



Benjamin Freeman Bird
1778-1862

Compiled by Marla Stone Walker 2011

Benjamin Freeman Bird was born January 19, 1778, in Rahway, Essex County, New Jersey. He was the fifth of eleven children of Jeremiah Bird and Elizabeth Marsh.¹ He had four sisters and six brothers.² It was almost two years before Benjamin was christened, possibly because the Revolutionary War was raging in the New Jersey area. However, on October 17, 1779, Benjamin was christened in the First Presbyterian Church in Morristown, Morris County, New Jersey, as Freeman Bird. (In his early years, Benjamin was evidently known as "Freeman.")

In this year of 1778, France sent a fleet to help the colonists; in return, the colonists had to sign an agreement that they would fight until they won their independence from England. It was about this time that the battle for the Hudson River was in progress, and Howe was prevented from crossing New Jersey. This was also the year Washington was at Valley Forge, and pursued the English across New Jersey. The year 1780 was the gloomiest year of the revolutionary war, but in the year 1783 on the 19th day of April the war ended.

With this event there began a real struggle. The soldiers were returning home, sick and tired. It had been a hard war, with little enough for the soldiers, who had suffered untold hardships with short rations, poor clothing, and severely cold winters. It was a slow, hard road to recovery.

About 1787, the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad and the Erie Canal were built for transportation, and Ohio, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin were added to the union. These states, formed on public land, gave Congress an opportunity to sell land to the people and use the proceeds to pay off the debt incurred by the War of Independence.

Changes took place in the lives of the Bird family. It would be interesting to know what part the Bird family played in this period. Nothing is known of Benjamin's youth. He seems to have been a very intelligent and active person.³

Benjamin was almost eleven years old when his father died on November 29, 1788, in Elizabeth, Union County, New Jersey. It is not known if his mother remarried.

Benjamin evidently remained in the New Jersey area because on February 22, 1801, he married Meribah "Milly" Reeves in Rahway. The handwritten record reads, "Freeman Bird to Milly Reeve. I certify that on the twenty second day of February in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and one I married Freeman Bird of Roxbury in the County of Morris and State of Newjersey to Milly Reeve of the same place--dated the fourth day of March AD 1801. Wm Grandin Minister of the Gosple. Received and Recorded the 4th March Ad 1801. C. Russell Clk [Clerk]".(from

¹Ludy, Diana R. "The Benjamin Freeman Bird Story". *For the Birds*, Issue Number 10, P. 4-5.

²Walsh, Susan. **Benjamin Freeman Bird - Biography**, 1980. P. 1

³Stratton, Clifford J. **Pioneer Stories**, 1945, 4225 Weems Way, Sparks, Nevada 89431, (702)673-9182). FHL US/ CAN 929.273st , 82 p., also microfilm XLIB7-102#1604. PART V, BENJAMIN FREEMAN BIRD, P. 16.

the Morris County Clerk's office; original spelling and grammar retained). Benjamin was 23 years old, and Meribah was 16 years old. Both were residents of Roxbury, New Jersey. Meribah had been born on May 8, 1784, in Rahway, Morris County, New Jersey, the daughter of Phineas and Mary Taylor Reeves.⁴ This was the year the nation's capitol was moved from Philadelphia to Washington, D.C. The Capitol building construction began in 1800.

Benjamin, being the third son, seems to be the one who pulled up stakes and left the old homestead, moving to Flanders in Morris County and starting a home for his new bride.

People were building more substantial homes at this time; many even built mansions, some of which still stand today. Lovely churches were built and industry was expanding. Church was still the center of social life, with dinners and teas and dancing. Benjamin Freeman had lived when Washington, then John Adams was President. Now in 1801-1809 Thomas Jefferson was President.⁵

Morris County records show that Benjamin paid taxes from 1802 to 1807 as follows: 1802, Freeman Bird, 1 house and lot, 1 cow. 1803, Benjamin F. Bird. 1805 Benjamin F. Bird, 1 house and lot, 1 horse, 2 cows. 1806, Benjamin F. Bird, 1 house and lot, 2 cows, 1 horse. 1807, Benjamin F. Bird, 1 house and lot, 2 horses, 3 cows. Several deeds conveying property to or from Benjamin were also recorded in Morris County during this time period. The last one found stated: "10 August 1805 Benjamin F. Bird and his wife Meribay of Roxbury, in the county of Morris, state of New Jersey, to [names] trustees of the school house in Flanders-[description was not copied] signed Benj. F. Bird and Mariba Bird. Witness: Kelsey Bird [brother of Benjamin] and Peter Smith." The deed was actually recorded July 5, 1834.

Benjamin and Meribah's oldest son was born on January 29, 1802, in Flanders, Morris County, NJ. They named him Phineas Reeves Bird. Their family grew quickly. Charles was born September 19, 1803, and Samuel was born March 19, 1805, both in Flanders. James was born December 22, 1807 in Roxbury.

Benjamin and Meribah moved their family to New York sometime in the next fourteen months because their first daughter was born on February 8, 1809, at Romulus, Seneca County, NY. They named her Elizabeth. The family evidently moved to several places in the area in the next few years. On January 16, 1811, George was born in Hector, Tompkins County, NY. The Birds suffered tragedy on January 16, 1813, when their almost 4-year-old daughter died. Two months later on March 30, 1813, Kelsey was born. Unfortunately, another child died on October 17, 1813--two-and-a-half-year-old George. The family moved again, this time to Southport, Tioga County, NY, where little Polly was born on June 13, 1815. Polly was also called Mary.⁶ It would be interesting to know the reason for these moves, as these places are not far apart. The counties in this area have been divided many times since these early days.⁷

Another son was born on May 2, 1817, also in Southport. Benjamin and Meribah decided to name him George, possibly in memory of their little son who had died three and a half years earlier. Tragically, this little one--not yet a year old--also died, on February 24, 1818. A year later on January 24, 1819, Amanda Ann was born. Benjamin and Meribah's eleventh child, Richard, was born on October 13, 1820. And their youngest son, William, was born on July 18, 1823. All three were born in Southport.⁸

The following is an excerpt of a letter which gives a description of the farm. "In old Southport, I climbed the highest peaks and took chestnut burs from the topmost boughs. I drove my carriage up Pouring Run that comes down by Fassets and wound around up on Green Hill in front of the old school house, where I could see Elias Gustin cradling oats on the highest field of the grandpa Bird farm.

George Rogers was raking rye across the gully and Mike Ronshey was hauling hay on the Uncle James Bird place and Jake Ronsheys son was doing the same on the Job Tobias farm and Stephen Brown was mowing mate and

⁴Ludy p. 4-5

⁵Stratton, PART V, P. 16-17.

