

A History of Margaret Crane Bird and Her Descendants

Margaret Crane was the second wife of Benjamin Freeman Bird. According to her great-granddaughter, Florence Bird, she was also the cousin of Meribah Reeves,¹ Benjamin's first wife. Margaret was born on 2 June 1797 in Caldwell, Essex County, New Jersey, the daughter of Azariah and Hannah Crane.^{2 3}

Azariah Crane was from Caldwell, Essex County, New Jersey, and was the son of John Crane and Hannah Johnson. Azariah died on 15 March 1814, and according to his will, he had ten children at the time of his death. They were named Nancy Brown, Rhoda Baldwin, Thankful Price, Elizabeth Brown, Ralph Crane, Keturah Pierson, Margaret, Benjamin, Rebecca and Sally Crane. We do not yet know anything about his wife, Hannah, other than her given name.

On 9 February 1822, at the age of twenty-four, Margaret married Thomas B. Dayley in Essex County, New Jersey.⁴ However, Thomas must have died prematurely, because Margaret was a widow in 1833 when she married Benjamin Freeman Bird. It is not known if there were any children born to her union with Thomas Dayley, but there were none surviving by the time she married Benjamin. Surely this was a hard trial to go through at such a young age.

When Meribah Reeves Bird became ill, her cousin Margaret went to stay with the Bird family on their farm in Wellsburg, Chemung County, New York, and care for their family. Meribah died on 13 February 1833, and Benjamin married Margaret on 25 October 1833.⁵ Amanda, Richard and William Bird were still at home, and they needed a mother. Benjamin was fifty-five and Margaret was thirty-five.

In June of 1834, Benjamin was baptized a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons), but we have found no evidence that Margaret was ever baptized. She did

¹ Bird Family Notes, by Florence Bird: "For his second wife, Benjamin Bird married Margaret Crane, who was a cousin to his first wife, and who came to the town of Southport from Orange County to care for the invalid Mariba Reeves Bird..."

² Possible christening record- 1st Presbyterian Church, Caldwell, New Jersey: "Oct. 1797- Chevise Peggy- of Azariah & Hannah Crane." (Peggy was a common nickname for Margaret).

³ Abstract of will of Azariah Crane, dec'd, Caldwell, Book III, page 399; Map pp. 410-411; S1562. "Children: Nancy Brown, Rhoda Baldwin, Thankful Price, Elizabeth Brown, Ralph Crane, Keturah Pierson, Margaret, Benjamin, Rebecca and Sally Crane, some minors under 21. Commissioners: Philemon Bates, George P. Marting. Recorded: 30 Dec 1820. Benjamin, Rebecca & Sally underage-unrecorded estate papers."

⁴ New Jersey Essex County Marriages, 1795-1920 vol. B p. 101.

⁵ Frances Bird Temple Records Collection, FHL Film #0673261

follow Benjamin when he went west. Their church records can be found in the Nauvoo, Illinois LDS Fourth Ward, but only Benjamin and the children are listed.⁶

Benjamin and Margaret were blessed with three children: Margaret Jane, Benjamin Freeman, Jr. and Martha Marie. Margaret Jane was born on 9 April 1834 in Wellsburg, Chemung County, New York. Benjamin Freeman, Jr. was born on 20 June 1837, also in Wellsburg, and Martha Marie was born on 2 June 1840 in Nauvoo, Hancock County, Illinois.

Between 1837 and 1840, Benjamin and Margaret moved their family to Davies County, Missouri, then on to Nauvoo, Hancock County, Illinois. In January 1846, when the Mormons were driven out of Illinois, the Bird family loaded their most precious belongings in a covered wagon and began their trek westward across the plains. Benjamin was sixty-eight and Margaret was forty-nine. We know they traveled as far as the Council Bluffs area of Pottawattamie County, Iowa. Brigham Young asked all the Bird family members to stay there for three years to raise food, build wagons, and gather supplies to outfit those who would be traveling on to Utah territory. This Benjamin and some of his older sons did.

