

# Life of John Taylor Jarvis

b. 9/27/1888 St. George, Utah

d. 8/17/1923 St. George, Utah

by Rose Lee Jarvis Nielson (his wife) 1955 in her own handwriting

first typing by Roma Jarvis Knight<sup>1</sup> 1979

footnotes by grandson, Kelly B. Jarvis Sr<sup>2</sup>. Feb 2008

John Taylor Jarvis was the son of George Frederick and Eleanor Cannon Woodbury Jarvis.<sup>3</sup> John's parents were married on October 21, 1872 in the Salt Lake Endowment House.

They had eight children. John Taylor was the youngest son and the second to the last child. His sister, Rose was the youngest child and youngest daughter. John Taylor was born September 27, 1888 in St. George, Utah in the family's home. He was born while his father, George Frederick was on a mission to England. Sister Jarvis wrote to her husband (in England) and asked what name they should give the new son. In Bro. Jarvis' humorous way he replied, "Well, if you can have a son while I am on a mission, I guess you can name him." These outbursts of humor characterized Bro. Jarvis whether well or ill and helped the family over many a rough spot.

John was rather a timid child with blue eyes and white curly hair. He grew up with Frank and Rose. They had many good times together. The family had a farm, a garden, raised fruit and of course, there was always work to be done, but the children engaged in playtime too. They often roamed over the black hill or had groups of young people at their home. John had great fun playing with bone horses and animals. He'd build extensive play corrals with sticks and bits of wood. For the animals, he had a collection of bones. At this past time he spent hours at play in the shade around the home. He also liked spinning a top. As he grew older, a book of poetry or prose filled much of his leisure.

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<sup>1</sup> Roma Jarvis Knight, eldest child and eldest daughter of John and Rose Jarvis deserves the credit for preserving this diary and many other family documents and for typing from its handwritten form -this biography--and for disseminating it to John's and Rose's descendants at family parties, funerals, weddings after her 1979 transcription..

<sup>2</sup> Kelly B. Jarvis Sr., grandson of John Taylor, added the footnotes to this document and made some slight changes in the typed biography in order to clarify some statements for John Jarvis' descendants and for those who won't be as familiar with the people and the places mentioned in this history.. Kelly was the President of the George and Ann Prior Jarvis organization from 1996 through 2002. During that time the board of trustees voted to approve the placing of George and Ann Prior Jarvis family histories, pictures, and documents on the Internet so that all descendants could have ready access to them. The Family Association also endorsed asking descendants to make sure their respective biographies are submitted. The webmaster Mark Jarvis: [jarvisfamilyweb@gmail.com](mailto:jarvisfamilyweb@gmail.com) is still-- as of this writing ( Feb 2008) requesting these histories from those branches of this family that haven't as of yet submitted anything. Kelly Jarvis placed a foot noted version of Ann's diary on the web in 2007. This version was typed and edited by Ella Jarvis Seegmiller, John Taylor Jarvis' older sister. Kelly Jarvis may be reached at: [bones1227@gmail.com](mailto:bones1227@gmail.com). Mark Jarvis has also placed some family pictures and other facts about George and Ann on the website as well. Kelly & Ruth Jarvis reside in Heber City, (Wasatch County) Utah and have six children: Kelly Jr. (Kasey), Elizabeth (Betsy), Katherine (Katie), Charles (Charlie), Alison (Allie), and Rosalee (Rosie).

<sup>3</sup> John was the grandson of George and Ann Prior Jarvis. George Frederick, Johns' father, was born 16 Jun 1847 in Stepney, London, Middlesex, England. John's mother, Eleanor Cannon Woodbury was born 9 Mar 1854 in Salt Lake City.

When John was fifteen months old, his mother took seriously ill and his sister, Annie, became his adopted mother. She gave him every attention and John never forgot her kindness and love. He always hoped to repay Annie in some way, not in money, but in kind thoughts and deeds. Later when Annie had trouble, he was able to help her with encouragement and finally moved her and some of the children from Duchesne City in Duchesne County to St George.

Annie and her husband were separating. Four of the children were leaving with the mother and two were staying with the father. John, to his dying day, never forgot the scene of the breaking up of that family that June morning long ago. He stood by his car ready to go as soon as the farewells were said. He saw the children weeping, kissing, parents and each other because they loved both parents and each other. Finally, John told Annie he couldn't endure this scene any longer and for her and the children to get in the car immediately. He often said it was one of the saddest events of his life. He loved Annie dearly because of the care she had given him and she looked to him when in need until his passing.<sup>4</sup>

The family moved to the farm in Washington Field<sup>5</sup> when John was fourteen. Here, he spent a great deal of his time until a year before he was married. He started school when he was six years old and graduated from the 8<sup>th</sup> grade in 1906 and from the 10<sup>th</sup> grade in 1909. The winter of 1907-1908, he spent on the farm unable to be in school. He always longed for education. He was very lonely that year having to stay closely on the farm without much social life. Whenever he could, he was reading and studying.

