

# Reuben and Rebecca Vermillion

By David Dennis

## Introduction

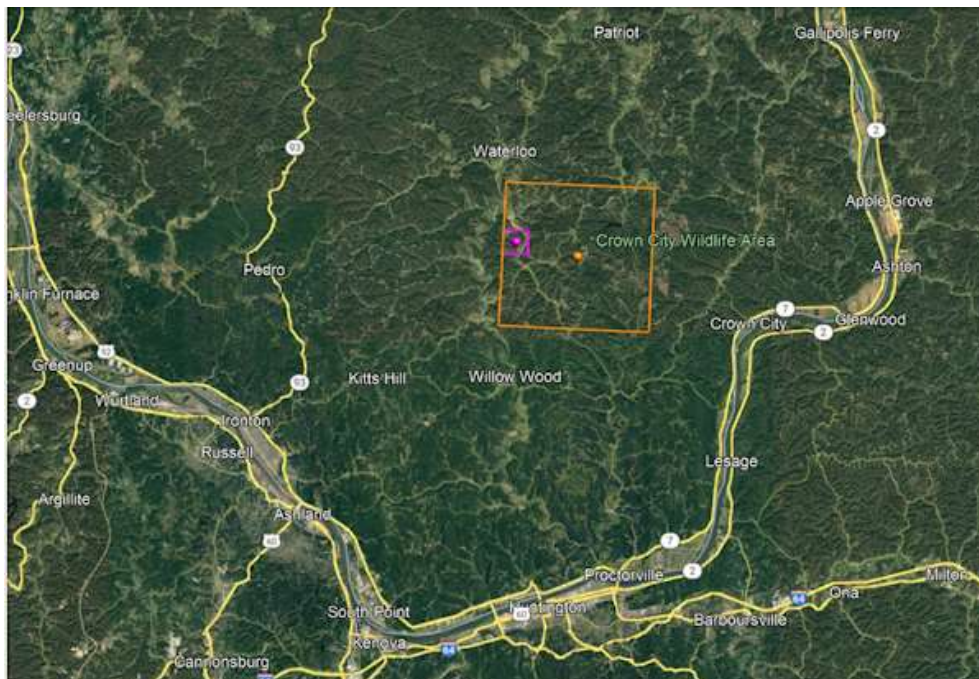
Reuben and Rebecca Vermillion are my 3rd great grandparents, and the parents of my 2nd great grandmother Elizabeth. As I began to research my genealogy, the facts in their lives began to unfold in ways that left me fascinated, and so I am writing a biography to put my studies into print and to preserve them for others that are interested. So here are their lives, as best as I can piece together from historical documents.

## Their Early Days

Reuben's father was Uriah Vermillion. I have seen two different middle names for him: Zachariah and Joseph. He was probably born in Piscataway, Prince George's, Maryland. (There is one source that said he was born in Ireland and came to America about 1782, but I have found a revolutionary war record for him, so I am guessing that this was not true.) Uriah served in Company G of the 11th battalion of Prince Georges County, Maryland in 1781.

As the war was drawing to its conclusion, Uriah married Susannah Barker on March 16, 1783. Susannah was born on March 23, 1761 in Loudoun County, Virginia. Of this union, about 10 children were born, the youngest of which was Reuben Vermillion.

Reuben was probably born in 1800, in Greenbriar, Virginia (which is now West Virginia). (Some records suggest he was born in 1798, but that date would conflict with the age listed on all his census records.) His mother died soon after his birth. Uriah quickly remarried a widow: Elizabeth Shumate (her maiden name) Peters (her married name). They were married on Feb 24, 1803. Elizabeth was likely the only mother that Reuben knew. Some time between 1808 and 1812, his father and stepmother moved the family to Lawrence, County, Ohio, where Uriah filed for land in 1816. Lawrence County is in the far southern tip of Ohio. It is closer to Huntington, West Virginia and Ashland, Kentucky than to any city in Ohio.



Rebecca's father, Henry Compston (or Cumpston) was born on Jan 19, 1768. On July 31, 1784, he married Hester (or Esther) Delaplaine (born on July 31, 1787 in Berkeley, Virginia). As parents, they lived in Greene Co, Pennsylvania, where all their children were born. Henry died in 1810 in Pennsylvania when Rebecca was about 6 years old. Rebecca was their youngest child, born in 1804.

Some time between 1810 and 1820, Hester moved to Lawrence County, Ohio. The 1820 census shows her residence right next to that of John Vermillion, Reuben's older brother.

### **Two Vermillion Weddings in Lawrence County**

John married Elizabeth Compston (born in 1798) on January 23, 1820. Elizabeth was Rebecca's older sister. Just 17 days later, on February 10, Reuben married Rebecca.

The 1820 census (August 7 1820) shows Reuben and Rebecca living alone together in Rome Township, Lawrence Co, Ohio.

In Lawrence County, the following children were born to them.

Lucinda Vermillion born in 1821  
Levi Isaac Vermillion born in 1823  
Malinda (or Melinda) Vermillion born in 1824  
Uriah Vermillion born in 1825

### **Reuben and Rebecca in Vermillion County**

In about 1828, they moved to Vermillion County, Illinois, (which was named after the Vermillion River and not the Vermillion family). Two more children were born to them there.

Nicodemus Vermillion born in 1829  
Rueben (or Ruben) Vermillion Jr born in 1831

Some family trees of Reuben's life suggest that he was in Vermillion County, Indiana, rather than Illinois. But with only one exception the census records for Nicodemus and Reuben Jr all show them both being born in Illinois. The civil war records of Nicodemus and Reuben also indicate they were born in Illinois.

### **Pastor Reuben and Rebecca Vermillion in Missouri**

Some time between 1831 and 1834, they moved again to Webster County, Missouri, where they added two more children to their growing family.

Zachariah Vermillion born in 1834  
John H Vermillion born in 1836 or 1837

Several records (some of which are posted on pages 12-13) indicate that Reuben Vermillion was a

Baptist preacher for 40 years. If that is true, then his ministry would have started at about this time. I believe it is true, because a mention of ministry is found in so many accounts. However, I do not think that Reuben was trained as a minister, or was ordained as one. There is no record of him ever receiving formal training. Every census record shows him to be a farmer. And I found no record of him officiating any of the weddings of his sons and daughters. I believe instead that Reuben was a deeply devout farmer who took his relationship with God seriously. As he moved his family further west, he found very small communities with no churches and no Christian leaders. So he stepped into the role of leadership and helped lead Christian communities which grew into churches.

In about 1838, Reuben and Rebecca moved to Barry County. Also in 1838, their oldest daughter Lucinda married Joseph Dennis (in Barry County) and moved with him to Taney County. Joseph was one of the 10 children of William Dennis. The Dennis clan had settled in Flat Creek Township, Taney County (in an area that would later become Stone County, just to the east of Barry County. The Dennis's and the Vermillions would have many more connections in the years to come.