⁶Ludy, P. 4-5.

⁷Stratton, PART V. P. 17.

⁸Ludy, P. 4-5.

her Milford Bird and Jennie composed the party on ??? Hill. As Jennie is still a cripple and could not cross and recross the state line nor straddle blackberry brush gracefully, nor peel burch bark, nor pick huckleberries, nor hunt the wintergreen and barberry, she sat on the brink of the hill and assorted berries and took notes as she viewed the landscape over.

We could see away upon the hill at Pa's old house and barn, orchard and buckwheat field in bloom. What a grand sight it was and how she enjoyed it. Well, when we came into her with our basket filled she said, 'I have been looking for a crazy quilt pattern for a long time and now I have it.' She pointed to the field where Elias Gustin was at work. He had laid his swaths of oats up, down and across the steep side hill in every conceivable direction that he could best climb up and down and the swaths as they lay, as she said, made the finest crazy quilt pattern that you ever saw.

We visited Elias and spent all day there. Some of the apple trees that grandpa grafted, using mud for wax, still bear and the old barn looks inside just as it did. I wanted that old wooden grannery lock that grandpa made, but it could not be found-----."⁹

During this period the prosperity of this new nation was established. There seemed to be plenty of employment, materials, and opportunities for all. It was a time when many immigrants came to this new country. There was a trend toward building cities, beautiful homes, and churches. America was young and growing and Madison was President, a man who greatly loved peace and tried constantly to avoid war or contentions.

Benjamin and his family undoubtedly heard many stories of the sea and of the battles fought there between the ships of our country and those of France and England. The United States was proud of her ships and seamen. She was not strong enough at this time to fight an offensive war, but with her ships she gained respect from England and France by capturing and destroying their shipping. One of our ships at this time was known as "Old Ironsides" or by its real name, the "Constitution."

In 1817, the year little George was born, steam ships were being constructed to take the place of sails, and Alabama and Mississippi were added to the union. The question of slavery was one of the big issues facing the government, and England was still smuggling slaves into the south.

John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson were presidents while Benjamin's children were growing to responsibility. Their son Samuel was born the same year as Joseph Smith, and Richard was born the year that Joseph received the great vision of God the Father, and His Son, Jesus Christ.¹⁰

In the 1830 census, Benjamin F. Bird is listed in Southport, Tioga County, NY. The listing includes 2 males aged 5 to 10 years [William and Richard]; 2 females aged 10 to 15 years [Amanda and Polly]; 1 male aged 15 to 20 [Kelsey]; 1 male aged 20 to 30 [James]; 1 female aged 40 to 50 [Meribah] and 1 male aged 50 to 60 [Benjamin]. Thus a total of eight persons were part of the household.

Sometime in the next three years, the family moved to Portsmouth, Chemung County, NY. The following is from a history written by Florence Bird, great-granddaughter of Benjamin and Margaret and his second wife, Margaret Crane. "When he [Benjamin] 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."¹¹

9**Nauvoo Ancestors**, Aug. 2006 Land and Records File Browser CD, Bird, Benjamin Freeman p. 63.

"Excerpt from a letter written by one of Benjamin F. Bird's grandchildren from Spring Hill, Kansas. Signer and date unknown. . . . The balance of the letter was not there, but gives one some picture of the farm of Benjamin Freeman Bird."

¹⁰Stratton, PART V, P. 17-18.

¹¹ Miss Florence Bird, **The Bird Family**, (Written in response to a query by Arthamese Denny in June, 1960), p. 1-3. Repository: Chemung County Historical Society, 415 E. Water Street, Elmira, NY 14901, ph. 607.734.4167, Call Number Bird Family file BF05-015.

In the meantime, the oldest sons were marrying and beginning their own families. Phineas married Melissa Coalman; and they established their home in Elmira, Chemung County, NY, where their oldest son was born on October 13, 1823. They named him George Washington Bird, and he was only three months younger than his Uncle William.

Charles married Mary Ann Kennedy on March 22, 1826, in Covington, Tioga County, PA. They, soon started a family. Samuel married Casiah Brown on April 5, 1826. He died February 13, 1828. James went back to New Jersey where he married Jane Mott Carpenter in 1831. Kelsey married Sally Carpenter Allbright; and Polly married Joel Matthews on March 27, 1832.¹²

In the winter of 1832, Benjamin Freeman Bird and his wife Marabah Reeves lived in a comfortable home in Southport, New York. They were members of the Methodist Church. Benjamin was one of five elected governing men of the Methodist Church.¹³ As the snow blanketed the New York country side, a single elder from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints knocked on their door. He asked for admittance and keep, since he was a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and was preaching without purse or script. Benjamin and Marabah were touched by the testimony that he bore. Over the next few weeks, by reading the Book of Mormon, they became convinced that his message was true. Since the Elder had moved on, the Bird's grasped at the only link that would tie them to the glorious message that they had received, they subscribed to the Messenger And Advocate. Because the Church was in its very early infancy, having been only 31 months since the Church was organized, the Bird family had no where else to turn for additional information.

In the first edition of the **Messenger and Advocate** printed at Kirtland, Ohio, in October 1834, Oliver Cowdery, then Second Elder in the Church, published the following excerpt: "Mr. Benj. F. Bird, of Southport, Tioga Co., N. Y., writes under date of Nov. 14 (1833) and says: 'I have received your papers almost one year: and because I held the Book of Mormon as sacred as I do the bible, the Methodist (though I had been a regular member almost 37 years) turned me out; but I bless God for it; for though they cast me out Jesus took me in.'"¹⁴

"He further adds, that he does not know as he shall ever have a privilege of uniting with his Church, as he never saw but one elder, whom he solicited to preach twice; that it caused a great stir and noise among the people, & etc."¹⁵

"If any of the elders are passing near, would they not do well to call?--We circulate some few papers in that place, the most of which is through the agency of our aged friend of whom we have been speaking, and from whom we acknowledge the receipt of money for the same."¹⁶

Before a team of elders could respond to Benjamin's request, he lost his sweetheart Marabah on February 13, 1833, leaving him with a heavy heart.¹⁷ She was buried on the family farm. These two had shared 33 years of joy, happiness, and struggle. Some of the older children were married, and the youngest was ten years old; four were still under eighteen years of age. Merabah's death occurred three years after the church was organized in Fayette, Seneca County, NY, which was not far from Chemung County. Jackson was President and Daniel Webster and Patrick Henry were statesmen of the day. Banking and tariffs were issues troubling the government, railroads were becoming an important means of transportation, and trains looked like little stagecoaches fastened together.

