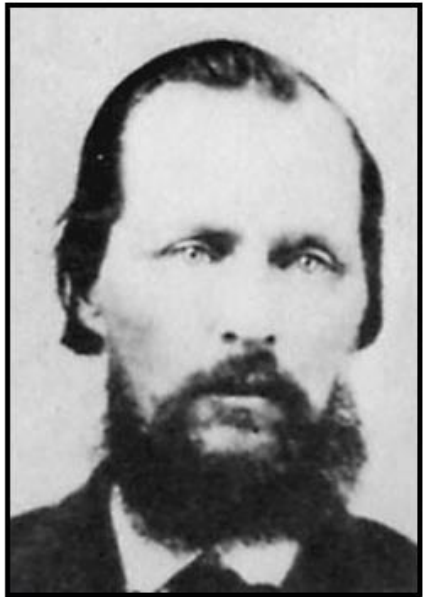


# John Rawlston Poole and Jeanette (Bleasdale) Poole



## A Family History

by Shelley Dawson Davies

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[shelleydd@verizon.net](mailto:shelleydd@verizon.net)

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## Chapter 1

# Jeanette

## A Family Divided

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*This old stone house in Wheatley is typical of farm buildings in rural Lancashire, England.*

Jeanette<sup>1</sup> was a farmer's daughter, the youngest of three girls born to William<sup>2</sup> and Margaret Bleasdale<sup>3</sup> in the rural village of Thornley, Lancashire in 1826. Not far from Thornley the factories of England's Industrial Revolution were turning the skies dark with soot, but little of that reached the fields where William labored with increasing difficulty to support his wife and daughters on a piece of rented land. Money was so hard to come by in the 1820s and the Bleasdales were forced to "put out" Jeanette on a neighboring farm to work for her keep and a few coins when she was only nine years old.<sup>4</sup>

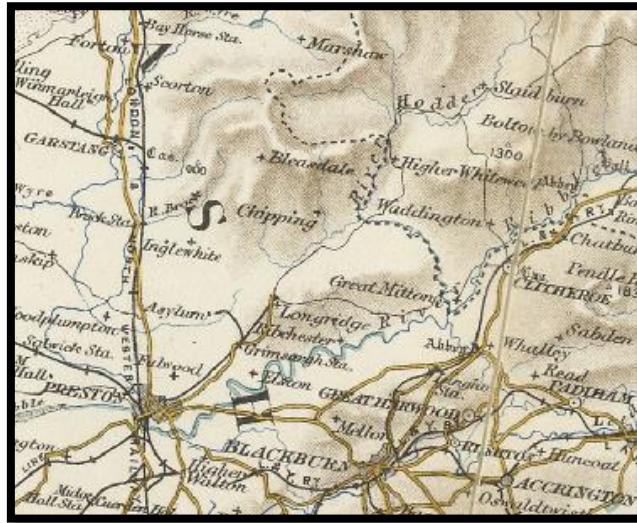
Jeanette's young life was a demanding one. She was awakened in the darkness of early morning to milk the cows and feed the pigs, watching to make sure the sow didn't crush her piglets when she lay down after eating. She tended sheep, helped "shake out" cut hay in the fields to dry after a rain storm, and scrubbed laundry by hand for lack of a washboard.<sup>5</sup> The most trying difficulty of all was not being surrounded by her own family. Even though she was allowed occasional visits with her parents, Jeanette spent most of her time

with people who thought of her as little more than a servant. She longed for family connections, questioning her mother one day why she had never even seen her Grandfather<sup>6</sup> and Grandmother Moss.<sup>7</sup> In response, Margaret dressed Jeanette in her best clothes and gave her directions to a large and beautiful home some distance away. The door was opened by the butler, who was asked what she wanted. Jeannette replied, "I want to see my grandmother." She was told to wait and soon a fine lady came to the door. "Whose little girl are you?" she asked. When Jeannette told her, her grandmother replied, "Your mother wants you. You had better run home." When Jeanette asked why she had been treated that way, she was told how her mother had fallen in love with one of the family's coachmen. Margaret's proud and wealthy mother refused to forgive her daughter for marrying a servant. Jeanette never saw her grandmother again.<sup>8</sup>

## Joining the Church

Resigned to their working class lives, the Bleasdales were nevertheless fervent in their religious beliefs and were intrigued when American missionaries from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints preached at their local parish in 1837. Elders Heber C. Kimball, Orson Hyde, Willard Richards and Joseph Fielding bore witness that God had restored the fullness of His gospel to the earth through his prophet, Joseph Smith. After being taught the first principles of the restored gospel, William and Margaret were baptized right away,<sup>9</sup> as was their oldest daughter Alice<sup>10</sup> and her husband Roger Parker,<sup>11</sup> who were living in nearby Clitheroe.<sup>12</sup> Roger's parents John and Ellen Parker were also convinced by the Elders' message, along with most of their children including Mary,<sup>13</sup> one of Jeanette's dear friends. The wave of spiritual conversion swept up Margaret's brothers David<sup>14</sup> and William Moss<sup>15</sup> as well as nephews Robert<sup>16</sup> and John,<sup>17</sup> son of Hugh Moss,<sup>18</sup> a warden<sup>19</sup> in the local parish church in Slaidburn, Newton, who remained an Anglican, despite his brothers' urging.<sup>20</sup>

The Saints, as members called themselves, met together in each other's homes for Sunday services. The Bleasdales opened their humble home in Thornley for meetings,<sup>21</sup> as did the Parkers in Chaigley,<sup>22</sup> hosting the missionaries as they travelled through the area preaching and strengthening their fellow members. There were several thousand members in the area by 1840, when church leaders announced a local printing of *The Book of Mormon* and *The Millennial Star*, a monthly publication dedicated to educating English members and encouraging their immigration to church headquarters in Nauvoo, Illinois.



***LDS missionaries preached the gospel from Preston throughout Lancashire's Ribble Valley.***

Joining with the Saints in Nauvoo not only promised spiritual support for the new converts, but hopes for a new and better life in America. Soon after accepting the gospel, the Bleasdales began making plans to immigrate, saving every penny they could toward a brighter future. John and Ellen Parker were fortunate enough to be assigned to the first emigrant ship chartered by the church in September, 1840,<sup>23</sup> but were unable to afford passage for seventeen-year old Mary. It was only natural for the Bleasdales to include Mary in their own immigration plans and Jeanette couldn't have been more excited at the prospect of travelling with her friend. Yet, even after selling their possessions, William and Margaret were not able to raise enough cash for everyone, and they reluctantly left fourteen-year old Jeanette behind with one of her uncles until she could earn her own passage.<sup>24</sup>

After the Bleasdales, accompanied by Mary, left for the port of Liverpool in December, 1840, Jeanette found employment in a cotton factory in nearby Preston, where she probably lived with her uncle William. By 1841, she not only had the funds to purchase a ticket, but so did another one of her uncles, who agreed to accompany her on the voyage. Unfortunately, he was robbed of his money on his way to the shipping office, leaving Jeanette with the unhappy choice of either leaving her relatives behind, or postponing the reunion with her parents. As young as she was, Jeanette was also so homesick for her family she decided to make the journey to America by herself.

## Leaving for Zion

Jeanette joined a group of several hundred Mormon immigrants on the good ship *Sheffield*, which sailed from Liverpool in February, 1841.<sup>25</sup> Almost as soon as she gained her sea legs after a bout of seasickness, the ship ran into a violent storm. The *Sheffield* heaved “most tremendously, rubs rolling about, pans, kettles and cans all in an uproar, women shrieking, children crying,” but the ship eventually regained its course and headed for New Orleans under a “fine wind” with “all cheery and merry.”<sup>26</sup> Jeanette was fascinated by the whale which followed the ship for some distance,<sup>27</sup> and watched in wonder as one of the mates caught a both a barracuda and a dolphin somewhere in the Caribbean,<sup>28</sup> although she became a bit less interested in peering over the railing after almost falling overboard one day as she tried to bring up a bucket of sea water. Fresh water was rationed to each passenger, but Jeanette used most of her allowance by mid-voyage, and she “nearly died for the want of water.”<sup>29</sup> Upon the ship’s arrival in New Orleans after a long fifty-one days, Jeannette was horrified to see barrels of water being thrown overboard, but she was consoled by her safe arrival in America.<sup>30</sup>



*New Orleans was the port of choice for many LDS emigrant ships in the 1840s.*



## The Rest of the Family

*Members of the Bleasdale, Moss and Parker families gradually made their way to America as opportunity afforded.*

### The Parker Siblings:

*Roger and Alice (Bleasdale) Parker immigrated to Delaware County, Pennsylvania between 1841 and 1843, where they remained until their moved to Pepin, Wisconsin fifteen years later. In their later years, the Parkers moved to Dodge, Kansas, eighty miles northwest of the Mormon Trail outfitting center of Council Bluffs. Their names are not shown on any LDS passenger list, and they may not have been associated with the church after leaving England.*

*John Parker Jr. left for Nauvoo in 1845, after his first wife's death. He remarried in Nauvoo and followed the Saints to Salt Lake City in 1852.*

*Alice (Parker) and her husband Edward Corbridge boarded a ship for New Orleans in 1846, eventually joining John Jr. and other LDS families immigrating to Utah in 1852.*

*Ellen (Parker) and William Corbridge sailed for New Orleans on a different ship than Alice and Edward in 1852, moving on to Utah the following year, in 1853.*

### The Moss Men:

*Hugh's son John Moss left England 1841. He married in Illinois and moved his family to Salt Lake City in 1848.*

*David Moss immigrated 1843. After serving in the Mormon Battalion, David entered the Salt Lake Valley in 1848, where he married and raised a family.*

*William and his nephew Robert left Liverpool together for New Orleans in 1851. While William remained in Salt Lake City, Robert settled in Bountiful, Utah, where he married in 1852.*