And let me say this about Joseph and Lucinda (Vermillion) Dennis. It seems to me that they must have had warm and loving relationships with those around them. Nearly all their relatives were drawn to them, and willing to follow them to new homes and new lands. Lucinda moved to Flat Creek Township, Taney County, and two of her siblings (Levi and Malinda) soon followed. Later, in 1856, she and her husband moved to Laclede County. Within six years, her parents, with their youngest children (Isaac, Rebecca and Clarinda) followed. So, also, did some of Lucinda's adult siblings: Nicodemus, Reuben Jr. and Zachariah. All of Joseph Dennis's living siblings also moved to Laclede County by 1860 (Sarah Barker, Axey Stone, John Dennis, Cary Dennis and Peter Dennis). Nearly all of these people moved to within five miles of Lucinda and Joseph Dennis. Two more of Lucinda's siblings, Joseph and Zachariah Vermillion, joined them by 1870.

But let's go back to 1838 with Reuben and Rebecca Vermillion in Barry County. Barry County is in the southwest of Missouri, bordering Arkansas on the south, with only one other county between it and Missouri's western border. Reuben lived in the far north of the county, which would later become part of Lawrence County.

In 1838, Rebecca gave birth to Joseph Edward Vermillion.

The 1840 census lists Reuben and Rebecca in Mt. Pleasant, Barry Co, Missouri

Males under 5 - 2 [John, Joseph]  
Males 5-9 - 2 [Reuben Jr, Zachariah]  
Males 10-14 - 2 [Uriah, Nicodemus]  
Males 15-19 - 1 [Levi]  
Males 40-49 - 1 [Reuben Sr]  
Females 10-14 - 1 [Malinda]  
Females 30-39 - 1 [Rebecca]

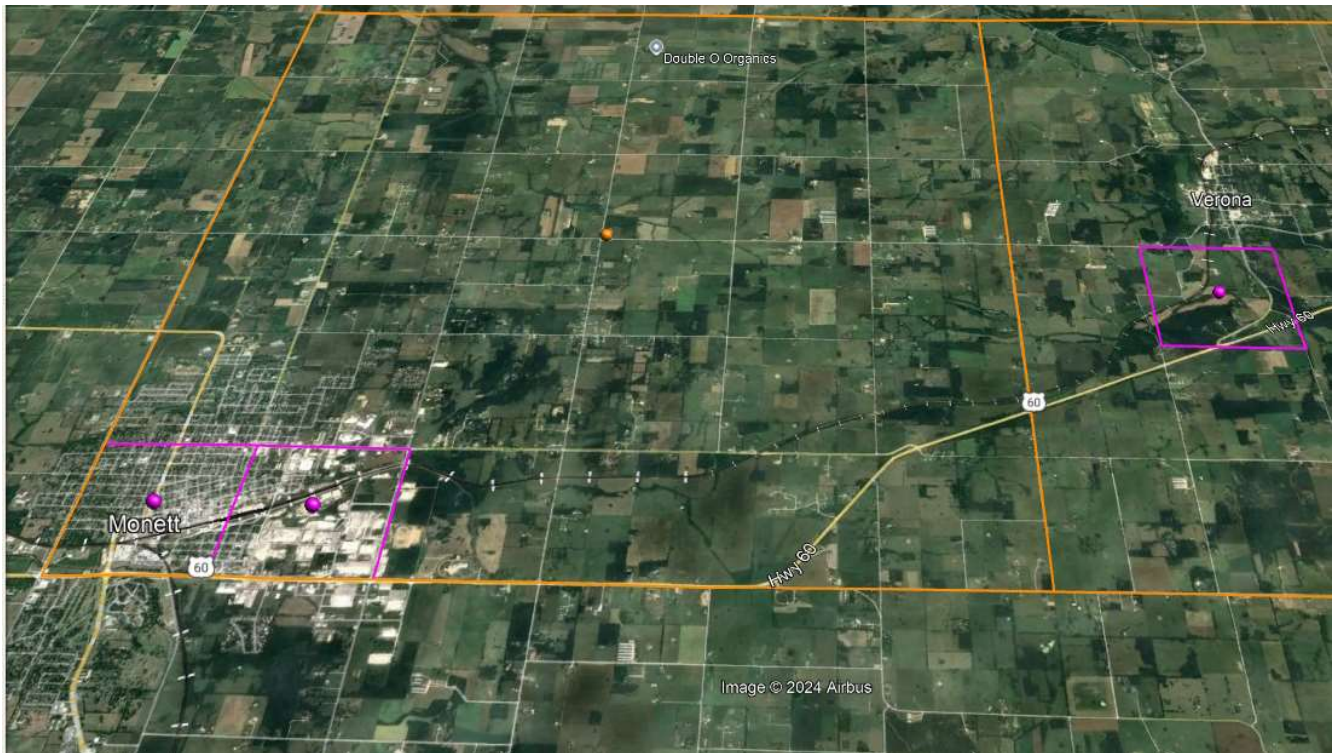
Mt. Pleasant was the first county seat in Barry County. It was located near present day Pierce city, a little to the northwest of Reuben's residence. Here, two more children were born.

Elizabeth Vermillion born in 1840  
Isaac Vermillion born in 1843

It is at this time that we first have a record of Reuben owning land. On September 10, 1844, he filed

four certificates of registration at the General Land Office in Springfield, Missouri. All told he laid claim to 320 acres of land in what was Barry County (but is now part of Lawrence County). Three of the certificates were for land that is now in the city of Monett. The fourth one is further east, near Verona. (Monett was not a city or town at the time. It was created more than 25 years later as a railroad town by the St. Louis–San Francisco Railway (Frisco Line), which was extended into the area in 1870.)

The land for which Reuben filed can be found within in the three purple squares on the map below.



After filing for this land in Barry County, Reuben and Rebecca gave birth to the last two of their 13 children.

Rebecca Vermillion born in 1845  
Clarinda Vermillion born in 1849

In Sept 17, 1846, Levi married Evelyn "Martha" Scott, and moved to Flat, Taney County, Missouri where his sister Lucinda lived.

On October 29, 1846, Malinda married George Washington King in Barry County. By 1850, they also moved to Flat Creek, Taney County.

The 1850 census shows Reuben and Rebecca's family in District 5 Barry Co, MO. Listed are the following:

Reuben Vermillion 50  
Rebecca Vermillion 46  
Nichodemus 21  
Zechariah 16

John 13  
Joseph 11  
Elizabeth 10  
Isaac 7  
Rebecca 5  
Clarinda 2 or 1

Uriah and his wife are also listed in the 1850 District 5 Barry County census. They are the next entry after Reuben's.

Lucinda, Levi and Malinda all lived with their spouses in Flat Creek, Taney County in the 1850's census.

On Jan 2, 1851, Nicodemus married Melinda Evans.

On April 11, 1854, John Vermillion married Mary Smith.

On Sept 13, 1855 Zachariah married Mary J Holabaugh.

About 1856 Lucinda and Joseph Dennis moved to Laclede county.

August 27, 1857, (on her birthday) Elizabeth married Martin Van Buren Watson

Oct 18, 1857 Joseph married Rebecca Seamonds (Garrison)

In 1859, Reuben sold his land in Barry County, and moved to Laclede County, Missouri, northeast of Springfield.

I don't know for sure why they made the move. There was much unrest in the southern and eastern border counties in the years leading up to the civil war, especially amid the beginnings of the border war. Several of Reuben's sons and daughters chose to stay in Barry County. Reuben's oldest daughter, Lucinda (who had married Joseph Dennis) had previously made the move to Laclede.