While he was attending the Woodward School, in the Spring of 1907, he began going with Rose Edith Lee. The next summer she went to Shem to work in a store for her Uncle, Warren Cox. John visited her several times during the summer. In September of the same year, she left to attend the B.Y.U. In June 1908, John and Rose were engaged. This was just prior to the moving of the Lee family consisting of the mother, Mary E. Lee, Rose and Lafe to Hinckley, Utah. The mother was called there to assist in nursing.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Note: As a grandson I have to say that my wife, Ruth, and I settled in Heber City, Utah in 1979 right when Roma was disseminating this biography to John's descendants, and after I first read this diary, I never could drive through Duchesne county again en route to various school related sports activities in the Uintah basin without thinking of this scene of the heart-breaking separation and divorce of Annie from her husband and the breaking up of the family with some children staying with the father and others with the mother. John certainly was a God send to his sister, Annie, in this time of extreme trial and sadness.

<sup>5</sup> Washington Field is north of St. George in Washington County, Utah

<sup>6</sup> Mary Cox Lee, mother of Rose, John's intended bride, had been widowed as a young woman and in the summer after undergoing and recovering from a serious and almost fatal operation performed by Dr. Middleton in Cedar City to repair damage from a previous childbirth, Mary was reading in the Salt Lake Deseret News that a Dr. Romania B. Pratt was going again to conduct her six month course in obstetrics in Salt Lake City, and she had openings for two women to earn their way through the course. Mary's operation under this competent physician and the fervent prayers and blessings offered by family led to Mary's recovery and she was able to take this course in Salt Lake City. After the course was completed, Mary returned to St. George to practice obstetrical nursing and mid-wifery. Brother T. George Theabold, who had moved to Hinckley (in Millard County) from St. George had sent for Mary to come to Hinckley from St. George and take care of Bro. Theabold's wife. Mary spent two months or so on this case. Not long after that, people in Hinckley offered to buy Mary a building lot if she would re-locate her practice to Hinckley.. Mary refused the lot as an inducement, but did say she would consider the request to move to Hinckley. This move was finally made while John was still engaged to Rose but not yet married to her. This led to the betrothed couple's move also.. (From the book, Mary Cox Lee, a remarkable lady, by Gene L. Gardner, Delta, Utah 1955 and re-printed by William Harwell in 1999 p.140-143 ).

The summer before John was married, he joined a surveying party which was working in southern Utah. In this party, were such men as Franklin S. Harris, who is now President of B.Y.U. at Provo, and Carl F. Eyring a student and professor. John often spoke of these young men and their ambition was to get an education. John had the same urge for education and it never left him during his life. When John worked with these surveyors, it was the first time he had secured work away from home. His father had been ill for years and he knew the running of the farm and the chores was too much for his mother to manage. His sympathy and understanding went out to his mother. For many years, she nursed invalid members of her family: her husband, his second wife (Aunt Rose) and her mother, Ann C. Woodbury.

John was able to save some money from the surveying job for his marriage to Rose Lee which took place in the St. George temple, Sept. 14, 1909. The ceremony being performed by President David H. Cannon. That night, the young couple was entertained at the home of John's eldest sister, Ella, and her husband, Dee Seegmiller. Shortly after the marriage, Rose and John left for Hinckley to make their home. Frank Jarvis and wife, Mame, who had been married two years, took them by team to Modena<sup>7</sup>, which took nearly two days. They took train to Oasis and were met at the station by Lafe Lee (Rose's brother) and taken six miles to Hinckley.

In west Millard County there was a great deal of farming land in the brush that could be purchased from the U.S. government. John's wife's mother, Mary Cox Lee, gave them 40 acres of land three and one half miles west of Hinckley. Then John took up a 160 acres under the Desert Entry. The couple lived with his wife's mother for two years. John did all kinds of single hand and team work to make a living. He cleared and railed greasewood land, made canals and roads. At this time, he had no machinery or animals of his own. He drove team for G.A. Robison for a long time.

