

PREFACE

*The "chronicle" below is reproduced by Graham B. Parker from a document created by Ellis R. Parker in the 1940s or possibly the 1950s (exact date unknown). It was typed on a manual typewriter on legal-size paper. A photocopy of that document was given to Graham B. Parker by Caroline Yaden, the great granddaughter of Ellis and sister of Graham E. Parker, the father of Graham B. Parker. Some of the wording in the document is unclear and an attempt was made to clarify where possible. In addition, some text was added **in italics** by Mr. Parker for clarification. This added text/information was verified by other documents and references to those documents in footnotes are provided where appropriate. Note that all footnotes in the document are added by Mr. Parker as none appeared in the original document.*

Graham B. Parker, November 8, 2019

PARKER HISTORY IN AMERICA

A few years before the beginning of the Year of American Independence, there came to Virginia two brothers, one of whom was named James. They came from Scotland. Since this James Parker became the progenitor of a somewhat numerous family living in many different parts of the country, we shall here endeavor to trace some of the many branches.

James Parker I (*Roman numerals are added to keep track of the 'James' names*) was the father of two children, a son named James II, born July 26, 1786, and a daughter, who was later married to a man by the name of Sovern.

In the course of time, James Parker II, the second of the name, was married to a Virginia girl named Rachael Reniyon¹, born September 21, 1792. To this union was born (7) seven children as follows:²

Ann Parker	June 2, 1812
Abner Parker	July 31, 1813
Daniel Parker	November 21, 1815
Thomas Parker	November 22, 1817
Mary Parker Lake	May 14, 1820
Rebecca Parker Stranider	November 3, 1822
Rachel Parker Horton	December 19, 1824

¹ This is quite an unusual last name and thus the spelling is uncertain. A web search turns up no family by that name in Virginia in the late 1700s

² A web search has yet to uncover any information on these children nor any gravesites.

The mother having died, he (*James II*) married Nancy McCoy in 1825. To this mother was born (11) eleven children as follows:³

Martha Parker Rutledge	July 28, 1826
Marion Parker	January 9, 1828
Jane Parker	April 12, 1829
Phoebe Parker Stoops	April 12, 1831 ⁴
https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/8358545/phoebe-stoops	
James (<i>Madison</i>) Parker III	March 19, 1833
https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/66997897/james-madison-parker	
Joseph (<i>Monroe</i>) Parker	December 10, 1834 ⁵
https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/70149059/joseph-monroe-parker	
Selenia Parker Parvin	December 10, 1834 ⁶
https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/42431840/selenia-parvin	
Martin Parker	January 30, 1837
Wilson Parker	December 31, 1839
Alexander Parker	October 23, 1840
Elisabeth Parker	February 3, 1843
William Reason Parker	December 8, 1845
https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/42391439/william-reason-parker	

Somewhere about the beginning of the second war with Great Britain, the second James Parker felt the call to go west and immigrated first to Washington and Jefferson counties in the state of Pennsylvania. Daniel was born in this state. After living here sometime, (*in*) 1820 he removed to the Ohio country and settled in Coshacton County⁷, where Joseph M...the father of the writer of this chronicle, was born on December 19, 1834.

Somewhere about the year 1843, the elder James Parker (*I*) loaded his numerous family in his old linch pin wagon, and driven by a yoke of patient oxen, they made their way across the state of Indiana, which was heavily timbered section, and along muddy and well nigh impossible

³ A URL of the gravesite for these children has been added where available.

⁴ Phoebe is the wife of John Stoops who traveled with Phoebe and her brothers James, Joseph and sister Selenia to Oregon from IL. That migration is more fully documented in a separate chronicle. The birthdate of Phoebe is somewhat uncertain as her headstone in the Pleasant Hill Cemetery is April 11, 1831. The birth date on the find-a-grave URL (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/8358545/phoebe-stoops>) is incorrect and is in process of being rectified with the editor of the gravesite.

⁵ Joseph Parker is the father of Ellis Parker, the author of this chronical. The life of Joseph is documented in a separate chronical.

⁶ Selenia is the twin sister of Joseph. She married James Parvin who migrated to Oregon in 1853 at the same time Selenia migrated with her brothers. <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/42431815/james-parvin>

⁷ The county lies within the Appalachian region of the state West of I-77.

roads to reach the prairies of Illinois, settling in Fulton County, near the present site of Lewiston. Life here was a battle of fever and plague⁷ along the Spoon River bottom. In a little time, cholera swept the country, the father (*James II*) and mother (*Rachael*) both passing away within two weeks of each other.

Imagine if you can the dire straits to which this orphaned family was reduced. Their clothing was a mere slip or gown made of coarse flax from which the shivers or splinters were only partially removed. On a cold winter morning, the last vestige of fire had burned out, and these little boys, James and Joseph were obliged to go to a neighbor's house two miles away to get a few coals to replenish it.

