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## HANNAH PARSONS AND HER FOUR HUSBANDS

Early Mormon History and Apostasy

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The authors discovered, while completing the genealogy of Nathaniel Riggs, that the story of his second wife, Hannah Parsons, is inconsistently told in well-known Mormon biographical resources. Hannah's history involves several leaders of the early Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (called also the Mormon or LDS church) and its branches formed at the death of its founder, Joseph Smith Jr., making her story perhaps more valuable than for most women with four husbands. We will tell it the way Hannah actually lived it, then discuss what probably went wrong in other explanations. We close with a genealogical summary.

Family Bibles and parish records are trusted sources in conventional genealogies. Mormons have additional sources accorded equivalent trust because of the LDS religious importance of the events recorded: (1) patriarchal blessings, (2) endowment and sealing records, and (3) baptisms for the dead.

### THE PARSONS FAMILY

A patriarchal blessing on 13 February 1851 at Great Salt Lake City establishes that Hannah Parsons was born on 28 April 1797 to Benjamin Parsons and “Elizbeth.”<sup>1</sup> This record places Hannah's birth in Northumberland County, New York, a county that never existed.

A family group sheet suggests that her birthplace was Northumberland, Saratoga County, New York.<sup>2</sup> A man believed to be Hannah's brother, Thoret Parsons, was born on 5 September 1802 in Northumberland, Cayuga [*sic*] County, New York.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Patriarchal Blessings [transcription], Hannah Parsons [Family History Library (FHL), Salt Lake City, film #392,677], cites Historian's Office Library—Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah, Patriarchal Blessings (hereafter cited simply as Patriarchal Blessings), 12:44. This record is a transcription of the original, which may be viewed only by a direct descendant. It is likely that “Northumberland Co., N.Y.” is an error in the transcription.

<sup>2</sup> Susan Ward Easton Black, *Membership of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830–1848*, 50 vols. (Provo, Utah, 1984–88), 33:963–64 (hereafter cited as Easton Black, *Membership of LDS Church, 1830–1848*).

<sup>3</sup> *6th Quorum of Seventies*, 1:62, Church History Library, CR 499, r. 19 (part of collection of Seventies Quorum Records, 1844–1975), Thoret Parsons, Nauvoo, son of Benjamin: “Born in the Town of Northumberland County of Cayuga [*sic*] State of New York September 5<sup>th</sup> 1802. Aged 42 years 1844.” There is no town of Northumberland in Cayuga Co., N.Y., but Thorit grew up in

In 1800 Benjamin “Pierson,” aged 26–45, resided in Northumberland, Saratoga County, New York, with two boys and one girl under 10 (probably Hannah) and one female, aged 16–26.<sup>4</sup> There was no other Benjamin Parsons, Parson, Pearsons, Pearson, Pierson, or Piersons family in the 1800 census for New York state which fits Hannah, aged about 3, and Benjamin, 45 or younger.

The same family group sheet that lists Thorit as a brother of Hannah lists other siblings as well.<sup>5</sup> These children can be matched to both the 1810 and 1820 censuses. In 1810 the “Benj. Pearsons” family was living in Avon, Ontario County, New York, with three boys under 10 (Isaac, about 9, Thorit, 8, Benager, about 7), one male aged 10–16 (Elisha, 11), one male aged 26–45 (Benjamin, 33), two girls under 10 (Betsey, 6), two females aged 10–16 (Hannah, 12), and one female aged 26–45, who was wife Elizabeth.<sup>6</sup> Ten years later, Benjamin Parsons, over 45, was living in Sempronius, Cayuga County, New York. There were seven younger males in the household and six younger females, including one, aged 16–26, who would have been Hannah.<sup>7</sup> The children known from the LDS records fit, as do all children in the family group sheet.<sup>8</sup>

More support comes from the 1840–41 baptisms for the dead in Nauvoo, Hancock County, Illinois, where “Thauret” Parsons, brother of Betsy Kennedy, served as proxy in baptisms for her and her (unnamed) husband, Mr. Kennedy.<sup>9</sup>

Probable sister Sophia Ketcham received her patriarchal blessing on 4 February 1844. The record gives her birth as October 1814 in “Cayaga” County, New

Sempronius, Cayuga Co. We have fixed on the single spelling *Thorit* for the generic use, but use spelling *Thoret* if the corresponding record does.

<sup>4</sup> 1800 U.S. census, Northumberland, Saratoga Co., N.Y., p. 1128.

<sup>5</sup> Easton Black, *Membership of LDS Church, 1830–1848*, 33:963–64, lists Benjamin Parsons but cites only a family group sheet, b. 1777, Vt., spouse Elizabeth Phillips, 12 children: (1) Hannah, b. 28 April “1797 [1798],” Northumberland, Saratoga Co., N.Y., (2) Elisha, b. N.Y., (3) Isaac, b. N.Y., (4) Thorit, b. 5 Sept. 1802, Northumberland, Saratoga Co., N.Y., (5) Betsey, b. Sempronius, Cayuga Co., N.Y., (6) “Benager [Benjamin],” b. N.Y., (7) Howland, b. N.Y., (8) Stephen, b. N.Y., (9) Deborah Ann, b. 9 “Mar. [Oct.]” 1812, (10) Sally, b. N.Y., (11) Sophia Elizabeth, b. Oct. 1815, Sempronius, Cayuga Co., N.Y., and (12) Jane, b. 5 Jan. 1817, Sempronius, Cayuga Co., N.Y.

<sup>6</sup> 1810 U.S. census, Avon, Ontario Co., N.Y., p. 602.

<sup>7</sup> 1820 U.S. census, Sempronius, Cayuga Co., N.Y., p. 88, lists Benjamin Parsons, 031301/41110.

<sup>8</sup> In addition, in 1860 Benjamin Parsons, aged 83, b. N.Y., resided in Spafford, Wayne Twp., Lafayette Co., Wis., in the household of Thorit Parsons, aged 58, a farmer b. N.Y., undoubtedly Benjamin’s son (1860 U.S. census, Spafford P.O., Wayne, Lafayette Co., Wis., pp. 910–11, dw. 89, fam. 89).

<sup>9</sup> Nauvoo Baptisms for the Dead, A:96, 1840–1841 [FHL film #183,376]. Baptism for the dead was publicly announced by Joseph Smith Jr. on 15 Aug. 1840. Mormon history dates are taken from LDS website, *Chronology of Church History*, <[scriptures.lds.org/chchrono/contents](http://scriptures.lds.org/chchrono/contents)> (hereafter cited as *Chronology of LDS Church History*).

York.<sup>10</sup> Sophia and her husband, Joseph Ketcham (Ketchum), will appear in the nexus of names later in this study. Isaac Parsons resided near Joseph Ketchum in Quincy, Adams County, Illinois, in 1840.<sup>11</sup>

The above facts support the family group sheet sufficiently to argue that the following household was Hannah's family.

In 1830 "Benjamin" Parsons, aged 50–60, resided in Brownhelm Township, Lorain County, Ohio, with a woman aged 50–60, three males aged 20–30, one girl aged 5–10, two females aged 10–15, and one female aged 15–20. Hannah is missing and had probably married. Benjamin was listed adjacent to (in alphabetical order in the census by first letter of surname) Thorit Parsons, Elisha Parsons, and Ebenezer Page.<sup>12</sup> The last named will become particularly important to Hannah's further story.

The movement of the Parsons family from upstate New York to Ohio reflects a general migration at this time and coincides with the beginnings of the Mormon church. The LDS church was organized in Fayette Town, Seneca County, New York, on 6 April 1830, and its members were commanded to gather in "the Ohio" December 1830–January 1831.<sup>13</sup> The gathering place was Kirtland, Geauga (now Lake) County, Ohio.<sup>14</sup> Cayuga County abuts Seneca County in upstate New York, and Lorain County in Ohio is separated from Geauga County by Cuyahoga County, all three bounded on the north by Lake Erie.

Thoret Parsons (as "Therot Pearsons") was taxed 1827–33 in Brownhelm Township, Lorain County, but then disappeared from Lorain County tax lists.<sup>15</sup>

#### THE PECK FAMILY AND HANNAH'S FIRST HUSBAND

Benjamin Parsons, with a woman (apparently Hannah Parsons) aged 16–26, in the household, had as neighbors in 1820 in Sempronius, Cayuga County, New York: (1) Abijah Peck, over 45; and (2) a man whose name appears to be Warren

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<sup>10</sup> Patriarchal Blessings [transcription], Sophia Ketcham [FHL film #392,665], father and mother not recorded, cites Patriarchal Blessings, 6:231.

<sup>11</sup> 1840 U.S. census, Quincy, Adams Co., Ill., p. 37, Joseph listed four names below Isaac.

<sup>12</sup> 1830 U.S. census, Brownhelm Twp., Lorain Co., Ohio, p. 14.

<sup>13</sup> *Chronology of LDS Church History*.

<sup>14</sup> Larry C. Porter, "A Study of the Origins of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the States of New York and Pennsylvania 1816–1831," Ph.D. dissertation, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, Aug. 1971, 326: "During the year 1831, a mass exodus of New York Saints occurred as they moved to the Ohio."

