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**Mrs. Jane Pattenden Tuckett**

The majority of my ancestors, especially on my father’s side of the family, hail from Great Britain. My father’s ancestors were citizens of that nation until the mid-nineteenth century when they emigrated to the United States. The second half of the nineteenth century in England, when Queen Victoria was crowned, is known as the Victorian era. England during the Victorian era was a time of great changes, many advances in technology and medicine were being made, and the lives of English citizens were changing too.

Quality of life for citizens of London in the nineteenth century depended solely on the amount of money that you earned or had access to. During this Victorian era the social classes were clearly defined, and the gap between the very rich and very poor in society was growing (*Picard*, 81). Poverty and overcrowding in London was rampant, and the working class of society began a harder push for change. At this time London had a very poor sanitation system that consisted of open sewers that emptied into the river Thames, which runs through the middle of the city. The air in London was very polluted, and the housing for the poor was sub-standard (*Picard*, 74).

A driving force of the great changes that happened during the Victorian era was the industrial revolution. This changed life for the citizens of London by creating new modes of transportation that were accessible to the public, and also by the mechanization that was taking

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place in factories. With the increases of transportation made available to the public, people were able to escape some of the overcrowding in the heart of London, and live in suburbs on the outskirts of the city by making commuting for work more easily accomplished (*Picard*, 31).

One such suburb was the London borough of Shoreditch, where my great-great-great grandparents Charles and Jane Tuckett, lived in the early part of the nineteenth century. Charles and Jane owned and operated a shoe, millinery, and dressmaking shop in Shoreditch that they were able to establish after their marriage with a legacy that Jane received upon the death of her former employer. Before the death of Jane’s employer and her marriage to Charles, Jane was a lady’s maid for 17 years in a wealthy household (“The Life of Jane Pattenden Tuckett”, 1). Because of Jane’s legacy, the shop that she and Charles owned, and the employment of two servants, Jane and Charles were a part of England’s middle class. Being a part of the middle class in Victorian London meant that your life was reasonably comfortable, but the political atmosphere at this time was something that every class had cause to be concerned about.

During the 1800s, the act of forcibly enrolling men into the military known as impressment, was primarily and very frequently performed by the British navy. The British navy needed more men to fight in the Napoleonic wars and any English speaking man in Britain could be “pressed” into service, and oftentimes American citizens whose ships were intercepted by the navy were pressed into service as well (*Impressment*). Impressment was dwindling by the time that Queen Victoria took the throne in 1837, but was still a common practice. My great-great-great grandfather, Charles Tuckett, was pressed into the British navy during the 1840s. His impressment happened one night after Charles had gone to bed, and soldiers of the crown came to his family’s home. The soldiers pressed a coin into the palm of Charles’ hand, and he was then

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taken away into service for the crown, and not allowed to return home. During Charles’ service in the navy, he was afflicted with quinsy, which is the inflammation and formation of abscesses on the tonsils and surrounding tissues. The disease ended up killing Charles, and he died in 1846 at the age of forty-seven (“The Life of Jane Pattenden Tuckett”, 1).

Shortly after Charles died, my then widowed great-great-great grandmother Jane heard the preachings of members of the LDS church. Jane was a Methodist prior to being converted to the LDS religion (“The Life of Jane Pattenden Tuckett”, 1). After Jane’s conversion to the LDS faith, Jane and her five children set sail for America on the ship called “Berlin” (“The Life of Jane Pattenden Tuckett”, 1). They arrived in New Orleans on September 26, 1849 (*Johnson*, 1). While in New Orleans, one of Jane’s sons, Henry, opened up a shoe shop so the family could get enough money to go up the Mississippi river to St. Louis. When Jane and her family made it to St. Louis, they ended up living there for four years. In order to make money during their time in St. Louis, Jane opened a boarding house that her children helped her to run, because Jane refused to receive help from the Perpetual Emigration Fund (“The Life of Jane Pattenden Tuckett”, 1). The Perpetual Emigration Fund was set up by the LDS church in 1849 in order to provide financial assistance to those seeking to settle in Utah, on the condition that they repaid the LDS church after they arrived in Utah and established a homestead (*Perpetual Emigration Fund*). Once Jane and her family made enough money from the boarding house, they began their trek to Salt Lake City. During their trek across America’s plains, Jane’s son Henry, my great-great grandfather, drove a five-yoke team of oxen for Dr. John A. Ray in the Captain Moses Daily company. Henry also walked the last 300 miles of the trek to Salt Lake City barefoot because his shoes had worn out (“Notes From Biography of Henry Tuckett).

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Jane, Henry, and the rest of the family arrived in Salt Lake City in September of 1853. Once in Salt Lake City, Jane and her family acquired a small adobe room with a small shack at the back to live in. To provide a living for her family, Jane continued dressmaking and performed any other work that would produce income for families that had already been established in Salt Lake. At this time, Jane and her family struggled and were very poor. Jane received many offers of marriage, and some of those offers would have greatly reduced or ended the family’s struggle, but she never accepted any of the offers. In giving a reason for never remarrying, Jane was quoted as saying, “I had one good husband, that’s enough”. (“The Life of Jane Pattenden Tuckett”, 1). Jane lived out the rest of her life in Salt Lake City, and she earned her own living until she died in 1882, at the age of 87 (*Pioneer Women of Faith and Fortitude*, 4: 3164).

The impact of Jane’s conversion to LDS faith and her decision to come to the United States is felt by my family and I every day, whether we realize it and think about it or not. Being a citizen of the United States, and being a product of the American culture and the LDS religion, shapes who my family and I are as people today. Jane’s convictions, determination, and independent spirit that she relied on throughout her life have been passed down through my family’s generations, and are a shining example of the strength that it took to survive as a pioneer and an early settler in the wilds of Utah. Jane’s strength of character, and the ability to make the most of what you have and are given in life, I find to be inspiring and aspiring traits to have and to continue to pass on to future generations.

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