JANE ELIZA WOOLF BATES
1873-1951

“Janey” was born 8 Aug. 1873, in Hyde Park, Cache County, Utah, the 4th child and 2nd daughter of John Anthony Woolf II and Mary Lucretia Hyde. On 18 Aug. 1873, she was blessed and given the name of Jane Eliza Woolf by her great uncle, Charles Walker Hyde. Her father, John Anthony Woolf II, was the son of John Anthony and Sarah Ann DeVoe Woolf, who were converts to the Church from Pelham, Westchester, New York.

The farm on which they lived in Nauvoo adjoined that of the Prophet Joseph Smith. As a small child, John once became very ill and was given a blessing by their friend and neighbor, the Prophet. When the Saints were forced to leave Nauvoo, he, with his parents and 6 other children, spent the winter in a log shack at Winter Quarters. In the spring they started west in Captain Edward Hunter’s Co. Although only 4 ½ years old, he often walked with his brothers to help drive the cattle. With his father’s family, he helped settle Iron County, Mona and Nephi, Utah. In 1861 they moved to Hyde Park and helped pioneer the country and subdue the Indian troubles there. In 1866 he married Mary Lucretia Hyde, daughter of William Hyde & Elizabeth Howe Bullard.

In 1834 William and others members of his father’s family heard the gospel and were baptized. The family then moved from the state of New York to Kirtland, Ohio, in 1836, and to Nauvoo, Illinois, in 1841. William Hyde and Elizabeth Howe Bullard were married in Feb. 1842 by Heber C. Kimball and sealed 19 Jan. 1846. William assisted in the building of the Nauvoo Temple. After their forced evacuation from Nauvoo, and upon their arrival in Council Bluffs, Iowa, William joined the Mormon Battalion. Following the long trek of the Battalion, he returned emaciated and unrecognizable to his family in 1847. The following year on 23 Dec. 1848, their daughter, Mary Lucretia Hyde, was born. Such was the goodly stock from which Janey had come.

As a young girl she was given an allowance—one half dozen eggs each week, if the hens were laying well. This precious allowance went immediately to the store where it was traded for needles or thread. These items were scarce and hard to come by and she knew of the need her mother had for such things. Every 4th week she saved enough to pay her tithing.

Janey attended school in Hyde Park and each day as she returned home to knit ten rounds on her stockings before she could go to play. It is no wonder she did such beautiful knitting and other handwork, as her mother was an excellent teacher, and she practiced at it often.

Had tomatoes been poisonous, as many of that day thought, Janey never would have made it to bring home a pail of tiny, ripe tomatoes for pickles or sauces. Of course, everyone knew that cooked tomatoes were not harmful. But Janey found out at an early age that uncooked ones would not hurt either, as the look of those luscious small red globes proved too much of a temptation and she refreshed herself with some of the ripest on her way home.

When she was 13, Jeney, her parents, and brothers and sister emigrated to Canada where Charles Ora Card had been sent to find a place suitable for a settlement. They arrived at Lee’s Creek on 3 June 1887, and Jane was old enough to remember many of the good experiences that happened along the way. She often spoke of the day her mother and some of the women were washing their clothes at one of the rivers by which they had camped. Suddenly a huge boulder came bounding down the hillside and into the river missing the women by only a few feet. They knew it was the hand of the Lord that had preserved them, and gave thanks to Him for their
safekeeping.

When they reached the St. Mary’s River with only a few miles to go, they found the river swollen and impossible to cross. The Mounties, on the far bank of the river, cautioned them against trying to cross and said it would probably be several days before the waters would recede enough for them to make it safely across. That night as they all knelt in prayer, they asked the Lord’s help in crossing the turbulent river. During the night the rain stopped and a hard freeze came so that when morning arrived the waters had lowered enough for them to cross. The Mounties were dumbfounded and said they had never seen anything like it before.

To help celebrate the 4th of July in their new home, they made homemade ice cream, putting to good use the snow still left along the bank of the creek.

