

Mormons in the Big Pigeon Area

Version 1 © 2018 by Robert A. Christiansen, updated by RAC 18 Jan '18.

The Mormon presence in Pottawattamie County, Iowa began in 1846. Forced to leave Nauvoo, Illinois and the surrounding area near the Mississippi River, three waves of Mormons travelled west across southern Iowa in 1846. Perhaps 10,000 individuals made this trek in 1846. Most settled temporarily along the Missouri River in what was then known as the Council Bluffs area.

To accommodate the large number of temporary LDS settlers, numerous camps grew up in the surrounding countryside, including Bybee's Camp in what later became Boomer Township and Allred's Camp in Hazel Dell Township.

Although most residents of these camps left after several years for Utah, a few remained and others returned. Later many Mormons dropped out and remained in the Council Bluffs area rather than crossing to Utah. In the 1860s numerous Reorganized Church of Latter Day Saints (RLDS) branches were established in Southwestern Iowa.

Contents	page
About This Report	2
Contacting Me	2
Sources for Mormons in the Big Pigeon Area - Notes	3
Map - Pottawattamie County, Iowa	3
Timeline of Early LDS History	4
● Allred's Camp	6
● Allred, James and Isaac	6
● Bybee's Camp	10
● Forsgren, John and the Forsgren Company	11
● Justesen Brothers	15
● Mormon Battalion	15
● Northwestern Missouri	16
● Kirsten Pedersen	18
● Reorganized Latter Day Saints Branches – Boomer and Hazel Dell	19
● Utah Mormon War	21
● Wight, Lyman	23
● Wood, Samuel	24

About This Report

Herein I have assembled some miscellaneous material I have written about aspects of Mormon history, most of which has some connection to what I call the Big Pigeon area, namely rural northwestern Pottawattamie County, Iowa. These notes contain information that doesn't fit into my St. Paul's database or my other reports.

Only a few of my extended family members have adhered to either of the LDS Church or the second largest Mormon denomination, the RLDS (now Community of Christ) Church. However, members of these churches profoundly influenced the early history of the Big Pigeon area, where my family lived for so long.

To view this report on-line as of 2018:

- Access the website *bigpigeon.us*.
- Look under the **Mormon History** entry in the main menu.

Contacting Me

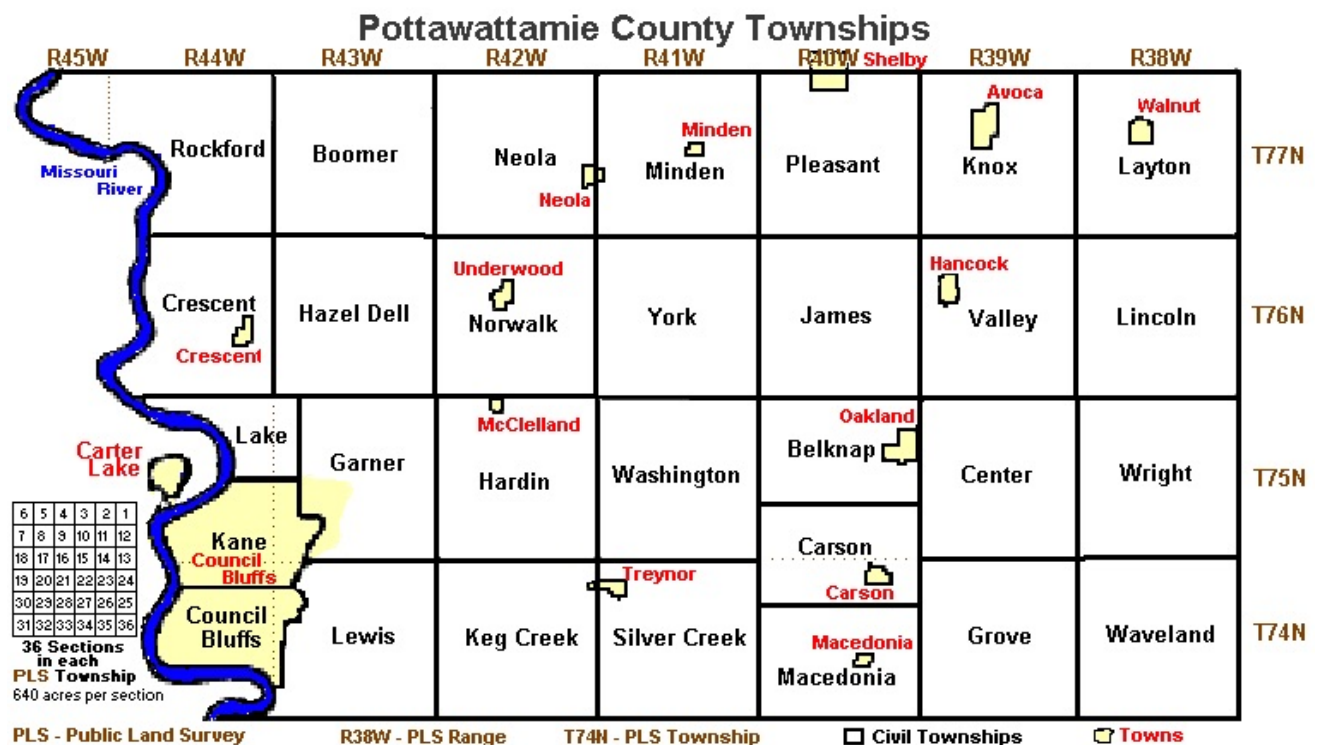
My initial version of this report is bound to contain errors - Please report them to me at your first convenience. I would also appreciate hearing from others who could help with the early history of rural northwestern Pottawattamie County.



Sources for Mormons in the Big Pigeon Area

This section is under development. Most sources I include here will be on-line. I don't include sources that are already listed in the **Resources** area of *Big Pigeon*.

