



SUSAN JANE PEARCE

Simple Biography



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The Complicated Life of Susan Jane Pearce Hurley/Herlihy Drouard/Harris

Life in nineteenth-century England was complicated for impoverished families. Nobility maintained ownership of most of the land by passing it to the oldest sons via primogeniture. Occasionally, a tenant farmer was fortunate enough to muster sufficient funds to purchase the land he worked on. However, tenant farmers were required to pay an annual fee to utilize the property, which left them with barely enough money to produce crops and purchase seeds for the following year, let alone save enough capital to purchase the land. Those who found themselves outside of nobility and tenant farming, owning no land, were generally ostracized and were fortunate to be hired as agricultural workers or servants in a household. Such was the case of Susan Jane Pearce.

Susan was born 10 March 1845 to Henry and Rachel Pearce at Broadwindsor, Beaminster, Dorset, England.¹ The oldest of this couple's six children, Susan was enumerated as a servant in the 1861 and 1871 census records, living away from her parent's home.²

On 1 January 1870, Susan had her first child, Augustus Henry Pearce, in Yeovil, England.³ Not much is known about the relationship between Susan and the child's father, Augustus Henry Foster.⁴ However, in the 1871 census, Susan was listed as a servant in the household of James and Jane Nobbs, in Weymouth, Dorset, England.⁵ During this same census,

¹ "England, Dorset, Parish Registers, 1538-2001," database, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com : accessed 3 July 2024), 30 March 1845, entry for christening of Susan Jane Pearce, FHL Film Number 2427443.

² Joseph C. and Mary Hodder household, Marshwood, Dorset, England, 1861 census, RG9, Series 1364, district Beaminster, folio 123, p. 19, Schedule 97, *FindMyPast* (www.findmypast.com : accessed 29 July 2024), entry for Jane Pearce born in Broadwindsor, Dorset, 1840, as a servant; James and Jane Nobbs household, Weymouth, Dorset, England, 1871 census, RG10, Series 2001, district 7, folio 23, p. 77, *MyHeritage* (www.myheritage.com : accessed 4 June 2024).

³ "Utah, Tooele County Records, 1855-1956," database with image, *FamilySearch* (www.familysearch.org : accessed 29 July 2024), entry for Augustus Henry Pearce, 22 Feb. 1898, Naturalization Records.

⁴ "Utah, County Marriages, 1871-1941," database, *FamilySearch* (www.familysearch.org : accessed 30 May 2024), entry for Augustus H. Pearce for 1920.

⁵ James and Jane Nobbs household, Weymouth, Dorset, England, 1871 census, RG10, Series 2001, district 7, folio 23, p. 77, *MyHeritage* (www.myheritage.com : accessed 4 June 2024).

Augustus was registered in the household of John and Ann Beaton, in Yeovil, Somerset, England, apart from his mother.⁶

Being born out of wedlock during the 19th century labeled a child with a shameful stigma. The mother was viewed as immoral and was often banished. Under the “Bastardy Act” of the 1834 Poor Law, the mother was solely responsible for the care of an illegitimate child. Rarely could a single mother adequately care for the child if she chose to “keep” the baby and continue to face public humiliation.⁷

No records have been uncovered to determine the circumstances surrounding the courting of Susan and James “Patrick” Herlihy/Hurley. However, a marriage in June 1871 in Weymouth, Dorset, England, is recorded for the couple. Patrick is documented as an enlisted soldier in the Royal Artillery on the marriage record.⁸

Following their marriage, Susan gave birth to John Herlihy in 1872. Though unknown where John was born, he first appears in the household of Patrick and Susan in the 1881 Bristol, England Census. Annie Matilda joined the family in 1874; Ellen Jane was born in 1876; Susan Rachel entered the family in 1878; and Susan Emma was delivered in 1880. These children are also shown in the 1881 census, including Augustus Pearce, who had rejoined Susan by this time.⁹ Susan Rachel is not listed in the census since she died 21 April 1879 in Bristol, England.¹⁰

⁶John and Ann Beaton household, Yeovil, Somerset, England, 1871 census, RG10, series 2417, district 1, folio 9, p. 9, *FindMyPast* (www.findmypast.co : accessed 28 June 2024).

⁷ Virginia L. Grimaldi, "Single, Unwed, and Pregnant in Victorian London: Narratives of Working Class Agency and Negotiation," *Madison Historical Review* 14, no.3 (2017):11-41.

