

## **Williamson Thaxton (< Thomas < Abel?)**

Williamson Thaxton was the first child born to Thomas Thaxton and Hannah Williamson. He was born about 1808 in Pendleton District, South Carolina. Williamson's birthdate is estimated from several sources. In her Revolutionary War pension application, Hannah Williamson Thaxton appeared to name all of her children in chronological order. She began with Williamson, and listed another child between Williamson and his brother Thomas Thaxton Jr., who was born about 1812. 1808 would be consistent with Thomas and Hannah's marriage date (19 May 1807), and with census records of Thomas Thaxton in 1810 and 1820, and Williamson Thaxton in 1830.

The location of Williamson's birth is assumed from the fact that, according to Hannah's pension application, she and Thomas Thaxton lived in Pendleton District from the time of their marriage until about 1811.

Williamson Thaxton married Mary Ann Sherry 23 May 1829 in Allen Co., Kentucky. According to earlier Thaxton researchers, Mary Ann was born 27 Jan 1809 in Rutherford Co., North Carolina, a daughter of Richard Sherry and Martha McKenney. Census records confirm that Mary Ann was born in North Carolina, and in 1880, she indicated that her parents were both born in North Carolina as well. (*1880 Davis Co., Utah, Farmington Precinct*)

Williamson and family were still living in Allen Co., Kentucky, as of the 1830 census. Shortly afterward, however, they moved to Illinois, locating in Fulton County. In Illinois, the winter of 1830-31 was known as the "winter of the deep snow":

It is said that the winter was a mild one till Christmas. During the Christmas holidays a snow storm began and for nine weeks, almost every day, it snowed. The snow melted little or none and was found to be more than three feet on average. It was, however, drifted very badly in some places. The old fashioned "stake and rider" fences were buried in many places with the drifted snow. The long country lanes were covered over so that no sign of the road was left. On top of this snow fell rain and sleet and formed such a crust that people and stock might walk on top of the snow. The birds and small game suffered very much for want of food, while larger wild game became very tame.

*(A History of Southern Illinois, George Washington Smith, 1912, I:182).*

In April 1832, Sac & Fox Indian chief Black Hawk and a band of followers crossed the Mississippi River into Illinois. The crossing was in violation of a treaty entered into the year before, and Black Hawk's intent was presumed to be hostile. Illinois Governor John Reynolds issued a call for volunteers, accompanied by a circular letter sent out through central Illinois by special courier:

Fellow citizens: Your country requires your service. The Indians have assumed a hostile attitude and invaded the State in violation of the treaty of last summer. The British band of Sacs, and other hostile Indians, are in possession of the country on Rock river, to the great terror of the frontier inhabitants, and I consider the settlers in imminent danger. Under these circumstances I have not hesitated what course I should pursue. No citizen ought to remain inactive when his country is invaded and the helpless part of the community is in danger. I have called out a strong detachment of militia to rendezvous at Beardstown on the 22d inst. Provisions for the men and food for the horses will be furnished in abundance. I hope my countrymen will realize my expectations, and offer their services as heretofore, with promptitude and cheerfulness, in defense of their country.

*(The Sauks and the Black Hawk War, Perry A. Armstrong, 1887, p. 295).*

A week later, on 23 Apr 1832, Governor Reynolds issued orders to Elias Foster of Fulton County: "You are hereby commanded to raise one other Company of fifty mounted men, volunteers out of the County of Fulton--said Company to elect its own officers and march forthwith and report to Gen Stillman acting as major of said Corps. If said Company cannot be raised by volunteering then a draft of that number must be made." *(John Reynolds: Orders, 23 Apr 1832, reproduced in The Black Hawk War 1831-1832 Volume II, Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library, Vol. XXXVI, p. 299, hereinafter "The Black Hawk War").*

Foster began efforts to raise the men, but as an assistant noted a few days later, "we find it difficult to procure horses & Saddles & Bridles--but can get men without

horses. Our frontiers are still without the complement of men & if you think proper of pressing horses we can raise another company. The words 'to press horses' will have some wait with the citizens. . ." (*Correspondence, Thomas W. Taylor to John Reynolds, 25 Apr 1832, reproduced in The Black Hawk War, p. 312*). The governor responded that "footmen will be received into service in the place of mounted men, if horse men cannot be had." (*John Reynolds: Orders, 26 Apr 1832, The Black Hawk War, p. 315*).

In Fulton County, Williamson Thaxton enlisted, along with about two dozen others. His company was formally mustered in April 28, 1832, commanded by Captain Asel F. Ball. The men prepared to join the command of Colonel Isaiah Stillman, who wrote Foster the following day: "Have your Regt in readiness--warm work is expected." (*Correspondence from Isiah Stillman to Elias Foster, 29 Apr 1832, The Black Hawk War, p. 332*). The Fulton County men left to join the other volunteers. The troops then marched toward Dixon's Ferry, arriving on 10 May 1832. Just a few days later, Williamson and his fellow company members became involved in a watershed event of the war, unfortunately known in history as "Stillman's defeat."

One writer has observed, "the Black Hawk War might have been avoided at any time up to and including the evening of May the fourteenth, 1832." (*The Black Hawk War, p. 51*). Many different versions of that controversial engagement have been written, some assigning blame to the army commanders, some to the militia, and some to Black Hawk. One commentator, noting that "we then had neither railroads nor telegraphs, nor even stage coaches," resulting in delay in communication of Governor Reynold's order, suggests that "For the promptitude with which Majors Bailey and Stillman responded to this order, and in making the necessary preparations to start to the places they were

ordered without military stores, transportation, ammunition or provisions, these officers are entitled to the highest praise. Indeed, their performances in that regard are almost unparalleled, and had they have had a better understanding between themselves, and time to drill and properly instruct their men, Stillman's defeat would never have occurred."

*(The Sauks and the Black Hawk War, p. 303).*

Another writer concludes that Governor Reynolds yielded to clamoring for action from the volunteers:

Many attribute the cause of that disaster to [Major Stillman's] lack of judgment and eagerness to meet the foe when really he was forced to go against his will and better judgment. The soldiers became impatient to rout the Indians, and Gov. Reynolds ordered Major Stillman with his command to move on and meet them. This he objected to doing, saying with his small force of raw militia he could only meet with defeat. The Governor urged him, and then he asked to have Capt. Henry of Springfield to accompany him, which he refused to do; and it only remained for Major Stillman to obey the orders of his superior. His men were undisciplined, and many of them had just come from the East and South and had never seen an Indian, and none were familiar with the Indian mode of warfare.

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The steady, careful movements of the regulars made the volunteers very impatient, and the latter were also exceedingly anxious to obtain the laurels to be won. The men under command of Major Stillman were particularly anxious to "ketch" the Indians before they could get away. They said the regulars would come crawling along, stuffing themselves with beef, and the Indians would never be "ketched." The officers yielded to the impatience and jealousy of the men, and requested Governor Reynolds to let them go out and reconnoitre the country and find the Indians. Captain Eads, from Peoria, insisted very strongly that they should be allowed to go. The other captains all volunteered, for they did not wish to be termed cowards. The question with them was not whether the matter was prudent and necessary, but whether they dared to go. Major Stillman consented to go, against his better judgment. He asked Mr. John Dixon's opinion, and the latter told him very decidedly that the business of "ketching" the Indians would prove very disastrous for a little force of less than three hundred men. Major Stillman then said that as all his officers and men were determined to go, he must lead them if it cost him his life.

*(History of Fulton County, pp. 291-92).*

Others state that Stillman and another commander "begged to be put upon some dangerous service, in which they could distinguish themselves." (*The Sauks and the Black Hawk War*, p. 311). Whatever the impetus, Governor Reynolds issued an order on Saturday evening, May 12, 1832: "Maj. Stillman--You will cause the troops under your immediate command, the battalion under Maj. Bailey, to proceed without delay to the head of Old Man's Creek, where it is supposed there are some hostile Indians, and coerce them into subjection." (*The Sauks and the Black Hawk War*, p. 312).

Stillman had about 145 men in his command, and Bailey less than 100. With additional volunteers, the complement was approximately 275 men.

With commendable promptitude, Major Stillman (who by the Governor's order was the commanding officer much to the mortification of Maj. Bailey) began his arrangements for his expedition, and bent his energies to start on the next day, Sunday though it was. He succeeded in obtaining an ox team and wagon to transport his supplies and camp equipments. Among other supplies he provided two barrels of whiskey, at that time considered indispensable. These were loaded with rations for a five days campaign on an old fashioned schooner-shaped, stiff-tongued Pennsylvania wagon, with two yoke of oxen attached as the motor power.

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A start was made on Sunday towards Old Man's Creek, moving up along the south bank of Rock river. Without seeing or hearing of an Indian or meeting with any mishap, they reached the end of their first day's journey, and encamped for the night near the dividing line between what are now Lee and Ogle counties. Between story telling, song-singing, and a good time generally, they retired late and slept late the next morning, and therefore were late in starting the next day. Start they did, but ere they reached what was then called Hickory Creek, (miscalled Sycamore by some writers) but now called Stillman's Run, they struck swampy land, of that decidedly treacherous character known as quick sand, where their supply-wagon sank down to the axles, and there it persisted in remaining. They were in a decidedly bad box. Their provisions they could carry, but their precious whiskey they could not, and it must not be left to tickle the thirsty throats of the savages. Canteens or other conveniences for carrying it with them they had not. Some of them had tin cups which afforded goblets to drink from, but they could not carry the liquor in these. Ever

equal to the emergency, these mounted volunteers determined to save their liquor, and at the same time preserve their spirits by turning spirits down, and therefore proceeded to carry their whiskey in their stomachs. In this way they emptied the barrels and filled their stomachs with the vile stuff, which maddened their brains and robbed them of their reason and prudence. There were, of course, many exceptions to this general condition. Some there were among them who neither touched, tasted or handled the soul-damning stuff. A considerable number, however, were decidedly demoralized, if not shamefully drunk, and alike reckless of what they did or said.

