

W. Ezekiel Blanks & Temperance Riley
of
Orange County, North Carolina,
Greene County, Georgia,
Alabama,
&
Hillsboro, Union County, Arkansas

by Timothy Dean Hudson

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Introduction

Ezekiel Blanks grew up in southern Greene County, Georgia. Other than his parents' brief foray into the rich Oconee River Valley when he was a toddler, he lived there until his mid-thirties. Zekiel lost his mother when he was eleven and father when he was eighteen. Afterwards, he lived with his maternal aunt and her husband.

Temperance Riley was born in Orange County, North Carolina, located in the central portion of the state just south of the Virginia line. While most of her father's siblings immigrated to Greene County, Georgia in the 1790s, her family remained in the Tar Heel State until several years after the 1812 death of her grandfather, Jacob Riley. When Tempey was fourteen, her family settled along Richland Creek in Greene County, southwest of the county seat of Greensborough. In the 1820s, she married twice and had one son who survived infancy, but both of her husbands died shortly after their marriages. About 1828, now a single mother with a toddler and no means of supporting herself, Tempey moved back in with her father, Peter Riley.

Temperance's first cousin, Thomas Riley, had moved to Greene County about 1795 with his father, Peter's brother, Revolutionary War veteran John Riley. Thomas became a successful planter, and in 1808, he married Ezekiel's aunt. After Zekiel was orphaned at the age of eighteen, Thomas served as his guardian. Acquainted through these family connections, Tempey and Zekiel married in March 1832, when he was twenty-seven and she, thirty.

After their marriage, Ezekiel Blanks and Temperance Riley settled in Greene County, where he presumably farmed. An 1837 controversy with a neighbor resulted in criminal charges against Zekiel, but when the case came to trial, the jury exonerated him. The following year, Zekiel and his father-in-law had a squabble that dragged their family business before the county courts. After lingering in the legal system for a year, they resolved their disagreement to the court's satisfaction.

These disputes, plus the economic hardships associated with the Panic of 1837, probably formed the impetus for Zekiel and Tempey to emigrate from Georgia in late 1839. After a few years in central Alabama, they moved farther westward to the village of Hillsboro, Johnson Township, southern Union County, Arkansas, a very remote region located just north of the Louisiana state line. They spent the remainder of their lives there as cotton farmers.

Ezekiel Blanks' father, Capt. William Blanks, and maternal grandfather, Capt. John Hill, both fell into the upper-middle class strata of Georgian society, as did Temperance's father, Peter Riley. The latter three men owned large farms along Beaverdam and Richland Creeks in southern Greene County, a region of extremely agriculturally rich farmland that produced significant amounts of cotton. However, the deaths of the elder Blanks and Hill and distribution of their estates left Zekiel

with limited financial backing after he was orphaned at eighteen years of age. Meanwhile, Peter Riley had a second family to provide for, and in the typical standards of the day, when planning for his eventual demise, he divided his valuable farm among his sons, leaving other property to his daughters.

These circumstances helped dictate Ezekiel and Temperance's decidedly middle-class lifestyle, one that fell somewhat below that of their parents'. They owned no real estate in Georgia or Alabama, but several years after settling in south Arkansas, Zekiel had accumulated sufficient funds to pay \$200 in cash to the State of Arkansas for a 160-acre farm. He grew cotton as his cash crop and corn to feed his family and livestock, but financial hardships forced him to sell his farm in 1855 to pay his debts. Afterwards, he settled next to his married daughter and cultivated land belonging to the father of his son-in-law. Ezekiel Blanks died in 1864 at the young age of only fifty-eight.

Temperance Riley remained a widow for the next three decades. She and Ezekiel had six daughters, but tragically, four of them died young. In 1866, their youngest surviving daughter married, and Tempey spent the rest of her life living with her son, Seborn Robins, a widower whose wife died childless in the 1850s. He acquired a small farm near Tempey's married daughters and near the Olive Branch Methodist Church where they all attended services. Tempey and her son died within two weeks of each other in 1894.

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Ezekiel Blanks: Early Years Along the Oconee River in Eastern Georgia

W. Ezekiel Blanks was born on 31 August 1805 in Greene County, Georgia [1], the son of Capt. William Blanks [2] and his second wife, Jane, the daughter of [Capt. John Hill](#) [3]. Zekiel had strong Patriot roots on both sides of his family. His father was born about 1755 in Halifax County, Virginia to Henry and Naomi Blanks [4]. During the Revolutionary War, William Blanks moved south into North Carolina, where he commanded a company of Craven County Militia that served under Col. Richard Caswell in the early months of 1780 [5]. In June 1780, "*Capt. W^m Blanks's Comp^y*" received payment by United States Paymaster Joshua Blount for service by the officers and soldiers in the North Carolina Brigade [6]. After the Revolution, Capt. Blanks returned to Virginia and married in 1782 [7], but by 1785 he had settled in Wilkes County, Georgia along with his brother, James.

Ezekiel Blanks's maternal grandfather, [Capt. John Hill](#), had arrived in the "*Ceded Lands*," later Wilkes County, Georgia, in the early 1770s. As the British instigated the Creeks to attack Patriot settlers in Georgia during the Revolutionary War, Hill took his family to Randolph County, North Carolina about late 1779. Hill's stepson, Joseph Newton, later stated that "*this move was made in order to get rid of the Tories & Indians.*" About September 1780, John Hill began recruiting soldiers to serve in a militia company. Capt. Hill's company participated in the action at the Battle of Cowan's Ford and then the Patriot disaster at Torrence's Tavern on 1 February 1781. Capt. Hill's company regrouped and fought at the Battle of Guilford Courthouse on March 15th. After that battle, Gen. Nathanael Greene ordered the North Carolina Militia discharged, and Capt. Hill issued discharges to his men. Hill's stepson said,

...notwithstanding we had received our discharges we were persuaded by our Capt. Hill to continue together for our own safety and that of the Country through which we had to travel, as the whole country was infested by the Tories, this was in the year 1781...

Newton said that "*we returned to the State of South Carolina on our way to the State of Georgia, where this deponent left his Stepfather & Mother and proceeded on to the State of Georgia*" [8].

On 6 June 1785, Capt. John Hill received a warrant for an 862½-acre tract of land as payment for his services as militia captain during the war. [Gen. Samuel Elbert](#) and [Col. Elijah Clarke](#) both signed Hill's warrant [9]. Hill's vast tract of land lay in northern Washington County, a region that became Greene County, Georgia in February 1786. Hill and his family lived on his farm on Richland Creek until his death in late 1817.

Ezekiel's father, Capt. William Blanks, obtained a small tract of land in Wilkes County upon his arrival there about 1783 or 1784. He paid taxes on 52 acres of land in 1785 and on 80 acres in both 1786 and 1787 [10]. At the church conference of the Phillips Mill Baptist Church on Little River in

Wilkes County held on 12 May 1787, "*Moriah*" Blanks joined the church, followed by William Blanks a few months later, on August 10th. Both Blanks and his wife joined "*by experience*," or by experience of faith, with baptism following shortly afterwards [11]. On 18 February 1788, William Blanks witnessed a land transaction along with Meshack Turner, another member of Phillips Mill Baptist Church. The pair appeared in court on 7 August 1788 to make an affidavit that they had witnessed the February transaction [12].

At the Phillips Mill Church conference held on 11 December 1790, John Robertson charged William Blanks with swearing, but since he was absent, the church cited Blanks to appear at the next church conference. Blanks did not attend either of the next two conferences on January 8th or February 11th, 1791, probably since he had already moved from Wilkes to Greene County, Georgia. Clearly annoyed, church members criticized Blanks for "*neglecting to hear the church when requested to do so*." At the conference held on 12 March 1791, the church finally resolved the issue. The minutes of that conference recorded that

Brother William Blanks, for taking God's name in vain and neglecting to hear the church, is excommunicated.

Several years later, on 7 April 1798, the Phillips Mill Church dismissed Mariah Blanks along with several other members described as "*having for several years been absent and removed without letters*." William and Mariah Blanks had already settled in Greene County by 1791, and Mariah had probably already died before the church dismissed her in 1798 [13].

On 2 February 1791, William Blanks of Greene County sold a 150-acre tract of land on the fork of the Ogeechee River to Bennett Posey [14]. The transaction in which Blanks had obtained this land was not recorded, but he must have purchased it between 1788 and 1790, as he did not pay taxes on it in 1788 or 1789 [15].

William Blanks' precise occupation for the next fifteen years is uncertain. Tax records between 1793 and 1805 show him paying only his own poll tax and owning no property. This could imply that he could not afford to purchase his own land, and he either farmed rented land or worked as a farm laborer. However, since later records suggest he was a man of some means, and he may have engaged in an occupation other than farming during this period [16].

William Blanks' first wife died by the latter 1790s, and on 25 September 1799, William Blanks married Jane, the daughter of Capt. John Hill of Greene County, Georgia [17]. We know very little about Jane. Her birth must have occurred between 1775 and 1785, either in Georgia or possibly in North Carolina, where her parents evacuated during the 1779–1781 violence that enveloped Wilkes County, Georgia during the Revolutionary War.

In 1805, the year of Ezekiel's birth, William Blanks drew a 202½-acre tract of land in the first of Georgia's many land lotteries, the unique system by which the State dispersed lands acquired from the Creek and Cherokee Indians to settlers. The State of Georgia officially issued the elder Blanks a patent for his land in September 1805 [18]. The 1805 Land Lottery resulted in a land rush into the rich Oconee River Valley formerly occupied by the Creek Indians, and Ezekiel undoubtedly moved with his parents across the Oconee River into Baldwin County and settled on their new farm on Fishing Creek. Ezekiel's maternal uncles, Robert and Joseph Logan Hill, moved with them to Baldwin County, and Joseph L. Hill bought a farm that adjoined the Blanks'. William Blanks appears to have successfully operated his new farm in the rich Oconee Valley between 1807 and 1811 [19].

In late 1811 or early 1812, William Blanks sold his Baldwin County farm and moved his family back to Greene County. He only paid his poll tax for 1812, but by 1813, he had settled on a 220-acre tract of land near the Oconee River in western Greene County and paid taxes on it through 1815 [20]. On 6 May 1816, Blanks appeared before the Greene County Justices, including his brother-in-law, Thomas Riley, to petition for a survey for a 25-acre tract of land adjoining his own land [21]. He had apparently not officially obtained a title to his 220 acres yet, so on 28 October 1816, Blanks had a deed recorded showing him purchasing his farm from William Armor for \$650 [22]. The very next month, on November 20th, the State of Georgia issued him a patent based upon his warrant obtained the previous May. However, upon survey, the tract consisted of a mere six acres [23]. William Blanks must have developed his property into a valuable farm, for he sold it for \$1500 on 18 April 1818 [24].

On 26 October 1818, six months after selling his land along the Oconee River, Blanks paid \$1000 to Jacob Peeler for a 102.9-acre tract of land along Richland Creek [25]. Two years later, on 28 December 1820, William Blanks made three land transactions. He paid \$1000 to Matthew Houghton for a 200-acre tract of land, and another \$1000 to John Mann for an adjoining 110-acre tract of land on Beaverdam Creek. In his third transaction that day, Blanks paid Thomas Bell \$20 for an adjoining 4.7-acre tract of land on Beaverdam [26].

Beaverdam Creek lies in southern Greene County, flowing from its headwaters just east of the county seat of Greenesborough (later Greenesboro, and now, Greensboro) along a southwesterly course to its intersection with Richland Creek. William Blanks must have sold part of the 417.9 acres he had purchased in southern Greene County, for by 1822, he only paid taxes on a 294-acre tract of land on Beaverdam Creek [27].

His parents' migrations show that after his birth in Greene County, Ezekiel Blanks moved as an infant into the newly created Baldwin County, returning to Greene when he was about six years old. Afterwards, he must have grown up on his father's farms in southwestern Greene along the Oconee River and Beaverdam Creek. In about 1816 or 1817, when he was about eleven, Ezekiel's mother died, and his maternal grandfather, Capt. John Hill, died between August 1817 and January 1818 [28]. Within a few years, William Blanks remarried to Nancy, a woman considerably younger than he. In fact, Nancy was born only a few years older than Ezekiel, making her around forty years younger than her husband.

William Blanks died in late 1823, when Ezekiel was eighteen years old [29]. As a minor standing to inherit property, Zekiel needed a guardian. Given his age, the Greene County Inferior Court allowed him to choose his own guardian. On 10 January 1825,

Ezekiel Blanks orphan of William Blanks over 14 years of age came in person in Open Court and made choice of Thomas Riley as his Guardian. Whereupon it [is] ordered that he be appointed accordingly and that he give bond and security in the sum of one thousand dollars for the faithful performance of his Guardianship and that Jacob Riley be receivd [sic] as his security on said Guardianship.

Riley appeared with Blanks before the court that day and posted \$1000 bond to secure his service as Ezekiel Blanks' guardian. Thomas' brother, Jacob Riley, served as his security on the bond [30]. Thomas Riley was Ezekiel's uncle, for in 1808, he had married Sarah Hill, the sister of Ezekiel's mother, Jane [31].

William Blanks had three known children by his first wife who survived to adulthood, including one son, Joseph Blanks, who died as a young man, either about the same time as his father or soon afterwards. Joseph's administrator held a sale of his property on 3 March 1825. At the sale, Ezekiel Blanks bought his older brother's horse for \$70 [32].

Ezekiel Blanks had fortunate draws in two of Georgia's land lotteries, the unique means by which Georgia dispersed land acquired from the Creek and Cherokee to citizens. As a single young man over the age of twenty-one, he registered in 1826 as a resident of Robins' District, Greene County, for the lottery to be held in 1827. At the drawing, his entry was selected for a 202½-lot of land in Lee County [33]. Zekiel owned the tract from the date of the drawing in 1827, paying taxes on it in both 1827 [34] and 1828 [35]. However, the State of Georgia did not issue him a grant for the land in Lee County until 7 August 1834 [36]. Given that Lee County lay in southwestern Georgia, a great distance from his residence in Greene County, Blanks probably never even visited his land. The early records of Lee were destroyed, so we have no record of his disposing of the

property. It appears that he sold it by 1834, probably even before he had received his formal grant of the tract from the state.

Zekiel Blanks' aunt, Sally Hill Riley, died between 1825 and 1830. Given that Thomas Riley served as his guardian, Blanks was probably one of the younger males living in Riley's 1830 Greene County household [37]. Thomas Riley himself died at his Greene County home on 21 November 1830 at about forty-five years. At his estate sale held on 21 February 1831, Ezekiel Blanks bought only one minor item: he paid 6¼¢ for one "*Baging Needle*" [38].

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Temperance Riley: Growing Up in North Carolina & Georgia

Temperance Riley (Tempey) was born on 15 April 1802 in North Carolina [1], the daughter of [Peter Riley](#) and Elizabeth Woods [2]. Tempey's birth presumably occurred in Orange County, where her grandfather, Jacob Riley, had settled in the early 1750s. Her father and grandfather's households were omitted from the 1800 federal census enumeration of Orange County, but other records show Peter Riley resided in Orange County through 1804 [3].

In late 1804, Tempey's parents moved from North Carolina to Greene County, Georgia to join Peter Riley's siblings, Mary Riley Gray, Catherine Riley Findley, and John Riley, who had settled there about 1793. In 1805, Peter lived in Capt. Dawson's District near his siblings. He paid his own poll tax and taxes on two slaves [4]. Soon after his arrival in Georgia, Peter Riley obtained a 122-acre tract of land on the Ogeechee River.

Tempey's grandfather, Jacob Riley, remained in Orange County, North Carolina, and on 28 November 1804,

...for and in Consideration of the natural love and affection which he hath and beareth unto his said Son Peter Riley as also for the better support maintainance [sic] and preferment of him the said Peter Riley...

Jacob gave Peter the 150-acre tract of land in Orange County, North Carolina "whereon the said Jacob Riley now lives" [5]. Instead of permanently remaining in Georgia with his siblings, Peter decided to return to North Carolina to their family farm. On 25 October 1805, as a Greene County resident, he sold his 122-acre tract of land in Greene County, Georgia for \$200 [6]. It is impossible to say with any degree of certainty that Temperance moved with her father to Greene County, Georgia as a toddler, for Peter could have left his young children in North Carolina with his parents during his brief foray to Georgia. However, his purchase of land in Georgia suggests that he initially intended to remain there, and he probably took Elizabeth and their young children along on the journey.

After selling his Georgia land in October 1805, Peter Riley then returned to Orange County, North Carolina, where he operated his father's old farm until several years after Jacob's death in 1812 [7]. On 27 July 1816, Peter Riley sold his 168-acre farm in Orange County for \$1320 and finally moved to Greene County, Georgia [8]. They had arrived in Georgia by 22 May 1817, when he paid \$1000 to Thomas Ware for a 194-acre tract of land located on Richland Creek, several miles south of Greensborough, the county seat. Peter's nephew, Joseph Riley, witnessed the transaction [9].

On 4 December 1821, at the age of nineteen, Tempey Riley married Thomas Deviney in Greene County, Georgia [10]. Deviney presumably died within a few years of their marriage, for on 8 January 1827, Tempey had a son, Seborn Robins [11]. No marriage record for Tempey and a Robins man has been located in Georgia, but the fact that her son went by the name of "*Seborn Robins*" throughout his adult life strongly suggests that she was married to Seborn's father prior to his birth. A few years later, Temperance was owed a debt by William Robins, son of Sarah Robins. The nature of the debt is unknown, but in 1849, Sarah Robins left a bequest to the heir or heirs of her deceased son, Thomas Robins. It is possible that he was the father of Temperance's son [12].

