

Jane Manning James is perhaps most famously known in the history books for being one of the first Black pioneers of the Latter-day Saint faith. Jane was also known by those close to her as a woman with a penchant for supernatural religious experiences¹ and a spiritual fervor that made her distinctly strong-willed and focused as a woman and pioneer. When she was only 20 years old, shortly after her conversion to the Latter-day Saint faith², Jane led her family from Connecticut to Illinois to join the band of Saints in Nauvoo. Though she and her family endured brutal physical conditions and racial persecution on their journey to Nauvoo, finally arriving in Illinois with bleeding feet and no possessions,³ Jane's faith amidst her circumstances made her an instant pillar of religious ardor for the Saints in Nauvoo.

During her first few years in Nauvoo, Jane lived with Joseph Smith and his wives in their Mansion⁴, where she worked as their housekeeper until later travelling to Salt Lake City, with her husband Silas, via the Ira Eldredge Company⁵. Jane and Silas owned and managed property together and had ten children, eighteen grandchildren, and eight great-grandchildren, many of whom died.⁶ Throughout her life Jane experienced the highs and lows of existence: birth and death, prosperity and pestilence. She also experienced the highs and lows of sainthood, acting as a pillar of faith for her community while also constantly battling the racial restrictions⁷ of the LDS Church at the time. Amidst all of this, Jane made her mark with intense feeling and devotion to the people and causes she deemed valuable.

¹ Terry, Charlotte Hansen. "Remembering Jane Manning James." *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 53, no. 3 (January 2020): 173. <https://doi.org/10.5406/dialjmomthou.53.3.0173>.

² Goldberg, James, Veronica J. Anderson, and Elizabeth J.D. Roundy. "Autobiography of Jane Elizabeth Manning James." *BYU Studies Quarterly* 57, no. 4 (2018): 150. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27033244>.

³ Goldberg, James, Veronica J. Anderson, and Elizabeth J.D. Roundy. "Autobiography of Jane Elizabeth Manning James." *BYU Studies Quarterly* 57, no. 4 (2018): 150. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27033244>.

⁴ Goldberg, James, Veronica J. Anderson, and Elizabeth J.D. Roundy. "Autobiography of Jane Elizabeth Manning James." *BYU Studies Quarterly* 57, no. 4 (2018): 152. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27033244>.

⁵ Terry, Charlotte Hansen. "Remembering Jane Manning James." *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 53, no. 3 (January 2020): 173. <https://doi.org/10.5406/dialjmomthou.53.3.0173>.

⁶ Goldberg, James, Veronica J. Anderson, and Elizabeth J.D. Roundy. "Autobiography of Jane Elizabeth Manning James." *BYU Studies Quarterly* 57, no. 4 (2018): 150. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27033244>.

⁷ Newell, Quincy D. *Your Sister in the Gospel: The Life of Jane Manning James, a Nineteenth-Century Black Mormon*. Oxford University Press, 2019.



Portrait of Jane Manning James, photograph, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/history/topics/jane-elizabeth-manning-james?lang=eng>

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