### **The 1860 Census**

In his household in the 1860 census in Union Township, Laclede County, were Reuben, Rebecca, and their three youngest children, Isaac, Rebecca and Clarinda.

Of his grown children, Nicodemus Vermillion (30), Reuben Vermillion Jr (29), Zachariah Vermillion (26) and Lucinda Dennis (39) all moved to Union Township, Laclede County. Elizabeth Watson (21) lived in Williams, Stone Co, Mo with husband Martin Watson (24) and daughter Jenette (4 months). Malinda King (36) was still in Flat Creek Township, Stone County (formerly Taney County). Uriah Vermillion (35), Levi Vermillion (37) and Joseph Vermillion (22) still lived in Barry County. John Vermillion (23) lived in nearby Spring River, Lawrence County, MO

### **The Civil War Years**

The civil war hit Reuben and his family pretty hard. In the years leading up to it, they lived in the area where the Border War was fought. Guerrilla groups that were pro-slavery (called bushwhackers) and anti-slavery (called Jayhawkers) terrorized settlers throughout eastern Kansas and southwestern Missouri. As I mentioned before, that may have been what caused Reuben and some of his adult children to move to Laclede County.

Of Reuben's sons, Levi, Uriah, Nicodemus, Reuben Jr, John and Joseph all enlisted in the civil war. The husbands of Lucinda, Malinda, Elizabeth and Rebecca also fought in the war. For all of these men, I found civil war records, or records of their widows or children filing for civil war pensions.

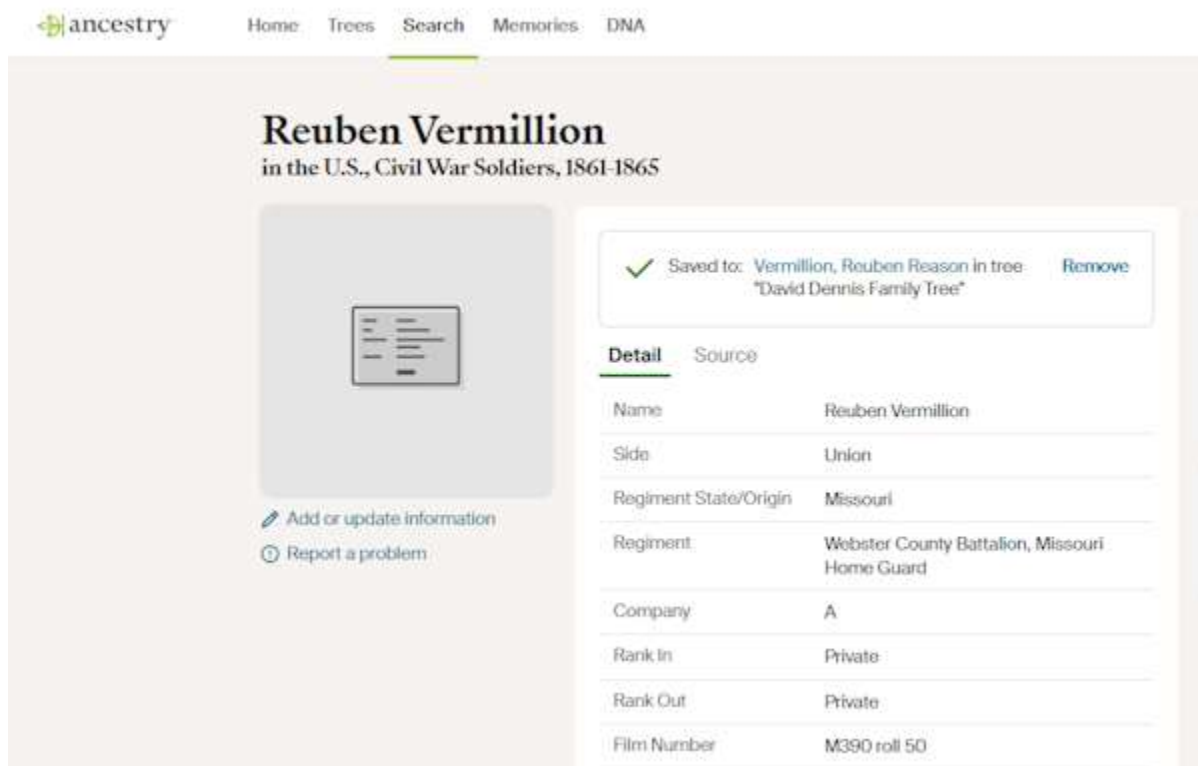
Some of Reuben's sons enlisted in the Missouri Home Guard in 1871. The Missouri Home Guard was formed by General Lyons to stay at their homes and be available to guard and fight in their own neighborhoods. (Many of the Missouri Home Guard fought in the Wilson Creek Battle in 1871.)

Elizabeth's husband, Sargent Martin Van Buren Watson died from disease while in service.

Uriah Vermillion died during the civil war years (1863), as did Malinda's husband George W King (1862). I have no knowledge of what caused their deaths, though it may very well have been war related. It is possible they died in bushwhacker attacks. Bushwhackers often attacked the homes of union sympathizers in southwestern Missouri, killing the men but not the women.

Joseph Dennis, Lucinda's husband died very soon after the war in 1868. I do not know if his death was war related.

There are some that believe that Reuben Vermillion, at the age of 61, enlisted in in the Webster County Battalion, Missouri Home Guard in the civil war. There is a record of a Reuben Vermillion enlisting, but I believe it refers to his son, Reuben Vermillion, Jr. Rueben Jr was a blacksmith, and we know that he served as a blacksmith and shod horses for the Union.



The screenshot shows the Ancestry.com profile for Reuben Vermillion. The profile title is "Reuben Vermillion" with the subtitle "in the U.S., Civil War Soldiers, 1861-1865". There is a placeholder for a photo and a document icon. Below the photo are links for "Add or update information" and "Report a problem". To the right, there is a "Detail" section with a table of information.

Detail	Source
Name	Reuben Vermillion
Side	Union
Regiment State/Origin	Missouri
Regiment	Webster County Battalion, Missouri Home Guard
Company	A
Rank In	Private
Rank Out	Private
Film Number	M390 roll 50

Other things that happened in that decade include:

About 1863, Nichodemus moved to Mt Vernon, Lawrence Co, MO

About 1863, Zachariah's wife Mary died and he married Catherine Burton Parker. They moved to Laclede County.

In 1865, Reuben's daughter Rebecca married John Cook Shields.

On March 5, 1868 Clarinda married William Breedlove Shields (the brother of Rebecca's husband) and moved to Norwood, Wright Co, Missouri.

About 1868, Rebecca Shields and her husband move to Ozark, Webster, Missouri

On April 9, 1868, Martha Scott, the wife of Levi, died.

On June 13, 1869, Levi Vermillion married Sarah Evaline Dollar in Laclede Co, Missouri

### The Terrible Tornado

Nearly everyone who has researched the life of Reuben Reason Vermillion knows of the tornado which caused his death. As I researched it, I found that several commonly believed aspects of the story are not true.