From the year 1830 a new era of progress began throughout the world, especially in the United States. The steam engine brought forth steam ships and trains, the printing press was invented, and with improved transportation and communication the time between places was shortened. Inventions began to come forth by the thousands, matches were invented and were distributed all over the country; schools were improved. Books were more readily obtainable,

¹²Ludy, P. 4-5.

¹³Walsh, p. 1

¹⁴**Messenger and Advocate**, Vol. 1 No. 3, Dec. 1834, p. 45. (The **Evening and Morning Star** was published in Kirtland from 1832-1835. The **Messenger and Advocate** was published from October 1834- Sept, 1835.)

¹⁵Stratton, p. 1..

¹⁶**Messenger and Advocate**, Dec., 1836, p. 45; original spelling and grammar retained).

¹⁷Ludy, p. 5.

and everyone had the opportunity of some education. The printing press made it possible for more people to get news, and gave more reason for learning to read. Because books were more plentiful, ideas were more freely exchanged.¹⁸

As Benjamin shared his testimony of the truthfulness of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints with his friends, many mocked, but a few hearts were touched.

Benjamin met a woman named Margaret Crane Daley in Chemung County, NY. She was born June 2, 1797, in Caldwell, Essex County, NY. Margaret was the widow of Thomas B. Daley. After a short courtship they were married on the 25th day of April, 1833. A year later, Margaret bore Benjamin a beautiful daughter whom they named Margaret Jane on April 9, 1834, in Wellsburg, Chemung County, NY.¹⁹

Finally in June of 1834, a team of Mormon elders came to the area and having the necessary authority, Benjamin, and several of the married children of Benjamin and Marabah, with their spouses, were baptized.²⁰ In the December, 1836, edition of the **Messenger and Advocate**, we also find: "The following is a list of the names of ministers of the gospel, belonging to the church of the Latter Day Saints, whose Licenses were recorded the last quarter, in the License Records, in Kirtland, Ohio. By THOMAS BURDICK. Recording Clerk. Kirtland, Dec. 1, 1836. Elder's names. . . . Benjamin F. Bird. . ." (P. 432; original spelling retained).²¹

"On June 20, 1837, Benjamin and Margaret Bird had their second child--a son that they named Benjamin F. Bird. He was also born in Wellsburg, Chemung County, NY."²² Shortly after his birth, Benjamin, his unmarried family, and his three married sons with their families, moved to Kirtland, Ohio, as part of the gathering of Israel. Benjamin's two married daughters remained in New York, and some of their descendants were later in Kansas. "There was a good relationship and feeling between the children of the 2nd wife and those of Meribah Reeves apparently, as the half sister Margaret often expressed a desire to see them and wrote frequently."²³

Upon their arrival in Kirtland they found the spiritual condition of the Church to be very gloomy indeed. Several members of the Quorum of the Twelve, including two of the three witnesses, had spoken out against the Prophet. Secret meetings were being held, which finally culminated in Joseph Smith having to escape from Kirtland in the dead of the night in January of 1838. The Bird families were convinced that the Prophet was in the right and that those who had come out in open rebellion against him had "the wagging tongues of apostate devils".

Charles Bird represented his father's large family at the meeting of the Council of the Seventies in the attic story of the Kirtland Temple. He pledged the support of the Bird family in what was later to be known as the Kirtland Camp. By commandment from the Lord, this camp of Saints, who were faithful to the Lord's Prophet, took the wearisome trek to Jackson County, Missouri, ending their seven month march by camping at the site of Adam-On-di-Ahman.²⁴

In 1838, the Benjamin Bird family moved to Far West, Caldwell County, Missouri, to settle with hundreds of other church families in what was then the frontier. Benjamin bought 160 acres and began to build and farm. In January 1839, the Bird families were residing at Far West, Missouri, and were aggrieved participants in the maleficent scenes of murder, rape and pillage which have since proved to be one of the worst persecutions ever imposed upon any people; the so-called Far West War. Benjamin Freeman Bird and his son Charles Bird had signed the affidavit wherein they covenanted with the other inhabitants of Far West to stand by and assist one another "to the utmost of our abilities in removing from the State of Missouri." They bound themselves to the extent of all their available property to be disposed of by a committee for the purpose of providing means for the removal of the poor and destitute from the state.

¹⁸Stratton, PART V, P. 18.

¹⁹Ludy, p. 5.

²⁰Stratton, p. 1.

²¹Ludy, p. 5.

²²Ludy, Diana R. "The Benjamin Freeman Bird Story--Part 2". *For the Birds*, Issue Number 11, p. 4.

²³**Nauvoo Ancestors**, From notes that Lola Brimhall found in Nauvoo.

²⁴Stratton, p. 1.

Their covenant was in vain, and they were ruthlessly driven from Far West. As they left Far West, the Bird families looked back and saw their homes in flames. They left Missouri with only the clothes on their backs in the dead of Winter, with nowhere to go, after having suffered the Far West holocaust.²⁵

In the Aroet Hale Autobiography typescript which is on file at Brigham Young University, we read. "Father had a good team and wagon when we went to Missouri. He lost everything and was helped out of Missouri by one of the brethren by the name of Bird" (p. 6). Since no initial or first name is given, this could well have been Benjamin or Phineas or Charles. At any rate, all three of the Birds assisted others as best they could.

Benjamin took his family first to Adams County, Illinois. There on May 13, 1839, Benjamin filed a document with the government asking for redress for property losses because of being driven from Missouri.²⁶ The document declares: "The S[t]ate of Mosura Dr to Benjm F Bird

"1838 To money and time Expende in moveing from NY State to mosura \$130.00

"to hors and wagon and harnes taken by the mob returne after ten day \$20.00

"1839 Damag in the sail of 160 akers of Land \$500

"To Damag and not haveing the Libertey that the Laws of the Land garentee to Everey Sivelisd Citiso[n] and being Driven outht of the State by Mob \$6000.00

"To Damag money Spent and time Lost in Moving out of the State \$100.00

"[Total damages] \$6750.00

"I certify the a bove account to Be Just and true a cording to the Best of my Knowldg

"Benjm F. Bird

"[Sworn to before C. M. Woods, C.C.C., Adams Col, IL, 13 May 1839.]"²⁷

While at Kirtland and Far West, the Bird families and particularly Charles Bird and his wife Mary Ann Kennedy, became personal close acquaintances with the Prophet Joseph Smith and his wife Emma. They gathered at Nauvoo with the rest of the Saints. In January, 1840, Benjamin purchased the property now known as the Bird-Browning Site on Main Street from the Prophet Joseph Smith for \$300. They built a nice two room log cabin with a root cellar, which has been restored by the Church, and dug a well which is now on the south side of the property. In the spring of 1843 they built the two story brick structure. Benjamin and his family lived in the log cabin for three years and in the two story brick structure for a few months. (Later they sold the property to Jonathan Browning, who then added on the first story of the middle section and even later, the gunsmith and blacksmith shops. Browning lived in the brick home approximately two years, then it was occupied by Lucy Mack Smith (1845-1846), the mother of the Prophet Joseph Smith. It was while she was living here that she wrote her autobiography which included the biography of her son. This is one of the most popular histories on the life of the Prophet Joseph even to this day (1980). Subsequent owners are thought to have added the small second story onto the middle section, the kitchen and probably even later individuals with German architectural liking, added the porch onto the back of the original two story living quarters.

