accompanied by the Stratford family consisting of George and Eliza Barwell Stratford and their children. George Stratford died en route to Utah. Edwin settled in Ogden and founded the Stratford family of Weber County. Julia married President William Budge and settled in Idaho, and Anne married Oliver Robinson and settled in Farmington. The two remaining sisters, Eliza and Emily, married Henry Rampton and Soren Poulson, respectively, and likewise settled in Utah.

There were 620 in the company of emigrants that left England at that time. They crossed in the steerage of the sailing ship "Underwriter" which took thirty days to sail from Liverpool to New York. It was a trying time. Mother was not yet three years old and her younger sister Kate was very ill. In fact, the doctor in England had said she would not live to reach America, so a tiny tin coffin was made and brought with them so she would not be buried at sea. Nothing was allowed to retard the journey to the Promised Land. Kate, however, lived to become a much loved and useful woman and the tin coffin was not wasted. It came in handy for many household uses. The pioneers could not countenance waste.

It required another eleven weeks to cross the plains. Grandfather drove his own ox team, Sam and Ned in Captain Homer Duncan's company. On reaching Echo Canyon, they remained behind the company while Grandmother gave birth to a little daughter. Bertha, September 12th, and then by forced marched they overtook the train of emigrants. That baby lived only twelve days and was buried in Salt Lake City, a tragic tribute to the cause.

The family settled in Farmington in a log house, which until a few years ago, stood on the main highway at the turn to Lagoon. The house has been preserved by the Daughters of the Pioneers and now stands back of the courthouse in Farmington and is used as a relic hall. One of the many memories Mother had of that home was that no one but Aunt Annie Robinson could milk the family cow, "Firey Bess." One day Aunt Annie was away, Mother, not quite four years old, thought, "How foolish for a big man like Father to be afraid of a cow. I'm not." To prove it she dragged the milk pail to the corral. The next thing she remembered, people were bending over her saying, "She's coming to." She recalled wondering what "coming to" meant. While recovering from that accident, she had her fourth birthday. Her brother Ernest was five the same day. He was exactly one year older to the hour. For a little birthday present, a neighbor brought in two pies - an unusual treat!

Another of her memories was that the winds of Farmington were most severe. On one occasion when Grandmother was in bed with new twin babies Grandfather rolled up in a buffalo rug against the door to try to keep the wind out and was blown across the room. The stovepipe caught on fire and blew down. Then the cow (their main source of food) got tangled in her rope and was choking so Grandfather had to go out in the awful storm. Only by pulling himself along the fence was he able to fight his way to the cow and save her. Later in England on a mission he thought of that storm and his loved ones at home and was moved to write his beautiful song, "Blow Gently Ye Wild Winds."

Grandfather taught school and let little Jessie go with him. He gave black-edged cards for good behavior and gilt-edged ones for well-prepared lessons. Being only four, Jessie had no lessons but she did receive a black-edged card. She could not see why it was not a gilt-edged one, as she had been so good. That bothered her for years, but she never told her father.

The family lived in Farmington for three years, then moved to Providence, and in the fall of 1864 they moved to Logan. Grandfather and Grandmother both taught school, and mother attended.

In April 1865, Grandfather was called on a mission to England. Mother was only eleven years old, but she vividly recalled many events of that period, which was one of great hardship and privation for the family. A new baby, Lucetta, was on the way, born eight months after Grandfather left. Grandmother taught school to support the family as long as her condition permitted; she also went out sewing. They lived in a two room log cabin with a dirt roof and rented one room to help pay expenses. Mother helped make candles, their only light, gathered saleratus, and helped make soap.

The children gleaned barefooted in the fields to get wheat for bread. Then they made fails out of willows and threshed the wheat ready for the mill. Eventually, however, shoes were obtained for Sunday through Mother's work caring for the shoemaker's children. But the shoemaker insisted on making the shoes with leather wrong side out, saying they wore better that way. How Mother longed for a pair with the

smooth side out! Mother recalled on one occasion how Grandmother wept because the children went into ecstasies over some lard given them to spread on their bread, not knowing the difference from butter. Mother was responsible for the family washing, which she did standing on a box to reach the tub. Grandmother's underwear was so heavy for her to lift that she never forgot how to struggle with it. She also took care of the children while Grandmother was at work.

Those days were fraught with peril from roaming Indians, so a dog was obtained to protect the children. One day when a big buck came to the house, the dog bit his hand. The next day the dog was missing but came home in the morning with a chain around his neck. Soon after, he was missing again but he never returned.

