



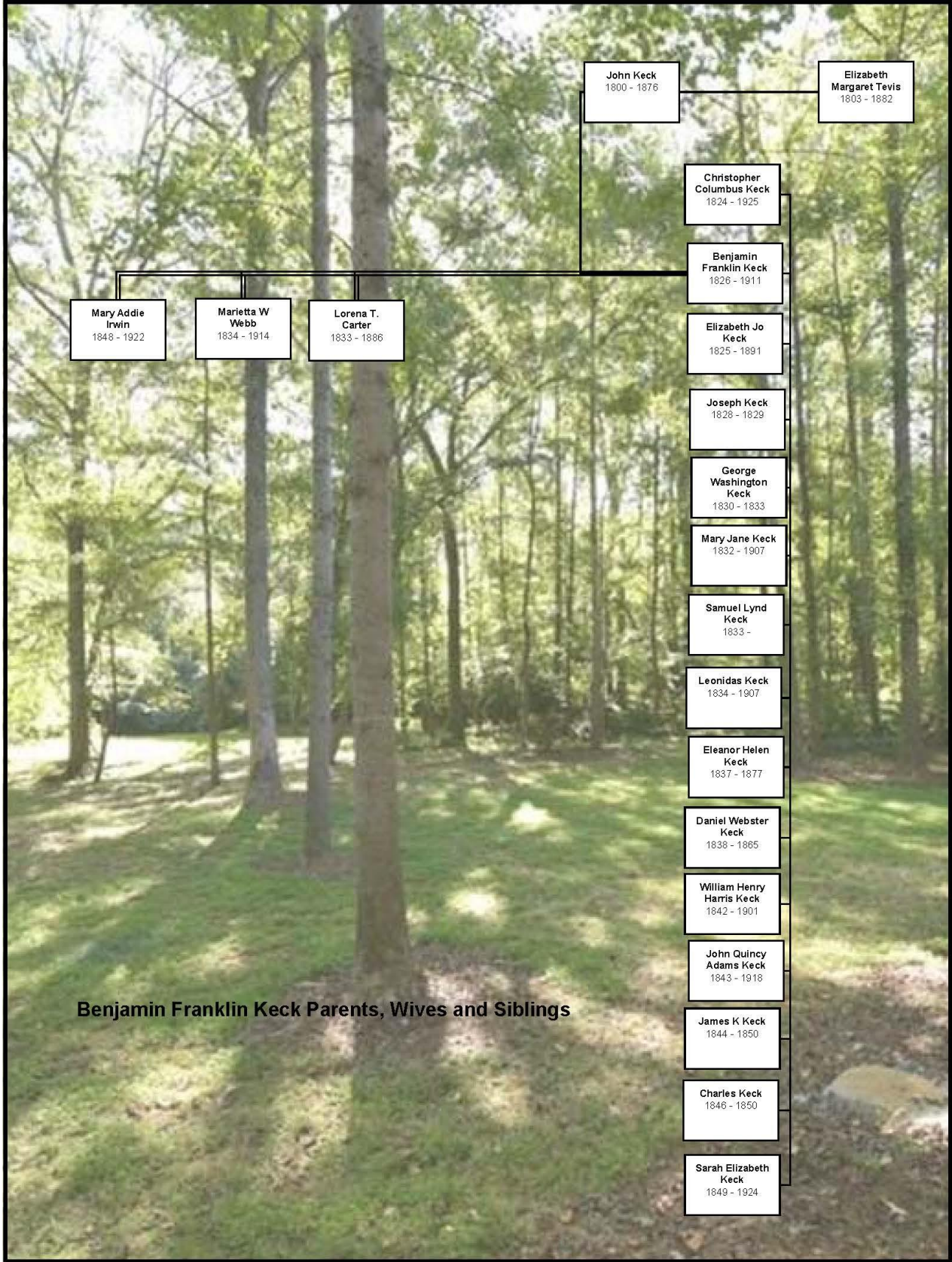
THE KECK BOYS SERIES

Benjamin Franklin Keck Life Story

“Four Times Dead or Not Dead Yet”

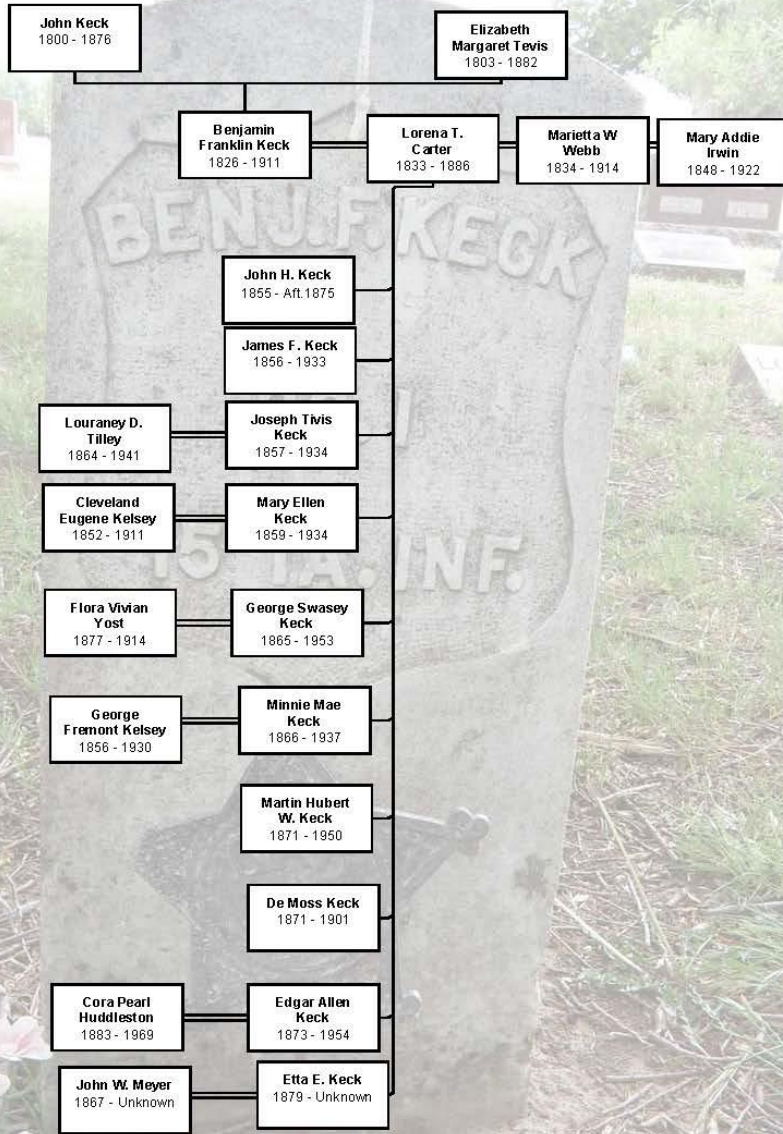
“I am not dead yet” Herodotus

1828-1911



Benjamin Franklin Keck Parents, Wives and Siblings

Benjamin Franklin Keck Parents, Wives and Children



Born on August 30, 1826¹ in Baltimore County, Maryland to John Keck (aka "John Quincy Adams Keck, Senior.") and Elizabeth Margaret Tevis (aka Tivis), Benjamin Franklin was the second son of nine surviving sons² and third child of this couple. He died on October 29, 1911 in Enid, Garfield, Oklahoma. However, before the final departure in 1911, Benjamin was reported dead on at four earlier occasions.³

First Time Dead: Benjamin informed his friend, the editor of the "*Enid Events*,"⁴ that he was born in Baltimore, Maryland on August 30, 1826 and moved to Cincinnati, Hamilton County, Ohio in "the early days." He was living there on February 18, 1832 when the 1832 Ohio River flood occurred.⁵ At this time the river rose to 64 feet three inches.⁶ The lower bank of Cincinnati ("Bottom") of 36 squares was inundated, destroying most of the business area.⁷ The forest had not yet been removed to till the land, which was later attributed to be the cause of the devastation of human and property loss of subsequent flooding.⁸ The family, who lived in the Bottom, was trapped in the second floor of their home by the rising waters before being rescued.⁹ The day after the flood, the newspaper reported that Benjamin had drowned in the driftwood.¹⁰ He did not.

The rising waters must have been especially frightening to his mother, Elizabeth Margaret, as she had just given birth to Benjamin's younger sister, Mary Jane Keck, on February 9, 1832.¹¹ James H. Beard, well known portrait painter, captured the terror of such events in "The Last Man" described as follows: "The last man is the victim of the ancient flood, who awaits on a crag, the closing in on him of the angry waters. His wife has perished, and floats in the surge at his feet. The rain still beats down from the black wind tossed sky. The storm-pelted man knows his fate, and awaits it with a stern sadness and a grand fortitude."¹² An eye witness account by Salmon P. Chase, future Secretary of the Treasury under President Abraham Lincoln whose image is on the \$10,000 bill, was reported by Owen Findsen, in *Cincinnati Enquirer* as follows: "A few days ago the Ohio began to rise rapidly, 24-year-old Cincinnati attorney



Salmon P. Chase wrote in his journal on Feb. 14, 1832. 'After reaching its ordinary height (50 feet) when reckoned at full flood, the noble stream, as if satisfied with that display of strength, flowed steadily on for a while, without increase or abatement. After a few hours, however, it began to subside and continued slowly falling for some time. It then rose again higher than before.... The Ohio, now swelled to an immense flood, more than a mile from shore to shore and 70 feet in depth, rushed almost without a ripple. It was sublime. It was a power mighty terrible yet unostentatious. It was simple grandeur, a calm putting forth of gigantic energy.'"¹³

The newly-born daughter survived not only the flood but subsequent measles and cholera epidemics in fall of 1832.¹⁴ Other members of the family may have not.¹⁵ However the economic crisis perpetuated by

the tightening of credit due to President Jackson's suspension of bank credits, fires that destroyed steamboats, hotels, and an iron foundry and cholera, that killed an average of 21 persons per day during its scourge, may have driven the family from Cincinnati with some other eight thousand citizens.¹⁶

The family moved downriver to Bracken County, Kentucky before 1835 as Leonidas Keck was born in Bracken County. Some family trees show a George Keck who was born in 1830 and dying in Augusta, Bracken, Kentucky in 1833.¹⁷ While Benjamin reported that he lived in Bracken County until he was 22 years old following this move, there are events that suggest that other members of the family moved to Ohio and returned to Baltimore, Maryland.

These events are his siblings' birth places showing that Elizabeth Margaret was subsequently present in Ohio (1837), Maryland (1839 and 1841), and Kentucky (1843 and 1849) before appearing on the US Federal Census in Fabius, Knox, Missouri. On June 1, 1840, there was a John Keck living in the 8th ward of Baltimore in the 1840 US Federal Census. The number and ages of the males approximate the ages of sons Daniel, Leonidas, Samuel, Benjamin or Christopher¹⁸ and father, John. Three persons were involved in manufacturing or trade and one person over the age of 20 who cannot read or write. The number and ages of the females approximate the ages of daughters Eleanor, Mary Jane, Elizabeth and mother, Elizabeth. There is a "Jno Kok", who is engaged in "manufacturing and trade" in the same census for Louisville, Jefferson, Kentucky; however the ages and numbers of children do not match John Keck at that time.

Benjamin and Elizabeth were in Kentucky in December 1840 as the Kentucky Marriage records sets out the marriage of Amos Poe and Elizabeth Keck conditioned upon the recognition of marriage bond of \$50 by Amos Poe and Benjamin Franklin.¹⁹ Marriage bonds were traditionally between the father or brother of the bride and groom.

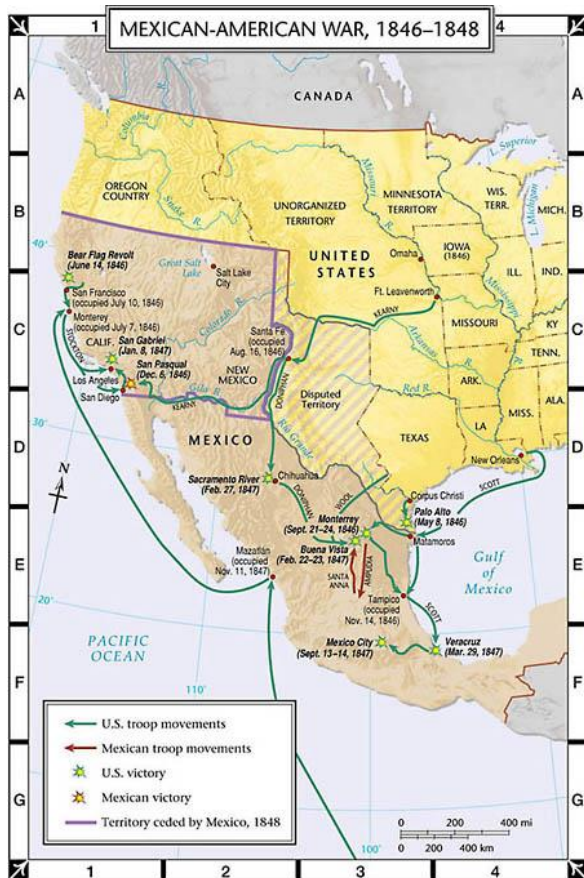
Benjamin or Christopher may have remained behind in Kentucky due to apprenticeships. Several of John Keck sons list themselves as tradesmen. By 1835, Christopher and Benjamin were old enough to have been placed in apprenticeship. Benjamin listed his profession as "shoemaker" on the 1856 Iowa State Census²⁰ and Christopher, a "carpenter", on several censuses. Leonidas states he was a "brick maker" on his registration with the Grand Army of the Republic membership rolls. Apprenticeships' agreements could be for seven years or more informally with family members. Amos C. Poe was a shoemaker. Christopher married Eliza Galloway, whose father was a carpenter, and with whom Christopher lived before and after the marriage.

The John Keck family did return to Bracken County, Kentucky. Benjamin's brother, John Quincy Adams Keck, reported returning to Bracken County when he was six months old (1844) and then to Shelby County, Missouri²¹ when he was about six years old (1849). Also on May 22, 1842 William Henry Harrison Keck was born in Augusta, Bracken County. Christopher Columbus Keck remained in Bracken County at least until the 1850 US Federal Census but left before 1860 when the US Federal Census locates him in Savannah, Andrew, Missouri. By 1850

both William Henry and John Quincy Adams had moved to Fabius, Knox, Missouri as well as Benjamin's father, John and Benjamin's other siblings.²²

Benjamin's Service in the Mexican American War: In 1846, Benjamin enlisted to fight in the Mexican American War at Augusta, Kentucky.²³ Augusta, Bracken County, Kentucky is located on the Ohio River south and east of Cincinnati. In 1846, Benjamin was living in Kentucky. He served with the army about six months without having engaged in any shooting or sightings of the Mexican forces. Benjamin reported that he did travel during his military service from Kentucky to New Orleans and then to Santa Fe, New Mexico.²⁴

Unlike Benjamin's Civil War experience, it is difficult to determine the specifics of Benjamin's service during the Mexican American War. The soldiers were divided into regularly enlisted men in the US Army and volunteers. The total official count of volunteer enlistments was 73,260 with terms of three-months (1,390), six months (18,210) and 12 months or for the duration of the war (33,596). Only a small percentage served with Generals Taylor or Scott or Kearney. An even smaller percentage of the volunteers engaged in combat. Some stayed within their home states not going to the areas of conflict (Mexico or south of the Rio Grande, New Mexico, California) and some were almost immediately disbanded due to the method of recruitment (e.g. "Gaines Army"), term of service (e.g. "six-month volunteers"), or state exceeding its quota.²⁵



There are several possible stories regarding Benjamin's experiences in the Mexican American War but none are totally consistent with his statements about his service. These stories are he was a volunteer (1) with Gaines Army; (2) under one of the two official requisitions by Kentucky, Ohio, Missouri or another state; or (3) under the Mason County companies formed under the second requisition but not accepted by the Governor.

After reviewing the available information sources, it is most probable that Benjamin responded to call for volunteers by General Edmund Pendleton Gaines, Commander of the US Army Western Division. General Gaines requested volunteers in anticipation of war with Mexico without the approval of President James K. Polk.²⁶ Gaines' request set off a fury of volunteerism. Later referred to as "Gaines Army,"²⁷ the 11,211 early volunteers of six regiments from Louisiana and contingents from Kentucky and Missouri were dispatched to the Rio Grande area as fast as transports could be

had via New Orleans.²⁸

The volunteers' hardships and frustrations began immediately during their trip to and encampment near Matamoras, continued with General Zachery Taylor, Commander of the Army of Occupation, order to disband the "six month volunteers" units on July 21, 1846, and return home. None saw any action, many became sick, others exhibited intemperance, insubordination, and disobedience, and some deserted once they arrived at the Rio Grande.²⁹ There is no located record that any of these volunteers were close to Santa Fe, New Mexico.

The War Department interpreted the voluntary enlistment of the men arising from General Gaines' "unofficial" request as being under the Act of May 8, 1795. This was the second militia act, the first being on May 2, 1795. The two acts provided for the establishment of state militias and mandatory conscription of all male citizens of certain age to be available to the President "*...whenever the United States shall be invaded, or be in imminent danger of invasion from any foreign nation or Indian tribe*". In section 4, the law provided "*And be it further enacted, That the militia employed in the service of the United States, shall receive the same pay and allowances, as the troops of the United States, [omitted in 1795: "who may be in service at the same time, or who were last in service, and shall be subject to the same rules and articles of war"]*: And that no officer, non-commissioned officer or private of the militia shall be compelled to serve more than three months in any one year, nor more than in due rotation with every other able-bodied man of the same rank in the battalion to which he belongs." The law required the permission of the respective governor from which the men were conscripted and in some instances, the men themselves.³⁰

The first official requisition in Kentucky was for a 12 month term. The Gaines' Army recruits, about 6000 in number, had signed on for six months. In addition to the discrepancy in terms, the six month term posed logistic problems being that the end of the six month was likely to occur either at or near a planned engagement. Arranging for the return transport of such returning troops would have been disruptive to such war campaign strategy. Initially General Zachery Taylor saw the "six month volunteers" as an embarrassment but within a month began to see the benefit of keeping some of the men. In the end, he reluctantly offered the men inclusion in battalions or single companies or individually to be assigned to the Quartermaster if the volunteer would agree to an extension of his enlistment to 12 months.³¹ This condition did not set well with either the men or the public and most refused to do so. Newspapers from the affected states (predominantly Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Kentucky) as well as others commented on the unfairness of either retaining the volunteers or failing to keep the terms of the enlistment by sending the men back to New Orleans after only three months. The men only received payment for three months from which they had to make arrangements to get home from New Orleans and reimburse the government for their clothing allowance of \$36.40³².

This scenario for Benjamin works except that these volunteers are never noted to have been in Santa Fe. They were either in New Orleans, near Matamoras or the Rio Grande or in route to and from for those locations. The area of Santa Fe was captured and overseen by the Army of the West commanded by General Kearney. His regular army troops had been supplemented by volunteers from predominately Missouri. The troops marched from Fort Leavenworth across

the desert arriving in Santa Fe on August 18, 1846. A few volunteers from Missouri had traveled at New Orleans but returned as part of the six month volunteers.

A possible means by which Benjamin reached Santa Fe was as a teamster. One option given to the “six month volunteers” was to join the Quartermaster who sorely needed teamsters. Additionally, there were daily advertisements in the New Orleans papers as well as other cities offering to pay good wages for experienced teamsters. As noted in a Special Committee Report, Senate, 30th session of Congress: “The new and quite abnormal traffic in the bustling days of 1846 demanded scores of teamsters and wagons. Wagons came from Pittsburgh, St. Louis, and were also purchased from anybody who had one to sell. Many young men who had rushed to the frontier for the purpose of enlisting in the Army of the West found that source of enlistment closed, hence they joined the ranks of the army teamsters. This type of service paid from \$25 to \$30 per month, including subsistence, while ordinary soldiers received but \$7 for the same period of service on regular duty. Oftentimes soldiers were given ‘extra duty’ at the salary of \$14.90 per month. These teamsters became foot soldiers of a wagon train subject to dangers far more perilous than those faced by many of the regular soldiers.”³³

Other possible scenarios for Benjamin’s enlistment are that he signed up in response to one of the two official requisitions in Kentucky. However Benjamin’s name was not listed in any newspaper³⁴ or any currently available official records. On May 15, 1846, the United States declared war and Kentucky Governor William Owsley officially called for volunteers based upon the War Department’s order. There were two requisitions of troops from Kentucky. Kentucky’s initial response to the Presidential call for troops was overwhelming. Over 13,000 volunteers stepped forward. Within four days of the call, Kentucky had raised the requisite two infantry and one cavalry regiment.³⁵ The troops from the first requisition were sent to New Orleans and to the northern part of Mexico and had tours of twelve months. The second requisition, made on August 31, 1847, was met with less enthusiasm and volunteers possibly due to reports by the returned soldiers from the first requisition. The term of enlistment was for the duration of the war.³⁶



Even prior to the official request, Governor William Owsley accepted the Louisville Legion’s, a state militia, offer to serve.³⁷ The German National Guard, another Kentucky militia, also recruited volunteers and traveled with the Louisville Legion to New Orleans. The volunteers traveled by two steamers, the *Diana* and *Alexander Scott*, departed on May 31st and June 1st, arriving “tentless” on the night of June 5th.³⁸ The first group was encamped at Algeria and the second, at the Barracks. In total

they represented about 700-800 men. The following week, “two companies of cavalry of about 200 men” traveled to Rio Grande.³⁹ The Federal government threatened to reject the Governor’s selection of the able and trained Louisville Legion as failing to comply with troop size.⁴⁰ Eventually, the Government accepted the majority of men sent forward but warned that subsequently sent men and men who had been appointed to staff and officer position had been done so illegally.

The Governor had also set off a maelstrom due to his manner of selecting companies. 105 companies volunteered of which the Governor selected 30. 79 out of 99 counties raised troops with some counties raising more than one company. Out of the 70 counties, only 14 counties were selected. These counties tended to be in the Blue Grass area around Lexington and near urban areas such as Louisville and Cincinnati.⁴¹ The competition was extreme between the companies. Volunteers threatened to get to the war by their own means. Counties complained that volunteers from other counties were improperly joining their companies.

When the Governor made the second requisition on August 31, 1847, he requested two regiments. The two regiments that were formed and ready for service were The Third and Fourth Infantry Regiments. The captains of the companies of the Third Infantry came from Laurel, Estill, Shelby, Bourbon, Scott, Boone and Fayette counties. The captains of the companies of the Fourth Infantry came from Caldwell, Livingston, Daviess, Hart, Jefferson, Adair, Pulaski, Washington, Nelson, Henry, Bath, Fleming, and Nicholas counties. There were twelve other full companies that reported but not selected from Mason, Montgomery, Fayette, Madison, Bullitt, Campbell, Hardin, Harrison and Franklin and three from Louisville. Additionally there were partially filled companies. And four companies were enlisted prior to the second requisition into the army.⁴²

There is no mention of any troops from Bracken County; however Mason County abuts Bracken and some towns overlapped the county lines. Benjamin’s brother, Christopher, lived in Mason County. It might also be that Augusta could have been considered part of “Cincinnati” for which 150 men were noted to have signed up on May 21, 1846. However, the units named do not correspond to Kentucky but Ohio⁴³. The men from the second requisition which formed the Third and Fourth Infantry Regiments were from eastern and Pennyroyal areas of Kentucky.⁴⁴ Benjamin did not state which unit to which he was attached thus keeping this as a possibility.

The men from the first requisition were sent to Northern Mexico while the men from the second requisition were sent to Southern Mexico.⁴⁵ None were sent to Santa Fe. Except for the Third and Fourth Infantry Regiments formed during the second requisitions⁴⁶, the volunteers engaged at some point in time with the Mexicans in battles. However, for about seven months after the first requisition, the men did not see battle but languished in camp. The first requisition volunteers having a 12 month term⁴⁷, the only way Benjamin could have only served for six months was for him to have deserted⁴⁸ or become ill enough to be transported back to New Orleans for treatment⁴⁹. His rendition of his military history does not state either.

There are, of course, multiple other possibilities such as Benjamin traveling to Missouri with his family in time to enlist in the Army of the West. According to certain family stories, one being John Quincy Adams, the family moved by 1849 but that date may have been earlier. The Army of the West did not engage in any action until well after the six months from their initial enlistment of which Benjamin states he was not engaged in battle. It was also in Missouri that the hopeful but rejected volunteers joined the teamsters.

What enticed Benjamin to enlist? In addition to a tradition of patriotism and adventure, men were motivated by promises of bounties, land warrants for 60-160 acres or script from \$25-\$100, pensions, escaping economic problems at home and prospects of good wages in Mexico or related to the war efforts.⁵⁰

Settling in Iowa: Benjamin returned to Bracken County by December 1846. In 1848, Benjamin “struck out to make a fortune for himself” and began his travels that took him to Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, St. Louis, Missouri and Iowa.⁵¹ On January 3, 1854 he married Lorena T. Carter in Davis, Lee, Iowa. In 1856, Benjamin and his family were in Van Buren, Lee County, Iowa.⁵² He states that he has been a resident of Iowa for eight years and his wife, three years. His family included his son, John H., father-in-law, Henry Carter⁵³, and brother-in-law, Luis. Henry and Luis state that they had been residents of Iowa for two years. In 1860 on Schedule Four, page 29, of the “Production of Agricultural Report for Montrose, Lee County, Iowa,” Benjamin is listed as being the “Owner, manager, or agent” of 50 improved acres, cash worth of \$2000 with farming equipment, one horse, one cow and ten swine worth \$150. Also in 1860, the US Federal Census shows that the family is at the Post Office of Nashville (Galland), Montrose, Lee County, Iowa with only personal property worth \$200.⁵⁴ Farmington is also associated with the Carter and Keck families around the time of the Civil War.⁵⁵

Benjamin’s Deaths in the Civil War: For Benjamin, the Civil War, was the predominant event of his life. He retold the stories of the battles in which he engaged to various newspapers, reminisced with comrades at the Grand Army of the Republicans (GAR) posts and conventions, and solemnized its meaning to his life through poems. There may have been a darker effect on Benjamin as he appears to have deserted his family at some point, wandered from city to city, enhanced his rank that he held, married two women at the same time, and attempted suicide. Considering the physical wounds he endured in battle, incarceration as a prisoner of war, and loss of friends and fellow soldiers to the carnage often experienced in hand to hand combat, it is more likely than not he did not lightly toss off the years as a soldier. Perhaps Benjamin’s feelings are best expressed by the following poem offered as his own yet significant despite his plagiarism of the same. James L. Kenway was the actual poet who wrote “The Little Button”. It had been re-published in the Pittsburg Daily Headlight from the National Tribune on December 19, 1894. This poem crediting Benjamin was published in the *Enid Events* on June 9, 1904⁵⁶:

*“Written by Benjamin Franklin Keck
of this city.*

*You ask me why upon my breast
My army badge I wear,*

*When duty called I dare not then
Disgrace the name I bore,
But left the peaceful joys of home
To hear the Cannon’s roar.*

*And when along our charging line
The roar of battle ran
I saw the gate of death ajar
And proved myself a man.*

*And deem it but a worthless thing
I proudly fasten there.*

*Yet that small button on my coat
Which you so lightly prize
Is honor's emblem on the earth
And sacred in my eyes.*

*To me it speaks of long-lost friends
Who once beside me trod.
And who for Freedom's sacred causes
Gave up their souls to God.*

*And oft with righteous sword in hand
I stood in Freedom's van,
And fought beneath the starry flag
With Grant and Sheridan.*

*Often beneath the wintry sky
I shivered as I slept,
Or through the dark and stormy night
My dreary vigil kept.*

*I bore the worst that war can
bring ---
Wound, danger, scanty cheer,
But never once repined nor
deemed
The sacrifice too dear.*

*Then scoff not at the simple badge
I wear upon my breast,
It should be precious in your sight
And not a theme for jest.*

*Plain as it is it far outshines
The purest brightest gem
And holds the foremost place of all
In glory's diadem. "*

Benjamin was 33 years old at the time of his enlistment. He and Lorena had four children under the age of eight⁵⁷ at the time of his departure. Six more children would be born after his return from the war.⁵⁸ Benjamin gave his residences at the time of enlistment as being Farmington, Lee, Iowa.