By 1828, Temperance Riley was "*solely & unmarried*" with a young toddler to care for, and she moved in with her father [13]. Peter Riley's 1830 Greene County household enumeration shows a young adult female and young boy the ages of Tempey and Seborn [14].

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1830s: Marriage & Conflicts

On 1 March 1832, Ezekiel Blanks married Temperance Riley, the first cousin of his uncle and former guardian, Thomas Riley. On their marriage license, the clerk recorded his name as *"Zekiel Blanks"* and hers as *"Temperence Leviney,"* presumably a corruption of *"Deviney,"* her first husband's surname. If she had legally married her son's father and he died shortly afterwards, then her legal name should have been *"Temperence Robins."* It is not clear if this were merely a clerical error, or if she never actually married her son's father [1].

As a married man, Ezekiel could register for the 1832 Land Lotteries even though he had a fortunate entry in a previous land lottery. In the Cherokee Lottery, he was again a winner, drawing a 40-acre tract located in the northwestern portion of Georgia. In 1834, Ezekiel paid taxes on his 40 acres, described as 3rd quality land in Cherokee County [2]. Georgia did not issue him a grant for his land until 19 May 1837 [3]. It lay in the portion of Cherokee that became Paulding County, but like Lee's records, those of Paulding County do not exist, so we have no record of his selling the property. However, in 1837, Ezekiel only paid his own white poll tax, so he must have already sold his tract in Paulding [4].

For the first seven years after their marriage, Ezekiel and Temperance Blanks farmed in Greene County. In 1834, he paid his taxes in Militia District #161, living near his first cousin, William Askew, and Tempey's brother-in-law, Robert F. Griffin. In 1837, he paid taxes in Militia District #163, where his father-in-law, Peter Riley, had lived until he sold his farm to Askew the previous year [5]. Both districts lay in southwestern Greene County, extending along Richland Creek from the outskirts of Greensborough southward to its juncture with the Oconee River.

Between 1837 and 1839, Ezekiel Blanks became embroiled in several unpleasant conflicts that put his personal business on display before the Greene County Superior Court. The first involved allegations made against him by a neighbor, accusations that resulted in Greene County officials accusing Blanks of committing several crimes. The second details an unfortunate quarrel with his father-in-law over money that he supposedly owed to Temperance. This family drama may ultimately have contributed to their decision to emigrate from Georgia in late 1839.

The legal action began in early 1837, when one of Ezekiel Blanks' neighbors claimed that he conspired to steal a \$100 banknote. The neighbor, Nathan Winfield, alleged that on 15 December 1836, *"...at the dwelling house of him the said Ezekiel Blanks...with force and Arms,"* Blanks took a banknote

...the property of one Nathan Winfield of said County then and there being in the possession of a certain Negro man Slave named Simon the property of said Nathan Winfield the said Ezekiel

Blanks then and there did receive of said Negro man Slave said Bank note without written permission from the said Nathan Winfield the Owner of said Slave or any other person authorized to give such permission authorizing said Negro man Slave to sell & dispose of said Bank note to the great damage of him the said Nathan Winfield Contrary to the laws of said State, the good order peace & dignity thereof.

Winfield next accused Blanks of committing “*Simple Larceny*” on December 18th and “*Larceny from the House*,” on December 20th, with the latter two incidents occurring at Winfield’s house. The two larceny charges were otherwise identical, with Winfield claiming that

...the said Ezekiel Blanks...at the dwelling house of...Nathan Winfield...with force and Arms [took] one Bank note...the property of him...Nathan Winfield then and there being found in the possession wrongfully frauduently [sic] & feloniously did Steal take & carry away without the Consent of him the said Nathan Winfield and to the great damage of the said Nathan Winfield Contrary to the laws of said State the good order peace and dignity there.

Winfield’s testimony gave a detailed description of the banknote allegedly taken by Blanks in all three incidents. It was Bank of Augusta banknote #257, for \$100, dated 5 April 1836, and signed by bank President John Moore and bank Cashier Robert F. Poe. Such banknotes were regarded as legal tender and the equivalent of cash [6].

Born about 1770, Nathan Winfield married in Oglethorpe County in 1797 and then settled in Greene County by 1803 [7]. He lived near Peter Riley, Blanks’ father-in-law, in 1830, and in 1834, Winfield paid taxes on thirteen slaves and on his 442-acre farm on Beaverdam Creek near Richland Creek. Winfield in the same area that Ezekiel Blanks lived in 1837 [8].

The court records indicate that Blanks and Winfield had a disagreement over a debt that focused on the \$100 banknote. The series of disagreements lasted at least from December 15th through the 20th, with incidents at both Blanks’ and Winfield’s houses. The precise distinction between the two larceny charges on the 18th and 20th is unclear.

The Greene County Superior Court opened their first session of 1837 on March 13th by impaneling a grand jury [9]. Several days later, on Thursday, March 16th, Solicitor General Richard O. Davidson appeared with Nathan Winfield before the grand jury to present the charges against Ezekiel Blanks. Based upon Winfield’s testimony, the grand jury reported three true bills against Blanks, a misdemeanor for allegedly taking the banknote from Simon at Blanks’ own house on December 15th, and two felonies, “*Simple Larceny*” for taking the banknote from Winfield’s house on the 18th and “*Larceny from the House*” for again taking the note from Winfield’s house on the 20th. Based upon the true bills against him, either the Greene County sheriff or a deputy presumably arrested Blanks that day.

Either later on Thursday, the 16th or Friday, March 17th, officials impaneled a jury of twelve men to hear the three cases, "*The State vs. Ezekiel Blanks*," and the jury heard testimony in the cases. Although the court proceedings gave detailed descriptions of Winfield's accusations against Blanks made before the grand jury, they recorded no details of the testimony of either Blanks or anyone else made in his defense at the trial. On March 17th, jury foreman Wiley M. White reported identical verdicts in all three cases against Blanks: "*We the Jury find the defendant not Guilty*" [10].

The next year, a dispute that Ezekiel Blanks had with his father-in-law over money that Riley supposedly owed to Temperance became public knowledge. Riley repeatedly refused to pay them money, and Blanks filed a lawsuit against Riley. Although court records can be difficult to interpret, they suggest that Zekiel himself pressed the matter against Riley, even though his attorneys included Temperance as one of the plaintiffs.

By mid-1838, Ezekiel and Temperance Blanks were in their mid-thirties and had been married for six years. In addition to Tempey's son, aged eleven years, they had two young daughters aged five and three years, and Tempey was pregnant, delivering her third daughter on September 22nd. Meanwhile, her father, Peter Riley, was in his sixties, married to his second wife, Nancy Finley, a woman only about three years older than Tempey. Peter and Nancy had one young son, born the same year as Tempey's eldest daughter.

On 19 August 1838, Greene County attorneys Francis H. Cone and Y. P. King filed a lawsuit against Peter Riley with the Greene County Superior Court on behalf of "*Ezekiel Blanks & Temperance Blanks his Wife formerly Temperance Riley*." They alleged that Peter Riley "*owes and from your Petitioners unjustly detains*" a total of \$200 plus interest. Their attorneys filed this as an action of "*assumpsit*," an implied promise or contract that had been breached.

The petition claimed that on 5 March 1831, while Temperance was "*solely & unmarried*," her father received \$100 from the late Irbane Leonard, who paid the money to Riley on behalf of William Robins, who was indebted to Tempey [11]. The Blanks claimed that Peter "*borrowed*" the money from Tempey and that he

...then and there promised and agreed to hold and keep the said sum of money for [Temperance]...untill [sic] she called for it at which time...when called for he the said Peter was to give your Petitioner a good note or the money with interest.

Blanks' petition averred that on 1 June 1838, the \$100 plus interest

...was demanded of the said Peter who then and there failed and refused to pay the same or any part thereof or to give your petitioners a good note...

By his refusal, they claimed that Riley breached his verbal contract, since he had previously “*faithfully promised your Petitioner*” to pay her when requested. Next, Blanks’ attorneys claimed that also on 5 March 1831, Peter Riley borrowed another \$100 from

...Temperance whilst She was Sole & unmarried and being so indebted he the said Peter undertook and then & there promised to hold & keep said sum of money untill [sic]...Temperance wanted or Called for it at which time...when called for the said Peter was to pay it or give a good note for it...

As with the first sum, they stated that on 1 June 1838, the \$100 plus interest “*was demanded of the said Peter who then and there failed and refused to pay*” any part of the sum. The petition stated that Riley,

Although so indebted and often thereto requested hath not paid the same nor any part thereof but...hath hitherto refused and still doth refuse to the damage of your petitioner three hundred dollars.

Since Blanks’ attorneys detailed two separate sums of \$100 that Peter Riley borrowed from his daughter, it is unclear how they arrived at total damages of \$300, a sum much larger than the \$200 plus the accrued interest.

Upon their attorneys filing the “*action of assumpsit*” with the Greene County Superior Court on 19 August 1838, Judge John G. Polhill ordered that Peter Riley be summoned to appear before the Court in September. On August 23rd, Deputy Sheriff William L. Skain left a copy of the summons for Peter Riley “*at his noted place of abode.*”

Peter Riley’s attorneys, Thomas F. Foster and Henry Sanford, filed Riley’s answer to the Blanks’ petition at the September 1838 session of the Greene County Superior Court. They acknowledged Riley’s receipt of the declaration but filed a cause of exception, arguing

...that the said action is brought in the Joint names of Ezekiel Blanks & Temperance Blanks his Wife when the right of action if any exists[s] is in the said Ezekiel Blanks alone and therefore there is a misjoinder of plaintiffs wherefore this defendant prays that said writ may be quashed.

To answer the Blanks’ declaration, Riley stated that

...he never did assume [or] promised [sic] in manner & form as the plaintiffs hath declared against him and of this he puts himself upon the County &c.

Furthermore, Riley stated that he

...admits that he may have owed the plaintiff one cent but says & pleads that said Plff. Ezekiel Blanks was indebted to this defendant in a much larger sum to wit in the Sum of Two hundred and twenty dollars according to an account & Bill of particulars hereto annexed which the said defendant pleads as a sett [sic] off and on the trial of said case will insist on a Judgement for the amount due him and this he is ready to Verify and prays Judgement & also puts himself upon the County.

Finally, Riley stated that “...if he ever did assume and promise as...” the Blanks’ lawsuit claimed, then “such assumption & promises were not made within four years” before filing of their suit. Thus, such action is “bound by a Statute of limitation.”

Along with his reply to Blanks’ lawsuit, Peter Riley’s attorneys filed the following account showing the debt that he claimed Blanks owned him:

Bill of Particulars above refered [sic] to

Ezekiel Blanks To Peter Riley

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| <i>1836 Jany 1. To board of his Wife the Said Temperance while Sole & unmarried for three years @ \$60 P. year</i> | <i>\$180.00</i> |
| <i>1837 Jany 1. To Cash paid to J. Coley for eight hogs</i> | <i>40.00</i> |
| | <i>\$220.00</i> |

Riley’s submitting a bill for caring for his own daughter, then widowed and with a young son, for the period in which she was unmarried seemingly reveals a complete breakdown in familial relations between Blanks and his father-in-law. It conflicts with other records that portray Peter Riley as a caring father who provided for his adult children and orphaned grandchildren.

The Superior Court took no additional action on the case at their September 1838 term after Riley’s attorneys filed their answer. When the case appeared on the court’s docket at the March 1839 term, they issued a continuance until the next session. At the September 1839 court session, the case appeared on the Superior Court docket on March 14th. Both the court minutes and proceedings merely mark the case as “*Settled*,” without recording any specific details of the settlement [12].

By the fall of 1839, Ezekiel Blanks had decided to emigrate from Georgia. Besides the resolution of his legal dispute with his father-in-law, he also finalized his other legal obligations. On September 27th, for an unspecified sum, he assigned his right and interest in his father’s old farm on Beaverdam Creek, now part of the dower of his stepmother, Nancy Blanks, to John G. Gaston, the husband of his younger sister, Martha P. Blanks. The original document shows that Ezekiel made his mark to it, indicating his lack of formal education as a child [13].

Shortly afterwards, Ezekiel and Temperance Blanks emigrated from Georgia. They headed westward, probably along the only available pathway at that time, the Federal Road, which connected Milledgeville, Georgia to central Alabama. In mid-1840, they lived in Perry County, where their household was enumerated on the federal census. Tempey’s son, Seborn Robins, was not enumerated in their household, which consisted only of Ezekiel, Tempey, and their three young daughters, with no one in the household engaging in agriculture.

Zekiel and Tempey did not remain long in Perry County and soon moved into neighboring Dallas County. On 1 October 1842, Temperance Blanks engaged in a transaction with Mr. William Seawell, who had resided in Perry County in 1840 [14]. On that day, Seawell sold and delivered to

...Temperance Blanks Wife of Ezekiel Blanks a certain negro Woman named Jane about 16 Years Old to have & hold the Said negro Woman to the Sole and Exclusive use of her the Said Temperance during the natural Life of Said Temperance Without being Subject to the ownership or Control in any Shape of her present husband Ezekiel Blanks or any future husband She may have and Without being Liable to the debts of her present or any future husband and after the determination [sic] of the life of the said Temperance Blanks then the Said Jane to belong to and be equally divided between all the Children of Said Temperance Blanks by her present husband Ezekiel Blanks who shall be Living at the time of her Death Said Temperance...

William Seawell made the transaction for the consideration of the sum of \$800, “to me in hand paid the receipt Whereof is hereby Acknowledged” [15].

This transaction proves curious, as the records give no indication that the Blanks had the financial resources to purchase an enslaved worker for \$800. That was an enormous sum for that era. Ezekiel presumably worked as a farm laborer and had very limited financial means. Tax records from the 1830s show him without any appreciable property, not even owning his own farmland in Greene County, Georgia before he emigrated.

The wording of the transaction with Seawell, specifically the manner in which Jane was conveyed to Temperance as her own property free from the control of Ezekiel, indicates that this transaction was part of the settlement with her father stemming from the 1838 lawsuit. Seawell’s 1840 household included eight enslaved females in Jane’s age range, and Riley had probably sent the money to him to make the transaction with Temperance.

1842 also coincides with the period in which Peter Riley made allocations of his property to his elder children, selling equal portions of his farm to his sons, William M. and James G. Riley. Peter sold each of them tracts of land valued at \$500 [16]. While Riley’s precise feelings towards Ezekiel Blanks are unknown, he clearly did not harbor lingering resentment towards Temperance, as he included her in his list of children to receive a portion of the final distribution of his estate after his death. The wording of his will, specifically, the money he left to his daughter, Susan, and to his orphaned grandson to “make all of my first children equall [sic] or nearly so,” further suggests that the enslaved woman given to Temperance came from her father, giving her a share of his estate equal to that Peter had given William and James about the same time [17].



Immigration to South Arkansas

Soon after the transaction with Seawell in October 1842, Ezekiel and Temperance Blanks moved their family from Alabama to Union County, Arkansas. They undoubtedly made the journey by water, heading first to a nearby landing on the Alabama River, where they boarded a steamboat with their children, Jane, and their animals. They traveled southward along the river towards Mobile, then connected to another steamboat headed through the inner passage, a winding connection of bayous that avoided the open Gulf of Mexico as it meandered towards the mouth of Lake Pontchartrain. After a brief trip through the lake and up Bayou St. John, they arrived at the bustling New Orleans wharfs on the Mississippi River. From there, travelers boarded another steamer headed northwards up the Mississippi and Ouachita Rivers. They may have disembarked at Alabama Landing, the northernmost river landing in Louisiana, or at the Champagnolle Landing in Arkansas, then the county seat of Union County.

The Blanks' fifth daughter, Mary Ann, was born in Arkansas on 29 October 1843 [1]. Ezekiel was not assessed 1843 Union County taxes, so they presumably arrived there mid-year while Temperance was several months pregnant with Mary Ann [2]. In 1844, Ezekiel paid taxes on his own poll and on one slave between eight and sixty years of age valued at \$400, Jane. His taxable property also included one horse or mare, and one mule, both aged over three years and valued at \$25, and one cow valued at \$10 [3]. Ezekiel paid similar taxes in 1845, 1846, 1848–1849, and 1851.

On 23 January 1846, a little over two years after his arrival in Union County, Arkansas, Ezekiel Blanks paid \$200 cash to the State of Arkansas for a 160-acre tract of government land. His new farm lay about four or five miles west of Hillsboro, then a thriving small village with a few stores. It lay about eight miles southeast of the site chosen a few years earlier for El Dorado, the new Union County Seat. Today, the modern U.S. Highway 82 connecting El Dorado and Crossett passes one mile north of Zekiel's old farm [4].

After his arrival in southern Union County, Arkansas, Ezekiel Blanks began to help maintain the local roads near his farm. On Wednesday, 14 January 1846, the Union County Court appointed Blanks as the overseer on the "*Luter Road*" from the Johnson Township line to "*Jas. Andrews*" [5]. The road was named for Bayou d'Loutre that flowed several miles south of Blanks' farm.

