

## ASA DOUGLAS AND BETSY ARTLIP REYNOLDS (1787- 1843)

By Robert N. Reynolds

In the frontier days of our country, families rarely moved anywhere by themselves. The adage, "there is safety in numbers" was true for our Reynolds family and their close relatives. After the War of Independence the family was growing every year and doing it's part to "cultivate and conquer the wilderness." Before the move to the Genesee Valley took place Jeremiah and Elizabeth's growing family included the additional family names of Kennicutt, Willard, Artlip, and Merchant. It could have been more except for the fact that first son Shubal married his cousin Hannah Daggett, second son Levi married his cousin Lorena Reynolds, and the two children, John Hinckley and Esther each married into the Merchant family.

A study of birth and marriage dates allows us to guess that the family move from Rensselaer County to the Glenville area of Schenectady County occurred about 1804. There, Asa Douglas Reynolds, our sixth generation American forebear met and married Betsy Artlip, the daughter of a German father and a Dutch mother and by the year 1810, their little family included four-year-old daughter, Eliza, and two year old son, Levi Hull. Asa appeared in the 1810 census as Arie (sp.) and was living next to the families of his Uncle Mayhew (Jr.) Daggett and his brother Shubal. Asa was 19 and Betsy Artlip 18 when they married 17 June, 1805. Asa would only live to be 48 years old, and Betsy died near the home of her son Asa in Rose, Michigan at age 56. Since no written history was left by them, we can only imagine their lives being characterized by harsh conditions, hard work, and living close to the earth as eleven children came from the union over a period of twenty-five years.

The period of the early 1800's was one of unrest and vigorous religious revival in New Your State. The desire for a better life "out west" stirred the collective emotions of many families of the period, ours included. The father-in-law of Asa's sister Elizabeth described it this way in 1793 when arriving in the Albany area from his previous home in Rhode Island: *"The further we go up the river the more beautiful the country appears while every heart is animated with lively sensations of arriving soon to the promised land."*<sup>1</sup> Initially this desire and animation took hold in two of Jeremiah sons, 38-year-old Levi and younger brother, Asa Douglas, as well as with daughter Elizabeth and her husband John Kennicutt. Between them their households

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<sup>1</sup> See Daniel Kinnicutt letter of June 5, 1793 attached to the Story of Jeremiah and Elizabeth Daggett Reynolds.

numbered over 20 individuals. Sometime during 1817, Levi, Asa and the Kennicutt's gathered their families, packed their wagons once again, and moved further west settling in the vicinity of Avon, New York. Jeremiah and his oldest son Shubal remained in Glenville with their families, at least for a while. Later, Jeremiah would leave for Avon but Shubal lived out his life at Glenville. Family records that have been handed down record the birth of five children to Asa and Betsy while living at Glenville. On 11 October 1815, daughter Sarah Ann was the fifth child in the family born there. By the time of the 1820 census daughter Caroline would be born at Avon, Livingston County, as number sixth child.

The 1820 Census for Avon, Ontario (later Livingston), New York has Levi, Asa, and the John Kennicutt family living close together. Their three households had increased to twenty-eight individuals. Asa's family included two boys less than ten years of age who cannot be identified. They could have been nephews. Sometime after 1820 Jeremiah and Elizabeth also moved to Avon. Jeremiah died there on September 24, 1827 at age 72.

Living conditions at this time in our Nation's history were harsh. The land was being opened up and cultivated for the first time; much clearing was needed to make room for the growing of crops. Housing was crude and unhealthy. Disease was prevalent and the practice of medicine was in its modern infancy. People moved often from place to place seeking their fortunes; education in most cases was nonexistent. The census of 1820 reported those who were involved in agriculture, commerce and manufacturing. The Reynolds family reported agriculture, as did about 90 percent of their neighbors. Our ancestors at this time were as much pioneers in the true sense of the word as those to follow who trekked across the trails and plains of the west.