## ENDNOTES

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- <sup>1</sup> Jeanette (Bleasdale) Poole (1826-1921), # L412-WYC, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) where verification of all vital dates can be found. Also see family group sheets at [www.DaviesDawsonHistory.weebly.com](http://www.DaviesDawsonHistory.weebly.com). Variant spellings of the name include: Blaesdale, Blaisdell, Blaesdale, Blesdel and Blazedell. This history uses Bleasdale, the spelling of a village fifteen miles north of Jeanette's birthplace of Thornley, Lancashire.
- <sup>2</sup> William Bleasdale (1796-1885), #MPGZ-XXN, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>3</sup> Margaret (Moss) Bleasdale (1798-1877), #LV69-CYH, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>4</sup> Dora G. Jensen, "A History of Jeanette Bleasdale Poole," June, 1968, typescript. Copy held by Shelley Dawson Davies.
- <sup>5</sup> John H. Yearsley, "Jeanette Blaisdell Poole," undated typescript. Copy held by Shelley Dawson Davies.
- <sup>6</sup> Robert Moss (1774-1845), #L8QW-HWY, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>7</sup> Margaret (Kelisall) Moss (1771-1846), #MQKD-52Z, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>8</sup> Jensen, "A History of Jeanette Bleasdale Poole," June, 1968, typescript.
- <sup>9</sup> Family researcher Cleo (Hales) Page shows William's baptism took place in 1837, but has no date for Margaret. See: "William Bleasdale-Margaret Moss family group sheet," supplied 1979 by Cleo (Hales) Page. This sheet offers only a generic list of materials consulted.
- <sup>10</sup> Alice (Bleasdale) Parker (1821-1905), #LCVQ-KJ9, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>11</sup> Roger Parker (1807-1897), #LJLQ-NJJ, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>12</sup> The Bleasdale's daughter Mary and her husband John Parker (probably a cousin to Alice's husband) may have also been baptized before her untimely death in 1848.
- <sup>13</sup> Mary Haskin (Parker) Richards (1823-1860), #L687-KSW. "Memorandum of Mary Haskin Parker Richards," Mary Haskin (Parker) Richards, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>14</sup> David Moss (1818-1897), #KWJR-HBT, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>15</sup> William Moss (1796-1872), #K24Y-P65, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>16</sup> Robert Moss (1821-1895), #L7GH-STZ, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>17</sup> John Moss (1820-1884), #L8QW-HC7, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>18</sup> Hugh Moss (1794-1861), #L8QW-HH1, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>19</sup> A warden in the Anglican church serves as a lay official who is expected to lead his fellow parishioners by setting a good example and encourage unity in the congregation. Hugh kept in touch with his sons after they immigrated to Utah, sending news and his love by letters. "Hugh Moss History," Hugh Moss, #L8QW-HH1, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>20</sup> "Biography of Robert Moss," Robert Moss #KWJ3-DQ7, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>21</sup> Maurine Carr Ward, editor, *Winter Quarters: The 1846-1848 Life Writings of Mary Haskin Parker Richards* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1996), page 224.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, page 5
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>24</sup> Jeanette probably stayed with her mother's brother William Moss, who was working as a cotton weaver in Preston. William Moss household, 1841, England census, Lancashire County, parish of Preston, Class: HO107; Piece: 498; Book: 6; Civil parish: Preston; County: Lancashire; Enumeration District: 7; Folio: 16; Page: 28; Line: 3; GSU roll: 306887, [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)
- <sup>25</sup> Passenger list, *Sheffield*, Liverpool to New Orleans, 7 February-30 March, 1841, [http://mormonmigration.lib.byu.edu/Search/showDetails/db:MM\\_MII/t:voyage/id:331/keywords:february+1841](http://mormonmigration.lib.byu.edu/Search/showDetails/db:MM_MII/t:voyage/id:331/keywords:february+1841)
- <sup>26</sup> "Journal of Alexander Neibaur," [http://mormonmigration.lib.byu.edu/Search/showDetails/db:MM\\_MII/t:account/id:1147/keywords:february+1841](http://mormonmigration.lib.byu.edu/Search/showDetails/db:MM_MII/t:account/id:1147/keywords:february+1841)
- <sup>27</sup> Jensen, "A History of Jeanette Bleasdale Poole," June, 1968, typescript.

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<sup>28</sup> “Journal of Alexander Neibaur,”

[http://mormonmigration.lib.byu.edu/Search/showDetails/db:MM\\_MII/t:account/id:1147/keywords:february+1841](http://mormonmigration.lib.byu.edu/Search/showDetails/db:MM_MII/t:account/id:1147/keywords:february+1841)

<sup>29</sup> Edna Margaret Porter Hegsted, “Jeannette Bleasdale Poole, Pioneer.” Undated typescript. Copy held by Shelley Dawson Davies.

<sup>30</sup> Jensen, “A History of Jeanette Bleasdale Poole,” June, 1968, typescript. .

## Chapter 2

# Westward

## To the Promised Land

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*A view of Nauvoo, Illinois, from the Iowa side  
of the Mississippi River.*

Instead of joining her fellow Saints aboard a New Orleans steamer headed straight for Nauvoo, Jeanette visited another of her uncles, probably John Moss,<sup>31</sup> who was living in New Orleans at the time, hoping he might have news of her parents. She was delighted to see a familiar face, but disappointed to learn her uncle was unaware the Bleasdales had already left England.<sup>32</sup>

Unknown to anyone else in the family, William, Margaret, Mary Parker and George Rhodes, a benefactor who was to augment the party's finances, had arrived in Liverpool the previous December, only to find the man who had arranged their passage demanded ten shillings more than their original agreement. William instead booked tickets on an alternate ship, but while waiting for the *Alliance* to sail eleven days later, George was robbed. Without these extra funds, none of the four would be able to travel all the way to Nauvoo, but with their passage already paid, they agreed to sail to New York City.<sup>33</sup> William, Margaret and Mary worked in the city for several years before they were able to continue westward.

In the meantime, Jeanette made her way up the Mississippi River arriving in Nauvoo during the early spring of 1841, with every expectation of finding her parents there, but still without any word from them, she was forced to fend for herself. She accepted work at the home of Joseph Young, brother to church leader Brigham Young, who lived with his wife and children in a large brick home on the corner of Kimball and Granger Streets.<sup>34</sup> The pay was attractive at seventy-five cents a week plus room and board, but when Joseph asked her to become his plural wife, she politely declined the offer and found employment elsewhere.<sup>35</sup>

William and Margaret Bleasdale finally arrived in Illinois sometime in 1843, settling ten miles north of Nauvoo in the farming community of Camp Creek.<sup>36</sup> After a brief stay at Camp Creek, Mary Parker joined her parents at their home in Nauvoo later that fall.<sup>37</sup> Jeanette probably learned of her parents' whereabouts from Mary, and she may have joined her father and mother in Camp Creek for some time, where she presented her mother with a cow and calf she bought from her savings.<sup>38</sup>

Nauvoo itself was a booming city, growing so fast as Saints and new converts gathered that it was rivaled only by Chicago. New homes and businesses were constantly being built, and the wide, straight streets were busy with the comings and goings of people dedicated to creating Zion. Joseph Smith himself could be heard preaching on Sundays, and with auxiliary meetings and social activities, Nauvoo was an exciting place to be. As the city continued to attract members of the church, old settlers in the area became suspicious and threatened by the growing power of the Mormons, who they feared would not only spread their strange religious beliefs, but dominate state politics as well. Enemies of the church mounted campaigns against their Mormon neighbors in the press, denouncing the doctrines in general and Joseph Smith in particular. Sensational articles succeeded in arousing such hatred toward the Prophet that he was eventually charged with riot after ordering an anti-Mormon newspaper destroyed. Joseph, his brother Hyrum and several other church leaders were ordered to appear at a trial in the county seat of Carthage in June, 1844, where they were held at the local jail. On the afternoon of 27 June, the jail was stormed by an armed mob who murdered Joseph and Hyrum.

Anti-Mormon forces celebrated the Prophet's death, hopeful the church would be unable to survive such a catastrophe, but the Saints rallied around their new leader, Brigham Young. As the gathering continued, so did the persecutions levied against the Saints. Violent attacks on outlying settlements caused church officials to warn members, requesting they move into Nauvoo for protection. William and Margaret Bleasdale may have been among those who heeded the call to abandon Camp Creek in September, 1845.<sup>39</sup>

One of the most important buildings in Nauvoo was the temple, rising above the city on a bluff, where baptisms for the dead were already being performed in the completed basement by 1841. Work on the temple hastened as it became increasingly clear the church's enemies would never allow the Saints to remain in Illinois. Even as plans were underway to move the entire population to a safe location somewhere in the west, efforts were increased to finish the temple. Rooms were dedicated as they were completed, and endowment ordinances administered day and night. Both Jeanette and her mother received their endowments in the Nauvoo temple the same day, 7 February, 1846, four days after Brigham Young led the first wagon train of evacuees across the river into Iowa.<sup>40</sup>

Twenty-thousand refugees from Nauvoo streamed across Iowa over the next ten months as the Saints left their homes for temporary camps scattered over the state, beginning with those families who were best prepared for the journey. For some reason Jeanette left Nauvoo without her parents, probably with her friend Mary Parker and the extended Parker family, who reached temporary church headquarters at the Missouri River before winter set in. She no doubt expected her parents to join the Saints at Winter Quarters that year, but when they failed to arrive, she became concerned. Once again, Jeanette found herself separated from her parents, with no idea of where they were.



*The Nauvoo temple as it looked in 1846.*



*The fertile land and rolling hills of Farmington, Iowa.*

## Finding the Family

William and Margaret Bleasdale were among those Saints ill prepared to leave Nauvoo in 1846. Many refugees were forced to make the journey in stages, working as they went to afford supplies. The Bleasdales made it as far as Farmington, Iowa, thirty-five miles west of Nauvoo, before they stopped at the farm of Micajah and Rebecca Poole, unable to continue any farther. Although the Pooles were not Mormons, they sympathized with the thousands of displaced families passing by their place, and agreed to hire the Bleasdales on as temporary hands. Margaret set up housekeeping in the old blacksmith shop out back and earned a small wage cooking for the Poole family, while William helped with chores around the barnyard.<sup>41</sup>

Somehow by the spring of 1847, Jeanette learned her parents were still in southeastern Iowa, three hundred miles away. She immediately set out to join them, travelling on foot with nothing more than a loaf of bread and forty cents in her pocket.<sup>42</sup> It took a month to work and walk her way across the state, but it was worth being reunited with her family. As she approached the Poole farm, Jeanette opened the gate for two young men who had stopped with a load of hay. One young man remarked to the other one, “Look at that girl’s pretty hands. I am going to marry her.”<sup>43</sup> That young man was John Rawlston Poole.<sup>44</sup>

John was three years younger than Jeanette, but with his red hair and “twinkly blue eyes”<sup>45</sup> he attracted Jeanette’s attention, and after a yearlong courtship, she agreed to become his wife on 16 July, 1848.<sup>46</sup> Micajah and Rebecca Poole depended on their oldest son to help run the farm and train up his seven younger brothers, and while they

expected John to eventually inherit the farm, they also expected him to marry a suitable bride. It was one thing to help out a family like the Bleasdales when they were in need, but it was another thing altogether to have Mormons as part of the family. Micajah was furious when John was baptized into the church in August, 1849,<sup>47</sup> immediately disinheriting him.<sup>48</sup> John, Jeanette and the Bleasdales were forced to find shelter elsewhere, even though Jeanette was heavily pregnant. She gave birth to her first child, Mary Elizabeth,<sup>49</sup> a month later. The Pooles and Bleasdales remained in Farmington until they were prepared to immigrate to Utah in the spring of 1850.<sup>50</sup>

## On to Salt Lake City

John, Jeanette and the Bleasdales made their way to the trail head of Kanesville, Iowa, where they bought supplies and outfitted their wagons. Both John and William had a gun, powder and lead, and fourteen head of cattle between them.<sup>51</sup> They teamed up with the William Snow/Joseph Young wagon company, pulling out of Kanesville on the first day of summer, 1850.<sup>52</sup> John was a bit uncomfortable travelling under the leadership of Joseph Young, the man who had once asked Jeanette to marry him, but Joseph showed his goodwill by naming John and William as guards for their division of ten families.<sup>53</sup>

Jeanette, pregnant with her second child, was still mourning the loss of little Mary Elizabeth, who had died two weeks before on the way to Kanesville. Although she channeled her grief into helping care for four-year old Reuben,<sup>54</sup> the orphaned child her parents had adopted in Farmington, Jeanette never forgot her first born. Until her own death, talk of Mary Elizabeth brought tears to Jeanette's eyes. "We have heard Grandma remark what an unusual child she was, just too sweet and pure to live on this earth. Everyone on the trail wanted to carry and love her," recalled granddaughter Dora Jensen.<sup>55</sup>

Jeanette soon feared she might also lose John as "the cholera raged that season with uncommon fury on the plains," according to fellow immigrant Mary Coray.<sup>56</sup> As John lay deathly ill, he asked for a priesthood blessing. Jeanette brought Joseph Young to the wagon, and as Brother Young prayed, John felt the pain leave his body, "starting at his head and going down and out through his toes."<sup>57</sup> He immediately felt well enough to take a drink from a nearby stream, then considered a dangerous thing to do when ill, but John had been healed.



