
More information on Benjamin Green

By Joni Vella

Benjamin Franklin Green was born in Kentucky in 1809 to Robert Green and his second wife, Elizabeth Farmer. He was their first child. His birthplace is probably Kettle Creek, Cumberland County, Kentucky, as that is the birthplace of his next sibling, Robert Robinson Green, born August 10, 1811, and the location of his father's property.

It would be best to backtrack here and give a brief overview of Benjamin's parents and siblings. As I mentioned, Benjamin was one of eighteen full, half and step siblings. There were twelve boys and six girls.

Robert Green was born in England between 1766 and 1775. He was in the United States by about 1795. Robert's first wife was Nancy Woods, they lived in Abbeville County, South Carolina in 1800. They had four children; two boys and two girls, two born in South Carolina and two in North Carolina. Nancy Woods Green died in Kentucky in about 1805. The four children from this marriage went from Kentucky to Missouri as adults, with some ending up in Texas.

Robert Green then married Elizabeth Farmer. They had eight children together; six boys and two girls. The first five were born in Cumberland County, Kentucky, the last three were born after the Green's moved to Sangamon County, Illinois in 1821. Robert Green died in Sangamon County in 1826.

Sometime between 1827 and 1830, the widow, Elizabeth Farmer Green and her children moved north again to the lead mining region of what is now southwestern Wisconsin, near the town of Platteville. She also married a man named Ebenezer M. Orne. They had five more children: three sons and two daughters. Ebenezer had a son from a previous marriage, although this son may actually turn out to be a nephew who was raised as a son. This is a long story that isn't really relevant and is still being researched by an Orne descendant.

A large number of the Green and Orne children headed west to California in the early to mid 1850s. There were also a couple of Farmer cousins who took this route. Ebenezer M. Orne went, too, and it appears his wife did, but we don't have a record as to when or where Elizabeth died for certain. We just know it was after 1850. All of these people did not travel west at the same time, although it does appear that some made the trip together. Which route they went is unknown, but there is a story that Benjamin's half brother, Ebenezer Hugill Orne went around the Cape.

Back to Benjamin Franklin Green.

The first record he appears on by name is the muster roll of Captain Irwin O'Harra's Company of Iowa(County), Michigan Territory (Wisconsin now) Volunteers, July 4, 1832, for service in the Black Hawk War. This service lasted one month and sixteen days. They were stationed at Fort Dodge in Platteville, a hastily built stockade, and the service was mainly protection of the locals as opposed to actual fighting. Also on the muster role were Benjamin's brother, Robert Robinson Green, his stepfather, Ebenezer M. Orne, and his cousin, Washington Farmer.

The next record of Benjamin is his marriage to Isabella Hugill on December 31, 1835. The notice of this event was published in the "North Western Gazette and Galena Advertiser", Published in Galena, Upper Mississippi Lead Mines, (now Illinois), on January 16, 1836. The announcement read: "MARRIED--At Platteville, on the 31st ult. by John H. Rountree, Esq, Mr. Benjamin Green, to Miss Izabella Hugill, all of Platteville." It should be noted that John H. Roundtree is one of the founders of the University of Wisconsin-Platteville.

Benjamin appears on the territorial census of 1836, living seven households from Robert R. Green. Between them are a couple of other relatives. In 1840, Benjamin and his family are still living in or near Platteville, the same in

1850, by which time Wisconsin is a state and Iowa County has been subdivided into Iowas, Grant and Lafayette counties. Benjamin Green's residence at Platteville is in Grant County.

In 1850, his occupation is gunsmith, as it is in some subsequent census records.

It seems that Benjamin was primarily a businessman as opposed to a farmer or miner. I have never found any land records for him, in Wisconsin or California, and the Wisconsin ones are abundant for his brother, Robert R., and numerous other family members, all within a very small area. I actually drew the sections out on graph paper to show how close they actually were!

Basing my assumptions on the birth locations of Benjamin's children and the first reference I find of him in Sierra County, California in 1853, I guess Benjamin and his family went west between the 1850 census and 1853.

We know that Benjamin was a partner in a jewelry and watchmaking business in Downieville, California, as well as holding the office of treasurer for two years in 1855 and 1856.

Next he went to Nevada and helped with the founding of Carson City, to a lesser degree than some of the other founders, but there none the less. Here he was also a jeweler and gunsmith. These seem to be good occupations for one who is in a gold mining community (lead mining, too for that matter), due to the number of disagreements that seemed to arise over the gold, and the jewelry that could be made out of it!

After his stint in Carson City, Benjamin returned to California, ending up in Placerville, where he is listed as a shoemaker in either 1870 or 1880. He had a number of relatives in and around Placerville.

Benjamin Franklin Green died December 8, 1883 in Placerville.

Benjamin F. Green and his wife, Isabella, had eight children: Benjamin F., Caroline (wife of Frank Proctor), Ellen, George W., Isabella, Elizabeth, Thomas P., and Henry. More on these can be found in the attached report.

I noted that Benjamin was county assessor for Sierra County in 1855 and 1856. He was not alone in his 'political' pursuits. His brother, Robert Robinson Green served two terms on the territorial legislature of South Dakota. His brother, Washington Y. Green, was mayor of Buckley, Washington from 1892 to 1894. His brother-in-law, Thomas K. Cruson (wife was Catherine Ann Green) served in a number of local positions in Grant, County Wisconsin as well as in the territorial legislature of Wisconsin during the time of the Second Constitutional Convention for the state. Thomas Cruson also ran for office at least once in El Dorado County, California, but was defeated.

My direct Green ancestor is Benjamin's brother, Robert Robinson Green, born August 10, 1811 at Kettle Creek, Cumberland County, Kentucky and died September 27, 1890 at Elk Point, Union County, South Dakota. Robert Robinson Green was my great-great-great grandfather. I know the following isn't related to your story, but I will include it anyways! He distinguished himself in a number of ways, mostly positive. He was primarily a farmer, but had some lead mining interest when he resided in Wisconsin. A part of the property he owned in Wisconsin is now part of a state landmark, a large stone "M", on a hillside, constructed by some students at the University of Wisconsin--Platteville in the 1930s and visible from a good distance, it is whitewashed and maintained on a yearly basis, and lit for special days. Robert has the distinction as opening the first store in Elk Point, South Dakota, a hardware store with Harvey Fairchild, who was his partner in another venture, so to speak. They were both involved in the murder of one William Carhart in 1859 over the rights to some lead diggings on a piece of property in Wisconsin.. It was a group quarrel that escalated and Mr. Carhart was shot at close range. Of the five men charged, two were acquitted,

Green and Fairchild sentenced to state prison, and the main character, Elijah Brown, escaped the local jail, twice, and appears to never have been sentenced. Green and Fairchild both received full pardons from the Wisconsin Governor. Robert R. Green had accumulated a decent amount of money before he went to South Dakota, which he used to open the store. After a few years, he sold out and finished his life, once again, as a farmer. Robert married twice, supposedly had seven children from the first marriage, all but one dying young, the seventh dying in the Civil War (that one can be traced!). Second marriage produced eight children. The seventh, a daughter named Nancy Jeanette, was my great-great grandmother. The rest is history!

I have been interested in family history for over thirty years. The majority of the Green information, with the exception of Robert Robinson Green and some of his descendants, was accumulated over the past ten years, with the bulk of the connections being made and confirmed three to five years ago. I cannot take credit for all of it, but I have somehow been elected as the keeper of all things "Green".

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