

WHERE WAS BABY JANE IN 1900?

By James W. Johnson, II
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In the 1900 US Federal Census for the County of Sevier, in Arkansas, the family of James W. Johnson was enumerated. The family consisted of James, as the head of household, his wife, Dempsey, his son, Charles, his son, Murray, and his daughter, Lois.

The boys, Charles and Murray, were the sons of James Johnson by his first wife, Sarah Jane Anderson (Johnson), who died in November of 1898. Lois was the daughter of Dempsey, who was Johnson's second wife.

Missing from this 1900 enumeration was the daughter of James and Sarah Jane, who was born in November of 1898. Her name was Elsie Jane Johnson; she was called Jane.

From a dated photograph, we know that Elsie Jane was with her family in Sevier County, Arkansas in the latter part of 1900,¹ but not on 1 Jun 1900, when the census was enumerated.

Where was Baby Jane Johnson in 1900 and why wasn't she with her family?

To locate Baby Jane in 1900, we must look back to 1885, when James married his first wife, Sarah Jane Anderson, which took place in the home of Sarah Jane's brother on 10 Sep 1885 in Pemiscot County, Missouri.²

Later the couple settled in Sevier County, Arkansas near the Oklahoma border in a village called Ultima Thule.

Ultima Thule (Latin words, meaning "The Last Line,") was in Arkansas, about one hundred fifty yards from the boundary with the Choctaw nation. Ultima Thule boasted a postoffice, a blacksmith shop, a general store and a gin.³

On 18 Jun 1892, their first son, Charles Parker Johnson, was born there,⁴ and on 13 May 1895, Murray California Johnson, a second son, was born to James and Sarah.⁵

Then on 30 Nov 1896, a daughter, Ida P. Johnson, was born to this family. However, she died as an infant on 6 Jan 1897.⁶

Sarah Jane would bare one other child, a daughter, whom they named Elsie Jane Johnson. She was born on 10 Nov 1898.⁷ Sarah died on this date from complications surrounding Elsie Jane's birth, and was buried near her daughter, Ida, at the Walnut Grove Cemetery.⁸

Soon after, on 2 Mar 1899, James married Dempsey Tennessee Clark, a Louisiana-born daughter of a neighbor, Henry Dempsey Clark.⁹ On 1 Mar 1900, James' and Dempsey's first child, a daughter, was born in DeQueen, AR. Her name was Lois Dempsey Johnson.¹⁰

This accounting of James, Dempsey, Charles, Murray, and Lois reflects the 1900 US Federal Census enumeration of this family *sans* Elsie Jane Johnson.¹¹ If Elsie Jane was not with her family, where was she?

James William Johnson, Elsie Jane's father, was born Patrick Alford in Illinois on 20 Jul 1860.¹² He later changed his name to the one listed on almost all other census records, and/or papers as James William Johnson.

James, aka Patrick Alford, had a younger sister, whose name was Rachel Rebecca Alford.¹³ Rachel married Leo McFadin in Dallas, Texas on 29 Sep 1879.¹⁴ Rachel and Leo, who lived in the Watson Community of Tarrant County, Texas, had four children. The third child, a son, was born on 19 Mar 1898. His name was Harry Gordon McFadin.¹⁵

Several interviews with grandchildren of James William Johnson revealed that, immediately after the death of Sarah Jane Johnson, Elsie Jane was taken to Texas by James' sister.

Elsie Jane's location was confirmed with the 1900 US Federal Census for Tarrant County, Texas. She was living with her aunt, Rachel Rebecca Alford (McFadin), her uncle Leonidus Hall McFadin, her first cousins, Oscar and Harry McFadin. Enumeration details match Elsie Jane's information, including her birth: November 1898, her birth location: Arkansas; her father's birth location: Illinois; and her relationship to Leo McFadin as his niece.¹⁶ This relationship to Leo McFadin was through her blood Aunt, Rachel Rebecca Alford (McFadin).

Elsie Jane lived in Texas with her father's sister so that, according to an interview with Rachel Rebecca's granddaughter, Rachel could nurse her. Harry Gordon, like Elsie Jane was born in 1898, so Rachel nursed both children. Margaret McFadin, Rachel's granddaughter, said that in later years, "Elsie Jane and Harry Gordon teased one another about sharing Rachel's teats."¹⁷

With these dates, we know that Elsie lived in Texas from the time of her birth in November 1898 until around Christmas of 1900 when a family photograph was taken which included Elsie Jane.