Finally, the younger children were 'found out' as it was called, to lead a life little better than that of the Negro slave of the time.

Joseph M, the father of the writer, was placed in the family of his brother-in-law, Lake⁸, where his lot was a very hard one.

But time moved on, and in the year 1852, another brother-in-law, John Stoops, a stern and just man, had developed a well-defined case of "Oregon Fever" and begin making preparation to go to that far away and little known country. By the spring of 1853, all preparations were completed and westward he and the old ox team pointed their noses. With him he took three of the little orphans, James, Joseph and the twin sister, Selenia.

Sharing the leadership with John Stoops was Blasingim Rutledge⁹, the maternal grandfather of the writer. James Parvin, who later married Selenia Parker, was also a member of this wagon train.¹⁰

They started early in the month of April, in the of 1853, along almost impossible roads, crossing the Mississippi River at a point near the current city of Keokuk, Iowa on a ferry boat operated by a drunken pilot, which threatened disaster to the party. Eventually, they came to the Missouri River at St. Joseph. Here they joined other teams bound for Oregon and together they made quite a formidable train.¹¹ Many of the pioneer families who later settled the Pleasant Hill County were in the group.

⁸ This is the family of Joseph's sister Mary Parker Lake who was 14 years older than Joseph.

⁹ See <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/42447641/blasingim-rutledge>

¹⁰ See <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/42431815/james-parvin>

¹¹ The makeup of that train, including listing the John and Phoebe Stoops family, can be found at <http://www.oregonpioneers.com/1853.htm>. Note that none of the Parker family was listed as members of the party.

Slowly they wended their way across the rich prairies of Iowa and Nebraska. The Platte River was crossed amid great dangers because of the tremendous quick sands which made the crossing extremely hazardous. Herds of buffalo were plentiful. Indeed 'buffalo chips' as the dried manure was called, was the only fuel to be had for the camp fire at night.

Bands of roving Indians often infested their camps, but happily, never offered to do them harm. One of these Indians, a Paronee (*likely Pawnee*) chieftain, looked quite fancy to a little black-eyed girl, Caroline Rutledge¹² by name, and offered to give 10 ponies for her. The offer was not accepted. This little girl later married Joseph M. Parker, and became the mother of the writer of this article.

Westward, yet ever westward by way of Fort Laramie, Wyoming, Chimney Rock, the Fort Hall, they reached the summit of the Continental Divide, and struck the headwater of the Suske (*likely Snake*) Branch of the Columbia River.

Until this time they had followed the well-marked old "Oregon Trail" being guided day by day by a little guide book, which told them where good camps, food, water, etc., might be had, but then they came to the last crossing of the river (*assuming this is the Snake River*), a portion of the train led by the old pioneer Thomas William (*and apparently Elijah Elliott*), chose to withdraw from the main train and (*eventually*) strike due west hoping to follow the Willamette from its source to the Willamette valley. They succeeded in this, but were obliged to suffer great privations and hardships, and if not for a timely assistance, no one would have reached the settlement alive.¹³ This was known at the "Starvation Party of 1853."

The train separated near the present site of Ontario Oregon. The main part under the leadership of Rutledge and Stoops chose to continue on the old train which follows very closely the well-known highway of that name.¹⁴ They struck the main branch of the Columbia River at Vivotilla? Landing and followed down the river to the falls at the Cascades. This was really the end of the old Oregon Trail. At what was considered a high price, they parted (*with*) their meager possessions at the end the treacherous rapids¹⁵ and eventually came to the metropolis of Oregon (*City*) at the falls of the Willamette. At this time, the venerable Dr. (*John*) McLoughlin, was a resident of Oregon City and after he had given the directions of the affairs of

¹² See <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/70149125/caroline-roselle-parker>

¹³ This is a well-documented story of these emigrants of the 1853 wagon train that followed Elijah Elliott over the Meek cutoff. This cutoff branched at the Malheur River in eastern Oregon near the town of Vale. The party followed the Deschutes River south and turned West near today's Willamette Pass. That trek is captured in a separate document.

¹⁴ Unsure what highway Ellis was referring to here.

¹⁵ Not sure which rapids this refers to. The big rapids were at Celilo Falls and Cascade Locks but there were multiple rapids from The Dalles to Oregon City.

the Northwestern fur Company, when the company was moved from fort Vancouver to Victoria B. C.¹⁶

Following the river, all the time on the east side, they came to Spores Ferry on the McKenzie River.¹⁷ Crossing here, they came to Springfield where the old pioneer Isore Briggs operated a soy mill and grist mill. The next day they came to the land of their dreams, Pleasant Hill, where already the Beistoros and Callisons had been living for five or six years. This was the in the month of October 1853.

At this juncture, we shall follow fortunes and destines of Joseph M. Parker as nearly as we can.