At the commencement of the Civil War, each state had a quota to fill and competed with other states to fulfill the Presidential order to enlist men. Benjamin⁵⁹ had already enlisted and reported to quarters on October 1, 1861, before the resolution by the Adjunct General ordering the Citizens of Iowa to refrain from accepting other states' enticements to join the other state's armies (October 10, 1861). He was mustered in on January 24, 1862. Benjamin was in the 15th Regiment of the Iowa Veterans Volunteers, Company I. (15th Regiment Iowa)⁶⁰ Benjamin enlisted as a private but was promoted to corporal after the battle of Shiloh⁶¹.

Company I had about seven corporals throughout the war with names and rank varying depending on "blood promotions," new enlistments, consolidation and reorganization of the regiment and general promotions. Benjamin is shown as being 4th and 6th corporal on various documents and reports. His official record does not show him ever receiving a rank higher than corporal.⁶² The records also show him requesting a reduction in rank, the purpose of which is unknown.⁶³ Corporals and officers were listed numerically by seniority and as such it may be that a more senior enlisted person had been selected to fill a corporal vacancy in the Company. An additional possible explanation is provided by "Rifle and Infantry Tactics, Title First, Article First, Formation of a Regiment in Order and Battle, of School of the Soldiers and Company, Instruction for Skirmishes" in Volume One of *Hardee Rifle and Infantry Tactics*.⁶⁴ When troops stood in formation, the corporals, who stood at the far right of each rank, were in the order of height. The tallest corporal took the first row of the first line. Benjamin could have been just shorter than the other corporals who preceding him numerically. A corporal is a non-commissioned officer who may direct soldiers of lesser rank and were the most likely source of encouragement and discipline in battle for those losing courage ready to retreat when more fighting needed to be done.⁶⁵

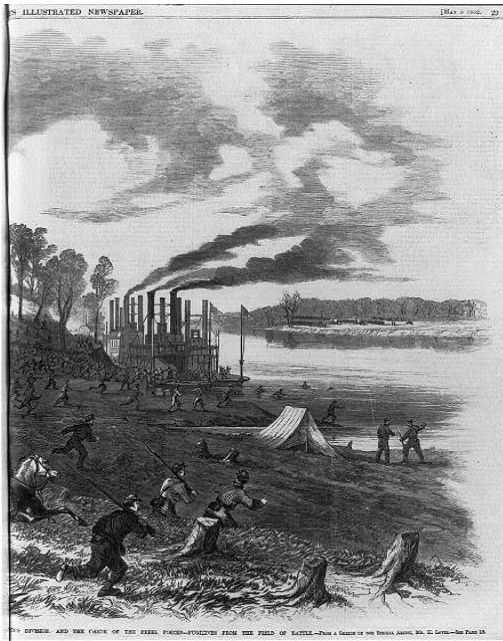
Benjamin participated in the first and last battles fought by the 15th Regiment Iowa, Company I, promoted from private to corporal, suffered severe wounds, reported dead on two or three occasions,⁶⁶ captured, imprisoned and released from Andersonville⁶⁷, present at the surrender of Johnson's Army in Raleigh and marched in the Grand Review in Washington, DC at the conclusion of the war before being mustered out at Louisville, Kentucky on July 24, 1865.

Immediately after being recruited Benjamin, along with the other recruits, was exposed to an extreme winter, threat of collapse of quarters at Keokuk⁶⁸ and an epidemic of measles.⁶⁹ While wounded and imprisoned, the extent of his wounds at Shiloh and confinement in Andersonville differ in rendition between the official records, newspaper reports and his statements to the *Enid Events* and the *Meridian Ledger*. Though difficult to completely substantiate his participation in the famous incident between the then Colonel William W. Belknap (1829-1890)⁷⁰ and confederate, Colonel Charles Harris D. Lampley, commander of the 45 Alabama Infantry, in the battle in Atlanta, Georgia, it does seem more probable than not due to the circumstances of that battle and descriptions of the incident by others. It is also most likely that Belknap and Benjamin knew of each other coming from the same area and formed a close relationship as fellow soldiers do. Thus the story of the gold watch and Benjamin's efforts to save Belknap from danger are probable.

Benjamin was in Company I, which proportionately to the size of the company, lost more men to casualties by killing, disease, wounds and capture than the other companies in the 15th Regiment Iowa. At the Battle of Shiloh, the company started with 66 men, of which 23 became casualties.⁷¹ In the Battle of Bald Hill or Battle of Atlanta, there were 31 men with 16 being captured⁷². It was also the first company to re-enlist as Veteran Volunteers in the 17th Army at Vicksburg, Mississippi in 1863.⁷³ Those soldiers of the 15th Regiment Iowa who re-enlisted as a "veteran," as Benjamin did, suffered 62% casualties during their 18 months of service.⁷⁴

The Second Time Dead: ***The Battle of Shiloh***





Shiloh was Benjamin's and the 15th Regiment Iowa's first engagement and a bloody one. On March 19, 1862, the citizens of Keokuk provided a great sendoff for the 15th Regiment Iowa who boarded a riverboat or "steamer"⁷⁵ to St. Louis. The regiment would stay in the Benton Barrack.⁷⁶ The soldiers left St. Louis on the *Minnehaha* on April 3, 1862, for the Tennessee River.⁷⁷

Settling in after arriving at 4:00 AM on April 6, 1862 at Pittsburg Landing, many of the men did not have time to finish their morning coffee, before Colonel H.T. Reid received General Grant's order. Colonel Reid ordered the troops to disembark, form lines of battle, and load their weapons, Springfield Rifle Muskets, for the first time.⁷⁸ Each soldier was issued 50 rounds of ammunition. Their initial order was to stay near the landing to stop stragglers and those retreating, which

they did for about one hour. The second order was to advance to a position on the bluff about two miles from the front to support General McClelland's division.⁷⁹ They were part of the Prentiss Division. The 16th Iowa accompanied the 15th. It was a dramatic, shocking introduction of the troops to battle as described as follows:⁸⁰

"The men fleeing the battle yelled as they passed the Iowa boys, 'Don't go out there!' 'You'll catch hell!' 'We are cut to pieces' 'We are whipped' Cavalrymen were galloping after the fleeing men and threatening to shoot them if they did not stop. The stragglers that the Fifteenth rounded up all told the same story; the Federals were whipped and would be driven into the river in less than twenty minutes. The men of the Fifteenth were becoming jittery, filled with doubt, and scared. Belknap ordered them to load their weapons.

"Against this backdrop of growing panic, Belknap received orders to march the men to General John McClernand's right flank to shore up the breach with Sherman's men. The road was clogged with retreating artillery, flying cavalry, straggling infantry and wounded. On that road was the first dead man the Fifteenth saw. He had fallen in the



road and his limbs had been mangled by the wheels of passing artillery, the scraps of his blue uniform furnishing the only evidence that he was a union man.”

As with most accounts of event during the Civil War, it is important to distinguish fact from later embellishment such as the “Sunken Road” at Shiloh but the horror felt by these newly enlisted men cannot be understated.⁸¹ Colonel Reid’s official report summarized the personal experience of the volunteers of the 15th that participated in the battle that day: “It must be remembered that the regiment had just received its arms and that the men had never had the opportunity of learning the use of them until they came on the battlefield; that they had just landed and were attached to no brigade, and fought the enemy without support of artillery, in a position from which more experienced troop had been compelled to retire.”⁸²

Benjamin was severely wounded. His descriptions of his wounds were described in two subsequent newspapers. The first was in the *Meridian Ledger* as “ball through his right side” on the first day of battle at Shiloh (April 6, 1862). In Benjamin’s interview with the *Enid Events*, he reported that he was shot in the right hand at Shiloh. The official and newspaper reports of the day on the wounded stated that Benjamin incurred a dangerous and critical wound to the stomach (“chest severely”)⁸³. It was also described as “Gsht rt breast, rbw & redis heart & total dfns rt ear” on his request for disability benefits, “W’d Abdomen severely, Shiloh” in the regimental history⁸⁴, and “chest” in the newspaper. The early prognosis was not good stating that he had been shot in the lungs and would die.⁸⁵ He did not.

During this time of little or no procedures to prevent disease and infection, it is amazing that Benjamin lived. Some researchers estimate that for every three men killed in action, five died of disease. 39% of those wounded died of infection.⁸⁶ For penetrating chest wounds, the fatality rate was 62.6%.⁸⁷ The benefits of sterilizing wounds or maintaining a sterile environment was not yet recognized. The lack of medical treatment including availability of surgeons or inexperienced surgeons, resulted in deaths due to wounds which otherwise should not have caused death.⁸⁸

There was also at this stage of the war no coordinated and dedicated system to get the injured off the battlefield quickly.⁸⁹ Perhaps Benjamin’s chances of surviving were increased by Assistant Surgeon W.H. Gibbons’ decision to position his hospital 250 yards from the rear of the 15th Regiment Iowa, closer than most primary locations for hospitals at the time.⁹⁰ Benjamin was no doubt one of the many wounded who were carried to the temporary hospital aboard the *Minnehaha*.⁹¹ Another factor in his recovery could have been that the Iowa wounded were transported by steamboat rather than railroad cars. Benjamin arrived at Keokuk on the *Empress* on April 20, 1862.⁹² Others arrived on the *Jeanne Dean* which brought 296 sick and wounded soldiers from Shiloh.⁹³

Yet Benjamin may not have been so exceptional.⁹⁴ Surgeons at Shiloh report amazing recovers such as “a ragged ball from the center of the forehead, two inches deep and which occasioned the loss of considerable quantities of brain from both of the anterior lobes and the man still lives, at last count, with good use of his faculties.” And due to the piercing of the soldier chest

by fragments of a watch, the same surgeon in removing the fragments touched the beating heart of a soldier who showed no signs of distress.⁹⁵

The third factor affecting his treatment was that he was transported to the newly established hospital at Keokuk for Iowa soldiers. The hospital had been quickly established on April 20, 1862 having received only a four-day notice that 300 wounded soldiers would be coming from the Battle of Shiloh. Lieutenant C.J. Ball of the 13th Infantry and Mayor Robert P. Creel of Keokuk commandeered 100 rooms in the Estes Hotel on the second floor, which were converted to accommodate the wounded. Six additional hospitals, including the Simpson House and Leighton House, were eventually established in various locations in the city increasing the number of beds to 625. The Estes House became known As "Keokuk General Hospital" and remained the largest facility.⁹⁶ The fact that these were "newly established" hospital decreased the possibility of infections that were rampant in older facilities.

Like his brothers, William Henry Harrison and John Quincy Adams⁹⁷, Benjamin was discharged due to his injuries on August 25, 1862 in Keokuk, Iowa. Benjamin requested a pension due to his disability on June 29, 1863.⁹⁸ His request for a pension included a description of his injury as "Gshrt rt breast, rbw & redis heart & total dfns rt ear." In June 1863 Benjamin is listed on the US, Civil Draft Registry Records, 1863-1865, in Lee County as "Wounded Soldier 15th Iowa, discharged."⁹⁹

During Benjamin's absence Company I had continued its participation in the war. Benjamin reported in a subsequent interview in the *Meridian Ledger* that he was on leave for 63 days¹⁰⁰. Benjamin claimed that he was part of "capture of Vicksburg" but his dates of confinement, request for pension (June 29, 1862), mustered out (August 25, 1863), listed as being discharged (June 1863) and re-enlistment (October 12, 1863) dates suggest otherwise. However, Benjamin's return to service after his recovery may have been early enough to participate in the occupation of Vicksburg.

The Siege of Vicksburg commenced on May 18, 1863 with the surrender on July 4, 1863. The Union troops continued to occupy Vicksburg after the surrender. For the most part, the troops had no opportunity to celebrate the victory at Vicksburg, which was touted by many as a great victory for the North but resulted in the soldiers "toiling in the hot sun in close and stifling rifle pits."¹⁰¹ The 15th Regiment Iowa was with the 3rd Brigade at Grand Gulf, a temporary garrison, forwarding supplies to the troops in Vicksburg and in other locations and times dug rifle-pits and sent sharpshooters forward to the front lines. And they did several fatiguing, strenuous marches.¹⁰²



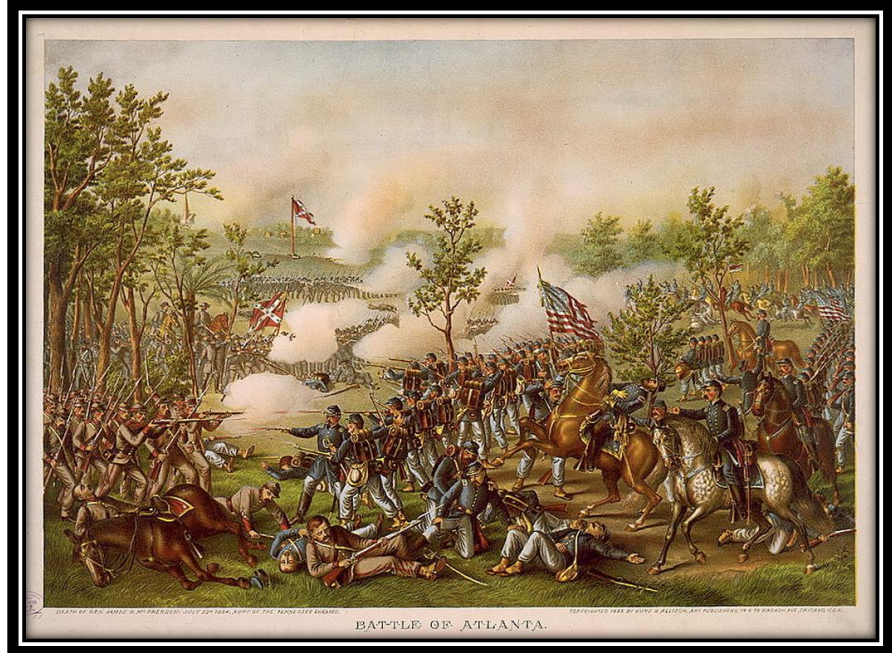
Benjamin reports that he “went back to his regiment and reentered as a veteran.” The official records show Benjamin re-entering service on October 12, 1863.¹⁰³ For the most part, the 15th Iowa Regiment was relieved from active operations from mid-September to late January 1864,¹⁰⁴ although there were some reported activity as his regiment was at the Big Black River Railroad Station on October 12 to October 21, 1863. Most probably, however, his return to his Company did not occur until weeks later when they were at Vicksburg from October 22, 1863 to February 2, 1864.

From December 24 to 25, 1863, 298 men of the 15th Regiment Iowa re-enlisting veteran volunteers “had the honor of being the first full company to re-enlist as veterans in the 17th Army Corp.”¹⁰⁵ As part of the incentive for re-enlisting the men were given bonuses and a furlough. On March 13, 1864, the veteran re-enlistee were transported by steamer *Die Vernon*¹⁰⁶ to Keokuk and given a 30-day furlough from March 22nd. The soldiers were entertained by local government officials and welcomed home by family and friends. On April 23rd, the troops rendezvoused at Keokuk for the return. They, by the same steamer, returned on May 6th to Clinton, Tennessee. Benjamin did take the furlough.¹⁰⁷

Prior to the furlough, Company I, 15th Regiment Iowa went on the expedition under General Sherman to Meridian, Mississippi, leaving Vicksburg on February 3rd and arriving on February 14th. This was the “famous Meridian expedition, which destroyed the confederate ships and supply houses at Meridian, Miss.” of which Benjamin spoke to the editor of *Enid Events*. The company returned to Vicksburg on March 4th. Perhaps more appropriately described as the “infamous” expedition or the prelude to the “March to the Sea”, Sherman did not obtain a military victory but a strategic one by destroying the Confederate’s transportation facilities and establishing his reputation as a ruthless general willing to leave citizen’s without food and shelter. Sherman's troops destroyed 115 mi (185 km) of railroad, 61 bridges, 6,075 feet of trestle work, 20 locomotives, 28 cars, and three steam sawmills. Sherman reportedly said, “Meridian with its depots, store-houses, arsenal, hospitals, offices, hotels, and cantonments no longer exists.”¹⁰⁸

Sherman and other Union leaders saw this type of destruction as necessary to win the war by destroying the means of travel, moving troops and crippling the delivery of supplies to the Confederate army.¹⁰⁹ The northern states could send ships to the Gulf after two years hiatus. The first being the steamer *Imperial* which reached New Orleans on July 16th. President Lincoln wrote “The Great River, which had be fretting and fuming under the iron chain of the rebels, now went unvexed to the sea.”¹¹⁰ When the soldiers of the 15th Regiment Iowa returned from furlough, they were off on a course that eventually led them to the Siege of Atlanta.¹¹¹

Third Time Dead: *Siege of Atlanta and Battle of Bald Hill*¹¹²



On June 8th, the 15th Regiment Iowa joined the McPherson's Army of the Tennessee¹¹³, the XVII Corps, and was positioned to the extreme left of Sherman's Grand Armies (Armies of the Cumberland, Tennessee and Ohio). Starting June 10th, until September 5, 1864, the regiment was involved in the Siege of Atlanta and either under fire, in battles or making advances. General Sherman stated "It is impossible to state accurately our losses in one separate battle; for the fighting was continuous, almost daily, among trees and bushes, on ground where one could rarely see a hundred yards ahead." Up to the 22^d of July the 15th Regiment Iowa had lost nearly one hundred as killed and wounded. In the battles of the 21st, 22^d and 28th of July, near Atlanta, the regiment lost heavily. By the conclusion of the Battle of Bald Hill, Company I had 31 men with 18 being captured.¹¹⁴ The combined losses of the regiment in these three days of battle were 190 men and officers out of 428 engaged, making an aggregate loss of forty-five per cent.¹¹⁵ Benjamin stated that at the Battle of Bald Hill¹¹⁶ or Battle of Atlanta on July 22nd, he saved the life of General William Worth Belknap and as a result of his efforts he was knocked unconscious and captured by the Confederates. On July 22nd that Benjamin went missing and according to Benjamin, he was reported as being killed.¹¹⁷ The official records state that was either wounded, killed or missing on July 22nd.¹¹⁸ He did not die.

The Battle of Bald Hill commenced on July 21st as the Confederate and Union forces fought to control one of the higher elevations in Atlanta. As part of the Battle of Peachtree on the 20th, Major General Joseph Wheeler's Confederate Cavalry had captured this important strategically positioned high elevation upon which artillery could be placed. The Confederates begun preparation of the area when the Union XVII Corps, of which Benjamin's regiment was a part, attacked. The 15th Iowa was engaged in taking the Confederates works on northwest of the hill. They proceeded through a slough and a corn-field towards the ridge line. At first the advancement of the 15th and 13th Iowa regiments were protected by a hill that shielded the

troops from the Confederate fire, but ended at the ridge. They were exposed to fire from the front and flank. In the 30 minute assault, the two regiments experienced a 25% casualty with the 13th Iowa regiment experiencing the greater loss.¹¹⁹ Benjamin was not wounded or captured on this day.¹²⁰ Brigadier General Mortimer D. Leggett's Union Division won the day and gained control of hill.¹²¹



On July 22nd, the battle continued for dominance and control of the hill.¹²²

Some historians suggest that the Confederates lost due to the delay of the battle until noon. Union soldiers and officers ate and rested. The Confederate troops, exhausted from a 12-mile, night march, had to further struggle through dense thickets to position for the attack. However key to the events of Benjamin's story about assisting Belknap is the Confederates' discovery of a gap of a half or three-quarters of a mile at the left (southern) of the Union defense line.¹²³ Prior to the attack, the men of Iowa Brigade¹²⁴ were settled in the woods.¹²⁵ They were moved forward and suddenly attacked from the front, rear and flank. The Iowa Brigade were forced to reverse the line, under fire, and in that reversal defended from a position they previously were attacking.¹²⁶ The jockeying of the troops continued with some of the 15th Iowa moved to a new position and then another. Benjamin's Company I was commanded by Captain James M. Reid who is referenced as remaining on the field and completing several of the position changes in response to the attacks by the Confederate soldiers.¹²⁷

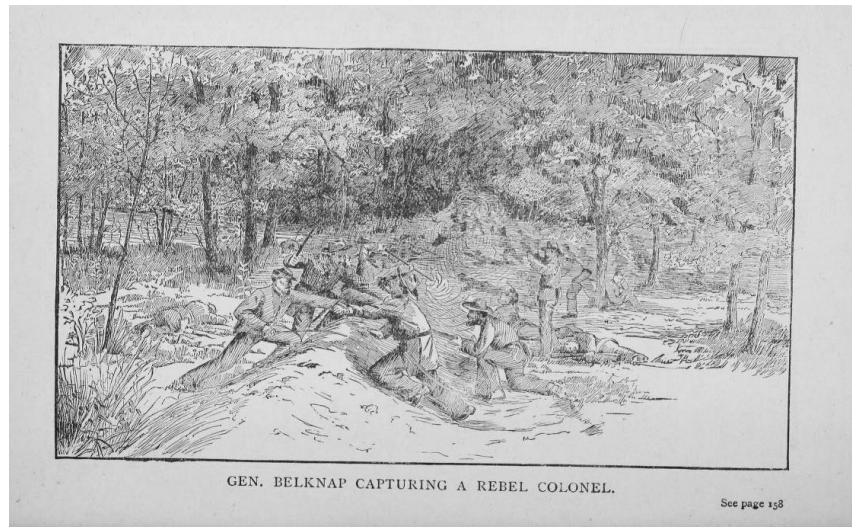
There was close-quarter fight with the Union Troops entrenched and the Confederates making open field charges. Despite full-volley defense by the Union troops causing mass casualties in the first two charges by the Confederates, Confederate troops continued to attack, reached the earthworks which afford them coverage to get within ten yards of the Union troops. After repulsing each charge, the soldiers of the 15th Iowa would retrieve the weapons of the dead and wounded Confederates to increase their firing power.¹²⁸ Soldiers fought face-to-face, rifles being deemed more effective for clubbing than shooting. The earthworks were only "shoulder high."¹²⁹ The Union troops yelled out repeated offers of surrender which were rejected. During the heat of it, then Colonel Belknap captured Confederate Colonel Harris Lampley, commander of the 45th Alabama. Reports on the specifics of that capture varied and offers insight into first-hand



recollections and political-social influence on reported events. The most common and later reports were that Belknap did so by grabbing Lampley by his collar and physically dragging him across the parapet¹³⁰.

Benjamin's version of the incident is as follows: "At that time Belknap was colonel of the regiment, and he had reached over a rifle pit and was pulling a Louisiana colonel over the works to take him prisoner. A Confederate soldier clubbed his gun to strike Belknap down: Keck was fighting near hand, and perceiving the eminent peril of Belknap, went to his defense, jumping between Belknap and his adversary just in time to receive the blow from the Confederate's gun on the side of his head. The trigger pierced his skull near the ear and he fell unconscious. When he came to he was in the hands of the Confederates on his way to Andersonville. He was again reported dead in the army record¹³¹ but was later conveyed the fact of his capture to General Sherman."

Benjamin's account is supported by other reports and illustration.¹³² Lampley reached the parapet with "a few members of his regiment at his side" and were "several times fired at by men at his side."¹³³ Another account states that Lampley was captured by Belknap who reached down and dragged him over the parapet and then "with the help of a nearby corporal"¹³⁴ lifted Lampley back up as a prisoner of war reprimanding him for cursing his troops by saying: "Look at your men! They are dead! What are you cursing them for?" Others report that Lampley stood alone on the parapet with most of his command died or wounded from the two assaults.



There is also support for Benjamin receiving a wound from one of Lampley's troops. While generally referenced as the "men at his [Lampley's] side" in other reports, one defender of Lampley was specifically identified as Robert M. Lee. Lee fired at Belknap three times during Belknap's attempts to collar Lampley. He was captured by First Lieutenant and Adjunct Ensign H. King.¹³⁵ In the Proceedings of Crocker's Iowa Brigade biennial reunion, the President references many letters received, including that of Robert M. Lee of Clayton, Alabama. Belknap had written an invitation to him in the most cordial manner to the meeting but Lee refused due to the inability to travel.¹³⁶

There is no doubt that Benjamin was in the thick of fighting that day. Belknap's men were engaged in the third fight and third direction in one hour with fewer than 300 lowans remaining

as part of 3,000 infantry of Leggett's defense line.¹³⁷ Soon after the event regarding Lampley, the 15th Iowa as part of the Iowa Brigade re-positioned and thereby most probably left those wounded and killed in place. The battle, having commenced around noon continued for over seven hours.¹³⁸ Many of the wounded who were non-ambulatory "fell into the hands of the enemy." It is most probable that this was the time that Benjamin became a prisoner. A truce was extended on July 23rd for the Union and Confederate troops to retrieve the dead and wounded from the field.¹³⁹

The Battle of Bald Hill was the most costly battle of the siege in the Atlanta Campaign with 5,500 Confederates and 3,600 Federals casualties. Two senior officers, Union General McPherson and Confederate General Walker had been killed.

