

A Sketch of the Life of Jane Haynes

On the first day of January, 1815, in the town on Brichalanton(?), Wor., England, was born a little girl who was named Jane Haynes. While she was yet a child her mother died, and her father left her in the care of her grandmother. She knew absolutely nothing of the love and care of her parents, only remembering that her mother's name was Mary. She was reared in poverty, having no education but learned early to work and care for herself.

At the age of 21 in 1836 she was married to William James, a son of Lee James. They resided in Pinvin, Wor., England, from which place they immigrated to America. They lived on a rented farm, as their fathers had done before them. But the husband's health began to fail until he was almost an invalid. At this time, the mother, with the older girls, was compelled to help support the family. The mother was an excellent needle woman and was an expert at making kid gloves. Apart from her duties of wife and mother, she made these kid gloves, selling them in the town at the end of each week, receiving in pay the articles needed for the family.

It was under these conditions that the Mormon elders visited this good family. Having always been a member of the Church of England, and a faithful, prayerful woman, her heart and soul were alive to the truth when it was presented to her. Faith, repentance and baptism, the apostasy and the final Restoration of the Gospel, were as food to her hungry soul, and she with her husband was baptized into the Church in 1854. Their home was at once made the gathering place of the saints. Until they left for the valley of the mountains, it was an open home for the elders.

On the third of May 1856 this happy couple, with the eight children whom God had blessed them with, started on the journey to join the saints in Zion. Leaving England in a sailing vessel called "The Thornton", along with seven hundred passengers, it took six weeks and two days for the trip was long and tiresome. The first great trial came when their little baby named Jane was taken sick and died, having to be laid to rest in a watery grave. Only her great faith and love kept the hearts of this brave little woman from breaking. Her implicit trust in the Heavenly Father was her guide and stay.

Landing in New York they traveled by train to Camp Iowa. The company was forced to spend three weeks in Iowa for the handcarts to be gotten in readiness for their trip across the weary plains. It was so arranged that they had carts for the baggage and provisions and for the aged and the very young to ride. But all who were able were to walk. They started in good spirits on the 15th of July, 1856. The first part of the journey was filled with pleasant memories, but the cold weather soon came on, for early in September the frosts of winter began and their trials and sorrows increased.

The Indians were a great danger to these pioneers, driving away the cattle that was allotted to their company. Thus they had no meat for food. At times the buffalo would stampede, and all would be in danger of their lives. The provisions were getting very scarce. For many days each person was only allowed a half teacup of flour a day. The poorly-made handcarts were nearly worn out with the terrible roads, and gave much trouble. The storm increased, and their progress was necessarily slow. Many were sick and many died from exposure to the ice and snow. This happened daily. Brother James was surely feeling the effects of the hardships and the little mother had to have hearts and faith for all. Early in the month of October a storm more severe than any other came upon them, and the strength of the poor man was almost gone. The girls with the lightest cart, went on with the company while the father, mother, and eldest son, Ruben, aged 14, were coming behind. It was snowing and blowing — the father's strength

gave out — he tried to continue on but could not. He said to the mother, “You go to the children, we will get in if we can.” She went on, found the girls and the little ones by the side of a creek waiting for her. She waded through the creek and back again to see that it was safe, then helped them across. Their dresses, now wet, froze about their body, and what shoes they had, froze on their feet. However, they reached camp in safety and sent help back for the father and brother. And what of them — the son helped his father over a creek and then lay him down on the snowy bed to rest. He then spent the time between trying to keep his father alive and keeping the hungry wolves from devouring them both. At last help came, but all too late, for the father. He was taken to camp frozen to death and the poor boy unconscious. They worked with the boy, and he recovered and was permitted to come on with his mother.

Now you see this family — the mother only 41 years old; the seven children starved and freezing; the father taken from them; and you can see what wonderful faith and confidence she did manifest at this time. Her physical and mental endurance were as a miracle and an open testimony of the blessings and comfort that can come from our Father in Heaven. They witnessed the burial of their husband and father, with fourteen others, the next day in a shallow grave on a trackless plain. Only God can tell how their hearts were torn and how they could endure. Two days later help came to the company from Salt Lake City, and the journey was continued. It was a terrible march and was ended on the 9th of November 1856, when they arrived in Salt Lake City. Thus ended one of the most memorable journeys recorded in history for trials and hardships, faith and endurance unequalled by any other.

The saints were very kind to them on their arrival, doing all they could for their comfort. But in a short time Sister James moved with her family to Springville. Here she found places for the older children to work and in her very independent way got a small place for herself and the younger children to live in until spring. After about a year she moved back to Salt Lake and lived there for four years. During this time she was married to Mr. Maud. Her troubles were not yet over, for her husband soon left the church and went off leaving her to care for a child who was yet unborn. This child was a boy named William Maud. When he was two months old, the mother, with the younger children moved to Provo where she resided the remainder of her life. She left two of the girls in Salt Lake City where they were working in good homes. As the boys grew older, they were able to help her and she soon got a comfortable little home.

During her entire life, filled for the most part with sorrow, she never murmured against her Maker, was always full of charity, and ready to serve wherever she could. Sister James was not a public woman but was a faithful, good Latter-day Saint. She was a Relief Society worker, being a block teacher for many years, ever ready to do any task in a willing, cheerful way. She was one of the sturdy oaks of Utah, one of the builders of the state. Her death came on the 14th day of August, 1911, at the advanced age of 96 years.