He was a slender lad of 19 years who weighed scarcely 100 pounds. At this time Oregon was building her first penitentiary. He secured work for the contractor who was getting out stone near St. Helens, Oregon, but when he had worked quite a time, the contractor went into bankruptcy and he received nothing for his work.

He then secured work form a man who was clearing land on what is now the business section of the city of Portland. He often said that he had grubbed out the stumps where some of the loftiest buildings rise today. Along about this time he was badly burned by falling into a blazing fire caused by him fainting while standing by the fire trying to dry his clothes. He was kept to his bed some time, while recovering from the burns.

During this interval, his sister, Selenia, had married James Parvin and he made his home when he returned to the upper Willamette with her, and also at the (*John*) Stoops home, which was located in what was called Lost Valley, near Dexter, Oregon.

On this 24th day of January, 1859, he (*Joseph*) was joined in wedlock to Caroline Roselle Rutledge, daughter of Blasingim Rutledge. The ceremony was performed by Justice of the Peace E. F. Bristow at the home of the bride's parents. The old house¹⁸ stood just a little below the present home of Holoon? C. Wheeler. The site is marked by two fir trees. B. Rutledge, a little later, built a fine new home, which still stands and is the residence of a Mr. Knowles. This is one of the Lane County's oldest residences still standing.

The first home of the couple was on Lost Creek, near the site of a (*future*) grist mill erected by John Pantee in 1879. This mill no longer exists. Later he bought what is now known as the Elia

¹⁶ This sentence does not make a lot of sense, and not sure the event Ellis was trying to capture.

¹⁷ This ferry was near Coburg and was replaced with a railroad bridge later in the 1850s

¹⁸ This is probably referring to the B. Rutledge home.

Williams place for \$600. Here was born the eldest child, Cecilia Louise, on December 26, 1862. He sold this place and moved to what was known as the Martin place, about one mile west of the Pleasant Hill Church.¹⁹ The oldest son, Clement M²⁰ was born at this place on February 4, 1864.

His next house was located $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile southwest of the Pleasant Hill church, on a place joining the farm of "Grandpa" (*Elijah*) Bristow.²¹ Other neighbors were Eli Kenney, Andrew J. Cruzan, and John Whiteaker, who became Oregon's first governor. He and Governor Whiteaker were lifelong friends. At this place was born Ellis Rutledge Parker²², on November 8, 1869. The old house still stands at this writing.

In the spring of 1872, Joseph Parker made an even exchange of this place for a farm where the present post office of Dexter is located. This was known as the McDowell Donation Land claim. The old house is owned and occupied at present by Wm. Williams. Later he (*Joseph*) built a new house on a portion of the old place. This house was destroyed by fire in 1930. At the old home at the Dexter post office were born two children, Ferd Parker²³ born July 9, 1876, and Georgia²⁴ born July 28, 1884.

Joseph Parker lived and labored on the old place until death called his wife on October 15, 1917. He lies today by the side of his beloved wife Caroline, in the old cemetery at Pleasant Hill, Oregon. He died November 26, 1919.²⁵

¹⁹ This was likely the Church of Christ established by Elijah Bristow, one of the earliest settlers in Pleasant Hill.

²⁰ See https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/42429505/clement-m_-parker

²¹ See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elijah_Bristow

²² See <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/171169080/ellis-rutledge-parker>

²³ See <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/42402475/ferd-parker>

²⁴ See https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/118906143/georgia-n_-newcomb

²⁵ Note the find-a-grave web site gives the date of death as November 22, 1921. This is based on the year on his gravestone and thus is probably correct. Verification of the month/day of death is required however.

HISTORY OF THE PARKER NAME

A “Parker” likely took his name from his occupation, for he was the “Keeper of the Royal Park.” The Earl of Morley²⁶ and the Earl of Macclesfield²⁷ were Parkers. The first Earl of Macclesfield was Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain.

The English Navy has had more admirals of this name (Parker) than any other, and it is interesting to note that the name is rarely found in the English Army. Reginold le Parker accompanied Edward I to the “Holy Land,” and for his valor was granted a large tract of land. It was this Parker who is accredited as the founder of the Norman Lees branch and of the Lancashire Parkers.

Winthrop Parker, a lawyer in New York City is a direct descendent of Phillip Parker of England whose son William Parker settled in Portsmouth, N. H. in the year 1736.

There are 38 names of Parker men who were among the pilgrims to come to America in the early part of the 17th century. Of this number, 31 settled in Massachusetts.

There were a number of Cavalier families of Parker name who came to America after the death of King Charles I (1649), and settled on the eastern shore and northern neck of Virginia. These are likely our ancestors.

Parkers are today found in every state, town and village of this country.

²⁶ See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Parker,_1st_Earl_of_Morley

²⁷ See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Parker,_1st_Earl_of_Macclesfield