

THE MARGARET SARAH WRENSHALL BIBLE

by Bettie W. Sarver

When an old homeplace in Crockett, Texas was being dismantled, an aged family Bible was given to the Houston County Historical Commission, so that it would be preserved. The Bible was printed in 1801 and the family names and dates in it were written in many different hands over a period of about 130 years.¹ This is the story of how the Bible traveled from Pennsylvania to East Texas.

The story begins in Halifax, Yorkshire, Great Britain. On July 8, 1784, a daughter, Margaret Sarah, was born to John and Mary Margaret “Polly” Bennington Wrenshall. John Wrenshall was a merchant, who had learned the trade by being indentured at the age of 14, and eventually establishing his own business. He also had a talent for preaching to the small Methodist congregations in the area. By 1794, economic conditions in England caused him to look toward the United States as a possible new home. On July 20, he and his family, consisting of his wife, four daughters — another daughter, Esther Ann, having died earlier — and infant son, and his business partners and their families boarded the *Pennsylvania* to emigrate, arriving in Philadelphia eight weeks later. The families settled in and the general merchandise business was opened. The country to the west was opening up, and in 1796, John Wrenshall and his family, now consisting of his wife and five daughters — Margaret Sarah, Mary Bennington, Julia B., Ellen Bray, and Fanny Fieldhouse — the infant son, John Matthew, having died — moved to Pittsburgh. The business in Philadelphia was left in the hands of his partner, and John Wrenshall opened a second store, in Pittsburgh. Finding no Methodist church there, he began preaching and became known as the Father of Methodism in Pittsburgh. Through his honesty and work ethic, which included his family’s participation, the business grew to include Pittsburg, Philadelphia, Kentucky and as far as the West Indies. In December, 1799, he made a trading journey to New Orleans, which was at that time under a Spanish governor, down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers; then aboard a sailing vessel back through the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic to Philadelphia. During this time, he kept a detailed journal of observations and events. Three additional children were born into the family in Pittsburgh: Emily, in 1797; Sarah Jane, in 1800; and John Fletcher, in 1802.^{1,2,3,4}

On July 1, 1812, Polly Wrenshall died while her husband was visiting with their daughter in Philadelphia, and she was interred in a vault in the graveyard behind the Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh.² In July 1813, John married again, to Ann McElhinney, by whom he had another daughter, named Ann Matilda.² Ann died in November, 1814, and Ann Matilda died in March 1815. They were buried in the same family vault.² In 1816, John Wrenshall created a partnership with his two sons-in-law, who were brothers — William Boggs in Philadelphia, and George Boggs in Pittsburgh.² John Wrenshall died on September 25, 1821, and was buried between his two wives in the vault behind the Presbyterian Church.^{3,4,5} His will divided his substantial holdings among his children.⁵

The Presbyterian and Episcopal cemeteries in Pittsburgh were adjacent to each other and were also the site of older burials. As the city grew, and with it the churches, the cemeteries began to be built over, and after 1849, many remains were removed to other cemeteries. The remainder of the burying ground was cleared when in 1902 the Presbyterian congregation leased “in perpetuity” all the land for building purposes.⁶ In that timeframe, the Wrenshall family graves were moved to Melville Cemetery, where his son, John Fletcher Wrenshall, and his family was buried.⁹

The surviving children of John and Polly Bennington Wrenshall were:

1. Margaret Sarah Wrenshall, who married William Boggs¹ on November 11, 1802, and for some years they lived in Philadelphia^{2,7,8} It was about this time that the Bible was purchased and presented to Margaret Sarah by her father.¹ William Boggs died September 1, 1821⁹, and his wife and children moved back to Pittsburgh, where they lived until the 1830’s¹⁰ when they moved to Florence, Lauderdale Co., Alabama,¹¹ bringing the Bible with them.
2. Mary Bennington, born in 1786, also in Great Britain, first married Woolman Gibson, who died and was interred in the Wrenshall family vault. She later married Rev. Asa Shinn, a Methodist minister, and died in Cincinnati, OH.^{2,22}
3. Julia Wrenshall, born in 1788 in Great Britain, married George Boggs, who was William’s younger brother. Julia died April 2, 1824, and she, too, was buried in the family vault.^{2,4} After his wife died, George Boggs moved his family to Lauderdale Co., Alabama.¹²
4. Ellen Bray Wrenshall, born about 1793 in Great Britain, married Frederick Dent² and they lived on a plantation near St. Louis. Their daughter, Julia Dent,¹³ became the wife of Ulysses S. Grant.¹⁴
5. Fanny Fieldhouse Wrenshall, born c.1796 in Philadelphia², married William Smith, a merchant, and lived in Washington Co., PA.^{2,15}