During that time they enjoyed all the special cultural events that have come to mark the Nauvoo period as being one of the most unique in history. Since converts from all over the world came to Nauvoo and established their homes during those years, there was a great mixing of cultures and arts. Bound by oneness, all being Latter-day Saints, there was a friendly blending of a variety of cultures and a feeling of personal pride and friendliness. These people, who had been persecuted and driven from Ohio and then Missouri, now lived in relative peace. They enjoyed a pronounced zest for life which enabled them to enjoy and appreciate the unique cultural advantages that were theirs.

The Bird families traded at the store of the Prophet Joseph Smith and often attended parties and socials at the Mansion House. There were several occasions where Benjamin played a friendly game of croquet with his friends and neighbors which included Joseph, Hyrum, Wilford Woodruff and Heber C. Kimball.²⁸

²⁵Smith, Joseph. **History of the Church**, Deseret News. Salt Lake City, Utah. 1948. Volume: 3, Page 251-154.

²⁶Ludy, Issue Number 11, p. 4-5.

²⁷Clark V. Johnson, ed., *Mormon Redress Petitions: Documents of the 1833-1838 Missouri Conflict*, pp. 141-142: *the original spelling and grammar were retained.*)

²⁸Stratton, p. 1-2

While living in the log cabin, Benjamin and Margaret were blessed with a baby daughter, who being born at this time of relative peace and prosperity, brought a great deal of joy and happiness into their lives. Martha Marie, was born in Nauvoo on June 2, 1840.²⁹ Also at Nauvoo, Benjamin enjoyed the association of several of his children and many of his grandchildren. His sons Phinias, Charles, and James all had their families at Nauvoo, and he still had living at home with him two sons by Maraba and the three children by Margaret.³⁰

In the 1840 census, Benjamin is found in Nauvoo: 1 male and 1 female under age 5 [Benjamin T. and Martha]; 1 female aged 5 to 10 [Margaret]; 1 male aged 20 to 30 [probably Richard or William]; 1 female aged 40 to 50 [Margaret]; and 1 male aged 60 to 70 [Benjamin F.]. A total of 6 were in the household, and 1 other person was "employed" in agriculture. In a special census taken in Nauvoo in 1842. Benjamin and Margaret are listed with their three children--"Margaret J., Benjamin T., and Martha M."--"under 8" years of age. Benjamin received his patriarchal blessing on February 9, 1842, under the hands of Hyrum Smith. (Appendix) He was a member of the Nauvoo Fourth Ward.³¹

In the fall of 1843, disruptions, both internal and external to the Church, were caused by John C. Bennet and William Law, who were at one time counselors to the Prophet Joseph in the First Presidency. Benjamin with his home on Main Street was in the middle of all the excitement and persecution. Because Benjamin was now 65 years old and had three children at home under the age of 9, he desired to move to a quieter location. As mentioned earlier, he sold the property and the newly built brick home to Jonathen Browning and purchased a large 50 acre farm on the outskirts of Nauvoo near LaCrosse.

Benjamin and all of his sons participated in the building of the Nauvoo Temple. Phineas and Richard were called on a Mission to the Wisconsin Pineries. Here Richard served on a Council of Directors under Bishop George Miller (who was called at the death of Bishop Edward Partridge) where he was involved in making a schedule of every man's property and making a general distribution under an order similar to the law of consecration. While on his mission, Richard and Phineas were involved in cutting down pine trees which were then floated down the Mississippi River to Nauvoo, where they ultimately were used in the building of the Temple. According to family history, two of his sons were called on proselyting missions to the eastern states.

After the death of the Prophet Joseph, the Birds, along with the other Saints, worked under armed guard to complete the Temple. Most of the Birds received their endowments in the third floor rooms of the Nauvoo Temple. The dressing rooms and chambers for preparatory ordinances were located in the large third story at the front of the building. They were sealed to their spouses in the large rectangular room beneath the gable. In fact Nauvoo Temple records indicate that Charles Bird was an ordained Temple Worker, which means that he worked night and day to assist those Saints who desired to receive their special endowments to do so, before the mob could destroy their Temple or drive them out. In two months (Dec. 10, 1845 to February 5, 1846) Charles assisted more than 5,000 Saints who were endowed in the Nauvoo Temple in the twelve and a half hour ceremony. This included washings and anointings, the endowment and the sealing of families. The ceremony was basically the same as it is today (1980) except that it was acted out on platforms, sheets were hung from the ceiling to make rooms or compartments, and there were several lengthy discussions instructing the candidates about the covenants they were going to make.

Benjamin and his sons and their families were present after the martyrdom when Sidney Rigdon claimed that he was to be guardian of the Church. They witnessed President Brigham Young transfigured into the voice, appearance and personality of the Prophet Joseph Smith and felt the Spirit bear witness to their souls that the Twelve should preside. On 7 Jan. 1846, Benjamin was ordained a high priest in the church by John Murdock.³² At a conference on 15 December 1846, Benjamin was sustained a member of the High Council of the Church.³³

²⁹Ludy, Issue Number 11, p. 5.

³⁰Stratton, p .3.

³¹Ludy, Issue Number 11, p. 5.

³²**Nauvoo Ancestors.** Nauvoo Land and Records File. High Priest Records 8.

³³Walsh, p. 4.

Benjamin and four of his sons--Charles, James, Richard, and William--decided to leave Nauvoo and move west, following the leadership of Brigham Young. Benjamin's oldest son Phineas was in Wisconsin cutting timber at that time. He went to Texas and later joined with the Reorganized Latter Day Saints.

Benjamin was active in helping the Saints prepare themselves to leave, especially to those who were old or helpless and dependent on others. He was indeed his brother's keeper, endowed with a great love, tolerance, and sympathy toward the poor and the sick.