The rest of the three-month journey was filled with troubles great and small. There were often so many mosquitos the pioneers found it difficult to sleep. “We have been much annoyed by these troublesome insects since we came on the plains,” recalled Angelina Farley, a member of the company. “Mosquitos [were] so bad we were obliged to get up and lie and sit by the fire most of the night.”<sup>58</sup> Supplies ran low as the company travelled west until it was necessary to supplement their provisions with buffalo meat. There was no shortage of these great beasts and even a small hunting party could supply the train with meat for several days, but the great buffalo herds also proved threatening to the immigrants as they surged across the plains. “The moving buffalo would make the earth shake, while the noise was deafening,” according to Elizabeth Bybee Smith, who recalled “when we were camped near a spring, we heard a terrible bellowing and roaring. The very ground that we were standing on shook. The men and boys went to nearby hill and looking over the plains saw a herd of thousands of buffalo on the stampede for water. Most of the people were terribly frightened. Some were laughing, some singing, some crying, other yelling and praying, while the more level headed brought torches to frighten the buffalo and held the horses and oxen to keep them from stampeding. The leaders of the herd seemed frightened when they saw us and turned off in other another direction. I think the Lord was surely with us in protecting his people.”<sup>59</sup>

John and William lost most of their cattle to stampedes and death along the trail. Toward the end, John had only one cow and a team of oxen to pull his wagon, and when one of the oxen died, he was forced to yoke up the cow in its place,<sup>60</sup> but the Pooles and Bleasdales managed to carry on, entering the Salt Lake Valley on 1 October, thankful the Lord had led them to Zion.



*The Mormon Trail through Echo Canyon, just before entering the Salt Lake Valley.*

## ENDNOTES

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- <sup>31</sup> John Moss (1806-1892), #L8QW-HC7, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) John left England in 1841.
- <sup>32</sup> Edna Margaret Porter Hegsted, "Jeannette Bleasdale Poole, Pioneer." Undated typescript. Copy held by Shelley Dawson Davies.
- <sup>33</sup> Maurine Carr Ward, editor, *Winter Quarters: The 1846-1848 Life Writings of Mary Haskin Parker Richards* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1996), page 6.
- <sup>34</sup> Joseph Young entry, Early Latter-day Saints: Remembering the People and Places, <http://earlylds.com/getperson.php?personID=I23619&tree=Earlylds>
- <sup>35</sup> Dora G. Jensen, "A History of Jeanette Bleasdale Poole," June, 1968, typescript. Copy held by Shelley Dawson Davies.
- <sup>36</sup> Lyman D. Platt, Early Branches of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830-1850, [http://mormonhistoricsites.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/NJ3\\_Platt.pdf](http://mormonhistoricsites.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/NJ3_Platt.pdf) Also members of this branch were John and Mary (Henderson) Dickson and William and Mary Ann (Stoddard) Dickson connected to our family through Ammon Davis, #KWCT-ZP8, and John Hyrum and Susannah (Phillips) Green, connected to our family through Alexander Dawson, #KWZG-7KD.
- <sup>37</sup> The Parkers were renting a house on the north east corner of Block 120. John Parker entry, Early Latter-day Saints: Remembering the People and Places, <http://earlylds.com/getperson.php?personID=I24756&tree=Earlylds>
- <sup>38</sup> Jensen, "A History of Jeanette Bleasdale Poole," June, 1968, typescript.
- <sup>39</sup> Platt, Early Branches of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830-1850, [http://mormonhistoricsites.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/NJ3\\_Platt.pdf](http://mormonhistoricsites.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/NJ3_Platt.pdf)
- <sup>40</sup> "John Rawlston Poole-Jeanette Bleasdale family group sheet," supplied 1979 by Cleo (Hales) Page. This sheet offers only a generic list of materials consulted. Also see Margaret (Moss) Bleasdale, #LZXCV-NVJ, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>41</sup> John H. Yearsley, "Jeanette Blaisdell Poole," undated typescript. Copy held by the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, Salt Lake City.
- <sup>42</sup> Jensen, "A History of Jeanette Bleasdale Poole," June, 1968, typescript. .
- <sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>44</sup> John Rawlston Poole (1829-1894), #KWNK-31C, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>45</sup> Elaine Brinton Poole, *Ancestors of John Rawlston Poole* (self-published, 1989), page 13.
- <sup>46</sup> Jensen, "A History of Jeanette Bleasdale Poole," June, 1968, typescript.
- <sup>47</sup> "John Rawlston Poole-Jeanette Bleasdale family group sheet," supplied 1979 by Cleo (Hales) Page.
- <sup>48</sup> Poole, *Ancestors of John Rawlston Poole*, page 15.
- <sup>49</sup> Mary Elizabeth Poole (1849-1850), #KF4L-ZD3, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>50</sup> John, but not Jeanette, is shown as member of the Micajah Poole household in the 1850 U.S. census.
- All questions answered for the 1850 U.S. census were supposed to refer to the official enumeration day of 1 June. The Micajah Poole household was questioned on 23 October, well after John and Jeanette had departed for Utah. The omission of Jeanette's name from the household may indicate the Poole's unhappiness with their son's marriage. Micajah Poole household, 1850 U.S. census, Lee County, Iowa, Division 28; Roll: M432\_186; Page: 382A; Image: 211, [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)
- <sup>51</sup> Gardner Snow, "Record Book, 1850," <https://history.lds.org/overlandtravels/trailExcerptMulti?lang=eng&companyId=283&sourceId=6103>
- <sup>52</sup> William Snow/Joseph Young Company, Kanessville, Iowa, to Salt Lake City, Utah, 21 June-1 October, 1850, <http://www.lds.org/churchhistory/library/pioneercompany/1,15797,4017-1-283,00.html>

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- <sup>53</sup> Gardner Snow, "Record Book, 1850,"  
<https://history.lds.org/overlandtravels/trailExcerptMulti?lang=eng&companyId=283&sourceId=6103>
- <sup>54</sup> Reuben Andrew Robinson Bleasdale (1847-1922), #KWCY-WVQ, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>55</sup> Jensen, "A History of Jeanette Bleasdale Poole," June, 1968, typescript.
- <sup>56</sup> Mary Ettie Coray, "Reminiscence,"  
<https://history.lds.org/overlandtravels/trailExcerptMulti?lang=eng&companyId=283&sourceId=6090>
- <sup>57</sup> "John Rawlston Poole," unidentified, undated typescript. Copy held by Shelley Dawson Davies.
- <sup>58</sup> Angelina Farley, "Diaries, 1846-1888," page 32,  
<https://history.lds.org/overlandtravels/trailExcerptMulti?lang=eng&companyId=283&sourceId=6091>
- <sup>59</sup> Elizabeth J. Bybee Smith, "Utah Pioneer Biographies,"  
<http://history.lds.org/overlandtravels/trailExcerptMulti?lang=eng&companyId=283&sourceId=6100>
- <sup>60</sup> Edna Margaret Porter Hegsted, "Jeannette Bleasdale Poole, Pioneer." Undated typescript. Mrs. Hegsted was a granddaughter of Jeannette Poole. Copy held by Shelley Dawson Davies.

## Chapter 3

# A New Home in Utah

## Subduing the Desert

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*Looking east toward the mountains in Centerville, where the Pooles were among the town's early settlers.*

John and William decided right away they would settle their families in Centerville, one of the new farming communities north of Salt Lake City where they could spread out and claim a place of their own. John built a log cabin next to the Bleasdales near Duel Creek, where Jeanette gave birth to Joseph Ewalt<sup>61</sup> on 24 February, 1851. Sadly, the baby died the same day, leaving Jeanette to mourn the loss of another child. Exactly one year later, John and Jeanette thankfully celebrated the birth of Adeline Melinda<sup>62</sup> on 24 February, 1852. This time their child survived, although the next infant, John,<sup>63</sup> died not long after he was born in 1854. Jeanette took comfort in a patriarchal blessing given to her the same year in which she was promised the Lord would “bless thee with off spring and honor thee with the enjoyment of their society and thou shalt receive the gifts and qualifications which are necessary to prepare thy mind and their labors for usefulness in coming life ... Thou shalt have power over disease from preying upon thy offspring.”<sup>64</sup> The Lord proved true to his word. Jeanette gave birth to seven more children after the blessing, all who remained healthy and survived to adulthood.

Centerville was only a small pioneer settlement along the Wasatch front, located near the camp grounds of nomadic native tribes who were only too happy to take advantage of the settler's bounty. It wasn't unusual to find natives stealing produce from unattended gardens or items from barns and outbuildings. Most women were afraid of encountering Indians, but Jeanette was up to the challenge. When she returned home one day to find a pair of Indians sampling her cream, she successfully fought them off by herself. Even though she ended up severely scratched and bruised from the encounter, she remained ready to defend her home. One day after setting a batch of minced pies out to cool, she noticed an Indian sneaking up to snatch one off of the window sill. She effectively deterred the would-be thief by running over to the stove, taking some hot coals from the fire and pouring them down the Indian's shirt.<sup>65</sup>

Wolves were also a problem to the young couple. Several packs of the animals roamed the village, finding the pioneer's stock easy prey. Jeanette was often forced to leave baby Adeline in her crib as she chased the wolves away from the corrals. Even raising a kitchen garden was a fight against nature. Jeanette recalled a time when crickets descended on her green peas just as they were ready to eat. She tried to protect her harvest by covering the plants with two of her linen sheets, but after the crickets passed there was nothing left in the garden, not even the sheets.<sup>66</sup>

After four years of pioneer living in Centerville, John decided to try his luck farther north in the growing town of Ogden. He bought a track of farmland three miles west of town on the Weber River bottom<sup>67</sup> as well as a piece of property within the city limits<sup>68</sup> where Jeanette happily set up housekeeping in time for the birth of Rebecca Margaret<sup>69</sup> on 29 August 1855. As their days quickly settled into a familiar routine, neither John nor Jeanette could have guessed how their lives would soon be changed by the misfortunes of the coming year's handcart immigrants.