6. Emily Wrenshall, who was born in 1797 in Pittsburgh² and married Samuel R. Page,⁵ a wealthy businessman, and moved to Louisville, Kentucky.^{2,16} They were hosts to Julia Dent and Ulysses S. Grant who came by steamboat to their home on their honeymoon trip.¹⁷

7. Sarah Jane Wrenshall, born in 1800 in Pittsburgh,² married John K. Fielding, and lived in St. Charles, MO.^{2,17,18}

8. John Fletcher Wrenshall, born in 1802, the only surviving Wrenshall son, was a businessman in Pittsburgh, and his wife, Mary Ann Cowan, inherited their country estate, Woodville, from her family.¹⁹ He and his family remained in the Pittsburgh area.^{2,4} The Woodville Plantation is owned by the Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation and is open to the public.^{20,21}

The children of Margaret Sarah and William Boggs were:

1. Mary Jane Boggs, born in 1803, married Edward S. Menager.²²

2. Emily Wrenshall Boggs, born 1806 in Philadelphia, married James Irvine and remained in Pittsburgh.²²

3. John Bennington Boggs, born 1809 in Philadelphia, married Ann Houston and lived in Alabama.²³

4. Ellen Wrenshall Boggs, born in 1811 in Philadelphia, remained in Pennsylvania.²²

5. Margaret Sarah Boggs, born in 1813, married Hugh Thomson in 1832²⁹, and at least four children were born to them – Jane, Emily, Robert and James.²⁴ Hugh Thomson died in a New Orleans cholera epidemic and is buried there.²⁵ The two boys, Robert and James died as children and are buried beside their grandmother,²⁶ Sarah Margaret Boggs in the Florence City Cemetery. Margaret and the two daughters, Jane and Emily, who never married, are buried in a nearby section of the same cemetery.^{24,26}

6. Fanny Louisa Boggs, born in 1817, married Richard O. Pickett²⁷ and lived in Florence, Alabama.^{22,28}

7. Julia A. Boggs, born in 1815, was presented with the Bible in 1828.¹ Julia A. Boggs married Seymour Plummer in 1832²⁹ and had one daughter, Elenora “Molly” Plummer, in 1838.³⁰ Seymour Plummer died, possibly in 1842, and Julia married Thomas W. Warren about 1845. They lived in Lawrence Co., Alabama for a few years, providing a home for his brother, Hugh, who was deaf, and his younger sister, Sarah, as well as Julia’s daughter, Molly.³⁰ Julia and Thomas had two sons, Richard Thomas and Thomas,¹ who apparently died in infancy, before their daughter, Frances C. “Fanny” Warren was born in 1850,³⁰ though the Bible entry says “1852”.¹ Three sons were also born in Alabama: Robert Levi in 1854, Hugh Bennington in 1855, and Thomas Henry in 1857.³¹ By 1860, the family had moved from Lawrence Co., Alabama to Houston Co., Texas, bringing the family Bible with them. They settled in the southwestern part of the county near Alabama Crossing and farmed.³¹ In 1864, a daughter, Margaret Laurence Warren, known as Maggie, was born.^{1,34} The following year on October 4, Thomas W. Warren died. Julia Boggs Warren died in 1890.^{1,32}

The children of Thomas and Julia Boggs Warren:

1. Molly Plummer, who adopted the surname of her step-father, Thomas Warren, married David Randall Hazelett on November 20, 1865.^{1,33} The Bible lists the deaths of three children: Tomis W. in 1868, William E., and David R. both in 1870. Their father also died in 1870.¹ Family lore is that all died from typhoid.³³ Mollie moved into the household of her widowed mother where she remained until her death in 1886.^{1,34,36}

2. Robert Levi “Lee” Warren^{31,36} (1854-1929), according to an entry in the Bible, received it from Julia Warren in 1865.¹ He managed the farm and then worked in the cotton yard.^{8,48,35}

3. Hugh Bennington Warren^{31,36} was born in Alabama in 1855, and died in 1884.¹

4. Thomas Henry Warren³⁶ was born in Alabama in 1857 and died in 1892.¹

All of the sons lived and worked on the family farm in Houston County.^{31,36} The youngest daughter,

5. Margaret “Maggie” Warren,³⁴ was born in 1864 in Houston Co., and after her mother’s death in 1890, moved into Crockett³⁷ and lived in her father’s home, while working as a seamstress; later, she became a practical nurse and lived with private families.^{38,39,40} These Warren children never married.