- The links found at <https://user.xmission.com/~nelsonb/scand.htm> are a useful gold mine but may be dated.
- Historical Pioneers Research Group database - earlylds.com
- Andrew Jenson's *History of the Scandinavian Mission*, 570 pages, 1927. (probably not on-line)



Pottawattamie County, its Townships and Incorporated Towns
courtesy of Dennis Walsh, iowagenweb.org/pottawattamie

Timeline of Early LDS History (Robert A. Christiansen, Mar 2014)

Joseph Smith Jr. developed the Mormon theology in the 1820s in upstate New York State, and organized a church in 1830. After Joseph Smith Jr.'s murder in Carthage, Illinois in 1844, Brigham Young became leader of the main Mormon body, commonly called the LDS (Latter Day Saints). In 1846 Brigham Young took his LDS followers to the Council Bluffs area in what later became Pottawattamie County and then, starting in 1847, on to Utah.

Many found, and many more still find, the Mormon faith to be an attractive religion. Brigham Young had impressive leadership and organizational skills. However, aspects of Brigham Young's leadership such as his autocratic style and some tenets of Mormonism such as the doctrine of polygamy helped influence many Mormons to leave the LDS church. Perhaps the prospect of leaving the relative lushness of the Midwest to live in arid Utah far from family and friends also helped motivate this splintering among Mormons.

The largest of these splinter groups, the RLDS (Reorganized Latter Day Saints), now called the Community of Christ, was organized in 1860 and until recent years was led by Joseph Smith Jr.'s descendants. In southwestern Iowa RLDS members were especially numerous in northwestern Pottawattamie and neighboring Harrison County.

My timeline follows:

- ~1820 Joseph Smith Jr.'s first visions near Palmyra in upstate New York.
- 1830 Book of Mormon published; Mormon Church organized.
- 1831 Mormon headquarters established at Kirtland in Northeastern Ohio.
- 1831 Mormons presence in Independence, Jackson County, Missouri, site of new Zion.
- 1833 Mormons expelled from Jackson County; many move north to Clay County.
- 1836 Mormons expelled from Clay County; Caldwell County further north created for Mormon settlement.
- 1837 First Mormon missionaries to Europe.
- 1838 Missouri Mormon War. 19 killed at Hahn's Mill Massacre; Mormons besieged at Far West; leaders jailed as hostages in Richmond and then in Liberty.
- 1839 Mormons expelled from Missouri. Many find refuge in Quincy, Illinois area.
- 1840 Mormons begin settling in Nauvoo on the Mississippi upstream from Quincy.
- 1844 Joseph Smith Jr. murdered in Carthage, Illinois jail. Brigham Young becomes new leader.
- 1846 Mormons expelled from Nauvoo and temporarily move to Council Bluffs area.
- 1846 Mormon Battalion of 500 hikes to Southern California during Mexican War.
- 1847 First Mormons cross to Utah on Mormon Trail.
- 1848 Mormon Battalion veterans present when first California gold discovered.
- 1852 Majority of remaining Mormons leave the Council Bluffs area for Utah.
- 1853 John Forsgren leads first company of Scandinavian Mormons to Utah.
- 1855 European Mormon immigrants begin arriving at New York rather than New Orleans.
- 1856 First handcart brigades from Coralville, Iowa to Utah.

- 1856 Willie and Martin handcart brigades trapped by winter. Two hundred die.
- 1857 Seventh (Scandinavian) handcart brigade. Participants included the artist C. C. A. Christensen and the family of Hans Hansen, later a RLDS leader in Council Bluffs, who drop out in the Council Bluffs area.
- 1857 Mountain Meadows Massacre. Mormons kill 120 gentiles crossing to California.
- 1857 Utah Mormon War begins. Power struggle between the Mormon Church and United States Government.
- 1860 Last handcart brigade. Ten brigades carried around 3,000 immigrants to Utah.
- 1860 RLDS church, now known as the Community of Christ, organized.
- 1864 Hans N. Hansen, later founder of the Hazel Dell RLDS congregation, arrives in the United States from Denmark.
- 1869 Transcontinental railroad completed in Utah ending early Mormon pioneer period. Estimated 70,000 Mormons have already crossed to the Utah area.
- 1877 John Doyle Lee, Mormon leader and founder of Lee's Ferry, Arizona, executed for his role in the 1857 Mountain Meadows Massacre.
- 1890 LDS bans polygamy.
- 1896 Utah Territory becomes a state.



Western Trails Overview Map
 courtesy manifestdestinywars.files.wordpress.com

- **Allred's Camp** (by Robert A. Christiansen, Dec '17, excerpted from *Mormons in the Big Pigeon Area* in *BigPigeon.us*).

In 1846 Isaac Allred and some of his children established **Allred's Camp** north of Council Bluffs. Allred's Camp was scattered over an area of several square miles in what is now south central Hazel Dell Township in the general area of today's Hazel Dell Methodist Church. I believe that Allred's Camp lay along the upper branches of Little Pigeon Creek, which is now called Crescent Creek.

Samuel Wood, the great-great-great grandfather of my daughter, Kathy (Frazier) Joyce, lived in Allred's Camp before co-pioneering the Union Grove settlement in southeastern Harrison County late in 1850. While in Allred's Camp, Samuel Wood worked as a wagon maker. (See the later *Samuel Wood* entry.)

For more about Mormon members of the Allred family, see the later *James and Isaac Allred* entry.

- **James and Isaac Allred** (by Robert A. Christiansen, Dec '17, excerpted from *Mormons in the Big Pigeon Area* in *BigPigeon.us*).

James and Isaac Allred, along with their brother, William, and several their children and grandchildren were significant figures in early Mormon history.

James and Isaac Allred were the sons of William Allred and Elizabeth Thrasher. James and Isaac and many of their children moved from the Nashville, Tennessee area to Monroe County in northeastern Missouri around 1830.

In 1831 leaders in the recently established Mormon Church began passing through Monroe County while traveling between Kirkland, Ohio (the first church headquarters) and Independence, Missouri (where Joseph Smith Jr. hoped to establish a new Zion). Because of this geographic accident, James and Isaac Allred and their families became early Mormon converts in 1832.

Around 1835 James and Isaac Allred's younger brother, William, converted to the Mormon faith and moved to Missouri.

The Allreds were in Caldwell County in northwestern Missouri during the 1838 Missouri Mormon War. James, Isaac, William, and James son, Martin Carrel Allred, were among the sixty or so prominent Mormons who were imprisoned in Richmond, south of Caldwell County. Subsequently Joseph Smith and a handful of other Mormon leaders were transferred to the Liberty Jail. All were released after a half year or less of imprisonment.