*(The Sauks and the Black Hawk War, pp. 313-14).*

A member of Williamson's company later wrote, "It has been intimated by many of the main army, that intoxication and cowardice were the causes of our defeat. To such I would say, do better yourselves before you boast. It is true there was, perhaps, one case of inebriation. On our march about ten miles from Sycamore, it was found that the baggage wagon was too heavy. One barrel of whiskey was therefore, unheaded and all our canteens filled. A quantity was still left which could not be lost, and was finally saved in a summary way. Stillman, it is true has been censured for his defeat,--but was any officer ever praised for a defeat?" (*Letter from Andrew H. Maxfield to the Sangamo Journal, reproduced in The Black Hawk War, p. 564*).

Having disposed of the whiskey, they proceeded on their march up Rock river in a wriggling kind of serpentine line, until they arrived at a small run or creek taking its rise in White Rock township, in Ogle county, running thence north about ten miles, thence east to Rock river, slightly above the present village of Byron. Reaching this small creek about sunset, Maj. Stillman, finding wood, water and grass, pitched his camp on the small strip of bottom land on its north bank. Both sides of this creek were lined and studded with small trees and hazel brush, with larger trees on the bottom land. Here these raw militia fastened their horses to stumps, stubs, and trees, and commenced to kindle camp fires to cook their suppers, unmindful that they were in danger of an attack from the ever watchful Black Hawk, whom they were seeking, and to their sorrow found.

*(The Sauks and the Black Hawk War, p. 314).*

Black Hawk later wrote that, having learned of the presence of Stillman's men within a few miles of his camp, he sent three men with a white flag truce to invite Stillman to talk with him. He sent five other riders to observe the troops' response.

When Maj. Stillman's battalion was first seen by the Indian spy, it was marching across the prairies, but had gone into camp when the flag-bearers arrived, and were preparing their suppers. On seeing these three Indians approaching, a large number of the volunteers, without orders, dashed wildly towards them, regardless alike that they were unarmed and protected by the sacredness of a white flag, rushed upon, surrounded and captured all of them and led them into camp, where, through one of their number, who had, some years before, lived with Black Hawk and learned to speak their language, they interrogated these prisoners as to where the chief then was, and the strength of his army, etc.

*(The Sauks and the Black Hawk War, p. 315).*

The Indians being questioned reportedly said, "Me good Pottawatomie," but pointed over the hill and said, 'Heap of Sac.'" (*History of Fulton County, p. 293*). That may have contributed to erroneous assumptions when Stillman's men saw Black Hawk's other warriors observing them from a distance.

While putting these three Indians through the pumping process, the five mounted Indians were seen drawn up on the bluff, about a mile off, when Capt. Eades, with his entire company, mounted their horses and dashed away towards them, followed by a disorderly mob of undrilled, would-be soldiers. These Indians remained until fired upon by the oncoming militia, when they gave way, and started at the top of their ponies' speed for Black Hawk's camp, hotly pursued by the wildly-excited militia, whose horses were longer winded than the fleet little ponies of the Indians, and soon began to gain on them. Two of the five Indians were overtaken and killed before they reached the skirt of timber near Black Hawk's camp. The foremost of the pursuing volunteers halted as they came to the edge of the timber, as if irresolute, and waited for the stragglers to come up, thus giving the three fleeing Indians time to reach their camp and report the facts.

*(The Sauks and the Black Hawk War, p. 315).*

Andrew Maxfield, a member of Williamson's company, later described the unfortunate sequence of events that occurred next:

Sunday the 13th of May, was dark and unpropitious. The rain fell in torrents, and wringing wet, our force was at an early hour on the march. On the following morning we found ourselves ten miles from the Governor, beneath a clear sky. The same sun saw us on the upper side of Sycamore creek, two miles from Rock river, and thirty five from Dixon's. The sun was perhaps an hour high when we made a halt for the night. After some time was spent in the preliminaries of encampment, we observed a party of 8 or 10 mounted men, about half a mile distant to the north on an eminence.

Some said they were Indians, some that they were our advanced guard. Believing them to be the enemy, I instantly had my horse caparisoned for pursuit. Here stronger arguments rose, and being ridiculed for my credulity, I stript my horse and turned him loose. Instantly we observed an officer in full speed toward us, and heard the ominous word, parade! parade!! The officer alluded to, was Lieut. A. Gridley of Bloomington, McLane county, in whom are combined the gentleman and the soldier. I was instantly mounted with about five or six others, and rode with rapid strides in the direction of the enemy, who instantly disappeared, behind the hill. At the foot of this eminence we passed capt. Covel, with two prisoners mounted.

After a pursuit of about five miles up Rock river, we overtook the fugitives, and found them armed with bows and arrows, spears and rifles. At the further edge of a ravine, about 40 rods wide, we recognized a red flag, and ordered them to surrender. This order being disobeyed we fired and brought down three Indians and one poney.

*(Letter from Andrew H. Maxfield to the Sangamo Journal).*

Black Hawk then gathered his warriors together to repulse the oncoming troops.

Williamson's fellow soldier wrote:

The Indians now rallied to the number of about 30, and moved towards us with moderation. We then fell back across the ravine till we were reinforced by about as many whites. The brave and intrepid coolness displayed by Lieut. Gridley on this occasion, deserves a high eulogy. After much exertion he succeeded in forming the ranks to await the approaching shock of battle. Soon after this we were joined by the main body under Gen. Stillman. Night was now closing fast around us, and as it was not supposed that any great body of Indians were in that vicinity we recrossed the bog and formed a line of battle. A deputation bearing a white flag, was seen advancing, and capt. Eads. of Peoria, with two or three other individuals rode forward. At this the flag receded till capt. Eads was drawn into an ambuscade, from which he narrowly escaped. It

was now known that this sham was only to give the Indians time to send out their flanks. Stillman now saw his error in crossing the slough, and therefore gave orders to retreat and form on an eminence, about one mile in the rear. The Indians were now seen by the glimmering moon light, on three sides like swarms of summer insects. Our lines were never again formed. Some companies formed and fired, and were thrown into confusion by the retreat of others. A general retreat now followed, and all the exertion of officers was insufficient to arrest the flight. Stillman's last order was to retreat over Sycamore creek, and make a stand on the hill beyond. This order also was disobeyed, and no further orders were given. I remained on the bank of the creek till most of the army had passed. Our camp then resounded as though five hundred men were under the torture of the tomahawk and scalping of the knife. This noise was undoubtedly made by the Indians as none of the whites were killed at this place.

*(Id.)*

"The Indians poured out of the timber, to the front, right and left, and both parties commenced firing; but the whites were in such bad order that those in the rear were in danger of shooting those in front. The Indians came on whooping, yelling and firing, and encircled around on both sides. Major Stillman ordered his men to mount and retreat and form a line across the creek, and also ordered them to break the line of the Indians on the left. Here was confusion, and one veteran says they did not go to the right or to the left but right straight for home. When they arrived at the creek great effort was made by the officers to halt their men and fight. The brave Capt. Adams cried out to his men, 'Come back, you cowards, and we will whip them.'" (*History of Fulton County, p. 293*). However, "[n]either Stillman nor his command were natural cowards. Indeed, his command embraced many of the very best and bravest men of the State. It was not what they saw but what they felt that did the mischief." (*The Sauks and the Black Hawk War, p. 337*).

Williamson's comrade observed, "Before I left the camp I heard orders given by some man to 'kill those d---d Indian prisoners.' There had been one brought in

subsequent to the two taken by capt. Covel. I heard a musket, a death groan, and saw one tumble over the guard fire, the others I believe were killed, but I did not see it. The pursuit was kept up for ten miles from Sycamore in perfect flanking order, and without confusion as the whole route was prairie, except the spot on which we encamped." (*Letter from Andrew H. Maxfield to the Sangamo Journal*).

Eleven of the Illinois volunteers were killed during the encounter, including a private in Williamson's company. Survivors began arriving at Dixon's Ferry about 1:00 a.m. "The dreadful news which these men brought from the scene of carnage filled the army with terror and gloom. The entire army, or at least two thousand five hundred men, proceeded to the scene of the defeat. They buried eleven of Major Stillman's men. It seems that when the Indians had followed the retreating army some distance, they returned and mutilated the bodies of Captain Adams' men and later went to the camp, broke the spokes from the wagons, poured out a keg of whiskey, destroyed the provisions, and returned to their camp." (*History of Southern Illinois, p. 187*). The fallen volunteers were buried, "without coffins or shrouds, in the same common grave." (*The Sauks and the Black Hawk War, p. 371*).

Word of Stillman's defeat spread rapidly throughout the country. Governor Reynolds issued another call for volunteers: "To the militia of Illinois--It becomes my duty again to call on you for your services in defense of your country. The State is not only invaded by hostile Indians, but many of your citizens have been slain in battle. A detachment of two hundred and seventy-five mounted volunteers, commanded by Maj. Stillman, were overpowered by hostile Indians, on Sycamore creek, distant from this place about thirty miles, and a considerable number of them killed. . . ." (*The Sauks and*

*the Black Hawk War*, p. 332). Many of the enlisted volunteers became disenchanted and indicated their intent to return to their homes. "When the governor became aware of the demoralized spirit of the army he ordered them to march to Ottawa where they were discharged." (*History of Southern Illinois*, p. 187).