Another story arising from this battle is Benjamin loaning his watch to Belknap. In 1910, multiple newspapers told of the old silver watch which Benjamin purchased before enlisting. Benjamin loaned the watch to Belknap "during the time Keck was a captive in the Confederate ranks and a prisoner at Libby prison."¹⁴⁰

To give some perspective and support for Benjamin's recounts of the war, other described Belknap as knowing "every soldier by name, and very soldier knew him for a personal friend, and held for him an affection surpassing the love of women."¹⁴¹ W.H. Gibbon, Surgeon 15th Regiment Iowa, remarked that "When off duty, he was frequently seen in company quarters in familiar chat with line officers and men, and in this way gained an individual and biographical knowledge of each one each one, which was invaluable to him in matters of promotion and made him seem the personal friend of every man in the regiment."¹⁴² According to Benjamin, Belknap and he remained in communication after the war, with Belknap writing him a letter shortly before Belknap died. Belknap continued to own a home on the bluff of Keokuk, overlooking the river, even after he resigned in disgrace as Secretary of War and commenced practicing law in Washington DC. Part of his practice was representing Iowa in settlement of war claims. He also succeeded Governor Baren R. Sherman of Iowa as the president of Crocker's Brigade, a society of old members, who kept alive the memories of the war. And if Belknap's words are held true he did not wish to relinquish the link that he felt with his men:

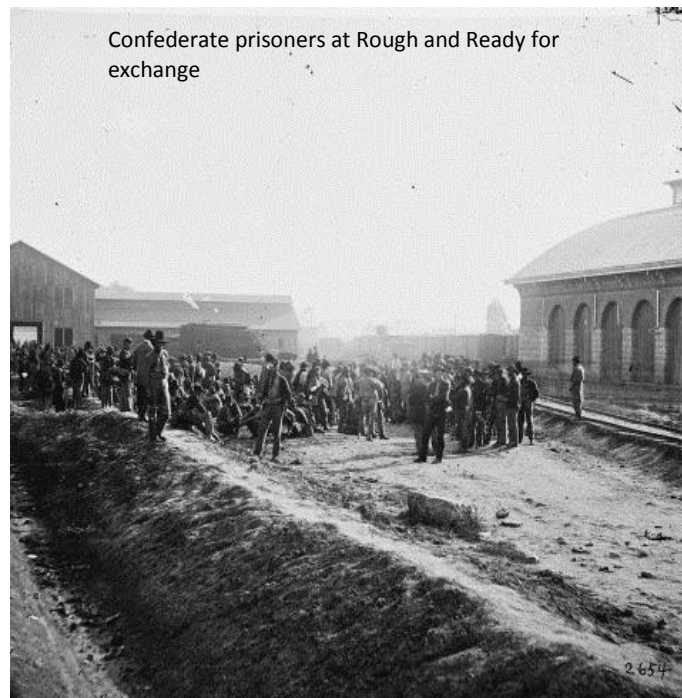
".... But there is a chain binding some men together, the luster of whose links time can not [*sic*] tarnish; and the strength of whose union grows firmer with each year. And though the ranks of those who side by side trod the fields of war and braved the cannonading of battle are full no longer; the recollection of soldier life do not fade with time. And those who stood together amid martial scenes, where danger lurked in every sound, still seem to hear the notes of the same bugle, still stand together, bound by love which, having its origin in battle, does not waver with the winds of later life; and now, in this reverential house see once more the kindling eye, the manly attitude and the heroic bearing of our younger leader as we lift our hats again to his magnetic presence. [speaking of General McPherson]."¹⁴³

The 15th Regiment Iowa captured 93 prisoners and lost ten killed, 40 wounded and 82 captured. Benjamin was among the captured and sent to Andersonville¹⁴⁴. He is counted among the 15 captured from Company I.¹⁴⁵

The Confederate troop evacuated Atlanta on the night of September 1 and the Federal troop raised the flag on September 2, 1864.¹⁴⁶ By September 10th, General Sherman and Hood had signed an armistice which included the exchange of 2000 Union soldiers at Andersonville for 2000 Confederate soldiers. Sherman had emphasized that only those men who were still under their enlistment agreements would be acceptable for a confederate of whatever status. When the Union prisoners were offered, “Many of Sherman’s men were too sick to travel – and a number had died. The cartel had been filled by union prisoners who had been the longest confined – but Sherman sent them all back again – without even a change of clothing because they did not belong to his own regiment and their terms of enlistment had expired.”¹⁴⁷ Many of the confederate prisoners were not soldiers but support crews.

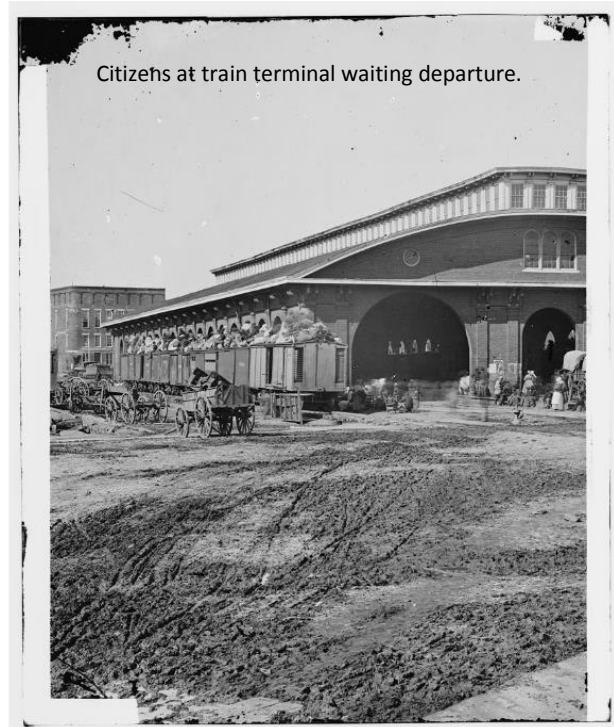
42 of the 89 soldiers of the 15th Regiment Iowa who had been captured during the battle of the 22nd rejoined the regiment at the end of September. The condition of the 16 captured soldiers from Company I were noted to be “extremely ragged, emaciated and fatigued.”¹⁴⁸ Benjamin reported that he was a prisoner for 63 days.¹⁴⁹ The exchange of prisoner took place at Rough and Ready, a small town in Georgia, which was the temporary headquarters for Confederate Lieutenant-General William J. Hardee during the Atlanta Campaign. The official records show that he was exchanged in Atlanta on September 19, 1864.¹⁵⁰ and that he returned on September 23, 1864; however this date may reflect the first muster after his return on the 22nd.¹⁵¹ One soldier, Henry Kirby, returned on October 1st, the day that Company I left on an expedition to locate Hood. Pursuant to Department Headquarters, 17th Army of Command, Department of Tennessee, new uniforms were issued gratuitously to each of the exchanged soldiers.¹⁵²

Sherman also wanted Hood to clear Atlanta of citizens. Even before Hood’s final fight in Atlanta, Sherman had issued the following order on September 4th: “The City of Atlanta, belonging exclusively for warlike purposes, it will at once be vacated by all except the armies of the United States and such civilian employees as may be retained by the proper department of the Government...” Sherman continued with a warning to those citizens who failed to comply with threats of seizing their property for purposes of the army and putting the individuals to work on “forts or conscripted into one of the regiments or



battery already in service.” Once again Sherman was “reaching into the recesses” to defeat the Rebel Army to bring peace.¹⁵³

Hood was not happy about civilians being forced from their homes. The civilians were given a choice of taking a train north or one to the south (September 8-24, 1864). Four hundred forty-six families went South. There were 705 adults, 806 children and 79 servants, which each family taking an average of 1651 pounds of furniture and other person property.¹⁵⁴ They started the journey by train headed south to Rough and Ready, where they had to disembark and travel to Love Joy’s Station by wagon, and eventually to Macon. Sherman and Hood were little agreed except that an exchange would benefit both and it is noted that no further communication between the men was attempted as to the other issues.^{155 156}



The 15th Regiment Iowa and more specifically Company I did various expeditions out from the Atlanta area into other areas of Georgia and Alabama, including an engagement with the retreating Confederate army at Snake Creek Gap on the 15th at Resaca.

Benjamin reported that once returned from prison, he was stationed in Atlanta. After the reorganization of the army by Sherman, on November 15, 1864, Benjamin joined in the start of Sherman’s March to the Sea.¹⁵⁷ Foraging for food, looting of citizens’ personal property, “taking” cities, inflicting damage to infrastructures, building and homes were interspersed with engagements with the Confederates at Garden Corners, Pocotaligo, bridges at Broxton and Rivers after wading through the Salkehatchie Swamp, and Bentonville, North Carolina. Field Officer, James M. Reid, Captain Company I, Brevet Lieutenant Colonel, characterized the experience as “a picnic.”¹⁵⁸

If the goal of the March to the Sea was to reach the sea, its advance stopped on December 10, 1865 upon the arrival of the Army of the Tennessee near Savannah. Others place the date at December 21, 1865, when Savannah surrendered. About this time Sherman set out in his diary the plan that he executed so well during the march.

“I have just returned from my trip throughout Savannah. Surprisingly, the citizens were in a rather good mood and were not holding any harsh grudges over my army. I have ordered my army to respect the residents and to assist them in rebuilding the city physically, as well as politically (Marszalek 112). However, a way to be able to defeat the enemy more efficiently is to win over the enemy’s population, rather than just increase their hatred for you even more.”

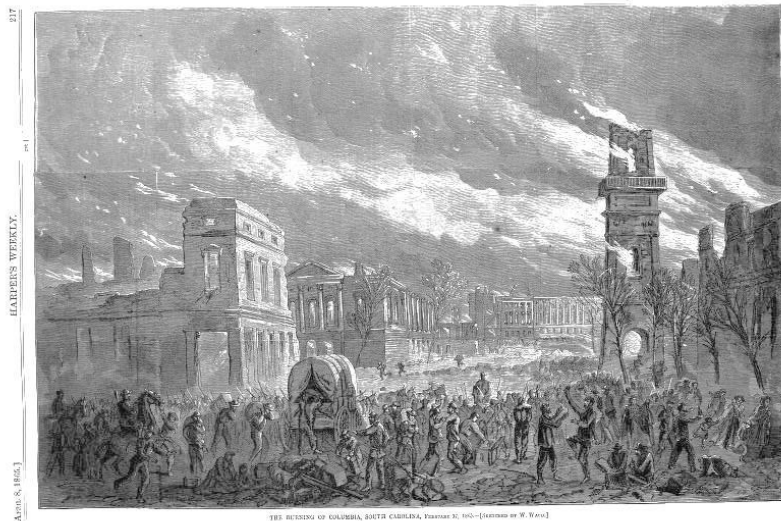
“Overall, I believe this campaign has been a great success. Not only was my army able to survive till we reached the Atlantic, but we were also able to reek havoc on the Confederate forces. This mission accomplished my main objective, to decrease the moral of the Confederate forces and to strip away their will to fight. I would have to estimate that the total amount foraged off the land would have to be around one hundred million dollars worth of food and supplies (Marszalek 77). By doing so, we were able to completely destroy the economy on our route, which has undoubtedly weakened the south’s morale. This in turn has weakened their will to fight, so hopefully it will just be a matter of time before they surrender. My expectations of this campaign were not as high as what we were able to actually accomplish. Hopefully, my name will go down in fame as a major cause to help win the war for the Union.”¹⁵⁹

Sherman’s change of heart apparently did not translate into a change in the behavior of troops as evidenced by the Union’s sacking of Columbia.

Sherman disavowed that he gave any order to the effect but did not regret its occurrence as he believed it benefited the defeat of the South. In Sherman’s report he states that the 17th Corp did not even enter the city.

¹⁶⁰ Lieutenant Colonel George War Nichols provides a detail defense against Union involvement in his contemporarily published account of the

March to the Sea.¹⁶¹ Union Colonel Slocum blamed it on the drunkenness of the men. Sherman as well as others blamed Governor Magrath and General Wade Hampton¹⁶² or the Confederate troops for starting the fires to bales of cotton which fire then spread due to the winds. The results however was that two-thirds of the city was destroyed. The 15th Iowa members asserted that the fire had occurred prior to its entry into the city.¹⁶³



The last battle for Benjamin was at Bentonville, North Carolina in March 20-21, 1865. Company I with Companies A, C and G were on the skirmish line and first to advance and last to fall back. They were highly complimented for gallantry by General Smith for such action.¹⁶⁴

Benjamin’s company was present in the general area of the surrender of General Johnston’s army on April 26, 1865 at Bennet Place in Durham, Durham County, North Carolina, the halfway mark between Sherman’s headquarters in Raleigh and Johnson’s headquarters in Greensboro.

¹⁶⁵ Lee had surrendered in Appomattox, Virginia 17 days earlier.¹⁶⁶ Johnston’s surrender

involved the largest number of Confederate soldiers in the field at that time, more than Lee and all the other commanders combined. According to others in Fourth Division of the XVII Corp, the 15th Regiment Iowa had settled into camp within two miles of Raleigh by the 19th. While in camp, the Fourth Division was reviewed by General Smith on the 23rd, and the XVII Corp by Sherman and Grant on the 24th. There was a hiccup in the surrender by Johnston, when the terms of settlement between Sherman and Johnston were refused by the government. The men readied for battle. The XVII Corp commenced moving towards Jones' station, ten miles west of Raleigh, on the 25th in concert with troop movement in the other corps to engage Johnston's troops. However, Johnston did accept surrender under the same terms as Robert E. Lee. For the Iowa Bridge, the 15th Regiment Iowa, Company I, and Benjamin the fighting was over.

Now that fighting was over, the men were subjected to unit drills, inspections and dress parades. The XVII Corp failed the inspections miserably. Lt. Colonel Andrew Hickenlooper described the results of an inspection of quarters¹⁶⁷: "The result was the collection of the largest and most heterogeneous mass of booty ever gathered by pilfering soldiers....There were probably 25,000 different articles, embracing everything that mind can conceived, from a paper of pins to a woman's night-dress. Some, such as watches, rings and jewelry, were of considerable value, but the great mass of the find [was] stuff for which the possessor could have no earthly use either present or prospective." Sherman had encouraged his men to "forage liberally." And they did to the point that the army was called "Sherman's Bummers."¹⁶⁸



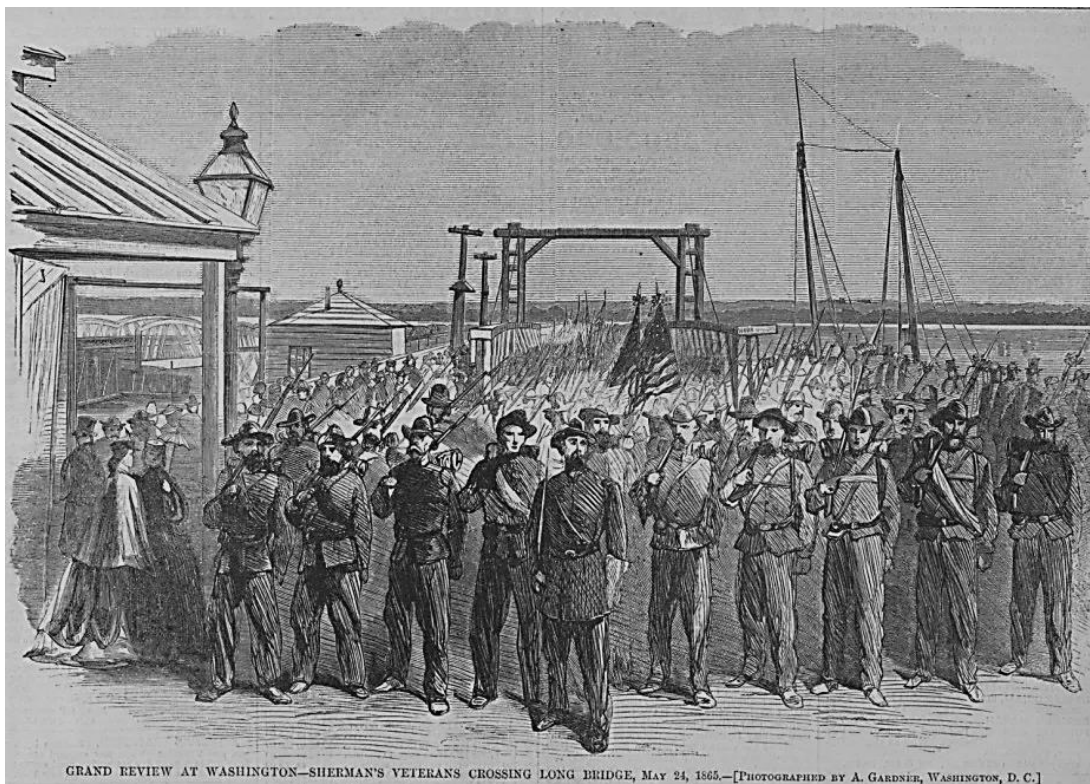
On March 23rd and 24th, the troops also had suffered the indignity of being laughed at by other troops, such as the Schofield's 24th Corp, at the review in Goldsboro. They were a sight that is true. Their faces covered with soot and dirt, uniforms tattered and torn leaving legs, arms and feet bare, while shepherding their captured livestock and other booty from foraging, the men obeyed the order to parade before Generals Smith and Grant but not without grumbling. Others called them a "circus" and some of the men worried that they were considered the laughing stock of the whole army but Sherman's belief was that his men were comparable to the soldiers of Julius Caesar. By the Grand Review in Washington, D.C., some but not all the men had received clothing, but they were determined to make a good appearance in their competition with the Army of the Potomac.¹⁶⁹

As a member of the 15th Regiment Iowa, Benjamin participated in the Grand Review in Washington, D.C. on Wednesday, the May 24th, as part of the Army of the Tennessee. General Sherman's 60,000 troops would do themselves proud bearing up under the moniker of "Sherman's Bummers." General Grant wrote of these men: "Sherman's army was not so well-dressed as the Army of the Potomac, but their marching could not be excelled; they gave the appearance of men who had been thoroughly drilled to endure hardships, either by long and

continuous marching marches or though exposure to any climate, without the ordinary shelter of camp.”¹⁷⁰

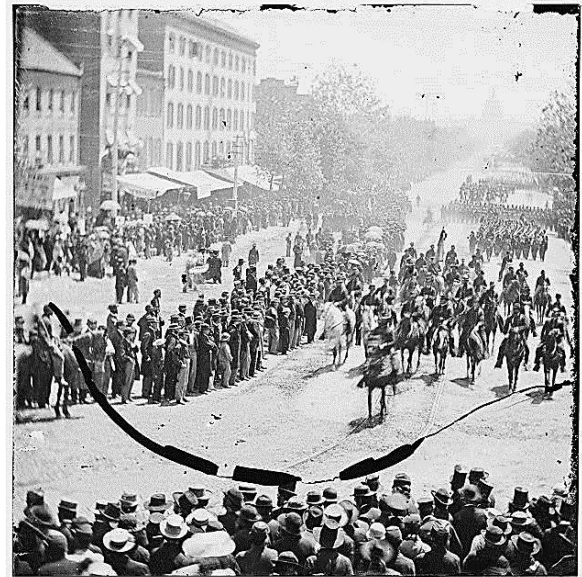
Sherman’s Army of the Tennessee encamped a short distance from Long Bridge (14th Street Bridges, US Route 1) on the Virginia side. In the afternoon and night of the 23rd, while the Army of the Potomac paraded on review, the Army of the Tennessee moved across the Long Bridge to bivouac in the streets about the Capitol. The men were marching light without knapsacks but with two days cooked rations in haversacks.

Early in the morning around 9:00 AM, they moved into place to commence the review. Benjamin was in the 3rd Brigade of the Fourth Division of the XVII Corps. The XVII Corps “... formed on a street east of Second Street East, and when the XV Corps had passed filed down on the latter street and fell into the line of march on Maryland Avenue in its rear, whence it passed down the street on the north side of the Capitol in the following order:Third Brigade, Brig.-General W.W. Belknap, Eleventh, Thirteenth, *Fifteenth*, and Sixteenth Iowa. Artillery Brigade Major W. Welker, Chief of Artillery and staff, Fifteenth Ohio, First Minnesota, First Michigan.”¹⁷¹ Contrary to one written report home to Iowa, the 15th Regiment Iowa was not the first out front. Benjamin with his fellow soldiers followed the XV Corp with some fellow Iowans, and near last of the XVII Corps and just before the Artillery Brigade (Major Frederick Welker, Chief of Artillery). Following the XVII Corps was the Army of Georgia under the command of Maj.-Gen. H.W. Slocum, who rode at the head of this column.¹⁷² The surviving photos and prints of the review offer some idea of the event but with less specificity needed to identify Benjamin’s regiment.



The New York Times article of May 25, 1865 reported “They [Sherman’s troops] were appropriately welcomed to-day by passing under a large banner suspended in the middle of the street on Maryland-avenue, east of Second Street east, on which was inscribed, “Hail to the heroes of the West! Shiloh, Vicksburgh (sic), Atlanta, Savanah, Stone River, Raleigh, Mission Ridge.”

One observer, L.D. Ingersoll popularly known as “Linkensale”¹⁷³, in a letter to *Keokuk Gate City*, commented on the Iowa Brigade [3rd Brigade of the Four Division XVII Corp] composed of the 11th, 13th, 15th and 16th Iowa regiments: “I am only saying that in this grand review the Iowa Brigade made the finest appearance in the whole column, and I will maintain the assertion against all comers, devoutly leaving the decision to the date of judgment. Nobody disputes it here, however. Our boys all did much more than well. They did nobly. The citizens of the state here have many times rejoiced with a joy unspeakable at the great things they have done for themselves, for Iowa, and for the Union, but I think they never rejoined more heartily than they did the other day upon witnessing the fact that those of other states gladly conceded to them the highest meed of praise.”¹⁷⁴”



Sherman and Major-General Oliver O. Howard lead the procession with their staffs. Following were Major-General John Logan & XV Corp, then Major-General Frank Blair & XVII Corp which Benjamin was a part.

“Sherman’s army made a different appearance from that of the Army of the Potomac. The latter had been operating where they received directly from the north full supplies of food and clothing regularly; the review of this army therefore was the review of a body of 65,000 well drilled, well disciplined and orderly soldiers inured to hardships and fit for any duty. But without the experience of gathering their own food and supplies in an enemy’s country, and of being ever on the watched.

“Sherman’s army was not so well-dressed as the Army of the Potomac, but their marching could not be excelled; they gave the appearance of men who had been thoroughly drilled to endure hardships, either by long and continuous marches or through exposure to any climate, without the ordinary shelter of a camp.”¹⁷⁵

On June 1, 1865, the Army of the Tennessee, including the 15th Regiment Iowa, was ordered to Louisville, Kentucky. On June 7th, the 15th Regiment Iowa left Washington, D.C. The first leg of the trip was by the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad to Parkersburg, West Virginia on the Ohio River.¹⁷⁶ The train accommodations were definitely not first class with men required to sit on the floor of the cars or uncovered flat cars exposed to sun, weather and soot.¹⁷⁷ It took about three days to reach Parkersburg after passing over the Potomac River at Harpers Ferry and through the Allegany Mountains. They arrived in Parkersburg, West Virginia on June 10th. The

accompanying photo show Federal troops in 1864 being transported in a similar manner at Harpers Ferry but going to battle.¹⁷⁸

At Parkersburg, there were plenty of steamers to transport the troops. The 15th Regiment Iowa boarded around noon on Saturday the “Bertha” steamer to Louisville, Kentucky.¹⁷⁹ One steamer, the Express, carrying the 11th Regiment Iowa sunk on Sunday after colliding with another ship.¹⁸⁰ One soldier attributed the crash due to racing of the steamers.



On June 12th the troops arrived in Louisville, where they established a camp about eight miles west of the city. On the June 15th, the camp was relocated to Bardstown Pike, five miles southeast of the city. This location was considered more healthy.¹⁸¹ The camp was in the woods which providing good wood but the ground that was “low and wet.” It was hot and with sporadic rain making, no doubt, the men uncomfortable in their wool uniforms. The men were asked to sign their pay rolls, anticipating payment when mustered out on the July 24th. One soldier complained: “We signed our pay rolls today & may be paid here. I don’t know but I am sure it is time we were paid again. One rumor says we will be sent to the state first; another that we will be paid up to the 30th of April & kept here or sent further south. But these are only rumors. We are not allowed the satisfaction of knowing anything at all & in consequence, never know how to prepare ourselves which is greatly to our inconvenience — often putting us to a great deal of trouble which might just as well be avoided. But this for a time only. The time of being hacked about as so much stock is bound to be over some day.”

While some soldiers went by train, there was a huge transport by wagon train from “Washington City” to Parkersburg, of which notably there were black teamsters or waggoners.¹⁸²

On July 3rd, Sherman arrived in Louisville by steamer from Cincinnati to be escorted by the Iowa Brigade into the city. The 15th Regiment Iowa as part of the Iowa Brigade moved from the camp at 3:00 AM to arrive at the landing at 5:00 A.M. There they waited until about 8:00 AM for Sherman to arrive and come ashore. The Iowa Brigade escorted him to a friend’s house and following that day marched in review. It was the following day that Sherman made personal visits to the troops which lined up by brigade. Among words of remembrance of battles, encouragement of the next step in the soldiers’ lives, appreciation for their service and Sherman acknowledged that the Iowa Brigade was oldest brigade in the Army of the Tennessee and expressing his thanks for their service.¹⁸³

The 15th Iowa Regiment remained in camp in Louisville while other regiments of the Iowa Brigade moved on to Davenport. The three-day rule about fish and visitors applied to the troops and the Louisville citizens. Sherman's "bummers" were not entirely welcomed in Louisville with shopkeepers reporting that the men were carrying off lager beer, cigars, and sardines.¹⁸⁴ For some, the feeling was mutual as with one soldier reporting "Louisville is one of the dirtiest cities I have been in — that is, in the streets. Some of the streets look very well & others stink so as to be almost intolerable. Everything is high-priced here too."¹⁸⁵

The men of the 15th Regiment Iowa were mustered out in Louisville on July 24th.¹⁸⁶ The last night in camp the men celebrated by lighting bonfires, candles under inverted rifles and shooting off their rifles. Interestingly, Company I is not mentioned as a company as doing so but only Companies A, F, C, H and G. There was only about three hours of sleep for the celebrants as reveille was at 3:00 A.M. on July 25. By 5:00 A.M. they were in formation and marching towards their final destination, home. It was raining hard. The troops crossed the Ohio River to New Albany, Indiana to take a train at noon to arrive in Michigan City at Chicago around 6PM on the 27th. They were met by the 8th Veterans Reserve Corp¹⁸⁷ and brass band.¹⁸⁸

The men were escorted to Soldiers Rest¹⁸⁹, where they enjoyed being served coffee "not such as your mother-in-law made" but similar to the coffee brewed by the soldiers over the years ("which had to float forty rounds before being drunk.") The Soldier's rest was a building 250 by 50 feet and opened on January 22, 1864. The Soldiers Rest staff was composed of women ("Lady Managers") and inspired by the women's efforts; however the President and Treasurer were men. The women's work was called "arduous as it was onerous." The facility and private dwellings were open at all hours accommodating the arrivals of the soldiers. The success of the Home was attributed to the women's "earnest, unremitting and untiring labors."¹⁹⁰ The soldiers were given leave to visit the town.

On the 28th the troops left Chicago at 3PM by train and via Joliet and Rock Island arriving at Davenport, Iowa at 7:15AM on the 29th. Iowa Supreme Court Judge, Judge John Forrest Dillion, gave a welcoming address to the troops before they moved on to Camp Kinsman. Many of the men boarded in the city.¹⁹¹ The 15th Regiment Iowa followed the 16th and 6th and 13th home with the former arriving in Davenport on the 22nd and the latter two regiments on the 25th.¹⁹² Some of the delay apparently was due to fulfilling the War Department and "several superior headquarters" orders that of all regiments correct, amend and present their records. The 15th Regiment Iowa's officers attributed the additional length of time to comply with the failure of other regiments to have as many such documents.¹⁹³ The men of 15th Regiment Iowa were expected on July 27, 1865 in the morning but were delay until evening due to a railroad accident.¹⁹⁴ However, a soldier in camp at Davenport blamed the delay on an officer.¹⁹⁵ Benjamin attributed the delay to the "Mexican trouble" relating to the internal struggles between the Conservatives head by the French installed Maximilian of Habsburg, Archduke of Austria, as Emperor of Mexico, and Liberal reformist Benito Juárez.

