

Helen DeVitt Jones, a great humanitarian and patroness of education and the fine arts, was born into one of the early ranching families of West Texas. Her father, David M. DeVitt, came to Texas in 1880 from New York; and in 1903 he purchased the Mallet Land and Cattle Company, which covered approximately 52,000 acres in West Texas.

This land is located principally in Hockley, Cochran, Yoakum and Terry counties, which are west of Lubbock, Texas.

In the 1930's, the Mallet Land and Cattle company became a corporation. Raising cattle was the main industry of the ranch, but oil and gas were discovered on the property in May of 1938. By the end of 1940, 101 wells had been drilled on the land. At the present time, there are over 1,000 pumping wells.

Helen's mother, Florence, who was reared in an orphanage near Waco, met Mr. DeVitt after he came to Texas. The couple had four children—two girls, Christine and Helen, and two boys, Harold and David, Jr. Harold died in a gun accident in 1901, and David, Jr. died in a car accident in 1930. Mr. DeVitt died in 1934, and Mrs. DeVitt died in 1945. Christine DeVitt lived to be 98 and died in 1983.

Mrs. Jones was born December 7, 1899, in Fort Worth, Texas. She lived on the ranch with her family until it was time for her to go to school. The family maintained a home in Fort Worth in order for her to attend school.

After completing high school, Helen enrolled at Texas Christian University for one year. She then continued her education at the University of California at Berkeley, where she graduated summa cum laude in 1921.

In 1925, she returned to Texas and married Lee S. "Bill" Secrest. The couple had one child, a daughter, Dorothy Gail, born in 1926. Later in life she married W. Tom Jones, who had been a friend of her father and who served as the farm manager until he died in 1955.

After the death of Mr. Jones, Helen traveled to the New York area for health reasons and in order to visit her daughter who was living in Woodstock, NY. She returned to Lubbock in 1966 where she remained until her death in 1997.

Mrs. Jones funded the Helen Jones Foundation in 1984. She was an avid supporter of the fine arts and organizations working with both public school and college students.

Helen DeVitt Jones devoted her later life to sharing her wealth as a patron of philanthropic causes. The Foundation continues to follow her philosophy as its guiding principle.

If you are interested in knowing more about Helen DeVitt Jones, the book entitled *Oil, Taxes and Cats* by David J. Murrah chronicles the life of the DeVitt family.

*Helen DeVitt Jones biography provided by the Helen Jones Foundation, Inc., 2006*