

The following was written by Miss Florence Bird who was the great-granddaughter of Benjamin Freeman Bird and Margaret Crane at the request of the Chemung County Historical Society. Miss Bird wrote this document from memory. We know this document contains many inaccuracies about Benjamin and his family once they left New York.

BENJAMIN FREEMAN BIRD

(From information sent to Helen Bird Strange, from Chemung, New York. Material was furnished by Mrs. A. B. Denny, Christian Hollow Road, Pine City, New York, who has done research on Southport. Information, courtesy of Miss Florence Bird, Elmira, New York.)

Benjamin Freeman Bird, of Sussuncunna Co. New Jersey was born in 1779. On 22 Feb 1800 he married Meribah Reeves of New York City. He died 25 July 1850 in Utah, probably in or near Mapleton or Provo. Meribah Reeves Bird died 13 Feb 1833. She is buried in the Gustin Cemetery on the South Creek Road, in the town of Ashland, Chemung, New York. For his second wife, Benjamin married Margaret Crane, who was a cousin of his first wife, and who came to the town of Southport from Orange County (believed to have been New York, but possibly New Jersey) to care for the invalid Meribah Reeves Bird.

Benjamin and Meribah had twelve children. Benjamin is said to have been a Methodist circuit rider. When he first came to this section from New Jersey he lived on the road which still bears his name "The Bird Creek Road." His farm was the first one on the Pennsylvania side of the state line. It is now (1960) owned and occupied by Mr. D. Collier, who reports that the sight of the Bird cabin is still marked by stones, remnants of either the foundation, or fireplace and chimney. Previous to the death of his first wife, Mr. Bird and his family had moved to the South Creek Road on the farm on the northeast corner of the Rogers Road. The cemetery where Maribah is buried is on a plot on this farm.

In the earth 1840's Benjamin sold this farm to Mr. Gustin and moved with his family to Utah as a follower of Joseph Smith. He lived, although it may have been only temporarily at or near Mapleton, where the Mormons held services in his barn while their church was being erected. (They also lived in Nauvoo).

Benjamin Freeman Bird died in 1850 and is thought to have been buried in either Provo or Mapleton. Following his death Margaret Crane Bird and her three children returned to Chemung County with their goods loaded on a cart with one ox.

Some of Benjamin's older children, by his first wife are thought to have settled in the Trout Ruin section of northern Pennsylvania. His sons, Charles, Samuel, George and Richard went west with him, but it is not certain that they went to Utah.

175 West
Amherst, N.Y. 1420
Sally Amherst

THE BIRD FAMILY

Courtesy: Miss Florence Bird
Franklin Street, Elmira, New York

BENJAMIN FREEMAN BIRD, of Succosunna County, New Jersey, was born in 1779. On February 22, 1800, he married Mariba Reeves, of New York City. He died July 25, 1850, in Utah, probably in or near Mapleton, or Provo. Mariba Reeves Bird died February 13, 1898, aged 78. She is buried in the Gustin Cemetery, on the South Creek Road, Town of Ashland, Chemung County, New York. For his second wife, Benjamin Bird married Margaret Crane, who was a cousin of his first wife; and who came to the Town of Southport from Orange County, (believed to have been Orange County, New York, but there is a possibility it might have been Orange County, New Jersey) to care for the invalid Mariba Reeves Bird.

Benjamin Freeman and Mariba (Reeves) Bird had twelve children:

Phineas Reeves Bird, born January 29, 1802

Charles Bird, born 1803; died September 29, 1884; married, on March 22, 1829, Mary Ann Kennedy

Samuel Bird, born March 19, 1805; married, on April 5, 1826, Keziah Brown

James Bird, born December 22, 1806

Elizabeth Bird, born February 8, 1809

George Bird, born January 16, 1811 (probably died very young)

Kelsey Bird, born March 20, 1813; killed in 1837 by a run-away horse

Polly Bird, born June 13, 1815. On March 27, 1832, she married Joel Matthews, who was born in Hector, Schuylar County, New York, on March 27, 1810, a son of Amasa and Polly (Everetts) Matthews. (Joel's brother Lawrence married Polly Bird's sister Amanda). Joel and Polly Matthews lived on Comfort Hill, in the Town of Ashland, Chemung County, New York. Their home is still standing and is presently (1960) owned by Mrs. Morrison. The known children of Joel and Polly (Bird) Matthews were: Hudson; Amasa; Mariba, who married George Rodgers (for whom the Rodgers Road, Town of Ashland, Chemung County, New York, was named); Milford; and Arzelia, who married _____ Clark

George Bird (the second son named George) born May 12, 1817

Amanda Bird, born _____ 24, 1819; she married Lawrence Matthews, whose brother Joel married her sister Polly. Lawrence and Amanda (Bird) Matthews lived on a farm near Joel and Polly. Later, they removed to Wallsburg, New York. They probably had more children than the known daughter, Ida, who married Hiram Young, of Wallsburg, New York.