It is interesting to study the geographic locations of our forebears during the late 1820's. Half of my ancestors were still on foreign soil. Of the other half, the Buchanan line was in Lexington, Kentucky and the other three, the Youngs, Knights, and Reynolds were in New York. Like the Reynolds, members of the Knight and Young families had traveled and lived in different parts of western New York State trying out different means of employment. In 1829, Asa and Betsy Reynolds were in Avon; just 13 miles away, Lorenzo and Persis Young were starting their new family; and a little over 100 miles to the southeast in Broome County, the Knight family was about to make history with it's support of Joseph Smith and creation of the "Colesville Branch." The town of Palmyra was just 27 miles northeast of Avon.

When great-grandfather, Warren Ford Reynolds, was nine years old his home in Avon was only a dozen miles from the home of Brigham Young. When Brigham's first

wife, Miriam Works, died of consumption leaving him two small daughters to care for, he described her dying moments in his journal: "she clapped her hands and praised the Lord, and called upon brother Kimball and all around to praise the Lord."<sup>2</sup> Brigham had been round about the countryside preaching his faith to anyone who would listen. It is possible that Asa and his family heard his voice and that of his new Prophet, Joseph Smith.

### The Asa Douglas Reynolds Family in 1830

In 1830, when the United States government sent census takers throughout the land to capture household data on its citizens, Asa and Betsy's family were living in Livingston County, New York.<sup>3</sup> Thirteen years earlier Asa and Betsy had moved



A typical scene from the area just south and west of Avon where the Reynolds family were known to have lived. Image illustrated by author; not an actual photograph.

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<sup>2</sup> Nelson, Leland R., *The Journal of Brigham*, Council Press, Provo, Utah, p.5.

<sup>3</sup> **Source Citation:** Year: 1830; Census Place: Avon, Livingston, New York; Roll 93; Page: 28.**Source Information:** Ancestry.com. *1830 United States Federal Census* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: The Generations Network, Inc., 2009. Images reproduced by FamilySearch. Original data: Fifth Census of the United States, 1830; (National Archives Microfilm Publication M19, 201 rolls); Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29; National Archives, Washington, D.C. **Description:** This database details those persons enumerated in the 1830 United States Federal Census, the Fifth Census of the United States. In addition, the names of those listed on the population schedule are linked to the actual images of the 1830 Federal Census. Enumerators of the 1830 census were asked to include the following categories in the census: name of head of household, number of free white males and females, number of other free persons, names of slave owners and number of slaves, number of foreigners, and town or district and county of residence.

their family of five children from Glenville in Schenectady County due west one hundred and eighty-eight miles to the promising agricultural and woodlands of western New York State. On an acreage of rented farmland,<sup>4</sup> just east of the Genesee River and a little south of the town of Avon, Asa and Betsy struggled to earn a living for their growing family. Over time Avon developed a considerable milk industry and became known for the breeding of horses. This fact alone is intriguing because the love of horses has carried down to members of our family from great-grandfather Warren Ford Reynolds who was born on the Avon property.

Since moving west to Livingston County five children had been added to Asa and Betsy's household making an even dozen counting mom and dad. When the census taker came knocking all were still at home with the exception of eldest daughter Eliza who, five years before at age nineteen had married Isaiah Butler. Eliza and Isaiah settled down very close by and in five years produced three grandchildren for Asa and Betsy to enjoy.<sup>5</sup> They named their first child Betsy Ann after Eliza's mother. Sadly, Eliza died one year later leaving Isaiah to care for his three children ages 6, 4 and 2.



Similar to photo above, this illustration by the author is based on scenes from the countryside in the area where the Reynolds Family lived in 1830.

To say that hardships were a way of life in 1830 would understate the reality. When the Reynolds' eldest daughter Eliza died at Avon on the 23 of November 1831, Betsy herself was "heavy with child." Her eleventh, Charles Douglas was born the 29<sup>th</sup> of December, 1831, just one month after Eliza's death. Asa and Betsy's large family were a conspicuous presence in the Avon community. Of 27 households listed on their

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<sup>4</sup> Personal correspondence with Robert C. Mahaney, 24 July, 2009 i.e., "The SUNY at Genesee had maps of land rented then and they show where the Reynolds lived. The county historical society had nothing to add and the county records were burned years ago."

<sup>5</sup> The 1830 census lists their family immediately next to that of Asa Douglas.

