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Avery

Re: Maria Jane Johnston Woodward Smith

The following is a compilation of information I got through telephone conversations of two of Maria Jane's descendents: Roselyn W. Slade, 460 East 1st North, Kaysville, Utah, 84037 (376-3835,) and Bea Mendenhall Jensen, Magna, Utah (250-7129.) The two women are cousins and are both in their early 60s.

Maria Jane Johnston was born March 24, 1827 to Oliver Campbell Johnston and Hannah Hall Buckley in Wartrace Creek, Wilson County, Tenn. She joined the church as a teen ~~age~~ and her family disowned her for doing so. She left her home in Tenn. with the elders who had converted ^(one was Alonzo L. Young) her and traveled to Nauvoo with them. They walked part of the way but went most of the distance by mule. This was about 1841 when Maria Jane was about 17 years old. Roselyn Slade indicated that she went to live with the Joseph and Emma almost immediatly but Bea's information suggests that she lived in the Mansion as a hired girl for three years until her marriage to George Washington Johnson (a brother to B. F. Johnson) on February 7, 1846. Either way, she would have been in the mansion during 1844. Her children passed down stories she had told them of her life in the Mansion. They say that she was always treated most kindly by Emma and Joseph and part of her responsibility was to help care for the younger children. She said she knew Joseph had his endowments and wore the garment of the priesthood because the girl who did the wash showed them to her (could this have been Jane Manning James? LKN.) Joseph set her apart as a midwife which became her life work. After Maria Jane married George W. Johnson ~~they~~ became temple workers in the Nauvoo temple and

stayed on after many of the others had left for the west. They stayed to help with the endowments of those who went later.

Maria Jane had children by Johnson but he took another wife without telling her which hurt her deeply. Maria was somewhat quiet and shy and, according to family tradition, the new wife was quite unkind to her. She finally left Johnson. Roselyn said there was never a divorce but Bea said they were divorced. In any case Maria Jane married James J. Woodward and had children by him. Later she married again (Roselyn says without obtaining a divorce) to Patriarch John Smith.

Both Roselyn and Bea told me about another relative--an uncle I believe-- named Rolo Johnson. He is now dead but was an avid genealogist and family historian. He lived in Reno and his family are not active in the church--some seem antagonistic. Bea said all his papers and documents are locked in a room and the family does not go in there. His son Max K. Johnson of Reno (702-825-4766) has possession of the papers.

Bea's mother has four sisters still living in Huntington, Utah. They are: Mildred Johnson, ⁽⁶⁵⁻⁹⁰⁷³⁾ age 76 who never married but is the family "keeper of the documents" and has all the original family papers--at least most of them; (Jane kept a diary for a time--she did not learn to read or write until she came to Utah--and also wrote a short history. Bea thinks her Aunt Mildred has one of those and Max Johnson the other.) Mrs. Phineas (Dean) Cook, age 74; Mrs. Alvin (Margaret) Young, age 97 and a bit senile; and Mrs. Tilman (Norma) Woolsey. Tilman Woolsey's first wife was my own mother's sister, Mildred Morrell. She divorced him when ^{their children} Donald, Sharon, Milton, and Warren were small because he had a violent temper and beat her. Norma is about 82.