Subsequently the James, Isaac and William Allred families were part of the 1838-1839 expulsion of Mormons from northwestern Missouri to Illinois, settling in Nauvoo around 1840.

William Allred and his nephew, Martin Carrel Allred, died within a few years of leaving Missouri. Some feel that their mistreatment at the hands of the gentiles was the cause of their deaths.

In 1846, the James and Isaac Allred families joined the exodus from Nauvoo to the Council Bluffs area near the Missouri River in southwestern Iowa. The Allreds comprised a sizable group, because both James and Isaac had many children, a few of

their Allred men already had plural wives, and some of their grandchildren were already married. In addition, there were the spouses and children of the two deceased Allred men, namely James and Isaac's brother, William, and James son, Martin Carrel.

By the end of 1851 most, perhaps all, of the James and Isaac Allred families had crossed the plains to Utah.

While in Council Bluffs it appears that James Allred and some of his children were based in the **Council Point** area near present-day Lake Manawa, several miles south of what is now downtown Council Bluffs.

After arriving in the Council Bluffs area, Isaac Allred established Allred's Camp (see the earlier *Allred's Camp* entry).

In the summer of 1846, during the Mexican War, three sons of James and Isaac Allred, along with one of James grandsons, enlisted in the Mormon Battalion and began the trek from Council Bluffs to southern California. Wives accompanied two of the Allred men. However, these two couples did not go on to California as they were sent from Santa Fe, New Mexico to Pueblo, Colorado with the sick detachment. (See the later *Mormon Battalion* entry.)

Below I have listed some very brief information about James and Isaac Allred and some of their many children.

- ☛ **James Allred** (22 Jan 1784 – 10 Jan 1876) married Elizabeth Warren (abt 1786 – 23 Apr 1879) in 1803.

James Allred became a member of the Nauvoo High Council in 1841 and later was on the LDS High Council for the Council Bluffs area.

James Allred went to Utah in 1851 and was an early settler in Sanpete County in central Utah around 1852. He may have brought the first Danish immigrants to Sanpete County in 1853. (The Ephraim area in Sanpete County once rivaled the Elk Horn, Iowa area for having the highest percentage of Danish immigrants. One of the Danish immigrants in Sanpete County was my great-great uncle, Peter Severin Martinus Justesen.)

- ☛ **Isaac Allred** (28 Jun 1813 – 12 May 1859), son of James Allred, was living in Pottawattamie County with his first two wives in 1850. He captained an immigrant train to Utah in 1851 and soon hereafter was sent as a missionary to England. He was murdered in Sanpete County during a confrontation with an acquaintance.
- ☛ **Reuben Warren Allred** (18 Nov 1815 – 4 Oct 1896), son of James Allred, started a ropewalk at Council Point, where a ferry crossed the Missouri River to Nebraska. This was a convenient location for a ropewalk, which was used to manufacture rope, since ferries of those days used long sturdy guide ropes.
- ☛ **James Tillman Sanford Allred** (28 Mar 1825 – 29 Mar 1905), son of James Allred, served as a Private in Company A of the Mormon Battalion and was accompanied by his wife, Elizabeth Bridget (Manwaring). James and Elizabeth did not complete the march, as they were sent from Santa Fe to Pueblo with the sick detachment and then went on to Utah in 1847.

One of the artifacts at the Mormon Battalion museum in Old San Diego is the musket of James Tillman Sanford Allred.

- ☛ **Reuben Warren Allred** (9 Nov 1827 – 21 Aug 1916), son of Martin Carrel Allred and Mary "Polly" Heskett, and grandson of James Allred, served as a Private in Company A of the Mormon Battalion and was accompanied by his wife, Elzadie Emeline (Ford), to Santa Fe, where they were sent with the sick detachment to Pueblo and then went on to Utah in 1847.

You may wonder why two Reuben Warren Allreds are listed above. The younger Reuben Warren Allred's parents both died in 1840 and his Allred grandparents took him in, along with his siblings. Some on-line sources may confuse the younger Reuben Warren Allred, born in 1827, with his uncle, Reuben Warren Allred, born in 1815.

- ☛ **Isaac Allred** (27 Jan 1788 – 13 Nov 1870) married Mary Calvert (19 Mar 1793 – 16 Sep 1851) in 1811. Isaac Allred established Allred's Camp north of Council Bluffs in 1846.

Isaac Allred crossed to Utah in the summer of 1849 in a wagon company led by his son, Reddick. Around 1858 Isaac Allred moved to Spring City in Sanpete County where both Isaac and his older brother, James, died.

- ☛ **William Moore Allred** (24 Dec 1819 – 8 Jun 1901), son of Isaac Allred, married Orissa Angelia Bates in Nauvoo in 1842. William Moore Allred lived in Allred's Camp with his parents and presumably other Allred family members. When Isaac Allred crossed to Utah in 1849, he sold his farm to William Moore Allred. Subsequently William Moore Allred worked with Samuel Wood building wagons, while building his own wagon for his later journey to Utah.

William Moore Allred was the brother-in-law of Orson Pratt, an early Mormon leader. William Moore Allred crossed to Utah with the Orson Pratt Company in the late summer of 1851.

- ☛ **Reddick Newton Allred** (21 Feb 1822 – 10 Oct 1905), son of Isaac Allred, married Lucy Hoyt.

Reddick Allred served as the Mormon Battalion Quartermaster Sergeant. Reddick left Lucy behind at Allred's Camp and had a perilous journey returning to her in December 1847. Eleven months later their child was born.