1830 census sheet, theirs was the largest -- four sons and five daughters varying in age from two year old Maria to twenty-two year old Levi H. Reynolds.

#### After 1835

When Asa died in Avon in 1835, our Reynolds family line had been on American soil for 200 years. Indeed five generations of Reynolds ancestors had been helping to write the story of this young country. From census records we know they were into farming as well as manufacturing. Since the early 1600's when John Reynolds, of Ipswich, took Sarah Chesterfield to wife just before immigrating from England to Watertown, Massachusetts, the Reynolds family line had uprooted four times in a continuous succession of moves, as hopes and dreams of a better life were pursued in the westward expansion of the country. Always, the family had carefully pruned their Christian beliefs and remained active in their church. In Avon, they were members of the Avon Baptist Church. A special section treating this membership follows this chapter of our Reynolds family history. It is especially interesting because Asa D. lost his fellowship in the Avon Baptist Church a few months before his death because of his beliefs in freemasonry.



Five Arch Bridge, Avon, New York. Built in 1856 by the Genesee Valley Railroad to span the Conesus Outlet, in a location just 1.5 miles from the Reynolds home lot 195.

Asa's death at age 48, in the spring of 1835, left six children at home under the age of 16. It was a very difficult time for Betsy. Asa's father, Jeremiah had died in 1827; four years later the family lost their oldest child Eliza in the fall of 1831; one year later in December 1832, Betsy's father died at Springwater, twenty miles south of Avon; her mother also died there in January 1835; her mother-in-law, Elizabeth may also have died since she was known to be very infirm and unable to travel in the fall of 1833; and now her husband, Asa is gone. In the least, the family was broken apart and more vulnerable than it had been for generations. Great-grandfather Warren Ford was eleven at the time of his father's death.

Asa and Betsy's second son Asa married Sarah Lurvey on February 22, 1835 and began teaching school in Monroe County, New York.<sup>6</sup> In the fall of that year, oldest son Levi H. married Irena C. Kenneyson on September 1st in Avon. Asa and Sarah's first child, Mary Eliza arrived on 24 March 1836 and Levi and Irena's first child, Sarah Louise was born three months later in Avon on 19 June 1836.

Asa and Sarah moved to Michigan in October 1836 and Betsy came with her younger children, Esther, Warren, William, Maria and Charles. They lived on farm land on Hickory Ridge Road rented from Captain Able Peck. Later, Asa bought the farm including two 80 acre parcels, one in section 17 and the other in section 18.<sup>7</sup>

The 1840 census of Rose Center, Oakland County, Michigan shows great-grandfather Warren Ford, age 17, living with his mother, Betsy Reynolds. Warren's older brother Asa, was listed next to Betsy's name on the census. Also of note is a David Gage just prior to Asa's name -- obviously a close neighbor. There are some Merrill's also on this sheet. These names play into the story when we visit the sections on both Asa and Warren Ford Reynolds. Also living with his mother, Betsy, were two brothers and one sister. They would have been William, age 14, Maria, age 12, and Charles Douglas, age 9. Nineteen year old Esther married George Whitehouse on October 18, 1840 -- the reason she was not with Betsy's children in the census.

Betsy died at Rose, Oakland, Michigan on 27 September 1843. She was buried at Rose Center Cemetery. A fine gravestone was made possible by her son Asa. Betsy's son Charles Douglas and other members of Asa's family are also buried there. Pictures of the stone memorial are in a section at the end of this report.

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<sup>6</sup>Michigan Biographical Sketches, Volume II, No. 977.4.

<sup>7</sup>A Life Sketch of Asa Reynolds by Robert C. Mahaney, January 1988, Holland, Michigan.





Aerial view of Rose Center Cemetery.