On October 25, 1910 at the close of a beautiful autumn day, their first child Roma<sup>8</sup> was born at their Grandmother Lee's home. This baby was their pride and joy. Either parents train children or children train parents. Before very long, Roma, tiny as she was, believed in sleeping all day and crying or fussing half the night. So John used to get up and play the harmonica to her until she'd fall asleep. This wasn't a wise procedure so the couple undressed the baby and rubbed and fed her and then put her to bed with nothing wrong with the wee one but a bad habit. She soon learned to go to bed and sleep at an early hour (only) after several nights (of) crying, which was harder on the parents than (on) her. This incident might have been the beginning of Roma's music career, who knows! Roma was a great comfort to the family and the couple took pleasure in recounting the cute things she learned to do.

The Spring of 1911, John went out to work for his brother-in-law, Fred Ward, who lived in

<sup>7</sup> Modena is located in western Iron County. In Feb 2008, it was the subject of much media attention as a couple was stranded in Modena canyon for ten days waiting in their vehicle for rescuers. The couple was found in time and the two were re-united with their families.

<sup>8</sup> Roma Jarvis Knight, the oldest child was married to Newell Knight for most of her married life. Roma had one child, by her first husband, Frederick Clift Foster and the daughter's name is Sheril. Roma and Newell lived most of their married life in Las Vegas where she taught in the public schools and was named Nevada teacher of the year in 1966. In her later years, she married Jan Wright, a childhood boyfriend after Newell died.

Duchesne<sup>9</sup>. It also gave him (John) a chance to visit with his sister, Annie Ward and family. With the money received from this work, John bought their first Jersey cow.

Frank Jarvis and family moved to Hinckley in March 1914. They wanted to buy a farm. John and Frank worked together on their farm and enjoyed each other's companionship. On June 9, 1913, a second daughter, Lillian<sup>10</sup> was born. She was a fair haired blue-eyed baby. Roma called her little, "Queen". She was a lovely baby. She had a time with the colic. She was lovable and after a few months grew and thrived and became the largest of the girl babies. She used to frighten the family by holding her breath. They finally sprinkled cold water in her face each time and she soon (abandoned) the habit.

John sold eighty acres of land to Frank Jarvis and decided to go to school two years to finish his high school at Millard Academy at Hinckley. Always, he wanted to gain more education. By this time they had a farm under cultivation, machinery, horses, cows, and were raising good crops. Their house had been remodeled with two rooms and a back porch added on. John's wife took in boarders while he manged the farm and went to school.

Frank Jarvis became ill later (note—he had diabetes as had his father) and John did what he could for the family. Later Frank and his family moved away for his health. Then later Frank and Mame moved back to Hinckley from Duchesne. Frank was very ill with diabetes. Thanksgiving day of 1919 a terrible blizzard was raging. John and family were warm and comfortable in their home enjoying a Thanksgiving dinner when word came that Frank and family were marooned at the Sevier Bridge Dam and that Frank was snow-blind. John immediately set out for the dam in his automobile and brought Frank, Mame, and family to his house where they stayed for two weeks. Later, they moved to their own home and Frank grew steadily weaker. Finally an attack of the flu was too much for him in his weakened condition and he passed away on Valentine's Day, Feb 14, 1920. John had stayed with Frank several days and nights. That morning he came home just long enough to have his breakfast and Frank passed while John was gone. John rather regretted this, and because of the flu epidemic there were only graveside services for Frank. Again, John was the only one of the family to attend the funeral service.

December 29, 1916, the third daughter, Ione<sup>11</sup>, was born. The couple had hoped for a boy but they were satisfied with a little girl. She was their smallest baby weighing 7 lbs. Many persons said she was the prettiest baby. She did very well.

John graduated from high school in May 1917. That year (Fall) the family moved to Logan where

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<sup>9</sup> Duchesne County which is located in North Central Utah is bordered by Wasatch County on the west, Uintah County on the east and Carbon County on the south and Summit County on the north. Within its borders are many of the highest peaks of the Uintah range. Duchesne City is about 200 miles from Hinckley.

<sup>10</sup> Lillian Jarvis Chatterley spent most of her life in Cedar City and taught in the public schools. She and Cliff, her husband had three children, John Phyllis, and Jane.

<sup>11</sup> Ione Jarvis Reeder spent most of her life in Twin Falls, Idaho. She and Charles, her husband, had five children, Richard, John, Mary, Barbara, and Robert.

