John Lapsley Yantis

Pioneer of 1852

compiled by Stephenie Flora
oregonpioneers.com

Rev. John Lapsley Yantis
b. 14 Sep 1804 Garrard County, Kentucky
d. 26 May 1882 Saline County, Missouri
buried Pisgah Cemetery, Saline County, Missouri
s/o Col. John L. Yantis and Priscilla Lapsley

m. 21 Aug 1828 Lincoln County, Kentucky
Eliza Ann Markham Montgomery
b. 03 Dec 1807 Kentucky
d. 09 Apr 1884 Saline County, Missouri
buried Pisgah Cemetery, Saline County, Missouri

1850: Saline County, Missouri, November 8, 1850, John L. Yantis, 40, minister (OSP), $10,000, KY; Eliza A., 42, KY; Priscilla C., 17, KY; William L.B., 15, student, MO; Marshall L., 13, MO; Edward M., 10, MO; Elizabeth, 8, MO; Robert F., 3, MO; Alexander V., 1, MO; Rufus W. Finley, 26, professor, NC; Robertson Clark, 22, professor, NC

DLC: #350 Linn County, John L. Yantis born 1804 Garrard County, Kentucky; settled claim 07 Oct 1853; m'd Eliza Ann 21 Aug 1828 Lincoln County, Kentucky. Affidavit: James M. Yantis, James G. Junkin, W. P. Abrams

1860: Boyle County, Kentucky, June 9, 1860; J. L. Yantis, 55, minister OSP, $18,000 $1500, KY; Eliza A., 53, KY; W.L.B., 23, MO; Marshall L., 21, MO; Edward M., 19, MO; Elizabeth A., 17, MO; Robert A., 15, MO; A.V.C., 11, MO; Jas A., 9, MO

1870: Salt Pond Twp, Brownsville PO, Saline County, Missouri; July 1, 1870; John Yantis Sr, 63, minister, $10000 $300, KY; Eliza Ann, 62, keeping house, KY; Robert A., 23, no occupation, MO; James A., 19, railroad engineer, MO; Marshal, 32, sawyer, $1000 $300, MO; Nanna Mc, 24, no occupation, MO; Martha E, 3/12 (Feb), at home, MO; Sophia Stunken, 19, housekeeper, MO

1880: Brownsville, Saline County, Missouri; June 7, 1880; John L. Yantis, 75, preacher, KY VA VA; Lizzie A., 70, wife, keeping house, KY VA VA; V.C., 30, son, lawyer, MO KY KY; E.M., 39, son, preacher, MO KY KY; S.E., 9, grandson, MO MO KY; Kate H., 6, granddau, MO MO KY; John Hall, 4, grandson, MO MO KY; E.H., 2, granddau, MO MO KY

Children of John Yantis and Eliza Montgomery:
1. Priscilla Catherine Yantis
b. 1833 Kentucky
d.

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2. William Lapsley. Breckinridge Yantis
b. 1835 Missouri
d.

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3. John Marshall “Marsh” Yantis
b. 1837 Missouri
d.

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4. Edward Montgomery Yantis
b. 1840 Missouri
d. 06 Mar 1887 Saline County, Missouri
buried Pisgah Cemetery, Saline County, Missouri
m. Elizabeth Fauntleroy Martin 25 May 1870 Saline County, Missouri

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5. Elizabeth Ann Yanitis
b. 20 Mar 1842 Missouri
d. 30 Jan 1903 Saline County, Missouri
buried Fairview Cemetery, Sweet Springs, Saline County, Missouri
m. Rev. William Johnston Lapsley 02 Oct 1868 Saline County, Missouri

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6. Robert Franklin Yantis
b. 20 Feb 1847 Missouri
d. 14 Dec 1878 Saline County, Missouri
buried Pisgah Cemetery, Saline County, Missouri

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7. Alexander Van Court Yantis
b. 15 May 1849 Saline County, Missouri
d. 10 May 1914 Jasper County, Missouri
buried Maple Park Cemetery, Auroa, Lawrence County, Missouri
m. Sadie E. Kennedy 14 Sep 1881 Saline County, Missouri

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8. James Aull Yantis
b. 1851 Missouri
d. 18 May 1904 Sebastian County, Arkansas
buried Oak Cemetery, Fort Smith, Sebastian County, Arkansas
m. Lucy Ames Sparks 1886 Sebastian County, Arkansas

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Yantis, John Lapsley

Liberty Weekly Tribune, v. VII, no. 46, February 25, 1853, p. 1, col. 2-3,
City of Liberty, Clay County, Missouri
[Transcribed by Dianne Brenner with edits by Colin O'Neill.]

