

MY LIFE HISTORY

BY: LOUISA TONKS JONES

(Daughter of William Tonks and Martha Derricott)

(William Tonks is Grandfather of Violet Tonks Berger)

(Re-written by: Ty Louis Berger – Grandson of Violet Tonks Berger. Taken from carbon copy manuscript in 1938 by; Maurine Tonks Kunz)

I was born February 28, 1863 in Salt Lake City, Utah in the 19th Ward. I don't remember living in Salt Lake, as the folks moved to Morgan in 1866. My earliest recollection of Morgan is when the grasshoppers were so bad. Grandfather and Grandmother Derricott were there. I remember grandfather digging trenches and that we kids helped them drive the grasshoppers in.

The folks lived in a dugout with just one room. It had steps to go down into it just like a cellar. When it rained the rain would come in in torrents. I remember one night it was raining and the rain came in under our bad and everything got soaking wet. We had pans on the table and bed trying to catch the water. There was a little window in the sides. One day George was setting up at the dinner table, so the folks put him outside and wouldn't let him eat. He looked in through this little window at us and I felt so sorry for him. Later the folks lived in a two-room house where it was so cold the flowers would freeze. The vegetables would freeze and it would make the potatoes so sweet we didn't like them at all.

We went to school in Morgan where that old school house was way down by Turners. James Mason was the teacher (the first teacher I remember). I don't remember what grade of school I went to, but we had to come all the way from Round Valley to school.

Ben and I were kids together and went to school together. He used to bring the drills from the lime kill down to Dad's blacksmith shop and I would see him then. We were married in October 1880. I was twenty years old and would be twenty – one the next February. We lived in Morgan until May, then we moved to Arizona.

They were sending a number of people to establish Arizona. Daddy had always worked on the lime-kill and he didn't have any land. He tried to buy from Joseph Turner but he didn't want to sell. When all these people were going, Daddy decided he's going to get land too. We had a team and wagon to go with.

We go along all right until we got to southern Utah We camped a little way from a large river we had to cross and had supper. A man came and asked where we were going. When they told him to Arizona, he said we would have to cross the river that night if we expected to get across, because the river was coming down and if we waited we would have to stay there a week or two. We didn't know what to do. Once one of the men said he was going across because he didn't want to sit around there, so we all had to

go. There was a man on horseback who went ahead. All of us followed him right in the river, but before he got across his horse fell down in the quicksand and he had to turn around and come back. We women were all there in the river. Some of them were bawling and carrying on. But I remember I sat in the seat of the wagon and wondered where I was going. It took us all night to get across. The water was so high that it flooded in the wagon box all over our clothes and everything got wet. We stayed there on the bank and dried everything out. The river didn't come down the next day, so it was all unnecessary.

We went on again until we got to Little's ranch. We asked them about the next river and they told us it was too high to cross. Even the ferryboat couldn't go across. There were fifty wagons camped there on the river bank for six weeks. It was a big flat with lots of grass on it. Then, we couldn't go across with teams, we had to take the wagons apart and go across in a row boat.

We got to St John's August 14 and our girl Lou was born in October. I didn't have any house except the wagon to live in. We stayed there and then the next spring daddy and another man got a piece of land and went to farming. The grain came up and looked so good to all of us, but the people living above our place took all the water and everything dried right up. Daddy would go haul freight and would be gone days at a time. Bur that is the money we lived on.

After the crop dried out, Daddy said, "We're not going to stay here. We'll go down to Mesa where Mattsons live." Along in October we got ready and Ben, the baby and I started down there. There was a road but we had to find it as we went along. We went along for two or three days and then one noon when we were camped, Daddy was watering the horses out of a bucket. (We had to carry water on the side of the wagon). The horses were very thirsty and were both truing to drink at the same time. He asked me to keep the other one away. All at once the horse kicked me and I fell down. I jumped up again and fell down again. I said; "Oh Ben they've kicked me on the leg." The bone was sticking out and blood was coming. He set me on the wagon tongue and we didn't know what to do. He started to cry. I told him to go in the wagon and get some pillows and we would try wrapping it up. He lifted me in the wagon and we went on. We came to a little ranch and asked if we might stay there. We hadn't had any dinner, and the horses hadn't had anything to eat since morning. He said; "No. because he was going." We turned around and camped in the bushes.

