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**LIFE STORY OF JAMES BARTLEY ADKINS  
WRITTEN BY HER DAUGHTER, VIOLET (ADKINS) NOBLE**

James Bartley Adkins was born on 24 Jan. 1887, in a large two-story log house on his father's farm in Hager, Lincoln County, West Virginia. He was the son, and second child, of Rodolph Dietz Adkins and Sallie Jane (stump) Adkins. After his birth, his maternal grandfather, Joseph Bartley Stump, wanted James to be named Jackson, after Lt. General Thomas Jonathan ("Stonewall") Jackson, whom he had fought under during the Civil War. James' parents had already chosen his name, which was to be, James Bartley Adkins, after his two grandfathers, Joseph Bartley Stump and James Willis Adkins. His grandfather Stump was deeply disappointed, of course, and showed his displeasure by always calling him "Jack," in honor of his beloved, General Stonewall Jackson. The family soon fell in line and throughout all of his life James Bartley was known as Jack Adkins.

Throughout Jack's youth, he worked on his father's farm with his brothers and sisters. He had an abundance of energy and when assigned a task, he was up and at it immediately, and quickly had it done. This caused some problems when working in the fields with his brothers and sisters. Jack was always the first to finish when hoeing his row of corn or other vegetables. When he finished, he would chastise the others for not keeping up with him. His brothers and sisters complained to their father about Jack's "Bossiness", and he was disciplined many times for it.

This abundance of energy was a characteristic of Jack throughout his life. He was always early on the job and never absent, due to good health all of his life. He was completely trustworthy. Whether he worked with others, or alone, his employers never checked up on him. They knew he would work just as hard alone as he would have, if they were there. He had the reputation of being honest and hardworking and was always in demand when he was self-employed.

When Jack was sixteen years old, he got a job as "water-boy" on the railroad, for which he was paid fifty cents a day. The railroad was being built from West Hamlin, Lincoln County, West Virginia to Logan, Logan County, West Virginia. The distance between the two counties was about forty miles. The year was 1913, when transportation for most people was by horse and buggy. His father needed his horse for work around the farm, so Jack walked to his job. At the beginning this wasn't a problem, but as the distance from his home became farther, he sought room and board with families along the way. He went home on weekends only. By the end of Jack's job in Logan, He was walking all night Friday in order to get home on Saturday morning; then he walked all night Sunday to get back to work on Monday morning. This was hard on Jack but he never complained. Jack was a person who always did what had to be done, and that was the end of it.

Until his marriage, Jack worked on his father's farm with his brothers and sisters. Sometimes, other farmers hired him to work for them. They paid him a dollar a day. He worked long hours at hoeing, plowing, stacking hay, feeding the animals and many other chores around the farm. He was always in demand because he was such a good worker.

When Jack was twenty-five years of age, he became engaged to a young lady by the name of Martha Elkins. From the beginning, her parents objected to her dating Jack because he was a Mormon. When Martha told her parents that she and Jack were engaged to be married, they protested strongly, and threatened to disown her. She didn't want to lose her family, so she called the wedding off.

A few months later, the Mormon Elders, who were proselyting in the area of Jack's home, introduced him to my mother, Gertrude Adkins, the daughter of Henry Fisher Adkins and Arabella (Bias) Adkins, who had joined the church a few months earlier. Gertrude was investigating the church at the time. Four months after their marriage on 24 Dec. 1908, Gertrude joined the church also.

The first year after their marriage, Jack and Gertrude lived in a small, three-room log house on his father's farm where Jack farmed with his father. The second year, Jack and his brother, John bought a farm on Big Creek, a branch of Mud River in Lincoln County, West Virginia. Gertrude, John his wife, Florence did the farming; while Jack worked for other farmers to pay for the farm that he and his brother had bought. This was a hard time for Jack. He got up at 3 AM in the morning, and after eating breakfast, walked 15 miles in order to arrive at work by 5 AM. After sundown, he walked 15 miles back, arriving home at 8 PM, or soon after. He had no time to spend with his family, and looked forward to the day when the farm was paid for.

After Jack paid for the farm, he sold his share to his brother John. He got a job in Yawkey, Lincoln County, West Virginia. He worked for South Penn Oil Company, drilling wells. He returned to the farm. He loaded up his family and furniture on two wagons, pulled by two teams of horses and driven by him and his brother; then he left for his new home in Yawkey. Jack had no experience and drilling for oil but he was quick to learn and enjoys his work in Yawkey.

In 1919, Jack left Yawkey and moved to Dawes, Kanawha County, West Virginia to work in the oil fields again. By this time, Jack and Gertrude had six children. They decided to move back close to their families, where their children could have a relationship with their relatives. In 1922, Jack and Gertrude moved to Logan County, West Virginia, near two of Gertrude's sisters and their husbands. Jack worked in the coal mines in Landville and Verdunville he worked on the Tipple, loading coal into long cars to be shipped away. In Monaville, he worked inside the mine, shoring up the ceiling of the mine with timber, to keep the coal from falling and killing the miners. This often happened in the mines. Part of the mine was flooded and he and his partner had to wade through water waist-deep. This was a very difficult situation, so Jack transferred to another job in the mine.

