Hannah Bowen Jones

A Scattered Family, An Enduring Legacy.

Hannah's story as a young woman cannot be told at this time. Hopefully, more will be discovered about her over time. For now, she is our mystery woman, and her story begins on April 14, 1776, when she and Increase entered their intention of marriage in Rehoboth, Massachusetts. We do not know when the marriage took place, but we do know that it began during the opening year of the Revolutionary War. Her husband served as a soldier and was likely away for at least part of those early years.

Hannah's first known child, Deborah, was born in 1781 after she and Increase had relocated to Putney, Vermont. Deborah's birth came approximately five years after their marriage. It is certainly possible that the combination of Increase's military service and the couple's relocation to Vermont contributed to that gap before they began raising their family.

The family's movements during these years are not entirely clear. Conflicting records suggest they may have moved between Putney and Granville more than once before finally settling in Minerva.

While living in Granville, Increase registered an ear mark for his cattle, an indication that the Jones family had established a working farm. Like many frontier wives, Hannah would have shared in the daily labor of managing the household, raising a large family, and helping support the farm.

Similar to Waite in Vershire, Hannah was living a settled life in Granville. By 1804, she had ten children ranging in age from twenty-three to four years old. Her oldest daughter, Deborah, had married in 1802 and may even have had a child of her own when Hannah and Increase left for the Adirondacks. Hannah was forty-five years old when the family made this move.

Hannah brought with her five sons: Charles (18), Elijah (15), Daniel (9), James (6), and Levi (4). Her daughters Patty (12) and Hannah (10) do not appear in the published histories of Minerva. However, the 1810 census lists six children living in the household, suggesting that at least one daughter, most likely Hannah, was still living at home. We do not know whether Patty, who would have been about eighteen years old in 1810, accompanied the family to Minerva or remained behind with her married sister, Deborah. Likewise, the records do not clearly show what became of son Elias before the family settled in Minerva.

When Hannah arrived in what would become Minerva, New York, Waite had already spent four years helping to pave the way for the families who followed. Hannah and Increase purchased 200 acres on the west side of Lot 39 in the Bailey Patent. Their property lay approximately two to three miles north of the Waite and Ebenezer family homestead. This property was destined to become part of the center of a thriving business district in Minerva and remained in the Jones family for generations.

How much had changed between 1800, when Waite arrived, and 1804, when Hannah arrived, is not known. At the very least, Hannah had the benefit of Waite's four years of experience living in the area. Both women were Baptists and would almost certainly have become acquainted, if not friends.

Waite was a founding member of the Baptist Church, while Hannah was baptized into the congregation in 1807, the day after the church was officially organized, three years after her arrival in Minerva. Their families became even more closely connected in 1810 when Hannah's son Elijah married Waite's daughter Polly,

supporting the idea that the two families had developed a close relationship. There is no evidence that Increase was a member of the church.

Sadly, fifteen years after being accepted into the church, Hannah was excluded for "neglect of the church." This could have been for failing to pay her tithes, not attending services, or even worshipping with another congregation. What makes this even more interesting is that her grandson, Increase Jones III, later became an ordained Baptist minister.

Although so many of Hannah's children made the move to the Adirondacks with her, they did not remain there. Her oldest son, Increase Jr., moved at some point to Meigs County, Ohio, and never appears to have settled in Minerva. Elias either went with his older brother or followed shortly afterward, and Charles relocated there sometime between 1812 and 1820. Charles also served as a musician during the War of 1812. Elijah returned to Granville with his wife Polly and is buried there. Deborah and Hannah are also buried in Granville. James and Daniel purchased part of Hannah and Increase's land in 1825. James joined the group that followed Elder Ravlin to Chautauqua County in 1832 and is buried at Freeman's Creek in that county. Daniel also left Minerva and eventually settled in Igerna. Polly, like her mother, disappears from the historical record after her birth. Although Ancestry lists her as dying in Granville, no records have been attached to support that conclusion.

Increase died in 1825, not long after selling his and Hannah's land to James and Daniel. Hannah followed him five years later. Both are buried in the Minerva Baptist Cemetery.

One branch of the family, however, remained firmly rooted in Minerva. Their youngest son, Levi Bowen Jones, purchased part of his parents' property and established his family there. That legacy continued through his son Elias, grandson David, and great-grandson Clarence Jones. Through them, the Jones family remained a part of Minerva's story for generations, and the Jones Store became one of the community's best-known landmarks until its sale in 1965.

More than two centuries after Hannah first arrived in the wilderness, her legacy still lives on in Minerva. One of her descendants continues to live in the home once occupied by Clarence Jones.