The paymaster did not promptly pay the men. Two stories emerge about the delay and may have been sequential rather than alternate theories. The first was a published rumor that

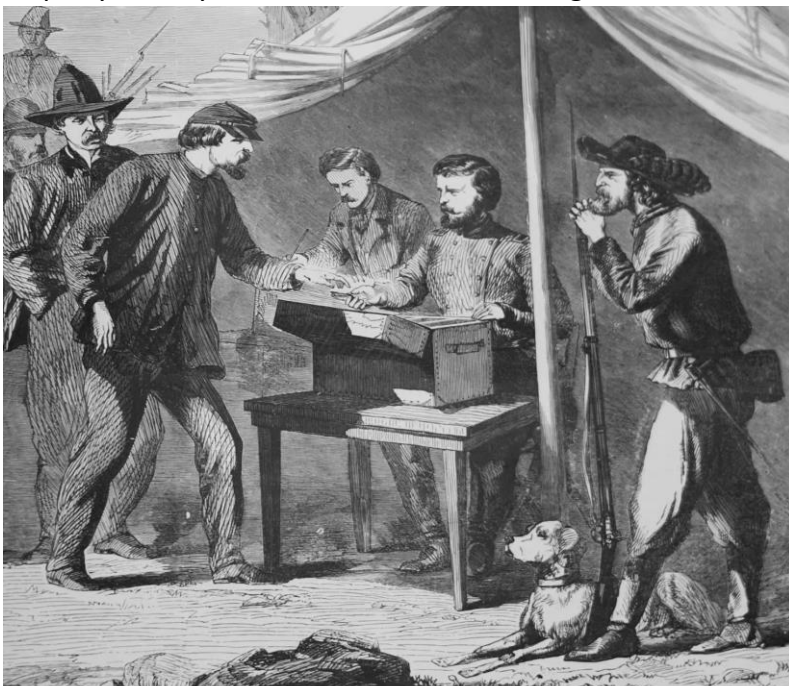
officers of the 15th Regiment Iowa were to be punished and not paid because some “teamsters belonging to the regiment” had damaged property belonging to a black man in Chicago.¹⁹⁶ Teamsters were civilian but under the command of the respective officers.

Teamsters were infamous for their ill tempers, mistreatment of the animals they oversaw and ability to curse¹⁹⁷. While the men in the 15th Regiment Iowa and those of the Army of the Tennessee had returned home by foot, train and steamer, teamsters drove wagon trains full of various supplies and ammunition, pulled by six mules per wagon, through Ohio to Indianapolis to Lewisville along the National Road.

Newspapers reported the travel and progress of “Sherman Bummers” wagon train and that “the great extent excites the wonder and curiosity of the people along the route.” It appears that some if not the majority of the teamsters were black. Reports on the teamsters of “Sherman’s Bummers” reported that these men were blacks or “contraband of the darkest blackness”, some of whom had served as such during the entire war. In Richmond, Indiana, the citizens welcomed the teamsters’ participation in the Fourth of July celebration, including the “plantation dancing” of the “American Citizen of African Descent” waggoneers.

The Iowa 15th incident was one of several reported offenses by “teamsters” associated with the Federal government, including theft and assault.¹⁹⁸ Captain Nelson W. Edwards¹⁹⁹, Company H of the 15th Regiment Iowa, went to Chicago to pay the injured party \$40 to compensate him for his property damages.²⁰⁰

The second story was that the paymaster did not have sufficient funds to pay all the soldiers.²⁰¹ A party of sixty or so men from the 15th Regiment Iowa had visited the town on the August 2nd



Detail of image from: *The Soldier in Our Civil War* (1886)

to encourage the paymaster to deliver the monies to the men. The paymaster arrived on August 3rd at noon to start paying the men but by 5:00 PM notified them that he did sufficient funds for all. Encouragement further needed, the men suggested he borrow monies from one of the other paymaster, the lucky one being from the 4th Regiment Iowa who happened to be walking by the men at the time. Payment continued and extended to August 4th and 5th before all the men and officers were paid and mustered out.²⁰²



Return to Civilian Life:

Civilian life for Benjamin involved moving to tribal lands recently opened to settlement by the public in another part of Iowa, Kansas and Oklahoma, having more children, participating in political conventions, buying and selling land, receiving a pension, becoming a widower, becoming a wanderlust, getting into legal problems, having his children marry and have children and settling for his last years in Enid, Oklahoma near several of his children and grandchildren. By his death in 1911, Benjamin's father, mother, wife, at least six siblings with only three known surviving²⁰³, and at least one of his children²⁰⁴ predeceased him but he was not alone in his final days as he was visited by families of his sons Demoss, James F., Joseph Tevis Keck, George Swasey Keck, Edgar Allen Keck, and Martin Hubert, sister Mary Jane, his adopted daughter, and friends. And then there were the memories of his fellow soldiers. He also made visits to his brothers and sisters, William Henry Keck, Leonidas, Elizabeth and Sarah as well as in-law relations.

Prior to the war, Benjamin and his family lived in Montrose, Lee County, Iowa with the post office being Nashville. On the Iowa State Census 1856, lists Benjamin as a shoemaker. His father-in-law, Henry Carter²⁰⁵ and nephew, Luis Carter, were living with the family. On the Federal US Census 1860 Benjamin and his family continue to live in Montrose, Lee County, Iowa, with his mother-in-law. Benjamin reported that after mustering out, he returned to Iowa, sold his farm and moved to Kansas near Winfield, where his family grew up. He spent his life there from 1867 to about 1898 when he moved to Enid at the solicitation of his children.²⁰⁶ Other records reflect a slightly different story.

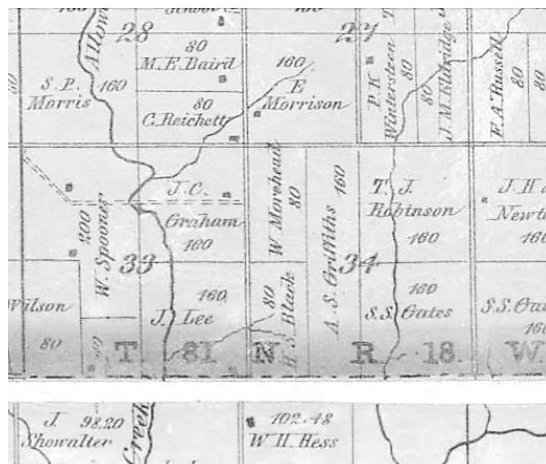
Benjamin stated that he “secured” and sold a farm in Iowa, however, the US Federal Census for 1860 and 1870 suggest that Benjamin was a tenant.²⁰⁷ In both counties, Lee and Jasper, in which the Keck family resided, tenancy was not uncommon and had increased to as high as 23.6% of the farms by 1880. The US 1860 Federal Census does not reflect ownership of land. While Benjamin did acquire land in Cowley County, Kansas on October 15, 1875,²⁰⁸ the 1860 US Federal Census Benjamin only states a value of personal property (\$200) and fails to show a value for real property. The US Select Federal Census Non-Population Census for July 18 and 19, 1860 shows Benjamin declaring that he was either the “Owner, agent or manager” of 50 improved acres planted in Indian corn with a cash value of \$2,000 as of September 1860. Thus the declaration most probably was for rented property.²⁰⁹

The first re-location of the Keck family from Lee County was to Jasper County, Iowa. By 1867, the population in Jasper County had increased from 16,284 from 12,097 in 1865 for a total of 4,142 new residents.²¹⁰ The area was being highly promoted as the best land in Iowa by land agents as well as the railroads such as the C.R.I &P which had extended its line to Newton, the “seat of justice” for the county²¹¹. Mariposa and other areas of Jasper County were a bit of the Wild West, with horse thieves a plenty, robbers and shootings between an editor and citizen.²¹²

The 1870 US Federal Census the Keck family is in Mariposa, Jasper, Iowa on June 22, 1870. At that time Benjamin lists himself as a farmer but with only \$500 worth of personal property. Benjamin does not show up on the Non-population Census of the same year regarding agriculture. The two farmers on either side of Benjamin in the 1870 Census, W.S. Spooner and John Showalter, do appear. The Non-population Census required that the listed persons have a crop production for the previous twelve months to be included in the report and as such the failure to be shown on the list may have been that the Keck family had arrived too late to put in a crop for the census year. While lack of funds to purchase the land is one explanation²¹³, Benjamin may have been wisely following rules of pioneering and settlement of new lands: evaluating the land in the region and avoiding the acquisition of virgin land. A farmer who anticipated making money off of such an acquisition had to expect that breaking the sod and planting a crop in the first year would result in less production. There were multiple written sources of the day that advised renting over purchasing a farm, putting good investment practices over pride of ownership. One newspaper advised that such a farmer needed to have

on hand \$3,000 after expenses of buying the land, building housing and buying implements or rent the first year. Another aspect of the land speculation business was that some landlords gave terms to the tenant allowing the tenant to purchase the land in the future. Under such terms of an “entry contract”, the landlord acquired the government land with the tenant being able to buy the land. During the 1870s the railroads who had acquired large acreage from the government were offering competitive terms such as lower down payments and annual interest payment only. More current evaluations of the farming business suggest due to the ration between mortgage interest and productivity of the land, it was smarter for a person newly entering into this business to rent than to own.²¹⁴ Another explanation is that Ben and his sons worked for one or the other of these two larger farmers who did have land.

W.S. Spooner is William S. Spooner (6/2/1825 in Ohio – 2/12/1895 in Taylor, Buffalo, Nebraska) married to Isabell Gunning (1825 in Pennsylvania – 1916). The Spooner property is illustrated on the Map of Jasper County, Iowa in the township of Mariposa from the surveys of George E. Warner published by Harrison and Warner, Marshalltown, Iowa, 1871. While not completely in sequence with the US Federal Census 1870, the names of the illustrated owners of Spooner and Showalter abut. The Spooner’s property is in the NW/4 and NE/4 of the SW/4 of Section 33 while Showalter is in the SE/4 of the SW/4 of Section 33 and the N/2 of NW/4 of Section 4. The map shows two dwellings or structures on the Spooner’s property. The numbering of dwellings on the US Federal Census for the Spooner’s was 30/30 and for the Kecks (31/31). As such, it is possible that Benjamin’s rented land was from Spooner. The Spooner family either lost or sold out their property sometime before 1880 as they had moved to Taylor, Buffalo, Nebraska. Mr. Spooner appears as a minister before acquiring the land in Iowa and subsequently in 1880 in Taylor, Buffalo, Nebraska states that has his profession on the US Federal Census.²¹⁵



Another possible reason for Benjamin’s move to this area of Iowa was Simon P. Awtry who enlisted for service with the 15th Regiment Iowa and served with Company C. He was also wounded at Shiloh with a severe leg injury and shipped to Keokuk for treatment and recovery. Simon Awtry or Autry lived in Jasper County and next door in Marion County, Iowa. The 1887 list of the survivors in the *History of 15th Iowa* show that Simon was then living in Pella, Iowa. The researcher found no other relations or information serving as a motivator for Benjamin to move to this area. Later Benjamin and family would move close to Lorena’s relatives in Kansas.

In 1875, the family is located in Beaver, Cowley County, Kansas, near to Lorena’s sister and brother-in-law. The Kecks are on the 1875 Kansas Census showing residences on March 1, 1875 under the spelling “Reck”. The names listed are B.F., “Sorency” [Lorena], John, James, Joseph, Ellen, Minnie, George, Demoss, Martin H., and Budd (Martin Hubert). Six of the children attended school in the last year.²¹⁶ Lorena’s sister, Louisa who married George C. Swasey,

lived in Vernon, Cowley, Kansas. On December 1, 1873, George C. Swasey had obtained 160-acre parcel nearby in the SE/4 of Section 33, T32S, R3E.²¹⁷ It is about eight miles north of Beaver and next door to Winfield. These two families were also living close together in Farmington, Lee, Iowa in 1860. The Swasey family was prominent in the Farmington area.²¹⁸ It appears that either Louisa's husband or another member of the Swasey family was the namesake for Lorena's son, George C. Swasey Keck born in 1865. The local newspaper, *Winfield Courier* reported on June 6, 1876, that in the week before a dog had bitten Benjamin in the hand while he tried to separate two fighting dogs. His hand was severely swollen preventing him from working.

Once again, Benjamin settled on Indian lands that became available to purchase by non-Indians. These lands had been part of the Diminished Osage Reserve and as such Indian Lands prior to the final agreement in 1870 whereby the lands became public subject to purchase by settlers at \$125 per acre, payment to be made within one year of settlement. It is pursuant to the Act of July 15, 1870 that the Kecks purchased his parcel.²¹⁹ Potential buyers followed the surveyors finding plots where there was no sign of development and staking their claims. Disputes arose between those who previously settled, paying the Osage a head right fee of \$5.00 per person, and these subsequent claim holders.

Between 1870 and 1874, the land in Cowley was divided and re-divided into townships and communities, the boundaries changing frequently with the changing population. Portions of Winfield had been allocated to Beaver and Vernon when these cities were formed in 1871. The Kansas State Agricultural Report of 1875 summarized that the largest number of new Cowley Citizens came from Illinois (1,891), Missouri (1,309) and Iowa (1,150). 376 people lived in Beaver.

Benjamin acquired 91.3 acres on October 15, 1875 described as the Lot/Tract 6, 7 and NE1/4 of the SW1/4 of Section 6, T33S R3E, 6th PM.²²⁰ This property is located next to the Arkansas River near Beaver, Cowley²²¹, Kansas. A little less than a year later Cowley County was hit by a drought and grasshopper invasion. Many abandoned their claim and left the state. The years of 1874-1875 were referred to as the "grasshopper" years. As described in William G. Cutler's *History of the State of Kansas* was first published in 1883 by A. T. Andreas, Chicago, Illinois:

"Their advent took place in August, 1874, the swarm coming from the northwest in such countless numbers as to form a cloud which obscured the sun. Dropping down upon the scanty fields which the drought had left, they made, what it seemed hardly probable the settlers would do afterward, a hearty meal, deposited their eggs and left the county.



Everything green was ravaged, the only crops saved being a few fields of corn which had been planted so early as to be already matured. Early the following season, the eggs hatched out and the fears of the settlers were renewed, but the young hoppers left the county without inflicting any damage. It would be difficult to estimate the damage done by this incursion. The newer settlers were already discouraged by the scanty rains of 1874 and the meager crops which were about to reward their hard labor, and when they saw all destroyed, they abandoned their claims by hundreds and left not only the county, but the State. Early in 1874, the population of the county was in round numbers 10,000; a year later it had fallen far below that figure, and it was not until two years later that it again reached that point.”

On February 24, 1876, “F. Brown” wrote a letter to *Arkansas Weekly City Traveler*, published on March 8, 1876, that quite a number of farms had exchanged hands in the last six weeks and others “men from all parts looking for more. Let them come.” He further wrote that “we have plenty of everything but money.” Brown projected that the price of the land “not in the far distant” would be \$5 to 50 per acre. By March 22, 1876 there were no vacant government lands in Beaver.²²² There were positive growth in populations (increase of 45 persons to a total of 415 persons) and crop production.²²³ However, seven days after this last report, a flood and hail hit Beaver, wiping out crops and causing residences to retreat to higher ground from their homes.

On February 2, 1878, the *Arkansas Weekly City Traveler* reported that a “colony was being formed” of Beaver citizens to move to Indian Territory on government land “not occupied by Indians or any one (sic) else” to show that people were interested in settling there. The newspaper was discouraging. However, it may have encouraged the Keck family to seek out new lands in that area. Eventually, Benjamin’s sons, Joseph Tevis and George Swasey, did settle in Oklahoma on such lands.²²⁴

The time and method of the Kecks leaving Beaver has not been determined. They may have sold or perhaps lost their property through foreclosure. Most probably, the Kecks were driven out of Cowley County by nature as the floods and droughts continued to wreak havoc on the settlers. Subsequent owners of the property in the same area, were John A. Schwantes and Read & Ready, the latter being well-known bankers in the area.²²⁵ John A. Schwantes (born September 7, 1874) was the son of FW (Fredrick Wilhelm) Schwantes, who participated in holding a lottery for the purchase of property in the area in 1875.

In 1880 the family is found in Hickory, Butler, Kansas. This location is about 47 miles north and east from Winfield, Cowley, Kansas. The population in 1880 was 431. The lands in Cowley County belonged to the Osage and were not opened to white settlement though many settlers crossed over from Butler County. Benjamin’s two oldest boys, John H. and James F., were not with the family at the time of the 1880 census. Lorena, Joseph T., Minnie M., George W²²⁶., Demoss, Hubert W., Budd Keck, and Ettie Keck were named in the federal census. One of Benjamin’s oldest sons, Joseph Tevis, was issued a patent of 120 acres in Butler, Kansas on June 20, 1884.²²⁷ On July 28, 1888, Joseph’s brothers-in-law, Licanery Filbert Tilley and I. F. Tilly, also acquired patents in Section 9, 160 acres each in N/E and SE/4 Section 9. The land is generally

seventeen miles south and east of Leon, Butler, Kansas.²²⁸ Leon is given as the nearest post office.

Benjamin served as a delegate for the selection of candidate to the Republican Convention in 1880 and August 1882.²²⁹ Their platform, voted on by resolution, included support for the temperance laws and fixing reasonable rates for transportation of freight and passengers by rail and adequate penalties for extortion and discrimination by railroad companies.

By 1885, Benjamin was no longer listed on the Kansas Census with "LT" (Lorena), J.T., "JF", "MM", "GC", "D", "H", "EA" and "EE" in Hickory, Butler, Kansas. James F. Keck, one of the two older boys, had returned but not John. Lorena, his wife, died in February 1886. She is described as being a "widow" with eight children living in Hickory, Butler, Kansas. The reference to "widow" suggest that the people of Logan, the neighboring community to Hickory, at least thought Benjamin was dead. He was not dead yet.

It was about this time that Benjamin is recorded as receiving a pension. Benjamin originally filed an application for a pension on June 29, 1863 after receiving wounds at Shiloh. His Application No. was 27591 and Certificate No. 1895. It appears that he did not receive monies under the pension until September 8, 1887²³⁰. He also appears to have received an increase on or about October 27, 1887 noting he was in Keokuk, Iowa²³¹.

In the listing of survivors in the *History of the 15th Iowa* published in 1887, Benjamin is shown living in Leon, Kansas, which is the post office location under the 1880 federal census and 1885 state census. As such it may have been listed not has his physical location but where notifications were sent by the organization. Leon is near El Dorado or Wichita, Butler County, Kansas. These cities are about 36 and 47 miles respectively from Hickory. Benjamin may have been in Neodesha, Wilson, Kansas in Summer 1887. Neodesha is 71 miles from Leon. John Madison Keck was a well-known person in Wilson County as "the only corporal west of the Mississippi," member and teacher (lecturer) of the Masons, and for the many public offices for which he ran and held (i.e. probate judge in 1896 and reelected in 1898). He also disclaimed being related to "Benjamin F. Keck of Neodesha" who is listed as receiving a pension in February 1888. In the news notice, he stated that he believed this "old gentleman", Benjamin F. Keck, was "now in Iowa" and "was here last summer."²³² The reference to being "the only corporal" appears to have been in jest and chastisement of others who had assumed higher ranks. In a news article regarding John's election to Lieutenant Colonel of the Veterans at the Wilson County Soldiers' reunion, he stated that he could only claim to be a corporal thus making himself the "only known Corporal residing in the county." In other articles this moniker was expanded to "west of the Mississippi," "Kansas" and "earth." He was in Company A of the 105th Pennsylvania Infantry, fighting at Gettysburg and wounded three times severely. The newspaper also notes in the coverage of the 3rd Congress of the Republican Convention where James was a delegate "Corporal Keck's modesty and originality makes him very popular with old soldiers and Republicans of Wilson County...."

On September 2, 1887, Benjamin visited his brother, William Henry Harrison Keck in Marion County, Missouri after not seeing him for 22 years.²³³ A follow up article²³⁴ states that

Benjamin had been in Florida and another article attributed to Benjamin the remark that Florida “was a boss place for a poor man to live, as he does not have to work half the year to wear the other half.” He also said that he was going to Kansas to visit relatives and then to California. There are no found documents that further substantiate that Benjamin was in Florida or California. However other sources do show that he did travel to different areas of Kansas and Missouri around this time.

Following his visit to his brother, Benjamin is found in the following locations: Neodesha (1887)²³⁵, Paola, Miami County, Kansas (February 1891 and 1893),²³⁶ Iola, Allen County, Kansas (November 11, 1891),²³⁷ Olathe, Johnson County, Kansas,²³⁸ Blue Mound, Linn County, Kansas (April 1896)²³⁹, Meriden, Jefferson County, Kansas (April 1896),²⁴⁰ Oskaloosa, Jefferson County, Kansas, Winfield, Cowley, Kansas and Fort Scott, Bourbon, Kansas, (May 1896),²⁴¹ On September 12, 1896, returns to reside in Meriden, Kansas from Denver, Colorado.²⁴² January 9, 1897, Meriden, Kansas²⁴³ March 27, 1897, Meriden, Kansas²⁴⁴

His visit to Neodesha in 1887 may have been to reconnect with Samuel F. Zornes, a fellow member of Company I who was captured at the Battle of Atlanta and imprisoned in Andersonville with Benjamin. In publishing the 2nd Annual Reunion of Wilson County Veterans at Neodesha on October 23, 1885, Samuel’s name was listed as being a member of the Humphrey GAR Post in Neodesha.²⁴⁵ Samuel and his family had moved earlier Ulysses, Kansas to homestead most likely in 1884. Yet the Zornes maintain some connection with the city as one of Samuel’s sons was born in Neodesha in April 1887 and letters to his wife is listed as being at the post office. James Madison Keck was also a member of the Humphrey GAR Post. He disclaimed relations to the “Benjamin F. Keck of Neodesha” who was advertised in the newspaper even though he did have a brother named “Benjamin F. Keck” who lived in Elk City, Pennsylvania.²⁴⁶ This suggests, along with the statement that it was an older gentleman and going to Iowa, that the referenced “Benjamin Franklin Keck” was most probably our Benjamin.

Benjamin’s connection with Paola, Miami, Kansas was that Benjamin was a member of the GAR McCaslin Post #117 in Paola, Miami, Kansas as of the December 31, 1890 Quarterly Report. At that time John D. Stocum who was with Company H of the 15th Regiment Iowa was the “J.V.C.” Officer of the Post.²⁴⁷ While the records of the McCaslin Post #117 show transfers and suspension in years after 1890, there is no indication that Benjamin either transferred or was suspended. While Stocum was a member of the Crocker Iowa Brigade and attended several of its reunions including the one in Council Bluffs, Iowa around September 20, 1889, there is no record of Benjamin being a member or participating in such events.²⁴⁸ Other indication of Benjamin’s residence in Paola is the listing of him as one of the soldiers who accompanied General Sherman on the “March to the Sea”.²⁴⁹ Benjamin had posted in the newspaper a poem in honor of General Sherman, who died on February 14, 1891.²⁵⁰ The posting read: “In the home of the clouds, where nature dies/ From the summits of the earth, to touch the skies,/ And feels once more the phalanx unbroken,/ Shoulder to Shoulder, with no words spoken/ They may join our ranks, who march no more,/ For a moments time, from eternity shores;/ And the pledge that was sealed by the angel’s death/ Shall be sworn again, with the living breathe.”²⁵¹ Benjamin is also listed as having two letters at the post office, which may indicate that he had

already left Paola, on June 2, 1893.²⁵² It is important to note that one of the other “Benjamin F. Kecks” was living in Ottawa, Kansas at this time and is mentioned as visiting Paola.

During this period, Benjamin married Marietta Croft who was from Iola, Allen County, Kansas on November 19, 1891. This was the first of two concurrent marriages that eventually led to his arrest and imprisonment for bigamy. Marietta Webb (Pierce) (Croft) (1834-1914), was twice widow.²⁵³ Alphonso S. Freed conducted the marriage at the Methodist Episcopal Church on the corner of Jefferson and Broadway in Iola, Kansas. Marietta continued to live in Iola, Kansas after the marriage at her home at 606 Chestnut Avenue²⁵⁴. His connection with Allen County was most likely due to Lorena’s family living in Elsmore as well as Blue Mound, Allen, Kansas. The marriage license shows that the record originally showed that Benjamin was from Allen County but “Allen” was crossed out and “Winfield” inserted.²⁵⁵ According to his wife’s subsequent petition for divorce based upon abandonment, Benjamin had left her in November 1893.²⁵⁶

On March 1, 1895, Benjamin is listed in the Kansas State Census in Olathe, Johnson County, Kansas, as “R.F. Keck” living with the Hackett family in “Hackett House.” Benjamin may have been at the Hackett House when the unfortunate death by consumption of Susie McCain occurred on March 2, 1895 as the McCoins were not listed on the census. They had returned to Olathe to visit friends from Indian Territory where her husband John J. had just been promoted to Superintendent of the Quapaw Agency.²⁵⁷ Josiah C. Jamieson, a member of Company E in the 15th Regiment is noted to have lived in Olathe; however other records suggest that he lived in Marion County, Kansas and finally after losing his lands in a Sheriff Sale, returned to Iowa to die²⁵⁸. While there are some Jamesons living in Olathe in the late 19th and early century, it is not been researched if these Jamesons are related to this Josiah. As such, Benjamin’s visiting old soldier friends may not have been applicable to this city.

1896 was a year of travel to Blue Mound, Linn, Kansas, Oskaloosa, Kansas, Winfield and Fort Scott Kansas. Shortly after the March 1, 1895 the Kansas State Census, Benjamin visits Galena E. Ball (nee Carter), daughter of his nephew, Hiram Carter, in Blue Mound, Linn, Kansas. Meriden, Kansas (April 1896),²⁵⁹ He then is found in Meriden in April.²⁶⁰ After a stay of six weeks in Meriden, Benjamin claims that he is on his way to Kansas City and then his home in Winfield with the plan to return to Meriden in two weeks. But he detoured to Fort Scott, took out a marriage license and married Mary Addie Irwin Meek before moving to Nevada, Missouri.²⁶¹

On May 20, 1896, Benjamin married Mary Addie Irwin Meek, who was also a widow, in Fort Scott, Kansas and moved into a house at 613 Elm, Nevada, Missouri. What did they have in common? Mary had a brother, Frank Irwin, who had also been committed to an asylum in Lincoln, Illinois. This asylum was for children that were feeble minded.²⁶² Benjamin’s son, Demoss Keck, had been committed to a mental facility in Jacksonville, Illinois on November 22, 1895. Perhaps this common experience attracted the two to each other. Benjamin had encouraged her to visit her brother. Later in 1900 Mary would live with Frank in Lawrence, Lawrence, Illinois. She is listed as a “washwoman” and her brother, “laborer.”²⁶³ She returned to Fort Scott, Bourbon, Kansas to live at 1624 C Oak Street. She died in 1922 and was buried in

Oak Lawn Cemetery next to her husband, Marshal Meek and her son, Wentworth. Her other son, Lewis M. Meeks, lived in the Fort Scott area and is buried in Evergreen Cemetery.

It did not take long for Mary to discover that Benjamin was married to Marietta. She had him arrested for bigamy. He was incarcerated on July 11, 1896 in Nevada, Missouri.²⁶⁴ Her initial inquiry into Benjamin arose because Benjamin had been sending off a part of his pension (\$17 per month) to Kansas. Mary was a relatively young widow (40 years), penniless and took in wash to support herself. During one of Benjamin's absences, Mary found letters from Marietta demanding support and calling him out for his long absences. Marietta wrote that Benjamin could just stay away permanently. Mary followed up with a letter to Marietta, who responded with a copy of her marriage certificate to Benjamin. Mary complained that Benjamin had asserted that he was well to do.²⁶⁵ Marietta made a similar claim in her divorce proceedings stating that he had assets between \$10,000 and \$30,000.²⁶⁶

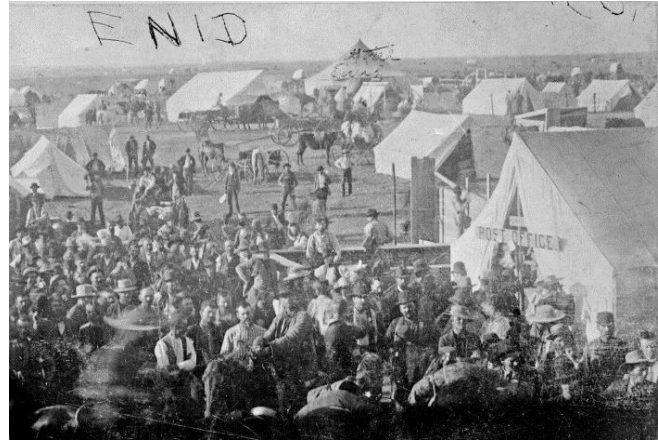
How could both Marietta and Mary be duped into thinking that Benjamin was a well to do person? On the marriage license Benjamin listed his origins as ""Winfield" striking through "Allen County" thus emphasizing that he was not of Allen County. In Winfield a "John M. Keck" was a community leader of some wealth. He was not related to Benjamin according to his obituary stating that he father was Daniel Keck.²⁶⁷ The only documented financial statement for Benjamin is that he received a pension of \$17 per month. The equivalent amount in 2018 dollars is \$482.