By 1870, all of Reuben's younger children had grown up and moved out of the household. The 1870 census was enumerated on August 30, 1870 and shows 5 residents: Reuben, Rebecca, Elizabeth Watson, Elizabeth's daughter Jenette, and a 13 year old boy named Joseph Vermillion.

Age	Name	Sex	Occupation	Value	Value	Birthplace	Married	Single	Widowed	Divorced	Other	
32	Eveline	F	Farmer		200	England						
33	Green Berry	M	Farmer			Tennessee					1	
34	Elizabeth	F	Keeping house			Tennessee			1			
35	Sarah E.	F				Tennessee						
36	Vermillion Reuben	M	Farmer	1200	415	Virginia					1	
37	Rebecca	F	Keeping house			Pennsylvania			1			
38	Joseph	M	Works on farm			Missouri		1	1			
39	Watson Elizabeth	F			140	Missouri						
40	Jenette	F				Missouri		1	1			
No. of dwellings, 9							No. of white females, 4		No. of males, foreign born, 1		No. of insane, 1	
" " families, 9							" " colored males, 0		" " females, " "		" " blind, 0	
									7		5	
											13	
											9	

Of interest is the identity of Joseph Vermillion (who broke his leg in the tornado). He lived with Reuben and is listed in Reuben's home in the census at age 13 as one who "works on farm." Reuben had a son named Joseph, but he was born in 1838, which would make him about 32 at the time so this does not refer to him. Reuben's son, Reuben Vermillion Jr (which is often spelled Ruben Vermillion) had a son named Joseph who was 13 years old at the time. Young Joseph is listed in the 1860 census as

living with Reuben Jr, but is not listed in that household in the 1870 census. It's likely, then, that, since Reuben Sr was at least 70 years old, Joseph was sent to help his grandfather out on the farm.

Elizabeth Watson and her daughter Jenette are also listed in Reuben's household. Elizabeth was one of Reuben and Rebecca's daughters. She had married Martin Watson in 1857, and they had a daughter, Jenette, probably in 1860. (Jenette is listed as 12 years old, but more likely she was 10. She is listed as 4 months old in the 1860 census.) Martin died in the civil war, and Elizabeth (along with Jenette) moved back in with her father.

### The Newspaper Article About the Tornado

There is a portion from a newspaper account of the tornado which has been floating around ancestry websites for some time. The article was first published in The Lebanon Chronicle. I have been unable to find an online copy of The Lebanon Chronicle and therefore do not know the original date in which the story was published.) It was republished in the True Latter Day Saints Herald on April 15, 1871. It can be found in Volume 8, pp. 252-254 at <http://www.latterdaytruth.org/pdf/100185.pdf>. I am including the article in it's entirety here.

#### Terrific Tornado.

A terrific tornado, which sent terror into many households, and proved to be the most destructive of any storm that ever visited this section of the State passed through our county, coming in at the southwest corner and passing diagonally across the county, Tuesday night. We have been unable to obtain full particulars of the destruction, but learned that on Brush Creek, in the Turner settlement, several farm houses and other buildings were blown to atoms and one family—Mr. Vermillion's—nearly destroyed. A grand daughter, Miss Watson, about twelve years of age was killed instantly, the old gentleman and his wife severely injured, by falling timbers. Mr. Vermillion died yesterday and Mrs. V., is not expected to recover. Mr. Sanford Turner's and a Mr. Dennis' houses were entirely demolished. Miss Rebecca Vermillion had an arm and her right leg broken and her side badly injured; she is not expected to live. Elizabeth Watson had a shoulder blade fractured and was badly cut in the face, thigh and ankle. The family tried to escape but could not get the door open; the house, a frame, which they were in was carried about fifty yards. Joseph Vermillion, a boy of thirteen years was carried two hundred yards and had a leg broken. A boy by the name of John Bohannon had a leg broken. Joseph Layman, S. J. Beck, Mason Lawson, Eli Kennedy, Widow Benson, Alex. Lowrance and John Bohannon had their houses blown away. William Catlin was carried in his house one hundred yards, when he and the house separated, and when coming to his senses found himself in a field one hundred yards further. Several of the largest trees

in that vicinity were blown three hundred yards. Samuel Dennis lost the top of his house and had two horses killed. Nearly all of the families in the houses above referred to were more or less injured. Several other houses were blown to pieces—the names of the owners we did not learn.

The storm seemed to take range of about a quarter of a mile wide; it passed north-easterly, uprooting, blowing down and breaking down all forest trees that stood in the way. Many of the trees were from two to three feet in diameter. The storm crossed the railroad this side of Stoutland. The destruction of forest trees can be seen near the road a couple of miles this side of that village. It passed about half a mile east of Lebanon. The only damage we hear of in this vicinity was the destruction of Jas. W. Appling's barn. Very fortunately for the town people they were spared the destruction that would have been inevitable had the storm come half a mile further west. The loss would have been terrible, for the town happens to be strung out parallel with the storm track nearly two miles.

The storm was accompanied by a very heavy rain, connected with which is one of the most wonderfully strange freaks of nature, if we may call it such, we ever heard of. We speak of the deposit of sulphur left upon the ponds, tubs, barrels and all places out of doors where water was found standing the next morning. Such places, and even some pieces of boards laying around, were covered with a yellow substance having the appearance, smell, and many say the taste of sulphur. Several families had to throw away the water, in their tubs and barrels, which they had caught for washing, so great was the sulphur deposits. In small ponds, which were increased by the excessive fall of water, this deposit was noticed to a great extent, the edges of the banks being thickly coated with the sulphur, having been left when the water receded. This is no sensation or nonsense but is known to nearly if not all of our citizens in and around the town. Whether the sulphur deposit was left in other places we are not advised, not having had time to make inquiry. Will some of the scientific men of the country explain the cause of this sulphur deposit?—*Lebanon, (Mo), Chronicle.*

FAITH is the blessed tree which produces the noble and priceless fruits of wisdom, virtue and true felicity.

This article was published in the "True Latter Day Saints Herald" on April 15, 1871. It can be found in volume 8, pp 252-254 at <http://www.latterdaytruth.org/pdf/100185.pdf>

Let me say just a few words about this publication. It was a semi-monthly magazine published by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. This is not the Mormon church that is

headquartered in Salt Lake City, Utah. This is a separate Mormon movement which stood in opposition to the Salt Lake group. (The issue that contains the tornado article begins with an attack on polygamy and on Brigham Young.) They were headquartered in Independence, Missouri, and were led Joseph Smith III, one of the original Mormon movement founder's sons. (They are now known by the name The Community of Christ.)