*John joined the rescue party which saved the stranded Willie and Martin handcart companies in 1856.*

## Handcart Rescue

Many English converts to the church were anxious to join their fellow Saints in Salt Lake City, but not everyone could afford the expense of such a journey. Brigham Young's idea of using handcarts instead of ox teams and wagons to travel was seen as a way of reducing the costs as well as the time required to cross the plains. The first three handcart companies successfully made the trek early in 1856, but the Willie and Martin companies were late leaving England and were further delayed in Iowa City during a last minute scramble for carts and supplies. By the time they stopped for repairs in Florence, Nebraska, some among the companies questioned the wisdom of trying to cross so late in the season, but the majority were determined to prove their faith by continuing west despite the risk. The carts, made of unsuitable green wood, broke down continually along the trail. Lost cattle and diminishing supplies further weakened the companies and by the time they were stranded by an early October blizzard in Wyoming, the immigrants were in desperate need of rescue.

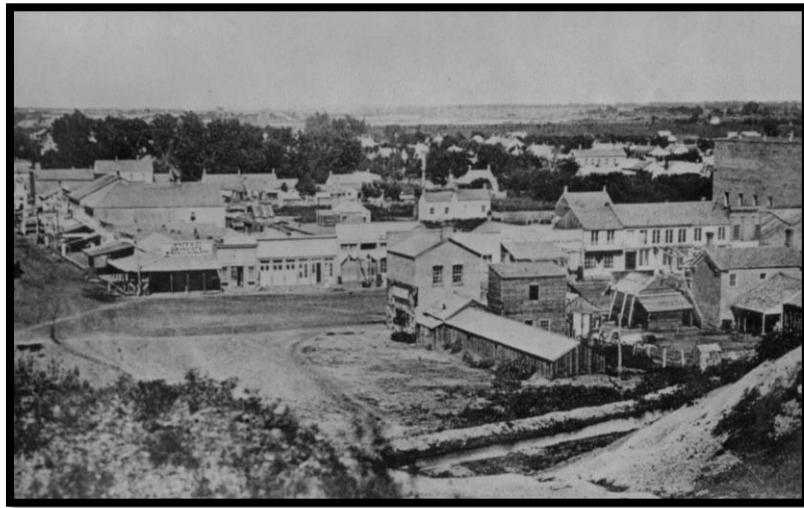
Brigham Young called for volunteers with good teams and wagons as soon as the news reached him. There was no hesitation from either John or Jeanette, who filled a wagon with as much food, clothing and other supplies as they could spare. John left Ogden immediately, joining with other volunteers in the mountains by 7 October. "A better outfit and one more adapted to the work before us I do not think could have possibly been selected if a week had been spent in fitting it up," wrote fellow rescuer Dan Jones. "We had good teams and provisions in abundance. But best of all, those going were alive to the work and were of the best material possible for the occasion."<sup>70</sup>

Travel which was already difficult became almost impossible when the rescue party was met head on with a snowstorm on 17 October. Four days later the rescuers somehow located the Willie Company in camp just as the sun was setting. The starving people had almost given up all hope. "On arriving we found them in a condition that would stir the feelings of the hardest heart," said rescuer Dan Jones. "They were in a poor place, the storm having caught them where fuel was scarce. They were out of provisions and really freezing and starving to death. The morning after our arrival we buried nine in one grave. We did all we could to relieve them. The boys struck out on horseback and dragged up a lot of wood; provisions were distributed and all went to work to cheer the sufferers. Soon there was an improvement in camp, but many poor, faithful people had gone too far, had passed beyond the power to recruit. Our help came too late for some and many died after our arrival."<sup>71</sup>

After leaving a few supplies with the Willie Company, the rescue party continued on towards the Martin Company stranded near Devil's Gate. On Monday, October 27, twenty days after leaving Salt Lake, the rescue party found Edward Martin's handcart company and Ben Hodgetts' wagon company. Many people in the Martin Company had already frozen to death and the survivors expected to die soon. Nineteen-year old Jane Bitton,<sup>72</sup> an English woman traveling with her brother John<sup>73</sup> and his wife Sarah,<sup>74</sup> told herself that if she were going to die, she would die clean. She took fresh underwear and "walked to the river not far away, broke the ice and washed herself. As she was dressing, she heard a great commotion and shouting from the camp. She quickly finished dressing and started back to the wagon train. She met an elderly Scotsman who was crying and she asked what was wrong. He answered, 'Aye, Lasse, We're saved! We're saved!' Jane replied, 'Then what in the world are you crying for?' She saw no reason for tears."<sup>75</sup>

Several days passed before the stranded companies regained enough strength to travel. Jane, John and Sarah Bitton and seventeen-year old Hannah Speakman<sup>76</sup> were among those assigned to John Poole's wagon as the Martin Company pulled out of camp on 10 November. While some of the weaker Saints were transported in wagons, most still had to walk the rest of the way to Salt Lake, many without the protection of shoes in below zero temperatures. "By this time the shoes of many of the emigrants had given out, and that was no journey for shoeless men, women and children to make at such a season of the year," wrote John Jacques.<sup>77</sup> Jane recalled how she left many a bloody footprint in the snow and she never forgot how hungry she had been. Many years later when she was an elderly woman, she was known to hoard small pieces of leftover bread wrapped in a napkin and tucked away in the corner of her bureau drawer.<sup>78</sup>

As excruciating as it was to go on, there was no other choice. Day after day, both rescuers and emigrants pushed and pulled their way through snow drifts until finally, on Sunday, 30 November, 1856, the Martin Company arrived in Salt Lake City. The starving, freezing Saints were met food, clothes and blankets before being assigned to a family who cared for them over the winter. John took the Bittons and Hannah Speakman under his wing, transporting them to his Ogden home where Jeanette nursed them back to health.<sup>79</sup>



*A view of downtown Ogden in 1876, not far from where the Poole families lived.*



## Added Blessings

Over the next few months John decided to take both Jane and Hannah as plural wives. In later years John jokingly said that since he had rescued Jane from a snow bank he felt he had a right to her, but there was nothing humorous about the situation for Jeanette, who recalled how heartbroken she was when she overheard the two teenaged girls discussing their upcoming marriage.<sup>80</sup> John was sealed to Jane and Hannah on 29 January, 1857, in Brigham Young's Salt Lake City office.<sup>81</sup>

Hannah was apparently not suited to life as a plural wife. The facts about why and when Hannah left the marriage have been lost. Family tradition maintains she ran away with one of the Johnston Army soldiers stationed in Salt Lake City that year to put down the rumored "Mormon Rebellion." Hannah's obituary indicates she left Salt Lake in the spring of 1859, headed with her party to California.<sup>82</sup> Whatever the circumstances of her departure, Hannah apparently did not remain married to John long enough to have children.<sup>83</sup>

Jane, on the other hand, proved to be a good wife who got along well with Jeanette. When Jeanette gave birth to William<sup>84</sup> in mid-January, 1858, Jane was there to assist; Jeanette acted as midwife eleven months later when Jane also presented their husband with a son, Hyrum,<sup>85</sup> on Christmas Day. The two wives gave birth again in 1860, with Jeanette's daughter Alice<sup>86</sup> arriving on 23 May, followed by Jane's second son Wyatt<sup>87</sup> on 8 December. By the time Jeanette gave birth to Susanna<sup>88</sup> on Independence Day, 1862, Jane was already pregnant with her third child, Harriet Jane,<sup>89</sup> who was born in early February, 1863.

Into this lively household of two wives and eight children John welcomed Jane's parents and sister Harriet<sup>90</sup> after their immigration to Utah in the autumn of 1863. John immediately took notice of seventeen-year old Harriet, a beautiful girl with wavy chestnut hair and brown eyes,<sup>91</sup> and two months later he married her as well.

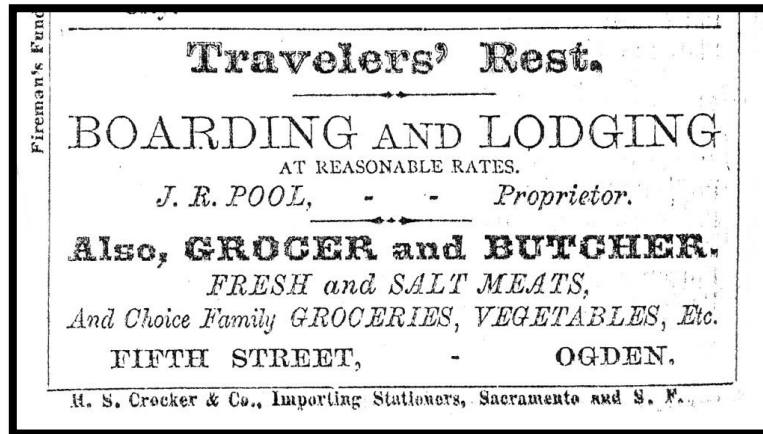
A family with three wives meant rapid growth, and babies arrived at least once a year until John had fathered a total of eighteen children. Being head of a household with one wife could be challenging enough, but a family of this size and complexity presented numerous difficulties not every man was equipped to overcome. To his credit, John not only supported his wives and children financially, but was

fondly remembered for his loving leadership. He built separate log homes for each of his wives and did his best to see to it each family was cared for equally. His children thought they had “the most wonderful father in all the world...He was a kindly man and ruled his large family with love rather than punishments,” according on one of John’s daughters.<sup>92</sup> John mourned as deeply as his wives over the loss of their children. Jane’s little daughters Harriet Jane, three, and Edith,<sup>93</sup> one, died within ten days of each other in June, 1866, followed by Harriet’s son two-year old James<sup>94</sup> in 1871, and Jane’s five-year old daughter Minauann<sup>95</sup> in 1878.

## The Globe Hotel

Despite losing so many small children, the Poole family prospered along with their new hometown. They could remember when they were among the fifty early families who helped build the tabernacle on the corner of Main and Second Streets,<sup>96</sup> a carefully crafted building which held 1,200 Saints from the surrounding area. Ogden could now boast of two stores by 1855, and adobe houses “were fast springing up,”<sup>97</sup> replacing many of the original log cabins. John invested in several city lots, eventually opening up a store of his own, a grocery and meat market.<sup>98</sup> John took advantage of Ogden’s new status as a major rail and commercial center after the transcontinental railroad’s completion in 1869 quickly transformed the city into a bustling transportation hub. John hoped to generate extra income from his new Globe Hotel, located a few blocks east of Union Station on the corner of Young and Fifth Streets.<sup>99</sup>

As the oldest and most experienced of John’s wives,<sup>100</sup> Jeanette took charge of running the hotel with the help of Jane and Harriet, who assisted with cooking and child care. Jeanette had breakfast on the table by five every morning and saw to it the rooms were kept clean and tidy, assigning her older girls the duty of scrubbing the wood floors in the kitchen and dining room every day with fine sand to keep them white.<sup>101</sup> The smaller children took turns standing on a stool at the kitchen sink, where there was always a stack of dirty dishes waiting for them. Adaline and Rebecca washed the soiled guest linens as well as the family laundry, scrubbing sheets and towels by hand in an alley behind a neighboring saloon. Adaline recalled many nights finding herself stretching clothes out on the line when the clock struck two a.m. Ironing in the dining room was complicated by having to retrieve irons heating on the kitchen stove through an outside door, as there was no connecting door between the two rooms.<sup>102</sup>



*This advertisement for John's business ran in McKenny's Gazetteer and Directory of Utah, 1872.*

Jeanette was a very efficient and industrious woman who believed in the virtue of work. Her hands were always busy and productive; when she wasn't working at the Globe, she was on duty at home, supervising the children, mending their clothes and making rag rugs for every room of the hotel.<sup>103</sup> She didn't have a moment to spare for leisure activities, chiding Adaline's love of reading as "a waste of time."<sup>104</sup>

By the time she gave birth to Benton<sup>105</sup> in February, 1871, forty-five year old Jeanette not only had eight of her own children to look after, but was responsible for the well-being of Jane, Harriet and their six little ones, especially when John was away at the farm or out of town on business. Only a few months after Benton's birth Jeanette assumed all of her husband's family responsibilities when John was called by the church to serve a mission to Iowa.