One day Grandmother had made two loaves of bread and had hidden them in two different places. She told the children to tell the Indians they had no bread. Soon after she left, a squaw came and asked for some bread. The children said they had none. The squaw answered, "You lie," and went right to the hiding place of one loaf and took it. A few minutes later another Indian came for bread. She walked in, went straight to the other loaf, and took that, leaving the children all day without bread.

Another time Kate was standing by the open window and a big Indian grabbed her hand. Mother ran and, doubling her little fist, hit the Indian as hard as she could. He laughed and said, "Brave little Papoose" and went away. One time the children saw an Indian approaching. Mother hastily slipped on her mother's dress and stood on a stool with the children surrounding her. The Indian saw the little group, laughed, and said, "Little Mama, Little Mama," and didn't bother them.

One day Mother went out to milk the cow. The cow stepped on her foot and wouldn't move. She had to stay there until her mother returned from work. Grandmother picked up the ax and hit the cow for which she was later criticized.

President Brigham Young was coming to Logan to celebrate the 24th of July. A beautiful arch of flowers was built across Main Street and a path was left on each side for people to pass, because President Young was to be the first one to go under the arch.

How proud Mother was to have been chosen one of the girls to strew flowers in the President's path and sing, "God Bless our Prophet, Priest and King, our Leader Brigham Young."

The first Christmas Mother remembered was in Logan. Her Mother was sick in bed prior to the birth of a new baby girl (Lucetta, born 8 months after Grandmother left for England) and Aunt Emily Poulson from Providence was taking care of the family. Aunt Emily was determined that the children should have a Christmas. So after putting them to bed on the floor she made some little 6-inch rag dolls for the girls, a paper horse for the boy, and some molasses candy. No expensive toys were ever more appreciated. Mother's first memory of wallpaper was when she was sent to visit in Providence while the house was papered. How she dreaded to go home, expecting to see the walls covered with newspaper, the only paper she knew about, and what a relief and joy to see beautiful paper covered with roses on the wall!

One of the bright spots Mother remembered was the privilege of attending the private school of Mary Balif, a friend of her mother's for whom Grandmother did sewing. Even at that early age, a minor incident illustrates Mother's inherent love of fine things. Miss Balif's Mother gave a dinner to the pupils. The table was set with all her best dishes. At one place was a beautiful thin glass. As soon as Mother saw the glass she couldn't take her eyes off it. The hostess noticed her interest and told the children to march around the table to music she played. They were to stop when the music stopped and that would be their place at the table. To Mother's great delight, she sat at the place with the beautiful glass!

When Mother was between eight and nine years old, Grandmother Stratford broke her arm and Mother went to Providence to stay with her. She cared for her Grandmother until she was able to wait on herself.

Mother was not baptized until she was nearly eleven years old. She was too young when Grandfather left for his mission and, so she waited until his return when he baptized her, her sister Kate and a group of other children in the Logan River. Mother remembered

Grandfather breaking the ice, then taking her hand and wading around in the river to find a suitable place. He wanted her to be first.

Grandfather had been called to Ogden on business. The baby, Emma Louise, the first born since his return from England, took very sick and died. Mother was alone with Grandmother at this time. Although not quite eleven years old, she ran all the way to Providence to get her Uncle Edwin.

In January 1870, Grandfather was called to Ogden to help edit the Ogden Junction. He left the family in Logan. After he was established, Grandmother, with just the help of the children, moved all their possessions to Ogden. It was on that trip that Mother saw her first train, and shortly after coming to Ogden she saw her first piece of coal. It appeared so beautiful to her that she was shocked when her father told her it was to burn.

Mother amused us many times telling about her first circus. She was twelve when the circus came to Ogden and, always being of a very venturesome nature, she decided the children must also have a circus. So she became the bareback rider, making their gentle ole buggy horse the victim. A rope was tied around the horse and Mother, standing on his back, triumphantly rode around the block with all the neighborhood children cheering in the rear.

Mother was twelve or thirteen when she had her first picture taken. Grandfather took her to C. R. Savage in Salt Lake. Grandmother scrubbed her face until Grandfather said it was red as a beet and as shiny as a brass kettle. (Incidentally, the "tragedy" of Mother's life, in her opinion, was that she had red hair and freckles and that her name was Jessie!) While in Salt Lake that time, Mother met many prominent Church and State officials.