About this time, the Great Depression came (Fall of 1929), when the stock market fell, factories closed, banks failed and millions of people were out of work. Jack, like all of the others, who were unemployed, had to stand in line to receive government commodities that were shipped in to feed the people. These were staples like beans, potatoes, rice, cheese, flour, and cornmeal. Not only was Jack embarrassed but he was humiliated. After about three weeks of standing in line for government “hand-outs” as he called it, he went to the County Supervisor and told them he was a carpenter and that he could make coffins for the indigent of the county cheaper than they could buy them elsewhere; and he would like to have the job. He got it. With the help of his daughter, Violet, who had just started her teaching career, and the produce from a one-acre field that Jack had rented; the family survived the Depression in better shape than the rest of the community.

Jack and his family settled in Verdunville, near Gertrude’s sister, Fannie and her husband, Walter Adkins. The Mormon Church had a Branch in Verdunville and Gertrude and Jack decided to rear their children there.

By this time, Jack had saved enough money to build his own home. He bought a lot in Thompson Town, just below Verdunville, and hired carpenters to build his house. The house was to be two-stories high, consisting of six bedrooms, a parlor (living room), dining room, kitchen and bathroom. He needed a large house because, at the time, he had seven children; also, Gertrude’s sister, Sarah and her husband had moved in with them. Jack had never done any carpenter work, but after observing the carpenters at work for awhile on Saturdays, (when he was not working on his new job) he bought some tools and worked with them until his house was finished. This experience taught Jack the fundamentals of carpentry and it became his occupation for life. Jack often expressed his love for carpenter’s work, and was so proud of the homes he had built. When his daughter, Violet, came home to visit, he would drive her around the area to show her the new homes he had constructed since she was there last. He built brick, concrete block, frame (wood) and log houses. He built these without ever having any instructions. He seemed to be gifted in this area. He did all the arithmetic in his head and could tell you how much lumber, nails, roofing, or other supplies one would need to construct a building. Before Jack retired, he bought and repaired houses to rent. This, along with a small Social Security Check, was his only income after he retired.

Jack was highly respected in his community, and did many things to improve conditions there. When the creek flooded because of heavy rains, the people, who lived on the far side, could not go from their homes or turn to them; because the road went through the creek bed. Without consulting anyone, Jack went to town and persuaded the telephone company to donate two large telephone poles, bought lumber with his own money, and he and two of his sons built a bridge across the creek so his neighbors could have access to their homes.

Jack’s home and those surrounding it, and beyond, had no running water, electricity, gas or in-door plumbing. He decided he wanted these conveniences for his home. He went to the utility companies in town and asked if they would provide the services, if every household signed up for them. They agreed. Jack walked 15 miles to the head of Mud Fork, then back, to get

signatures on his petitions from each household. Today ( 1992), the people living in those households do not know that some of the comforts that they enjoy is because of Jack Adkins' effort and determination to make his, and their, community a better place to live in.

Jack retired from work at the age of 75. He still had good health. He had never smoked, drink coffee, or use alcoholic beverages of any kind in his life. He worked at hard manual labor and got plenty of rest. He was early to bed and early to rise. He kept the Word of Wisdom in every aspect of his life. In Jack's last years, he suffered from severe arthritis, his only health problem ever. This disease seems to run in the family, since his father was afflicted with it also.

After Jack's retirement, he and Gertrude made several trips to Arizona to visit their daughter, Violet and her sons. Along their trip ( by car), they stop to see places of interest to them; one of them was in Arizona, the Grand Canyon, which impress them the most. This was a happy time for Jack and Gertrude. They enjoy traveling, and they especially like Phoenix. On their last trip, Jack bought a house on 1330 W. Lynwood. They live their one year. Gertrude grew homesick. She missed the children that she had left behind in Verdunville, and her old friends that lived there. Jack didn't want to leave Phoenix, but deferred to Gertrude's wishes and took her back to Verdunville. A year later, she died on 11 April 1959, the result of a massive cerebral hemorrhage in the brain.

On 15 Aug 1960, Jack married Mrs. Hazel (Avis) Scaggs, a widow. Jack and Hazel bought a home in Huntington, Cabell County, West Virginia and move there, where jacks spent the last days of his life. His arthritis had left him almost completely immobile; but he had the help and support of his wife and son, James ("Jim"), who went to care for him the last two years of his life. Jack seems serene and happy– always looking forward to seeing his children and grandchildren.

Jack died from old age on 17 May 1980, at the age of 93. He is buried beside his beloved Gertrude in Forest Lawn Cemetery, Peck's Mill, Logan County, West Virginia.