After Benjamin was arrested in Nevada, Vernon, Missouri on July 11, 1896²⁶⁸, he elected to go to prison rather than post bond. Both women swore out statements against him. By mid-September 1896, Benjamin was back in Meriden to stay, claiming that he was returning from Denver, Colorado.²⁶⁹ Benjamin returned to Meriden by January 9, for birthday celebration of "Grandda Pebbler" at age 86²⁷⁰ and severed as a juror as of March 27, 1897²⁷¹ in the same community.

Meanwhile, Marietta filed for divorce in 1897 for abandonment and failure to support.²⁷² There was broad newspaper coverage of these events.²⁷³ The duplicity of wooing and wedding two widows and creating an impression that his first wife was a widow (rather than an abandon wife) creates some concerns about relying upon Benjamin's rendition of events in the Civil War. However, it may be due to this researcher's prejudice as opposed to what was acceptable "lies" to one's female companions and that of one's comrades in arms. One author, however, has justified exaggerations of the Civil War events around the 1890s and early 1900 based upon memorials of the Civil War veterans.²⁷⁴ We all become saints after death, one might say. For Benjamin, it was just moving to another state and town.

In 1898, Benjamin moved to Enid, Oklahoma to become "A good citizen, ardent patriot and grand old man"²⁷⁵ of the community and a herald hero of the Civil War. On September 16, 1893, Joseph Tevis and George Swasey, Benjamin's sons, participated with about 100,000 other hopefuls in the fourth and largest of the five openings of land to settlement in the Oklahoma.²⁷⁶ They most likely took off from the south side of the Cherokee Strip line about five miles north of Hennessey²⁷⁷ and registered at Meirbergen and Godschalk's store.²⁷⁸ This particular

opening started at noon on September 16, 1893 encompassing 6,361,000 acres of the Cherokee Outlet²⁷⁹. The Cherokees had sold the land to the US government for about \$1.40 per acre or \$8,505,736. Cities that developed in this area were Enid, Perry, Alva and Woodward. The counties created were Garfield, Grant, Kay, Noble, Pawnee, Wood and Woodward. Both Joseph Tevis and George Swasey acquired title to land under land patents²⁸⁰. Enid became a “city” of about 10,000 overnight as the hopefuls jumped the train before reaching the established train station to stake their respective claims. Prior to being called “Enid” the name of the train stop and designated town site was called “Skeleton,” which according to some sources was changed by M.A. Low, a Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad official, to character in Alfred Lord Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*. Others prefer the tale that the name arose from a food stand sign “DINE” being turned around to proclaim “ENID”.



At his sons’ urging, Benjamin moved to Enid. By the time he arrived, Enid had recovered from the loss of over three-quarters of its initial population due to departure of many of the participants in the land rush and a three year drought. Benjamin eventually rented a dwelling at 410 E. Cherokee Avenue²⁸¹ and later at 612 Cherokee Avenue. There were some minor mishaps, Benjamin shot himself in the leg²⁸² but otherwise, Benjamin settled into the community, enjoying “the cool breeze in a hammock”²⁸³ and tending his garden and vineyard. During Benjamin’s residence, Enid would expand to a population of 13,799.

In July 1901, Benjamin and the rest of its citizens were affected by the burning of most of the business district which surrounded the public square. Dynamite had to be used to stop the blaze. Four blocks were consumed within three hours which started after midnight on a Saturday. The loss was estimated to be about \$100,000.²⁸⁴ Most of the businesses were back in business, using tents if necessary. The fire resulted in major changes in the fire department of the city, and building codes against wooden structures in the city. The city soon funded



better equipment than the a two wheeled car with 500 feet of fire hose and the horse draw Pabst Blue Ribbon hook and ladder that was at the disposal of the volunteer firemen when this fire occurred.

Benjamin had kept in touch with his Civil War experience by participating in the G.A.R (Grand Army of the Republic and Kindred Societies), which had local and state associations. While Iowa and Kansas initially organized G.A.R. posts in 1866 and

some posts recognized in Indian Territory, the G.A.R. in Oklahoma was organized in 1889. The Irwin McDowell Post for Enid was number 19²⁸⁵. In the year that Enid was the location for the Oklahoma encampment, he was installed as the Quarter Master Sergeant for the Post.²⁸⁶ He attended at least one of the national encampments the Grand Army of the Republic and Kindred Societies which took place on September 7-8, 1905, the Thirty-ninth National Encampment, Denver, Colorado with 232,455 attending.²⁸⁷

Benjamin and about 600 other people took a special train from Enid to Denver, Colorado.²⁸⁸ Benjamin reported that Denver was unable to handle the large crowds with lodging being of poor quality and food and bed being expensive.²⁸⁹ Marquis James provided more details in "A Boy's Version of Colorado Sites."²⁹⁰ The events included parades of veterans, meeting of ex-prisoners, speeches, reunions of seventy-five associations such as "army post, divisions, brigades, battery and cavalry associations, regimental associations, battle of Shiloh and Gettysburg survivors, blockading squadrons, Berdan's Sharpshooters' Associations, United States Signal Corp Associations, Colorado veterans, Union ex-prisoners of war, Iowa veterans, Hurlbut's fourth Division army of Tennessee, National Association of Army Musicians, Maimed



Veterans Association, New York Iron brigade, reunion of colored veterans," and free lunches and dinners²⁹¹.

Benjamin had preceded this trip with a reunion with his sister Sarah Elizabeth in Stillwater, Oklahoma. They had not visited for over 50 years. He was accompanied by his granddaughter. His son, Joseph had made an earlier visit to Stillwater.²⁹² Sarah Elizabeth Keck had married Eugene Smith White and lived in Tiger Fork, Shelby County, Missouri. Sarah's and Benjamin's brother, William Henry Harrison Keck, and family visited each other extensively. William Henry Keck died at their home during one of his visits there. One of Sarah's children, Eugenia Sarah, married her cousin, Clarence Albert Keck, son of William Henry. Eugenia and Clarence had moved to Stillwater during the time that Sarah and Eugene resided in Stillwater. William Henry Harrison Keck was also the father of Walter Cheston Keck, the author's maternal grandfather.

Following the GAR national encampment in 1905, Benjamin visited the Creek Nation stating that he would not give 15 cents of Creek Nation if forced to live there.²⁹³

In February 1906, Benjamin's son Edgar Allen Keck was robbed while traveling on the Santa Fe train from Maple, Mapleton, Monona²⁹⁴, Iowa to Enid to visit with his father and brothers. The train had stopped just outside of Council Bluffs, when three men attacked Edgar as he attempted to go from car to another. They took \$47 and his return train ticket.²⁹⁵ Edgar, also known as "Budd", was one of Benjamin's younger children being born on January 11, 1873. There is a puzzle created by the 1875 Kansas census, and US Federal 1880 and 1900 census as to where Edgar was born. Some records show Missouri while other family members, including Lorena, show that they just came from Iowa. However in later census and a delayed birth certificate of Cora Huddleston Keck, Edgar's wife, for their son, Roy Freeman Keck, states that Edgar was born in Keokuk, Iowa. This would have been incorrect as the Kecks had moved by the time of his birth. Edgar married Cora Pearl Huddleston on December 23, 1899 in Onawa, Monona, Iowa. Their subsequent residences were in close proximity to her parents.

While living in Enid, Benjamin had guests living with him at East Hill location which included his sons Martin Hurburt, adopted daughter, and sister, Mary Jane. He also had visits with his sons, "J.F." or James F.²⁹⁶, Edgar Allen, Joseph Tevis and his children, George Swasey and his children, sister Sarah Elizabeth White, brother William Henry Harrison and family, and most probably Leonidas and brother in law, Amos Poe, through the GAR meetings. Benjamin opened his rented dwellings to his family, including his sons, James F. and Martin H. (Hubert).²⁹⁷ James F. and Martin Hubert boarded with Benjamin in 1905-1906. James F. arrived in town in 1904 from Barton County, Kansas.²⁹⁸ Martin Hubert continued to be listed as a boarder with Benjamin until 1910.

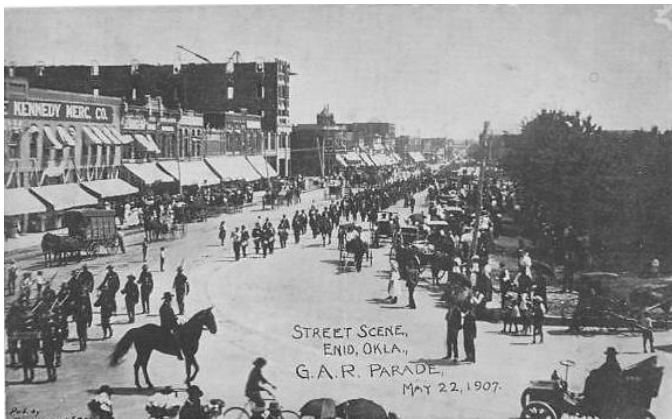
In August 1906, Benjamin suffered severe poisoning ("blood poisoning") in his left arm while tending to his tomatoes. The pain continued for at least two months and disturbed his sleep²⁹⁹.

On January 29, 1907, Benjamin's sister Mary Jane Keck died at his house. She married Daniel W. Miller in 1860 at the home of her brother-in-law and sister, Amos C. and Elizabeth Keck Poe, in Newark, Fabius, Knox Missouri. Daniel W. Miller had died on July 23, 1894. She had suffered some ailment for five years before her passing. Benjamin selected lines from a poem which appears to have been part of a poem written by Harriette Bronson Gunn, that she subsequently sited in In the Shadow of the Wall:³⁰⁰

There falls across the face of life
A veil called Death I said
A sleep, a dream, a little rest
From care there are no dead
And while I sowed my sleeping seed
Of lily life to be
Still chimed the bells incessant
Hope of immortality.
The Lord into his garden came
The lilies spring to meet
The glory of sun and showers
The coming of his feet.

Benjamin's brother, Leonidas Keck, also died in 1907 on September 16th. He was buried in La Belle Cemetery, Le Belle, Lewis County, Missouri under the name "Kick". He had lived in Wichita for years before his death.³⁰¹ Leonidas had also participated in the Civil War, serving with Missouri 3rd Regiment Cavalry as a Sergeant. Unlike his brothers Benjamin, William Henry Keck and John Quincy Adams he suffered no known wounds.³⁰² He was active in the GAR Eggleston Post in Wichita, Kansas serving in various positions with that organization. He married Sarah Elizabeth Sanford October 19, 1858 in Knox, Missouri.³⁰³ He was a brick maker.³⁰⁴

On May 22, 1907, the three-day, annual 17th encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic, Oklahoma took place in Enid, Oklahoma. Billed as one of the largest gathering of Oklahoma veterans at the time, Benjamin no doubt participated.³⁰⁵ Participants arrived in Enid starting two days before on every train. The parade began on the 22nd at 2:00 PM, starting with the dignitaries, various veterans associations and then the men of the Grand Army of the Republic. 735 men registered from 27 states and the US Army and Navy with an estimated 250 men not registering but participating.³⁰⁶



In 1908, Benjamin was growing a "Monster Tomato Vine" in his well-known garden. The bush was estimated to have produced 300 bushels of tomatoes which had been distributed to friends, neighbors and family members. The *Enid Events* commented "Even the fact that Mr. Keck is one of the best gardeners in the county does not avail to cause those to increase marveling who have viewed this wonderful tomato bush."

The same newspaper over the years expressed its appreciation for Benjamin's acumen at gardening and delivery to the staff of this garden's bounty on many occasions.³⁰⁷ Apparently, Benjamin could grow not only vegetables, fruits, but Tennessee Rambler roses.³⁰⁸ Benjamin reported being optimistic that the world was getting better.³⁰⁹ The editor of *Enid Events* was F. Everett Purcell whose office was at 117 East Broadway. The following is a photograph of the *Enid Events* staff and office, a place Benjamin frequently stopped by with his garden bounty of vegetables and fruit.

He received visits from his son, George Swasey who lived in Drummond.³¹⁰ The Editor of *Enid Events* describes Benjamin as follow in January 1909 under an article entitled "Historical Reminiscing A Tribute to the Living:

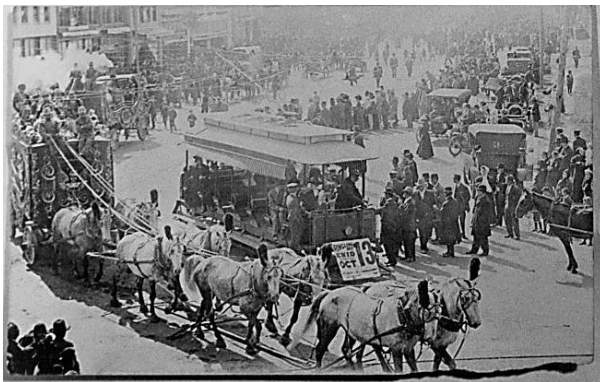
"A quiet and unassuming citizen of Enid called upon the editor of the *Events* the other day, venerable, smiling, good natured and with an optimistic word.



So we were engaged in an animated discussion of related subjects – politics, religions and what-nots. We are not impressed of age; it were as though conversing with a sprightly, middle-aged watcher of events. Yet he was passed 83 years of age; has been reported killed twice, drowned once and served time in that hell on earth – Andersonville. An old friend, who was a physician, once said to him: “Had you stayed out of the army, I verily believe that you would have lived to 150 years.” He is not only virile, but interesting in his virility, a recount of his career coming both instructful and stimulating. He enlisted in two wars, serving to the end the great conflict, and saved the life of a noted Union General on one occasion.”³¹¹

Benjamin’s 84th birthday on August 30th was noted in the *Enid Events* with the comment that “hale and hearty as twenty years ago” and felt that he would reach the 100 mark. Benjamin also reported that among the other congratulations and mementos, he received a silver set from a cousin in Chicago.³¹²

Later in September, Benjamin visited his son George Swasey in Drummond. George Swasey married Flora Vivian Yost on March 2, 1901 in Enid, Garfield, Oklahoma. They had seven children. George was considered a successful farmer.



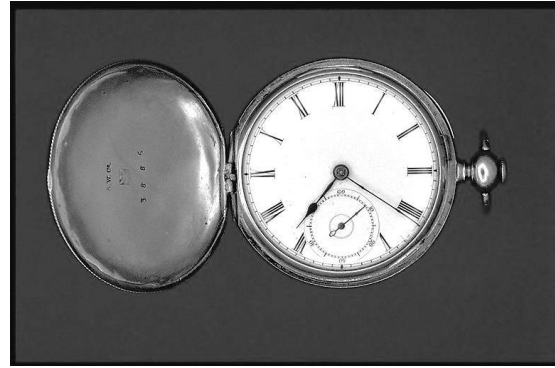
On October 13, 1909, Benjamin may have joined “several thousand people,” including 700 from Billings and Garber people who traveled by train, to watch the Ringling Brothers Circus parade and attend the performances. Shopkeepers were happy and so were school children as school as dismissed.³¹³ Years later, Drummond, a city in which Benjamin’s son George Swasey lived, became known as a circus haven. Elisha

Campbell and his sons Bill, Fred, Bert and Ed, who had participated in the 1893 land rush, purchased the bankrupt circus that belonged to other relatives and set it up on Elisha’s farm. New winter residents of Drummond gained by this acquisition included “Baron Capitan Nicu de Barcsy” and Sidonia, his breaded mother, the Alligator Man, the Tallest Man in the World, Tim Tarver at 8 feet 7 inches, “pygmies” who practiced Iturian head binding, Mary and Margaret Gibbs, Siamese twins joined at the hip, Al Beck, the tattooed man, and Spider Boy, a contortionist called the Spider Boy.

In 1910, the year in which Dorothea Irene Keck, his grandniece and this author’s mother, was born, Benjamin still lived in Enid, Oklahoma. While the city directory included his son, Martin Hubert Keck, as a resident in Benjamin’s house³¹⁴, Hubert was serving as a witness on a homestead for Charles F. Bradley in Waverly, Oregon. As such he most probably had left Enid at an earlier date.

Benjamin was in the news with his story about a “rare old watch” which he purchased prior to enlisting and which he loaned to General Belknap during his imprisonment after the capture in Atlanta. Benjamin purchased it in 1860. It was “... in a silver case, key wind affair, made by

Home Watch Company...³¹⁵ This story was published in many newspapers of the day. As with many stories told by Benjamin there is a bit of controversy associated with this story due to the description of the watch.³¹⁶



Prior to the purported purchase of the watch, newspapers carried “infomercials” about the quality and availability of “Waltham” watches. “Home Watch Company” was used as a trade name for pocket watch movements manufactured by Waltham. Waltham watches were produced by successively merged companies, including American Waltham Watch Company, between 1852 and 1957. This watch was the lowest grade made and considered to be more likely carried by the enlisted man rather than an officer. Advertisers noted that this version was not fully warranted and guaranteed. However the trade name “Home Watch Company” is not prominent until after the Civil War during a time when the company expanded operations and instituted changes in the watch to accommodate the cheaper market. Further, Home Watch Company did not inscribe its name on watches until after the Civil War (1867). So if the name “Home Watch Company” or trade symbol was on the watch rather than Benjamin’s memory or the reporter’s assumption, the watch could not have been at the Battle of Atlanta.

On the other hand, if identified incorrectly, there was available a low-cost model made by Waltham which was marketed by roving merchants sold to eager Union soldiers in field for \$13. This model was called “William Ellery,” which followed the tradition of the company at the time to name the model or grade of watches for prominent men from the company or history.³¹⁷ Abraham Lincoln owned and carried an 1863, 11-jewel, 18 inch, silver hunter cased William Ellery watch. It is located in the National Museum of American History.³¹⁸ Another possibility relating to the probability of this story is that the story was true but the watch identified was a replacement for one loaned and lost.

He continued his garden distributing its “fruits” to the staff at *Enid Events*.³¹⁹

Benjamin also “adopted” a daughter, Josephine E. “Marrell”, who is listed in the US Federal Census 1910 as being 14 years old. Her parents were Samuel J. and Mary Margaret Grove Morell from Madison, Daviess, Indiana. She was born in Indiana on June 16, 1896. Mary died and Samuel married Sarah Harris Leburn on April 3, 1900. Josephine shows up on the 1910 US Census in Enid in the house of Samuel and Benjamin Franklin Keck. During the same year, Mary, Josephine older sister by four years, quietly and quickly married Clifford W. White. Thus it might be concluded that there was some tension in the household driving the two girls out.

Samuel died on June 29, 1915. He had worked as a nurse and there are reported payments by the government for his services. Josephine died in August 1984 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Her husband, Otto Benjamin Barr, pre-deceased her in January 22, 1932. His parents were Robert and Kittie Bar from Missouri. He is buried in Forest Hill in St, Joseph, Buchanan County, Missouri. Josephine surviving relatives listed in her obituary are her nephew Clinton White and

great nephew, Larry White of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. It appears that this was not a formal adoption.

Benjamin's Final Death:

The year 1911 started off with some difficulties for Benjamin. He had not been feeling well in January confined to his home for some time.³²⁰ He injured his hand but put off any sympathy as "... he was left for dead three times during the war and a little thing like a hand hurt don't bother him at all."³²¹

On October 20, 1911 on Friday, Benjamin died at his home. The historical context of Benjamin's life was set out in a three column obituary in the *Enid Events* on November 2, 1911.³²² The editor sums up Benjamin's life as follows: "Mr. Keck was a personal friend of the editor of the Events. He came into the office for a chat with us once or twice every week, and during his chats with us disclosed a splendid spirit and the complainant confidence of a useful, honorable life. His mind was a storehouse of reminiscence. The feast of time was upon his head but the sunshine of God was within his heart. He was not a relic of the past but an active participant of the present. He often said that the heart of a man was forever young." Other tributes were paid by fellow soldiers, including George D. Orner, who reflected "After what he passed through during the darkest days of '61-'65, his vitality was remarkable."³²³



What is interesting is the lack of reference to family members in the obituary or Benjamin's celebration of his 86th birthday on August 20th.³²⁴ It was not that the family members had not visited Benjamin during his residence in Enid, or he, them. Or that the family members did not feel compelled to attend the funerals of loved ones as evidence by George S. Keck traveling to Arkansas City, Kansas to Cleveland Eugene Kelsey's funeral on February 17th.³²⁵ Cleveland Eugene Kelsey, was the husband of Benjamin's daughter, Mary Ellen. However, if judged by the newspaper reports, it does not appear that either George or Joseph attended the funeral of Benjamin. The GAR oversaw and paid the expenses of Benjamin's burial on Sunday, October 22nd, in the Enid Cemetery, Enid, Garfield, Oklahoma.³²⁶ It is noted, however, that he is buried near Benjamin's son and daughter-in-law, Joseph Tevis and Lourancy D. Tilly³²⁷, and nephew, Harry T. Keck with his wife, Esther D. Morris.

The Other Benjamin Franklin (or B.F.) Kecks: The difficulty in researching Benjamin Franklin Keck is that there numerous concurrently named individuals in the United States with similar ages. One such Benjamin Franklin or Benjamin F. Keck purchased 80-acre parcel in Poweshiek County within the city of Madison, which was organized on March 5, 1855. He was born in August 1832 [burial site says October 1831] in Pennsylvania. He married Margarett or Mary Watkins in December 25, 1856 in Iowa County, Iowa. The deed to David Ogden states that "BF Keck" is from Iowa County, Iowa where this Benjamin lived in 1856 with his wife and children at

Honey Creek. He continued to live in Iowa County in 1870 in Washington, Iowa, Iowa with family and children.³²⁸ By 1880 he lived in Rock Creek, Coffey, Kansas and 1885, Ottawa, Kansas, which is about 180 miles due west of Kansas City, Kansas.

A Benjamin Franklin Keck transferred property to "Mr. Mendenhall" in Bell Plaine, Kansas in 1899. There are individuals named Ed Keck, Nettie D. Keck and Bertha Mae Keck in the same area around the time of the transfer.³²⁹ These names correspond to the names of the children of this Benjamin Keck. In 1900, this Benjamin was living in Round Grove, Kay, Oklahoma. In 1910, he is living with his wife at the home of his son, Edward, in Lake, Ferry, Washington. The US Federal Census for 1920 for East Republic, Ferry, Washington, shows that Edward was a merchant of a second hand store and remained single. This Benjamin died on July 7, 1912 in Republic, Ferry, Washington. This Benjamin also had sons named John H. (b. 1858 in Iowa), James H. (1860 in Nebraska) and Edward F. (1862 in Iowa). He was buried in Republic, Ferry County, Washington on June 7, 1912.

Thus we have both our Benjamin Franklin Keck born in approximately the same year, living in similar locations³³⁰ and having lots of children with similar names. Despite these similarities the newspaper stories about Benjamin's trip to Florida and his visit with his brother, William Henry Keck, Lenora's death, and the bigamy charges do relate to our Benjamin.

There were several references to a Benjamin F. Keck relating to pensions. A Benjamin F. Keck who requested a pension on behalf of his wife, Mattie M. Keck, in 1879 and December 1905 from Pennsylvania. He started to receive a pension on April 26, 1892 which continued until he died on November 24, 1908 at rate 12. Mattie received pension benefits until her death on January 15, 1923. He was a private with Company E, Regiment 148 Pennsylvania Infantry and 14th Regiment of the Veteran Reserve Corp. Company BA. He served from July 16, 1862 to June 26, 1865. In 1890 he was living in Ashland Township, Clarion, Pennsylvania. His Certificate No was 334831.

There was another Benjamin F. Keck living in Kansas City Ward 9, Jackson, Missouri listed on US Federal Census 1900 brother to George O. Keck. This Benjamin listed his birth in November [11], 1823 in Virginia and father born Pennsylvania and mother, Virginia. He states that he is a widower. His brother George (November 1842 in Indiana) is shown married to Nancy J. (July 1842 in Indiana). She had six children with only two surviving: Arthur (January 1876 in Indiana, Farmer) and Ralph D (December 1885, Missouri, at school). George O. is a salesman in the stockyard. This Benjamin shows no profession. The family lived with two white servants. They rented a farm which is shown on Farm Schedule. This Benjamin died on October 26, 1903 and is buried in Elmwood Cemetery, Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri. His wife's name is Emily Ann Nave (November 11, 1831- June 24, 1896) in Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri. She was born in Kentucky.³³¹ Further research of the US Federal Census (1850, 1860, 1870) shows that this Benjamin F. Keck lived in Addison, Shelby, Illinois in 1850 and in Bloomington, McClean, Illinois in 1870 with his family and was a butcher. His father appears to be Daniel and mother, "Percilla." As such he may have been a brother to the James M. Keck or Jim Keck of Winfield. James M. Keck was a prominent person in the community and is well documented as not being related to our Benjamin.

Though inconsistent with Benjamin's story about the Ohio flood, there was a report in Maryland in 1840 of "Benjamin F. Keck," the son of John Keck, a carpenter, who was killed by a horse kick. Later the newspaper reported that the son survived. Research suggests that the Kecks traveled back to Maryland after going to Kentucky. However, it has been found that concurrent with this news story about this "boy," our Benjamin was in Kentucky and possibly indentured to his uncle, Amos Poe, to learn shoemaking. As such, this story does not apply to Benjamin.³³²

Other miscellaneous records show a Benjamin Franklin Keck in the 1st Northeast Regiment, Missouri Home Guard, appearing on records of allowances of Hawkins Taylor Commissions listed in Index to Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers Who Served in Organizations From the State of Missouri. Also Benjamin F. Keck married on April 1, 1850 to Emily Ann Neve in Shelby County, Indiana.

In reference to the information regarding these other Benjamin F. Keck, the author researched the individuals only to the point of eliminating their relevance to our Benjamin Franklin Keck.

END NOTES AND SOURCE INFORMATION

Note that many referenced material is located on the web. The newspapers referenced are available on <https://www.newspapers.com>, <https://gateway.okhistory.org>, <https://www.genealogybank.com> and <https://gateway.okhistory.org/explore/collections/ODNP/>. Other websites sources are <https://www.ancestry.com/>, <https://www.familysearch.org/>, <https://books.google.com> and <https://archive.org/>. Government sites include <https://www.loc.gov/> and <https://gateway.okhistory.org>. Author has also directly contacted genealogical organization by old fashion mail and telephone during her research. Thanks to all individuals who have assisted in this research. Best wishes to your continuation of your research.

¹ Findagrave states "1826." *Enid Events* reports birth year as 1825 [based upon celebration of his 84th birthday in 1909] and "1826" in articles on his life and obituary notice. On 1900 Federal Census, Benjamin reported "Aug 1828."

² According to an interview with Benjamin reported on March 8, 1895 in the *Blue Mound Sun* (Blue Mound, Kansas) nine boys were born in a slave state and their father was once a slave owner and all of them served over four years a piece in the Union army. Facts suggest that there were 11 boys born with two dying in early childhood and military service of the brothers varied in number of years. Additionally, no records currently obtained show that John Keck owned a slave or slaves.

