

LIFE STORY OF WILLIAM GILBERT JACKSON

It is with a bit of reluctance that I will try to write a biography of my life. Mine has been such a different one than anyone else. I think at times if I stop and let myself think over it, I would say that it has been a happy life in a way, not too many regrets. I hope that the mistakes I have made will only help my childrens' path to be easier. After considering the purpose of it, I will try in a humble way to glance over a very small part, maybe some of the high lights.

I was born March 8, 1904, at Manassa, Colorado. I know that I had the very best parents anyone ever could expect to have. Father was the hard-working type. He had gone through many hardships in his life in order to get what he finally had. He was older than Mother by ten years, but she always seemed so mature for her years. At her death it was said " ... she lived so many years in one ...". My recollections of her are always the sweetest, endowed with kindness and emotion for each child she bore. The religious side was one I remember most; she entered it into everyday life. Each night when putting me to bed, she told Bible stories. They came back to me in the mission field. I cannot say enough of my parents in words, the appreciation to my Heavenly Father for having been reared by them is my thankfulness. I was sent to Sunday School every Sunday or taken by my sister Elvera. My mother took me to Relief Society. I liked work day the best because we got to eat ice cream and cake. Mother would dress me up in my knee britches with a nice little bow tie. My hair would be messed up by the time we got there so she would smooth my hair down. I was always tried to be kept clean.

I was five years old when my Father was called on a mission to England. It left Mother and four of us kids at home. We lived in a four roomed house, where the white brick is now. Mother was proud of Dad and was sure she could get along while he was gone. Dad was in partners with his brothers: Lafe, Sam, and his father. This made it better for everyone concerned. Mother was so independent and, of course, everyone tried to get along as cheaply as possible. Every time one of the family went on a mission, they bought another piece of land. I can remember how each year their ranches grew. I guess that is probably why I love the sheep and farming.

When I was seven years old I went with Dad to the sheep camp for a month. I learned many things while I went on that trip, and it has helped me to prepare for the things that have come up later. For many years I went over the trail. After that I always wanted to be around the sheep -- in the Spring lambing, shearing, and going on the trail.

I had many experiences, a few scary and some wonderful ones. Here is one I will always remember: We had taken the sheep down in the big meadows that year; snow was deep and hard in the canyons. We went over the top of it down through Willow Canyon, then followed the creek down until we came to where Gibbs and South Fork comes together. The sheep wouldn't cross the creek because the water was too high. We decided to make a bridge. We worked and worked until we had a bridge fixed for them to cross. After we had been there a few days, Heber Rogers and I went fishing. There were some falls about 30 feet high. I went above them and Heber went below. I walked out on a rock not noticing where I went. I remember my feet going up and turning over in the air on my stomach. My pole went down over the falls and I grabbed a very small groove in the rock (I could just barely tell it was there). I held my boots up out of the water and was very careful not to move. I could see Heber down below but could not make him hear. The water was so swift and made so much noise. But when my pole finally drifted by, Heber saw it and looked up. He came up and pulled me out. We both were so frightened we quit fishing and went to camp. I will always feel that it was for a purpose I was saved. Something I had to do in the future.

I was called to go to England on a mission in October, 1923. I had gone through the San Luis Academy and I still didn't feel too secure. Many things went through my mind. I was over at San Acacio herding sheep when my Dad came in the truck with Lawrence Mortensen to tell me and to take me home to get ready. I was not very well acquainted with the Gospel and it took me a good while before I was able to preach it very well. But I had enough faith that it was true and with the Spirit to guide me I was able to see its strength and learned to give it to my fellow men. Before long I was able to see many faith-promoting instances.