6. Fannie C. Warren, born 1850, died 1885.¹ On March 7, 1870, she married Charles J. Hassell in Crockett and their children were born in Crockett. Charles was a store clerk⁴⁷ and was elected to various city offices⁴¹.

The children of Charles and Fannie Warren Hassell:

1. Edward Lee Hassell, who died in infancy in 1871.¹

2. Charles A. Hassell was born in 1872^{1,47} and married Henrietta “Hennie” Moore Leaverton.⁴² He was a salesman, and was active in the community.⁴³ Their children were Guy A., b. 1897⁴⁴; Julia and another infant, b. before 1900;⁴⁵ Kathryn E., b. 1900; Mable, b. 1901; and Norma, b. 1904.⁴⁶ Charles A. Hassell’s death date in 1934 is the last entry in the Bible.¹

3. Julia Hassell, born in 1874^{1,47}, married Banks B. “Boney” Barbee in 1894; he died in 1901. His widow moved into town and supported her three children by working at a general store.^{48,49} “Miss Julia,” was well-known in Crockett,⁵⁰

and died Aug. 11, 1956.⁵¹ Their children were: Elmo E. Barbee , b. 1896; Charles Hall Barbee, 1897-1985; and Mary Kate, b. 1899^{51,38}

4. William B. Hassell (1877-1915)^{1,38}

5. Edner Earl Hassell (1880-1900) ^{1,38}

6. Fannie May Hassell (1882-1904) ^{1,38}

7. Maggie Lee Hassell (1885-1886) ^{1,38}

The Bible today is in the office of the Houston County Historical Commission, Crockett, Texas, where prints of its family pages may be seen, and they may also be viewed online on the Houston County TXGenWeb site, <http://www.rootsweb.com/~txhousto/>. Linda S. Mabry's transcriptions of the *Journals of John Wrenshall, 1808-1817* and other documents are also available to be viewed at the Commission office in the Houston County Courthouse Annex.

¹ Margaret Sarah Wrenshall BIBLE, Printed by Isaiah Thomas, Worcester, Massachusetts, 1801. Transcribed by Bettie W. Sarver, 2000.

² *Journals of John Wrenshall, 1808-1817*, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, Senator John Heinz Pittsburgh Regional History Center, 1212 Smallman Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15222--Collection No. MSS#202, Series I, Microfilm 11243c.2, Transcribed by Linda S. Mabry, 2006

³ John Newton Boucher, *A Century and a Half of Pittsburgh and Her People* (Pittsburgh:Lewis Publishing Co., 1908), Vol. 2, p.213. University of Pittsburgh Digital Library, 1999 <http://digital.library.pitt.edu/>

⁴ *History of Allegheny County Pennsylvania*, (A. Warner & Co. Publishers, 1889), pp. 350-351, 500-501. University of Pittsburgh Digital Research Library, 1999 <http://digital.library.pitt.edu/>

⁵ Will of John Wrenshall, 1 Sept.1821, Allegheny Co. Will Bk II, p.258, PA Archives. Transcribed by Sean Drury, 2000 <http://boards.rootsweb.com/localities.northam.usa.states.pennsylvania.counties.allegheny/11299/mb.ashx>

⁶ Charles W. Dahlinger, *A Place of Great Historic Interest: Pittsburgh's First Burying Ground*. (Pittsburgh: 1919.) pp.8-28. University of Pittsburgh Digital Research Library, 2001 <http://digital.library.pitt.edu/>

⁷ Wm. Boggs household, U.S. Census of 1810, Philadelphia Co., PA , North Ward of Philadelphia, p.228. line 3 NARA microfilm M252, Roll 55