³ The mistakenly reported four deaths are once as drowning as a child, two times during the Civil War, and by implication that his wife when she died was a "widow." Benjamin stated that he was reported dead three times during the Civil War and one reported drowning event.

⁴ There are several articles about "B.F. Keck" or Benjamin Franklin Keck in *Enid Events*. His life story and obituary were in Vol. 17, No. 13, Ed. 1 on January 14, 1909 and obituary (reading very much the same) in Vol. 20, No. 3. Ed. 1 on November 2, 1911. The reference to the editor as "a personal friend" is most likely to F. (Franklin) Everett Purcell. Originally the newspaper was *Coming Events* in 1893 and became *Enid Events* in November 1899. It closed in 1954. Copies of the newspaper are available at **OK Gateway**.

⁵ A "John Keck" and "John P. Keck" were listed as having mail in the area of Cincinnati, Ohio during this time. *National Republican* and *Daily Mercantile Advertiser*, December 31, 1831 and January 5, 1832, p. 4, and *Daily Cincinnati Republic*, January 8, 1830.

⁶ Comparing the height of the flood waters is dependent on the gauges used at the time. Since 1964, there have been four or more gauges used over the history of the Ohio River Floods, during which time there have been 19 major floods (over 60 feet). As such, the standard set by the 1832 Flood was surpassed by the 1884 flood. In 1937

the flood levels in Cincinnati reached 80 inches. George P. Stimson, "River on the Rampage: An Account of the Ohio River Flood of 1837", *Bulletin of the Cincinnati Historical Society*, Vol, 22, No. 2, April 1964. See National Weather Service for history of flood levels of the Ohio River at **Weather Service**.

⁷ Cincinnati was made up of banks, the lower of which included practically all the business area. The flood affected 36 squares of the lowest part of Cincinnati also referred to as the "Bottom". The boundaries of the flood were described as: from John Creek on the west to Deer Street on the east; and as far north of Lower Market Street and Pearl. Daniel Aaron, *Cincinnati, Queen City of the West, 1814-1838*, [Ohio State University Press, 1992] p. 95, ISBN 0814205704, 9780814205709. Also Charles Theodore Greve, *Centennial History of Cincinnati and Representative Citizens*, Vol. 1, [Biographical Publishing Company, 1904], pp. 586-587, original University of Ohio, digitized July 28, 2005..

⁸, John L. Vance, ed., "The Great Flood of 1884 in the Ohio Valley, 1884," *The Work of the Gallipolis Relief Committee*, [Gallipolis, Ohio, Bulletin Office, 1884]. J. Collet, "The Report of the State Geologist, J. Collett, The Ohio River Floods," *Fourteenth Annual Report of the Department of Geology and Natural History*. [Indianapolis: William B. Burford, Contractor of State Printing and Binding], pp. 99-102, <https://scholarworks.iu.edu>. Owen Findsen, "'Simple grandeur ...gigantic energy", *The Cincinnati Enquirer*.

http://enquirer.com/flood_of_97/history2.html.

⁹ *Enid Events* Vol. 17, No. 13, Ed. 1 on January 14, 1909 and Vol. 20, No. 3. Ed. 1 on November 2, 1911. It is noted that the flood affected primarily Ward IV and parts of VI. The 1830 Federal Census does not show persons named "Keck" in those wards.

¹⁰ Other than Benjamin's statements as recorded in *Enid Events* Vol. 17, No. 13, Ed. 1 on January 14, 1909 and Vol. 20, No. 3. Ed. 1 on November 2, 1911. No other independent sources found.

¹¹ *Enid Events*, February 21, 1907. The source of the obituary for Mary Jane Keck Miller appears to have been Benjamin at whose home she died.

¹² Image provide by the Cincinnati Art Museum Eden Park Cincinnati Ohio 45202-1596 1Accession Number: 1986.714, where original is located awaiting restoration. Also see Henry Howe, *Historical Collections of Iowa*, Volumes 2-3, (H. Howe & Son, 1891), pp. 52-53, Source Ohio State University, digitized January 21, 2015, Archive Iowa.

¹³ Owen Findsen, "'Simple grandeur ...gigantic energy", *The Cincinnati Enquirer*.

http://enquirer.com/flood_of_97/history2.html.

¹⁴ The flood of February 18, 1832 was followed by the measles outbreak from April to June 1832, a leading killer during that time and then cholera. Ruth Carter, "Cincinnati and Cholera, Attitudes Towards Epidemics in 1832 and 1849", *Queen City Heritage*, pp. 32-49, Bicetech. A possible relative, Peter Keck, died of cholera in the 1832 epidemic with his wife, daughter of Colonel Hale from Cincinnati and his mother in law. They were buried in the Catherine Street Cemetery which is now defunct. This Peter Keck is reported to be the fourth son of Henry Keck the second. His brother George Washington Keck came out to settle his estate. He also had a brother named John.

¹⁵ There are two siblings who reportedly died in early childhood: Joseph Keck (b. 1228 d. 1829) and George Washington Keck (1830-1833). A third sibling, Samuel Lynn Keck, who was born in 1833 has not been successfully identified in research sources.

¹⁶ Daniel Aaron, *Cincinnati, Queen City of the West, 1819-1838, Urban life and urban landscape series*, (Ohio State University Press, 1992), pp. 44-45, https://books.google.com/books/about/Cincinnati_Queen_City_of_the_West_1819_1.html?id=bDZBvgAACAAJ, ISBN 0814205704, 9780814205709

¹⁷ No further research has been done on this family member.

¹⁸ Assuming that George Washington Keck died in 1833.

¹⁹ Kentucky, County Marriages, 1797-1954 , GS Film Number 000344098, Digital Folder Number 004542780, Image Number 00379. Located on FamilySearch

²⁰ Iowa, State Census 1836-1925, located on FamilySearch

²¹ The Keck family did not first settle in Shelby County but sometime after 1850. Certain family members were listed as being in Knox County in 1850 on the US Federal Census. Knox County is south of Shelby County. In 1850, there were 2895 residents of Knox County and in 1856, 5484 residents. Nathan Howe Parker

Missouri As It Is In 1867: an illustrated historical gazetteer of Missouri, [Philadelphia, J.P. Lippencott & Co., 1867]. Online at **Missouri State Collection** or <https://archive.org/details/missouriasitisin00parkrich>.

²² In 1850 Federal Census, Christopher Columbus Keck, Benjamin's older brother, is living with his in-laws, the Galloways, in District 3, Mason, Kentucky. Bracken County was formed out of Mason County, Kentucky. Christopher was 26 years old at the time. Leonidas, Mary Jane, William Henry Harrison Keck, Ellen or Eleanor, Daniel and Sarah were living in Fabius, Knox, Missouri. By the 1860 Federal Census, John and his wife, Elizabeth, with their children John, William, Sarah and Ellen or Eleanor are living in Tiger, Shelby, Missouri. They must have acquired a farm by then as the value of real property is shown as \$2400 with personal property of \$1600.

²³ Review of existing records for enlistments from Kentucky are limited if non-existing. Current search of information on Fold3, Familysearch, other on-line sites and Bracken County Historical Society was not fruitful.

²⁴ *Enid Events*, Vol. 17, No. 13, Ed. 1 Thursday, January 14, 1909. There is also a "Sante Fe" Kentucky near Milford, Kentucky.

²⁵ Richard Bruce Winders, "Mr. Polk's Army: The American Military Experience in the Mexican War," *Williams-Ford Texas A&M University Military History Series, Vol. 51, pp. 71-72* [Texas A&M University Press, 2001], ISBN1585441627, 9781585441624

²⁶ From June 5, 1837, until December 9, 1839, and from April 2, 1842, to July 12, 1842, Gaines was in command of the Western Division of the United States Army. General Gaines had on three previous occasions requested volunteers from the Southern states. Kent Barnett Germany, "Patriotism and Protest: Louisiana and General Edmund Pendleton Gaines's Army of Mexican-American War Volunteers, 1845-1847," *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association, Summer Vol. 37, No. 3, 1996*, pp. 325-335 [Louisiana Historical Association, 1996]. At <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4233314>.

²⁷ K. Jack Bauer, *Zachery Taylor: Solider, Planter, Statesman for the Old Southwest*, [LSU Press, 1993], pp. 171, ISBN 0807118516, 9780807118511.

²⁸ Some Kentuckians embarked for New Orleans before May 6th. *Louisville Daily Courier*, May 16, 1846. Captain McConnell of *Diamond* steamer advised the newspaper that volunteers left Lake Province, Louisiana on May 7th on board the steamer *Talma* for New Orleans. Two-thirds of the volunteers were from Kentucky. See also *The American Presidents From Polk to Hayes: What They Did, What They Said & What Was Said About Them* by Robert A. Nowlan, Ph.D., Edition illustrated, (Outskirts Press, 2016), pp. 45-46, ISBN 1478765720, 9781478765721.

²⁹ James I. Dantic, "The Kentucky Volunteer Foot Soldier in the Mexican War: A Social History of Company B, Second Regiment, Kentucky Infantry Volunteers", *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society*, Vol. 95, No. 3, pp. 237-283 [Kentucky Historical Society, Summer 1997], <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23383895>.

³⁰ United States Statutes at Large/Volume 1/2nd Congress/1st Session/Chapter 33

³¹ Barnette Germany, supra at p. 332. Also see *Alton Telegraph*, August 21, 1846, "Letter from the Telegraph Junior Editor, New Orleans, August 8, 1846"

³² *Baton Rouge Gazette*, August 15, 1846. Governor Johnson from Louisiana interceded on behalf of volunteers from his state, requiring the Quartermaster not to deduct the clothing allowance. Also see footnote 25 regarding clothing allowance.

³³ Walker D. Wyman, "The Military Phase of Santa Fe Freighting, 1846-1865," *Kansas Historical Society Quarterly, November 1932 (Vol. 1, No. 5)*, pp. 415 to 428. *Transcribed by lhn; HTML editing by Tod Roberts; digitized with permission of the Kansas Historical Society.* <https://www.kshs.org/p/kansas-historical-quarterly-the-military-phase-of-santa-fe-freighting-1846-1865/12563>.

³⁴ *The Louisville Daily Courier*, May 30, 1846.

³⁵ Paul A. Tenkotte, James C. Claypool, ed., "The Encyclopedia of Northern Kentucky", *EBSCO ebook academic collection*, [University Press of Kentucky, 2015], p. 617, ISBN 0813159962, 9780813159966

³⁶ General review of Mexican American War references are from these sources: Damon Eubanks's articles in *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* published by the Kentucky Historical Society as follows: "A Time of Enthusiasm: The Response of Kentucky to the Call for Troops in the Mexican War", *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society*, Autumn 1992, Vol. 90 No. 4, [Historical Society of Kentucky, 1992], pp. 323-344; "Kentuckians in Mexico: Kentucky Volunteers and Their Attitudes Toward the War, Mexico, and Mexicans," *The Kentucky Review*, Vol. 14 : No. 1 , Article 5, [University of Kentucky Libraries, 1998], pp. 38-50. Available at

<https://uknowledge.uky.edu/kentucky-review/vol14/iss1/5>. John T. Hughes, *Doniphan Expedition*, [Cincinnati, J.A. & U.P. James, 1848]. https://archive.org/stream/doniphansexpedit00hugh_1#page/24/mode/2up

³⁷ The Louisville Legion met on May 14, 1846 and conveyed their message to the Governor of their services and the pledge of 60 men in each of the eight units. *Louisville Daily Courier*, May 16, 1846. *Louisville Daily Courier* of May 19th reported the Governor's his acceptance and order [which is dated May 26th] relating to the Louisville Legion.

See *Louisville Daily Courier* of same date.

³⁸ *The Louis Daily Courier*, June 6, 1846.

³⁹ *The Baltimore Sun*, June 1, 1846; *State Indiana Sentinel*, June 4, 1846: On the *Diana* the following units: Washington Blues; 1st German National Guard, Louisville Artillery, Jefferson Riflemen, Montgomery Guards. On the *Alexander Scott* the following units: Louisville Guards; Highland Riflemen; Kentucky Riflemen; 2nd German National Guard.

⁴⁰ The Federal government acquiesced to the Governor selection of the Louisville Legion but only as to those who had started to Mexico in the summer of 1846.

⁴¹ A review of the dates and locations of recruiting, deployment and battle engagements for volunteers of Ohio and Kentucky do not correspond with Benjamin's time (six months), locations, not sighting any of the "enemy" and non-participation in battles.

⁴² William Henry Perrin, J.H. Battle, G.C. Kniffin, *Kentucky: A History of the State*, [Southern Historical Press. June 1979], , pp. 338-339, ISBN

0893081353 (ISBN13: 9780893081355)

⁴³ *The Louisville Daily Courier* May 21, 1846 stating that 150 men had added their names to the list as of noon on Tuesday. Also on May 23, 1846, stating that five companies were in Cincinnati including the Columbus Guards and a company from Dayton.

⁴⁴ John Raman, *Kentucky Rising: Democracy, Slavery, and Culture from the Early Republic to the Civil War*, [University Press of Kentucky, 2011] Footnote 31, p. 377, ISBN 0813134412, 9780813134413.

⁴⁵ Eubank "Kentuckians in Mexico," supra.

⁴⁶ The Third and Fourth Infantry Regiments are noted to have never reached the battle front and mostly did garrison duty. Some authors place them in Mexico City. See John Raman, supra. Again there is no located source saying these regiments were in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

⁴⁷ The official units had twelve month and "duration of the war" terms and/or participated in battle: Regiment of Kentucky Cavalry Volunteers, for 12 months; June 1846 – July 1847. Colonel Humphrey Marshall (former 2nd Lt 1. U.S. Dragoons.); 1st Regiment of Kentucky Volunteers, for 12 months, "Louisville Legion"; May 1846 – May 1847. Colonel Stephen Ormsby; 2nd Regiment of Kentucky Volunteers, for 12 months; June 1846 – June 1847. Colonels: William R. McKee (former 1st Lt. 3rd. U.S. Artillery, killed.); Lt. Colonel Henry Clay, Jr. (former 2nd Lt. 2nd. U.S. Artillery, killed); Major Gary H. Fry (former 2nd Lt, 3rd. U.S. Infantry); 3rd Regiment of Kentucky Volunteers, for the duration; October 1847 – July 1848 [participated in the battle of Buena Vista]. Colonel Manlius V. Thomson¹; 4th Regiment Kentucky Volunteers, for the duration; October 1847 – July 1848. Colonel John S. Williams (late Capt. of Independent Company); Independent Company of Kentucky Volunteers; May 1846 – May 1847. Captain John S. Williams (served with the 6th U.S. Infantry).

⁴⁸ A total of 3,876 volunteers deserted during the war. See Footnote 14 of *Occupying for Peace, The U.S. Army in Mexico, 1846-1848*, by Thomas W. Spahr, [Ohio State University, 2011.] Data from Paul Foos, *A Short, Offhand, Killing Affair: Soldiers and Social Conflict During the Mexican-American War*. [Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002], p. 85; Wool to Butler, Feb 1, 1848, *Wool Papers, Box 60, V34*, NYSL; Wool GO 67, Feb 26, 1848, *Wool Papers, Box 63*, NYSL.

⁴⁹ As of August 25, 1846, 35 soldiers had received discharges from the Louisville Legion and headed home. Another report by Thomas L. Caldwell, Louisville Legion Surgeon, on the same day, states there were 14 men in the hospital, three of which were members of the German national militia were critical. Six soldiers had died of non-combat illness. See *Louisville Daily Courier* of same date. By September, the number of patients at Matamoros, including regulars, volunteers and camp attendants, from all units was about 400. See *Louisville Daily Courier*, September 23, 1846.

⁵⁰ Richard Bruce Winders, *Mr. Polk's Army: The American Military Experience in the Mexican War*, Williams-Ford Texas A&M University Military History Series, Vol. 51, [Texas A&M University Press, 2001], pp. 71-72, ISBN1585441627, 9781585441624

⁵¹ See Benjamin Obituary in *Enid Events* Vol. 20, No. 3. Ed. 1 on November 2, 1911.

⁵² Ancestry. Iowa, *State Census Collection, 1836-1925* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2007. His parents and siblings were in Fabius, Knox, Missouri in 1850. See US Federal Census for 1850. Members of the Keck family, including Walter Cheston Keck, would reside in this area well into the 20th century.

⁵³ Henry Carter (55 years old) states that he is a widower yet Hannah Carter shows up in a subsequent US Federal Census living with Benjamin F. Keck. Carter states he has been in Iowa two years.

⁵⁴ Montrose, established in 1841, is located on the Mississippi River. Other cities relating to Benjamin Franklin in proximity are Keokuk, Nashville (Galland) and Farmington. This area was part of the lands in the Half Breed Tract in Iowa, of 119,000, for the Sac and Foxes who qualified as mixed blood. To local native tribes the area (Black Hawk, Keokuk, Wapello, Appanoose, Patapaho) was called Ah-wi-pe-tuck, meaning "the beginning of the cascades." While initially set out as a reservation in 1824, no rules were establishment about the vesting of title or ability to transfer title to others. In 1834, Congress allowed the sale of the land. Native began to sell the parcels, sometimes multiple times and squatters encroached on the land. Eventually the cloud on the titles of the parcel was resolved by a partition agreement confirmed by the US Supreme Court in 1850. Montrose is situated immediately across from Nauvoo. Many members of the Church of the Latter Day Saints settled into the empty barracks of Fort Des Moines as their homes. Montrose, named after the wild roses in the area, was the head of the Mormon Trail. When the Mormons left Nauvoo and Montrose area, their farms were occupied by Kentuckians and Scandinavians. In 1847, Montrose and Keokuk were connected by a railroad.

⁵⁵ Louisa Carter, Lorena's sister, was married to George C. Swasey on December 15, 1878, stating that she was a resident of Farmington. Hiram S. Carter was married to Mary Goodnight in 1853.

⁵⁶ Two other poems cited by and credited incorrectly authored by Benjamin are noted: one to honor Sherman and his sister, Mary. The one to Sherman are lines from "Two Encampments" by Patterson Leonard McKinnie which were cited by the President as the third toast, "Memory to our Dead", offered at the 19th Reunion of the Society of the Army of the Tennessee. September 15-16, 1886 In Rockville, Illinois, see page 400. Benjamin referenced the quote in February 1891 in Paola, Kansas upon the death of Sherman. Benjamin is shown as being a member of the GAR post in Paola. Patterson Leonard McKinnie, M.D., Rush Medical College, Chicago, 1872, a retired practitioner of Evanston, 111., surgeon during the Civil War, Iowa 2nd Infantry, died at Riverside, Cal., March 3, from heart disease, aged 62. Patterson Leonard McKinnie, *From Tide to Timber-line: Poems and Dialect Verse* [Press of Clinic Publishing Company, 1900] Fourth Edition, p. 50. Original Harvard University; digitized February 23, 2009; Society of the Army of the Tennessee, *Report of the Proceedings of the Reunions of the Society of the Army of the Tennessee, Volumes 17-20, 1893. Original from University of California, digitized on October 7, 2010.*

⁵⁷ See charts above. Federal and state census: Iowa State, 1856; US Federal Census 1860 in Montrose, Lee, Iowa; US Federal Census 1870 in Mariposa, Jasper, Iowa; US Federal Census 1880; Kansas State Census 1885. By the 1900 US Federal Census for Enid, Garfield, Oklahoma, Benjamin lists himself as a "widower".

⁵⁸ See charts above.

⁵⁹ It should be noted that there were several men of the same or similar name and age in the Iowa-Kansas-Missouri area at the time of the Civil War. Some even had children similarly named. This made researching Benjamin challenging and required following out family lines not related to Benjamin. A section is set out below identifying some of these individuals. The confirmation for our Benjamin Franklin is that he subsequently lived in Enid, Oklahoma near some of his children. Our Benjamin was interviewed by newspapers and by those interviews and articles we can also confirm his story.

⁶⁰ If the originally purpose of the formation of this unit to support in Fremont in Missouri had not been changed, then all the Keck brothers would have fought in the same theatre, the Trans-Mississippi. See *Chicago Tribune*, July 27, 1865.

⁶¹ According to a letter presented to the *Meridian Ledger*, Benjamin's promotion was at the recommendation of Captain J.M. Reid to General John A. Rawlins, who describe Benjamin as "distinguished as a soldier, gallantry and good conduct of the battlefield of Shiloh, and was vigilant and energetic." The newspaper reported that the

promotion was to 2nd Lieutenant “; however Benjamin’s service records show no higher rank than corporal. Official records show promoted to Full Corporal on October 25, 1863 after his re-enlistment on October 12, 1863. See Guy E. Logan, contributor, Adjutant General’s Office of Iowa, “Roster and Record of Iowa Soldiers in the War of the Rebellion: 9th-16th regiments, Infantry” *Volume 2 of Roster and Record of Iowa Soldiers in the War of the Rebellion: Together with Historical Sketches of Volunteer Organizations, 1861-1866*, [E.H. English, state printer, 1908], original from Harvard University, digitized on Oct 8, 2008.

⁶² See *Meridian Ledger*, April 18, 1896 for purported letter from Colonel J.M. Reid supporting Benjamin’s promotion to Lieutenant.

⁶³ *Index to Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from the State of Iowa*. Film no. 14, Affiliated Publication No. M541. Also see William Worth Belknap, ed., Loren S. Tyler, compiler, *The History of the Fifteenth Regiment, Iowa Veteran Volunteer Infantry, From October 31, 1862 to August 1865, when disbanded at the end of the War*, [R.B. Ogden & Son, 1887], pp. 104-105, original from Harvard University, digitized September 23, 2008. Also digitizing sponsor Allen County Public Library Genealogy Center, Open Library OL6916797M, Internet Archive historyoffifteen00inbelk, LC Control Number 02013410, OCLC/WorldCat 5728343.

⁶⁴ There were multiple versions of this book published without permission of the author, W. J. Hardee. The copyright version bears the following title and credits to the author: “The Only Copy-Right Edition Rifle and Infantry Tactics Revised and Improved by Brig. Gen. W.J. Hardee, C.S. Army. Fifth Edition.” This version of Hardee’s book was published in Mobile by S.H. Goetzel & Company with additional note “First Year of the Confederacy.” Hardee’s “Rifle and Infantry Tactics” was used by the Union and Confederate armies during the Civil War, with the Union Army modifying some tactics in Hardee by adopting “Casey Infantry Tactics” in August 1862.

⁶⁵ Hardee, Rifle and Infantry Tactics. On page 6, the corporals height played a part in their respective role in battle formation: “8. The formation of a regiment is in two ranks; and each company will be formed into two ranks in the following order: the corporals will be posted in the front rank, and on the right and left of platoons, according to height; the tallest corporal and the tallest man will form the first file, the next tallest man will form the second file, and so on to the last file which will be composed of the shortest corporal and the shortest man.”

⁶⁶ Benjamin reported on two occasions that he was deemed dead in the Civil War. The first time was “twice” and the second time, trice. Official and other reports only substantiate twice. *Enid Events*, Vol. 19, No. 46, Ed. 1, August 31, 1911, page 8.

⁶⁷ See 1895 Kansas State Census (March 1, 1895) where Benjamin is listed as “R.F. Keck” in Olathe, Johnson County. On pages following his name it shows that he served in the Company I of the 15th Regiment Iowa and Andersonville as the prison wherein he was confined. Benjamin was living in a boarding house run by JN Hackett.

⁶⁸ *Quad City Times* (Davenport, Iowa) December 2, 1861.

⁶⁹ Belknap, *History of 15th Iowa*, p 79

⁷⁰ When the Civil War broke out in 1861, Belknap joined the Union Army; a veteran of the Iowa Militia who had attained the rank of captain, he was commissioned as a major in the 15th Iowa Volunteer Infantry. He took part in numerous engagements, including Shiloh and Corinth, served as a regimental, brigade, division, and corps commander, and served in high-level staff positions. In hand-to-hand combat at the Battle of Atlanta, Belknap captured a wounded Confederate commander. By the end of the war, Belknap had been promoted to brigadier general of volunteers, and received a brevet promotion to major general. He was also an elected official from that state before the war.

⁷¹ *Belknap, History of 15th Iowa*, p. 82.

⁷² Note some say 18 were captured. Belknap, *History of 15th Iowa*, p. 336; total captured from regiment 87,

⁷³ Belknap, *History of 15th Iowa*, pp. 77-78.

⁷⁴ Belknap, *History of 15th Iowa*, p. 510.

⁷⁵ The name of the riverboat is disputed. One name offered is *The Gate City*. Colonel H.W. Reid recalled in his report that it was the *Jennie Deans*.

⁷⁶ Belknap, *History of 15th Iowa*, pp. 104-105. It should be noted that one of Benjamin’s brothers, Daniel Webster Keck died at this location on February 18, 1865.

⁷⁷ *Burlington Weekly Hawkeye*, April 5, 1862. Also see above for riverboat’s name.

⁷⁸ *The Morning Democrat* (Davenport, Iowa), April 2, 1862 printing report from Benton Barracks, St. Louis, March 27, 1862.

⁷⁹ Belknap, *History of 15th Iowa*, p. 189. Logan, *Roster and Record*, p. 884.

⁸⁰ Edward S. Cooper, *William Worth Belknap: An American Disgrace*, [Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2003], page 68,

Original from the University of Michigan, Digitized Sep 19, 2008, ISBN 0838639909, 9780838639900. Also a good description of this battle from the soldier's perspective is *The Civil War Diary of Cyrus F. Boyd, Fifteenth Iowa Infantry, 1861-1863* by Lieut. Cyrus F. Boyd, [Pickle Partners Publishing, 2016], ISBN 1787200299, 9781787200296. Lieut. Cyrus F. Boyd was born in Indianola, Iowa in 1837. In October of 1861 he enlisted with Company G of the 15th Iowa Infantry, where he served alongside his friend Dan Embree. On March 1, 1863 Boyd was discharged to accept a commission as 1st Lieutenant in Company B of the 34th Iowa Infantry. He was mustered out of service on November 12, 1864. In 1896, he sent a copy of his wartime diary to his former fellow soldier and friend, Dan Embree. The diary remained in his family's possession until 1951, when it was presented to the State Historical Society of Iowa for preservation.

⁸¹ The US National Park Service (NPS) describes the relationship between the "Hornet's Nest" at Shiloh and the merger of this skirmish location with the establishment of the icon, Sunken Road the result of subsequent publications such as Manning F. Force's *From Fort Henry to Corinth*, [New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906, original copy right 1881], soldiers' reunions, and efforts of David Wilson Reed, the "Father of Shiloh National Military Park. For more information see "*The Annals of Iowa, David Wilson Reed, the Father of Shiloh National Military Park,*" by Timothy B. Smith, Vol 62, No. 3 (Summer), pp. 333-359, State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs. Also NPS website:

<https://www.nps.gov/shil/learn/historyculture/upload/sunken.pdf>.

⁸² Logan, *Roster and Record*, p. 885

⁸³ *The History of 15th Iowa*, pp. 15, 185.

⁸⁴ *The History of 15th Iowa*, p. 162.

⁸⁵ *Burlington Weekly Hawkeye*, April 25, 1862, page 1; also see April 26, 1862, p. 2.

⁸⁶ See "Caught in the Line of Fire" at <https://www.armyheritage.org>.