<sup>15</sup> Brownhelm Twp., Lorain Co., Ohio, tax lists 1827–33 [FHL film #s 511,790–91]. He was not listed in the 1834–35 tax lists. The 1832 list includes Isaac, "Benajiah," "Therot," Elisha, and Stephen "Pearsons." The 1833 list has Isaac, Elisha, "Therot," Stephen, Benajah, and Howland "Pearsons."

Peck, aged 26–45. The [Warren?] Peck listing appears directly above Abijah Peck.<sup>16</sup>

Abijah Peck of the 1820 census fits the description of a descendant of Deacon Paul<sup>1</sup> Peck—Abijah<sup>5</sup> Peck (*Abijah*<sup>4</sup>, *Samuel*<sup>3</sup>, *Paul*<sup>2-1</sup>)—treated in a Peck genealogy by Ira Peck,<sup>17</sup> as corrected by Donald Lines Jacobus.<sup>18</sup> The information for Abijah's family was provided to the genealogy's author, Ira Peck, by Abijah's grandson and Warren's son, Joseph L. Peck, in whose residence Abijah had died.<sup>19</sup>

Abijah Peck had three wives, the first being Lucy Percival, and six children, including Warren Peck. Son Warren Peck was born on 30 December 1786, and died in Locke, Cayuga County, New York, on 2 February 1836. Warren married three times: (1) Abigail Owen, (2) "Roxy" Standish, and (3) Hannah "Pearsons." Genealogist Ira Peck did not list a fourth wife for Warren, an important point in our closing argument. Ira Peck gave Warren five children by the three wives: (1) Phylinda, born on 15 August 1806; (2) Joseph L. [Lyman],<sup>20</sup> born on 18 April 1809, "to whom I am indebted for my information"; (3) Susannah, born on 22 February 1814; (4) Warren [Jr.], born on 15 May 1816; and (5) Caroline Matilda, born on 9 November 1818.

The mothers of Warren's children are not specified, but the gaps in the births suggest that Warren must have married Abigail, say 1805, and had with her the first two children. Then Abigail probably died, and Warren married Roxy, say 1813, and had with Roxy the next three children. Then Roxy probably died after the birth of her last child in 1818 and before the 1820 census, and Warren married after 1820, Hannah Parsons. We will show that there are four children, all Hannah's, missing from the Ira Peck genealogy and suggest a reason for the omission.

The [Warren?] Peck listed above Abijah Peck in the 1820 census matches Warren of the Peck genealogy: [Warren?] Peck, aged 26–45 (Warren would have been 34), resided in Sempronius, Cayuga County, with one boy (Warren) and two

<sup>16</sup> 1820 U.S. census, Sempronius, Cayuga Co., N.Y., p. 86. The putative Warren item is distorted on the microfilm by what appears to be tape or adhesive at the binding edge of the page.

<sup>17</sup> Ira B. Peck, "Descendants of Deacon Paul Peck of Hartford, Connecticut," an appendix to *A Genealogical History of Descendants of Joseph Peck* (Boston, 1868) (hereafter cited as Peck, "Descendants of Deacon Paul Peck"), 367–89, with errata on p. 401.

<sup>18</sup> Donald Lines Jacobus, "The Family of Paul Peck of Hartford, Connecticut," TAG 9 (1932):82–89. Jacobus famously criticizes the early generations of the Ira Peck genealogy. The Jacobus correction which applies here is the substitution of Paul<sup>2</sup> for Samuel<sup>2</sup> in the lineage list for Abijah<sup>5</sup> Peck.

<sup>19</sup> Peck, "Descendants of Deacon Paul Peck," 376, 382. "Abijah<sup>5</sup> Peck . . . died at the residence of his grandson, Joseph L., in Cayuga County, May 18, 1828" (p. 376). Abijah Peck was b. 11 July 1747, Middletown (now Berlin), Middlesex Co., Conn. [Middletown VRs, 1:71], and died "May 18, 1828, age 80y/10m/7d" (Flora B. Daniells and Mable L. Crosby, "Monaghan Cemetery," *Cemeteries of Cayuga County, New York*, 10 vols. [Cayuga Co., N.Y.: Owasco Chapter D.A.R. and Pomona Grange, n.d.], 5:131 [FHL film #1,435,221]).

<sup>20</sup> 1850, 1860, and 1870 U.S. censuses all record him as Lyman Peck in Locke, Cayuga Co., aged 40, 51, and 61, respectively, b. in N.Y. in all cases.

girls (Susannah and Caroline) under 10, and one male (Joseph) and one female (Phylinda) aged 10–16. No woman of the age to be his wife was recorded.<sup>21</sup>

Hannah and Warren married sometime after the 1820 census because a son, Thorit Peck, was born on 30 May 1826 in Locke.<sup>22</sup> *Thorit* is such an unusual name that surely he was named for Hannah's brother, Thorit Parsons.

These relationships are substantiated by the Mormon practice of proxy baptisms for the dead. Thorit Peck served as proxy on 5 August 1844 in Nauvoo, Hancock County, Illinois, for Joseph Peck, his uncle, Abijah Peck, his grandfather, and Lucy Peck, his grandmother. Listed next to Thorit in the record, at the same time and place, Hannah Page served as proxy for the baptisms of her deceased husband Warren Peck and "friends" Abigail Peck and Roxanna Peck, surely Warren's first two wives. Ebenezer Page (Hannah's second husband) witnessed these baptisms.<sup>23</sup>

Warren Peck of Locke, Cayuga County, New York, bought lot 2 in Locke of one acre on 22 January 1827 for \$30 from Gideon Morey and his wife, Anna, of Locke.<sup>24</sup> Warren Peck and his wife Hannah of Locke sold lot 2 in Locke of 1¼ acres on 10 August 1830 for \$150 to William N. Bennett and George W. Bennett of Locke.<sup>25</sup>

In 1831 Warren Peck was taxed in Brownhelm Township, Lorain County, Ohio, on lot 55 of 25 acres, valued at \$46, and with one cow.<sup>26</sup> Warren Peck moved from upstate New York to northern Ohio at about the same time as Hannah's father, Benjamin Parsons, who was listed in Brownhelm on the 1830 census. Hannah's brothers, Elisha and Thorit Parsons, were also listed on the same census page as was her next husband, Ebenezer Page.<sup>27</sup>

Hannah and Warren had another child, King Benjamin Peck, on 7 July 1831.<sup>28</sup> King Benjamin is such a strong Mormon name that surely Hannah had converted

<sup>21</sup> 1820 U.S. census, Sempronius, Cayuga Co., N.Y., p. 86.

<sup>22</sup> Patriarchal Blessings [transcription], Thorit Peck [FHL film #392,677], b. 30 May 1826, N.Y., father "Hanen," mother Hannah, date of blessing 31 Jan. 1857, Pleasant Grove, Utah Terr., patriarch John Young, cites Patriarchal Blessings, 27:208; "Nauvoo Temple Endowment Register: 10 December 1845 to 8 February 1846" (manuscript compiled by LDS Temple Records Index Bureau, 1974), 320 [FHL call no. 977.343/N1 K29] (hereafter cited as *Nauvoo Temple Endowment Register*), gives Thorit's birth as 30 May 1826, Locke, Cayuga Co., N.Y., citing "30 May 1828 – slg [sealing] record." We believe "Hanen" to be a transcription error for "Waren" (cf. the patriarchal blessing for brother King Benjamin Peck).

<sup>23</sup> Nauvoo Baptisms for the Dead, D:118 [FHL film #183,379].

<sup>24</sup> Cayuga Co., N.Y., Deeds, FF:540, recorded 1 March 1827.

<sup>25</sup> Cayuga Co., N.Y., Deeds, MM:140, recorded 15 Sept. 1830, witness James Herman Jr.

<sup>26</sup> Brownhelm Twp., Lorain Co., Ohio, tax list, 1831 (T6 R19).

<sup>27</sup> 1830 U.S. census, Brownhelm Twp., Lorain Co., Ohio, p. 14. Warren Peck was not found in the 1830 census, probably because he and his family were moving.

<sup>28</sup> Patriarchal Blessings [transcription], King Benjamin Peck, b. 7 July 1831, Ohio, father "Haren" Peck, mother Hannah, date of blessing 2 Feb. 1857, Pleasant Grove, Utah Terr., patriarch

to the LDS faith before this time.<sup>29</sup>

Warren Peck was taxed in 1832 in Brownhelm Township, Lorain County, again on 25 acres, six of them in Lot 55, but he disappeared from the Lorain County tax lists after that.<sup>30</sup> We have no further evidence of Warren except his death.

Since Warren Peck died in 1836 in Locke, Cayuga County, New York,<sup>31</sup> and was baptized by proxy by his widow after his death (implying he was not Mormon), we suggest that his son Joseph Lyman Peck disapproved of his father's Mormon wife, Hannah, so he ignored her children when giving family information to genealogist Ira Peck. It is unlikely that Joseph, at age 17, would have been unaware of the birth of his half-brother Thorit Peck in Locke in 1826.

Although Warren Peck returned to New York sometime after 1832, Hannah did not join him, but rather in 1833 moved contemporaneously with her brother Thorit Parsons and others to the newest home for the Mormons: Missouri.