The magazine is entirely dedicated to instruction in spiritual things. (I searched this issue, and the two before it and the two after it.) I found no secular articles in the magazine, nor stories quoted from other publications. This article is the exception. So why did they choose to print it? I believe a clue can be found elsewhere in the magazine, on p. 241, where these words are written:

**We print elsewhere an account of a terrific tornado passing over Laclede Co., Missouri; read it.**

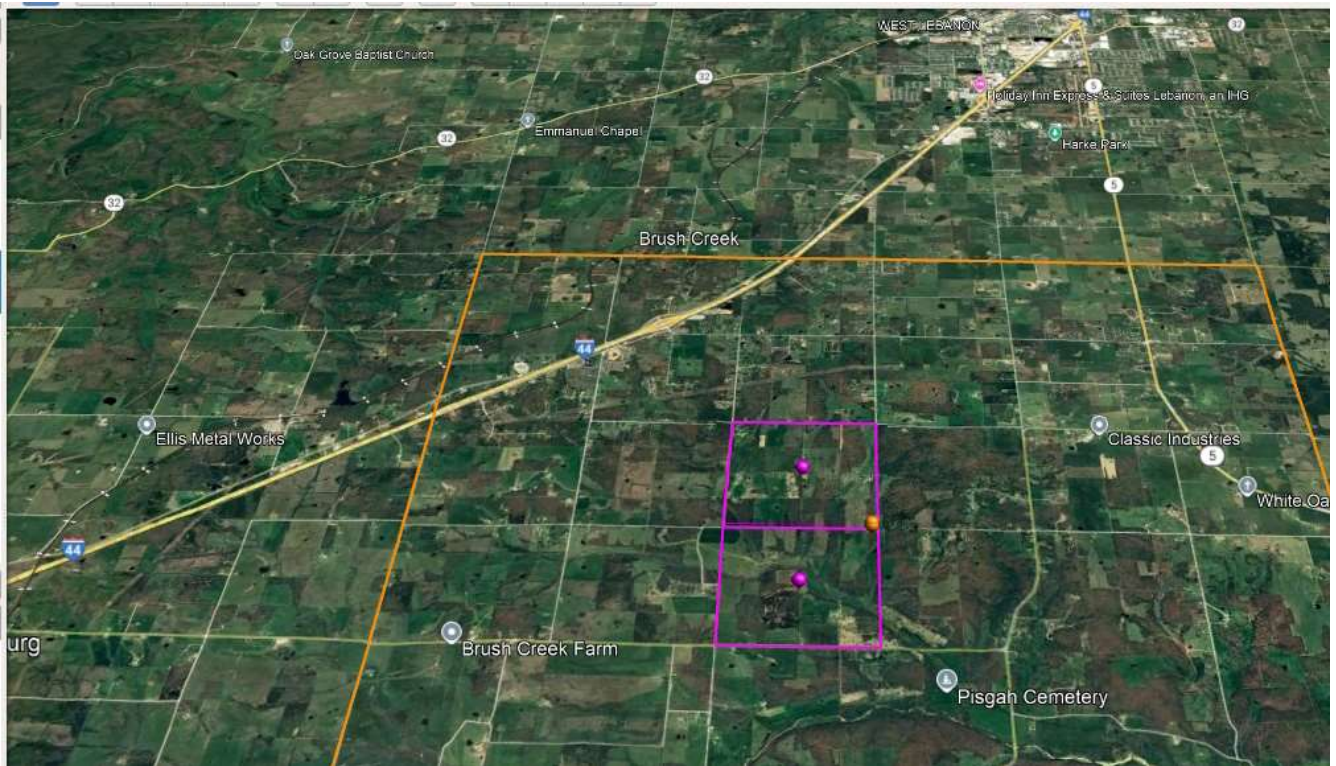
**In one of these terrible storms lately occurring at East St. Louis, Illinois, so strong was the wind, that a locomotive was lifted from the track and thrown down the embankment, without disturbing the track upon which it stood and from which it was hurled. Just think of the force that was required to lift a thirty ton engine from the ground in that way.**

**Surely the Lord with his mighty helps could turn the earth upside down, and make it utterly desolate."**

It is my best guess, then, that the authors of this magazine saw the story as an opportunity to instruct their readers as to the awesome power of God, who "could turn the earth upside down and make it utterly desolate."

It is also my guess that the publishers could have published the story about the East St Louis tornado, but chose to use this story instead because it was recent and more local, therefore of more interest to the readers.

Now let's talk about the news story. It talks about the tornado on Brush Creek, in the Turner settlement. Land records (found in Reuben's probate file) show that Reuben's land lay in Laclede County almost due east of Phillipsburg and south and a little west of Lebanon. Brush Creek runs east and west just south of it. It is the wavy line just south of Pisgah Cemetery on the map. [Reuben's land lay within the two purple squares.]



The story mentions Mr. Sanford Turner (for whom the Turner settlement was probably named), who, along with a Mr. Dennis, completely lost their houses. Sanford Turner was probably a good friend of Reuben's, as he was later appointed as the administrator of Reuben's estate. It is likely that Mr. Dennis refers to John Dennis, the brother-in-law of Reuben's daughter Lucinda Dennis. John lived on land adjacent to Reuben. Joseph and Lucinda had also lived very close by, but Joseph died in 1868.

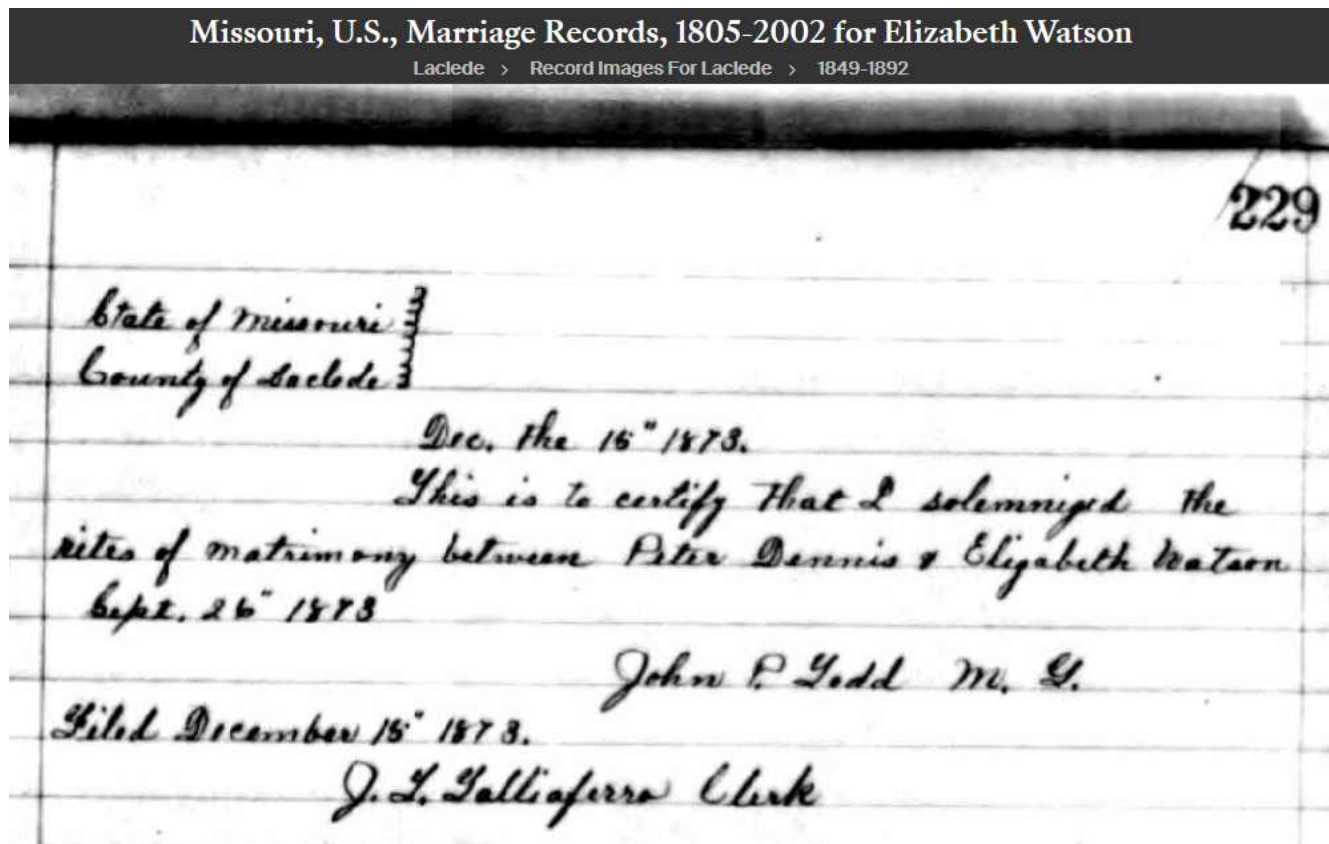
There can be no doubt that this tornado hits the home of Reuben Vermillion, even though it only mentions him by his last name. All of the people listed as part of Reuben's household in the 1870 census are mentioned in this account. It talks about a Mr. Vermillion, whose family is nearly destroyed, his wife, a 12 year old granddaughter, Miss [Jenette] Watson who was killed, and Elizabeth Watson and Joseph Vermillion, who were injured.

