

## **The Elusive John Mansfield** by Richard Thayer

John Mansfield was born September 15, 1795 along the banks of the Big Miami River in Hamilton County, Northwest Territory. This area is now southern Butler County, Ohio. He was born on the frontier at a time when the Indian Wars of that area were just ending. His uncle Johnny Crum had just been released from 5 years of Indian captivity only 6 days before John's birth. (It is possible that he was named for his uncle.) At this time who could have predicted that John Mansfield would have a fatal encounter with Indians 52 years later in far off northern Mexico.

John was the second or third of possibly 7 children born to Charles Mansfield and his wife Rebecca Crum Mansfield, and was apparently the oldest son to survive. The birth dates of his siblings were Robert 1792 (may have died young), Margaret, January 24, 1794; William, July 19, 1797; Rachel, February 5, 1799; Charles, March 24, 1800 and James September 22, 1801 (or 1803). These birth dates are so complete and precise that I think they must have been recorded in a family bible. I have not found the original source of the birth dates and can only rely on the accuracy of an inter-net posting for these dates.

In 1803 Charles Mansfield died at the age of about 38 and left Rebecca on the frontier with 6 small children to raise, ages infant to 9 years. It is no wonder that Rebecca was soon remarried to a man named Robert Goble on July 28, 1807. At least 6 children grew to adulthood and married and raised families. These families generally lived near one another, migrated to different regions together and often provided support and assistance to each other so that all might survive and prosper.

Margaret married Charles W. McGowan first and Andrew Carmichael second, number of children unknown. William married Susannah Demming and had 10 children. Rachel married Christopher Kiger and had 3 children, married second to Samuel Andrews and had 6 more children. Charles married Hannah Schafer and had 7 children. James married Mary Andrews and had 4 children. On May 12 1814, John Mansfield married Rebecca Montgomery in Butler County, Ohio. I have searched for the parents of Rebecca, but have only found possibilities and no confirmation at this time. There was an Ann Rebecca Montgomery born on August 26, 1800 in Washington County, Kentucky to Charles and Mary Ann (Elder) Montgomery who is a possibility? I encourage other cousins to help with this search.

John and Rebecca moved west soon after their marriage in 1814. Their two oldest children, Jane born ca 1815, and Charles born May 30, 1816 were probably born in Butler County, Ohio, but it seems that the rest of their children were born in Indiana. Martha Ann was born June 9, 1818, James was born ca 1819/22, John was born in 1823, William was born 1825/30 and Rebecca Ann was born after 1830. Even though the family eventually settled in Delaware County, Indiana and bought land there in close proximity to many relatives, there may have been some short stays in other Ohio and

Indiana Counties. There is some evidence of John living in Wayne and Perry Counties, Indiana for a short time.

Charles and Hannah Mansfield, John and Rebecca Mansfield, James and Mary Mansfield, William and Susannah Mansfield, Andrew and Margaret Carmichael, Samuel and Rachel Andrews and Rebecca Goble were all living in Monroe Township, Delaware County, Indiana by 1832. The specific land claims or purchases by John were: W1/2 SE1/4 Section 10, July 19, 1830; NE1/4 SW1/4 Section 14 January 15, 1836; SE1/4 SW1/4 Section 14 September 25, 1832; NE1/4 NW1/4 Section 23, August 24, 1832; and E1/2 SW1/4 Section 34, September 25, 1832. I have a listing of the land holdings of all of the other relatives in the area but will not list it here due to its length. John's mother, Rebecca Crum Mansfield Goble died in Delaware County, Indiana on September 2, 1833 and is buried there in Section 15 Monroe Township on the Mansfield Farm. This farm is one mile east of present day Cowan, Indiana. To illustrate how fate has determined our past and present, we find that Temple Smith, the future husband of Martha Ann Mansfield, had taken up land in section 22 Monroe Township on August 17, 1833. This parcel lies only 2 miles from land owned by John Mansfield. Temple Smith and Martha Ann Mansfield were married on June 27, 1837 in Delaware County, Indiana.