The LDS *Biographical Encyclopedia* gives this account of Thorit Peck:

Peck, Thorit, a member of the Mormon Battalion,<sup>32</sup> Company C, was born May 30, 1826, in Lock [sic], Cayuga Co., New York, a son of Warren and Hannah Peck. He emigrated with his mother to Jackson County, Mo., in the fall of 1833, and a few weeks later the Saints were driven out by mobs. Thorit was baptized as a boy and moved with the saints from Missouri to Illinois, and while on the journey from Nauvoo westward in 1846 he enlisted in the famous Battalion, and marched to California, enduring all the fatigue and hardships of that long, wearisome journey.<sup>33</sup> He arrived in Great Salt Lake Valley in 1848 and was ordained a Seventy May 10, 1857, becoming a member of the

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John Young, cites Patriarchal Blessings, 27:245 [FHL film #392,677]. King Benjamin was blessed just two days after Thorit Peck and in the same place. "Haren" is probably a transcription error for "Waren."

<sup>29</sup> King Benjamin was one of the most prominent and revered leaders in the Book of Mormon. His life and teachings comprise the first part of Mosiah (in the Book of Mormon).

<sup>30</sup> Brownhelm Twp., Lorain Co., Ohio, tax list, 1832, He was not in the 1833–35 tax lists.

<sup>31</sup> His son Joseph L. reported his death date and place to Ira Peck. No probate was found for him in Cayuga Co.

<sup>32</sup> The Mormon Battalion of the U.S. Army in the Mexican War consisted of about 500 men, mostly LDS members escaping the hardships of Nauvoo, Ill., in 1846. They undertook a grueling march of over 1800 miles through the Southwest, visiting much of what became the Gadsen Purchase, and reached Los Angeles, Calif., in 1847. There about 80 men reenlisted. (From various sources, e.g., Daniel Tyler, *A Concise History of the Mormon Battalion in the Mexican War, 1846–1847* [Salt Lake City, 1881].)

<sup>33</sup> Mexican War pension file, Sarah Peck, widow of Thorit Peck, application 29705, certificate 7740 [FHL film #480,143]. Thorit Peck enlisted 16 July 1846, Council Bluffs, Iowa, in Capt. Brown's C Co., as a private, was promoted to corporal 2 June 1847, and was mustered out 16 July 1847 as a corporal at "Ciudad De Los Angeles California." He reenlisted (erroneously entered as "Thomas" Peck) 20 July 1847 in Capt. Daniel C. Davis's Co. of Mormon Volunteers in Los Angeles, Calif., as a corporal, and was mustered out 14 March 1848, San Diego, Calif., as a corporal. His pension papers recount he contracted chronic diarrhea "in the neighborhood of Semirone [Cimarron] Springs near Santa Fe [Santa Fe] New Mexico" on the overland march (implying late 1846). Sarah filed for widow's pension benefits on 5 Aug. 1885.

34th quorum of Seventy.<sup>34</sup> He was one of the early settlers of Pleasant Grove, Utah Co., where he resided until his death,<sup>35</sup> which occurred there Feb. 6, 1858, he being only 32 years of age.<sup>36</sup> He left a wife and three children, and died as a faithful member of the Church.<sup>37</sup>

Naming patterns alone argue that King Benjamin and Thorit were brothers and children of Warren and Hannah Peck. Thorit had three children with his second wife, Sarah: (1) Alma Mattison Peck, a son born on 30 September 1852; (2) Thorit Randolph Peck, born on 12 November 1854; and (3) Anna B. Peck, born on 15 September 1857.<sup>38</sup>

King Benjamin Peck had 12 children, including (1) Warren Jackson Peck, born about 1853; (2) Hannah M. Peck, born about 1855; (4) Thorit Randolph Peck, born in September 1859 (1900 census) or on 11 June 1858 (death certificate); and (8) Alma M. Peck, a son born on October 1868 (1900 census).<sup>39</sup>

#### THE PAGE FAMILY AND HANNAH'S SECOND HUSBAND

Ebenezer Page Jr. was born on 7 October 1807, perhaps in Watertown, Jefferson County, New York, the son of Ebenezer Sr. and Rachel (—) Page.<sup>40</sup> Ebene-

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<sup>34</sup> The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles was organized on 14 Feb. 1835, and the First Quorum of the Seventy commenced on 28 Feb. 1835, both in Kirtland, Ohio [*Chronology of LDS Church History*]. These are governing bodies of the Mormon church. Members are called apostles or seventies, respectively.

<sup>35</sup> Pleasant Grove Ward Records, p. 1 [FHL film #25,583]. Thorit Peck consecrated his property in Pleasant Grove, 15 Feb. 1857, p. 7, "K B" Peck donated corn worth \$2.30, and Thorit Peck donated potatoes worth \$2 to Patriarch John Young and others.

<sup>36</sup> *Cemetery Records, Pleasant Grove, Utah County, Utah*, 3 vols., 3:475 [FHL film #824,234], Thoret Peck, d. 6 Feb. 1858, buried in Pleasant Grove Cem., block 15, lot 2.

<sup>37</sup> Andrew Jenson, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia: A Compilation of Biographical Sketches of Prominent Men and Women in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City, 1901–36), 4:760.

<sup>38</sup> Mexican War pension file, Sarah Peck, certificate 7740.

<sup>39</sup> 1860 U.S. census, Provo, Utah Co., Utah Terr., p. 893, dw. 3749, fam. 2827; 1870 U.S. census, Scipio, Millard Co., Utah Terr., p. 365, dw. 13, fam. 13; 1880 U.S. census, Wellington, Millard Co., Utah Terr., ED 31, p. 485B, dw. 2, fam. 2; 1900 U.S. census, Clover Creek, Lincoln Co., Idaho, ED 129, p. 8, sh. 7B, dw. 121, fam. 120, lists his wife of 47 years, "Margret" A., b. March 1836, Mo.; death certificate, Idaho Dept. of Health, "Thret" Randolph Peck, no. 50021 [FHL film #1,530,843].

<sup>40</sup> Ebenezer Jr.'s birth date is from *Nauvoo Temple Endowment Register*, 90, which cites only the washing and anointing record for birth date. His birth state is from the 1850, 1860, and 1870 U.S. censuses. In a letter of April 1847, Ebenezer refers to his "brother John," thinking that they were to be shot in Far West in 1838 [*Zion's Reveille*, Voree, Walworth Co., Wis. Terr., 15 April 1847, vol. 2, no. 13, p. 55]. In another document, John E. Page stated that he was born of Ebenezer and Rachel Page, their first child, 25 Feb. 1799, at Trenton Town, Oneida Co., N.Y. He mentioned he was ordained an elder under the hands, among others, of Ebenezer Page Jr. at Brownhelm, Lorain Co., Ohio (*History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* 7 vols., vols. 1–6: Joseph Smith Jr., *Period 1, History of Joseph Smith, the Prophet, by Himself*, vol. 7: Brigham Young, *Period 2, Apostolic Interregnum* (Salt Lake City, 1969–73), 3:240–41 (hereafter cited as Smith, *History of LDS Church*, for vols. 1–6, and Young, *History of LDS Church*, for vol. 7).

zer Page was living there in 1810 as a male over 45, with a boy of Ebenezer Jr.'s age and one the age of John E. Page.<sup>41</sup>

Ebenezer Page Sr. moved his family to Ohio before the 1820 census, and in 1830 Ebenezer Page [Jr.], 20–30, was head of household in Brownhelm, Lorain County, Ohio, with three males but with no females other than one aged 50–60, who was probably his mother, Rachel. It appears that he was providing a home for his mother and younger brothers.<sup>42</sup> As stated earlier, Benjamin, Elisha, and Thorit Parsons were in the same locale at that time. Warren and Hannah Peck would arrive there in 1831.

At the fourth general LDS conference, held on 3 June 1831 at Kirtland, Geauga County, Ohio, a list of leaders present included Elders Joseph Smith Jr. and Ebenezer Page, and Teacher Thoret Parsons.<sup>43</sup>

Rachel Page, Ebenezer Page, and “Therot Pearsons” all paid taxes in 1830 in Brownhelm Township, Lorain County, Ohio.<sup>44</sup> Rachel and Ebenezer were taxed there in 1831, with Rachel being taxed for three cows but no property.<sup>45</sup> Ebenezer was taxed there again in 1832, but he disappeared from the Lorain County tax records after that.<sup>46</sup>

#### MISSOURI AND ILLINOIS

On 20 July 1831, Joseph Smith Jr. announced the site for the city of Zion in Independence, Jackson County, Missouri.<sup>47</sup> Several Mormon groups from Ohio were encouraged to move there in the early 1830s, and these migrants no doubt included Thorit Parsons and Ebenezer Page and his wife Hannah (Parsons) (Peck) Page and her young sons, including Thorit Peck, about 7 in 1833, and King Benjamin Peck, age 2. All were present there when the troubles between the Mormons and other Missouri settlers surfaced.

After most of the Mormons were driven out of Jackson County in late October and November 1833, they dispersed to adjoining counties with their headquarters in Clay County. They remained there three years but were soon pressured to move again. Primarily due to their capable lawyer, Alexander Doniphan of Clay County, the state of Missouri authorized the formation of Caldwell County, and Far West

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<sup>41</sup> 1810 U.S. census, Watertown, Jefferson Co., N.Y., p. 517.

<sup>42</sup> 1830 U.S. census, Brownhelm Twp., Lorain Co., Ohio, p. 14.