A few months later, on April 13th, the Union County Court created a new road leading from the Louisiana line northward to intersect the Champagnolle Road at James Andrew's farm. The Court appointed Ezekiel Blanks overseer of this new road beginning at James Andrews "*to where said rode [sic] intersects the Champagnolle road*" [6]. On 8 November 1847, Ezekiel Blanks petitioned the Union County Court for "*...the sum of four dollars for warning hands to work on the road*

1846...,” which sum the Court ordered him paid [7]. On 6 February 1849, the County Court reappointed Ezekiel Blanks as the overseer of the “*Luter Road*” from the Franklin Township line “to James Andrews” [8].

On 23 October 1847, Ezekiel Blanks was impaneled to serve on a jury to determine the damages in a lawsuit before the Union County Circuit Court [9]. For the Circuit Court session that began on 10 April 1848, the sheriff summoned Ezekiel Blanks to appear and serve on a petit jury. He appeared as ordered and was impaneled to serve on the jury, but it appears that Blanks left the courthouse after being sworn in as a petit juror. This prompted the Circuit Court to hold him in contempt of court and fine him \$1.00 for his failure to appear. He appeared in Court on April 11th and served on the juries that deliberated two criminal cases against Yewin Norman as well as one civil case. The following day, April 12th, Ezekiel appeared in Court and served on a jury that determined the outcome of another civil lawsuit. Blanks then petitioned the Court:

Came the said Ezekiel Blanks in his own proper person and the Court being satisfied [sic] that the act committed by him on a previous day of this term of this Court, for which he was fined the sum of one dollar + cost, was not intended to cast contempt. It is therefore ordered and considered by the Court that said Judgement for the sum of one dollar fine + cost as aforesaid be and the same is set aside and said Ezekiel Blanks go hence without day [delay] free therefrom.

The court minutes do not record Blanks’ reason for leaving Court [10]. The next day, April 13th, Ezekiel Blanks again appeared at the courthouse for jury duty. He served on juries that deliberated five civil cases that day. This appears to have been his last day serving at that court session [11].

On 23 January 1849, the Union County Court ordered Ezekiel Blanks and Charles Smith as “viewers” to “view and mark out a road leading from James Andrews Spring branch” and to intersect Bayou Bartholomew at the Louisiana line. The Court ordered them to meet at Hillsboro on the second Saturday in February to be sworn before beginning their work.

Blanks and Smith appeared in Court on May 7th to file their report on the road. The Court accepted the pathway recommended in their report, issuing a decree that “*the same is hereby established a public road.*” That same day, Blanks petitioned the court and was paid \$30.00 “*...for his services in viewing & marking out a new road...*” [12]. During the 1850s, Blanks continued to perform his civic duty when summoned. For example, on 29 June 1852, he appeared before the Circuit Court and was impaneled on a jury that deliberated on the verdict of a civil lawsuit [13].

In 1850, Ezekiel and Temperance Blanks were enumerated as residents of Harrison Township, even though all other records show their residence in Johnson Township. Their household consisted of their four surviving daughters, Temperance’ son, Seborn Robins, and two enslaved

females described as “mulatto,” including an adult aged twenty-one and a toddler aged two [14]. The adult woman was Jane, and the young girl was probably her daughter.

Since settling on his farm near Hillsboro, Ezekiel Blanks had managed to improve 45 acres, leaving 115 acres unimproved. His farm was valued at \$1200 and his farming implements and machinery worth \$75. The table below gives Blanks’ livestock on hand in mid-1850 and his 1849 crop production [15]:

| 1850 Union County, Arkansas Federal Census, Agricultural Schedule Farm of E. Blanks | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------|------------|--------------|--------------|-------|-------|-----------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Livestock as of 1 June 1850 | | | | | | | | 1849 Farm Production | | | | | | |
| Horses | Asses/mules | Milch cows | Working oxen | Other cattle | Sheep | Swine | Value livestock | Bushels Indian corn | Bales, ginned cotton | Bushels, peas & beans | Bushels sweet potatoes | Pounds butter | Value, homemade manufacturers | Value, slaughtered animals |
| 2 | -- | 6 | - | 8 | -- | 45 | 250 | 400 | 4 | 50 | 100 | 300 | 100 | 600 |

◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

The Blanks, Ogdens, & Rev. Dr. Juba Estabrook

After settling in southern Arkansas, Ezekiel Blanks and Temperance Riley attended religious services at the Olive Branch Methodist Episcopal Church located a few miles south of their farm. Their Methodist faith brought them into close contact with the family of Rev. Benjamin Ogden, a Methodist preacher who arrived in the region in about 1816 but had died several years before the Blanks' arrival in Arkansas [1]. His son, Isaac Ogden, owned a large farm about three miles south of the Blanks' farm. On 18 September 1851, Isaac's son, Isaac Nathaniel Ogden, commonly known as "*Nathan Ogden*," married Zekiel and Tempey's eldest daughter, Elizabeth Jane Blanks [2].

Their Methodist affiliation also brought the Blanks into contact with the family of Rev. Dr. Juba Estabrook, a native of Lebanon, New Hampshire. Despite being orphaned at a young age, he managed to attend and graduate in 1824 with a medical degree from Dartmouth College. He married Sarah, and they settled in Hardwick, Vermont, where they had two sons in the latter 1820s, Marquis De Montiequey and Julius R. De Montiequey Estabrook. Juba and Sarah soon moved their family to Ohio. About 1831, Estabrook felt called to the ministry and became studying to become a Methodist minister [3]. At the Methodist Episcopal Conference held at Columbus, Ohio on 26 September 1838, the assembled clergymen approved the credentials of Juba Estabrook as a Methodist minister [4].

Rev. Dr. Estabrook did not linger in Ohio after the 1838 annual conference. By early 1840, he and his family had settled in northeastern Arkansas near the thriving settlement of Batesville, in Independence County [5]. On September 30th, Estabrook paid \$100 cash for an 80-acre tract of government land near Batesville [6]. At the Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church held in Little Rock, Arkansas in early November 1840, Rev. Estabrook was assigned to the Batesville District for the calendar year 1841 [7]. On 16 October 1841, Juba and Sarah, as residents of Independence County, deeded ten acres of land of their land to the trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church in order for them to "*erect and build...a house or place of worship*" [8].

For the year 1842, the Estabrooks moved to northwestern Arkansas, for on 16 August 1842, as residents of Johnson County, Juba and Sarah sold their remaining 60 acres of land located in Independence County for \$100 [9]. In November 1842, the Conference assigned Estabrook to the Washington Circuit, located in southwestern Arkansas. Before the arrival of the railroads, Washington was a thriving community, serving as the county seat of Hempstead County and center of commerce for the entire region [10]. For the year 1844, Rev. Estabrook was assigned to the Union Circuit consisting of Union County [11]. On June 9th, "*Juba Estabrook an Elder of the Methodist Church of American Love*" solemnized a marriage in Union County, Arkansas [12].

In December 1844, the Methodist Conference appointed Rev. Juba Estabrook as the Presiding Elder for the Pine Bluff District located in south/central Arkansas [13]. He served as Presiding Elder for that region from 1845 through 1848 [14]. Although responsible for the entire district, he continued to preach and perform marriages in Union County [15]. Rev. Estabrook hosted the Methodist Episcopal Annual Conference at Pine Bluff in November 1848. For the year 1849, the Conference appointed Estabrook and Rev. J. W. Shipman as the preachers for the El Dorado Circuit [16]. As one of the highlights of his final year in south Arkansas, Revs. Estabrook and Shipman conducted a protracted meeting at El Dorado that began on Friday, September 7th and continued through Tuesday, the 11th. During the revival, they baptized thirty-five people into the Methodist faith [17].

This illustrates Rev. Dr. Juba Estabrook's close connections to Union County, Arkansas between 1843 and 1849. While stationed in that district, he undoubtedly preached at the Olive Branch Church, serving as the first Methodist preacher that Ezekiel and Temperance Blanks met after their arrival in south Arkansas in 1843.

At the Methodist Episcopal Church Conference in late 1849, Rev. Estabrook was assigned to the Bentonville Circuit in northwestern Arkansas, including the towns of Van Buren and Fort Smith. He and his wife, Sarah, left immediately for his new assignment. In November 1850, the Conference reappointed Rev. Estabrook to the Fort Smith Circuit [18]. Tragically, while serving in that capacity, he succumbed to cholera at Fort Smith on 21 July 1851. Sarah Estabrook died from the same malady just a few days later, on July 24th [19].

When the Estabrooks left Union County in 1849, their sons, Marquis (Marcus) and Julius, accompanied them to northwestern Arkansas [20]. However, both had lingering ties to south Arkansas, including connections to Ezekiel Blanks, his stepson, Seborn Robins, and to Isaac Ogden. All three and the Estabrook brothers were involved in litigation before the Union County Circuit Court beginning in 1851. While the precise nature of the lawsuits is unclear, it appears that when they followed their parents to northwestern Arkansas in late 1849, the Estabrook brothers left livestock and other property in Union County. The 1851 lawsuit suggests that Blanks and Robins took abandoned property of Marcus Estabrook into their possession, while the 1852 suit implies that Blanks, Robins, and Ogden all retained possession of property belonging to Julius.

In the fall of 1851, Marcus De Montiequey Estabrook filed a lawsuit against Seaborn Robins and Ezekiel Blanks with the Union County Circuit Court. Estabrook claimed that Robins and Blanks "*took the Horse of the said Plaintiff.*" In response, Estabrook confiscated some of their property and retained it as compensation for his loss.

Although summoned, neither Robins nor Blanks came before the Court to answer Estabrook's petition on 17 October 1851 when the case appeared on the court docket. Their failure to appear constituted an admission of guilt that they had indeed taken the horse. This prompted the Court to rule in favor of Estabrook and issue a decree awarding him damages of one cent by the unlawful taking of his horse. The Court ordered that Estabrook should "*retain the property in his Declaration mentioned as his own*," and that he recover from Robins and Blanks one cent as his damages [21]. By awarding damages of 1¢ for a horse, the justices clearly made their ruling only as a matter of principle and did not consider that Estabrook had sustained any financial loss.

Rev. Dr. Estabrook's younger son, Julius R. De Montiequey Estabrook, worked as a clerk in a Fort Smith store in mid-1850. On November 7th, he married there to Amelia Ann Walton, a native of New Orleans [22]. It appears that Julius and Amelia left immediately after their wedding and returned to Union County. Over the next few years, their primary residence is unclear as they remained connected to both Union County and New Orleans. Throughout this era, the Mississippi and Ouachita Rivers served as the region's thoroughfare, with steamboats offering a relatively quick and efficient means of transportation from the Crescent City through north/central Louisiana, Union County, and northwards to Arkadelphia, Arkansas. Both Julius and Amelia received letters at the New Orleans Post Office between 1851 and 1853, with newspapers frequently including letters addressed to them in notices published by the post office [23].

In early 1852, E. B. Bishop & Co. filed a lawsuit against Julius D. R. Estabrook for payment of a promissory note of \$650.79 dated 23 November 1850, just a few weeks after his marriage at Fort Smith. Although Julius D. R. Estabrook was the sole defendant in the lawsuit, Bishop & Co. also named Ezekiel Blanks, Seborn Robins, and Marcus D. M. Estabrook as "*garnishees*" of the defendant. This indicates that the latter three all had Julius' property in their possession. The case appeared on the docket of the Union County Circuit Court on April 14th. That day, Bishop's attorney filed interrogations for the garnishees while the attorney retained by Blanks and Robins filed their response to the lawsuit.

On 19 April 1852, Julius Estabrook failed to appear before the Circuit Court to file his response to the suit filed against him, so the Court ordered publication of the writ of attachment against Estabrook's estate. The Court also summoned his garnishees, namely, Ezekiel Blanks, Marcus D. M. Estabrook, Isaac Ogden, and Seborn Robins. It is unclear why they added Ogden to the list of garnishees compared to the original petition filed on April 14th. Presumably, this was merely an oversight [24].

On 19 October 1852, Julius D. R. Estabrook had his attorney respond to the suit filed by E. B. Bishop & Co. by filing a bill of discovery against E. B. Bishop & Co. The latter did not file their response until demanded by the Court on 15 June 1853. Estabrook's attorney then filed his exceptions to their suit, which the Court took under advisement. On the 27th, Estabrook's attorney filed a plea in response to communication by the Court. On July 8th, the attorneys for both parties appeared before the Court, which then issued its ruling. They sustained the objections filed by Estabrook against the original petition related to the garnishees named in the lawsuit. Thus, the Court ruled that *"all property attached returned to the defendant all garnishees discharged & all bonds returned by the sheriff herein cancelled."* Moreover, the Court dismissed the suit by E. B. Bishop & Co. and ruled that Estabrook recover his costs related to this suit. This ruling released Ezekiel Blanks, Seaborn Robins, and Isaac Ogden from any legal involvement in the matter [25].

The attorneys for E. B. Bishop & Co. immediately filed exceptions to the Court's decree in favor of Julius D. R. Estabrook, and the Court granted them additional time to *"prepare and tender"* their arguments to continue the case against Estabrook. Thus, the matter dragged on, although it now only involved Estabrook and not the garnishees named in the original petition [26].

Julius and Amelia Estabrook spent enough time in the late summer of 1853 to have letters waiting for them at the New Orleans post office in September [27]. However, sometime that fall, Julius died, for on December 15th, the Union County Probate Court appointed a public administrator to handle the affairs of his estate in Arkansas [28]. Two days later, on the 17th, the attorneys for E. B. Bishop & Co. notified the Circuit Court of Estabrook's death, and the Court agreed to revive the case against Estabrook in the name of his public administrator [29].

On 9 January 1854, since officials reported that Estabrook's property in Union County was valued less than \$300, they cancelled the appointment of his public administrator and ordered him to turn all property over to his widow, Amelia Estabrook. A few weeks later, on January 26th, E. B. Bishop & Co. petitioned the Probate Court to set aside their previous ruling, as they were his creditors *"to a large amount"* and the administration was revoked without any notice to them. The attorney for Mrs. Amelia Estabrook argued against their motion. The Probate Court ruled in favor of Mrs. Estabrook and ordered that Bishop & Co. pay all costs related to the matter [30]. Although their attorneys continued filing motions to recover their claim against Julius Estabrook, the Probate Court ruling effectively ended the circuit court case [31].

Their association with the Estabrooks left an impression on the family of Ezekiel Blanks. His descendants still spoke of the Estabrook connection well into the next century [32].



Navigating Droughts & Crop Mortgages

Throughout the nineteenth century, Southern cotton farmers routinely operated by obtaining advances of supplies from local merchants each spring. These allowed them to plant and tend to their crops until the harvest, when the farmer was expected to pay his debts with the proceeds from the sale of his cotton. Arkansas law required that farmers who received advances valued over a certain amount to officially record a mortgage with the county clerk to guarantee their repayment.

On 6 June 1853, Albert Rust agreed to furnish Ezekiel Blanks goods and supplies valued at \$144.06, with payment due by the following January 1st. In exchange, Blanks mortgaged to Rust

...all the cotton which I may be able to raise this year, which I now have in a state of cultivation on the place on which I now reside. I am to pick, haul, and have said cotton ginned and to deliver the same at such place as said Rust may designate – and he the said Rust is to ship the cotton and sell it and after paying said debts and all necessary expenses incident to said Shipment and Sale, the residue if any he is to pay over to me...

[Gen. Albert Rust](#) (c1818–4 Apr 1870) was an extremely wealthy planter from Virginia who later served in the U. S. House of Representatives and as a Brigadier General in the Confederate Army during the Civil War [1].

South Arkansas lay in the greater Ouachita Valley, and the economic engine that developed in that region beginning in the 1820s and 1830s relied upon steamboat navigation of the Ouachita River to deliver baled cotton to the New Orleans wharves. Seasonal rainfall in the Ouachita Mountains of west/central Arkansas caused an annual rise in water levels between November and June, a period when steamboats regularly plied the river as far north as Arkadelphia, Arkansas. This dependable weather pattern gave rise to the annual “*steamboat season*” lasting from November through June. Beginning shortly after the fall harvest, it gave farmers time to have their cotton baled and delivered to river landings for shipment downriver to New Orleans.

Beginning in the late summer of 1853, a series of unusual cyclical weather patterns developed across the Ouachita Valley that disrupted navigation of the waterways for the next four years. A cycle began with a prolonged drought that caused the water levels in the Ouachita River and her tributary bayous to fall low enough to prohibit steamer operation. Next, just enough scattered spring and early summer rain fell to grow that season’s crops, but the rainfall was not sufficient to affect water levels. This caused episodes of repeated transportation interruptions on the Ouachita River, the region’s only major thoroughfare, resulting in severe economic repercussions for the region’s farmers.

The pattern began in the late summer of 1853, and by September 7th, the Ouachita had fallen too low for navigation north of Harrisonburg, Louisiana. By January of each year, steamboats typically made regular trips up the Ouachita to Camden, Arkansas, further north than the Champagnolle and Pigeon Hill Landings closest to Blanks' farm. However, low water levels caused navigation of the Ouachita to remain closed through early 1854. Steamboats finally reached Monroe, Louisiana on January 23rd, but lack of water stranded the few steamboats that reached Champagnolle, in Union County, in mid-February [2].