We don't know exactly when or why, but sometime in 1847,⁷ Margaret took their three young children and returned to New York, settling in Southport. We do know that Margaret was fifty, and Benjamin was sixty-nine. In the 1860 US Census, Margaret was blind, so possibly her eyesight had begun to fail her. According to Florence Bird, Margaret told her children their father had died, so she was taking them back home to New York. Florence stated that Margaret and her three children "returned to Chemung County with their goods loaded on a cart drawn by one ox."⁸ Margaret Jane was thirteen, Benjamin was ten, and Martha Marie was seven.

Margaret and her children have not been found anywhere in the 1850 US Census, but she is listed in the 1855 NY State Census for Southport, Chemung County. Her children are not listed, but it indicates Margaret had lived in Southport for eight years, and that she was a widow. In the 1860 US Census, Margaret is still listed in Southport, and Benjamin Jr. and Margaret Jane are with her. Martha Marie was married, and living in Pennsylvania by then.

Margaret died on 24 March 1866 in Wellsburg, Chemung County, New York, and was buried there in the Ashland Cemetery, just to the left of the old Baptist Church. Her son, Benjamin is buried next to her, and her step-daughter, Amanda Bird Mathews and her family are buried right in front of Margaret and Benjamin, Jr.

Below is a brief history of Margaret Jane, Benjamin Freeman Jr. and Martha Marie. Margaret Jane's story will be told last, since she is the only one who left any posterity.

⁶ Film #CR 375 8, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Record of Members Collection 1836-1970, Reel 4550 (100000633019)

⁷ 1855 NY State Census states that Margaret had lived in Southport for 8 years.

⁸ Bird Family Notes, by Florence Bird.

As stated earlier, Benjamin Freeman Bird, Jr. (also called Benjamin Tucker in honor of his aunt, Jane Tucker), was born on 20 June 1837 in Wellsburg, Chemung County, New York. With his family, he moved to Missouri and Illinois, and then traveled west with his parents as far as Council Bluffs, Iowa. Then, when he was about ten years old, he came back to Southport, Chemung County, New York with his mother and sisters. He worked as a farm laborer for a few years, then joined the Union Army during the Civil War. While serving, he contracted a disease (probably typhoid or cholera) and died on 24 June 1864 at the age of twenty-seven.⁹ Benjamin never married.

Martha Marie Bird was born on 2 June 1840 in Nauvoo, Hancock County, Illinois. She married three times, but Florence Bird said she never had any children. Her first husband was Walter Minthorn Farnsworth, and they were married on 19 April 1859.¹⁰ In the 1860 US Census, they are found living with Walter's parents, Hiram and Zephia Farnsworth, in Smithfield, Bradford, Pennsylvania. During the Civil War, Walter enlisted as a Union soldier, and died on 30 July 1861 while serving his country.¹¹ In the 1865 NY State Census, Martha Marie is found living with her mother in Southport. She was listed as a widow, and was working as a domestic.

Next, Martha Marie married Isaac Bennett on 20 January 1869.¹² They are found in the 1870 US Census for Ashland, Chemung County, New York. Isaac is listed as a painter, and Martha was keeping house. In the 1880 US Census for Smithfield, Bradford County, Pennsylvania, there is a Martha Bennett who is listed as being forty year old, married, and working in a lady's fur store. Florence Bird said that Martha worked as a milliner at one point in her life, while she lived in Smithfield and Bentley Creek¹³, so perhaps this is our Martha. Isaac was perhaps away from home at the time, because he is not listed with her. Isaac died on 22 June 1887, leaving Martha a widow once again.

On 22 February 1893, Martha married Hollis Allen. Of Hollis, Florence Bird said he was "remembered for the extraordinary amount of clothing he wore to prevent colds." Hollis died in

⁹ Bird Family Notes, by Florence Bird: "Benjamin Freeman, Jr., substituted 'Tucker' for his middle name 'Freeman' in honor of his aunt, Jane Tucker. Benjamin Bird died on June 24, 1864. He is buried in Ashland Cemetery, Wellsburg, New York. He served in the Civil War and died of disease contracted while in the Army."

¹⁰ Pension Application file of Martha M. Farnsworth, widow of Walter M. Farnsworth. Affidavit from Civil War Pension Application: "State of New York, County of Chemung: Harrison Decker and Lyman C. Brown being both duly sworn deposes and says that they attended the marriage of Walter Farnsworth and Martha Maria Farnsworth at a certain house in Southport and County of Chemung on the 19th day of April 1859, and that Elder J. M. Coby solemnized said marriage in their presences as witnesses to the said marriage- and that they are well acquainted with Martha Maria Farnsworth and know her to be the same person above described and that they have no interest in her claim...23 day of Jany 1867."