Mother attended school in Ogden, although their father, who taught them rhythm, singing, the scriptures, and other subjects also taught the children at home. Every Sunday afternoon they memorized a passage from the Bible. At one time Mother memorized the

whole "Sermon on the Mount" to "get ahead" of her sister Kate, who had memorized a longer passage the week before.

At fourteen years of age, Mother attended the Ogden Seminary under Prof. L. F. Moench and assisted with the teaching to pay for her tuition. Adult education was started in Ogden at this time, and Mother taught the women and girls who were deficient in English. She also won the prize for penmanship in the E. J. Heinz School.

Professor Moench also taught a class in elocution and it was there that Mother discovered her great talent. She came to be known, and was in great demand for her readings in both Ogden and Salt Lake. She possessed the ability to forget herself completely and to project herself into the part she portrayed. Her first great recitation was "The Soldier's Reprieve." At the conclusion of the rendition she was astonished suddenly to find herself in the center of the stage with tears streaming down her face.

She was the first in Utah to recite "Curfew Shall Not Ring Tonight." On one occasion when she was going to recite that piece in Salt Lake Theater, Grandmother, who was a gifted designer, had made a beautiful and very becoming green silk dress for Mother, but Mother thought "Bessie" should be dressed in white. Mother was so very small, dainty, and thin, while her girlfriend was tall and stout, but her girlfriend had a white dress. So Mother persuaded the friend to change dresses with her secretly. Imagine Grandmother's chagrin when Mother walked on to the stage in the long, sloppy, ill-fitting white dress! But Mother was in her glory, and consequently. "Curfew Shall Not Ring Tonight" was given as it never had been given before!

In those days no lady was supposed to walk unescorted on to stage. On one special occasion Mother was invited to recite in the Salt Lake Theater and was very flattered when President John Taylor requested the pleasure of escorting her to the platform.

Another interesting event that occurred when Mother was twenty was that Professor Hamil, a very noted elocution teacher from the East, offered to take her with his wife, Edna Dwyer, and daughter to New York for two years to give her lessons. She



was to help him for the first year and to keep all she made the second year. But she hated to leave her people and Church and refused the offer.

Mother's dramatic ability stood her in good stead with all her activities. After she moved to Salt Lake she became President of the old 15th Ward Primary and she and her sister Alice trained twenty children ranging in age from three to fifteen for the play, "School," which was presented with great success throughout the wards of the city. In fact, it was used to raise money to establish the first free kindergarten, as well as for missionary and Sunday School benefits.

While the family lived in Ogden, Mother taught school. Her first school was at Riverdale. (Later she taught in other Ogden schools). She was sixteen years old, while her pupils were from five to sixty years old. The two previous men teachers had been run out of that school by the big boys, but Mother was so young and small that she aroused their chivalry, and instead of opposing her, they helped her. Mother's being forewarned averted several practical jokes. She always had a very strong aversion to mice. One of the boys found out about her fear and when a little girl was absent, that boy brought a parcel and said it was a present from the absent girl. Mother thanked him and told him to take his seat. He said, "Aren't you going to open it?" She answered, "After awhile." When school was started, she raised the lid of her desk and with that protection she opened just one end of the package. Several little dark feet were kicking. She wrapped it up, again quickly and called the boy to her. "On second thought," she said, "I don't think it wise to accept gifts from the pupils. Will you give this back to Mary and thank her for me?" He took the parcel and put it in his packet, but sat very uncomfortably all morning. It contained four mice.

Mother went home to Ogden for weekends and Grandmother would come for her with the buggy. One time they had just passed a wagon in the center of the bridge over the Ogden River when the bridge separated, leaving one carriage on each side of it! Mother walked the ties six times while they were rebuilding the bridge.

At the age of fourteen, Mother had a very severe fall and she suffered from the effects of it throughout her life. On her nineteenth birthday the family moved to Salt Lake City, her father having been called to edit the Deseret News, and Mother was very sick at the time. While recovering from that illness, she was called back to Ogden to help establish the first grade school of Utah. On her return to Salt Lake she taught in the old 14th Ward. In that school she taught many men and women who later became prominent in the community. In later years she frequently met former pupils who expressed gratitude for her teachings. She was a natural born teacher. President Angus M. Cannon once remarked that he would send his children to her no matter where she taught. Her next school was in Mill Creek and then she was asked to Logan to take charge of a private school in the home of Moses Thatcher. However, her health was so poor she resigned after that school.