Dry weather persisted across the Ouachita Valley during the summer and fall of 1854, dropping water levels in both the Ouachita and Red Rivers to extremely low levels. For the remainder of the year, steamboats could only make it as far north on the Ouachita as Harrisonburg, as the low water levels prevented boats from passing over the Catahoula Shoals a few miles above that town. By late December, residents at Harrisonburg stated that the Ouachita River *"is lower now than was ever known before"* [3].

As a protracted drought persisted across the Ouachita Valley into mid-1855, the Ouachita River fell to the lowest level ever observed by *"the oldest inhabitant"* of the region, leaving farmers and merchants with *"a gloomy and foreboding thought,"* considering the large number of bales of cotton awaiting shipment downriver. Since merchants could not sell cotton to New Orleans merchants, they could not pay farmers cash for the previous year's crop. This caused a *"vast amount of destitution,"* with many families throughout the Ouachita Valley suffering *"for the want of the common necessities of life."* *"The Register"* published at Monroe, Louisiana just south of the Blanks' farm warned, *"This is not fancy nor rumor,"* for talk of the *"big hungry"* actually existed and openly stalked inhabitants of several nearby parishes and in southern Arkansas, with *"many families being entirely destitute of both bread and meat – living on roots, herbs, &c."* [4].

Farmers felt the effects of that year's drought early in the growing season, with residents across the state line in Union Parish, Louisiana complaining in mid-April about the lack of rain. Many reported the ground *"as hard and dry as it is in June or July"* when they planted the cotton seed, causing the plants to not sprout. The weather remained hot and dry throughout the summer without any rain. By late July, it had severely affected all vegetation, especially cotton. The rains finally came in August and September, but this proved too late to have any significant effect upon the crops. September rains caused further damage to that year's cotton crop. The precipitation did bode well for navigational prospects, finally opening the Ouachita to navigation [5].

These dire economic conditions directly impacted Ezekiel Blanks, making it difficult for him to raise sufficient cash to pay his debts in 1853 and 1854. By mid-1855, Blanks had become indebted

to Augustus C. L. Hill, an El Dorado merchant originally from Maine. Hill filed two separate lawsuits against Blanks in the Union County Circuit Court, but when the cases came before the Court on 26 September 1855, Hill's attorney requested that the Court dismiss them both, saying, "*the cost having been previously paid*" [6].

The payment that Ezekiel and Temperance Blanks made that day was to sell their 160-acre farm to Augustus Hill for \$600. This transaction points to a distinction between Ezekiel and Temperance, as he made his mark to the document while she signed her name [7]. This indicates that she received a sufficient education as a child growing up in North Carolina that allowed her to sign her name to documents as an adult, just like her father. On the other hand, Ezekiel was illiterate, making his mark to legal documents throughout his lifetime, just as his own father had.

Since his arrival in Arkansas in 1843, Ezekiel Blanks had paid taxes each year on livestock and on Jane, the enslaved woman given to Temperance in 1842. Curiously, after the 1855–1856 legal issues he faced, neither he nor Seborn Robins were assessed Union County taxes in 1856, 1857, or 1858. It is unclear if this resulted from a period of poor accounting by the tax assessor, or if they temporarily moved elsewhere after he sold his farm in 1855. If so, they had returned by 1859 [8].

After selling his farm in September 1855, we have no record that Ezekiel Blanks owned land in Union County, Arkansas or elsewhere. His son-in-law, Nathan Ogden, owned a farm about three miles south of Ezekiel's, with Ogden's land adjoining that of his father, Isaac Ogden. Sometime after selling their farm in 1855, Zekiel and Tempey moved onto a portion of Isaac Ogden's land.

On 1 August 1859, Ezekiel Blanks mortgaged

...all of the crop of cotton which [he] shall or may grow or produce of from and upon a certain farm & messuage of land now in possession and known as the land lented [sic] of Isaac Ogden.

Blanks made the mortgage to John Hearin, a wealthy Hillsboro farmer and merchant. Blanks signed a promissory note to Hearin for \$6.32 due the following January 1st. However, the main purpose for the mortgage was that Blanks was "*desirous of purchasing of & from*" Hearin "*goods, wares & merchandise for & during the year A.D. one thousand eight hundred & fifty nine upon a credit until*" 1 January 1860 [9]. This indicates that Zekiel and Tempey cultivated Isaac Ogden's land until the latter's death in 1859. Nathan Ogden acquired a portion of Isaac's land when his three heirs divided it, and the Blanks probably remained there throughout the 1860s.

On 26 September 1855, the same day that Ezekiel and Temperance sold their farm to Hill, he engaged in other legal business. Zekiel, his stepson, Seaborn Robins, and son-in-law, Nathan Ogden, signed a joint promissory note for \$478.25. They failed to pay that debt, and in early 1856,

Augustus C. L. Hill, "*who sues for the use of Francis F. Greanleaf*," filed a lawsuit against Blanks, Robins and Ogden for nonpayment.

When the case appeared on the Union County Court docket on 17 April 1856, Hill's attorney requested that the Court "*discontinue*" the suit against Blanks and Robins. The Court proceeded with the case against Nathan Ogden, but as he failed to appear in Court, they decreed that Hill should recover the sum of \$188.32 plus damages of \$3.14 from Ogden [10].

On 9 October 1855, Ezekiel Blanks and several of his immediate family filed claims for payment with the Clerk of the Probate Court for debts owed them by the administrator of Emanuel Kern. Kern owed Ezekiel \$21.25 due 30 July 1855 at 6% interest, while his daughter, Susan Blanks, aged twenty years, filed her claim against Kern's estate for \$5 due 24 August 1855 at 6% interest. Nathan Ogden filed his own claim against Kern's estate for \$6.25, also due the previous August 24th at 6% interest. The Court accepted these claims and authorized William R. Cowser, Kern's administrator, to pay them [11]. Nothing is known of Kern, and the court records give no indication of the purpose for these debts or similar ones filed by others that year.

Several years later, William R. Cowser filed his final account with the Union County Probate Court on 20 March 1860. The Court ordered that it be published in a local newspaper. At the next court session on Monday, May 28th, the attorneys for Ezekiel Blanks and two merchants appeared before the Court to oppose the final settlement of Emanuel Kern's estate. Based upon their objection, the Court continued the case until the next court session. On Friday, August 31st, the Court again continued the case but ordered Cowser to appear at the next session to explain why he asked for credit for the "*Insolvent List*." On Wednesday, December 12th, Cowser appeared to explain his amended final settlement, which the Court approved. It shows that he had previously paid the claims of Ogden and Susan Blanks, but not Ezekiel's. The Probate Court ordered Cowser to "*pay over immediately to the following named Claimants*," including paying Ezekiel Blanks his claim of \$21.25 plus interest of \$6.85 [12].

Union County, Arkansas remained an isolated locale throughout the nineteenth century, and Ezekiel and Temperance appear to have led a relatively quiet life after settling there in 1843. Family records indicate that they had four daughters born in Georgia and Alabama, one of which perished the year before they immigrated to Arkansas. They had an additional two daughters born after settling near Hillsboro. Tragically, after their arrival in Arkansas, Zekiel and Tempey experienced the deaths of three more of their daughters, one dying at fifteen months in 1848, another at age eleven in 1852, while Susan Blanks died in 1857 at the age of twenty-two [13].

The remote nature of southern Union County kept most outsiders at bay well into the twentieth century, perhaps explaining the large number of local families missed by the men who enumerated the 1850 and 1860 federal censuses. Although their family was enumerated in 1850, the 1860 enumerator omitted both the Blanks and Ogden households.

W. Ezekiel Blanks died on 25 February 1864 at the age of only fifty-eight years. Temperance had him buried in the cemetery beside the Olive Branch Methodist Church where they attended services. It was located near their home, on land now owned by their daughter and son-in-law, Elizabeth and Nathan Ogden.

Temperance had a tombstone erected for her husband, and it is the oldest marked grave in the Olive Branch Cemetery. Ezekiel's original monument was inscribed:

W. E. Blanks
Died
Feb. 25, 1864
Age
58 Ys. 5 Mo. 26 Days
May he rest in Peace

Three decades later, Temperance's children had a tombstone erected for her, inscribed with, "*Temperance Wife of W. E. Blanks.*" No known evidence reveals Zekiel's first given name. His older brother was named, "*William Henry Blanks,*" so it seems highly unlikely that Ezekiel's first name was "*William.*" Throughout his life, he exclusively went by "*Ezekiel Blanks*" or its derivative, "*Zekiel Blanks.*" These two original tombstones are the only known source proving he had two given names.

By 1985, Ezekiel's original tombstone, probably erected in the 1870s or 1880s, had deteriorated significantly and broken into several pieces. In 2010, descendants erected a new double monument for Ezekiel and Temperance Blanks placed immediately behind their original tombstones [14].

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Thirty Years a Widow

Temperance Riley spent the remainder of her life living in southern Union County, Arkansas with her son, Seborn Robins on his farm. He had married in 1854, but his wife died soon after their marriage [1]. They had no children to survive infancy, and we have no evidence that Seborn ever remarried. Two years after Ezekiel's death, on 19 July 1866, the younger surviving Blanks daughter, Mary Ann, married Reuben Searcy Breazeal, a veteran of the Confederate Army [2]. Mary Ann and Reuben settled on a farm near her sister and mother. All three families lived in Johnson Township, near the modern community of Caledonia that developed about 1900. During their era, the nearest village was Hillsboro, where they obtained supplies and delivered cotton to merchants.

In 1867, Seborn Robins paid taxes on one horse or mare valued at \$50 and two cattle valued at \$10 each [3]. About 1866–1868, he began making improvements on a tract of vacant land that adjoined the farm of his sister, Elizabeth J. Blanks, and her husband, Nathaniel Ogden. Robins built a house on the property, and he and Temperance soon settled on the 120-acre tract.

In 1870, the census enumerator listed their farm in Temperance's name, valuing it at \$300. It consisted of 50 acres of improved land and 70 acres of woodland. Their farming implements and machinery were valued at \$10, and during the previous year, they had paid \$55 in wages for farm labor. Their current livestock holdings and 1869 crop production are given in the table below [4]:

| 1870 Union County, Arkansas Federal Census, Agricultural Schedule Farm of Temperance Blanks | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|----------------|------------|--------------|-------|-----------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------|---------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Livestock as of 1 June 1870 | | | | | | 1869 Farm Production | | | | | | | | | |
| Horses | Mules or asses | Milch cows | Working oxen | Swine | Value livestock | Bushels Indian corn | Bales, Ginned cotton | Bushels Irish potatoes | Bushels sweet potatoes | Pounds of Butter | Gallons of Molasses | Pounds of Beeswax | Value, Home Mfgs | \$ Slaughtered Animals | Total Farm Production |
| 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 12 | 200 | 200 | 7 | 3 | 30 | 100 | 10 | 200 | 10 | 60 | 850 |

On 8 March 1872, "*Sebbeon Robbins*" signed a promissory note for \$300 due the following December 1st to William A. Coit, the Union County Clerk of Court. Coit had furnished Robins supplies "*to enable me to make a crop.*" To secure his payment of the note, Robins mortgaged this property to Coit [5]:

...All the growing crop of Cotton Corn and fodder, And one yoke of steers marked as follows crop in right ear and split in left ear. Two Cows and calves, same mark, and twelve head of hogs same mark, and one ox wagon...

On the 24 January 1874, Seborn Robins obtained title to an 80-acre tract of government land from William A. Coit, but the Commissioner of State Lands did not issue a patent to Robins for the tract until 24 May 1877 [6]. Two years later, on 19 April 1876, Seborn signed a promissory note for \$200 due 1 January 1877 with 10% interest and payable to the firm Williams & Smith. To guarantee his payment of the note, he mortgaged this property [7]:

My entire crop of cotton that I may produce or cause to be produced through whatever source this present year, the same being in consideration of supplies [furnished to] me as an advance to inable [sic] me to produce said crop. The cotton to be delivered to said Williams & Smith at Hillsboro Ark or Pigeon Hill Landing in good order by the first day of January 1877.

On 4 March 1880, Seborn Robins paid the county and state taxes on his 80-acre farm, which the county assessor valued at \$120 [8]. The federal census enumeration made a few months later in June shows Temperance and Seborn living near her daughters. Their farm, including the buildings and fences, was valued at \$400 and consisted of 60 acres of tilled land, one acre of pastures or orchards, 30 acres of unimproved woodland, and 10 acres of unimproved non-wooded land such as old fields. He owned farming implements and machinery valued at \$5, the total value of his 1879 farm production was \$250, and he owned livestock valued at \$100. His livestock on hand and 1879 farm production included the following [9]:

| 1880 Union County, Arkansas Federal Census, Agricultural Schedule "Seaborn" Robins, farm owner | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|------------|------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|-------|------------------|---------------|----------------------|------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------|------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| Livestock as of 1 June 1880 | | | | | | | | 1879 Farm Production | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Horses | Milch cows | Calves dropped in 1879 | Cattle slaughtered in 1879 | Cattle died, strayed, stolen | Swine | Barnyard poultry | Other poultry | Pounds of Honey | Pounds of Butter | Dozen Eggs Produced | Acres in Indian Corn | Bushels Indian Corn | Acres in Cotton | Bales of Ginned Cotton | Acres in Sweet Potatoes | Bushels Sweet Potatoes | Bushels Apples - 2 trees | Bushels of Peaches - Produced by 100 trees | Value Orchard Production |
| 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 10 | 13 | 60 | 75 | 50 | 75 | 15 | 100 | 8 | 3 | ¼ | 25 | 1 | 25 | 15 |

Temperance and Seborn continued to operate their farm during the 1880s, when she was in her eighties and he in his fifties. Seborn's farm, just like that of Ezekiel Blanks, was included in a vast tract obtained by the State of Arkansas in 1841, called "*Internal Improvement*" lands. Seborn obtained his initial 80 acres from the State of Arkansas in 1874, and he made improvements to an adjoining 80 acres in preparation for purchasing it from the state. Legal issues held up the transaction, but following an 1887 court decision in Little Rock, Seborn's adjoining tract was auctioned at "*public outcry*." Seborn offered \$127.75 for the land, and the commissioner officially

conveyed title of the property to him on 16 May 1888 [10]. In 1890, he paid taxes on his 160-acre farm that adjoined that of his sister, Elizabeth Blanks Ogden [11].

Elizabeth J. Blanks Ogden died in April 1891 at the age of only fifty-eight. Coincidentally, this was the same age at which her father perished [12]. Temperance lived until 6 March 1894, dying just one month shy of ninety-two years. Her family buried her beside Ezekiel and Elizabeth in the Olive Branch Methodist Cemetery near her farm [13].

Seborn Robins only survived his mother by twelve days, dying on 18 March 1894. He was buried in the Bussey-Hearin Cemetery, presumably beside the grave of his wife, Elizabeth Jackson Robins [14]. His nephews probably cultivated his old farm for the next few years. On 26 January 1900, his heirs, including his only surviving sister, Mary Ann, and the children of Elizabeth Ogden, sold 116 acres of his old farm to Tony Martindale for \$116 [15]. It is unclear what became of Seborn's final 40 acres, as it was not included in the transaction.

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Seborn Robins (1827–1894)

Son of Temperance Riley

Seborn Robins (8 Jan 1827–18 Mar 1894) was born in Georgia, the son of Temperance Riley [1]. Seborn's father was presumably the second husband of Tempey, although no evidence of a marriage between Tempey and a Mr. Robins is known to exist. In 1831, William Robins of Greene County owed a \$100 debt to Tempey. He was the son of a widowed Sarah Robins, who was born about 1767 in New Jersey. Her will left a bequest to the orphaned children of her son, Thomas Robins, who may have been the father of Seborn Robins [2].

Seborn Robins is undoubtedly the young male under five years of age living in the 1830 household of his grandfather, Peter Riley [3]. He may have remained in Greene County, Georgia with relatives after his mother and stepfather left for Alabama, for the 1840 Perry County, Alabama household of his stepfather did not include any young males. However, it does not appear that he lived with Peter Riley that year. In 1850, Seborn lived with his mother, stepfather, and sisters on their farm in southern Union County, Arkansas.

Seborn Robins married on 21 December 1854 in Union County, Arkansas to Elizabeth Jackson (c1839–1855/1870). The county clerk who issued their marriage license recorded that Seborn was aged twenty-six and Elizabeth was fifteen years of age [4]. Nothing further is known of her, and she presumably died within a few years of their marriage. If Elizabeth had any children, then they must have died young. Seborn was omitted by the enumerator of the 1860 federal census, so all we know is that by 1870, Seborn and his mother lived together, suggesting that he was by then a widower.

Seborn Robins enlisted on 26 April 1862 at Hillsboro as a private in Co. D, 37th Regiment Arkansas Infantry. His regiment had several designations during the War, including the 1st Regiment Trans-Mississippi Infantry, Pleasant's Regiment, and Bell's Regiment. He became ill and was admitted to St. John's College Hospital in Little Rock, Arkansas on June 13th and remained there through July 1st. He was discharged from the hospital soon afterwards and listed as present for duty from July 1862 through 31 August 1863. On 29 February 1864, the last known muster roll of the 37th Regiment, Robins was absent on sick leave. Due to this lack of records, his activities during the last year of the War are unknown [5].