## ENDNOTES

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- <sup>61</sup> Joseph Ewalt Poole (1851-1851), #KF4L-ZD3, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>62</sup> Adaline Melinda (Poole) Yearsley (1852-1936), #KWZM-CYD, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>63</sup> John Bleasdale Poole (1854-1854), #KWVZ-FK3, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>64</sup> Patriarchal blessing given by Isaac Morley, to Jeanette Poole, 25 September, 1854. Copy held by Shelley Dawson Davies.
- <sup>65</sup> Elaine Brinton Poole, *Ancestors of John Rawlston Poole* (self-published, 1989), page 16.
- <sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>67</sup> John is also listed as farming on Spring Street between 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> in today's Washington Terrace area, south of Ogden. S.A. Kenner and Thomas Wallace, *Directory of Ogden City, and North Utah* (Ogden, Utah, 1878), page 113.
- <sup>68</sup> Susana Poole Lawson, "John Rawlston Poole," *An Enduring Legacy*. Vol. I-XII. Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, Salt Lake City, UT: Utah Printing Company, 1978.
- <sup>69</sup> Rebecca Margaret (Poole) Porter (1855-1935), #KWCT-DNG, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>70</sup> *Remember: The Willie and Martin Handcart Companies and Their Rescuers—Past and Present* (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Riverton, Wyoming Stake, Salt Lake City, Utah: Publisher's Press, 1997), page 103.
- <sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, page 52.
- <sup>72</sup> Jane Evington (Bitton) Poole 1836-1921), #KWJZ-4PJ, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>73</sup> John Evington Bitton (1830-1905), #KWJZ-33S, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>74</sup> Sarah Susannah (Wintle) Bitton (1839-1907), #KWJZ-33Q, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>75</sup> Poole, *Ancestors of John Rawlston Poole*, page 79.
- <sup>76</sup> Hannah (Speakman) Poole Huntsman (1839-1935), #LHV7-PWF, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>77</sup> *Remember: The Willie and Martin Handcart Companies and Their Rescuers—Past and Present*, page 74.
- <sup>78</sup> Poole, *Ancestors of John Rawlston Poole*, page 80.
- <sup>79</sup> "John Rawlston Poole," unidentified, undated typescript. Copy held by Shelley Dawson Davies.
- <sup>80</sup> Dora G. Jensen, "A History of Jeanette Bleasdale Poole," June, 1968, typescript. Copy held by Shelley Dawson Davies.
- <sup>81</sup> "John Rawlston Poole-Jane Bitton family group sheet," supplied 1979 by Cleo (Hales) Page. This sheet offers only a generic list of materials consulted.
- <sup>82</sup> Hannah lived many years in Nevada with her husband Lindley Huntsman, where they maintained an inn near Lake Tahoe. The Huntsmans moved to Salt Lake City in 1902. Lindley died in 1912, followed by Hannah in 1935. Both are buried in Mt. Olivet cemetery. *The Salt Lake Telegram*, 21 May, 1935.
- <sup>83</sup> Another version claims Hannah stayed "long enough to move to Idaho with the family, then she caught the train at Market Lake (now Roberts, Idaho) and left." This version seems unlikely, as John did not relocate to Idaho until 1879, twenty-two years later. See: Poole, *Ancestors of John Rawlston Poole*, page 10.
- <sup>84</sup> William Micajah Poole (1858-1955), #KWCY-HZL, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>85</sup> Hyrum Evington Poole (1858-1944), #KWJZ-CW2, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>86</sup> Jeanette Alice (Poole) Caldwell (1860-1953), #KWJD-C95, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>87</sup> Wyatt Alexander Poole (1860-1882), #K2H4-V51, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>88</sup> Susanna Rosetta (Poole) Lawson (1862-1949), #KWCB-WGX, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>89</sup> Harriet Jane Poole (1863-1866), #K2H4-V2B, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>90</sup> Harriet (Bitton) Poole (1846-1929), # K2MQ-VR2, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>91</sup> Poole, *Ancestors of John Rawlston Poole*, page 100.
- <sup>92</sup> This information was taken from a history of John Rawlson Poole authored by an unidentified daughter and reprinted in Poole, *Ancestors of John Rawlston Poole*, page 13.

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- <sup>93</sup> Edith Roseltha Poole (1865-1866), #KHWT-B1N, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>94</sup> James Arthur Poole (1871-1873), #KHBC-SCD, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>95</sup> Minuann Durant Poole (1872-1878), #KHYQ-7ZS, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>96</sup> Now renamed Twenty-second and Washington Streets.
- <sup>97</sup> <http://www.orsonprattbrown.com/CJB/-CaptainJamesBrown/brownsville.html>
- <sup>98</sup> H.M. McKenney, *McKenny's Gazetteer and Directory of the Central Pacific Railroad and its Branches for 1872*, (Sacramento, California: Directory Publishing Company, 1872), page 61-62.
- <sup>99</sup> Today this address is at the corner of Grand and Twenty-fourth streets. Gwen Berrett Fillmore, Elaine Britton Poole and Fontella Bitton Spelts, editors, *Menan, Idaho 1879-1986* (self-published, 1986) page 393. Also see: McKenney, *McKenny's Gazetteer and Directory of the Central Pacific Railroad and its Branches for 1872*, page 621-22.
- <sup>100</sup> Jeanette was ten years older than Jane and twenty years older than Harriet.
- <sup>101</sup> Jensen, "A History of Jeanette Bleasdale Poole," June, 1968, typescript.
- <sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>104</sup> Poole, *Ancestors of John Rawlston Poole*, page 19.
- <sup>105</sup> Milburn Benton Poole (1871-1960), #KWDC-3YF, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)

## Chapter 4

# Transitions

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### New Troubles to Overcome

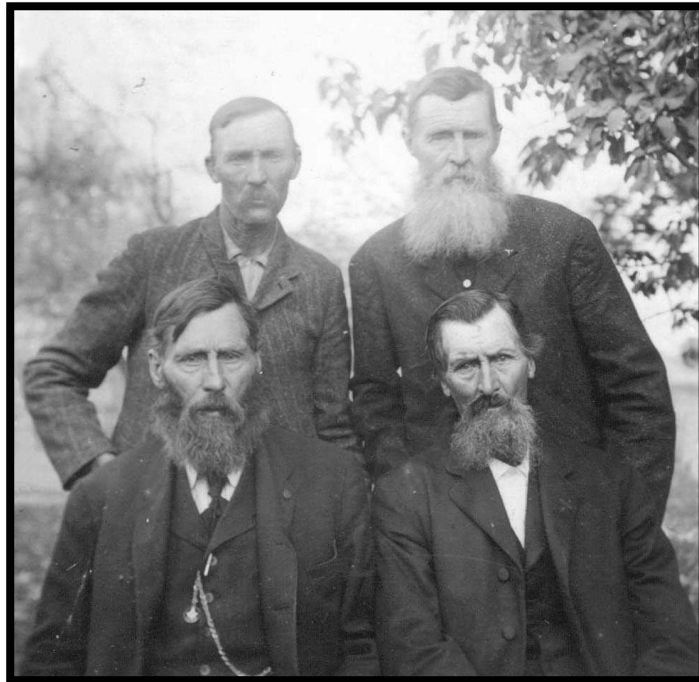


*This formal portrait of John was probably taken before he left on his mission in 1871.*

**I**t was with mixed feelings that John left his wives and children to serve a proselytizing mission in Iowa. As much as he trusted Jeanette to skillfully manage both the hotel and the family while he was absent, he would miss them all terribly, yet he was anxious to serve the Lord and set out with faith and dedication to preach the gospel wherever he could.

John began by visiting his family in Farmington, hoping the twenty-one years since his departure had softened his father's bitterness. As he approached the old house near sundown one evening, John noticed his father rousting chickens out of the trees with a long pole. "How do you do, Father?" John called out. "That you, John?" Micajah queried. "Yes," replied John as he watched for any sign of reconciliation. "You will have to go right on," responded his father. "You can't stop here." There was nothing John could do but respect his father's wishes, and he walked on.<sup>106</sup>

Micajah and Rebecca Poole had always been dedicated to their religion and by the time John returned to Iowa they were devoted members of the local Methodist Episcopal Church.<sup>107</sup> Even though Micajah's beliefs prevented him from welcoming his son, Rebecca felt differently. She arranged through one of her other sons to meet with John while he was in Farmington. It was a tearful reunion for John, who had always loved his mother a great deal.<sup>108</sup> He also visited with his sister Adaline<sup>109</sup> and brothers Milburn,<sup>110</sup> William,<sup>111</sup> Joseph,<sup>112</sup> and Benton,<sup>113</sup> and was saddened to learn of Ewalt's<sup>114</sup> death in the Civil War eight years before.<sup>115</sup> Even though some of John's descendants later told how the Poole family responded to requests for genealogy information with "letters returned unopened,"<sup>116</sup> a photo of brothers William, Martin<sup>117</sup> Joseph and Benton passed down through the generations indicates not all family ties remained severed. John never saw his parents again. Micajah died a year after John left Iowa, in January, 1873. Rebecca died eleven years later in April, 1884.<sup>118</sup>

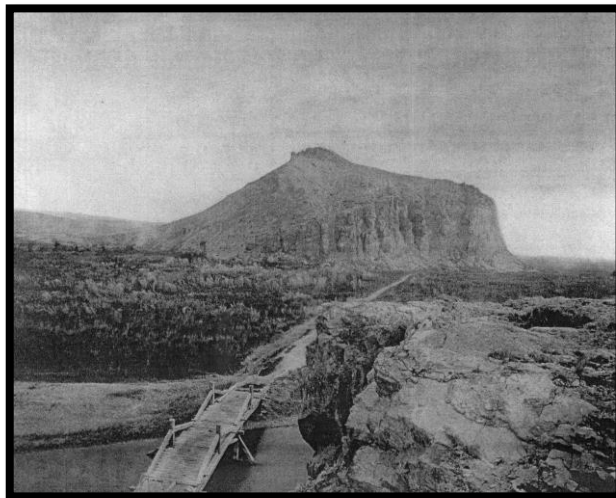


*John's brothers pose together (left to right): Joseph and Benton stand behind William and Martin.*

## Return to Ogden

John happily returned to his wives and children in Ogden in November, 1871, ready to throw himself back into the work of providing for his family. It was by then becoming clear he was in financial trouble, thanks to the high-interest loan he took out to buy the Globe Hotel.<sup>119</sup> With the threatening possibility of bankruptcy hanging over him, John set himself up as an independent freighter, enlisting his three oldest sons, William and Hyrum, both fourteen, and twelve year old Wyatt, in hauling lumber down from the nearby mountains, but this enterprise failed to generate enough cash to save the business. By the spring of 1878, John needed money and he needed it badly. He made one last bid to free himself from economic disaster by signing on as a freighter to Montana's gold mining country.