Digressing for a moment, Reddick Allred's Mormon Battalion superior, Assistant Quartermaster George Stoneman (there seems to have been no Quartermaster in the Mormon Battalion), has three claims to fame:

- Stoneman was governor of California from 1883 to 1887.
- Stoneman headed the army's Department of Arizona from 1870 to 1871.
- Stoneman's devastating cavalry rampage near the end of the Civil War in March and April 1865 drove some of the final nails into the coffin of the Confederacy. Robert E. Lee's surrendered his Army of Northern Virginia at Appomattox Court House on April 9th and Joseph E. Johnston, with a larger army, surrendered in North Carolina on April 26. In popular culture Stoneman's 1865 raid provided some context for the 1969 song "The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down", the first four lines of which are

Virgil Kane is the name
And I served on the Danville train
'Till Stoneman's cavalry came
And tore up the tracks again

Reddick Allred was a Utah militia officer in subsequent Indian wars in the 1850s and 1860s but is perhaps best remembered for his October 1856 role in rescuing the Willie and Martin handcart companies. These two handcart companies had started late from Florence, Nebraska and were caught by winter in the Wyoming high country. They lost over 200 out of 1000 members. All would have died except for the perseverance of Reddick and his fellow rescuers.

In Utah in the late 1880s attempts were made to outlaw polygamy, partly as an implicit precondition for receiving statehood. Around a thousand Mormons who were practitioners of polygamy served terms in the Utah penitentiary. Reddick Allred served sixty days.

- ☛ **James Riley Allred** (28 Jan 1827 – 14 Apr 1871), son of Isaac Allred, served as a Private in Company A of the Mormon Battalion. Subsequently James Riley Allred remained in California and Utah except for some freighting trips back to the Missouri River. I don't believe James Riley Allred ever married.

Most of the Allred family information herein came from the Internet in November 2013. As of 2013, the Google search engine returns abundant information about the Allred family members who joined the Mormon Church.

If you're interested in learning about early Mormon history during the Iowa years, 1846-1852, perhaps the best place to start is *The Winter Quarters Project* at winterquarters.byu.edu.

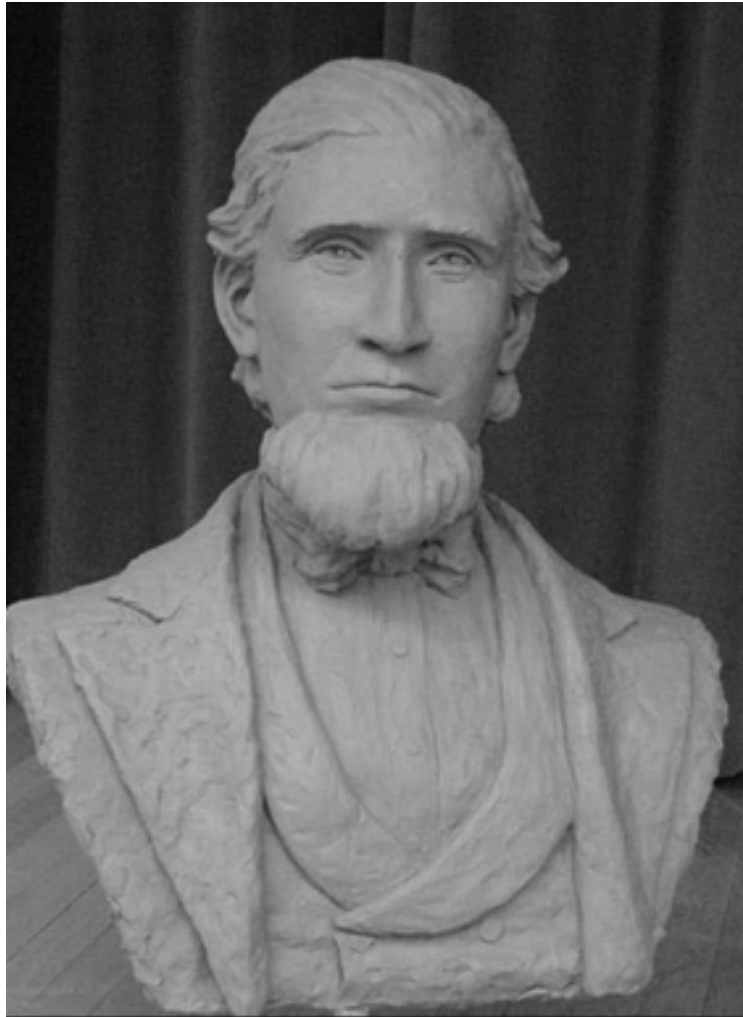
- **Bybee's Camp** (by Robert A. Christiansen, Dec '17, excerpted from *Mormons in the Big Pigeon Area* in *BigPigeon.us*).

Bybee's Camp was located near North Pigeon Creek in the southwestern corner of what is now Boomer Township.

This is a placeholder - I hope to add more information later.

- **Forsgren, John and the Forsgren Company** (by Robert A. Christiansen, Dec '17, excerpted from *Mormons in the Big Pigeon Area* in *BigPigeon.us*).

John Erik Forsgren, who played a significant role in early Mormon immigration from Scandinavia to Utah, converted in 1843, was expelled in 1879, and readmitted posthumously in 2010.



John Erik Forsgren (courtesy of flickr.com)

John Forsgren was born in Sweden in 1816 and was a seafarer during his teens and early adulthood. Forsgren became a Mormon convert in Boston in 1843. He served in the Mormon Battalion during the Mexican War and in October 1849 he and Erastus Snow, Peter O. Hansen and George Dykes, were chosen to be the first Mormon missionaries to Scandinavia. John Forsgren first went to Sweden. Forsgren baptized his brother, Peter Adolph Forsgren, on July 26, 1850, the first Mormon conversion in Scandinavia.

John Forsgren was expelled from Sweden in September of 1850 and then did missionary work in Denmark. In late 1852 John Forsgren left Denmark with about 300 Mormon converts, the first sizable group of Mormon immigrants to Utah from Scandinavia.

The Forsgren Company.

In 1853 John Forsgren brought to Utah the 60th company of Mormon immigrants, which was the first company consisting of Scandinavians. The Forsgren Company, initially numbering 294, left Copenhagen on December 20, 1852 on the steamer *Obotrit* bound for Kiel, Germany. From Kiel, they took a train to Hamburg, and from Hamburg the ship *Lion* to Hull, England, and then a train to Liverpool.

The Forsgren Company left Liverpool on the sailing ship *Forest Monarch* on January 1, but then encountered two weeks of unfavorable winds. The Forsgren Company finally arrived in New Orleans, Louisiana on March 17.