After the War, Seborn Robins returned to Union County and lived with his mother for the next three decades. Tempey Riley Blanks died on 6 March 1894, and Seborn Robins died less than two weeks later, on March 18th. He is buried in the Bussey-Hearin Cemetery, located in the Pleasant

Grove community several miles north of his farm. That cemetery lay near the old farm of Ezekiel and Temperance Blanks that they sold in 1855. Since neither Robbins nor the Blanks had any known connection to that cemetery, it was probably where his wife had been buried after her death. Seborn's tombstone was recorded in cemetery surveys made in the 1970s, but it had broken into several pieces, making it difficult to read. In subsequent decades, the cemetery has become overgrown and fallen into disrepair. His gravesite is now difficult to identify [6].

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Children of Zekiel Blanks and Tempey Riley

Ezekiel and Temperance Blanks had six daughters, but four of them died young between the ages of fifteen months and twelve years. Family records provided by a great-granddaughter in 1988 give the precise dates of birth and death of their daughters you died young [1]. Their two daughters who survived to adulthood are both buried near Zekiel and Tempey in the Olive Branch Methodist Cemetery, located today near Caledonia, in southern Union County, Arkansas.

The children of Zekiel Blanks and Tempey Riley as documented in court records and by family records include:

1. **Elizabeth Jane Blanks** (1 Dec 1832–6 Apr 1891) was born in Greene County, Georgia. She married on 18 September 1851 in Union County, Arkansas to Isaac Nathaniel Ogden (28 Nov 1822–1 Jul 1877), son of Isaac Ogden (19 Aug 1797–28 Sep 1859) and Milinda Reed (21 Dec 1801–18 May 1860). Elizabeth and Nathaniel Ogden farmed in Johnson Township southwest of Hillsboro, Union County, Arkansas.
2. **Susan A. Blanks** (8 Mar 1835–25 Oct 1857) was born in Greene County, Georgia and died in Hillsboro, Johnson Township, Union County, Arkansas at the age of twenty-two.
3. **Martha M. Blanks** (22 Sep 1838–20 Jul 1842) was born in Greene County, Georgia and probably died in Dallas County, Alabama, where her parents lived on October 1st a few months after her death.
4. **Louisa A. Blanks** (29 Jul 1841–29 Jun 1852) was born in Alabama and died near Hillsboro, Johnson Township, Union County, Arkansas.
5. **Mary Ann Blanks** (29 Oct 1843–7 Jun 1915) was born in Johnson Township near Hillsboro, Union County, Arkansas. She married on 19 July 1866 in Union County, Arkansas to Reuben Searcy Breazeal (25 Feb 1843–2 Feb 1917), son of Hosea Bright Breazeal (5 Apr 1813–19 Oct 1891) and Sarah Elizabeth Mayfield (17 Jun 1819–9 Jan 1888). Mary Ann and Reuben Breazeal lived in Johnson Township southwest of Hillsboro.
6. **Sarah C. Blanks** (6 Mar 1847–17 Aug 1848) was born and died in Johnson Township near Hillsboro, Union County, Arkansas.

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Union County, Arkansas Tax Records

The tables below give tax records from Union County, Arkansas for Ezekiel Blanks and his son-in-law, Nathan Ogden [1].

| Union County, Arkansas Tax Lists 1844-1846 | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|----------------|---|-------------------------------|-------|-------------------------|-------|---------------------------|----------|------------|-----------|
| Year | Taxpayer | # Poll taxes | Horses/Mares 3 yrs & older | | Cattle 3 yrs & older | | Total Taxable Property | Poll Tax | County Tax | State Tax |
| | | | Number | Value | Number | Value | | | | |
| 1844 | Ezekiel Blanks | 1 | 1 | \$25 | 1 | \$10 | \$460 | 50¢ | 57½¢ | 57½¢ |
| | | 1 mule aged 2 years or above valued @ \$25 | | | | | | | | |
| | | 1 slave aged between 8 and 60 years valued at \$400 | | | | | | | | |
| 1845 | Z. Blanks | 1 | 1 | \$15 | 1 | \$9 | \$449 | \$1 | 90¢ | 50¢ |
| | | 1 mule aged 2 years or above valued @ \$25 | | | | | | | | |
| | | 1 slave aged 8 years and upwards valued @ \$400 | | | | | | | | |
| 1846 | Z. Blanks | 1 | 1 | \$25 | 2 | \$20 | \$470 | \$1 | 94¢ | 59¢ |
| | | 1 mule aged 2 years or above valued @ \$25 | | | | | | | | |
| | | 1 slave aged 8 and under 60 years valued @ \$400 | | | | | | | | |

| Union County, Arkansas Tax Lists 1848-1851 | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|------------------|---|-------------------------------|-------|-------------------------|-------|---------------------------|----------|------------|-----------|
| Year | Taxpayer | # Poll taxes | Horses/Mares 2 yrs & older | | Cattle 2 yrs & older | | Total Taxable Property | Poll Tax | County Tax | State Tax |
| | | | Number | Value | Number | Value | | | | |
| 1848 | E. Blanks | 1 | 1 | \$60 | -- | -- | \$940 | 50¢ | \$1.88 | \$2.35 |
| | | 160 acres land valued @ \$480 | | | | | | | | |
| | | 1 slave over 8 and under 60 years valued @ \$400 | | | | | | | | |
| 1849 | E. Blanks | 1 | -- | -- | 1 | \$10 | \$370 | 50¢ | 74¢ | 92¢ |
| | | 120 acres land valued @ \$360 | | | | | | | | |
| | | 1 | 1 | \$190 | -- | -- | \$1070 | -- | \$2.64 | \$2.67 |
| 1851 | "Ezekial" Blanks | 160 acres land valued @ \$480 | | | | | | | | |
| | | 1 slave aged over 5 and under 60 years valued @ \$400 | | | | | | | | |
| | | 1 | 1 | \$75 | 2 | \$14 | \$729 | -- | \$1.45 | \$1.41 |
| 1851 | Nathan Ogden | 80 acres land valued @ \$240 | | | | | | | | |
| | | 1 slave aged over 5 and under 60 years valued @ \$400 | | | | | | | | |
| | | 1 | 2 | \$130 | -- | -- | \$1010 | -- | \$1.76 | \$2.02 |

| Union County, Arkansas Tax Lists 1853-1860 | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|-------------------------------|-------|-------------------------|-------|---------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Year | Taxpayer | # Poll taxes | Horses/Mares 2 yrs & older | | Cattle 2 yrs & older | | Total Taxable Property | County Tax | State Tax |
| | | | Number | Value | Number | Value | | | |
| 1853 | Nathan Ogden | 1 | 2 | \$100 | 5 | \$25 | \$365 | \$1.11 | 91¢ |
| | | 80 acres land valued @ \$240 | | | | | | | |
| | Ezekiel Blanks not assessed taxes | | | | | | | | |
| 1854 | E. Blanks | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | \$880 | \$2.26 | \$2.20 |
| | | 1 mule aged two years or above valued @ \$50 | | | | | | | |
| | | 160 acres land valued @ \$480 | | | | | | | |
| | | 3 slaves aged over 5 and under 60 years valued @ \$350 | | | | | | | |
| | Nathan Ogden | 1 | 1 | \$60 | 3 | \$24 | \$724 | \$1.95 | \$1.81 |
| | | 80 acres land valued @ \$240 | | | | | | | |
| | | 1 slave aged over 5 and under 60 years valued @ \$400 | | | | | | | |
| | Seaborn Robbins | 1 | -- | -- | 2 | \$16 | \$61 | 62¢ | 15¢ |
| | | 1 mule aged two years or above valued @ \$45 | | | | | | | |
| 1856 | Neither Ezekiel Blanks nor Seborn Robins were assessed 1856 taxes. | | | | | | | | |
| | Nathan Ogden | 1 | 1 | \$80 | 2 | \$10 | \$480 | \$1.39 | \$1.20 |
| | | 80 acres land valued @ \$240 | | | | | | | |
| | | 1 slave aged over 5 and under 60 years valued @ \$150 | | | | | | | |
| 1857 | None of Ezekiel Blanks, Nathan Ogden, or Seborn Robins were assessed 1857 taxes. | | | | | | | | |
| 1858 | Neither Ezekiel Blanks nor Seborn Robins were assessed 1858 taxes. | | | | | | | | |
| | Nathan Ogden | 1 | 1 | \$80 | 4 | \$36 | \$116 | 65¢ | 19¢ |
| 1859 | EzK ^l Black | 1 | 1 | \$50 | 7 | \$70 | \$120 | | 20¢ |
| | Nathan Ogden | 1 | 1 | \$50 | 13 | \$100 | \$150 | -- | 25¢ |
| | C. Robbins | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 50¢ | -- |
| 1860 | E. Blank | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | \$120 | -- | 20¢ |
| | | 40 acres land valued @ \$120 | | | | | | | |
| | Mrs. Temp Blank | -- | -- | -- | 5 | \$50 | \$850 | -- | \$1.42 |
| | | 2 slaves over 5 and under 60 years valued @ \$800 | | | | | | | |
| | Nathan Ogden | 1 | -- | -- | 10 | \$100 | \$1670 | | \$2.78 |
| | | 90 acres land valued @ \$270 | | | | | | | |
| | | 2 slaves over 5 and under 60 years valued @ \$1200 | | | | | | | |
| | | 1 mule over two years old valued @ \$100 | | | | | | | |
| Seborn Robins was not assessed 1860 taxes. | | | | | | | | | |

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Notes

Ezekiel Blanks: Early Years Along the Oconee River in Eastern Georgia

1. Olive Branch Methodist Cemetery (Caledonia, Union County AR), tombstone of [W. Ezekiel Blanks](#). His original tombstone, now broken into pieces, was inscribed with: "W. E. Blanks, Died Feb. 25 1864, Age 58 Ys. 5 Mo. 26 Days." This yields a birthdate of 31 August 1805. A modern tombstone was erected in 2008.
2. [Greene County GA Ordinary Court Records \(1820–1836\), p. 95](#) (*Georgia Greene County Greensboro Monday 10th January 1825*"); [p. 99](#) ("Ezekiel Blanks orphan of William Blanks over 14 years of age came in person in Open Court and made choice of Thomas Riley as his Guardian"). [Greene County GA Estate Papers, LDS Film #5764283, Image #512](#) (William Blanks Estate, 1824, account of John G. Gaston, Administrator, filed 28 January 1854).
3. [Greene County GA Will Book 4 \(1817–1842\), pp. 34–36](#); [Greene County GA Probate Court Wills \(1798–1914\), LDS Film #5764273, Images #196–199](#) (Will of John Hill of Greene County, Georgia, written 11 August 1817, filed in court 15 January 1818). John Hill made a bequest to his three granddaughters, Matilda, Martha, and Seleta Blanks, "daughters of William Blanks and Jean Blanks his wife who has lately deceased." It is unclear why he did not mention his grandson, Ezekiel Blanks, but William Blanks and other relatives sued after Hill's death, claiming he was not in his right mind when the will was made, and other relatives had pushed him to make certain bequests.
4. [Pittsylvania County VA Deeds & Wills Book 10 \(1794–1797\), pp. 73–74](#) (Will of Henry Blanks, written 15 September 1794, filed in court 20 October 1794). Henry made this bequest: "I give to my Son William of Georgia Mare Cow & Calf and a Sow now in his possession to him I give the same to his heirs forever." For more details on the Blanks family, see:
Blanks, William L. *Filling in the Blanks: A Study of the Blanks Family*. Meridian, MS: Dement Printing Company, 1984.
5. The following veterans of the Revolutionary War described their service under Capt. William Blanks in their applications for pensions:
 - #W1122:** Application of Richard Arthur – States that he was drafted about the time that the British were besieging Charleston and marched to Kinston, North Carolina and placed under the command of Captain William Blanks.
 - #S6557:** Application of Peter Banks – States he was drafted in Craven County by "William Blanks Captain," the year in which Charleston was taken by the British. He went to Kinston, North Carolina, under the command of General Caswell, Col. Richard Caswell, and Captain William Blanks, then marched to South Carolina and was present at Charleston when it was taken by the British.
 - #S1760:** Application of John Freman – States he was drafted on 1 March 1780, when to Kinston on March 10th, stating "my Capt. Was William Blanks." Marched towards Charleston but learned it had surrendered. Stated, "My discharge was but for three months signed by Capt. Blanks."
 - #S25689:** Application of William Miller – States drafted in the company of Capt. Blanks, North Carolina Militia, for a four-month tour in Craven County to defend Charleston. Marched through Fayetteville to Camden, South Carolina, then to the Santee River before learning Charleston had surrendered. Retreated to Cross Creek
6. State Archives of North Carolina, Treasurer and Comptroller's Papers, Military Papers: Revolutionary War Army Accounts. S.115.59, Record ID: 13.30.4693, Vol. VIII, p. 21, Folio 1, p. 39, Folio 4, Wm. Blanks (company of).
7. Halifax County VA Marriage Bonds, p. 206 (William Blanks to Marian Robertson, 10 January 1782).
8. Revolutionary War Pension Applications #R7635 (Joseph Newton, Georgia and North Carolina); #R2421 (William Crabtree, North Carolina); #S6030 (Sarah Knight, widow of Capt. John Knight, North Carolina).
9. [Georgia Headright and Bounty Documents, 1783–1909. LDS Film #5139170, Images #284–285](#) (John Hill, 862½ acres, Washington County, 6 June 1785; signed S. Elbert & Col. E. Clark).
10. Hudson, Frank Parker. *Wilkes County, Georgia Tax Records, 1785–1805*. 1996, pp. 23–142:
 - 1785:** Capt. Karr's District, #014: William Blanks, 52 acres 3rd quality land.
 - 1786:** Capt. Heard's District, #22: Wm. Blank, 80 acres 2nd quality land.
 - 1787:** [Capt. Heard's District, #35: Wm. Blanks, 80 acres 2nd quality land.](#)
11. Franklin, Jimmie Tucker. *Church Histories: Phillip's Mill Baptist Church, Wilkes County, Georgia, 1785–1850*. Meridian, MS: Lauderdale County Department of Archives and History, 1995, pp. 6–7.
12. Wilkes County GA Deed Book FF, pp. 46–47 (Thomas Heard to James Turner, 18 February 1788).
13. Franklin, pp. 13–14, 36.
14. Greene County GA Deed Book 3 (1799–1804), pp. 78–79 (William Blanks to Bennett Posey, 2 February 1791). The consideration for which Blanks made the transaction was not stated.
15. 1788–1789 Greene County GA Tax Digests, LDS Film #7903320, Images #364–403.
16. Greene County GA Tax Digests, LDS Film #7903320:
 - [1793. Image #436:](#) Capt. Fielder's District, Defaulters, #89: William Blanks.
 - [1796. Image #498:](#) Capt. Robert Melton's District, #22: William Blanks, poll tax without property.