Freighting to Montana in the 1870s was a very lucrative enterprise. According to one contemporary freight operator, a pig purchased in Brigham City, Utah, for \$36.00 was sold in Montana for \$600.00, and imported eggs went for a dollar a piece. Returning freighters brought back mail, passengers and sometimes even gold dust.<sup>120</sup> There was money to be made along the trail through eastern Idaho known as the "Gold Road" and John hoped to make some of it for himself. He and eighteen-year old Wyatt loaded two wagons with fruit trees and drove them north to Montana, but most of the trees died before reaching their destination. John was forced into insolvency later that year and all of his property was sold under foreclosure.<sup>121</sup>



*John and his sons drove freighting teams along this route between Ogden, Utah, and Helena, Montana.*





*The “Dry Bed,” a branch of the Snake River on Poole’s Island. The settlement was later known as Cedar Buttes and finally Menan, an Indian word meaning “island,” when a post office was established there in 1885.*

## Poole’s Island

John was at a loss as to what to do next, but as he drove home through Idaho, he couldn’t help but notice the construction of a narrow gauge railroad up to the mines. He took a job on one of the rail crews grading and laying sixty miles of track from Marsh Creek, Idaho, to Idaho Falls, sending for his sons to sign on as well.<sup>122</sup> John and William stayed on after the camp closed down for winter to tend to the work stock. They set up winter quarters on a section of fertile grassland west of the Snake River where there was plenty of cattle forage along the Snake River near the Menan Buttes. As the men roamed through the territory all winter hunting the moose, elk, deer, antelope, and grizzly bears, John also explored an “island” between the two forks of the Snake River, gradually realizing he had discovered good farming country. Acres of abundant blue grass and tall sagebrush, some of it six feet high, covered the area, indicating fertile soil, and the mountains were close enough to provide building timber.<sup>123</sup>

In April John located claims and built several cabins with the help of William and Hyrum. He also planted a small section of oats to test the feasibility of farming, presenting his harvest to Apostle Franklin D. Richards that fall with his settlement plans for the area. With Elder

Richards approval, John made immediate arrangements to relocate his families to Idaho. Jane, Harriet and their ten children moved during the summer of 1879, as did approximately twenty other families, clustering together on what soon became known as Poole's Island.<sup>124</sup>

Jeanette remained behind in Ogden to tie up loose ends. All was ready by the spring of 1880, when Jeanette, accompanied by Susanna, eighteen, Christina, twelve, and Milburn, nine, finally boarded the train to Idaho Falls in April.<sup>125</sup> The train was a slow, but steady way to cover the distance between civilization and Idaho's raw frontier. The two day trip offered little in the way of scenery, passing through miles of land with little more to see than sagebrush. After living in a busy city for twenty-five years, Jeanette must have been uneasy at the thought of starting life over in the wilderness, but with the loss of her husband's properties, there was little choice. If Jeanette thought the train trip had been long, she was even more impatient with the last leg of her journey, a twenty-mile road which took all day to travel. Looking at the distant buttes where her new home was to be, Jeannette sighed, "Oh, John, we will never get there."<sup>126</sup>

Jeanette soon settled into her own cabin and did her best to adjust to life in Idaho. There were Indians here, as there had been in Centerville long ago, but they were scarce on the Island, and those who visited were friendly. Since there was no need to center homes inside a protective fort, homesteaders lived on their farms. John built a three-room log house on a spread of one hundred and sixty acres for each of his wives. Jane's home was close the center of the settlement,<sup>127</sup> while Jeanette homesteaded her acreage less than a mile east,<sup>128</sup> Harriet's cabin was situation in between the two.<sup>129</sup> These first cabins were built from the cottonwood trees lining the Island streams, roofed with earth covered willows, the walls chinked with mud. The floors were nothing more than dirt. Oil-soaked muslin covered the windows instead of glass, while coal oil lamps furnished light and wood stoves the heat. Water for drinking and washing was hauled up by the bucketful from an outside well.

In addition to the usual challenges of living on the frontier, the first settlers on Poole's Island were faced with having to ford one of the surrounding rivers whenever they left the area. Supplies were ferried across the water on boats, and when the rivers were high with spring snow melt wagons were dismantled and floated across on a raft. It was not uncommon for horses to drown in the river as they tried to swim across. In winter when the water froze, both wagons and horses passed over the ice.<sup>130</sup>

The marshy banks of the river were perfect breeding grounds for clouds of mosquitoes, huge insects that “hung from the door casings like a swarm of bees.” The mosquitoes became legendary in the area. “Some old-timers say they were so large that they trampled flat the underbrush,” according to grandson John Tanner Poole. “John Wright once reported during mosquito time he could swing a pint cup around their heads and get a quart of mosquitoes every time.”<sup>131</sup> Smudges were burned outside the door to fend off the insects and no one dared have a light on inside after dark for fear of attracting the troublesome insects. Harriet protected her arms and legs while working in her raspberry patch by wrapping them with old newspapers.<sup>132</sup>

The Snake River may have supported mosquitoes worthy of tall tales, but its waters also made farming possible with irrigation and no time was wasted in constructing a cooperative canal to control this precious resource. John joined the other men in building the Long Island Canal during the spring of 1880. It was “little more than a ditch,” with head gates built of hewn cottonwood timbers, but it was important in conveying water to nearly all the settlers on Poole’s Island.<sup>133</sup>

Regulating water was only one step in producing Island crops. Clearing the land itself was an enormous battle for the settlers. Gnarled sagebrush covered the land as far as the eye could see, while the riverbanks were lined with cottonwood trees and thickets of willows so dense it was hard to see a neighbor’s house.<sup>134</sup> Sage brush had to be cleared by hand with an axe before small patches of soil could be plowed and planted.<sup>135</sup>

## Threshing and Milling

By the early summer of 1880, John had consigned most of his teams to freighting, putting Hyrum in charge of hauling loads from Blackfoot to Challis and Custer, Idaho. John also purchased a threshing machine that year which he worked during the harvest season one hundred eighty miles south in Cache Valley, Utah. This operation not only provided food for his own families, but for the entire settlement, since John ground the wheat he received as pay into flour and hauled it back to the Island where supplies were difficult to come by.<sup>136</sup>

The winter of 1880 was very severe with snow depths up to twenty-two inches. Drifts became crusted over and so hard they could hold the weight of a horse. A warm south wind swept over the Island in early April, melting all the snow in only three days, creating floods

which covered the fields and inundated hollows. There was little high ground for foraging cattle and as a result every watering holes filled with dead animals.<sup>137</sup> Jeanette, Jane and Harriet were forced to face many of these challenges without John, who was often away hauling freight or threshing other farmer's fields.

John's threshing machine was the only one anywhere near Poole's Island for several years, so after working in Cache Valley, John threshed for Idaho farmers as well. He brought a self-binder into the Snake River Valley in 1882, working much of the harvest that year and many following seasons. During this time he was also engaged in other activities such as laying out and constructing roads.<sup>138</sup>

## ENDNOTES

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<sup>106</sup> Interview with John Tanner Poole (grandson of John Rawlston Poole) and his son J. Rulon Poole, by Harold Forbush, 25 June, 1870. Transcript held by Shelley Dawson Davies.

<sup>107</sup> Elaine Brinton Poole, *Ancestors of John Rawlston Poole* (self-published, 1989), page 4.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid*, page 13.

<sup>109</sup> Adaline (Poole) Walker (1847-1936), #LQ56-V8W, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)

<sup>110</sup> Milburn Zolman Poole (1833-1908), #KL4F-1ZT, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)

<sup>111</sup> William Sylvester Poole (1835-1911), #LC8N-RKR, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)

<sup>112</sup> Joseph Parshall Poole (1840-1929), #KN6R-9HC, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)

<sup>113</sup> Benton Poole (1849-1930), #LZV7-J2C, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) Brothers Wyatt and Martin had move west to California by 1871.

<sup>114</sup> Ewalt Poole (1844-1863), #LC8N-1S2, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)

<sup>115</sup> Three of John's brother, Milburn, Joseph and Ewalt, had served as Union soldiers in the Civil War. Ewalt Poole, [www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com)

<sup>116</sup> Susanna Poole Lawson, "John Rawlston Poole," *An Enduring Legacy*. Vol. I-XII. Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, Salt Lake City, UT: Utah Printing Company, 1978.

<sup>117</sup> Martin McDaniel Poole (1838-1918), #KN6T-6XG, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)

<sup>118</sup> Both Micajah and Rebecca Poole are buried in the McDaniel Cemetery, Farmington, Iowa.

<sup>119</sup> Family sources note the interest rate on the loan was twenty-four percent per annum. See: Susana Poole Lawson, "John Rawlston Poole," *An Enduring Legacy*. Vol. I-XII. Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, Salt Lake City, UT: Utah Printing Company, 1978. Also see: Interview with John Tanner Poole and his son J. Rulon Poole, by Harold Forbush, 25 June, 1870.

<sup>120</sup> Leonard J. Arrington, *History of Idaho* (Moscow, Idaho: University of Idaho Press, 1994), page 315.

<sup>121</sup> Interview with John Tanner Poole and his son J. Rulon Poole, by Harold Forbush, 25 June, 1870.

<sup>122</sup> Lawson, "John Rawlston Poole," *An Enduring Legacy*. Vol. I-XII. Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, 1978.

<sup>123</sup> Poole, *Ancestors of John Rawlston Poole*, page 1.

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<sup>124</sup> Lawson, "John Rawlston Poole," *An Enduring Legacy*. Vol. I-XII. Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, 1978.

<sup>125</sup> The neighborhood surrounding the Globe Hotel was in decline by this time. Newspaper articles published several years after the Pooles lost the hotel report an area where "the criminal element is on the increase and the tide of lawlessness is swelling. Scarcely a day passes, nowadays, but what we have the disagreeable duty of recording some open offenses against the law and some infringement upon the property or persons of citizens," noted *The Ogden Standard Examiner*, 6 November, 1882, which went on to report a mugging right outside the Globe Hotel. The Globe deteriorated into an establishment housing people down on their luck, transients, illicit lovers, and criminals on the run. See: *The Ogden Standard Examiner*, 1 December, 1882; 15 March, 1883; 18 July, 1883; 2 January, 1886.

<sup>126</sup> Dora G. Jensen, "A History of Jeanette Bleasdale Poole," June, 1968, typescript. Copy held by Shelley Dawson Davies.

<sup>127</sup> Jane lived near Main Street and 3600 East.

<sup>128</sup> Jeanette lived at today's address of 3674 East Menan Lorenzo Highway.