<sup>43</sup> “Journal History, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” Historical Dept., 53 microfilm reels ordered by date (hereafter cited as “Journal History, LDS”), 3 June 1831 [FHL film #1,259,729].

<sup>44</sup> Brownhelm Twp., Lorain Co., Ohio, tax list, 1830 (T6 R19).

<sup>45</sup> Brownhelm Twp., Lorain Co., Ohio, tax list, 1831 (T6 R19), Ebenezer on lot 76.

<sup>46</sup> Brownhelm Twp., Lorain Co., Ohio, tax list, 1832. He was not included in the 1833–35 tax lists.

<sup>47</sup> *Chronology of LDS Church History*.



became the chief town of the Mormon settlement.<sup>48</sup> In 1838 mobs again began to harass the Mormons living in isolated farm areas, and each side began to arm. The anti-Mormon actions were supported by Governor Lilburn Boggs, who stated, “The Mormons must be treated as enemies and must be exterminated or driven from the state if necessary for public peace.”<sup>49</sup> The militia was ordered to attack.

Hannah’s brother, Thorit Parsons, warned the Mormons on 24 October 1838 of the impending attack on them at Far West.<sup>50</sup> Thorit appeared for the defense in Richmond, Ray County, Missouri, begun on 12 November 1838 in the trial of “Joseph Smith, Jr., and others for high treason and other crimes against the state.” Thorit testified:

I was living in Caldwell county at the time of the battle with Captain Bogart, on the head of the east fork of Log creek, and about five or six miles from the battleground. On the day before the fight, between 1 and 3 o’clock in the evening, a company of twenty-three, mostly armed men, came to my house; they inquired my name, and told me I must go away—that I must leave that place . . . . They further stated to me, that if they got the forces from Clinton coun[ty] they expected, they would give Far West thunder and lightning before the next day night. All that was said to me, was sent immediately to Far West.<sup>51</sup>

When the Mormons realized that they could not withstand the attack on Far West, they surrendered. Their leaders, including Ebenezer Page,<sup>52</sup> were taken prisoner on 11 November 1838.<sup>53</sup> Although they were sentenced to be shot in the Far West public square, Doniphan, now brigadier general of the Missouri militia, refused to carry out the order. The surviving Saints made their way to Adams County, Illinois, and eventually to Hancock County, Illinois.

<sup>48</sup> Duane G. Meyer, *The Heritage of Missouri*, 2nd ed. (St. Louis, Mo., 1982), 202–3.

<sup>49</sup> Perry McCandless, *A History of Missouri: Vol. II 1820–1860* (Columbia, Mo., 1972), 110.

<sup>50</sup> Smith, *History of LDS Church*, 3:169.

<sup>51</sup> *Document Containing the Correspondence, Orders, &c. in Relation to the Disturbances with the Mormons: and the Evidence Given Before the Hon. Austin A. King, Judge of the Fifth Judicial Circuit of the State of Missouri, at the Court-House in Richmond in a Criminal Court of Inquiry, Begun November 12, 1838, on the Trial of Joseph Smith, Jr., and Others for High Treason and Other Crimes Against the State* (Fayette, Mo.: [Missouri] General Assembly, 1841), 148 [FHL film #1,670,779].

<sup>52</sup> Milton V. Backman Jr., *A Profile of Latter-day Saints of Kirtland, Ohio and Members of Zion’s Camp, 1830–1839: Vital Statistics and Sources* (Provo, Utah, 1982) (hereafter cited as Backman, *Profile of Kirtland and Zion’s Camp*), 97, reproduces a broadsheet printed in Kirtland, April 1836, listing “The Second Seventy Elders,” including Ebenezer Page and John E. Page.

<sup>53</sup> Smith, *History of LDS Church*, 3:209. Ebenezer’s letter to *Zion’s Reveille*, 15 April 1847 [Voree, Walworth Co., Wis. Terr., vol. 2, no. 13, p. 55], revealed that John E. Page was also a prisoner: “As they commenced calling names my brother John, who stood by my side, said, What does all this mean? I said, those that are called out are to be shot, I suppose. . . . My brother then put his hand on my shoulder and said, we two share alike: we have buried each a wife in this place, and if we follow them our trials will be over; if you are shot I will avenge your blood.” In another document, John E. Page “lost his wife, Lorain, and two children at this time [late 1838] and blamed their death on a ‘furious mob’” [John Quist, “John E. Page: Apostle of Uncertainty,” in *Mormon Mavericks: Essays on Dissenters*, ed. John Sillito and Susan Staker (Salt Lake City, 2002), 19–41, at 20 (hereafter cited as Quist, “John E. Page”)].

Ebenezer Page petitioned for redress of the 1833–38 Missouri conflict by swearing before C. M. Woods in Quincy, Adams County, Illinois, on 6 May 1839. He requested reimbursement for loss of cattle (\$85), time lost in “campaign” and in prison (\$85), for four acres and “bild” (\$200), for moving expenses (\$75), for four acres of corn, property and damage (\$50), for loss of furniture in the house (\$45), and for tools and chain (\$28). Also “My wife sustain loss preveous to our marriag \$200.” Thorit Parsons swore a similar complaint the same day and before the same man. James Hendricks (to be Hannah’s fourth husband) petitioned similarly.<sup>54</sup> The mention of Ebenezer’s wife proves that Ebenezer and Hannah were married during the conflict (1833–38) and before 6 May 1839.

In April 1847, Ebenezer Page wrote a letter to James J. Strang, which was published in Strang’s newspaper, *Zion’s Reveille* (Strang is discussed below as one of Brigham Young’s rivals as Joseph Smith Jr.’s successor). In the letter, Ebenezer complained about William E. McLellin,<sup>55</sup> blaming McLellin for much of the persecution the Mormons had received in Jackson County, Missouri. Ebenezer also revealed some personal information (in the third person):

He [McLellin] will remember a poor man of the name of Ebenezer Page, who . . . has belonged to the church of Christ sixteen years. He had his endowment in Kirtland, and went up to Far West the following season [spring 1837],<sup>56</sup> and there buried his wife the 19th of the following July [1837], while in the most destitute circumstances. The following June [1838] he married Hannah Peck, a poor widow, who lost all she had in Jackson Co., Missouri, at the time the church was driven from Independence. She had four boys, the eldest was about ten years old.<sup>57</sup>

From the bracketed date estimates, Hannah (Parsons) Peck and Ebenezer Page probably married in June 1838. Hannah’s son Thorit Peck would have been 12, and King Benjamin Peck 7. We estimated that the other two sons were born say late 1827 and 1829. The older of the two probably was Isaac Peck, born on 19 February 1828 in Cayuga County, New York; Isaac enlisted in Company C of the Mormon Battalion,<sup>58</sup> the same day as Thorit, and both reenlisted in Los Angeles, Calif., on 16 July 1847 in the Mormon Volunteers.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Clark V. Johnson, ed., *Mormon Redress Petitions: Documents of the 1833–1838 Missouri Conflict*, Religious Studies Center Monograph Series, 16(Provo, Utah, 1992):307 (hereafter cited as Johnson, *Mormon Redress Petitions*). Rachel’s affidavit appears on p. 308, Thorit’s on p. 310, and James Hendricks’s on p. 231.

<sup>55</sup> One of the first Twelve.

<sup>56</sup> Far West was founded Aug. 1836.

<sup>57</sup> *Zion’s Reveille*, Voree, Walworth Co., Wis. Terr., 15 April 1847, vol. 2, no. 13, p. 55.

<sup>58</sup> Sherman L. Fleek, *History May Be Searched in Vain: A Military History of the Mormon Battalion* (Spokane, Wash., 2006), 332: “On February 25, 1847, a court martial was convened, the first such held in the Mormon Battalion. . . . Also the court convicted Privates Isaac Peck, John Mowry, and Ebenezer Harmon, all of C Co., for stealing and butchering an Indian’s cow and sentenced them to ten day’s confinement and a fine of \$2.50 each.”

<sup>59</sup> Mexican War pension file, Sarah C. Peck, widow of Isaac Peck, application 17812, certificate 13968 [FHL film #480,143], includes Mexican War pension file papers for Isaac Peck, survivor’s application 22540, certificate 19058 (next to Thorit Peck’s widow’s pension file)

The 1840 census of Adams County, Illinois, where Ebenezer appeared in court in 1839 and Hancock County, Illinois, where his daughter was born in April 1840, has been searched frame by frame, but Ebenezer's family does not appear, although all their associates were found.<sup>60</sup>

Hannah and Ebenezer Page had a child, Elizabeth Jane Page, born on 20 April 1840 in Hancock County, Illinois, who married (an LDS sealing, by Brigham Young) on 22 August 1860 in Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, Utah Territory, Samuel H. Smith.<sup>61</sup> Elizabeth was Hannah's fifth child, and there is no record of any later children. Hannah was nearly 42 or 43 at Elizabeth's birth.

Ebenezer Page was listed in the 1842 tax record of Nauvoo, Hancock County, Illinois.<sup>62</sup> He signed on 18 November 1843 in Hancock County, Illinois, a petition to Congress asking them to take action against riots and mobs.<sup>63</sup>

Next to the Nauvoo endowment record of 2 January 1846 cited previously for Ebenezer Page's birth date is the endowment, and washing and anointing, of Hannah Page, born on 28 April 1798,<sup>64</sup> which is identical to the birth date of Hannah Parsons except for 1798 rather than 1797. This supports our identification of Hannah Parsons with Hannah Page. No record has been found for this marriage of Ebenezer Page and Hannah (Parsons) Peck.