In September of that year another group of pioneers arrived, and as Janey once said to her children, “Little did I know when I waved my handkerchief to them as they came over the hill that I was waving to your father also.”

Janey was 14 years old 8 Aug. But with the responsibilities of pioneer life was maturing fast, and it was at this time she was called as a missionary by Pres. Card to teach the first school in Cardston. Books were plentiful, but whatever books were to be found among the settlers were used to further the education of the 17 young people who attended. The pupils were seated on rough hand-hewn benches, and several of the students were older than she. As her mother said in a letter to her mother, “Though she is only 14 in a few days, Brother Card has called her to teach the first school beginning in September. She has always been good at her studies and will get along all right teaching the children.” Janey served in this capacity for 3 years.

Janey loved riding horseback. She rode like a boy and could ride for miles without tiring. The prairie grass reached as high as the stirrups and many times, after she had dismounted to examine wild flowers or search with interest along the creek banks, she would pile up buffalo skulls to help her remount.

Vegetables grew to a tremendous size in the lush, new soil and she spoke of sitting on top of one turnip while she cut the top off another and scraped out its delicious goodness with a spoon. Jane became secretary of the Y.L.M.I.A. beginning in the winter of 1888-1889. She loved amateur dramatics and often took part on programs with her “readings”, at which she was very good and was often called upon for an encore.

She served as secretary of the Sunday School for 4 years until 5 Sep. 1892.

During this time she had not gone unnoticed by the young men in the settlement. Young Ern Bates, who had arrived in the fall of 1887, had the inside track. Perhaps it was the fine white china hen (now in the possession of Jane’s daughter, Roberts Bates Wiener) he had given her for her 16 birthday, on 8 Sep. 1890, Jane Eliza Woolf and Ormus Ernest Bates were married by her father, Bishop John A. Woolf, at Cardston, Alberta. Later on, in April 1893, they received their endowments and were sealed in the Logan Temple.

On 26 March 1892, Jane gave birth to their first child, a girl given the name of Ada Jane. 9 more healthy children blessed this marriage: Ormus Ernest, born 28 March 1894; June Lillian, born 2 Nov. 1895; John Orville, born 20 Dec 1897; Leland Woolf, born 18 June 1900; Hugh Molen, born 12 Feb. 1903; Wanda Lisle, born 24 July 1905; Grace Byrdene, born 23 April 1909; Roberta Mildred, born 7 Jan. 1913; Frances Garry, born 17 March 1918.

Besides raising a large family, Jane kept busy in other ways. Beginning 3 Nov. 1892, she served as secretary in the ward Relief Society, then in 1894 was appointed secretary in the Alberta Stake Relief Society, called and set apart by Pres. Card.
20 April 1920, she was chosen as first counselor to stake Relief Society president, Annie D. Snow, then became president of the Alberta Stake Relief Society 1 Nov. 1923. She was sustained to the fullest by her husband, Ern, who with the help of the older children, managed to take care of the home and family should it be necessary for her to be away from home overnight. The wards were scattered far apart in those years and she, with the brethren, often wrapped in buffalo robes and with her rocks to keep their feet warm, traveled to the outlying areas to visit the saints.

While attending a Union Meeting 22 Aug 1928, she caught her foot on a step and fell, breaking her ankle. She was released as Stake Relief Society president 4 Feb. 1929, because of ill health, but served as literary class leader of the Cardston 2nd Ward during 1929-30.

Jane excelled in needlework and often took prizes at the fair for her handwork as well as canned fruits and vegetables. She embroidered beautifully and also tatted, crocheted, quilted and knitted. She was never too busy to teach these arts when anyone expressed an interest. When her daughter, Roberts, first showed in interest in darning, Jane said, “Sit right down here by me and make your needle go in and out like this. Keep it smooth so it won’t make blisters on the heel.” Roberts says, “When I wanted to learn to crochet, Mother handed me a book, suggested I pick a pattern, and then gave me a hook and a ball of thread. She didn’t tell me the pattern I had picked was very difficult for a beginner and would take many hours to finish, but she started me out and encouraged me every inch of the way. Her motto was, ‘Anything worth doing is worth doing well,’ and I often had to take out mistakes and remake a particular part of a pattern. To this day I cannot make a mistake in my handwork without thinking of her, and the mistake comes out and I begin again.”