Richard Bird, born October 13, 1820; married, on March 27, 1845, Emeline Crandle

William Bird, born July 16, 1823

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#2: The Bird Family

Benjamin Freeman and Margaret (Crane) Bird, his second wife, had three children:

Benjamin Freeman, Jr., who went to Utah with his parents and returned to Chemung County with his mother. He substituted "Tucker" for his middle name "Freeman" in honor of an aunt, Jane Tucker. Benjamin Bird died 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.

Martha, born 1840(?). She went to Utah with her parents and returned to Chemung County with her mother. Martha was three times married, but had no children. Her first husband was Walter Farnsworth, who was killed in the Civil War. Isaac Bennett was her second husband; and her third was Hollis Archer, who is remembered for the extraordinary amount of clothing he wore to prevent colds. Martha was a milliner and lived, at least for a time, near Smithfield and Bentley Creek, Pennsylvania.

Margaret Jane, born April 9, 1834, on the farm on the northeast corner of the South Creek and the Rodgers Roads, Town of Ashland, Chemung County, New York. At the age of three she started school. (The school, which was very near her home was later to be called the "Rousby School"). The first words she learned to spell were "lady", "baker", and "shady". She was about seven or eight years old when her parents moved to Utah; she later returned to Chemung County with her mother. Martha Jane Bird became a tailoress and traveled about the country in the vicinity of Troy and Columbia Crossroads, Pennsylvania, tailoring men's clothing. In 1861, she married Orriston E. Bird, who was born in 1826, the son of James and Jane (Carpenter) Bird, who had come to Peach Orchard, or Hector Falls, Schuylar County, New York, from Connecticut. Margaret Jane Bird died in 1912.

(Jane Carpenter Bird died when her son Orriston was born. Her widower, James, remained in New York State only a few months after her death and then went "West". He is not known to have been related to the Benjamin Freeman Bird family. James is thought to have married a second time, but no details are known. Margaret Jane Bird remembered another family of Birds sharing her parents' cabin when they lived in Nauvoo - although their presence was never explained to the children, in later life she thought it had been the James Bird family. - She remembered one of the daughters, Sarah Jane, who was older than Margaret, sitting in the center of the bed, with the feather-bed fluffed up around her to hide the lace she was knitting so that Margaret could not copy the pattern.)

Arkansas Evening News 1960

#3: The Bird Family

Benjamin Freeman Bird is said to have been a Methodist Circuit Rider. When he first came to this section from New Jersey, Mr. Bird lived on the road which still bears his name - the "Bird Creek Road". His farm was the first one on the Pennsylvania side of the State Line. It is now (1960) owned and occupied by Mr. D. Collier, who reports that the site of the Bird cabin is still marked by some stones - remnants of either the foundation or of the fireplace and chimney. Previous to the death of his first wife, Mr. Bird and his family had moved to the South Creek Road - the farm on the northeast corner of the Rodgers Road. The cemetery in which Meriba Reeves Bird is buried is a plot on this farm. In the early 1840's, Benjamin Bird sold his farm to Mr. Gustin, and moved, with his family, to Utah as a follower of Joseph Smith. He lived, although it may have been only temporarily, at or near Mapleton, where the Mormons held services in his barn while their church was being erected. Benjamin Bird died in 1850 and is thought to have been buried in either Provo or Mapleton. Following his death, Margaret Crane Bird and her three children returned to Chemung County with their goods loaded on a cart drawn by one ox.

(They also lived in New York)

(Some of Benjamin Bird's older children - those by his first wife - are thought to have settled in the Trout Run section of northern Pennsylvania. His sons Charles, Samuel, George, and Richard went West with him, but it is not certain that they went to Utah.)

William Denny - June 1960