

JESSAMINE ELIZABETH ROUTLEDGE

Born: 29 Jan 1837 London, England

Age: 19

Martin Handcart Company or Hunt Wagon Company



Martin
Company

Jessamine Elizabeth Routledge was born into a loving and prosperous family with a twin brother, John, and eight other siblings. The family lived near the Tower of London and Jessamine remembered watching Queen Victoria and her attendants pass along nearby streets. Jessamine often rode in a coach to visit her father at his office. He took her on a trip to Paris and Scotland and at Christmastime he would tie oranges from Spain on the branches of their backyard cherry trees.

Jessamine's mother, Martha Boozy or Petts, died during childbirth while Jessamine was a young girl. When Jessamine was a young woman, her father, Isaac Routledge, also died. He had rendered a decision in a legal matter that angered the woman he ruled against and she then poisoned Isaac. The woman was convicted of the crime and Jessamine said she was "transported for life." She said that she had never seen such a long funeral procession as the one for her father.

One day while walking on the streets of London with a friend, Jessamine heard two young Mormon missionaries singing and stopped to listen to their message, which she readily accepted. Her friends and family tried in vain to stop her but she was baptized in the Finnsbury Branch of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints at about age 17 by Henry Maben. She then began to make plans to gather with the Saints in Utah. She tried to get some of her inheritance but was told she could not have any until she was twenty-one years old, so she began saving her allowance.

When her brothers saw her determination, they took her to the stores and told her to buy what she needed. She was not experienced in buying clothing and other items for such an adventure. Instead of sturdy, practical items, Jessamine bought pretty and frivolous things.

At the age of 19, Jessamine had saved enough to pay for first class passage on the ship *Horizon*. It broke her heart to leave her family, especially her twin brother, John. Jessamine's brothers all begged her to stay, going so far as following the ship out to sea, hoping to the last that she would change her mind.

As the Martin handcart company began its journey, Jessamine realized that her pretty clothes were not the most useful. She lost her shoes and someone loaned her a pair of boots that were much too large for her, but she was most grateful for them. A bundle of her finery went down a river at a crossing. When the food supplies dwindled and the storms began, Jessamine suffered much with other members of the company. When they reached the Salt Lake Valley, they were welcomed with open arms by the Saints. Warm clothes, good food, rest and shelter were ready for them. For a while Jessamine lived at the home of Emmaline B. Wells. Here she met Francis Martin Pomeroy and they soon married. Sometimes when she would tell their six children stories of her emigration, they would cry and say, "Do not tell us. It is all too awful."

Jessamine cared for her family and many others during her lifetime. At one time her brothers wrote and told her that they would meet her in New York with money for her to return to London. Her husband, Francis, worried that she might never return and asked her not to go. She never received her inheritance and never heard from her family in England again. Jessamine's descendants say that she was a naturally jolly person and was not bitter, though she longed for word from her family. Jessamine and Francis were called to colonize in Northern Utah and then in Southern Arizona. Jessamine passed away at the age of 63 in Mesa, Arizona.

Sources: "Francis Martin Pomeroy," in *Pioneers and Prominent Men of Utah*, by Frank Essholm, 1913; "Story of Jessamine Elizabeth Routledge Pomeroy," by Hazel Pomeroy Millet, Oct. 1960 (later submitted to Daughters of Utah Pioneers). (Jessamine may have been with the Hunt wagon company, not the Martin company as noted in these sources.)