

A HISTORY OF JOHNSON FORT

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By

Annie I. Matheson

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Enoch, a little town situated twelve miles west of Parowan and six or seven miles northeast of Cedar City, was first known as Elkhorn Springs. It is between Iron Mountain on the west and Little Salt Lake on the east, both well known landmarks on the Great Transcontinental Trail over which travelers were coming from East and West many years before our Pioneer times. The Old Spanish Trail which was opened up in 1829 came through Elkhorn Springs. William Wolfskill and Ewing Young were both trappers and led companies over this trail and it was one of those early companies which gave the springs the name of "Elkhorn Springs". Credit should be given Ewing Young, who led a party of Spaniards from Santa Fe to Los Angeles three years in succession, 1829, 1830 and 1831.¹

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Almost a generation later, on Friday Nov. 23, 1849 an exploring party, consisting of about fifty men was organized at Cap't. John Brown's house on Big Cottonwood, S. L. C. with Apostle Parley P. Pratt as president. It started the next day to explore what is now Southern Utah. This expedition, after it had explored and designated the present sites of Parowan and Cedar City, explored the southern country on down beyond the rim of the Great Basin and as far south as the Virgin River. From here they followed the river down to where the mouth of the Santa Clara empties into it. It is near here that the Old Spanish Trail is intercepted by the river.²

It was on this trip that Joel H. Johnson, as one of the explorers, got his first glimpse of the present site of Enoch. The party camped on Summit Creek, west of Parowan. One of the mules (with a pack on) had strayed away and become lost and Joel H. Johnson, with others was sent to find it. They climbed to the top of some black hills in order to get a better view. They crossed over the top and came through a pass in the hills (later called Parley's Pass). Johnson, who was in the lead, was the first to see there spread before him a beautiful valley of lush meadows. It is said that he spread out his arms and was heard to exclaim with pride, "Mine, all mine by right of discovery!". He wanted to go there then but his help was needed in the settling of Parowan.¹

In Dec. 1850 thirty families, including 118 men, left Great Salt Lake City with 101 wagons and 600 head of stock, under the direction of Apostle Geo. A. Smith, for the Little Salt Lake Valley, to locate a settlement there. On Monday, Jan. 13, 1851 Geo. A. Smith and company of settlers arrived on Centre Creek, Little Salt Lake Valley, Utah, where they located a townsite, which later was named Parowan. They commenced their settlement by building a fort.²

Joel H. Johnson, in the fall of 1850, was one of the men selected to assist Apostle George A. Smith in forming a settlement at Little Salt Lake, as he states in his journal. He sent with Geo. A. Smith his two oldest sons with two teams and wagons "laden with provisions, seed, farming tools, iron mill saws etc." And in the spring of 1851 he went down with stock, and several more teams "laden with necessities for the new settlement". It was not until near the end of the year that he had his desires granted. Joel H. Johnson wrote in his Journal: "On the 19th day of November 1851 I was sent by George A. Smith to the spring twelve miles south of Parowan to make a fort and myself a farm, and to herd the stock for Parowan and Cedar City." His daughter Janet Mauretta Smith wrote (in her biography of Joel H. Johnson) : "For several years he occupied this position, watching over the herds so they might be protected from the Indians."³

Mrs. Smith continues: "When the trouble became so bad he moved to Cedar City with his family. Here they remained until peace was restored, to a certain extent, and when he moved back to Johnson Springs, as they were now called, five other families went with him. The six families built a fort so they might be protected from the Indians. Joel H. Johnson was a farmer and fruit grower. Here he lived for several years until the fall of 1861 when he moved with his family to Virgin City, Utah".

In 1856 Navajo Indians raided the livestock and the settlers of Cedar City lost horses and cattle in the amount of \$28,260.00.¹

Joel H. Johnson was the first Presiding Elder at Johnson Springs. Following are a few of his accomplishments:

In the year 1829 (while back in the States) Joel H. Johnson invented and pat-

ented a shingle cutter or machine now used for making and cutting shingles throughout the United States and Canada. The patent is signed by Andrew Jackson, President and Martin Van Buren, Vice President of the United States.

