

JONATHAN (or Johnathan) STONE  
for *Tell My Story, Too* collection  
by Jolene S. Allphin

Born: 6 January 1800, England, died October 19, 1856

Age: 56

Martin handcart company

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Jonathan Stone's tragic death was reported by several fellow emigrants. Details vary widely, making it difficult to determine exactly what happened and whether or not there was also a child who died at the same time. This biographical sketch will attempt to present what has been written without making any assumptions as to which parts of the various accounts are accurate.

Page 182 of the British Mission Record (BMR) for the ship *Horizon* shows John<sup>n</sup> Stone signing up on May 15, 1856, to sail on this ship as an ordinary passenger, not assisted by the PEF. He paid a deposit and ticket #69 was issued. Remarks on this BMR entry make reference to the Missionary Dept. Book 47, Dunbar's List, May 16, 1856. This reference is to Elder William C. Dunbar, a missionary in England. Johnathan's occupation is listed as "Sawyer," meaning a wood sawyer or carpenter. It has been incorrectly transcribed as "Lawyer" on some official records.

Jonathan Stone was from the same branch of the Church as fellow travelers George Lawley and James Thorne. All three of these men died on the trail in October or November. Jonathan Stone died on October 19. It appears that these three men were traveling together, with plans to prepare the way in Utah for their families who remained in England.<sup>1</sup> James Thorne already had a brother and other relatives in Utah. He also had a sister, Jane Thorne (age 50), and her daughter, Annie Thorne (age 26), in the Hunt wagon company.<sup>2</sup> The Hunt company traveled closely with the Martin handcart company and sometimes their camp was nearby.

The Martin, Hodgett, and Hunt companies traveled fairly close to each other on October 19. At different times that day, all three of these companies reached a place on the North Platte River where they would cross it for the last time in their journey.<sup>3</sup> They had passed a trading post about 5 miles prior to reaching this last Platte River crossing. There was a toll bridge at the trading post which they could not afford to use.<sup>4</sup> It is hard to imagine what it was like for the emigrants to walk right past this bridge and not be able to use it.

The first winter storm arrived the afternoon of October 19, just as the Martin handcart company was trying to cross the river. There was much suffering that came from this river crossing. Chunks of ice were already floating down the river. Jonathan Stone was not with his group. He may have been sick, or just lagging behind, but at some point during this day, Jonathan became separated from the Martin company, and made his way to the Hunt wagon company in their rear.<sup>5</sup> He was with the Hunt company just prior to his death on this day. The

following accounts are given by five members of the Martin company, and two members of the Hunt company:

**Josiah Rogerson, Martin Company.** As I was leaving the soldier's quarters [at Fort Bridge] with the load of provisions on my back, I espied Father Johnathan Stone ... in one of the log cabins. He was sitting by the side of a fire, on the floor, the cook handing him bread and meat, which he was devouring with relish. I went and called to him and begged him to come on, telling him the time, and that it was getting late in the day; that I could see our company a mile or two off, preparing to cross the river, and that the storm clouds were getting quite low. Sister Wilson was with me, and added her entreaties for him to come on with us to camp.<sup>6</sup> All the response we were able to obtain was his promise that he would be along soon . . . After all had crossed the river, we camped an hour or so close by the river, and after a tin or cup or two of hot tea and a bite or two for supper, we traveled on up the river a mile or two that same evening and made camp. Father Stone did not show up or reach our camp that night, and apparently went back to the bridge on the road he had come. He crossed the river, there again that night and, turning west up the river toward the crossing, found his way into Hunt's wagon company's camp, leading by the hand a young girl, 9 to 12 years of age, making inquiries as to the location of our camp to which he belonged.<sup>7</sup> He left this camp immediately after dark, without being further noticed by any of its members, the girl with him. This was the last seen of Father Stone alive. When Captain Martin, after missing him next morning, returned in quest to the crossing, recrossed the river to Hunt's camp and, hearing the last they knew of him, he turned east on our back track, and in a few miles found some of the remains of both bodies and clothing upon which the Platte wolves had feasted the night before.

**John Jaques, Martin Company.** The company was barely over [the Platte River] when snow, hail and sleet began to fall, accompanied by piercing north wind, and camp was made on this side of the river. An elderly man named Stone who was much weakened by diarrhea, went over the Platte bridge to avoid fording the river. He started up the northwest side of the river to meet and rejoin the company after it had crossed the ford, about five miles further up. Weary and weak, he may have sat down to rest on the way and have become benumbed with cold, or frozen to death. Be that as it may he was never seen again, but a portion of what was supposed to have been his body was afterwards found and brought into camp, having been ravaged by the wolves. Captain Hunt's wagon company camped on the other side of the river and Captain Hodgett's was on this side. That was a nipping night, and it told on the oxen as well as on the people.

**William Binder, Martin Company.** The intense cold morning had a very discouraging effect upon us. Bro Stone an aged gentleman who crossed the River on the Bridge to avoid wading was benighted and is supposed lost his way as he never came into camp again but this morning an English boot with a human foot in it was brought to Camp by Bro Jos[eph] McMurrin which were identified as all that was left of Bro Stone. It is supposed that being very fatigued had laid himself down to rest and was attacked and eaten by wolves.