¹¹ Record from the War Department- Civil War Pension File: "Walter Farnsworth, Co. F Ret'g Pa Res Inf was enrolled May 15, 1861 and died * July 29, 1861 at Harrisburg, sick with fever. *It has been this day (June 10, 1901) determined by this department, from records and from information furnished by the Auditor for the War Department, that this soldier died July 30, 1861."

¹² Ancestral File, FamilySearch.org.

¹³ Bird Family Notes, by Florence Bird

1899, leaving Martha a widow for the third time. She died on 14 January 1903, and she and Hollis are buried next to each other in the newer part of the Ashland Cemetery in Wellsburg, Chemung County, New York.

Margaret Jane Bird was born on 9 February 1834 in Wellsburg, Chemung County, New York. As a young child, she traveled with her family to Missouri, Illinois and Iowa, then went back to New York with her mother and siblings. In 1850, she is listed in the US Census as being sixteen, and in the household of John Sutphen, a farmer. Florence Bird said Margaret “became a tailoress and traveled about the country in the vicinity of Troy and Columbia Crossroad, Pennsylvania, tailoring men’s clothing”.¹⁴ Perhaps this was before she married.

Margaret Jane is the only one of Benjamin and Margaret Bird’s children who left any posterity. According to the 1865 NY State Census for Southport, Margaret Jane had been married twice, was presently married, and had had one child. At the end of the census, there was a page that listed marriages that had occurred during the previous year. It indicated that Oscar E. Bird (Orrison sometimes went by the name of Oscar), age 36, single, married Margaret J. Bird, 30, divorced, on 12 July 1864 in the town of Southport by a clergyman. We have not yet been able to find a record of a first marriage for Margaret Jane, but possibly she married someone briefly while she was working in Pennsylvania, and had a child who died. This little mystery will require further research.

Orrison and Margaret Jane had three children: Oscar F., Jennie E. and Lark. They raised their family in Dix and Watkins, Schuyler County, New York. Orrison worked as a drayman (he drove a cart and hauled things for other people), a canal man, and a castman (he worked with a sculptor). Orrison died from pneumonia on 2 November 1901 in Watkins, and was buried the next day in the Glenwood Cemetery. Margaret Jane died on 22 June 1912 at Penn Yan, Yates County, New York, and was buried near her husband in the Glenwood Cemetery. They do not have markers on their graves.

Jennie and Lark do not now have any living posterity, so a brief history will first be given of them. Lark Bird was born in July of 1870 in Schuyler County, New York,¹⁵ and he spent his early years in the Watkins area. On 24 July 1894, Lark married Ellen F. Whalen in Penn Yan, Yates County, New York.¹⁶ Ellen was the daughter of Patrick and Mary Whalen of Rye, West Chester County, New York. According to the 1900 US Census, she was born in January of 1868. Lark and Ellen were blessed with one daughter, Florence J. Bird. She was born 14 December 1898 in Elmira, Chemung County, New York.¹⁷

¹⁴ Bird Family Notes, by Florence Bird

¹⁵ 1900 US Census for Dix, Schuyler County, NY- age 29, b. July 1870, md 6 y.

¹⁶ Marriages and Deaths of Schuyler County- p. 59: Bird, Lark C. of Watkins, NY Whalen, Ella F. of Penn Yan, NY July 24, 1894 Penn Yan, NY.

¹⁷ New York State Vital Records Index.

Since we don't know much about Lark and Ellen, census records have helped to fill in a few blanks. In the 1900 US Census of Watkins Village, Lark was listed as a bus driver there. In the 1910 US Census he had a livery stable in Penn Yan. In 1920, he was a machinist who lived in Elmira, and in 1930, he was a foreman in an auto parts manufacturing plant, still living in Elmira. By 1930, Florence was listed as a stenographer for an insurance company, and she lived with her parents. No occupations were listed for Ellen. We know that Ellen died in 1942.¹⁸ Lark died on 6 July 1947. They are both buried in the St. Mary's Cemetery in Horseheads, Chemung County, New York.¹⁹