From the Warsaw Review
FROM OREGON

We offer our readers, as an apology for the lack of our usual variety of general reading, this week the publication of a lengthy and intensely interesting letter from Oregon, by the Rev. Mr. Yantis, addressed to Maj. James Dunn, of this vicinity. Its perusal will amply repay the reader, and those interested in the affairs of Oregon, or desirous of emigrating to that country, it will be doubly interesting. A vivid description of the route, country, climate, products, &c., &c., is given, in which implicit confidence may be placed. The letter follows:

Portland, Oregon Territory, Nov. 30, 1852.

My dear Brother: I fear you are beginning to grow impatient with my tardiness in writing to you; but you will fully excuse me when I tell you that, until within the last ten days, I have not been able to write or even read a line for nearly two months. One of the families of our train brought us an epidemic sore eye of the most malignant type, with which I was attacked not long after passing Fort Hall, and from which I am only now recovering.

I could give you a long chapter of incidents of travel, but I wish to fill my sheet with matter which may be more profitable. We reached this place, the largest town in the Territory, during the first week of October, after a travel of five months and a few days. At least one month of this time was consumed by harassing delays. We have reason to be profoundly thankful, that our family came safely through, having had no disaster and no case of alarming illness – others of our friends fared much worse. – We were greatly favored in the preservation of our stock; it is a remarkable fact that I did not loose a single ox from the three teams I set out with, or one which I bought on the road. This is owning partly to the excellence of my teamsters; (all of whom I selected from good families and were first rate young men) and partly to the constant supervision of my own eye; but mainly to the fact that I had the very best teams on the road. It would have gratified you to have seen the performance of my Osage cattle and to have heard the remarks made about them. I expect to get from $150 to $250 a yoke for the cattle I sell. I am satisfied now that cattle, such as you bought for me, can always be got through in good condition.

I have not been able to see much of the country, but I have seen enough to feel profoundly thankful to God that He has directed my footsteps to this lovely land. The only objections that I can see to the country are, first, that it rains too much in winter, and second, that it is so hard to get to. [v.__] The last of these objections does not effect me now, only as it will be in the way of many friends coming. It has been about a month since the rainy season set in, and I declare to you, I think I have seen more rain in twenty-four hours in Missouri, than I have seen here during the month. The rain descends to gently that unless you are watching you would not

know it frequently – no thunder, no lightning, no wind. – Then the remarkable events of temperature: it is cooler now than when we arrived, but when it got so, or how, I do not know. I am confident that the mercury has not passed over five degrees up or down the scale during any twenty-four hours since we have been in the Valley. The old settlers say that thus gradually the cold will increase till about Feb. 1, and then it will as gradually decline, till spring comes on in all her greenery and glory. I am delighted with the climate. I am pleased also with the clear evidence borne to the healthfulness of the country by every man's appearance whom I have seen in the country. They are the most vigorous and healthy looking men I ever saw, no dull, languid eye; no pale, sallow face; no heavy dull motion to be seen. I have not seen sickly, feeble, looking men in the Territory who has been here twelve months.

The extent and beauty of the country very far exceeds my expectations – this valley alone is said to be much more extensive than I had supposed, Then the Rogue River and Um[p]qua River Valley's to the South, the Puget Sound and Chehalis country to the North, and the [Klamnke?] &c., on the coast are opening, wide and exceedingly promising districts. I have not selected my location – from all I can learn I am strongly inclined to select near Marysville [note: now Corvallis], on the Willamette. This is the seat of the Territorial University; said to be a rich and beautiful country, adapted in a remarkable degree to the growth of wheat, oats, potatoes, melons; and the domestic fruits, such as apples, peaches, pears, quinces, plumbs, grapes &c., prosper here beyond anything we have known in the Western States.