Mother's sister Lucille was born on Grandfather and Grandmother's 25th wedding anniversary. It was also Eliza R. Snow's birthday. As soon as Grandmother was able to come down stairs, Sister Snow, Sister Helen Mar Whitney, and Sister Zina Young came to the house to celebrate this event. Grandma Whitney, as she was affectionately called, sang for them in the sweetest tones and language. Afterwards, Sister Young interpreted it explaining that it was the pure Adamic Language.

Then Sister Snow touched each one on the shoulder and gave them a blessing in tongues and Aunt Zina interpreted it. She told Grandfather that he would go to the ends of the earth to preach the Gospel and would hold positions in the Church he had never dreamed of.

On December 16, 1883, Mother married William Richard Jones, born June 15, 1857, son of William Roberts and Sarah Ann Wright Jones. They had become engaged one day while enjoying one of Mother's favorite forms of recreations - horseback riding. President Joseph F. Smith married them in the old Endowment House, just before the Logan Temple was finished. Mother had her endowments August 31, 1874, when she was only sixteen years old. After Father and Mother were married, they made their home

in the old 15th Ward. Seven children were born to them: Jessie Lucetta, William Richard, Sarah Vida, Charles Penrose, Ernest Stratford, and Gladys Lucille. Later they were blessed with 21 grandchildren and many great grandchildren.

Soon after her second child, William Richard, was born, Mother had the feeling that she would not raise that baby. The thought "nine months" kept going through her mind. "If only he were past nine months!" she kept thinking. Then one day Grandpa Jones was playing with the baby and he said. "Oh, I wish you were nine months old." When the baby was about eight months old, Dr. Romania B. Pratt gave a "boiled dinner" for Sister Eliza R. Snow, who had been very sick. Emmeline B. Wells, Zina D. Young, Lucy Bigelow Young, Mother, Grandmother, and others were guests. Mother took her baby. After dinner the baby slid from Mothers lap and crawled over to Sister Snow and pulled her skirt. Aunt Em said, "Go away baby. Aunt Eliza is sick." Mother picked the baby up but in a few minutes he was back again. Aunt Lucy B. said, "I believe that baby wants a blessing." Mother picked the baby up again, but later he crawled over to Sister Snow a third time. Sister Young said, "That baby surely wants a blessing," and Sister Snow said, "He shall have it." She picked the baby up, but instead of giving him a blessing for health, she dedicated him to the Lord. Immediately Aunt Lucy B. put her hands on Mother's head and gave her a most wonderful blessing. She promised her strength to withstand the trial she would be called upon to bear. She also said Mother's voice would be heard for good by thousands of people. At that time Mother was so timid and backward she thought that prophecy could never be fulfilled, but it was. The baby died ten days before he was nine months old.

The fourth child, Charles Penrose, died at exactly the same age - nine months all but ten days. Mother was very sick at the time so the funeral was held at home. R. K. Thomas, father of our former Utah Senator Elbert D. Thomas, was preaching the funeral sermon. Mother went into a kind of trance. She was given her choice between life and death. She saw her little girls sitting in little red chairs on each side of the room (in reality her daughter Vida was sick in bed). On the other side of the room, behind a

chiffon curtain, were the two boys. She wanted to go to the boys, for she was so tired. But she thought, "The boys are all right, but the girls need me." She chose to live. A few minutes later she opened her eyes and found that Grandfather Penrose was administering to her. He promised that she would get better and would have two more boys to replace the ones she had lost. He also told her that this age was a critical time in the lives of her boys and that when that time came again, they would hold a prayer circle for the baby.

When her fifth child, Shirley Penrose, was nine months all but ten days old, he was very sick. Mother was distracted. At noon Grandfather Penrose came in. He said, "I just stopped to tell you I haven't forgotten the day, I am on my way now to a prayer circle on the baby's behalf. I placed his name in the Temple this morning." Shirley Penrose recovered and lived a full life and so did his younger brother, Ernest Stratford, the other boy Mother was promised.

In spring of 1914, Mother, accompanied by her youngest daughter, Gladys, visited Washington D. C. While there, she did a great deal of research work in the Genealogical libraries in Washington, New York, and Philadelphia. (Mother was the Genealogist for the Penrose family organization for quite a while). Her Daughter, Sarah Vida, and her husband, Charles Ray Bradford, were living in Washington D. C. at that time and Vida had just had her third child, a girl, Lucile.

In February 1927, Vida died, leaving an eleven-month-old baby and six other children. This was such a shock to Mother that it was over a year before she could regain her health.