The Company then traveled by riverboat to St. Louis, and then in two parties by riverboat further up the Mississippi to Keokuk in southeastern Iowa.

In Keokuk, they joined an encampment of English and Welsh Mormon immigrants while preparing for the trek west. On May 21, the Forsgren Company of 294 individuals and 34 wagons left Keokuk.

The company paused outside of Kanesville, soon to be renamed Council Bluffs, on June 25. While camped near Kanesville, three families apostatized and became the first Scandinavians among what became the large number of former LDS members, many of whom joined the RLDS church, in the Council Bluffs area.

From the Council Bluffs area, the Forsgren Company crossed the Great Plains and Rockies and the 268 remaining members of the company arrived at Salt Lake City on September 30th.

Subsequently many immigrants from Scandinavia, especially from Denmark, settled in Utah. Utah has the highest percentage of citizens of Danish ancestry of any of the 50 states.

John Forsgren and his fifth wife, Kirsten Pedersen.

By 1862 John Forsgren's former wives were either deceased or divorced. On December 14, 1862, Forsgren married his fifth wife, identified on-line as "Kiersten Nelson Johnson, the widow of Henrie Johnson". In my records, she is Kirsten Pedersen, the daughter of Peder Nielsen and Maren Christensdatter and the widow of Jens Hendriksen.

Although John and Kirsten remained married until John's death in 1890 and probably lived together until 1889, John did have one subsequent, plural, marriage to Mary Ann Mount Snyder in 1869.

In Denmark Kirsten Pedersen and her two youngest daughters, Else Marie Jensen and Johanne Cathrine Jensen, lived in Dronninglund parish north of Aalborg. They converted to Mormonism, emigrated on the *Monarch of the Sea* in 1861, and crossed to Utah. Around 1869 Kirsten's son, Anders Jensen, also came to Utah, where he was known as Anders Johnson.

Kirsten's daughter, Karen M. Jensen, who was age 14 when her mother emigrated, remained behind in Denmark, immigrating to the Council Bluffs area in 1867 with the Gregers Acton family and marrying Laurits Christian Fog "L. C." Bondo in 1868. Members of the Acton family became Adventists, and Karen, usually known as Carrie, evidently flirted with the Adventist religion before she and Christian Bondo became stalwart members of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Boomer Township, a congregation in

the pietistic branch of the Danish Lutheran church in America. My great-aunt, Winnie Rasmussen, married Christian and Karen's oldest child, Peter Bondo.

As he aged, John Forsgren became eccentric and perhaps suffered from dementia. In 1879, he was cut off from the Mormon Church. By 1880 Forsgren was a self-proclaimed prophet living in a tent in Salt Lake City. He called himself "J. J. Branch" and was known as the "Bench Prophet" from the neighborhood in which he lived. On January 20, 1886, a tent fire badly burned his wife, Kiersten/Kirsten. John and Kirsten then lived with her son, Anders Johnson, for a time and then moved to Blaine County, Idaho, to live with her son-in-law and daughter, John and Johanne Cathrine Timerman. Kirsten died in Idaho on April 28, 1894.

In June of 1889, John Forsgren left Kirsten and the Timerman household and wandered through Utah seeking out old acquaintances from the Mormon Battalion until taken in and nursed by an acquaintance, Antoinette Carr. He died in Salt Lake City in January 1890, one of the lost giants of Mormon history.

Over a century later in 2010 John Erik Forsgren was readmitted into the folds of the Mormon Church.

Recall that John Forsgren's fifth wife was Kirsten Pedersen. Except for Kirsten's daughter, Karen M. "Carrie" (Jensen) Bondo, all Kirsten's relatives known to have immigrated, whether children, siblings, nieces or nephews, had converted to the LDS faith in Dronninglund parish before emigrating. Kirsten's Mormon relatives lived many aspects of the Mormon experience in the west. Three died of disease while waiting to cross to Utah. One crossed with a handcart company that suffered grievously and then she married a fellow survivor. One apostatized and settled in Iowa. One, perhaps several, experienced plural marriages. Some became early settlers in Mormon communities in states neighboring Utah. Several left behind memoirs that are now on the Internet.

For more about Forsgren's fifth wife, Kirsten, her two Mormon siblings and their children, and her three Mormon children, see the Kirsten Pedersen material in the **LDS History** area of.

Sources for my John Forsgren survey:

- There is a brief overview at en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_E._Forsgren.
- A major source is the blog maintained by Forsgren relatives in the United States, johnerikforsgren.blogspot.com/2011/03/john-erik-forsgren-timeline.html. It appears that Adele Manwaring Austin, a descendant of John Forsgren's brother, Peter Adolph Forsgren, started this blog in 2010.
- The Forsgren Company's journey from Denmark to Utah is outlined in Chapter 7, pages 157-165 of *Homeward to Zion* by William Mulder.

Parentetical remarks by Robert Christiansen May 2014: At the May 2014 board meeting of the Danish American Heritage Society (DAHs), I plan to nominate the life of John Erik Forsgren for a future article in our journal, *The Bridge*. If our editor chose to pursue this project, the Forsgren family blog names some sources other than those listed above:

There are other biographical sketches in the Forsgren Family Association files. One is written by Oluff Peterson. Another is authorless, but seems to have been copied from Mr. Petersons and varies very little from the information we have already presented here.

One of first attempts at re-doing and enlarging upon the well-known sketches was done by James B. Anderson as part of his work: Denmark to Manti. Please see the separate blog post that discusses that research.

The most recent biography, finished in 2010, was researched and written by Laurie Bryant, a non-relative in Salt Lake City. It is an unpublished manuscript and was donated by Ms Bryant to the Utah State Archives. It is titled "A Rascal Among the Saints." (I refer to it in more detail in another blog post as well). It is meticulously researched and documented and is worth the time for you to ask for it at the archives and read it. [As of Spring 2011 it had not yet been catalogued].

There is a good chance that John Forsgren's papers were accidentally burned some years after his death in 1890.

- **Justesen Brothers** (by Robert A. Christiansen, Dec '17, excerpted from *Mormons in the Big Pigeon Area* in *BigPigeon.us*).