Benjamin left Nauvoo with Brigham Young in the first company of saints, and traveled with them to a place they named Council Bluffs.³⁴ The Mormon settlement of Winter Quarters was established. He stayed in Winter Quarters at least three years to plant crops and farm in order to supply food for the Saints going through on their way to Utah.³⁵ Evidently Margaret chose to leave Benjamin and to return to New York with their three children because she died in Wellsburg, Chemung County, on March 24, 1865. The three children eventually married and continued living in the Wellsburg area.³⁶ Margaret is listed in the 1860 United States Census in Southport, Chemung, New York with her son Benjamin and daughter Margaret.³⁷

In a church record dated July 17th 1848 the following information is given: "Meeting called to order by Elders George A. Smith and Ezra T. Benson at the house of brother Green for the purpose of reorganizing the branch. Chose father Burd {Benjamin F. Bird} president, Frui Ames Counsyler, Joseph H. Tippets, clerk and also father Burd to act as Bishop for said branch. Meeting closed by sining {singing?} and prayer. {Beneath this entry were the members of the Lake Branch. These names included: Benjame {Benjamin} F. Burd {Bird} and Jane Burd {This was probably not Jane Gully, as her husband died in 1849 on their way to the Salt Lake Valley}. This Church record established several things. First, Benjamin Freeman Bird was chosen as Branch President of the Lake Branch at Winter Quarters at that time and was also temporarily assigned as Bishop over the Branch. Secondly, this establishes that his second wife, Margaret, did not appear to be with him and probably had returned to New York.³⁸ There were many settlements in the Bluffs area. By the end of 1848 there were 40 branches in the area. "A branch president managed local affairs in his area and reported directly to the Pottawattamie High Council." In the list of Mormon Branches/Communities in Western Iowa, 21 December 1848, Benjamin F. Bird is listed as president of the Lake Branch.³⁹

Because several of the Bird's were weavers by trade, Benjamin and his sons and their families were asked to remain at Council Bluffs and Winter Quarters and assist in the outfitting of the emigrant Saints. Many had been driven out of their homes without opportunity to take the necessary clothing and other items that they would need to make the long trek into the wilderness to where they knew not. The Bird family set up a woolen mill of sorts, similar to the one that they had at Nauvoo, and thereby assisted in the emigration of the thousands of homeless Saints.⁴⁰

After three years at Council Bluffs, Apostle Hyde released them to come to the Salt Lake valley.⁴¹ In 1850 the Brethren invited the Bird families to come West. They emigrated with the Milo Andrus Company. There were 206

³⁴Stratton, PART V. P. 19.

³⁵Ludy, Issue Number 11, p. 5-6.

³⁶Ludy, Issue Number 11, p. 5-6.

³⁷**1860 US Census**, Southport, Chemung, New York. Series: M653 Roll: 730 Page: 655.

³⁸Research done by Larry Mace, 8 March 2004. Church Archives Film # 3144, WR f Pt.2, #4 Lake Branch 1848-1851.

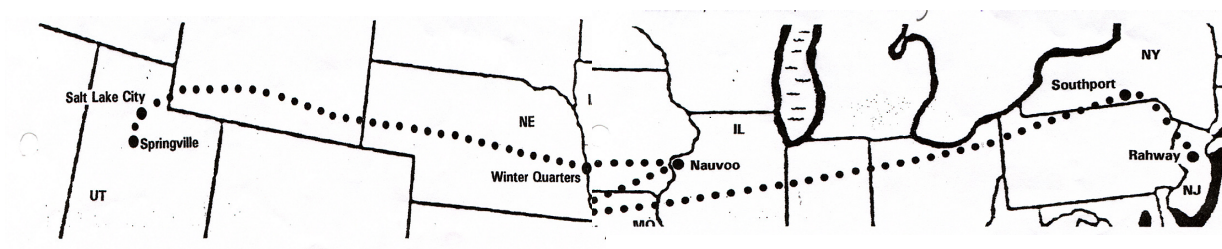
³⁹Bennett, Richard E. **MORMONS AT THE MISSOURI, 1846-1852 "AND SHOULD WE DIE . . ."** University of Oklahoma Press: Norman and London. 1946. p. 217-18..

⁴⁰Stratton, p. 3.

⁴¹Walsh, p. 4.

persons and 51 wagons in the Company.⁴² Benjamin was 72 years of age when he made the trek. He traveled with his son Charles Bird, his wife Mary Ann and 10 children.⁴³ Richard and James and their families were in the same group.. This was the first company of emigrating Saints for the season, leaving Missouri on June 3, 1850.⁴⁴ They crossed the Missouri River that day, and traveled along the south bank of Salt Creek. The water was high with the spring runoff and when they reached the crossing, the bridge was washed away, so they built a raft and floated the wagons across. Brother Hyde told this company of saints as they left that if they would be faithful and prayerful and keep the name of God Holy that they would reach the Salt Lake Valley without trouble or disaster, and they did.⁴⁵ They took the pioneer trail over which the year before trains had passed which had been stricken with cholera. As the pioneers moved along they saw the bones of their dead comrades as their bodies had been ripped out of their shallow graves by wolves and other scavengers and scattered over the countryside.⁴⁶ They made it west in good time--60 days--with only 1 birth and 1 death the whole trip! Benjamin then settled in Salt Lake City.⁴⁷ Captain Andrus was a brave and spiritual man. When he drove into the Valley he had a large sign on each side of his wagon; one side read "Holiness to the Lord" and the other "Hail to the Governor of Deseret." Members of this company knew most of the people who were in the Salt Lake Valley, so it was a joyous reunion with families and friends.⁴⁸ They arrived in the Valley on 30 Aug 1850.⁴⁹ Benjamin's son, William, marched with the Mormon Battalion in the historic trek that has come to be known as the symbol of dedication and patriotism of the Latter-day Saint people.

Benjamin married a third time. His new wife's name was Jane Frilick Gully. Jane had two daughters by her previous marriage to Samuel Gully. Her daughters were Martha, born about 1835 in Alabama and Harriet, born about



1840 in Mississippi. Jane was born in Newburn, North Carolina on May 27, 1798. Most of our records reflect a marriage date in 1852. That is the date that they were sealed to each other in the Endowment House in Salt Lake City. In the 1850 census taken in Salt Lake County, Benjamin F. Bird, aged 73, was listed with Jane, aged 55, Harriet Gully aged 10, and Martha Gully aged 15. Benjamin's occupation was mason.⁵⁰

⁴²Stratton, p. 3.

