

# **ROSTER OF 1852 ROBBINS WAGON TRAIN MEMBERS**

**Researched and compiled by**

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## **PRIMARY SOURCES**

Lewis, John N. *John N. Lewis Diary, 1851-1859*. Unpublished manuscript. Original held by Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley, with microfilm copy, roll #80-3477.

Robbins, Harvey. "The Story of Jacob and Sarah (Spilman) Robbins as told by Harvey Robbins," unpublished manuscript; transcribed copy in possession of Kevin K. Mittge.

Robbins, William Franklin. "Journey to Oregon: Incidents, Events and Trials on the Route: Letter from Wm. F. Robbins," *The Decatur Press* (Greensburg, Ind.), 2 Sept. & 9 Sept, 1853, Vol. III, no's 37 & 38; Indiana State Library Film #290515.

## **SECONDARY SOURCES**

Jones, Kate Sharp. "Destination Oregon." *Sherwood Tri-City News*, Sherwood, Oregon, May 7, June 11, and June 25, 1959

Mittge, Kevin. *The Oregon Trail Families: The Robbins and Herrens of the Pacific Northwest: Sesquicentennial Edition* (2 vols.), Florence, Ore.: privately published, 2008.

## **BACKGROUND**

Nathaniel Robbins and his family (Family Group 1) left Sandcreek, Decatur Co., Indiana, on September 15, 1851. They arrived in Randolph Co., Missouri on October 12, 1851, and stayed at a place rented in advance by son William Franklin Robbins.

In the spring they were joined by the family of Jacob Robbins (Family Group 2) – a first cousin of Nathaniel and his wife Nancy – and left Randolph Co., Missouri together on April 15, 1852. They were among the last to get started on the trail that year and arrived in Oregon sometime in November.

Eight members of the family died.

The following list of Robbins family members of the wagon train is documented and complete. The list of non-family members is not and comes from mention in the John N. Lewis diary or family recollections.

## **ROBBINS FAMILY:**

## Family Group 1:

Robbins, Nathaniel (L) (1793-1863) – member of Oregon’s Constitutional Convention 1857 from Clackamas County, self-trained “country” doctor; drowned in Tualatin River

Robbins, Nancy (1797-1880) m’d 1813 Nathaniel Robbins (her first cousin)

Robbins, William Franklin (L) (1816-1856) s/o Nathaniel and Nancy (Robbins) Robbins, m’d 1836 Melvina Myers, accidentally shot himself while out bear hunting

*“Emeline very bad; we did not think she would live an hour, as she was cramping terribly, but she lived till next morning, when she died; but before she died Amanda and Mahala were both taken, and Amanda, being very weakly, died about the middle of the day. Mahala lasted till next morning, when she died. We buried them all three in one grave. We were nearly all unwell, and all nearly frightened to death; so we yoked up and left the place about 11 o'clock. We traveled 5 or 6 miles where we struck Little Blue river, a little larger than Sandcreek. Here father was taken so bad, with a pain in his breast, we had to stop with him; he soon got easy and fell asleep. Absalom Barnes was very much complaining. We ate our dinners, and encamped for the night. Next morning Absalom so bad he could not travel. He grew worse all day; we set up and done all we could to save him, but all was of no use; he died next day, about the middle of the afternoon.”* William F. Robbins (1853)

Robbins, Melvina (Myers) (1818-1880) m’d 1836 William Franklin Robbins

Robbins, Nathaniel Spencer (“Nat”) (1837-1895) s/o William Franklin and Melvina (Myers) Robbins

Robbins, Margaret (1839-1928) d/o William Franklin and Melvina (Myers) Robbins

Robbins, Richard Gilman (1841-1852) s/o William Franklin and Melvina (Myers) Robbins

*“Gilman was able to walk out of doors without help, which he had not been able to do for some time, and he appeared to be a little better until Thursday morning, when he was taken with a severe diarrhoea, and he being very weak with the fever it soon ran him down, and Friday morning about breakfast time he died. This was the hardest stroke that ever fell on me, he was such a good boy in our train; he received several presents as a reward for his good behavior and attention to business.”* William F. Robbins (1853)

Robbins, Benjamin Dow (1843-1916) s/o William Franklin and Melvina (Myers) Robbins

Robbins, Nancy Adeline ((1844-1936) d/o William Franklin and Melvina (Myers) Robbins

Robbins, Sarah Jane (1846-1852) d/o William Franklin and Melvina (Myers) Robbins, died in eastern Oregon

*“About the time we was leaving this river our daughter Jane was taken with diarrhoea; we drove to Powder river, here she died, and was buried in Powder river bottom; this was a*

*terrible stroke to leave a child here, among savages and wild beasts; it was hard but had to be borne...*” William F. Robbins (1853)

Robbins, George Henry (1849-1940) s/o William Franklin and Melvina (Myers) Robbins

Robbins, Melissa (1851-1949) d/o William Franklin and Melvina (Myers) Robbins – last surviving member of the 1852 Robbins wagon train

Robbins, John Dow (L) (1819-1873) s/o Nathaniel and Nancy (Robbins) Robbins, never married, found murdered on his donation land claim

Robbins, Amanda Minerva (L) (1821-1852), d/o Nathaniel and Nancy (Robbins) Robbins, died of cholera in Nebraska, was an invalid and rode in a specially created wagon with her sister Angeline

*“...Amandy was taken sick this morning and died in the afternoon ...”* John N. Lewis diary, 31 May 1852

Barnes, Bethiah Emmeline (Robbins) (L) (1823-1852), d/o Nathaniel and Nancy (Robbins) Robbins, m'd 1848 Absalom Barnes, died of cholera in Nebraska

*“...Mrs Barnes died at half past nine ...”* John N. Lewis diary, 31 May 1852.