Rasmus Christian "Chris" Justesen and Peter Severin Martinus Justesen were younger half-brothers of my great-grandfather, Lars Christian Rasmussen, and grew up in Denmark in Voer parish in northern Jutland. The Justesen brothers became LDS converts and immigrated to Utah in the 1880s.

Peter Justesen settled in Ephraim in Sanpete County where he was a farmer and rancher and the father of seven children.

I have little information about Rasmus Justesen. He was living in Hailey, Blaine County, Idaho in 1900 and 1920.

The Justesen brothers stopped only briefly in the Council Bluffs area. I include them here because they are my relatives.

- **Mormon Battalion** (by Robert A. Christiansen, Dec '17, excerpted from *Mormons in the Big Pigeon Area* in *BigPigeon.us*).

In 1846 Mormons, expelled from the Nauvoo area in Illinois, began arriving in the Council Bluffs area, where they staged for their trek to Utah. The United States Army recruited an engineering battalion of nearly 500 men from among the Mormons gathering in the southwestern Iowa area. The battalion's mission was to hike to southern California while opening a wagon road to California through the southwest.

The Mormon Battalion, along with some women and children, left Council Bluffs on July 20. Their route, one of the longest military marches in United States history, took them through Fort Leavenworth, Kansas; Santa Fe, New Mexico; and Tucson and Yuma, Arizona. They arrived in San Diego on January 29, 1847.

Company A of the Mormon Battalion included William A. Garner, for whom Garner Township in Pottawattamie County is named. William Garner returned to the Council Bluffs area in 1848, and in 1849 each of his two wives produced a son. William Garner settled east of the town of Council Bluffs, where he became a major landowner and operated mills along Mosquito Creek.

The Mormon Battalion included four members of the extended Allred family (see the earlier *James and Isaac Allred* entry). Perhaps the only Scandinavian member was John Forsgren (see Forsgren, John and the Forsgren Company).

- **Northwestern Missouri** (by Robert A. Christiansen, Dec '17, excerpted from *Mormons in the Big Pigeon Area* in *BigPigeon.us*).

Northwestern Missouri had great significance for Joseph Smith, who founded the Mormon Church in 1830. Consequently, starting in 1831 Mormons began moving to the Independence, Missouri area where Joseph Smith hoped to develop a new Zion. Friction between Mormons and the gentile residents of the Independence area soon led to Mormon movement northward, first across the Missouri River to Clay County in 1833 and then further northward to the newly created Caldwell County in 1836. During the winter after the Missouri Mormon War late in 1838, most Mormons left northwestern Missouri. Most went east to Illinois, where they established the city of Nauvoo along the Mississippi River across from Lee County in southeastern Iowa.

Below I've listed seven areas in northwestern Missouri that I know to be of historical import to LDS or RLDS members. I have visited several of the Independence sites over the years. In August 2013, I was fortunate to visit the Caldwell County sites of Far West, Kingston, Hahn's Mill, as well as Richmond in Ray County to the south. I was motivated to visit these sites because my daughter, Kathy, is the great-great-great granddaughter of Samuel Wood, who survived the Hahn's Mill massacre in 1838. Accompanying Kathy and me on this heritage tour were my wife, Martha, and my brother, Don.

- ☛ **In Independence** in eastern Jackson County: Clustered near each other are the Community of Christ Temple, Auditorium, Library & Archives, Heritage Plaza, and Old Stone Church. (My daughter, Kathy, was married in the Old Stone Church). The LDS also has a visitor center nearby. (Also in Independence is the Midwest Genealogy Center, which is evidently independent of the LDS and Community of Christ churches.).
- ☛ **In Liberty, the county seat of Clay County:** The reconstructed Liberty Jail, where Joseph Smith and associates were imprisoned from November 1838 to April 1839. This group, along with a larger group, was first imprisoned further east in Richmond.
- ☛ **In Far West** in western Caldwell County: In a park-like setting one finds the cornerstones of the planned Mormon temple as well as some interpretive materials. There are also restrooms!

Far West was the major town during the brief period of Mormon occupancy in Caldwell County in 1836-1839. Here the Mormon militia surrendered to Missouri militia forces on November 1, 1838.

The town of Far West no longer exists. None of the original structures survive, and there are no reconstructed buildings. Nearby is an active Community of Christ church, a country store that includes a large selection of books of interest to those of the Mormon faith, and a cemetery that we were unable to locate.

To find Far West: I 35 north to highway 116, and then highway 116 east to highway D. Highway D north through Mirabile past highway HH and the Hill Cemetery. The Far West site is at the northeast corner of highway D and road 370/Far West Drive.

- ☛ **In Hahn's Mill**, in eastern Caldwell County on Shoal Creek: This is the site of an 1838 settlement where 19, 17 of whom were Mormons, were killed during the infamous Hahn's Mill massacre. (See the later *Samuel Wood* note.) As of 2013, there is nothing

at the Hahn's Mill site except a historical marker, a large grassy area, and an abundance of poison ivy growing under the trees near Shoal Creek. A few years ago, ownership passed from the Community of Christ to the LDS, and during our 2013 visit a team from Brigham Young University was present doing archeological research.

To get to Hahn's Mill from Far West: Far West Drive east to state highway 13. Highway 13 north to Road U. Road U east 8.5 miles to Ironwood Dr.; Ironwood Dr. east 1.5 miles to Catawba Rd. Catawba Rd. south 2.0 miles or less to the Haun's Mill dirt road and then west on the dirt road and cross over the culvert south to the Hahn's Mill site.

- ☛ **In Kingston, the county seat of Caldwell County:** Few Mormons would include Kingston on their roots tour. However, we stopped here because Kathy's ancestor, Samuel Wood, had clerked in a store in Kingston before his fortuitous survival at the Hahn's Mill massacre. I found Kingston, which gave the appearance of being largely abandoned, a fascinating example of a backwater county seat.
- ☛ After our August 2013 visit to Far West, Kingston and Hahn's Mill, we drove south to **Richmond, the county seat of Ray County:** Here, in November 1838 in two buildings no longer standing, 68 prominent Mormon men were held after the November 1 Mormons surrender at Far West. Six leaders were later moved to the jail in Liberty, as mentioned above.