He built a sawmill at Kirtland and sawed the lumber which helped in the building of the Kirtland Temple. He organized the Crooked Creek Branch of the Church near Carthage. He assisted in finding a location for the Church that was later called Nauvoo. "He was a great financier and engaged in horticulture, having the best and largest vineyards in Southern Utah. He also had sawmills. He made and operated his own shingle mills", says Mrs. Smith. And Joel says, "I never lived but a short time in any one place while in the States, on account of mob violence, and since in Utah have made eleven new places". One of his best known accomplishments is the song, "High On The Mountain Tops" which he composed.

"Laban Morrill succeeded Joel H. Johnson as Presiding Elder at Johnson Fort. The Morrill families were relatives of Joel H. Johnson. Laban D. Morrill and wife Parmelia H. Druary came from Vermont, crossed the Plains by ox teams and arrived in Salt Lake City in the fall of 1852. They were called to Iron County to help in the settlement of Cedar City. In 1854 they moved to Johnson Springs to help in building the fort".⁵

In those early days the tall grass was cut and cured for hay. The valley was divided. Parowan had the lower and Cedar the upper half. Each man was given all the hay he could cut in a day with a scythe.⁶

"About 1853 Laban D. Morrill went East to bring emigrants to Salt Lake City. Among these emigrants were William Dalley and wife Mandana Hillman and James Dalley and wife, Emma Wright. In 1854 the Dalleys were called by President Brigham Young to come to Johnson Springs to assist in caring for the livestock belonging to the Saints in Iron County and help build up the fort there."⁵ William Dalley was the Presiding Elder at the fort there from 1857 to 1859 when the little settlement was almost broken up and no regular church organization existed at these springs for some time.² The Indians had by this time become very troublesome. William Dalley was a tailor by trade and a great lover of livestock and especially of fine horse.

He was only at Johnson Fort a short time when he moved to Summit. Later he was ordained a bishop of that little settlement and it was here he spent the rest of his days.

"Other settlers came later in 1854 to help in building the fort. Among them was Thomas P. Smith and James W. Bay, Edward Davis and James Razor.

"Samuel Bell was an early settler at Johnson Springs, going there about 186-. He settled on the bench at one of the springs, about where Johnson had lived earlier. He took up a big spring located farther east and south of the place where he lived. It was up in the ravine and became known as the Bell Spring. He drew water from this to irrigate his farm. Brother Bell run a dairy for a number of years." ⁵ And he was an honest old man in his dealings with the people. Myron Jones remembers hearing his Uncle Hyrum Jones say, "I have seen him take his two hands and scoop up a lump of butter which he would work, or mold into shape and this was sold for a pound." It was later found that Brother Bell's estimate was a pretty accurate one." ⁷

In those days almost everybody had a few cattle on the range, even widows. Those who had the largest number only had about fifty head. They couldn't afford to herd them all the time so the first Co-op Cattle Co. was started in 1870. In this organization if a widow had her cow stolen the loss was distributed among all the stockholders so the loss wasn't felt so keenly. Over the years the cattle had been accumulating and since there was no market here for them herds of them were driven back east and sold when outfits were sent to bring back emigrants.

The Cedar Co-op Cattle Co. had a ranch north of Enoch, homesteading the ground. While the Indians were so bad and no one was living on the place a couple of men by the names of Warren and Fish, jumped the claim of the cattle company. The company gave Warren and Fish \$700.00 to relinquish their rights and get out. \$700.00 was cheaper than a law suit. At the time these men left, a team of beautiful dapple gray horses along with other property owned by the settlers disappeared. The horses had been turned up in the hills to pasture because the owners didn't have the feed for them.

In 1860 the Cedar Co-op Cattle Co. rented their herd to Robert and Dave Bulloch and in 1883 the company dissolved. In 1884 the cattle were distributed to the stockholders. For a number of years the Clark Brothers run the ranch at Enoch, just had to pay the taxes on it. The Clark Brothers (Collins, Porter and Edgar) had the ranch until 1898.

When the Branch Normal at Cedar City was built, the people in the area, had drained themselves dry of cash to complete the building. It was built as the plans were drawn up but when the State came to receive the property it was discovered that no provision had been made in the contract for heating the building. A heating plant would cost \$5500.00 more, but it was desperately needed. What could they do? Then someone remembered the ranch north of Enoch which the stockholders in the cattle company still owned. The stockholders were contacted and they donated their interest in the ranch to a building committee, who in turn sold it to Clark Brothers for \$7,000.00 and \$5500.00 of this was transferred to the Branch Normal for a heating system. !