According to another historical account (found on page 12), Reuben was badly injured when "a large splinter was driven into his side, and he died a short time later." The news article said that his wife Rebecca was injured, and not expected to survive. Most family trees show that Rebecca died that day, but she did not. In the 1880 census, she (at age 77) is shown living with her oldest daughter, Lucinda Dennis (age 55).

1880 United States Federal Census for Rebecca Vermillion  
 Missouri > Laclede > Washington > 079

Line	Age	Name	Sex	Mar	Age	Relationship	Occupation	Value	Value	Value
16	33	Rebecca Vermillion	f	m	77	Mother	Washing	1	Ohio	Pa
17	44	Freeman	m	m	70		Washing	1	Virginia	Pa
18	55	Chapman	m	m	47		Farming	1	Missouri	Pa
19		Jessie	f	m	45	Wife	Washing	1	Missouri	Pa
20		Harry	m	m	26	Son	Farming	1	Missouri	Pa
21		Charles	m	m	18	Son		1	Missouri	Pa
22		Ann	f	m	7	Daughter		1	Missouri	Pa

Many family trees also show Elizabeth Watson as having died that year, but she did not. Here is proof that she married Peter Dennis (another of brother-in-law of Lucinda Dennis) on December 15, 1873.



I am especially grateful that Elizabeth did not die in the tornado. She gave birth to Carey Dennis (my great grandfather) on January 6, 1875. Elizabeth died in 1875, possibly in childbirth. Carey was her only child who lived to adulthood. I have written more about Elizabeth in an essay I call "The Tragic and Beautiful Story of Elizabeth Vermillion Watson Dennis." It can be found on the source page for Elizabeth Vermillion on my Ancestry.com page under my user name DGDennis.

Reuben's daughter Rebecca, who was born in 1845 is not the "Miss Rebecca Vermillion" who is mentioned as dying in the news account about the tornado. Reuben's daughter Rebecca married John Cook Shields in 1865, and is found in the 1870 census married to him, and having two children. Who, then, is the "Miss Rebecca Vermillion" who was injured in the tornado? I am uncertain. I do know that Reuben's son Zachariah lived in Laclede County at this time. He had a daughter named Rebecca who would have been about 7 years old at the time of the tornado. According to most family trees, she died in 1871, so she could very well have been the one killed in the tornado.


### The Date of the Tornado

There are at least three historical accounts that say that Reuben died in 1870. I am listing them here.

Home &gt; User Trees &gt; Max-E-Biggerstaff

## MY GENEALOGY HOME PAGE: INFORMATION ABOUT REUBEN VERMILLION

[Home Page](#) | [Surname List](#) | [Index of Individuals](#) | [Sources](#)

 [View Tree for Reuben Vermillion](#) **Reuben Vermillion (b. 1800, d. 1870)**

**Reuben Vermillion** (son of [Uriah Vermillion](#))<sup>4067, 4068</sup> was born 1800 in Greenbrier, Co., W.V.<sup>4069, 4070</sup>, and died 1870<sup>4071, 4072</sup>. He married (2) [Rebecca Compston](#) on February 10, 1820<sup>4073, 4074</sup>. He married (3) [Rebecca Compston](#) on February 10, 1820 in Lawrence Co. Ohio<sup>4075, 4076</sup>.

 [Includes Notes](#) Notes for **Reuben Vermillion**:

[New Biggerstaff Family.GED.FTW]

[New Biggerstaff Family File.ged]

About 1840 settled on land along Broadway Street, Monett, MO. Reuben came from Ohio where his son Uriah was born then through Marshall, MO. He came into possession of three hundred acres which he sold in 1859. Reuben then moved to Laclede Co., MO where he was killed in a storm in 1870. For many years, Reuben was a preacher in the Regular Baptist Church.

### REUBEN VERMILLION 731

Great Great Great Grand Father Reubin Vermillion was born 1800 in Va.

He married Feb. 10, 1820 to Rebecca Compston, before 1830. Reuben Sr. and his family migrated West, through Indiana & Illinois.

One son Reubin Jr. born in Vermillion Co. Ill.

Reuben Sr. and family was in Mo. 1835 or 1838. In 1840 he stacked a claim for land in Barry County Mo. and the farm covered what is now the site of the town of Monett Mo. Reubin was a Baptist preacher for over 40 years & was highly regarded in S. W. Mo. About 1859 he sold his farm & moved to near Lebanon, in Laclede County Mo. Where he remained until 1870, when he was fatally injured in a tornado. A large splinter was driven into his side, and he died a short time later.

*By: Neoma C. Barger  
203 S. Maples  
Versailles, Mo. 65084*

History of Newton, Lawrence, Barry and McDonald counties, Missouri. From the earliest time to the present

**Author**  
**Pages** 1,095  
**Language** English; eng; en  
**Publisher** Chicago, The Goodspeed publishing co.  
**Date** 1888  
**Location** Allen County Public Library; <http://www.acpl.lib.in.us/>  
**Subject** Missouri, Newton - History; Missouri, Lawrence - History; Missouri, Barry - History; Missouri, McDonald - History;

Reuben <input type="checkbox"/>	Vermillion <input type="checkbox"/>	Date or date-range	<input type="button" value="Search"/>
Place	Relatives' names <input type="checkbox"/>		

1052 BARRY COUNTY.

county, born in 1848. He is a son of Uriah and Matilda (Etheridge) Vermillion. Uriah Vermillion was born in Ohio in 1820, and was a farmer by vocation. When a boy he drove a yoke of oxen to Barry County, Mo., for his father, Reuben Vermillion, who settled where Monett is now located. The latter was a pioneer settler of the county, which at that time was an unbroken wilderness, teeming with wild animals and Indians. He became the owner of 320 acres of land, which he sold about 1859 and removed to Laclede County, Mo., where, about 1870, he was killed in a storm. He was highly esteemed in Southwest Missouri, and was a devoted Christian, having been a minister in the Regular Baptist Church for over forty years. He was the father of twelve children, five girls and seven boys. Uriah was his second child. He was reared on his father's farm, and after his marriage located near the old homestead. His death occurred in 1865. His wife was born in Tennessee, and died in 1874. They

All three of these accounts have four things in common. They tell us that Reuben settled in Barry County on land that became Monett, he was a Baptist preacher, he moved to Laclede Co in 1859, and he was killed in a tornado in 1870. They seem to be second or third hand accounts, written in the 20th century. The similarity in stories leads me to believe that they all came from one common source. Is it possible that the source was wrong about the date of the tornado?

