

Biography of Jane E. Manning James written from her own verbal statement and by her request. She also wishes it read at her funeral by E.J.D. Roundy

Written in the year 1893

When a child only six years old I left my home and went to live with a family of white people their names were Mr, and Mrs, Joseph Fitch, they were aged people and quite wealthy, I was raised by their daughter, when about fourteen years old I joined the Presbyterian Church. Yet I did not feel satisfied it seemed to me there was something more that I was looking for.

I had belonged to the Church about eighteen months when an Elder of the church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was travelling through our country preached there, The pastor of the Presbyterian Church forbid me going to hear them as he had heard I had expressed a desire to hear them, but nevertheless I went on a Sunday and was fully convinced that it was the true Gospel he presented and I must embrace it

The following Sunday I was baptized and confirmed a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. About three weeks after while kneeling at prayer the Gift of Tongues came upon me, and frightened the whole family who were in the next room. One year after I was baptized I started for Nauvoo With my Mother Eliza Manning my brothers Isaac, Lewis and Peter my Sisters Sarah Stebbings, and Angeline Manning. My brother in Law Anthony Stebbings, Lucinda Manning a sisterinlaw and myself (fall of 1840)

We started from Wilton Conn, and travelled by Canal to Buffalo N.Y. We were to go to Columbus Ohio before our fares were to be



collected, but they insisted on having the money at Buffalo and would not take us farther. So we left the boat, and started on foot to travel a distance of over eight hundred miles.

We walked until our shoes were worn out, and our feet became sore and cracked open and bled until you could see the whole print of our feet with blood on the ground.

We stopped and united in prayer to the Lord, We asked God the Eternal Father to heal our feet and our prayers were answered and our feet were healed forthwith. When we arrived at Peoria Illinois the authorities threatened to put us in jail to get our free papers We didnt know at first what he meant for we had never been slaves, but he concluded to let us go, so we travelled on until we came to a river and as there was no bridge we walked right into the stream, when we got to the middle the water was up to our necks but we got safely across, and then it became so dark we could hardly see our hands before us, but we could see a light in the distance, so we went toward it and found it was an old Log Cabin here we spent the night; next day we walked for a considerable distance and staid that night in a forest, out in the open air. The frost fell on us so heavy that it was like light fall of snow. We rose early and started on our way walking through that frost with our bare feet, until the sun rose and melted it away. But we went on our way rejoicing singing hymns and thanking God for his infinite goodness and mercy to us, in blessing us as he had, protecting us from all harm, answering our prayers and healing our feet. In course of time we arrived at La harpe Ill, about thirty miles from Nauvoo



At La harpe we came to a place where there was a very sick child, We administered to it, and the child was healed I found after the elders had before this given it up as they did not think it could live.

We have now arrived to our destined haven of rest, the beautiful Nauvoo! here we went through all kinds of hardship, trial, and rebuff, but we at last got to brother Orson Spencer's he directed us to the Prophet Joseph Smith's Mansion, when we found it, Sister Emma was standing in the door, and she kindly said come in, come in!

Brother Joseph said to some White Sisters that was present, Sisters I want you to occupy this room this evening with some brothers and sisters that have just arrived, Brother Joseph placed the chairs around the room then he went and brought Sister Emma and Dr Bernhisel and introduced them to us, brother Joseph took a chair and sat down by me and said, You have been the head of this little band havent you? I answered Yes Sir! he then said God bless you! Now I would like you to relate your experience in your travels, I related to them all that I have above stated, and a great deal more minutely, as many incidents has passed from my memory since then. Brother Joseph slapped Dr Bernhisel on the knee and said, What do you think of that Dr, isnt that faith, the Dr said, Well I rather think it is, if it had have been me I fear I should have backed out and returned to my home! he then said God bless you, you are among friends, now and you will be protected. They sat and talked to us a while, gave us words of encouragement and good counsel. We all stayed there one week, by that time all but myself had secured



homes, Brother Joseph came in every morning to say good morning and ask how we were. During our trip I had lost all my clothes, they were all gone, My trunks were sent by Canal to the care of Charles Wesley Wandel, one large trunk full of clothes of all descriptions mostly new. On the morning that my folks all left to go to work, I look at myself, clothed in the only two pieces I possessed, I sat down and wept, Brother Joseph came into the room as usual and said good morning, why not crying, Yes sir the folks have all gone and gat themselves homes, and I have gat none. He said yes you have, you have a home right here if you want it, you musn't cry, we dry up all tears here. I said I have lost my trunk and all my clothes, he asked how I had lost them? I told them I put them in care of Charles Wesley Wandle and paid him for them and he has lost them. Brother Joseph said dont cry you shall have your trunk and clothes again.

Brother Joseph went out and brought Sister Emma in and said Sister Emma here is a girl that says she has no home, havent you a home for her? Why yes if she wants one, he said she does and then he left us, Sister Emma said what can you do? I said I can Wash, Iron, Cook, and do housework! Well she said when you are rested you may do the washing, if you would just as soon do that. I said I am not tired, Well, she said you may commence your work in the morning. The next morning she brought the clothes down in the basement to wash Among the clothes I found brother Josephs Robes. I looked at them and wondered, I had never seen any before, and I pondered over them and thought about them so earnestly that the spirit made manifest to me that they pertained to the new name that





is given the saints that the world knows not off. I didnt know when I washed them or when I put them out to dry.

Brother Josephs four wives Emily Partridge Eliza Partridge, Maria and Sarah Lawrence and myself, were sitting discussing Mormonism and Sarah said what would you think if a man had more wives than one? I said that is all right! Maria said well we are all four of Brother Josephs wives! I jumped up and clapped my hands and said that's good, Sarah said she is all right, just listen she believes it all now.