Williamson was mustered out with the rest of his company at Ottawa two weeks later, on 28 May 1832. He reported \$5.50 in property lost in battle. Meanwhile, Governor Reynolds was concerned that the state would be left undefended until his most recent call for troops came to bear. "During Sunday afternoon, as company after company were drawn up and mustered out, Gov. Reynolds, who, with all his faults, had many virtues, for he was truly a noble-hearted man, mounted an empty whisky barrel and appealed to these men by the love they bore their wives and children--by their humanity, honor and patriotism in behalf of the women and children of the frontier--to re-enlist for twenty days for their protection, until the new recruits under his second call (May 15) for 2,000 men, should relieve them." (*The Sauks and the Black Hawk War*, p. 379).

Williamson re-enlisted in June 1832 in Capt. Asel F. Ball's company, now part of Major Samuel Bogart's Odd Battalion of Mounted Rangers.

These two battles [Stillman's Run and Indian Creek] prompted the United States to commit 800 more regular soldiers and a hastily formed company of rangers, under Major Bogart, to assist the largely militia force that had gathered to fight Black Hawk. The rangers were, once again, to patrol northern Illinois. One of the short term militia soldiers who was called up at this time was a Springfield lawyer named Abraham Lincoln.

*Elite Warriors, 300 Years of America's Best Fighting Troops*, Lance Q. Zedric, Michael F. Dilley, 1996, p. 81.

The war effectively came to an end with the battle of Bad Axe on 02 Aug 1832.

Williamson was mustered out with the rest of his company on 04 Sep 1832.

Although the Black Hawk War was relatively brief and involved only about 2,500 troops, a surprising number of well-known persons participated, including three future presidents, Abraham Lincoln, Andrew Jackson, Zachary Taylor, the future president of the Confederacy, Jefferson Davis, future generals Winfield Scott, Albert Sidney Johnston, Robert Anderson, Phillip Kearney, and future governors Thomas Ford, Thomas Carlin, Joseph Duncan, Zadok Casey, and Stinson H. Anderson of Illinois and Henry Dodge of Wisconsin.

A few years after Williamson's service in the Black Hawk War, he and Mary Ann apparently moved to northwest Missouri. Williamson's son Richard Thaxton stated on several occasions that he was born in Monroe Co., Missouri, 04 Jan 1837.<sup>1</sup> The birth of his son is the last record we have of Williamson Thaxton.

Several theories have been offered regarding the disappearance of Williamson Thaxton. His great-grandson, George F. Millett, recorded the various accounts in his extensive research on the Thaxton family:

It is said by some members of the family that Williamson Thaxton and his wife Mary Ann Sherry came or started west with the Saints [Mormons] and got as far as Winter Quarters (Omaha Nebraska) and there it seems Williamson Thaxton left his wife and two sons and was supposed to go back to assist other Saints to Winter Quarters but was never heard of after whatever became of him no one seems to know. His wife Mary Ann Sherry came on with a colony of Saints to the Salt Lake Valley & there in the Endowment House in Salt Lake City she and James Watton were married received their Endowment & were sealed for time and eternity. It seems Mary Ann (Sherry) Thaxton felt that her husband Williamson Thaxton deserted her and the two boys James Williamson and Richard.

There is another report stating that Williamson Thaxton while living in Mo. left his home early one morning before breakfast to go collect a bill

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<sup>1</sup>A couple of records indicate a birth date of 1839 for Richard. For example, the Genealogy of the Presidents and Members of the Fifty Sixth Quorum of Seventies states "Sep 8 - 39". However, most records indicate the 1837 date.

that was owing to him and was never afterwards heard of. James Williamson Thaxton was then taken to raise by one of his uncles on his mothers side (a Sherry) & work on a large Tobacco farm in Ky but that James & his cousins could not get along on the farm together. James W. left.

. . . There are many stories concerning this family but we are unable to determine whatever became of Williamson Thaxton. This is now July 7 - 1943 & we have consulted many books & county records for a number of years and to date we have learned nothing we could rely on as being authentic that we are certain of.

There is also another story stating this separation of Williamson Thaxton & his wife Mary Ann Sherry took place in or about St Louis Missouri and after living for some time a widow in St. Louis Mo. Mrs. Thaxton married Mr. James Watton & went west with a hand cart company of the Saints to Salt Lake City & there in the Endowment House she & Mr. Watton were sealed in the year 1855 by Pres. Brigham Young.

Another great-grandchild, Della Thaxton Tippetts, heard a similar version: "They had James William and Richard Cantley Thaxton [and] 'two sons infants names not given.' The parents separated the mother remarried and came west." (*Correspondence from Della Thaxton Tippetts to W. G. McDonough, 1951*).

We have not been able to determine the circumstances under which Williamson left the family. However, available information suggests that the last-mentioned theory may be closest to the truth. It is doubtful that Williamson was ever a member of the LDS Church. A review of extensive records available for early Mormons fails to disclose any mention of him. (However, Williamson and Mary Ann were in Monroe Co., Missouri during the mid-1830s, during which time an estimated five to ten percent of the county's population was Mormon. At that time, more than fifteen Mormon families resided in Monroe County, including that of James and Elizabeth Allred, with whom Mary Ann and her children were later associated in Iowa and Utah. (*Mormon Land Ownership As a*

*Factor in Evaluating the Extent of Mormon Settlements and Influence in Missouri 1831-1841, thesis by Wayne J. Lewis, Brigham Young University, 1981, p. 46).*)

We believe that Williamson Thaxton and Mary Ann separated in 1837, that Williamson moved to St. Joseph Co., Indiana at that time, remarried, had a family under the name William Thaxton, and later died in Berrien Co., Michigan. Our reasons for believing that “Williamson Thaxton” and “William Thaxton” of Indiana/Michigan are one and the same include:

- Williamson Thaxton was born in Pendleton District, South Carolina, about 1808. William Thaxton was born in Pendleton District, South Carolina, about 1808. William’s birth place in the 1860 and 1870 censuses is listed as South Carolina, and in his Civil War enrollment, William stated that he was born in Pendleton, South Carolina.<sup>2</sup>
- The only Thaxton family in Pendleton District, South Carolina, in 1800 and 1810 was that of Thomas Thaxton, father of Williamson Thaxton. We have also eliminated most other Thaxton families in other areas of South Carolina during that period.

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<sup>2</sup> Although William Thaxton’s age is stated as 40 / 41 when he enrolled in Co. E of the 129th Indiana Regiment in 1864, it clearly appears to be the same William born 1808. He enlisted in the same county as his son Samuel M. Thaxton. He gave his residence as Elkhart Co., Indiana, in which he and other members of his family lived at various times, and which shared a border with Berrien Co., Michigan. And there was no other William Thaxton in the area at the time, let alone one born in South Carolina. Union Army recruits were supposed to be under 45, but ages were often fudged to get around the restriction. We also note that there is a gap in William’s known children between 1863 and 1868, and William was gone for most of 1864 and 1865, not returning home until several months after the war ended due to illness.

- Our last known record of Williamson Thaxton is the birth of his son Richard in January 1837. Our first record of William Thaxton is his marriage in August 1837.<sup>3</sup>
- We know that the separation occurred prior to the family heading west, since Mary Ann remarried in St. Louis in 1849, then went to Iowa and on to Utah in 1852. That it was a separation rather than a death may also be suggested by the fact that Mary Ann's family waited until her death in 1886 to baptize Williamson. (In the LDS Church, baptisms are at times done by proxy, and may include persons who are deceased.)
- There is no duplication in the names of Williamson and William's children.
- While serving in the Black Hawk War of 1832, Williamson spent time in the Lake Michigan area not far from the Michiana area in which William Thaxton settled a few years later.

Mary Ann Sherry, James William Thaxton, and Richard Cantley Thaxton were all baptized into the LDS Church in 1849 or 1850. (*Sealing record of Mary Ann Sherry; Genealogy of Members of the Quorum of the Seventies, 48th Quorums; Record of Members, Rockville, Utah*). Mary Ann married James Watton 16 Apr 1849 in St. Louis, Missouri. (*Marriage record*). James Watton was born 03 May 1801 in Warwick, England, a son of John Watton and Elizabeth Toronto. (*Record of Members, Davis Stake, Book B, p. 104*).

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<sup>3</sup>Interestingly, the transcription of this marriage, which is the only copy we have been able to find, lists him as "William Phthaxton." We wonder if the original handwritten record actually read Williamson Thaxton but was misread by the transcriber, or if the original reporter misheard "Williamson Thaxton" and wrote it phonetically.

The marriage of Mary Ann and James in St. Louis was performed by Nathaniel H. Felt, who presided over the LDS congregation in St. Louis from 1847 through 1849. (*"The Mormons in St. Louis," Our Pioneer Heritage, Vol. 5, pp. 441, 444*). St. Louis was "one of the gathering places for Church members driven from Nauvoo and also converts from foreign lands coming by way of New Orleans. Upon [Felt] devolved almost entirely the responsibility of advising these Saints, purchasing outfits and supplies for them, and chartering the necessary vessels to take them to Kanessville, Iowa." (*Id.*, p. 445).

Mary Ann and James Watton were among those who went to Kanessville. Within a year of their marriage, James and Mary Ann had relocated to Pottawotamie Co., Iowa, along with other Mormons waiting to remove to the growing Mormon settlement in Utah. (*1850 Pottawotamie Co., Iowa, p. 94*). In September 1850, James and Mary Ann's household included both of Mary Ann's living children, James and Richard Thaxton. They lived next to James Watton's daughter and son-in-law, Eliza and Telemachus Rogers. The Watton and Rogers families travelled together from Missouri to Iowa and, eventually, to Utah.