The 1870 census which lists Reuben and his family alive was enumerated on August 30, 1870 so he was alive then. Tornadoes in Missouri typically happen in April, May and June. So it might be possible that the tornado that killed him happened in 1871. Also, the news article about the tornado that is quoted above came from the "True Latter Day Saints Herald" and was published on April 15, 1871. (That article credits the original story to the Lebanon, (Mo), Chronicle. But I have been unable to find any existing copies of that article.)

I have one other convincing piece of evidence that Reuben died in 1871. There is, in his probate file (which was filed in 1879) a promissory note (see below) signed by both Reuben Vermillion and Rebecca Vermillion (owing money to Elizabeth Watson). It is dated December 24, 1870. (Someone has suggested that the document might have been signed by Reuben Vermillion Jr, but this is unlikely because Reuben Jr lived in Stone County, Missouri in 1870.). The administrator of Reuben's estate believed it to be a genuine document signed by Reuben Sr, and set aside money from his estate to pay it back.

One day after date I  
promise to <sup>pay</sup> Elizabeth  
Watson the sum of one  
hundred and twenty three  
dollars drawing ten per cent  
interest from date  
negotiable and payable  
without deduction or dis  
count this 24 day of December  
1870  
Laclede County } Reuben <sup>his</sup> Vermillion  
Missouri } <sup>mark</sup>  
Rebecca <sup>his</sup> Vermillion }  
M. E. Warren <sup>mark</sup> } Witness

Based on these things, I believe Reuben had to have died between December 24, 1870 (when the note in probate was signed by Reuben) and April 15, 1871 (when the article was printed in the True Latter Day Saints Herald). Spring is the normal time for tornadoes, so I would guess it to be in late March or early April, 1871.

### Probate for Reuben

Even though Reuben died in 1870 or 1871, probate was not filed on his estate until 1879. I believe this is because his wife and family continued to live on and work his land until that time. It is from his probate records that I found the location of the lands that he owned in Laclede County. (Probate files for Reuben Vermillion are available for examination at the Lebanon-Laclede County Library. I obtained copies of all of them from there.)

# Application for Letters of Administration.

State of Missouri,

ss.

COUNTY OF Laclede

In the Matter of Reuben Vermillion's Estate.

Sanford Turner says, that to the best of his knowledge and belief, the names of the heirs of the said Reuben Vermillion deceased, and their places and residences, are respectively as follows:

Rebecca Vermillion widow, who resides in the County of Laclede, in the State of Missouri;

Levi Vermillion, who resides in the County of Laclede, in the State of Mo.;

John Vermillion, who resides in the County of Unknown, in the State of Mo.;

Lucinda Dennis & Joseph Vermillion, who resides in the County of Laclede, in the State of Missouri;

Isaac Vermillion, who resides in the County of Unknown, in the State of Texas;

Reuben Vermillion, who resides in the County of Unknown, in the State of Texas;

Zachariah Vermillion, who resides in the County of Unknown, in the State of Missouri;

Nick Vermillion, who resides in the County of Unknown, in the State of Mo.;

Rebecca Shields & Harinda Shields, who resides in the County of Dright, in the State of Mo.

~~and those others whose residence is not known to him~~  
That the said Reuben Vermillion died without a will;

that he will make a perfect inventory of, and faithfully administer all the estate of the deceased, and pay the debts as far as the assets will extend and the law direct, and account for and pay all assets which shall come to his possession or knowledge.

Subscribed and sworn to before me, this 14<sup>th</sup> day of April

Sanford Turner

A. D. 1879

[Signature]  
Clerk.

Also the heirs of Sarah Vermillion being about 20 persons and Malinda being unknown

The administrator of his will was Sanford Turner (the neighbor who lost his house during the tornado). Sanford listed Reuben's heirs as follows: (Information in brackets was unknown to Sanford Turner, but discovered by me.)

Rebecca Vermillion widow in Laclede Co [Another proof that Rebecca survived the tornado]  
Levi Vermillion in Laclede County  
John Vermillion residence unknown [but we know he was living in Lawrence Co, Missouri]  
Lucinda Dennis in Laclede County  
Joseph Vermillion in Laclede County  
Isaac Vermillion in unknown, Texas [Bosque County]  
Reuben Vermillion Jr in unknown, Texas [Wise County]  
Zachariah Vermillion in unknown, Missouri [Lawrence County]  
Nick Vermillion in unknown, Missouri [Nicodemus was in Barry Co MO or Bosque Co TX]  
Rebecca Shields in Wright County, Missouri  
Clarinda Shields in Wright County, Missouri  
Uriah Vermillion deceased  
Elizabeth Dennis deceased  
Malinda King residence unknown [Stone County, Missouri]

Reuben's estate value was \$423.62. This came from \$350 (for the sale of his land) and \$73.62 (for the rental of his land in 1879 and 1880 while the estate was in probate).

Expenses (such as back taxes, notice publications, attorney fees and also including an allowance of \$270.18 for the Elizabeth Watson loan) \$346.86

Balance to be divided by his heirs: \$76.76.

Sanford Turner did not take any payment for his work on Reuben's estate.



## **The Burial Place of Reuben Vermillion**

I believe that Reuben Vermillion was buried in Pisgah Cemetery in Laclede County. (It can be found on the map of Reuben's land on page 10) There is no proof of that, but I am convinced that he was buried there for the following reasons:

Pisgah Cemetery was started by John Dennis on land that he owned. (See history of John Dennis below). His land was nearly adjacent to Reuben's farm. The cemetery was used mostly as a family burying place. There are many family connections between the Vermillions and the Dennis clan, some of which are as follows:

John had a brother, Joseph Dennis, who was married to Reuben's oldest daughter Lucinda. They were married in Barry County in 1838, before either family moved to Laclede County. (Also, according to 1880 census records, Reuben's wife Rebecca lived with Lucinda Dennis after Reuben's death.)

John's youngest brother, Peter [my great great grandfather] married Reuben's daughter, Elizabeth Vermillion Watson in 1873.

John's daughter Martha Dennis married John Benton Vermillion, Reuben's grandson. Martha Vermillion died young, and was buried in a marked grave in Pisgah Cemetery.

Reuben's grandson, Joseph Vermillion (who was injured in the tornado), married Gilla Dennis, the daughter of Peter Dennis and his first wife Clarinda. They were married in 1875.