Florence, the only child of Lark and Ellen Bird, stayed in Elmira the rest of her life. She never married or had children. She worked for several years as a stenographer/secretary in Elmira, and for the last 25 years of her career, she served as a secretary for St. Mary's [Catholic] Parish. Because of an inquiry from a lady in Arizona in about 1965, Florence wrote a short history of the Benjamin F. Bird family who had lived in Chemung County in the 1800's. She recounted the stories her grandmother, Margaret Jane had told her when Florence was a child. This history provided much good information, and is now in the Bird file in the Chemung County Historical Society in Elmira. Florence died on 21 November 1986 in Elmira, and was buried next to her parents in Horseheads.²⁰

Jennie E. Bird was born on 16 July 1868 in Watkins, Schuyler County, New York.²¹ According to census records, she lived there in the Watkins/Dix area until at least 1900. We don't know much about her, but we did find an interesting tidbit- in the 1887 Schuyler County Fair, Jennie won the 2nd prize for her beautiful crochet work! She was nineteen years old at the time. In the 1900 Census, Jennie is listed as single, and a dress maker, living at home with her parents. In her father's 1901 obituary, she was listed as Jane E. Bird of Watkins. In her mother's 1912 obituary, Jennie is listed as Mrs. E.W. Van Vleet of Philadelphia, so she must have married and moved to Philadelphia sometime between the deaths of her two parents. Jennie died shortly after her mother, on 21 September 1912,²² at the young age of 44. She had no known children.

In searching for the Van Vleet name, a Wert C. or Cyrus W. Van Vleet, and Mary H. Van Vleet (widow of Charles) were found in the 1899 thru 1902 Elmira NY City Directories. Cyrus was listed as a commercial traveler. In 1906-8, Mary H. Van Vleet, widow of Charles was still in Elmira, but Cyrus was not there after 1902. In the 1870 US Census, Charles and Mary H. Van Vleet can be found with their four year old son, C. W. Thomas, living in Romulus, Seneca, New

¹⁸ Obituary – Elmira Advertiser – Tues., 1 Sep 1942: "Mrs. Ellen Franes Bird of 204 Scottwood Ave., Elmira Heights, died Monday, Aug. 31, 1942. Survivors: Husband, Lark C. Bird; a daughter, Florence J., of Elmira Heights; two sisters, Mrs. Kate Tompkins and Mrs. Julia H. Wood of Penn Yan, and several nieces and nephews."

¹⁹ Burial Card – St. Mary's Cemetery: Lark C. Bird d 6 Jul 1957 – age 85 – last address Elmira, NY...Date of burial 9 July 1957

²⁰ Death Certificate

²¹ Letters of Margaret Jane Bird in possession of Naoma M. Harker.

²² Letters of Margaret Jane Bird in possession of Naoma M. Harker.

York. A Cyrus W. and Jennie E. Van Vleet are found in the 1910 US Census in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. It indicates that Cyrus is a proprietor of a life insurance business. It also says Jennie was only thirty-six years old, although our Jennie would have been forty-two. It also says Cyrus and Jennie had been married fourteen years! Perhaps it should have said they had been married four years. In the 1909-13 Philadelphia City Directories, there is a C.W. Van Vleet who is a manager for Peoples Health and Accident insurance Company. The next time Cyrus could be found was in the 1920 US Census for Elmira, Chemung County, New York. Jennie had died by then, and Cyrus had remarried. This may or may not have been her husband.

Oscar F. Bird was the oldest child of Orrison Emmet and Margaret Jane Bird, and the only one with living descendants. He was born on 13 March 1865 in Watkins, Schuyler County, New York.²³ In family records, as well as early census records, Oscar's birth year would have been 1865, but in the 1900 and 1920 US Census, his birth is listed as 1864.

On 18 February 1892, Oscar F. Bird married Mary Evelyn Gillis in Horseheads, Chemung County, New York.²⁴ Mary, sometimes known as May, was the daughter of Andrew Gillis and Susanna Gould. They were blessed with two sons, Charles E. and Francis J. In the 1900 US Census, Oscar and Mary and their two boys are found living with his parents in Watkins Village, Schuyler County, New York. Oscar gave his occupation as a general repairer.