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The Jones Family move to Fort Johnson or Johnson Springs:

John Pidding Jones was called to go South to Iron County at Cedar City where he assisted the brethren when they started an iron works at that place. To the west, a distance of about ten miles was a large mountain containing iron ore while to the east was found coal in abundance in the canyons. The brethren organized themselves into a company which was known as the Deseret Iron Company. John P. Jones was a member of this organization. This group of men had previously tried to make iron, on a small scale by the side of the creek but were unsuccessful. Now they made another attempt to manufacture iron but after spending one million dollars in four years, they were compelled to close down the business for lack of means.

At the time of the drawing for lots in Cedar City, John Lee Jones, (oldest son of John P. Jones), who was at that time a very young man, drew the lot where the Old Co-op stood and where the First Security Bank now stands. For some reason he was denied the right to have this lot. Later his father gave him a city lot to build

upon. In his biography he says, "I built a house of adobies, (sun dried bricks) on my lot and planted an orchard which in after years bore very prolific and good fruit. I continued to live here about eleven years working a small portion of the land which yielded about 9 bushels per acre." At the age of 21 years he married Rachel Simkins who was nearly seventeen. This was Jan. 13, 1862. Four children were born at Cedar City: John James Jr., Isaac, Jane and Sam B. Jones.[†] Myron Jones, (a younger son) tells the story of when his people first moved to Johnson Springs:

One morning as father and mother were sitting there in their little home, eating their breakfast, father threw his knife down on his plate and said, "Rach, let's get out of here!" She asked, "Where will we go?" And he answered, "Let's go out to Johnson Springs." A bachelor by the name of Bell had tried to get him to come out for some time and homestead. So they went out and took up a homestead of 160 acres. When they moved Sam was a baby only about a month old. Old man Bell wanted father and mother to name the baby after him. He said, "I'll give your son a heifer calf if you'll name him after me." And so the baby was named Sam Bell (Jones) after the old man." In talking with Sam about this he laughingly said, "It was my calf but it became father's cow." Sam B. Jones was born Jan. 8, 1869 so it was February or March 1869 that John Lee Jones moved to Johnson Springs.

Myron Jones continues:

"Mother went to work for Old Man Bell in his dairy, helping care for the milk and make butter. After working all through that first summer she received a cow for pay. Cash was a rare commodity in those days so most transactions were done by means of barter or trade. This cow was sold to prove up on the homestead. While mother was working in the dairy father went down in Cedar Valley and chopped down cottonwood trees. Using an adze he hewed the logs and then hauled them to Johnson Springs. Here he built himself a house. He gave lots to my Grandfather (John P. Jones) and my Uncle Sylvester Jones. Then with the help of his brothers he built log houses for Grandfather and Uncle Ves and had them come out from Cedar and help build up the little community. Mother held Primary in our little home and father organized a Sunday School and held it here, also. This was while there was no presiding elder at

Johnson Springs. The first houses were built of logs but the later ones were built of adobes. Father was a brick mason and he laid up the adobes in these homes. There was an extra large room in Uncle Ves' home so that was where Sunday School was held after more families moved out from Cedar. Between fathers and my Grandfather's home they built a little one-roomed adobe building. In this building a play would be given then a dance. The room was big enough for two quadrille sets. It was dusty and sometimes muddy but still we had lots of fun."

Sam B. Jones says:

"Father started the first school which was held in this little adobe building. Aunt Lucy Jones was the first school teacher and then Mrs. Catherine Granger-Gibson (Bell-Dover) came to Johnson Springs and married Old Man Bell and she taught school." Myron Jones says, regarding the school when he attended: "She would sit with her knitting while each child recited his or her lessons. We'd hold up our hands and say, "Teacher, I'm ready." She would listen awhile, then say, "You can do better than that. Go back and study some more." And she would go on with her knitting. After Old Man Bell died she married Mr. Dover but she always went by the name of Bell."