Dennis's and Vermillions knew each other before either family moved to Laclede County, and located very close to each other when they moved to Laclede. In view of the marriage unions between the two families and their close proximity in Laclede County, it seems that they were very closely bonded. It would be natural that Vermillions would be buried in the Dennis family burying grounds.

There are quite a few field stones (marking graves), as well as unmarked graves in Pisgah Cemetery. I believe that two of these are the graves of Reuben Vermillion and his wife Rebecca.

### The John Dennis Family

Because I did not have the privilege of knowing my great-grandfather, John Dennis, and his wife, Mary Catherine Melton Dennis, my great-grandmother, I write this Dennis history with loving thoughts of them and their family.

I have learned a few things about my great-grandparents from Frank Hill, grandson of John Dennis. I quote from his letters:

"John Dennis and his wife, Mary Catherine (Melton) Dennis, came to Stone County from Bedford

County, Tennessee. They lived in Camden County, Missouri, near old Linn Creek when they first moved to Missouri. They lived in a lean-to shed building and the children went barefoot all winter. In the spring they went to Stone County, Missouri.

"It is said that grandfather always ate with his hat on as was sometimes the custom in those days. It was thought to show authority. Grandmother, Mary Catherine, usually wore black clothing. She smoked a clay pipe. I can remember lighting her pipe for her. I probably took a puff from the pipe myself.

"The farm John Dennis owned before the Civil War was west of Galena, across a river. Louisa Dennis, first born of the John Dennis family, went to school five days a week. From Monday morning until Friday evening she stayed at Grandpa Melton's house. The Austin Melton family lived across the river from the Dennis farm. Friday afternoon Grandpa Dennis by the river with his skiff ready to bring Louisa across the river to her home."

On July 1, 1885, John Dennis bought land in Laclede County, Missouri; he wanted his family to live with him in this county. He wanted to be near his other brothers who now lived in Laclede County, Missouri. Eight children had been born to John and Mary Catherine in Stone County, Missouri. Two other children were born in Laclede County, Missouri.

John and Mary Catherine, when it became necessary, started a family cemetery on their new farm in Missouri; it is called "Pisgah Cemetery." I visited this cemetery in May, 1986, and saw the gravestone of John and Mary Catherine Dennis. Austin Melton, my great-grandfather, even though his grave is not marked, is buried there, too. It is a quaint little cemetery surrounded by chain link fence. A tall tree in the middle provides a nice shade. It is located in a small wooded area away from the farm home where there are lots of memories. Several of John's brothers are buried there with their families; also a sister, Axey Dennis, Stone, Reagan.

My husband and I had never been in Galena, Missouri, until May 20, 1986. I had been in correspondence with Ruth Asher for some time regarding the Dennis family. We were to meet Ruth, a Galena, Missouri, resident, at her home and then continue on to the Dennis farm.

The trip down the winding road to the Dennis farm was so exciting! Ruth would point out places of interest to us, and once she leaned over and said, "Sometimes you can see a wild turkey fly across the road in the turn ahead." Sure enough, it was as if she had it all arranged, for suddenly a wild turkey spread its wings in wild flight across the road. Just as quickly it was lost in the thicket of trees.

I am sure my great-grandfather had seen this hap-

pen many times, maybe as he and his family came home from church, or maybe they would be coming home from the country store with the wagon piled high with staples and feed for the stock.

We soon came to a bend in the road where the Dennis farm was located. The gate to the lane leading down to the house was locked so we sneaked through the barb wire fence.

Walking slowly down the lane to the farm, I soon saw the beautiful old farm land stretched out ahead. The green pasture went all the way to the famous James River which flowed in and around the farm. The bluffs along the river were heavy with fern and green brush. I also thought of this lane as being traveled often by the many friends and relatives of the Dennis family, and, of course, the faithful old family doctor.

So it was to this farm that John Dennis brought his bride, Mary Catherine Melton Dennis, in 1843.

I just wanted to touch something my grandmother had touched, so I touched the old root cellar door handle, thinking that Mary Catherine had opened this door so many, many times to store her fruit and vegetables in this safe place.

Walking back up the lane to the car, I left with the memory that John and Mary Catherine had been blessed with happiness and good fortune, so I leave these thoughts with you who read this family history of John and Mary Catherine Dennis.

by Kathleen Manning Calton

This article is taken from the  
History of Stone County Missouri,  
Stone County Missouri  
Historical Society

### Rebecca without Reuben

As was mentioned before, we find a 77 year old Rebecca Vermillion alive in the 1880 census. She is listed as "mother" in the household of Lucinda Dennis. That census was enumerated on June 23, 1880, so we know she was alive at that date. I would speculate that after the tornado, she continued to live on the land where she and Reuben had lived. When her health declined and she could no longer live alone, she moved in with her daughter Lucinda. It was then time to sell the property where they had lived, and that is my guess as to why Reuben's property did not go through probate until 1879. I have found no other mention of her after 1880, so I am supposing that she did not live long after.

### A Few Final Facts About the Family

In 1883, Nicodemus died in Pierce City, Lawrence County, Missouri.

On Aug 23 1886, Malinda King died in Cape Fair, Stone County, Missouri.

Levi died before 1895, as that was when his wife Sarah filed for civil war pension in Missouri.

Zachariah died after August 1895 in Mount Vernon, Lawrence Co, Missouri.

John Vermillion died on May 15, 1900 in Joplin, Jasper County, Missouri

The death of Lucinda Vermillion Dennis took place in Laclede County on February 15, 1908.

Isaac Vermillion died in Bosque County, Texas on June 14, 1909

Rubin Vermillion Jr died on February 28, 1913 in Aubrey, Denton Co, TX

Last of all, Joseph Vermillion died on May 19, 1918 in Brownington, Henry County, Missouri.

Reuben and Rebecca were amazing people, and they left behind an amazing legacy. They passed on their Christian faith and values to their children, and to their grandchildren. I believe that the wealth of information available about them is due to the fact they they were much loved and respected. They left behind 13 children, and (I think) 113 grandchildren. From them have come literally thousands of descendants who are part of the legacy of Reuben and Rebecca Vermillion.

### **Disclaimer and Request**

The story as I have told it here is factual to the best of my knowledge with a few of my guesses notated along the way. New sources come available every day, and there may be some older sources that I have overlooked. If you find any errors in anything I have written, or anything new I should include, please let me know. I can be reached at [photoguydave@msn.com](mailto:photoguydave@msn.com) or [davydicus@gmail.com](mailto:davydicus@gmail.com)

Sources that I have used that are not documented here can be found in my Ancestry.com account under the names of the people referred to. My account ID on Ancestry is DGDennis

And just for the record, I am the son of George Ralph Dennis, the son of Ralph Chester Dennis, the son of Carey Lafayette Dennis, the son of Peter Dennis and Elizabeth Vermillion Watson Dennis (who was injured, but not killed, in the tornado).

### **Acknowledgment**

I wish to acknowledge the help of Ally Dorris, the library historian at the Labanon-Laclede County Library for her help in obtaining the probate files, finding the location of Reuben's land, and first suggesting Pisgah Cemetery as a possible burial place for Reuben.