In the record of members of the LDS church of Macedonia (originally Ramus, now Webster), Hancock County, Illinois, for 1847–50, there appear many names included in Hannah's history and those of her husbands, including Thoret Peck, Isaac "Persons," Ebenezer Page, Rachel Page, "Jos. Ketcham" and Sophia Ketchum (listed separately), and J. J. Strang.<sup>65</sup> The last named was probably James Jesse

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(hereafter cited as Mexican War pension file, Sarah C. Peck, certificate 13968). Isaac Peck m. 23 Sept. 1858, Sarah C. Sibert, and d. 20 Aug. 1904, Rushville, Buchanan Co., Mo. (both dates from the Mexican War pension file for Sarah C. Peck).

<sup>60</sup> 1840 U.S. census, Hancock Co., Ill., James Hendricks on p. 161, "Johne" E. Page on p. 170, and Thorit "Barsons" on p. 178; 1840 U.S. census, Adams Co., Ill., Isaac Parsons and Joseph Ketchum on p. 37.

<sup>61</sup> Sealings of couples, living and by proxy, 1851–1889, p. 451, no. 3039, Elizabeth Jane Page, b. 20 April 1840, Hancock Co., Ill., to Samuel Smith, b. 7 Feb. 1836, Wickwar, Gloucester Co., England, sealed 22 Aug. 1860, by B. Young, Endowment House, witnesses S. L. Sprague and W. C. Staines [FHL film #183,395].

<sup>62</sup> Tax list for district no. 3 (Nauvoo), Hancock Co., Ill., 1842, 175, Ebenezer Page, T6N R5W [FHL film #7706]. Joseph Ketchum listed on the same page, Thoret Parsons on p. 200, and James "Hendrix" on p. 220.

<sup>63</sup> Johnson, *Mormon Redress Petitions*, 565: The Scroll Petition: Inhabitants of Hancock Co., Ill.

<sup>64</sup> *Nauvoo Temple Endowment Register*, 90, dated 2 Jan. 1846, cites the washing and anointing record only for her birth date, just as for Ebenezer.

<sup>65</sup> Record of members, 1847–1850, Macedonia Branch, LDS [FHL film #1917, item 6]. The list of members is undated. The dates 1847–1850 in the title of the microfilm are the earliest dates found in the record. The material that is dated, however, follows the list cited here which we believe to be an earlier one. Strang, for example, joined the LDS in 1844 and formed his own church in 1846.

Strang, who would have major impact on Hannah's life. Also on this list are the following consecutive names, handwritten immediately left of Thoret Peck's name: "Isaac Peck[,] Joseph Peck[,] Benny Peck." Benny Peck is probably King Benjamin Peck, so surely these are the three brothers of Thoret Peck in birth order.

After the Mormons left Missouri and relocated in Illinois, Joseph Smith Jr. and his brother Hyrum were killed while in the jail of Carthage, Hancock County, on 27 June 1844. The Mormon exodus to Salt Lake Valley of the followers of Brigham Young began in early 1846.<sup>66</sup>

### APOSTASY

When Joseph Smith Jr., LDS founder, was killed in 1844, several contenders vied for leadership of the church. Brigham Young was ultimately victorious in this power struggle, but another rival who is important here was James Jesse Strang.<sup>67</sup> Both Ebenezer Page and his older brother, John E. Page, would figure in Strang's splinter church. Ebenezer's apostasy probably changed Hannah's life.

In an article entitled "King James Strang: Joseph Smith's Successor?" William D. Russell introduces James Jesse Strang this way:

In the twelve years following the murder of Joseph Smith, the leading threat to Brigham Young's leadership came from a recent convert, James J. Strang of Voree, Wisconsin. Baptized into the Mormon church by Smith himself only four months before the prophet's death in June 1844, Strang was nonetheless able to make a believable claim that he was Joseph's legitimate successor by producing a letter purported to be from Smith, by claiming a vision in which Smith ordained him, by publishing revelations which he had received, and by unearthing plates and translating them, reminiscent of Smith's Book of Mormon.<sup>68</sup>

Strang was able to attract as his early supporters William Smith (an apostle and Joseph's younger brother), Lucy (Mack) Smith (Joseph's mother), and Apostle John E. Page.<sup>69</sup> Strang was excommunicated on 26 August 1844 by the Brighamite Mormons.<sup>70</sup> In 1848 he moved the Strangite Mormons from Voree to Beaver Island, now Charlevoix County, Michigan, in Lake Michigan just south of Mackinac (Michilimackinac before 1850) County, Michigan.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> *Chronology of LDS Church History*.

<sup>67</sup> For genealogical information on "King" James J. Strang, see Charles A. Strange, "The Strangs of Westchester," *The New York Genealogical and Biographical Record* 102(1971):89–94, at 92–94.

<sup>68</sup> William D. Russell, "King James Strang: Joseph Smith's Successor?" chapter 6, *Mormon Mavericks*, 131–57, at 131 (hereafter cited as Russell, "King James Strang").

<sup>69</sup> Russell, "King James Strang," 139.

<sup>70</sup> "To the Saints," *Times and Seasons* 5(2 Sept. 1844):621, in *Times and Seasons* (Nauvoo: 1843 [sic]), 6 vols.; Young, *History of LDS Church*, 7:574: [24 Jan. 1846] "If any wish to follow Sidney Rigdon or J. J. Strang I say let them go" [Brigham Young speaking].

<sup>71</sup> Russell, "King James Strang," 147.

John E. Page was “disfellowshipped” from the Brighamite Twelve on 9 February 1846 in a letter signed by Brigham Young and others.<sup>72</sup> By 6 April 1846, John E. was a member of the Strangite Twelve.<sup>73</sup> He had advanced to the presidency of the Twelve on 8 April 1847, when Ebenezer Page was promoted to it at the annual conference of the Strangites in Voree.<sup>74</sup> On 22 July 1847, Apostle Ebenezer Page was appointed to preside at “Beaver Islands” until further organization.<sup>75</sup>

John E. Page became an apostate to the Strangites, as he had to the Brighamites, just a few years later. At a Strangite conference on Beaver Island on 7 July 1849,

Ebenezer Page, one of the Twelve, next arose, and with the feelings of a fond and natural brother, strengthened by the bond of the eternal brotherhood of God Almighty, expressed his love for his brother and President of his quorum in the church of God, stating that he had talked with his brother and faithfully admonished him, but could get no assurance of him that he at this time had any confidence in the authority of James J. Strang’s administration, and gave his opinion that Bro. Page could not be restored to the church at present, but must be given for a time to the buffetings of Satan.<sup>76</sup>

John was disfellowshipped from the Twelve the same day.<sup>77</sup>

In the winter of 1850 on Beaver Island, “the plates from which the Book of the Law was taken were shown unto certain Apostles,” who signed an affidavit testifying that they had seen the plates. Ebenezer Page was one of the seven apostles who signed, in this remarkable replay of the founding event of the LDS church.<sup>78</sup>

But Hannah Page did not follow her husband Ebenezer into the Strangites. She remained loyal to Brigham Young, and this was probably the reason for her split with Ebenezer. At the time of the Beaver Island conference, she was traveling west with third husband, Nathaniel Riggs.

#### THE TREK TO SALT LAKE VALLEY AND HANNAH’S THIRD HUSBAND

“Hannah Parsons Riggs,” 52, Nathaniel Riggs, 52, and “Elizabeth Riggs,” 10, traveled to Salt Lake in the Allen Taylor Company, known to have departed

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<sup>72</sup> Young, *History of LDS Church*, 7:582–83. To be disfellowshipped is a lesser sentence than to be excommunicated, leaving the person a member of the Church but with no power or position.

<sup>73</sup> *Voree Herald*, Wis. Terr., Feb. 1846, vol. 1, no. 6, p. 27. Every item in the issue postdates Feb. 1846. Voree newspaper transcriptions are by Samuel E. West.

<sup>74</sup> *Zion’s Reveille*, Voree, Walworth Co., Wis. Terr., 1 April 1847, vol. 2, no. 12, p. 51.

<sup>75</sup> *Zion’s Reveille*, Voree, Walworth Co., Wis. Terr., 19 Aug. 1847, vol. 2, no. 22, p. 90.

<sup>76</sup> *Gospel Herald*, Voree, Walworth Co., Wis., 2 Aug. 1849, vol. 4, no. 20, p. 89.

<sup>77</sup> *Gospel Herald*, Voree, Walworth Co., Wis., 2 Aug. 1849, vol. 4, no. 20, p. 90.

<sup>78</sup> Warren Post, “The Record of the Apostles of James, Written in 1854–1863, Relating to the Events of 1844–1856, James J. Strang, the Mormons and Beaver Island, Lake Michigan,” unpub. MS, Clarke Historical Library, Central Michigan University, Mount Pleasant, Mich., as cited in Vickie Cleverley Speek, *God Has Made Us a Kingdom: James Strang and the Midwest Mormons* (Salt Lake City, 2006), 121n.

