

BIOGRAPHY OF JACOBINIA WILLS OSBORNE PATON

by her grandson, Sylvester Low, Jr.

Revised 1976 by A. J. Burnside, great-grand-daughter



Jacobinia Wills Osborne

“Without a tender reverence for the Past it is not possible to be entirely worthy of the Present,” so wrote Miss Francis L. Schaeffer. To venerate those who have lived in former times, who won blessings for us by their sacrifices who made our very life on earth possible we must come to know them intimately through the facts of their biographies that have been preserved.

The subject of this Biography, Jacobinia Wills Osborne Paton was born on the 15th day of May, 1813 at Hillockside, Ochiltree, Ayr[shire], Scotland. She was the daughter of Robert Osborne and Margaret Jamison. Only her birth date and place and the names of her parents are the only recorded items we have of her early life. The facts, herein stated, have been taken from events that occurred during her mature life.

She must have received rigorous training to prepare her for the experiences [and] vicissitudes of Pioneer Life. She was a woman of sterling qualities, fearless, and undaunted, staunch and full of faith, also, blessed a great amount of “Scotch determination and independence”.

She married James Paton on the 1st of February, 1840, at Hillockside, Ayr[shire], Scotland. James Paton was a clock maker by trade and was born on April 1, 1811, at Galston, Ayr[shire] Scotland. He was the son of John Paton and Ann Allan.

Eight children were born to James and Jacobinia through the years of 1840-1852.¹ They resided at Galston, Dalkeith, Kilmornock, and Irvine, Scotland according to the records.

James and Jacobinia [her baptism date: 1 Sep] had embraced the gospel of Jesus Christ in 1843. He was one of the first Elders ordained by Wilford Woodruff and George Q. Cannon who were the

¹ Margaret, Nov 1840; Ann Allan, 29 Oct 1842; John 15 May 1844; Robert 13 Apr 1847; James Osborne 13 May 1848; Janet Sophia Kelsey 9 Jul 1849; Joseph Eli 18 Dec 1850; Jean Jacobinia 5 May 1852.

missionaries in Great Britain at the time. They began to get ready to embark for Zion. They had all preparations made and were ready to sail when James, the husband and father, was afflicted by what was called the "White Plaque".² He died at Irvine, Ayr[shire], Scotland.³ Also six of their children died. Child #2, Ann and child #5, James O. were the only children left. The family's money had to be used for burial expenses, so the Widow had to plan again. We haven't any records of the means by which she worked and saved again, but she did, only to have her funds used for some other purpose by a dishonest Elder. Jacobinia didn't give-up, she set out again to gather means to get her children and self to Zion.

At this time she met with much opposition from her own family. Her sisters tried to prevent her from leaving Scotland. At one time they locked her in a room "until she came to her senses". Somehow she got out of the room and the sisters then resorted to physical force to hold her. It is recorded that she got away, somehow, ran down the street, her hair flying and her clothes torn, her brother⁴ stopped her. He said "Law, Bina, have you gone daft?" He promised her protection but she declined as the "protection" had strings attached—"she must give up her religion." She was refused her share of the family's inheritance.

On April 20th, 1855, Jacobinia and her two children, Ann, age 13 years and James O, age 7 years set sail from Liverpool on the ship, the "Samuel Curling". One month later they landed in New York.

Sailing on the same vessel was Sylvester Low, a young Scottish lad that had been "kicked out of his father's home for joining that 'awful sect', the Mormons." He was all alone and bound for Zion. In his loneliness he offered his services to others and so he offered to help the Widow and children with their luggage and many other chores that needed to be cared for. He truly believed in "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you." Jacobinia's heart went out to this young man and made him a promise that when the time came he would have her daughter, Ann, for a wife. She said she had seen him in a dream before she left Scotland.⁵

The emigrants traveled by rail from New York to Pittsburgh, and then continued on by boat, on the Ohio River, to St. Lewis, Missouri. Here the young Sylvester had to stop as his money had run out. So he was obliged to get employment to gain funds to continue on to Salt lake City, Utah.

Jacobinia and her children continued on by boat to Atchison, Kansas. Here they joined the Milo Andrus Company for the trek West. Their luggage was placed in a wagon and they were to walk, as none but the sick or crippled were to ride.

So their trek over the plains began. She was not only a mother, but a father, protector and a guardian, armed with faith. Not only for her own did she serve, but to many who were sick, destitute and helpless. She was a strong and healthy woman and offered help where needed.

On one occasion when the Company was crossing the Platte River, Jacobinia carried many sick or

² The "white Plaque" also some times called consumption is tuberculosis. It was a scourge in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

³ 28 April 1853.

⁴ This could be Robert, the only other sibling we have record of. We have no record of the sisters.

⁵ Sylvester did become her son-in-law when he wed Annie.

helpless across the River on her back, making many trips and when Capt. Andrus tried to stop her, she brushed him aside and continued until all were safely across.