- [1797, Image #554](#): Capt. Robert Melton's District, #17: William Blanks, "*Pole without Property.*"
- LDS Film #8134236:
- [1798, Image #45](#): Capt. Melton's District, column 1, #28: William Blanks, "*Pole without Property.*"
- [1799, Image #114](#): Capt. Moses Speer's District, column 2, #1: William Blanks, "*poll Without property.*"
- [1802, Image #294](#): Capt. George W. Forster's District, column 1, #2: "*W^m Blanks,*" 1 white poll.
- [1804, Image #379](#): Capt. James Armor's District, column 2, #5: William Blanks, 1 white poll.
- [1805, Image #456](#): Capt. Armor's District, column 2, #13: William Blanks, "*Polls without property.*"
- [1806, Images #474–551](#): No William Blanks listed.
17. [Greene County GA Marriage Book \(1786–1810\), p. 6](#) (William Blanks to Jane Hill, 25 September 1799).
 18. Graham, Paul K. *1805 Georgia Land Lottery: Fortunate Drawers and Grantees*. Decatur, GA: The Genealogy Company, 2004, p. 6. Georgia Secretary of State, Surveyor General Land Grants, 1805 Land Lottery, Baldwin County, District 1, p. 41 (State of Georgia to William Blanks of Greene County, Lot #154, 26 September 1805).
 19. Baldwin County GA Tax Digests, LDS #7895985.
 - 1807**: Capt. Thomas' District, p. 3, #4: William Blanks, 202½ acres on Fishing Creek; p. 6, #18: Robert Hill; Capt. Stephen's District, p. 2: Joseph L. Hill, 202½ acres on Fishing Creek adjoining Blanks.
 - 1808**: Capt. Watson's District, p. 3: Joseph L. Hill, 202½ acres on Fishing Creek adj. Blanks; Capt. Thomas' District, p. 1, #9: Robert Hill; p. 4, #6: William Blanks, 202½ acres on Fishing Creek, adj. J. Hill.
 - 1809**: Capt. Watson's District, p. 1, #3: Joseph L. Hill, 202½ acres on Fishing Creek adj. Blanks; Capt. Hill's District, p. 1, #20: William Blanks, 202½ acres on Fishing Creek adj. J. L. Hill; p. 2, #13: Robert Hill.
 - 1810**: Capt. Watson's District, p. 3, #14: Joseph L. Hill, 202½ acres on Fishing Creek adjoining Blanks; Capt. Hill's District, p. 1, #22: William Blanks; 202½ acres on Fishing Creek adj. Baker; p. 2, #1: Robert Hill.
 - 1811**: Capt. Ellis' District, p. 1, #24: Robert Hill; p. 3, #16: William Blanks, 202½ acres on Fishing Creek adjoining Baker; Capt. Smith's District, p. 1: Joseph Hill, 202½ acres on Fishing Creek adjoining Blanks.
 20. Greene County GA Tax Digests, LDS #8191031:
 - [1812, Image #333](#): Capt. Lemuel Gresham's District (Militia District #161), #8: "*W^m Blanks,*" 1 white poll, 2 slaves, tax: 93¾¢.
 - [1813, Image #415](#): Capt. William Garner's District (Militia District #161), #5: "*W^m Blanks,*" 110 acres Quality 2, 110 acres Quality 3 land drained by Oconee River, adjoining Armor, 1 white poll, 3 slaves, tax: \$1.66.
 - [1814, Image #494](#): Capt. William Garner's District (Militia District #161), #5: "*W^m Blanks,*" 220 acres Quality 2 land drained by the Oconee River, adjoining Armor, 1 white poll, 3 slaves, tax: \$1.80.
 - [1815, Image #581](#): Capt. William Garner's District (Militia District #161), #3: William Blanks, 110 acres Quality 2, 110 acres Quality 3 land drained by W. Oconee River, adjoining Park, 1 white poll, 4 slaves, tax: \$1.97½.
 21. [Georgia Headright and Bounty Land Records, 1783–1909, LDS Film #5061137, Images #248–250](#) (Greene County Justices, warrant for survey of 25 acres for William Blanks, 6 May 1816; "*Thomas Riley, J.P.*").
 22. [Greene County GA Deed Book FF \(1816–1818\), pp. 394–395](#) (William and Sally Armor to William Blanks, 28 October 1816).
 23. [Georgia Grant Book K5, p. 852, LDS Film #5007536, Image #807](#) (State of Georgia to William Blanks, 20 November 1816). Georgia granted Blanks a tract of six acres adjoining his own land and that of Gaston.
 24. [Greene County GA Deed Book GG \(1818–1821\), p. 57](#) (William Blanks to Thomas B. Scott, 18 April 1818).
 25. [Greene County GA Deed Book GG \(1818–1821\), pp. 239–240](#) (Jacob and Sarah Peeler to "*William Blanks Senr,*" 26 October 1818).
 26. [Greene County GA Deed Book HH \(1821–1826\), pp. 205–206](#) (Matthew Houghton to William Blanks; John Mann to William Blanks; Thomas Bell to William Blanks, 28 December 1820). The tract Blanks purchased from Houghton gave no discernable identification of the 200 acres, with the description only in terms of various trees, numbers of chains in various directions, with the line described as "*up the Creek,*" without identifying which creek. The 110-acre tract he bought from Mann lay "*on the waters of Beaverdam Creek*" and adjoined the lines of Veazey, Hasten (Houston?), and Houghton. The 4.7-acre tract also lay "*on the waters of Beaverdam Creek.*" Thomas J. Moore and Francis West J.P. witnessed the transactions with Houghton and Mann, while the purchase from Bell was witnessed by Matthew Houghton, John Mann, and Francis West J.P.
 27. [1822 Greene County GA Tax Digest, LDS #8191031, Image #655](#): Capt. William L. Astin's District (Militia District #142), #11: "*William Blanks Senr,*" 294 acres Quality 3 land drained by Beaverdam [Creek], adjoining White, 1 white poll, 4 slaves, tax: \$1.93.
 28. [Greene County GA Will Book 4 \(1817–1842\), pp. 34–36; Greene County GA Probate Court Wills \(1798–1914\), LDS Film #5764273, Images #196–199](#) (Will of John Hill of Greene County, Georgia, written 11 August 1817, filed in court 15 January 1818).
 29. [Greene County GA Administrations & Guardians Bonds, Book A \(1812–1858\), p. 132](#) (William H. Blanks, bond as administrator of the estate of William Blanks, 12 January 1824).

30. [Greene County GA Ordinary Court Records \(1820–1836\), p. 95](#) (Greene County Court session, 10 January 1825); [p. 99](#) (Ezekiel Blanks, orphan of William Blanks, chooses Thomas Riley as guardian). [Greene County GA Administrators & Guardians Bonds \(1821–1835\), p. 92](#); [Greene County GA Original Guardians Bonds, LDS Film #7731074, Image #830](#) (Bond of Thomas Riley as guardian of Ezekiel Blanks, “*orphan of William Blanks decd*,” 10 January 1825; security: Jacob Riley).
31. [Greene County GA Marriage Book \(1786–1810\), p. 74](#) (Thomas Riley to Sally Hill, 10 January 1808).
32. [Greene County GA Estate Papers, LDS Film #5764283, Image #478](#): Estate Sale of Joseph Blanks, 3 March 1825 (“*Horse*” bought by “*Ezekiel Blanks*” for \$70).
33. Houston, Martha Lou, comp. *Reprint of Official Register of Land Lottery of Georgia 1827*. Easley, SC: Southern Historical Press, 1986, p. 208. Ezekiel Blanks, who registered in Robins District, Greene County, drew Lot #19, District #32, Section #1.
34. [1827 Greene County GA Tax Digest \(marked as 1828\), LDS Film #8191032, Image #206](#): Capt. Daniel W. Howel’s District (Militia District #161), #6: Ezekiel Blanks, 1 white poll, 202½ Quality 2 land in Lee County, Lot #19, District 32, tax: 82¢. Although identified as the tax digest for 1828, comparing this with the 1828 digest on Film #8188760 shows a conflict, as on that listing, Capt. Thomas J. Parks was the captain of Militia District #161. A careful examination of the recapitulations of the 1827 (partial) and 1828 (complete) tax digests on Film #8188760 shows that Daniel W. Howell was the captain of Militia District #161 in **1827**; see [1827 Greene County Tax Digest, LDS Film #8188760, Image #204](#), compared with the recapitulation of the [1828 Greene County Tax Digest, LDS Film #8188760, Image #302](#), which shows Capt. Thomas J. Parks as captain of MD #161.
35. [1828 Greene County GA Tax Digest, LDS Film #8188760, Image #258](#): Capt. Thomas J. Park’s District (Militia District #161), #11: Ezekiel Blanks, 1 white poll, 202½ Quality 2 land in Lee County, Lot #19, District 32, tax: 82¢. Although both tax digests are labeled as 1828,
36. Georgia Secretary of State, Surveyor General, Land Grants; 1827 Land Lottery, Lee County, District 32, 1st Section, p. 126 (“*Ezekiel Blanks of Robins District Greene County*,” Lot #19, 32nd District, 1st Section, Lee County, 7 August 1834). Lee County lay on the opposite side of the state from where Ezekiel lived, so he probably never lived on the land. Early records of Lee County do not exist, so we have no way of knowing when he sold the land.
37. 1830 Greene County GA Federal Census, p. 289, line #1: Thomas Riley. In his household is one male aged 20–30, the age bracket into which Ezekiel Blanks have fallen in 1830. Riley had one known son alive at that time, William M. Riley, born sometime between about 1805 and 1810.
38. [Greene County GA Estate Papers, LDS #5778161, Image #486](#) (“*List of Sale, Personal Property of Thomas Riley decd, February 21st 1831*”); [Image #495](#) (“*E Blank Paid 6¼*” cents for a “*Bagin Needle*”). [Greene County GA Appraisements, Sales, & Divisions Book K \(1831–1841\), p. 23](#) (“*Sale of the personal property of Thomas Riley decd*,” purchaser: “*E. Blanks*,” filed 5 April 1831). The original papers show that “*E Blank*” paid 6¼¢ for a “*Bagin Needle*.” In the recorded version, he was identified as “*E. Blanks*,” with the item he bought described as “*1 Baging Needle*.”

Temperance Riley: Growing Up in North Carolina & Georgia

1. Olive Branch Methodist Cemetery (Caledonia, Union County AR), tombstone of “[Temperance wife of W. E. Blanks](#)” (15 Apr 1802–6 Mar 1894). Both the original tombstone erected soon after her 1894 death and a modern replacement erected in 2010 mark her gravesite. Federal census records for 1850, 1870, and 1880 show her birth in North Carolina.
2. [Greene County GA Will Book 5, \(1840–1877\) p. 28](#); [Greene County GA Original Wills, LDS Film #5764274, Images #499–503](#) (Will of Peter Riley, dated 31 January 1844, filed in court 13 January 1845). Peter Riley wrote:
...what may be remaining from the foregoing sale, after my debts & the above cash legacies are paid, I wish to be equally divided between my children William M. Riley, James Riley, Susan Griffin, Temperance Blanks & my Grand Son Early Fawcett.
3. “*Raleigh Register and North-Carolina State Gazette*” (Raleigh, NC), July 9 (p. 3, column 3) and 23 (p. 1, column 4), 1804. The Hillsborough post office advertised that Peter Riley had a letter there awaiting pickup. Hillsborough was the county seat of Orange County, North Carolina.
4. [1805 Greene County GA Tax Digest, LDS Film #8134236, Image #399](#), p. 4, #5: John Riley; #6: Peter Riley. John Riley paid taxes of \$1.71¼ on 100 acres of Quality 3 land on the waters of the Ogeechee River adjoining Flippen and granted to Barnett, one white poll, and four slaves. Peter Riley paid taxes of 93¾¢ on one white poll and two slaves.
5. [Orange County NC Deed Book 11 \(1803–1805\), pp. 290–291](#) (Jacob Riley “*Senr*” to Peter Riley, 28 November 1804).
6. [Greene County GA Deed Book 4 \(1803–1808\), pp. 371–372](#) (Peter Riley to Jesse Grimes, 25 October 1805).
7. 1810 Orange County NC Federal Census, p. 126a/816, line #23: Peter Riley; #24: Jacob Riley. [Orange County NC Will Book D, p. 365](#); [LDS Film #4088834, Orange County NC Original Wills, Image #1569](#) (Will of Jacob Riley, dated 31 August 1812).
8. [Orange County NC Deed Book 16 \(1817–1818\), pp. 274–275](#) (Peter Riley to William Brown, 27 July 1816).

9. [Greene County GA Deed Book GG \(1818–1821\), p. 82](#) (Thomas Ware to Peter Riley, 22 May 1817; witness: Joseph Riley).
10. [Greene County GA Marriage Licenses Book A \(1817–1829\), p. 161](#) (Thomas Deviney to “*Tempy Riley*,” 4 December 1821).
11. Bussey-Herin Cemetery (Pleasant Grove, Union County, AR), tombstone of “*Seaborn Robins*” (8 Jan 1827–18 Mar 1894). Seborn Robins’ tombstone was standing and included in cemetery surveys made in the 1960s or early 1970s. However, it appears that the cemetery has since fallen into disrepair, with his stone broken into pieces. Several sources prove that Seborn Robins was the son of Temperance Riley Blanks, namely the 1880 federal census and a 1900 deed in which his heirs sell his farm. His heirs who signed the deed are Mary A. Breazeal, wife of Reuben S. Breazeal (the former Mary Ann Blanks), and the heirs of Elizabeth J. Blanks Ogden, who died in 1891. Mary Ann and Elizabeth are the only daughters of Temperance and Ezekiel Blanks who survived childhood. The 1850 and 1870 federal censuses show Seborn Robins living in Temperance’s household. These precise references:
1850: Harrison Township, p. 268a, Dwelling #798, line #31: E. Blanks (age: 46; Farmer; born: “*Geo*”); #32: Temperance Blanks (age: 46; born: “*N.C.*”); #37: Seborn Robins (age: 22; Farmer; born: “*Geo*”).
1870: Johnson Township, P.O. Hillsboro, p. 568b, Dwelling #228, line #25: “*Temperance Blanks*” (age: 65; Farmer; born: “*North Ca*”); #26: “*Seaborne Roberts*” [sic] (age: 44; Farm Laborer; born: Georgia).
1880: Johnson Township, ED #273, p. 271b/15, Dwelling #110, line #1: “*Seaborn Robins*” (age: 52; widowed; Farmer; born: “*Ga*”); #2: “*Temperance Blanks*” (age: 74; mother; widowed, Keeping House; born: “*N.C.*”).
 Union County AR Deed Book 14, p. 303 (“*The Heirs of Seborn Robins, Mary Brazeal, J. E. Ogden, I. N. Ogden, Eliza Ogden, and Mary L. Ogden*” to Tony Martindale, 26 January 1900; also signed by William R. Ogden, Sarah E. Ogden, and Susan M. Robertson). Two other daughters of Elizabeth J. Ogden did not sign the transaction.
12. [Greene County GA Will Book 5 \(1840–1877\), p. 96](#) (Will of Sarah Robins, written 12 June 1849, filed in court 1 July 1850). The records in the next section describe the debt owed to Temperance by William Robins.
13. See the references below to the 1838–1839 Greene County Superior Court suit between Ezekiel Blanks and Peter Riley.
14. 1830 Greene County GA Federal Census, p. 274, line #15: Peter Riley. His household included one white male aged 50–60 (Peter himself), two white males aged 10–15 (William M. and James Gray Riley), plus a white female aged 30–40, who is undoubtedly his second wife, Nancy Finley, who he obtained a marriage license to marry on 18 January 1830. Also in Peter Riley’s household was a white female aged 20–30 and a white male under 5, precisely the ages of Temperance Riley and Seborn Robins.

1830s: Marriage & Conflicts

1. [Greene County GA Marriage Licenses Book \(1829–1849\), p. 79](#) (“*Zekiel Blanks*” to “*Temperance Leviney*,” 1 March 1832).
2. [1834 Greene County GA Tax Digest, LDS Film #8191032, Image #340](#), Capt. Park’s District (Militia District #161), #4: Ezekiel Blanks, 1 white poll, 40 acres Quality 3 land in “*Characee*” County, tax: 36¢.
3. Georgia Secretary of State, Surveyor General, Land Grants; 1832 Cherokee County Gold Lottery, Section 4, District 2, Vol. 1, p. 409 (“*Ezekiel Blanks of Harris District Greene County*,” 2nd District, 4th Section, Lot #634, 40 acres, 19 May 1837).
4. [1837 Greene County GA Tax Digest, LDS Film #8191032, Image #406](#), Capt. Hutcherson’s District, #18: E. Blanks, 1 poll tax, total tax: 31¼¢.
5. [Greene County GA Deed Book NN \(1839–1842\), p. 22](#) (Peter Riley to William Askew, 24 December 1836).
6. [Greene County GA Superior Court Proceedings Book LL \(1834–1838\), March Term 1837, pp. 470–471](#) (“*The State vs. Ezekiel Blanks: Larceny from the House*”); [p. 477](#) (“*The State vs. Ezekiel Blanks: Misdemeanor*” [sic]); [pp. 477–478](#) (“*The State vs. Ezekiel Blanks: Simple Larceny*”).
7. Leslie-Winfield Family Cemetery (Liberty, Greene County GA), tombstone of “*Nathan Winfield; Died Sepr. 20th 1849; Aged 79 years.*” Graham, Paul K. *1805 Georgia Land Lottery: Persons Entitled to Draws*. Decatur, GA: The Genealogy Company, 200, p. 614. Nathan Winfield registered for Georgia’s 1805 land lottery in 1803 as a resident of Greene County. In the lottery, he drew two blank entries.
8. 1834 Greene County GA Tax Digest, LDS Film #8191032, Image #336, Capt. Hutcherson’s District (Militia District #163), #2: Nathan Winfield, 100 acres Quality 2, 342 acres Quality 3 land in Greene County, Beaverdam Creek, adjoining Merritt, 13 slaves.
9. [Greene County GA Superior Court Minutes, Vol. 8 \(1831–1839\), p. 363](#) (“*The Honorable the Superior Court met pursuant to adjournment present his Honor*,” 13 March 1837).
10. [Greene County GA Superior Court Minutes, Vol. 8 \(1831–1839\), 16 March 1837, p. 371](#) (“#3: *The State vs. Ezekiel Blanks, Larceny from the House True Bill, George Heard foreman*”); [p. 373](#) (“*The State vs. Ezekiel Blanks, Misdemeanor, True Bill, Geo. Heard, Foreman*”); [p. 377](#) (Case #134: “*The State vs. Ezekiel Blanks, Misdemeanor*”;

