

Biography of Sage Treharne (1832-1897)



Sage Treharne was born in the parish of Llangendyrne, Carmarthen, Wales on 27 November 1832. When she was about 12 years old, Eliaser Edwards and Abel Evans, missionaries of the LDS Church came to that village to preach their religion. Sage's mother and father were unable to attend the meeting set up by these missionaries, so they sent their daughter Jane, who was 16, to the meeting to find out what the teachings of the LDS Church were. When Jane returned home and related to her parents what she had seen and heard, her father clapped his hands on his knees and said, "That is the Gospel I have been looking for, for years." The following day the missionaries left the village,

and the Treharne family did not hear any more about the LDS Church until 1847, three years later. At that time missionaries came again to their vicinity and the entire family went this time to hear them preach, and all were completely converted. Soon they were baptized; William and Ann Treharne left Wales in 1849 bound for America with their five children, Mary, Jane, Sarah, Sage, and William. They crossed the ocean in a sailing ship named the Buena Vista leaving Liverpool 25 February 1849, under the direction of Elder Dan Jones. Their destination was New Orleans, Louisiana. After their arrival the Treharne family took a river boat up the Mississippi River to Council Bluffs, or Kanesville. After a short time, cholera broke out, and during the trip, some hundred persons died and were buried on the banks of the Mississippi River. Sage's mother, Ann Richards Treharne, was one of the unfortunate persons to contract this dreaded disease and passed away.

When the rest of the Treharne family reached Kanesville, they found that they did not have enough money to continue their journey to Utah, so the father and the older children found what work they could so that they could save enough money to travel on. However, soon Sage's father contracted cholera and died, leaving his children to fare for themselves. Sage went to keep house and care for the four children of Samuel Leigh whose wife had died of cholera. Brother Leigh married Sage's sister, Mary, so Sage went to work for a man by the name of MacGinnis, who taught at an Indian school. Later Sage cared for the Evans Greene family who were afflicted with smallpox. They were kind to her, and she and the family became very attached, so when they were able to travel on to Utah, Sage went with them. While living in Kanesville, Sage had met Thomas Jones and they became very interested in each other and agreed to be married when they arrived in Utah. Thomas left Kanesville a little over a year before Sage did,

and just a few weeks after Sage arrived in the Valley, the couple was married, on 28 October 1852.

Sage and Thomas had barely become used to married life when a call came from Brigham Young for masons and other workmen to go from Salt Lake City to work on the State House being built in Fillmore. Thomas assisted in laying the stone and worked there for some time. In 1853 he and Sage moved to Palmyra, or Spanish Fork, to help establish a settlement there. Their first child, Alma Treharne Jones was born there 21 August 1853. Soon Thomas and Sage moved again, this time to Cedar City, Utah where they lived in the "Old Fort." Perhaps Thomas thought his experience in the coal mines of Wales could be put to use better there where an iron works was being established. Thomas worked diligently with the Deseret Iron Company in the attempt to produce iron, but the company was faced with many setbacks and finally failed; Thomas lost almost all of his wages.

Thomas and Sage's second child, Lehi Willard Jones, was born in the "Old Fort" 15 November 1854. A third son, Kumen Jones, was born 5 May 1856. Their first son, Alma, was kicked in the stomach by an ox and died at the age of four in 1857.

Probably in the summer of 1855 or 1856, Thomas was called to help build a fort at Las Vegas as an outpost on the Old Spanish Trail. It was while Thomas was working at the "Muddy" that he took cold and developed rheumatism. The climate there was extremely hot and dry, and it was not uncommon for the temperature to go well above 110 degrees. In order for the men to sleep during the hot nights, the men wrapped themselves in wet clothing or blankets for relief from the heat. These conditions were instrumental in causing an attack of rheumatism, for which Thomas had an inherent tendency.