The Wattons and Rogers were again reported as neighbors in the 1851 census of Pottawotamie County. By that time, James Thaxton had apparently left; Richard remained with his mother and step-father. (*1851 Pottawotamie Co., Iowa; Pottawotamie Co., Iowa, Council Point Branch Record of Members, 1850-52*).

James, Mary Ann, and Richard were listed again in the 1852 state census of Pottawotamie County. In June of that year, after several months of planning by group elders, James Watton, Mary Ann, and Richard Thaxton left with an emigration company

on a trek from Pottawotamie Co., Iowa, to Utah. A contemporaneous account of the journey was kept by George Bowering, who was elected clerk by the other members of the group. Bowering made the trip in the same wagons as James Watton and Telemachus Rogers. Excerpts from A Journal of the Emigration Company of Council Point, Pottawatamie County Iowa In the summer of 1852, provide an invaluable account of the company and its trek to Utah from June 4 through September 15, 1852.

Friday November 28th 1851. Council Point Branch of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Was visited this evening by one of the Twelve Apostles Ezra T. Benson, and his assistant Elder Thomas McKenzie. Elder Ezra T. Benson is one of the deligates that was appointed by the Authorities of the Church in company with President Orson Hide and Elder Jedekiah H. Grant as Agents for the Emigrating Fund, to see to the gathering of the poor and superintend the Emigration the coming season and exert themselves in pushing the Saints unto the Valley.

In the meeting, McKenzie read an announcement from Brigham Young and his councillors exhorting the members in Iowa to come to Utah:

To all the Saints in Pottawatamie,

Beloved, Brethren: We send unto you our beloved brethren, Ezra T. Benson and Jedekiah M. Grant, for the special purpose of counselling and assisting you to come to this place, and we desire you to give heed unto their counsel in all things and come to this place with them next season; and fail not. Come all ye officers of the Church, and all ye officers in the State or county. There is no more time for Saints to hesitate what course they will pursue. We have been calling to the Saints in Pottawatamie ever since we left them to come away; but there has continually been an opposing spirit, whispering, as it were-stay another year, and get better fit-out, untill many who had means to come conveniently have nothing left to come with, even as a former Prophet said, "if a man will not gather when he has the chance, he will be afflicted with the Devil." His property will go to waste, his family fall by sickness, and destruction and misery will be on his path; even so has it been with some of you, and soon will it be with more of you, if you do not hearken to this call and come away. What are you waiting for? Have you any excuse for not coming. No! you have all of you, unitedly, a far better chance than we had when we started as Pioneers to find this place; you have better teams and more of them. You have as good food and more of it; you have as much natural strength as we

have had to come; our women and children have walked here, and been blessed in walking here, and barefoot too, only as they could occasionally get a skin from the Indians to make a moccasin, and can you not do the same? You can. And we say again, come home! And if you can get one good wagon and team to five families, and five teams to 100 souls; or no teams at all, more than cows and calves to your handcarts, you can come here with greater comfort and safety when the Pioneers come here they had nothing to come to: while you will have everything; and here is the place for all the Saints to get their fitout for Zion, even from all nations, therefore we say again, Arise and Come home. Elder Hide will return to your place with Brs. Benson and Grant, and act in his calling as usual; but you must not depend too much on him, for he has his private affairs to settle and prepare to bring on his family, and come with you; and we have sent Brs. Benson and Grant to bless you, and counsel you and relieve Br. Hide. Therefore we wish you to evacuate Pottawatamie, and the States, and next fall be with us all ye saints of the Most High, and it shall be well with you if you will keep all the commandments. Oh ye Saints give not your heritage to reproach, neither sell your improvements for their value or give them into the hands of those you shall be counseled to for the benefit of the poor Saints who are coming after a concecration for the benefit of the poor. It is a day of sacrafice and those who are ready to sacrafice and do their duty, and come home they may save being burned. How long will the Saints in St. Loues remain where they are? Arise and come with the Saints of Pottawatamie and you shall be blessed.

Benson then addressed those in attendance:

After which Ezra T. Benson arose and exorted us, on the necessity of us as a people emigrating from these Pottawatamie lands in mass to the Valley of the Great Salt Lake so that we might escape the scourge and judgments that is about to come upon this nation for the rejection of the gospel and went on to show that this call for the Saints to come home, he said those that neglected the same would not attend unto this counsel fo the servants of the Lord might expect to suffer loss and perhaps have to lay their bones down here, and we was to see the fitting up of our wagons, and those that could not get wagons was to get hand carts, and those that could not get hand carts was to get wheelbarrows or a cow to carry a pack upon and so make their way unto the Valley. Then he went on to state the advantageous circumstances of the Salt Lake Valley that it was good soil, good houses, good water, and plenty of timber &c &c . . .

The following evening, "the names of all those that intended to unite themselves into a company" were taken down. Among the 60 families listed were those of Telemichus Rogers and James Watton. Watton reported three in his family, one wagon,

one cow, two hogs, and three young stock. The members met again over the next few months to make preliminary efforts toward emigration.

On 03 Feb 1852, the group met to discuss preparations. "Several of the brethren said they were making ready as fast as they could to get away, one said that he was all ready with the exception of putting a bottom into his power horn. Captain Tidwell gave a short address with good and wholesome counsel about getting away as early as the first of May next . . ." Later that month, the group discussed the desire for able members to assist poor neighbors make the trip, even though it would mean leaving behind possessions:

Captain Tidwell again arose and said you all know the circumstance that we are in and any of you that can come and assist in making wagons come and be on hand. Again would it be just for us to take big heavy boxes full of clothing that perhaps in value is worth more than the clothing and teams of those they may want to haul them, and at the same time we have had a pretty hard time in getting teams and wagons and we want those of the poor that expect to be took away by others to go and make bargains with some and if they have a surplus of clothing to part with some of that for the hauling of the rest. . . . (17 Feb).

On March 2, Telemachus Rogers reported that he would be able to go independently; James Watton indicated that he would need partial assistance. Captain Tidwell counselled the group to be resolute, and not to be influenced by anyone resistant to the idea of migrating: "[L]et nothing have any influence over your minds that may come along, and if there is any thing that comes crossed grained into council do not trouble yourselves about the same, I have my eye on a good many of the movements that is going on in our midst and I am watching them, there is nobody to try, nor any body else to counsel the people in this place in the Emigrating operations but myself and my two counsellors. Therefore let every-one mind their own business and go right ahead in the same. . . . I want to see this branch from here, and it is better to get from here as soon as we can and let none of these things trouble us."

Preparations continued. On April 5, Captain Tidwell told the group, "[t]he time is fast drawing that our wagons should be ready and seeing after our poor, When I talk of the poor it is those that are unable to help themselves away without aid, for to come to the point we are all poor and it is our salvation to know how we are going to the Mountains." One week later, members reported what they could contribute or lacked. James Watton reported, "I lack both provisions and clothing and have not wherewith to obtain them."

On April 27, the company was organized into groups of tens. The members then renewed discussion of means by which the poor could be assisted; it was decided at this meeting to "sell the school-house and use the timber therein for the benefit of the poor." The time then drew nearer for departure. Telemachus Rogers and James Watton and families, travelling together, agreed to take Elen Wilkshire and 50 pounds of her freight with them. (*Journal*, p. 78). Telemachus had one and a half wagons, three horses, four oxen, two cows; James Watton had two oxen and two cows. (*Id.*, p. 79).

On May 30, Bowering reported that "[t]he last few days Wagons has sprung up in the Camp all in full rig for crossing the Plains like mushrooms." On June 3, the company met and decided that property not yet sold would be left in the hands of two members who were remaining behind, eventually to be disposed of by a committee. Telemachus Rogers, seconded by James Watton, moved that the company sustain John Tidwell as captain. "And it was moved and carried that we begin to move out tomorrow." The following day, June 4, 1852, ten teams rolled out on their way to the upper ferry.

Telemachus Rogers' teams set out on June 7. The following evening, after the teams had reached camp, Ezra Taft Benson read the rules to be observed by the company:

- First. Prayers to be observed night and morning.
- Second. Meeting to be held on the Sabbath.
- Third. No swearing to be allowed.
- Fourth. Every one to be prepared to tie up their cattle.
- Fifth. A Guard to be kept every night and the word cried every half hour.
- Sixth. Horses put into the correll for safety every night.
- Seventh. No cattle to be put in the correll, but to be kept outside and a guard kept round them.
- Eighth. No man permitted to leave the Camp without the consent of the Captain.
- Ninth. Every man to have a good gun and ammunition.
- Tenth. No gun to be put in the wagon with a cap on to avoid accident, and put a piece of leather over the tube.

Eleventh. Treat your animals with the utmost kindness.  
Twelveth. A Captain of fifty to be appointed.

On June 12, the first and second tens crossed the Missouri River by the upper ferry, otherwise known as the old Mormon Crossing. With large numbers of Mormons and Californians emigrating through Kaneshville, several ferries were in operation. The ferry operated by Thomas Clark advertised its features:

TO EMIGRANTS. WE would say, roll up the old Mormon Crossing opposite Winter Quarters, 10 miles above Kaneshville. This Ferry has been in full operation for five years, and each season a powerful migration, and not the first dollars worth of property lost there, it is decidedly the best crossing on the river, take it both sides. When the emigrant is landed on the other side, he then has no bottom nor sloughs to cross; but in one half mile is on the divide. We shall be ready by the middle of March, with 3 or 4 good and substantial Boats, with good bulwarks on them, which renders it as safe as a steam Ferry. It will be manned by good sober and experienced hands; and if the weather is good we can cross from 60 to 100 wagons in a day. Our least best took over 34 wagons in one day. When the emigrant arrives at Kaneshville, he will take up the North West Hollow--and the roads are sound and good all the way to the Ferry. And as we have removed the Ferry about half a mile above town it will render it very convenient for wood and water, and for herding cattle. We also have good foldyards, where we can fold a 1000 head at one time.

