

BY JOSEPHINE JACKSON JONES

APRIL 1978

I've been reading through an old diary I kept in the early thirties today and my memory was jogged to remember the many, many problems that beset Dad at the age of 59 at the death of our Mother on August 5, 1930. Suddenly he became completely responsible for a young family of eight plus 3 married children. Lenard had died at the age of one when Dad was on his second mission to England. The responsibility must have been overwhelming. Mother had taken care of our needs and the house and garden completely because he was so busy and involved with the livestock and farming. And then suddenly to have everything placed on his shoulders, must have been horrible. We all had so many wants, and needs and aches and insecurities. Considering all, I think he managed as well as any man could have. I'm sure I have more empathy now with his heart ache, and loneliness since I'm now a parent. We children missed Mother desperately, yet Dad's grief and loneliness was even worse, I'm sure. I remember seeing him many times with his head in his hands, and hearing sad lonely sounds coming from his throat. We never bothered him then, just went quietly about our work. I remember him saying in later years that he would come home and go completely through the house calling her name and looking for her, even though he knew he wouldn't find her.

And thinking of lonely sounds reminded me of a night or two after Mother's funeral. Dad had had to leave us and spend the night at the sheep camp. We children were all gathered in the kitchen around the old wood burning stove. The water in the tea kettle began to boil gently resulting in the saddest melody. Suddenly, I felt very insecure, and really realized for the first time, that Mother wasn't coming back, and Dad was so very far away from us too. I wonder if my brothers had this same sad feeling.

Of course Mother's death was right during the horrible depression. And Dad had to manage that also. Money was very scarce, but somehow we always had something to eat--plenty meat, potatoes and milk and cream, eggs (if we cared for the chickens) butter (if we churned the cream). We never had to go hungry, we had few luxuries, much hard work, but always food on our table. Many fathers weren't able to do it during those difficult days. We were lucky to have such a father.

It always amazed me how quickly we were all forgotten by our relatives. They may have felt sorry for Dad with all his problems, but they did very little to aid him or us. The one shining light at this point was Sister Turner. Dad had converted her and her husband to the gospel on his first mission in Kansas. They ended up following him to Colorado to live. They were dear friends just two blocks away. Each week she baked bread for us, came down and helped with the mending. She helped me with the flower beds too. It was difficult to keep them as Mother had them. Sister Turner was a strict disciplinarian, but I really don't know what we would have done without her.

This period was most painful for the younger boys, I'm sure. Elvera took Sam until her death in September 1937 and Louvina took Alfred to Boston for a year and that was a great blessing. Elbert was only 8, Warren 10, and Lorraine and I were too young to have much empathy. At this time Dad was always sad and preoccupied, and yet was willing to hear our problems. I remember I was chosen Queen of the Green and Gold Ball in 1933. I didn't own a long dress and that was required. I found a dress advertised in the Sears Catalogue for \$4.00 -- a soft flowered voile. A week before the dance I got nerve enough to ask Dad for the dress. He understood, and dug deep for 4 silver dollars. I was so relieved I cried. I quickly made out the order, took it and the silver dollars down to the post office and with "crossed fingers" asked for four "green backs" in exchange for the silver, to enclose with the order.

I was lucky, they had them...And then the agony of the wait for the package. It didn't arrive until Friday, the day of the dance.

I remember, if ever we needed a pencil for school and didn't have the penny to buy one, we could usually depend on Dad. He would reach down into the pocket of his bib overalls and would come up with one most often no longer than two inches, very seldom an eraser. I can still see him figuring numbers on little slips of paper with a little stub of a pencil. It must have been difficult to make ends meet with such a large family, especially during the depression.

Both Dad and Mother were excellent managers. Both had been well trained to count their pennies. Dad had moved from Nephi, Utah when just 17. Soon after he spent a winter freighting for a Mine, and had never received his pay. The family was trying to save enough to purchase the brick house river ranch. They did succeed and became quite prosperous and formed the Jackson Investment Co., Grandfather Jackson and his three sons, Sam, Lafayette and our Father Will. They also had to support Aunt Martha, Grandfather's second wife, and her three daughters, Vida, Jessie and Fannie. They all built the nicest homes in town and had the first electricity. It was furnished by a Delco plant, lines running to all five houses, from Grandfather's lot.

A fun memory was going with Dad a few times way, way out to Meseta. Meseta was a little Mexican Village about 30 miles east of Manassa in the center of the east desert. He objected to my reading while riding along with him. He insisted I look out and up to see the desert. I felt it wasn't all that interesting and the book was. The high light of the trip was when he would stop in front of the General Mercantile, go in and come out with a small sack of lemon drops (sugar coated) and white peppermints (about the size of a nickel but thicker.) Never a variation. Then he would park in front of the land management building and go in to see about the desert land lease, and I could read. There were no people on the street to watch.