<sup>129</sup> Gwen Berrett Fillmore, Elaine Britton Poole and Fontella Bitton Spelts, editors, *Menan, Idaho 1879-1986* (self-published, 1986) page 381. Also see: Jensen, "A History of Jeanette Bleasdale Poole," June, 1968, typescript; and "John Rawlston Poole," unidentified, undated typescript; and Interview with John Tanner Poole and his son J. Rulon Poole, by Harold Forbush, 25 June, 1870.

<sup>130</sup> Jensen, "A History of Jeanette Bleasdale Poole," June, 1968, typescript.

<sup>131</sup> Interview with John Tanner Poole and his son J. Rulon Poole, by Harold Forbush, 25 June, 1870.

<sup>132</sup> Elaine Brinton Poole, *Ancestors of John Rawlston Poole* (self-published, 1989), page 101.

<sup>133</sup> Gwen Berrett Fillmore, Elaine Britton Poole and Fontella Bitton Spelts, editors, *Menan, Idaho 1879-1986* (self-published, 1986) page 380.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid*, page 13.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid*, page 379.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid*, page 380.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid*, page 12-13. Also see: "John Rawlston Poole," unidentified, undated typescript.

<sup>138</sup> Susana Poole Lawson, "John Rawlston Poole," *An Enduring Legacy*. Vol. I-XII. Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, Salt Lake City, UT: Utah Printing Company, 1978.

## Chapter 4

# Life in the Wilderness

### Trials and Tribulations



*Both church meetings and school classes were held in this log assembly hall, one of Menan's earliest buildings.*

When church leaders approved John's plan to settle the Snake River Valley, they also set him apart as presiding elder in the region. One of John's first acts during the summer of 1879 was to call together his neighboring Saints for Sunday services in a bowery specially constructed for the purpose. By the spring of 1881, settlers had been officially organized into the Cedar Butte Branch and a log meeting house was under construction.<sup>139</sup> Even though the building had a sod roof, John arranged to have lumber shipped in for a puncheon floor. In the meantime, many meetings were held in member's homes, with Harriett often entertaining visiting church authorities on their travels through the valley. It was often wondered how Harriet managed to set such a fine table with the scarcity of food,<sup>140</sup> but she succeeded in making a good impression for her husband in particular and the settlement in general.

Of necessity, other gatherings were held in private homes, as well. Jeanette volunteered to host the settlement's first dance in her home on the Fourth of July, 1880. She removed all of the carpets and furnishings to make room for the festivities, which included a late supper, since guests remained until the next morning when there was enough light to make their way home.

John opened a grammar school in the fall of 1881, assigning his daughter Susie to teach pupils in the completed log meeting house, followed by the organization of the women's Relief Society in 1882, which met in the same building. The community depended on the meeting house for every public gathering, and its loss by fire in February, 1883, not only destroyed the few available school books and church records, but left the settlers without a gathering place. School classes and church assemblies were temporarily moved to private homes again until a new meeting house could be constructed.

In December of 1882, President William B. Preston, presiding bishop of Cache Valley, visited Poole's Island with Thomas E. Ricks. John was asked to join the pair as they searched for a suitable spot to locate a new town. They finally settled on the present day site of Rexburg, seventeen miles north of Poole's Island. Rexburg soon became the main settlement of the area where church conferences were held several times a year. Attending these meetings was only accomplished with great sacrifice by the residents of Poole's Island. Jane's daughter Mary Ann recalled how difficult travelling to Rexburg was during high water. Her father "and the boys who were with him would unhitch the horses, take the wagon apart and take it across the river in a boat, swim the horses across, then take the family. They would reassemble the wagon and resume their journey. It would take most of the day to travel about seventeen miles."<sup>141</sup>

## A Fearful, Fatal accident

While life in the valley could be a struggle, nothing was more difficult for the Poole family than losing one of their own. Jane's twenty-two year old son Wyatt was working as a conductor on the Utah Northern Railroad on the evening of 9 June, 1882, when the freight train he was riding pulled into the Market Lake, Idaho, station, yielding to a passenger train. As the freight train put on steam and moved forward out of the station, Wyatt slipped while attempting to jump onto the cars, falling under the huge wheels. He was trapped under the car, and both of his legs were completely severed as he was dragged along the tracks. "The unfortunate young man was taken from under the machine, and all that could be done for his relief was done, but without avail—he died shortly afterwards," reported *The*

*Ogden Standard Examiner*. “We are sure that Mr. Poole and family have the sympathies of their numerous friends and former fellow citizens of this place in this sad and serious misfortune.”<sup>142</sup> Jane, who had now lost four of her children, mourned quietly while carried on for the sake of her remaining six.



*Left: John once said there was “no credit due him for not using tobaccos, because he tried it once and did not like it, but there was a lot of credit due him for not using alcohol as he tried it one time and liked it very much.” Right: Even though she lived in rural Idaho, Jeanette enjoyed wearing fashionable hats.*

## Domestic Life

The Poole wives remained as busy as ever with their families, each taking on added responsibilities in the community when needed. Jeanette served as Relief Society first counselor for thirteen years, during which she helped teach lessons and raise money for activities. Through the sale of eggs and donations of butter, carpet rugs, calico and even lead pencils, the ladies eventually paid \$300.00 for a city lot on which they built a granary to store donated wheat.<sup>143</sup>

Jeanette found many avenues for service as wife of the presiding elder of the church, but her most demanding duty was that of midwife, a calling she received from the church. After completing a short course in obstetrics in Salt Lake City, Jeanette attended every new mother in the country, assisting in the birth of 1,300 babies during the twenty years she served as a midwife.<sup>144</sup> She faced the swollen streams of



spring, the heat of the summer and the high, drifted snows of winter as she rode across the countryside. Driving across twenty-five miles of open country in a sleigh or wagon was a common occurrence for her, and when the weather prevented travel by buggy, Jeanette made her way on horseback.<sup>145</sup> “I can remember her great coat, fur boots, mittens and hood she kept always ready and no road was too bad or the weather too cold for her to fail to respond,” recalled grandson John H. Yearsley, who also remarked that since money was very scarce and her services were part of a church calling, Jeanette often wasn’t paid. “If Grandmother got two dollars for a baby, it was all she expected and more often she got less.”<sup>146</sup>

While Jeanette earned a reputation of compassion as a midwife, she could also be strict and disapproving, as she demonstrated when seventeen-year old Christina married against her parent’s wishes in April, 1885. Jeanette registered her disapproval by not only refusing to attend the wedding, but also denying her daughter a new dress to be married in.<sup>147</sup>



*John’s three wives in their later years: Jeanette, Jane and Harriett.*

## The Underground

John made friends easily as he traveled around Idaho with his freighting teams, even among those who professed to be anti-Mormon, according to granddaughter Aurella Poole. “Each time Grandfather arrived in Salmon a large group of men would gather around him and ask him all kinds of questions about other parts of the country. He seemed their connection with the outside world. The people of Salmon at that time were known to be ‘Mormon haters’ but during Grandfather’s conversations with them he managed to get in a lot of Mormonism without his audience realizing it. Dr. Wright told

me, 'He was the finest man I ever knew, even if he was a Mormon.' The other old-timers spoke equally well of him."<sup>148</sup> Unfortunately, no matter how many "gentile" friends John made, he was still subjected to the persecutions of anti-polygamists in the 1880s.

The LDS pioneers of southeastern Idaho maintained a close knit community which many other residents found to be cliquish at best, but it was the practice of polygamy which brought out anti-Mormon sentiments in force against the Saints. Thanks to legislation passed in 1884, Mormons were not allowed to vote, hold political office or serve on a jury. Polygamists were hunted down by U.S. Marshals who had the right to search their homes any time day or night. When arrested, men were thrown in jail for six months if "cohabitation" could be proved.<sup>149</sup> Those convicted were excused from serving their sentence if they promised to cut off contact with their plural wives, something John was not prepared to do. John said he had three wives, but only one family, refusing to abandon any of them<sup>150</sup>

For a while, John was able to evade the marshals thanks to warnings from a sympathetic judge in Eagle Rock who let him know when a raid was planned, but by February, 1887, the pressure was too great and John was forced to flee across the Utah border to avoid arrest.<sup>151</sup> He took freighting jobs in towns where he would not be recognized as a polygamist, sending money home to support his families. John missed his wives and children as much as they missed him, and he kept in touch as often as possible with letters. In a letter written to ten-year old Mary in July, 1888, John longed for the day when he could return to his home and live with his family in peace. "The greatest comfort, and I may say the only source of comfort, I have is I believe that I am kindly remembered at home and I am recognized and blessed by the Lord," he wrote. "It is simply useless, my Dear Child, for me to try to express the feelings of my heart. The joy and comfort afforded by reading you kind and loving letters is known to none but your Dear Old Father. I often read them with mingled feelings and tears of joy and sorrow."<sup>152</sup>

He reported some of his hardships by making light of them in an effort to reassure those at home that he was doing well, noting how he encountered a snow storm on the first of June while hauling with his team. "We had a fine snow storm and I had a special benefit. I was on the road to Salt Lake City and had a full benefit of it all. Then again on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> it gave us another fine snow storm followed by heavy frosts and hard freezing nights that made me think of Christmas. The weather now is quite warm and pleasant and the gnats, flies and mosquitoes are so thick that they are quarrelling among themselves for room in the canyon."<sup>153</sup>

John was resigned to his exile for the time being, knowing he would be jailed if he return, but he constantly hoped his homecoming would be soon. "If I could [come home] another Sabbath would not find me here. But I am today as a prisoner, but it is in the Lord, 'tis not that I have committed any crime for which I should be thus deprived of the right to go or come as I choose, but it is because the power of evil rule and govern the acts of men. That we may each and all of us as a family live to see the day for which we all anxiously wait and pray when we can all see and greet each other in joy and peace is the unceasing air and constant desire of the heart of an ever kind, loving Father, Rawlston."<sup>154</sup>

Jeanette, Jane and Harriet did the best they could without John, turning to their older sons to help run the farms. Mack (Reuben) and (Benton) Millburn lived with their mother Jeanette helping her farm the property, while Charlie and Ewalt lent their support on Jane's homestead. Harriet struggled the most, especially after the death of five-year old Hurbert<sup>155</sup> in 1885.

Pressures and persecutions against the church over polygamy were finally relived in 1890 when President Wilford Woodruff issued the Manifesto, a statement officially ending future plural marriages. Not only did the Manifesto allow Utah to become a state, but now John could return home to his families in Menan.