- verdict: *"We the Jury find the Defendant not Guilty, Wiley M. White;"* Case #135: *"The State vs. Ezekiel Blanks, Simple Larceny;"* verdict: *"We the Jury find the defendant not Guilty, W. M. White,"* 17 March 1837). [Greene County GA Superior Court Proceedings Book LL \(1834-1838\), March Term 1837, pp. 470-471](#) (*"The State vs. Ezekiel Blanks: Larceny from the House...True Bill;"* verdict: *"We the Jury find the defendant not guilty;"*; [p. 477](#) (*"The State vs. Ezekiel Blanks: Misdemeaner [sic]...True Bill;"* verdict: *"We the Jury find the defendant not guilty;"*; [pp. 477-478](#) (*"The State vs. Ezekiel Blanks: Simple Larceny...True Bill;"* verdict: *"We the Jury find the defendant not Guilty"*).
11. Greene County GA Marriage Licenses Book A (1817-1829), p. 344 (William S. Robins to Sarah Williams, 23 October 1827). Greene County GA Will Book 4 (or F) (1817-1842), pp. 216-217 (Will of Irbane Leonard, written 18 July 18--, filed in court 18 May 1837). Irbane Leonard was a well-to-do bachelor. His first bequest was to *"the lawful children of William and Sally Robins born and to be born,"* leaving them four slaves. Temperance's statement that William Robins owed her money suggests that he may have been a relative of the father of her son, Seborn Robins. William was the son of Sarah Robins, who in her will of 12 June 1849 dictated that her estate was to be divided among her children, including *"Thomas Robins orphan Children"* and *"William Robins orphan Children."* This may be an indication that Thomas Robins was Seborn's father. See [Greene County GA Will Book 5 \(1840-1877\), p. 96](#) (Will of Sarah Robins, written 12 June 1849, filed in court 1 July 1850).
 12. [Greene County GA Superior Court Proceedings Book Z \(1838-1841\), pp. 97-99; LDS Film #8458690, Images #91-92](#), September Term 1839: *"Ezekiel Blanks & Wife vs. Peter Riley, Assumpsit."* [Greene County GA Superior Court Case Files, LDS Film #8201397, Images #181-188](#): *"Ezekiel Blanks & wife vs. Peter Riley, Sept Term 1838."* [Greene County GA Superior Court Minutes, Vol. 8 \(1831-1839\), p. 463; LDS Film #8627953, Image #488](#), 14 March 1839: *"Ezekiel Blanks & Wife vs. Peter Riley, Assumpsit Settled."*
 13. [Greene County GA Estate Papers, LDS Film #5764283, Image #516](#) (William Blanks Estate, 1824, Ezekiel Blanks to John G. Gaston, selling *"his proportionable [sic] part of Nancy Blanks Dower,"* 27 September 1839).
 14. 1840 Perry County AL Federal Census, p. 276, line #29: Ezekiel Blanks; p. 285, line #8: *"W^m Seawall."* William Seawall's household consisted of an adult male/female couple, presumably him and his wife, together with thirty-two slaves, twenty-four males and eight females. All eight of the enslaved females were aged between ten and twenty-five years of age.
 15. [Dallas County AL Deed & Mortgage Book J, p. 278; Union County AR Deed Book A, pp. 284-285](#) (William Seawall to Temperance Blanks, 3 October 1842).
 16. [Greene County GA Deed Book NN, p. 414](#) (Peter Riley to William M. Riley, 23 December 1841; witness: Robert F. Griffin, J.P.). [Greene County GA Deed Book OO, p. 10](#) (Peter Riley to James G. Riley, 9 May 1842; witness: Robert F. Griffin, J.P.).
 17. [Greene County GA Will Book 5, p. 28 \(1840-1877\); Greene County GA Original Wills, LDS Film #5764274, Images #499-503](#) (Will of Peter Riley, signed 31 January 1844, filed in court 13 January 1845). [Greene County GA Inferior Court Records \(1837-1851\), p. 143](#) (Will of Peter Riley proved; appraisement ordered; William M. and James Riley qualified as executors, 13 January 1845). In his will, Peter Riley wrote, *"what may be remaining from the foregoing sale, after my debts & the above cash legacies are paid, I wish to be equally divided between my children William M. Riley, James Riley, Susan Griffin, Temperance Blanks & my Grand Son Early Fawcett."*

Immigration to South Arkansas

1. Olive Branch Methodist Cemetery (Caledonia, Union County AR), tombstone of *"Mary Ann Blanks, Wife of R. S. Breazeal"* (29 Oct 1843-7 Jun 1915). Federal census records from 1850 and 1870-1910 verify her birth in Arkansas in October 1843.
2. [1843 Union County AR Tax Assessments, LDS Film #833821, Images #843-844](#): Ezekiel Blanks was not assessed 1843 taxes in Union County.
3. [1844 Union County AR Tax Assessments, LDS Film #833821, Images #867](#), #5: Ezekiel Blanks, 1 white poll, 1 slave over 8 and under 60 years valued @ \$400, 1 horse or mare aged three years or older valued @ \$25, 1 mule aged three years or older valued @ \$25, and 1 cow aged two years or older valued at \$10; total tax: \$1.65.
4. [Arkansas Internal Improvements #959, LDS Film #8274168, Image #72](#): Ezekiel Blanks, 23 January 1846, NE¼ of Section 20, Township 18 South, Range 14 West, 160 acres at \$1.25 per acre for a total price of \$200.
5. [Union County AR County Court Record Book A \(1830-1846\), p. 271](#) (14 January 1846); [p. 277](#) (*"Luter Road from High's land; Ordered...that the following persons be appointed on the luter road Joel Kelly from Highs land to Johson Township line, Ezekiel Blanks from thence to Jas. Andrews,"* January 1846).
6. [Union County AR County Court Record Book A \(1830-1846\), p. 284](#) (*"At a regular County Court begun and held at the Court House in the town of Eldorado in said County on Monday,"* 13 April 1846); [p. 287](#) (Commissioners appointed by the Court *"to view and mark out a road leading from the Louisiana line to intersect the Champagnolle road at James Andrews...it is ordered that Henry Tatum be and he is hereby appointed overseer from the Louisiana line to the Township line near James Andrews and Ezekiel Blanks from there to where said rode [sic] intersects the Champagnolle road,"* April Term 1846).

7. [Union County Arkansas County Court Record Book B \(1845–1849\), p. 128](#) (“Ezekial [sic] Blanks vs. The County, On the account of Ezekial [sic] Blanks here filed it is ordered that he be allowed the sum of four dollars for warning hands to work on the road 1846 and that the Clerk issue a warrant for the same; Issued,” 8 November 1847).
8. [Union County Arkansas County Court Record Book B \(1845–1849\), p. 256](#) (“Luter Road. It is ordered by the court that Joel Kelly be and he is hereby appointed overseer of this road from the end of the land formerly owned by Dr. Meek to the Franklin township line and Ezekiel Blanks from thence to James Andrews,” 6 February 1849).
9. [Union County AR Circuit Court Record Book B \(1846–1849\), pp. 247–248](#): Franklin B. Pearce vs. 197 Lee Sullivan and William D. Lee: “...and thereupon came a jury of good and lawful men to wit...Ezekiel Blanks,...who being duly elected tried and sworn well and truly to inquire into the truth of the breaches as in plaintiffs declaration...,” 23 October 1847.
10. Union County AR Circuit Court Record Book B (1846–1849):
 - [p. 254](#): “And the sheriff is ordered to forthwith summons from the bystanders nine persons Qualified to serve as Pettit Jurors, Whereupon...Ezekiel Blanks,...[have] been summoned and reported as such. There now being Eighteen persons in attendance Qualified to serve as Pettit Jurors all of Whom answered to their names when called to Wit...#10. Ezekiel Blanks,..., were duly empaneled to Serve as Pettit Jurors during the present week of this term of the Court,” 10 April 1848.
 - [p. 257–259](#): “State of Arkansas vs. 204 Yewin Norman; State of Arkansas vs. 210 Yewin Norman...; William Thompson vs. 134 John A Mitchell.” Ezekiel Blanks was impaneled as a juror on the juries that heard all three cases, 11 April 1848.
 - [p. 266](#): “Samuel T. Cobb vs. 203 Edmund P. Tatum...it is ordered by the Court that a jury come to try the issue joined in this cause. Whereupon came a jury of good and lawful men to wit...Ezekiel Blanks...” 12 April 1848.
 - [p. 267](#): “State of Arkansas vs. Ezekiel Blanks, fine for contempt of court. Came the said Ezekiel Blanks in his own proper person and the Court being 42atisfied [sic] that the act committed by him on a previous day of this term of this Court, for which he was fin[e]d the sum of one dollar & cost was not intended to cast contempt. It is therefore Ordered and considered by the Court that said judgement for the sum of one dollar fine & cost as aforesaid be and the same is set aside and said Ezekiel Blanks go hence without day [delay] free therefrom,” 12 April 1848.
11. Union County AR Circuit Court Record Book B (1846–1849). Ezekiel Blanks served on juries that determined the verdict in these cases:
 - [p. 272](#): “William Abernathy vs. 272 John H. High; John Wesson vs. 267 Alfred P. Smith.”
 - [p. 273](#): “Bryant Deas vs. 292 Daniel H. Tobin”
 - [p. 274](#): “Andrew J. Owens vs. 230. James M. Hudson.”
 - [p. 276](#): “William Abernathy vs. 272. John H. High.”
12. Union County Arkansas County Court Record Book B (1845–1849):
 - [p. 230](#): “...Ezekiel Blanks & Charles Smith be and are hereby appointed viewers to view and mark out said Road...”
 - [p. 269](#): “Ezekiel Blanks vs. The County, Upon the Account of Ezekiel Blanks here filed, It is ordered by the Court that he be allowed the sum of thirty dollars for his Services in viewing & marking out a new road and that the Clerk issue Warrant for the same. Issued to Cornish,” 7 May 1849.
 - [p. 274](#): “Report of Charles Smith & Ezekiel Blanks road viewers. This day came Charles Smith and Ezekiel Blanks viewers appointed to view and mark out a road leading from James Andrews Spring branch...”
13. [Union County Arkansas County Court Record Book E \(1851–1854\), p. 224](#) (“Edmund R. Thompson vs. 885 John Carter...and thereupon came a jury to wit...Ezekiel Blanks...twelve good and lawful men who being duly elected impannelled [sic] and sworn...”
14. [1850 Union County AR Federal Census, Slave Schedule, Harrison Township, p. 567, column 1, #27: E. Blanks](#), slave owner.
15. [1850 Union County AR Federal Census, Agricultural Schedule, Harrison Township, pp. 475–476, line #10: E. Blanks](#).

The Blanks, Ogdens, & Rev. Dr. Juba Estabrook

1. “Arkansas State Gazette” (Little Rock, AR), 26 December 1837, p. 2, column 5. The obituary of Rev. Benjamin Ogden gives his death on 9 December 1837 in Union County and describes his service as a Methodist minister.
2. [Union County AR Marriage Book B \(1850–1866\), p. 73](#) (Nathan Ogden to Elizabeth J. Blanks, 18 September 1851).
3. “Arkansas State Gazette Democrat” (Little Rock, AR), 1 August 1851, p. 3, column 6. Vermont, Vital Records, 1760–1954, LDS Film #4543226:
 - [Images #1873–1874](#): Hardwick, VT, Book 2, p. 506, Julius De Montiegnay Estabrook, born 17 March 1829, son of Juba Estabrook.
 - [Images #1927–1928](#): Hardwick, VT, Book 2, p. 506, Marquis De Montiegnay Estabrook, born 17 June 1827, son of Juba Estabrook.

4. Stewart, Rev. John. *Highways and Hedges; or, Fifty Years of Western Methodism*. Cincinnati: Hitchcock and Walden, 1872, p. 198.
5. 1840 Independence County AR Federal Census, p. 200, line #10: "J. Estabrook."
6. [Bureau of Land Management, Track Book, Arkansas N-W Vol. 13, LDS #7116780, Image #376](#): Batesville, Arkansas Cash Entry #2590, Juba Estabrook, 30 September 1840. Estabrook paid \$100 cash for this 80-acre tract: W½ of NE¼ of Section 12, Township 13 North, Range 8 West. The government issued him a patent for the tract on 10 July 1844, but they misspelled his name on the patent as "Eastabrook."
7. "Arkansas State Gazette," 18 November 1840, p. 2, column 2.
8. [Independence County AR Deed Book E, pp. 268-269](#) (Juba and Sarah Estabrook to Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 16 October 1841).
9. [Independence County AR Deed Book E, pp. 421-422](#) (Juba and Sarah Estabrook to Serena Maclean, 16 August 1842). Estabrook deeded Maclean the 80-acre tract he had purchased from the government a few years earlier, except for "Ten acres on the North East corner" of the tract that "he has heretofore conveyed to the Methodist Episcopal Church."
10. "Arkansas State Gazette," 30 November 1842, p. 2, column 5. The Annual Conference was held at Helena, Arkansas on November 22nd. The newspaper reported that "J. E. Stabrook" was the minister assigned to the Washington Circuit.
11. "The Arkansas Banner" (Little Rock, AR), 9 December 1843, p. 3, column 1. The 1843 Conference was held in Clarksville, Johnson County.
12. Union County AR Deed Record Book A (1830-1845), p. 288 (Melton H. Holloway aged 29 to Elizabeth K. James aged 21, 9 June 1844). "Juba Esterbrook" signed the marriage record at the courthouse on the same day that he performed the marriage, 9 June 1844.
13. "Arkansas State Gazette," 4 December 1844, p. 3, column 4.
14. "The Arkansas Banner," 9 December 1846 (p. 2, column 5) and 29 November 1847 (p. 2, column 6). The Methodist Episcopal Conference appointments for the ensuing years of both 1847 and 1848 included "J. Estabrook, P.E.," or "Presiding Elder," for the Pine Bluff District.
15. Union County AR Marriage Record Book A (1847-1850):
 - p. 20: "This may certify that I Juba Esterbrook an Elder of the Methodis [sic] E. C. South solemnized the rites of matrimony between James J. McGough aged 22 and Margaret J. Thompson aged 16, Union Co. Arkansas May 20, 1847. My credentials are recorded in Hempstead County Clerks office." He signed it as "J. Esterbrook," or at least that is how the Union County clerk transcribed his signature.
 - p. 20: "I Juba Esterbrook an Elder in the M. E. Church South do certify that on the 27th day of May 1847 I did unite in Bonds of matrimony Hen L. Jivins [Givens] aged 31 to Elenor Rodes [Rhodes] aged 16..."
 - p. 52: "I hereby certify that I performed or solemnized the rites of matrimony between W^m W. Bennet aged thirty two (32) to Mary McGough aged twenty five (25) according to the usage of the M. E. Church South on the twenty forth [sic] day of July 1848. Juba Estabrook an Elder in the M. E. Church South."
16. "The Arkansas Intelligencer" (Van Buren, AR), 16 December 1848, p. 3, column 1. "Washington Telegraph" (Washington, AR), 20 December 1848, p. 2, column 4. The Methodist Episcopal Conference appointed "J. Estabrook and J. W. Shipman" to the El Dorado Circuit for the ensuing year.
17. "The Eldorado Union" (El Dorado, AR), 15 September 1849, p. 2, column 1.
18. "Washington Telegraph," 28 November 1849, p. 2, column 6. "Arkansas State Gazette Democrat," 8 November 1850, p. 3, column 2.
19. "Arkansas State Gazette Democrat," 1 August 1851, p. 3, column 6. "Arkansas Democratic Banner" (Little Rock, AR), 5 August 1851, p. 3, column 3. The "Gazette" published a detailed obituary of Rev. Estabrook and that gave cholera as his cause of death. The "Banner" merely published a notice of his death and listed typhoid fever as the cause of his demise.
20. 1850 Washington County AR Federal Census, Prairie Township, p. 391a, Dwelling #106, line #7: "Marquis Estabrook" (age: 24; Carpenter; born: "Vt."). 1850 Crawford County AR Federal Census, p. 289b, "The City of Ft. Smith," Dwelling #22, line #6: "Mary Miller" (age: 34; Merchant; born: "Mass"); line #15: "Julius Esterbrook" (age: 20; Clerk; born: "NY").
21. [Union County AR Circuit Court Record Book E \(1851-1854\), p. 46; LDS Film #8197445, Image #356](#): "Marcus D. M. Esterbrook [sic] vs. Seaborn Robbins [sic] & Ezekiel Blanks," 17 October 1851.
22. "New-Orleans Weekly Delta" (New Orleans, LA), 2 December 1850, p. 8, column 7.
23. "The Daily Picayune" (New Orleans, LA), 11 July 1851 (p. 4, column 1) and 27 February 1852 (evening ed., p. 4, column 4). "New Orleans Daily Crescent" (New Orleans, LA), 27 February 1852, p. 1, column 5. "The Daily Delta" (New Orleans, LA), 25 February 1853, p. 6, column 2.
24. Union County AR Circuit Court Record Book E (1851-1854); LDS Film #8197445:

- [Image #382](#): “E. B. Bishop & Co. vs. 815 Julius D. R. Esterbrook [sic] Deft, Ezekiel Blanks & Seaborn Robbins [sic] Garnishees & Marcus D. M. Esterbrook [sic],” 13 April 1852 (the page numbers are illegible).
- [Image #395](#): “E. B. Bishop & Co. 815 vs. Julius D. R. Estabrook,” 19 April 1852 (the page numbers are illegible).
25. Union County AR Circuit Court Record Book E (1851–1854); LDS Film #8197445:
[Image #454, p. 247](#): “E. B. Bishop 815 vs. Julius D. R. Esterbrook [sic] Attachment,” 19 October 1852.
[Image #543, p. 391](#): “E. B. Bishop & Co. 815 vs. Julius D. R. Esterbrook [sic],” 15 June 1853.
[Image #567, p. 435](#): “E. B. Bishop & Co. 815 vs. Julius D. R. Esterbrook [sic],” 27 June 1853.
[Image #578, p. 457](#): “E. B. Bishop & Co. 815 vs. Julius D. R. Esterbrook [sic],” 8 July 1853.
26. [Union County AR Circuit Court Record Book E \(1851–1854\), pp. 457–458; LDS Film #8197445, Image #578](#): “E. B. Bishop & Co. 815 vs. Julius D. R. Esterbrook [sic],” 8 July 1853.
27. “The Daily Picayune,” September 3 (p. 4, column 2) and September 24 (p. 4, column 1), 1853. On the 3rd, the New Orleans Post Office had letters waiting for “D. R. Estabrook” and “Julius D. Estabrook,” while on the 24th, they had a letter waiting for “Mrs. Amelia A. Estabrook.”
28. [Union County AR Probate Record A \(1845–1855\), pp. 331–333](#): Shadrach D. Drennan appointed “public administrator...of Julius D. R. Esterbrook [sic] deceased,” 15 December 1853. [Union County AR Probate Record E \(1852–1856\), p. 196](#): Shadrach D. Drennan petitioned for letters of administration on the estate of “Julius D. R. Esterbrook” [sic], 15 December 1853.
29. [Union County AR Circuit Court Record Book E \(1851–1854\), p. 524; LDS Film #8197445, Image #612](#): “E. B. Bishop & Co. 815 vs. Julius D. R. Esterbrook [sic],” 17 December 1853.
30. Union County AR Probate Record E (1852–1856):
[p. 201](#): “Julius D. R. Esterbrook [sic] Estate,” 9 January 1854.
[p. 249](#): “E. B. Bishop & Co. v. S. D. Drennan as adm^r of the Estate of Julius D. R. Esterbrook [sic] decd.,” 26 January 1854.
31. Union County AR Circuit Court Record Book E (1851–1854); LDS Film #8197445:
[Image #652, p. 602](#): “E. B. Bishop & Co. 815 vs. Julius D. R. Esterbrook [sic],” 16 June 1854.
[Image #659, p. 614](#): “E. B. Bishop & Co. 815 vs. Julius D. R. Esterbrook [sic],” 20 June 1854.
[Union County AR Circuit Court Record Book F \(1854–1859\), p. 133](#): “E. B. Bishop & Co. 815 v. Julius D. R. Esterbrook [sic],” 19 April 1855. The Court ordered this case to “abate,” or be dismissed.
32. In 1988, Mrs. Mary Frances (Sissy) Mace (27 Jan 1923–5 Feb 2015) of Caledonia, Union County, Arkansas provided family information with specific names and dates of birth and death of the children of Ezekiel and Temperance Blanks. Mrs. Mace was a great-granddaughter of Ezekiel and Temperance, and she obtained this data from her mother, Mrs. Gussie Cates, the daughter of Mary Ann Blanks Breazeal and granddaughter of Ezekiel and Temperance. Mrs. Sissy Mace also gave detailed information on the connection of the Blanks to the Estabrook family. She did not know given names, but she did know that they came from Vermont. She mistakenly thought that they were relatives, and did not seem aware of their connection through the Methodist faith.