Kanesville, Iowa, on 5–6 July 1849, and arrived in Salt Lake Valley on 10–20 October 1849.<sup>79</sup>

Nathaniel Riggs was born on 5 August 1798, near Newport, Campbell County, Kentucky,<sup>80</sup> the youngest child of Bethuel Riggs, a Baptist minister, and Nancy (Lee).<sup>81</sup> Nathaniel had married first about 1818, probably in Missouri,<sup>82</sup> Rachael Weldon<sup>83</sup> and reared eight children.<sup>84</sup>

Nathaniel Riggs's baptism on 17 January 1831 into the early Mormon church must have shocked his family, as probably his partaking in the Zion's Camp march in 1834 to bring relief to the Missouri Mormons did as well.<sup>85</sup> Rachael waited for several years for him to return to his Baptist family in Missouri, which must have occurred at least once, since their youngest child was born in 1837. But she filed a complaint against him on 24 April 1844, stating, "some 13 years since her said husband joined the Mormons since which time he has spent much of his time with said church & people and away from his family and has lavished much of his property & means upon them to the inconvenience of his family & your oratrix."<sup>86</sup> Rachael ultimately sued for divorce on 21 April 1849 on grounds of abandonment. The divorce was granted, recorded on 16 April 1850, and the Missouri property assigned to Rachael.<sup>87</sup> So the divorce case was proceeding

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<sup>79</sup> *Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel, 1847–1868*, Allen Taylor Co., 1849 (<[www.lds.org/churchhistory/library/pioneercompanysearch/](http://www.lds.org/churchhistory/library/pioneercompanysearch/)> [hereafter cited as *Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel*]). This is an official LDS website, claiming to be "the most complete listing of individuals and companies in which Mormon pioneer emigrants traveled west to Utah from 1847 through 1868." Citations as additional sources for this family, however, are the 1850 Utah Terr. census and ancestral files.

<sup>80</sup> LDS Endowment Index (formerly TIB, for Temple Index Bureau) [name] Nathaniel Riggs [born] 5 Aug. 1798, near Newport, Campbell Co., Ky. [father] Bethuel Riggs [mother] Nancy [marriage] (1) Rachel Welding [or Welling] [*sic*] [baptism] 17 Jan. 1831 [endowment] 19 Jan. 1852 [FHL film #1,255,545] [sealed to spouse] 19 Jan. 1852 [refers to his 3rd marriage] [reference] Endowment House [book] A [page] 23 [no.] 531 [FHL film #1,263,284].

<sup>81</sup> Alvy Ray Smith, "Captain Bethuel Riggs of the Revolutionary War Died in Missouri Not Ohio," TAG 79(2004):34–37.

<sup>82</sup> In her official complaint against Nathaniel Riggs, 24 April 1844, before the circuit court of Monroe Co., Mo., Rachael Riggs stated that "she intermarried with one Nathaniel Riggs some 26 years ago—that of that time they have lived in the county of Monroe some 23 years as man and wife."

<sup>83</sup> Ralls Co., Mo., Deeds, A:472; heirs sell portions of the Weldon estate.

<sup>84</sup> Monroe Co., Mo., Circuit Court Records, 6:387–88, partition of Rachael Riggs's estate.

<sup>85</sup> Smith, *History of LDS Church*, 2:184; *Journal History, LDS*, 10 Oct. 1864 [FHL film #1,259,749], 10 Oct. 1866 [FHL film #1,259,750]; Backman, *Profile of Kirtland and Zion's Camp*, 94.

<sup>86</sup> *Rachael Riggs vs. Nathaniel Riggs* case file at the Monroe Co., Mo., courthouse. Full transcription in Alvy Ray Smith, *Elder Bethuel Riggs (1757-1835) of Morris County, New Jersey, and His Family through Five Generations: Edwardian Riggesses of America I*, appendix L.

<sup>87</sup> Monroe Co., Mo., Deeds, K:217–18.

against Nathaniel as he traveled west with Hannah. He would have been still legally married to Rachael at the end of the trek.

In the 1850 census, Nathaniel Riggs, 52, a millwright born in Kentucky with an estate valued at \$100, resided in Great Salt Lake City with Hannah, 52, born in New York, and Elizabeth, 11, born in Illinois.<sup>88</sup>

Since Hannah and Nathaniel both had living spouses at the time of their presumed marriage, they could not have had a civil marriage. It is possible that Nathaniel married polygamously, but this was relatively rare in the 1840s, apparently confined to the top church leaders and not officially condoned by the church until 1852. And the concept did not extend to non-Mormon wives. A more likely explanation is that marriage rules were relaxed for Nathaniel because his divorce from a non-Mormon woman was imminent in Missouri. The more difficult part of the problem is Hannah. Polyandry was exceedingly rare and has never been officially condoned by the church. That her husband Ebenezer Page was an apostate to the main church might have inspired further relaxation of the marriage rules.

Perhaps Nathaniel served only as Hannah's protector as she trekked west with her child. They had no children together, and both married other spouses not long after arriving in Salt Lake Valley. There is no known record of their marriage or divorce, nor is there likely to be one.

#### UTAH TERRITORY AND HANNAH'S FOURTH HUSBAND

Hannah Parsons married next (LDS sealing) on 2 April 1852, in Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, Utah Territory, James Hendricks, with Brigham Young performing the sealing.<sup>89</sup> This was the only sealing of Hannah's four marriages, which is consistent with LDS theology in which a woman is sealed for eternity to only one man.

James Hendricks was born on 23 June 1808, in Simpson County, Kentucky.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> 1850 U.S. census, Great Salt Lake Co., Utah Terr., p. 28, dw. 64, fam. 64. This census was actually enumerated after Brigham Young's authorization of it on 28 March 1851, pursuant to the Compromise of 1850, which established Utah Territory ["Correspondence, Great Salt Lake City, October 19, 1851," *Deseret News*, Great Salt Lake City, Utah Terr., 29 Nov. 1851, 2:2 (FHL film #26,586)].

<sup>89</sup> Sealing of couples, LDS Endowment House, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake Co., Utah Terr., A1:40, no. 509 [FHL film #183,393], James Hendricks, b. 23 June 1808, Franklin, Simpson Co., Ky., to Hannah Parsons, b. 28 April 1797, Northumberland Co. [*sic*], N.Y., sealing 2 April 1852 by B. Young. On A1:12, Nathaniel Riggs, b. 6 [*sic*] Aug. 1798, Canmel [Campbell] [Co.], Ky., was sealed by B. Young on 19 Jan. 1852 to Anne Reynolds.

<sup>90</sup> *Nauvoo Temple Endowment Register*, 71, high priest, endowment 30 Dec. 1845.

He married first, on 31 May 1827,<sup>91</sup> Drusilla Dorris, who was born on 8 February 1810, in Sumner County, Tennessee.<sup>92</sup>

James Hendricks, an early Mormon, was shot during the troubles in Missouri at the Battle of Crooked River on 25 October 1838,<sup>93</sup> and was subsequently awarded on 19 January 1840 a house lot by the (Mormon) High Council at Nauvoo, which also voted to build him a house.<sup>94</sup>

In a meeting held in Nauvoo, Hancock County, Illinois, on 21 March 1841, James Hendricks was made a counselor of the lesser priesthood. Then on 2 May 1841, the Teachers' quorum was organized in Nauvoo with James as counselor.<sup>95</sup> When Salt Lake City was divided into 19 wards on 22 February 1849, James was made bishop of the 19th ward.<sup>96</sup>

James Hendricks, 36, and wife Drusilla, 37, trekked west to Salt Lake Valley in the Joseph B. Noble Company, arriving on 2 October 1847.<sup>97</sup> In three successive censuses after James and Hannah married, in 1856 in Salt Lake City, and in 1860 and 1870 in Cache County, Utah Territory, James was enumerated with Drusilla, but never with Hannah, who will be shown in both censuses (1850 and 1860) before her death to have been in a different county.<sup>98</sup> Therefore, Hannah was a plural wife who did not stay long in the Hendricks household despite the sealing for eternity. Not surprisingly, Drusilla chose to ignore Hannah in her account of the family.<sup>99</sup>

In the 1856 Utah Territory census, Hannah "Hendrix" resided in Pleasant Grove City, Utah County. Next door was [her son] Thoret Peck.<sup>100</sup> King B. Peck resided nearby in Alpine City, Utah County.<sup>101</sup> Thorit and King Benjamin re-

<sup>91</sup> LDS Endowment Index (formerly TIB) [FHL film #1,262,994], [name] James Hendricks [born] 23 June 1808, Simpson Co., Ky. [father] Abraham Hendricks (1763) [mother] Charlotte Hinton [marriage] 31 May 1827 to Drusilla Dorris [endowment] 30 Dec. 1845, Nauvoo, 1:71, no. 5, [sealing to spouse] 27 Jan. 1846 [back of card] married (2) Hannah —.

<sup>92</sup> *Nauvoo Temple Endowment Register*, 175, endowment 22 Jan. 1846.

<sup>93</sup> *Journal History, LDS*, 8 July 1870 [FHL film #1,259,754], cites "Des. Eve. News July 18."

<sup>94</sup> Smith, *History of LDS Church*, 4:76.

<sup>95</sup> Smith, *History of LDS Church*, 4:312, 354.

<sup>96</sup> *Journal History, LDS*, 22 Feb. 1849 [FHL film #1,259,737].

<sup>97</sup> *Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel*, Jedediah M. Grant and Joseph B. Noble Co., 1847.