Another charm this country possesses over any other I have known – you can sow your wheat at any time from June to March with certainty of a crop of from 20 to 35 and even 40 bushels, which you can harvest without haste and without fear of damage from a rainy spell, and then you can sell every bushel at from $1.50 to $3.00 per bushel. Potatoes here are at home, never saw such anywhere, from 150 bushels to 300, and even more are expected from an acre, they are now selling here at $2.00 per bushel. Turnips are finer both as to size and quality than I ever saw – what would you think to see a man give $1.00 for a bushel and have trouble of measuring take two turnips for his bushel? I have not seen this, but I have no doubt it has been done. I have given a dollar for three cabbage heads, and made better bargains than I have sometimes made in Missouri at five cents a head. Suffice it to say, that I never seen a country where the production was so abundant, where the laborer was so richly recompensed for his toil, or where it was so easy to live and thrive.

A man who can start with ten or twelve cows, can hardly fail to grow independent in a few years, having no other trouble to take than see after his cattle – no feeding to do. Now, these are things which I fully believe, after the most careful and diligent endeavor to know the truth.

If I were not here and knew all I do, I would get here some how, if I could. I advise no body to come, and there are many who ought not to think of coming – but I am glad I am here and I hope when I have to go hence to my last home, to rejoice that it is my privilege to leave my children here.

The storms gave us no trouble, and I have no doubt the wonderful tales we here on that subject, are pretty much gass. We suffered considerable from dust during the last month, because we started too late – our cattle never suffered

materially for want either of grass or water – those terrible tales of waterless deserts, are all stuff – mere stuff. The fact is we did not happen to come by the places where you had to let your cattle down perpendicular precipices of many hundred feet by the tail! – or where your tongue would swell with thirst till you had to find room for it out of doors. We saw no great marvels, made no hair breadth escapes, and we do not feel that we deserve a high place on the roll of fame, as heroes or heroines. The fact is, that coming to Oregon, is a very plain, matter of fact sort of business, in which the adventures are few, and from which the wonders all vanish, just before you get to see them. As to the road, you may have some idea of it, when I tell you that my most unruly team was driven every alternate day by a 15 year old black boy, who regularly took a nap of two or three hours every day, and yet, in all our train there was not a single upsetting all the way. It is amusing to think of some of the terrible anticipations which almost deterred me from making the trip. One of these it is laughable to remember, viz: The crossing of South Platte, a stream full half a mile wide, and muddy and tumultuous as the Missouri – this stream had to be forded and the bottom was one wide spread quicksand, on which, if wagon or horse should stop, it 'were wo worth the chase [?]' to it. Well the fact is, the South Platte is full half a mile wide, muddy and mad, but there is about as much to alarm in crossing it as in crossing Cole Camp, or little Tebo, in July. I remember that about the middle of the stream I dropped the whip from the stock and had the temerity to risk every thing and jump out to save it, when the waters of the hissing, rushing stream came all the way up to my ankles! So of many of the awful passages you have to make.

There is generally, more or less disease, almost always a very manageable diarrhea, some slight fevers, &c., &c.

It may be of service to give some directions as to the preparations, &c., necessary to be made. If I were yet to come, I would be careful as to the wagons I would bring. I found by experience that there is often at least the difference of a good yoke of steers, in wagons of the same burden. The Chicago wagons are the best. I would have at least five yoke of steers, and two of cows to each wagon, using four yoke at a time, and I would not start with a steer about which I felt any fears. I would have my wagon cloths so fixed at the ends and sides as that rain could not beat in and so that they could be easily drawn up to admit the air; I would have my yokes lines with lead or zink to keep from galling; I would get some 300 ox shoe nails, (half the size of horse shoe nails) and a few iron shoes; I would use stout harness leather for shoeing the lighter cattle; I would have one wagon body made very tight to ferry in, (the simplest thing in the world) otherwise there is great imposition; I would get Walker's guide to Oregon; I would put up with my provisions several hams of bacon, and several of venison to serve in case of sickness; I would get my family physician to put up my medicine, and if I had a son-in-law who was a physician, I would bring him along if I could; I would lay in a good stock of patience and perseverance; I would commit myself and family to God with prayer and fasting; set out by the 15th of April if possible, not later than the 20th; travel regularly, consulting the capabilities of my cattle; and then, resting every Sabbath; I would make the journey; I would endeavor to be as near ahead, as possible, so as to get the best grass, to avoid dust and epidemic diseases, and I would try to get to the Cascade Mountains by the 10th of September, and would cross the mountain instead of coming by [T]he Dalles. There is more expense, more trouble, more danger to

persons and stock, more delay and more vexation from [T]he Dalles to this place, than in the rest of the journey. *Mark that well.*

* * * *

I would bring at least two pounds of Gum Arabic [pulverized.] with which to clear coffee; it is an excellent preventative used in this way, against bowel complaint.