Oscar has not yet been found on the 1910 US Census, but Mary, who was listed as Evelyn, and the two boys are found in Rochester, Monroe County, New York. Evidently, Oscar either died, or he divorced Evelyn, because the census shows Evelyn married to a David Campbell, who is a real estate dealer. It is his first marriage, and her second, and they had been married two years. Charles E. and Francis J. Bird are listed as his step-sons. Francis has no occupation, but Charles E. was a movie picture operator. There is an Oscar Bird listed in the 1920 US Census, who is living in Islip, Suffolk County, New York, and he was working as a chef in a lunchroom. His age is correct, and he stated he is a widower. We have not yet found a death date for Oscar, but we know his wife, Mary Evelyn died on 20 January 1914 in Rochester, Monroe County, New York. She was buried in the Mount Hope Cemetery in Rochester.²⁵

Francis J. Bird, son of Oscar F. and Mary Evelyn Gillis Bird, was born on 13 February 1897 in Watkins, Schuyler County, New York.²⁶ In the 1920 US Census, Frank was single, and living in Rochester. He was employed as an auto repairer. On 23 February 1924, Francis, or Frank, married Gladys Evershed, daughter of George L. and Emory or Emma Evershed in Rochester,

²³ Letters of Margaret Jane Bird in possession of Naoma M. Harker.

²⁴ New York State Vital Records: "Oscar F. Bird – res Watkins, NY – age next bday 27y- laborer- b Watkins, NY – father Orrison E. Bird – mother Margaret J. Bird – 1st marr to May E. Gillies – res Watkins, NY – age 20- b Watkins, NY – father Andrew Gillies – mother Suzannah Gould – 1st marr MD: 18 Feb 1892 at Horseheads, Chemung, NY by Ure(?) Mitchell, preacher Witnesses: Anna L. Kidder, S.E. Kidder –D2034"

²⁵ Rochester Democrat and Chronicle- Wed., 21 Jan 1914.

²⁶ New York State Vital Records Index #6886

Monroe County, New York.²⁷ In the 1930 US Census, Frank and Gladys still lived in Rochester, and he worked as a mechanic. Frank later worked for Eastman Kodak.²⁸ He died on 17 June 1965, and Gladys died in June of 1979. They were buried next to each other in the Maple Grove Cemetery in Ogden, Monroe County, New York.²⁹ They had no children.

Charles Emmet or Eldred Bird, son of Oscar F. and Mary Evelyn Gillis Bird, was born on 25 January 1893 in Watkins, Schuyler County, New York.³⁰ On 30 August 1911, Charles married Ruth Spies, daughter of George Valentine and Ella A. Bird Spies at the Spies residence.³¹ They were blessed with three daughters who all married, and raised families of their own.

In 1919, Charles went to New York City to work in vaudeville for a short time. While in New York City, Charles met and married Daisy Smalling, and had two sons. Their first son later married and raised a family. However, the second son died in infancy.³² Charles and Daisy lived in Babylon, Suffolk County, New York, where they raised their son and several foster children. Charles started his own business, Bird Fuel Oil Company, delivering heating oil to homes. He continued in this occupation till 1960, when he had a stroke. He and Daisy then moved to Florida.

In Florida, Charles and Daisy were members of the Forest Lake Seventh-Day Adventist Church. Charles taught a Bible class for Sabbath Lesson Study, and sometimes he gave the sermon. He spent long hours reading his Bible, and writing down notes. He also spent time writing in his journal. Charles was quite active, and even after having a stroke, he enjoyed mowing the lawn and doing yard work.

In later years, Charles had another stroke, and on 10 June 1977 Charles died in Forest City, Seminole County, Florida. Daisy soon was moved to a local nursing home, and she died on 27 July 1979.³³ They both were buried in Woodlawn Memorial Park Cemetery in Orlando, Orange County, Florida.

This is the story of Benjamin Freeman Bird, Margaret crane, and their descendants. They worked hard and sacrificed much so their posterity could have a better life, and we can be proud

²⁷ Monroe County Marriages 1908-1935: "Francis J. Bird- w res 121 Fitzhugh St. – age 27 – occ Van Berg Co., - b Watkins Glen, NY – 1st marr – father Oscar Bird b USA – mother Mary E. Gillis b USA to Gladys M. Evershed – w res 590 Fremont St (or Tremont) – age 25 – occ at home – b city – 1st marr- father George Evershed b USA – mother Emeroy McIntyre b USA MD: 23 Feb 1924 at Rochester, Monroe, NY, by Fay C. Martin, clergyman Witnesses: Frank J McDonald, Hazel M. Marshatta."

