

The Life of Jessie Walkup

(Trava Olivier, January 2022)

Jessie Elmira Walkup was born August 11, 1882, in Pipestone, Minnesota to Clarence S. and Ida M. (Cornick) Walkup. She was the second of 9 children in the family.¹ She grew up in Pipestone and graduated from Pipestone High School with the class of 1901.² She went on to become a schoolteacher and in 1906 was teaching sixth grade in Pipestone.³ At some unknown time she became the Superintendent of the rural district schools in the county and was serving in that position in 1910⁴ while living with her family in a home on Hiawatha Avenue. It is unknown how long she served in this role, though it is known she held the position until at least 1912.⁵

While serving as District School Superintendent, Jessie Walkup became active in the Pipestone community in other ways. She formed the Pipestone suffrage club in May 1912⁶ and was involved with the Minnesota State Suffrage association later that same year. When the state suffragists hosted a tent at the Minnesota State Fair, Jessie oversaw lining up programs⁷ and became one of the guest speakers.⁸ Following that event, she organized suffrage clubs and centers throughout the state by following political district lines to ensure each district had representation from proponents of women's rights.⁹ She was named a state officer of the Minnesota's Woman's Suffrage Association at an annual convention held in St. Paul in October 1913.¹⁰

Another activity Miss Walkup became involved in was the Pipestone County Fair where Jessie served as secretary. She was sent to the State Agricultural Society's annual meeting in January 1912 and was the only female delegate present.¹¹ While participating on the Agricultural Committee, a Woman's Fair Committee was formed and tasked with bringing more entertainment and activities that would appeal to women and children who attended the state fair. Jessie Walkup was named to this committee as the representative of the southern district in 1913.¹² By early 1914 she was the committee chairperson.¹³

Census records indicate Jessie lived in the family home in Pipestone through 1910. Because no census was taken between 1910 and 1920, we are unable to follow Jessie's life journey in its entirety. She lived in St.

¹ "Minnesota, U.S., Births and Christening Index, 1840-1980" Accessed on <http://www.ancestry.com> 15 January 2022.

² "1905 Pipestone High School Yearbook," held in the collection of the Pipestone County Historical Society; 15 January 2022.

³ Untitled Article, *The Minneapolis Journal*, (Minneapolis, Minnesota), 5 September 1906, Page 15, Accessed on <http://newspapers.com> 21 January, 2022.

⁴ "1910 United States Federal Census," Accessed on <http://www.ancestry.com>, 15 January 2022.

⁵ "Superintendency of Schools Appropriate Work for Women," *Star Tribune*, (Minneapolis, Minnesota), 1 December 1912, Page 24, Accessed on <http://www.newspapers.com> 21 January 2022.

⁶ Untitled Article, *The Pioneer*, (Bemidji, Minnesota), 27 May 1912, Page 1, Accessed on <http://newspapers.com>, 21 January 2022.

⁷ "Suffragist Parade," *The Pioneer*, (Bemidji, Minnesota), 30 August 1912, Page 8, Accessed on <http://newspapers.com> 21 January 2022.

⁸ "Colonel's Endorsement Asked," *Star Tribune*, (Minneapolis, Minnesota) 6 September 1912, Page 8, Accessed on <http://newspapers.com>, 21 January, 2022.

⁹ "Legislators to Be Seen," *Star Tribune*, (Minneapolis, Minnesota) 17 November 1912, Page 30, Accessed on <http://newspapers.com>, 21 January 2022.

¹⁰ Untitled Article, *Star Tribune*, (Minneapolis, Minnesota) 28 October 1913, Page 7, Accessed on <http://newspapers.com>, 21 January 2022.

¹¹ "Mr. Gloffelter Named Head of Fair Society," *Star Tribune*, (Minneapolis, Minnesota) 13 January 1912, Page 10, Accessed on <http://newspapers.com> 21 January 2022.

¹² "More For Women at this Year's Fair," *Little Falls Herald*, (Little Falls, Minnesota) 1 August 1913, Page 3, Accessed on <http://newspapers.com> 21 January 2022.

¹³ "Club Workers Plan Business Sessions," *Star Tribune*, (Minneapolis, Minnesota) 15 February 1914, Page 38, Accessed on <http://newspapers.com> 21 January 2022.

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Paul, Minnesota in 1916 and 1917 and was employed by the Woman's Bureau as a factory inspector. This position meant Jessie strived to ensure the working conditions in the factories she inspected were safe and equitable for women.¹⁴ She married Loran Stanton Bowker of Paynesville, Minnesota at Clear Lake, Deuel County, South Dakota on July 17, 1917. He was 36 and she was 33. How they met or why they were married in South Dakota remains unknown. What is known is that Jessie resigned from her role as factory inspector following her marriage.¹⁵

According to census records, Jessie and Loran Bowker lived in Seattle, Washington in 1920 where Jessie was employed as a public-school teacher once again and Loran was working as an auto salesman.¹⁶ By 1922 the couple called Los Angeles, California home.¹⁷ The couple remained in California the remainder of their lives. Jessie continued to work as a schoolteacher, likely until at least 1930 when her California voter registration listed her occupation as teacher.¹⁸ Loran listed his occupation as "broker" for a time.¹⁹ Sometime before 1936²⁰ she and Loran became proprietors of a furniture store where Jessie worked as a saleswoman.²¹ The 1940 Federal Census indicated that Loran and Jessie continued as proprietors of the same furniture at the same location on Sunset Boulevard in Los Angeles, California in 1940.²² Because census records do not become public information until 72 years after the census date, no further census records are currently available that would indicate their type of employment in 1950 and beyond. California voter registrations also discontinued listing occupations after 1942. Loran's draft registration card for WWII, completed in 1942, does indicate that he and Jessie are "in business at 2170 Sunset Boulevard, Los Angeles, California."²³ Because the draft card provides the business address as being on Sunset Boulevard, it is a fair assumption they were still operating the same furniture business at that time.