John entered college at the U.A.C. (Utah Agricultural College). He began to specialize in irrigation, drainage, and soils. The home in Hinckley was rented to Henry Hentze and family. This was during World War I. A very exciting time with U.S. soldiers in training camps and overseas. Many foods were rationed out such as sugar and flour. Potato bread was used a good deal. Sugar could only be bought in small amounts and at certain times. The family never suffered at any time for the necessities of life.

The family returned to Hinckley the next Spring where John farmed and made preparations to attend the U.A.C. the next winter. In 1918, the flu epidemic raged. The family had it before so they knew what it was. For many reasons the Jarvis's were unable to go to Logan. John found work at the sugar factory in Delta. On Nov. 11, 1918, the Armistice was signed and the war in Europe ceased.

John's father, (George Frederick) died in St. George, January 1, 1919. John was the only one of the boys able to go to the funeral. He arrived at his father's bedside just before he died. During the summer of 1920, the family lived on their farm. John bought a new "Chev" to replace the Ford car, which made it quite pleasant. Every Sunday the family went to town to church. Ione was so cute that year. She was with her daddy a great deal. When she was dressed in cover-alls she called herself "Jackie" wanting to be a boy for her father. When her hair was curled and she had a dress on, she was Ione. John took great pleasure with her as well as Roma and Lillian.

On November 6, 1920, Lee Taylor Jarvis<sup>12</sup>, the only boy of the family was born and that was a thrilling event. The (family now had) three girls and a boy. The girls paraded him about when he had his first shoes, rompers, cap, hat, shirt, and pants. The mother, Rose, took very ill when Lee was six weeks old and suffered ill health for some time. John's mother-in-law, Mary Cox Lee, nursed Rose while his brother-in-law and sister-in-law, Lafe & Pearl took the baby and each one helped in many ways to look after the family. John always seemed like Lafe's older brother and they spent many happy hours working together on their farms. Sister Lee, John's mother-in-law, lived next door and was the family nurse and mid-wife and she attended Rose when the four children were born.<sup>13</sup>

John enjoyed his family very much. He loved to see them grow and take part in church and

<sup>12</sup> Lee Taylor Jarvis spent most of his life in Salt Lake City practicing chiropractic. He and his wife, Jeanette (Jeri) had seven children: Ken, Patricia, Kelly, Scott, Jill, Kathy, and Wendy.

<sup>13</sup> Just before the Holidays, after Rose's son, Lee, was born, Rose became very sick. Three small children and their very sick mother were Mary's next concerns. They lived just east of Mary in a little home they had built. To better take care of them all, Mary had them move over to her home. At Christmas time she thought, "My, this is a dreadful Christmas." As the anxiety went on and on there wasn't much change in Rose's condition. Mary went to her Heavenly Father, as she had done many times in her life before, except she said, "Take everything I have, but spare me my daughter." The next Spring Rose was better and had gone back to her own home, and Rose's grandmother was visiting Rose's mother in Hinckley. In the afternoon, Rose's mother had occasion to go outdoors for something. She could hear the roaring of a violent windstorm headed in the direction of her little house. She ran into the house and told her mother who was visiting that the wind was going to strike the house. Then the thought struck her, "This is the other half of my bargain with the Lord". Rose's mother and grandmother stood against the door so it could not be blown open. When the powerful gust struck, it took off the roof, and it loosened the top adobes and several fell to the floor. Rose's mother and grandmother were unhurt and Mary was doubly grateful for the great blessing of the Lord in sparing her daughter and most of her house. (Mary Cox Lee, A Remarkable Lady by Gene L. Gardner, Delta, Utah 1955 and re-printed by William Harwell in 1999, p. 166-167)

school. He liked the plan of the home evening when all the youngsters took part on the program with a song of piece played on the piano, stories told and refreshments. He held high ideals for them. He hoped they would all have a good education. He enjoyed dancing and he and his wife used to go often.

In dealing with banks or his fellow man John was honest and a square shooter, as the saying goes. If he was unable to meet a bill or a note he always wanted to make satisfactory arrangements until it could be paid. He was rather a quiet man never forcing himself into the limelight but he enjoyed congenial groups and parties and could laugh and joke, tell amusing stories with the rest of them. He had a contagious hearty laugh.

During February 1923, John went to Provo to attend leadership week at B.Y.U. He stayed with his cousins Walter and Effie Cottam. They had just finished a new modern home and were living in it. John's enthusiasm was fired again for more education. This was truly an educational feast for him. When he returned home, he talked of going to school the following year. He also wanted his family to enjoy the convenience of a modern home. Always, though, he worked hard and farmed and raised very good crops, farming was only a means to an end. That end was more education and sometimes teaching.