⁸⁷ U.S. Army Medical Department, Office of Medical History. See Medical Department, United States Army Surgery in World War II, Thoracic surgery, Volume I, Prepared and published under the direction of Lieutenant General Leonard D. Heaton, the Surgeon General, United States Army, Editor in Chief Colonel John Boyd Coates, Jr., MC, USA, Editor for Thoracic Surgery Frank B. Berry, M.D. Associate Editor Elizabeth M. McFetridge, M.A. Office of the Surgeon General. Department of the Army, Washington, D.C., 1963. Chapter 1, Part 1. at pages 5-6. "Of a total of 253,142 wounds recorded in the Civil War, 20,607 (8.1 percent) involved the chest, and 8,715 of these (42.3 percent) were penetrating wounds (5). The overall case fatality rate for chest wounds was 27.8 percent and for penetrating chest wounds 62.6 percent. A number of cases were reported in which complete recovery followed gunshot wounds of both lungs. A number of recoveries were also reported after penetrating gunshot fractures of the sternum, apparently because the causative missiles were of low velocity."

"In 1863, Assistant Surgeon Benjamin Howard recommended to Brig. Gen. William A. Hammond, The Surgeon General, that penetrating wounds of the chest in which suppuration had not occurred should be managed by removal of all foreign bodies; control of bleeding; paring of the edges of the wound; closure by metallic sutures; and the application of an airtight dressing, so that the wound would be hermetically sealed. In this recommendation, the implications of the physiology of chest wounds, their mechanics, and the principles of wound suppuration and wound healing were all overlooked. Because of failure to realize that sealing the wound hermetically was only part of the problem, infection was common, and a high case fatality rate was inevitably associated with this type of treatment."

⁸⁸ Various websites but see <http://civilwar.org>. Per several sources the number of "casualties", meaning those soldiers not able to return to the battlefield due to death, wounds, capture or otherwise, remains uncertain. Most recently, numbers have been generated by comparing the men of certain age range listed on censuses before and after the civil war resulting in a higher figure than previously calculated.

⁸⁹ Robert F. Reilly, MD, "Medical and Surgical Care during the American Civil War, 1861-1865", *Baylor University Medial Proceedings*, 2016 Apr; 29(2) [Baylor Scott & White Health], pp. 138-142. Also at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4790547/>

⁹⁰ Belknap, *History of 15th Iowa*, p. 188. The doctor's participation was not limited to surgery at Shiloh. When Confederate troops advanced on the doctor's location in a ravine while treating the wounded, he ordered a retreat. They came upon an abandoned battery of four cannons, took charge and commenced firing on the Confederate troops for a half an hour until Union troops arrived to re-group and assume the position.

⁹¹ Belknap, *History of 15th Iowa*, p. 182.

⁹² *Davenport Daily Gazette*, April 25, 1862, page 2.

⁹³ Gerald Kennedy, "US Army Hospitals: Keokuk 1862-1865", *The Annals of Iowa*, Vol. 40, Number 2 (Fall 1969), [State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs], pp. 118-136. Also at <http://ir.uiowa.edu/annals-of-iowa/vol40/iss2/4/>

⁹⁴ Closer to the point is the recovery of Sgt. Benjamin Hunter, a colored flag bearer for the 79th Ohio that was also part of Sherman's army and March to the Sea. Hunter fully recovered after being shot through both lungs, set aside by the surgeon due to the nature of his wounds, receiving no treatment for a week and convalescing in a tent with other patients. See Mark L. Brandley *This Astounding Close: the Road to Bennett*, [University of North Carolina Press, 2006], ISBN 0807857017, 9780807857014. Overall a good book on the events of Sherman's March to the Sea.

⁹⁵ Silas Thompson Trowbridge, contributors John S. Haller, Barbara Mason, *Autobiography of Silas Thomas Tollbridge, M.D.*, Shawnee Classics, [SIU Press, 2004], ISBN 0809388596, 9780809388592

⁹⁶ Photo shows The Estes House, 500-512 Main Street in the 1920s.

⁹⁷ William Henry was initially discharged due to a foot injury on April 15 or 23, 1863 depending on which official record is consulted. John Quincy Adams was discharged for a knee condition which the family reported was due to his horse falling down; however the official medical report states that the condition was of unknown cause and had been present over 18 months. Most importantly the doctor opined that John "should have never been in the service." These two brothers as well as Leonidas Keck served in Company B, 3rd Regiment of the Missouri Cavalry together at some point in time, however William Henry and Leonidas served in other companies and regiments before the war ended. Both are listed as serving in Company L of the 11th Regiment SM Cavalry and William Henry, also with the Company A, Berry's Cavalry Battalion, Missouri Volunteers under the name "William Kick."

⁹⁸ United States Civil War and Later Pension Index, 1861-1917, National Archives and Records Administration, Publication Number T289, Publication Title "Organization Index to Pension Files of Veterans Who Served Between 1861 and 1900" Film Number 2064668, Image Number 1319.jp2

⁹⁹ Western Historical Company, *History of Van Buren County, Iowa*, [Western Historical Company, 1878], p. 437, original New York Public Library, digitized January 24, 2008. Also as of June 1863 Benjamin is shown on the US, Civil Draft Registry Records, 1863-1865, in Lee County, as "Wounded Soldier 15th Iowa, discharged." [Also states he was born in Kentucky]. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA); Washington, D.C.; *Consolidated Lists of Civil War Draft Registration Records (Provost Marshal General's Bureau; Consolidated Enrollment Lists, 1863-1865)*; Record Group: 110, *Records of the Provost Marshal General's Bureau (Civil War)*; Collection Name: *Consolidated Enrollment Lists, 1863-1865 (Civil War Union Draft Records)*; NAI: 4213514; Archive Volume Number: 3 of 3. Also Logan, *Roster and Record*.

¹⁰⁰ *Meridian Ledger*, April 18, 1896.

¹⁰¹ Belknap, *History of 15th Iowa*, p. 268.

¹⁰² Belknap, *History of 15th Iowa*, pp. 272-278

¹⁰³ Logan, *Roster and Record*

¹⁰⁴ Logan, *Roster and Record*, p. 890

¹⁰⁵ Logan, *Roster and Record*, p. 411.

¹⁰⁶ Belknap, *History of 15th Iowa*, p. 310. The Captain, SS Matson, and chief officers of the *Die Vernon* complimented the recruits on their "orderly and gentlemanly manner" conduct on the respective ships during their transport from St. Louis.

¹⁰⁷ Belknap, *History of 15th Iowa*, 93 and 311.

¹⁰⁸ Setting out a quote from Sherman report at page 150, Herman Mississippi Campaign by Buck T. Foster, University of Alabama Press, 2006, ISBN 0817315195, 9780817315191.

¹⁰⁹ *Belknap, History of 15th Iowa*, p. 269. Sherman did not succeed, however, in his original plan of taking Meridian and then driving further into Confederate held territory of Selma and Mobile, Alabama. His plan was thwarted by the efforts of Confederate Major General Nathan Bedford Forrest who prevented the joining of Brigadier General William Sooy Smith cavalry force of 7,000 men with that of Sherman's 20,000 men at Meridian.

¹¹⁰ *Belknap, History of 15th Iowa*, p. 271.

¹¹¹ *Belknap, History of 15th Iowa*, pp 92-94

¹¹² The painting by Kurz and Allison (1888) does not accurately portray the killing of General James Birdseye McPherson who was killed on July 22nd during the battle. Notified by Lieutenant Colonel William Strong that the Union line might be breached at the gap in the Union line between the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Corp, McPherson went to inspect the line. He was confronted by Confederate troops, who demanded his surrender to which he responded by tipping his hat and turning his back to ride away. He was shot in the back, falling to the ground. Stories vary as to whether he died instantly as the bullet passed through his lungs near his heart or languished on the battle field. There are stories of a member of the 15th Iowa Regiment holding the General as he died.

¹¹³ The Union Armies were named after rivers (e.g Potomac, Tennessee, Mississippi) thus "the" preceding the river is required. Also not to be confused with the Confederate army, "Army of Tennessee."

¹¹⁴ *Belknap, History of 15th Iowa*, p. 94; at p. 336 states 10 wounded and 18 captured.

¹¹⁵ *War of the Rebellion Official Records*, Series 1, Vol. 38, pp. 605-607, inclusive. Prisoners

¹¹⁶ Renamed "Leggett Hill" in honor of Brig. General Mortimer D. Leggett. Bald Hill is part of a ridge along which Moreland Avenue runs. The "hill" portion of the ridge runs north of I-20 and a few feet east of the present-day road. It was leveled off in the 1960s and battle site succumbed to urban progress by becoming the intersection of Moreland Avenue and I-20 interchange.

¹¹⁷ *Belknap, History of 15th Iowa*, p. 335

¹¹⁸ Original data: Andersonville, Georgia. *Andersonville Prisoner of War Database*. Andersonville, GA, USA: National Park Service, Andersonville National Historic Site.

¹¹⁹ Gary Ecelbarger, *The Day Dixie Died: The Battle of Atlanta* [Macmillan, 2010], pp. 42-43, ISBN 1429945753, 9781429945752; *Belknap, History of 15th Iowa*, p. 329

¹²⁰ *Belknap, History of 15th Iowa*, p. 327.

¹²¹ CNN website: https://history.army.mil/news/2014/140709a_atlanta.html

¹²² For map and details of troop placement and movements see generally *Belknap, History of 15th Iowa* and more specifically at pages 340-343 as reported by William Hall, Colonel of the 11th Iowa Volunteer Infantry, Commander Brigade. Additional accounts are provided by different participants. See

https://history.army.mil/news/2014/140709a_atlanta.html for good summary of the events and part played in the Confederate and Union strategies.

¹²³ *Military Essays and Recollections: Papers Read Before the Commandery of the State of Illinois, Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States*, Volume 1, *Military Essays and Recollections: Papers Read Before the Commandery of the State of Illinois, Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States*, p. 319, [A.C. McClurg and Company, 1891], original from Ohio State University, digitized Jan 27, 2014.

¹²⁴ Comprised of the 11th, 13th, 15th, and 16th Iowa Regiments, later known as the Crocker Brigade after Marcellus M. Crocker.

¹²⁵ *Belknap, History of 15th Iowa*, pp. 28-29.

¹²⁶ *Belknap, History of 15th Iowa*, p. 352.

¹²⁷ James M. Reid was given credit for capturing seven prisoners during this battle.

¹²⁸ Ronald H. Bailey, *Battles of Atlanta: Sherman Moves East*, p. 112, [Time-Life Books, Alexandria, VA, 1985]

¹²⁹ F.Y. Hedley, *Marching Through Georgia: Pen-pictures of Every-day Life in General Sherman's Army, from the Beginning of the Atlanta Campaign Until the Close of the War*, illustrated by F.L. Stoddard, [R.R. Donnelley & sons, 1887] p. 157, digitized on May 7, 2015

¹³⁰ Hedley, *Marching Through Georgia*, p. 158. Other versions have Belknap personally and solely grabbing Lampley, with varying degree of danger to Belknap in doing so. The variance could be attributed to the need to aggrandize Belknap by his troops or support his superiors who promoted him for his heroic efforts or better first-hand knowledge of the events or the assumption of success by his troops to the Belknap. One report suggests that he also captures "four or five of his [Lampley's] men. See page 85 of "Neighbor's Home Mail: The Ex-soldier's

Reunion and National Campfire,” Issue 2, editor J.W. Neighbor (Lieutenant), 1894, original from Princeton University, digitized January 24, 2009. There is also a report of how “easy” Lampley’s capture was in a report by McCleran and perhaps influenced by Colonel William Hall and John Shane, who though holding higher rank were overlooked.

To gain a perspective on this incident, one must read Lampley’s perspective. “For several hours, the Rebel tide had been crashing around Bald Hill with steady, though intermittent, waves of troops rolling up the western, southern and eastern slopes. At 5:00 P.M. Patrick Cleburne sent in his reserves, including the 45 Alabama Infantry of Lowery’s Brigade. In command of that regiment was Col. Harris Lampley, a thirty-one-year-old merchant and slaveholder from Barbour County. A veteran of all of the Army of Tennessee’s campaigns, Lampley was confident that his men would prevail where so many other had failed – never mind that neither he nor his men had slept in two days. Advancing as part of the brigade’s left wing, the 45th passed through some woods, then some 500 yards away from the enemy lines, the Alabamians picked up their pace. Uneven terrain interspersed by trees prevent Lampley from maintain contact with the brigade’s right wing, but he urged his men forward nonetheless. The regiment routed a company of Yankee skirmishers, then hit a portion of the main Union line defended by a brigade of lowans dug in behind a parapet. With the colonel out front, he and his men came within arm’s reach of the earthworks when hundreds of Yankee muzzles flashed in unison. The 45th Alabama literally crumpled under the volley. It rallied and attached again with similar results. As the regimental color bearer went down in this last charge, Lampley himself reeled from a deep bullet wound to his right shoulder. Delirious from pain and fatigue, the colonel cursed his fallen and retreating men as cowards and then leaped alone onto the parapet. His counterpart on the Union side, Col. William Belknap, grabbed Lampley by the collar, spun him around, and shouted: “Look at your men! They are dead! What are you cursing them for?’ Badly wounded and now a prisoner of war, a crestfallen Lampley spent the next month in a Union field hospital before finally dying on 24 August.” See Ben H. Severance, *Portraits of Conflict: A Photographic History of Alabama in the Civil War*, Vol.10, [University of Arkansas Press 2012], p. 213, ISBN 1557289891, 9781557289896. Read more about this incident and Lampley dying of “broken heart” *Belknap, History of 15th Iowa*, pp 371-371.

¹³¹ Benjamin was listed among the “Killed, Wounded and Missing in the Above Action” report after the battle. *Belknap, History of 15th Iowa*, p. 335. The distinction between killed, wounded and missing is only noted with parenthetical references to “wounded” following the named soldier. Thus Benjamin was considered either “killed” or “missing” per this report.

¹³² Hedley, *Marching Through Georgia*, p. 158. Illustration by Stoddard.

¹³³ See *The War of the Rebellion*: v.1-53 [serial no. 1-111] Formal reports, both Union and Confederate, of the first seizures of United States property in the southern states, and of all military operations in the field, with the correspondence, orders and returns relating specially thereto. 1880-1898. p. 583, [U.S. Government Printing Office, 1891], original from Pennsylvania State University, digitized Jul 6, 2011.

¹³⁴ Hedley, *Marching Through Georgia*, p. 158. The degree of corporal (i.e. “4th” “5th” etc.) is either assigned due to experience and date of enlistment or are “blood stripes” arising from a death of a senior corporal and then reshuffle of designations. At the time of enlistment of Benjamin the following persons were also given status as a corporal with ranking: William W. Williams (2nd), William L. Watson (3rd), Benjamin F. Keck (4th), Isaac N. Hewitt (5th), Joseph Howard (6th), and Hassel Rambo (7th). During the time of the Battle of Atlanta, Company I of the 15th had at least five corporals: John Davenport (killed on the 21st)[4th] and Isaac Marsh Christy (wounded in hand on 22nd *) [3rd], Benjamin F. Keck (captured*) [6th or 5th], Garret W. Colenbrander (captured twice Shiloh (also wounded) and Atlanta) [not stated], Luther B. Thomas (captured*)[7th]. Survivors of the war are those (*) and James W. Carson [possibly 1st] and Daniel W. Johnson [also stated as 7th but no date]. It is logical to assume that the “corporal” assisting Belknap was one of the corporals of Company I.

¹³⁵ King was a Sergeant of Company I at the battle of Shiloh. *Belknap, History of 15th Iowa*, p. 40.

¹³⁶ Further review of Belknap correspondence might prove helpful to determine if actual correspondence between Benjamin and Belknap occurred.

¹³⁷ Ecelbarger, *The Day Dixie Died*. pp. 137-139

¹³⁸ *Belknap, History of 15th Iowa*, p. 346

¹³⁹ Among other reports, “Burton Graphics,” (Burton, Kansas), September 20, 1895, reembraces by General G.F. Wiles.

¹⁴⁰ *Wichita Daily Eagle*, March 16, 1910, p. 2. The reference to Libby prison was an error as that prison was located in Richmond, Virginia. There had been a recommendation not to send the prisoners to Andersonville but it was the nearest prison available and prisoners were sent on July 28, 1864. The *Daily Gate City* at http://www.mississippivalleypublishing.com/daily_gate/news/battle-of-atlanta-turning-point/article_c739cad6-4c4e-5ced-b4cc-b84911c1f1ce.html reports that the captured men of the Iowa 16th Infantry were taken to Macon where the enlisted men and officers were separated and the enlisted men sent on to Andersonville. Benjamin, however, and the 15th did experience firsthand the horrors of prisons as they were part of Sherman's troops which on December 3, 1864 arrived at Millen Georgia discovering a Union prison of war camp. *Harper's Weekly* and other newspapers provided pictures of the starved Union prisoners and terrible conditions of the camp. The dead had remained unburied and 700 graves were found. *Harper's Pictorial History of the Rebellion*, New York, 1866, p. 687.

¹⁴¹ *Belknap, History of 15th Iowa*, p. 28.

¹⁴² *Belknap, History of 15th Iowa*, p. 116.

¹⁴³ See "Report of the Proceedings of the Society of the Army of the Tennessee at the ... Meeting[s] ...", Volumes 14-16" by The Society., 1885, pp. 272-273, original from the University of Michigan, digitized Feb 20, 2008

¹⁴⁴ Ancestry.com. *Andersonville Prisoners of War* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 1999. Original data: Andersonville, Georgia. *Andersonville Prisoner of War Database*. Andersonville, GA, USA: National Park Service, Andersonville National Historic Site.

¹⁴⁵ *Belknap, History of 15th Iowa*, p. 94.

¹⁴⁶ *Belknap, History of 15th Iowa*, p. 396

¹⁴⁷ Note written by Robert Knox Sneden concerning prisoner exchange negotiations between Generals William T. Sherman and John B. Hood in September 1864. Also, includes a table regarding the causes of death of Union prisoners at Andersonville Prison. Sneden was a Union mapmaker and prisoner at Andersonville. He painted several paintings of Andersonville.

¹⁴⁸ *Belknap, History of 15th Iowa*, p. 404. Note discrepancy from earlier report that there were 87 prisoners.

¹⁴⁹ "Meridian Ledger," April 18, 1896

¹⁵⁰ US Civil War Records, 1861-1865 on Ancestry.com. Search under "Keck"; however records show "Reck" under "R."

¹⁵¹ *Belknap, History of 15th Iowa*, p. 94

¹⁵² *Belknap, History of 15th Iowa*, p. 404

¹⁵³ Willis Fletcher Johnson, *Life of Wm. Tecumseh Sherman*, [Edgewood Publishing Company, Philadelphia, 1891] pages 349-350, digital sponsor: Sloan Foundation .

¹⁵⁴ Johnson, *Life of Wm. T. Sherman*, p. 355

¹⁵⁵ Sources: *Official Records*, Series 1, Vol. 39, Part 2, p 414-422; Series 2, Vol. 7, p82. The confederate forces reoccupied the city in December with residents returning in and around that time.

¹⁵⁶ During the occupation, George N. Barnard, official photographer of the Chief Engineer's Office, made the best documentary record of the war in the West; but much of what he photographed was destroyed in the fire that spread from the military facilities blown up at Sherman's departure on November 15. Photo shows refugees standing to right prior to destruction of depot. Library of Congress

¹⁵⁷ According to General Grant's recollection, the March to the Sea was Sherman's response to Grant's plans to transport the Army of the Tennessee to the James River by water. The anticipated delay in arranging the transport motivated Sherman to suggest that the army move on foot. *Belknap, History of 15th Iowa*, p. 463. Also see *The Miami Republican*, February 20, 1891 which states that Benjamin was one of the soldiers from Iowa who participated in such march.

¹⁵⁸ *Belknap, History of 15th Iowa*, p. 95.

¹⁵⁹ Sherman's official report on the Campaign of the Carolinas and reported on pages 336- 349, with reference to the 17th Corp on page 341, in Citation Journal Entry XI, December 21, 1864. George Ward Nichols, *The Story of the Great March. From the diary of a staff officer*, [New York, Harper & Brothers Collection ,1865; republished Apple Books, 2008], pp. 169, 342, original New York Library, digitized MSN, ISBN 1429015292, 9781429015295

¹⁶⁰ Nichols, *Story of the Great March*

¹⁶¹ Nichols, *Story of the Great March* p. 160

¹⁶¹ Nichols, *Story of the Great March*

¹⁶² Dr. Daniel Trezevant, *The Burning of Columbia, S.C.* Dr. Daniel Trezevant is an ancestor of this author's husband.

¹⁶³ *Belknap, History of 15th Iowa*, p. 459

¹⁶⁴ *Belknap, History of 15th Iowa*, pp. 521-522

¹⁶⁵ Per reflections of George D. Orner tribute to Benjamin as published in "Event Events," Vol. 20, No. 5, Ed. 1, Thursday, November 16, 1911. Orner was a civil war veteran, member of the Medicine Lodge Post, prominent in Oklahoma and Kansas politics. He held the positions of district judge, government land inspector, and register of the land records in Woodward, Oklahoma. It does not appear that Orner who was with the 33rd Regiment Indiana Infantry and Benjamin fought on the same battlefield but both were present during the Siege of Atlanta. In the Grand Review in DC, the 33rd Regiment was part of the 15th Corp that preceded the 17th in which Benjamin's company was a part. Orner died January 27, 1915.

¹⁶⁶ See generally *Belknap, History of 15th Iowa*.

¹⁶⁷ Mark L. Bradley, *This Astounding Close: The Road to Bennett Place*, [University of North Carolina Press, 2006], ISBN 0807877069, 9780807877067

¹⁶⁸ Name given to a forager in Sherman's army then generally applied to troops. Origins are obscure but common among army terminology by 1864. Defined and glamourized in various pro-northern newspapers at the time. Possibly derived from the German *Bummler*, meaning "idler" or "wastrel." See *Daily Ohio Statesman*, September 3, 1864, as to use of term meaning "loafer." Also *Woodstock Sentinel* (Woodstock, Illinois), June 7, 1865, as to application to Sherman's Bummers. Applied early in the campaign to the men "...generally lagged behind in camps until commands got started on the road..." Less glamorous and favorable descriptions and illustrations also were published during the war and afterwards. The engraving by J.E. Taylor. Repository Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA, Digital Id: cph 3b34794 //hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/cph.3b34794, LOC No: 99614126.

¹⁶⁹ Bradley, *This Astounding Closure: the Road to Bennett Closure*," pp. 29-20, 254. Overall a good book providing details to the March to the Sea from soldier's perspective. Also Joseph Wheeland, *The Last Full Measure: the Final Days of the Civil War*, [Da Capo Press, 2015],pp.129-140, ISBN 0306823608, 9780306823602

¹⁷⁰ *Belknap, History of 15th Iowa*, pp. 488-489

¹⁷¹ *New York Times*, May 25, 1865

¹⁷² Henry Edwin Tremain, *Last Hours of Sheridan's Cavalry: A Reprint of War Memoranda*, [Bonnell, Silver & Bowers, 1904], original from the New York Public Library, digitized January 7, 2008

¹⁷³ Frank Moody Mills, *Early Days in College Town*, [Sessions Printing Company, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, 1924], p. 61, digitized 2016 by Internet Archive.

¹⁷⁴ Mills, *Early Days in College Town*, p. 491

¹⁷⁵ *Belknap, History of 15th Iowa*, pp. 488-489

¹⁷⁶ *Belknap, History of 15th Iowa* p. 494

¹⁷⁷ Details of the trip are provided by letters from C. E. F. &C., 15th Iowa Infantry, 3rd Brigade, 4th Division, 17th Army Corps with the assumption being made that Benjamin's experience was similar. See

<https://cyrusferguson.wordpress.com/>

¹⁷⁸ From Library of West Point Military Academy

¹⁷⁹ *Belknap, History of 15th Iowa*, pp. 494-499.

¹⁸⁰ See *The Wheeler Daily Intelligence*, June 13, 1865. The Express belonged to the city. No mention of loss of life but costs of \$35,000 for ship. Further reports in the *Pittsburg Gazette* June 15, 1865 reports that the ship struck Manchester bar or chute 75 miles from Cincinnati. Only one soldier was reported lost. She was with a fleet following in the wake of the Revenue when the accident happened.

¹⁸¹ *Belknap, History of 15th Iowa*, pp. 494-499.

¹⁸² *The Wheeling Daily Intelligence*, June 15 and 20, 1886.

¹⁸³ *Belknap, History of 15th Iowa*, pp. 496-499.

¹⁸⁴ *Wheeler Intelligence* reporting on article in *Journal of Louisville* on June 23, 1865.

¹⁸⁵ Cyrus Ferguson, __

¹⁸⁶ History of Army at http://www.history.army.mil/news/2014/140709a_atlanta.html; also *Roster and Record*, p. 893.

¹⁸⁷ Created by General Order No. 105 War Department on April 28, 1863, this military reserve organization was formed for the purpose of allowing partially disable or invalid soldiers and former soldiers to perform light duties freeing other soldiers for the front lines.

¹⁸⁸ *Morning Democrat*, July 31, 1865

¹⁸⁹ Soldier's Rest opened in January 22, 1864 as a place for soldiers who were sick or those in transit could get a place to eat and sleep. The building was constructed on the edge of Camp David prison camp through the efforts of local women's organization.

¹⁹⁰ History of Chicago, Illinois, Vol. 1, by John Moses and Joseph Kirkland, Munsell & Company, 1895, page 197, original University of Minnesota, digitized July 29, 2010.

¹⁹¹ Belknap, *History of 15th Iowa*, pp. 510-511.

¹⁹² *Morning Democrat* (Davenport, Iowa), July 29th. See earlier editions on the arrivals of the 16th, 6th and 13th.

¹⁹³ Belknap, *History of 15th Iowa*, p. 499.

¹⁹⁴ Chicago Tribune July 27 and 28, 1865

¹⁹⁵ Supra Fergusen.

¹⁹⁶ *Quad City Times* (Davenport, Iowa), August 2, 1865. August 28, 1865. August 18, 1865.

¹⁹⁷ Page 316 of David Conyngham, *Sherman's March Through the South: With Sketches and Incidents of the Campaign*, reprint, [Applewood Books, 2001] p. 316, ISBN 1429015152, 9781429015158; also William R. Trotter, *General Kilpatrick Surprised" of Silk Flags and Cold Steel, Volume 1 of Civil War in North Carolina*, [John F. Blair, 1988], ISBN 0895875500, 780895875501

¹⁹⁸ *The Daily Empire* (Dayton, Ohio) July 1, 1865. *Richmond Weekly Palladium*, July 5, 1865. Also see: *Evening Star*, June 20, 1865 reported 250 wagons driven by "darkies" with anticipation of 1000 more. Not all were from Sherman's army. *The Spirt of Democracy*, June 21, 1865 counted 300 wagons going to Louisville, Kentucky. *Janesville Weekly Gazette*, reported 12,000 teams, 100,000 mules with wagon train being 30 miles but traveling in three to four mile sections. Also see *The Atchison Daily Free Press*, June 29, 1865. *Quad-City News* reports that the 500 wagons and 3000 mules, part of the Sherman wagon train, was camped at New Albany, Indiana on August 3rd. And that the destination was Texas and Fort Laramie. *Evansdale Daily Journal*, Vol 17, August 14, 1865 reported an assault by a teamster. *The Times-Picayune*, August 24, 1865 reported that upon reaching New Albany, the teamsters were muster out and transported back to Washington, D.C.

¹⁹⁹ Captain Edwards was from Council Bluffs, Iowa, enlisted November 11, 1861 as private, commissioned on March 3, 1863. Belknap, *History of 15th Iowa*, p. 619

²⁰⁰ *Quad-City Times*, August 2, 1865.