Mother was always deeply devoted to her church and people. Prayerful and spiritual minded, she ever sought Divine guidance in matters of importance and was a life long source of comfort and inspiration, especially to her family and friends. There was never a time in all her life in sickness or health when she failed us. Our troubles and times without number she lifted the load of sorrow or distress from our shoulders with her wise and sympathetic love and counsel.

She was an outstanding figure in her church and held many positions of prominence and importance. In the old 15th Ward she taught Sunday School and was president of the Primary. While in that position she broke her ankle and for nine months she performed her duties on crutches. She was on the Stake Primary Board under Camilla Maeser Cobb, the first schoolteacher in Utah. In the 24th Ward, Mother was president of the Primary, Secretary of the Relief Society and senior class leader-in the Y. L. M. I. A. She was a member of John A. Widtsoe's Genealogical Society of Utah. In 1915 she was a delegate to represent that society at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco. In the Salt Lake Stake Relief Society she was a member of the Board, then second counselor, and for seven years first counselor. After moving to Granite Stake she became Theology class leader on the Stake Relief Society Board and served on the Board for thirteen years until 1934. She was also a member of the Daughters of the Pioneers of Salt Lake and a charter member of Richards Camp. She knew personally every President of the Church except the prophet Joseph and every General Relief Society President except Emma Smith.

Although Mother held many high positions in the Church, the one that she always wanted was denied her, that of a visiting teacher. In spite of never having held that office officially, she never missed an opportunity to visit the sick and lonely. Many people bless her for her little acts of kindness. Being sick so much herself gave her compassion for the ills of others. She delivered many a little delicacy to sick neighbors. On one of those missions of mercy she fell and sprained her foot badly, but she didn't spill a drop of soup and was able, with much pain, to deliver safely. Even her poor health never affected her strong will and determination to do her part in life.

In the latter part of her life, Mother had a great many shocks. Although she was never very strong physically, her wonderful will and power helped her to endure them. On May 18, 1941, her son Ernest died suddenly with a heart attack. Five months later, October 23, 1941, our dear father passed away as a result of a stroke. He lived three

weeks after he was first stricken and regained much of his usual strength, but five days before the last, he took a sudden turn for the worse and never spoke again.

After Father's death, Mother made her home with her daughter Gladys. Mother loved to visit and take trips. Gladys devoted a great deal of time to driving Mother around, enabling her to visit many places she had always wanted to see. She spent several days at the Hot Pots, went to Park City and to Bingham Canyon. Although she made her home with Gladys, she visited with her other children a few weeks at a time as she felt like it.

When Mother left her home to live with Gladys, her granddaughter Lucile Bradford and her husband, Clane Bates Hale, bought a house and moved in with their two children. But the bishop of Richards Ward promised her that she could leave her recommend there. However, when bishopric was appointed, they were unaware of the arrangement and transferred Mother's recommend. Imagine Mother's shock when the 21st Ward Relief Society called on her to welcome her into the ward. It broke her heart to think that Richards Ward didn't want her any more, and she never got over it.

On March 20, 1942, during the war, word was received that her grandson, Ernest Arthur Jones was missing in action. He was never heard of again and the worry and anxiety were very great for her.

March 3, 1944, was the date of the accident that ultimately led to Mother's death. She fell while getting into bed and broke her right arm at the elbow. The doctor set it without anesthetic, fearing her heart could not stand it. The arm would not stay in place. Since the hospital was crowded, she stayed at home but was taken from there three times by ambulance for X-rays and resetting of the bones. At last, after a bone specialist had been called in, the setting held. A room at the hospital became available and she stayed there with constant and special care for a week. In three weeks the cast was taken off. Everyone said she would never use her arm again, but during her first meal after the cast was removed, she simply took the spoon in her right hand and fed herself as if nothing had happened!

Although her arm healed miraculously, the shock was too much for her and she never fully recovered. On June 8, 1944, after being in a coma for four weeks, she died very peacefully. Her funeral was held in the 21st Ward Chapel and she was buried in the City Cemetery. She left three children, 20 grandchildren, 20 great-grandchildren, five sisters, two brothers, and a host of friends who mourned her passing.

Hundreds honor and bless the name of Jessie Penrose Jones for her good advice and loving friendships. She typified the true pioneer woman. Inured to hardship, undaunted by adversity, her eyes ever turned to the inspiration of the stars, unknown to despair, turning sorrow into joy and doubt to faith, moving ever onward, leaving in her path peace, love and happiness, truly may it be said of her, "Well done, good and faithful servant."