²⁸ Information from Don Bird, Jr.

²⁹ Cemetery Inscription, Maple Grove Cemetery, Ogden, Monroe County, New York.

³⁰ New York State Vital Records Index

³¹ Information from Don Bird, Jr.

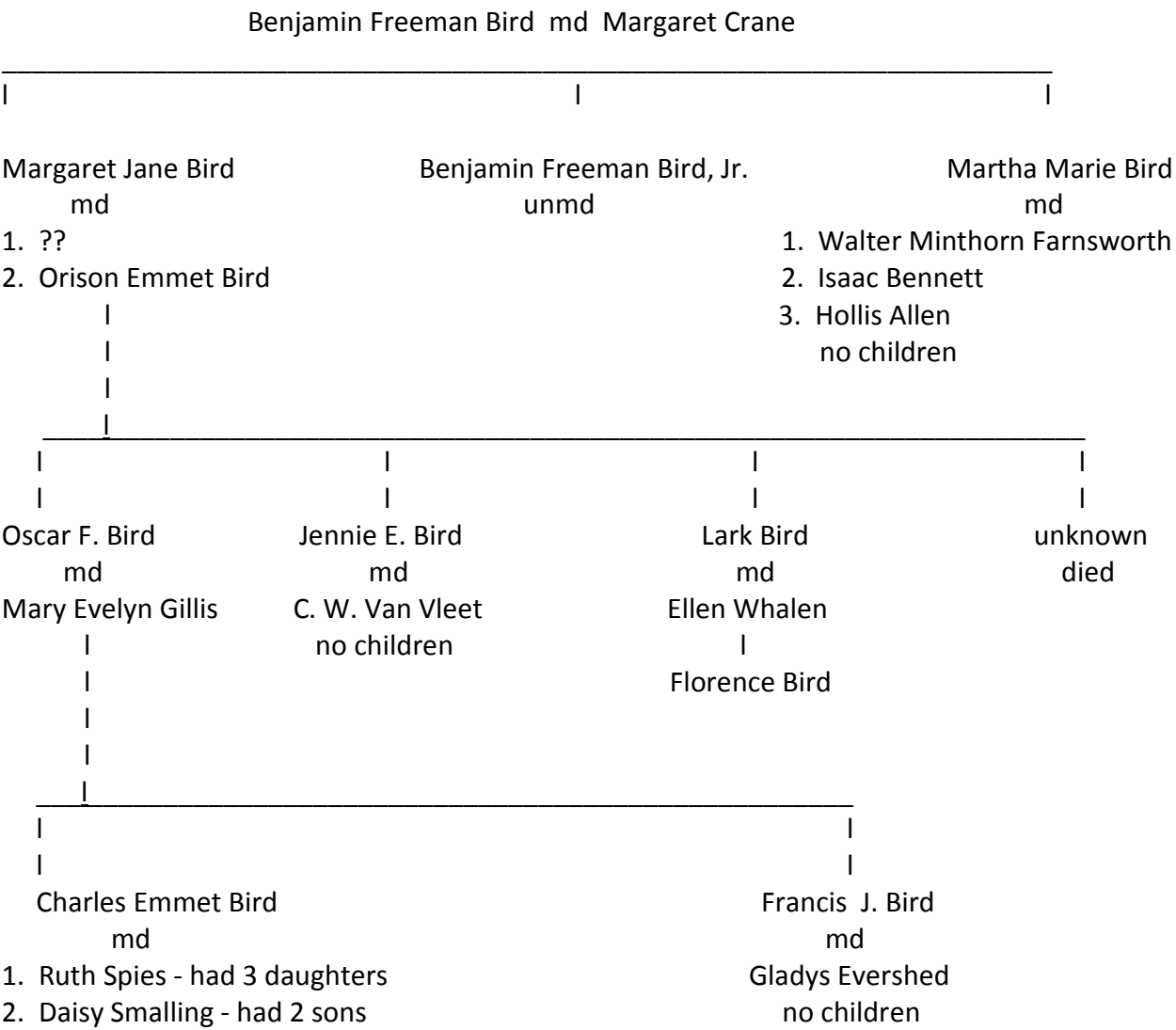
³² Information from Don Bird, Jr.