We also visited the Pioneer Cemetery, a few blocks north of downtown Richmond, where early Mormons David Whitmer and Oliver Cowdrey are buried. Also buried here is Bloody Bill Anderson, one of Missouri's most notorious Civil War guerrillas, but that is another story.

- ☛ I have not visited **Adam-ondi-Ahman in Daviess County**, north of Caldwell County: Adam-ondi-Ahman is five miles south of Jameson on the bluffs on the east side of the Grand River. This is maybe about 30 miles NNW of Hahn's Mill.

Lyman Wight, an early Mormon leader, started a ferry across the Grand River in 1838. (See the later *Lyman Wight* entry.) Later in 1838 Joseph Smith visited Lyman Wight and pronounced that this was the area where Adam and Eve lived after being cast out of the Garden of Eden.

- **Kirsten Pedersen** (by Robert A. Christiansen, Dec '17, excerpted from *Mormons in the Big Pigeon Area* in *BigPigeon.us*).

Kirsten Pedersen never lived in Pottawattamie County. However, her daughter, Karen (Jensen) Bondo, was the founding mother of the Bondo family of the Big Pigeon area and were prominent in St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Boomer Township. Two of Kirsten's nieces lived in Boomer Township after immigrating.

Kirsten Pedersen was born to Peder Nielsen and Maren Christensdatter in Dronninglund Parish north of Aalborg in northern Jutland, Denmark. She married Jens Christian Hendriksen in Dronninglund in 1838.

Kirsten converted to the Mormon faith in the mid 1850s, while her husband remained Lutheran until his death in 1859.

Kirsten and her two youngest daughters emigrated in 1861 on the *Monarch of the Sea* and crossed the plains to Utah. In Utah in 1862 Kirsten married John Erik Forsgren. (See the Forsgren entry in this report.)

In addition to Kirsten and her children, most of Kirsten's siblings, nieces and nephews came to the United States. In the United States Kirsten's extended family members underwent a wide range of experiences associated with the settlement of the American West. You can find an illustrated survey of the lives of Kirsten and some of her relatives in the **LDS History** area of *bigpigeon.us*.

The Danish American Heritage Society is planning an article in their journal, *The Bridge*, about some of the experiences of Kirsten Pedersen and her relatives.

- **Reorganized Latter Day Saints Branches – Boomer and Hazel Dell** (by Robert A. Christiansen, Dec '17, excerpted from *Mormons in the Big Pigeon Area* in *BigPigeon.us*).

The mainstream Mormon denomination, often referred to as the LDS, has been headquartered in Utah since the late 1840s. Over the years many smaller denominations grew from LDS roots, with most withering away. The largest and most long-lasting of these branches was the Reorganized Church of Latter Day Saints (RLDS) Church.

In 1860 Mormons who supported as their leader young Joseph Smith 3rd, the son of the Mormon Church's founder, Joseph Smith Jr., organized the RLDS. RLDS headquarters moved to Lamoni, Iowa in 1881 and to Independence, Missouri in 1920. In 2001, the RLDS Church became the Community of Christ.

As of 2014 there are Community of Christ congregations in Pottawattamie County in Council Bluffs, Carson, Crescent and Underwood, as well as nearby congregations in Missouri Valley and Persia.

The RLDS Church attracted many congregants in the Council Bluffs area from among Mormons who had settled in the area rather than crossing to Utah, from disenchanted back-trailing Mormons returning from Utah, and from recent immigrants passing through to Utah. Numerous RLDS branches were established in and around southwestern Iowa. Here I mention only two former branches, the Boomer (English) branch and the Hazel Dell (Danish) branch, named for Pottawattamie County townships north of Council Bluffs.

The Boomer (English) Branch: The Boomer branch of the RLDS Church was organized in 1860. Most of the older members were immigrants from England and Wales who lived near Pigeon Creek in either southern Boomer Township or just to the south in northern Hazel Dell Township. It appears that branch meetings were sometimes held at the Parish School in north central Hazel Dell Township.

The Boomer branch appears to have been inactive at times. It was reorganized on October 22, 1893 (RLDS Journal of History, volumes 14 & 15, p. 123). Between 1885 and 1902, probably after 1893, a church building was constructed on land owned by the Mackland family. The church sat on the north side of the road a quarter mile to the west of St. Paul's Lutheran Church and appears in the 1902, 1913 and 1919 plat books. (Incidentally at one time there was also an Adventist church on the Rasmussen farm across the road and just to the east of the RLDS church.)

The Hazel Dell (Danish) Branch: The Hazel Dell branch of the RLDS Church was organized in 1882. Its original members were Danish immigrants who lived in or near eastern Hazel Dell Township. In the 1885, 1902, 1913 and 1919 Hazel Dell Township plat books, the RLDS chapel was in Section 14 on the Hans N. Hansen farm.

Hans N. Hansen, and later his son, John A. Hansen, were mainstays of the Hazel Dell RLDS congregation. The Hansens may have moved to Hazel Dell Township from Crescent Township in 1872. Hans N. Hansen was thought to have been the first RLDS missionary to Denmark, in 1875. Hans N. Hansen was the great-great-uncle of today's Bill Darrington of Persia, Iowa. Some older Hazel Dell Township residents may remember Hans N. Hansen's granddaughters, Leona who married Lynn Handlen and Ruth who married Harl Hough.

Around 1930 it was no longer necessary to keep two separate rural RLDS branches only six miles apart. The Danish immigrants of fifty years earlier were now speaking English, and farmers had automobiles that allowed travel greater distances to services. Thus, the Boomer and Hazel Dell branches were combined.

To serve as a meeting place for the combined Hazel Dell/Boomer congregation, the Boomer RLDS church building was moved five miles to the east and south, to a half-acre lot in Section 15 of Hazel Dell Township. Its location was on the east side of today's L-34 country road, a scant mile south of the intersection with road G-30. It was a mile northwest of the old Hazel Dell RLDS chapel site.

The Hazel Dell/Boomer RLDS branch was dissolved in October 1941. Funds used from sale of the property were donated to the North Star RLDS branch in Underwood, about five miles to the east.

After dissolution of the Hazel Dell/Boomer branch, the former church building became the Hazel Dell Township Hall.