<sup>98</sup> 1856 Utah Terr. census, folder 13, 19th ward, Salt Lake City, Great Salt Lake Co., p. 17 (p. 492 of census) [FHL film #505,913]; 1860 U.S. census, Brigham P.O., Cache Co., Utah Terr., p. 592, dw. 1997, fam. 1925; 1870 U.S. census, Richmond P.O., Cache Co., Utah Terr., p. 181, dw. 117, fam. 117.

<sup>99</sup> Drusilla Hendricks, *Historical Sketch of James Hendricks and Drusilla Dorris Hendricks*, 23-page typescript transcription [FHL film #119, item 4].

<sup>100</sup> 1856 Utah Terr. census, folder 31, Pleasant Grove City, Utah Co., p. 7 (p. 924 of census). She was also enumerated, as Hannah Riggs, in the household of Nathaniel Riggs, 1856 Utah Terr. census, folder 32, Provo City, Utah Co., p. 40 (p. 980 of census), perhaps to increase the number tallied in an effort to persuade the U.S. Congress to consider Utah for statehood.

<sup>101</sup> 1856 Utah Terr. census, folder 31, Alpine City, Utah Co., p. 3 (p. 862 of census).



ceived their patriarchal blessings in Pleasant Grove on 31 January and 2 February 1857, respectively.

In 1860 Hannah Hendricks, 62, born in New York, resided in Great Salt Lake City, Great Salt Lake County, Utah Territory, in the household of her son-in-law, Samuel H. Smith, 22, a laborer born in England with real and personal estates worth respectively \$100 and \$50, with her daughter Elizabeth J., 20, born in Illinois, and Samuel and Elizabeth Smith's daughter, Hannah J., 1, born in Utah Territory.<sup>102</sup>

The *Deseret News* of Salt Lake City, 27 March 1861, carried Hannah's death notice:

On the 19th inst., in this city, of disease of the liver and lungs, Hannah, wife of James Hendricks, in the 64th year of her age.<sup>103</sup>

### HANNAH MATTISON

The only fly in the ointment for this reconstruction of Hannah's life above is the surname *Mattison*. In several well-known secondary biographical sources in the LDS Family History Library in Salt Lake City and in several family group sheets and online databases, Thorit Peck's mother's name is given as Hannah Mattison.<sup>104</sup> We attempted to track each of these submissions to a primary source, but without success.

<sup>102</sup> 1860 U.S. census, ward 19, Great Salt Lake City, Great Salt Lake Co., Utah Terr., p. 278, dw. 1392, fam. 36.

<sup>103</sup> *Deseret News*, Great Salt Lake City, Utah Terr., 27 March 1861, 11:32 [FHL film #26,589].

<sup>104</sup> A family group sheet at FHL for Warren Peck [FHL film #2,370,293], submitted by Mary Ann Kirk, his "4 gg daughter," on 19 Jan. 1977, lists four wives for Warren Peck in this order: (1) Abigail Owen, (2) "Roxy" Standish, (3) Hannah "Pearsons," and (4) Hannah Mattison. She states, "inform. on Warren Peck Book 929.273 p334p *Peck Gen.* pg. 382." This is the Ira Peck genealogy (with a different FHL call number than the book actually has on the shelf), and the p. 382 sketch for Warren Peck does not mention Hannah Mattison. Another family group sheet, submitted by Ann Judy Kallas Cranney, Thoret Peck's "2 gg dau," lists his mother as Hannah Mattison, with one citation, *Pioneers and Prominent Men of Utah*, 1094. A third family group sheet, found with the ones above, for Thorit Peck, submitted by Elva Spainhower, his "G gdau," cites "Book of Early Pioneers & Prominent Men of Utah."

Utah Cemetery Inventory, <[www.Ancestry.com](http://www.Ancestry.com)>, "[name] Thorit Peck [birth date] 30 May 1826 [birth place] Locke, Cayuga, Ny [death date] 6 Feb. 1858 [death place] Pleasant Grove, Ut [burial date] 8 Feb. 1858 [cemetery] Pleasant Grove City Cemetery [source] Sexton Records/Grant [grave location] A-13-002-05 [relatives] Mother Hannah Mattison Father Warren Peck." This record has been annotated. Transcriptions of the cemetery records, described earlier in the Peck Family section of this paper, give nothing more than Thorit's name (as Thoret or "Thomas" Peck), death date, cemetery, and block and lot no. (Cemetery Records, Pleasant Grove, Utah County, Utah, 3 vols. [FHL film #824,234 or FHL 979.224/P5 V3c, 3:475]).

Others include <[archiver.rootsweb.com/th/read/peck](http://archiver.rootsweb.com/th/read/peck)>, nine entries on World Family Tree of <[www.Ancestry.com](http://www.Ancestry.com)> (none of which provide any source) <[www.worldfamilies.net/surnames/p/peck/pats.html](http://www.worldfamilies.net/surnames/p/peck/pats.html)>, ancestral file AFN-8845-SQ, and Susan Easton Black and Harvey Bischoff Black, *Annotated Record of Baptisms for the Dead, 1840-1845, Nauvoo, Hancock County, Illi-*

Supporting the belief that Thorit and King Benjamin's mother's maiden name was *Mattison* is that Thorit named a child Alma Mattison (and King Benjamin named a child Alma M.), the first name of a prophet in the Book of Mormon, the source for *Mattison* unknown.

All efforts brought us back to one source for the maiden name of *Mattison*: a volume entitled *Pioneers and Prominent Men of Utah*, first published in 1913. The crucial sentences read, "Peck, Thorit (son of Warren Peck and Hannah Mattison of Cayuga County, N. Y.). Born May 30, 1826, in Cayuga county." The credibility for this entry is that the next biographical sketch is for their son Alma Mattison Peck, who at the time the book was written "was residing in Vineyard ward." Thus we asked, "Did Alma Mattison Peck know his grandmother's maiden name, did he provide the information to author Esshom, and was it recorded accurately?" The authors have concluded that the answer to at least one of these crucial questions is "No."

Alma Mattison Peck was eight years old when his grandmother died. His father had died three years before. One cannot help wondering how much he knew about his father's family as he grew up. It is possible that he had been told or believed incorrectly that his middle name was a family name.

Among Mormon scholars, such as Myrtle Stevens Hyde, FASG, *Prominent Men of Utah* is recognized as a questionable source. If this were not enough, Esshom's explanation of how he gathered and assembled the material from September 1907 to 1913 shakes one's faith in its complete accuracy:

In almost every instance an application for a volume was given by the Bishop of the ward and he gratuitously furnished the author with the names of the pioneers who had died in his ward and the names of their representative male descendants, also the names of the Pioneers who were living in his ward and the names of their respective male descendants. Nearly a year was required in making these visits. After this organization was perfected, the author, assisted by a corps of solicitors, visited each house . . . , where a Pioneer or the descendant of a Pioneer lived . . . and gathered the portraits and genealogies. . . . The gathering of this data . . . probably required more than fifty thousand calls, the assistance of every photographer in the territory, the traveling of thousands of miles which was made over every kind of roads [*sic*] in all kinds of weather, and by every mode of conveyance . . . . After this data had been gathered, it was necessary to re-write it in duplicate and submit a copy to the one who furnished the genealogy [*sic*] and biography, and the correspondence in connection with that and other phases of publication required more than fifty thousand letters.<sup>105</sup>

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*nois*, 7 vols. (Provo, Utah: Center for Family History and Genealogy Brigham Young University, 2002), 5:2826 (hereafter cited as Black and Black, *Annotated Record of Baptisms for the Dead, Nauvoo*), that cites Nauvoo Baptismal Records of the Dead, Book D:118, proxy Thorit Peck, father Warren Peck, mother Hannah Mattison. The actual baptism records for Thorit do not mention Warren or Hannah, except to the extent that Hannah Page's proxy baptism for Warren Peck is listed next to Thorit Peck's proxy baptisms. *Mattison* does not appear in these records. An example of one of these succinct records is, "[person baptized] Thorit Peck [for whom baptized] Joseph Peck [relationship] Uncle."

<sup>105</sup> Frank Esshom, *Pioneers and Prominent Men of Utah Comprising Photographs, Genealogies, Biographies: Pioneers are those Men and Woman Who Came to Utah by Wagon, Hand*

This process sounds ripe for inclusion of many errors. Yet Esshom's work remains the earliest known source for the introduction of the name *Mattison* into the genealogy. A wife named Hannah Mattison simply cannot chronologically fit into the primary data and known sequence outlined for Hannah Parsons. Nevertheless, many researchers have tried to force this superfluous piece into the puzzle. These include stating that Hannah Mattison was Warren Peck's third or fourth wife, providing Hannah Parsons with a middle name or a new maiden name,<sup>106</sup> even making *Mattison* the middle name for Hannah Parson's fourth husband, James Hendricks,<sup>107</sup> or suggesting that she must have married again (a fifth time) to a Mr. Mattison, without indicating when this marriage occurred. Not only has no data been found to substantiate any of these attempts, but information outlined in Hannah Parson's story clearly refutes some of them.

The authors are convinced that no such person as Hannah Mattison existed and that this name is a red herring that can safely be ignored.