Jane was a wonderful cook and set a good and plentiful table. She canned great quantities of vegetables, which her husband provided from his excellent garden. Jars of corn, peas, beans, tomatoes, pickles, relishes, jams, jellies, wild fruits and fruits shipped in, five-gallon jars of eggs in water-glass. Jars of chicken and meat and anything else preserveable. There were also big tubs of vegetables that had to be brought in before frost and made into pickles. There were cabbages that wouldn’t fit into the root cellar with the cabbages, potatoes, carrots, turnips and squash, which had to be grated and pounded and salted and put in large crocks to become delicious sauerkraut in time. It was from this plentiful store that she often took to help others less fortunate.

Roberta remembers sitting on the kitchen stool cutting raisins for the Christmas cake that was made just before Thanksgiving. This would give it time to “set” and let all of its delicious goodness permeate into one luscious, mouth watering cake.

About a year after Ern’s death in 1934, Jane had another bad fall which broke her right leg just above the knee. It healed beautifully and the doctors and nurses couldn’t understand how it had healed so quickly. But Jane knew. Hadn’t she been administered to by the priesthood? The break, however, left her with a stiff knee so that she was never able to walk again without a crutch or a cane.

Jane still wasn’t down and out. She loved poetry and enjoyed writing it, too. She had tremendous memory and because of this and the many notes she had kept, was persuaded to commence writing the history of Cardston.

As the younger children were married and left home, they tried to persuade her to give up her home and live with them, but this she refused to do. She was very independent and did not want to feel that she was a “burden” on anyone.
“But Mother,” they questioned one day, “don’t you ever get lonely here by yourself?”
“Sometimes,” came the reply. “Then what do you do?”
“I sing.” Surely the angels of heaven must have sung with her. How could they help
joining with such a great spirit as hers? She loved flowers and always had beautiful flowers
surrounding her home. In later years, she couldn’t get down to pull out the weeds, so used the
end of her cane or crutch to root out the offenders. One day as she was engaged in this task she
took a tumble. She had no broken bones, just a few bruises. Pres. Edward J. Wood visited her in
the hospital. “Well, Jane, are you ready to go?” he asked. “Yes, “ was the reply, “but I would
have liked to have finished my history first.” Janey died peacefully in her sleep 26 July 1951,
just 12 days before her 78 birthday.

At her funeral, Sterling Williams, who was one of Cardston’s first pioneers, said “Now
what is her life’s monument? The greatest monument Sister Bates left is her 10 children to
whom she gave birth–She had 37 grandchildren (33 are still living) and 19 great grandchildren.
Her posterity must be the greatest monument she has left behind her. All of her life Janey served
the Lord–as a mother, a good neighbor and friend of the poor, and in her many services to the
Church.

Surely the Lord did say, “Come, thou blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom
prepared for you from the foundation of the world–(Matt. 25:34).
The following poem written by Janey was set to the music of a familiar song and sung at her
funeral.

The Autumn days are robed in royal splendor,
The glow of nature all around I see.
My heart responds in joyous, sweet surrender.
To all the bliss of mingled harmony.
When Winter comes, I still will have a feeling
Of gratitude, because my eyes have seen
The grandeur of the earth, and o’er one stealing
Come memories to make my soul serene.
Oh, may I be attuned in generous measure,
To all the beauties of the earth and sky;
The memory of these I still shall treasure
When I have reached my Heavenly Home on high.
When Winter comes and earthly joys are passing,
And I’m preparing for the life to be,
May my soul be in harmony that’s lasting,
To share the glories of Eternity.

Jane Eliza Woolf Bates

History by Roberta Bates Wiener, Daughter

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