³³ Information from Don Bird, Jr.

to be part of their family. Below is a descendancy chart that shows how everyone mentioned in this history is related. Pictures of many of these people are also included.

Sandi Monson
566 East 1090 North
Orem, UT 84097

Descendancy Chart



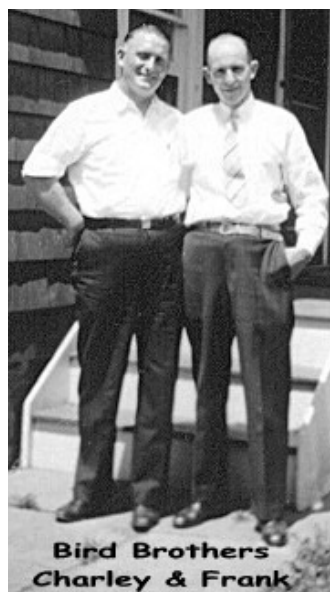


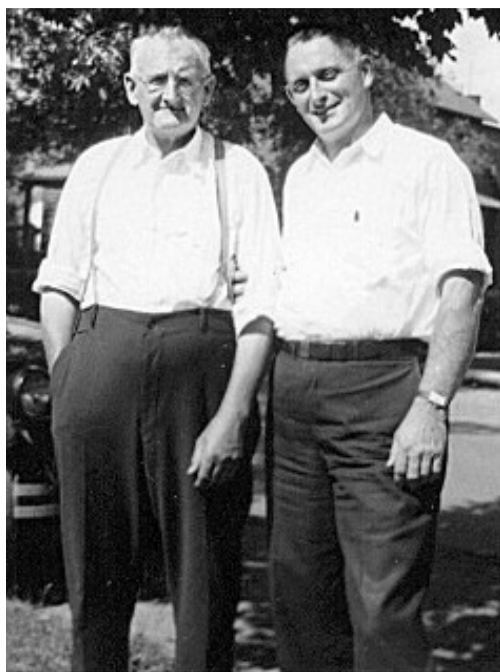
Charles Eldred Bird born 1893

Browne

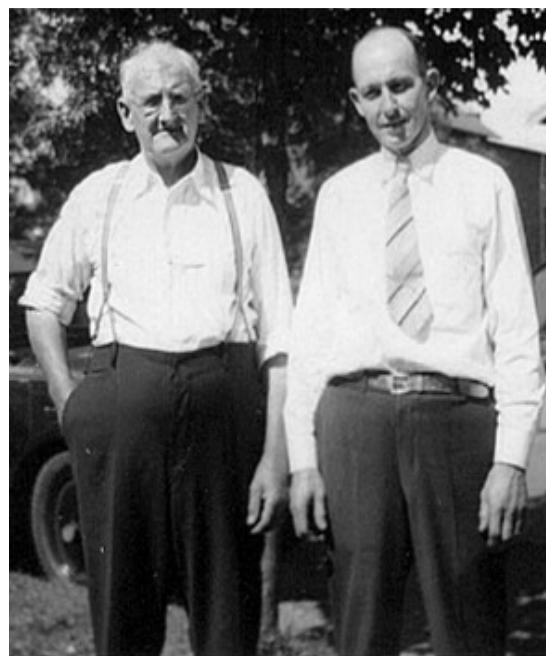
Watkins, N. Y.

Young Charles Emmet (or Eldred) Bird





Great Uncle Lark Bird with nephew Charley Bird



Great-Uncle Lark Bird & Frank Bird
Lark & Oscar Bird are brothers
Charles & Frank are brothers



Oscar F. Bird and wife, Mary Evelyn Gillis



Ruth Spies, 1st wife of Charles E. Bird



George Wood, 2nd husband of Ruth Spies



Ruth Spies Bird – 1963



Ruth Spies Bird and brother, Erwin Spies



Charles E. Bird's 2nd wife, Daisy and son Donald



09-1975
Daisy & Charley Bird



1) Gladys(Frank Bird's wife)
2) Florence Bird (Uncle Lark's daughter)
3) unknown.