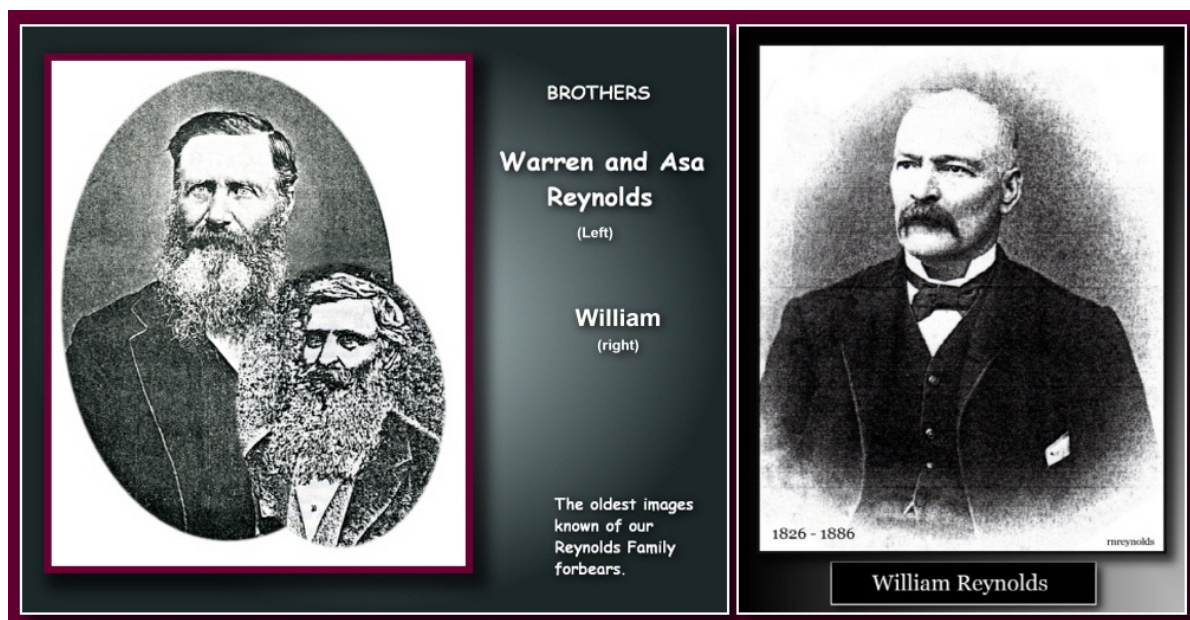
### Scattering of the Family

The years 1836 through 1850 marked a time when the family of Asa D. and Betsy Reynolds relocated to yet another western frontier -- this time to Michigan and points further west. Eliza's widowed husband Isaiah Butler remarried and together with his son Jerome B. Butler established a noted presence in Lapeer County. Eliza's daughter, Louisa Maria married James W. Ogle, a hotel keeper of some renown in Pontiac. Oldest son Levi became a successful miller and raised a family of four children in Saline and Milan, Washtenaw County. Second son, Asa led the way for Betsy and her younger children to Oakland County where Asa became a township supervisor, Justice of the Peace, and Democratic state legislator. Second oldest daughter, Amanda married one of "the Chapel boys," Samuel Blakesley Chapel. They relocated to Grand Blanc, Genesee County, Michigan and there raised a family of nine children. Daughters Sarah Ann and Caroline both died before 1840 and their records are lacking. Daughter Esther married, first George Whitehouse in Rose at age 19, and later in 1855 a successful farmer, Benjamin Graham. She died in Hubbardston, Ionia County in 1902. Youngest daughter, Maria Elizabeth, lived with her older brother Levi until her marriage at age 32 to Horace Parsons. She died and was buried at Saline in 1900. Youngest son, Charles Douglas, married Melvina Hovey in 1851. He fathered two children and died prematurely at age 23 in 1854 at Rose, Michigan.

Great-grandfather, Warren Ford, together with his brother William, two years his junior, left Michigan in January 1846, in a group of 70 individuals with the intention of joining the Mormon exodus to the west. They traveled first to Nauvoo where

Warren Ford and his wife, Edna Merrell, chose to be baptized in the Mississippi River on 1 March 1846, thus joining with other Merrell family members who were already converts of the LDS faith. They then traveled across Iowa, stopping for a time at Garden Grove, to prepare for the westward trek.