"Us young duffers got the logs and built an amusement hall", says Sam B. Jones. "Then they took the building and made a school house out of it." The "young duffers" were David W. Gibson, Charles E. Jones, S. B. Jones, Isaac Jones, John Armstrong, and probably others. "This was in 1891-92. This "old log schoolhouse" as it was later called served as a shurch until 1911 when a new brick church was built. School was held in the basement rooms of the new church until a new brick school building was built in 1917-18. In 1931 a bus route was established in Iron County and from then on all children were transported by bus to Cedar City Schools."⁵

"During the year 1878-80 the railroad changed its route from Marysvale to Milford."⁵

"There was a mail route from Milford that came by way of Rush Lake to Cedar City. Another contract carried the mail from Cedar to Parowan and Paragonah. Johnnie Armstrong (brother of Joseph H.) was driving the mail from Beaver to Cedar City. He took over the station and stayed there till 1881. The drivers and horses were changed at this station. They (Armstrongs) cared for the horses and gave board and

room to drivers and passengers. Armstrongs were at this time living at the Old Co-op Ranch. The second year they lived at the ranch Joseph H. Armstrong ran the mail from Johnson Springs to Paragonah by pony. His oldest son Joseph S. did much of the riding." ⁵ "After their contract run out, father took the contract and Sam and Charles run the mail." says Myron Jones. Sam says he was the first one of the Jones family to run the mail and that \$495.00 was the wage he received for this.

When John L. Jones applied for a Post Office at Johnson Springs the Government notified him that the name would have to be changed because there was ^{AN} another Johnson Springs in the area. The Jones family lived a form of the United Order. The father (John Pidding Jones), three sons (John L., Sylvester, & Hyrum) and their families worked so well together that they formed a company that was in force for many years. (Fred, another son, had been called on a mission to San Juan so the company had fitted him out with teams, wagons, etc. He went to help in the settling of that part of the country.) The United Order was called "After the Order of Enoch". So John L. Jones changed the name from Johnson Springs to "Enoch. Regarding this John L. Jones tells in his biography:

"In the year 1884, we established a Post Office here in the village and gave it the name of "Enoch". I appointed my oldest son, John James, as the Postmaster and myself as the assistant. We received the mail daily. This town took the name of Enoch after the establishment of the Post Office." He continues: "The year 1898, July 1, I took a contract to carry the mail from Cedar to Paragonah and back, six times a week, for the sum of \$648.50. I drove nearly four months while my sons, James S. and Myron, went to school part of the time." The mail was carried in a cart which was drawn by one of five horses. The horses were run in relays of one a day.

John Pidding Jones became the Presiding Elder of Enoch in 1878 and in 1891 he was succeeded by Joseph H. Armstrong who was followed by Sylvester F. Jones in 1900. Sylvester F. Jones presided until August 18, 1912, when the Enoch Branch was organized into a Ward with Charles E. Jones as Bishop. 5

John L. Jones, son of John P. Jones, was a natural born leader and had the push and determination needed to get things done. Every "May Day" there was a big cele-

bration held at Enoch. Then there was the Sunday School Jubilee which was held each year. John L. Jones was the Sunday School Superintendent and so organized this celebration. Bro. Bell would back him up in this by furnishing a beef to be barbecued. Icecream wasn't made and sold commercially in those days but was made by a considerable effort on the part of the members of the community for each celebration. As there was no ice this late in the season, men used to go up the mountain where there was still snow and bring back enough to freeze the cream. The icecream mixture was poured into square, five gallon kerosene cans which were packed in the snow and had to be stirred all the time until frozen. The men and boys took turns stirring it. Now and then the boys would "snitch" a taste, when they thought no one was looking.

John L. Jones was a talented musician, who played for all the dances at Enoch as well as the surrounding communities. As a boy John L. wanted to play the violin so much that he took a willow and built himself a bow, using the hairs he had pulled from "Old Lyons" tail for the string. Old Lyon was one of the oxen from his father's team. And that's how he got started on the violin.

"Father (John L. Jones) had a nice choir of his own which consisted of Margareta Jones, Mary Jones, Uncle Ves, Uncle Hyrum, Brother Bell, Emma and Arabella Smith and Joseph Armstrong", says Sam B. Jones. Sam B., who was only six at this time belonged to this choir, also. This choir sang at Quarterly Conference in Parowan. Sam can remember being given a little pocket knife for singing all alone at Brother Marsden's home between conference sessions. It was Bro. Marsden, who had a store, that gave him the knife.