Returning home, he didn't always stay on the graveled main road. He would suddenly turn off and take a trail out across the desert. And here I first learned how to drive through gullies crisscrossing the desert. Never should they be taken head on (that would be fatal). It was necessary to approach them at a severe angle one wheel at a time. This was where I had my first driving lessons. I remember driving on the graveled road at the incredible speed of 30 miles. I was really flying low. I felt insecure and frightened and wasn't at all sure I could keep the car on the road.

Reuben and I visited Meseta several years ago and it had most dried up and blown away. The old boards covering those once exciting display windows of the General Mercantile were even in shreds and ready to fall. Seemed soon the entire town would return to dust.

I never remember Dad speaking harshly to me. But I do remember his discipline at the long kitchen table. If one of us was unruly, he would pound the table several times with his fist, then would point his forefinger at the offending child. That was enough to take the wiggles and the giggles out of any of us. He was in control, we respected him. We were graduated around the table according to our age. A long bench was along the east side. This bench was used for the small children except the very youngest. His position was in a high chair between Dad (who always occupied the South end of the table) and Mother (who always sat at the south corner place on the west side.) The second youngest child took his position on the bench next to Dad and so on down the line. One of us girls sat at the north end so we could "wait table." The oldest children, especially those visiting from college sat on Mother's left on the west side. I never remember any variation from this unquestioned seating arrangement. Dad was the patriarch.

Each fall several pigs were killed, and I remember Dad carrying out to the back yard buckets of boiling water Mother had prepared. This was used to scald the hair off the skin. The hams were cut off and covered in barrels with smoked salt, the fat was rendered for our lard (Mother made tender, delicious pie crust with this), sausage made (some fried and bottled and processed for we had no freezers.) One year I took one of the pig tails, and pinned it on the back of Dad's overalls. He went down town to get the mail and came back without discovering it. And when I could resist no longer I told him. I thought it funny, as did the other children. Dad didn't.

A trip to the Wolf Creek Pass on the Continental Divide (about 100 miles) was a yearly adventure for the small ones of the family. We took special treats to the boys herding the sheep up there. We would stay the night. Dad would put up the big tent, then cut pine boughs, stacking them high, and then Mother with our help, would cover them with a big tarp (large piece of heavy canvas) and then the sheets and home made camp quilts (made of denim pieces). What a wonderful bed. We were so warm and secure with our parents. We called it a Brigham bed. One morning we found bear tracks near our tent wall.

Dad would cook regular "sheep herder" fare for us over the little cook stove placed on one side of the tent entrance. Meat fried to a crisp, and special sheep herder bread (really biscuit dough spread out in a pan.) With molasses it was delicious. Mother added some yummy home produced items. The last trip with Mother up there was in the summer of 1930. She died August 5, 1930.

Dad remarried 10 July 1935. He married Lucille Schofield and Ellen arrived 20 Feb. 1937. By then I was away, only the younger boys were at home.

Dad was a courageous kind man. He had a firm testimony of the truthfulness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. He always honored his priesthood. He was Bishop twice and a member of the High Council and in the Stake presidency. His father was Bishop for 20 years before him. Under Dad's inspiration the Gospel was very much a part of our lives, directing and enriching our lives. He and Mother encouraged us to strive for school beyond High School. It wasn't easy. He helped all he could.

As he got older his sight and hearing weren't very sharp. He said once that if he didn't sit on the front row in church he couldn't hear or see. And if he did sit on the first row, the Bishop thought he wanted to pray so he had a problem.

With Mother's death, the heart of our home was destroyed. She was such a wonderful helpmate to Dad. Together they were complete. She was a beautiful, spiritual woman.

I remember going with her to Relief Society meetings. She would place me on a front row chair, my legs unable to touch the rag-rug carpeted floor. But I could watch her conduct the meeting.

And about every two years, she welcomed into our home a new baby. And each was loved and tenderly cared for.

She had boundless energy, and was called upon constantly to help in Church activities, and relatives...especially her sister Aunt Annie who was always ill. When Grandmother Gilbert, her mother, broke her hip in Salt Lake, it was "Mary's responsibility" to nurse her back to health after Dad went to Salt Lake to bring her home.

When Dad was in England two years on his second mission, she cared for Elvera, Louvina, and Will and had to go through the ordeal of Lenard's death without Dad. She was to ask for financial help from Grandfather Jackson while Dad was away. She asked for very little. She managed on her own some way.

She loved flowers. In our home, she had had constructed a large bay window where she raised lovely geraniums, wandering jews, begonias and coleus. And in the summer she had peonies and dahlias and many others. She managed some way to keep the lawns trimmed and irrigated.

The big bay window reminds me of Christmas, and each year that window was the one to which Santa Claus came to take our orders. How excited we were. But how sad we were that each time he would just happen to come when our Mother had gone to the neighbors. She did make our Christmas special filling our long black stockings with little surprises. A dime and an orange in the toe was always a must. That job became mine when she died.

She loved poetry and books, and read to us when time allowed. I am so grateful for her sweet spirit. She filled her 45 years to the brim, and set a high standard for us to follow.