²⁰¹ The painting of the paymaster is a supplementary image for Union Muster Roll, Company C of the 32nd Ohio Volunteer Regiment taken from *The Soldier in Our Civil War: a Pictorial History of the Conflict, 1861-1865*, edited by Paul F. Mottelay and T. Campbell-Copeland (1886). Located on website of the Loyola Marymount University and Loyola Law School, Archive and Special Collections Gallery Exhibit on the Civil War.

²⁰² Belknap, *History of 15th Iowa*, p. 96

²⁰³ There are several siblings named in various census for which documented deaths have not been found: James K (born 1844); Charles (born 1846); Samuel Lynn (born 1833). Benjamin commented that his father had nine boys all of whom participated in fighting in the Civil War. To accommodate this statement three additional boys would have had to live to that time. Two boys died before their fifth birthday: Joseph Keck (1828-1829) and George Keck (1839-1833). As such further research is needed on the three Keck boys listed above.

²⁰⁴ Demoss Keck died on November 12, 1901.

²⁰⁵ The actual name and circumstances of his father in law is not resolved. For example: there is a "Henry T. Carter," who died in 1844, married to a "Hannah Davis." Her maiden name most probably "Davis" as her brother Howell Davis from Delnost, Colorado visited her around February 1, 1897. See *Edwardsville Intelligence* of same date. See *Alton Telegraph*, December 8, 1848. She continued to live in Madison, Illinois until her death there in February 16, 1897. They married on June 6, 1833 in Madison, Illinois. See *Edwardsville Intelligencer*, March 2, 1897. Henry, father of Lorena, was alive in 1856 with Benjamin's family in Lee County, Iowa according to the Iowa Census. Likewise Henry says he is a widower but his wife, Hannah, is found with the Keck family in 1860 in Montrose, Lee, Iowa, and subsequently in March 1875 with Hannah and Henry's daughter, Louisa and her husband George C. Swasey, in Vernon, Cowley, Kansas. In 1850, Hannah is found with her children in Otter Creek, Vigo, Illinois. There is also a "William Henry Carter" but with little connection to the other family members. There is a

Carter family that lived in Davis County, noted to be among the first settlers of the area. Further research is needed.

²⁰⁶ *Enid Events*, Vol. 17, No. 13, Ed. 1 on January 14, 1909 and Vol. 20, No. 3. Ed. 1 on November 2, 1911

²⁰⁷ It is possible that Benjamin could have secured land under the bounty of 60 acres or money equivalent to six month volunteers in the Mexican American War. Richard Bruce Winder, *supra*.

²⁰⁸ By patent dated October 15, 1875 of 91.03 acres. Information from Bureau of Land Management, General Land Office: Accession No. KS3700-.186. Kansas, issue date 10/15/1875, filed in land office Wichita, by authority April 24, 1820: Sale-Cash Entry (3 Stat. 566), Document No. 6790, 91.30 total acres, Lot/Tracts 6 and 7 and the NE/4Sw/4 of Section 6, Twp 33E Range 3E, Cowley County, Kansas.

²⁰⁹ Donald L. Winters "Tenancy as an Economic Institution: The Growth and Distribution of Agricultural Tenancy in Iowa, 1850-1900", *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 37, No. 2 (Jun., 1977), pp. 382-408 [Cambridge University Press on behalf of the **Economic History Association**] <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2118763>

²¹⁰ *Quad City Times*, September 11, 1867.

²¹¹ *The Morning Democrat*, June 18, 1867 reports that unimproved farms went for \$5 to \$15 per acre; improved farms \$15 and up.

²¹² *Quad City Times*, November 22, 1865

²¹³ Elridge and Brothers were land agent promoting sale of land in Jasper County such as follows: "... today completed sale of 240 acres of fine prairie land in Jasper County, seven miles north of Newton, belonging to Thos. Crew, at \$10 per acre. Jasper County is looking up in the land market. There can be no doubt that the county contains some of the best land in the State. *Quad City Times*, September 25, 1867. A representative sale of a farm in Jasper County is that to James McCullen in 1868 of 160 acres for \$1600. See *Quad City Times*, October 16, 1868. J.B. Everly 80 acres for \$400 in *Quad City Times*, February 26, 1868. Trade of Jasper land for house in town, *The Morning Democrat*, February 6, 1868. Also December 28, 1867, 1000 acres in Jasper "for a few days" at \$2.00 per acre.

²¹⁴ Winters, "Tenancy as Economic Institution"

²¹⁵ The connection to this family is not fully researched; however, an Abraham Spoons acquired Lot 8 next to Benjamin's property in Beaver, Cowley, Kansas. Abraham Spoons homesteaded several parcels in Kansas in Sumner as well as in Cowley counties. He also was born in Tennessee and as suggest a different line than William S. Spooner. As such the proximity of a similarly named person is incidental. Other research confirms that there was no marriages between Spooners, Spoons and Kecks.

²¹⁶ Kansas State Historical Society; Topeka, Kansas; 1875 Kansas Territory Census; Roll: ks1875_5; Line: 26.

Available on Ancestry.

²¹⁷ The step-daughter of Louisa E Carter and her husband George C. Swasey moved to Mosier, Wasco, Oregon after a brief time in Colorado. Mary and Leander (Lee) Evans became prominent members of that city. Louisa is also found in Orego, winning a lawsuit regarding a homestead and dying after her step daughter in the area. However, I have been unable to find her gravesite.

²¹⁸ George C. Swasey's parents were Hemeneal Morrill Swasey (11/4/1803-8/15/1861) and Eliza Boree (1800-1864), the latter noted to have been raised and educated by the Fairbanks. Hemeneal's father was Joseph (6/7/1774- 8/25/1837). Benjamin Franklin Swasey, *Genealogy of the Swasey Family: Which Includes the Descendants of the Swezey Families of Southhold, Long Island, New York and the Descendants of the Swayze Families of Roxbury, Now Chester, New Jersey*, [Private printer for A. Swasey, 1910]. original from the University of Wisconsin – Madison, digitized on Jan 17, 2008. Also Western Historical Society, *The History of Van Buren County, Iowa*.

²¹⁹ *Walnut Valley Times*, No. 40, *The Osage Lands*, December 2, 1879

²²⁰ Bureau of Land Management, General Land Office at <https://glorerecords.blm.gov>

²²¹ Cowley County, formerly part of Hunter County, was established in 1867. Initially, Cowley County covered the Diminished Osage Reserve ("thirty mile strip") and an additional three mile wide strip that was formerly a pathway reserved to the Cherokees for their hunting trips to their more western possession.

²²² *Arkansas City Weekly Traveler*, September 22, 1876.

²²³ *Arkansas City Weekly Traveler*, May 10, 1876.

²²⁴ One of Benjamin's sons had settled in the area of Paul's Valley, Garvin, Oklahoma. In 1901 "J.T. Keck of Enid" and "a brother from Paul's Valley" were in Norman, Oklahoma. Due to the date of such visit, December 13, 1901, the two brothers may have been visiting Norman due to the recent death on November 12, 1901 of their brother, DeMoss Keck. DeMoss had been transferred from a mental facility in Illinois to the mental hospital in Norman, Oklahoma in 1897. Unlike others who died in the facility, DeMoss has a headstone which raises the question if these two brothers made such arrangements while in Norman. His burial site is in Section 20-R-14-11 in the IOOF Cemetery in Norman. Those persons buried in close proximity to DeMoss appear to have no connection [Josephine L. Swank (1902-1903) on SO2-R-14-10; Hiram Carl Swift (7/14/1877-10/3/1903 on SO2-R14-12)]. It should be noted that neither of these burial site have as significant headstone as DeMoss. The article mentions that they knew "J.C. Wails" or Jesse C Wails from being old Kansas neighbors. The Wails and Kecks both lived in Beaver, Hickory, Kansas in 1885 which matches the references that they had not seen each other for 16 years. Not sure which Keck brother this might be. The census records and newspapers do not show a Keck in Paul's Valley around this time. There is a John C. Keck son of John A. Keck as well as a John H. Keck but none match up so far. *The Peoples Voice* (Norman, Okla.), Vol. 10, No. 21, Ed. 1 Friday, December 13, 1901.

²²⁵ 1885, the NE/4 of the SW/4

²²⁶ George is referred in this census as "George W." In latter references he is referred to as "George S." These references include his marriage license and deed to his property in Garfield County, Oklahoma.

²²⁷ Document No. 15869 for the SE/4 of the SE/4 of Section 8 and the S/2 of the SW/4 of Section 9, Township 28S, Range 7E of 6th Meriden. See GLO records.

²²⁸ *Historical Atlas of Butler County, Kansas, 1885*, available at <http://www.kansasmemory.org>

²²⁹ See *Eldorado Republican* August 26, 1880; *Walnut Valley Time*, August 4, 1882. Originally published in *El Dorado* on August 2, 1882.

²³⁰ Affiliate Publication Title Veterans Administration Pension Payment Cards, 1907-1933 Affiliate Publication Number M850 GS Film Number 001635253 Digital Folder Number 004693462 Image Number 00032. Also *The Oathe Mirror*, Feb. 16 1888, confirms receipt of pension.

²³¹ *Daily Non-pareil* (Counsel Bluff), October 27

²³² *Neodesha Register* dated February 10, 1888. Note there was an earlier notification regarding a "Benjamin F. Keck of Keokuk" receiving a pension on October 25, 1897.

²³³ *Marion County Herald* of same date.

²³⁴ September 16, 1887, *Marion County Herald*.

²³⁵ Granting of pension notice in the *Marion County Herald*, dated September 9. 1887. *Winfield Review*, September 2, 1888.

²³⁶ *Miami Republican*, February 20, 1891. Benjamin was a member of the GAR McCaslin Post in Paola, Miami, Kansas. He is also listed as having uncollected letters in Paola on June 2, 1893.

²³⁷ *The Allen County Herald*, November 19, 1891. Was the marriage of Benjamin Franklin Keck to Marietta Croft.

²³⁸ Kansas State Census as "R.F. Keck"

²³⁹ *Meriden Ledger*, April 18, 1896.

²⁴⁰ *Meriden Ledger*, April 18, 1896.

²⁴¹ *Meriden Ledger*, May 8 and 9, 1896 after a stay of six weeks in Meriden. Benjamin claims that he is on his way to Kansas City and then his home of Winfield with the plan to return to Meriden in two weeks. But it appears he may have made a detour as he took out a license to marry in Fort Scott on May 21, 1896 to Mary Meeks. See *Fort Scott Daily Monitor* of same date.

²⁴² *Meriden Ledger* September 12, 1896

²⁴³ *Meriden Tribune*, January 9, 1897 for birthday celebration of "Grandda Pebbler" at age 86.

²⁴⁴ Serving as juror on trial, see *Meriden Ledger* of March 27, 1889.

²⁴⁵ Another soldier from Company I who was captured at the Battle of Atlanta and imprisoned at Andersonville and moving to Kansas is Samuel Crampton Thomas. Born November 7, 1846 in Iowa and died April 1, 1920 in Mario, Franklin, Nebraska. Lived in Burr Oak, Kansas,

²⁴⁶ *Neodesha Register*, September 8, 1881 and January 25, 1884

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- ²⁴⁷ Ancestry.com. *Kansas, Grand Army of the Republic Post Reports, 1880-1940* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010. This collection was indexed by Ancestry World Archives Project contributors. Original data: *Kansas Grand Army of the Republic Post Reports, 1880-1943*. Topeka, Kansas: Kansas Historical Society. Loose paper, 104 boxes.
- ²⁴⁸ See *Miami Republican*, 20 September 1889.
- ²⁴⁹ *The Miami Republican*, February 20, 1891
- ²⁵⁰ Dated February 23, 1891 and posted in the *Miami Republican* on February 27, 1891, "In Memory of General Sherman".
- ²⁵¹ This poem was offered as part of the toast to "The Memory of the Dead". See earlier endnote (55) regarding McKinnie poem.
- ²⁵² The *Miami Republican* and *Western Spirit* of same date.
- ²⁵³ Marietta's second husband was John Croft with whom she had four daughters. Only one daughter survived until Marietta's death in 1914. In her obituary she makes no mention of her marriage to Benjamin or other men. See *Iola Daily Register and Evening News*, December 12, 1914, "Death of Mrs. Marietta Croft".
- ²⁵⁴ Her home was at 606 N. Chestnut. *Iola Daily Register and Evening News*, August 29, 1913
- ²⁵⁵ Family Search records on marriages in Kansas.
- ²⁵⁶ Marietta filed in the District Court, Case No. 4487, on August 16, 1897. Copies of court record acquired from Allen County District Court. Marietta swore that Benjamin had abandoned her for more than one year prior to the filing (November 8, 1893). On September 8, 1897 she filed a request to publish the summons as Benjamin was not in the state of Kansas. The court approved the request on November 16, 1897 and it was published in the *Iola Register* for three consecutive weeks.
- ²⁵⁷ *The Olathe Mirror*, March 7, 1895. "An Unexpected Summons"
- ²⁵⁸ *Belknap, History of 15th Iowa*. He is also listed on the Pollock Post No. 42 at Post Office Marion. He served with the 15th Company H and 11 Michigan Cavalry. *Kansas, Grand Army of the Republic Post Reports, 1880-1940*. Cover letter is dated March 3, 1888. A Sheriff's Sale in 1892 appears to relate to property he owned in Canada, Kansas. He is buried in Van Buren, Iowa.
- ²⁵⁹ *Meriden Ledger*, April 18, 1896.
- ²⁶⁰ *Meriden Ledger*, April 18, 1896 and May 8 and 9, 1896
- ²⁶¹ *Fort Scott Daily Monitor*, May 21, 1896
- ²⁶² See *Fort Scott Weekly Monitor*, Thursday, July 16 and Saturday, July 18, 1896. Appears Frank Irwin was committed prior to October 26, 1883 to Lincoln facility. See *Inter Ocean*, Friday, October 26, 1883. The facility appears to be the Illinois Asylum for Feeble-minded Children which was constructed in 1877 and occupied in 1878.
- ²⁶³ See US Federal Census for 1900.
- ²⁶⁴ *Post Dispatch* of July 11, 1896 as copied in *St. Louis-Dispatch*, July 12, "A Bigamist in Jail"
- ²⁶⁵ *Fort Scott Daily Monitor*, July 16, 1896. "He is a Marrying Man".
- ²⁶⁶ Marietta filed in the District Court, Case No. 4487, on August 16, 1897. Copies of court record acquired from Allen County District Court. Marietta swore that Benjamin had abandoned her for more than one year prior to the filing (November 8, 1893). On September 8, 1897 she filed a request to publish the summons as Benjamin was not in the state of Kansas. The court approved the request on November 16, 1897 and it was published in the *Iola Register* for three consecutive weeks.
- ²⁶⁷ Benjamin Keck did have a brother named Daniel who died in the civil war leaving only a daughter.
- ²⁶⁸ *Sedalia Democrat*, July 12, 1896
- ²⁶⁹ *Meriden Tribune*, September 12, 1896.
- ²⁷⁰ *Meriden Tribune*, January 9, 1897.
- ²⁷¹ *Meriden Tribune*, March 27, 1897.
- ²⁷² Benjamin's pension payments show commencement of payments in September 8, 1897 and death on October 20, 1911 and reason for disability relating to gun shot in right breast, heart and dysfunction of right ear. See "United States Veterans Administration Pension Payment Cards, 1907-1933," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:2MK1-NTB : 12 December 2014>), Benjamin F Keck, 1907-1933; citing NARA microfilm publication M850 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.); FHL microfilm 1,635,253.

²⁷³ *St. Louis Dispatch*, July 12, 1896 and *Fort Scott Daily Monitor*, May 21, 1896.

²⁷⁴ For example Belknap's ambitions were noted early on by other soldiers. Cyrus E. Ferguson, who was assigned as a musician to Belknap's command, wrote of Belknap: "I do not think Colonel Belknap has treated us anything like right, but he may fall as far short of his ambitions desires as many another have done & I suppose in his good time every thing may come around right, but we may slip from under his hands before that time...." Cyrus's brother Amos was one of those captured during the Siege of Atlanta on July 22nd and died in Andersonville. But later he changes his mind as they advance up the Eastern Coast line on Sherman's March to the Sea: " I have the highest position in the Brigade as musician...[General] Belknap is a great man to stick to...if he suits him & I have given no cause for complaint since I have been detailed as bugler. The 15th has a one horse bugler detailed since I was & I heard Belknap tell the commander of the regt. that he was of no account..."

²⁷⁵ *Enid Events*, Vol. 20, No. 3, Ed.1, Thursday, November 2, 1911

²⁷⁶ George S. Keck received a patent deed dated July 3, 1902, Document No. 2648 for the SE/4 of Section 18 in Township 21N, Range 8W in Garfield County, while his brother, Joseph T. Keck received a patent deed dated June 9, 1902, document number 2431, for the NE/4 of Section 9 of township 22N Range 5W in Garfield County.

²⁷⁷ Joseph T. Keck is shown as being from Hennessey on lists of participants.

²⁷⁸ *Enid Events*, Vol. 28, No. 48, Ed. 1, Thursday, September 29, 1921.

²⁷⁹ Sometimes but incorrectly referred to as the "Cherokee Strip."

²⁸⁰ Bureau of Land Management, General Land Office at <https://glorerecords.blm.gov>

²⁸¹ 1900 US Federal Census

²⁸² *Enid Weekly Wave*, November 29, 1900.

²⁸³ *Enid Events* July 21, 1904. The address is later given as 612 East Cherokee in local directory.

²⁸⁴ *Indian Journal* Eufaula Oklahoma, July 19, 1901

²⁸⁵ Irwin McDowell Oklahoma Historical Society records available at 800 Nazih Zuhdi Drive, Oklahoma City, OK 73105; phone 405-521-2491; email research@okhistory.org; website www.okhistory.org/[Closed Stacks] Call number: E 462.1 .O45 .C69 Grand Army of [the] Republic, Irwin McDowell Post 19 register book [and] Daughters of Union Veterans, Lucretia Garfield Tent 3 application forms / copied and compiled and published by Opal London Cox.

²⁸⁶ *Enid Events*, January 10, 1907.

²⁸⁷ The following is a list of national encampments for which documentation of one kind or another exists. The Library of Congress does not have official guides, souvenir programs, badges, flags, or other types of G.A.R. ephemeral materials. If the name of an encampment is hotlinked, the Library does possess some miscellaneous published materials for that encampment; go to the link to see a listing of those materials. The full text of these materials is not available online. Information concerning specific national encampments can be found in the *Journal of the National Encampment...* (LC call number: E462.1.A17) for the year the encampment was held. There are no official records of membership prior to 1878.

²⁸⁸ *Enid Events*, Vol. 13, No. 50, Ed. 1 Thursday, September 7, 1905. Train leaving the Saturday before publication date.

²⁸⁹ *Enid Events*, Vol. 13, No. 51, Ed. 1 Thursday, September 14, 1905

²⁹⁰ September 9, 1905 in *Enid Events*. Marquis was the son of Judge James who also attended the events.

²⁹¹ *Salida Record* Volume 23, No. 13, August 4, 1905 for description of event.

²⁹² *Enid Events* Vol. 13, No. 35, Ed. 1 Thursday, May 25, 1905

²⁹³ *Enid Events*, Vol. 14, No. 1, Ed. 1 Thursday, September 28, 1905

²⁹⁴ Based upon the birthplace of his son, Roy Freeman Keck, born on February 27, 1903

²⁹⁵ *Enid Event*, Vol. 14, No. 21, February 15, 1906

²⁹⁶ There is a note that “J.F. Keck from Barton County, Kansas” visited his brother, J.T. Keck in Patterson township in 1904. See *The Enid Events*. (Enid, Okla.), Vol. 12, No. 15, Ed. 1 Thursday, January 14, 1904 “J.T.” is used to reference Joseph Tevis Keck as well as “Joe Keck” in the *Enid Events* and also as the son of Benjamin. Thus “J.T.” would be the son of Benjamin also and would be referencing “James F. Keck”. When researched, a James F. Keck was not located in Barton County in and around this year. Another reference was made to “J.F. Keck” was made in to a visit to Enid by J.F. and “Master Harry Keck”, the latter being the son of Joseph Tevis Keck in the *Wave-Democrat* (Enid, Okla), Vol. 1, No. 48, Ed. 1 Sunday, April 11, 1909. This is more likely a typographical error unless “J.F. Keck” was referencing an uncle. James F. Keck died on November 12, 1933 in City County Hospital, Fort Worth, Texas. The death certificate states he was single and a laborer. Also of note is the there is a younger “James F. Keck” in Enid, Garfield, Oklahoma who is the son of George S. Keck.

²⁹⁷ US City Directory Collection, Enid, Oklahoma, 1905-1906, Ancestry.com. Also living with Benjamin at this time is Martin H. or Hubert, who says he is a “trav agt.”

²⁹⁸ See earlier footnote regarding visit with J.T. Keck.

²⁹⁹ *Enid Events*, Vol. 14, No. 44, Ed. 1 Thursday, August 2, 1906 and Vol. 14, No. 49, Ed. 1 Thursday, September 6, 1906

³⁰⁰ Mrs. Harriette Bronson Gunn, *In the Shadow of the Wall* [Christopher Publishing House, 1922]. This appears to be one of her poems. Harriette Bronson Gunn was the wife of W.C. Gunn, a chaplain in prisons in Iowa and did “rescue work” for twenty-five years prior to this and other publications.

³⁰¹ *Wichitan* September 25, 1907

³⁰² For his complete records of service search Fold3

³⁰³ *Wichita Daily Eagle* September 29, 1907

³⁰⁴ Profession is listed on Muster Rolls of Eggleston GAR Post 244, Wichita, Sedgwick, Kansas. Dated December 31, 1894. Ancestry under All Ancestry under All Kansas, Grand Army of the Republic Post Reports, 1880-1940

³⁰⁵ *Garber Sentinel*. (Garber, Okla.), Vol. 8, No. 30, Ed. 1 Thursday, May 16, 1907, “GAR Encampment”

³⁰⁶ *Enid Events*. (Enid, Okla.), Vol. 15, No. 35, Ed. 1 Thursday, May 30, 1907 Page: 1, GAR Encampment Over”

³⁰⁷ *Enid Events*, Vol. 16, No. 49, Ed. 1 Thursday, September 17, 1908

³⁰⁸ *Enid Events*, Vol 17, No. 31, Ed. 1, May 20, 1909

³⁰⁹ *Enid Events*, Vol. 16, No. 42, Ed. 1 Thursday, July 30, 1908

³¹⁰ *The Messenger* (Drummond, Okla.), Vol. 1, No. 44, Ed. 1 Thursday, December 24, 1908

³¹¹ *Enid Events*, Vol. 17, No. 13, Ed. 1 Thursday, January 14, 1909

³¹² *Enid Events*, Vol. 17, No. 47, Ed. 1 Thursday, September 9, 1909. Researching the family tree, there is only one relative currently identified who was living in Chicago at Benjamin’s death. William Henry Keck’s wife, Anna Mae Harr, had a half-sister, Emma Short, living in Chicago. Anna Mae and Emma Short met for the first time around February 11, 1928 but corresponded for many years. Emma was somewhat “famous” as she worked for the Jane Addams, co-founder of the Hull House in Chicago. However Benjamin continued to communicate with his wife’s family and could be relatives from that side.

³¹³ *Enid Daily Eagle*. (Enid, Okla.), Vol. 9, No. 25, Ed. 1 Wednesday, October 13, 1909, “Real Circus in the City” and *Garber Sentinel*. (Garber, Okla.), Vol. 10, No. 52, Ed. 1 Thursday, October 14, 1909, “To the Circus” and various smaller articles throughout edition. Photo: The William Edson Photograph Collection, 1909,], photograph, 1909; The Gateway to Oklahoma History, gateway.okhistory.org; crediting Cherokee Strip Regional Heritage Center. Available at <https://gateway.okhistory.org/ark:/67531/metadc963400/> Photograph 2008.148.035.223

³¹⁴ Benjamin reportedly lived at 612 East Cherokee and 420 East Cherokee in various news articles and directory of city.

³¹⁵ *Enid Events*, Vol. 18, No. 20, Ed. 1 Thursday, March 3, 1910. Ironically, this story appeared on the birthdate of Dorothea Irene Keck, who is the author’s mother, and Benjamin’s grandniece.

³¹⁶ This William Ellery model watch was a gift to Army surgeon G. D. O’Farrell from his patients at White Hall, a Civil War hospital near Philadelphia. At National Museum of American History.

³¹⁷ William Ellery represented Rhode Island as a signer of the United States Declaration of Independence.

³¹⁸ See online articles by <http://americanhistory.si.edu/profile/512>, curator of the *Division of Work and Industry at the National Museum of American History*. Other sources of information are from dealers of antique watches and Civil War historian buffs on the Internet.

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- ³¹⁹ *Enid Events*, Vol. 18, No. 37, Ed. 1, 6/30/1910
- ³²⁰ *Enid Events*, Vol. 19, No. 15, Ed. 1 Thursday, January 26, 1911; also *The Enid Daily Eagle*. (Enid, Okla.), Vol. 9, No. 307, Ed. 1 Friday, January 27, 1911
- ³²¹ *Enid Events*, Vol. 19, No. 46, Ed. 1 Thursday, August 31, 1911
- ³²² *Enid Events*, Vol. 20, No. 3, Ed. 1 Thursday, November 2, 1911
- ³²³ *Enid Events*, Vol. 20, No. 5, Ed. 1 Thursday, November 16, 1911. See endnote 133 for information on Orner.
- ³²⁴ *Enid Events*, Vol. 19, No. 48, Ed. 1 Thursday, September 14, 1911
- ³²⁵ *The Messenger*. (Drummond, Okla.), Vol. 4, No. 1, Ed. 1 Thursday, February 23, 1911
- ³²⁶ To locate on Findagrave.com look under “Corporal Benjamin Keck.”
- ³²⁷ In photo of Benjamin’s headstone, Lourancy’s head stone is visible on right.
- ³²⁸ December 15, 1855 under the Sale-Cash Entry law of April 24, 1820 for 80 acres in Poweshiek County, Iowa [N1/2 SE1/2 of Section 18 of T81N R41W 5th PM]. Accession No. IA2570__ .174. The property is bordered by 320th Avenue to the north and 140th Street to the east. The closest property appears to be 1228-1230 320th Avenue, Malcom, Iowa 50157. The land in Poweshiek was sold on December 4, 1856 to David Ogden and is recorded in Deed Record E, page 624. What may explain the purchase of this land is a “gold rush” in this section of Iowa. Jonas Keck of Keokuk, Iowa, with California experience, is herald has having found gold north of that city. Jonas Keck purchased several parcels in Poweshiek County. There were two other Kecks in the area, Henry and Jonas that do not appear to be related. There is no reference to a “Keck” in Madison’s history which notes its early settlers, most of whom arrived in the late 1840s. For a history of this area see [The History of Poweshiek County, Iowa: Containing a History of County, Its Cities, Towns, &c., ...](#), Publisher Union Historical Company, 1880, Original from University of Chicago, Digitized, Oct 6, 2014.
- ³²⁸ *Belknap, History of 15th Iowa*, p. 599
- ³²⁹ Various articles in *Belle Paine News* found on Newspapers.com.
- ³³⁰ In 1870 Benjamin and his family is living in Mariposa, Jasper County. This county abuts Poweshiek.
- ³³¹ Findagrave
- ³³² *Baltimore Sun*, August 31, 1840 and September 1, 1840, Page 2.