I labored in Hull, England, for eighteen months and then was transferred to Edenburg, Scotland, where I stayed six months. Then to Glasgow where I finished my mission. We had many good experiences there -- holding cottage meetings and street meetings. The Scotch were very good people. They wanted us to give our views and then ask questions -- which we did. It was a wonderful mission; I learned many good things and saw many bad ones. I went over the Continent for two weeks before getting my release and saw some of the old battlefields of World War I. What man can do when going against God's ways and plans. I reached Antwerp, Belgium, on December 21st. and was broke so we found the Canadian Steamship Lines. We told them we were booked from Liverpool on January 2. So they gave us tickets to Liverpool for which we were grateful. We went to Hull, England, for Christmas and spent it with Sister Wharom and Todds. We went to Grimbsey and visited Sister Thrope, then left on the morning of January 3. Elder Simmons and I. We were exposed to smallpox and really thought we had it because I was so sick for the first two or three days. I didn't care what happened to us. It was only sea sickness, which was lucky for us. We landed in St. Johns, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia. It was awful cold there. I went to Salt Lake City with Elder Simmons. I went through the Temple and because I was feeling rather blue and depressed went to the Patriarch for a special blessing. The spirit of my missionary labor had fulfilled its purpose. It seems that the adversary tries harder than at any other time to dishearten the elders. The special blessing was a great comfort to me and has been down through the years.

I decided to go to school when I returned home. Dad tried to discourage it but I couldn't find any girls around home I thought very much of. All the girls my age were married and had families. So I went to BYU the second quarter. I really enjoyed it. There were lots of girls there, however, and we had a good time (ha). But Dad insisted I return home in March so I did and helped lamb the sheep. I loved the sheep and wanted to work with them -- but something was lacking -- I guess it was a wife. My Mom advised me to wait a while so I went back to school in the fall. I stayed two quarters and then came back in March again. I hadn't had time to really get acquainted with any one girl. When I came home Louvina had been in Alamosa nursing and had gotten acquainted with Agnes Shawcroft, one of J. W.'s daughters, who had been studying nursing. She brought her down and Mother thought she was the one, so sweet and such a kind disposition, so I made a date with her in April. I went with her a couple of times and knew she was the one for me. She went back to Denver and I lambed sheep. It seems as far as I can remember now, that she couldn't wait any longer, so along the last of May we were married -- in a hurry. Uncle David Shawcroft was Bishop of Richfield so we were married on May 31, 1928; we then went to the Temple in Salt Lake City in a hurry and I think I've hurried ever since.

Our married life was about as rugged as anyone's, I guess, we were awful poor. The depression came on soon and we really had a hard time. Gene came, he was sure a sweet little fellow. He was born in March, 1929, and the twins were born in December, 1930. They were a big surprise. Ray was first, then Jay. We had quite a time with Ray, he was so weak. But Mama seemed to know what to do and pulled him through. We are really proud of them; they have really grown to be men.

Agnes worked hard raising the children -- the twins were not far behind Gene and then she had all the hired men to cook for and she did it with such a little bit to do it with. When I look back I can't see how she did it. We always had two to seventeen men

to cook for.

On November 29, 1935, little Gene passed away suddenly. It was quite a shock and I know it was harder on Agnes than me. In 1937 I was called to fill a short-term mission in the Central States. I was surely glad to go. I felt I had work to do. I went to Independence, Missouri, from there I was sent to Little Rock, Arkansas. I had a good Mission, but at the end of six months I felt like I was still not through. I wrote to the Mission President, President Woodroff, and asked if he would let me stay a little longer. He said he felt that there was more for me to accomplish. I can say it was with all my heart a very good mission. I was appointed district president and that gave me a chance the spirit had been waiting for to lead me to the place where I was to fill my mission. After a conference in El Dorado we went to Fayette which was at the extreme northwestern part of the state. We went out tracting, I took one side of the street and they the other. I had no more started to open a gate when an old lady saw me and came running over to me. She said she knew me and wondered why I had taken so long to come to her. She said she had seen me in a dream and had prayed for me to come. Her husband had told her I would come and tell her what to do. They had gathered genealogy all their married life and had thousands of names. In three months she was baptized, went to Salt Lake City to the Temple and died. I then went straight across the state to Eureka Springs and went directly to another house just on the outskirts of town. The woman came to the door and said, "Oh, come in, I know who you are, you are the one I saw in a dream. I knew that you would come and give me the right way to obtain eternal life." A lady missionary had given her a tract. Her husband had died but both of them had felt something was missing. They had gathered records also. We organized a Sunday School there, and she was baptized and came to Utah to do temple work. The Lord will lead us if we will let him. I returned home and continued working with the sheep and farming in the last of September, 1937.