⁴³Information taken from the Record Book of a Great-great-granddaughter - Amy B. Schwendiman - supplied by Mrs. Ben Williams - Idaho Falls. Facts arranged by Nora Lund- Historian of Nibley Park D.U.P. Camp - Jan. 1961. 2.

⁴⁴Stratton,. P. 3-4.

⁴⁵Stratton, PART V.P.19.

⁴⁶Stratton, p. 3-4.

⁴⁷Ludy, Issue Number 11, p.6.

⁴⁸Stratton, PART V. P. 20.

⁴⁹Sons of the Utah Pioneers, **Conquerors of the West**.

⁵⁰Ludy, Issue Number 11, p. 6

Deseret News, Wed Mar 26, 1862.

1860 US Census, Southport, Chemung, New York. Series: M653 Roll: 730 Page: 655.

Family Bible of Benjamin Freeman Bird

LDS Temple Records

Ludy, Diana R. "The Benjamin Freeman Bird Story". *For the Birds*, Issue Number 10

Ludy, Diana R. "The Benjamin Freeman Bird Story--Part 2". *For the Birds*, Issue Number 11

Mace, Larry. Research done 8 March 2004. Church Archives Film # 3144, WR f Pt.2, #4 Lake Branch 1848-1851.

Messenger and Advocate, Dec., 1836, p. 45; original spelling and grammar retained.

Nauvoo Ancestors, Aug. 2006 Land and Records File Browser CD, Bird, Benjamin Freeman

Numerous family histories and family records in the possession of C. Stratton. 4225 Weems Way, Sparks Nevada 89431. (702) 673-9182.

RLDS Church History 2:313-315; LDS Church History

Sons of the Utah Pioneers, **Conquerors of the West**.

Stake and Ward Records in the possession of Clifford J. Stratton

Stratton, Clifford J. **PIONEER STORIES**. "Benjamin Freeman Bird and Marabah Reeves". Genealogical Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. US/CAN 929.273 st 82 p.

Schwendiman, Amy Bird. Information taken from the Record Book of a Great-great-granddaughter - Amy B.- supplied by Mrs. Ben Williams - Idaho Falls. Facts arranged by Nora Lund- Historian of Nibley Park D.U.P. Camp - Jan. 1961. 2.

The Documentary History of the Church

Walsh, Susan. Benjamin Freeman Bird - Biography, 1980.

APPENDIX

Recd and Recorded the 4th March AD 1801
 C. Russell Clk
 Freeman Bird
 to
 Milly Reeve - } I Certify that on the twenty second day of February in the
 year of our Lord eighteen hundred and one I married Freeman
 Bird of Roxbury in the County of Morris and State of Newjersey
 to Milly Reeve of the same place - dated the fourth day of March
 AD 1801
 Wm Grandin Minister of the Gospel
 Received and Recorded the 4th March AD 1801
 C. Russell Clk

Marriage Record

Recd and Recorded the 4th March AD, C. Russell Clark.

Freeman Bird to Milly Reeve. I certify that on the twenty second day of February in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and one I married Freeman Bird of Roxbury in the County of Morris and State of Newjersey to Milly Reeve of the same place- dated the fourth day of March AD 1801.

Wm Grandin Minister of the Gospel

Received and Recorded the 4th March AD 1801.

C. Russell Clk

New York Genealogical Records, 1675-1920 Record about Benjamin Bird

Name: Benjamin Bird
Event: Lived
Year: 1800
Place: Chenango
County: Chenango
Province: New York
Source: Reel 24, 1800 Federal Census of New York, Microfilm Series M32
Publisher: National Archives, Washington, DC.
Additional info: See Family History Library, in Salt Lake City, Utah.
Page: 231

New Jersey Census, 1772-1890 Record

Name: BENJAMIN BIRD
State: NJ
County: Morris County
Township: Chester
Year: 1802
Record Type: June Tax List
Page: 002
Database: NJ Early Census Index

Ministers of the Gospel

Lynn & Pat Sagers - Oct 28, 2006

Categories: Benjamin F. Bird family In the Messenger and Advocate, vol 3, number 3, page 431-432, it states: "The following is a list of the names of Ministers of the Gospel, belonging to the church of the Latter Day Saints, whose Licences [Licenses] were recorded the last Quarter, in the Licence [Licenses] Records, in Kirtland, Ohio. By Thomas Burdick. Recording Clerk. Kirtland, Dec. 1, 1836. Elder's Names. Truman O. Angel, Solomon Angel, Asa Anson, **Benjamin F. Bird**, Ezekiel Barnes, Noah Bulkey, Amos Babcock, Samuel Brown, Jeremy Bartlett, John Badger, Gideon H. Carter, Samuel Conklin, Austin Cows, Joseph W. Cole, Silas Davis, Jonathan Dunham, Amos B. Fuller, Jonathan H. Hale, Thomas Hayes, Nathaniel Homes, Dana Jacobs, Ozias Kilbourn, Daniel Kent, John Kempton, John Lawson, Richard Mann, Orin Perry, Philip Packard, Gustavus A. Perry, Abram Rose, Carvil Rigdon, Stephen Shumway, Otis Shumway, James C. Snow, Sylvester B. Stoddard, Charles Smith, William W. Spencer, C. W. Stilwell, Alvah L. Tippits, Alvah Tippits, William Willsey, Benj. S. Wilber, Levi B. Wilder, Ira J. Wiles. Priests. Jacob K. Butterfield, H.N. Byington, Elijah B. Gaylord, Samuel Parker, Jeremiah Wilby. Teacher. Joseph Fielding. (page 432)" I found this record while I was doing research on the Perrys - not sure if you already had this piece of information. Pat L. Bird Sagers

Patriarchal Blessing

The Patriarchal Blessing of Benjamin F. Bird, Son of Jeremiah & Elizabeth Bird, Born in the Township of Rahway, Co. of Essex, & State of New Jersey, the 19th day of January, 1778.

