

Jane Mason McCully

Jane Mason McCully and her husband, Dr. John Wilmer McCully, were among the first settlers to arrive in Jacksonville in 1852. They had three children, Jimmy (James), Molly (Mary), and Issie (Isabel).

John was a trained doctor, and Jane a teacher — miners had little use for either. So Jane started a business baking bread, cakes, and pies. John purchased land in Jacksonville and became part owner of the El Dorado saloon and a local dairy. He took out loans to build the two-story brick McCully Hall (now Odd Fellows Hall) and the handsome McCully House. Unable to repay his creditors, Dr. McCully took the morning stagecoach out of town in 1862 and never returned. Jane was left with three small children and all his debts. Jane made it clear to their children and the town folk that they were never to mention John's name to her again.

Jane abandoned McCully Hall but kept the McCully House. She kept part ownership of the El Dorado Saloon which brought in rent. In June of 1862, Jane also opened Mrs. McCully's Seminary, the town's first school for girls and boys. She educated generations of Jacksonville children, continued to buy property and houses, and invested in various businesses. Her success was such that her unmarried daughter, Issie, never had to worry about finances.

Jane continued to live in the McCully House for 40 years. She wrote poetry, was active in civic and social affairs, a member of the Eastern Star Lodge, and an important participant in the Pioneer Society. She died in 1899, at the age of 75.