On August 10, 1938, our Mary Beth was born. How happy and proud we were to get her. I guess I was a little foolish about her, at least Grandma Shawcroft thought so; but she has been such a comfort and joy to me. I always told her she helped me so much.

On January 5, 1944, our little Lloyd was born, but he just lived 12 days. It was a hard thing to lose him. It was such a hard, cold winter, and I was marooned over at Mesita for three days after he was born.

After a few years with Dad we decided it best to divide up. Alfred was called on a mission and our boys were growing up. They wanted to help me and were not too satisfied as things were. Dad thought it best, too, to divide. We had purchased the Barr Ranch from Fred Christensen (640 acres for \$20,000). A few years before I had bought 600 head of sheep from Morgans. I went to the Alamosa National Bank and borrowed the money. We paid for them in two years while I was still working with Dad on a 50-50 basis, because we were putting in half. The Barr Ranch produced lots of vegetables. We rented it to Roy Inouys for \$3250 and it was all put into the Company.

From that time we had lots of sickness. In October, 1949, I went to the Del Norte Hospital and had my gallstones removed; then I developed asthma. I did all I could for it and tried to work; but I had pneumonia six times in two years. Dr. Anderson and a lung specialist, Dr. Joyce of Denver, advised me to go to Arizona. Dr. Joyce told me he could not promise me over one or two years at the most to live. Ray and Jay did a wonderful job looking after things. The next December Ray was called to the Spanish American Mission. Jay stayed home and took care of things and did a very good job considering the experience he had. He married Evelyn Poulson, one of Frank Poulson's daughters from Sanford, August 14, 1951, and that was better for him.

We bought us a home in Mesa, Arizona, and Mama, Mamie, and I planned to live there in the winter time. I felt fine in the Valley of the Sun. It sure was different than the high altitude at home. Just seemed like I couldn't take that any more. I was always out of

breath, sick or something.

In 1954 we wondered if we should sell out and move back to Colorado. I was called on a Stake mission and had a wonderful mission. I preached to the Lamanites and was thrilled to bear my testimony to the Indian people. I knew that the Lord had been good to us in blessing us with enough means to be able to come here and enjoy better health. I knew it was through the power of the Lord that I was made well. The blessing I had been given by President Williams (who was 2nd counselor in the Maricopa Stake Presidency) was fulfilled. I really enjoyed the mission and saw many people come into the Church. Many bore good testimonies, I never heard such strong ones.

I was undecided as to what might be best from now on. Agnes was working in the 10th Ward Relief Society and enjoyed every minute of it. I had worked too hard last summer and it was the latter part of November before I got to Mesa to stay. I wanted to be with Jay lambing in March, so I went up and tried it; but it wasn't long until I came back. I got so I was so sick I couldn't stand to hold my head up. The third time I tried to stay in Colorado, I ended up in the hospital in Del Norte. It just seemed like I couldn't stand to stay in Colorado, so it looks like I will have to live in Arizona.

By William Gilbert Jackson
Fall 1954

*My father died February 16, 1955, in Mesa, Arizona, just a few short months after writing his life story. At his death people also remarked how ... "he lived so many years in one ...". His words of advice and cheerful disposition will remain in the hearts of his friends forever. His children will always cherish the example he has set before them and hope that they may continue his work. -- Mary Beth Jackson, Winter 1958