*(The Frontier Guardian, 02 Sep 1852, reproduced in Kaneshville Advertisements).*

The promise of "sober and experienced hands" was not entirely fulfilled. Only two of the tens were able to cross on June 12. Three days later, the company clerk reported: "This morning the remainder of the Company crossed the river and came up to the camping ground but why we did not cross all the wagons on Saturday was in consequence of Bro. Clark the Ferry man devoting one of the boats entirely to the removal of Californians, and again about an hour before sun down the boat hands were quite tipsey the pleasures of the dram shop was more powerful than the salvations of we Mormons . . ."

On June 14, Telemachus Rogers returned to Kaneshville upon the counsel of LDS President Ezra Taft Benson to help the poor cross the plains. The following day, as the remaining wagons approached after crossing the Missouri, the company suffered their first deaths, one from cholera and one elderly woman from being run over by the wheels of a runaway wagon. Before the journey ended, the company would suffer eleven more

deaths, all from cholera and other disease. The first cholera victim was the company's blacksmith. The company then wrote Benson to request, "if you could spare our old companion Bro. T. Rogers to attend to the important duties of blacksmithing we should feel obliged . . ."

A few days later, the membership adopted more bylaws:

#### Bye Laws for the Government of the Guard:

First, Every man to be ready for duty when called upon unless he is sick and not able to take his post.

Second, Carpenters and Blacksmiths to be released from duty when they have been at work for the benefit of the company.

Third, Any man no matter what is his station or calling if found asleep or otherwise neglecting his duty, for the first offence he will be required to perform double duty, for the second offence in addition to double duty he will be required to perform one half days herding and for the third offense a fine of one dollar shall be demanded, and for every additional offence the fine to be doubled.

Fourth, the money produced by the fines imposed upon the delinquents to be paid into the Perpetual Emigration fund for the benefit of the poor.

#### Bye Laws for the Herdsmen

First, the same number of men to be employed for herding the cattle during the day as are on Guard during the night.

Second, Any of the herdsmen found guilty of indolence to the neglect and danger of loosing the cattle the same Penalties to be imposed upon the delinquents herdsmen as those placed upon the offending Guard.

Three weeks into the trip, the company realized that one of its members had contracted smallpox. She was sent outside the camp, while the group decided whether to banish her. They did not do so; instead, the company unanimously covenanted "to stand by each other unto death under all circumstances." Another company which had sought to travel with Tidwell's group left, afraid of the cholera and smallpox.

Members of the group were occasionally able to enjoy recreation. On June 25, "[t]he amusements commenced with the Salt Lake Boys singing a song, the brass band that is with us were present and gave us some delicious and melodious music followed up

with dancing song singing and it concluded by some remarks from Captain Margretts about the prospects at Salt Lake." The company continued westward, passing graves of other pioneers who had died along the trail.

On June 29, James Watton had a small misfortune, which was followed by good news. The clerk reported that he walked ahead of the company "and immediately after the company had overtaken us we were informed that there had been a stampede in the first ten caused by Widow Weldens horses running away but not damage done except the breaking a ox yoke belonging to Father James Watton. Soon after ourself had been informed of this runaway scrape, the whole company was thrown into cheerfulness by the arrival of our old friend and brother Telemachus Rogers who came riding up, he was received in our midst with acclamations of friendship, and cheers, yea, all faces seemed to manifest joy on the occasion . . ."

The same day, a problem developed with the captain of the first ten, of which Rogers and James Watton were members. Watton seconded a motion that the captain be dropped from his position, and Telemachus Rogers was appointed his successor. The following month was difficult for the company. The group traversed hundreds of miles over "sandy roads, hills and mud holes" and steep sandy bluffs, across rivers, wet, swampy ground, and muddy creeks, through heavy wind and rain storms, at times in heat "almost too much both for man and beast." Nine members died, and numerous others became ill with cholera. On July 8, one member died and six others took sick. The following day, two more died.

Travel slowed with illness and the need for food. Rogers, apparently an excellent shot, set out on horseback in search of food for the company. On July 11, "Captain T. Roger and William Clark came rolling into camp with their horses loaded down with Bafallo beef. Captain Roger first shot it then W. Clark also shot it, and between them they killed it and brought what they could with them, but before they had done they were surrounded with wolves and had enough to do to keep them off until they could get away."

Realizing that they were about to cross a 200-mile stretch where wood could not be readily obtained, members of the company hoped to gather timber, "but to our great disappointment there was nothing to be had. A little willow brush and that more scarce

than we had yesterday, and the grass is also poor. The need for food also increased. On July 15, ". . . Captains Roger and McCallough came rolling in on horse back, both bringing meat to the amount of sixty pounds (this captain Rogers shot), and divided in their own Tens, which caused some in the company not to feel right about it, because it was not divided among the whole company."

The following day, "arrangements was made for another hunt, when Captain Rogers and a few others was choose to go out, they had not been gone above an hour when Captain Rogers returned into camp having shot one, then seven yoke of oxen was sent out to bring it into camp. In an hour or two they brought up the frightful monster. When all eyes were satisfied in looking upon it, the butchers went to work and dressed and cut it up in scientific manner. Then the several Captains shared it out in their tens according to the size of the families." On August 3, the company reached Laramie, Wyoming.

At various times during the trek the group had met up with Indians, generally "quite peaceable." On August 14, however, the company "had not been in bed many minutes before Captain McCallough, said every man to be in the middle of the correll in five minutes with their guns in full prim ready for duty if required. And why all this? It was inconsequence of the herdsmen the other side of the river giving the alarm that Indians were upon them. Every man was on hand in the time given and necessary arrangements made for a combat if required, but while these arrangements were preparing another cry was given that all the horses were gone and three of the herdsmen with brave and heroic courage pursued through thick brush and timber with only axe in hand fearlessly regarding the appearance of Indians until they secured all the horses. . . . At the same time the cattle was flying in all directions which was supposed by the clattering of their feet for it was pitch dark, in fact it was a stampede past description." The cattle were all recovered the following morning.

In mid-August the company approached Sweetwater, Wyoming. The company clerk recorded an admonition to be cautious because the ground was "very saleratically." Oxen and cattle began dying in large numbers, "supposed by partaking of saleraticious." One member lost one of his oxen, and the other became ill. His freight was divided up among others in the group, Telemachus Rogers and James Watton agreeing to carry 50

pounds. The company continued the trek, the first Ten reaching Green River, Wyoming, on August 30. One week later, the company came to Fort Bridger, and continued westward into Utah Territory, past Bear River and Weber River and over the mountains. Finally, on September 15, 1852, company clerk Bowering wrote:

Wednesday. We passed through the mouth of the canyon and rolled into the city in full rig and in good health and spirits, rejoicing in the Lord God our Savior whose hand and mercy has been over us . . . And from our hearts we say unto his name be the praise the honor the glory, power might and majesty both now and forever and ever Amen and Amen.

James Watton, Mary Ann, and Richard Cantley Thaxton settled in Farmington, Davis County, Utah, along with several of their companions from Kaneshville. In the territorial census taken in 1856, James Watton, Eliza, Clara, and Phebe Watton were reported in Farmington. Richard Thaxton was also a member of the household. Several houses away, the census taker listed Mary Ann Watton, Eliza, and Sarah, near Telemachus Rogers. Also nearby were the Adams, Eldredge, Yates, Whitlock and other families who had accompanied the Wattons and Richard Thaxton on the trek. (It is not clear why James and Mary Ann were listed in separate households. Separate households often reflected the practice of polygamy, but as far as we know, James did not have more than one wife at the time.)

In 1857, James Watton and Telemachus Rogers were both privates in the "Rough & Ready" 5th Battalion, 1st Regiment of Infantry, mustered in at Farmington. Watton reported one musket on hand. (*Muster Rolls, Davis County*).

James and Mary Ann continued to reside in Farmington until Watton's death 06 Feb 1880. (*1860 census, Davis Co., Utah; 1870 census, Davis Co., Utah; Will of James Watton, Record of wills, Davis Co., Utah, pp. 48-51; Genealogies of the High Priest Quorum, Davis Stake*). James drafted his will 27 Aug 1877, being "of sound mind but of feeble health." In the will, probated in October 1880, Watton bequeathed his real estate in Farmington to Mary Ann for the remainder of her natural life, after which the property was to go to the "Trustee in Trust of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." The will was witnessed by Alice Stayner, and proved by Arthur Stayner and Louise Stayner of Farmington.

In 1880, Mary Ann was living alone in Farmington. She could not read or write. (*1880 census, Davis Co., Utah*). Within a few years, she married a well-known widower in the area, Abraham Rose. Rose was born 05 Oct 1803 in Oneida, New York, a son of Abraham Rose and Rachel Haws. He was baptized into the LDS Church by Orson Hyde, and later joined the Mormons in Nauvoo, Hancock Co., Illinois. He moved to Utah in 1853, locating in Farmington, Davis County.

Rose died 09 Sept 1884 in Farmington. Mary Ann died in February 1886 and is buried in the Farmington Cemetery, Davis County, near Abraham Rose and Abraham's first wife. (*Gravestone*). The same month as Mary Ann's death, family members had Williamson Thaxton baptized. (*LDS Family History Library records*).