Utilizing the website, Newspapers.com, a Jessie Bowker appears active in the California Federation of Women's Clubs in Los Angeles throughout the late 1950s and early 1960s, serving on the resolution committee.²⁴ She was active in the General Henry M. Roberts Parliamentary Club²⁵ for many years holding

¹⁴ "U.S., City Directories, 1882-1995," Accessed on <http://www.ancestry.com> 21 January 2022.

¹⁵ "Marshall Girl Named Inspector," *Warren Sheaf*, (Warren, Minnesota), 23 January 1918, Page 8. Accessed on <http://www.newspapers.com>, 21 January 2022.

¹⁶ "1920 U.S. Census, Seattle, WA," Accessed on <http://www.ancestry.com> search for Jessie and Loran Bowker, 21 January 2022.

¹⁷ Untitled Article, *South Idaho Press*, (Burley, Idaho), 23 November 1922, Page 5, Accessed on <http://www.newspapers.com> 28 January 2022.

¹⁸ "California, U.S., Voter Registration, 1900-1968," Accessed on <http://www.ancestry.com> search for Jessie E. Bowker, 29 January 2022.

¹⁹ "1930 U.S. Census; Los Angeles, CA," Accessed on <http://www.ancestry.com> search for Jessie Bowker, 21 January 2022.

²⁰ "California, U.S., Voter Registrations, 1900-1968," Accessed on <http://www.ancestry.com> search for Jessie E. Bowker, 29 January 2022.

²¹ "1940 U.S. Census; Los Angeles, CA," Accessed on <http://www.ancestry.com> search for Jessie Bowker, 21 January 2022.

²² "1940 U.S. Census; Los Angeles, CA," Accessed on <http://www.ancestry.com> search for Jessie Bowker, 3 February 2022.

²³ "U.S., WWII Draft Registration Cards, 1942" Accessed on <http://www.ancestry.com> search for Loran Stanton Bowker, 25 January 2022.

²⁴ "Metropolitan District Officers Installed," *The Southwest Wave*, (Los Angeles, California) 23 June 1960, Page 60 Accessed on <http://www.newspapers.com> 22 January 2022.

²⁵ "District Slates Meeting," *The Southwest Wave*, (Los Angeles, California) 11 December 1958, Page 24, Accessed on <http://www.newspapers.com> 22 January 2022.

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roles as the Secretary of Correspondence²⁶, Second Vice President²⁷, First Vice President²⁸, and President.²⁹ While there are missing years in Jessie's life as an activist for women that could not be located, one could make a case that this is the same Jessie Bowker. Newspapers.com does not hold a complete collection of newspapers and research is limited to what was available at the time of this article. Through voter registration information of both Jessie and Loran between 1930 and 1960, the Bowkers lived at 5 different locations all within a few miles of each other in the same area of the city of Los Angeles. The articles from the 1950s and 1960s that were located are all from newspapers from that same area of Los Angeles. Again, due to lack of newspapers available online, it is hard to say when Jessie's role as an active member of these organizations came to an end. At the time she began her term as president of the parliamentary club in 1961, Jessie would have been 2 months shy of turning 82 years old.

Jessie's husband, Loran, passed away in Los Angeles January 19, 1963, in Los Angeles³⁰ and was interred at Angelus Rosedale Cemetery³¹. Jessie lived another 11 years and passed away in August 1974 at the age of 91.³² She was laid to rest beside her husband.

²⁶ "Parliamentary Club Slates Installation," *The Southwest Wave*, (Los Angeles, California), 7 June 1956, Page 52, Accessed on <http://www.newspapers.com> 29 January 2022.

²⁷ "President entertains officers," *The Southwest Wave*, (Los Angeles, California), 12 July 1959, Page 6, Accessed on <http://www.newspapers.com> 29 January 2022.

²⁸ "Installation scheduled," *The Southwest Wave*, (Los Angeles, California), 5 June 1960, Page 4, Accessed on <http://newspapers.com>, 29 January 2022.

²⁹ "Parliamentarians to Seat Leaders," *The Los Angeles Times*, (Los Angeles, California), 2 June 1961, Page 30, Accessed on <http://newspapers.com>, 29 January 1961.

³⁰ "California, U.S., Death Index, 1940-1997," Accessed via <http://www.ancestry.com>, search for Loran Stanton Bowker, 5 February 2022.

³¹ "Larry Bowker memorial," Accessed on <http://www.findagrave.com>, search for L. Bowker in Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, California, 5 February 2022.

³² "Deaths," *The Los Angeles Times*, (Los Angeles, California), 2 August 1974, page 28, Accessed on <http://newspapers.com> search for Jessie Bowker, 22 January 2022.