I had to pass through Mother Smiths room to get to mine, she would often stop me and talk to me, she told me all Brother Josephs troubles, and what he had suffered in publishing the Book of Mormon. One morning I met Brother Joseph coming out of his Mothers room he said good morning and shook hands with me. I went in to his Mothers room she said good morning bring me that bundle from my bureau and sit down here I did as she told me, she placed the bundle in my hands and said, handle this and then put in the top drawer of my bureau and lock it up, after I had done it she said sit down. Do you remember that I told you about the Urim and Thumim when I told you about the book of Mormon? I answered Yes Mam, She then told me I had just handled it, You are not permitted to see it, but you have been permitted to handle it. You will live long after I am dead and gone And you can tell the Latter-day Saints, that you was permitted handle the Urim and Thumim.

Sister Emma asked me one day if I would like to be adopted to them as their child? I did not answer her, she said I will wait a while and let you consider it; she waited two weeks before she



asked me again, when she did I told her No Mam! because I did not understand or know what it meant, they were always good and kind to me but I did not know my own mind I did not comprehend.

Soon after they broke up the Mansion and I went to my Mother, there was not much work because of the persecutions, and I saw Brother Joseph and asked him if I should go to Burlington and take my Sister Angeline with me? He said yes go and be good girls, and remember your profession of faith in the Everlasting Gospel, and the Lord will bless you. We went and stayed three weeks then returned to Nauvoo. During this time Joseph and Hyrum were killed.

I shall never forget that time of agony and sorrow, I went to live in the family of Brother Brigham Young, I stayed there until he was ready to emigrate to this valley. While I was at Bro, Brigham's I married Isaac James, When Bro, Brigham left Nauvoo I went to live at Bro, Calhoons, In the spring of 1846 I left Nauvoo to come to this great and glorious Valley. We travelled as far as winter quarters there we stayed until spring, At Keg Creek my son Silas was born. In the spring of 1847 we started again on our way to this valley We arrived here on the 22nd of September 1847 without any serious mishaps, the Lord's blessing was with us and protected us all the way, the only thing that did occur worth relating was when our cattle stampeded, some of them we never did find. May 1848 my daughter Mary Ann was born, all of my children but two were born here in this valley, their names are Silas, Silvester Mary Ann, Miriam, Ellen Madora, Jessie, Jerry, Boln, Isaac, Vilate, all of them are with their heavenly father except two Sylvester and Ellen Madora, My children were all raised to men and women and all had families



except two. My husband Isaac James worked for Brother Brigham, and we got along splendid accumulating Horses, cows, oxen, sheep, and chickens in abundance. I spun all the cloth for my family clothing for a year or two, and we were in a prosperous condition, until the grasshoppers and crickets came along carrying destruction wherever they went, laying our crops to the ground, stripping the trees of all thier leaves and fruit, bringing poverty and desolation throughout this beautiful valley. It was not then as it is now, there were no trains running bringing fruits and vegetables from California or any other place. All our importing and exporting was done by the slow process of ox teams.

Oh how I suffered of cold and hunger and the keenest of all was to hear my little ones crying for bread, and I had none to give them; but in all the Lord was with us and gave us grace and faith to stand it all. I have seen Bro, Brigham, Bro's Taylor, Woodruff and Snow, Rule this great work and pass on to their reward, and now Brother Joseph F, Smith I hope the Lord will spare him if tis his holy will for many many years, to guide the Gospel ship to a harbor of safety, and I know they will if the people will only listen and obey the teachings of these good great and holy men. I have lived right here in Salt Lake City for fiftytwo years, and I have had the privilege of going into the Temple and being baptized for some of my dead

I am over eighty years old (Her brother Isaac said she was born in 1813) and I am nearly blind which is a great trial to me, it is the greatest trial I have ever been called upon to bear, but I hope my eysight will be spared to me poor as it is, that I may be able to go to meeting, and to the temple and to do more work for my dead



I am a widow, my husband Isaac James died in November 1891. I have seen my husband and all of my children but two, laid away in the silent tomb, But the Lord protects me and takes good care of me, in my helpless condition, And I want to say right here, that my faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ as taught by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, is as strong today, nay, it is if possible stronger than it was the day I was first baptized I pay my tithes and offerings, keep the word of wisdom, I go to bed early and rise early, I try in my feeble way to set a good example to all; I have had eighteen grand children eight of them are living also seven great grand children I live in my little home with my brother Isaac who is good to me we are the last two of my mother's family. I want him to stay there after me

This is just a concise but true sketch of my life and experience

Yours in truth

Jane Elizabeth James

Jane Elizabeth James called on me to write this. It was her own statement and she declared it was true. The only error, or you may call it evasion, was her reticence pertaining to one of her children. She stated in her brothers presence that all but two were born in the valley, one Silas was born on their way to the valley, but the other was born before she was baptized or soon after.

Patriarch John Smith read or heard her history read, he said that when she came to Nauvoo she had a boy five or six years old at any rate he said that he was a good chunk of a boy, and told me to find out about it; I could not get anything out of Jane but her brother Isaac came to my house one day and he said that the boy was Sylvester, that he was born in Conn, at her mothers, that he was the child of a white man a preacher, but he could not tell if he was the child of the Presbyterian or a Methodist preacher, that Jane was nearly eighteen or quite that old when the child was born, and her mother kept the child and Jane went back to the Fitch family, and





then she heard the Gospel and was baptized, and soon after she got her mother and the whole family to be baptized. Isaac said in a year or two after they all started for Nauvoo as Jane has stated in her sketch

Elizabeth J.D. Roundy