Sam B. Jones who was 91 years old (Jan. 8, 1960) told of iron making at Enoch. He was a young man then and remembers it very well. Following is the story as told by him and Myron, who is fifteen years younger:

The Jones family had a coke oven, a lime kiln, and other necessary equipment to set up and make iron products. John Pidding Jones had worked in a foundry in England and so understood the trade. He was called to come and work with the iron in Cedar. After moving to Johnson Springs they purchased an old boiler from the people who run a sawmill in Little Creek Canyon the other side of Paragonah. It

was like the ones they used to have on trains years ago and they had got it from the railroad company. The engineer at the sawmill had let it become dry and filled it with cold water while it was still hot. It blew up killing one of the Lyman boys. This was the boiler that John Pidding Jones and family bought, installed in an upright position and lined with fire clay. This clay was tough and strong and prevented the boiler from melting from the extreme heat that it was subjected to. In the boiler was placed coke, charcoal and scrap iron in layers. Iron ore could not be used this way. It had to be scrap iron and it had to be broken up into small pieces. Coke was made from coal in a coke oven. Charcoal was made from green pine wood. The green wood was placed in the coke oven which was shut up and burned slowly until it was charred sufficiently. Then the fire was quickly smothered out. They operated their blast with a horse-power outfit. The horsepower was attached to a fan or blower and air came in from under the boiler. The horses were run in a circle with the driver keeping them at an even speed. A heavy wind from the south would carry the sparks from the furnace over the horses and would often light on them. Once when Sam was driving, the wind blew the sparks over onto the horses, frightening them so badly that it caused a runaway.

The furnace was located out in the mouth of the canyon. Two box-like frames were filled with heavy clay. Then a wooden pattern of the article wanted, was made and placed in the clay. Towards the inside sand was sprinkled to keep the pattern from sticking. John L. Jones made the pattern to mold the castings. After packing the clay tightly around the pattern it was then carefully removed and a clay tube was fastened to the top of the mold through which the liquid iron was to be poured. This also had to be done very carefully so there wouldn't be a blur in the mold.

When the iron was melted to a molten mass it was run out through a hole in the bottom of the boiler into heavy iron kettles which were also lined with fire clay, to keep them from melting. These kettles with long handles on each side were carried by two men and the molten iron was poured through the clay tubes, in a small steady stream, into the mold. The timing had to be just right so that the liquid iron, as soon as drawn from the boiler, was poured into the molds. Heavy clay (fire

clay) found near-by in the area, was molded into a wad, placed on the end of a pole and used to stop the flow of iron as soon as the right amount was drawn. The wad of clay was placed in the hole in the bottom of the boiler. The clay would dry instantly, with a puff of steam, and shut the flow right off. When ready to draw off more liquid iron a long bar was placed against the clay stopper which was then hit with a sledge hammer to remove it from the hole. After the liquid iron was poured in the mold it was allowed to set for twenty-four hours and become cold. Additional coke, charcoal and iron scraps were fed from the top of the boiler.

This was the way they made grades for fire-places, dog irons, flat irons, cog wheels for machinery, piles for dams, and rollers for molasses mills for the Dixie people.

Enoch has won renown for her excellent music leaders and music talent and the cooperative spirit of the people insures the success of anything they set out to do.

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Footnotes:

I have not attempted to write a complete history of Johnson's Fort because there are several excellent histories written about that place. Among them is a "A Short History of Johnson Fort or Enoch as it is Known" by Belle Armstrong and Estelle J. Grimshaw. In this short history a map of the Fort is drawn and a description of the houses and spring within the Fort is given.

I have obtained information for my history from the following:

1. Dr. William R. Palmer.
2. Church Chronology.
3. Journal of Joel H. Johnson and Daughter Mauretta Johnson Smith.
4. Biography of John L. Jones.
5. A Short History of Johnson Fort or Enoch as it is Known by Belle Armstrong and Estella Grimshaw.
6. Owen Matheson.
7. Sam Bell Jones and Myron Jones, sons of John Lee Jones and grandsons of John Pidding Jones.
8. Mrs. Hillman Dalley.

This history was compiled and written up for the Iron Mission Camp of The Daughters of Utah Pioneers, by Annie I. Matheson. May 10, 1960.