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RECOLLECTIONS OF MARY A. JONES. ALAMO, CONTRA COSTA CO, CALIF.

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(Compiled when she was past her eightieth year.)

Courtesy of Mrs. J. C. Jones-Alamo

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In Bedford County, Tennessee, in the year of our Lord 1825, in the home of John P. Smith, (my father), on the tenth of February, there was a house-raising, a quilting and a new baby, and that baby was me.

I remember many things in connection with my home in Tennessee, although I was only three and a half years old when we moved from Tennessee to Missouri. On the road as we were traveling one morning (the boys walked, driving the stock) there was a negro boy came along and had a live rabbit he had caught in a trap, and when he got to where the boys were, he said, "Rabbit ahoy! He good for stew, he good for fry, he good to make a chicken pie, he good for everything." And the rabbit jumped away and ran away, and he stood looking after it in perfect astonishment when he said, "Rabbit ahoy! he no good for stew, he no good for fry, he no good to make a chicken pie, he no good for nothing!" The boys made a great deal of sport of him, and all of the children thought it very funny, and that was something that I never forgot. And I remember many things that happened on our way to our new home in Clinton County, Missouri.

Father had gone to the new land and made a home. In the summer of 1833 and 1834 he was elected to the Legislature, and he was elected first judge of Clinton County. In the spring of 1835, with his family, he moved to Kickapoo as blacksmith for the Indians. We lived there near the mission where we all went to school to Rev. J.C. Bergman and other teachers, among them Miss Ann Jefferson, niece of the President. She was married at the Mission to a Mr. Riphat. I think his name was George. We lived at that place for three years, and my brother Gustavus P. was born there, March 4, 1836. He was the first white child born in Kansas. We moved from there to the Platte Purchase, just across the river, on the east side, and settled on a beautiful place, on what was afterwards called Sugar Creek, and not far from the lake which is now called Bean Lake.

After we had been there only a few years, my mother died. Her maiden name was Elizabeth Crittenden of the old line of Crittendens, distantly related to John P. Crittenden, the great statesman. When my mother had been dead one year and a half, my father was married the second time to a Miss Ellen Henderson, an old girl, and a nice one too, but nine months after, he also died and then we were orphans indeed. My mother left nine children and I was the oldest.

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daughter at home. One brother and one sister were married before my mother died. As I was the eldest daughter at home, I had the care of the household. We had a negro woman in the house, and I looked after the weaving and spinning, and all the house. We made all the wearing apparel for the family for common use. We wove all the cloth, such as jeans, table linen, sheeting, and quilting, and we knitted the stockings for all, both white and black. Yes, we made blankets too. My father was very proud of my handiwork and supervision.

After my father's death my stepmother moved away to another farm and the children were divided. I and my baby sister, America Elizabeth, went with our step mother to live in Buchanan county, and there our near neighbor was John M. Jones, whom I had met some time before. My mother died in the year 1839 and my father died in 1841, and I was married to John M. Jones in 1842. He had a little home - eighty acres of public land, and I had some money and household goods, and a horse etc. So we settled down to be good citizens, and we had improved our land, and had built a new house, and had an orchard of three years growing, and everything was prosperous. June 10, 1843, we had a little girl baby and we named her Sarah Jane. That year my husband cast his first vote for James H. Polk, and he voted the Democratic ticket all his life. In 1845 we had another little girl baby, and we called her Candace.

In the winter of 1845 and '46 our neighbors got hold of Fremont's History of California and Oregon, and began to talk of moving to the new country, and they brought the book to my husband to read, and he was carried away with the idea too. I said, "O, let us not go". Our neighbors, some of them old men and women, and had large possessions and large families, but it made no difference. They must go. And in the Spring of '46 all were making ready to go to the new country, and we with them. We sold our home, and everything we could not take with us, and what we could not take with us or sell, we gave away and on the seventh day of May 1846, we joined the company for California. The third day after leaving our home we crossed the Missouri river about two miles above St. Jo, and <sup>on</sup> the tenth of May we left the river and started on our uncertain journey across the plains. We had no pilot, and I think we traveled according to directions given in Fremont's book, out among the Indians, who gave us no trouble although our men stood guard at night for some distance for fear of them.

We had no accident for some distance, and then one morning Than Jones was handling his gun, and it was accidentally discharged, and killed a mule belonging to David Allen. Our company, by this time, had in it about fifty wagons, but we got along all right in perfect

peace and harmony. The first habitation of any kind that we had seen was a stone cabin the trappers had built for winter use when they were hunting. It was a little low house perhaps eight feet square, with a little door about big enough for a man to crawl in on his knees. A queer looking house for a white man to live in. We journeyed on until we reached South Platte River, and we camped near the river. That night the guard fired off his gun and hollered "Indians" and every man was up and to his gun. It was a false alarm. It was only a dog that stuck his head above the bank, that the guard had seen, so all went back to bed and were soon asleep again.