⁸ “UK, British Army and Navy Birth, Marriage and Death Records, 1730-1960,” database with images, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com : accessed 28 June 2024), WO69.

⁹ Patrick and Susan Hulity household, Bristol St. Philip and Jacob Out, Gloucester, England, 1881 census, RG11, Series 2494, district 3, folio 53, p. 12, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com : accessed 4 June 2024).

¹⁰ “FindAGrave,” database, *FindAGrave* (www.findagrave.com : accessed 30 May 2024), entry for Susan Rachel Herlihy, Memorial #108843997.

Susan and Patrick continued to enlarge their family with the birth of Harry Herlihy in 1882.¹¹ Following the birth of Harry, Susan and Patrick relocated from Bristol to Wales and added their last child together in 1885, Rose Mary Hurley.¹² On 2 May 1887, at Cardiff, Glamorgan, Wales, Patrick passed away. He left Susan as a single mother to eight children.¹³

Three and a half years following the death of Patrick, Susan married Frank Harris Drouard, a seaman, in Cardiff, Wales.¹⁴ Lillian Marian Drouard was born less than seven months after the marriage, and Frank returned to the sea.¹⁵ Little has been discovered about Frank, and no information other than a marriage record has been located. However, Susan's 1928 death certificate indicates she died a widow and her spouse listed was Frank Harris, who apparently dropped the last name of Drouard.¹⁶

Family lore maintains that Susan was introduced to the gospel by her daughter, Annie, while in Wales. Baptism records are not available online and immigration records for Susan could not be found.¹⁷ However, Susan immigrated to the United States in the early twentieth century. The 1910 Salt Lake City, Salt Lake, Utah Census denotes a 1903 arrival date on United States soil for Susan and her daughter, Lillian. The 1910 Salt Lake City, Salt Lake, Utah Census denotes a 1903 arrival date on United States soil for Susan and her daughter, Lillian.¹⁸

¹¹ Utah, death certificate #1120 (1927), Harry Hurley; Utah State Board of Health, Salt Lake City, UT.

¹² "FindAGrave," database, *FindAGrave* (www.findagrave.com : accessed 30 May 2024), entry for Rose Mary Hurley Middleton, Memorial #167365.

¹³ "FindAGrave," database, *FindAGrave* (www.findagrave.com : accessed 29 July 2024), entry for Patrick Hurley, memorial #108837051.

¹⁴ 1890 Marriage solemnized at the Register Office; Cardiff, Cardiff, Glamorgan, and Monmouth on 16 August 1890, record between *Frank Harris Drouard, bachelor, mariner, and Susan Jane Hurley, widow; book 174, entry No. 43*; A photocopy of the original document is in possession of W. Bart Christenson, Jr., Provo, Utah.

¹⁵ "Utah, Salt Lake County Death Records, 1849-1949," database, *FamilySearch* (www.familysearch.org : accessed 30 May 2024), entry for Lillian Marion Harris, 9 November 1919, image 436.

¹⁶ Utah, death certificate #002802762 (1928), Susan Harris; Utah State Board of Health, Salt Lake City, UT.

¹⁷ Baptism Records located at FHL, Microfilm CR 375-8, Salt Lake City, Utah.

¹⁸ 1910 U.S. Census of Salt Lake City, Salt Lake, Utah, population schedule, ED 116, p. 137; sheet 3A; digital image, *FamilySearch* (www.Familysearch.org : accessed 4 June 2024).

Susan died on 10 September 1928 in Salt Lake City, Salt Lake, Utah. She was buried 12 September 1928 in the Mount Olivet Cemetery in Alpine, Utah, Utah.¹⁹

Susan Jane Pearce's life illustrates the norms of her station, location, and era as she fulfilled the expectations of what was expected to survive financially despite family tragedy. In her younger years, Susan looked to men for comfort and security, as is evident from the relationships she had with the fathers of her first and lastborn. As she matured, Susan's children became a source of comfort. Susan mustered the strength she needed to join her children and the Saints who had emigrated from the United Kingdom to the United States. Her relocation to Utah after joining The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and her desire to live near her children, demonstrate Susan's dedication to her family and the Lord.

¹⁹ State of Utah, death certificate, #002802762 (1928), Susan Harris.