Brother Benjamin, I lay my Hands upon your Head, in the Name & by the authority of Jesus Christ, to bless you, which Blessing shall be fulfilled in future, in the Order of God's providence, according to the Gifts of the Spirit, & Gifts & Callings of God, unto you, agreeable to the Holy Priesthood also, & the right of Lineage, which shall be fulfilled upon your Head, a Portion in time, & the residue of Eternity, for in time you shall be blest with a knowledge of the Mysteries of God, even unto a fulness, if your Faith fail not to sustain you, & preserve your Days upon the Earth, & you shall be blest Temporally & Spiritually, in Basket, & in Store, for a Reward of your Sacrifices wherein you have been sacrificed, unto the restoring of Four Fold, which is the Mind of the Spirit, for the integrity of your Heart, together with the Gifts of the Spirit which is to come in the Order of the Kingdom, by the Priesthood, in its legal authority, according to the Lineage of your Fathers, which seemeth to be in the Lineage of Aaron, to be received according to the Blessings which are sealed upon that Lineage & Priesthood, with all its Light, & Life, & qualifying Powers to prepare you for that which is in future, the same to come to pass, & be fulfilled, unto the fulness of the Covenant made unto Abraham, Issac, & Jacob, & the day shall come when you shall stand forth & bear Testimony of the things of God, according to your authority given you, & the Blessings that shall be Sealed upon you in the House of the Lord, in the day of your anointing, for you shall be blest, & your Posterity after you, with the Holy Priesthood, from Generation to Generation, & your Name shall be perpetuated & held in Honour, as one of the Noble and Honorable in the kingdom of God, whilst the Earth shall stand, & you shall come to your Inheritance in the Resurrection, with your Children, And Fathers House according to the Covenants to your Fathers, still your days shall be lengthened out, & you shall see much of the Salvation of God, & you shall be saved in the Celestial Glory, which Blessings & promise I Seal upon your Head henceforth, & you shall go down to your Grave in Peace, notwithstanding the perilous Times that shall exist, to Sleep but for a Moment, to be awaked by the Sounding of the Trump of God, at the resurrection of the Just. These are the Blessings that I Seal upon your Head. Even so, Amen.

Given by Hyrum Smith, at Nauvoo, Illinois, February 9th 1842.

James Sloan - Clerk

Book of Patriarchal Blessings Index, Volume: 4 Page: 246

Benjamin Freeman Bird home/property in Nauvoo

Dale L. Berge, *BYU Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 2, p.209

The Jonathan Browning property was acquired by Nauvoo Restoration, Incorporated, from the estate of Charles H. Hudson, who died 11 April, 1968. Mr. Hudson had lived in the Browning house for a few years when he was first married, but when the house he was building on the northwest quarter of Lot 2 was finished, he moved from the Browning house to the new home. This move took place in 1916, after which the Browning house was not reoccupied. Since 1916 the house was used mostly for storage and was allowed to decay. Mr. Hudson married Louise Schoell, who was the daughter of Fred Schoell, owner of the home from 1890 to 1912. Lot 2, Block 118, was originally purchased from Joseph Smith, trustee for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, by Benjamin F. Bird in 1840. After Bird had paid nearly \$300 on the lot, he requested a deed for the south half and reverted the north half back to Joseph Smith. However, no record of the deed has been located.

Dale L. Berge, *BYU Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 2, p.209

Jonathan Browning obtained the south half of Lot 2, Block 118, about 1843, the same year that he was baptized into the Mormon Church. He left Nauvoo in 1846 during the Exodus of the Mormons, and sometime thereafter the mother of Joseph Smith, Lucy Mack Smith, temporarily lived in the Browning Nauvoo home and shop. When the trustees of the Church sold the property to Peter Poncin in 1847, records indicate that on the property there was a "good brick house", "also a good brick blacksmith shop and a small frame barn and a log house." 6(l)

Dale L. Berge, *BYU Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 2, p.210

During the historic Mormon period from 1839-1846, the northwest quarter of Lot 2, Block 118, was owned by George W. Harris, a watchmaker, while Heber C. Kimball owned the northeast quarter, which he subdivided into three smaller lots. The north half of Lot 3 to the south of Jonathan Browning was owned by Henry G. Sherwood. Shadrach Roundy and others owned the property to the rear of Jonathan's property.



Benjamin Freeman Bird home in Nauvoo before restoration
Taken : July 1970. Owner: Ila Peck



Picture of Benjamin Freeman Bird home (Browning Home)
and taken from a different position than the preceding picture.
It is hanging on the wall inside the restored home.



Picture of the first cabin of Benjamin Freeman Bird in Nauvoo as restored today. It sits immediately behind the two story home in background which was built later. (Larry Mace: 28 May 2003)





Description: First constructed by Benjamin Freeman Bird, the house and property were sold to Jonathan Browning in 1843. The two-story section was built by Benjamin--and probably the 1-story portion seen here, as well as the cabin directly behind the brick home (the cabin is a reconstruction on the original foundation.) Diana Ludy is in the foreground. Date Taken: June 1994. Owner: Diana Ludy.



Picture of bed inside restored Bird cabin at Nauvoo. By Larry Mace, 28 May 2003.



Picture of eating area of restored Bird cabin in Nauvoo by Larry Mace 28 May 2003.



Picture of interior of Bird cabin as restored today. Notice herbs hung drying near fireplace by Larry Mace 28 May 2003.



Living room inside restored Bird (Browning) home in Nauvoo. By Larry Mace, 28 May 2003.