Williamson Thaxton and Mary Ann Sherry apparently had four children:

Son Thaxton - born by 1830. Williamson's household in the 1830 census of Allen Co., Kentucky, included a male under 5. Family tradition is that Williamson and Mary Ann had four children, so this male may be a child.

+James William Thaxton - born 22 Aug 1830-32 in Illinois. See section below on James William Thaxton of San Pete, Washington, and Kane Cos., Utah.

Son Thaxton - probably born about 1834 in Illinois. Family tradition includes a son born between James and William, which is also consistent with the gap in birth dates.

+Richard Cantley Thaxton - born 04 Jan 1837. See section below on Richard Cantley Thaxton of Davis Co., Utah.

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**JAMES WILLIAM THAXTON (< Williamson < Thomas)  
of San Pete, Washington, and Kane Cos., Utah**

James William Thaxton, son of Williamson Thaxton and Mary Ann Sherry, was born 22 Aug 1830 in Fulton Co., Illinois. Although we have seen some references by family historians to a middle name of Williamson, James identified his middle name as William in his pension application.

Several different birth dates and places are found for James. In a contemporary record of members of the LDS Church for Rockville, Washington Co., Utah, James' birth date is stated as 22 Aug 1830. (*Record of members, Rockville, Washington Co., Utah*).

In his application for pension, James also states that he was born in Fulton Co., Illinois, on 22 Aug 1830, and we believe that to be the correct date.<sup>4</sup>

Contemporary records, James' pension, and James' death record indicate that he was born in Fulton Co., Illinois. (*Record of members, Rockville, Washington Co., Utah; death record James W. Thaxton; application for pension*). Considering that Williamson Thaxton enlisted in the Black Hawk War from Fulton County in early 1832, that location seems probable.<sup>5</sup>

James W. was living with his mother and step-father in Pottawotamie Co., Iowa, in September 1850, but apparently left during the next year. James had located in Utah by July 1853, when he enlisted at Manti, San Pete Co., Utah, in a Cavalry company commanded by Nelson D. Higgins, to serve in the Indian conflicts. (*Affidavit Concerning Service in Indian Wars Within the State of Utah and of Service Relating Thereto, Helen Thaxton*). The Indian conflicts had developed in spite of efforts to keep peace by Mormon leaders:

In the summer of 1853, the Indian war, known as the Walker War, broke out in Utah. About the middle of this month -- July, Walker with his brother Appropine (pronounced Arapeen) with their bands were camped on Peteetneet creek, at the mouth of the canyon above Payson, and someone from Springville, seeing an Indian whipping his squaw, took her part, and gave the Indian a severe whipping, from which it is said he died. He belonged to this tribe, and Walker was made, "heap tobuc," they said. Arropine was very anxious to strike the first blow in revenge; he took a number of his warriors, rode down to Payson on the 18th July; they made no outward demonstration; the whites received them kindly and gave them

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<sup>4</sup>Another contemporary record gives James' birth date as 29 Aug 1831. (*Genealogy of the President and Members of the Forty Eighth Quorum of Seventies*). Census records are somewhat consistent: As of 24 Sep 1850, James was reported as 17 years old; 08 Jun 1860, 28 years old; 1870, 38 years old; 1880, 49 years old. In the 1900 census, James' birth date was given as August 1830. James' death record states that he died 25 Jun 1903, age 72 years. In 1910, James' widow Helen stated inconsistently that James had enrolled in a cavalry unit on 19 Jul 1853 at the age of 30, and that James died 25 Jun 1903, age 73 years. (*Affidavit Concerning Service in Indian Wars Within the State of Utah and of Service Relating Thereto, Helen Thaxton*).

<sup>5</sup>We have seen some family records indicating a birthplace of Quincy, Adams Co., Illinois, and one contemporary record also says Quincy. (*Genealogy of the President and Members of the Forty Eighth Quorum of Seventies*). However, the evidence points pretty clearly to Fulton County.

food. On their leaving town to start back to camp in the evening, they shot and killed Alexander Keel, who was standing guard near the fort. Arropine hastened back to camp, told Walker what had been done, and immediately the word was given to break camp; wick-e-ups were quickly packed and a retreat up Payson canyon commenced, for they well knew what would follow.

Gov. [Brigham] Young, upon hearing of the outbreak, wrote the following letter to Walker:

Great Salt Lake City, July 25, 1853.

Capt. Walker:

I send you some tobacco for you to smoke in the mountains when you get lonesome. You are a fool for fighting your best friends, for we are the best friends, and the only friends that you have in the world. Everybody else would kill you if they could get a chance. If you get hungry send some friendly Indian down to the settlement and we will give you some beef-cattle and flour. If you are afraid of the tobacco which I send you, you can let some of your prisoners try it first, and then you will know that it is good. When you get good natured again, I should like to see you. Don't you think you should be ashamed? You know that I have always been your best friend.

Brigham Young

The Indians, in their retreat through the mountains, drove off a yoke of cattle belonging to John Edmiston of Manti, and in the night they passed by the camp of George Peacock and Barney Ward, who were in the mountains southeast of Manti. These men heard them, and in the morning following the trail a distance. This was the first warning Manti had, and fearing that Peacock and Ward had been killed, Riley G. Clark, Will Henry Peacock and John Lowry started to go to their camp to learn their fate, or to render assistance if needed; however, before they reached the camp they met Peacock and Ward and all five returned to Manti in safety.

*(History of Manti, M. F. Farnsworth, compilation of news articles pre-dating 1892, pp. 21-23).*

James William Thaxton was one of the Manti residents mustered into service during the "Walker War." He enlisted 19 Jul 1853, and was released 15 Oct 1853. During his enlistment, James "served as home guard at Manti." James' service was attested to by John Lowry, one of the men who went after Peacock and Ward, and who was involved in the commencement of Indian troubles a dozen years later in 1865.

Lowry, then 81 years old, attested to James' service in an affidavit dated 17 Feb 1910. George Allred of Ephraim, San Pete County, aged 72, also submitted an affidavit regarding James' service dated 04 Feb 1910. (*Affidavit Concerning Service in Indian Wars Within the State of Utah and of Service Relating Thereto; James Thaxton*).

James Thaxton married Helen Marion Averett 15 Jul 1855 in the Manti Temple, San Pete Co., Utah. Helen was the oldest child of Elijah Averett and Cherrizade Bernice Grimes. She was born 28 Oct 1830 in Hamilton Co., Illinois.

James W. and Helen lived in San Pete County for several years. James was ordained a member of the 48th Quorum of the Seventies within the LDS Church on May 17, 1857. (*Record of Members, Rockville, Utah; Genealogy of President and Members of 48th Quorum of the Seventies*). In the 1860 census of San Pete County, James, Helen, and children "Cheryjade" [Cherrizade], James W., and Elijah M. appeared as residents of Manti City. James was listed as a farmer, with \$400 worth of real estate, and \$300 worth of personal property.

In late 1861, James and family left San Pete County for Washington Co., Utah. The Church was actively making efforts to settle southern Utah. Brigham Young called three groups to establish a mission in Washington County during 1861 and 1862. Among those called were C. G. Averet, Alma and Joseph Millett, James Lemmon, and Oliver DeMille. (*A History of Rockville, Utah 1862-1972, Wayne Stout, p. 1*). In addition, other families went to southern Utah to help the colonization efforts:

Finally, the Dixie volunteers were offended when they failed to receive a call. These men had a natural talent for pioneer life. Many of them asked for the privilege to go. Others went without permission. Those who landed in the Rockville area were:

John Beal, Martin Cheney, William R. Crawford, Daniel and John Dennett, Franklin Elders, Charles Griffin, Edward Hepworth, Gottlieb Hirschi, Henry Holiday, Cyrus Jennings, John Langston, George Lewis, Jacob and Robert McClure, David Morris, William and David Patton, John Rolph, Ezra Stevens, Charles F. Stevenson, Henry Stocks, A Stanworth, James Thaxton, and David Williams.

*(Id., p. 2).*

In November [1861] the roads above Virgin City was crowded with covered wagons caring home-seekers to the promised land. By December, the camp above Adventure was a town of covered wagons. These home-seekers were from Sanpete. Before the Christmas day rains began, the hardy pioneers were on the move up the valley. They saw that Adventure was already over-crowded, so they moved on up the valley, failed to recognize Rockville as a potential site and stopped at the forks of the river. There they found James F. Lemmon had laid claim to a 30-acre plot suitable for agriculture. Two men in the party, Isaac Behunim and William Black laid claim to adjacent grazing lands which they later abandoned.

The main body of home-seekers moved on up the East Fork to an Indian village, arriving January 20, 1862 after traveling for 26 days during the 49-day storm. Traveling in the heavy mud, no roads, must have been a terrific ordeal. Having arrived in the rain storm, 16 days before the rains stopped, made it difficult to start home making. During the rest of the storm, little progress could be made in building homes and clearing subbery for agriculture.

. . . Those January arrivals in Shonesburg with the Demilles were: George Petty, Hardin Whitlock, Samuel K. Gifford, William Riggs, Daniel Washburn, Hyrum Stevens, Charles Clapper, Alma Millett, James Thaxton, and John Allred.

*(Id., p. 10).*

"[Shonesburg] was limited by the small amount of land, although there were good pasture lands adjacent. The floods which washed away many a dam and ditch put in by the settlers, washed away much of the little available land." (*I Was Called to Dixie, Andrew Karl Larson, 1961, p. 99.*) As James W. Thaxton's granddaughter later wrote,

The family established residence in Shonesburg and for a short time lived in Rockville. Both towns were in Kane County. Though these two towns

were only about 4 miles apart, early settlers reminds one that Shonesburg was of somewhat higher elevation than Rockville, it being out of "The Canyon" confines, and Rockville, along with several settlements, were nestled in the low slung canyon.