⁸ Wm. Boggs household, U.S. Census of 1820, Philadelphia Co., PA, Middle Ward of Philadelphia, , p.75, line 30 NARA microfilm M33, Roll 108

⁹ Family memoirs in possession of Ruth Wong, 5 May 2007

¹⁰ Margaret S. Boggs household, U.S. Census of 1830, Allegheny Co., PA, North Ward of Pittsburgh,, p.36, line11,NARA microfilm M19, Roll 144

¹¹ M. S. Boggs household, U.S. Census of 1840, Lauderdale Co., AL, town of Florence, p.110 NARA microfilm M704, Roll 7

¹² George Boggs household, U.S. Census of 1830, Lauderdale Co., AL, p. 189, line 19, NARA Microfilm M19, Roll 2

¹³ Fred. Dent household, U.S. Census of 1850, St. Louis Co., MO, population schedule, St. Louis (Independent city), Ward 2, p.232, line 28, dwelling 375, family 1179, NARA microfilm M432, Roll 415

¹⁴ *History of First Ladies*: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/firstladies/jg18.html> 2007

¹⁵ Wm. Smith household, U.S. Census of 1850, Washington Co. PA., population schedule, Washington Borough, p.366, line 39, dwelling 443, family 443, NARA microfilm M432 Roll 834

¹⁶ Samuel R. Page household, U.S.Census of 1850, Jefferson Co., KY, population schedule, Louisville, Dist. 2, p.163, line 36, dwelling 306, family 362 NARA Microfilm M432-206

¹⁷ *The Personal Memoirs of Julia Dent Grant (Mrs. Ulysses S. Grant)*., John Y. Simon, Editor, Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale, IL, 1988

¹⁸ Sarah J. Fielding household, U.S. Census of 1850, St. Charles Co., MO, population schedule, St. Charles, p. 48. NARA Microfilm M704 Roll 230

¹⁹ Kirk Q. Bigham, *Major Abraham Kirkpatrick and His Descendants* (Pittsburgh: J. P. Durbin, Printers.1911). pp. 33-34

²⁰ Jerry Storey, "On the Whiskey Trail", *Tribune-Review*, May 22, 2005.

http://www.phlf.org/news/mediaclips/2005/20050522TR_WhiskeyRebellion.html

²¹ Woodville Plantation <http://www.woodvilleplantation.org/>

²² Family memoirs belonging to Linda S. Mabry

²³ Lauderdale Co., Alabama Marriage Book 5, 1841-1851, ALGenWeb, <http://www.rootsweb.com/~allauder/marriages.htm>

²⁴ M. Thompson household, U.S. Census of 1870, Lauderdale Co. AL, Twnshp 3, R 11W, Florence PO, p.597, line 15, dwelling 1116, family 1061, NARA microfilm M593-21

²⁵ "Historical Address of Hon. Wm B. Wood", 4 July 1876, as published in the *Florence (AL) Gazette*, July-Sept., 1876. ALGenWeb <http://www.rootsweb.com/~allauder/history-wood-1876.htm>

²⁶ Timothy McCord, *Cemetery Survey, Florence City Cemetery, Lauderdale Co., AL*, 2001, Sec.P., p.2, ALGenWeb <http://www.rootsweb.com/~allauder/cem-florence-sectionp2.htm>

²⁷ "Richard Orick Pickens", *Memorial Record of Alabama*, Vol.II, (Madison, Wisconsin: Brant and Fuller, 1893), pp. 365-366. ALGenWeb <http://www.rootsweb.com/~allauder/bio-pickett.htm>