There were births and deaths in the company, at which she ministered comfort and aid. She cared for the Widows, Widowers, and Orphans, for which her own life had schooled and prepared her. She had days of hunger and thirst, days of blistered aching feet, and bone aching with weariness.

The company plodded on until they came to the valley. They arrived in Salt Lake City on the 28th of October, 1855, six months and 4 days from Liverpool to Salt Lake City, Utah.

Soon after Jacobinia arrived in Salt Lake City, Bishop Christopher Williams sought her hand in marriage to fill the place of a helpmate, indeed, for Bishop Williams already had a wife—this is the story.

Christopher Williams and wife and 5 of 7 children arrived in Salt Lake in 1847. Brother Williams became the first Bishop of the Third Ward, also, his wife passed away and he was left alone to care for the family. Members of the Church sought and accepted the advise of Pres. Brigham Young in almost all matters at that time.

A widowed Swiss Convert had appealed to Pres. Young to Marry her, as she was destitute and alone. Pres. Young knew that Bishop Williams was also alone and needed help so Bishop Williams was called in by Pres. Young and advised to marry this Swiss Widow, which he did.

At the time Bishop Williams sought Jacobinia in marriage, his little Swiss Gretchin was a helpless invalid, having become afflicted with a sore affliction. The Bishop was sorely in need of help.

Jacobinia and Bishop Williams were married in 1856 by Bishop Everett of the 8th Ward. They had one child, a daughter, Millicent, born to them the 12th of Sept., 1857, at that time [the] Bishop was 68 and Jacobinia 44 years of age.

Jacobinia was a good wife and helpmate and many outside of the home called for her to come and nurse, which she did willingly, without any thought of pay.

When the wife, 'Gretchin' died, the household cares and duties were less burdensome, but not for long though, as old-age was creeping up on the Bishop.

The years of 1856-1857 were hard times for the Pioneers. Food was very scarce as the "grasshoppers" had devoured most of the crops. Many destitute people came to the Bishop Williams home asking for aid. Each time, the flour bin was dusted clean and the contents shared, only to have more flour found in the clean barrel the next time flour was needed.

Jacobinia would go to Pioneer Square and meet the new Emigrant Arrivals in Salt Lake. She took food to share with them and offered each one a "hearty" warm welcome. She took Orphans back to the William's home to live until they either found work or homes for themselves. Many called her blessed and said she was truly a friend in time of need.

The home of Bishop Williams as on the corner of 1st East and 7th South, there was, also, some farm

⁶ Sounds like an arranged marriage. But one that would help everyone.

land near by. In 1858, when order came from Pres. Young, for the Saints to move sought, the Williamsses filled the house with straw read to burn and left. Later a frame home which was more commodious was built.

Jacobinia had to accept the burden of running the farm as well as the house, as old-age had caught up with the Bishop. He had a paralytic stroke and for the rest of his life he had to be cared for. For a very short spell he was able to get about some on crutches but could do nothing in the way of labor.

Finally the farm had to be rented out, but Jacobinia chose to keep the cows. She went about and set up a "milk route." Millicent would deliver the milk which was carried in a covered bucket and then measured into the patron's container at his door. They did well with the established business.

Jacobinia's grandson, Sylvester Low, Jr.⁷ told about staying with his grandmother and Aunt in Salt lake for one year. He said "they put up with him", but he assisted herding the cows in the summer doing shores each day and helped some with the milk delivery.

In 1873 Bishop Williams died and Jacobinia was once again, a widow. She got along well and cared for herself and her daughter. In due time she had a new home built that was more comfortable. She prospered and for the last 9 years of her life she was blessed with sufficient income so she could devote "all of her time" to the Church and charitable duties.

Her daughter Millicent was married to Joseph Golightly of Salt Lake City, on 18th November, 1877, three days later the Golightlys moved to Cache Valley, settling at Preston, Idaho, and the mother was left alone.⁸

Jacobinia gave up her milk route and sold the farm and retired from "hard work", but she did not close her Church activities until some time later when she was unable to walk without the aid of a cane.

She often visited her daughters, Annie in Smithfield and Millicent at Preston.

While on a visit to Annie's home in 1882, she was stricken with a fatal illness and passed peacefully away the 27th of April, 1882 (age 69). Her body was shipped to Salt Lake City and laid to rest in the Family Plot D, Block 6, Lot 2 East Road.

Note:

This history was transcribed by Robert J Burnside from hand written pages in 2008. Anything in brackets [] was added by me as are the footnotes.

⁷ This is the son of Sylvester Low and Jacobinia's daughter Annie who were married 28 February 1858, in the Endowment House.

⁸ The records indicates that James O. married Rachel Ann Hall, 5 Feb 1880 in the endowment house. They had six children, all born after Jacobinia's death. Where he is during this time is unknown. He died 5 Jan 1910 in Preston, Franklin, Idaho.