From the published biography of Reuben Mansfield, a son from John's second marriage, we learn that John Mansfield moved to Livingston County, Missouri in 1839. At least some of John's married children and their families also moved to Missouri at this same time. Since John married Susan Rockhold McCoskrie on May 16, 1841 we can presume that Rebecca Montgomery Mansfield died prior to that date and probably died about 1839. Her death may have prompted the move by these families to Missouri, or it may have just been the desire for more land, fewer neighbors or for adventure.

At the time of his second marriage John had 7 children: Jane who married a man named Todd, Charles W. who married Eliza Whitaker on November 25 1836 (Charles died November 23, 1845), Martha Ann who married Temple Smith June 27, 1837 (Martha died July 11, 1900, at the age of 82), James maybe married Susannah Fees, John married unknown, William married unknown, Rebecca Ann born after 1830 married unknown. More detective work is required to determine these marriage dates and spouses. Of further interest and possible indication of the Ann Rebecca Montgomery connection is the fact that three of the daughters had the middle name of Ann. See below for more about Sarelda Ann.

Susan Rockhold McCoskrie brought 5 children to the marriage, ages 5 to 15 years, Emaline, John, Isaac, Martha and Levy McCoskrie. John and Susan had 2 more children, Sarelda Ann born January 30, 1842 (died young on March 11, 1855 at age 13), and Reuben born September 7, 1843, married Mary Jane Ewen on May 8 1862. Reuben died in 1903 in Livingston County, Missouri.

When John Mansfield moved to Missouri he settled in Livingston County and to illustrate another example of fate we find that a man named John Yates has taken up land in NE1/4

NW1/4 Section 18 T58, R24 Livingston County Missouri on February 10, 1840. John Yates would later marry Rebecca Smith, granddaughter of John Mansfield.

When John Mansfield went off to the Mexican War in 1846 he took his 23-year-old son, John Mansfield Jr. with him, but left behind a wife and 8 children as well as 5 stepchildren, although some were young adults by this time. (He must have felt confident of returning because he never even made a will). There was heavy recruitment in Missouri for militia troops to march to war in northern Mexico (today this area is primarily California, New Mexico and Arizona). James K. Polk, who had just become president of the U.S., exhibited strong expansionist ideas and hoped to annex California and other western lands by conquest and occupation. Missouri was on the western frontier of the U.S. in 1846 and its population was a good source of hardy recruits for these campaigns. Captain Alexander Doniphan had formed the 1<sup>st</sup> Missouri Mounted Militia in early 1846 and had headed west to Santa Fe. Colonel Sterling Price formed the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missouri Mounted Militia primarily with recruits from Livingston and Caldwell Counties, Missouri to follow down the Santa Fe Trail in late 1846. These units were variously called the Missouri Mounted Volunteers and Missouri Mounted Rifles. There were age limitations for service in these militia companies of 18 to 45 years of age and that must have been why John Mansfield was carried on the militia rolls as age 43 when, in fact, he was 51 at the time of his enlistment. Due to his age and experience he was chosen as 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant of Company L, 2<sup>nd</sup> Missouri Mounted Militia.

The Livingston County Militia was organized in Chillicothe, Missouri during late July and early August 1846. The men assembled at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas Territory on August 10-11, 1846 and were assigned to company units. John Mansfield Sr. and John Mansfield Jr. were assigned to Company L, commanded by Captain William Yarnel Slack. Company "L" of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missouri Mounted Militia contained about 90 men of various ranks, 1 Captain, 4 lieutenants, 9 sergeants, 6 corporals, 2 buglers, 2 farriers and 67 privates. Of this group 9 were discharged at various times during the campaign for disability and 12 would die of wounds or disease while in service. Captain Slack would later serve again under General Sterling Price during the Civil War. He eventually attained the rank of Confederate General by 1862, but died during the war.