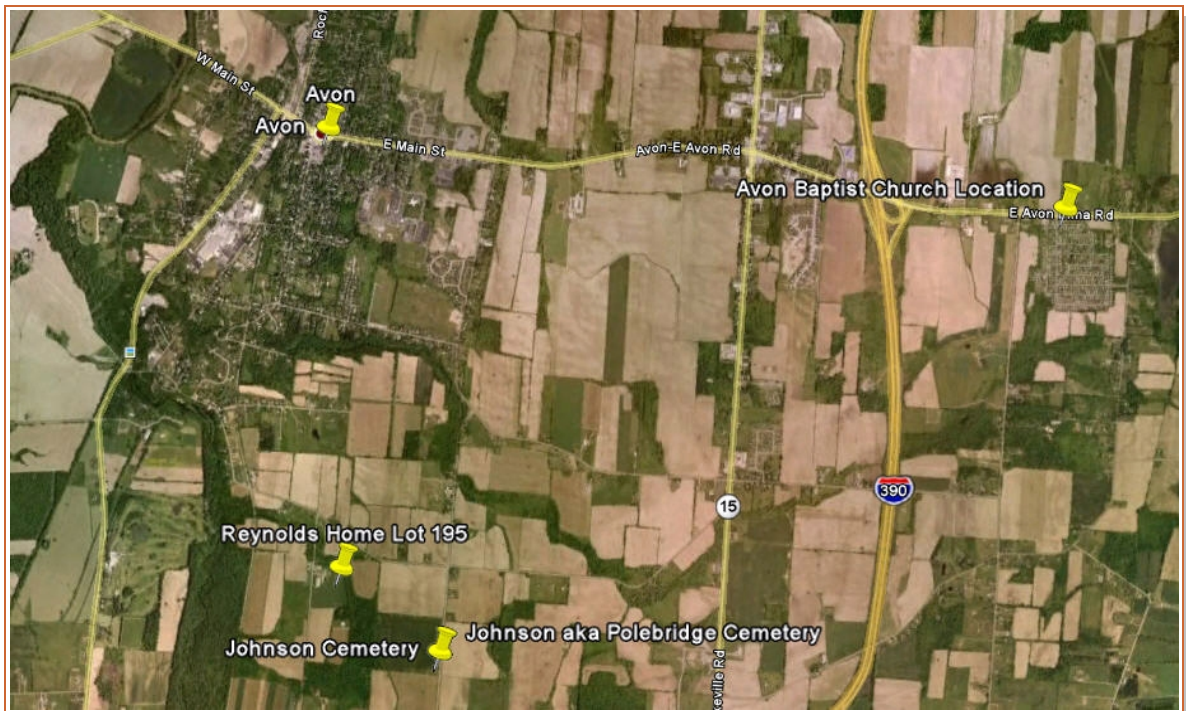
In July 1846, under the authority of U.S. Army Captain James Allen and with the encouragement of Mormon leader Brigham Young, the Mormon Battalion of the "Army of the West" was mustered in at Council Bluffs, Iowa Territory. Among its young Iowa volunteer recruits was 19 year old William Reynolds, who was given the rank of Private and assigned to Company C. William served faithfully as one of only a handful of Mormon Battalion members who were not Mormons. At the conclusion of the march in the late spring of 1847 in Los Angeles, California, General Stephen Kearney chose an escort of 12 to 15 of his best soldiers to return with him to the United States with the objective to reach Fort Leavenworth, Kansas in August of that year. Kearny's purpose was to return Colonel John C. Fremont to the east and to have him tried for his attempted usurpation of the governorship of California, which Kearny held was his alone because of his rank and his orders from President Polk. William was chosen as one of the escorts and acted as a guard for Fremont on the return trip. A separate chapter is reserved for William's story as it is both unique and fascinating. After his military service was ended, William returned to Michigan where he soon married Calista Carver. He raised four children and died at Hubbardston, Michigan in 1886. Without further detail we will leave Warren Ford and his family at Garden Grove, Iowa in 1846 and treat his life further in a later chapter.





## Burying The Dead

During the period 1817 thru 1836 at least six family members died and were buried at Avon. Much effort has been made by individual descendants, especially Dr. Robert C. Mahaney, a descendant of the second son Asa, to locate the place of burial but so far to no avail. Dr. Mahaney believes the burials would have been made at a cemetery of the Avon Baptist Church which was then located in an area east of Avon. Over time the Avon Baptist Church ceased to exist and the location of the old cemetery is unknown, and possibly the site has been desecrated by later construction or land use. Mahaney has personally traveled to Avon and there searched for the site.