ENDNOTES

¹ Family Around Christmas, photograph, December 1900, probably in De Queen, Arkansas; digital image, scanned from original; privately held by James William Johnson, [address for private use], Pinellas Park, Florida, 2013. Commercial family photograph. Dempsey Tennessee Clark (Johnson), Lois Dempsey Johnson (Childress), Kathryn Louise Childress (Webb), James William Johnson, II.

² Pemiscot County, Missouri, marriage license, Book 1, page 78, James William Johnson & Sarah Jane Anderson, 10 September 1885; Pemiscot County Courthouse, Caruthersville, Missouri.

³ Oklahoma Historical Society, "Chronicles of Oklahoma," 80 volumes, Oklahoma State University, *OSU Library Electronic Publishing Center* (<http://www.digital.libray.okstate.edu/index.htm>: accessed 22 January 2013), Vol. 10, No. 4, Recollections of Peter Hudson, Dec 1932.

⁴ Charles Parker Johnson, death certificate (Standard) 287-9147 (10 April 1922), State of Kansas, Board of Health, Division of Vital Statistics, Topeka, Kansas.

⁵ Arkansas, State Board of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics, death certificate no. 10343 (6 September 1955), Murray California Johnson; Arkansas Department of Health, Little Rock.

⁶ Walnut Grove Cemetery (Sevier County Arkansas), Ida P. Johnson; photograph taken by Holly D. Winegardner (Johnson), 15 July 1998.

⁷ Sevier County, Arkansas, birth certificate no. 61682 (10 November 1898), Elsie Jane Johnson; Court of the Clerk of Sevier County, Arkansas, De Queen.

⁸ Walnut Grove Cemetery Marker (Sevier County, Arkansas; also known as West Line Cemetery), Sarah Jane (Johnson); photographed by Holly D. Winegardner (Johnson), 15 July 1998.

⁹ Sevier County, Arkansas, Certificate of Marriage, Book 2, page 69, James William Johnson & Dempsey Tennessee Clark, 2 March 1899; Sevier County Courthouse, De Queen.

¹⁰ Dempsey Tennessee Clark Family Bible Records, dates ranging from 1860 to 1955, *Indexed Holy Bible*, New (Chicago, Illinois: John A Dickson Publishing Company, 1909), Pages 664-665; privately held by James William Johnson II, [address for private use], Pinellas Park, Florida, 24 June 1914. Lois Dempsey Johnson (Childress), Kathryn Louise Childress (Webb), James William Johnson, II.

¹¹ 1900 US Census, Sevier County, Arkansas, population schedule, Buckhorn Township, enumeration district (ED) 151, page 202A, dwelling 279, family 280, James William Johnson; digital images, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : Accessed 1 June 2011); NARA, T623.

¹² Johnson, James William, II. "James William Johnson Was Patrick Alford?" *West Line Outlook Newsletter*, March 2003, pages 16-19.

¹³ 1870 Census, Macoupin County, Illinois, population schedule 1, Township 10, Range 7, p. 36, dwelling 267, family 286, James William Johnson; digital images, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 1 Jun 2011); NARA microfilm publication M593.

¹⁴ Dallas County, Texas, marriage certificate no. Book 00F, page 406 (29 September 1879), Rachel Rebecca Alford Leonidus Hall McFadin; Clerk of the Court, Dallas County, Texas, Dallas.

¹⁵ Elsie Allean Newton, "Our Family: Mom's family," Page 4; hand written manuscript, birth, marriage, and death dates, Dallas, Texas; privately held by cousin, Harry McFadin, JR, [address for private use], Arlington, Texas, 2013.

¹⁶ 1900 US Census, Tarrant County, Texas, population schedule, Justice Precinct 2, enumeration district (ED) 110, page 11B, dwelling 202, family 205, Elsie Jane Johnson; digital images, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : Accessed 15 Jun 2011); NARA microfilm T623.

¹⁷ Margaret McFadin, granddaughter of Rachel Rebecca Alford (McFadin, [address for private use], Arlington, Texas, Oral interview by James W. Johnson, II, 3 Feb 2002; handwritten notes, privately held by James W. Johnson II, [address for private use], 2013. James W. Johnson, II.