

WILLIAM JACKSON JOLLEY, SR. AND SEREPTA CURTIS JOLLEY

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by Jessie Jolley Terry

William Jackson Jolley Sr. was born in Weakley Co. Tennessee, the eldest son of Reuben and Sarah Pippin Jolley. When his parents joined the Church in 1842, he too was baptized and accompanied them to Nauvoo. He helped wherever he could in making a living, working on the Temple and fighting mobs.

When the saints were driven from Nauvoo in 1846, they went to Iowa just before they left for Utah. William married Serepta Curtis, a daughter of Gardner and Merie Dunn Curtis. The wedding took place in Pottawattamie Co., Iowa. William and Serepta made the trip across the plains with Williams mother and his eight brothers and sisters. His grandfather, who was already in Utah, met them and President Brigham Young sent them all to settle Pleasant Grove which was their first home.

They were young and loved to dance and William was the best foot racer in the country. But there was so much work to be done. . . they had to have some kind of a home to live in, ground to break, crops to plant and harvest. The Indians were also giving them a bad time. William was wounded while on a scouting trip. When Serepta heard that he had been shot she started out on foot with her baby in her arms to go to him. There was only one man in the whole valley that dared go with her (Edward Koyle). They found him and were able to bring him home alive. He recovered but his right arm was always stiff.

They had a lot of different homes in the next few years. One child was born in Palmyra, one in Springville, three were born after they went to Dixie in Leeds, Washington Co., and one in Parowan, Iron Co. From there they moved to Kane County where they settled the little town of Mt. Carmel. They were doing well there when the Indians really went on the warpath. One time when William and his son William were hiding in a dugout, the Indians knew they were there so they put a lot of limbs and bark against the door preparing to smoke them out, when one of the Indians got trigger happy and fired one shot through the door and hit a bucket that was setting on a box. It knocked the bucket off and made so much noise that it frightened the Indians away, and their lives were saved.

They felt they would have to go where there were more people, so they went back to Dixie where others of the Jolley family were still living.

In 1871 the Indians had either gone away or at least quieted down, so they went back to Mt. Carmel to reclaim their farms. William learned the Indian language and did a lot to keep peace with them.

For several years the Jolleys prospered; their children married and made their homes nearby. They soon had large herds of both cattle and keep and the land yielded abundantly. William had a nursery and supplied all the new pioneers with young fruit trees. He was also the Postmaster and the Presiding Elder of their branch of the Orderville Ward. He loved to sing and

was the branch Chorister for years.

They raised eleven children and have a large posterity.

Serepta, who was loved by all who knew her, was a wonderful woman, kind and generous. She died in 1889 and was buried in the Mt. Carmel Cemetery. It was about this time that the worst drought and depression in history started. Their cattle and sheep died, whole herds of them. All of the young people were going away in all directions. William was too old to move again, so he remained. He was able to add enough money to the emigration fund to have a lady (Beanie Iptson) from Denmark come to Mt. Carmel. They were married and raised a boy, Olef Jensen, whom she brought with her. He grew up to be a fine man. Beanie was a good woman and was sweet and kind to William. She did not live long after he passed away. He died July 1905.

JUSTICE COURT

In the early days of Mount Carmel all offenses and misdemeanors were handled by Bishops' Courts. All cases were judged from a religious point of view. In the absence of a civil code, the Bishopric tried to deal out judgment, often informally.

The accused were cross-examined by the Bishop and the accuser. Justice and fairness were the guide lines. Punishment often required the guilty to ask forgiveness, and restitution was necessary in cases of theft or damages. In more serious cases the person was required to be rebaptized and occasionally the accused was disfellowshipped or excommunicated from the Church.

When the Justice of the Peace office was created, the Judge often handled his cases similar to the Bishop. As the communities grew and non-church members moved in, cases could not very well be handled by the Bishop. There were Indian offenses and offenses by the people traveling through the communities. These cases were properly handled by the Justice Court.

Uncle William Jackson Jolley was the Justice of the Peace at Mount Carmel for many years. When the county was organized, a sheriff was elected and law enforcement began.

On one occasion an Indian was accused of stealing. Uncle William was disciplining him with words rather than punishment. Apparently the Indian couldn't get a word in during the lecturing of Uncle William. Finally, Frank, the Indian, tapped Uncle William on the shoulder and said, "Hey, Jolley, let me talk."

On another occasion a man had killed his neighbor's dog. During the trial Uncle William asked "Well, Mr. Jones, how much was your dog worth?" The answer was "Well my dog was worth nothing. He was valueless, but since my neighbor has been so mean as to kill him, I am going to charge him full value."

Source: "The Jolley Family Book" by Bryant Manning Jolley and Committee, with contributions from family members. BYU press 1966.