The company started westward down the Santa Fe Trail on August 15, 1846. They rode west across Kansas to the Big Bend of the Arkansas River thence up the river, then followed the Cimarron Cutoff across what is now extreme southeastern Colorado to shorten the journey to Santa Fe. Along the way they anticipated Indian trouble, but had none probably due to their large and well-armed force. They did have some adventures with violent summer thunderstorms and pursuing and killing buffalo, which they encountered in large numbers. Francis Parkman in "The Oregon Trail" tells of meeting the Missouri Mounted Militia on the trail and of their frustrated attempts to kill buffalo with their inappropriate infantry rifles. The men were possibly armed with the 69 caliber smoothbore flintlock or percussion muskets. The 1842 Springfield percussion musket was standard army issue at that time, but since they were militia and not regular army they may have had a mixture of older and less reliable weapons.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Missouri Mounted Militia reached Santa Fe on September 28, 1846 and went into camp on the south side of the city. Later they were quartered in various public buildings within the city. They were designated to become the army of occupation of Santa Fe upon the departure of Colonel Alexander Doniphan commanding the 1<sup>st</sup> Missouri Mounted Militia marching south toward Mexico and General Stephen Kearney commanding the Army of the West and the Mormon Battalion marching toward California. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Missouri Mounted Militia under Colonel Sterling Price assumed these occupation duties in late September 1846 upon the departure from Santa Fe of all other commands, except the 1<sup>st</sup> U.S. dragoons under Captain Burgwin who were assigned to Colonel Price.

On about October 14, 1846 Company L was assigned guard duty in the small town of Abique and they were there until December 20 when they returned to Santa Fe. All was quiet until the uprising in Taos on January 19-20, 1847 when Governor Charles Bent, Sheriff Lee and about 25 other government officials and American citizens were killed by Mexican Patriots and local Pueblo Indians. Price had to act with his small force. He left a portion of his force to garrison Santa Fe and began his march to quell the uprising. He marched the command to the town of Canada and Embudo Pass where small battles were fought on the way to Taos. The battle of Canada may not have seemed small to the participants since it is estimated that Price was outnumbered 4 to 1 with about 500-600 American soldiers facing about 2000 Mexican Patriots and Pueblo Indians. This was during the winter of 1846/47 and it was cold and there was as much as 1 foot of snow on the ground. This area of northern New Mexico is very mountainous and much of the land is at high altitude

On February 3, 1847 the command arrived at Taos where the perpetrators of the uprising were fortified within the walls of the Taos Pueblo as well as within the massive walls of the San Geronimo Church. The artillery was prepared for a frontal assault on the church. Captain Slack and Captain St.Vrain's companies were stationed to the east of Taos Pueblo to prevent escape of the enemy in that direction. On February 4, 1847 after hours of bombardment the church walls were breached and the battle entered the final phase. Sometime during the battle John Mansfield Sr. was wounded, by either a bullet or an arrow. There is conflicting information in the original sources. The wound was initially reported as slight in the military records, but 12 days later on February 16 John Mansfield died of his wound. He probably died from infection due to the absence of antibiotics and lack of adequate medical treatment. He was possibly transported back to Santa Fe since Price's command moved there after the Taos battle. So far I have not found the burial site of John Mansfield. It could be in Santa Fe. It could be in Taos, or it could be somewhere in between. There is one instance I have found where Captain Burgwin, U.S. Dragoons, who was killed in the battle of Taos, was transported to Fort Leavenworth for burial, but I do not think this is the case for 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Mansfield. There were a total of 7 killed and 45 wounded (John Mansfield was counted among the wounded but needs to be reassigned to the KIA total) during the battle on the American side. Price lost 2 men killed and 6 wounded at Canada, 1 killed and 1 wounded at Embudo Pass, and with the casualties at Taos he had 10 killed and 52 wounded during the suppression of the

uprising. It is estimated that there were 206 enemy killed during these 3 engagements with no estimate of enemy wounded.

The San Geronimo Church was badly damaged during the battle and was not rebuilt. The crumbling adobe ruins of the church still stand today as a stark reminder of the 1847 battle. We could treat the abandoned church ruin as a memorial to John Mansfield since we may never find his grave or headstone. (Recent research has indicated that John may be buried at the Kit Carson cemetery in the center of Taos NM, but has no headstone).