A 2010 aerial photo of Avon showing the relative location of Avon, the Reynolds home lot 195, and the estimated location of the old Avon Baptist Church attended by Jeremiah's family.



Photo of Betsy and Asa's memorial by Jerome Reynolds of Vermontville, Michigan, 2009  
Jerome Reynolds is a descendant of the oldest son Levi H. Reynolds.






2010 Photo by Jeremy Reynolds, descendant of Betsy Artlip and Asa D. Reynolds.


# Asa D. and Betsy Artlip Reynolds

Collage 2011 by Robert N. Reynolds



06.28.2009

### Descendants of Asa Douglas Reynolds



ROSE CENTER CEMETERY

06.28.2009

**Eliza Reynolds**  
 b. 1806 Glenville, Schenectady, New York, USA  
 d. 1831 Avon, Livingston, New York, USA  
 bu. 1831, New York, USA

**Levi H. Reynolds**  
 b. 1808 Glenville, Schenectady, New York, USA  
 d. 1885 Milan, Washtenaw, Michigan, USA  
 bu. 1885 Oakwood Cemetery, Michigan, USA

**Asa Reynolds**  
 b. 1810 Glenville, Schenectady, New York, USA  
 d. 1888 Fenton, Genesee, Michigan, USA  
 bu. 1888 Oakwood Cem., Fenton, Genesee, Michigan, USA

**Amanda Reynolds**  
 b. 1812 Glenville, Schenectady, New York, USA  
 d. 1906 Grand Blanc, Genesee, Michigan, USA  
 bu. 1906 South Grand Blanc Cemetery, Genesee, Michigan, USA

**Sarah Ann Reynolds**  
 b. 1815 Avon, Livingston, New York, USA  
 d. 1839

**Caroline Reynolds**  
 b. 1819 Avon, Livingston, New York, USA  
 d. 1837 Pontiac, Oakland, Michigan, USA

**Esther Reynolds**  
 b. 1821 Avon, Livingston, New York, USA  
 d. 1902 Hubbardston, Ionia, Michigan, United States

**Warren Ford Reynolds**  
 b. 1823 Avon, Livingston, New York, USA  
 d. 1900 South Cottonwood, Salt Lake, Utah, USA  
 bu. 1900 Murray City Cemetery, Salt Lake, Utah, USA


**William Reynolds**  
 b. 1826 Avon, Livingston, New York, USA  
 d. 1886 Hubbardston, Ionia, Michigan, USA

**Maria Elizabeth Reynolds**  
 b. 1828 Avon, Livingston, New York, USA  
 d. 1900 Saline, Washtenaw, Michigan, USA  
 bu. 1900 Saline, Washtenaw, Michigan, USA

**Charles Douglas Reynolds**  
 b. 1831 Avon, Livingston, New York, USA  
 d. 1854 Rose, Oakland, Michigan, USA  
 bu. Rose Center Cemetery, Rose, Oakland, Michigan, USA

**Asa Douglas Reynolds**  
 b. 1787 Pittstown, Rensselaer, New York, USA  
 d. 1835 Avon, Livingston, New York, USA  
 bu. 1835 Avon, Livingston, New York, USA

**Betsy Artlip**  
 b. 1788 Glenville, Schenectady, New York, USA  
 c. 1789 Brunswick, Rensselaer, New York, USA  
 m. 1805 Glenville, Schenectady, New York, USA  
 d. 1843 Rose, Oakland, Michigan, USA  
 bu. 1843 Rose Center Cem., Oakland, Michigan, USA



06.28.2009

**Inscription reads:**

BETSY  
WIFE OF ASA D. REYNOLDS  
DIED Sept. 27, 1843

Lived 56 years

CHARLES D.  
THEIR SON  
DIED Jul 14, 1854

Lived 22 Yrs. 6 Mos. & 15 Ds.

Memorial located at Rose Center Cemetery, Oakland, Michigan.

The photos used in this piece were made available by Jeremy Reynolds, descendant of Levi H. Reynolds, son of Asa D. and Betsy Artlip Reynolds.

The End