#### GENEALOGICAL SUMMARY

HANNAH PARSONS was born probably in Northumberland, Saratoga County, New York, on 28 April 1797 or 1798, daughter of Benjamin and Elizabeth (—) Parsons. Benjamin and Elizabeth had another child, Thorit Parsons, born in Northumberland, Saratoga County, on 5 September 1802. Hannah died in Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, Utah Territory, on 19 March 1861.

She married first, about 1820–25, WARREN PECK, who was born on 30 December 1786, son of Abijah and Lucy (Percival) Peck. Warren died in Locke, Cayuga County, New York, on 2 February 1836. Hannah was his third wife.

Hannah married secondly, probably in June 1838, EBENEZER PAGE, born perhaps in Watertown, Jefferson County, New York, on 7 October 1807, son of Ebenezer and Rachel (—) Page. Ebenezer and Rachel had another son, John E. Page, born in Trenton Town, Oneida County, New York, on 25 February 1799. Hannah and Ebenezer may have divorced before her trek west to Salt Lake

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*Cart, or Afoot between July 24, 1847 and December 30, 1868, before the Railroad[;] Prominent Men are Stake Presidents, Ward Bishops, Governors, Member of the Bench, Etc. Who Came to Utah after the Coming of the Railroad* (Salt Lake City, 1913), 1094.

<sup>106</sup> Black and Black, *Annotated Record of Baptisms for the Dead, Nauvoo*, 5:2726, cites Nauvoo Baptismal Records of the Dead, Book D:118, proxy Hannah Page, deceased Warren Peck, spouse Hannah (Mattison) Parsons. The actual record states only, “[person baptized] Hannah Page [for whom baptized] Warren Peck [relationship] Husband.”

<sup>107</sup> Black and Black, *Annotated Record of Baptisms for the Dead, Nauvoo*, 5:2725–26, proxy Hannah Page, Hannah's 4th husband is given as James Mattison Hendricks. The actual record is given in the preceding footnote.

Valley commencing 5–6 July 1849. Hannah was Ebenezer's second wife. Ebenezer died after the 1870 census, when he resided in Marion County, Iowa.<sup>108</sup>

Hannah (Parsons) (Peck) Page perhaps married third, about 1849, NATHANIEL RIGGS, who was born near Newport, Campbell County, Kentucky, on 5 August 1798, son of Bethuel and Nancy (Lee) Riggs. Hannah and Nathaniel lived together as husband and wife in Salt Lake Valley, in 1849–50, and separated about 1851, as both married other spouses in 1852. They had no children, and there is no record of a marriage or a divorce. Hannah would have been Nathaniel's second wife. He died in Provo, Utah County, Utah Territory, on 5 June 1869.<sup>109</sup>

Hannah married (was sealed to) third or fourth in Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, Utah Territory, on 2 April 1852, JAMES HENDRICKS. He was born in Simpson County, Kentucky, on 23 June 1808, son of Abraham and Charlotte (Hinton) Hendricks. Hannah was a plural wife to James, his second marriage. They had no children. James died in Richmond, Cache County, Utah Territory, on 8 July 1870.<sup>110</sup>

Children of Warren and Hannah (Parsons) Peck:

- i THORIT PECK, b. Locke, Cayuga Co., N.Y., 30 May 1826, d. Pleasant Grove, Utah Co., Utah Terr., 6 Feb. 1858, bur. Pleasant Grove City Cemetery;<sup>111</sup> m. (1) within the year of the 1850 census, ANNA YOUNG, b. Canada, ca. 1832,<sup>112</sup> d. 3 Aug. 1851;<sup>113</sup> m. (2) Pleasant Grove, 8 Jan. 1852, SARAH YOUNG,<sup>114</sup> b. "Upper Canada [Ontario]," 8 Oct. 1834,<sup>115</sup> daughter of James Ross and Elizabeth (Seeley) Young,<sup>116</sup> d. 30 Aug. 1896.<sup>117</sup> Thorit and Sarah had 3 children.

<sup>108</sup> 1870 U.S. census, Marysville P.O., Indiana Twp., Marion Co., Iowa, p. 55, dw. 189, fam. 181.

<sup>109</sup> *Deseret News*, Great Salt Lake City, Utah Terr., 16 June 1869, 18:217 [FHL film #26,591].

<sup>110</sup> *Journal History*, LDS, 8 July 1870, citing "Des. Eve. News July 18" [FHL film #1,259,754].

<sup>111</sup> *Cemetery Records, Pleasant Grove, Utah County, Utah*, 3 vols. [FHL film #824,234], block 15, lot 2.

<sup>112</sup> 1850 U.S. census, Great Salt Lake Co., Utah Terr., p. 54, dw. 449, fam. 449. The National Society of the Sons of the Utah Pioneers database [*Pioneer Immigrants to Utah Territory*, <[www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)>] has Anna's marriage on 3 Jan. 1850, her birth in Whitby, Ontario, Canada, on 27 Aug. 1832.

<sup>113</sup> Mexican War pension file, Sarah Peck, certificate 7740.

<sup>114</sup> Mexican War pension file, Sarah Peck, certificate 7740; *Deseret News Weekly*, Salt Lake City, 21 Feb. 1852 [FHL film #26,586, item 4]: "On the 8th ult., by bishop George S. Clark, Mr. Thorit Peck and Miss Sally Young of Utah Valley."

<sup>115</sup> *Pioneer Immigrants to Utah Territory*, <[www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)>, has Sarah Young b. in Whitby, Ontario, Canada, and sister of Thorit's first wife, Anna Young.

<sup>116</sup> Patriarchal Blessings [transcription], Sarah Young Peck [FHL film #392,677], father James Young, mother Elizabeth, date of blessing 31 Jan. 1857, Pleasant Grove, Utah Terr., cites Patriarchal Blessings, 27:210; *Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel*, the Edward Hunter—Jacob Foutz Co. included James Ross Young, 42, Elizabeth Seeley Young, 40, Anna Young, 15, and Sarah Young, 12.

<sup>117</sup> Mexican War pension file, Sarah Peck, certificate 7740.

- ii ISAAC L. PECK, b. Cayuga Co., N.Y., 19 Feb. 1828, d. Rushville, Buchanan Co., Mo., 20 Aug. 1904; m. 23 Sept. 1858, SARAH C. SIBERT, b. 4 Jan. 1839, daughter of Henry Sibert;<sup>118</sup> d. 12 Nov. 1920.<sup>119</sup> Isaac and Sarah had 10 children;<sup>120</sup> both bur. Sugar Creek Cemetery, near Rushville.<sup>121</sup>
- iii JOSEPH PECK, b. probably in New York but possibly enroute to Ohio, probably late 1829 or early 1830; no further record found.
- iv KING BENJAMIN PECK, b. Brownhelm Twp., Lorain Co., Ohio, 7 July 1831, d. Shoshone, Lincoln Co., Idaho, 27 Aug. 1916; bur. there.<sup>122</sup> He m. ca. 1853, MARGARET A. SMITH, b. Mo., 1 March 1836, daughter of Jackson and Mary (—) Smith.<sup>123</sup> King Benjamin and Margaret had 12 children.<sup>124</sup>

Child of Ebenezer and Hannah (Parsons) (Peck) Page:

- v ELIZABETH JANE PAGE, b. Hancock Co., Ill., 20 April 1840, d. Aberdeen, Chehalis (now Grays Harbor) Co., Wash., 31 July 1900;<sup>125</sup> m. (sealed to) 22 Aug. 1860, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake Co., Utah Terr., SAMUEL H. SMITH, b. Wickwar, Gloucestershire, England, 7 Feb. 1836. Elizabeth and Samuel had 11 children.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Nadine Hodges and Mrs. Howard W. Woodruff, *Buchanan County Missouri Abstracts of Wills and Administrations from Books "A" and "B," 1839–1857* (Kansas City, Mo., 1969), 58, "[Lane Twp.] Henry Sibert, father-in-law of Isaac L. Peck, came in the fall of the same year [1841]."

<sup>119</sup> Mexican War pension file, Sarah C. Peck, certificate 13968. Her last official residence was Holton, Jackson Co., Kans.

<sup>120</sup> 1900 U.S. census, Lake Twp., Buchanan Co., Mo., ED 34, p. 63, sh. 2A, dw. 30, fam. 32, Isaac L. Peck.

<sup>121</sup> Martha McDaniel Thompson, "Cemetery Record, Center and Crawford Townships, Buchanan County, Missouri, Part I" (typescript, 1973–74) [FHL call no. 977.8132 V3, 25].

<sup>122</sup> Death certificate, Idaho Dept. of Health, King B. Peck, no. 15272 [FHL film #1,509,301].

<sup>123</sup> Patriarchal Blessings [transcription], Margaret Smith Peck [FHL film #392,677], b. 1 March 1836, [empty], father Jackson Smith, mother Mary, date of blessing 2 Feb. 1858, Pleasant Grove, Utah, patriarch John Young, cites Patriarchal Blessings, 26:376.

<sup>124</sup> 1900 U.S. census, Clover Creek, Lincoln Co., Idaho, ED 129, p. 8, sh. 7B, dw. 121, fam. 120.

<sup>125</sup> Death certificate, E. J. Smith, Chehalis Co., Wash., Deaths, no. 389, aged 60.

<sup>126</sup> 1900 U.S. census, East Aberdeen Pct., Chehalis Co., Wash., ED 7, p. 163, sh. 17A, dw. 298, fam. 317.