History of Pleasant Ewell

The following is a narrative script, acted out at a Ewell family reunion, August, 1997, in Salt Lake City, Utah (Wheeler Farm)

Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Pleasant Ewell. I am a great grandfather of yours and I am so please to be here with you today. Why some of you little ones here are my sixth great-grandchildren.

I am greatly pleased that you came here today to learn somewhat of your Ewell heritage. You see “understanding our past, helps us better understand ourselves." Now—my father’s name is Maxcey Ewell and my dear mother is Ann Mullins. I was born August 2, 1788 and raised in Albermarle Country Virginia with my seven brothers and three sisters. I, being the 10th child.

On the estate we lived very comfortably. My father was a planter, owning a goodly portion of land, including servants. We also owned and operated the Ewell Shop and Mill. We welcomed travelers and on occasion Thomas Jefferson would recommend other to stay with “his good friend, Maxcey Ewell.”

We also enjoyed the association of my mother’s family as they lived nearby. Let’s see—When I was 12 years of age, my father died. At age 26, I married my sweetheart Barbara Fauber of German descent. We stayed in Virginia, where I, like my father, was a planter. My estate grew to the need of eight servants. I recall that six of our eight children were born in Virginia: Sarah, William Fletcher, Elizabeth, Thomas Maxey, Barbara Ann, and John Martin. Now my beloved mother was a widow almost 30 years when she died in the latter part of 1829. Shortly after mother’s death, we sold all our property and moved to Bedford county, Tennessee where my sister, Mary, and her husband, Jonathan Webster lived.

There in 1831, out little Mary Dabney was born. After 11 years, we adored having a little one around. We were only in Tennessee for 3 years when we ventured west to the edge of the frontier – Ray County, Missouri. (Say Missouri) Just shortly after we arrived, we witnessed the “falling of the stars.” Today you would call it a meteor shower. That was a sight I shall never forget. Let’s see I believe that was in 1833. That’s right! The 13th of November, 1833.

There in Missouri we acquired property a few miles north of Richmond and commenced farming. About this time the Mormon missionaries cam around. William joined first and was baptized about a year before he married Mary Lee Bland... let’s see... they got married in 1834 and Elizabeth at 17 married Leonard Thornhill, that same year on Christmas Day! Tom? Well, he never did get married.

Now in the next year, 1835, our little daughter, Pirene Brown, was born. Now we had eight children in all.

About the time, Mormon settlers were moving into Missouri. Brother Jacob Foutz taught us there in our home. Later, we were taught the everlasting gospel by David Evans. My dear wife, was first to believe. She was then baptized by David Evans and the rest of us soon followed her faithful example. Little did I know at the time that David, in a few years, would become my son-in-law! He married
Barbara in Nauvoo after his wife died. It was all around this same time in Missouri that Sarah met Jonathan Packer and David performed their marriage. There in Ray county, I became the justice of the peace. I served about 2 ½ years until the extermination order was given by Governor Boggs to drive the Mormons out. The last entry in my docket book was three days before Haun's mill. We helped several of the saints at that time with food and lodging. Hearing their accounts of the mobs – barbarism deemed beyond reality. By March of 1839, we too, were obliged to leave, after the consequences of over $2,000 worth of property damages were incurred.

My dear wife and our daughter Sarah, being very sick when we left, both died shortly after our arrival in Illinois. In the course of a few months, Elizabeth died. Sarah and Elizabeth both left a small child, for our 18 year old daughter, Barbara Ann, to take charge of, in connection with our remaining family being eight persons in all. Oh how I grieved for my sweet wife and girls. I missed them so. I don’t know what I would have done if Barbara Ann hadn’t taken over like she did. We made our home on the banks of the beautiful Mississippi River in the city of Nauvoo near the prophet, Joseph Smith. When Brother Joseph received revelation to do the work for the dead, I commenced to do the baptisms for my deceased father and mother, brothers, sisters, and other relatives who had passed on.

In 1842, David Evans became the bishop of our ward and marries John Martin to Elizabeth Study.

In the year of 43, I married Elizabeth Clapper, she being the widow of Jacob Smith and I being a widower of 4 years past. A year later, at the April Conference, I was ordained a high priest and called to serve a mission in my native state, Virginia.

Persecution increased and it became apparent that our days in the beautiful city of Nauvoo were numbered. We prayed that we could finish the temple in time to receive our ordinances before we had to leave. ON the last day of January I had the privilege to enter those sacred walls of the Nauvoo temple. That day it was recorded that 233 persons received ordinances. I couldn’t believe that I was so privileged to live in a time when all these truths had been restored to this earth, that which had been lost for so many years.

The exodus out of Nauvoo began a few days later. I chose to remain to try to sell my property. By the end of April, for the same properties that cost me $1,400 sold for less than half that amount. But at least I was able to sell. Many could not.