The news of the death of John Mansfield Sr. reached the family in Missouri on April 11, 1847. John Jr., who later became an administrator of his father's estate, probably carried the news to the Mansfield family in Missouri. We have learned much about the Mansfield family from the estate records filed in Livingston County. The inventory of the personal estate shows many examples of personal property as well as monies owed from debtors who were often relatives and friends:

One mare and colt  
One horse  
Thirty-five head of hogs  
Two steers  
One cow and calf  
Six head of sheepe (sic)  
Three beehives  
One wagon  
One log chain  
One chopping axe  
One weeding ho (sic)  
One shovel plow, one C\_\_\_\_ plow  
One set geering and harness  
Two single trees & clevises  
Two collars, two bridles  
One clock  
One fire shovel  
One table  
Chairs  
Two tables, bedsteads  
One big cittle, one skillet, two ovens, one tea kittle (sic)(I'm not making this up)  
One bucket, one pail, crocks  
Dresser, ware knives, forks, coffee pot, coffee mill  
Looking glass, plains, augers, chisels, saw  
Draw knife, one large grain bo\_\_\_\_, one pork barrel  
One large barrel, one side saddle, one churn  
One grubbing ho, one pare saddlebags  
One note on P. A. Martin for 18 barrels of corn           \$18.00  
One act. on James Brown                                       \$37.95  
One act. on Jesse Nave   \$69.19

One act. on D. Eddings for a bill of goods	\$1189.72
One note on James Ogle	\$93.00
Act. on William T. Todd for three ___ and shingles	\$9.00
Act on John Dearing        corn	\$2.50
Act. on Boon Frost	\$1.00
One pare bed steads	
One pare of stiliards (sic, steelyards)	
One large tin Ba___ six candle moles	

Money that I (John Jr.) made use of belonging at Santa Fe after paying all his debts, which leaves me indebted, thirty-four dollars and seventy five cents.    \$34.75

One account on Temple Smith for	\$98.92
One account on Henry Gray	\$3.00
One account James Goben	\$3.25
One act. Jacob Goben	\$2.75
Elizabeth Murphy	\$4.06
William Todd	\$6.66
John Winingim for 37 bushels of corn	_____
Samuel E. Todd assigned by P Martin	\$37.47
John Garn	\$3.86
James E. Bown (Brown)	\$1.21
John Runnels	\$.62
William Carlisle	\$5.20
Joseph Y. Todd	\$4.84
Luther Low	<u>\$3.20</u>
	\$1751.00
Amount braught (sic) over \$199.42	

Also from the estate record we have learned the names of all of the children of John Mansfield for both marriages. There is also a claim against the estate for \$46 as compensation for 1 mule bought by John Mansfield from Lieutenant Zadock Holcomb in New Mexico about February 1, 1847.

There is a memorial plaque at the Texas State Capital in Austin that lists 147 officers killed during the Mexican War and 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant John Mansfield's name appears on the plaque.

I have called John Mansfield elusive since it took many years of searching to find him. If John Mansfield had not lied about his age in order to serve in the Mexican War I may never have been able to locate him from the shred of information in the family legend that only said, "Martha Mansfield Smith's father died in the Mexican War".

Bibliography and other interesting reading on the Mexican War:

“The History of the Military Occupation of New Mexico”, 1909, Smith Brooks Co,  
Ralph Emerson Twitchell

“Tragedy at Taos”, 1995, Republic of Texas Press, James A. Crutchfield

“Down the Santa Fe Trail (Diary)”1846, Yale University Press, Susan Shelby Magoffin

“The Oregon Trail”, 1990, Library of America, Francis Parkman

“The Year of Decision: 1846”, 1943, Little Brown and Co., Bernard DeVoto

“Soldiers on the Santa Fe Trail”, 1967, University Oklahoma Press, Leo E. Oliva

“Those Who Went Before”(Delaware County Burials,) Shawn Gray

Butler County, Ohio Marriage Records

History of Delaware County, Indiana