John worked exceptionally hard that Spring but his labors were interrupted. He had traded for about eleven acres of land near the home. He intended to spend more time at home and work on this land.<sup>14</sup> He knew he had been overdoing in his haste to accomplish all that he felt should be done. In June, when he started haying, strong winds delayed his plans. The girls, Lillian and Roma, helped him tramp the hay and lead the derrick horse.

The first part of July, the hay was stacked and John complained of not being well.<sup>15</sup> This developed into a cold and fever and perhaps he needed a good rest. After being under the doctor's care for two weeks the doctor pronounced the disease as typhoid fever. He had a very severe attack of the fever. When the crises came, he began to get better, only to be set back with pneumonia. This long illness proved too much for his heart. His mother arrived from St. George the day before he died. He passed away at about 10:00 p.m., Friday August 19, 1923. Funeral services were held in the Academy Assembly Hall on Sunday August 19, 1923. Many out of town relatives and friends came along with area friends, neighbors and associates.<sup>16</sup> A large congregation paid him tribute. He was buried in the Hinckley Cemetery.<sup>17,18</sup>

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14 Roma notes: "Papa had been working extra long hours on his farming with little time for Mama after a little attention to us children and his church required duties."

15 Roma notes: "This was unusual for Papa; he usually suffered symptoms of reddened eyes, watering etc, which we now call 'hay fever' during his haying time and most men did during threshing."

16 Roma notes: "I recall the hall packed to overflowing."

17 Roma notes: "Ever after, the Hymn, "Oh My Father" has always had a very special meaning to me- - a personal one. Also, with Papa's death I lost my fears of many things- -of the dark, of dying, of the unknown: I felt him with me"

While John worked and went to school he was a faithful member of the L.D.S. Church.  
He was ordained a deacon- -Nov. 14, 1900- - - by John E. Pace, St. George  
He was ordained an elder- - Sept. 9, 1909- -by Bp. Jas. McCarthur, St. George

He was ordained a Seventy- -Nov. 1, 1910- -by Jos. W. McMurrin, Hinckley  
He was ordained a High Priest-Dec. 22, 1912- -by Wm. F. Pratt, Hinckley  
He was ordained 2<sup>nd</sup> Counselor to Bishop J.B. Pratt 1912-1918

### **Postscript**

Rose Lee Jarvis later married another choice man, Joseph Sylvester Nielson, and he was offered a job on President Hinckley's farm where the Salt Lake Airport is now located so the family moved from Hinckley to Salt Lake City some years after this marriage. `Ves' and Rose had a daughter together, Vesta Rose.<sup>19</sup> Vesta joined her three sisters and brother and they welcomed their new half-sister and loved her dearly.<sup>20</sup>

John was active in Genealogical work and with his wife went on many Temple Excursions. When he died, he was First assistant to Bro Hugh Hilton in the Sunday School Superintendency of the Hinckley Ward in the Deseret Stake. He possessed good judgment and understanding. He had a testimony of the L.D.S. Church; he practiced and believed much in prayer and administrations.

Written by Rose E. Lee Jarvis Nielson  
Sometime in the nineteen-fifties?  
Salt Lake City  
Copied by daughter Roma- -1979

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<sup>18</sup> John's mother-in-law said her heart was made very tender toward her daughter, Rose, who had the misfortune of losing her husband, John, in death. She gave Rose and her four children all the added love and tender helpfulness her mother heart possessed. (Mary Cox Lee, *A Remarkable Lady*, by Gene L. Gardner, Delta, UT 1955 and reprinted in 1999 by William Harwell, Hanna Utah p. 163.)

<sup>19</sup>Vesta Rose Jarvis Lindstrom lived her life in the Salt Lake Valley and she and her husband, Douglas, had three children: Michael, Gayleen, and Kirk.

<sup>20</sup> Note from Kelly: It was apparent to the grandchildren that the half-sisters never thought of themselves as `half-sisters' to Vesta and Vesta didn't regard them as half-sisters. They were simply all sisters and they looked after one another as a loving family should. Frequent phone calls, trips, visits, and reunions have marked this family. Rose Jarvis-Nielson reunions have been an annual happening since Rose's death in Dec. 1984. And many, many reunions for any reason were held before when Rose and Ves were still living. As of this writing Feb 2008, all of the five children have passed on, the last one being Lee Taylor who died in June 2005. All of the spouses of these five children have passed on except Jeanette (Jeri), wife of Lee. Jeri, resides in Salt Lake City.