The next morning we went five miles to another little settlement, and when they got me in the house they unwrapped my leg, but none of them could do anything, so the wrapped it up again. The next day we went to the next settlement about five miles away and they took me to a woman's place and unwrapped my leg again, but she couldn't do anything for me. They made me a bed in a little granary, and we stayed there. There was a small fireplace in it and Daddy did the cooking and took car of me and the baby.

After six weeks I could move it so Daddy made me some crutches. He was so tickled to thing that I could walk that he said, "Let's go over to Mathison's and show them." There was a little ditch at the side of the path, and as I was walking along there one of the crutches slipped in and I fell and broke my

leg open again. They picked me up and carried me back in the house and I stayed there for six more weeks. They didn't set it, so that's the reason my leg is now crooked.

Dad said; "Well, We'll go to Mesa now." We packed all up and got ready to go. When Daddy went out to get the horses he couldn't find a one. He came to the door and asked me, "What shall we do not?" One man said he had seen tracks down the road where we came from, so dad went down five miles and found the horses. While he was gone the bishop said; "I think you had better not go." So we stayed there.

Erysipelas set in my leg and we tried everything. It ran all down my leg. They told us to go to Utah, so we sold everything except one horse, hired a man to take us to the depot in a wagon. We got in Utah February 2. We were all that winter getting my leg cured. I went on crutches all the next summer. Daddy went out north with cattle. He stayed with Mother and Mrs Turner. Ben came to us about two years later.

Then we moved to Idaho. There was snow and everything all over. We lived in a wagon for a while then in a little shack on the flat near Victor. We didn't have any windows or doors. We would hang a quilt up to the door to keep the snow out. There wasn't another soul on the flat, but quite a few people in the Valley.

Myrtle was born the first year after we got there. We tried to get a doctor but couldn't. Mr. Johnson knew a woman, Mrs Carpenter, in Bates. They went in a sleigh and the snow was so deep that they would have to change teams every little way. They got back in the morning on New Year's Day and Myrtle was born about 11 o'clock.

I had seven children. All of them are living except May who died leaving four children.

We used to have lots of parties. We would go to dances and dance all night. We used to go up to grandmother Reins place for a lot of our parties. Sometimes it would snow so much that it would be impossible to get back until the next day. We went fishing a lot and would have big fish suppers on the creek bank. Everyone liked picnics and we had many of them.

Whenever we were out of meat, Daddy would go down to the bushes and get deer and all the ducks we could eat. When the snow was deep they made snow shoes and went to the foot hills and caught elk. I remember on big bull elk they caught that wasn't fat at all. When we would cook it the kettle would rust along the top because of the lack of grease. When we had our first cow, we were thrilled to death and how we did enjoy the butter milk.

There wasn't any stores at first. Whenever we needed things they would go out to Idaho Falls or Rexburg to get them. The first two or three years they went to Market Lake the first winter we had three sacks of potatoes and had save enough of those to plant the next spring. We divided them up between Uncle Henry and us. We had dried fruit and lots of dried corn.

Daddy hauled freight over the Jackson Hill. That's the way we got money. They used to flean the hay around the bushes and in the swamps. When the snow was still on the ground they would dig trenches

and drive the cattle through to the warm springs where there was grass growing. Sometimes the snow was so deep we couldn't go over to Uncle Henry's place except around where the cattle went or else on snow shoes.

This history was written down in short hand and translated just as Aunt Louie Jones dictated it to me in 1938. By; Maurine Tonks Kunz Victor, Idaho.