## ENDNOTES

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- <sup>139</sup> Gwen Berrett Fillmore, Elaine Britton Poole and Fontella Bitton Spelts, editors, *Menan, Idaho 1879-1986* (self-published, 1986) page 60.
- <sup>140</sup> Elaine Brinton Poole, *Ancestors of John Rawlston Poole* (self-published, 1989), page 101.
- <sup>141</sup> Fillmore, Poole and Spelts, editors, *Menan, Idaho 1879-1986*, page 407.
- <sup>142</sup> *The Ogden Standard Examiner*, 10 June, 1882.
- <sup>143</sup> Fillmore, Poole and Spelts, editors, *Menan, Idaho 1879-1986*, page 61. Also see: Dora G. Jensen, "A History of Jeanette Bleasdale Poole," June, 1968, typescript. Copy held by Shelley Dawson Davies.
- <sup>144</sup> John H. Yearsley, "Jeanette Blaisdell Poole," undated typescript. Copy held by Shelley Dawson Davies.
- <sup>145</sup> Jensen, "A History of Jeanette Bleasdale Poole," June, 1968, typescript.
- <sup>146</sup> Yearsley, "Jeanette Blaisdell Poole," undated typescript.
- <sup>147</sup> Poole, *Ancestors of John Rawlston Poole*, page 58.
- <sup>148</sup> *Ibid*, page 13.
- <sup>149</sup> Because Idaho had not laws against adultery, a man was allowed to cohabit with anyone like liked, including someone else's plural wife, as long he did not cohabit with more than one woman at a time. See: Merle W. Wells, "Law in the Service of Politics: Anti-Mormonism in Idaho Territory," *Idaho Yesterdays Volume 25, Spring, 1981* (Boise, Idaho: Idaho Historical Society, 1981), page 33-43.
- <sup>150</sup> Poole, *Ancestors of John Rawlston Poole*, page 79, 90.
- <sup>151</sup> Interview with John Tanner Poole and his son J. Rulon Poole, by Harold Forbush, 25 June, 1870. Transcript held by Shelley Dawson Davies.
- <sup>152</sup> Poole, *Ancestors of John Rawlston Poole*, page 90.
- <sup>153</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>154</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>155</sup> Hubert Bitton Poole (1880-1885), #KZVB-GX2, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)

## Chapter 6

# The End of Days

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### Final Release



*John's influence was instrumental in building Menan's grist and flour mill, seen here from the rear along Spring Creek.*

John was sixty-one years old by the time he returned home from Utah in 1890. The effects of life on the road were beginning to take their toll and John was never again very well. As time passed, his energy waned as he suffered bouts of indigestion and nausea, and he lost an alarming amount of weight. An examination by the local doctor revealed John had developed cancer of the stomach and he was advised to seek specialized treatment in Idaho Falls.

John took a room at the Graell Hotel, in the early part of September, 1894, where he stayed while waiting for surgery, but it soon became apparent his condition was past hope.<sup>156</sup> He prepared himself for the inevitable, writing a letter to son-in-law Tom Caldwell<sup>157</sup> in which he described his requests for funeral arrangements. "I wish my coffin to be made out of rough pine boards, red pine if possible, and line it to suit the taste," he wrote. "I wish to be buried in a full suit of temple clothes according to the priesthood that I hold." He also asked that his friend Brother Rigby preach the eulogy and requested his favorite hymns, "Oh My Father," "Nearer My God to Thee" and "Farewell All Earthly Honors."<sup>158</sup> John died alone at the Graell Hotel in the early morning hours of September 16, 1894. He was sixty-five.

His funeral was one of the largest gatherings ever assembled in the valley. Following his request, it was held in the cottonwood grove on Harriett's farm in Menan. The Menan Brass Band led the funeral procession, which was very impressive, according to grandson John T. Pool, who witnessed it as a child. "The funeral procession went from the Grove, where the funeral was held, to the Little Butte Cemetery. The band was leading, then came the horse drawn wagon with a white pine coffin followed by the mourners."<sup>159</sup> The procession ended at the Cedar Butte Cemetery in nearby Annis, where John was buried.

John was remembered as "a man of unusual energy" and "a public speaker of exceptional force and eloquence"<sup>160</sup> who had worked tirelessly for the benefit of his community. Perhaps his most important contribution was his success in lobbying for a grist mill to be built in Menan, ending the one hundred forty mile trip to Oxford, a journey which required ten days. The mill began operation 16 September, 1894, the day John was buried. Mary Poole Richardson mixed and baked bread from the first flour ground at the mill the very same day, a fitting tribute to John Rawlston Poole.<sup>161</sup>



*The Poole family plot at Little Butte Cemetery.*



*Jeanette's last portrait.*

## Life on Her Own

Although Jeannette would be a widow for another twenty-six years after John's death, her daily life didn't change very much. She had long since learned to manage her own affairs and live without her husband after forty-six years of polygamous marriage. Only her youngest child, twenty-three year old Milburn, was living at home by then, and he left for a mission the following year.<sup>162</sup> Jeanette supported both her son and the work of the Lord by milking cows, churning butter, and raising chickens. She delivered her butter, eggs and vegetables to customers throughout the countryside with an old mare she called Flora hitched to a buggy.<sup>163</sup>

When Milburn married in 1902, he and his bride made their home with Jeanette, who at the age of seventy-six years, decided she had worked long enough. She retired to her room, which was comfortably furnished with the walnut bedroom furniture she brought from Utah so long ago, and her dearly loved platform rocking chair. Milburn installed a little stove to keep the room warm all winter so Jeanette could piece quilts and knit lace for pillow slips in comfort. She also spent quite a bit of time reading in her later years. Many times her children or grandchildren found her laughing or sometimes crying, and on inquiring why, she would relate an incident she was reliving from a recently read book.<sup>164</sup>

A number of years passed by in this quiet way before Jeanette divided her property among her eight surviving children. She spent the remainder of her years living at the various homes of her five daughters in Menan and Rexburg.<sup>165</sup> Jeanette's grandchildren were

always thrilled when it was their turn to have Grandmother Poole stay with them. She had a lively sense of humor and the children liked to play little jokes on her. Thurza (Lawson) Smith remembered a time she tried to change her voice and said very formally, “Good morning Sister Poole, how are you today?” Jeanette chuckled and replied, “Now Thurza, I’d know your voice if I heard it in a mush pot.”<sup>166</sup> Dora (Green) Orstrom recalled how Grandmother Poole once walked unsteadily to the kitchen table where she asked for a dishtowel to help dry the dishes. The children wouldn’t have grandmother doing their chores, but when she pretended to cry, they handed her a towel.<sup>167</sup>

Jeanette remained exceptionally healthy until she neared the age of ninety. It was then she began to have periodic sick spells until her death five years later. She passed away in the early morning hours of 20 May, 1921, at Alices’s house in Menan.<sup>168</sup> So many family members and friends attended Jeanette’s funeral two days later the services were moved from the church to the amusement hall. She was buried beside her husband in the Little Butte Cemetery at Annis, Idaho.<sup>169</sup>



*Jeanette surrounded by her children. Back, left to right: Susanna, William, Mack, Rebecca. Center: Alice, Jeanette, Adaline. Front: Milburn, Christina.*





*Jane Bitton Poole*

## Passing On

Jane remained in her own home after John's death, near to most of her children and grandchildren. She became particularly close to her daughter Emily<sup>170</sup> during the terrible period between January, 1891, and February, 1892, when all of Emily's small children were taken by death. It began when six-year old Rosie<sup>171</sup> died 5 January, 1891, at Emily's Rexburg home. Just as Emily was starting to recover, five-year old Andrew<sup>172</sup> died on 21 February, followed several weeks later by two-year old Fannie,<sup>173</sup> leaving Emily childless. Emily gave birth to Rawlston<sup>174</sup> in September, but the little boy only lived for five months before he, too, passed away. Emily's own sudden death at the age of forty-eight in 1915 affected Jane so greatly her health began to fail and soon she was unable to live alone.

Jane's only surviving daughter Mary Ann invited her to join her household outside of Rexburg<sup>175</sup> where Jane was given her own room. She was happy there surrounded by the furniture from her old home and Mary Ann's seven children, who delighted in their grandmother's English accent. Jane's habit of putting an "h" in front of vowels and leaving it off from other words was often a source of entertainment. The family often laughed remembering the day Jane noticed a large bird, asking her son, "Hyrum, is that a awk (hawk), a howl (owl) or

an eagle?” Jane’s children occasionally teased her about her quaint expressions. When one day Jane asked Ewalt to “pass the sugar bowl,” he dumped the sugar out and passed her the empty bowl.<sup>176</sup>

Jane passed away on 23 July, 1921, at the age of eighty-five, only two months after Jeanette’s death. She was buried next to John and Jeanette in the Little Butte Cemetery.

Harriet spent her last years raising a second family. After his wife’s death in 1895, Walter<sup>177</sup> and his four children lived with Harriet for several years.<sup>178</sup> Herbert,<sup>179</sup> Myrle,<sup>180</sup> Emily<sup>181</sup> and Maggie<sup>182</sup> elected to remain with their grandmother after Walter’s remarriage. Harriet continued to live on her Menan farm until her death at the age of eighty-three on 27 November, 1929, aged eighty-three. She was buried in the family plot at Little Butte Cemetery.

## ENDNOTES

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<sup>156</sup> A post mortem examination discovered an enormous tumor weighing four and a half pounds. Elaine Brinton Poole, *Ancestors of John Rawlston Poole* (self-published, 1989), page 13.

<sup>157</sup> John Thomas Caldwell (1847-1927), #K2WH-ZHL, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) Tom was married Jeanette’s daughter Alice.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>159</sup> Ruth Thomblinson Shippen, “Music in Menan,” undated typescript. Copy held by Shelley Dawson Davies.

<sup>160</sup> Susanna Poole Lawson, “John Rawlston Poole,” *An Enduring Legacy*. Vol. I-XII. Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, Salt Lake City, UT: Utah Printing Company, 1978.

<sup>161</sup> Interview with John Tanner Poole (grandson of John Rawlston Poole) and his son J. Rulon Poole, by Harold Forbush, 25 June, 1970. Transcript held by Shelley Dawson Davies.

<sup>162</sup> “Missionary Experiences of Milburn Benton Poole as told by his Missionary Companion Albert Lorenzo Cullimore,” Milburn Benton Poole, #KWDC-3YF, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)

<sup>163</sup> Dora G. Jensen, “A History of Jeanette Bleasdale Poole,” June, 1968, typescript. Copy held by Shelley Dawson Davies.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*

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- <sup>170</sup> Emily Cordelia (Poole) Anderson (1867-1915), #K2H4-VL5, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>171</sup> Emily Roseltha Anderson (1885-1891), #K27T-3ZN, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>172</sup> Andrew Wyatt Anderson (1887-1891), #LZ5L-PQ5, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>173</sup> Fannie May Anderson (1889-1891), #L65F-X7D, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>174</sup> Rawlston Poole Anderson (1891-1892), #K27T-HLC, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>175</sup> Jane moved with the Roberts family when they relocated to Idaho Falls. See: William Richardson household, 1920 U.S. census, Bonneville County, Idaho, town of Idaho Falls, Roll: T625\_289; Page: 6A; Enumeration District: 100; Image: 678, [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)
- <sup>176</sup> Poole, *Ancestors of John Rawlston Poole*, page 79.
- <sup>177</sup> John Walter Poole (1866-1923), #LCZB-YTM, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>178</sup> Harriet Poole household, 1900 U.S. census, Fremont County, Idaho, town of Menan, Roll: 232; Page: 3B; Enumeration District: 0054; FHL microfilm: 1240232, [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)
- <sup>179</sup> Herbert Walter Poole (1888-1965), #K2H4-VGV, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>180</sup> Myrle (Poole) Hadley (1891-1972), #K2MQ-H3J, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>181</sup> Emily (Poole) Hart (1893-1958), #K2Q6-15S, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- <sup>182</sup> Maggie Poole (1895-1961), #KCF2-18F, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)

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# INDEX

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