Navigating Droughts & Crop Mortgages

- [Union County AR Deed Record Book G \(1851–1854\), p. 631](#) (Ezekiel Blanks mortgage to Albert Rust, 6 June 1853). 1850 Union County AR Federal Census, Wilmington Township, p. 277a:
 Dwelling #947: “Alfred Rust” (age: 46; occupation: Farmer; no real estate; born: “Va”).
 Dwelling #948: “Albert Rust” (age: 32; occupation: Planter; real estate: \$16,000; born: “Va”).
- “The Daily Picayune” (New Orleans, LA), September 17 (p. 2, column 4), November 29 (p. 4, column 1), December 10 (p. 3, column 1), 29 (p. 4, column 3; p. 8, column 6), 1853; January 8 (p. 8, columns 3, 7), 10 (p. 3, column 2), 11 (p. 4, column 1), 18 (p. 4, column 4), 22 (p. 8, column 5), and 25 (p. 2, column 1), 1854. “The Daily Delta” (New Orleans, LA), 30 September 1853, p. 1, column 1. “The Standard” (Clarksville, TX), 4 February 1854, p. 2, column 5. Capt. Kouns left New Orleans at 5:00 p.m. on December 10th with the “Frank Keeling,” headed for the Ouachita River. He must have gone north into the Ouachita River, possibly stopping at Harrisonburg, Louisiana until the water levels rose enough for him to make it over the Catahoula Shoals and to Monroe, Louisiana by December 21st. The Ouachita Packet “New World” advertised to leave on December 31st for all landings on the Ouachita River as far as Camden, Arkansas, including Alabama Landing and Ouachita City, the two northernmost river landings in Union Parish, Louisiana, while the Ouachita Packet “R. W. McRae” departed on the 29th, going as far as Alabama Landing, the northernmost Ouachita River landing before reaching the Arkansas state line. The advertisement stated that, “as soon as the navigation opens,” the “McRae” would “go up Bayou Bartholomew to Point Pleasant.” This shows that, although the water in the bayous clearly remained too low, they anticipated a rise in the Ouachita River that would allow trips as far north on the river to Camden, Arkansas.
- “Picayune,” November 4 (p. 5, column 1), 21 (evening edition: p. 1, column 3), December 16 (p. 4, column 6), 19 (evening edition: p. 1, column 3), 20 (p. 5, column 2), 1854; 3 January 1855 (p. 1, column 6). “The Daily Delta,” 6 January 1855, p. 4, column 3.

4. *"Picayune,"* May 3 (p. 5, column 3), 20 (p. 3, column 1), 24 (p. 1, column 7), June 26 (p. 1, column 6), July 27 (p. 2, columns 1, 3), 1855.
5. *"Picayune,"* May 1 (morning edition supplement, p. 5, column 3), August 28 (p. 1, column 4), September 22 (p. 2, column 2), 1855. *"Democratic Advocate"* (Baton Rouge, LA), 7 June 1855, p. 5, column 2. *"New Orleans Daily Crescent,"* 7 August 1855, p. 2, column 3. *"Semi-Weekly Standard"* (Raleigh, NC), 19 September 1855, p. 3, column 5. The reports from Union Parish, located just a few miles south of Ezekiel Blanks' farm, all come from the *"Farmerville Enquirer."*
6. [Union County AR Circuit Court Record F, p. 178](#) (Union County Circuit Court, 27 August 1855); [pp. 181–182](#) (A. C. L. Hill vs. Ezekiel Blanks, Cases #1362, 1388).
7. [Union County AR Deed Record I \(1856–1860\), pp. 125–126](#) (Ezekiel and Temperance Blanks to Augustus C. L. Hill, 26 September 1855).
8. [Union County AR Tax Assessments, LDS Film #8339822](#), 1848–1860.
9. [Union County AR Deed Record I \(1856–1860\), pp. 600–601](#) (Ezekiel Blanks mortgage to John Hearin *"of the town of Hillsboro,"* 1 August 1859).
10. [Union County AR Circuit Court Record F, pp. 223.5](#) (A. C. L. Hill vs. Ezekiel Blanks, Seaborn Robins, & Nathan Ogden, Case #1453, 17 April 1856).
11. Union County AR Probate Record Book E (1852–1856):
[p. 440](#): *"Nathan Ogden v. W^m R. Cowser as admr. of E. Kern Deceased,"* 9 October 1855.
[pp. 440–441](#): *"Susan Blanks v. W^m R. Cowser as admr. of Emanuel Kern's Estate,"* 9 October 1855.
[p. 450](#): *"Ezekiel Blanks v. W^m R. Cowser as admr. of Emanuel Kern deceased,"* 9 October 1855.
12. Union County AR Probate Record Book F-1 (1860–1863):
[pp. 446–447](#): *"Estate of Emanuel Kern dec^d Final Settlement,"* 20 March 1860.
[p. 460](#): *"Estate of Emanuel Kern dec^d Final Settlement. Comes C. Yale Junior & Co., Taylor, Hadden & Co. and Ezekiel Blanks claimants against said Estate by attorney, and on their mother, It is ordered by the Court that this settlement be and the same is hereby continued until the next term hereof...,"* 28 May 1860.
[p. 482](#): *"Estate of E. Kern dec^d Final Settlement,"* 31 August 1860.
[p. 535](#): *"E. Kern's Estate, W. R. Cowser Admr, Final Settlement,"* 12 December 1860. The Court accepted the final settlement and *"ordered by the Court that the Administrator pay over immediately to the following named Claimants...E. Blanks...Prin [principal] \$21.25, Int [interest] \$6.85..."*
13. In 1988, Mrs. Mary Frances (Sissy) Mace (27 Jan 1923–5 Feb 2015) of Caledonia, Union County, Arkansas provided family information with specific names and dates of birth and death of the children of Ezekiel and Temperance Blanks. Mrs. Mace was a great-granddaughter of Ezekiel and Temperance, and she obtained this data from her mother, Mrs. Gussie Cates, the daughter of Mary Ann Blanks Breazeal and granddaughter of Ezekiel and Temperance. The specific names and dates of the Blanks daughters provided by Mrs. Mace are given below. These appear to have come from a family Bible, but if so, it has not been located.
14. Olive Branch Methodist Cemetery (Caledonia, Union County AR), tombstone of ["W. E. Blanks, Died Feb. 25 1864 Age 58 Ys. 5 Mo. 26 Days."](#) The age inscribed on his original monument places his birth on 31 August 1805.

Thirty Years a Widow

1. [Union County AR Marriage Book B \(1850–1866\), p. 117](#) (Seborn Robins to Elizabeth Jackson, 21 December 1854).
2. [Union County AR Marriage Book B \(1850–1866\), p. 358](#) (*"R. S. Brazeal"* to *"Miss M. A. Blanks,"* 19 July 1866). Rev. S. T. Cobb reported that on that day, *"I duly Joined in Marriage R. S. Brazeal and Miss M. A. Blanks both being of the Lawful age then and there declared them to be husband and Wife according to Law."*
3. 1867 Union County AR Tax Assessment, Johnson Township, LDS Film #8339822, Image #700, p. 53, #8: S. Robins.
4. 1870 Union County AR Federal Census, Agricultural Schedule, P.O. Hillsboro, Johnson Township, p. 4, #14: Temperance Blanks.
5. [Union County AR Deed Book O \(1871–1872\), pp. 391–392](#) (*"Sebbeon Robbins"* mortgage to William A. Coit, 8 March 1872).
6. [Union County AR Deed Book X \(1876–1877\), pp. 225–226](#) (State of Arkansas to W. B. Coit, 14 June 1873; W. B. Coit to W. A. Coit, 30 September 1873; W. A. Coit to *"Sebran Robbins,"* 24 January 1874; State Commissioner of Lands to *"Sebran Robbins,"* 24 May 1877). Robins purchased the E½ of the SW¼ of Section 4, Township 19 South, Range 14 West, 80 acres of land for \$100.
7. [Union County AR Deed Book V \(1876–1877\), pp. 151–153](#) (*"Seaborn"* Robins mortgage to William & Smith, 19 April 1876).
8. [1880 Union County AR Tax Assessment, LDS Film #8743836, Image #97](#), Township 19, Range 14, Section 4, Seborn Robins, E½ of SW¼, 80 acres valued at \$120, taxes paid 4 March 1880.
9. 1880 Union County AR Federal Census, Agricultural Schedule, Johnson Township, p. 9, #9: *"Seaborn Robins."*

10. [Union County AR Deed Book II \(1886–1890\), pp. 382–383](#) (J. W. Callaway, Commissioner appointed by the Pulaski Chancery Court to dispose of “*Certain Lands in Union County Arks*” to “*Seaborn Robbins*,” 16 May 1888). Robins received the N ½ of NW ¼ of Section 9, Township 19 South, Range 14 West, 80 acres of Internal Improvement Land for \$127.75.
11. [1890 Union County AR Tax Assessment, LDS Film #8743836, Image #427](#), Township 19, Range 14, Section 4, #2: “*Sebn Robbins*,” E ½ of SW ¼, 80 acres @ \$120; #3: Mrs. E. Ogden, SW ¼, 159.30 acres @ \$206; [Image #428, Section 5, #21](#): “*Sebn Robbins*,” N ½ of NW ¼, 80 acres @ \$100. Both Sebn and his sister paid their taxes on 10 February 1891.
12. Olive Branch Methodist Cemetery (Caledonia, Union County AR), tombstone of “[Elizabeth J. Wife of Nathanel Ogden](#)” (1 Dec 1832–8 Apr 1891).
13. Olive Branch Methodist Cemetery (Caledonia, Union County AR), tombstone of “[Temperance Wife of W. E. Blanks](#)” (15 Apr 1802–6 Mar 1894).
14. Bussey-Herin Cemetery (Pleasant Grove, Union County, AR), tombstone of “[Seaborn Robins](#)” (8 Jan 1827–18 Mar 1894).
15. Union County AR Deed Book 14, p. 303 (“*The Heirs of Sebn Robins, Mary Brazeal, J. E. Ogden, I. N. Ogden, Eliza Ogden, and Mary L. Ogden*” to Tony Martindale, 26 January 1900). Robins’ heirs sold the E ½ of SW ¼ of Section 4 and the NE ¼ of NW ¼ of Section 9, both in Township 19 South, Range 14 West. The clerk erred with the names of Robins’ heirs, including only Mary Ann Brazeal, Isaac N. Ogden, and James E. Ogden, and the wives of the latter two in the initial list of grantors. However, the transaction was also signed by William R. Ogden and his wife, Sarah E. Ogden, and Susan M. Ogden Robertson. Two other daughters of Elizabeth J. Ogden did not sign the transaction, Temperance Ann Ogden Griffin, who then lived in Texas, and Mary Elizabeth Ogden Jeter, who lived in Union County.

Sebn Robins, Son of Temperance Riley

1. The 1850, 1870, and 1880 Union County AR Federal Census enumerations all show Sebn living in Temperance’s household, while the 1880 census identified her as Sebn’s mother:
 - 1850:** Harrison Township, p. 268a, Dwelling #798, line #31: E. Blanks (age: 46; Farmer; born: “*Geo*”); #32: Temperance Blanks (age: 46; born: “*N.C.*”); #37: Sebn Robins (age: 22; Farmer; born: “*Geo*”).
 - 1870:** Johnson Township, P.O. Hillsboro, p. 568b, Dwelling #228, line #25: “*Temperance Blanks*” (age: 65; Farmer; born: “*North Ca*”); #26: “*Seaborne Roberts*” [sic] (age: 44; Farm Laborer; born: Georgia).
 - 1880:** Johnson Township, ED #273, p. 271b/15, Dwelling #110, line #1: “*Seaborn Robins*” (age: 52; widowed; Farmer; born: “*Ga*”); #2: “*Temperance Blanks*” (age: 74; mother; widowed, Keeping House; born: “*N.C.*”).

Union County AR Deed Book 14, p. 303 (“*The Heirs of Sebn Robins, Mary Brazeal, J. E. Ogden, I. N. Ogden, Eliza Ogden, and Mary L. Ogden*” to Tony Martindale, 26 January 1900). The transaction was also signed by two other children of Elizabeth J. Blanks Ogden: William R. Ogden, and his wife, Sarah E. Ogden, and Susan M. Ogden Robertson. Two other daughters of Elizabeth J. Ogden failed to sign the transaction.
2. [Greene County GA Will Book 5, \(1840–1877\) p. 96](#) (Will of Sarah Robins, written 12 June 1849, filed in court 1 July 1850).
3. [Greene County GA Superior Court Proceedings Book Z \(1838–1841\), pp. 97–99; LDS Film #8458690, Images #91–92](#), September Term 1839: “*Ezekiel Blanks & Wife vs. Peter Riley, Assumpsit.*” [Greene County GA Superior Court Case Files, LDS Film #8201397, Images #181–188](#): “*Ezekiel Blanks & wife vs. Peter Riley, Sept Term 1838.*” [Greene County GA Superior Court Minutes, Vol. 8 \(1831–1839\), p. 463; LDS Film #8627953, Image #488](#), 14 March 1839: “*Ezekiel Blanks & Wife vs. Peter Riley, Assumpsit Settled.*” This court record shows that Temperance lived with her father, Peter Riley, for the three-year period prior to her marriage to Blanks on 1 March 1832.
4. [Union County AR Marriage Book B \(1850–1866\), p. 117](#) (Sebn Robins to Elizabeth Jackson, 21 December 1854). Justice of the Peace Ezeriah Pepper stated that “*Sebn Robins aged 26 years and Elizabeth Jackson aged 15 years all of Union County Arks and were then and there by me at their mutual request and desire Joined in the bonds of matrimony.*”
5. Compiled Military Service Record, “*S. Robbins*,” private, Co. D, 37th Arkansas Infantry Regiment, Civil War (Confederate).
6. Bussey-Herin Cemetery (Pleasant Grove, Union County, AR), tombstone of “[Seaborn Robins](#)” (8 Jan 1827–18 Mar 1894).

Children of Zekiel Blanks and Tempey Riley

1. In 1988, Mrs. Mary Frances (Sissy) Mace (27 Jan 1923–5 Feb 2015) of Caledonia, Union County, Arkansas provided family information with specific names and dates of birth and death of the children of Ezekiel and Temperance Blanks. Mrs. Mace was a great-granddaughter of Ezekiel and Temperance, and she obtained this data from her

mother, Mrs. Gussie Cates, the daughter of Mary Ann Blanks Breazeal and granddaughter of Ezekiel and Temperance. The data appears to have come from a family Bible, but Mrs. Mace did not report ever seeing a Family Bible or recalling her mother mentioning a Bible. Mrs. Mace was unsure of the origins of the family information, but she thought it was given to her mother in 1971 by Mr. Irol E. Blanks, a man with no close relation to their family. This family information from Mrs. Mace is the only source for specific details on the daughters of Ezekiel and Tempey Blanks who died young: Susan, Martha, Louisa, and Sarah Blanks.

Union County, Arkansas Tax Records

1. Union County AR Tax Records for the given years are found on LDS Film #8339821 (1843–1846) and #8339822 (1848–1867).

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