- ²⁸ Lauderdale Co., Alabama Marriage Book 3, 1833-1838, ALGenWeb, <http://www.rootsweb.com/~allauder/marriages.htm>
- ²⁹ Lauderdale Co., Alabama Marriage Book 2, 1825 -1833, ALGenWeb, <http://www.rootsweb.com/~allauder/marriages.htm>
- ³⁰ Thomas W. Warren household, U.S. Census of 1850, Lawrence Co., AL, population schedule, Dist. 8, p.389 NARA microfilm M432 Roll 8
- ³¹ Thos. Warren household, U.S. Census of 1860, Houston Co., TX, population schedule, Beat 8, Alabama PO, p.252, line 25, dwelling 640, family 598, NARA microfilm M653 Roll1297
- ³² Bebe Beasley Ulrich, *Crockett Newspapers 1853-1896* (Publications Development Company of Texas, Crockett,TX, 1984), p.39
- ³³ Houston County Historical Commission, Crockett, Texas, *History of Houston County Texas 1687-1979*, (Tulsa, OK: Heritage Publishing Co., 1979). p. 398
- ³⁴ Julia Warren household, U.S. Census of 1870, Houston Co., TX, population schedule, Pct.4, Crockett PO, p..279, line3, dwelling 133, family 133, NARA microfilm M593 Roll 1592
- ³⁵ Lee Warren household, U.S. Census of 1920, Houston Co., TX, population schedule, Crockett, ED 171, SD 1, p.2A, line 15, dwelling 23, family 27, NARA Microfilm T625-1819
- ³⁶ Julia Warren household, U.S. Census of 1880, Houston Co. TX, population schedule, Crockett PO, ED 23, p. 9D, line 11, family 1118, NARA microfilm T9 - 1312
- ³⁷ Bebe Beasley Ulrich, *Crockett Newspapers 1853-1896* (Publications Development Company of Texas, Crockett,TX, 1984), p. 59
- ³⁸ Charles J. Hassell household, U.S. Census of 1900, Houston Co., TX, population schedule, town of Crockett, ED 15, SD 8, p. 8A, line 1, dwelling 134, family 134, NARA microfilm T623-1646
- ³⁹ Maggie Warren, boarder, U.S. Census of 1920, Houston Co., TX, population schedule, Pct. 1, Crockett, ED 74, SD 1, p.11B, line 2, dwelling 72, family 78, NARA microfilm T625-1819
- ⁴⁰ Nathan Phillips household (Maggie Warren, lodger), U.S. Census of 1930, Houston Co., TX population schedule, Pct.1, Crockett, ED 1, SD18, p.10B, line 56, dwelling 245, family 275, NARA microfilm T626 - 2358
- ⁴¹ Bebe Beasley Ulrich, *Crockett Newspapers 1853-1896* (Publications Development Company of Texas, Crockett,TX, 1984), pp.52-181
- ⁴² Houston County,Texas Marriages:Groom Index,1882 – 1917, Transcribed by Mary Turner Kinard,. <http://www.rootsweb.com/~okgarvin/kinard/houstonhmarr.htm>
- ⁴³ Bebe Beasley Ulrich, *Crockett Newspapers 1853-1896* (Publications Development Company of Texas, Crockett,TX, 1984), pp.168,170.
- ⁴⁴ Chas. Hassell household, U.S. Census of 1900, Houston Co.,TX, population schedule, Crockett,ED 15, SD 8, p.12A, line 19, dwelling 219, family 221, NARA Microfilm T623-1646
- ⁴⁵ Houston Co. Historical Commission, Crockett, Texas, *Houston County (TX) Cemeteries, 3rd Edition*, (Marceline, MO: Walsworth Publishing Co.,Inc.,1987), p.339
- ⁴⁶ Charles A. Hassell household, U.S. Census of 1910, Houston Co., TX,population schedule, Pct. 1, Crockett, ED 62, SD 7, p.29B, line 82, dwelling 458, family 458, NARA Microfilm T624-1565
- ⁴⁷ Chas. J. Hassell household, U.S. Census of 1880, Houston Co. TX, population schedule, Crockett, ED 23, SD 1, p. 49, line 34, family 319, NARA Microfilm T9-1312
- ⁴⁸ Charles J. Hassell household, U.S. Cemsus, 1910, Houston Co., TX, population schedule, Crockett, Pct. 1, ED 62, SD 7, p. 9B, line 39, dwelling 175, family 175, NARA Microfilm T624-1563
- ⁴⁹ Julia Barbee household, U.S. Census 1930, Houston Co., TX, popuilation schedule, Pct. 1,Crockett, ED 1, SD 18, p. 5A, line 29, dwelling 112, family 180, NARA Microfilm T626-2358
- ⁵⁰ Bebe Beasley Ulrich, *Crockett Newspapers 1853-1896* (Publications Development Company of Texas, Crockett,TX, 1984), pp.47-179.
- ⁵¹ Houston County Historical Commission, Crockett, Texas, *History of Houston County Texas 1687-1979*, (Tulsa, OK: Heritage Publishing Co., 1979). p.245