Here at Shonesburg the ground was fertile and the climate next to tropical. One handicap, however, and that was the unpredictable Virgin River. Fed by melting mountain snow in spring and often in summer fed to flood stage by torrential rains, this river is no respecter of anything that lies within its path and that path extended far beyond the confines of its normal banks. Even so, this stream supplied irrigation water for all farms.

*(Life History of Elijah Richard Thaxton and Olive Mariah Lemmon, Eldona Thaxton Goodrich, ca 1979, p. I-1).*

"Less than a hundred acres was cultivated in 1866, the year in which the place was temporarily abandoned because of Indian trouble." (*Larson, p. 99.*) The Indian trouble referred to began in 1865:

Black Hawk, Utah's "Red Napoleon," was a victim of the white man's injustice and inequitable treatment. The red chief violently resented the white man's policy of unjust discrimination. He met the challenge by assuming a very hostile attitude toward the whites. The spark that ignited the conflagration was the failure of the government to honor the treaty repudiation led to hostilities when John Lawry [Lowry] disciplined a young chief for obnoxious conduct. This was the spark that ignited the war. Several white men paid with their lives for Lawry's unwise tactics. War was then declared by the red men. The whites took a defensive position and only attacked in retaliation for murders committed.

*(A History of Rockville, p. 21).*

In February 1866, James Thaxton was one of a company organized to respond to the threat manifested by recent depredations. At the time of James' enlistment, the conflict had become quite serious:

April 9, 1865. John Lowry had a quarrel with the Indian Chief Jake, in Manti, Sanpete Co., Utah, the Indians boasting of having killed stock belonging to the citizens.

10 -- A small party of men from Manti was fired upon by the Indians near Twelve Mile Creek, Sanpete Co., and young Peter Ludvigsen was killed and mutilated by the savages. The same evening Elijah B. Ward and James Anderson were killed and scalped by the Indians in Salina Canyon, Sevier Co., who also drove away considerable stock.

12 -- Col. Reddick N. Allred with 84 men, who pursued the Indians, had a dangerous encounter with them in the mountains about fifteen miles east of Salina, during which Jens Sorenson of Ephraim and William Kearns of Gunnison, were killed. The company retreated to Salina.

17 -- The dead bodies of Sorensen and Kearns were secured and brought to Salina.

May 25 -- Jens Larsen was killed by Indians about four miles north of Fairview, Sanpete Co.

26 -- John Given, his wife and four children were murdered and their bodies fearfully mangled by the Indians, near Thistle Valley about twelve miles north of Fairview, Sanpete Co.

29 -- David Hadlock Jones, a member of the Mormon Battalion, was killed by Indians about three miles northwest of Fairview, Sanpete Co.

June 8 -- Col. O. H. Irish, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, made a treaty with the principal Indian chief in Utah at Spanish Fork Reservation Farm, in the presence of Brigham Young and other leading men.

July 14 -- Robert Gillespie and Anthony Robinson were killed by Indians near Salina, Sevier Co.

18 -- The militia under Warren S. Snow surprised a party of hostile Indians, killed twelve and routed the rest in Grass Valley. The command then went east to Green River and suffered much by long marches and for want of supplies.

26 -- The Indians attacked Glenwood, Sevier Co., Utah, wounded a man and drove off nearly all the stock belonging to the settlement.

Sept. 21 -- General W. Snow had an engagement with the Indians near Fish Lake, 80 miles east of Circleville. Seven Indians were killed and Snow and two of his men wounded.

Oct. 17 -- Martin Pederson Kubre and wife, Elizabeth Petersen, Wm. Thorpe, Soren N. Jespersen, Benj. J. Black and Wm. T. Hite were killed by Indians under Chief Black Hawk, near Ephraim, Sanpete Co.

Dec. 18 -- A number of Piede Indians made a break on Kanab, Kane Co., Utah, and stole some horses.

January 1866 -- The Indian war in southern Utah continued and a number of the smaller settlements were abandoned by the settlers.

8 -- Dr. James M. Whitmore and Robert McIntyre were killed by Piede Indians near the Pipe Springs ranch, Kane Co., Utah.

20 -- The dead bodies of Whitmore and McIntyre were found about four miles from Pipe Springs by a company of armed men who also surprised the murderers camped in a narrow gulch about twelve miles distant and killed seven of them.

*("Black Hawk War Chronology," Our Pioneer Heritage, Vol. 9, pp. 189-90).*

The government relied upon local citizens to defend against the Indians. "On February 14, 1866, Mr. [James] Andrus received Special Orders from the Headquarters Washington Military District N. L. as follows:

You are hereby ordered to call 30 men from your command, armed and equipped as the law directs, and proceed forthwith in pursuit of the Indians who have committed the late depredations in the neighborhood of Kane, who are supposed to be in the vicinity of Pahreah Creek.

You must be vigilant and ascertain by reconnoitering their probable strength and if they are too numerous for your small force to punish, you will endeavor to cut off their retreat by way of the Colorado and express to Major Maxwell for the additional force necessary. You will also furnish Peter Shirtz and family a suitable force necessary to convey them to the nearest settlement and keep us regularly informed in relation to your discoveries and acts.

D. D. McArthur, Col. Commanding

*(Sketch of James Andrus, collected by Katie Webb, reprinted in Utah Pioneer Biographies, Vol. 3, pp. 185-86).*

James W. Thaxton was one of the thirty men enlisted in response to the directive from Washington. *(Id; Index to Military Records Indian Wars 1866-67)*. "The company was mustered on February 20, 1866, and served until March 12, 1866, serving twenty days. The object of the expedition was to deliver Peter Shirts and family and to protect the white settlers while they left Kane County. William D. Clark was badly wounded in the foot, and three Indians were killed during the campaign." *(Sketch of James Andrus, p. 186)*.

The conflicts continued. On May 2, 1866, martial law was declared. "Stake officials ordered the people to concentrate in the larger communities for protection. Upper Virgin residents were advised to move into Rockville -- including Grafton,

Northop, Shonesurg and Springdale. Rockville soon began to burst at its seams. Every available spot was choked with covered wagons and tents. The town became a bubbling babylon. . . . The population of Rockville in December, 1866 was 430, thanks to the 'transients' from other towns." (*A History of Rockville, pp. 23-24*). "Prior to the Indian troubles in 1866, the church membership in Rockville was 95. During the two years the exiles were present the population went to nearly 500 persons or about 200 families." (*Id., p. 26*).

James W. Thaxton and family were among those who took shelter in Rockville between 1866 and 1868. Thus, while James and Helen's fifth and seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth children were born in Shonesberg, their sixth child was born in Rockville in 1867. The exiles began returning from Rockville to their homes in March 1868. (*Id.*) However, the Thaxton family continued to have conflicting relations with the Indians. In the fall of 1866, James W. Thaxton's brother-in-law, Elijah Averett, was killed by Indians while on an excursion in Southern Utah. Some of James Thaxton's children, however, had Native American friends. James' granddaughter Eldona Thaxton Goodrich, daughter of Elijah Richard Thaxton, wrote: "In spite of depredations, credit must be given where credit is due. Among dad's boyhood friends have been some Indians and his appraisal of them ran something like this. 'When an Indian made a promise you could depend on his keeping it. His word was as good as his bond and his loyalty to a real friend was spectacular.'" (*Goodrich, p. 1-3*).

James W. Thaxton and family continued to reside in Shonesburg a few years after returning from their exile at Rockville. As of 1870, Shonesburg had 50 residents. (*Id., p.*

31). The following year, 1871, the pioneers faced another serious threat. Three years earlier, in 1868, grasshoppers had done serious damage to crops in the area:

The great "Noah's" flood of hoppers came three years later. The grasshoppers of 1868 came in thousands, the red clouds of hoppers came in billions in 1871. Only Noah's flood can be used in comparison. They formed great black clouds in the sky. The people thought it was a complete eclipse of the sun. It was so dark at noon, the farmers had to carry lanterns to find the cows. . . . It looked as if we were going to have to stand by and see our crops completely destroyed by grasshoppers. One day the sun suddenly became darkened and it seemed that great clouds were covering the valley. They were not clouds, however, but billions of grasshoppers. They settled down in the fields. They swarmed around the windows of our houses and came into our kitchens making it impossible to do any cooking. . . . It was terrible. They started eating our crops. We determined to destroy them. In desperation, we went into our fields with clubs and brooms and tried to drive them off. Some of our people put chickens into the fields to help kill the hoppers. The chickens did eat some of them. . . . The grasshoppers were in town a day or two and left as suddenly as they came."

*(Id., p. 32, quoting account of John Dennett).*

James farmed in the Shonesburg area for another few years. In 1872, "[a] damaging flood hit Shonesburg in June, which destroyed the crops and broke the dam in the creek. The damages exceeded \$1,000." *(Id., p. 33)*. James' granddaughter related a story of another adventure during that time period, involving her father Elijah Richard Thaxton and uncle James William Thaxton, Jr.:

Dad recalls the summer when he and Jim were in the teens. They left home with 4 head of oxen to plow "the field." Despite their young ages, they were getting along rather nicely until a man came along with 2 unbroken oxen. These were to be exchanged for 2 of our broken critters. Grandpa and this man had previously made the deal. After some difficulty in getting the 2 unbroken brutes into plowing position, they continued the day's work. Uncle Jim held the plow and dad the reins and whip, and first thing they knew all 4 oxen had taken to the hills and before gotten under control, dad declared, "We had that whole hillside plowed by fits and jerks."