On 5 June 1858, Sage and Thomas became the parents of another son whom then named Thomas Jedediah Jones; and William Treharne Jones was born 12 September 1859. In 1860 Sage and Thomas, with their four boys, moved out of the "Old Fort" and managed to build a small one-room adobe house in the new Cedar City townsite. Moving to their new location was a chore for Thomas, as his rheumatism was bothering him. It was extremely difficult for him to do much manual work, and it hurt him deeply to put so much of the load on his wife. After the Iron Works were discontinued, Thomas and Sage turned completely to farming and raising livestock. On 11 February 1861 twins were born to Sage and Thomas: a boy and a girl, Uriah Treharne Jones and Sarah Ann Jones.

As the months wore on, Thomas became increasingly disabled by the crippling disease which had become a part of him. He spent a good part of his time in bed the last year of his life. He died 2 September 1862 leaving Sage alone to rear their six children, the oldest being only eight years old. What a tremendous task she had ahead of her.

Sage turned her hand to sewing for people to help make a livelihood for the family. She still had the ten acres of farmland in the West Field where they kept the yoke of oxen.

She also had the home and a wagon. They, naturally, had to have a garden to raise their vegetables, and worked diligently to grow the crops they needed. The children helped out as much as possible with the small farm and the chores. The eldest son, Lehi, was able to get small jobs here and there: hauling wood to sell, helping other ranchers during lambing season, etc. As the boys grew older, they were able to take increased responsibilities, and each of them was constantly looking for odd jobs to do and ways by which they could earn money. The older boys worked as freighters and mail carriers between Cedar City and the mining camps of eastern Nevada. Under Sage's direction they had the contract to ride the Pony Express route between Cedar City and Bullionville, Nevada from 1870 to 1876. In 1885, Sage was appointed as postmistress for Cedar City. Because Sage was unable to write English, her children helped her with the correspondence and book work. Sage had had very little education. She had learned to read when quite young, but had not learned to write until her son Kumen was sent on a mission to San Juan County. She once told Kumen that she had so much trouble getting the letters written to him that she decided to learn to write herself. It was surprising how quickly she learned. She eventually became a very proficient writer. When her term ended, Uriah, her youngest son, was her successor. Together, Sage and Uriah kept the post office for 13 years. Lehi later wrote about how proud his mother was of her little family, and he was grateful for her energy and the efforts she made and the example she set for her children. She was never ashamed of how little they had; she taught them to be proud of their name and their heritage.

Sage's granddaughter, Pearl Higbee Lence, wrote about Sage: "Her marvelous influence was felt not only in her own family, but there seemed a oneness with the large group of grandchildren who were soon grouped around her. As a child, I remember, with a great deal of pleasure, the family gatherings we always had on her birthday and other special occasions. Every time she went to Salt Lake to conference, she allowed a grandchild or two to accompany her, and always came home loaded down with fine gifts for all the relatives. Whole bolts of good woolen cloth were purchased, and it was not uncommon to see a half-dozen little cousins with dresses alike. She insisted on having the best of materials, but liked to have the dresses made very plain. . . . I remember her as a very dignified, genteel woman, who was respected and loved wherever she went, but I also remember that she insisted that I wear only plain black sateen dresses, and have my hair combed very straight so that I would not grow to be vain."

Sage was a public spirited woman. She worked in the Relief Society for a number of years as a counselor and president. At the time of her death on 30 March 1897, Sage was a counselor in the Parowan Stake Relief Society. She lived to see all her children take active parts in the LDS Church and civic affairs. Two of her sons, Lehi and Kumen, became bishops; two were in the stake presidency, Jed and Uriah; Jed was a counselor in the stake presidency for a number of years; Kumen and Uriah were patriarchs; William died soon after returning from a mission to Great Britain. All of them held civic offices as well; Uriah and Jed were sent to the state legislature; Uriah was mayor; Lehi was a county commissioner and mayor, and Jed was mayor twice. Sage's only daughter was an invalid for many years, but she reared a splendid family.

(Material taken from Jones, York F. and Evelyn K. Jones; *Lehi Willard Jones 1854-1947*. Salt Lake City, Utah: Woodruff Printing Company, 1972.)