**Patience Loader, Martin Company.** Here poor brother stone was missing. He was sick and laid down to rest by the road Side. He fell asleep it was supposed. Some of the brethren had to go back in search of him and when they found him he was dead and nearly all eaten by the wolves. This was a terrible death, poor man. Br stone was aloan Man from London England.<sup>8</sup>

**James Loynd, Martin company.** Another man known as father Stone, who traveled in company with a little grandchild, about 10 years of age, lagged behind one day and was taken up by the Hunt wagon company traveling in the rear. He was invited to stop with them over night, but being anxious to rejoin his own company, he and his little companion went forward On the morrow their mangled remains were discovered upon the plains surrounded by a pack of wolves.

**Elizabeth White, Hunt Company.** Another sad event, one night a father and little son went out for wood to make a fire. They never returned. One leg was found in the father's boot. Wolves had eaten them.

**Mary Goble, Hunt Company, 1908 account.** [letter] My husband, Brother [Richard] Pay<sup>9</sup>, was driving the cattle up one morning. Some of them ran in the brush. He went after them. He saw a part of a man's leg and arm and his vest. His watch was in his pocket. He came to camp and notified Captain Hunt and Spencer and they went with him to the place. It looked like he was tired and sat down to rest. Brother Pay gave the watch to his sister. I have forgotten her name. They came to Spanish Fork. Her daughter's name was Anna. She married Bishop Wells of Spanish Fork. I knew Brother Stone well. He would often stay to our camp with his sister. [Mary is referring to Jane Thorne and her daughter Anna Thorne. As noted on page 1, Jane did have a brother in the Martin company. Mary Goble mistakenly remembered Jonathan Stone as Jane Thorne's brother.<sup>10</sup>]

**Mary Goble, Hunt Company, earlier account.** [Richard Pay] was driving cattle ... and some of them ran in the brush. He went after them and he saw a man's vest, part of a leg and an arm. The vest had a watch in the pocket. He came to camp and notified Captain Hunt and Gilbert Spence. They got on their horses and went with him to the place. It looked like a man had sat down to rest and had gone to sleep and had been killed and eaten by wolves. His name was Brother Stone. He must have been making for our camp, as he had a sister and her daughter living there that he used to stay with very often. [Richard] gave the watch to his sister, Janet [Jane Thorne]. She later moved to Spanish Fork. Her daughter's name was Anna. She married Bishop Wells of Spanish Fork.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jonathan married Sophia Glennister in 1821. It appears they had 11 children. Two daughters had died at young ages, and probably another daughter and a son had also died prior to 1856. Some of Jonathan's children were married at the time he left England, and some grandchildren had been born at that time. At least two of his grandchildren later came to the United States. One grandson, Albert E. Stone, died in Kirtland, Ohio.

<sup>2</sup> Jane Thorne is listed as Jane "Jemmett" on the BMR for the ship *Horizon*. Although Jane and her daughter Ann traveled with the Hunt wagon company to Utah, their names were inadvertently left off the Hunt company's list of emigrants.

<sup>3</sup> This last crossing of the N. Platte River was often referred to as "Last Crossing." It was also commonly called "Upper Crossing." Fort Caspar was built at this site in 1865. After following the N. Platte for several weeks, the next major river they would follow was the Sweetwater.

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<sup>4</sup> This trading post was sometimes called “Fort Bridge.” The bridge at this location was owned by a Frenchman named Richard, pronounced “Ree-shaw.” The bridge was called the “Platte Bridge” and “Reshaw’s Bridge.”

<sup>5</sup> There was a group of “invalids” traveling under the leadership of George P. Waugh. These were people who were sick or handicapped or who otherwise could not keep up with the company, such as nursing mothers. Some needed special supervision and assistance. They were relieved of camp duties such as setting and striking tents and preparing meals, so they could get a head start in the morning. Jonathan Stone does not seem to be pulling a handcart on Oct. 19, and he may have been one of the “invalids” that day. If he was, he would have reached Fort Bridge before the rest of the Martin company, and he may have remained there until the Hunt company arrived.

<sup>6</sup> Elizabeth Ollerton Wilson was traveling in the Martin company with her husband James Wilson. Josiah Rogerson’s sister, Jane, was married to Elizabeth’s brother, Seth Ollerton.

<sup>7</sup> There is no known verification of the accuracy of this statement. Elizabeth White of the Hunt Company says Jonathan Stone was with a young boy. Neither account gives a name or other indication of who this child might have been.

<sup>8</sup> This may be a transcription error. Jonathan Stone may have been “a lame man,” or at least lame at that time. Jonathan Stone did have a wife and children in England, and, as stated, appears to have been traveling with George Lawley and James Thorne. Patience Loader was well acquainted with the Thorne family. She stayed with James Thorne’s relatives upon reaching Salt Lake City.

<sup>9</sup> Mary Goble was 13 years old in 1856. Richard Pay and his wife, Sarah, were also in the Hunt Company. Sarah died on the trail. When Mary was older, she married Richard.

<sup>10</sup> It is fortunate that Mary made this mistake, as it led to the identification of Jane and Annie Thorne. Their names were not previously on the Hunt company records.

<sup>11</sup> This is Stephen Robert Wells, as identified on early ward records as a Bishop in Spanish Fork. See Annie Thorne’s story in Hunt company section of *Tell My Story, Too*.