*(Goodrich, p. I-4).*

James and Helen Thaxton's last child was born in Shonesburg in 1873. "[A]s time went on [Shonesburg] declined and finally became a ghost town. A bit of ranching is carried on at the present time near Oliver DeMill's old rock house which sits atop the hill like a sentinel that watches over a deserted battlefield." (*I Was Called To Dixie*, p. 99).

James and Helen continued to reside in Shonesburg until after 1880. (*1880 census, Washington Co., Utah*). About the latter part of 1887, they moved to Mount Carmel in neighboring Kane County. Mount Carmel was "[a] village situated in the western part of Kane County, on the Rio Virgin river, 20 miles north of Kanab, the county seat, 100 miles from Richfield, its banking town, and 100 from Belknap, the nearest shipping point. Agriculture and stock raising are the only industries. Population 175." (*Utah State Gazetteer and Business Directory, 1903-1904, R. L. Polk & Co., Vol. II, p. 203*).

In 1902, James W.'s son Elijah and family left their home "on the back of Grandpa Thaxton's lot" in Mount Carmel for their new home in Lovell, Wyoming. Goodbyes were difficult. James' granddaughter wrote: "The last we saw of Grandpa he was seated on a ditch bank crying. No wonder dad's heart was heavy as lead. He never saw his parents again." (*Goodrich, p. I-12*).

That same year, James applied for a pension for his service in the Indian Wars. (*Application no. 7820; widow's application no. 9582.*) James W. Thaxton, aged 72, post office Mt. Carmel, Kane County, Utah, declared that he was enrolled 01 Jul 1853, "Volunteers called out by Gov Brigham Young under command of Captain Warren Snow in the Utah Indian war of 1853," and was honorably discharged at Manti, Utah, on 01

Dec 1853. James stated that, since leaving the service, he had lived in the state of Utah, and that his occupation had been that of a farmer.

As part of the application process, on 13 Feb 1903, James answered questions put forth by the Bureau of Pensions:

1. When were you born? Aug 22 1830 Fulton County Illinois
2. Where were you born? Fulton County Illinois
3. When did you enlist? December 1853
4. Where did you enlist? Farmington Davis Co Utah
5. Where had you lived before you enlisted? Farmington Utah
6. What was your post-office address before you enlisted? Farmington.
7. What was your occupation at enlistment? Blacksmith.
8. When were you discharged? About June 1st 1854.
9. Where were you discharged? Manti Sanpete County Utah.
10. Where have you lived since discharge? Came to Washington County in 1861 and have lived there and in Kane County ever since
11. What is your present occupation? Unable to do any work
12. What is your height? 6 feet [blank] inches. Your weight? 200 lbs. The color of your eyes? Brown. The color of your hair? Brown. Your complexion? Dark. Are there any permanent marks or scars on your person? If so, describe them. Tumor on right shoulder.
13. What is your full name? Please write it on the line below, in ink, in the manner in which you are accustomed to sign it, in the presence of two witnesses who can write. James William Thaxton (X - his mark). Witnesses: R. W. Jolley, Harve Moncur. Date: feb 13, 1903.

James answered additional questions about his family:

1. Are you a married man? If so, please state your wife's full name, and her maiden name. Yes, her maiden name is Hellen Everet.
2. When, where, and by whom were you married? July 15th 1855 Elijah Everet J. P. Manti Sanpete Co Utah
3. What record of marriage exists? none
4. Were you previously divorced? no
5. Have you any children living? If so, please state their names and the dates of their birth. Yes 7, James W Jr. Elijah R. Mary Ann George H, Stephen W Emma S Hellen M.  
Date of reply, feb 13th, 1903. James W Thaxton

James Thaxton died in Mount Carmel a few months later, 25 Jun 1903. (*Register of deaths, Kane County*). His widow continued the effort to obtain a pension, submitting an application from Mrs. Helen M. Thaxton, Mt. Carmel, Kane County, Utah, aged 73. She stated that she was the widow of James W. Thaxton, who was a private in the company commanded by John D. Chase in the Territory of Utah, 1853, in Sanpete Co. Utah. She stated that her maiden name was Helen Marion Averett, and that she was married to James W. Thaxton on 15 Jul 1855 at Manti in Sanpete County, Utah Territory, by Elijah Averett a justice of the peace. She declared that James W. Thaxton died the 26 day of June, 1903, at Mt. Carmel, Utah, where she currently resided. The pension was denied for insufficient proof of James' service.

Helen Averett Thaxton died 12 Dec 1916. They had ten children:

Cherrizade Bernice Thaxton - 07 May 1856 - 29 May 1882. She married Alfred A. Misner.

James William Thaxton, Jr. "Jim" - 16 Mar 1858 - 09 Jan 1931. Jim never married.

Elijah Richard Thaxton - 14 Apr 1860 - 05 Nov 1931. He married Olive Maria Lemmon.

Mary Ann Thaxton - 02 Sep 1862 - 30 Jul 1934 . Mary married Alma Millett.

Elizabeth Augusta Thaxton - 13 Nov 1865 - 07 Dec 1897. She married George T. Jennings.

George Henry Thaxton - 15 Feb 1867 - 24 Feb 1929. George married Annie Maria Todd.

Helen Marion Thaxton - 04 Nov 1869 - 03 Feb 1929. Helen married Harvey V. Moncur.

Stephen Williamson Thaxton - 28 Nov 1871 - 16 Aug 1949. Stephen married Sarepta Angeline Jolley, and later Signora Hansen.

Emma Sophronia Thaxton - 17 Feb 1873 - 18 Oct 1932. Emma married Milton Manning Jolley.

\* \* \* \* \*

**RICHARD CANTLEY THAXTON (< Williamson < Thomas)**

**of Davis Co., Utah**

Richard Cantley Thaxton, son of Williamson Thaxton and Mary Ann Sherry, was born 04 Jan 1837 in Monroe Co., Missouri. Richard moved with his mother and step-father to Pottawatomie Co., Iowa, and from there to Utah in 1852. Richard and family settled in Farmington, Davis County.

In 1855, Richard was re-baptized by Abraham Rose (who later married Richard's mother). He was confirmed the same date by Ira Oviatt, who had lived near Richard's family in Iowa, and M. G. Wilson. (*Record of Members, Book A, p. 78*).

During the Civil War, Richard enlisted in the 3rd Regiment of California Infantry. (Although this was designated as a California unit, it had early been dispatched to Utah in 1862 to protect the territory.) Richard enlisted 18 May 1864 at Camp Douglas, Utah, where the regiment was stationed much of the war, primarily providing protection for the overland mail service.

Richard's enlistment is particularly interesting because of a longstanding public dispute between Col. Patrick Connor, commander of Camp Douglas and the soldiers

stationed there, and Brigham Young, leader of the LDS Church. Throughout the War years, Connor and Young fought a bitter war of words, through writings in Connor's camp newspaper *The Union Vidette* and discourses by Young. (*Brigham Madsen, Glory Hunter: A Biography of Patrick Edward Connor, 1991.*)

After transferring from Company C to Company B of the Third Infantry, Richard was reported to have "deserted from camp while en route for Camp Douglas, U. T., Oct. 13, 1865." (Records of California Men in the War of the Rebellion, 1861 to 1867, pp. 542, 552). In actuality, the Regiment had essentially completed its service, and disbanded shortly after returning from Denver.

We have not located Richard in the 1870 or 1880 censuses. On May 16, 1882, Richard married Mary Rebecca Martin in Davis Co., Utah. Mary was a daughter of George Douglas Martin and Sarah Watton. (Sarah Watton was a daughter of James Watton and his first wife, Selina Humphreys.) Mary was born 27 Jan 1856 in St. Louis, Missouri, and had moved to Utah less than two years before her marriage. (*Family records; 1880 St. Louis MO, Dist. 94*).

Richard was a member of the 56th Quorum of the Seventy within the LDS Church. He died at Mount Carmel, Kane Co., Utah, 14 Feb 1900. (*Family records*). In the census taken in April of that year, Mary and son Arden were residing with her mother Sarah in Salt Lake City. Mary died 17 Mar 1918. The *Davis County Clipper* of 29 Mar 1918 reported her death:

Mrs. Mary Thaxton of Farmington died at the Salt Lake county infirmary a week ago Sunday, and was buried in the Farmington Cemetery on Wednesday of last [week]. She was in her 63rd year and had been a helpless invalid for several years, and the last ten months she had been in the infirmary.

Richard Cantley Thaxton and Mary Rebecca Martin had one child, Arden Martin Thaxton. Arden was born 18 Jun 1883 in Farmington, Davis County. (Record of Members, Farmington; Genealogical Record of Arden Martin Thaxton in Records & Historical Sketches of Residents of Davis County, Utah). In 1916, Arden Martin described his background as follows:

My parents were Americans descendants of English parentage. I don't meddle with Politics very much, I am a Socialist if anything. I was born and raised a Latter Day Saint. My occupation at present is an Elevator constructor. I have never been a user of tobacco, tea coffee or intoxicating drinks. I was born in Farmington my [family] moved to Salt Lake. I didn't have the chance to attend school only about four years. Due to circumstances I went to work at thirteen years of age. . . .

(Historical Sketch, Arden Martin Thaxton, *Records & Historical Sketches of Residents of Davis County, Utah*, Part 8, comp. 1916).

Arden Martin Thaxton married Olive Lavinia Carr. Arden and Olive continued to live in Utah for many years, moving to California prior to their deaths. Olive died 02 Feb 1951 at Monterey Park in Los Angeles Co., California. She was buried in Farmington, Utah. (*Obituary; gravestone*). Arden died 25 Mar 1960 at San Gabriel, California, and was buried in Farmington. (*Id.*)