The next place I remember was the Big Blue. It had been raining all day and the stream was full up to the top of its bank, but we all crossed in safety without getting our goods except one man. He didn't raise the bed of his wagon high enough, and consequently got his goods wet. That night we camped not far from the stream, and oh, what a fearful night it was—thunder and lightning and rain, and we were on a level place—no place fit to stretch a tent—had to skin bark off the trees to spread in the tents to make our beds on. The men stood guard all night in the rain, for we were right in the Indian country, and didn't know but that they would attack us in the night or drive off our stock. But we found all in good shape in the morning and traveled on. The next place was Sweetwater and Independence Rock. There we stayed that Sabbath day and the Fourth of July until the next morning. While we were there some of our men went up on the rock and cut their names, and each tried to cut his name higher than any before him, and one of our men cut his name the highest. That was John Allen, Elizabeth Jones' brother.

We moved on in the morning and passed what was called the Devil's Gap. It was a swift running stream that looked like it had been cut through the solid rock until it reached the plain and joined the Sweetwater that was running the same direction that we were traveling.

The next thing in my memory was the Middle Platte River, A broad, shallow stream and very muddy. We forded it without much trouble and camped on the bank of the river, and that night we lost fifty head of the company's cattle. We stayed there nine days hunting the cattle. We dug holes in the bank of the stream to get clear water, and it contained some kind of mineral that made us all sick, and some of the company were sick all the way to California. We never found the cattle and one man lost all he had. His team was made up of those who had more than enough.

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Two of our cows worked in the yoke all the way to California and then had calves in the spring and gave us plenty of milk and butter all the year, with which I bought our groceries after we went to San Jose. There was a company that came up with us after a few days, who had found six of our cattle, and that was all we ever found of the fifty head we lost.

I remember passing the Black Hills. The side next to the road was like a wall, flat and was covered with shallow nests - thousands of swallows flying. The air was full of them.

The next place in my mind was Fort Laramie. The morning we reached the North Platte which was near the fort, the Sioux Indians were all equipped for war with another tribe of Indians - the Pawnees. They met us and formed in line across our path and demanded pay from us for passing through their territory. They wanted ammunition and tobacco. Our men divided with them and had no trouble with them. There were three companies fell in with us that morning so we were not afraid of them. We crossed the river and drove past the fort and camped on this side and next day made a dinner for the chief, and spread it on the ground. All of our company added something to the dinner, and our captain had a seat by the old chief. The chief and got done eating and then filled his pipe, and took a few draws and passed it to Mr. Brown, our captain and he took a few draws from the pipe and passed it on to the next until it went round the table so that was the pipe of peace, and they gave us no trouble. And in the afternoon of that day we hitched up and started on our journey and had no trouble with the Indians. The next tribe of Indians that we saw was the Crows and the Flatheads, but they gave us no trouble. The Sioux are the handsomest of Indians, and the cleanest of any on the plains. They are the tribe at Fort Laramie.

The next place in my mind is Fort Bridger. We had two very sick men in our camp who were not able to travel - Mr. David Allen, and Mr. Warren Brown, and we had to leave two men to care for the sick. Our man was having a chill every third day, and he was cross and wicked. When he helped drive the stock he was cross, and when he drove the team he was cross, and I said to my husband, "Let's leave March", and he was agreed, so we left him to care for Brown and another man, (I have forgotten his name) was left to care for Allen.

One of our milk cows was very tender footed and couldn't travel, so we traded her for another at the fort. She proved to be a number one cow, and we called her Bridger, and we kept her until she died of old age.

After all things were arranged for the sick men, we started on the road, and the following day after we left the fort, my husband was taken sick and I had to drive the team. At the time there were nine women who were driving- not well men enough in the company to drive teams. Well that was a sad day for me. I had never done anything in that line and was very awkward, but the driver next to me looked after me a little, and we reached the top of the about the middle of the afternoon, and we had a rest and some lunch and prepared to go down. We took all the oxen off but one yoke, and locked all the wheels and started. The road was terribly cut up from teams that had already gone over it, which made it more difficult.

My husband was in the wagon, not able to hold his head up, and was holding the child to keep them from tumbling out. We got down safely and in time to pitch our tents on Green before dark- a lovely spot, a nice grassy place by the river. Well, they called it a river the water was clear and beautiful. The next day we forded that stream too, and traveled on in a few days we reached Soda Springs. My husband was still very sick and we had no doctor in the company. Wasn't that a great oversight, to start on such a journey without a doctor. We with Governor Boggs and he prescribed for my husband, for we had medicine with us, and I gave the medicine according to his directions, and in a few days he began to improve and grew better along and got well. But before this there was one man, a Mr. Adams, died and left a wife and four children.

Then another, Mr. Isaac Allen, father of Mrs. Betsy Jones (Mrs. Nathaniel Jones) died and was buried by the roadside, with only a board to tell that one was buried there.

The soda springs were a great curiosity and the water was as good as any I ever drank. There were five or six springs close together, and some of them were clear, pure water, and some were dark brown in color, and one was green in color, and none but two were fit to use. It was close to the river and we could see springs bubbling up all over the river, and there was one they called the Steamboat Spring, and it formed a high basin around it as much as three feet high, and the water would shoot up as high as five feet, with a great noise, and then stop and after a few minutes shoot up again.

Then we reached Fort Hall- a large adobe building where the soldiers were stationed, and they had a little garden full of vegetables, which I would have liked to sample, but the word was hands off.