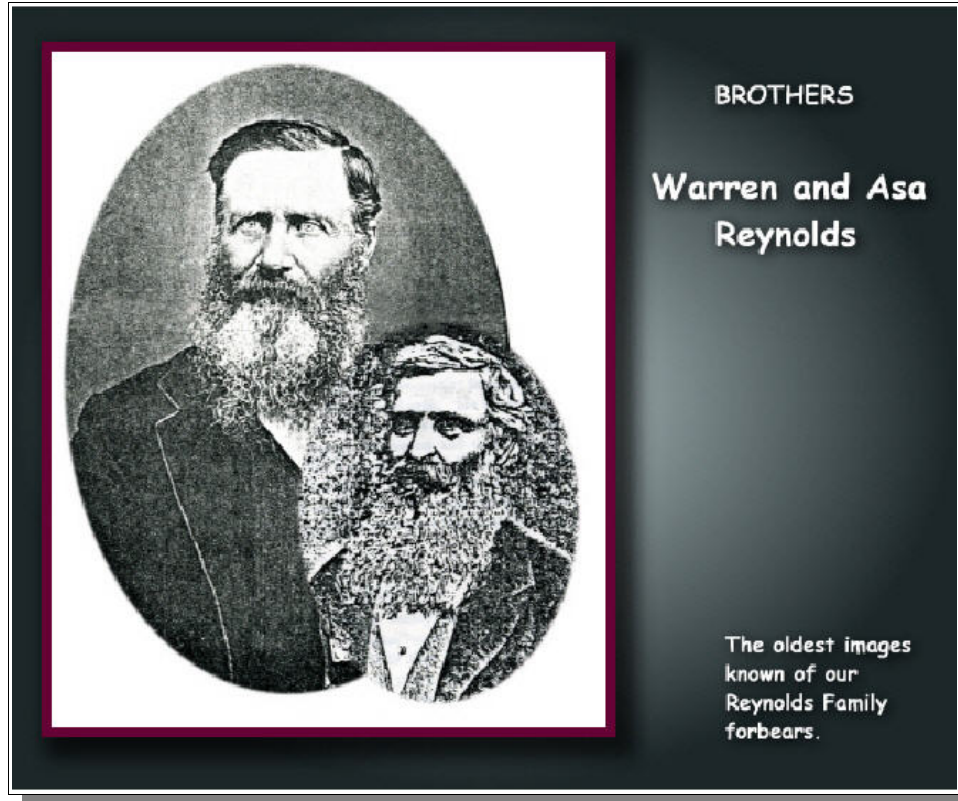


## Leaving New York - Moving to Michigan Scattering of the Family



Collage by author from early day family photos. Warren and Asa were seventh-generation Americans whose grandfather, Jeremiah fought in the Revolutionary War. Asa became a school teacher. A close teacher friend, Abel Lamb, married their neighbor, Almira Merrill. Asa and Warren witnessed Abel and Almira as they were converted to Mormonism by Brigham Young and baptized by the Prophet, Joseph Smith. After reaching Utah, Warren wrote to Asa, back in Michigan and said: "*Asa I Have sean Abil Lam - he lives in this city - you mite supose he wood look verry old but he holds his age vere well - he has been amongst those kind of men which I have ben riting about ho sek to disimbody men & force thare spirets back to God.*"<sup>1</sup>

For over a year after her husbands death, Betsy's focused on her meager resources and contemplated what future options were available to her and the six children still at home. Oldest son Levi Hull was employed in the milling business in Avon and was busy

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<sup>1</sup> See June 1853 letter from Warren to Asa. PDF is linked on Warren Ford Reynolds' main page on this website.

with his new family, as was Amanda and Samuel Chapel. Son Asa with his new young family finished a year of teaching in Rochester and had already set his sights on the prospects of joining the influx of folks caught up with "Michigan Fever" heading for the Michigan frontier. The southern tier of counties there were being touted for their good soils and rich agricultural potential and land opportunities were abundant. <sup>2</sup>

Asa and Sarah Lurvey Reynolds moved to Rose Township, Oakland County, Michigan in October 1836 and Betsy came with her younger children, Sarah (Sally Ann), Esther, Warren, William, Betsy Maria and Charles. They lived on Asa's 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>3</sup>

When the widow Betsy's family arrived in Michigan and took up residence on her son's property with her three young sons and three daughters one can only imagine the typical set of challenges that awaited. The records of what transpired between the late fall of 1836 and 1840 are silent except for the story that filtered down through time that Warren overheard a conversation making him painfully aware that his older brother, thirteen years his senior, was struggling to support both his and his mother's family on his farm income. That Warren sought to help by finding a place to live and work on the neighboring farm of a Mr. Gage speaks volumes for his work ethic and his character.

Were it not for the two 1853-54 letters that we now have that transpired between these two brothers we would be left to ever ponder about such things as the brotherly love and concern we hoped and now know they mutually shared. These epistles tell us many things but nothing more important than the familial regard these two felt toward each other, their parents, their siblings, their close relatives and even their deceased children; and, that it had survived, though thinly, the divergent evolution of their respective theological beliefs and their willingness to share their respective lives.

### The 1840 Census

The 1840 federal census of Rose, Oakland County, Michigan lists the heads of families and, by their relative location on the list, provides evidence of their geographic

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2 Politicians waxed enthusiastic at the prospect and inevitability of statehood. Treaties acquiring lands, the beginning of public-land sales; the start of steam navigation on the Lakes, and the actual opening of the Erie Canal in 1825, all began a new era for Michigan. Between 1830 and 1837 the population soared from 31,000 to 87,000.  
[http://www.geo.msu.edu/geogmich/michigan\\_fever.html](http://www.geo.msu.edu/geogmich/michigan_fever.html)

3 A Life Sketch of Asa Reynolds by Robert C. Mahaney, January 1988, Holland, Michigan. Old land ownership maps show Asa with a 100 acre parcel and an 80 acre parcel.

proximity to each other. Also given are the number of family members by gender and age. With respect to this study there are four families in the Rose township census that relate to our story. Betsy (Betsey) Reynolds is named with three sons and one daughter residing with her. They were Warren, age 17, William, age 14, Betsy Maria, age 12, and Charles D., age 9. Of the six children that came with their mother in 1836 to live at Rose, we know from Asa's family records that Sarah or Sally Ann died on 16 June 1839, and nineteen year old Esther married George Whitehouse on October 18, 1840. These later two are included on the census six households away. Warren's older brother Asa, was listed next to Betsy's name on the census with a household of five individuals (two more than were in his family at the time).<sup>4</sup> Also of note is a David Gage just prior to Asa's name -- obviously a close neighbor who may very well have been the Mr. Gauge of family folklore. Also on the sheet is the six member family of Hosea Merrill, father of Warren's first wife Edna Maria Merrell. The Merrell family were Mormon converts in 1840 and were active in one of several branches of the church that had been established in Oakland County.<sup>5</sup>

By great-grandson Robert N. Reynolds

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4 There were several extended family members moving in and around Michigan during 1840. It was not unusual for any of them to stay for a time with family. Ten years later in 1850 names of family members were listed in the census making it easier to locate folks.

5 Browne, Hilda Faulkner. *The Michigan Mormons: Their History from 1831 to 1952 and a little beyond.* (Provo: No publisher listed, 1985) 210 pages in length.