Barnes, Absalom (L) (c1827-1852), m'd 1848 Bethiah Emmeline Robbins, died of cholera in Nebraska

*“A Barnes died at 5oc in the afternoon & was beried at 6oc he was beried on a high gravel point on the bank of the little blew R. 5 m. west of the place whare his wife was...”* John N. Lewis diary, 3 June 1852.

Barnes, Nathaniel (1848-1886) s/o Absalom and Bethiah Emmeline (Robbins) Barnes

Barnes, William (1850-1867) s/o Absalom and Bethiah Emmeline (Robbins) Barnes

Robbins, James Anderson (1825-1886), s/o Nathaniel and Nancy (Robbins) Robbins, m'd 1848 Minerva Elizabeth Hamilton

Robbins, Minerva Elizabeth (Hamilton) (1823-1920) m'd 1848 James Anderson Robbins

Robbins, Sarah Catherine (“Cassie”) (1846-1920) d/o James Anderson and Minerva Elizabeth (Hamilton) Robbins

Robbins, Nancy Jane (1848-1927) d/o James Anderson and Minerva Elizabeth (Hamilton) Robbins

Hamilton, Mary Jane (Robbins) (1828-1900) d/o Nathaniel and Nancy (Robbins) Robbins, m'd 1848 John Henry Hamilton

Hamilton, John Henry (1826-1909) m'd 1848 Mary Jane Robbins

Hamilton, John Milton (L) (1850-1894) s/o John Henry and Mary Jane (Robbins) Hamilton, died in a mine collapse in Grant Co., Oregon

Robbins, Mahala (L) (1830-1852) d/o Nathaniel and Nancy (Robbins) Robbins, died of cholera in Nebraska

*"...Mahala was taken this morning and is not likley to recover ..."* John N. Lewis diary, 31 May 1852.

*"...this morning found us in awful circumstances Mahala died at 7oc in the morning & was beried at 8oc & [ ? ] her and her two sisters was beried in one grave..."* John N. Lewis diary, 1 June 1852.

Robbins, Nathaniel Norval (L) (1832-1926) s/o Nathaniel and Nancy (Robbins) Robbins

Robbins, Zobeda (L) d/o Nathaniel and Nancy (Robbins) Robbins, later married 1853 William Sharp, who was hired to help drive cattle on the wagon train

Robbins, Nancy d/o Nathaniel and Nancy (Robbins) Robbins

Robbins, Angeline d/o Nathaniel and Nancy (Robbins) Robbins, walked with crutches due to a fever in childhood so was outfitted with a special wagon for herself and her sister Amanda

## **Family Group 2:**

Robbins, Jacob (L) (1809-1896) m'd 1833 Sarah Spilman

Robbins, Sarah (Spilman) (1812-1865) m'd 1833 Jacob Robbins

Robbins, Harvey (1833-1925) s/o Jacob and Sarah (Spilman) Robbins

Robbins, Levi (L) ((1835-1921) s/o Jacob and Sarah (Spilman) Robbins

Robbins, Thomas (1836-1913) s/o Jacob and Sarah (Spilman) Robbins

Robbins, Martin (1838-1921) s/o Jacob and Sarah (Spilman) Robbins

Robbins, Oliver (1840-1933) s/o Jacob and Sarah (Spilman) Robbins

Robbins, Nancy Jane (1842-1929) d/o Jacob and Sarah (Spilman) Robbins

Robbins, Theodore (1844-1852), s/o Jacob and Sarah (Spilman) Robbins, died of "mountain fever" on the Sandy river

*“Mr. Herren came to their rescue at this camp, he having crossed in 1845 and settled near Salem. He was Pappy’s cousin, having married Uncle Natty’s sister Docia. They knowing this train had started and was getting in late, Mr. William Herren got on his horse and found us at this camp on the Sandy, sick and travel worn. Seeing our needs, he rode back home as quickly as he could and his brother Noah gathered supplies into the wagon and with good strong oxen came to our rescue, meeting us at Mr. Barlow’s, where Theodore died. We boys were both down sick by this time, but the wagon kept on to their destination at Salem Prairie, where Mr. Herren had rented a house for them. Here they spent most of the winter.”* Harvey Robbins recollections

Robbins, Aaron (1847-1852) s/o Jacob and Sarah (Spilman) Robbins, died of “mountain fever” on the Sandy river

*“Harve by this time was a very sick boy and death was in the camp as little Aaron died that night.”* Harvey Robbins recollections

Robbins, Amanda Minerva (L) (1849-1922) d/o Jacob and Sarah (Spilman) Robbins

### **OTHERS IN THE WAGON TRAIN**

(only a few names confirmed as indicated in Lewis’ diary or Harvey Robbins recollections; Kate Sharp Jones was a child of the emigrants and was not a personal witness but some of the names come from her):

Armstrong, Martin  
Bigsby, Sol  
Brown, Edward  
Connor, James (L) (R)  
Connor, Martha (L)  
Connor, Joseph  
Connor, William  
Connor, James Jr.  
Connor, Milton  
Connor, Melvina  
Donovan, Pat  
French (or Frank?), William (L) (R)  
Gardner, J.E. (L) (R)  
Hopkins, Frank  
Huff, William (R)  
Jackson, George  
Lewis, John N.  
Martin, A. (R)  
Mattix, Frank  
Nortin, \_\_\_\_\_  
Reed, Able  
Reed, Horice  
Ross, Aaron (L)

Sharp, William (L) m'd 1853 Zobeda Robbins

Sharp, Elizabeth (R) m'd 1853 John Clark Herren, nephew to Nathaniel and Nancy Robbins

L = mention in Lewis diary

R = mention in Harvey Robbins recollections

otherwise names come from Kate Sharp Jones secondary story