The Hazel Dell Township Hall and lot were sold at auction on November 1, 2008. The purchasers were Rick and Sheryl Larson, who live in the house of Rick's late grandparents, Vernon and Thelma Larson, just behind the former township hall. Rick and Sheryl work with Rick's parents, Gary (my cousin) and Sandy Larson, in the Larson Farms farming and trucking operation located across the road.

- **Utah Mormon War** (by Robert A. Christiansen, Jan '18, excerpted from *Mormons in the Big Pigeon Area* in *BigPigeon.us*).

To understand the Utah Mormon War of 1857-58, one must first know a bit about the first ten years of the Mormon presence in what in 1896 finally became the state of Utah. The first Mormons arrived in the Salt Lake Valley in 1847. In 1850 Utah Territory was organized, and President Fillmore appointed Brigham Young as territorial governor. At times during the next seven years, conflict arose between Mormon officials and appointees sent to Utah. This conflict was amplified by the general anti-Mormon feeling among the public and the press.

In 1857 President Buchanan decided to replace Brigham Young by his own man, Alfred Cummings. Concerned that an ongoing federal military presence in Utah would be necessary for Cummings to govern effectively, Washington organized a substantial military expedition. A truncated timeline follows:

Apr 1857: Troop mobilization for the Utah campaign begins.

Jul 1857: Brigham Young refers to rumors that the U.S. is sending troops to Utah Territory.

Sep 1857: Brigham Young publicly issues martial law declaration.

Sep 1857: Mountain Meadow Massacre, followed by an attempt to blame Paiute Indians. In 1877 John D. Lee, of Lees Ferry, Arizona, is executed for his role in the massacre twenty years earlier.

Oct 1857: Nauvoo Legion led by Lot Smith destroys Army supply wagons.

Nov 1857: Army goes into winter quarters near the ruins of Ft. Bridger.

Feb 1858: Thomas Kane, unofficial representative of President Buchanan arrives in Salt Lake City via San Bernardino, and begins negotiations with Brigham Young.

Mar 1858: Brigham Young issues a scorched-earth policy for Utah's northern settlements.

Apr 1858: President Buchanan conditionally pardons Utah insurrections.

Apr 1858: Alfred Cummings enters Salt Lake City without army escort and assumes the territorial governorship from Brigham Young.

Apr 1858: U.S. Army enters Salt Lake City. The Army then moves 50 miles to the southwest and establishes Camp Floyd.

Jul 1858: Mormons begin to return to the homes in the northern settlements.

Those who chronicle the Utah Mormon War sometimes make light of it, as the battle casualties were very light. However, it could have ended very differently. As it was, there were four major costs.

- The cost of the Mountain Meadows Massacre in lives lost and loss of respect for Mormonism.
- The cost to the Utah economy from militia mobilizations and the temporary abandonment in 1858 of portions of northern Utah.
- The loss of Mormon outposts such as San Bernardino, California.
- The embarrassment to the United States government from a bungled military operation with an 1858 price tag of \$3,000,000.

- **Wight, Lyman** (by Robert A. Christiansen, Dec '17, excerpted from *Mormons in the Big Pigeon Area* in *BigPigeon.us*).

(See also the Adam-on-di-Ahman section of the earlier *Northwest Missouri* entry.)

Lyman Wight was an early Mormon leader who was imprisoned in Richmond, Missouri and then in the Liberty, Missouri jail with Joseph Smith in 1838-39. After Joseph Smith was murdered in 1844, fractures developed in the LDS church over the choice of his successor and what direction the church should take. In March 1845 Lyman Wight led a group of about 200 Mormons known as the *Wightites* to central Texas, where many of them remained until Lyman's death in 1858.

After Lyman Wight's death, many of his remaining followers, including his son, Romanan, moved to Iowa and became RLDS members.

Romanan Wight died in Council Bluffs in 1918. Two of his granddaughters, Arlene and Phyllis Wight, married young men from the Hazel Dell RLDS congregation, namely Elmer Johnson and Donald Jensen.

● **Wood, Samuel** (by Robert A. Christiansen, Dec '17, excerpted from *Mormons in the Big Pigeon Area* in *BigPigeon.us*).

Samuel Wood was born in Ohio in 1816 to Henry Wood and Elizabeth Cranmer and came to northwestern Missouri as a young man. In Missouri, he taught school and worked in a grocery store in Kingston. Samuel married Mary Merrill early in 1838.

In late 1838 Samuel and Mary Wood were a young Mormon couple living in the Hahn's Mill neighborhood of eastern Caldwell County. On October 30th Samuel narrowly escaped death at Hahn's Mill when a band of Missouri militia killed 17 Mormon men and boys.

Early in 1839, The Samuel Wood family joined 5,000 or more Mormons who were expelled from northwestern Missouri. Within a few years most Mormons settled in Illinois and Iowa, in and near Nauvoo on the banks of the Mississippi River.

In 1846 Mormons were forced to abandon Nauvoo. The Samuel Wood family left Lee County, Iowa, near Nauvoo, for the Council Bluffs area. Here they lived in the Allred's Camp vicinity north of Council Bluffs. (See the earlier *Allred's Camp* entry.)

In late 1850, the Samuel Wood family became the first permanent settlers in the Union Grove area in Harrison County southwest of present-day Persia, Iowa.

In the 1860 census, Samuel Wood is listed as a wagon maker, a trade he pursued during his earlier years in Allred's Camp.

I know of nine children of Samuel Wood by his first wife, Mary Merrill, who died in 1865. His second wife, Nancy E. Copeland, was already in her 40s when she and Samuel married so there was no issue from this marriage. He had three known stepchildren and one child by his third wife, the widow Jane Elizabeth (Follett) Gunnette.

Samuel Wood left the LDS church but later was active in the RLDS church, including serving for a term as an RLDS missionary to Utah. During his Union Grove years, Samuel also traveled with his brother back to Ohio.

Except for absences such as those listed above, Samuel Wood apparently lived in Union Grove until his death, which I believe was in 1895.

For more about Samuel Wood and his legacy, see *The Older Descendants of Samuel Wood*, which is accessible from the **Family History > Allied Families** page of *bigpigeon.us*.