Very affectionately yours, J.L. Yantis.

LETTER FROM OREGON.

On Saturday last, we had the pleasure of receiving a letter from our old and esteemed friend, Rev. J. L. YANTIS. The letter was just three months and six days on its passage.

We regret to learn that Mr. YANTIS has been suffering from sore eyes for near fourteen months. That during most of this time has been wholly unable to read or write. He has sustained some heavy pecuniary losses, and says that owing to the great influx of population during the past year (1853) when the country was unprepared for it, provisions of all kind were exorbitantly high.

Mr. Y. promises as soon as he shall be able to write, to become a regular correspondent for the Express.

He says that Oregon possesses some advantages over every other country that he has ever seen.

Heartily do we sympathise with our ancient friend in his afflictions, and hope that ere he shall receive this acknowledgement of his kind letter, that he will have fully recovered from this distressing malady.

[Lexington Weekly Express and Union, Lexington, Missouri, Wednesday, February 15, 1854, p. 2]

His oldest son, Rev. John Lapsley Yantis, D. D., was born September 14, 1801. He began the study of medicine with Dr. Paulding of Harrodsburg. His medical education was almost completed when, having become a member of the Presbyterian Church, he determined to consecrate his life to the ministry of Christ. He studied theology under his uncle, Dr. Robert Armstrong Lapsley, with the intention of completing the work of preparation for the pulpit at Princeton Theological Seminary. By too close application to books, his health was seriously impaired, and he was compelled to finish his studies in private. On August 21, 1828, he married Eliza Ann Markham Montgomery, daughter of Colonel James Montgomery, of Lincoln County, and grand-daughter of Markham Marshall, who was an uncle of the illustrious Chief Justice Marshall. Dr. Yantis was licensed to preach in April, 1829, and was ordained a minister of the Gospel in the fall of 1830. He preached at Stanford and Lancaster until 1833, when he removed to Missouri, whither his father and father-in-law had preceded him. Here he entered upon that career which has indissolubly linked his name with the history of Presbyterianism in Missouri, and made him celebrated throughout the State as a brilliant, earnest and fearless preacher of God's word. The pioneer of his church in Missouri for many years, his history is that of Presbyterianism in his adopted State. He organized the churches of Kansas City, Westport, Lexington, Fulton, Liberty, and many others in Western Missouri. From 1841 to 1848, he was pastor of the Lexington

church, and during part of this time was register of the United States land office. On account of ill health he removed to the Sweet Springs, in Saline County, which he purchased, and in the fall of 1848, opened there a boarding school for boys. In 1852, Dr. Yantis, in company with his three brothers and his brother-in-law, Dr. Nathaniel Ostrander, undertook an overland journey with their families to Oregon. Dr. Yantis preached all over the Willamette Valley, and returned to Missouri in 1855, to assume the presidency of Richmond College. He also preached to the Richmond church. Four years later he accepted a call to the Presbyterian Church at Danville, Kentucky. Here he remained until the breaking out of the war in 1861, when he returned to his home at Sweet Springs. During the war he was an ardent Southern sympathizer, and three of his sons served in the Confederate army. In 1865 he took charge of the Westport church, and, soon afterwards of the church at Kansas City. During the stormy years that followed the close of the war, Dr. Yantis was one of the ablest champions of the Southern Presbyterian Church, and, in the unflinching courage with which he fought his battles, showed the splendid fighting qualities of his ancestors. A powerful debater, he always took a leading part in the proceedings of the Synods and General Assemblies. In 1867 he returned to his old home at Sweet Springs, where he continued to reside until his death on May 28, 1884. During this period he preached to the churches of Waverly, Marshall, St. Joseph, Brownsville and Prairie. The most

conspicuous traits of Dr. Yantis' character were his frankness, modesty and courage. Never forgetting the sacredness of his calling, he was full of a quiet, comical humor that made him one of the most companionable of men. Imbued with the true spirit of Southern courtesy, he commanded the respect and admiration of friends and foes alike; while his classic grace of diction, his wonderful skill in debate, and his scholarly address made him one of the most popular preachers of his day.

[US Family History Books, ancestry.com, Lehi, Utah 2025 excerpt from full article]