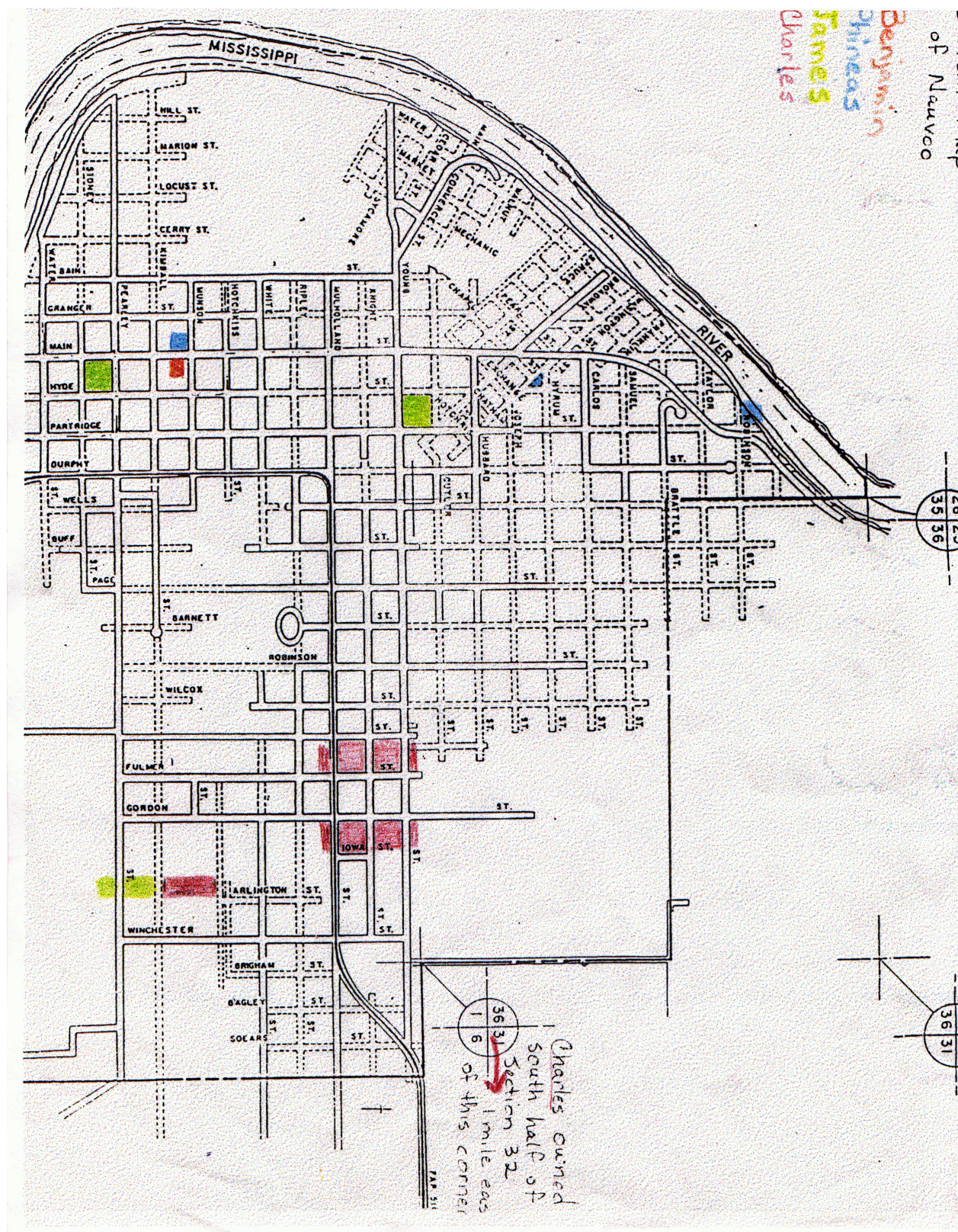
This is a picture of the upstairs bedroom as it looks today in the restored Bird (Browning) home in Nauvoo. By Larry Mace, 28 May, 2003.



This is the fireplace in the upstairs bedroom in the resored Bird home in Nauvoo. By Larry Mace, 28 May, 2003.



Benjamin Bird owned 50 acres near Fountain Green, IL, about 30 miles east of Nauvoo, IL. James Bird also owned some of the land in the foreground. By Diana Ludy, 1996.



July 1846.

Benjamin Freeman Bonds & Co. Deeds
 You it is known by these Presents that I Benjamin Freeman

Ward of Springville City in the County of Utah &
 Territory of Utah for & in consideration of the good
 will which I have to the Church of Jesus Christ
 of Latter day Saints give & convey unto Benjamin
 Young Trustee in Trust for said Church his
 Successors in office & assigns all my claim
 to & ownership of the following described
 property to wit:

Lot 7 in Block 13 in the Springville Survey	
of Building Lots containing two acres &	
1/2 of an acre	Value 50.00
One Log cabin in Springville Fort built	50.00
One Cow & calf	43.00
One sheep	3.00
Cooking utensils #10 Farming Tools &c	15.00
Household furniture Beds Bedding etc	50.00
Interest in the Springville Fort wall	50.00
Total One hundred & thirty three Dollars \$133.00	

Together with all the rights, privileges and
 appurtenances thereto belonging or appertaining
 I also covenant & agree that I am the sole
 claimant & owner of said property & will
 warrant & for ever defend the same unto
 the said Trustee in Trust his successors
 in office & assigns against the claims of
 my heirs assigns or any person whatsoever

Witness my hand
 Lute W. Gallop
 Alvin C. Stewart
 Robert L. Johnson

Benjamin F. Bird (S.S.)

\$10.00 Lute W. Gallop
 \$10.00 Alvin C. Stewart
 \$10.00 Robert L. Johnson

#1835 Lusins N. Sevil per Geoe [George] Wimmer Gen. Deputy
Provo Courthouse, Provo, Provo, Utah

Judge Probate

Benjamin Freeman Bird county [County] in Deeds

Be it know by these Present that I Benjamin Freeman Bird of Springville City in the County of Utah & Territory of Utah for & in Consideration of the good will which I have to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latterday Saints give & convey unto Brigham Young Trustee in Trust for the said Church his Successors in office and assigns all my claims to & ownership of the following described property to Wit

Lot 7 in Block 13 in the Springville survey of building lots containing two acres & 45/160 of an acre	Value	50.00
One log & cabin in Springville Fort line		50.00
One Cow & Calfe		65.00
One Swine		3.00
Cooking utensils \$10 Farming tools \$5		15.00
Household furniture Beds Bedding etc		50.00
Interest in the Springville Fort wall		50.00
Total two hundred & sixty three dollars		263.00

Together with all the rights, privileges and appurtenances there unto extensions or appurtenanting I also Covenant & agree that I am the lawful claimant & owner of said property & will Warrant & for ever defend the same unto the said Trustee in Trust & his successors in office & assigns against the claims of my heirs, assigns or any person whomsoever.

Witnesses

Lute W. Gallup

Alvin G. Stewart

Robert L. Johnson

Benjamin F. Bird (S)

1850 United States Federal Census Record

Name: Benjamin Freeman Bird

Age: 73

Estimated birth year: abt 1777

Birth place: New York

Gender: Male

Home in 1850

(City, County, State): Not Stated, Great Salt Lake, Utah Territory

Died

In Springville City, Utah County, February 20, **Benjamin Freeman Bird**, aged 85 years 1 month and 1 day. Father Bird was born in Essex County, New Jersey, and has been a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints nearly twenty—seven years, having been baptized in Southport, Chemung county, New York, in June, 1835. He emigrated to Far West, Mo. in 183- , and after the saints were driven from that state, settled at Nauvoo, and shared in their persecutions in, and ultimate expulsion from, Illinois. From Nauvoo he went to the frontiers, and from there he emigrated to Utah, arriving in Great Salt Lake City in 1850 where he resided two years, and then moved to Springville. He was universally respected, and lived and died a Saint

Utah Cemetery Inventory Record

Name:	Benjamin Freeman Bird
Birth Date:	19 January 1778
Birth Place:	Essexcounty,newjers
Death Date:	20 February 1862
Death Place:	Springville
Burial Date:	0 0 0
Cemetery:	Springville City Cemetery
Source:	Sexton / Grant
Grave Location:	Blk. 59 Lot 1 Pos. 1