We left that spring and by July arrived in Iowa in time for the mustering of the Mormon Battalion. The very day that Brigham Young called for 500 volunteers, I, with other brethren in the camp, breakfasted with Brigham Young. Two of my sons signed on, both becoming members of company E. I was so proud of them. But it was hard on their young families. William left Mary Lee who was with child and four little children. John Martin left Elizabeth with two little ones.

A few months later, I married a young widow Mary Wiekel. She had two small children, Susannah and Jeremiah. Then little Martha came into our lives. Being born exactly one month after my 59th birthday. In early spring of 1851 we left
by ox team for the Salt Lake Valley arriving in the month of May. It was then
Pirene and I renewed our covenants as we re-entered the waters of baptism with
other members of the Salt Lake Stake. We hadn't been here a full year before I
passed beyond the veil.

As patriarch of this family, I came here to this valley, in my senior years, so that
my posterity can enjoy the blessings of the restored gospel. I yearn for the day
that all of my great grandchildren are identified so that they can be sealed in the
House of the Lord, so that we can be together as families forever.

I am aware of your good works. I want you to know I love you and I care for you
and I can't wait until I can meet with you again.

References:
1. Broadcast message of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
2. Nauvoo Social History Project by James Smith (on Microfilm)
3. Will of Maxcey Ewell, Probated 1 Dec. 1800, Albermarle, Co., VA. FHL Film 030213
   BK. 4 pp. 60-61
4. Thomas Jefferson’s “Farm Book” Issue no. 3. Fall 1989, p. 28. Report by Paul Jensen
given in “Roots and Branches” Newsletter of the Ewell Family Historical and
   Genealogical Society.
5. Second Marriage records of Augusta Co., VA, Date 7 Feb 1814
6. 1820 US Census, Albermarle Co., VA, p. 8 (had 6 children and 8 slaves)
7. IGI Virginia
9. Albermarle Co., VA Land Records – Complete “Ewell” extracted records in possession
   of Peggy Doman
10. 1830 Federal Census (List Pleasant Ewell and Jonathan Webster)
11. Tennessee IGI
12. Barbara Ann Ewell Evan’s History from Bishop David Evans and His Family, FHL
    M270.1 E915
13. Ray County, MO Land Records – Richmond, Ray Co., MO
14. Membership of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, by Susan Easton-
    Black, 1987. Personal History of Mary Lee Bland, as told to a granddaughter. Date
    and author unknown. Printed in “Our Pioneer Heritage 1825-1870” Vol. 8
15. Carroll Co., MO Marriage Records – Certificate of Records filed by Samuel Todd
    J.P., Feb 27, 1835 now at Carrollton, Carroll, Missouri. Married 30 Nov. 1834
    14 Mary 1838 – Elizabeth Thornhill and Sarah Packer
17. Vera Tillman Letters – Roots and Branches Newsletter Issue
18. Personal History written by Pirene Brown Jamieson in Possession of Ewell Family
    Society
19. Virginia IGI (note 7)
20. See note 12
21. See note 2
22. See note 16
23. Dockets of the Justice of the Peace, Jan 11, 1836 - March 8, 1851 of Ray Co.,
    Missouri. Copied pages covering years Jan. 1836 - Oct 27, 1838 – The Years Pleasant
    Ewell served as Justice of the Peace. Reference: State Historical Society of Columbia,
Missouri. Wester Historical Manuscript Collection, 23 Ellis Library, University of MO. Columbia, MO 65201 – Copies in Possession of Ewell Family Society.
24. Personal History of James McBride – Copy in possession of Ewell Family Society
26. See note 12
27. Maps of the City of Nauvoo from the office of Jim Kimball HDC
28. Nauvoo Baptisms for the Dead Book, A 1840-41. Film 183,376 FHL
29. See note 16
30. See note 2
31. See note 2
32. Forney’s Five Families, by W. Forney
33. 9 April 1844, Record of Fourth Quorum of seventies, HDC Film Cr 449, No. 11, p. 3
34. Vol. 6, Chapter 16. P. 337, History of the Church, 15 April, 1844
35. Nauvoo Endowment Records. Bk 1 P. 244, No. 4 Jan. 31, 1846
36. History of the Church, period 2, Apostolic Interregnum, Vol. 7, page 578
37. History of the Church, period 2, Apostolic Interregnum, Vol. 7, page 584
38. See Note 2
41. See note 32
42. 1850 Federal Census, Pottawattamie County, Iowa, District 21, page 279, Family No. 203
43. Endowment House, Endowment Records, F. 183, 406 page 63
44. Salt Lake Stake re-baptism record – 25 May 1851 – Mini Margaret File
45. See note 18
46. See note 44
47. Logan Sealings to Children. Film 178087, p. 402. Died 4 March 1852